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POETRY

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**BASUDHARA ROY**

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**Bolts**

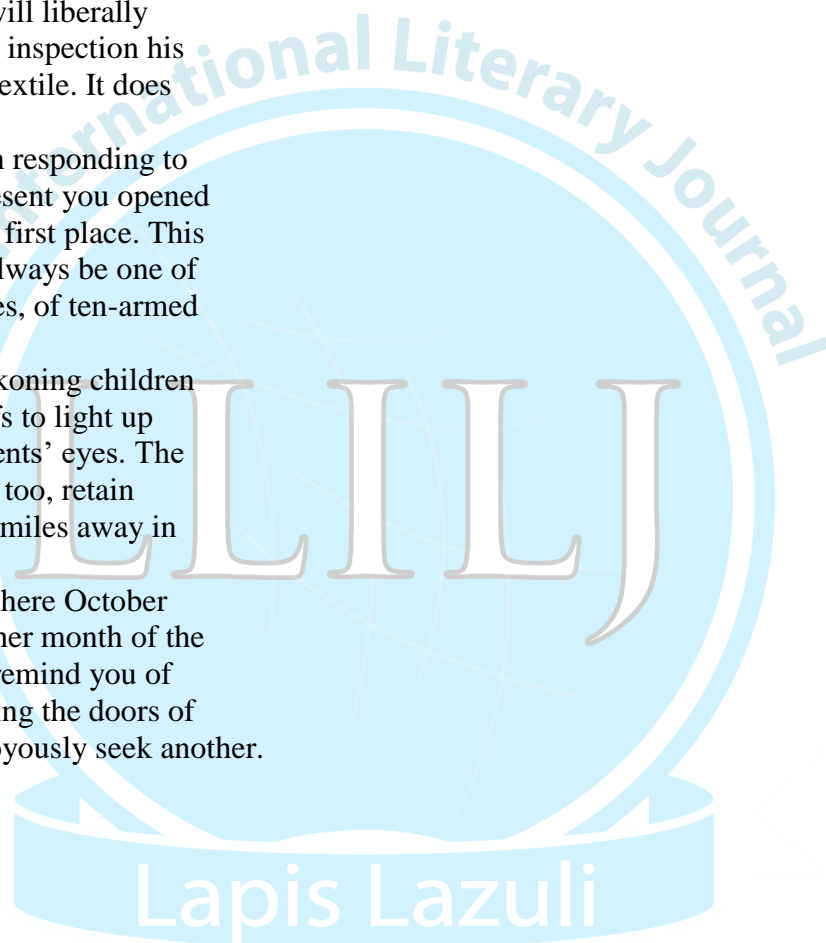
It's strange how a bolt beneath  
your fingers can, with its  
skeletal familiarity, unsettle you  
for a moment, take you back in  
time. The sun is suddenly in

October now, crisp as fritters,  
unfurling gold from skies the  
way a draper will liberally  
unroll for your inspection his  
hued bales of textile. It does

not matter then responding to  
what in the present you opened  
the door in the first place. This  
moment will always be one of  
clay, of conches, of ten-armed

goddesses beckoning children  
to waiting roofs to light up  
their grandparents' eyes. The  
shape of bolts, too, retain  
memories and miles away in

another land where October  
is merely another month of the  
year, can still remind you of  
restlessly locking the doors of  
one home to joyously seek another.



## Waitings

You tell me you were waiting  
for answers; that I should have  
stopped, counted, spoken, acted.

That you were waiting for signs,  
for footfalls on moonlit nights,  
for my waves to fill your sand

niches across these shorelines; for  
petals to bear the weight of ecstasy,  
for assent, timid, fragrant, and for

confessions, long-standing, bold;  
for flushed cheeks, untamed breath  
and a weaving of our darkneses.

You may not believe but I was in  
waiting too, scratching the surface  
of the moon for nail scoops of silver

to put in the parting of my hair, folding  
away dappled bales of clouds to make  
room for you. Knowing you loved dust,

I chiselled mountains, grated rocks, to  
sprinkle dust across pathways wherein  
you would, barefooted, arrive; peeled out

of sunshine its mellow golden to light  
rooms, warm a hearth for you. I hoarded  
words for months so I could be affluent

when you came; stitched promises,  
embroidered songs on kerchiefs hand-spun  
in the loom of love. My hair, neglected for

days, I combed and let loose in the evenings  
for tresses to dance their joy in your rains.  
I measured desires, filtered hesitations,

pestled distances, froze fulfilment. You did not  
come and I undid everything again, placed desires  
back on shelves and mopped the floor with salt.

Your waiting was all abroad.  
I am not surprised you chide me  
for keeping to my threshold.

**BIO-NOTE**

Basudhara Roy is Assistant Professor of English at Karim City College, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, India. An alumna of Banaras Hindu University, she holds a Ph.D. in diaspora women's writing. As a poet and reviewer, she has featured in several anthologies and magazines like *The Poetry Society of India*, *Mad in Asia Pacific*, *Teesta*, *Borderless*, *Muse India*, *Shabdadguchha*, *Cerebration*, *Triveni*, and *Setu* among others. She has authored two books, *Migrations of Hope* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2019) and a collection of poems, *Moon in my Teacup* (Kolkata: Writer's Workshop, 2019). Her second poetry collection, *Stitching a Home*, is forthcoming next year.

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