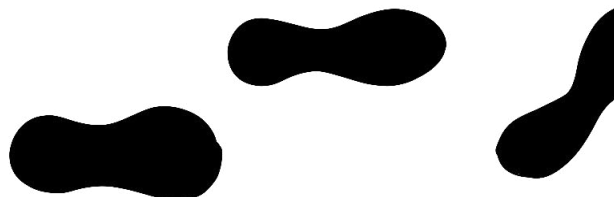


Where

I am walking the ground we once did and
I wore shoes this time, but the earth still hurts my feet
I came searching for comfort in nostalgia yet
all that greeted me was a wasteland,
perfect rows of crop sown in, cashed out, scattered
the unnamed graveyard of a massacred people
the fighting never finished for my unsatisfied mind
wandering a war-zone, floundering through
an unknown land we thought we owned, frantically reaching for
your hand, you said would be there—

why wouldn't you be there?

Flat on my back, ears stunned in shrill
silence from collision; I can feel the earth breathing
in synchronization with my corrosion, chemicals once medicinal
now habitual in the destruction of you, me, and the enemy
we lumber through the minefields of no-man's land, disguised as
functional industry,
waiting for artillery fire to be lit in lieu of candles,
and though I'm pleading to escape the wreckage I turn to salt
in the hopes you were still behind me





if only I could stop hearing what isn't there.

Amid the aftermath the horizon burns quietly, the sun
paints a delicate masterpiece in the sky,
only meant for her love the moon to see, I corrode
the image in jealousy, acid still seeping from my eyes
soaking the soil beneath my aching feet, aging the wreckage;
the sun waning, giving way to the
nighttime now— I am still afraid, but
the moon keeps me warm as I wander the night sky
Songs of torture faintly echo in the hollows of my chest
Vibrating bones on bones of a cage they may never escape,
their laments becoming only a whisper against
the sound of me falling from the heavens as Adam fell
a drunkard stumbling into the forest,
fireflies stinging me like cigarette butts;
in the distance someone calls for me.

It appears I have lost my shoes

by Grae Kipping