

Sharmila Ray

The Dry Shadows of March

The dry shadows of March have histories inside it.
God has disappeared down empty streets and shuttered shops.
The whole city is a gothic zigzag of grey and more grey,
and sometimes a filigree of yellow superimposes on the pattern.
Now the Neem talks to the Banyan ripping apart its petrol smeared gag
and the birds have a field day.
But it seems a pity that the real world is virtual-crisp and definite
under some fairy's moon-cold spell.

From childhood we have heard about the seven wonders of the world,
All man-made. Like me many others have added rockets to their list.
By risking everything we have forgot that the stars do not belong to us.
The universe penetrates and burns
and we are just fleshy dollops
sliding and slipping on earth's skin.

New Dawn

In retrospect our handshake that afternoon in February
was a wind tossed chocolate.
The interval between holding and letting go of your hand
was an unwritten work of fiction.
Lunch was laid around a small vase with sunflowers
and the distance between two chairs was insignificant.
The flowers were stretching to touch your eyelids
and I mastered enough self confidence
to make the dictionary of everydayness normal...

Tonight I stare at the pink moon trying to visualize the
space beyond seven heavens, quarantined in my flat.
Like papa Plato I prefer introspection.
In between I wash my hands a hundred times.

In between the memory of our entwined fingers pops up.
It seems surreal like Magritte's painting.

I don't want to imagine that our next handshake will be bone dry
accompanied by drops of sanitizer. Fragile fingertips trembling,
our gloved hands hardly registering the warmth.
The facemask will bar the flowers stretching to touch
your eyelids.

In the meantime I am looking at Matisse's painting-*le bonheur de vivre*,
hydrated by cadmium and intense unmodulated colours.
Let the interval between isolation and anticipation turn to invisible plaited bond.
And when the Universe stops raining tears
the sky azure-lilac,
we shall hold hands again
once again we will hold hands
once again...

Sentences

Sentences with liquid words debate within my head all night
trying to find new harmonies and chords.
The warm-veined alphabets meditate with other alphabets
within the organ pipes and steeples of my mind
in search of new words.

I watch curiously,
soft-hard words gathering into
the depths of other words,
purple cluster of sentences
gliding through my thoughts
trying to capture
unpublished manuscripts.

About the Poet

Sharmila Ray is a poet and non-fiction essayist, writing in English and anthologized and featured in India and abroad. Her poems, short stories and non-fictional essays have appeared in various national and international magazines and journals. She is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of History at City College, Kolkata. She has authored nine books of poetry. She conducted poetry workshops organized by British Council, Poetry Society of India, Sahitya Akademi. She is the Vice-president of Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library. She has been reading her poems in India and abroad. Her poems have been translated into Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Slovene, Hebrew and Spanish. Currently, she is working on a manuscript of non-fictional essays. She may be contacted at sharmilaray25@gmail.com.