



Photo Credit: Alessandra Capodacqua

Were you there?

Were you there?
Yes, a voice says.

Did you also do
The same bad things?

Yes, a voice says.
You're crying.

Where are they, those
Who could forgive you?

Are you really alone in the world?
The voice is silent.

At the circus

At the circus I got
A magic square.
Nine symbols.
Their sum always death.

Mother sent me
To your unknown
Residence
For a reading.

Before I even learned
Where to search,
I became the shape
Of your absence.

Look how the mountains

Look how the mountains arise!
Mountains don't arise, the mountains are.

Look, rain is being made!
But rain isn't made, rain is.

Look, a day is being born.
But a day isn't born, a day is.

I ran through this meadow like a child.
Now my aged son walks through it.

But it wasn't me running.
I am.

Son

Son,
When you wake up,
Horses continue to run
Through your dreams.

Love is

Love is
A small kitten
Drinking water
From a cracked dish.

Translated from the Slovenian by Brian Henry from Above the Sky Beneath the Earth (2015)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Aleš Šteger

Aleš Šteger is a poet and prose writer, based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. His work has been widely translated and has found much acclaim among readers around the world. Šteger's texts have appeared in internationally-renowned magazines and newspapers as *The New Yorker*, *Boston review*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *TLS* and many others. The Bavarian Academy of Arts awarded him in 2016 with the International Bienek Prize for Poetry calling him "one of the most original European poets writing today." Among other prizes and honours his English translation of *Knjiga reči* (*The Book of Things*, BOA Editions, 2010) won two mayor U.S. translation awards (BTBA award and AATSEL). He received the title Chevalier des Artes et Lettres from the French state and is a member of the Berlin Academy of Arts and the German Academy for Language and Literature. Aleš's work reaches out to various fields of artistic expression. He has worked in the field of visual arts (lately with a large scale installation at the International Kochi-Muziris Arts Biennale in India), several collaborations with musicians (Godalika, Uroš Rojko, Peter N.

Gruber) and the film director Peter Zach (collaboration on the movie *Beyond Boundaries*). Since 2012 he has worked on a performative writing project *Written on Site*, making one public writing performance each year. More about the author: www.alessteger.com