

John David Muth -- Two Poems

Prelude to Another Break-up

Raven-haired and pale,
she sits at the edge of the bed
cries almost every night I visit
for reasons I do not understand
reasons she will not reveal.
Years ago, she was another woman,
blonde and olive-skinned
and another before this,
brunette and sallow.

Emotion is a war veteran
pitted by inoperable shrapnel
and memory is a fall
down a flight of stairs.
All of those jagged pieces
rattle in their flesh cocoons
bringing back ancient pain,
shouts and screams
tearing through a pool of tinnitus.

Perhaps the Y chromosome,
this ancient, two-pronged arrowhead
keeps me from understanding.
It needs a precise target to be effective
and I don't have the strength
to ask her why again.

Lying on her side,
her sobs become sporadic.
When she falls asleep
I'll leave for home
and try to decide
whether it would be better
to not come back again.

In a Tiny Indian Restaurant

Another dinner date
the 51st or 89th this year
the second one for us
at a tiny Indian restaurant
on Lexington Avenue.

I waited nearly a week
took two trains
walked nearly forty blocks
to see those lips again
and green eyes
like rain-soaked forests
sparkling in an ocean
of cars and dirty concrete.

It could be true chemistry
or desire held back by caution
a rusted cage full of starving dogs
who bang their bleeding heads
against the bars
iron oxide tongues dripping.

This tablecloth and I have much in common
stained and torn in places not so obvious.
The room's romantic lighting
works to my advantage.

She steps on my foot.
Our knees bang together
making the ice rattle in our water glasses.
We laugh and I forget
how hard it is to find
someone I really want.

John David Muth was born and raised in central New Jersey. For the last seventeen years, he has been an academic advisor at Rutgers University. The main focus of his poetry is satire, particularly romantic relationships and modern values and problems. Some of Muth's poems have appeared in *San Pedro River Review*, *Verse-Virtual*, and *US I Worksheets*. His latest book, *Odysseus in Absaroka* (Aldrich Press), was published this year and can be found on Amazon.com.