

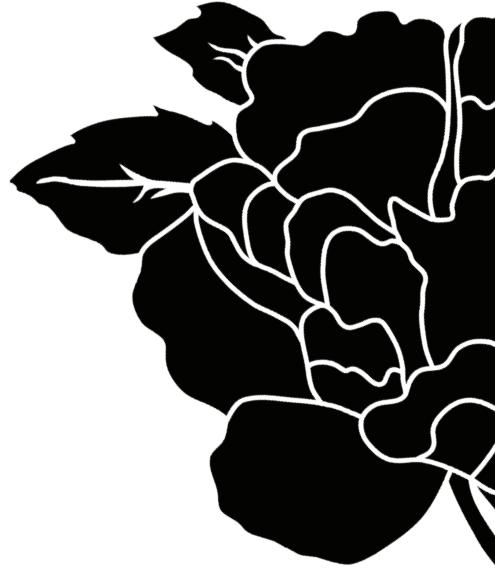
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Anon





Anon

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DALLAS, TX



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3000 Commerce St., Dallas, Texas 75226
deepvellum.org · @deepvellum

Deep Vellum is a 501c3 nonprofit literary arts organization
founded in 2013 with the mission to bring
the world into conversation through literature.

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First edition, 2022
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Paperback ISBN: 9781646052219
eBook: 9781646052479

Library Of Congress Control Number: 2022945308

Cover art by Irina Kolesnikova
Cover design and typesetting by
David Wojciechowski | www.davidwojo.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Acknowledgments



STAY

For the muse could not
light another city

with her eyes, you spoke
anon, oil black like mine,

and whoever crossed
that cobbler's

bridge in Ljubljana
would also speak of roots.

So stay, I said. Or kiss
me. No one's

watching, beloved,
but a night

placed
at the far, far end of it.

JULIJA

Prešeren of bronze
facing a window,

not the lake
and ghosts of Tomaž

placed along
his empty hall. One stood

nearby, reading sonnets
in a fortress

dyed to yellow. That
taking shape

was laurel
held above his heart.

Who brought the rose
for Julija? Not you

and certainly not
this poet weeping, Julija.

BECAUSE YOU PREVIOUSLY
LIKED OR PLAYED

BECAUSE
YOU
PREVIOUSLY
LIKED
OR
PLAYED

POEMS BY

JIM REDMOND

DEEP VELLUM



DALLAS, TX



DEEP VELLUM PUBLISHING
3000 COMMERCE ST., DALLAS, TEXAS 75226
DEEPELLUM.ORG · @DEEPELLUM

DEEP VELLUM IS A 501C3 NONPROFIT LITERARY ARTS ORGANIZATION
FOUNDED IN 2013 WITH THE MISSION TO BRING
THE WORLD INTO CONVERSATION THROUGH LITERATURE.

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FIRST EDITION, 2023
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SUPPORT FOR THIS PUBLICATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN PART BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR
THE ARTS, THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON THE ARTS, THE CITY OF DALLAS OFFICE OF ARTS AND CULTURE,
AND THE GEORGE AND FAY YOUNG FOUNDATION.



Texas
Commission
on the Arts



Office of
Arts & Culture

THE
GEORGE & FAY YOUNG
FOUNDATION

PAPERBACK ISBN: 9781646052981

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CONTROL NUMBER: #####

COVER ART BY JULIANA TANCHAK
COVER DESIGN AND TYPESETTING BY
DAVID WOJCIECHOWSKI | WWW.DAVIDWOJO.COM

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GOD SPEED, MR. PRESIDENT. GOD SPEED.

