

Victory Signs in the Darkness

by Marguerite Bouvard

The young people are sitting in a café
 sharing their stories, intimacy,
 and red wine, and gathering
 at a concert in Bataclan music pulsing

in their veins, and sharing
 their excitement at a sport stadium,
 another generation enjoying
 the simple pleasures

of every day, when suddenly
 a burst of explosions shatters
 their lives. The massacre was meant
 to kill an embrace, music that lifted them

to the sky, and the joy that united
 them, by those who invented their
 name to draw the disaffected
 with false promises, who see

victory in shattered corpses,
 the breath of people's screams,
 a river of blood, and seek to drown out
 the voices of those who do not want

the law of the jungle. But after
 the week of sirens and police streaming
 through the streets, Paris
 regained its voice, as the cover
 of Charlie Hebdo shows
 a bullet-riddled man spouting
 champagne, with the words,
 "They have the weapons. Screw them.

We have champagne," and the young
 people flock to their cafes again
 because nobody tells a French person
 what to do, and a powerful voice

demolishes the massacre—a young man
 who lost his wife and remains
 alone with his tiny son
 pronounces a true victory,

"You will never get my hatred.

If God whom you blindly
killed made us in his image,
each bullet in the body of my beloved wife

is a wound in his heart. So I won't give
you the victory of my anger
which would be the same
ignorance that has defined you.

You would like me to sacrifice
Liberty for security. My wife
will accompany my son and I
everyday, and we will meet

in a paradise of free souls.
Everyday my son will answer you
with his happiness and freedom,
and you will not receive his hatred.”