Donji Žabar

Back when everyone was still alive, we’d gather in the village, sit under the vinograd, and drink my aunt’s homemade rose juice until the jugs were completely empty, our tongues so thorny. All my cousins would rush to play with the sun as long as they could, but on those rosy days, I couldn’t move. I’d lie there, head in the shade, and listen to my uncle’s raspy voice tell the same war stories he’d been telling even before the war. I listened less to hear and more to remember Ujak Milje’s smoky laugh, Baka Zorka’s shaky voice, the dog’s bark. I’d listen and daydream about roses blooming in my stomach. Now, just when I think I can’t hear them, I cough up handfuls of red petals.