Goodbyes are always awkward. The president isn't too touchy feely, neither is the vice president. They don't touch. They don't feel. They just kind of stand there and acknowledge the moment. Mnuchin is a bit of a crier, but otherwise, it's like everyone is already looking back at this special time in their lives. All the great memoires. All the good times. Remember when? Remember when? Well, what an honor it was. I guess this is it then. The president waves to his faithful staff and supporters. He waves to the empty parking lot from the top of the portable staircase. He waves to his wife and son as he boards the airplane. Goodbye. Goodbye. He waves to some clouds. Goodbye. His little face in the little airplane window as the airplane ascends higher into the air space holding just long enough to see him gently waving goodbye to his own simpered reflection.

THE DARK PHRASE

A woman from a faraway land
throws a shoe at the president
and the shoe turns into a bird
and the bird flies out the window
and it keeps flying over the mountains
until it falls into the hands of a poor boy
who whispers many sad and lonely things
into his hands every night
until the bird turns into a stone
that the boy drops in the river like a wish
and the stone keeps dropping down into the river
into the water into the darkness
all the way into the past it keeps dropping
into the bad dreams of a shopkeeper
where it turns into a dark phrase
they have to write down in their ledger
all of these ghostly transactions
to finally get rid of the phrase
until many years later
when a cleric transcribing the old mysteries
finds the dark phrase in a book
and touching their cold heart
it turns into a blessing
which they give to the downtrodden
which they give to the poor
and the blessing turns into a cry of freedom
which the people beat into swords
to bring down the ruling officials
who had tried to turn the dark phrase
into a cruel edict and the people turn into citizens
and the freedom turns into commerce

and the commerce turns into the shoe
that the first woman threw at the president
which this time turns into nothing at all
as it falls to the floor behind the podium
because there are no longer mysteries
which can touch such a man of this world

I'D RATHER BE LIGHTNING

NANCY LYNÉE WOO

GASHER
/////

Published by Gasher Press
www.gasherpress.com

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Library of Congress
Title: I'd Rather Be Lightning / Nancy Lynée Woo
Description: Gilbert : Gasher Press, [2023]
Identifiers: LCCN 2022949006 | ISBN 978-1-957746-04-3

Published in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Cover art by Julien Pacaud
Cover designed by David Wojciechowski
Interior designed by David Wojciechowski

Printed by McNaughton & Gunn

*For the animals
and their protectors*

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Acknowledgments

*“I’d rather be a lightning rod
than a seismograph.”*

—Ken Kesey

*“Wisdom is knowing I am nothing,
love is knowing I am everything,
and between the two my life flows.”*

—Nisargadatta Maharaj

*“Lightning, this is what you came for.
Lightning strikes every time she moves.”*

—Rihanna

α

Everyday Apocalypse

The brown tree ring
inside the coffee mug
will not clean itself.

Dish rack, when dirty,
needs the good lick
of a wet sponge.

The cat needs to be fed
twice a day and taunted
by a string of feathers.

It's easy to forget
I have a body
that needs me,

a neighborhood
that needs me
weaving circles through it.

Taking out garbage
is a reverent task. I scrub
the sink, sort the closet,

water down the roots of plants
it'd be easier to forget about.
Sometimes, I forget

about orangutans swinging
their fists at logging machines.
Coyotes trot the streets.

Opossums shine in the night.
Hopelessness is not productive
so I imagine watering holes

expanding, return books
to their places, strap on shoes.
There have always been leaves

falling, and children running.
The television screen flickers.
I wake to harvest rain.

S.O.S. with Warble & Cell Tower

I'm remixed and slumped
over a log in a swimsuit,
network of wires
grieving the ants and the grass.

Casting lines from the tower
of Bitcoin, I do the robot dance,
inner landscape full
of white space and cows.

