



Indelible in the Hippocampus is the Laughter

- Christine Blasey Ford, testifying about her sexual assault to the Senate

Sialkot 1969

Anytown, Anytime

Silk of girlhood
raw thread snapped

adolescence, womanhood

he was the one who had tied
the, *rakhi*, run his fingers on
the *linea negra* while she was still
in her mother's womb

the only safe place

to awake
straddled
by a huge and heavy staleness,
unable to move

why does she think of chess?

cornered
pinned, trapped, drugged, addled
a toxic maleness

the corpulent assaulter
on top of her,
one hand stuffing
a kerchief in her mouth and the other
holding her down while stabbing
bulbous penis, malignant root, digging in
call a spade a spade
and not

behind, beside, inside

others

took a section of pipe

edible pawnography

blood,

where
copious, ephemeral, indelible everywhere

her insides, were

terrified and still
unable to move, she stares
up into the high Victorian ceilings
with their dark ominous beams
All the while
the clink, clink, clink
of water dripping
in the metal bucket

spilling

After wards, (*gauze, iodine, sedative*) she finds

behind the bathroom door

words, too have power
sutra, the cotton from which
turning the wheel

to rearrange
suture
she will be queen

the pieces
spun
again.

Splitting Screens

Broken gram, her
weight and balance, beam, repeat
doesn't miss a single beat

Woman as splitting
headache, bad apple, spittoon for seed,
bossed from on high, sifting

Through shifting feelings, fear
like a clot of flour in the cake
no one would know the measure

Of that furtive cupping, unread blood
would boil over, yet remain
hallways in the marrow, dread

Hollow as a bone to pick
and pick it up she did, knowing
those hated eyes that held

Her pittance hostage like a soft
summer peach biting
her lips to keep an angry dam

From spilling the beans
because par for the course
men were golfers, women holes.

'Splitting Screens' Originally published in the Summer/Fall 2018 double issue of Pratik

Current Affairs

It doesn't matter what
you are wearing, whether headgear
squarely in the left-right crosshairs
or a slit across your throat

You could strip
the blush blood leaves from Eve's
Fall trees, skirt the subject
from head to henna red toe

Pull the wool, thick as a load
shedding night over eyes and mouth
and arm your legs with leather
fast and furious too

And still the tentacles
would find you, bump
and grind right behind you
octopi to occupy

Each crack and crevice
so tiresome to be
female-as-fortress
what would you give to float

Possess an infinite moat, a mote that blinds
aggression of the regressive stripe
this is your dream as you swim
hooked in a sea of fishing eyes

That the voltage of women's verse will rise
versus a weaponized gaze, unfazed
by curses or cursor, a current to shock
unlock the dark chokehold

Until #MeToo sings the body electric.

**Poems excerpted with permission from Indelible In the Hippocampus is the Laughter; one of 5 movements in Zero Period, Sophia Naz's latest poetry manuscript.*