

Laos takes how many months to earn escape?

At night. On foot. Foraging through jungle
toward a porous border crossing,
avoiding one that crawls with chaos
pressed against barbed fence,
a melee of splintered languages,
guards who punch with rifle butts.

Noy offers sautéed cicadas

to everyone at lunch

in a Hmong lilt of voice,

her child-sized hands

poised in presentation.

A few will eat one as a prayer with Noy.