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POETRY

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IQRA RAZA

Undercurrent

Each time we make love
 And you tell me to stay calm
 Like the ocean, on a summer noon;
 As you, a skilled seafarer
 Trace each superficial wave of it,
 Forgetting that some sunken ships
 Have also made it their home.
 Vessels that echo abandonment
 Even while being pregnant
 With treasures of centuries
 That silently crack,
 Each time you roll a wave
 With the casual abandon of a dice.

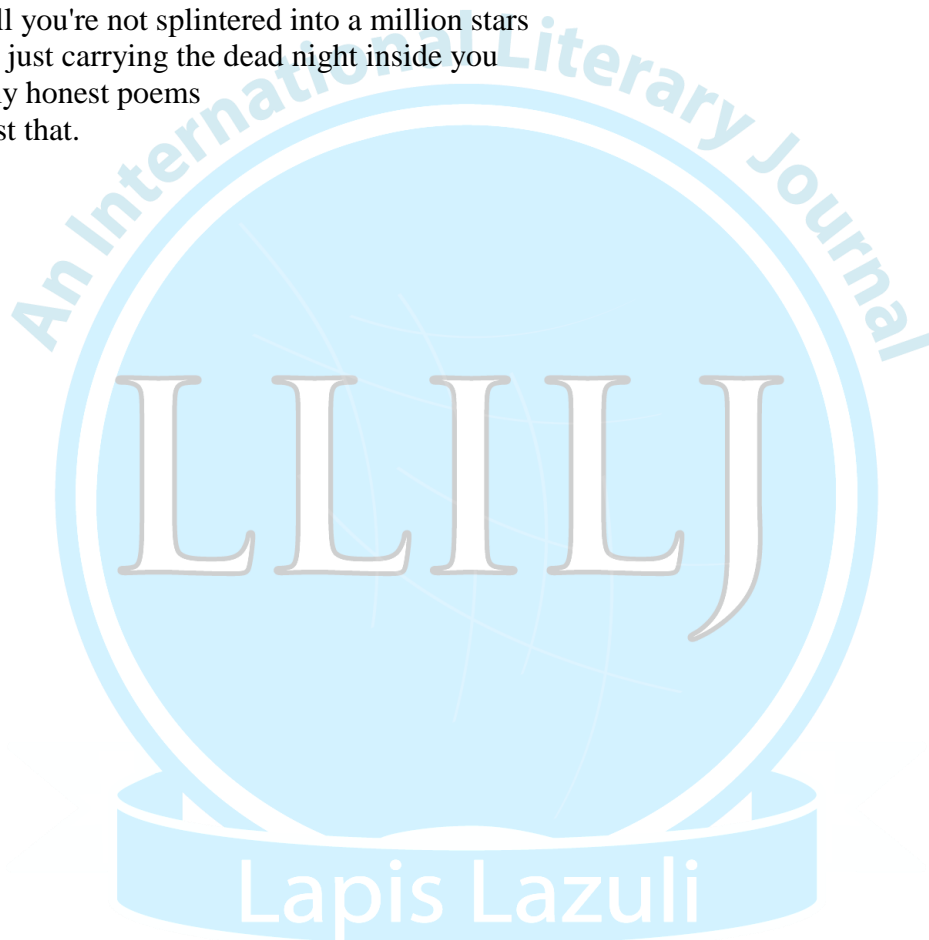
I lay still, homeless within my own home
 And you smile, ecstatically
 Having conquered, what
 You think is the whole of me.
 And after you've made your sojourn,
 Caused turbulence, and spilled
 A bit of yourself into me
 You fall asleep, exhausted;
 Before you can hear
 The silence seep into your bones
 And the violence spilling from mine.
 The ocean that lies calm on a summer noon
 Rises in rage when dusk arrives

An Honest Poem

Yesterday, my friend told me that I shouldn't be writing honest poems,
 Because my honest poems talk of my ocean- self at storm,
 They scream anxiety and depression, grief and melancholy.
 She said, they echo the silence of 22 years trained to the music
 Of violence, dancing to the rhythm of my breaths;
 And my breaths are hardly breaths, they're reluctant rasps
 Of a life at the edge of death, they're a continuum
 Of decisions taken in favour of life, and regretted.
 Life, because I've heard that God doesn't like the taste of unripe fruit

And regret, because it means another decision in favour of life.

My honest poems make her lonely and depressed
Depressed like the sunken sun at the bed of a beach;
And I remind her that the sun will rise again
Like it always does in the landscape of Donne's poetry.
And I get the charge of being a hopeless romantic
In love with heartbreak, spilling it out on endless pages.
I tell her that my poems do
What Aristotle says, all good literature must do-
Give you pleasure at the expense of pain; she says,
No one likes to hear about gnawing grief, there is no pleasure
When the sun sinks, your heart sinks too.
Darkness seeps into your bones, and leaks into your heart
And till you're not splintered into a million stars
You're just carrying the dead night inside you
And my honest poems
Are just that.



BIO-NOTE

Iqra Raza is a final year student of MA English at Delhi University's St Stephen's College. She is a haikin, an artist and a poet and has been published in various journals and anthologies, (both online and in print) including but not limited to *Teenage Wasteland Review*, *Dilliwali*, *Expressions*, etc. She has also won two international awards for her haiku and has been widely published in Haiku journals and anthologies like *Modern Haiku*, *Cattails*, *Failed Haiku*, *Wishbone Moon*, *Naad Anunaad*, etc.

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