

New Poetry from Janaya Martin

More Than Twice

She said you better hush
before he comes back in here

like she knew who she was
talking to but didn't

She was me and he was the
mistake you made more than twice

but he gave you a daughter who
gave you trouble, sometimes.

this is what women do, talk
nonsense and make trouble

all about the earth, but only
because no one lets them

keep things nice or clean
or quiet. let us just have

one damn thing.



Aretemisia
Gentileschi,
"Susanna and the
Elders," 1610.

First Wednesday Sirens

Working from home includes:
day-old coffee heated in the microwave,
snoring dogs and sometimes the desire

to add wine.

Yesterday, July 4, the incessant booming.

Today, Wednesday, the sirens.

Feels like a warning, a dry run, a war inside.

I feel like I should move the canned
goods to the basement, the bottled water too,
build a wall to keep all the crazy white men out.

Maybe I should have titled this poem,

Me + My Uterus = 4-ever.



Odilon Redon, "The Crying Spider," 1881.

Spider

my head feels heavy
so i let it hang like

a knot in a thread
and i drag it around.

i remember when i was 10
a spider crawled up my leg

i let it, even though i was terrified.
you are that spider.

how do i tell you that you
are that spider?

how do i tell you that i can hear
the words you do not speak?

how do i tell you that sometimes
i sit in the basement and listen

to the house, to the way
each foot plays a different note
across the floor.

The Ghosts Will Not Save You

My mother taught me that no house
is a home. Instead, each room is an opportunity
to be a statistic.

Instead, this is where you hide the pipe,
this is where you keep the bottles
and here, daughter, is where you keep
the secrets. All of them.

Stacked against the door, not as an offering,

but as a precaution or a reminder that you
will not leave here. At least not the way
you came.