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Because children are still brave

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Because children are still brave

Abstract

Lucky it couldn't do what it wanted, they say. Easy to get rid of, now that it's locked up. Three days, they say. Three days and it's gone. From my cage in the dark

Keywords

because, still, children, brave

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Law

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VARUNA, THE WRITERS HOUSE BLOG

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October 15, 2011 by [Admin](#)



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October 2011

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					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						
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VARUNA THE WRITERS’ HOUSE



[Varuna the Writers' House](#)





"Hi, my name's Tara Goedjen and I'll be reading from my story, *(Because Children Are Still Brave)*, forthcoming in [Fairy Tale Review](#), (The Grey Issue).

Lucky it couldn't do what it wanted, they say.

Easy to get rid of, now that it's locked up.

Three days, they say. Three days and it's gone.

From my cage in the dark basement, I hear them whispering. They call me the dark-eyed child. They say they're lucky they found me, lucky they found me before I could go and do it —. What the others like me did. They say I'm just like the ones before. Just like the ones who took their daughter and sons and drank the blood of the stray cats. I protest and they kick my cage.

I want to sketch my thoughts for them, I want to say, we aren't all the same. Does the river exist in the same way as the sea? And what makes up a beach? To them, one grain of sand is like any other. It takes holding up a tiny piece in the sunlight to notice any difference.

Please. I try to reason with them. My thoughts a pebble skipping. *Listen, listen.* The pebble sinks into my stomach.

Shut up, the men say. Dave and Jimmy are their names. They throw a blanket over the metal wire. The blanket is made of horsehair and muffles their voices, but I can still hear them talking. They say they're gonna kill me when three days are up, because it's the only decent thing to do.

The world is better off without it, they say.

Maybe best to kill it now, they say.

When I plead they hit the cage, slam it with their fists, and then I cry out as someone—the younger man, Dave—picks up the cage and throws it against the wall and *!!!* I hit the side and *!!!* and *!!!* and I try to go still, to hold back, to calm down. I think of soothing things, of white petals, white petals, white petals with yellow hearts but the blanket falls off and *!!!* my dark eyes shriek wide in the throbbing light, and my head explodes it hurts so much, whitepetalswhitepetalswhitepetalsyellowhearts.

The women gasp—*is it having a seizure?*—and they toss the blanket over the cage again. I hear one of them, Wanda, tell her husband Jimmy he better stop, she knows I'm dark-eyed but it don't seem right.

She's just a little one, Wanda says.

That's exactly what it wants you to think, Jimmy says.

In the darkness under the horsehair blanket, I feel the gash on my head and squeeze my skull shut. Then the one called Wanda lights up a joint in the rocking chair while David and Jimmy eat on the overturned crates. I hear their teeth chomping, their molars mashing their food. I hear their tongues slurping against the roofs of their mouths when they swallow. Then I think of cutlery, of the shine of lamplight on silver. I remember pressing my forehead up to the window of a house to watch a family eating dinner. The scraping sounds that forks and knives make against a ceramic plate with a ribbon round its rim, the family round the table. Laughter. Goblets filled with milk."

ABOUT TARA GOEDJEN:

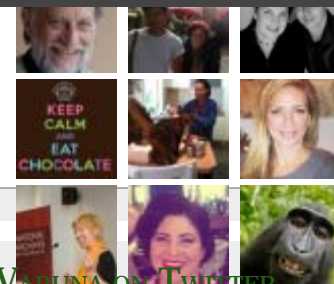
Tara Goedjen is a candidate in the Doctorate of Creative Arts program at the University of Wollongong. She has a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Alabama, where she won the Outstanding Thesis Award in 2008 for her short story collection, *The Moment Before Waking*. She is currently at work on a transnational

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novel.

"In 2011 I spent a week at Varuna as a Fellowship Committee Member" Tara Goedjen

PUBLICATION:

(*Because Children Are Still Brave*). [Fairy Tale Review](#), (The Grey Issue), forthcoming 2012.

Orphans of Holy Week. [New England Review](#), (Volume 31, #4), January 2011.

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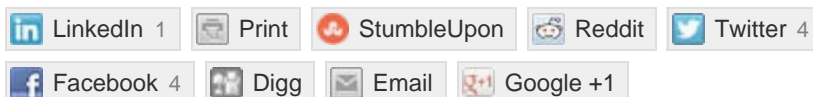
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[Varuna](#) has been funded by the [Australia Council](#) to produce a Varuna Writer-a-Day "app". When we have recorded 365 writers the app will be made available via the iTunes store. In the meantime, if you subscribe to this free blog, you can receive a daily reading delivered to your email inbox which can also be directed to your mobile phone.

To find out more about Varuna's programs, residencies, events and support services for writers click [here](#).

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