

BENEATH ALL THOSE LAYERS

By Charu Sharma

Poetry editor Hezekiah writes:

Here is a beautifully fluid poem submitted by Charu Sharma. Try a slice, "Ashamed at my very own absence / when I needed me the most, a steely taste of guilt / always remains in my mouth;" She writes with a passion that somehow combines timidity and ferocity tenderly wrapped in fine paper with a profusion of ribbon and bows. HS (Spacing is poet's own.)

Beneath all those layers
you are stark naked,
despite all the company surrounding you
you are alone absolutely.

My cavernous heart
houses deep within its gut
a burning flame of warm *Nostalgia*
keeping it from going cold
but quakes erratically by the sonorous echoes
ricocheting off its walls,
most biting words from sentences
running parallel to my very existence
(but never ever meeting it),
uttered by those who stayed
only to leave.

My past, an albatross around my neck
fills me with a nauseating embarrassment,
my head hanging on the edge of my bed
in an anticipation of finally retching it out entirely,
only to carry it forward to yet another day;
could have saved myself the pain,
could have protected myself,
could have just done something!
But I didn't,
I didn't, I didn't, I didn't, I didn't!!!
Ashamed at my very own absence
when I needed me the most, a steely taste of guilt
always remains in my mouth;
against the dark, the contours of this guilt
stand in complete contrast,
that's why nights are so hard, I haven't slept for so long...

You build your house

on my grave,
my past will haunt you
when it would have left me
defeated by the coagulating years
accentuating an already approaching *Forgetfulness*
rendering it powerless for it would finally be
without a countenance, just lessons
both my body and soul would have gotten
deeply acquainted with;
just wait for it!

I dream of the sea, all the time...
I envisage myself tracing
the unsteady periphery of the sea
marked by the receding waves,
not allowing even the dribble of seawater
to touch my feet;
my bare skin exposed
to an open sky holding a flaring sun
with a condescending and indifferent confidence,
color me golden!
There will come a day
when I will relinquish
this inclination towards disparate colors,
for I will fully embrace an all encompassing White.

THE POET SPEAKS: *I am a very sensitive person due to which I tend to feel all kinds of emotions with unwarranted intensity which gets overwhelming at times. Also, I am an introvert who loves to stay alone (I am no misanthrope in any sense, I have ten friends!) and I have been “blessed” with a hyperactive brain that doesn’t let me sleep for most of the nights owing to which I always have time to think too much and also to imagine too much. So poetry is a necessary evil for me to cleanse myself of all the hyperbolic feelings and emotions I carry on a daily basis and a containment/ map of the intangible that most of the times is nonsensical. No wonder my head feels so heavy and chest clogged!*

Anyway, I have been writing poetry since 2016. My poems at the beginning followed a strict rhyming scheme but eventually the level of books I was reading advanced and so did my writing. The first shift from the poems with a rhyming scheme to the poems with continual flow emerged right after I finished reading The “God of Small Things” by Arundhati Roy. Right after that my first encounter with Magical Realism through “One Hundred Years of Solitude” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez changed everything for me. That book introduced me to a concept of expression that could both elaborate and yet disguise my personal experiences which I have never really wanted to share with the world and yet I wanted to express them. I fell in love with it and since then I have been trying to incorporate the element of that genre in all my poems. Although every year, my style of writing shifts to the genre and the work of creativity I am exposed to. But it wasn’t until the last year that a significant change in my style appeared owing to the dreadful encounters my life was putting me through and my introduction to the amazing poets like Sylvia Plath and Emily Dickinson and my burgeoning inclination to pen down my emotions only after they have matured to

their full capacity. Though because of that the frequency with which I write poems now has decreased but the increasing quality of my work and the fulfilment I achieve after writing a piece of poem has compensated for that.

AUTHOR'S BIO: *My name is Charu Sharma, I am 25 years old and I am from India. I have been writing since 2016 but only recently I have started submitting my work for publishing. So far, I have managed to get published at two collectives only.*

I am an aspiring writer and I am aiming for improving my poetry as a form of expression of my emotions in an exhaustive manner. For that I read a lot and fortunately enough, I have come across some amazing works from different genres of creative writing in both prose and poetry which have helped me better my art. But the major influencer of my writing style has been Magic Realism genre.