

Spring 5-1-2014

The Coping Saw

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Recommended Citation

Banerjee, Bakul (2014) "The Coping Saw," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 36: No. 2, Article 17.
Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol36/iss2/17>

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In darkness, stood the tree
with its limbs spread out
like torn prayer flags.
I tasted its stressed twigs
gritty and dry on my lips.
I asked, "How do you cope,
I mean, swirling snow
and tiresome whirling wind?"
Another dark and cold night,
I watched an old woman
dressed in many-colored rags
walking toward her shack,
a tent under the bridge,
now and then, shaking her arms
in protest toward the sky.
I wondered how she coped.
I followed a man leading
his wife out of the morgue,
into the inky womb of the night.
He shreds his badge into pieces
throwing them in a trash can.
He just visited his dead son
laid on ice who would
never have to be an orphan.
Then I understood. In darkness,
we take out our coping saws,
thread blades through lacunas
of our soul, cutting away
maladies and shaking them
loose, like twisted tree limbs
strewn on the desolate street.
That's how, my friend,
we cope.

