

Maligawatte, 2020

Vivimarie VanderPoorten Medawattegedara

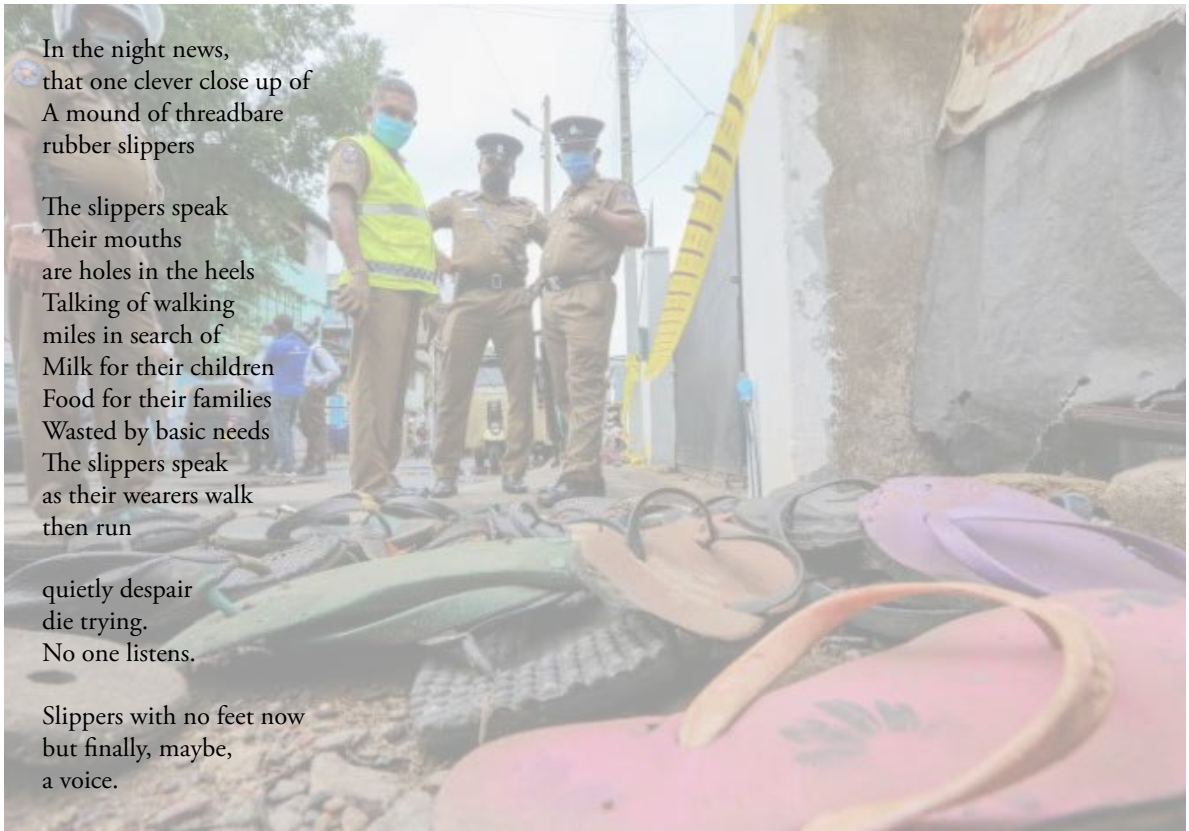
Three women have been trampled to death during a stampede for an \$8 cash handout in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo amid growing desperation among Sri Lankans struggling to make ends meet during a coronavirus lockdown - News item

In the night news,
that one clever close up of
A mound of threadbare
rubber slippers

The slippers speak
Their mouths
are holes in the heels
Talking of walking
miles in search of
Milk for their children
Food for their families
Wasted by basic needs
The slippers speak
as their wearers walk
then run

quietly despair
die trying.
No one listens.

Slippers with no feet now
but finally, maybe,
a voice.



Vivimarie VanderPoorten Medawattegedara is Senior Lecturer in English in the Department of Language Studies at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Her poetry collection *Nothing Prepares You* was awarded the Gratiaen Prize in 2007.