

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.