

CHIP SCHEUER

As The Crow Flies, 2016
Archival Pigment Print, 30 x 40 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

BLAGOVESTA PUGYOVA

Mr. Psychotherapist

I apologize, Mr. Psychotherapist, sir,
I understand, crying is good.
I tried today, and yesterday, a little,
I believe you, sir.

But I refuse—when I see
how many have traveled miles
to meet one child—
if they are smiling, I stretch my lips as well.

I don't feel like crying.
Because Iva walks to school,
I don't feel like crying when a child's eyes read
because a stranger surrenders time.

And you, Mr. Psychotherapist, you insist
that I have to cry a lot, it's healthy, it's good for me,
trust me, sir, I do not object
but I can't while I see those people, sir,
those who give what no one asks.

And I smile every day, I smile and I smile,
despite your wise instructions,
I know your diagnosis is often serious
but those, sir, are causeless smiles,
but every day I smile again, sir,
and again, and again, sir,

I smile.

—Co-translated from the Bulgarian
by Ilya Kaminsky and Eireene Nealand

Blagovesta Pugyova was born in 1987 in the city of Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. She is the founder of Podarete Kniga, the Give a Book Foundation, a network of volunteers who donate books to orphans and become their mentors and friends. For this initiative, Pugyova was awarded honors such as Human of the Year, Contributor to Freedom Award, and many others. Her first book, *Meet Me at 10 on the Moon*, was published in December 2014 by Janet 45, turning her into one of the most popular young contemporary poets in Bulgaria.

Ilya Kaminsky was born in Odessa, Ukraine, and currently lives in San Diego, California.