

Here are some of the submissions from our twelfth Invite to
Write inspired by the following work, a veil painted by
Marina Kiesling:



**ON SEEING A ROTTING WOODEN CRUCIFIX
IN A MEXICAN MONASTERY**

I

Jesu, be Able, be Cain
for old men, perhaps,
or children eating apples.

And when the wild birds come
to shadow their sun,
bend, and be able,

bend with the aching wind.

II

Words are the flesh that embody the life of a mind,
and the words of a poem are the old sacrifice of the son,
an absurd birth of love in a place one would least like to be,
a manger of need. Of no place. Of despair. Of a deep
poverty.

Closer than clothing are words to a body's desire,
wrapping, revealing that bending and stretching to be,
each gesture caught and released in the candescent air,
light food for a ravening mind. Its igneous pyre.

And what is it called when the Word nails the flesh

and the soul

to the world, for the world, by the world, like a cross

or a tree? A poem, it is called.

Jesu, deliver me.

III

Be able, be cane

for old men, perhaps,

or children eating apples.

And when the wild birds come

to shadow their sun,

bend with the aching wind.

Robin van Loben Sels

Veil of Truths

In these times, I stand courageous,
to peek behind my veil
dropped upon me at birth.

Day after day, I wrestled
until torn and tattered with untruths.
I choose to let it go.

Grays and blacks fall wayside
sadness, and fears dissipate.
A new tapestry of breath I birth
filled with vivid light.

In these times I wrap myself,
to be hugged by my cloak
now made from fibers of love.

Moment after moment, I connect
to the rainbow fabric of aspirations
for new beginnings.

Beginnings,
I foster with my sacred veil of truths.

- Star Blossom

Such Ludicrous Ideas: Evocations after Marina Kiesling's painted veil

for Gisela

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling:
The notion of some infinitely gentle
Infinitely suffering thing.

- T S Eliot

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1

In Pamplona I bought my mother two mantillas
- one sombre, white; the other flamboyant, sequinned.
She liked them so much she never wore them;

their early disintegration thwarted by mothballs.
Decades later she and my father became Catholic
converts.

Nor did she wear the mantillas to church either:
much too precious she said; such a ludicrous idea

2

Years earlier living in Calcutta my mother
bought a silk sari – deep crimson with silver
edging - and wore it once with the bombast
of a colonial-memsahib-gone-native air.
When we left India, it was too bulky to pack
she said; such a ludicrous idea.

3

During my Indian childhood I was once tricked out
in jest as an *ayah*; I have never worn a veil since.
Some of my hints and threats may have done so.
I choose to go through the world a barefaced man
behind the veiled ambiguities that words possess
I ignore the retributive masks of normality
the perils of such a ludicrous idea.

4

My mother died: the realities of her ruined flesh
veiled under a hospital blanket;
death too, such a ludicrous idea.

- Tony Ulyatt