

**[14:] THIS IS THE STORY OF ALL PEOPLE WHO MUST  
FACE THE PANGS OF DEVELOPMENT.**

*JODI CHILSON*

One puzzled species that has yet to prove its worth  
who wanted to persist in stone for ever  
and hated life with heart and soul  
our frontier crossed, our forces in retreat.

On their brow and mailed bosoms heedless perched  
the birds of prey. But before the high and ponderous door,  
between the tall houses of a street as still and decorous  
as a well-kept alley in a cemetery

he watched the stars and noted the birds in flight;  
that glance was speech more lucid than man's  
and more moving than a woman's tears.

His jokes were stale; like wartime, he was dull;  
and later on I seemed to see his collected languid manner,  
when he said one day, 'This lot of ivory now is really mine.'

## [16:] KURU WOMEN VISIT THE BATTLE-FIELD

With horse and sword he drew the girls' attention.  
“Hither and yon,” the Percy said, “As every fight must go—  
the stretcher, the phantom-bearers, the wild crowd  
of obedient worshippers, the gloom of the forest,

the glitter of the reach between the murky bends,  
the beat of the drum, regular and muffled like a beating.”  
He brotherly greeted the armourers stooping to weld them.  
“What do you think I ought to do—resist? Eh?

I want no more than justice. Of the present work. I'm afraid  
they will try to claim it as theirs though. H'm. It is a difficult case.”  
Censors and soon the fragrance of myrrh and frankincense.

I rang the bell before a mahogany door on the first floor.  
The dangers and the punishments grew.  
And tyrants held him up as an example.

## [17:] PUBLISHERS NOTE

Empire follows Art and not vice versa as Englishmen suppose.  
Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows  
gave them promise for fair weather; that can be traced back  
through every epoch of history, perhaps.

Fieldhouse was discussing white colonists in the Americas,  
but his general point goes beyond that: "Who has killed your son?"  
The demon replied, "You have killed my son."  
The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in,

and the sun and moon were made to give them light.  
His care-free swagger was a fine invention. Shahrazad replied,  
"With the greatest pleasure, dear, happy King":

Then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence,  
a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike.  
"This is basically the way all stories go, Grandpa."

## [18:] THE NOBEL PRIZE ACKNOWLEDGES THE UNIVERSAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS FICTION

His handsome face was suddenly transformed as it lit.  
The bent gilt legs and backs of furniture shone in indistinct curves;  
that of the rulers and that of the distant ruled, and in turn each  
had a set of interpretations of their common history

with its own perspective, historical sense, emotions, and traditions.  
He says in his annotations to Reynold's *Discourses*, "Art  
and Science. Remove them or Degrade them and the Empire  
is No more." While that army of theirs seems sufficient.

Yet ideas can be true, although men die: Men of sorry kennel,  
racked by guilt. Over to the other side. I am suddenly reminded:  
What I am interested in are the strategies

for breaking it. The problem isn't just one of salary;  
"The engagement is an obstacle to the both of them," he said.  
William Blake is unrestrained on this point

[20:] SOME WOUNDED MYTH THAT ONCE MADE  
CHILDREN GOOD.

It is also noticeable that Ravan's second brother  
also had the courage to censure his elder's action,  
in the glow of fires, within the patient woods,  
those broken phrases come back to me:

Homeless, disterred, these know themselves defeated.  
Later I realized that my efforts were not understood  
by the victims themselves, for I wrote my poems  
in classical arabic. My cattle that once grazed upon flowers

and produced rich milk, decide on what is tradition  
and what is not, what relevant and what not. But abandoning  
life and riches—teachers, fathers, mothers—a boy

brings milk and bowls. There is a plan.  
They will not allow my name to be mentioned at home,  
as though it were a sin.

A fork on a table, a relic from a meal moments before, the plates already removed. He  
stands, looking down at girl sitting poised on edge of couch. She looks at the fork, her lips  
curling into a grin. *Go ahead; come on...I dare you.* she says taunting anger to physical, his  
upper body still leaned forward, bent to full extent of presence.

Man sits in chair—or side of bed—head leaning over book open in hands. He reads  
aloud the words to the small girl tucked beneath covers. The covers are decorated with  
hand sown little girls in wide dresses and sloping bonnets. This is a ritual. He reads; she  
listens. *Where the Red Fern Grows* and 'the dog who would be wolf.'

