**Jorge the Church Janitor Finally Quits**

 By Martin Espada

No one asks  
where I am from,  
I must be  
from the country of janitors,  
I have always mopped this floor.  
Honduras, you are a squatter's camp  
outside the city  
of their understanding.  
  
No one can speak  
my name,  
I host the fiesta  
of the bathroom,  
stirring the toilet  
like a punchbowl.

The Spanish music of my name is lost  
when the guests complain  
about toilet paper.  
  
What they say  
must be true:  
I am smart,  
but I have a bad attitude.  
  
No one knows  
that I quit tonight,  
maybe the mop  
will push on without me,  
sniffing along the floor  
like a crazy squid  
with stringy gray tentacles.  
They will call it Jorge.

Excerpt from *Krik? Krak!*

By Edwige Danticat

There is a pregnant girl on board. She looks like she might be our age. Nineteen or twenty. Her face is covered with scars that look like razor marks. She is short and speaks in a singsong that reminds me of the villagers in the north. Most of the other people on the boat are much older than I am. I have heard that a lot of these boats have young children on board. I am glad this one does not. I think it would break my heart watching some little boy or girl every single day on this sea, looking into their empty faces to remind me of the hopelessness of the future in our country. It’s hard enough with the adults. It’s hard enough with me.

I used to read a lot about America before I had to study so much for the university exams. I am trying to think, to see if I read anything more about Miami. It is sunny. It doesn’t snow there like it does in other parts of America. I can’t tell exactly how far we are from there. We might be barely out of our own shores. There are no borderlines on the sea. The whole thing looks like one…

**Children of Gaza: Tick, Tock**

by Maryam Srouji

Sunday, 13 July 2014.  
We are all sitting around the TV  
Watching the World Cup finals  
When my dad's phone rings.

Usually, he wouldn't answer,  
But this time, he actually does  
And it's the last phone call he ever takes.  
"Hello, this is Solomon.  
You have a minute to evacuate your home.  
We know Hamas is there,  
And we are sending a missile right now.  
We don't want to hurt /you/,  
So please run."

As my dad yells and curses  
That there's no one here  
I start counting down.  
Suddenly, we are not watching a game  
But living it.  
A team with no defenders,  
Trying to get to a goal  
That is always out of reach.

50 seconds.  
We don't know what to pack.  
Mama struggles to get her scarf on  
Because she's afraid that if they identify her body  
She wants to at least have her modesty.

45 seconds.  
Yalla, yalla, my dad yells,  
Ushering us out of the door.  
We live on the fifth floor of a crowded apartment building  
And I wonder if those below us  
Got the same call, at what time,  
If any at all.

40 seconds.  
I look to Khaled,  
My six year old brother.

This is his first time being fully aware  
That we are trapped,  
That even if we go to the next house  
Or the next neighborhood  
We can still be hit, too.

35 seconds.  
Time seems to slow down  
As my heart beats faster.  
The stairs have no railing  
And the toys Mama always told us to pick up  
Are now blocking our path.

30 seconds.  
I wonder how crowded the hospital is,  
Whether they'll have room for us,  
Who will survive,  
Who will die,   
And if any news station will actually cover this.

25 seconds.  
Anger wells in my heart as I realize  
That this isn't just happening to me  
But my friends, family, and country, too  
We are being slaughtered like pigs  
But even pigs enjoy their life  
Before they die.

20 seconds.  
We are on the second floor now,  
But no one is moving.  
Someone is screaming.  
A broken ankle, my dad says,  
But we must keep on.

15 seconds.  
We pass Walid,  
Who is crying out in pain:  
Ya oomi, Ya oomi.  
My mother, my mother.  
Father picks him up,  
Tells us to keep going.  
My breath is running short,  
I need my inhaler,  
But I must keep going.  
Ten seconds.  
Mama gives me baby Salma.

Nine seconds.  
Don't look back, she says.

Eight seconds.  
Keep going, keep going.

Seven seconds.  
I push Khaled through the narrow door.

Six seconds.  
I wonder if it's better to die.

Five seconds.  
Or live and watch my people suffer.

Four seconds.  
But my lord, if I do die.

Three seconds.  
La ilaha ila Allah.  
(There is no God but Allah).

Two seconds.  
Muhammadan rasool Allah.  
(And Muhammed is his messenger).

One second.  
As I hear the impact, I close my eyes and think,  
Ina lila wa ina ilahi rajioon.  
(We belong to Allah and to him is our return).

Excerpt from **“How to Tame a Wild Tongue”**

by Gloria Anzaldua

“We’re going to have to control your tongue,” the dentist says, pulling out all the metal from my mouth. Silver bits plop and tinkle into the [bowl]…

“We’re going to have to do something about your tongue,” I hear the anger rising in his voice. My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. “I’ve never seen anything as strong or as stubborn,” he says. And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?

“Who is to say that robbing a people of

its language is less violent than war?”

– RAY GWYN SMITH

I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess – that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for “talking back” to the [white] teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. “If you want to be American, speak ‘American.’ If you don’t like it, go back to Mexico where you belong.”

“I want you to speak English. *Pa’ hallar buen trabajo tienes que saber hablar el ingles bien. Que vale toda tu educación si todavía hablas ingles con un* ‘accent,’” my mother would say, mortified that I spoke English like a Mexican. At Pan American University, I and all the Chicano students were required to take two speech classes. Their purpose: to get rid of our accents.

Attacks on one’s form of expression with the intent to **censor** are a violation of the First Amendment. *El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua.* Wild tongues can’t be tamed, they can only be cut out…