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PAULAMI SENGUPTA

Mornings in Patel Nagar

Mornings are self-conscious

I preen with my laptop bag and think while waiting for a battery car.

How mellow it would be to have a child around.

She, who would dress up as me and enact my business

‘I can’t do this anymore. It is getting too tough’.

She would deliver this line before a packed audience, her expression genuine but nubile.

Watering thoughts bring down my BP.

I feel like a sheaf of corn in picture books

And smile at pregnant women in Patel Nagar.

Invigilation

No beginning, middle, or end

‘Vigil’ sounds like the balcony of a dilapidated building

Before I call out the names I am supposed to call out.

Students hang their shoes from the roof

And I am so scared

When knowledge descends from the ceilings

Like white shreds of skin.

My chair does not face the wall— this unlikely shelter
which has a lot of answers.

It is always good to dip your eyes in tea.

BIO-NOTE

Paulami Sengupta is a publishing professional based in Delhi. Her poems (in English and Bengali) and translations have been published in Muse India, Nether, Kritya, Indian Literature, Parabas, The Sunflower Collective and Cold Noon. She has a collection of Bengali poems titled Jiwhai Barbar Fire Ashe Laban (2007).

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