



"Womb" Copyright 2000 J. N. Foster

New Birth

Down where the babies are – yes, down
there, where the doctors plumb
in veins and the mother writhes and
green seeds are planted so that we have
leaves, lushly growing, out of our eyes.

This is a beautiful world when seen through
such eyes. God is licking ice-cream cones
and watching cesareans. Only blond long-haired
women with shaved legs can have
a husband who watches American football.

Amen to that!

A mother whose tender mouth
suckles many kisses, her legs
are pliant and folding, neat
as laundry beneath the asking hands – oh what
a day to wake up and find that she has
disappeared, and is caught staring
somewhere from within
the wallpaper, whose ivy grows
over her mouth and strangles her
while she calls out
for her husband and her child –
both of whom have disappeared.

She is alone now. Empty
room. The large lights switch
on, she is sitting across a table
talking to an old white male
licking ice-creams.

"Don't worry," he says.
"It'll all be OK."

She had learned never to listen
to those words. Instead she laughs and says:

"You have a vanilla moustache!!!"

He seems not to hear and disregards her.

He is smiling and she doesn't know.

He is smiling and watching ghosts
perform cesareans after cesareans
on the dead baby that never lived.

Her womb is cut open and he smiles,
this old white male.

How strange, she thinks.

His ice-cream doesn't melt.

Tribute To Whataworld

So I decided to buy myself a breast and
move to California. I wanted to perch on a
lawnmower, smell toxic fumes from nailpolish removers and
wait till my shrink said I was sane.

Boiled spaghetti settled around my neck. Chained by bad
cooking, I smiled like a fancy napkin and served
catered cuisine with apricots when my Mum
dropped by. Still maintaining my sanity was a pleasurable

pastime, Dickens laughed at all my jokes but I refused to
hear him. Rain fell in a rhyme scheme of ABBA,
I licked the tarmac and watched out for nosy
neighbours, but

at least they never left their window open so I
could watch them fucking at 4 p.m.

I did not scream at the caterpillar for killing my rose.
My shrink nods. I shrink. You shrink. She shrink.
These days you can walk into a place and buy breasts,
move to California with nothing but bad
spaghetti. What a world. I wish Charles Dickens
was dead.

Pooja Mittal

Pooja Mittal was born and brought up in Nigeria and is now a university student in New Zealand. Pooja's poems have been published in the literary journals *Poetry NZ*, *JAAM*, and *Takahe*.