

Chris Warner – Three Poems

Reeva (#309)

in memory of Reeva Steenkamp, who died, Valentine's night, 2013, from three gunshot wounds fired by her lover, the double amputee Olympic athlete, Oscar Pistorious

Your beauty—
blonde
blonde
blonde—
what we all want:
the unlined face,
square-jawed, sharp,
and soft, in all the right places;
your wide clear eyes, dark-lined,
Husky-like, almost colorless;
breasts, high, and round, and perfect;
your skin, fine—
a designer paint chip—
like #309, *Adobe Desert Rose*,
the flawless hint of sun, and kiss;
and those full lips,
flush
with the flash
of bulbs, cameras, adoring
screens, magazines—those looks
that couldn't shield you
from anything.
I wonder
if you were kneeling.
I wonder about his aim,
how long that took,
if he steadied the gun grip
on one of his stumps.
If his hands even shook.
Or maybe
he'd already
strapped on the Blades,
one by one,
right leg, left leg,
snap, and click.
And maybe

you were waiting,
listening,
holding your breath.
Maybe you could hear him.
Maybe there was hope.
Did you call out his name?
I wonder if your bathroom was cool and dim,
and if it echoed, softly,
like mine does.
If it was pretty.
If you had time between shots to scream.

Ice

for MRM

It's just another day
in the shrunken city,
and by *city*, I mean
blizzard wind on high pitch piercing the one thin line
of this white-out snow-coat cul-de-sac—who can tell
if there ever were nitrous oxide night lights or sodium
or whatever's true, or warm-like, or concrete anything—
it's just one more next day
in melodramatic silence, no
text messaging, no one-word
snide or blame, it's all non-response, it's 'super-busy,' this girl's
minute-by-minute 'super-fun' clown posts on her social network—
fried cats, or balls, and weed-faced women, or fuzzy
half-naked boys or babies flying—
and by *girl*, I mean
who—or what—showed up at the side door: that unfilter
and grey beige cheek blotch, the skitter eye, the broken black nail hand, this
five foot ten wonder of dope bloat ankle and twenty three
less pounds, stone body, flat face —this girl—hard
mouth raging down
the one line left
on an open phone,
and by *open*, I mean
when three Friday morning miles equals two more
hours, and then another, waiting, and where are you, please
pick up the phone, and just come, and pacing
and by *hours*, I mean
the best vein left in the next-town-over's frozen needle park, littered with twist

ties and hardened little creamy latex puddles, benches of browned out spray spatter, but not her, it's all 'no,' and, sniff sniff, 'I'm good' and 'I got this,' no, not this girl—the big Audi mama's pin prick pupiled ice blue marvel—she says, 'no, I'm not like them'—and by *not*, what she means is not yet.

Wall, in blue

A caving in. Or, rather, caved in. As in effort. Force. Effect. This is nature. This is why I don't talk. I can't be trusted. I don't mean to be. Yes, I know I'm a liar. Ok, yes, your father—are we *there* again? There is a meanness hunkering down inside, can't you see? And yes, thief, and yes it is blizzarding again, it's all too much out there (and in here), it's all a confusion of white or blank and endlessly, and of course there's more chatter on the perpetual television, and that mythic wind, and more about historic, and howling on and on about shelter. As if there were a place. As if location is specific. And then, this. It's a new development. The quiet room. A fist-shaped blue. There could be a cul-de-sac. If you squint, if you make it all go blurred and hazy, or if you could color again, a hand-shape, and like *Daydream*, like *Lake Placid*. Or it could be *Wondrous*. It could be Number 483, *Last Day on Nantucket*. I don't remember anymore. I forgot to write everything down. I remember you smiled. I heard you. And yes I should have said. I wish I could. I thought you knew. You said so pretty so clever so funny. You said...nothing. Silent. Then again, there is deserving, and of course, there's got be one more dinner. Right? Rooms, well-treated. All those suitable walls, the endlessness of option and aptly named colors. Or not. And yes, I might have joked about a vacation. Was anything funny, ever? I remember you smiling. The blue room is just another one ruined. I did, I know it. I can't seem to help anything. It's just a wall. Yes, I do have a number. What can be fixed. Matched. What keeps getting smashed, broken. Spit-shine and spackle. Is possibility finite, and predetermined, like number of eggs or parcels of hope? The winds die down eventually. And then, one leg over, one arm out, you came and slept, the body, inadvertent, the long thighs, runner-shaped and lean, race-shaped, and now curved again and still and curled around mine.

Chris Warner (M.Ed, E-RYT), is the author of a micro-chapbook, *Strokes (Mostly) in Silence*; her poem, "Engulfed" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize (2012). She co-led the creative writing program for inmates at MCI Concord for two years (2013-2015), and now heads up a weekly Creative Writing and Spoken Word Performance Workshop for inmates at the Lawrence Pre-Release Center in Essex County. Chris also teaches yoga and meditation in West Boxford, MA, and is currently at work on her first full length poetry collection.