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我們 知道 許多 事情 都 是 在 這 個 世界 上 發生 的，  
 但 我們 卻 不 能 確 定 這 些 事 情 是 否 會 在 這 個 世界 上 發生，  
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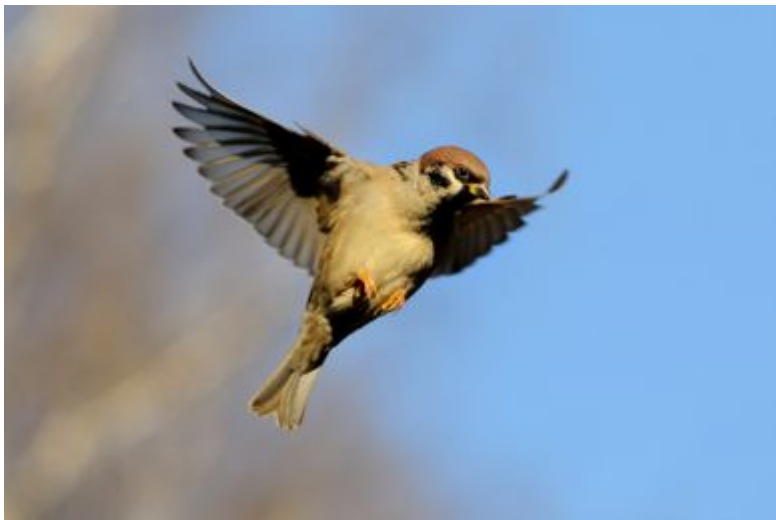




राजेश कुमार शर्मा, Delhi Police. (Studied in MSJ College, Bharatpur)

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# MY HEART IS AN ALIEN SPARROW and other poems in English and Italian



## MY HEART IS AN ALIEN SPARROW

Ah my heart, my heart is an alien sparrow.

Ah my heart, my heart, which dance of love,  
that dances a comma of your land.

Ah my heart, my heart,  
in the summer fire  
between thirsty slopes,  
in the clear sky,  
between your roots

.

## **Il mio cuore è un passero alieno**

Ah il mio cuore, il mio cuore è un passero alieno.

*Ah il mio cuore, il mio cuore, che danza d'amore,*

che danza una virgola del tuo terreno.

Ah il mio cuore, il mio cuore,

nel fuoco d'estate

tra pendici assetate,

nel cielo sereno,

tra le tue radici.

(Antonio Blunda, © 2022)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **YOU COULD BE MY SON**

You could be my son

Ah...My son...How could you be that!

I can't forget your name

In the days that is yet to come

I will end up soon

But it will be you

To find me among the dead

Together we will fly away,

Sail in the wind

As evil is all visible

And goodness is hiding

Come and hold my hand

At your leisure

### **POTEVI ESSERMI FIGLIO**

Potevi essermi figlio.

Figlio mio, ah come potevi esserlo!

Non perderò il tuo nome,

nei giorni che restano.

Finirò il mio respiro,

ma sarai tu

a trovarmi tra i morti.

E voleremo insieme

come una vela al vento,

come il bene nascosto

nel male di questo mondo.

Tu allora, d'un conforto,

verrai a prendermi per mano.

\*\*\*\*\*



You could be my son Image: ColumbusDojo

## **THE SOUND**

The life – it's our strongest hold

We are in this world

And with our light

We lift ourselves from the ground

Life is so beautiful

because it has its rhythmic sound.

A sound

That I hear from the bloomed flower

by god's grace

I listen to it in love and compassion

The sound

Of trains in the railway station,

I listen to it even in the still clocks

And in the passing winds  
The sound that lingers  
Inside the rooms of my house  
And I am ever listening to my own sound  
The sounds that make you feel things around  
I hear it from behind my tears of the youth  
And still from the green paths of those small roads  
Now I feel it in my middle age  
Life...my life  
the sweet sound of it  
But yet something more to be heard  
Life...you are the light so heavenly  
And the sound –  
The moving reason behind  
All those fluttering butterflies

### ***RUMORE***

La vita  
è la mia cosa più forte.  
E' caduta appena  
per questo mondo  
d'una mia luce breve,  
e mi solleva da terra.

