

The Wall

Jelena Dinić

Dubrovnik in July 2018

1.

I walk the sea-wall.
Here, it is easy to fall
for the charm of a stone –
all smooth and glistening.
Leaning over is foolish
like that crab in the sea
thinking sideways
as if she could crack open her shell,
and climb out of her rocky life.

Then?
Nothing
is promised although
young men throw coins
into Onofrio's Fountain
believing otherwise.
They drink from the mouths
of the sixteen maskerons –
their lips are wet with luck.

Further up the unnamed street
towards the tower with no doors
my balcony clutches the wall
like a stone mollusk
waiting for high tide.

2.

The view drapes itself
with the old habit of a summer night.

Someone says it's nice to see you
as I look for what I remember.

Two little boats sail away.
What is lost the sea brings back
only saltier.

Two chairs on the nearby balcony
are arranged like the signs of life

or even love inside the walls.
Washed sheets in the wind

mirror the birds flying, or
is that just a dream tied back.

My suitcase is full of excuses.
Expensive returns.

The sea is unsettled in blue.
lifting slowly towards the sky.

Already I have overstayed.

3.

Raise yourself,
stone city.
Raise another
taller sea-wall
to withstand all
that's coming.
Keep my memories
high and dry.

Jelena Dinić arrived in Australia in 1993. She writes in Serbian and English. Her first full poetry collection *In the room with the she wolf* was selected for the Adelaide Festival 2020 Premier's Unpublished Manuscript Award. Jelena is dedicated to working with students and families from Culturally and Linguistically diverse backgrounds supporting their inclusion, settlement, learning and wellbeing.