Finally, I'm tidying and pouting
about tidying. I give
the cold shoulder
a cuddle, A/C on arctic
blast, jamming to space
tunes, celebrating a new
sweater. I notice

something, bobbling in the horde—
a hand of silk
selling us the pixelated remains
of elephants in a museum

with ivory doors. If collapsing
the wall around the moat
resets the radio signal, let's

un-collar all criminals
who have committed no crime
and keep grasslands wild
for giants to roam. Listen

to coughing from above,
rough sound. Find its origin
in a tree across the street,
un-shampooed, hunched
and in command of her call:

a squirrel. I grab a didgeridoo
from the dictionary
and holler, tossing and turning
discount crackers into the cart.

maybe

this

is

what

i

deserve

MAYBE THIS

IS WHAT

I DESERVE

stories

TUCKER LEIGHTY-PHILLIPS



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Published by Split/Lip Press
PO Box 27656
Ralston, NE 68127
www.splitlippress.com

ISBN: 978-1-952897-29-0

Cover and Book Design: David Wojciechowski
Cover Art: Eastman Johnson, *The Truants*, 1870,
Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington
Editing: Pedro Ramírez

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DOWN THE TUNNEL, UP THE SLIDE

This is how it begins: your father grants five minutes in the play-place while he orders two hamburgers. You bolt through the door and into the glass room, slip your shoes into the cubby, gaze at the colorful, massive structure towering over you. Up the tunneled ladder you climb, latching onto each rubber rung, dawdling on all fours, fully feral. You rush through each section and subsection, burrowing deeper into the fluorescent caverns. In this place, you are an explorer. In this place, you are an escapee. You rush through a tube, crawling opposite another child heading your direction. You squeeze past one another, giggling all the while. There is optimism here. You are but two cells in this rich, brilliant network. From a window on one side, you overlook the parking lot, where cars pull in and out from the highway, unknowingly surveilled. On the other, you look into the restaurant, where your father is holding an unraveled burger wrapper, bun splayed in two parts, open face and open face, as he shows it to a manager. He has found a stray hair, perhaps a fly. Your father is always finding hair and flies. You, however, have slipped into the heart of the edifice; out of the dense tunnels and into a large room; round, saucer-like, a view of every angle. This is where the children have gathered. You wonder if their parents are finding flies in their burgers too. One boy hunches as the others stand. Soon, he will outgrow this sanctuary. You scan the congregation, this small squirm parade. Into a ball pit you celebrate, dip your hands into the pile, run your fingers across the lining in search of coins, artifacts. This is what your brother taught you. You find something, a dum-dum sucker, an explosive shade of blue. It is dry and packed with dehydrated flavor. You pop the sucker into your mouth, let the artificial berry dissolve, steep your saliva with its richness. Some other child's loss. You drop the sucker back among the balls, let it slip into the pit for another to find; your small camaraderie. This is how it ends: your father knocks on the glass, you whisk down a slide and grab your shoes, return to two legs. The blue still purrs on your tongue.

TODDY'S GOT LICE AGAIN

This is what I tell myself: she'll grow out of it, she's just a kid, it's part of being a parent. This is what I say regarding Toddy, who loves her lice like family. When she's without them, she acts like she's missing a teddy bear or her own birthday party. She rolls in grass the way a dog covers itself in stink, wiggling and twisting until her head becomes a floating hairy hive. You've got to see it. She'll find them in her sideburns, press her middle finger against her skin to trap the creatures, and rather than pinching them out, she'll push them further in, like she's collecting a child who strayed too far from the house. Of course, the neighbor kids don't want to get near her, and the school's sent a stack of letters telling us to take care of the situation before she's expelled, and sleepovers at the house aren't possible because our place may as well be haunted. But the kid's happy. She talks to them, admires them being so close to her thoughts—likes knowing they can hear her secrets. As for me, I'm coping as best I can. Just feels like too many summer days are spent with Toddy's hair styled up with mayonnaise, trying to scare the buggers off for good, knowing it's useless because I can't trust her not to swan-dive back into the tall grass, ostrich her head in the milkweed, tumble into nature a little too sacrificially.

