



JOHANNA BREIDING
TWO SANDBAGS, 2014
BLACK AND WHITE ANALOG PRINT
20 X 20"

Visiting Prophets

HAFIZAH GETER

1

My uncle pacing the dirt field behind his mother's house,
like a car whose tank will not empty.
He might as well be in prison.

Poisoned

We guess,

bipolar

2

that maybe the malaria
is at it again.

If this were America, he would be a boat we could tug
beneath the shed during winters,

could thaw him
without having to send word
to other seasons. Not even money would stop
us from feeding him medicated morsels
to bring his mind back in from the rain.

At the very least we could fix this fucking
limp.

If this were anywhere, we would be hysterical.
So long it's been since relief has doubled

us over, cried into our stomachs,
held our knees to our shoulders.

3

But since this is our homeland, we drive.

Through markets.

Past Ahmadu Bello University,
where my father taught students to draw the body
after mastering the line.

4

Into the brunt of a fresh
rainy season, my cousin snakes
the car round the roundabout,
round beggars using foreign objects
as limbs. We are stockpiling

mangos, plantains, a bit
more powdered milk,
and baobab leaves for kuka.

Guards barely old enough to be lovers
stand in front of gated compounds
avoiding eyes and forgetting
the weight of their weapons, forgetting
our mothers have died
the same way.

5

What do we name this revision
of our bodies?

Diabetes
Hypertension
Hepatitis
Stroke

I can see how all these guns have helped
keep my uncle crazy.

Our hunger is anonymous.

6

For three days my feet continue
to swell, splitting

the stitching of the boots that took my last
eighty dollars. Not even
Nikes can hold me.

Maybe, my uncle
is onto something,

pacing the backyard for his madness.

7

On our mothers' dirt
roads we know

how dangerous someone who wants to save you
can become.

Compassion is not the same as repair.

8

Let's say madness has a heart. ✍