*All you do is lie. I'll never be able to trust you. I will never trust you again.* He says. Despite truth  
being told, guilt of telling. Guilt of being.

She sits on a counter, listening. He stands rapt in storytelling. Stories of a teacher he  
once had who for days would explain Russian history and politics with such passion and  
fervor that he who tells her of such tells now would love such a similar stage. His voice  
fills the room, not with presence, but with sound as though to an audience of many  
despite there being only one. Feeling the stage of linoleum, he rolls and bends into stories

of further youth, now in tones of nostalgia. His eyes—wide, blue clear—seeing to the top rows of the audience beyond her.

She begins to cry, understanding too much of what isn't told. *It was great!* He had begun. *Whenever I wanted candy, I just had to go see my mother. She'd always give me a dime so I'd leave her alone. Then, I'd go and get my candy.* He grins, the candy wrappers in the dark of his eyes. *One day the machine broke.* His eyes now bigger, mimicking the child he once was standing in front of the busted machine, bending to collect his loot, and his alone. *The machine just kept popping out candy bars. I must have nearly emptied the whole thing. I had my fill, and saved the rest!* His hands together, clasping in relish.

She cries, but not initially, only after sequence of such tales. Each revealing this man in ways she had not been aware. This man father who was also a boy. Stories of the home that was his father's business: a school of technology. A house of stone. A yard of pavement.

She cries. She cries harder because he is confused by her tears. Because he hasn't understood what he has told her. Because he doesn't understand what he has revealed. She knows and is afraid. She knows and is pained hollow.

## PSALM

a woman curved

dollar & center like an anchor: \$

pos'd, an Aztec princess

pistol shot dead, *tum tum tum* drop

edified, codified: ancient, scientific

place

another god-damned war, man grabbed

greedy and blood-black oil, quick sand

throat tight, the twisting hand

*it can't happen here*

a wished intervention, dictated repose

mandate

pulling down, metal torn and folded  
steel like a napkin wadded and tossed  
10 splintered in failed suicide

fuck

red as sex; limbs wound tight  
in passion bright as sun silver  
liquid incensed spirit

dangling, a flower w/o water

a lazy day afternoon

painful reclamation

a perfect reader (read: *self*)

another paper torn from flesh  
miscarried  
grown black, the spreading red  
vain bled

water dark pavement

clear sky blue

misgiving life cold

cookie cutter perfect

a potato god on eBay

landscape thin

self disposed

buzz flash anti-aircraft  
attached to HumVees,  
inaugural protection  
for Black Tie & Boots  
40 million dollar  
imperial crowning

licked from spoon  
the batter pour'd  
cake lain in pain  
spreading in oven heat  
silent and still lest it fall

clap, twack, clap

spinning dance soft feet down

the tan leather, soft rubber tread  
running stair, over cobbled ruin  
patrolling for death

angel'd death

the force of god, both sides  
invoked

muse



bleeding womb  
lack of faith, fertile

Muslim man, imprisoned man,  
Guantanamo man, face smeared,  
separated from Allah via impure blood

PoppyCock

snap'd shots, ten year sentence  
the commanded government issue

wrist rap'd while superiors promoted

war crime  
criminal

inaugurate with fixed red hands  
on book, no longer read

threads

meatless limbs

light dead eyes  
of returned, hopeless dread  
battle dead

*oh, sweet jesus*

fuck

keeping bodies, prisons  
and endless holes  
of burnt black night

recessed echoes  
of blue black eyes

*nineteen: the average man of fifty*

G. I.

our self-same enterprise

on the damp cold ground

flash-bulb heat

keeping up morale

delusion

fight

fight spounge bob squarepants  
that queer bard of the pineapple  
under the sea

*spare our children, oh Lord*

and his gay lifestyle

gotta reinforce

hate

all volunteer army

cartoon enemy

drawn Darwin

fagot yellow savior, anti-christ  
square pants, tolerance

spell-checked, and double-crossed

reformation

godless pencil sketched

the thin lipped people

dancing in knitted layers  
poppy field; orange as the sun  
spread, swaying dance  
spun opium smoke thin

