

Dawn on the Fall Equinox

by Persis M.Karim

The shifting light of autumn
has caused uneasiness.
This morning, I lay beside
my son, listening to his breathing,
finding comfort in the soft bulbs
of his hands, opening
like poppies at first contact with sunlight.

What those other boys
in that place where we've unleashed
war are thinking, I cannot say.
Theirs is a life punctuated by
the *ratta-tatt-tatt* of bullets,
the mud-green of uniforms,
and corpses of bombed-out cars.
Waking at dim first light,
cannot be like this. Soft and sweet,

the certainty of their mother's
breath against neck and hair.
In this dream-state here,
I can only think of dressing,
feeding him, caressing his smallness.

I don't like this early darkness,
the falling leaves, the raking
that once provided a kind of order
reminds me of death
somewhere else.

How will I explain *this* to him?
In these hummed hours
before he speaks my name,
I pretend to have a truth
that turns the darkness into light.

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