Maybe it's my fault. We're poor, the proper treatment's expensive, maybe she's used to the itching and scratching and bugs bouncing from shoulder to scalp. Maybe she finds it easier to come home to a pillow springing with tiny fireworks, a towel covered in dead like a battlefield, a car seat reminding us these things travel wherever we go. Maybe she's just used to it. That's what we do as humans, right? We find ways to turn our consequences into comforts, to say *maybe this is good enough, maybe this is what I deserve.*

OF
BEING
NEIGHBORS

OF BEING NEIGHBORS

P O E M S B Y

DANIEL BIEGELSON



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Cover Art by Margot de Korte

Cover Design and Interior Layout by David Wojciechowski / www.davidwojo.com

Published by Ricochet Editions / www.ricocheteditions.com

Ricochet titles are distributed by Small Press Distribution
This title is also available for purchase directly from the publisher
www.spdbooks.org / 800-869-7553

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
of being neighbors / Daniel Biegelson

Library of Congress Control Number 2021933499

Biegelson, Daniel

ISBN 9781938900396

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

FIRST EDITION

FOR AMY, JACK AND JUNE

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Acknowledgments

“...mind’s claim to independence announces its claim to domination”

—Theodor W. Adorno

“There is a ladder
The ladder is always there.”

—Adrienne Rich

“the footprints inside us
iterate the footprints outside”

—C.D. Wright

NEIGHBORS (I)

“History has made us all neighbors”

—Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Replace I with you. Replace clouds with branches. Exculpate my heart. Replace my heart with another organ. The eyes. With iris aperture. Or. Hear the body with the body. Extinguish the inner ear. Imagine the scrollwork. There are times when assent is impossible. Hear the way the syllables sound. The words ring. Excise the plague of grasshoppers from the crisp fields, the schoolyards, the white lawns. Recall the patch of pin oak leaves against a backdrop of memorial sky. Fingernail the edges and pull. Walk in rubber soles. Refuse leather. Unless to bind the arms. To wrap the forehead in tefillin. You are made in whose image. Replace neighbor with children. Redact silence since silence is impossible. Also a cymbal. See. A symbol. Replace symbol with synapse. Move on to arrive at the synagogue. Because I believe I am angered by the slightest hiss. Imagine a parade drumming around the town square. The brick-and-mortar courthouse with a hint of roman tracery. See the angles. From various angles. Above. Treeward. Though the legs. The limbs. The thrown pink and blue bubblegum scattering under lawn chairs. Scrambling. Redact stained glass. As a child entering to see swastikas spray-painted on the ark. Now again. Plagued. And plagued by continuity. Layer upon layer. Bewildering specificity subsumed by synchronicity. A ritual. We chronicle. Replace message with memory with message. We feel the past lifted upon us. Differently then. Now again. I am rage but plagued by a hibernating guilt. A cryogenic wood frog. I told myself. This is a safe place. Saved by people. Which people. I had children. I have children. I am afraid of revelation. I am until the sun shines. Once I tried to set aside you. Try again. Once I tried to set aside rage. I keep finding myself driving down the highway confusing blown tires with black crows. They’ve have been circling for eternity. Do you believe in eternity. Infinity. Affinity. For once. Can we pray without ropes around the prayer. Exchange branches for wires. Extinguish the clouds. We are the murmuration turning over the earth with our predatory eyes. We are the field turned over and under. We want to preserve our singularity. We can no longer look at each other.

THE LIGHT WALKS OTHER AVENUES

"I can / connect / any two things / that's g-d"

—Eileen Myles

I would have followed the light everywhere even
at sparkfall. Instead, I go mourning all day
and flitting about the hollow space inside.

In the marketplace headless chickens hang
against the closed dark of a butcher's shop.

Past the gerrymandered edges of town, a farmer
rowing the heated earth in the faint orange afterglow
finds a fossilized ribcage. Should we be nostalgic.
Utopic. Under the light now the light of eternity.

The field eighty years on still warmed by magma.
The plates still grinding their bitter teeth. And now

I have broken with the remnant of you that lived
somewhere among the archives of my many selves.

