

ARMINE IKNADOSSIAN

Father after Surgery

There are other amputations to speak of:
a televised beheading, a car bomb
at a wedding after the elections.

We nibble and chew the discomfort
with our polite words; the book I loaned you,
the mulberry tree outside your window.

All that wasted fruit, you say, as you pluck
a piece of chocolate from its foil wrapper,
a sweet little bon-bon for your palate.

What is to be of a father and a daughter
who face each other in this clean white box,
scratching and fidgeting, glancing at the clock
in this air-conditioned hospital room,
in this god-forsaken spring of ours?

Beirut Blues

Remember the curtains Mother?
How they wrapped their arms
around the sofa on windy days,

how the blue-tongued ocean below our window
licked the painted toes of French tourists in bikinis?

Remember tea parties on the balcony,
the red dress you sewed for me
right out of the latest issue of *Burda* magazine?

And then the missile's cry,
how its whiny trajectory fooled us

as it lit up the summer sky during rooftop dinners.
They weren't for us, were they?

But that day we hid behind the sofa,
you and I, they were for us that day,
the day we ran down the stairs

to the damp and dim below,
down where death could not reach

and the breath of life was quick at our feet.
I remember more,
but let's talk instead about

the dancing curtains, the wide-mouthed sea,
porcelain tea cups and Father coming home.

Armine Iknadossian was born in Beirut, Lebanon and raised in Pasadena, California. A graduate of UCLA's creative writing program and Antioch University's MFA program, her first manuscript, *Gnosis*, explores mythology from different female personas. Publications include *Ararat*, *Arbutus*, *Armenian Poetry Project*, *Backwards City Review*, *Lit Parlor*, *Lounge Lit: An Anthology*, *Media Cake*, *Poetic Diversity*, *Poetry Super Highway*, *Spout*, *Writers at Work* and *Zaum*.