

Water Rush

By Rina Garcia Chua

At 21, he said he wanted the baby -

my empty packet of pills in his hands
crackled as he threw them away.

21, I bolster awake, wondering
if she has all her ten fingers and toes -

she's perfect; of course she is.

At 33, I click "undecided/open" -

but I let him come inside me anyway.
I wake up at 3 am, pee, study the
glistening dry flat map of white pyrite
crystals on my underwear.

the empty packet of pills in my hands
made no whimper as I threw them away.

a choice has been made for me, by my
mother, father, my auntie, a stomach ravaged
by the violence of life, my hips
that do not open wide, all of you -

Today, the blood thickens in the toilet
and I hurl into that pool — *perfect*,

this taste, uncoiling down a throat.

The portrait from home

Rina Garcia Chua

I refuse to have white
Jesus hung on my walls;

he does not need to stare
at the plant-based meals
I cook

nor does he need to stomach
the moments I touch myself
until I shudder.

This white man will not save
me; he is not invited
when I follow another strange
person down

the basement where my bed
is,

nor when I open my legs
to let them in.

His thorny blood red
heart will not appease
the sins he has decorated

my collarbone with,
nor the guilt he carved
on my stomach

when I was only twenty-
one.

And when I sleep
with this twenty-one
year old, or with the dirty

white unicorn stuffy found
in a sale bin,

I do not need his truth,

nor his brown eyes to flicker
at me with compassion.

When I do close my eyes
at night, I listen to the
pink noise of my head
and breathe

and breathe

and come to dark.