A break so sudden that words flood the streets,
the anabatic wind hunts and the trees clutch
their purses. Do you see it too. The way the details
shake loose of their moorings. The way silence
cannot suffice. And now it's you breaking
with an image of me. Let me lean down. To assist.

What do the seeds know. I have a strange
relationship with time. Just yesterday
an *I* in me stood eating pea soup and crusty bread
with utensils owned by people we had forgotten
while you waited for your predictions to resolve
or dissolve. Some iteration of the world is always ending.

Even upon reasoned review. Burning.
Little is up in wings again as the sky is enumerated.

The salted veins excavated for inspection and prayer.
A form of protest. We see and do not see ourselves
there. We sway and nod. A drying sea. Is the sermon
enough. Is it inimical. No one says I sent a packet of actions
to *The New Yorker*. No one submits their liver
to *The Los Angeles Times*. No one crawls toward
the hovel or speaks the word. No one draws

back the shroud. It's one foot. Then the other. 'Onwrds.'

Pray with your 'legs,' your walking and all I can do is to find the clearing.
Not even the threads of the threadbare story.

And even here in the last rays of empire when it is so easy
to return hate with hate, the obscure light wraps
itself around our heartened bodies and hums.

George Oppen

Frederick Douglass;
Rabbi Abraham Joshua
Heschel

Our eyes come into being over time and we begin
to solve their intricate limitations by embracing
the dark and invisible spectrums of light.

And there is darkness, if not silence.

And despite market forces, they are not interchangeable.

Still life. Still light is the subject and object.

Elie Weisel

‘And this must be sufficient.’ For you, I would have stomped
grapes on my march to Rome past painted billboards
of naked women or watched *I Love Lucy* in dubbed Italian
while dust blew in through the balcony. This is silly
and growing slim or slack—an American condition—
growing virulent and violent. What is this you ask
as the fires burn and glass breaks. How far can I go before
we unravel. My first bicycle was a royal blue
Schwinn with metal flecks that sparkled as I road in circles
under the afternoon sun. And I felt like a Wright brother
or an actor playing a Wright brother on a set
of a Spaghetti Western. We met in the crinkling rain
or on the bus or by walking backwards with brown-bagged groceries
through an apartment door and we are told at once
everything that has happened to us could have happened

Bob Hope via Martin
Luther King, Jr.

in no other way. Could never have happened. And ‘if by chance
we develop hiccups on taking off—we will “hic” in Los Angeles
and “cup” in New York City.’ Where I am waiting

John Gallaher

at JFK, attuned to the news, ‘watching the national tragedy,’
the global tragedy, ‘this personal tragedy,’
we wake to each morning.’ I am trying not to love
with a closed heart. I am split like an atom.

I have many brothers who are sisters

and sisters who are brothers and many who are many.

This is far afield from where we began.

THE CIPHER

Molly Brodak



PLEIADES PRESS EDITORS PRIZE FOR POETRY SERIES
WARRENSBURG, MISSOURI

Library of Congress Control Number:

ISBN 978-0807173978

Copyright © 2020 by Molly Brodak

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Published by Pleiades Press

Department of English

University of Central Missouri

Warrensburg, Missouri 64093

Distributed by Louisiana State University Press

Cover Art: LK James

Book Design: David Wojciechowski

First Pleiades Printing, 2020

Financial support for this project has been provided by the University of Central Missouri, as well as the Missouri Arts Council and the Missouri Humanities Council.



$$U_H = TU_R = kU_O|U_R|^2 + k|U_R|^2U_R + k|U_O|^2U_R + kU_O^*U_R^2$$

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Acknowledgments



THE CIPHER

Infinity scared me
when I was small.

A nonbeliever accepts
a kind of fog around facts—

believers demand meaning.

This beloved fog forms a tissue, like love.
Burns off in bald light, like love.

Nonbelievers just put on their war wigs
and their war gloves
and pick

from a fanned deck of brute facts.
To prove nothingness exists

you'd need just one thing that was not itself,
one x that did not equal x .

