

Sarita Sharma

era...

the faraway look
confounds
she rattles
monologues
of a greener era
a lustier yesteryear
flooded
dimmed
by cataract webs
around her
which circumscribe her vision
and paralyse her will

she still smiles
toothless
pounds betel
with her wrinkled
unsure hands
brows knitted
in deep concentration
conversation peppered
by monologues
inane to us
life to her

generational shift
shifts silently
the burden of being old
and lonely
monologuing
to an invisible audience
to the soft smirk
the poor-maudlin whispers

life is passing us by
each one of us
the burden shifts silently
dialogues become monologues
audience disappears
as silence descends
quietly
annihilates!

a married life...

my husband gifted me a green pote
and a hair parting full of red vermillion
on the day he wed
i gifted him my fresh virgin body
i didn't ask if he had ever seen
felt a vagina

i dare not
don't i have the red and green bounties
to hold my head high
he deserves my chastity
a pair of lips sealed
in lieu of the surname he would share

his body
a little pungent
of day old sweat
of raw onions
his fingers of cigarettes
a bitter mouth on my own

i forge the small moans
the giggles i don't feel
just as instructed

this is how it is
you don't have to like it all
says sister in law
i look at my brother and see him differently
something sour gags me

my mother's multiple pregnancies
and the many lethal abortions
point tiny fingers at my father's grave face
tiny invisible fingers

they have a right over their women
you owe them the red of the hair parting
the green on the neck
to walk safely in
an identity you always lacked

men will have their idiosyncrasies
their obsessions

feed them well
make yourselves available
ready
lest they wander
counsel the wise
even as i puke my lungs out
just a month after the first baby

pregnancy is proof that you love
what i do
slyly smiles he
pushing my garment up
freeing his pent up manhood

the ceiling has twelve beams
four rain patches
the cobwebs are reclaiming the corners
it takes him exactly a minute and some
to roll off from me and start snoring

it is in moments like these
that i wonder
at least i do not get beaten
like mrs mishra next door
or have to bear with a mistress
like mrs kanan

i look at his calm face
the rhythmic heave and fall of his chest
pull down my garment
and try to sleep!

**Pote: crystal necklace, semblance of a married woman*