

Hole

At times I have the overwhelming feeling that love
flows at me in parallel streams --
it is just like at Venta Falls or in the shower
or as if I stood under a huge colander –
and you, my sweeties,
your eyes, your hands, your mouths were holes.

You are the holes when you are happy
to see me, for example,
when mum calls and says that she'll give me
some chocolate to eat on the way,
when someone has come to meet me or has fried squash or made soup,
when my husband handles me gently like his own flesh,
and at an exhibition the artist comes out
and gives me a hug himself.

And then there is also that light.
To awaken in a room filled with bright sun
and see the ornaments move on the curtains,
and the day is all clean and young,
you walk out and get dizzy from all that space,
and you are overwhelmed with the need to weep in gratitude,
drop to your knees in the sand by the sea or snow,

or in colourful leaves, and say, enraptured:

I wish I were a hole.

And even when my time lacks its honey and ease,
when songs go silent and plant shadows no longer dance upon waking,
when mum no longer has soup,
and I have to fry tons of squash all by myself
and help to lift my ailing dad,
without ruining the catheter bag,
and when I myself am that artist
who must hug each visitor
as the only one,

when children make me bigger
and fall out of me one by one as if from a peapod
and all want the chocolate and the hugs;
when my husband turns away silent
and friends enjoy themselves far off on the beach,
but no, when they are sad and don't turn to me for solace,
when the dog in the country insistently nudges me with his nose,
but I have just run out of the mash,
when the Riga neighbour no longer brings me a carnation on the 8th of March,
because he isn't able to leave his flat,
when I get dizzy no longer because of too much emotion –
no matter, I will want to be a hole.

I want to be a colander hole –
even if slightly tarnished,
even if only for a tiny, narrow rivulet.

And perhaps it is because I don't know where dad is now
and if it is from where the children came,
and frankly, I am afraid
that we will not rise again in flesh
yet I cannot imagine anything else that would do;
and even if the ground is not such
that I'd feel like dropping down to my knees,
I can simply nod and conclude drily –
I do still want it.

I want to be a hole for love.

I evangelize inebriated

oh my, what am I saying here, friends,

I cannot preach this inebriated –

although, come to think of it, any moment will do

what d'ya think –

have I never stuffed myself on Good Friday?

I have also spent all vigil dancing at a bar

shaking my hair, stomping my feet,

and that's hardly all I have done

but as, when young, we dropped wherever

when, as adults,

we go to sleep sad in the evening politely

it's okay to whisper: it is bigger than you are

so what are you trying to tell me here

as the night is once again warm and the city is drinking –

don't you know that there is a little puddle in each of us

connected by a rivulet to the sea?

we can also say – with a stem

each branch contains nine blossoms

so functional, the metaphors

so we have been gathered in a bundle
or rather, that's where we originate,
we who were plankton and mountain goats,
all of us who received consciousness
in which He then turned it inside out --
the evolution scheme, like a sock,
and it was very painful

and inside us and under us
He pulsates like a sponge,
and we are in Him like underwater vegetation
and when you walk down the street
every bum has a puddle inside
that will join yours in a common pool
each schoolmate in the old class
every old woman in the parish choir
every Macedonian bastard
and all whom I really don't like
and it can really can make it easier
when you try to inhale peacefully when falling asleep

I do like it most of all that we got our consciousness –
for a kitten, I guess, will be absorbed in Him straight
whereas we, as we are going to sleep, can think
how a skating-rink is made on the lake

how robots are getting rid of construction waste

how we rake away autumn leaves

but even we don't ever know for sure

how much rock is still there, underneath,

so now I will have done it intoxicated, my friends

but any moment is the right one of course

and after all, when sober,

I never see you.

Identity

Inspired by Lev Rubinstein

1. Tulips bloom by the electrical box.
2. Vērtūži is about four kilometres away.
3. Bombis was always hungry.
4. Dad died, and Latvenergo took off the meter.
5. It seemed that my heart opened only after two thousand and ten.
6. Juris was a wonderful cat, proud and wilful. He softened with age.
7. Betija played the piano.
8. Ernests lived in Moscow.
9. In ninety-three, I lived alone at Bīnāti in June, subsisting on condensed milk and rhubarb.
10. Some are allowed not to have children.
11. If we don't let him out at night, it will be even worse.
12. Sonya too lived in Moscow.
13. Dad was groping around for his pain medication.
14. Jana and Mitya lived in St Petersburg.
15. In eighty-six, my sister and I went to Vērtūži, hoping to buy sour cream. On the way back, it was raining, and we hid in a piece of a concrete pipe -- two embryos in a womb.
16. Anna had five children: daughters Mīle, Minna and Olga; sons Kārlis and Jānis.

