

## Friday Midnight Rain

Jane Dare

Friday midnight rain  
coming down black and sideways,  
drivers start to pull over, pull off  
put it in park to wait it out;

My metallic-blue Isuzu is under torrents,  
his AC coughs up humid phlegm; Big Blue  
is twenty years old, his valve stems cracked  
and wrinkled skin, and interstates are no  
longer a friendly place.

I float four-wheel drive past cars begging  
life boats, passengers blur into specters  
behind shower-glass windows, peeking,  
while a banshee cries, and home is still  
an ill-omened thirteen miles away.

Huebner at I-10, police draped black  
and hard-shelled, signal with red-hot flares  
to tell Big Blue and other traffic, exit here now.  
I slog down the ramp and am captured  
by the surreal blend of interstate lamplight  
on bare-swept cement in pearl-gray mist;

Eastbound I-10 is dead. Two ambulances  
set, doors closed tight, no attendants in sight,  
but five cop cars, no light, windows charcoal  
dark, they sit at odd angles to the side rails  
to the center stripe, to each other, motionless.

All this must be someone's photoshopped  
snap-shot: grand haloes around the light poles,  
radiated golden dust sparkles on each particle  
of nighttime;

While the steering and rolling wheels crawl  
in unnatural, impossible slow motion, I turn  
my head to see sopping hair trail behind  
a woman drenched; too thin to be safe alone  
standing behind the trunk of her green Hertz  
economy car, frozen, looking west as wretched  
despair tramples her pretty face.

I follow her morbid trance-like gaze—  
a canary-colored body bag, almost regal  
laid out in Kinkadee light; transcendent  
luminescence. Drowned in sadness I drive,  
my eyes slowly brush past the dead-still woman,

where, one quarter-mile east a motorcycle  
straddles the far side median, polished jet  
and silver remnants of Harley-Davidson demon-  
sparkle in the lightning flashes, as thunder gods  
join the Gaelic wailing winds.

Climbing away, up Highway Loop 410, I rise  
like steam hovered above the panorama, shaken  
by these shades of fate, as Friday midnight rain  
comes down black and sideways on an artist's canvas,  
on an all too perfect still life.

## Cracking an Egg

Chris Ellery

So many days begin  
with an egg. So simple:  
shell breaks on porcelain,  
thumb punctures membrane.

Pancakes for the dawn of my wedding,  
whisking egg and milk together.  
On the morning of a death quite  
unexpected I made an omelet.

The first day of school and the last.  
Quiche for the big promotion.  
The first kiss and the last kiss.  
She made soufflé on Christmas.

Some days we find next to the yolk  
a bit of blood. The boys on the bridge  
were drowning a cat. That day.  
The day I took him away

from their cruelty and carried him home.  
Again that morning, a morning  
like others, he ran in front of the car.  
He was euthanized in my arms.

One day we wake and want eggs.  
A plane crashes.  
A friend we thought would be with us forever  
is gone forever.

My children one by one arrived  
on days I stirred the eggs,  
something I never knew was in me hatching.  
Call it love. Or need. Something.

Today, breaking the eggs, alone,  
picking a bit of shell from the bowl  
I see it outlasts the birth  
of their leaving.



**The Message of Jainism: Non-Violence is the Highest Virtue**  
*From Jain Temple, Rajasthan, India*