

Lapis Lazuli

An International Literary Journal

ISSN 2249-4529

www.pintersociety.com

GENERAL ISSUE VOL: 8, No.: 1, SPRING 2018

UGC APPROVED (Sr. No.41623)

BLIND PEER REVIEWED

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MANDIRA GHOSH

Memories of Some Summers

As I walked down the Janpath,
I remember the Queen's Way
referred by my aunts
frequently in their anecdotes.

Reminiscences of the past come alive,
As I remember the quiet joys of those summer afternoons
spent outside even in the blazing heat during summer vacations.
Toofan express going towards Calcutta.
In Asansol, my father got down the train
Brought tea in khullars...

Now I experience heat blazing like the aura of the monk
As I watched the red, yellow, orange robes at Janpath
Worn by sannayais, and nun.
And an illuminated Sun.

Thirsty Buddha had asked for water
From an untouchable soul
In scorching sun,
years before my memory was born.

Jyoti and aura always convert
Arrogance into compassion
Pride into kindness.
Darkness into light.
As the summer season turned
Time into memories
Moments into eternity.
Frozen ice into deep water
As elixir of life.

From New Siam

As I stepped into Gulf of Thailand
Electric current passed through my body
Did Tagore arrive here
In the land of Buddha?

Long back?
In his Siam?

From the shore of Bangkok
Jumping from a fishing boat
to a vessel,
trembling feet of an advanced age
watched in wonder
coral islands of Pattaya
or shall I say
Koh Lan?
Water still crystal clear
Corals disappearing
with thrust of tourists....

In a make shift restaurant made of bamboo
camouflaged with nature divine
head of an unknown fish, among the unfamiliar vegetables of the island
arrived as lunch.

for dessert, ample fruits
we took
among the people
from all corners of the world.

From Flower Market

Goods from the statues of Buddha
to purses, bracelets, magic eyes
elephants, dresses, tops and T shirts with elephant motifs
are on sale on water...

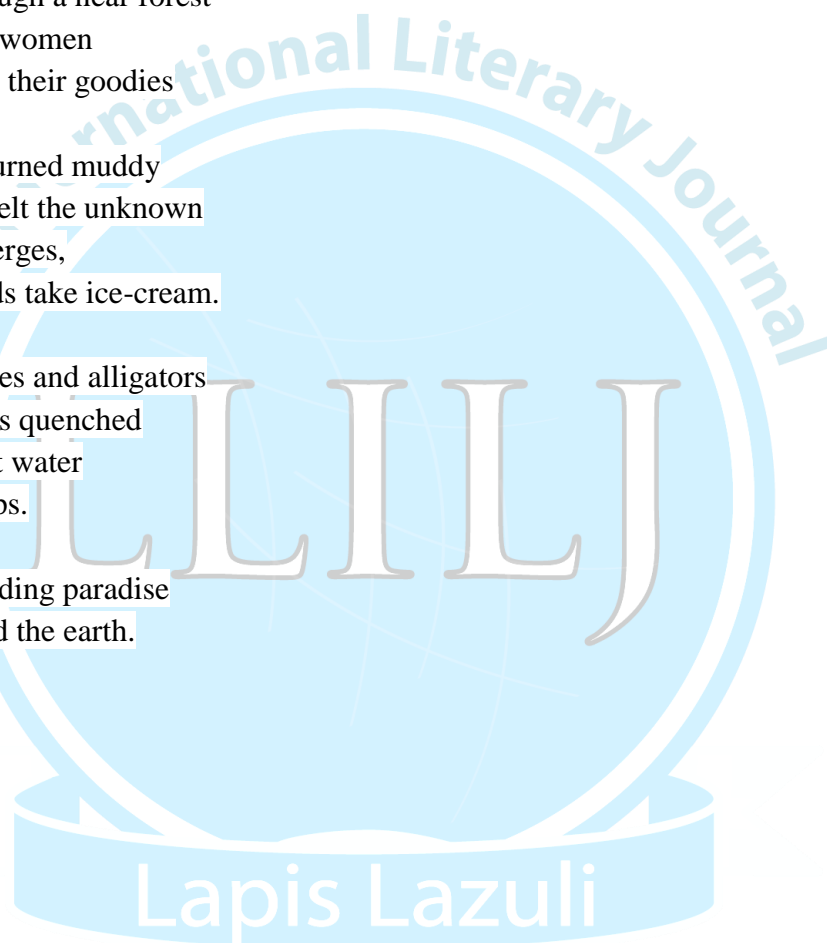
Canals displayed wealth
Of the Venice of the East

we hire a boat after much bargain
and stepped into a world of wonder
we pass through a near forest
among Thai women
jubilant with their goodies

waterways turned muddy
the boats smelt the unknown
alligator emerges,
while the kids take ice-cream.

among, snakes and alligators
our thirst was quenched
with coconut water
in plastic cups.