17. Rhythms and colours.
18. My bag contains my bra, razor and toothbrush. They spill out in front of the auditorium as I take out my Baudelaire.
19. Bombis was run over. Then they shot him to take him out of his misery.
20. I was naïve and very cruel.
21. Kārlis promised to help Olga to become a doctor but he fell in the World War.
22. Hell was a clearing behind the temple where the remains of the sacrificed animals stank.
23. I did not turn off my phone, I rose at dawn to pee. At seven, mum called.
24. The following spring, we brought all the rhubarb back with us.
25. I was good with numbers, I had trouble with thoughts.
26. At Velta and Roald's, there were strawberries.
27. Marija is twelve.
28. I think that I was conceived in Asari.
29. Olga had worked since the age of ten.
30. Juris is buried in the Bīnāti yard.
31. Otto told me about Normandy.
32. Colours are semiotic.
33. We arrived, and Olga served us sorrel soup.
34. My sister and her husband slept in the hay.
35. There are people whose hearts open early, in childhood.
36. Mum is difficult. And so is Marija.
37. I talked about Lermontov and got mixed up.
38. It was difficult to give birth.
39. Grandpa Viktors died in sixty-three, while painting the floor.

40. The Bīnāti garden was shady. You couldn't feel the heat.
41. In eighty-seven, Klāvs fell out the window in Dubulti.
42. If God gives us the next day, he will give us bread.
43. I don't know when dad's heart opened.
44. Little chicks were busy in the Bīnāti yard.
45. Mum's mum was also Olga.
46. An exam on 2 June.
47. Mum's grandma Baba Lyuba. I walk and talk like her.
48. Dad compiled Lermontov.
49. Andrītis, too, is a cool cat. He bites you on the nose.
50. Rainy afternoons with tea. The family women.
51. Marija plays the piano.
52. Tolstoy. Write it down: the real history is birth, love and death.
53. Mum went off to write.
54. Matīss and Evija buried Juris.
55. I am Anna. Olga is a shepherd.
56. Trees are flickering by, the vice-chancellor and I are riding on the train and laughing.
57. Dad died and Bombis was run over.
58. This is Mārtiņš, my husband.
59. Maigonis was born in Ozolnieki.
60. In eighty-four we came to Bīnāti after grandpa was dead. Half of the house had rotted and been sawn off, the other side was under repair.
61. Baudelaire, yuk, says the student, disgusting. She cries because she didn't get a ten.

62. Only some are allowed not to have children.
63. In ninety-eight, the ante-room ceiling fell in. Mārtiņš used a spade to dig into the house. I was expecting Margērs.
64. Betija was hiding in Ārītes.
65. Dad was probably born in Auziņi. I should check the book.
66. In eighty-five, we moved to an abandoned building in Mežamuiža. There were fancy tiles, broken, and old toys with the stuffing sticking out.
67. Children of course also open one's heart.
68. Margērs got dreads. He is upset with god that he is different.
69. Inside the foundation of the barn, we found a typewriter.
70. I had good colour sense.
71. I wanted to call the priest, but dad asked for a notary.
72. If God gives a child, he will provide the swaddling clothes.
73. Rimbaud and Verlaine.
74. The large circle is behind Mežamuiža.
75. Ieva didn't say that she was going to give birth at home.
76. Maigonis was baptized, but dad was not.
77. The small circle leads up to the swamp.
78. In empty years, I brought back forty some ceps, said dad in his last autumn.
79. Mum got married while pregnant. Lyolya cried.
80. The maple is growing too big and will knock over the outhouse.
81. I went to Moscow at the age of ten, then twelve.
82. The tractor is ruining our mushroom spots.
83. My daughter needs girlfriends.
84. Dad is buried at Rainis cemetery. Juris is buried in the Bīnāti garden.

