

Kin Ma

Where to begin? Who was cruel, who was crueler?
Who was awake when they lit the torches?

We left our grandmothers with the torches.
We showed them how to keep the light.

We left them in the house. We left by moonlight—
We left them food and drink for a day or two.

They did not survive a day or two.
The soldiers came with rage and fire.

The floors went up in smoke. Their skin on fire—
Maybe they died in their sleep. Maybe they prayed.

Oh, God, there is no question. Of course they prayed.
—*Ashes to ashes and dust to dust*—

Not enough. We've had enough of ash and dust.
Let's begin. If they are cruel, then we'll be crueler.