

# WILLOW LEGS, FALSE TAIL

Pranjal Saini

1)

willow legs, false tail,  
 i am neither on the land nor in the sea  
 i have drowned so many times yet i miss the waves  
 for my blood only knows notes of resilience  
 and it never fully learnt to stop when silence is expected  
***i am no swimmer but i dive again and again and again***  
 for that is all i know of myself,  
***a diver, head first into the first thing that carries her away from the ground.***  
 there's an ache to meet more of myself,  
 there's a fear of encountering her on the edge of the shore.  
 crash landings are all i am aware of  
 so i stay in the water, holding my breath,  
 practising for the day of my fall even before it comes.  
 it's easy to be the golden child if you are aware that too much heat ruins the plating  
 but i have always loved the sun and i do not know when to stop  
 i burnt myself to ground,  
 i am only twenty, a child of the last eclipse.  
 and i am too young to rise from my ashes yet.  
 the wind cradles me before tossing me into the ocean  
 i have learnt to swim now and the waves have become my home.  
**for i was the diver**  
***who fell head first into the first thing that carried her away from the ground.***  
***(so i dive again and again and again)***

2)

shadow child painted gold,  
 threw me on the track before i could run  
 you became my achilles heel before my soles touched the earth.  
*(did you know my soft spot was you? did you poke yourself in front of me because it was you?)*



you'd play fetch with me, and i would keep running after the promise of an open sky you would give.

*(i forgot freedom doesn't look the same for everyone; you were offering me a platter of meat, but i was always the vegetarian)*

the fruit was on the tree, and my wings were in your hand.

i waited for the hold to shrivel and slammed my head on the trunk.

the sweet red fell right on me, but i waited too long, and it's rotten now.

*(will the stench of fruit be known as mine now?)*

the soiled pulp swallowed me, and the paint covering me now floats away from me.

the bars again glitter, and the space is convoluting around me, but i no longer shine.

the golden child is brought back home.

the home asks her name but she doesn't know what she's called.

*(and since when do the nameless have a home of their own)*

you called me love but kept taking my guts out to eat

3)

time is an old friend i don't recognise anymore, and

i am slipping through the spaces of my conscience.

wisteria grew in my lungs, and i thought i would bloom,

but lungs are meant to be empty

*(where's the air now? where's the air?)*

tomorrow is still in the womb, but i have been throwing punches at it for too long now

*(it's blue, the colour of dreams, dreams that crawled backwards)*

i became the limbo, holding little hopes by the fingers till they find their way out on the other side.

and i pricked myself sewing the words to make the noose, the blood is trickling down,

*(blue on the nail, blue everywhere),*

i thought i could eat the ichor, frozen and stagnant and

make a faith of a day that won't rust

but i am just a child who made a god of herself

little did i know that gods burn themselves, and i was already made of ash



This is Pranjal, your friendly, sleep-deprived literature enthusiast. She loves art in every form, right from the words strung together to the colours bent in strokes. On a good day, you'd find her either volunteering somewhere, scrolling through poems on Pinterest or engrossed in a book with her headphones on.

