Strange fruit

I am walking my dog, Osito,
when a bullet finds its way into my chest.
I do not know who killed me.
Perhaps it was police
or a vigilante pretending to be police
or one of the neighbors
or the person who carved KKK into our sidewalk
or the man who waves two large Trump flags
or my friend who liked a post
that said Blue Lives Matter on Facebook.

After I am shot, my sternum cracks open,
my heart visible and beating, like the soft skin
beneath a hermit crab's shell. Cherry blossom petals
bloom from my chest.

My hand falls, hitting the concrete.
I try to hold onto Osito's leash. He licks my tears,
my ears, my hands, but I do not stir.
He steps in my blood on his way home,
his red footprints leading my family back to my body.

After I am gone, hornet's nests crash and crack.
Hornets fall like bullet casings hitting the ground.
The sky rips open like an angry gash, coughing up dozens
of white mourning doves with broken beaks.

Even when it rains, my blood remains. They replace the sidewalk
with fresh new slabs of cement, but my blood stain
seeps through. There are cherry blossom petals
strewn across the lawn,
but no tree.

—Eva Lynch-Comer (she/her)

Mamiwata

—on "Mamiwata" artwork by Isabel M. Arche and Ramón M. Martín

i throw quarters in the ocean,
give beads of water to desert snakes.
write her name in my mirrors,
brush my hair with a fine-toothed comb,
rub mango juice on my skin before entering
the sea. dive underwater, close my eyes.
sing like a whale calling
to her love. low. legato.
water snakes wrap around
my arms, lift me to the surface.

mama sagrada
cuidame por siempre.

mamiwata watches me in the raindrops that gather
into puddles in the concrete, in the water
that swirls down my sink, in the steam
that fogs my window. i bathe with
rose petals and cinnamon, dip my head
between my legs, call yemaya. oshun. mami wata.
diosas del mar ayúdame. ven aquí, por favor,
porfa, por fin.

—Eva Lynch-Comer (she/her)

Find her

My stomach hardens into a trunk.
I knock on it. Hollow. Bang.
Sprout two more arms like Kali Ma.
Branches crawl out of my back, skeletal wings.

Leaves spring from my scalp.
A bluebird tastes my hairline.
She squats, squeezes eggs.
I walk carefully
step toe step toe
so as not to disturb her life-making.

I trek to the birch wood desk
at the end of the forest.
The light brown tree rings vibrate
when I sit in the chair,
my hands folded in the center,
obsidian crystal on my right,
gold wentletrap seashell on my left.

I flip over the shell and find
the Andromeda constellation pulsing,
a mollusk in search of water.
I drop the obsidian into the shell, wrench
two leaves from my hair, borrow
a song from the bird on my head.
The shell swallows it all up.

A pale white camellia flower blooms
from my navel, dressed in warm dewdrops.

—Eva Lynch-Comer (she/her)