

Isabela Banzon \ Three Poems

Fireworks

You asked for a poem about family and the New Year in lieu of a gift. This year, I watched the fireworks from your side light up my side of town. I could not see the stars. Laila, I would rather give you the barbecue grill than tell you what I know. Let me buy you clear champagne glasses. Don't make me warn you of fireworks that rocket and fall over homemade enemy targets, how white phosphorus torches the dawn, its residue still littering the rubble already out of fuel and argument. We must re-learn touch if our children are to survive.

Duende

I climbed the mouth of a volcano and
flung your name against the wind.
The heat rose, and you boiled over.
I suffered the burns. I thought that was
the end. But you spewed fire back
into me. I took you in; inhaling so deeply
I was renewed. The earth shook.
I too trembled, as you did. You were
molten, and I became the roar inside you.
I reached for you—but knew I would
not find you. We never are the same again.

Blackout

—after Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, 1893

Remember black and be
undone, the world
twisted inside our skull, shrieking
horror
just at closing time.
Out there, night
revels in instant doubt,
doom streaking
across a liquefying sky,
no dark matter to hold and meld
a universe in place.
Let not the mind confound
us with its shadows; let
neither sludge nor stench lure
and captivate;
pitch the stricken heart
into the void ...

still no vision constellates.
Only a hollow twitch, and nowhere
near release.