REENA MITCHELL KATZ

the planets as triggers of devastating earthquakes

i dreamt you took me to a sweat shop, mommy.

it was 1939

you were just born, i was 36

violently stuffed

into a white pinafore:

our anachronism

there were textiles all around us; every texture and hue:

they were blank woven pages waiting to be punched out just like us, mommy: blank. dirty.

women with strong hands worked there

blonde hair tied back tight

their fingered machines took out all the yellow yards

two per worker: yellow yellow

filling the factory, filling the galaxy pushing like a moving mist

we could taste the sour

long sheets of lemon drop, daffodil, meringue, banana. (you told me yellow was always bubbie’s favourite)

they were punching out shapes, those women. from the cloth with their tools hand held and brick like two by two

i saw small shapes fall from the yards and yellow yards, mommy they were stars, mommy. falling out of the punched yellow "jude" stars.

we watched the strong hands making the shapes over and over turning the remaining cloth into what will never again be a night sky magic and grand, universal.

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LISA GRUSHCOW

Fire

there’s a woman in a photograph, i saw of the warsaw ghetto uprising. she’s standing by herself, out from the smouldering ruins around her like a phoenix except i think that she’s about to be shot. facing her is a nazi, young, somehow uncertain as he looks over her shoulder to his superior. she looks at neither. simply stands legs apart, bracing and an empty gun strapped across her chest. the ghetto is burning, it’s over, the nazi will almost certainly kill her, leaving her facelessjewish face face down on the stones and the blood that runs through her legs through her chest will fill in the cracks the empty gun clattering as she falls. but for the moment of the photograph the gun across her chest the nazi’s eyes uncertain the sun standing still there’s a woman like a phoenix rising up.

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CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES/LES CAHIERS DE LA FEMME