

POETRY

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Blackout

Even though, I was a child
I still hold, few fragmented memories
Of the 1971 India blackout
Black paint on the windowpanes
Brown cardboard on the ventilators
On hearing sirens and aircrafts
Moving under the dining table
The fear, stress, anxiety resulted in
My mother's psychogenic blackout
To save me from withering in gloom,
In hope to fill my life with sunshine and delight
My father married me young,
In a dream house, I had fantasized.
Few days passed...
The dark souls could not be
Eclipsed by fake lights.

I applied black paint
On the windows of my eyes
Covered my heart with thick brown cardboard
To make my relationship survive
With a husband who would get frequent
Blackouts from binge drinking.
I even moved my toddlers under the table
To save them from harsh attacks of domestic violence.

In spite of all my efforts to save my marital status
Amidst all the darkness.
It succumbed to a divorce.
In Broad Daylight
After three years of communication blackout.

Brooch

There are times
When emotions discard all colours
And get into the mourning dress
The heart synchronizes
And pumps darkness instead of blood.

The darkness flows
Through the body and mind
Leaving a patch glittering
In the heart- on the left side.

A star-studded motif of golden memories
Sparkles magically like a vintage Rhinestone brooch
Over the left breast of my black coat
Which I had worn throughout my life.

Hide & Seek

When I was a child
The game I played most
Was Hide and Seek
I usually being the loser
Was the one chosen to be
Seeker in the next game
As I did not know
The art to conceal.

Later, I learnt the skill to retreat
To camouflage emotions
In a smile, laughter, or a power packed speech.

Time to time
I would go to sanatoriums
To let my damp emotions dry swing free
Like the unclipped, unpinned laundry
On the washing line...

The Music of Heartbeats

A young boy in the neighbourhood, whom we saw sitting on a bench, chatting with friends in the colony park a night before.
In the morning we got the news, he is no more.
He passed away in his sleep...
Shocked and unable to believe. We rushed to his house.
His mother sitting next to his body was repeatedly keeping her head on his chest.
Trying to focus on his heartbeat. Thrice she called for the doctor on the second floor insisting she heard his heartbeat.
I came back to my flat, pondering and reflecting over what I saw.
Trying to feel the rhythm and beauty of a heartbeat, pulse, and the air we breathe.
Which normally goes unnoticed like the call of rag pickers and street vendors passing down the lane.

BIO- NOTE

Poonam Chawla Sood is a bilingual Indian author published across the globe. She is the founder Chairperson of Gulzar Sahitya Samiti (established 1998) and an active member of various literary and environment friendly organizations. She is a life member of INTACH. She has published a poetry collection in Hindi (Misfit Kavitaayien) and a translation of a Marathi book (Mitr Jeevache) into English (Soulmates). She has received national awards and has participated in many international literary events. Her poems and short stories are regularly broadcasted on All India Radio- Ayodhya. Two of her books are in the process of publication.