

# Rama K. Ramaswamy

## Bottle Genie

i

If it was the swallowed smash,  
something so brief,  
it shook the earth from flesh;  
in seconds- daylight seizures, tiny  
psychic explosions, coagulating the physics of it;  
how purposeless the empty bottle.  
The genie rubs out the way nectar trembles  
under the mere drone of flickering,  
a winged hum; yet what remains sharpens showers  
like wounded shards  
and whipping spine, pitching like love,  
it accretes blood cells.  
The belly hits a home run and  
acids churn fear like fire hurts.  
The sands of fate metamorphose time:  
each second accumulates eyes,  
layering dust like gathering awareness,  
the way Soutine paints it- splayed, unyielding.  
Control can atomize anytime  
fragmenting fundamental, the way journeys are written;  
but the destinations rotate repeatedly elsewhere  
like the warble of our moon. It is a chiasmus-  
around car parts my child hugs me and we wait  
to cut out of Lot's wife- holding the insides,  
wrecked animal coils. I tell her of Einstein-  
and how *gravity cannot be held responsible*  
for repeatedly *falling in love*.

ii

A child sees the immediate  
in ways that age turns doorknobs  
accessing consequences like love  
and other tenuous whispers.  
The blast of steel pillows feather like  
drizzle, freeing bones from cut flesh,  
accidental and allowing genies lift, like  
using the word love for the lack of one more apt.  
Duty and economics suck oxygen like sharp pollutants,

straining for feelings that ought to grow  
windows within, more easily. Look at me!  
Show me atheists in fox holes.

iii

Even a legacy can die in infancy,  
and herding pachyderms will carry the bones,  
for miles of months as moths or ancient mariners might,  
with nocturnal senses, barreling rum sloshed and anticipating doldrums.  
There are many metaphors for fear, for loss:  
The buzz of bees. The settling  
fury of hollow bottles  
belly sailing suffering;  
either everything is surreal or nothing is.  
The rough breast of this steel beast  
fills curves, shatters with the safety-glass,  
like coal for Christmas stockings  
and it occurred to me-  
that bearing the graveyard of your first born  
almost cost me mine! Caught  
like a sneeze.  
How can such small  
genies ripple so elephantine?

**Rama K. Ramaswamy** is a geo-microbiologist and poet. Through her PhD research, she analyzed interactions between microbes and minerals, life in extreme environments and human-rock, geo-spatial relationships. She has published in the fields of Acid Mine Drainage, Microbial Ecology, Sedimentology and Paleontology. Her poetry and work in literary fiction reflect her training, travels and experiences living in Asia, Europe and all over the US, especially New England. Rama's poetry, freelance articles and biography have been featured internationally. She published her first book of poetry in 2011, *Coming Full Circle* and is currently working on a second. Rama also produces a TV show promoting women, is currently a K-5 science enrichment instructor and is developing her blog voice while raising her three children.