

POETRY

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Ahalya's Waiting

*"Ahalya, you will live here for many thousands of years,
eating wind, without any food, lying on ashes
and generating inner heat. Invisible to all creatures,
you will live in this hermitage. And when Ram,
who is unassailable, comes to this terrible forest,
then you will be purified. By receiving him as a guest
you will become free of greed and delusion,
you evil woman, and you will take on your own form
in my presence, full of joy."*

Echoed husband Rishi Goutama's command
bestowed upon the beautiful wife Ahalya, who had just had
her first ever orgasm, the fulfilment of her
womanhood through Indra, in disguise of Goutama.
'Ahalya', the 'one with no ugliness'--
the woman beautiful turned into a stone there and then.
Reek of patriarchy with
the social game of victim-blaming began.

I am Ahalya. Am I really waiting since centuries
for my salvation by just a touch, and for my redemption?
I have the *Indriyas*, the five senses, inside me
so solid that I cannot be transformed to oblivion,
I am as inert as a stone.
While my acquisitive mind retorts, my steady mind waits.
I am the *Sthit-pragya Sadhak* , I have my *Indriyas*

in my own accumulation.
Doing my *sadhana*, I am time and timeworn.

Oh Ram, finally you are generously plentiful
to meet me, after ages of waiting. But my penance
is not yet completed. I will not consent
oh Ram, to be redeemed by you for an offense
that I have not committed.
I am untainted, confident and clean.
What purity on me will you assign?
What is the merit of this debate on of my pollution?

Oh Ram, the archetypal Ram,
if you really need to touch me,
touch me as the elemental woman. Touch me
as the galaxies do collide, touch me with
all your unspent unbiased emotion.
Touch me as the blue firmament touches the stars.
Make me your lyre and lure me.
Give my harmony your personal touch.
I assure you, you'll solve the mysteries
of the universe with my touch,
because I am the quintessential, ultimate woman.
Your touch should be your creative language,
your behaviour, your basic attitude.
With my touch, stars ought to dance across your skin.
Your touch must take away my fears of
all Goutamas and Indras.
Love, soothe my anxiety and
fill my senses with your compassion.
Touch my cognizance and you can redeem the stone.
Make me your Muse.
You know, touch is where miracles arise
And exchange of the light and dark begin.
The curse of Rishi Goutama may be immobilized
with your touch, with this assertion.

My redemption lies not just in your touch
but in zero tolerance of
any marginalization.
I need a rejoinder from the society
and from you, oh the most knowledgeable one,
for my quintuple patriarchal relegation.

Father presented me, the puppet, to husband on his free will.
Husband couldn't fulfil me as a woman.
Indra tricked me to satiate his desire, not mine.
Inept, impotent husband cursed me
with what right, oh, with what right,
to become a stone exactly at a moment
when I was satiated as a woman!
And now why do I need yet another man, you, oh Ram,
to touch me and cleanse me of my uncommitted sin?

Touch sensitive, touch deprived,
touch-waiting, I would rather wait till eternity.
I prefer to reject your offer of touching me
on the condition of taking me
into the snares of purity-pollution.
I am my own possessor, proprietor, I am my woman.
Let me remain ethically upright on my own terms—
this is my ultimate liberation.

*Reference to Goutama's curse:

Splitting the Difference: Gender and Myth in Ancient Greece and India - Wendy Doniger, Mircea Eliade
Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions Wendy Doniger, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty -
Google Books

Isn't Love Enough?

Isn't love enough love? Isn't love enough
that you quest for everything else that should matter so little?
You know, the world anyway makes and breaks one and all.

Afterwards, only the survivor becomes solid at broken places.
Because love is the most agreeable way of discounting a broken piece.
And because, only birds born in a cage think flying is an illness.

Love, see a world in a modicum of sand and heaven in a desolate flower.
Let time decide who you meet in life.
Hold eternity in the palm of your hand and perpetuity in an hour.

Your own emotion decides who you want in your era
and your own pronouncement decides who stays.
Rest assured, your secrets are safe with me, I can't remember my own passwords.

If you don't correct the world when they dismay you, and ill-treat,
they will never learn how to treat you right.
In any case, you have to fight fit, you have to defeat.

The truth is that you will lament forever, if for you love isn't enough.
Sometimes you will not get over the loss of the loved ones,
but yes, you will learn to live with it, on and off.

You will heal and remake yourself around the loss
you have agonized. You may be complete again, but you will never be the same.
Nor should you be the equivalent to the one who you left amiss.

Love, love did never hurt you. Someone who doesn't diagnose the ways to love,
hurt you. Don't confuse the two.
With true love, either you forget everything or you evoke who from the who.

I shall anyway re-read you as my favourite book at different stages of my life.
The plot will never change, but my perspective of love may.
For me love will be enough, nothing more nothing less, just any given day!

Eyes

*Silence is the language of God.
All else is poor translation.
--Rumi*

*'Every word has consequences. Every silence too!'
-- Jean Paul Sartre.*

I cannot really do any much about it.

They say they are intimidated by one's wide, dark speaking eyes.
Questioning, interrogating, argumentative eyes?!
Well, eyes do not really have to be docile, compliant.

Eyes are truth.
Eyes do all the talking when I deliberate
my words are
not as powerful as my thought.
On such junctures, I just let the eyes silently articulate.
Words need not always bother to frame a judgement.

Of late I discovered a thing or two about eyes. They melt.
They melt even without tears, and they get teary
out of nothing in the midst.

There are a few things that words cannot say in enchantment.
Sometimes things get jumbled since words cannot
designate what not and what to accept.

But then, one cannot speak within the self
and let the words bleed in silence, just quiet.
The loudest exclamations are heard
in silence if we listen prudent.

Silence is peace. In absolute silence, I hear
the poetry of earth. Silence, unveiled with eyes,
reveal the undertones of the heart.

You cannot really do any much about it.
About eyes, I mean! Eyes are caught
in the dichotomy of a subdued certainty and concert.

BIO- NOTE

Prof. Nandini Sahu, Professor of English, IGNOU, New Delhi, India, is an established Indian English poet, creative writer, theorist and folklorist. She is the author/editor of fifteen books; has been widely published in India and outside. Prof. Sahu is a triple gold medalist in English Studies. Her areas of research interest cover New Literatures, Critical Theory, Folklore and Culture Studies, Children's Literature and American Literature. www.kavinandini.blogspot.in