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Tongariro

Milorad Pejić

Hung on a cloud, the cloak of the Tongariro volcano is clasped at the neck with a single round button: Blue Lake. At the bottom of the lake, at the height of the heart, a time bomb is ticking. We try not to think, we try not to know, but its veins like prickly goose bumps are crawling up our spines and are sweating.

In the blue lake at the top of the Tongariro volcano there is nothing to eat, nothing but stone. This is known to the strange long-necked birds, but they still, on their way across the ocean, alight on it. Flying high, they have outlived their enemies and are now resting on the waves like on a seesaw.

We, too, you and I, are strange long-necked birds who have outlived all their enemies. Coming from afar, we set down our backpacks and wade into the dead water of the Tongariro volcano. We are resting from our courage.

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The English translation first appeared in *Guernica* on 2 June 2014 and can be found [here](#), with biographical information about the poet and translator.

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