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## Lady Triệu Thị Trinh Prays While Grooming Her Elephant

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## Creative and Literary Work

**Mai Nguyen Do**

*University of California, Riverside*

### Lady Triệu Thị Trinh Prays While Grooming Her Elephant

What I'd give to become  
like the wind carrying the first mounted ride.  
Like every old gust that has only rested,  
never died.

This night, I dream:  
Mothers sing mountains into terraces,  
calloused hands dredging spring from beneath topsoil.  
A child sows the seeds  
of a country.

I will accept every wound  
but the last.

I will stretch my own sinew  
along the beams of my spine,  
ready to pluck thunder  
into lullaby. How many songs  
can we write before sunrise?

I pray, let me sing something new  
when the dewdrops pool,  
when the matchstick strikes,

when tonight's last shard of starlight retreats  
from a grazing water buffalo's horn.



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### About the Author



**Mai Nguyen Do** (Đỗ Nguyễn Mai) is a Vietnamese American poet from Santa Clarita, California. Her debut poetry collection *Ghosts Still Walking* is available from Platypus Press, and her second poetry collection *Battlefield Blooming* is available from Sahtu Press. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Riverside, where she studies Southeast Asian refugee communities in the U.S. and the school-to-prison-to-deportation pipeline.



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