

A Retrograde

She crept into my room, took me outside into the mosquito night thick with the gutted hums
of fishermen's wives, piercing the flesh of a sleep walking sky.

She taught me that cobwebs are hammocks for spirits, a stop along the way to rest their weary
skins, a knot on the thread of their pilgrimage to a place they had almost touched once.

In those days, a village could grow legs. Wedge itself deep into the throat of mountains
where horses couldn't smell it, where footsteps couldn't sear its memory onto
peeling roads.

Dear mama: The orchids have teeth
 the machetes are ornaments
 rusting upon the walls.
 I want to build you a temple
 of teeth
 but my hands are too tender
 my hands are for stringing
 the rice grains of rosaries.

Dear mama: On the ocean roams a shadow of splinters
 the fish are hurling themselves onto the shore
 the shore will break into birds of dust
 the scales are mirrors
 blinding the sun.
 On the ocean roams a shadow of splinters
 how will I swim to you
 when the day is done?