

Attack the Water

By Janice Mirikitani

My first flash
on the newsprint/face
she could have been
obachan
5 back then/just after
the camps
when the land/dried/up
no water for months.
In town,
10 they would not sell
to japs.
we had to eat what
we could grow
that's only natural
15 when there is nothing
else
nothing
else
we ate rice with roots & rooster legs.
20 Vietnamese woman
her face etched old
by newsprint/war
mother/grandmother
she has borne them all
25 (have they all died?)
flash!!
"they are bombing the waterways
"this new offensive
which has previously/been/avoided
30 for humanitarian/reasons/
will/seriously/jeopardize/
their/food/situation."
Obachan
sitting
35 breathing heavily
in the sun
watching her pet rabbits
(she loved them like children)
which one/
40 tonight?
i still remember her eyes
drawing the blood
like water.
And the rice—

45 there were maggots
in the rice.
no water
to flush/them/out

50 Up river
bodies floated in My Chanh
eyes eaten by crabs
flushed onto the land—
fly food.
“They are attacking the water.
55 when all else fails
attack the water.”

Obachan
would chew
the food first/spit
60 out maggots.
Grandchildren
ate the spit-flushed rice.
when all else fails
attack the water.