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## The Sales Pitch

Judith Boogaart  
*Grand Valley State University*

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## Judith Boogaart    *The Sales Pitch*

The man in the three-piece suit  
sits at the head of the table,  
genial, handsome, full of himself.  
His politician's smile gapes open  
as he mouths the party line.  
"It has been a long and terrible battle,"  
he says, "but now the red dragon  
has been defeated and we can leave  
the past behind and move  
towards a glorious future."

An uncomfortable stirring,  
a slight cough, the shuffled feet  
of the visitors answer him.  
Their questions pop softly,  
like fizzled firecrackers,  
into the charged air.

"What death squads?" he responds.  
"Have you seen any death squads?  
They are merely the inventions  
of the foreign journalists.  
Have you been to the coast yet?  
You should visit our beaches.  
It is lovely there.  
The ocean curls up softly on the sand,  
the palm fronds dance in the breeze,  
and the resorts are very economical.  
You should go home and tell your people  
about our beautiful country.  
They could spend their holidays here.  
We need them to come and visit."

His words buzz around the room  
like a lazy fly. Their drone  
attempts to block out the cries  
of the mothers of the disappeared,  
the sounds of the beggar boys  
with glue on their breath  
asking for a dollar, the roar of trucks  
full of soldiers, armed and aimed,  
patrolling the city streets.

"Why speak of what is past?" he asks.  
"Tell your people about our climate,  
our beaches, our markets, our hotels,  
things Americans like.  
Tell them to come and visit  
our beautiful country."