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Griotte

the story I remember Sandie Mbanefo remembers
her Igbo father telling her the old village storyteller
sat in the moonlight middle of a circle of ears and drums
beating the story in to let each one remember
stories from the very beginning simple complete
the way to throw nets onto the center of the lake
the way to cast spells to tame spit of the black mamba
in the countless spirals of words seeking the listening
whole navel dark pit memory called Mother in any tongue
in any story remembered and passed on in time
from time to time resurfacing in another other parts
of the world woven with skein like hers like mine like
Lina Sagara Reyes bathing in the moonlight because
Bohol Electric cut off her supply her power to tell
the moonlight to me undiminished under the candleglow
as she remembered how rain water splashed
a shiver of fireflies on her brown body washed off salt
and silt from her twilight search for mollusks at Loay Beach
with the village women who also tell stories
what they remember everyday where crabs dance mate spawn
at new moon tide extraordinary things glowing
in the mangrove swamps while my feet tread their way
back to the night Sandie showed me Nigeria
the ceremonial clay figures in the round of storytelling
pulling me into the silent stretch of words as time curves
the gesture of fishers' nets on to another lake where
I sit listen with Mabel Alampay to the blind
storyteller of Talisay remembering Taal Volcano
spewing lightning bolts the memory burned onto thin membrane
of eyelids shut forever into seeing inward a story of awe
passed on passing