

SUN BREATHED YELLOW

I
ALL AFTERNOON, THE SUN BREATHED YELLOW
THE SHADE (GOT AWAY) FROM YOU
ON THE DRIVEWAY, YOUR BODY CURLED IN DRIED BLOOD

A DUMPSTER TRUCK PULLED UP AND PARKED
AND A BLACK MAN IN A BLUE JUMPSUIT
(GOT OUT) AND PUSHED OPENED THE GATE

WHEN HE SAW YOU, HE STOPPED AND DID THE CROSS OF THE CHEST
AND RAN BACK TO THE DUMPSTER TRUCK AND DIALED 911.

II
O SON I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU
BUT IT WAS THE POLICE

THEY TOLD ME YOU DIED ON YOUR FACE
FOUR BULLETS SCORED INTO YOUR BACK
YOUR OLD FRIENDS CHASED YOU DOWN
FROM CHINATOWN TO ECHO PARK

I CALLED YOU EARLIER, YOU SAID
YOU WERE COMING HOME
I PRAYED YOUR DREAM WAS A DREAM.

III
THE MORNING BEFORE I TOLD MOM I DREAMT
I WAS WALKING HOME DOWN ALPINE STREET
WEARING A SHIRT AS RED AS A GIRL'S LIPSTICK

I SAW AN OLD WOMAN IN GREEN SLIPPERS
AND LONG SILVERY THREADS FOR HAIR
BLESSING HER DOORSTEPS WITH WATER DROPLETS
AS IF TOSSING BIRDSEEDS TO A FLOCK OF WHITE PIGEONS
I SLOWED TO WATCH BUT SHE WAVED ME AWAY
WITH JADE BRACELETS RATTLING ON HER RIGHT WRIST

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND BUT MOM KNEW
SHE BEGGED ME TO HURRY HOME
SHE LIT INCENSE, STUCK THEM INTO A BOWL OF UNCOOKED RICE
AND KNELT DOWN,
HER HANDS PRAYING TO THE STRANGER IN THE SKIES.



SAY-VUN KHOV

Say-Vun Khov is a survivor of the Cambodian holocaust and a graduate of Smith College. She works full-time in the office of Gonzalez|Goodale Architects and writes part-time as a poet. She debut her first poetry reading this past April 15th at L.A.'s most prestigious annual poetry event of the Newer Poets IX, hosted by the Los Angeles Poetry Festival, Beyond Baroque and The Los Angeles Public Library. She wishes to thank the great, gifted, witty, and generous L.A. poet, instructor and friend Suzanne Lummis for helping to breath life into many of her poems.