

*KLADENETSUT (The Well)*

*The heart of my little green oasis is my well, hidden in the yard among three birches and twin pines.*

*In December the well is warm, in July, cold, wrapped in white dawn and soft evening shadow.*

*On the bottom, within the frame of stone, its water a round mirror.*

*When I lift the heavy lid at noon, the sun comes from the zenith, across its sky flies a bird, and into it stormy south winds spill blossom.*

*When I open it up at night, I see – a wandering cloud, the moon throws its platinum discus, a star leaves like an innocent tear, and the fathomless oval gleams in full light.*

*Oh, my dear well, deep and clean and alive. It is absorbed with lament and laughter, favourite voices and happy children's cries.*

*When I am lost I lean over it searching for my image in the depths – and I always find myself again – in winter frost, in sweltering heat...*

*But can you imagine how difficult it was to grind through those layers of stone and hardened clay?*

*Before one vein of water could find its way, a huge mound of earth lay piled upon the ground.*

*Passers-by stopped and wondered, friends asked, strangers asked:*

*What on earth do you need a well for, now you have a tap in the yard?*

*I answered, as if I were to blame: To remind me of the well of Sliven and of my first flights of fancy, and the push of that first wave...*

*– Poetry – they smile ironically.*

*But the drought sucked the lakes dry in summer, the fountains and the tap water – and the people started to peep into the well to draw its clear water.*

*Then came a severe winter. Everywhere froze and there were burst water pipes, but the well was not seized by the frost. It breathed out warm vapour from its depth – at the bottom the water was alive just like the well at Sliven, from which I sipped my first faith.*

*Elisaveta Bagryana*

*translation by Belin Tonchev from*

*Selected poems of Elisaveta Bagryana, Forest Books, 1993*