

IT'S FANTASY IT'S REALITY

Sharmila Ray

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When I was asked to preface my poems, I was taken aback. I felt and still do feel that no amount of prose writing, whatever be it, preface, introduction, author's note, can really make one get into the poem. It is either one does or doesn't.

The selection process for this collection is varied and so are the voices, taken from by earlier four collections of poetry (*Earth Me And You, A Day With Rini, Down Salt Water and Living Other Lives*) and new ones.

The poems do not follow my chronological order. Rather, they are grouped under headings.

In fact, for me, poetry is reinventing time, place, event, relationships to capture the moment I'm trying to define, creating a personal archive which sometimes, transcends.

Sharmila Ray
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Stories

Tell Me A Story

And there is something the storyteller forgot to tell. It is this—

Jagged cityscape gives way to sand – a whole fifty miles of whitewashed gold and sometimes perforated shellfish and cowrie shells line the shore. If you are sensitive enough you can feel two people at different gradients talking.

He's clasping a notebook close to his heart (probably where he spills his heart out). Walking moodily, jumping from one time frame to another.

And she?

Equally moody but more hesitant. She has found what she had been searching for from day one, through lyrics and realities. She is afraid as a huge wave rushes in and then goes back to the sea. Only sea patterns remain on the beach. She feels a song rising in her. She hides it between her toes.

There are isles inside her, dusty pink pinched from her pink white walls and boats travel past the isles into the open sea. She takes her song lathers herself with it. It has the glow of a pair of laughing eyes – almonds in autumn rain.

He is looking down at his hands feeling her travelling fingers on the half-moons of his thumb. Mounds of sand are piled high beside them. Marooned between silhouettes they gently lift each other's natal earth. Suddenly the sea grows turbulent.

He knows says nothing.

She knows says nothing.

The silent yes glows phosphorous
on the elliptical sea.

Barefoot

Barefoot you walk
softly among tall grasses,
grasses which keep secret love.
From the other world,
the moon rises.

You walk barefoot, among
muted shades and diffused light
the city sleeps.

They

They glow with radioactive isotopes
and speak of demon lovers in the rain,
a vision conjured, word by word,
from which it is hard to refrain.

Of course it was a beautiful time
each moment splashed with sea-water spray
the tingling sodium picking at small skin gashes
and bodies becoming as limp as clay.

And now they'll uncode all earthscapes
except a little that will not yield to bribe
that's interesting and what makes them go on
back to zero and unarrived.

Birthday I

Her smile cold, she swallows gulps of adrenaline,
a faint sea murmur in her ears
she swims to an island
and it is not there
only the opaque smoke-mist of the mainland.

She knows this birthday will be different
when she will tear away the paper cut-out people
such words waxing and waning her insides
flashing out of her,
lashing against her old protective walls.

Reduced to turret and moat
with the hissing high blood pressure crystallising
she is bare-boned and raw
an island of imprisoned protoplasm.

yet she knows this birthday will be different
when she will cut away the paper cutout people
and gently lift her dust-thin skin
raising her glass to the pole star.

But in the morning cold,
they found black marks on the grass
a body lying as if asleep
no daughter, no wife, no lover
just a body – riderless
and the radio bussing obsequiously
at 95 megahertz.

Birthday II

Then

She tried to believe
that her birthday with five candlesticks
and seven sea gulls was not
an apparition in fluorescent haze
but warm currents in the veins
of her loved one.

On a newly made eastern beach
she wanted to launder her morals
melt those wax like people
rise above jealous waters, desultory conversations
and zoom into stars flashing hypnotic warmth.

Then

she wanted so many things ...

Now

she saw herself—
lifelike doll, lifted high and thrown into
the seething waters of the flooded river.
She tossed and finally sank
the angry Gods accepted her.

The saying goes;
the river remained calm,
there was no flooding of the land
strangely enough there was not.