

I Cannot Tell You
By Sunil Narayan

I cannot say where I live for the fear of losing you
I cannot tell you what my life has been like inside the room

He came to me out of nowhere pulling my body into his truck
Inside there was a little light, though the cigarette smoke filled the space
My wrists, he wrapped tightly with tape
My eyes, he hid with sunglasses
My head, he placed a hat on top of
Words for which still stay in my mind I hear twice "Don't say anything or you'll get it!"

I cannot say where I live for the fear of losing you
I cannot tell you what my life has been like inside the room

No one could see me looking through the oily and dirty window
They walked by laughing as if life is good to them
Children who have a way to get home sat on the grass playing cards
Mothers talked in the driveway about how things have been since January 1st

I cannot say where I live for the fear of losing you
I cannot tell you what my life has been like inside the room

Yet, I sat and felt my own life slip away
To help me breathe the quiet man who chatted on his car phone ripped the tape off my mouth
I tried to catch some air between my legs only to be yanked by the hair
My mouth closed and eyes shed tears for which they didn't seem to matter to him

I cannot say where I live for the fear of losing you
I cannot tell you what my life has been like inside the room

The man's breath stunk of tuna and vodka
What did his eyes look like?
I couldn't see...they were hidden behind black sunglasses
His scaly lips smacked when I begin to shiver
He stopped at a gas station to pick up a can of beer and Doritos
They were not for me, but for him

I cannot say where I live for the fear of losing you
I cannot tell you what my life has been inside the room

He drove down the highway into the mountains where silence is often accompanied by sounds
beyond my knowledge
They were echoes of warnings

The trees spoke as the wind blew through their branches
I heard them speak: "Never stop praying Johnny because God will stay by your side!"

I cannot say where I live for the fear of losing you
I cannot tell you what my life has been inside the room

I didn't pray....not that evening, the day after or any other for that matter
God abandoned me when the man with the cigarette tucked behind his ear took me from the
street