

## **calls himself lemur mostly on autumn days**

I ask him what that means and the answer is easy:  
whatever relates to dropping some candy  
into some hand. I ask him again and he's like:  
today I have run into this powerless beast.  
extracted the candy out of my mouth  
and shoved it under its muzzle, cupped in my hand:  
*lemur*. and then? what did it do? its hair was not yet grown.  
it had wooden knots at the joints of its feet.  
what next? it breathed into my face.  
it smoothed the piece of candy with its muzzle – it didn't care for it.  
after retrieving it,  
I felt it all different on my palate.  
its taste was akin to its smell. it went on breathing,  
spreading wreaths of white steam round its muzzle.

it recognizes me by my white torso.  
it lies down in the new grass I'm leading it to.  
it's got big blue eyes. it is not yet a lemur.  
it goes no matter where. we could have walked to the forest  
that ends in a chasm.  
he said: it's your choice. I was choosing at random,  
unaware he was going to change into a lemur.  
we're walking downhill. he follows me smiling,  
in a black fur almost making a cover.  
we are running, I whistle. we can't see a thing. we call out.  
the sound fades away in the apple-tree orchard.  
in the chestnut-tree orchard.  
in the orchard with houses on the point of collapsing.  
crouching down feels so good. at diminutive height.  
we are breathing the warm air now leaving our nostrils.  
the lemur leans down on its front paws increasingly harder,  
leaning towards me as it mirrors my gesture.

that white torso between us.  
that's the torso he's anxious to feel.  
on the right, a small heap of rotten apples,  
on the left, a small heap of ripe apples

at night he's afraid of the body. in the dark, he tells me,  
he can see just whatever is white.  
he tells me my eyes would be doing him good. as he departs,  
he is rubbing his hands in the black dust.  
raises them to his eyelids.  
the blue eyes rush to my blue eyes:  
we won't see each other again evermore.

## Simulacrum

*I need to deduct the sum of our days –  
year after year, in a dreary routine – from what has been left.*

Crying out since I met him, in an unvaried pitch,  
not exactly coherent at times, but then ready to trigger off  
an endless range of female imageries:

I often dream  
he's wearing high heels,  
ribcage exposed,  
all there is to touch  
is that bundle of stumps

adorned and summoned  
to life by a non-existent body:

a head appended thereon, some sinews  
well built, a robust contour.

*I want back everything that belongs to me*

then I let my hands roam all over his stumps,  
I enclose his palms (mine),  
I enclose his neck (mine),  
I watch him from afar.

he continues to wear that odd chunk of body,  
that trace of a massacre whose ends he never  
finds. he dresses his extremities  
in period costume: under their time, in the rancid  
odor of those having worn them:  
*here am I in all my perfection,  
here is a perfect simulacrum*

**Andra Rotaru** (Bucharest, Romania) has a BA in Sociology from The University of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest. Currently settled in Bucharest, she is an active cultural journalist and organizer of literary events. She initiated several collaborations at the intersection of poetry and choreography (the dance performance *Lemur*, presented in US and across Europe), poetry and fiction and video: the documentary *All Together*, made during International Writing Program 2014; photography (*Photo-letter pairing*), involving community from Iowa and IWP writers. Published books: *Într-un pat sub cearșaful alb/ In a bed under the white sheets*, Vinea Publishing House, 2005 (debut) – awarded the most important prizes for a debut book; *En una cama bajo la sabana blanca* (the translation of the debut book into Spanish), Bassarai Ediciones, Spain, 2008; *Ținuturile sudului/ Southern Lands*, Paralela 45 Publishing House, 2010; *Lemur*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, 2012, awarded *The best young poetry book* at *Writers' Gala*, Bucharest, 2013. Was

scholar in several literary programs in US and Europe, among them International Writing Program, Iowa University (2014).