

Jagari Mukherjee

The Prelude

A Night's Conversation

In the dark, only the
light of your cigarette,
flashing red amidst
the blue cliches of
my melancholia.
I cling to layers
of shame in oil paint.
A glimpse of you, a poem I read...
sleepless hours tiptoe past;
you make me want to forget
the definition of rest.

"Let me see you once"--
your request.
Then you try:
"I can see your eyes
and a cheek."

I watch a shadow
in the mirror:
I wonder if you
find me beautiful.

1
The moon is a glass.

I place, at its bottom,
a turquoise bound in
latticed silver...

You tell me, Inamorato,
that promises don't
wax and wane.

2

The sun offers a pitcher of wine.

Let us drink then, Inamorato,
the new gold together.

3

My sister embroiders
blue flowers with satin leaves.
Chain stitch and lazy-daisy.

Teach me, I whisper to her--
in every chain
my fingers are bound in thread
where each tinted weave
on the light cotton spread
is a letter to Inamorato.

4

Pain, palliative-resistant.

I want to write a poem
in all its imperfections, Inamorato...

You slide your tongue
over the navel of your girl
with the violet scent...

I hold my suffering
like a cup of rain

or a jar of fireflies, aflame

5

New moon--

I search for my turquoise
in the violet of the sky

I am jealous

of the harmonica
touching your lips

and envy every girl
taken by you

6.

ON THE PHOTOS OF YOUR EXES

No comfort there: to think
of your memories.
I understand, of course,
that you (like me)
were once careless and young:
the taste of fresh love was
on your tongue; as lush
as a soft tamarind.

Yet, I must confess
a lingering sadness.
One of them had eyes
of amber flecked with gold.
The other one looked out
from her photo with her
dark green, bold jewels.
(More entrancing than mine...
I wonder...)

You once made love
under a computer table:
it wasn't me, and we hadn't met.
Your past was a sky of
rose and lavender.
Don't ask about me:
I wrapped my decades
in foils of drought and rains
for too long and it rotted
away like a cavernous tooth.

Now, in the middle years,
the pain of withering summoned;
still you play your harmonica

for me today. I am content
to name you the flesh of my flesh.
The bone of my bone.

About the Poet

Jagari Mukherjee holds an MA in English Language and Literature from University of Pune, and was awarded a gold medal and several prizes by the University for excelling in her discipline. Her poems and other creative pieces have been published in different venues both in India and abroad. She is a Best of the Net 2018 nominee, a DAAD scholar from Technical University, Dresden, Germany, a Bear River alumna, and the winner of the Poeisis Award for Excellence in Poetry 2019, among other awards. She won the 2019 Reuel International Prize for Poetry, and the Tagore Literary Prize 2018 for Book Review. Her chapbook *Between Pages* was published by Cherry-House Press, Illinois, USA, in June 2019. Her book *The Elegant Nobody* was by Hawakal Publishers in January 2020. She has co-authored with Dr. Ampat Koshy *Wine-Kissed Poems: A Set of 18 Sakhi-Sakha Duet/Dialogue Poems*, published by Blue Pencil. She is currently pursuing her PhD from Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, India. She is the Managing Editor of EKL Review.