

Say Grace

By Emily Jungmin Yoon

In my country our shamans were women
and our gods multiple until white people brought
an ecstasy of rosaries and our cities today
glow with crosses like graveyards. As a child
in Sunday school I was told I'd go to hell
if I didn't believe in God. Our teacher was a woman
whose daughters wanted to be nuns and I asked
What about babies and what about Buddha, and she said
They're in hell too and so I memorized prayers
and recited them in front of women
I did not believe in. *Deliver us from evil.*
O sweet Virgin Mary, amen. O sweet. O sweet.
In this country, which calls itself Christian,
what is sweeter than hearing *Have mercy*
on us. From those who serve different gods. O
clement, O loving, O God, O God, amidst ruins,
amidst waters, fleeing, fleeing. *Deliver us from evil.*
O sweet, O sweet. In this country,
point at the moon, at the stars, point at the way the lake lies,
with a hand full of feathers,
and they will look at the feathers. And kill you for it.
If a word for religion they don't believe in is magic
so be it, let us have magic. Let us have
our own mothers and scarves, our spirits,
our shamans and our sacred books. Let us keep
our stars to ourselves and we shall pray
to no one. Let us eat
what makes us holy.

Source: *Poetry* (November 2017)