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Southeast Asia, Second Grade

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SOUTHEAST ASIA, SECOND GRADE

When the art class washes black
over their secret crayola drawings
Blong's Spiderman
pulls a green net across
the watery page. When we write
poems that begin I remember
Blong designs
a Mercedes limousine, the exact
military detail. In dream
poems, he colors
a ship with two anchors
a ship whose stars and stripes
shine turquoise, orange, and green.
He prints slowly
I'm the one who eats ghosts.
He's the one who searches
all the books for more
designs: a pink brontosaurus grins
and hops, his Arapaho
eagle rises like fire, Norwegian
serpents curl
to bronze, aquamarine and Spiderman
comes back again
and again without a sound
to my desk, to my lap —
the scraps, manilla, white
paper in sixteen folds.
And I'm the one
with the wide Caucasian face
who stares inscrutably
at the nets that bind. Down the hall
the soldiers' boys, pencils in fists,
grudge out the calligraphy of punishment —
I WILL NOT EXPLODE IN CLASS —
these sentences
knotting inside
one hundred times.