*praise jesus*  
*em, yes, geez-us*

Allah of the morning  
and of the night, almighty

bleeding delicious

sweet as a pomegranate  
seed perched on tongue  
sucked tender juice, the taut flesh

almond white  
and wheat

nutritious

thirst; a water-less people  
barren of need

drying out like cheap skin

folded in corner, shadow room

a dead job sucking, listless shadow  
the people inside hallow

chaff

a skin people

tv feed: angelic  
glow spreading joy

i v soul

*praise jesus*

a gray hair mirror'd

21 and in her sleep—heart  
murmur'd silent—peace

unknown—made known  
via death—news reel carnage

controlled

fox'd

*it could happen to you*

but not here, not there,  
you're American, and white,  
and un-uniformed

sleep softly Thames  
and hear my song

a soldier returns from war  
killed in his home—murder'd  
in Mississippi

slick sick Death

*ashes to ashes*  
and walking bones

60 years since the last known holocaust

fire still burning bright  
in name of freedom

and God

*have mercy*

Allah the merciful

*the bell toils for thee*

## THE WIND FOR RAIN SPEAKS

dull roots  
caged, ropey  
choking

dirt thirst

marie, marie  
mother of god

pray for us sinners

store'd images  
beaten

life bind  
broken and shadow'd: red

the lux and flow of latin

the language of curse

poppies and curls  
taken bleeding

to the garden  
neither dead  
the silence

and drowned slits  
humped

ashes to ashes  
engraven beneath fog of flood

so many

exhaled

before his feet

Joyce Street: a blind eye  
and ashplant ready  
another drink another

the dawn: Celtic Twilight

obsessed myth, though not my own

a history held beneath wing

vile survivory

unworked, raw  
in prolonged flame

sea burnt green  
the stain'd glass:  
the blood of Christ

again the stumps of time

under  
    firey points

the bar room hush

and thinking pints  
    elixir of thought  
loosen'd  
    forgotten  
        pearls  
made ready

a trivial rag

cistern, copper tinge

the taste of missing truth

others will

long-faced and wide eye'd  
awaken'd and dumb

the last to leave  
the rantings of tongueless barbs

lost, the last fingers  
across brown land

burnt and bare  
as naked wrists

curve flesh  
without address

song of men,  
the bust of rats,  
slimy bellies round  
hidden in fancy rags  
and veneer smiles, pasted on

speaking in spellbinding tongues  
like sweat fancy of disillusioned,  
avenged

happy to be taken

a weekend of toil

the sweat of artists  
and broken limbs

tin food spread  
resurrection  
forced in stays

unbutton'd  
untold

w/o remorse  
one bold stare  
beady black

thin line fine

indifferent, enacted all

the lowest of the dead:  
finding the stairs unlit

unformed  
a cigarette, ash

bless'd water

a public bar, sawdust

and flaccid tar

drifting

a field of green,  
green as god

pecked with yellow  
like scattered grain

connected with bloody hands

a burning bush  
and death foretold

a hang man drown'd in air

new tongue whispers

a wheel  
the rubber and road  
of corn  
gold green

a field in agony  
carved of sad reprove

distant living death  
a pink creature of black  
center'd eyes

a dream that cannot spit

I slept, seeing him near  
standing in doorway  
wordless

the air died in throat,  
lungs pushing silence  
between parched lips

empty the sound  
could not fade,  
none came

a deep slumber—conscious  
but unable to wake



who was I when body could not speak,  
when speaker made silent  
by body weight

as dead—  
and empty chapel where only the wind breathes

waiting for rains  
the day crack'd land  
begging for red

we have only existed

by way of lean solicitor;  
a prisoner and prison each

night fall—light fails,  
a gripless hand;  
flesh weight pulling

earth's law heavy

a fragment shorn in ruin

wrap me up. I am small.

Moon as center ripple in folding black.

The shell: flesh skin sloth solid. Risen upon spine like an altar.

She rolls into a ball, knees into chest, arms bound wound about face, eyes  
pressed wet in dark of bent limbs.

She can only cry in their cover.

The sob pushes her lungs like gravity but she holds her breath against it.

Wincing into the folds of her bent gray bones, imagining the backs  
of her eyes are the corner of her bed; her place in the space  
between, at its edge.

When she dreams, she sweats them through  
her clothes.

This self of pain.  
This self of fear.

She eats to fill; drinks the words like salvation.

Green brightened by black of rain. The barren rock. Tongue parched of flesh.