

THE FIRST MORNING AND OTHER POEMS

By Reena Prasad

When it dawns

The crow pheasant will sit on the well's rim
and call the sun down with a soft, booming 'coop' 'coop'
The front door will not groan

The fish monger boy will toot his rubber horn
while moving up and down the street on his bike
An orange tabby will run to the gate
The front door will look the other way

The old rose bush will creak and bow low
under the weight of its rain-drunk blooms
The curry plant will be looted by the neighbour
The front door will not move

The milking lady will pass by the low wall
looking in at the shed of the big-horned brown cow
Squabbling hens will squeeze in under the fence
The door will make no sound

The wind will shake the slanting rubber grove
looking for the man who cuts and milks the sap
He will clang in with a chain to lock up the farm gate
The front door still won't budge

I wish they wouldn't make such a racket
trying to tug at the strings the night broke
All these pleas cannot rouse her
And the front door? It never had ears

ARITHMETIC

This time
everything will look different
There will be no blurred sides
only a steel-gray clarity
I have put mine away
and borrowed your eyes

The trees are taller than the house
A few thin waists have snapped in the wind
They need to be fed more
but the leaves are healthy
The ground is covered with button weed
My feet ache where thorns
have marched through them
Pain is a phantom
Your eyes could never see wounds

They are busy measuring and taking count
of the gaps in the broken wire fence
the cost of fertilizer from the depot
the balance in the passbook

and the days left before a month is up
Nothing adds up

I abandon them on a border stone
You reclaim them eagerly
to glare at a tree
which dared to thrust a branch
past its boundaries

Through the barbed-wire
the sun sinks into a paddy field
White egrets awash with an orange glow
settle on a buffalo
My eyes fresh from a nap
nuzzle at the scene
You see the darkening sky
and the delight in mine
then add them up perfectly as rain

We hurry home
just before the storm breaks

Bio

Reena Prasad is a poet from India, currently living in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals e.g. The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, York Literary Review, Lakeview International Journal, Duane's PoeTree, Mad Swirl etc. She is also the Destiny Poets UK's, Poet of the year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015.

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More recently, her poem was adjudged second in the World Union of Poet's poetry competition, 2016.

EPISTEME