

Riddhiman Roy

Homecoming

For an entire year I have been waiting,
Looking forward to my untimely rising.
It isn't just another palsy vacation,
No, it is my holy Invocation.
And in the air I hear the prayers forthcoming,
It is almost time for my homecoming.

I descend on the rolling white meadows,
Take rest under the lofty tree's cool shadows,
I run around near my Father's foothills,
Reliving all my childhood thrills.
And in the air I hear the bells forthcoming,
It is almost time for my homecoming.

As I walk through the muddy lanes,
I see myself, through the artists' window panes.
Here I am made of straw and clay,
The artists' hands beautifully at play.
And in the air I hear the conch-shell forthcoming,
It is almost time for my homecoming.

Upon lofty mansions and narrow lanes I descend,
Upon courtesan's houses and decorated Pandals I descend.
All religious and gender barriers I transcend,
All women are me and I am all women in the end.
And in the air I hear the drum beats forthcoming,
It is almost time for my homecoming.

And then you bid me farewell with tear in your eyes,
Smear red vermilion on my face and whisper prayers in goodbyes.
In me you see your mother and your daughter,
But yet you go to immerse me in the water.
And in the air I smell the disdain forthcoming,
I will come again for another homecoming.

As I leave I hear women getting beaten,
I see young girls by society's lust getting eaten.
And those mouths that have abused me,
Hear this, your prayers are poison to me.
And in a world where I see misogyny forthcoming,
Will I be welcomed again for another homecoming?

Separation

The meandering Yamuna flowed,
 Through Vrindavan it bent and bowed,
 Her dark water as if reflecting the disdain,
 As Vrindavan bid the dark-skinned boy farewell in pain.

They had always known that His stay would be short,
 But every moment in their lives, immense joy He brought,
 Remembering how butter He stole and His friends He fed,
 Bittersweet tear everyone without exception shed.

There was one face in the crowd He couldn't see,
 For the last time maybe, with Her, alone He wanted to be.
 He took off from the crowd and went inside the woods,
 From His waist He took out his flute and cross legged He stood.

Ayan Ghosh's wife sat at home and churned milk for butter,
 She wept without consolation, today all Her tears were bitter.
 It was as if not the milk but Her heart was being churned,
 She couldn't believe that Her love, He, had spurned.

And in the moonlight's trance they had danced all night,
 His dark skin reflected and radiated the love and shone bright.
 And in the morning, forests of flowers they walked through.
 Had his love only been fun and play? Was it ever true?

In the woods his pink lips He put to the flute,
 And She knew it was for Her, She was absolute.
 All Her rage She lay aside, not a second longer She spent,

The music carried Her, off Her feet, to answer love's beckoning She went.

And there He stood beautiful as ever, benevolence emanating,
In the darkness of the dusk, He stood, love radiating.
They did not speak, just on His shoulder, She placed Her head;
The flute played songs of love, loss and life; their hearts heavy it made.

She sat on a rock, and He sat at Her feet;
In their hearts they gave love a seat.
And the river and time, gently trickled by,
They had lost themselves in each other's eyes.

It was moonlight again and they danced their last dance.
It was only ecstasy; pain of separation did not stand a chance.
And when the birds chirped and the water reflected the first rays of sun,
They wiped their tears, they knew their time had run.

She did not cry anymore, as near Her feet He knelt on the ground,
For the last time the flute played a mournful sound.
He had said that it is Her love that played His flute,
It was the tune of love, always pure, never dissolute.

She was his muse and music, the flute was never again played,
At the feet of His love, His flute, with great reverence He laid.
And She looked at Him, and saw a teardrop in the corner of his eye,
She knew His love was true, it was celestial, and She will always be His Rai.

They walked hand in hand, blessing the surrounding with a divine persona,
Amidst Gods and men alike chanting in love, Radhe-Krishna,
In praise, Radhe-Krishna,

In reverence, Radhe-Krishna.

The Storm

There was a storm brewing,
And rage it was spewing,
I could smell it from afar,
It was particularly bizarre.
For a storm wasn't supposed to come today,
But it came without a warning anyway.
And as it made its way towards me,
It shook the earth and uprooted every tree.
It was as if Mahadev's cosmic dance,
No other thoughts today stood a chance.
The thick black clouds roared like a monster,
The crackle of the thunder sounded sinister,
It was as if the oceans were being churned again,
Except today there wasn't any elixir; only Halahal to gain.
Halahal was spewed all over my world,
Dousing it in poison as confusion whirled.
I knew I could stop it, only if I tell the truth,
But who will listen to me, it'll only make me a monster uncouth.
Every time I gain confidence to speak,
I am ignored, other topics over me peak.
And every time as I sit by the window,
I realise that I have forever been stuck in limbo.
I am stuck between being who I am not and being who I want to be,
And as I light a stick of cancer, I watch the smokes that are freer than me.
They can take any form and shape, there is no one to judge,
They can escape the grills of my window while I can't budge.
I think the poison of these thoughts, make my brain invoke the storm,
As progressively, to engulf me, it becomes bigger and bigger and bigger in form.

Riddhiman Roy, B.Com graduate from St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, is the founding president of the Literary Society in St. Xavier's Collegiate School. He has won numerous recitation competitions nationally at various cultural festivals. He has participated in various poetry readings organised by Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library and has been invited to read his poems at Yuva Sahiti organised by Sahitya Akademi, India. He is working on his first poetry collection for publication.