2000

You Didn't Know

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.5240
YOU DIDN’T KNOW

I
When you were strutting
up and down like a chicken
looking for a place
to lay her eggs,
You didn’t know.

When you were looking at me
from over your nose
kissing your bloody lips
stained by that lipstick,
You didn’t know.

When you were calling
my old in-laws “Aunty this” and “Uncle that”
desperately looking for their good eyes,
You didn’t know.

When your glossy studio pictures
adorned the parlour
displacing my stern browning ones,
You didn’t know.

II
When he was allotting you
the single room next to mine
bellowing that he needed privacy,
You didn’t know.

When your steaming tears
mingled with the onions
as you withdrew, pregnant
to the grinding stone,
You didn’t know.
When you saw the new queen
and you were screaming,
swearing to drink a calabash-full
of rat poison,
You didn’t know.

III
That the same whip
that raged up the back
of the undeserving senior wife
is simmering patiently
in the thatched roof of his bedroom
ready to bruise the pride
of the young-blooded wife.

IV
Now you know.