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.

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

Other Poems by Acushla Sarswat