

Burma: 8-8-88

Earthquake

In the Year with many Eights in it
the World trembled.

A fault like the San Andreas
had been rumbling in Burma for
decades sending seismic signals
the finials of *chedis* falling
off a gourd temple Bu Hpaya
toppling into the Irrawaddy.

In that year finally the Fault that
people tried to hop or jump over
could no longer be
ignored.

Two tectonic plates grated
against each other
one plate completely sliding under
one undermining the other
the other raised higher for the
opposing plate pushed

under it as

Everest always grows
higher as India pushes under
China.

Extinct volcanos belched
lava and mud
the Dragon bubbled sulphur
through its
nostrils

rivers changed
course

children spoke with
the wisdom of adults
grownups babbled
like
fools

leaders appeared students and matrons.

It rained human
ashes and bones

Buddha images shed tears

swollen at the

breast

the blood of children

flowed.

Kyi May Kaung, *She-Monkey goes West*, 1993.