

Three Poems · *Ina Cumpiano*

MIGRAINE

As if I'd seen enough,
my vision starts to go around the edges.
As if my circle of sight were a timepiece,
the face of the man at seven o'clock disappears.
As if I were giving stars too much importance,
a ring of small, flashing prisms haloes the knives at the table.
As if they'd become less important to me, these people eating,
their little moves, their fingers, the water in their glasses—they fade.
Fade, as if they would still talk forever; even without their bodies
they would talk. As if talk were a white noise
that has something to do with darkness.
Darkness, as if I'd returned to my grandmother's house,
as if I'd recalled the silent pianola,
the photos of the dead, brown and stiff in their silver frames.
As if the dust still held
to the one breath of light coming in from the veranda.
As if it held, as I'd said *can't you love me a little?*

LUNA NUEVA

No moon.
My father has told me not to phone him when there's no moon.
He won't be home;
he fishes when his boat doesn't drag its shadow.

Three of us fished at night by the light of a small *quinqué*.
A battery lamp would have given better light,
but this is what they've always used. They. We. Me,
my father and his friend, this man my brother's age.

Here, even without a moon, we can see each other:
in a place like this,
two men, my father and this unacknowledged
son of his, can give off their own light.
In this differentiating dark, they can be recognized.

ADVICE

Be like the jellyfish that moves by taking in
and letting go. Not constant,
unlike the green pilings of the dock
that moor and bear the weight of sailors
leaving love behind.

Allow light to move through the body—
fracture the light, should it come to that—
but be aware that light and the self
are fellow travelers.

Bend around coral, do not let that once live thing
pierce your soft parts.

And sting if you must.

Be sister to Medusa and to the sea anemone
who makes the under world
believe her tentacles are blossoms:
she's saved by beauty.

Be the peony of dawn and sunset sky, not plucked
by any hand yet floating

in this larger bowl at noon:

be like the jellyfish that encompasses memory
and knowledge both

but who knows and who remembers nothing.