

# 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.