

New Poetry by Kat Raido: “Blood Goggles”

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New Poetry from Ben Weakley: “Beatitudes I,” “Beatitudes II,” “Beatitudes III,” “Beatitudes IV”



THE BROKEN SKIN / *image by Amalie Flynn*

Beatitudes I.

The Lord blessed us with knowledge. Twin curses, good and evil.

Why else plant the luscious tree there, where we were bound to find the fruit? The purple and shivering flesh never lacks in spirit. The ache and growl of our naked bellies are the price

for the moment's delight. So, we gorge and the juice drips sticky down our chins. Let angels have the eternal heaviness of paradise; ours is the moment. The act, willful and with intent.

Advised of the penalties. Done poorly. Knowing this kingdom cannot last. Looking beyond the gardens

for a more convincing view of heaven.

Beatitudes II.

Are we not also blessed, we who praise
the clear night and its silence?

Betrayed by the absence of stars, we mourn
a billion-years' light no longer burning.

We whimper at the withered grass burning,
the breathing forest burning, the one
great and living ocean boiling and burning.

You who created time, who is before all things, who will
remain after the ruin,
will you be waiting for us in the cool garden?

Will we lie down with you in the dew-damp grass?
Will we be comforted?

Beatitudes III.

Are the meek blessed tonight in their bundled and stinking
shelters

beneath frozen bridges? Are they blessed with patience in
their waiting
for the Lord of compassion? For the Lord that *suffers with?*

They suffer together. Their children will inherit the
suffering
of generations,
the split lip of submission, the broken skin of the earth.

Beatitudes IV.

Blessed. From a word that meant *blood*.

Latin for *praise*. Blood and praise to the hungry; they are weak.

Blood and praise for the thirsty. For those who bathe in fetid water.

What are words
to those who hunger in a gluttonous world?
To those who thirst beside the brackish rivers,
choking on garbage? We say, wait for righteousness
to come from above. But they have starved
in their flesh so that our spirits could be filled.

New Poetry by Michal Rubin: “I Speak Not Your Language” and “Omar Abdalmajeed As’ad of Jijlya”

I, born from the womb of
my mother’s remembrances
wrapped in the cocoon
of her story[...]

Landslide / For Byron Who Was

Separated From His Father At The US-Mexico Border



When you left
Guatemala. Crossed the border
Into Mexico. With your father or
How there was a smuggler. Who
Took you. On foot. All the way to
America. How the truth is. When
You went down the road and off
Of the mountain. Where you live.
Have always lived. How you did
Not think. *I will ever come back.*
And now. You cannot get back.
How your mother and father
Cannot get you back. And when
You got here. Crossed over the
Border and into California. How
Border Patrol picked you up and
Your father. How they sent him

Back. Back to Guatemala. They
Deported him. But without you.
Because they kept you. Keeping
You in detention. And in Texas or
How. Texas is so far away. Away
From your father. Your mother.
Sister or the mountain. And you
Were only seven years old when
You left. Left Guatemala. Or how
You are eight now. Because you
Have been. Here. And detained.
In Texas. Or how it has been five.
Five months. They have kept you.
And not let you go home.
I want you to know. This
Was not supposed to happen to
You. How they made your father
Sign a form in a language he did
Not know how to read. Or how.
They told him. Told your father
If you sign it. They would bring
You back to him. And *who will*

Hug him. Your father says. Who
Will hug you now. Now that you
Are still here and he is back. In
Guatemala. On a mountain. Or
Without you.

And he stretches your clothes.
Each day and across a bed. The
Bed where you used to sleep.

How he cannot stop saying *how*
You are very small.

And *how much.*

That this is *too much.* This is just

Too much pain. And your mother

Says that when. They are able to

Call you. How they can see you.

Over video and it is hard. Hard

To connect. How you look away

And off to the side. Whispering.

Whispering *it is dangerous here.*

And I know.

I know what some people will say.

When your father tell the story

About why he did it Took you all
The way across Mexico. And into
America. Across the border. How
He says he did it for you. So you
Can have *a better life*.

How they will say his reasons
Were *economic*. And how. How
You were not fleeing violence.
How there was no danger. And
It was a few years ago. When
There was a landslide. And
Land slid down your mountain.
How it was falling or rushing
Down. And it covered houses
And people.

Or how it buried everything.
And a landslide happens when
The stress of a mountain
Outweighs its resistance.

Or when your father does not
Know. If there will be another
Job. If he can keep you fed or

Alive. When he knows there
Is no more. Clean water. For
You to drink. Living like this.
It is waiting.
Waiting for the land to slide
Down. And bury you. Alive.
Because poverty is always
Dangerous.
But your father knows now.
He knows that
What is even more dangerous
Is a country without a heart.
This heartless country.
That took you away from him.
And will not. Will not.
Give you back.

This poem is part of [Border of Heartbreak](#) – a collection of poems written for children separated at the US-Mexico border. It was written after reading a [New York Times article](#) about Byron – an eight year old boy who was separated from his father at the US-Mexico border in May 2018, detained, and kept in detention even after his father was deported back to Guatemala. Byron was held in US detention for eight months.

New Poetry from Liam Corley

In Which I Serve as Outside Reader on General Petraeus's Dissertation

[The current version of the Army's Field Manual on Counterinsurgency, FM 3-24, originated as a doctoral dissertation written by David Petraeus at Princeton.]



Premise flows from premise like water over the edge
of a waterfall, entrancing those not caught
in the turbid spray, those not lingering in the limestone
chutes that channel the first descent. *Dulce et decorum*,
those molecules in free fall, powerless to reverse
dictates of gravity, whether they be composed
of dollars or bodies. A theorist must maintain sense of scale,
must view war at an appropriate distance, so that its beauty
may emerge like a cold, perfect moon that draws the restless
from their beds with dreams of space flight. The best way to
lie
is to get one big whopper on the table and move on quick
to crystalline truth after truth in a train of plausibility
so compelling we don't see how down becomes
up, so convinced are we by the quality of our reasoning
that be leads to see and eventually to eff and tee, and the
best
first lie aligns with ones we've already bought, like how we
cheer
Frost's traveler in the yellow woods longing for the road
not taken, nodding along with his glib boast that non-
conformity explains contingency because we can accept
failures chosen on noble grounds more than unforeseen

leaf-covered ways that erupt when footfalls complete
the circuit of pressure plate IEDs. Mr. Petraeus, your
counterinsurgency
tools could only work in countries we didn't create, republics
not birthed
by death from above, and so I regretfully conclude
this dissertation presents the naked assertion of imperial
power
as the contribution of a helpful guest, final proof that
intelligence and gulled innocence, in general, betray us.

Double Rainbow at Dawn, 15 North at the 10

The rubberneckers slow down
as they do for other hazards,
brake lights merging into
the penumbra of a double rainbow
due west of the traffic lanes,
while in the East the rising sun
irradiates vapor-soaked air.

We are all late, looking askance
at the fireworks of nature,
wondering how our priorities
match up with this display.

Double, not just one: two arcs
of vibrant color proclaiming
peace on earth if we
don't kill each other
trying to take it in.