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Kristine Muslim
John Tustin
Russel Jaffe
Minal Sarosh
Amritha Dinesh

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Amritha Dinesh / One Poem

Support Systematic

Swallow O.

Suckin then close throat

Without any outward muscular movement.

The order doer,

unquestioner.

Later, dim the light of

I toldya

In those adoringly eyes

Lowered to the sole's bottoms

To be a souls mate.

Dig deep for the lies

To be buried

Cover with unseeing eyes.

Untalking tongues

Back teeth clenched smiles.

Push back life

To push forward living.

Amritha Dinesh is a part time copywriter, writer, reader, poet, cook and day dreamer.

John Tustin / 2 Poems

I Sit Alone and Terrified

I sit alone and terrified,
unable to move
as angels are being strangled in the night,
as the weeds spring up from every crevice
of the soul,
as eyeglasses are smacked off of crying faces
and trampled by evil grinning women.

I sit alone and terrified,
unable to move
as razed bumps form along my body,
as my mouth stinks like rotten meat,
as my flesh crawls with the possibilities
of destiny,
as my dignity crawls slinking from my body
and dies gasping
on cold uncaring pavement.

I sit alone and terrified,
unable to move
as black wings encapsulate the room
with purple shadows,
as angels scream, their faces pulped
by fists of nonchalant raging iron.

The angels scream and no one hears.
And I scream and no one hears.
Tied to the chair, staring into the black,
I scream and no one hears.
No one hears because their ears are filled
with their own screams.

The Loneliness Of

The loneliness of dripping faucets.
The loneliness of a bedroom without sound or light.
The loneliness of the incessant mosquito.
The loneliness of obsequious pleading to oneself in the refrigerator light.
The loneliness of tedious mechanical movement.
The loneliness of shattered glass lying ignored.
The loneliness of the second hand of the clock.
The loneliness of sirens slicing the restive night.
The loneliness of words without response.
The loneliness of assumed non-reciprocation.
The loneliness of clicking keys and empty locks.
The loneliness of an addled mind, rotting teeth, rotting soul.
The loneliness of plugged-up tears.
The loneliness of stopped-up drains.
The loneliness of an unkempt head.
The loneliness of two people in two rooms.
The loneliness of unresponsive limbs, heart, genitalia.
The loneliness of July 2nd, 2009.
11:36 P.M.
11:41 P.M.
11:42 P.M.
Now.

John Tustin's poetry is forthcoming in Bryant Literary Review, The Medulla Review, Chiron Review, and others. He began writing three years ago after a ten year hiatus at the behest of a psychiatrist. She was right. fritzware.com/johntustinpoetry is a link to his poetry online.

Kristine Ong Muslim / Two Poems

No time for miracles

There is no more ground left
in this farmland.
The motion of grass
scraping the wind
is obscene
like a hand groping
inside a skirt of sky.

Rain squanders away,
makes the same mistake
of letting the drought in.
Inside the stable where
the white horses are dying,
something echoes:
the sound of God whining.

The Doorman

My gloved hands are the hinges that creak and flap in the absence of wind. Although rust is the first sign of weakness, I unfurl my palms, let you in.

Kristine Muslim's work has appeared in numerous publications including Boston Review, Contrary Magazine, Mary Journal, Narrative Magazine, Potomac Review, Southword, and The Pedestal Magazine. She has also authored the full-length poetry collection, A Roomful of Machines (Searle Publishing) and several chapbooks published by small presses. She has been nominated five times for the Pushcart Prize and twice for Best of the Web 2011.

Minal Sarosh / One Poem

Joss Sticks

And when hypocrisy
was burning you like joss sticks,
I saw that your actions didn't hold shape,
ghost hands went up in smoke
words beguiled with fragrance,
spreading for a short time
while truth burnt
and silently fell down to ashes.

Minal Sarosh has a collection of her poems *Mitosis and Other Poems* published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata in 1992. Many of her poems have appeared in *Times of India*, *Journal of Poetry Society (India)*, *Chandrabhaga*, *Emerging Voices*, *Voices of Hope*, *Poetry Chronicle*, *The Silken Web* and *Winners Vol.III* (Unison Publications. Besides, her poems have also appeared in online journals like *Muse India*, *Asia Writes*, *Danse Macabre*, and *Other Voices International Project* and *The Brown Critique*.

Russell Jaffe / Two Poems

You

You're here like:

 a
bean, a cream colored bed, a
 push—

 to this I say you're

the scar tissue

 healing over the back of my
mouth, my slats of pink light under the windows,
 my opening and closing

 throat
planted in rows and
it's spring

 time

Final throat ache

The creek flushed on, the branches mumbled loudly as they shoved between each other in the breeze, and instantly, immediately it was dark. We stayed in a little room next to a barn converted into a bed and breakfast.

The little room stuck out from the side of a barn.
I drank the rest of the light from the jar
and then under the quilts
the dark drank us in, swallowing
in big gulps, lapping loudly as the creek
did, dark as the licorice colored water
over stones.

Russell Jaffe teaches English at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA and holds an MFA in poetry from Columbia College. His poems have appeared in Shampoo, MiPOesias, The Portland Review, La Petite Zine, and others. He is the author of the chapbooks Note/Worthy (Scantly Clad Press, '08) and G(*)D (Pudding House, '10) and editor of the online journal O Sweet Flowery Roses.

Vasudha Pande / Two Pieces

Noise

Every night I stare at the television for sixty minutes, trying to replace memories of my dead baby with the irritating drone of soaps and commercials. I look forward to this ritual all day. Allowing the TV to pour its cheap imitations of reality into me, I reel in the comfort of not having to think about anything at all.

Sitting in my pajamas, I let the noise drown out everything else. That's the easy part.

The difficult part is getting into bed and pretending to fall asleep. It's annoyingly difficult to pretend to be asleep when you live alone. Especially if a baby is supposed to keep you up all night.

Sometimes, though, I feel relieved that the baby didn't live longer. She looked a lot like me — she would probably have grown up to have throbbing headaches, and cold feet and hands, too. And that would have been my fault, not hers.

Motion

i stand next to you on the metro your head is bowed your face is burnt and you hold a man's death certificate in your hand i wonder who he was and how he died and how that makes you feel i want to ask you questions but you keep staring at the floor i wait for you to look up but you never do and you do not realize that time has not stopped and the earth is still moving i look at you and wonder when you will move i think of things to say to you things that might ease your pain and help you move on someday you will look around you and notice that everything is fine and the sky still changes color and chocolate still tastes good and drinking lemonade while listening to lo-fi music still takes you back to the summer when you were ten and happy and free and that might comfort you but maybe you are not looking for comfort or maybe you find comfort in pretending that time is dead and the earth has stopped moving and everything is lost

Vasudha Pande lives in Delhi, India. She enjoys writing, talking to strangers in bookstores, and terrorizing kids. She blogs at <http://vpande.wordpress.com>.