

# *Sketch*

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## Big Mouth Blues

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## Big Mouth Blues

When my mother-in-law opened her mouth to talk, it was like the bellows of bad breath fanning fumes that turn dreams into nightmares.

This gross cavern, with a pair of scythes for teeth, drove Mariya away from me. Mariya will not come back, because she believed what her mother

told her. I still remember my mother-in-law's complaints when she came to visit. They had the pungency of rotten red peppers. They burnt the love

out of Mariya's eyes. And left that cold glare of betrayal. Now how could I make her believe I was not cheating, that I

only got drunk and was raped? They wanted to know why I did not go to the law, if that was the truth. But they forgot feminists had

changed the law about rape, that it is no crime if the victim is male. Yet those chappy, flapping lips heaved up and down in smelly

outbursts about my infidelity and Mariya being too good for a rotten, low-down, and cheating miscreant who wrecked her happiness.

She would rattle on, and on, about my sins,  
about God, and judgement day, and about  
damnation. I then realised how those tusks

were determined to gouge this bond between Mariya  
and me. All affection fled at the sting of her  
breath. Not even patience or tolerance

could stand the heat of those fiery bellows.  
I watched in shock as the ring burned on  
Mariya's inflamed finger. I knew it was

Over.

On full moon nights, I go to the  
deserted beach and sit under the coconut  
trees. I watch the dancing splash of

the waves and listen to dizzying whispers  
of the tropical breeze. I know I will find  
no answers, in the cresty waves, to the

throbbing ache in me. The canopy palms  
above can only offer rustling fans of sympathy.  
Yet, in this charged loneliness, the pain beats

with a vibrant rhythm that promises a new joy. But  
I am always afraid another walrus might  
swim on to this shore asking questions.

— Yuxuf Abana