

Collection of Poetry
Mai Sakurai

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Not Halfway

Obāchan said the best kept secret
Is that ancient history was not even
A lifetime ago.

The day's colors
still level out to a distinct binary,
If you breathe too deeply, you can taste
the ocean's salt, the skyline's oil

Ojīchan called American soil "tearless",
full of bounty that still hasn't bled enough,
eyes that haven't seen enough to cry
He said I was a half moon waning,
reaching for the Earth's other side.

For so long, home was across the horizon
A distant, beautiful image
Framed by worn edges and an infinite distance

Or sat across me from the dinner table
As I recited what was said in the history lecture
About the bombs they dropped - to end the war

It's not black and white, so they say
There's a little bit of confusion, a little bit of gray.

But when I hear a boy laugh:
"we should drop another bomb"
I know a heaviness like that
could roll only off a weightless tongue

In response, the red yolk of the sun rose
Fell upon the land, raw and runny,
And the edge of Death
stood nose to nose with me.

There were newspapers littering the streets

As though a white shell had split open,
egg spilling across the sidewalks

Or a sleek, raven gun was dropped suddenly

Death kissed my forehead and whispered softly
Evil is evil,

not in part, not halfway.

The melting slash of moon
drizzled silver through a dark, inky sky,
Firmly refusing to ebb into gray

And haunting, white rabbits were scalded
by the hateful ocean spray

Glowing ropes, where gods were haggling,
hung around trunks of ruined shinboku trees

So quietly, and suddenly,
A night welcomed me.

When the doves of peace flew and a brush rolled off the desk
It splattered midnight blood onto the walls and windows

An ancient tongue unfurled to speak
and the beautiful, bleeding night
welcomed me.

When white bombs bloomed along the land
and that cold hand of Freedom offered me to stand
I sank into a pitying iris and heard
The ancient tongue spit in rebuke

With one word, the night broke

So long as I were the negative space in history and you, the border of calamity
We, who are not bound by the same gravity cannot both bear witness

To a black and white tragedy