Winter 1995

Jakarta

Henrietta Goodman

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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.