

ARUN GAUR

GANDHI OF ZODIN SQUARE

Gandhi of Zodin Square was
a smudge.

Truncated flotsam in air.
Jetsam while it rained.

Tall rusty piece.

It was gritty. Self-composed.
Almost grim.

Teenagers sniffed snuff on night vigils.
Smoke ascended to its nostrils.
Tellers counted coins at RBI windows.
Metal clattered.
Riflemen rehearsed. Their starched
pantaloon crackled in celebration
of his birthday.

Of late I noticed
Its pince-nez slipping down bit by bit.

I could have borrowed a ladder
to set it aright.

But why would I bother?

It made fun of all my accidental failures
presuming them to be my potential pitfalls.

Drizzle or harsh rain
it persisted in its mocking stance.
It irritated me.

I missed my train.
It kept smiling with its sticking frothy lips
curled up. Masticating. Chewing gum.

It irritated me.

One day it flung aside its walking staff.
It started slowly—
hands creating vibrant chiaroscuro.
Then picking up its pace it offended
with impunity
my puritan upbringing
leaving me distraught.
Ruined.

On a deserted track Toofan Mail thumped
through venerable rattle of golden autumn leaves
in splendid isolation.

This dusky exposition of magic blue hour
left me ruined. Utterly. Frankly it is
an exposition not any sort of disclosure
he hinted.

Did he somehow overhear my 2004
Derridean lectures
executed in Rosiama Building?
Did he manage to catch
some ambiguities some unintentional nuances?

A moral question exasperated me:
How could a simple act of masturbation
be so ridiculous?

(Before my very naked eyes!)
 What end did he intend to reach
 through this excessive unwarranted articulation?
 Would he be ready to face
 the moral repercussions of this unholy act?

And that too
 before my very naked eyes?
 My exposed self?

One rainy evening daily wage earners came
 to prune him for his birthday,
 throwing swathes of white paint all over him
 boisterously turning him into
 an expressionless dud white swan.

Dandy. I don't like you anymore.

If only by this time next year
 rain could once again turn him
 into rust.
 He can still be his older usual pleasant self
 with his pince-nez slipping down.
 Maybe then I would borrow a ladder
 to clamber up and set his specs right.

Then with a little thump on his hunch-back
 I would loudly applaud:

I can see.
 You have certainly made your mark
 even in this torrid North-East.
 You look tough smart pert rusty once again.