

Sue Gillett

Witnessing Saigon

I.

It's *Tet*, nineteen sixty eight, and
Saigon's burning.
The cocktails clink,
champagne, molotov,
sampled from the rooftop.
Bomb-blast stutters in the blink
of a shutter,
wink of mechanical eye
that can withdraw
and recover
blank composure.

II.

She's nine in nineteen sixty eight.
Human. Her eye
is seared by fires
breaking close to kin.
Images are trapped in
eyelids shut on living pyres,
undefended,
unrevealed in quickly snapped,
chemically fixed,
two-dimensioned
short exposure.

III.

It's New Year's Eve, new century, and
Saigon's bursting.
The star lights flint,
pyrotechnics drop,
best viewed from the rooftop.
You watch memory's imprint
return to haunt
the festive scene, a raw veined,
skin-thin silk-screen,
superimposed,
encrypting a
grim disclosure.