

Creators of Justice Awards 2020

POETRY HONORABLE MENTION

Amy Hsieh (Canada): *Old Maps*
Juan Mobili (Argentina): *God, My Father, and the Bombing of the Churches*
Tain Leonard-Peck (USA, MA): *Safe Crossing*
Guna Moran (India): *Rock*
Andrena Zawinski (USA, CA): *Crossing Boundaries*

OLD MAPS By Amy Hsieh

1.
In unmediated madness, she lashed
maps into me. Reinforced boundaries,
tallied the times I strayed and she stayed up
straight as the midnight hour. I barely—
white space dissolving to red, as sound fled
from my pounding heart wanting out—
gripped her wrist. The black whip writhed,
its metal mouth gaping to be fed
until she faced my blood-flushed stare:

*Don't you dare.
I'm your daughter.
I can be just like you.*

It cost all of me
to not rain blows
that would rainbow the flesh it fell on
like my legs, that suddenly felt
too long.
These tears are tarnished, an oily metallic
trespassing from old maps.
What good is old badness?
It was unmedi(c)ated madness.

2.
Upon a lifetime's pile of rice,
hand-picked,

and soiled clothes, hand-washed—
the prized dryer still spared every encumbrance—
Grandmother sits, salivating for sensationalist TV
and a good meal.

Again you hop into her bosom, another version,
a kokeshi—for happiness this time—
ignoring the knife knocking in my middle
that you sharpened; my heart, a stake.

Grandmother, illiterate in mother tongue
you deciphered the syllables of seasons.

In harvest, the hoe's rhyming strikes,

Poor. More. Chore. Poor

you dug into your daughter,
balanced two loads of clothes
with the caesura of your back
and walked along the pause of your stomach
between dawn and dusk.

You shipped us bundles
of dried, pliable bamboo.

A loving thing to hit with, mom defended,
for a child's discipline of simple sins.

But harder things came.

3.

Mother, you are waltzing on happiness,
a clean, white, floor—

and say you are spotless.

So should I forgive
what you have forgotten?

That tax of love may finally be too costly.

I remember the feel of your old maps,
and learn a new ache, of a changed cartography.

But I see that the space is mine
and like the wild peace of sunrise.

Amy Hsieh is a Toronto-based poet. Her work has appeared in *Acta Victoriana*, *Hart House Review*, *University College Review*, *Watershed Review*, and *Devour: Art & Lit Canada*. She is Chinese, bi, and disabled.

GOD, MY FATHER, AND THE BOMBING OF THE CHURCHES

By Juan Mobili

to Jorge Enrique Mobili

My father was an atheist
he insisted on it
every time the conversation

drifted toward religion
or talk became about
driving my mother mad

My mother was the daughter of the devout
president of *Our Lady of the Garden's*
Alumni Association,
the convent school across the street

My grandmother was furious
her child fell in love
with someone who had forsaken Jesus
and would only offer my father a stare
as cold as the steel of Gabriel's sword

But the story is really about 1954
when our president decided
to empty every hangar in Buenos Aires
and bomb the churches of our city

The roaring of white light began early.
My grandmother, true to the Lord's mission,
walked to the convent and commanded
the nine resident nuns to take refuge
in the safety of her home
fifty feet from where they lived

My father, the thin man without a God,
was there and spent the night making them
laugh, pouring them *mate* and tending
to nine frightened sisters
whenever he was not standing on the roof
cursing the bombers, daring their bombs,
a cigarette between his lips
while they lit up the sky of Buenos Aires

The explosions went on all night but no bomb
ever fell close to the *Lady of Our Garden*

Then morning broke and the bombers fled
like vampires to the shelter of their coffins
and the nuns walked single file back to their convent,
led by my father, who insisted on seeing them to safety

That was also the moment my mother told me,
as she swayed in the memory of a triumph,
that my grandmother fell in love
with the only atheist she'd ever care to love

I know my father was given a medal by the nuns
it was gold plated
with the Holy Mother's face on it

and although he never carried it
he saved it
just in case heaven existed.

Juan Pablo Mobili was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and, now, is an adopted son of New York City. He came of age in his native country during a tragic period of its history, when many thousands of young men and women, were unconstitutionally detained, tortured, and often murdered. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming, in *First Literary Review-East*, *The Poetry Distillery*, *Anti-Heroic Chic*, *Red Planet Magazine*, *Mason Street*, *The Red Wheelbarrow Review*, and *The Journal of American Poetry*. In addition co-wrote a chapbook of poems in collaboration with Madalasa Mobili, "Three Unknown Poets," published by Seranam Press.

SAFE CROSSING By Tain Leonard-Peck

Through burning sand, sharp
stone, pass the tortoise, fight for
home, the promised land.
Hope drives us, northern freedom,
Slow, steady, to liberty.

Tain Leonard-Peck writes plays, poetry, and fiction, paints and composes music. He's a competitive sailor, skier, and fencer. He currently lives on a family farm on Martha's Vineyard, but he's lived all over the world as well. He knows how to construct his own laminar flow hood, knit his own blankets, and haggle for flowers on five continents. He thinks the world is a place of wonders, and he loves traveling to see more of it. He has lived in caves, dived with sharks, and not been defenestrated by a temperamental donkey named William Shakespeare. He is frequently bitten by geese.

ROCK By Guna Moran *Original: Assamese*

A rock can be only made smaller
By beating and hitting
Can never be made larger
The rocks are generally homeless
They lay everywhere
Run over by vehicles
Rock do not get flattened
Passer by stamp on it repeatedly

Not even the epidermis is damaged
Struck by hammer
Rocks turn smaller and tinier
Even after that we term it hard and ruthless
Rock for benevolence
Rocks are immortal-never aging
Because it can turn itself smaller immediately
(benevolent never die)
Time-winning aesthetic is impossible sans sculpture
In every era the rock sculpture stands best
Still we find it hard to accept
The eternal rock is the ever spreading glory of the mankind

Translation : Bibekananda Choudhury

Guna Moran is an Assamese poet and critic. He lives in Assam, India. His poems are published in various international magazine, journals, webzines and anthologies.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

By Andrena Zawinski

We tipped wine glasses to Paris, Bastille Day,
whirled and twirled each other across the walk,
swung into the street—two women travelers
smiling and laughing until the hems of our skirts
were singed by firecrackers tossed at our feet
by men demanding dances we would not give.
Women in hijabs pulled us into a cloistered corner
of sisters inside La Belle Equipe, encircled us
to show us how to position hands, extend arms
as if to shove away looming shadows
of their guardians and husbands—crossing
boundaries of difference for what we share
and where years later extremists with Kalashnikovs
would spray bullets into crowds along that same
Rue de la Charonne, its sidewalk to turn altar
of flowers, candles, sentiments, and tears—
women embracing each other, trying to hold
the world together, bound in courage and fear.

Andrena Zawinski's poetry has received awards for lyricism, form, spirituality, social concern with several Pushcart Prize nominations. Her latest book is *Landings* (Kelsay Books); others are *Something About* (a PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award) and *Traveling in Reflected Light* (a Kenneth Patchen Prize). She founded and runs the San Francisco Bay Area Women's Poetry Salon and is Features Editor at PoetryMagazine.com