

## SHARMILA RAY

### **Nib**

Under the shade of a lamp the black gold pen looks at its nib  
aware that it has locked centuries of magic alphabets  
whose DNA lingers inside dried ink.

Seen retrospectively, cities, towns, events, accidents, names, numbers,  
movements, gestures, stories, myths, are all words grafted  
on relentless time.

The nib dreams, extending and linking to other infinite nibs.

Flirting with Euripides in Athens or Camus in absinthe scented Tipasa,  
remaining alone with Calvino in impossible landscapes and meditating  
with Tagore, it is conscious of the powers of gods and demons  
in whose shadow cities bloom and men make history.

Without saying a word it forms words, mysteriously outliving  
the mortal body.

### **Alphabets**

Alphabets march to enter my heart  
but an ancient wind stops them.

They get lost

they die

without forming a word.

However, in the evening they return

with kites

with birds.

Coloured alphabets

sitting arrogantly on my desk

deriding me.

Alphabets mist of my armpits.

Alphabets the cotton stretched

over my breasts.

Alphabets the invisible horizon.

I'm swept.

In the sense-space of my thought

alphabets grow again on their own

as do the fern

much like the nail on your finger.

Alphabets mother of words.

Alphabets word-forest.

And if we do lose ourselves

in the forest, it is exactly then

that we find our voice

### **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.