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“Teaching someone how to write a poem”Akhil Katyal

Teaching someone how to write a poem
is like saying, come let's knock on
our aporias together.

Give me some of your dead-ends
and I will give you
some of mine.

Make a plaything out of pain.

We will undermine each other
with full trust, I must add.

While work-shopping a lost love
we will dissertate on a comma.

Because that little pause is the thin line
between the memory of her going away
and her going away.

Come we will relive it.

I will place your lost loves under mine
and we will find splinters in our small hands.

Bring me the coal-black of your memory.

We will remind each other
of everything that we have lost.

We will thresh time
between our fingernails.

Somewhere
in all this doing
will be the poem.

In the Urdu class

I confused my *be* with *pe*.

He asked me to write 'water',
I wrote 'you'.

Who knew they'd make them so close,
Aab (آب) and *Aap* (آپ).

Both difficult to hold on to.



BIO-NOTE

Akhil Katyal is an Indian poet, translator and a Queer activist. Born in Bareilly, U.P. in 1985, Katyal is based in Delhi where he teaches literature in *Shiv Nadar University*. His writings have appeared in *The UCity Review*, *North East Review*, *The Four Quarters Magazine*, *The Bangalore Review*, *Ezra - Journal of Translation*, *Earthen Lamp Journal*, *Ivory-Tower* among several others. He has translated the works of Mangalsh Dabral, Wislawa Szymborska, Agha Shahid Ali, Om Prakash Valmiki, Dorothy Parker, Langston Hughes among others. He finished his PhD from SOAS, University of London in 2011.

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