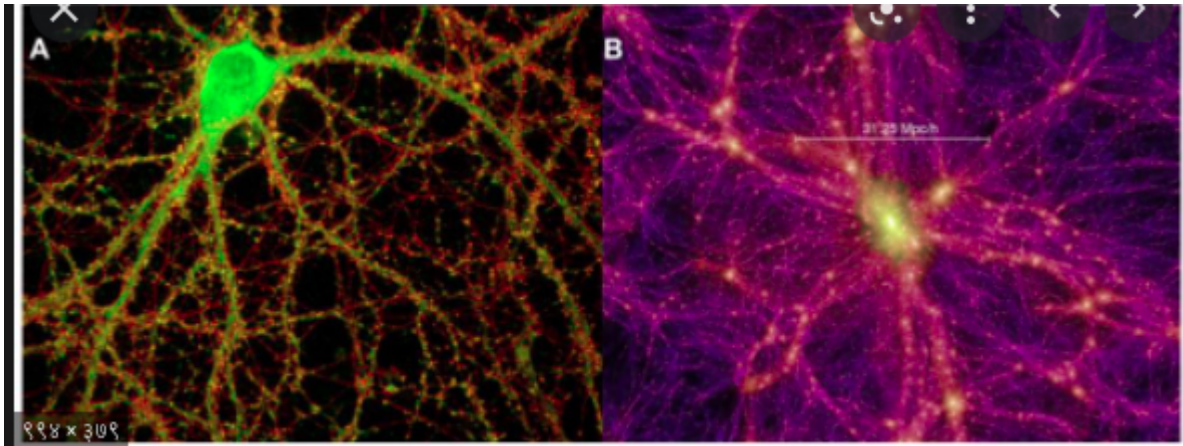


# Night's Neurons



## The Weaver (June 2007, Mumbai)

Betwixt waking and eternity  
the corridor twists  
and turns  
darkness peeps out  
of many doors  
left ajar.

Out in the open  
a man steps out  
of the lamplight  
into the rain  
he wears a long, black coat  
his voice  
is breaking  
and his eyes are earnest.

He drives off  
in a van, full of people  
into mortal danger  
there are no digits  
on the number plate.

The corridor turns  
like a thread for Sydney Carton  
on a spindle

in his weary hands.  
He reeks of midnight's oil.  
The rain drips off  
his shoulders  
like a chill  
into his heart  
His lamp is burning  
and the door is shut.

## **Wait Until Dark (February 2014, Mumbai)**

The wings of night are spreading wide  
the Morgul Lord *unmounts*  
his hands are cold as ice  
his breath  
forks like a tongue  
a sheet of flame, twisting and unwavering  
his eyes the usual  
empty sockets  
hopelessly out of sync  
for it is daylight that he haunts.

The night, the pristine, the undying  
night  
keeps us safe,  
unmirrored  
untouched  
within Her bosom  
for if any of Her creatures should see the day  
be it an owl, besieged by ravens  
or a candle flame  
in a pile of amorphous wax  
or a student grappling with a crowd  
of random cadences and flashing rhythms  
a fastening of fancies  
into tens and fives  
and sevens and their noises,

if one of us forgets a turning, strays  
into the deepening shadows of daylight  
and forgets the way,  
the noonday sun will have his fill  
and let us go  
and She will find us  
where She left us  
in the midnight hour.

## **To Swell A Progress (March 2015, Mumbai)**

A voice: What will you do  
when you're free?  
When the memory of this tiger and that  
no longer snarls  
at your gate?  
When your bones have left their grating  
at chalkboards  
squeaking clean  
allowing  
no dust particles to settle with ease  
at the counter  
dark matter  
white matter in a parallel universe  
I answered - almost.  
My eyes are tired  
from too little widening  
the muscles are stretched thin  
now blowing out  
at elliptical fault lines  
cavernous as hot air balloons  
and just as vacuous in their leaning  
into the bitter air.

And yet, there is a way  
of gentleness  
a deathly stillness  
that rips the sky open  
and in between the seconds

uncountable millennia  
leave just enough  
breathing room  
for a promised freedom.

## **Class (October 2001, Philadelphia Suburbs)**

Your curses clamor through the walls,  
the crickets shrill, the boiler's rumbling grin  
a grin,  
not quite a laugh, a grin  
escapes the boiler room below  
muscles in its chin  
contort in heed, in heat,  
to conversation's end.  
Pieces of your soul are strewn like coals  
into this empty din.

I read between the minutes of the night  
freezing autumn night unquenched  
the boiler's heat in rhapsody, in flame  
in flame upon my back  
in chill upon my feet.

I read between the minutes of the night  
your face  
caught in a struggle  
with my swearing friend  
I looked at you  
with brave and tender eyes.

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Other Poems by Acushla Sarswat