



[nether]

/ fortnight # 7



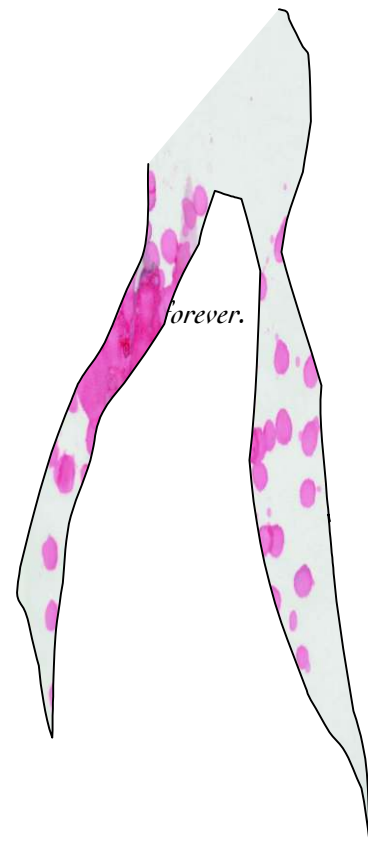
Christine Herzer
Simona Terron
Jim Davis
Anirban Roy Choudhury
Nazir Ali
Kushal Poddar

about the marks,

fingers wrapped
around a man's
right knee the
woman has freckles
high cheek bones
and
a dream
he is holding
a glass of champagne
he has no face

I
want
to say
to her:

*Why don't you —
Take off his belt
Place it around your neck, I
wouldn't
worry
about the marks, I
am told
true
love
lasts*



Christine Herzer is a poet and visual artist. Her work appears in Fence, RealPoetik, American Letters & Commentary, Blackbox Manifold, BlazeVOX, elimae, nth position, Spiral Orb, Platform Magazine [India], Upstairs at Duroc [France], Fogged Clarity among others. An e chapbook is forthcoming with H_ngm_N Books. She received her M.F.A. from the Bennington Writing Seminars [Vermont, USA]. In 2011 she designed and led the 2week-Poetry-Workshop 'We die and become architecture' for the National Institute of Design [NID] in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Jim Davis / Three Poems

The Dripping Faucet

They said he was a good soldier,
a constant in the boy scout reserves, strapping
frasier firs to station wagon rooftops.
When he grew, the man at the newsstand said
Boy, you know how to live!
Assuming he would snack on crackers and cheese
that night. Most nights. There is a crippling efficiency
in laundry and dishes and other such things.
In '84, Reagan threw fat fistfuls of funding
at Walter Mondale, told him to screw himself.
Of course, there was more then than there is now.
And somehow the mystery brought everyone closer.
Alone on the beach, he jabs his cocktail umbrella
into tiny ice cube islands, hoping they'll sink,
melt, and make his drink more bearable.
He sees a woman tucking an auburn tress behind her ear,
then she twirls gum and pops it with her mouth.
He is barebacked on the lawn,
stirring slightly, hoping for the promised wind.
Damn you, Augustine, for questioning yourself.
Damn you, Springtime, and all your ruined cities.
Damn this heat and our patchwork lives.
The faucet dripping, the shrapnel of confetti
from a ticker tape parade sticking to the sink.
Damn the whiskers on the canvas-come-basin.
Explain why we need so many soldiers,
and how it ever seemed like a good idea.
From the tap, expanding beads,
the fullest among them at the lip of the drain.

The Last Tasmanian

On the morning of the genocide, he carved kiwis
in a field. The harbor and the ships painted gold
by morning sun. The day clouded.
When evening fell, the torches lit faces like masks.
Fire touched the crying houses
and farmers and farmer's sons.
When it ended, maps were rolled and stuffed in bags,
chests filled and gathered. He was grateful.
He was alone. The boats pointed seaward.
As the night turned over, he sat on a log
and split the brown whiskered flesh with a knife,
sliced a section of emerald fruit, which drooled
from itself, over his wrist, to the sand.
He placed the knife tip at his teeth and let the flesh
slide between his lips. He pressed its sharp sweetness
with his tongue, gathered its juice and swallowed,
confident the final rowboat had set.
All things considered, he agrees about the suffering.
Now he does his best to keep branches off the siding
of his home. He slips shears between thorny spirits
of rose limb and snips. He pushes a cart
through grocery aisles and brings sacks of fruit
to his kitchen, where he carves kiwis on a board.
He chews sweet flesh with reverence.
From his kitchen window, a truck groans
and pulls its cargo to the curb. A silver door rises
and brown-slat fruit crates are wheeled from it.
The kitchen sways and tilts like a ship deck.
A farmer stares back at him, wheat grass between his teeth,
a thumb stuck behind his overall strap, assures that
this is fresh as fruit gets! He drops
the blade to the floor, throws the bolt on the door.

