Two poems by Raquel Chalfi in translation

by tsipi keller

On the Shore, Tel Aviv, Winter 1974

A crocodile cloud swallowed a cloud-cloud. All is clogged and where did the war go? The pier is painted yellow and red with the inscription: Tel Aviv. The drums of the depths are indifferent. In the sky shadowy figures slowly go berserk. An infinite wrestling arena in slow-motion takes. A crane rises above the luxury hotel Hilton. And where did the war go. A crocodile cloud swallowed a cloud-cloud. Where did the war go. Up in the depths soft clouds make love to planes. The air fills the lungs with spiky salt and laughter. The sun, a fading photograph. Shorebirds grayly peck the sand. The sea — its muscles groan. A lone woman, a synthetic kerchief on her head what is she in face of a thunderstorm. The diving board, too, is painted orange.

An old woman, her lips attempt:

He was an angel He was an angel

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From the Songs of Crazy Dolores

1. I am the child above whose bed Mexican gods laugh

Seasons go by, a sun reigns and pyramids do not turn upside down

There are many antiquities in the land of *Mejico* and I am the smallest among them

2.

I love Beli-Belik-Boom (once I called him Le-Le-Le) and I'll always love Le-Le-Le. But Belik does not understand what love is.

Belik is a strange man. He wrote me a poem of love yet refused to kiss my bare soul under the *huppa*. It was a *huppa* of a parachute and he jumped with it out of there down, leaving me to freefall. Of course I arrived before him. Boom.

I managed somehow to break my bones. And I have a few memories left. When I was broken and a memory only Belik would kiss me on my cheek (Le-Le-Le) every evening. Later he swapped me for a cat. When he photographed me he would photograph me in double exposure. Somehow I managed to appear in the picture.

Boom.

3.

I am made of glass and my father is a glazier I tell you I'm as transparent as a yogurt jar without the yogurt try to look through me just try and you'll see that you can see everything lean your head on me children and your noses will be squashed flat and your mouths will be pulled like a down-in-the-mouth blowfish take a look inside me I'm transparent absolutely I am made of glass because my daddy is a glazier and my mother dons a tulle dress take a look children take a look it will do you good only be a little cautious please vesterday someone looked through me too hard and saw as far as the Bali islands. and he rode a blue whale in the Bali islands

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and then my glass broke into a zillion shards and I was pricked and pricked and pricked and I was all glass glass in a zillion red puddles

4. Dolores jumps rope Dolores plays hopscotch

She looks into a kaleidoscope tube builds broken tunnels in a dream Dolores lives her life backward swings on a rusty groaning gate looks for puppies to adopt dead chicks to revive diamonds buried in trashcans in order to help refugees hiding in a tunnel under Keren Hakayemet Boulevard on the other side of the world

Dolores jumps rope always jumps rope to the other side of the world

5. I am Dolores-not-Dolores

I am in the dream of some god

It seems to me that my life is a life but really it is only a particle in the dream of a sleeping god who dreams me with love

Dolores-not-Dolores

I have to pinch myself hard because the hour when images switch in his brain is near

Yes Dolores no Dolores yes Dolores no Dolores birds Dolores sea Dolores a loose shoelace Dolores a broken blue glass a milky way bathing a world a white horse lost in the plain tunnels inside time time going backward a snake shedding its skin a mobile of broken galaxies suspended on fine transparent fiber

I have to pinch myself hard because the hour when images switch in his brain is near I must watch myself so I don't sink in a dream when he dumps me from his brain like a crumb dropping from indolent fingers

http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6092-reality-crumbs.aspx

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