

## Three Poems

By Tejaswinee Roychowdhury<sup>1</sup>

### Dead Boy

*A found poem from the short story, War, by Luigi Pirandello, translated into English by Michael Pettinati.*

a shapeless bundle—moaning,  
his face death-white,  
felt it his duty was to be pitied.

a boy of twenty—  
twisting and wriggling,  
at times growling like a wild animal.

twice wounded,  
bro-ken into pie-ces,  
and s p l i t amongst teeth.

bloodshot eyes, this is the truth:  
girls, cigarettes, illusions,  
and silence all around.

before dying, he shook his light  
with a shrill laugh,  
which might have been a sob.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tejaswinee Roychowdhury is a lawyer and Pushcart-nominated writer-poet-artist from West Bengal, India. She edits *The Hooghly Review* and her publications include *Taco Bell Quarterly*, *HOAX*, *Muse India*, *The Bayou Review*, *The Chakkar*, *Stanchion*, *San Antonio Review*, *Drieck* and others. Twitter: [@TejaswineeRC](https://twitter.com/TejaswineeRC)

## Before Yamaloka

Where the dust fails to settle  
 along civilization's fault lines,  
 burying children under rubble  
 like worthless clay figurines;  
 where old Hitler is unbenched  
 to air raid sirens and a thousand  
 effigies are drunk on red rum  
 from the Overlook Hotel,<sup>2</sup> I imagine  
 Lord Yama<sup>3</sup> is pained by the stench of death.




---

<sup>2</sup> "Red rum" or "redrum" and the "Overlook Hotel" are references to Stephen King's novel, *The Shining*. The word "redrum" refers to "murder" as the protagonist child repeatedly sees the word "murder" in its mirror image. The photograph is of the Replica of the scenography of the film *The Shining* at Stanley Kubrick: The Exhibit, TIFF, Canada, from a Wikimedia source made available by Carlos Pacheco for publication under the Creative Commons CCO License.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Yama is the Hindu god of death. Yamaloka is his realm, where human beings, after death, are believed to be held before judgment.

## Origins of a Crater

The field in front of my grandparents' house  
is marked by a crater. It coddles an ecosystem  
of luscious grass and floods every monsoon.  
Organizers of the annual Durga Puja avoid  
building any part of the pandal<sup>4</sup> over it  
while gully cricketers seem undeterred  
by its dramatic intrusion on their pitch.

I once investigated the origins of the crater.  
Some said it was a bomb prefaced by a siren.  
Others weren't so sure but nodded gravely.  
All concurred circa 1971 was trouble  
but nobody was quite paying attention—  
hungry nights, rations, and other things.<sup>5</sup>  
My investigation remains inconclusive.

---

<sup>4</sup> A pandal is a large temporary bamboo structure erected in India for religious purposes or public meetings.

<sup>5</sup> The Bangladesh Liberation War was fought in 1971 marking a landmark moment in history not just for Pakistan and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) but also for India. This poem refers to one of the regions where the people who were forced to migrate overnight to India's West Bengal from East Pakistan during the 1947 partition, settled. Many of these people were still struggling with poverty during the 1971 crisis and thus, did not have the liberty to think of anything but their own difficulties which mostly centered around securing basic amenities such as food.