

ONLY THE DEAD

JASMINE BALADAD-NALDAR

From the attack on Pearl Harbor
to Hiroshima and then Nagasaki.
A small silver speck descends,
releasing nuclear chain reactions
of annihilation and atomic atrocity.
Suffocating smoke swallows the sky,
obscuring burning buildings and lighting debris
afame. The rubble-ridden streets
are covered in layers of incinerated corpses.

Radiation steals innocent lives,
as victims vomit their own bile.
Blood seeps through their scorched skin,
like an overflowing stream of death.

A genealogy of disease and mutation
haunts both humans and wildlife alike.
Once fruitful crops plowed asunder,
and coral reefs housed radioactive fish.
Cancer afflicting all flora and fauna
until the Earth's resources are no more.
We threaten one another with retaliatory strikes
in this game of nuclear football.
Soldiers and civilians fall like expendable pawns
at the mercy of war-hungry kings.
This ongoing technological competition
to see who can build the deadliest weapons
will never end the stalemate
of mutually assured destruction.
Nations destroyed for the same reasons
we place multiple locks on our doors
or secure sensitive info with passwords.
We all assume everyone else is evil.

We dropped bombs to end the war,
yet only the dead have seen it.