

FORLORN

By Lopa Banerjee

Did I lose you somewhere
Between the hyacinth and the ribbons
The pleats and folds of my adult drape?

I know you still wait for me, my moon
As the night flutters, the unfailing rose
Drunk with solitude and honeyed longing.

I breathe shallow and deep, my eyes
Swept away by stardust, I am alone
Your milk, eager and firm, waits for me
At the shore of the night.

Between my trembling lips and voice,
Your song hides in the fugitive wind,
Slender and silent, you walk away,
Barefoot, soaking in the night's last ashes.

Did I call you, my white hills
Breaking, sinking at the wake of dawn?
I return to the day, dust blown
Crushing sand beneath my feet,

You have sliced me to pieces,
I move, unsure, forlorn, in spirals
Of smoke as I call you out
My moorings trapped in the day, dying.

BETWEEN THIS LIFE AND THE OTHER: THE RAIN

Do my dirty walls rain, still?
Dots imprinted on dark leaves, scrawling,
Pressing their heads to the crushing dust of human pain?
Do the fingers still dig into
The dark, unfathomable whole,
Beneath the ribs, the pain, stark dead, burning?

Do the primal clouds of monsoon jump in puddles, still?
Longing to steam, to cry in small streams,
Ripples and kisses, running down, the deluge
Slitting throats, trampling my primordial breast?
I have seen the skin, blood, bones
Of the rain, hung on to thirsty fingers
Licking the pickled salt of a fleshy pain.
Is it mine, still?
Forgot its name since we last held hands.

Does it still rumble, growl inside,
The billowing cloud-fire, the necklace of grief?
The night, jumping, leaping, sticking her tongue out
For one last dance, entwines me,
Stumbling over, as I listen to mourning ghosts,
Moving around, in circles, the earth
A whisper of sprinkled ashes of pain.

The smoke, a translucent fusion,
Do I drink it whole? The murky waters
Ruminating on the slumber-buried drone of pain.

Do I shake it off like old dust? Here it comes back

Peels and hums amid grinning, littered rain.

The bird rests beneath the rusted bricks and walls

The flash of cool light, of rain, long gone.

The heart of the wind beating amid the dead leaves in rain,

I stand, smothered between the damp walls,

Breaking and sinking, birdlike, aflame, drowning.

THE REVISITING

An old love flaunted itself in half-written letters.

An old love buried in the slippery sands of time.

An old love puffed fiercely, flashed sugary smiles,

Clenched at me tight, and loosened,

Cried in long, ragged sobs.

An old love finds me in smoke, sips of coffee and yawning.

An old love comes to visit me, his face ghostly and blurred.

I take him in and we begin to talk,

Greet each other in discreet, playful nods.

We talk in shadows and scribbling,

In warm monotones and the equation of rhetoric.

We've rubbed off awkward kisses, wayward fantasies

With the palm of our hands.

Our delicate, birdlike buffoonery slapped hard

By a slate of routine chores.

A scrapbook of lost words careen around the room.

My hands, stretch out to him in stray lines
Azure blue, green, purple shades of calf love.
Keystrokes of a lost harmony, fading, resounding,
Crossing paths in a dim, complicated dream,
Melting, wafting, diminishing again.
An old love is a long smear on my whiteboard face,
In twilight memories, summons me
In anonymous blinks and glittering.
I watch him from afar, lanky, white-haired and lost,
Leave the room with the faint odor of our used up days.

A WORLD WITHOUT POETRY

A world without poetry,
The concrete hammering of mails
The infusion of programmed chores
A day, yet another day shedding it's leaf
In parched, scheduled coldness.

Collective tangling of prosaic voices
Barbecue in the summer heat,
Disjointed company of drunk folks
Stinking of the corporate fumes.

Shattered raindrops, where do I hide you
In the luscious spread of weekend delicacies?
The shrieking yells of perfumed bodies,
The flashy make-up of the powdered night
Hides you like submissive dirt.

The deep chasm of naked arms bleed
My unwritten lines buried under
The daily litany of unanswered applications,
Unsolicited proposals, boxed and sealed
Never caring for a reply, a nod, an assurance.

A world without poetry dies and lives
Every day, crafty, stoic, plastered,
Waking in hopes of a startling twist
Of a delicate, lyrical opulence.

SLEEP

Let my muse hide in his blanketed darkness.

There are slumbers to attend to,
Nourishment to tend to,
Tastes to be brewed in sleep
Far more enticing than my rickety poetry.

In the deep dungeons of words and stanzas
Where I walk around, nude, barefoot,
Itching to burst over, in the helter-skelter
Of unruly winds, the muse has been trampled over,
Bleeding, drowned in soot,
Hungry, like a child wailing, for acceptance.
Words of praise hovering around like fireflies of light,
Evaporate into thin air at the bend of the road.

For now, I want my words, buried dead
Under the avalanche of nondescript public clutter.
I trudge the sordid paths paved for our recycled days.
Knowing that my muse will speak to me again,
The dingy language of rhythms and blank verse,
Etched out through the lovelorn streets
Where I will wait for him, dreaming, forlorn.

Bio:

Lopa Banerjee is an author, poet and freelance writer based in Nebraska, US. She has a Masters' in English with a thesis in Creative Nonfiction from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her unpublished memoir 'Thwarted Escape' has been First Place Category Winner at the Journey Awards 2014 hosted by Chanticleer Reviews. Her poetry, stories and essays have appeared at 'Words, Pauses, Noises', the creative writers' blog of Kingston University, UK, 'Café Dissensus', 'eFiction India', 'Earthen Lamp Journal', 'Camel Saloon' (special anthology published on International Women's Day), 'About Place Journal', 'Spark Magazine', 'Northeast Review', 'Indian Review', 'River Poets' Journal'. She has also been a recipient of the critic award and 'Poem of the Month' award at Destiny Poets International Community of Poets, UK.