

AND TOMORROW IS A DAY TOO

she is Ioana – trapped
between the cold walls of an apartment
without a number
in a Bucharest block
like any other
she keeps looking out the window

at the dusty green leaves of scattered trees,
wandering?
at the crude ugliness of the blocks across the street?

Ioana keeps looking out the window
Ioana looks back

...12, 13, 14, 15

“Ioana, you’ve got homework for Monday!”

16, 17, 18...

“Ioana!”

19 swallows on the first wire, motionless, unelectrocuted

“Ioana!”

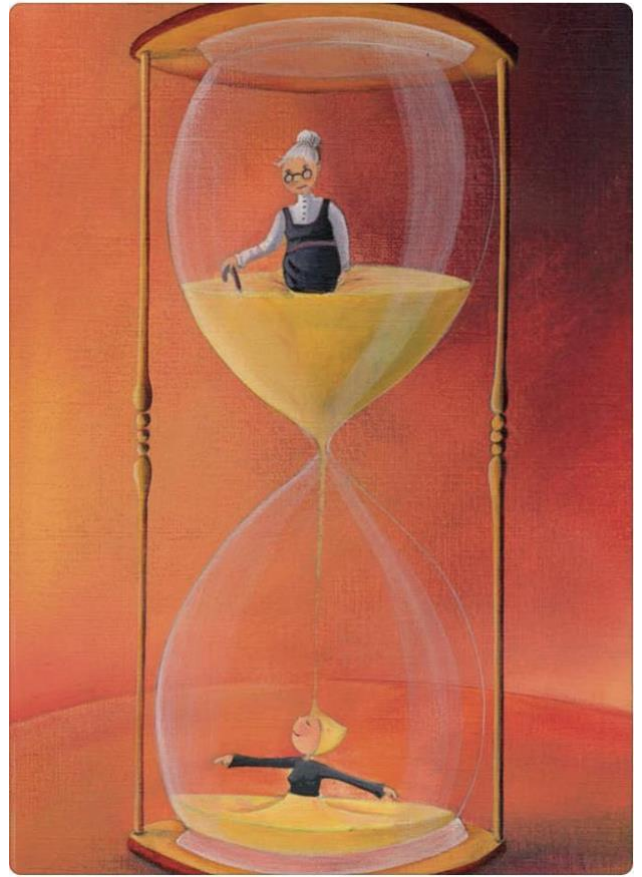
“Yes, mom, tomorrow’s another day —
today I’m bathing in sunlight
like the seagulls at the sea.”

“When you come back home, be careful, don’t stray,
there’s no time to lose,
no time to sing,
no time to dream,
no, not even for a sigh!”

The grass must be pulled from between the stones,
the weeds uprooted,
the bugs destroyed.

Ioana said: “Alright, alright,”
but it was nearly summer —
the hills dressed in flowers,
with ladybugs and light-winged butterflies.
She came back only in the evening,
with a bouquet of daisies, carnations, and honesty flowers.
“They’re for you!”
“Ioana, what did I tell you?”
“It’s alright — tomorrow’s another day,
the yard won’t be overrun with grass!”

“Ioana, it’s getting dark, please, come inside!”
Ioana walks barefoot through the grass,
through the grass turning bluer,



in her nightdress, jar in hand,
waiting, searching, waiting, searching.

“Ioana, it’s getting dark, please, come inside!”
she waits, she searches, she waits, she searches.

“Ioana, it’s getting dark, please, come inside!”
and tomorrow is a day for catching living lights.

Ioana looks through the windowpane
of an apartment
without number, color, light.

She looks through the slab of a grave,
into the eyes of her daughters.
There’s no time for mourning,
no time for tears,
no time to stand still,
no, not even time for love.

The earth must be worked,
the animals watered,
the mouths fed.

And tomorrow’s another day, Ioana!

Ioana doesn’t hear, no longer tilts her head to the sky,
doesn’t care — is it night or day,
and *tomorrow* — that word *tomorrow* —
will no longer be.

The retinas of her eyes — like a scratched film reel —
play the same images on loop:
a woman wakes at 5 a.m.,
feeds the animals,
milks the cow, pulls the grass,
weeds the onion beds, takes honey from the hives,
picks the Colorado beetles,
crushes them underfoot, doesn’t eat, doesn’t drink — maybe prays.

The only visible changes:
a bent spine,
graying hair,
a gaze drawn ever closer to the ground.

Ioana stares and thins the glass
of the window
in a Bucharest block
like any other.
Ioana leans on a frame,

looks ahead, behind, at the day when
she poured the little sugar left in her life
into a hidden spring, away from all eyes.

She no longer gave herself time to get lost in thought,
to build castles on anthills,
to listen to the sound of simple things:
birds chirping,
the electric flutter of beetles,
the rustling of leaves, the crackle of firewood,
the clanging of cowbells, the static music on the radio,
the muffled voices on the phone:
“*Mom, tomorrow’s another day!*”

Ioana looks — the glass cracks.
Ioana rewinds time. forward. back.
Ioana stops it. Ioana starts it.
Ioana smiles at it. Ioana speaks:
“No matter how short you are —
tomorrow is a day too.”

The window shatters
into crystals of sugar.

Alina ȚÂRCOMAN-OCHEA (b. 1989, Sângeorz-Băi) originally aspired to become a film director but eventually found her path as a primary school teacher. She holds a degree in philology and completed a master’s thesis on South American poetry titled *From Avant-Gardism to Postmodernism*, focusing on the literary works of Neruda, Octavio Paz, and Nicanor Parra. She collaborated with poet Angela Marinescu on compiling the *Complete Works (Subpoetry I & II, Prose)*, published by Charmides Publishing House. In September 2024, the Mexican magazine *Círculo de Poesía. Revista Electrónica de Literatura* will publish a selection of eleven previously unpublished poems by Țârcoman-Ochea, translated into Spanish by Roberto Amézquita and Elena Borrás García. Her debut poetry volume, *It Doesn’t Hurt When You Sleep*, will be released in October 2024 by Cartier Publishing House.