

Grandmothers

By Asha Viswas

In my cousin's house her grandmother
moulded her as she wished .
at each turning of the wheel
her shaping hands decided
how loud should a girl's laughter be,
how much should her lips spread
to wear a smile on her face.
The length of her hair, the colour
of her cheeks, the pitch of her vocal chords ,
the manner of her walk were controlled
by the fire of her frowning face.
No one dared to fail her
She could erase them with a blink of her eye.

I have heard my grandmother cried
at the birth of each of her granddaughters.
The cry was louder when I,
the fourth girl child was born .

Did she guess I would break the mould ?

An Apparition

By Asha Viswas

I tell you , I did not cry in this prison
where your verbs were the warders ,
but taking a deep breath, I plunged
into a sea of dark intensities
meeting only the ghosts of moments
shared while gazing at the shadow of my being .
I admit , my real self, with your touch

morphed into a frightened child
[whose feelings I quite forget]
left alone on a distant, desolate crag
where I carried my own bleak innerscape.
I was not surprised to find my heart
brought to me on a silver platter.
This , it seemed, was the map to lead me
through emptiness to surcease .