When Parking is Tight

He watches from the window, the blinds
have parted. I am squeezing myself
forward, crank right, reverse, crank left,
park between his car and another.
There is no room to pull out, but can you see
how close I am to the door. He is watching me
from an empty room, save a chair near the window.
Save the blanket on his lap. Save a ceramic figurine
on a small table. Save him. Save 50%,
says Mufflers 4 Less, stenciled on the side of a van.
In the morning I find the fat E has grounded
the see-saw needle. The tank is stone dry.
And there's a small crack in the bumper.
He helps me mush to the pump. He's that kind of guy.
How did I ever fit in? There's barely a breath between.
He's the kind of guy who takes topless photos
of himself after 30-40 pushups, a blink of light
reflected in the mirror. He is the kind of guy
who keeps an umbrella on him always.
He's the kind that bounces knuckles off the ceiling.
And she's the kind of girl who answers
with heels on the hardwood. Who will sleep around
and go hung-over to work. Who will spend an hour
in a parked car with the kind of guy he is.

Jim Davis is a graduate of Knox College and now lives, writes and paints in Chicago. Jim edits the North Chicago Review, and will be appearing as the feature artist for the upcoming issue of Palooka Magazine. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in Poetry Quarterly, The Ante Review, Chiron Review, The Café Review, Red River Review, Midwest Literary Magazine, and Blue Mesa Review, among others.

Anirban RoyChoudhury / One Poem

Vendetta

The dusk carried a message today
In guise of a verbal scrap
Innocence's child and an uncharitable father
Fire a row over some whelp's body.
"It's dead," said he, adjusting his heavy specs
His son sassed up some naive quibble
Curiosity declined descry, turned back the last time
A forlorn verdict, "It's asleep".

Anirban is 19. He is an English literature student from Scottish Church College, Kolkata. This is his first publication. He writes because he wants people to listen.

Simona Terron / One Poem

Disengagement

A soft pop as I disengage my head
From my heart from my groin
I hear you moan lightly in your sleep
A cross between a mumble and a sigh
And wonder at our respective states:
You, asleep, spent, resting your weary self
As I stare, awake, at the ceiling and wrestle mine
A dog barking somewhere far away in the night
Distracts my snarling thoughts from turning on each other
And instead I catch a glimpse of your face
Completely relaxed, calm, it surprises even me
My instinctive leaning over to kiss your forehead
And while doing so I inhale the scent of your hair.
This is all I have of you to call all mine
The image of a divinely supine you beneath my covers
Your feet bathed in moonlight stealing through the window
Of my 22nd floor 4-bedroom, luxury apartment.
And I ponder in panic at the thought
Of your waking, brow creased in confusion
As you try, still sleep fogged, to decipher
Why my side of the bed is empty
And what my slippers, one carelessly turned over,
Are doing near the wide-open French windows.

Simona Terron, a journalist for the last ten years, occasionally writes poems when inspiration strikes. She loves cats and enjoys spending quiet time with them when she's not reading or cooking or working on a charity initiative called The Bicycle Project.

Nazir Ali / One Poem

Prayer for the Dead

The ten holy men,
dressed in shades
of white, divide
the Holy Book
three chapters each,
and recite, swaying,
each one a pendulum
of prayer.

No halo
surrounds the heads
of these holy men.
A few of them
are coarse, earthy.
Then my eyes
are drawn to
the callused ankles,
the tread-worn soles
bent in prayers –
athletes
serving God.

Each busy
in his own
plot of divided holiness.
Yet their
tributaries of chanting
collect,
gather force
enough to make
my scientist brother
whisper,
See, the ring of flowers
vibrate,
our father's spirit is here.

M.Nazir Ali is an Associate Professor of English working in Tagore Arts College Puducherry, India. His poems have appeared in Indian Literature, Nthposition, Brown Critique, Asia Writes and Reading Hour. Kavya Bharati will feature his poems in the coming edition.

Kushal Poddar / One Poem

On a sublime note

The note,
a surprise element,
meanders through the traffic
stalled at the middle bridge.

We close our eyes
standing still on the tip
of a pyramid,
our stretching indexes
in touch with the finger
we cannot see.

Kushal Poddar resides in Kolkata. Previously, he has been published in Bengali on several occasions and has written fiction and scripts for television mini-series as well. His English poetry has appeared in various print and online magazines. He is the author of “All our fictional dreams” and his poems have been published in the book “Poor Poet’s Pantry: Collaborative Poems”.