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Jakarta

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Henrietta Goodman

Jakarta

I remember this street. I remember
the plaster wall where I stop to rest.
My fingers throb. In the fighting
a bullet grazed my ear. That day we walked
in the forest he quoted Keats. She stood
in tears amid the alien corn. I stood
in tears while he poked the dead tiger
with a stick, lifted the black gums
to expose the teeth. "Une abeille,"
he said, "that's what stung you."
He smeared green ointment on my hand.
In the bar I hardly recognize him.
He orders a martini.
He still has the stick,
the end coated with tar.
When I was a baby in a bar like this
they gave me wedding cake.
They beat drums. "It's my birthday,"
he says, "the day of the dead."
"I don't care," I tell him.
Where is the dictionary that used to be
on the bar? I used to know more words.
He takes the maps from his pocket
and spreads them out. "Los dias de muertos."
Send me some red leaves from home.
Show me some grief.