

The Lost Colony and Other Poems

KRISTINE ONG MUSLIM

The Lost Colony

The lost colony calls out for its broken children,
its trespassers and doomsayers. Everywhere,
the clay subsiding, the impurity settling down,
the darkest hues receding, the mountain groaning
to make room for underground tunnels caving in
to make room for the clearing. Glaciers melt, release
warmth in the form of methane. Someday, the ancient
fireball, the razed continents, the lull of the first ocean:
what has carried you this far must be allowed to rest.

Seethe, Waxman

Seethe, because your body is not spacious enough
to contain your hate. Boil over. Upset the crook
of your nose. Sculpt by years of screaming
that neck and that throat made of beige putty.
The bees are silent in the hive you create
each time you curl your hand into a fist.
The bees are silent because they are
stinging you, because they are dying.

Cyclops

Malignancy of a barcode-scanning eye: hurt those who tease you, make them cower in the far infrared where they can become invisible, invisible but still palpable in their absence. Remember those snot-nosed children of the flood the children with diseased toes, with canker sores marring the pale pink insides of their mouth—they torment your lone eye because all they know is pain, because all they know is hunger. They eat what you call sadness, spit it back because they don't find it bitter enough. Use your lone eye to spot, catch, fold birds to stifle their manifold symphonies, roll them into feathered matchsticks with their grisly beaks still pointing toward what everyone assumes is the only location of the sky. If the birds stir when you grab them, if their ribcages should someday burst open, then you know that they are real, that you have been holding them long enough.

Juggernaut

You just notice now that it is slick with rain. Today may be the day when water damage finally finds a way to enter its body. It ambles in a slow, slightly lopsided gait, causing traffic at the intersection where the city meets the farming town. For years, you've been wondering what a creature like it—a creature that can only die of metal fatigue, a creature with no eyes, no hands, only sensors for detecting ambient light, location, proximity, and depth of field—can possibly want from life. It may want the same things you yearn for. It may not want anything at all. You look closely, catch a glimpse of the early signs of corrosion around its polished lips, at the sacrificial anodes of its knees. It can be a trick of light. It can be anything.