

Introduction

TAKE 2

She is mad

*A dark belligerent sea rises in anger
The night has a deadly mission, I can see –*

*Gloom deepens to darkness, turns purple
I feel dark inside*

*They are here, they drive me
Dark shadows in my room*

She is mad.

She has her brains in her heart, or the heart in her head. She lives the experience twice. First when she actually lands in a situation and takes the full experience of life. The second, when she filters it, takes the essence in a poem and relives it. That is why for an actress, her first take is always her second take. So too with her poems. To play the role of a mad woman, she went all the way and lived with the women in an asylum. It was a very close brush with life; it bruised her mind and heart. And she bled poems.

*A dagger pierces the gut and my sanity reels
Hurled in a corner, I live and re-live my life
Closing in on me, inch by deathly inch
Vicious spiteful beings
Hissing . . . hissing . . .*

The role in the film became secondary, and the poem assimilated the firsthand experience of life in 'Black Wind'.

The intensity that she lives with is apparent in her lines. There is a desperation, exasperation. She dies a hundred times in an explosive moment of life. The liquid is thick as we swallow. She squeezes every experience into a black hole. The gravity is so heavy and intense that all the light she throws up, comes back to the star—the sun. She is a big sun. I wonder how she manages to live with a smile, that heartwarming smile.


*One candle between us
And the world beyond . . .*

*. . .
Why is it . . . that I still wait
For someone?*

Yet she doesn't relax. She is keen and curious to find 'another way of living life'. In a dense jungle hunting for an insect, she wants to hunt moments in this vast wilderness of time.

'Endless she roams, her inner wilderness.' She makes love with moments and then aborts them. I have known Deepthi for decades now. She is an actress, a painter, a poet, and a human being who has the zeal and the courage to row through the sharp currents of life. She is serious about living.

She follows where her aesthetics lead her, and lives life on her own terms, as she wants to. She looks too real, too practical, a total contrast to what she is . . . 'Her dreams looking for the real, and her reality chasing a dream.'


Gulzar

If You Had Turned

For Shabana

You stepped inside the coach
And stood facing the door

Black jacket & short-short hair

I thought perhaps if you turned
I could smile

But I guess you knew
I was sitting there

I looked at your feet
Then your hands
As you slumped the handbag
On the floor

Are you the same?
Or have you changed
Look older I guess, but so do I

And if you had turned
And I had smiled
You would have seen the lines
Now around my eyes

That first meeting, years ago
Then many a time
At your place, sometimes mine
We shared our thoughts
And talked of life

Then,
The years of silence
Echoed in my mind . . .

I wonder, which of us
Had gone wrong where
Could we perhaps find it again?
I know we could, if we both tried

With a jolt, the coach stopped
And before I knew
You had boarded the flight

A moment came, and was denied
If only you had turned,
And I had smiled . . .

Tied to a Chair

Hey! Listen . . . untie me, will you?

Open these knots, please . . . Sister, don't go!

Quiet!

Untie me please! Let me go! They're hurting me!

Quiet! I said!

They're tearing off my ears!

See! They're tearing off my ears!

No one is doing that . . . Sit!

They're only removing your earrings . . .

No! My EARS! My EARS! See . . .

Sit! Or I'll smack your face!

There . . . now . . . be a good girl!

.

Sister!

What . . .

If I give them my ears,

Will they let me go, then?

Chasing a Scream

In the chill of the winter night

Walking the eerie length

Corridor after corridor

Chasing a single scream . . .

Splashes of scarlet spill into the night

Curled up bodies, in rows of frayed blankets

Behind locked doors

Lie sedated, drugged to sleep

All is still, as in still life

Except for one wretched scream!

Stop! Somebody stop her

Where are the attendants?

The strong butch women –

A woman needs help out there, damn it!

Torch in hand

One gloomy length after another

I pace through the dark,

Through fog, through fear

Through stark verandahs slashed by light

Sounds of my footsteps

Echo from other wards

Mindlessly I follow

From pillar to pillar

Bizarre patterns of light

On the black & white tiles