One copse of alders in one dim dusk
that was none of the above.
Souls are made up
of such obstacles.

And a nonbeliever accepts
that God is very, very likely.

Nothingness is just not
how brute facts work.

A rainstorm, brute fact, shuttles brainlessly towards us,
in our tent, and our evening is overtaken in rain,
rain and fog, infinity, the opposite of engineering.

I listened to some invisible bird
rattling off the facts of consciousness.

He used that exact word,
cipher.

OTTO DIX

In Exodus
Moses is hidden

in a cleft, behind God's hand,
begging,

and he sees—rushing past him—
God's back, diminishing.

Moses stops begging.
God's back is black fog.

I know. He, we guess,
means to do it.
To do all of this.

The brute center part
of an iridescent moth.

The carnation
against the man.

WINTER

TESTIMONIES IN VERSE

PHOENIX

WINTER

PHOENIX

TESTIMONIES IN VERSE

SOPHIA TERAZAWA

DEEP VELLUM



DALLAS, TX



Deep Vellum Publishing
3000 Commerce St., Dallas, Texas 75226
deepvellum.org · @deepvellum

Deep Vellum is a 501c3 nonprofit literary arts organization founded in 2013 with the mission to bring the world into conversation through literature.

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Support for this publication has been provided in part by grants from the Moody Fund for the Arts and the Amazon Literary Partnership:

**MOODY FUND FOR
THE ARTS**

amazon *literary*
partnership

ISBNs: 978-1-64605-142-7 (paperback) | 978-1-64605-143-4 (ebook)

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Terazawa, Sophia, author.

Title: *Winter phoenix : testimonies in verse* / Sophia Terazawa.

Description: Dallas : Deep Vellum, 2021.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021025789 | ISBN 9781646051427 (trade paperback) | ISBN
9781646051434 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Poetry. | War crimes--Poetry. |
LCGFT: Poetry.

Classification: LCC PS3620.E736 W56 2021 | DDC 811/.6--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021025789>

Cover Design and Interior Layout by David Wojciechowski · www.davidwojo.com

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Acknowledgments

***I WROTE THIS BOOK OF JUSTICE
THEN OUR AMULET OF LOVE.***

OPENING STATEMENT

17 NOVEMBER 1966

Morning. Uphill 192, the chicken bone as jute made durative and marked attached to nail reduced to bones in place of grass, that month turned into spoons, a bar of soap, exhibits *A* through—evidently bent around her body—marks of which we couldn't speak by. Then we felt for loops. A loop fell down leaving its print. To kneel around or name her body—*here* and *there*; to testify which lung inverted, *here* or *there*, deducing what was brown would happen on that hill. *I was alone, mama*. Why did you stand there and say nothing?

WITNESS OATH (1)

That place, then our syllable for skin, became one room, two intersecting walls; sliding across, two mirrors tall as men who entered, and they watched. I would awake. I was awakened, after that, was bruised then filmed or made to bark like dog(s). I don't remember much. It happened, yes. Their women watched. They also laughed. I was therefore their dog(s). Yes, solemnly I swear, what happened on that hill would happen in this room four decades later. Why did you just stand there and say nothing?

18 NOVEMBER 1966

Yes, we swore to tell that truth—retribution, not a subject
likening to waves of bullets
running through my arms. You wrecked into it, falling,
altered light, at best.

Pacing in circles, near us, there, we found a stag. That stag was tall
and wounded, bleeding downhill.

Edges raveled to our dips of earth made, once again, too red.
That hill had bloomed.

At this, we wanted then, to end. Yesterday, horns were upside down,
and ramming, bleated days.

We made a month to swear by—
Yes, we ran. I ran. That woman ran.

These women died. I did not die. The only difference, here, is—somewhere,
in our country—one might call this
patience. Yes, we testified.
Justice carving figs into a date—
the only difference, here, is—somehow, I survived.

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INTERIOR DESIGNS

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