85. I went to St Petersburg at the age of thirteen, I vomited at the train station. In two thousand, I went with Inga and Kārlis. A year later, I talked Mārtiņš into it.
86. He will give the next day and bread, and baby and swaddling clothes.
87. Mum's mum Baba Lyolya.
88. The kids talk about hell in class.
89. During the blockade, some babushka wanted to eat a baby.
90. My sister was born in fifty-eight. Women who had given birth were told to stay in bed and were watered like flowers, their legs spread.
91. Mum's grandpa was a pastry-cook in Tashkent.
92. They all died: Otto and Olga, then Maigonis, Little Imants, as well as Lyolya and Sea Dog.
93. Tallinn used to be called Reval.
94. Sleep, my darling, sleep, my baby, close your eyes and sleep. Darkness comes; into your cradle moonbeams shyly peep.
95. A friend and a girlfriend in third grade.
96. Sister was taken to the hospital, but mum was not let near her. The green cat had to be left at the ward for infectious diseases. When I heard that, I felt sorry.
97. In eighty-five, Raimonds put in a floor in the big room. The rough-sawn boards soaked up much of the paint, yet it stayed on really well.
98. Dad died and I forgot the name of the swamp.
99. I will tell you stories; I will sing a song.
100. After that, we sat by the river and sucked on bonbons.
101. I gave birth to my son in the paid ward.
102. In nineteen ninety, during the autumn holidays, dad and I tried to goad Ieva and Matīss to come with us on the small circle, but they pretended to be ill.

103. Mum was not in the Leningrad blockade.
104. Kaspars Ivuškāns took offence, when I said "let me by, fatty". I flew against the window, but all ended well. Teacher Ruciņa rebuked us.
105. One shop was at the people's house and then, for some time, near the post office. There is also a shop in Vērtūži. The Zalve shop was before the church.
106. Windows should be changed.
107. In eighty-two, Matīss was born.
108. The idea was to put in particle board, but we couldn't get it, and it's a good thing, otherwise the floor would rot.
109. Everyone, except Ēriks Jurevskis, got to be a member of the Young Pioneers.
110. Aunt Velta died this winter.
111. Mum really wanted me.
112. Dad was buried in Rainis Cemetery, Juris was buried in the Bīnāti garden. Bombis was buried I don't know where.
113. Lukass knows German.
114. There was lemonade at the shop. But no sour cream.
115. Dad was taken ill, and we became more loving to one another.
116. As I was giving birth to my daughter, I stayed home till the last. I arrived right off the street and did not pay a red cent. Yet they broke my waters.
117. Matīss got married. Evija is a doctor.
118. There were frogs in the cellar.
119. In eighty-six, Liene Vasermane moved to sit with Signe. My heart broke.
120. Lyolya gave birth to four children, the first ones in St Petersburg, the next ones in Moscow. One died while still a baby, mum's sister simply little. The brother was coddled and later nicknamed Sea Dog.

121. You worked and I read old magazines.
122. In fourth grade, I enjoyed playing alone in the sand and the kids called me Badger. Later, Amalya. It hurt a little.
123. Olga gave birth to dad and Maigonis.
124. Mum was evacuated.
125. I don't want a grave. Scatter the ashes.
126. Andis Liepiņš was good with numbers, but I was better.
127. In eighty-six, my sister brought her children for the first time to Bīnāti.
128. In tenth grade, we laughed that Ivo and his roommate were fags. It turned out that they were in fact a couple. Later they moved to London.
129. Evija is expecting.
130. In fourth grade, I read that young ladies slap impudent young men and so I slapped a classmate several times. I became infamous.
131. We came just the two of us, dad and I, and we ate whatever.
132. Cousin Viktors shot himself to death in the army.
133. Aunt Velta called us over for milk.
134. Teacher Vasermane became Jēgermane.
135. By accident, I saw Ēriks Jurevskis peeing against a pine-tree. He thought that it was intentional.
136. An old black-currant bush behind the foundation of the barn. Its branches should be bent down, earth dug over and then the young shoots dug up and replanted, otherwise it's not producing.
137. I got married pregnant.
138. Mum's other grandma was called Baba Tanya.

139. The plaster was all white dust. The repairmen were drinking. You slept and I wandered through the meadows unwatched.
140. In fourth grade, Andis Liepiņš went to Secondary School No. 1.
141. Bombis, as it turns out, has a grave just behind the lindens.
142. We brought a little girl from St Petersburg.
143. I cannot remember Lyuba.
144. In ninety-nine, it was dry. Margers crawled on a dusty path.
145. Ēriks Jurevskis swung me very high. I felt guilty.
146. Olga died in eighty-two, Lyolya in eighty-nine.
147. I am Anna. This is my daughter Marija.
148. Signe boasted later on that Andis loved her. The bitch, Liene was not enough.
149. A hairy head emerged, you said. A good thing that it happened so quickly.
150. Juris climbed trees.
151. Life with teenagers is cheerful and full of challenges.
152. God, let Margers drive with six horses.
153. A pump can be put in and a shower installed.
154. Another baby. If it does not come on its own, let's adopt.
155. Perhaps my heart opened earlier.
156. I signed a contract, and they put a meter in the little box again.
157. Dad died, and we became more affectionate.