

Old Tunes on Spruce

My foremothers cradled
harps of northern spruce
in their laps—their strings
form my birth-ribs,

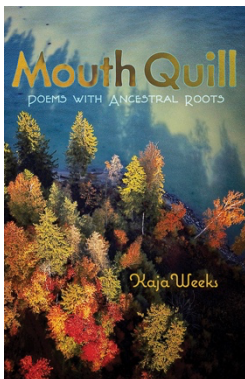
from which plucked-tones rise,
cluster and peal.
Drawing air to breathe,
I taste evergreen.

I am a spring twig, just six.
My melody slips its bent-tone
below the peak of a modal scale,
hinting at heartbreak.

But by twelve, cattle-train wheels
on Siberian metal haunt me.
Their din vanquishes lyric sound,
splitting my chest's veneer.

Yet, unbidden, vocal cords quiver,
resonate—steal space in my bony frame.
Ah, I see, it's not my space, but ancestral,
where bird-warbles became runic songs—

Kukukuu, pilli lill, vaak vaak vaa . . .
Spirits seize me,
wounded *kannel*-wood sweats amber—
pulls me, holds me in primeval sap.



Estonian Terms:

Kannel - Estonian zither

Kukukuu, pilli lill – Bird chatter in Runo song verses