



Source: 'Iran accused of arming both sides in sectarian divide', *New York Times* in *Sydney Morning Herald* online, 13/04/07.

Tags: child/parent, dreams, sewing/weaving, religion  
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"Pointed to markings! The whole Apo-mountain abode of leeches and deities is pointed to markings!" he mutters. His toes gripping the slippery clay are pointed to markings. 'The tender curled shoots of the giant fern are, why yes, these, too, are pointed to signs and slight, glancing records of things that may or may not have occurred. Ina's darkened fingertips are always pointing to, composing, and unravelling markings!' He thinks as he spots the limokon bird about to launch itself into the valleys of 'armed resistance,' where the few trees standing are marked by feathers of dead birds: 'the augury bird's beak points to no good.'

He imagines he is furious but just this moment Sartiga recognizes feelings of affectionate surrender to an umbilical logic. His mother can spot-dye as many lengths of abaka fibre as she cares to, with as many markings pointed to hills, frogs, vaginas, worms, crocodiles, rivulets as her dreams demanded, and Sartiga, who cares nothing for this language consisting entirely of invocations, will love it all.

In the past, she would have been called Inanisartiga, Sartiga's mother. It would have been hugely disrespectful to utter her name, a woman who had given birth and was hence older, moving towards Apo-like standing. The village would have made it a point to mark the almost-imperceptible, nearly-unremarkable evolution by ceasing, at some unpredictable time, to call out her name. Sartiga smiled and grimaced. He learned of this arcane matter from the anthropologist Mateo, not from the village elders. But now that the NGO busybodies and the tourists who come for the ikat-dyed fabrics call his mother Yefey, like she were a teenager, he often feels like he owns this tradition that neither his mother nor grandmother would have known of. He feels entitled to spaces no one could point to.

By the time Sartiga had graduated from the hill-top secondary school, he was 21. The widow Yefey was 35 then, a good age to have no babies and a lot of time to make ochre and charcoal-colored patterns on threads to be woven by younger women. Mateo was already living in the village. It was good to have finished with school, because the two teachers there both died in an ambush in the valley and no one came forward to replace them. Christian settlers had supposedly pointed to markings on that one Kawasaki motorbike, rigged, as normal in these parts, with a metal pod intersected by wooden planks to seat some 10 people; and the next you know, the assemblage of metal, wood, rubber, cloth, plastic, and people was dramatically disassembled in a few noisy instants. Mateo himself was lucky to have missed riding that ill-fated 'Skylab', as such contraptions are called.

That was eight years ago today, the 13th of April. Walking faster now, Sartiga remembers the day of his graduation with some dread. Mateo came late, though he promised to be the guest speaker. Seems all the horses were spooked that bright morning. The villagers were caught

up in the commotion over dead 'insurgents.' Yefey had been crying all night, but seemingly weeping for joy. The rest were more enthusiastic over figuring out the markings on the Skylab's parts and the corpse's clothes—to divine meanings in the violence—than in witnessing the ritual passage of 25 young people from illiterate natives to men and women who can write. Yefey cried some more during the ceremony, just when Mateo came, to give an apology and not a speech. Mateo said something about finally understanding what it means to point at markings. But everyone was too giddy then to be bothered to listen.

Sartiga found out this morning that his mother, too, is taken up by recollections of that day, this year, unlike other years when it did not seem like Yefey even knew how to count. She waited for Mateo to arrive at their hut before she sat in front of the loom of her thousand threads which were marked, to the half-way point, by patterns Sartiga suddenly recognized to be parts of a dismembered Skylab.

They wished to marry, Mateo and Yefey: 'in a tribal ceremony with no Christian parts', said Mateo. Yefey began a story for her son, which she left unfinished.

'Eight years ago,' she said, 'I dreamt these marks, and told Mateo because they had nothing to do with you. Mateo gave me a pencil to draw. I do not know how to draw, so he made the markings on paper. I directed his fingers. I said he will die if he does not continue drawing. I could have dyed the patterns on threads myself, but I knew I was too young to fly like the limokon bird up Apo-mountain and down to the valleys, and also fight and deceive the ghosts who want others to join them. Mateo said such a dangerous task is no longer necessary, because Sartiga can now write, and draw, and also fly, in his own way. And I said to Mateo then: you are already making the marks for me.'

Because Mateo accepted the omen, he took another trail. And now Yefey wishes to fly again. Sartiga continues walking to the junction where he will catch one of the many Skylabs still ferrying his people to town, with his dread dismembering into parts. His mother was wrong. 'The dream-patterns had everything to do with me.' He formed words around his secret: 'I pointed to the marks on the Skylab for the military man. I did not know what they meant, but I grew up sensitive to signs and can pick them up out of the jumble of life. I did not know there would be killings.'

Eight years ago, Mateo believed Yefey, and she, him. They now move faster across worlds they are making up. Loving them both, Sartiga believes neither of them. He races to the rickety vehicle, needing to go to town as soon as possible, and from there, to disappear. He can never go back.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Marian Pastor Roces.*