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Lady Triệu Thị Trinh Prays While Grooming Her Elephant

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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,
ever 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.
About the Author

Mai Nguyen Do (Đỗ Nguyên 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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