

The Idiot's Guide to Overthrowing the Government

we all rolled over

and took it

like americans

to the mall

to bed

to the prescription counter at Rite-Aid

while we took away their Wednesday

and all their Wednesdays

and their soccer and their Disneyland

and their ambrosia salads

with our money

and some of us won't be taking any summer

vacation this year

we thought we were depressed

but maybe we are just feeling what it feels like

to go shopping while our money

is out killing people

my mother says I should write a letter to congress

I probably will,

but it won't keep me off the streets,

because no one can see the letters to congress

but my mother worries

she's a jewish mother with her own stories

of pogroms in kiev,

her grandfather hidden under a bed

while nine brothers and sisters end

just a couple generations away

she says, don't make too much noise

they'll burn crosses in your front yard

they will come for you

they kill people

but its better to be on death row for fighting

than to be dead

from not fighting

anything can be a weapon

if you're angry enough

and when you are angry enough
and when there's no where
left to run
everything
everything
becomes a weapon

#2

nobody died in noodletown today

it doesn't sound like a place to send an army
it sounds like some dr. seuss village with curly chimneys
on skinny houses with hats for roofs
it sounds like the sound noodles would make
if they could sing

Falooooooooojaaaaaaaaahhhhhh

“Falooooooooouuuuujaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh,” I demonstrate for Elias,
who will arrive there by the end of the week

“You're right,” he says. “It sounds exactly like a noodle singing.”
After that we just call it Noodletown

“How are things in Noodletown?”

“Nobody died in Noodletown today.”

“How is the weather in Noodletown?”

“They’re melting people alive in Nooodletown.”

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“You have a postcard from your brother,” Sky waves the wrinkled thing
the picture is a dusty snowglobe
from the worn postcard Fallujah looks like a place for whispering dervishes,
not for fire, white phosphorous, napalm, depleted uranium
not for war
written in Arabic above the paper skyline, the postcard says, *Insha’Allah*
it means God willing
I picture dizzy sufis dancing across the faded streets of the city of mosques,
blue watchtowers reaching into the vacant sky,
where a thousand prayers have rocked the ethers
through three decades of war
and then drifted down over the city like fog

“It’s nothing like that,” Elias says.

*

Sky thinks maybe I should try prozac
or this new weed from the other Hollywood
I don’t want a prescription for anything
that will make me think it’s okay to drop bombs
through people’s kitchen tables—through their green bean casserole

“Yeah, not through the green bean casserole.” Sky nods,
stoned out of her tree-hugging, 11th house-watching mind
I didn’t know I said it outloud

“Turtle Island is blind,” she says. “The empire is falling. America’s going down.
You should take a bath in olive oil.”

I don’t take a bath that night, but I dream I’m sleeping
in a bathtub filled with olive oil on the top of a mosque that looks over Noodletown

Elias says I’m as crazy in my dreams as I am in the real world

I wonder which world he means, Iraq? Hollywood?

*

When Elias calls we’re having the kind of rain you’d expect
from an apocalypse, but I’m pretty sure we couldn’t get that lucky

“They’re shutting down the hospitals,” Elias says.
“Why?”

“So they can’t count the dead. So know one will know,” he is crying now.

“So know one will know what we did.”

my eyes trace the loops
of ivy on the cotton sheets that hang
down from Sky’s mattress
they are new sheets
white flowers in perfect diamond shapes
the Latin names of the flowers are printed in cursive letters
her mother just sent them from Portland or Telluride or somewhere
she got them on sale at TJ Maxx

Dictamnus albus: burning bush

it is a rusty lavender thing

there is nothing urgent about it—nothing urgent about lavender

“They’re killing everyone,” he whispers. “*Everyone.*”

Dictamnus albus. My eyes follow the curve of the *C* up to the *T* then back again cursive seems so ridiculous, so impractical

I’m glad I never bother to use it

autographs and bed sheets—that’s what cursive is good for

there is a ripple of voices behind his

click. static. dial tone.

*

the streets are lined with white flags, but it doesn’t matter

America falls on the Noodletown,

leaving a crippled skyline of abandoned mosques

with no heart left unbroken

but the prayer signal goes off anyway,

filling the alleys with the sobering call to pray

the Arabic song descends naked over the stunned silent streets

despite the threat of tanks, napalm, bullets, white

phosphorous, depleted uranium, despite the risk

the children come out of their hiding places and fall to their knees,

on the wreckage of these mosques,

where their families have gathered for a thousand years

they lower their foreheads to the dust

and pray

it's enough to make a person question if there is a God,

but I don't

I just wonder what a god is for

if it isn't to save a place like Fallujah

Page Getz spent about a decade working as a journalist in L.A., from the Los Angeles Times to talk radio before returning to school to complete a degree in creative writing. Ten of her poems and short stories have been published in literary journals. She has written three screenplays, two children's stories and freelanced for print and radio. As an activist, she has been involved in social justice struggles including labor, racial equality, marriage rights and the peace movement. Originally from Kansas, she found political sanctuary in the San Francisco Bay area, where she just finished her first novel, "After the Revolution We'll All Wear Tiaras."