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## We Are Refugees

In groups of two or three, we steal through breaches in the mountains.  
In throngs, we shamble over trance-inducing sands.

We left our city to the interlopers, with their new weaponry.  
We left our village to feral cats and the few dying elders.

We carry dry foodstuffs in woven cloths, and motionless infants.  
The Holy Book we left behind, with our intricate carpets.

By this walking we know we live. Do our bowed heads still venerate?  
We cannot say; nor do we speak of bleeding or any particular lack.

A little water may flow out of rock; we chance upon a small oasis.  
To extinguish a morning's thirst, to move on: it is enough.

There is nothing to want anymore, nothing to expect.  
Nevertheless, a child is delivered, ululating in the reeds.

At night, when you fly over, count the holy prayer beads of our fires.  
By day, with your instruments, note the many colors of our robes.

We hear from all directions sounds of strafing and detonation.  
Is there no place left where we came from, then? None where we are going?

Kate Bernadette Benedict



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## Chasing the Tornado

Even the dainty ones, dancing in multiples,  
undulate like Shiva the Destroyer's arms!

So I don't fault others when they run and hide  
and I don't need their company  
though I admit it gets lonely, out here on the wet roads,  
hurtling toward the commonplace mirages.

The vistas tire me. They are flat, monotonous.  
The constant scanning of them hurts my eyes.

Even in perfect conditions—  
when ions buzz and lights zip  
and the magnificent supercell draws near—  
nothing may happen

or nothing more unusual than low rumbling and hard rain.

You can't coerce a quirk of vapor into being,  
you can only keep ready, keep watch,  
notice the corn, where it's cut through,

the purple cloud withdrawing its fine blade.

Kate Bernadette Benedict

Kate Bernadette Benedict's publication credits include print journals such as *Slant*, *Rhino*, *ELF*, *Thema*, and *The American Voice*, and online journals such as *The Cortland Review* and *Perihelion*. Her chapbook *Carnal Beauty* is published online by *The New Formalist*. Kate lives in New York City where she has worked in book publishing and finance.