

Gabriel Garcia Marquez changes a diaper

Leche asada hands stop typing,
surnames roll back into fingerprints.
I lift the crying boy out of the burning pot of sancocho,
gently wipe the ants from his buttocks. The boy's mouth sails

in blue water, his nose inhales five years with each wail.
I have seen a thin girl float into the air near the Jacaranda tree.
It is not necessary to believe. The histories populate the floor with
massacres and bagre fish flapping like dead words. I string the gold veins

to form corporal masses around bone. And this room
only half stands, as my wife makes loans to offer empanadas
and arroz con coco to the fictions turning flesh, hunger. Rodrigo squirms
in my grasp, the descendent of the dry minutes which quiet turns

into decades, still needing to be held, cleaned, reformed. The body
now manifest at this one time, with this name,
in my stained arms.

Jacque Cousteau rides a camel

Or maybe this is a llama. Snow, sand, scratching hooves.
The Atlas or the Andes? The words stay in the air longer
at this altitude, they have to be chewed and coughed out like
a dry catharsis, khlia stuck in the teeth. What year is this?

Phillipe, are you here, back there on one of those swaying beasts?
(No approximation for the tides of Gibraltar
swinging under your hull). Spanish or Arabic or Berber?
I thought I heard a *merci* around that last

sprouting of junipers. And I cannot see the ocean here, cannot
smell anything but must, saffron, couscous on my lips. The path
is too narrow to look back. Is there at least a lake up here?
I don't recall having any aqualungs or masks or fins.

I remember the first time I went down to the sea floor:
to the Mahdia wreck off Tunisia, so much time to breathe
in each separate word, each diaphanous syllable.
Blue sings in the colors of the cold dark, and turning

up, the fragile sun. Is Michel here? Phillipe? Is *Calypso*
still waiting in El Hociema, her legs sweeping
in her sleep?

Jane Goodall flosses her teeth

Being the least ranking member of any group
can become harrowing. I try to take care
of my body's needs without Goliath approaching.

Maybe it is easier to hold no power
except that of observation, empathy, translucent
white arms placating. I have seen what Humphries

and the others can do, tearing colobus
monkeys in pieces, making the women beg for
a fresh shoulder, a bit of wiry tendon.

I have seen a female strangle another's son
and lick her hands. But Greybeard tolerates
me, allows for inclusion. Frodo does not.

Dominance. Such a thin position to hold.
Appearance of superiority or strength, pressing fear
into the arrector pili with screaming, glares.

I am no longer in Gombe, being lowest has
its end either in death, retreat, or contest.
I choose the middle, and now can sleep

and brush my teeth and floss. There are people
who begin as lower, as higher. The sky crackles
with the ire of suited cannibals, positioning

over the troop with a few innocuous words,
trapping us in an acacia tree or two
before we realize we have our own dominance,

our own silver lamps hidden in our
chests.

Mr. Rogers kills fruit flies

This is not the set with the trolley.
This is not Brockett's Bakery
or Trow's Workshop or Negri's Music.

These flies malingering in my kitchen
squatting on my mangoes and my pears.
I should have thrown out those bananas

when they leathered, but I always believed
that everything has a use, even if overripe.
And all beings should have a right to live

in their essence, unobstrusively.
But these fruit flies are unclean:
they rust the wheels, they push kids

in line and extort quarters, they falsify
their usefulness for consuming decay.
I cannot discuss them away with delicacy,

especially as I speak into the glass lens.
I spin a paper into a funnel:
wide as sky at the top, narrow as necessity

near the bottom. I pour pinot noir
into the jar, set the thin trumpet in to fit
tight at the rim. Once the creatures

venture to the sweet smell
they will be captured, scrambling
on the glass looking out at more

ripe tangerines I have set in the bowl.
I think I hear them arguing. They are still alive.
It's such a good feeling. I say this every day

from the other side. I am late for the studio.
At least the earl grey warms me.
I leave as small regrets swim

and ferment.

Joseph Campbell dreams of war

It started in the bathroom, mirror etched in ice,
the razor's rhetoric on jawline tearing up
trees and children, and here in my home!

But I cannot leave Jean unbeknownst
on the lanai. I look to the East, there
is a mountain of bodies skinned bare

like antelope. In the crater their identities
cave in, obtund. The lava waves fragrant
like hibiscus and rot. I fly the invisible jet

next to the Amazon Queen to reach
the blue prince and the ape man of India.
My Sanskrit is embarrassingly poor, but we do find

Sita under the glacier. She ate pomegranates!
Unfortunate, the ferryman says. I gave him
my shoes and credit, some broken cuneiforms.

No, she stays or you stay, he demands. But I lived in a shed
and ate sacred texts during the depression!
The paper tongues on the drapes turned emerald,

even in the snow! *But we have already gone to war*,
he announces. Heroic men fall from the skies, limp.
A mountain of the brave and the sacrificed embattles

the green of the dark land, Mount Inasa
grows above Nagasaki, Vesuvius pours
over the trees and children. Vesudeva implores,

*What have your Holy words done
to stop this?*