

T I M L Y N C H

Living in the Killing Fields: In the Tank to Phnom Penh

We dared to conclude our decision was correct.

—Nuon Chea, *Enemies of the People*

Stuffed in that stove-box, tongues parched as if kissed
with flame, our seats against the wall, Pol Pot
hunched forward next to me, chin cupped in his
hand. Two men sat beside him, stared off. Not
a word between us. It was hard enough
to breath, air spiked with briny sweat-laced stench,
our black shirts blacker in our pits, damped cuffs
around our wrists. The hatches like two stanced
wounds opened like trap doors. Our heads crowned through
and found mossed tree limbs crooking down as bone-
thin bodies forked like ants around us. You'd
think dead men walked if not for those left prone
in roadside mud. A soft breeze hushed through, sung
past my ear, *they are yours*, and crisped my tongue.

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