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Mute As Lawns Nobody Dares to Walk Across

When my mother calls telling me of still freezing nights across the Atlantic, I smell moldering pears, see the claret tinge of their bruised skins, as mother talks of her darkness, the not-good-news that travels from where she lives in thinner light, her voice in low cadences as she speaks of Kiveli who made pies all her life and

I smell the moldering pears, see the claret tinge of their bruised skins, as mother talks of *that awful man who rubbed Kiveli's face into the pavement and broke her elbow*. Her voice in low cadences as she speaks of Kiveli who made pies all her life and lay bleeding on an Athens street when a young woman found her and asked if

that awful man who rubbed Kiveli's face into the pavement and broke her elbow was someone she would recognize. *What man? What man?* Kiveli was crying and lay bleeding on an Athens street when a young woman found her and asked if with her face to the pavement she remembered the event. Remembered if the man

was someone she would recognize. *What man? What man?* Kiveli was crying and asked over the phone if I wanted a bottle of oil from her olives, *for your salads?* With her face to the pavement she remembered the event. Remembered if the man had hurt her any more she would not have been able to walk, but won't say more, and

asked over the phone if I wanted a bottle of oil from her olives, *for your salads?* I tell my mother I'm going to see Kiveli, and mother tells me if her arthritic knee hurts her any more she won't be able to walk, but won't say more, and I ask about her surgery, whether her knee is healing, and say she'll be okay.

I tell my mother I'm going to see Kiveli, and mother tells me if her arthritic knee gets any worse she will be left to the sad fact of a wheelchair life, so I ask about her surgery, whether her knee is healing, and say she'll be okay. *Do you have memories that won't heal?* the Vietnam vet asks, confessing had things

got any worse he would have been left to the sad fact of a wheelchair life, so *What man? What man?* The therapist wants to know, muffled voices, Vietnam. *Do you have memories that won't heal?* The Vietnam vet asks, confessing had things... There was a coup d'état. I learned to count in Thai then we moved to Bangkok.

What man? What man? The therapist wants to know, muffled voices, Vietnam. I had an uncle who thought it fun to slip my panties down in a circle of adults. There was a coup d'état. I learned to count in Thai then we moved to Bangkok. My uncle would say we played a game, the circle of adults nodded and laughed.

I had an uncle who thought it fun to slip my panties down in a circle of adults. He died in a hospice speaking in Greek his American wife couldn't understand. My uncle would say we played a game, the circle of adults nodded and laughed. Kiveli is healing fine, back to making pies. We talk and I tell her of my uncle.

He died in a hospice speaking in Greek his American wife couldn't understand. My mother says how sad to die speaking words your wife can't understand. Kiveli is healing fine, back to making pies. We talk and I tell her of my uncle. I'll revisit Vietnam, even Bangkok. *It all comes back*, the therapist insists.

My mother says how sad to die speaking words your wife can't understand. *And poor Kiveli, accosted by that man ... What man? What man? ...* I'll revisit Vietnam, even Bangkok. *It all comes back*, the therapist insists. So I tell my mother about my uncle and she is uncomfortable, interrupts with

And poor Kiveli accosted by that man ... What man? What man?...
her darkness the not-good-news that travels from where she lives in thinner light, her days mute as lawns nobody dares walk across, and I'm folding sweaters and scarves when my mother calls, telling me of the still freezing nights across the Atlantic.