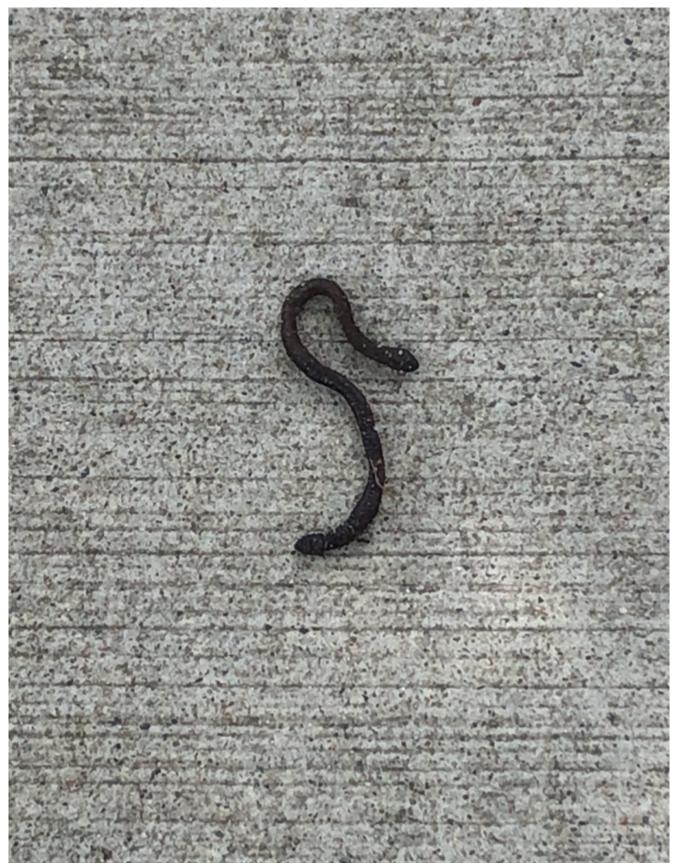
New Poetry from Andy Conner: "Apples," "Untouchable," "Remanded In Custody"



YOU MEAN NOTHING / image by Amalie Flynn

## Apples

'The landmines are just like apples' Khmer Rouge survivor Apples can peel your skin Like it isn't there But more often than not The cruellest fruit Sucks the rusty blade And leaves threads Dripping Threads of skin Threads of your life Dripping Seeds onto barren ground You mean nothing to the apples You mean nothing to the apples You mean nothing Their anaesthetic minds Hold no sense of time No sense of pain No sense No sense of what remains And if you Are one of the hand-picked Who escape in a step-right-on-it flash Give thanks for this windfall Which leaves survivors Green To the core As they crawl With the worms With the worms And the decay

Praying To scrump a handout With no hands For the crumb Which may or may not come As they sit In their own shit Begging On their stumps For a friendly worm To turn Up

## Untouchable

And eat it

On my recent trip to Gujarat

I took numerous pretty photographs

of Modhera Palitana Dwarka The White Desert

and other pretty places

but

the image
I can't delete
from my heart

my hard drive

is of a ragged street child

at Vastrapur Lake who stepped out from the promenading crowd

raised his left index finger into the stifling late afternoon

## air

and drew a rectangle to take an imaginary selfie

with me

## Remanded In Custody

How can you talk Of an even split When you're parents Of three kids

How can you ask For understanding When you won't say What you did

How can you demand We keep calm When all you do Is shout

And scream It's your own business When we're what The fight's about

How can you plead You need your freedom When you've built Our jail Whose four sad walls Have heard it all Every selfish Last detail How can you think We're stupid 'Cos we don't know What it means To move on and Make a new start When we're not yet In our teens If you two Are so clever And know what Life's about Why must it Take forever To sort Your problems out You've no thought For our feelings Or respect for What we think While you resent That we need feeding When you don't have Cash for drink

You complain We're far too young To understand Your trials Well in this case It's not the children Who're acting Like a child You both believe That you're the victim Of the other's Poisoned mind But if your eyes Can still open You might see The only crime's Neglect of Your own kids All three Ripped apart By being used As silent weapons Against your Other half How dare you Claim us as conscripts To fight Your filthy war When the offence That we committed Was only Being born

You'd never think You're guilty But if you'd any Common sense You'd see the last thing Left in common Is we've all got

No defence