

Yake-ato Sedai (Generation Post-burnings)

Mayu Kanamori

Every day my eighty-eight year old mother
walks across the busiest intersection
in the world to shop for dinner.
Three thousand people every two minutes,
half a million every day, make their journeys
across and over from all directions
at the Shibuya Scramble Crossing.

My mother was born in Tokyo
between the two world wars,
after the Great Kanto Earthquake spawned
firestorms and whirls, and before the napalm
in the cluster bombs from the B-29s
killed one hundred thousand in
code name Operation Meeting House.

My mother is a yake-ato sedai,
the generation born between 1935 and 1945,
with beliefs not too new nor thoughts not too old.
She never talks about her childhood days of war,
adolescent learnings of scarcity and confusion,
her growing years of hunger.
So hungry, so very very hungry.

My mother moves her thin legs quickly
across the busiest intersection in the world.
Without looking back, focused ahead on her favourite store.
And then she shops, she shops, she shops in Shibuya.
Every day she crosses Shibuya Scramble Crossing again
on her way home with plenty in her tiny hands.

Poetry: *Yake-ato Sedai* by Mayu Kanamori

Mayu Kanamori is a Tokyo born artist living in Eora Country, otherwise known as Sydney. She takes photographs, makes collages and performances, films and edits art documentaries, and writes plays and poems. Find more of her work at <https://mayu.com.au/>