The Metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa and My Grandpa

by Jaime Mera

Kafka, what were Gregor Samsa's
unruhigen Träumen—
restless dreams?
I've dreamed of two, tiny snakes
with skin
shimmering silver
like a sardine.
Flying out of an oak,
they wrap around my wrists.
In another, I've dreamed
of my grandpa
whose torso split in two;
insides pink like a spiral ham.
Dreams dissolve
like a copy
of a copy of a copy.
Kafka, what were Gregor's restless memories?
I remember my grandpa,
who died nine years ago,
carving the Christmas ham,
saying to my mom,
"You're a nothing."
He mistook
my sandalwood mala beads
for a subhar
and asked me if I enjoyed
killing people.
His brain processed information
like colors defying the color wheel—
red and blue makes green.
Last night, I dreamed
I was on an airplane with my cousin.
I no longer knew
his name
and I hid under the seat.
I awoke as myself.
Kafka, please transform me
into an ungeheures Ungeziefer—
tremendous vermin.
As Gregor awakes
from his restless dreams
he knows
yellow and blue makes green.

Image: "Brainyo" by Dana St. Mary. "The Metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa and My Grandpa" was written by Jaime Mera for *Rattle*'s Ekphrastic Challenge, October 2019, and selected as the Artist's Choice.

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