

DORIS KAREVA

Three poems from *The Shape of Time*

Desert dogs run through my dreams,
light, fast, and silent,
just like the wind of God;
beautiful and regal, night after night
they bound wildly.

I smell it, naturally I smell it:
my heart is their prey.

How could I ever feel fulfilled,
if I didn't run until I was spent;
if I didn't run night after night, didn't race
with the phantom, alien
desert dogs.

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The three-sided glass house: One side
is water. One is fire. One is night, where
prehistoric and outlawed creatures live—
impatient, shameless, and exquisite
like the carnivore flower and the butterfly dog.

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Bitter and scarce is the northern light.
The sledge here is drawn by heavy shadows,
the owls and wolves keep watch.
A word crunches between the teeth.

I don't know, I don't know how to be here,
I am chilled by history.
All borders are cages,
all stories are locked.

What I'm talking about, is
the dance of the dust mote
in the immeasurable sun.

Translated from the Estonian by Tiina Aleman