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Akhila Pingali

Show Me Art

I – The Painting

So I was walking back home one night
With a wrapped painting in my arms
One I'd just bought at an auction
And I bumped into a man
The parcel fell and came undone
The painting caught his eye
He stopped and looked at the colours
And the strange way they mixed
Down to a twinkle in the woman's eye
That seemed to shine in the darkness
The man stood there, gazing
Lost in thought
And then finally he nodded
And turned back
I asked him if he wasn't going

Where he was headed five minutes earlier
He shook his head and simply said
He was a killer on a mission
But the woman he was after
Looked like the one in the painting
And perhaps her eyes twinkled like that, too.



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II – The Song

A song floated out of a window
It drifted into a bird and out of its throat
And wafted down with the wind
It hummed among the wasps and bees
And whirled through the leaves
It glided up the tinkling stream
And pranced among the twilight fields
Hovered above the city lights
And poured into the drunk man's ear
And he forgot to beat his wife
And fell asleep.



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III – The Poem

Drop a word into the ocean
And watch the ripples spread
To the trembling sand and
Through shaken bodies,
And rise
Like steam
Till the air shimmers
Till the whole sky shudders in ecstasy
As it soars, expands into a poem
That drops back into the ocean
And washes ashore
Bringing with it the whole world
And laying it at your wet feet.



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Newspaper for Breakfast

On a lazy Sunday morning I don't want to make breakfast
At the tiffin place under the bridge they give me my idly
I bring it home. It is wrapped in old news about climate change and
the like,
On one side there is half an article about someone who ate beef
And is now dead – could be food-poisoning, they're saying.
Sunday morning newspaper in front I sip my tea
And sit with the crossword. That is the way to make words stay:
Meanings don't change in the little boxes and they'll still be useful
tomorrow,
Even when it's someone else's turn to die of writing or eating or
praying.
Meanwhile oil is oozing into the meaningless ones,
Either that, or they suffocate under neatly folded clothes
Behind neatly closed doors, or warm up a bunch of peanuts –
So cheap, so cheap, at the cost of lives.



Akhila Pingali

Akhila is pursuing Ph D in English Literature at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.

Some of my poems have appeared on an online platform called Terribly Tiny Tales, and one of them has found a place in their anthology entitled 99 poems.



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