

As in Leaving the Pyroclastic Volcano

One Minke whale
was suspended
by six helicopters
above the fiery
caldera. They had
to please the gods,
so they sedated
its body which was
the size of
a school bus
and started
the procession.

The children
wore gas masks
and climbed the rocky
edge without
their parents.
They had waited for
the new moon
when the sky
was clear
as a teardrop.

The little girl
pointed up.
She could see
its fins flapping
in the snowy air.

The brother and sister
huddled on the slope
holding hands. He asked
his little sister
if she was cold.
She told him
that she wasn't
a baby and to let go
of her hand, then
kneeled down
and put some
dull ice in
her mouth.

Probably the wet
kaleidoscopes pointed
“out there”...

or maybe, Pablo, you
recall the grimoire
tucked neatly in a drawer

that smells of cedar
wood and pipe smoke.

A little bit of this,

a little bit of that.

“Do you have any
powder?” the woman
with the rubber gloves
asks pointing
to the stratosphere.

“In fact, I may,”
you answer, dumping
the contents of your
purse onto
the conveyer belt.

But there's more
to say about
the dormant
geyser — that it used
to blow 500 shillings
into the afternoon
chill every eight
minutes. Then one day,
a villager crooned
his neck and looked
inside the hole.

“Nothing!” he shouted
triumphantly.

Strokkur chuckled.

Our jet descended
through a cloud

bank and the metal
around us shook.

I took
a pill,

read a spell
from the igneous isle
we were leaving:

*Inscribe this on a fox pelt
and color with blood from
your right ring-
finger and you will
not be haunted by ghosts.*

The monitor
on the seat said
“Happy Valley
Goose Bay.”

I gulped.

I choked on
the chalky sedative.

I grabbed
my husband's arm.

That's when they
heard the moaning,
splashing
and loud yawn
of the great god
the village
was trying
to please. By
then, most
of the children
had started
to descend the side
of the volcano.

"Mother would like
us to pick some arctic
poppies and bring them
back to the cabin.
Tonight, she
is going to make
us stew," the sister said.
The brother nodded.

They gathered
as many white
flowers as they
could as they climbed
down. For a moment
the sister turned
back to look
at the caldera. She
could see the Minke
whale waving
from the top
and smiling at her.

I think we know
what the son did.

Ah, mythology.
He had waited
a lot time for the death
of his father.
It was his turn
to destroy paradise.