

Deeptesh Sen

Decadence

The night is lonely without laughter,
the moment is empty without speech,
memory is unfinished without desire.

Laughter is the perversion
you choose to embrace
over the banality of love.

Solitude

You and I have spent centuries
travelling across ruins in the city.

The ruins of the rugged skin
on a blacksmith's palm,
the ruins of overdrunk streets
unhurried with nostalgia.

You and I have tasted the sweat
on sun-baked bodies that shrivel up
with desire when winter comes,

with heart throbbing and pupils dilating
when an artful peck winds down
the texture of solitude.

You and I are always half-arriving on the hill
remembering the places we had promised
to visit but never did;

the lakes, the souvenirs, the airports
and the people we had planned to meet
all haunt us in repetition like unminted memory.

Instead,
we are here at home on a Friday night
talking of New York, London, Amsterdam

staring at my lathered face in the mirror
while you recoil in bed
in the ruins of the Calcutta summer.

Hands

dark remonstrance
of hands

hands that laugh and die
but dare not speak

jostling
with speech and sweat
on the other side of silence.

just hands

hands that drink
the black flower of your eyes,
and walk into your house
with no explanation.

Caravaggio's laughter
stretched across your blood-nail face,

time burning
closing, closing
beneath your feet,

time burning
on folded shadows.

hands that hold, make love,
exercise control

now hang in the silence
panting,
turning into Daphne's claws.

Drifting

morning flipped open the wounds
like an aimless streetlight
at a vacant bus stop

no counter-reasoning
or justification,
there was no need for that

we had sandwiches and coffee
for breakfast
and left for work
without a word

at night
you returned drenched
in laughter and rain

you watered the plants
and fed the children
with care

you sang them to sleep
and put out the lights
with meticulous dedication

we made love
with the same practised indifference

your body flooded the room
with the familiar scent of strange men

About the Poet

Deeptesh Sen is currently pursuing his PhD in English at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He is the author of *House of Song* (Kolkata: Writers Workshop, 2017) and *Leaves in the Mirror* (Self-published, 2010). His poetry has been published in *The Statesman*, Kolkata, the *Journal of Poetry Society, India*, the *Stare's Nest* and the *Crab Fat Literary Magazine*. He blogs at www.deeptesh.net.