

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Carolina Rivera Escamilla: “Children”

Carolina Rivera Escamilla · Friday, June 26th, 2020

### Children

How will we remove the thorn  
war time sting left us moribund,  
dead, dying, no absolution  
in our aging memory.

Our boys and girls caged  
behind bars and barbed wire  
wait for a despot

to release them.

They are not the children of the hellish nights  
Of massacres in El Mozote,

in Zumpul, 1981

They painted the moon black.

The thorn filters through rivers, lakes, seas,

The water veins swell,

the thorn embeds in water-bloated flesh

How do we excise it

from our imprisoned daughters and sons?

The thorn infects us

in our collective souls.

River Stones fly to the stars

You can hear voices

in its firefly light,

The night of the children

of El Mozote,

I call to the stars,

to the ancestors,

to the earth.

I plant words that echo in the universe

And I offer the universe my future,

our boys and girls

caged within metal bars.

Not guilty.

Our sons and daughters

caged in our twenty-first century  
 prison they call detention facility.  
 Not the massacred ones  
 on that December night of 1981.  
 I remember  
     whistling gusts of wind,  
 the smell of running mountain water  
 carpeting starry night.  
 You caress the hair  
 of our volcanoes.  
 Fireflies lit up the hands  
 of the children,  
 lightning bug  
 lanterns flying through the universe  
 that December of  
 purple-pink twilight.  
 Our boys and girls imprisoned!  
 What suns of tomorrow are we offering them?  
 What future?  
 That December night,  
 before the moon stopped  
 lighting the pock-marked roads,  
 the beast already opened its eye  
 spit bullets against them.  
 Nine-year-old girl knew  
 All her family massacred  
 Remembers posing for the polaroid photo  
 In her white communion gown  
 Between her two older sisters  
 dressed in pink dresses with  
 white flowers in their hands.  
 She clutches fireflies and lightning bugs  
 Once they were machine-gunned,  
 fireflies and children slip towards forgetting.

In our throats the infected thorn  
 gags against ancient memory  
 our daughters and sons imprisoned,  
 teachers, mothers, fathers choked  
 The future imprisoned  
 by the same beasts,  
 that silenced the voices  
 of parents and children,  
 perfumed by carrion in 1981.  
 We are failing once more

here

in this garden cemetery.  
 We have separated.

