



Bari's Love Song

Kang Eun-Gyo

Translated by Chung Eun-Gwi

Free Verse Editions

Edited by Jon Thompson

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Translator's Preface

Chung Eun-Gwi

"Let all sadness leave us with these songs."

In her early career, Kang marked nihilism as the departure of her poetic imagination. The poet, in response to the turmoil of the world and modern Korean history full of violence and violations of human rights, struggled to build her poetry in a house of nothingness. With *Bari's Love Song*, the poet echoes the voice of a sorceress, a female shaman who treats the sadness, suffering, loss, and pain of all people. From the private losses of the poet to the universal songs of losses and love, *Bari's Love Song* covers the modern history of Korea in the forms of songs and recollections. In Korean folk literature, Bari is the name of a princess who was abandoned as soon as she was born just because she was the seventh daughter of a King with no son. In the meantime the King and Queen became critically ill and Bari, the abandoned princess, traveled to the underworld to get medicine. It features Bari as the agent of action, of hope, of love. The poet, in her love songs borrowing the voice of Bari, invites readers to the scenes and spots that filled their days and years with love and revolution in modern Korean history. Demonstrating her sustained concerns and affections for forces of life, this poetry book shapes a certain communal voice for a new world beyond loss and sadness. Bari's love songs are the songs of the earliest abandoned and the most forgotten. With these songs, the poet seems to say, these are the final version of all sorrow and loss. Let all sadness leave us. Let's go to the next port.