

Two Poems by Jay Deshpande

AFTER THE CHILD FELL

Your hands are as gentle as marble.  
Now that the screams have quieted,  
you face the morning

like breakfast, putting individual  
objects down at precise locations  
on the tile, cold counter

occasional clattering plate  
to your hatred. What some of us  
have done, we can't

relax. There is more where all  
the hungers come from. There is  
something between my teeth

and who gets out now?  
Your fingers on the rail  
of a slim heartbeat

body, the hymnal  
of his small torso held  
in your hands, and how

did the shelf  
where rib meets arm  
let go of you?

There must be something unprincipled  
in forgiveness. There must be  
a wind in those thieving trees,

the ones you watch  
shake eleven feet down into  
a growling, a gnashing

quiets inside of you,  
it's sturdy and sure  
as a glass of milk

## LANDING IN ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

A day is only a little hunger; but, looming low  
over a new city, the cloud reports come in:  
You will be happy here. You will lock yourselves  
together against a pressing sky. What else?  
It is winter. Futilities abound like men alone,  
fashioning arguments and breeding contempt  
in dry houses. All that holds this together is pale  
water, press of a gulf tide—someday, warmer.  
You sleep beside me because you are an animal  
without any choice. Without accessory, you  
are beautiful just by being. Your hunger, too,  
is little, Little Thing: it makes for itself a season,  
new and quiet in these tiny rooms. I say to you:  
Someday, warmer, someday. We bank into a wide bay.