La vita è così bella

perchè fa un rumore.

Un rumore che conosco

nel fiore dischiuso

nella mano di Dio

nell'amore amato e coincidente

nel cerchio della mia pietà

.

Il rumore che conosco di tutti i treni

di tutte le stazioni con gli orologi fermi

di tutti i passanti nel vento

.

Questo rumore

che va bene per tutte le stanze,

per le stanze della mia casa

dove, da sempre,

ricordo il rumore.

.

Il rumore di cui parlo,

il rumore che ti fa sentire le cose

.

qualcosa già prima



per ogni mia lacrima

.

Perchè ho pianto, in gioventù.

E nel cammino verde

della piccola strada

sento adesso la via

così a metà della mia vita.

.

Vita, mia vita,

vita mia,

immenso dolcissimo rumore

di tutto il mio vivere.

Rimani ancora qualcosa.

.

Tu che sei la meravigliosa luce

e la ragione commovente

delle mie farfalle.

\*\*\*\*\*

**YOU NO LONGER KNOW WHAT WINTER IS**

***(To my father)***

You no longer know what winter is

a winter of the Thermopylae kind

the hatred  
sickened by love  
the road  
perspiring from medicine  
the cold  
in steam from water  
all this cold  
like the last unfinished  
speech at six  
the kind that discards me  
like a defeated soldier  
inoculated  
and kicked like tin cans  
that discards me  
with all the candy souls of radiators.

***TU NON SAI PIU' COS'E' L'INVERNO***

***(A mio padre)***

*Tu non sai più cos'è l'inverno  
quest'inverno da Termopili  
l'odio  
ammalato d'amore  
la strada*

*nel sudore della medicina*

*il freddo*

*nel vapore dell'acqua*

*tutto il freddo*

*come quell'ultimo discorso*

*incompiuto delle sei*

*da scartarmi via*

*con la resa d'un soldato*

*inoculato*

*in calci da barattoli*

*da scartarmi*

*con tutte le anime di caramelle dei radiatori.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **TELL ME I LOVE YOU**

Tell me I love you,

I who hardly can say it any longer.

Tell me I love you,

so that this house, for once,

will not remind me

because the last sunset

seems a story told

because "I love you"

is something immense

in this silence  
that vibrates so much  
tell me I love you  
and I swear to you  
that I will have slowly counted  
all the swallows"

### **DIMMI TI AMO**

Dimmi ti amo,  
io che quasi non so più dirlo.  
Dimmi ti amo,  
perché questa casa, per una volta,  
non me lo ricorda  
perché l'ultimo tramonto  
sembra un viaggio narrato  
perchè "ti amo"  
è qualcosa di immenso  
in questo silenzio  
che vibra così  
dimmi ti amo  
e giuro  
che avrò contato piano  
tutte le rondini

---

# The Grand Inquisitor

But, he was only a shadow.

He was not  
the Prince of Darkness

the veiled Mistress  
smiles gently.

