

Backbencher

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I saw my father cry for the first time
he gave birth to this city
to remind me home
is sketched across his belly

the sirens did not stop yelling
we kept on running
and this will never
be our game to play.

My father spat this city
out of his mouth chanting
her anthem in his foreign tongue.

The red flag is the only song he knew.

I saw my father cry for the first time
he scuffled his hands
in the mud to find a secret
between our borders
is the difference
between this city
and men in suits who suck
their thumbs and fiddle
their fingers in
our pockets

and young men like my father,
black curly hair
brown eyes
mocha skin
curl their tongues
in their political lingo
they sat on back benches
and learned to watch
from a distance.

I saw my father cry for the first time
he cradled this city
in his arms
waiting to be loved
but all he knew this glory
does not belong
to people like him.

The red flag is the only song he knew.

When my father died
of a heartbreak
he told me to never give up
on this city for no first love
kills with a dagger.