(three from) Love in a Time of War

Now, she moves against him
like salmon trying to swim upstream
against the earth’s spin. The whole night
trembles, the oldest sobs caught
in their throats, a new skin of sweat.
For him, his trek into the deep woods
began days ago when the birds grew silent.
They now pray a son hides inside her.

But tomorrow—tomorrow, only the men
will dance ancestors alive, gazing up at Venus,
born to slay the enemy in their sleep.

The high priest has blessed the weapons,
& they cannot turn back. Not until
a thousand hooves strike the dust red.
Two memories filled the cockpit.
The pilot fingered the samurai swords beside him, as the plane banked & dove.
Locked in a fire-spitting tailspin, headed toward the ship, he was one with the metal & speed, beyond oaths taken, nose-diving into the huddle of sailors below, into their thunder.

The day opened like a geisha’s pearl fan. The yellow kimono of his first & last woman withered into a tangle of cherry blossoms & breathy silk. A sigh leapt out of his throat. Before he climbed up into the cockpit he left a shadow to guard her nights.
A marine writes the name of his sweetheart, carefully printing each letter as if to make the dead read the future’s blank testaments.

He straddles the fantailed bomb & scribbles a note to Al-Qaeda: This is a fat prick for you sand niggers. This is a cauldron of falling stars.

Months tick down to a naked sigh. The marine reads again the Dear John to bring kisses to life on smudged paper.

Her skin is now a lost map. Each page is a bloody memory facing itself, seeping through a white dress.