

Two Poems

Jamil Jan Kochai

Our Mother Speaks of Drowned Ghosts

I gave them names because
we had no water.
Allah having left us dry.
But now
if you were to ask me
for the second name
of my tenth son,
I might not be able
to hear
the whispers
from the old rivers
which become softer
the farther
I swim.

Two AKs in an Apple Tree

Where did snow meet steel, he asked.

Where the bend met the road, she said.

How do gunmen dream, he asked.

Not unlike ourselves, she said.

How long did they wait, he asked.

For as long as they could, she said.

Did the wheat all die, he asked.

Like the leaves in the night, she said.

How far did it ring, he asked.

For as far as I know, she said.

Does the smell still cling, he asked.

Only in my flesh, she said.

Did they dream of us then, he asked.

They dream of you now, she said.

Did you see us there, he asked.

I saw what was left, she said.

Where were you in that dark, he asked.

Where you were in that dark, she said.

Were we heavy, he asked.

Like flowers, she said.