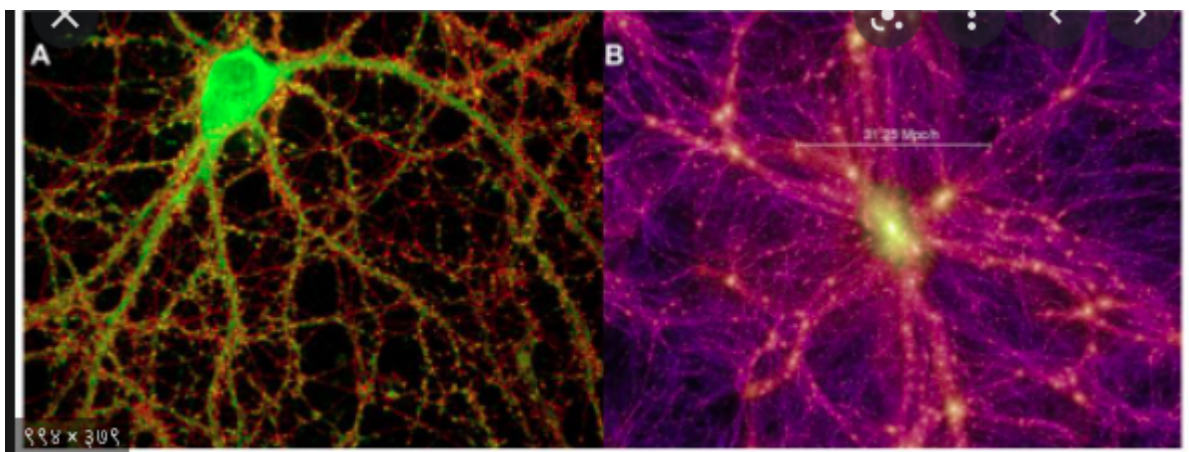
She gave me an address  
and instructions

He lives on

The majesty of willing life-in-death  
in Absolute Zero

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## 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

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## **Blood and Rain**



## **A View from an Ex-Aristo (Mumbai, 2014)**

Mother of God!  
There you stand  
tall and proud  
the blade across your torso  
angled  
like a grey black sports bra  
but you have no breasts.  
Why no breasts?  
Only straight lines  
running true  
without curving  
without bending.  
I stand for my turn  
sometimes sit waiting  
always waiting  
for you  
to christen me again  
your pen

writing my name  
in blood,  
in drops of red ink  
rolling,  
rolling with my severed head  
across the floor  
my thoughts disembodied  
stuck in limbo  
for a soul to pick them up  
somewhere  
off the mainline.  
I think they've lost my number  
I've been waiting for hours  
the never-ending minute  
seems to stretch across eternity  
like a rubber band  
carrying within it  
infinite tension  
never breaking  
always teasing  
just a little further ...  
Your blade is dull today  
it carries rust  
there is no one to whet it.  
We are saved by gravity alone  
Madame la Guillotine!  
May Thou always be  
so merciful.  
Hallowed be Thy Name.

## **Sand and Yang (Mumbai, 2014)**

The safest place in the universe  
is the eye of a hurricane.

Walls of steam rise up around me  
making havoc of buildings, trucks  
breaking trees like pencils  
carving messages into uranium  
reactors that pop and fizz  
like corks and balloons

now spurting blood  
as if some wrathful Goddess  
eyeless  
in the steam-colored garb of Isis  
drawn like oil paintings  
from the wells of fantasy  
threw a party  
for a fan following of misshapen clowns  
and half-baked misanthropomorphic entities  
hanging out  
the bored masculinity of the ancient desert  
having been assured  
that there is no water on the red planet  
and no little blue men worth waiting for  
hooded or otherwise.

The balloons we live in  
are fragile  
and yet the storm  
protects us  
for the whirlwind has no center.  
His dark anger spins Him  
in the vortex  
of memory.

And who are you  
to talk of fantasy  
said He  
you who live in the land of Bell Curves  
and Sorting Hats?

## **August (Philadelphia, 2002)**

As you walk by  
the air becomes so heavy  
I am pushed against a wall  
Is it you or is it just the heat of August?  
Hiroshima breeze  
you are so heavy  
I am hanging like the leaves  
on the drying summer trees

pulled down towards the earth  
Is it you or is it just the August air  
that makes me droop with so much longing?

