

Three Poems by Joshua Converse

“Suspect to be Charged in 1998 Slaying of Christina Williams”

07 April 2017 The Mercury News

The kids that were in middle school
when she was murdered are
parents now. I wonder if they think about that.

Mention her and the same look crosses
every face.

The details go unspoken
...what he did to her...

I wonder if earthly justice can touch him.
Even if they kill him tomorrow
nothing approaches “fair;”
She breathed for thirteen innocent years.
He has breathed on for twenty.

A Syrian Son From Afar

In the paper:
a boy with long eyelashes, just my son's age
slumped, crusted, chalky and enrubbled,
dead in his weeping father's bleeding hands.

So it has been;
this scene again this scene again;
loss-compounded loss;
merciless images of merciless reality.
Here,
my son snores softly in his bed,

I kiss
his eyelids and
tremble.

The Boy, the Girl, and the Crocodile

18 March 2017, Associated Press.

A boy of 18 (I read) lost his
arm to a saltwater crocodile.

He jumped into the river to swim across
and back, On a dare, it seems.

Days later, a report confirmed he'd jumped into the
crocodile-infested river
to impress a girl.

I remember 18, invincible, drunk, and in love.
It marks us all,
Like teeth rising out of dark water.

Some of us swim away mutilated,
And some, not at all.

Joshua Converse was born in Palo Alto, California. He grew up on a horse ranch in Louisiana and served 4 years in the U.S. Army, deploying to the Middle East during the war. He holds a bachelor's degree in Literature and holds a Master of Arts in English. Joshua now teaches English at Monterey Peninsula College and Hartnell College. He lives in Seaside, California with his wife and children.