

# 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.

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**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[...]

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## **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.*

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## **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 he 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.