

Shatarupa Mishra

Lockdown Know-How

No knock on door.
No howdy, no bow.
Only pot blossoms bob.

Hollow dots block flow.
Sky low, clock slow.
Stop. Mop floor.

Noon now. Chop. Cook.
Chomp on good food.
Boost mood.

Bolt door. Brook no story.
Rows of books nod fondly.
Look on. Do not brood.

Grow comfort.
Go to work.
Words flow, orbs glow.

Living Metal

Surfing digital worlds
I am one with the machine.
A stubborn breeze,
moist with stolen dreams
of myriad eyes
sets wide the half open door
and brings in a whiff
of bygone days:
days that saw the unfolding

of two souls in a garden
of marigolds and togetherness,
then gave the name of obligation
to forged distances of time.
I come back to the human in me
and find life oozing through metal.
My fingers feel not the inert keys
but the warmth of a brother's gift.

Looking out the Window

An empty stained barrel
asserting itself.
A jack-fruit plant proud
of its climbing friend.
Glinting in the sun a glass pane,
At once official and personal.
Dried mossy twigs against the bricks
speaking of storm and rebirth.
Memory of an absent squirrel
settling like dew on expectant shoots
that crown the boundary wall.
Ridges and rings on a wet trunk
declaring the grit of a deodar.
Raindrops carrying the load
of lost love, illusion and hope.

Persistence

A windy morning.
Two determined eyes of a newly wed
ready to make her home spic and span.
An anxious pigeon aiming
to make its nest in a nook.
A clash of interests.

The scattered straws on the threshold
receive a spiteful glance.

The world's too busy to see
the silent war that follows.
Human and non-human at loggerheads,
each craving to demarcate home.
Straws thrown in the roadside dump in a moment.
Fresh straws dropped at the entrance the next.
Resolve lies on both sides
till tired hands lose the battle
and the beak tastes victory.

The next morning, the maid,
otherwise ever in a hurry,
looks at the skillful weaving and says,
"Pigeons bring good luck."
The beaten lady of the house smiles.
The earth is indeed mother to all.

The Errand Boy

There is something within,
running in my veins, burning.
Should I tell you
what turns the insides
into a barbed pulp?

But how fickle is Word.
He leaves me with promise
Of hope, help, humanity.
Halfway, he is ambushed
and so is the promise.

Play seizes him. Puzzles,
an interesting game
where solving is not the trick.
The more you jumble,
the better the score.

Word is on a winning spree now.
And I lose him.
His masterworks only burn me more.
Do I dare utter
what chokes me now?

Oh, let the barbs crush against
my skin and show themselves.
Let the pulp peek through the gash.
I'd need no messenger then,
face no enigma.

Translation

Like bold lightning
tamed by a magnet pole
descended the crooked boughs,
leafless,
on the barren trunk,
thrilling a pallid heart
and letting it touch
the untouched.

About the Poet

Shatarupa Mishra is an Assistant Professor of English at Govt. Women's College, Bhawanipatna, Odisha. She is a Gold-Medalist from the University of Hyderabad (2009.) She loves to read and write poems. One of her stories has been published as part of an ebook "Esmeralda's Hair and Other Stories." It is available on Amazon. Though new to the world of publishing, she cherishes her poems as the break of day, feathers and flute notes. She recently completed the peer-reviewed "Sharpened Visions: A Poetry Workshop" on Coursera (12.06.2020) offered by California Institute of the Arts and received 98.4 per cent. She hopes the poems (six in number) appeal to the readers.