

One Word Quotation

Out of context
the word *damnation*
or *weeping*

or
or.

The word carrying
scare quotes
on its head
like horns

or
blinkers

like this:

“[your name here]”

Reciprocity Failure

Haggle like this.
Surrender light for sharpness
immobility for depth.
Go lower
 still lower
exchange speed
for whatever you can get.

You could have ghosts
for the asking
shadows that will not move
but can follow you
even if you never say the word
 sleep
in their hearing.

Don't talk about colours
if you have more than a second
to spare. Dark rooms, red lights
they never – sometimes –
come out right.

**Sridala Swami's poetry and fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in various journals including Wasafiri, [Asian Cha](#), [Desilit](#), [Drunken Boat](#) and [InterLitQ](#). Her work also features in [The Bloodaxe Book of Contemporary Indian Poets](#) (ed. Jeet Thayil, UK: Bloodaxe, 2008); in [Not A Muse Anthology](#) (ed. Katie Rogers and Viki Holmes, Hong Kong: Haven Books, 2009) and in [First Proof: 4](#) (India: Penguin Books, 2009).*

Swami's first collection of poems, [A Reluctant Survivor](#) (India: Sahitya Akademi, 2007, rp 2008). She lives in Hyderabad, India and blogs at [The Spaniard In The Works](#).

