

I don't want to feed the ghost
hovering over warm homes,
growing fat from scraps of grief, anger, scorn
dutifully offered up to red-lit altars
dark fruits of whose labor and for whom?
confusing remembrance with vengeance —
they lovingly laid family portraits next to burning embers,
inky incense, ill bodings rise,
a prayer that clouds out the heavens
casting long shadows on paths ahead.
The ghost stretches forward,
ever hungry
and ever fed.

Ghost pains —
for what was laid to rest
and deserves to rest,
yet lingers still.

I don't want to feed the ghost
that tries to follow me,
a strange sense of guilt :
guilt to have never felt the aftershock of a bomb
or the frigid lap of dark ocean waves,
guilt to be alive and happy,
guilt to see in colors beyond old silver photographs
full of horror and debris,
guilt to want to learn all sides of history,
guilt to feel love for my homeland.

I don't want to feed the ghost
but I wonder
if the ghost is gone

will what remains
be emptiness?

a void,
devoid
of memories both painful and beautiful.
No stories left to grasp
to remember the ghosts of who we were,
what came before,
to remind us we are more than
a generation-wide sense of displacement.

Loyalty or a lifeline,
Who has been feeding whom?

Ghost pains —
for a life without ghosts,
yet doubt lingers still,
we linger still.