

Ida Börjel

MA

translated from the Swedish by Jennifer Hayashida

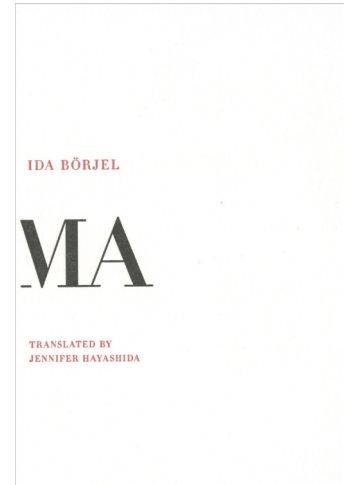
MA, Ida Börjel's award-winning abecedarian, is a maelstrom of voices cast in the underwater shadows and nuclear light of the Anthropocene. A refraction of Inger Christensen's seminal *Alphabet*, published in 1981, *MA* speaks a furious incantation in the past tense, a grammar of loss, from the vantage point of a disintegrating here and now. Appearing for the first time in English in Jennifer Hayashida's luminous translation, *MA* is less a curative than a testimonial, speaking simultaneously for the one and the many, the solitary mother and the insurgent multitude.

// Vowels exceed the alphabet, an utterance beyond the neon spiral that ends with Z. Börjel's *MA* augments the mouth's O, then reverses it, an anti-clockwise writing that's "broken into pieces." Hayashida's translation evokes these fragments as sound that's felt rather than heard across the line breaks: blood, sheet, cybernetics, cystic. The book works at the level of the nervous system, dispelling the tiny shocks and slack of circuits monetized by "dread," "crux," and corneal burn.

— BHANU KAPIL

// Ida Börjel recasts the great experimental Danish poet Inger Christensen as a Cassandra, as a Sheherezade, sounding the alarm of her multi-layered, self-organizing repetition for our own times of the renewed atomic threat: Christensen's *Alphabet* is awoken in Börjel's *MA*. Poetry gushes from these pages, relentless in its returns and surprises, striking the gong of somber proper nouns at every turn, searching for blood relations between languages, nature, nurture, geopolitics, and violence. Sweeping, astute, and full of lament, *MA* is a poetry book written by language itself.

— VALZHNYA MORT



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Ida Börjel is a poet and translator currently living in Malmö, Sweden. In her award winning books of poetry, including *Sond* (Probe), *Skåneradio* (Radio Scania), *Konsumentköplagen: juris lyrik* (*The Consumers Purchase Act: juridical lyricisms*), and *MA*, she is enquiring into and trying to enact our contemporary, linguistic, and societal conditions in relation to different forms of authority, sovereignty and juridical systems. As a co-translator, she has translated poetry books from Russian by Maria Stepanova and Galina Rymbu.



Poet/translator/artist **Jennifer Hayashida** is the author of *A Machine Wrote this Song* (Gramma Poetry/Black Ocean) and the chapbook *Översättaren som arkiv/Arkiv som översätter* (Autor). She is the Swedish/English translator of writers including Athena Farrokhzad, Ida Börjel, Kim Hyesoon, and Don Mee Choi. She has received awards from, among others, the New York Foundation for the Arts, PEN, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. She is based in New York and Stockholm.

Media contact: Eduardo Rios Pulgar • publicity@uglyducklingpresse.org

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