The August sun was always known to burn  
us lesser mortals  
with his august glare

We sacrificed an apple for the rain  
I kissed the earth  
I heard a little girl cry out  
as if she knew the presence there  
If August comes creeping  
like a whisper  
through the hollows of your mind  
tell me, love  
then does September trudge behind?  
If you were a pebble  
in the walls of Jerusalem  
would they come crashing down?

Is it you or is it just the mushrooms clouds of August?  
Sodom and Gomorrah lifted out  
like mushrooms from our lore, our fantasies  
borne into reality  
and christened Hiroshima, Nagasaki ...  
hanging heavy in the firmament  
laden with their sixty years  
of ripened weariness  
your glance is heavy as the August rain  
shining through them and the trees.

The stares of the undying lifted through the skies  
reflecting points of consciousness  
the dying steps of the millenium  
now reborn into the new  
thunder like the heavy August rain  
and you.

## **Waiting for Rain (June, 2005, Mumbai)**

Climb, gaze  
up where the steeple meets the sky  
scribble someone's name  
into the dust-filled clouds.

Casino in the heavens  
lit by lightning  
somewhere the westerly wind  
sits poker faced  
covering diamonds  
about to be scattered  
wait for the sparkling rain.

## **Shards of Light (October, 2005, Mumbai)**

In the shredded darkness of this night  
dazzled and undeafened  
stupid  
stupid, staring eyes  
stuck in the stupor of unceasing sight  
the heaviness of nothingness plodding  
through  
tortuous miles of wakefulness  
and twisting arms of time  
tick-ticking through eternity.

Arise! Awake! Shake off your sleep!  
You swept through the room in all of your magnificence.  
An army of rays assailed us  
nailing me to shadows  
that have dared remain.

Eyelids jammed are not like doors  
the lock of sleep  
cannot be forced with chisels

chisels are at work  
carving out my name  
into each terrifying minute.

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Acknowledgments: I have quoted song lyrics by Iron Maiden and Megadeth in some of my verses.

Other Poems by Acushla Sarswat

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## About Amrita Pritam / Kanika Aurora

The bonds and conventions of society are certainly reflected in my poetry, negatively, of course. But I think every intelligent person has to suffer...Suffering is the price the intelligent person has to pay. As for women, I feel that women in literature are different from women in other fields...Basically; there is a prejudice against women in literature. Men take women's writing lightly; they doubt a women's sincerity. For example, when I got this Sahitya Akademi Award, and with it fame, the leading English daily in Delhi wrote that I got my popularity in Punjabi literature because of my youth and beauty. I felt very sorry to read that. Why not talent? They can admire a beautiful woman, but not a talented one."

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# **In The City Alone ... and other poems / Rachna Joshi**

I walk through the old market  
fascinated by cowbells. Himalayan cedars  
and pines cover the slopes around.  
Dew soaks through the foliage  
and the cold vapours settle everywhere,  
branches and leaves hang in a myopic mist  
green, white and light blend.

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## **As tributes pour in on Surekha Sikri's demise listen to her Swan Songs**

As a fitting tribute to the great performer she was we will listen to her mellifluous recitations of Hindi and Urdu Poetry. But before that, here are some of the tributes which poured in on social media and otherwise from her millions of admirers, and eminent people whom she knew, including actors and directors from film, television and theatre.

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## **Aneeta Chitale: Sojourn to**



# **Maldives – Book Review / Interview**

The turbulent times between the years spanning from 2008 to 2014 is presented on the canvas. The relations between the two countries were totally raptured in this era. The entire plethora of Indian nationals and foreigners had gone berserk. I had to study it in detail and follow it consistently.

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## **Resonances of the Past – a review by Manohar Khushalani**

Ruth is best known for her pioneering work integrating sacred texts into contemporary voice/body theatre. Her pioneering approach to the transcendental aspect of voice is founded solidly in sacred cantorial Jewish traditions. In Mirror Sky in a backdrop of dimly lit scenes Ruth, swirling, moaning, producing guttural sound explains the origin of her techniques: