

RENEE NORMAN

The Poem as Home

gather all the books & parcels
lines & stanzas
prayer shawls & smoking twists
of candles
fumble for the key

shoes kicked off
there is comfort
in the poems we live in
the beat of rhythms
skirt around the shadows
of Yawa prophets
cups of wine

I want to bring my poems
into the kitchen
cook them with the smells
of latkes frying
in family oil
roast chicken dipped
in children's laughter
doors & windows open
to draw the fresh rush
of worldly air

the poem as home
where suits & socks are shed
and songs that sing the skin
are written and mark the places
where we all come in

but home entraps too
for days on end
no language but your own
& silence does not answer
where the smells
grow stale

I need home and kitchens
to belong in poems that simmer
but where the words end
is where I next begin

Renee Norman is a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia, a part-time teacher, writer, and poet. Her poetry has been published in Contemporary Verse 2, Prairie Journal, Room of One's Own, and Writing for Our Lives.

PHERYNE WILLIAMS THATCHER

Procrastination

After several days of marriage,
she told him they'd made a mistake,
... he grinned, she must be joking.

After a few months of marriage,
she insisted it wasn't working,
... he tickled her and tied her up.

After a year of marriage,
she packed her suitcase,
... he unpacked it, promising to change.

After two years of marriage,
she ran away in the middle of the night,
... he found, and brought her back.

After three years of marriage,
she pleaded for her freedom,
... he cried, begged her to stay.

After four years of marriage
she became demanding and hysterical,
... he claimed she was demanding and hysterical.

After the first child,
she became pregnant, obsessed with motherhood,
... he was relieved she'd come to her senses.

After the second child,
she became pregnant and fat,
... he felt ever so secure.

After the fourth child,
she once again made plans to leave,
... he chuckled and shook his head.

After fifteen years of marriage,
she screamed she'd go crazy to get out,
... he rolled his eyes, inviting her to go.

After twenty-four years of marriage,
she left,
... he looks so crushed, broken, weary,
and he will explain, if you will listen,
how after twenty-four years,
without warning or provocation,
she walked.

Pheryne Williams Thatcher is a teacher living in Vancouver.