

L I Z S O L M S

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## Undergarments

Buildings softened by bombs,  
Aleppo is now the wreckage of Aleppo.  
At each intersection, four crumbly  
piles of essential elements:  
glass, steel, concrete.  
New monuments to the new city.  
Traffic lights lie limp like big dead  
birds caught underneath, electric entrails.

Aleppo turns the television  
into a vista from the early nineties.  
There's dad, home from work  
front and center on the couch.  
I sit beside him with flexible bird legs.  
Mom comes home to find us  
reclining in front of the green-tinted war.  
It was nighttime over there,  
and the falling bombs sounded quiet and airy.

Today under a hail of gunfire  
the Syrian bakers still bake bread.  
What protects them but their souls' silent plea?

The war is on in the doctor's office too,  
and I watch the screen in the waiting  
room like watching a fireplace.  
My doctor told me he was Mormon.  
He let it slip when we talked about the war  
before we talked about my body.

He always looks away when he's listening  
to my heart. So then I stare at him  
if as if I were wearing night vision goggles.  
I can see through to what I hear the Mormons wear—  
undergarments they call them.  
Underneath, everything glows green,  
organs churning.

Mormons say their undergarments deflect bullets,  
even heartbreak. I'd like a pair.  
The Mormons—they should drop  
their garments down over Syria  
like leaflets, like government corn.  
Rain down underwear onto Aleppo.

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**LIZ SOLMS** lives between Philadelphia and the island of Jamaica. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Post Road*, *Wasafiri*, *The Village Voice*, and the *Naugatuck River Review*, among other publications. In 2014, she received a Pushcart Prize nomination, and was a finalist for both the Sandy Crimmins National Prize for Poetry and Glimmer Train's New Writer Award. Most recently she was a finalist for the Breakwater Prize in poetry, and in the top 25 for Glimmer Train's Very Short Fiction Award. She holds an MFA from Bennington College.