Plastics invading paradise
earlier ruined the earth.



From the Temple of Emerald Buddha

Murals display cosmology in the walls of the temple
where the king of birds
Garuda holds the serpents.

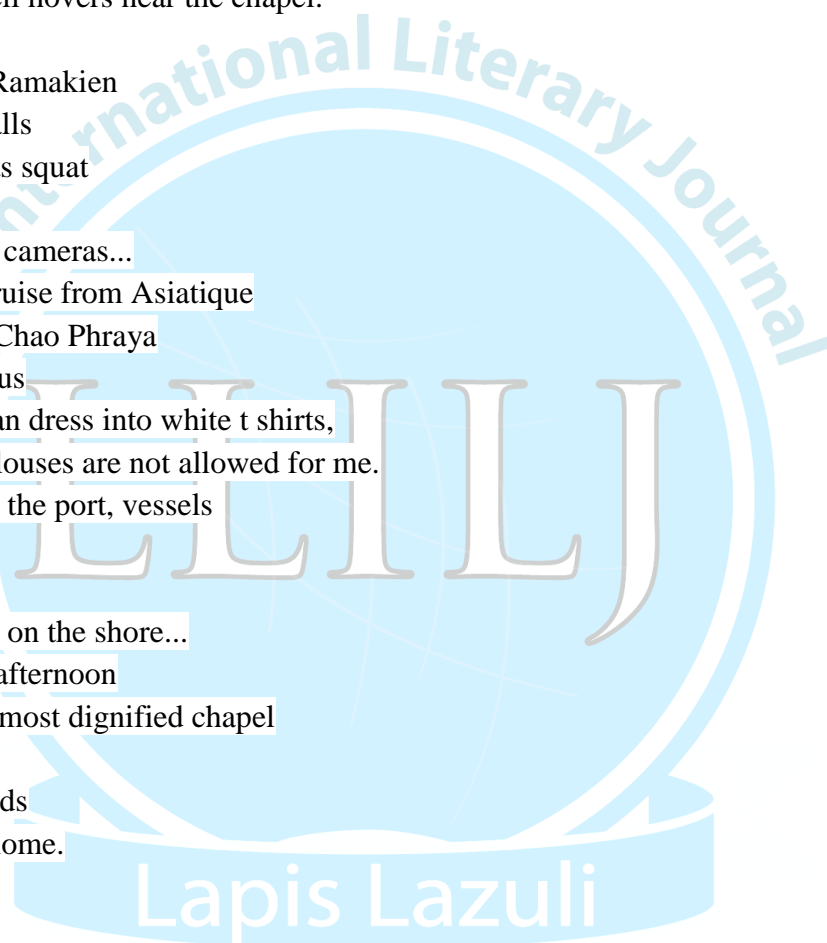
Buddha in jasper
reigns in the Chapel of Emerald Buddha.

Thai citizen inside, worship the Lord
The tourists outside burns the incense sticks.

Fire and smell hovers near the chapel.

pages from Ramakien
adorn the walls
as the tourists squat
with their
switched off cameras...
We took a cruise from Asiatique
on the river Chao Phraya
Heat killing us
Daughters can dress into white t shirts,
Sleeveless blouses are not allowed for me.
Outside near the port, vessels
on journey
embarks
as we sip tea on the shore...
Think of an afternoon
Spent in the most dignified chapel

Dusk descends
Time to go home.



BIO-NOTE

Mandira Ghosh is a poet and author of eminence. She is author and editor of *Aroma*, *New Sun*, *Song in a City*, *The Cosmic Dance of Shiva*, *Folk Music of the Himalayas*, *Impact of Famine on Bengali Literature*, *Benares the Sacred City in Verses and Hymns*, *Indian Poetry through the Passage of Time: A Journey of thirty Indian Poets*, *Shiva and Shakti in Indian Mythology*, *Lost Compass on the River Bank*, amongst others. As Guest Editor of “Poets of India” and “The Swansea Magazine” (Wales), she was twice given the Editors Choice Award by the International Society of Poets, and has recently been elected into the International Poetry Hall of Fame. Presently she is the treasurer of the Poetry Society of India.

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