

# Before and after the water

Laura Accerboni

Poetry

Italian



## Title

Il prima e il dopo dell'acqua

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## Translation rights

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Laura Accerboni was born in Genoa in 1985. She has published two previous collections of poetry: *Attorno a ciò che non è stato* (Edizioni del Leone 2010) and *La parte dell'annegato* (nottetempo 2016). With Einaudi, she has published *Acqua acqua fuoco* (2020).

*Laura Accerboni's fourth collection of poems, Before and after the water, presents powerful and intimate new political poetry in which words are stripped bare to interrogate meaning, seeping into the cracks and absurdities of modern life, in constant tension between private and social experience.*

"I am  
the domestic  
animal  
for I shape  
the lawn  
then tear it apart  
and take off  
to lick  
the brief names  
of cities  
The rough  
tongue  
of elsewhere."

Before and after the water

Laura Accerboni

Selection of poems translated by Ruth Clarke

La sedia  
ha solo  
tre gambe  
ma resta  
in piedi  
sopra  
c'è tutto  
il tavolo  
e la cucina  
e la casa  
e poi ci siamo  
noi  
con la quarta gamba  
tra i denti  
e ringhiamo  
ogni volta  
che qualcuno  
la tocca.

\*

Lasciavo precipitare  
i bambini  
ed era vero  
e il vero  
era  
tantissimi  
A fine giornata  
imparavano  
a saltare  
da palazzo a palazzo  
e io potevo andare  
dai corpi  
a raccogliarli

\*

The chair  
has only  
three legs  
but stays  
on its feet  
atop  
is everything  
the table  
and the kitchen  
and the house  
and there we are  
us  
with the fourth leg  
between our teeth  
growling  
every time  
someone  
touches it.

\*

I was letting  
the children  
fall  
and it was true  
and what was true  
was  
countless  
At the end of the day  
they were learning  
to jump  
from building to building  
and I could go  
to the bodies  
to collect them

\*

Nel sogno  
mio marito  
arriva  
impugnando  
nostro figlio  
vuole insegnarmi  
come si carica  
e come attutire  
il contraccolpo.

\*

Il bambino  
cresce suo padre  
in fiamme  
si procura  
piccoli  
bastoncini di  
legno  
per non spegnerlo  
gli racconta  
di fuochi antichi  
per non farlo  
addormentare  
C'era  
una volta  
un rogo  
e accanto a lui  
seduto  
un filo di vento  
che non smetteva  
di soffiare.

\*

In the dream  
my husband  
arrives  
gripping  
our son  
he wants to teach me  
how to ready yourself  
and how to soften  
the counterblow.

\*

The child  
raises his father  
in flames  
procures  
small  
wooden  
sticks  
to keep him from  
going out  
tells tales  
of ancient fires  
to keep him from  
falling asleep  
There was  
once  
a bonfire  
and beside it  
sat  
a breath of wind  
that never stopped  
blowing.

\*

Ci sono  
ami  
al posto  
dei lampioni  
il padre  
non vede nulla  
ma sa  
che sta per  
essere pescato.  
Tiene una  
mollica  
in bocca  
e sente  
il metallo  
trafiggergli  
il palato.

\*

Sono io  
l'animale  
domestico

perché formo  
il prato  
e poi lo strazio

e me ne vado  
a leccare  
i brevi nomi  
delle città

La lingua  
ruvida  
dell'altrove.

There are  
hooks  
in place of  
the lampposts  
the father  
sees nothing  
but knows  
he is set  
to be caught.  
He has a  
crumb  
in his mouth  
and feels  
the metal  
pierce  
his palate.

\*

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