

Sample translations from Lucija Stupica's poetry collection **Vanishing Points** (Točke izginjanja, LUD Literatura, Ljubljana 2019)

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Integral translated manuscript of *Vanishing Points* available, publishers can contact the author:  
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## The blue gondola

Once upon a time, there was a street named Bregovita.  
A short blind alley. It still exists. With a different name.  
With two blue cars of the shortest funicular at its end.

I've got it all, just come.

He had some maize flour and a small pot of fat.  
Three children, the youngest only a month old.  
Zagreb 1941, paperless exiles.  
At night, the streetcar, several transfers, several numbers  
unknown to the children, a hideout and a place  
to warm themselves, even with socks on their hands.

Later, coal came to the room shared with another family,  
this is how they made it through the four years.  
Nobody talked about the summers.

Children shouting in the streets: *Sand, white sand for sale!*  
The sand falling. The moments spent in the funicular alley, falling.  
The tapping of the sewing machines in the blanket manufacturing company  
during the day, unannounced visits at night. The sand falling through  
sleepless nights pierced with children's crying—

Mother was slowly turning into a wall.

Later still, halfway between a fairy tale and reality,  
a blue gondola rises from memory's gap.  
It floats in water, in air—but never on rails.

Now the engines start up, a faraway rhythm  
of sewing machines, the blue gondola drifts into the steepness.

I try to breathe through some other time,  
some other life.

All of a sudden, for a split second,  
I feel I can touch it. Then I let go.

## **The last photo together**

They share something confidential,  
the four-year-old girl on the left side of the bench,  
in her red coat, a kerchief around her head,  
and the three-year old boy, with their grandpa.

They left the backyard long ago.  
And the bench with the wooden slats  
and the crooked cast iron legs  
standing before the faded façade.

The grandpa in the photo, resembling  
Jean Gabin, is wearing a tie, a brown cardigan,  
and gabardine pants. His silvery hair  
neatly combed off his forehead.

The children cannot spread out their coats yet  
to cover their grandpa with them. Her tiny hand  
is shielding the sunlight, making room  
for the view toward a different place.

**In her absence**

I looked through the window  
one more time  
a short driveway  
with a white scooter parked on it  
and a priest wearing a straw-hat  
a rather unusual picture  
was already walking toward the entrance  
scratching his beard  
a warm smile and a handshake  
you're not from here  
no  
my wife isn't either  
tell me more about yourself  
her blanket tossed over the chair  
a year of diagnoses then the call  
what do you think of first  
when you think of the late woman  
but still  
still i'd come  
too late  
secretly i know  
just as she lives on in her son  
he will in our daughter  
this room  
i think to myself  
her now muted piano  
awkward laughter at the table  
an interlacement of entangled words  
a conversation about the service  
how  
we love one another

empty spaces  
are always loud  
that morning  
everything was about life  
both cats  
the ginger one and the black-and-white one  
were still looking for her  
so many photos  
how  
will we arrange them  
and the summer  
we are talking now  
over a glass of water  
it had started off so promisingly

**The King's Garden**

If I were to write *she stood there,*  
*in the fast-food restaurant,*  
*ordering soft ice-cream,*  
*with the nearby park in cherry blossoms,*  
if I were to write *her pink was more distinct,*  
*everywhere: the socks, the cape, the lips, the eyelids,*  
*an adorned tree with a lively past,*  
if I were to write *she had already ordered soft ice-cream,*  
*paying with bills and speaking English,*  
*nothing uncommon for a big city,*  
if I were to write *she stood, all tiny, in a ballet position,*  
*with an old-age hump, hair tied together and fingers like a swan's neck*  
*before following the greasy footsteps into the basement*  
*among the tables and the restroom and the customers,*  
*turning to her soft ice-cream,*  
if I were to write *the blossoms do not waft anymore,*  
*that*  
*the vivid pink*  
*was defeated.*