

My Mom, from Santiago

by: Kyoung H. Park

My Mom, from Santiago, was written for Nou Se Zanmi: “We Are Friends,” a Benefit for Haiti. It was presented as a reading at Joe’s Pub by EST/Youngblood (New York, March 2010), featuring Cindy Cheung as “Mom” and directed by R.J. Tolan.

MOM: The television fell.

Your cousins came to help me
pick it up from the floor—
the television fell and it smashed on the ground.
The wine bottles rattled off the racks,
and the picture frames fell from the walls—
I grabbed a blanket and ran to the window,
I was thinking about jumping down.
I would have died if I jumped—
but the house was shaking,
and the dogs were barking.
I ran to the streets and
people started coming out of the bars.
Their phones weren't working,
a man was crying cause his phone wasn't working—
The cars were going up and down,
the pavement looked like a wave made out of concrete—
I had no candles, no light—
the phones and the electricity went out
and I tripped on the stairs going back in the house.

The south is gone.
Entire cities are in rubbles.
Of course the people are going to sleep on the streets—
where else are they going to go?
They're holding on to their possessions because—

A tsunami washed a whole island away.
There was no warning—no preparation...
Eight hundred dead...
That's what they say today, but there's going to be more.
13 out of 15 million people affected—
80% of the country's destroyed.

Hold on. It's still shaking.
It's been trembling all day long,
it just keeps on coming and coming,
and I get so scared.
I stepped on the wine bottles on the way out.
There was glass everywhere on the floor—
and now.. Now I have to pick them up,
all those little pieces...