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## Praying Mantles

Desanka Maksimovic

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# Praying Mantles

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Desanka Maksimovic (Serbia, Yugoslavia):

In a meadow full of flowers  
praying mantles mate.  
And their love could be like  
so many other things of the world  
that make their course,  
were not the earth pressed by scorching heat,  
were not the thirst of the sun like lust.

The scorching panes of the mantles' eyes  
look as if they have no sight,  
while they break the bodies of the males.  
And that would be only a metaphor  
to describe the earth's summer song,  
had not even the lips of clay cracked  
because of the great thirst,  
were not the lizards dying of heat . . .

*Translated from Serbian by Ivo Soljan*

Translator's note: Desanka Maksimovic, the doyenne of the women poets of Yugoslavia, has published numerous collections of poetry and has been widely translated into many languages of the world.