

Tanja Pak: Mid-Breath. 84 pages.
(Glesia, 2021)

Tanja Pak both documents and examines her body of glasswork in her recent publication *Mid-Breath* (titled *Predih* in her native Slovenian). A collection of installation photographs, natural imagery, poetry, and reflections, the book serves as a linguistic intervention into her ephemeral glass creations. Aesthetically, physically, and textually, *Mid-Breath* immerses the reader in the space between breaths.

In his foreword, Slovenian poet Miklavž Komelj wrote, "I believe the reason Tanja Pak has devoted her life to designing glass is her dedication to secrets." True to form, Pak's book takes on the task of meditating on the secrets that lie between the moment of inhaling and exhaling. Featuring monochromatic images of Pak's work from a variety of installations, interspersed

hourglass



with poetry and selected photographs of natural phenomena, the book embodies the concept of a holistic reflection and introspection.

Down to the composition of the photographs and text, *Mid-Breath* indicates consideration of meditation during the reading experience: some pages are fully white with a cornered

box of text, while others are overtaken by a black-and-white photo, and others are filled with text alone. There is a rhythm present in the way the book progresses, shifting between pages fully saturated with text and imagery, and pages where the empty space does more of the work of communicating Pak's message.

The selected photographs of water, the movement of light, and voyages into nature complement Pak's glassworks by giving the reader something almost tangible to connect to her liminal forms. Works like *Quiet Breath* and *White Breath*, where the tension between solidness and softness is explored, pair well with the depth and movement of the surfaces of bodies of water. *Silence*, followed by close-up photographs of unlabeled textures, creates an environment of contemplation on the transient nature of life and noise. The inclusion of anecdotes about the liminal experiences she's had invites the reader to imagine themselves alongside her, further explaining the emotion with which she imbues her artworks.

Pak's poetry speaks to being unreal and real at the same time, simultaneously being and non-being. Though the message may be repeated in many different forms throughout the book, visually and textually it is consistent and full of conviction. The human experience is to question the seconds between minutes and the places between destinations, an experience that Pak has captured in the use of light and darkness, smoothness and texture, and black and white. From its larger-than-life size to its otherworldly monochrome, *Mid-Breath* is not only an archive of the essence of Tanja Pak's work, but a guided and illustrated lesson in meditation.

—SADIA TASNIM IS THE MANAGING EDITOR OF GLASS

