

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
And eat it

Untouchable

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