

FSH COMMENTS 2015 9

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: I felt engaged and interested in this poem from its opening lines till its conclusion. I really liked the Q&A format, it was very involving and convincing. Of great interest is that the poem is part of an emerging practice among social science researchers to convert parts of their findings into poetry or theater because they feel the conventions of scientific reporting constrain the scope of what they have learned. I am very supportive of this practice.

I have a few suggestions to improve clarity and flow:

1) The transition from the 12 yr old getting her periods (line 1) to the graduate with a science degree is confusing (line 5). Please figure out a way to prepare the reader for the passage of time.

2) Line 12 - sounds too didactic, lacks the human style of the rest of the poem. I think "soon" is the problem. Try to reword so it is more natural.

3) Line 13 - referent for "he" is unclear. Husband? Doctor? I think you could specify without loss of style: i.e., "Your husband..."

4) Lines 16-17 - these seem weak relative to the other couplets. I think you are trying to show the devaluing of girl babies. Think of a clearer way to convey this: "What if I want a girl baby, Amma?" "Shh, don't talk about it. Try to avoid it."

Some of the phrasing are just wonderful - "foreign-returned;" "you will know automatically..." Really worth savoring! Concluding couplet is heartrendingly perfect.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I liked this submission a lot. As the author explains, it presents an imagined dialogue between a south Indian girl and her mother which reinforces many stereotypes and prejudices against women. The writing is not the most elegant, but with a little more wordsmithing it can work. I really liked the Q&A format, it was very involving and convincing. Of great interest is the fact that the poem is part of an emerging practice among social science researchers to convert parts of their findings into poetry or theater because they feel the conventions of scientific reporting constrain the scope of what they have learned. I am very supportive of this practice, and would like to see FSH lend its support as well.

In terms of the actual writing, I make a few specific suggestions above.