

until her head swung against his; on all fours now, dragging her knees. The veins stood out in her neck, under her ears, swelled in her arms and wide and throbbing rose up on her fingers as she moved forward.

The dog, quivering in every muscle, sprang back, his lips drawn, his tongue a stiff curving terror in his mouth; moved backward, back, as she came on, whimpering too now, coming forward, her head turned completely sideways, grinning and whimpering. Backed now into the farthest corner, the dog reared as if to avoid something that troubled him to such agony that he seemed to be rising from the floor; then he stopped, clawing sideways at the wall, his forepaws lifted and sliding. Then, head down, dragging her forelocks in the dust, she struck against his side. He let loose one howl of misery and bit at her, dashing about her, barking, and as he sprang on either side of her he kept his head toward her, dashing his rump now this side, now that, of the wall.

Then she began to bark also, crawling after him—barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching. The dog began to cry, running with her, head-on with her head, as if to circumvent her; soft and slow his feet went. He ran this way and that, low down in his throat crying, and she grinning and crying with him; crying in shorter and shorter spaces, moving head to head, until she gave up, lying out, her hands beside her, her face turned and weeping; and the dog too gave up then and lay down, his eyes bloodshot, his head flat along her knees.

SONG OF SKINS

from **ANXIETY OF WORDS: CONTEMPORARY POETRY BY
KOREAN WOMEN** (2006)

by Kim Hyesoon

trans. Don Mee Choi

*The open lips find my breasts
though they weren't told where mine were,
draining sweet water from my body.
They want to suckle again right after they've eaten.
First the saliva evaporates inside my mouth,
tears vanish from my eyes,
veins shrivel,
blood fades,
trees and plants collapse,
the Nakdong River dries up,
and its floor shrieks as it explodes.
My whole body is pumped out.
Even though you vomit what you've just eaten,
your open lips still hang onto my nipples
till my body is emptied
of everything but dry bones and skin,
till the heaven's castle splits
and the Milky Way shatters,
till I can think of nothing
and my soul withers and dies.*