

Many Waters

This poem was originally published (in Hebrew) in Ravikovich's book *Many Waters: Poems 1995-2005* (Mayim Rabim), published by Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Tel Aviv 2006, pp. 7-8.

Dahlia Ravikovich

Translated by Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld [1]

A ship
afloat with no anchor.
She does have a sail
but the sea has no wind.
The sea expands,
spills into the ocean.
All across the horizon
no shade.
The ship's an antique
from the fourteen hundreds.
No motor on board.
For the Indies she sails.
The bread grows stale.
A plague erupts inside her.
The sail's torn.
Fresh water's gone.
Maybe a native canoe will arrive
bearing maize
or something to gulp down.
The captain despairs.
Jumps into the water.
He'd rather drown.
Meanwhile he floats
not far from the ship.
Through the spyglass
the second mate sees
no Indies, no bread,
no meat and no fish.
A sailor gnaws on a rotten plank.
The hunger's horrific.
The ship will get nowhere.
She's gone astray.
This ship
is the Dahlia Maria.
She will sink today,
she is sinking today.

[1] The English translation of the poem is taken from the book *Many Waters*, Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld (trans.), to appear in Norton Press.