

Poetry Series

Shirin Abbas
- poems -

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Shirin Abbas()

B&W (Black & White)

Tinged with pink come misty morns
Mustard fields that beckon dawns
A splash of green, a brush of gold
Floral wisps with hues untold
Tawny sunsets as silence falls
When birds return to plaintive calls
Silver rivers in landscapes grey
Limpid pools reflect clouds astray...
With zillions of colours on earth to fête
A thousand reasons to celebrate...
It seems such an awful plight
That some are stuck to Black and White!

Shirin Abbas

Deep Is His Slumber

Millions throng...
hands folded, heads bowed
with tear-filled eyes,
hope-filled hearts
at temples, churches and mosques,
chanting, in different languages,
prayers filled with one note-
of hope, salvation, redemption...
and He..who has for years listened
and toyed with His playthings on earth,
till now tired...He brushes them aside,
their chants grow louder...He turns his head away
till their unceasing murmur is like a lullaby
to which He closes his eyes...and sleeps
Deep is His slumber,
unshattered through the night
and maybe when at dawn He awakens,
He might play with them again
or cast them away...
and create a better toy to play with
when He wakes.
It is better that He sleeps...
their desperate chants continue,
more out of habit than need
and He continues to sleep... through the night!

Shirin Abbas

Homeward Bound

I wish I could return to safe arms
a home, a hearth a warm heart a place to call my own
childhood dreams that shattered like slivers
as the ground beneath my feet shook and trembled
and me, trying to keep a foothold,
slipped, bruised, fell, got up and walked again
one step two steps, one more then fell again
all the while head high, show no pain
shed no tears for when these fall
the arms that reach to wipe them
seek gratification in kind
leave, just leave them all behind
and walk - not too fast
to lose the magic of the sunrise,
not too slow to miss the tawny sunset
just in pace, in sync- one step at a time
into the horizon- in search of peace of mind...

Shirin Abbas

Illusions

Illusions, of happiness
omnipresent yet elusive,
intangible like bubbles
I ache to reach out and touch
and feel their softness in my palms...
take some joy from them
to fill the hollows,
the aching voids of my life...
and yet i know,
the minute I touch them,
they burst.
In my sight yet not for me...illusions...
All that I want and can never have
teasing like the taunts of women,
confident of their attraction,
their allure and their existence...
Illusions... if I reach out to you,
will you promise not to go?

Shirin Abbas

Quo Vadis

The architects of modern India had a vision, a dream that helped them break the shackles of foreign oppression and give posterity a free India to breathe in. Presented below are images of that dream juxtaposed with the stark and agonising reality of the present, the nightmare that the dream has changed to-

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high....

Ayodhya, . December 6. The nation hangs its head in shame as the three domes of the 465-year-old Babri mosque come crashing down, one by one, amid frenzied chants of Jai Shri Ram. And significantly, as this symbol of Muslim identity collapses, screams are heard from the Muslim dominated regions of Ayodhya where a fanatic mob is out on a mission to destruct...

Where knowledge is free...

Images of the brutal, unprecedented, planned attacks on the fourth pillar of democracy- the press. Ripped clothes of women reporters, smashed cameras, bleeding bewildered scribes, unarmed, unprepared against the systematised attack...

Where the world has not been broken up into narrow domestic walls, - where words come out from the depths of truth...

The betrayal of the highest court of the land by a democratically-elected government that goes back on its written pledge. Ragukul reet sada chali aayi, pran jaayi par vachan na jaayi? (In Ram's family and among his followers, it is a tradition that one would rather die than go back on his given word... the basis tenet of Lord Rama's life.)

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection, where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sands of dead habit...

Images again...this time of Uma Bharti ecstatically hugging Murli Manohar Joshi as the third dome tumbles down...saffron hordes clearing the debris... holding aloft bricks of the desecrated structure like treasured trophies. But is this the debris of the Babri mosque alone that they are clearing... for somewhere in that rubble is buried the myth of Hindu tolerance, for in a Hindu Rashtra- their version of modern India- there is no need for myths. The mask has been lifted off the face of the world's largest secular democracy. And the face beneath it is horrifyingly ugly.

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action...

The idols of Ram lalla, hastily installed at a makeshift temple atop the mute remains of the Babri mosque...which God would condone this?

Into that heaven of freedom my Father, let my country awake...

The stench of death and doom hangs in the air as curfew is imposed in city after city in the wake of the incidents at Ayodhya. In the eyes of the world overnight, the image of India has changed from a tolerant, secular democracy to a fascist mobocracy led by religious fanatics. And the perpetrators of this sit smug, unrepentant...

Quo vadis India?

Quo vadis my Indians?

QUO VADIS?

Shirin Abbas

The Miracle

I had practically worked out
all the steps
smoothed out all the wrinkles
of our path
cleared all the obstacles
put myself in the role of a martyr
and planned out a masterplan
carefully, painstakingly
I had worked out
the blueprint of a miracle...
it wasn't hard, perfect strategy
was all that was required
...a little more time was needed
so I sat and replanned
Eureka!
I had worked out the perfect miracle
for both of us
and now to execute it...
I turned around to where i had left you,
a look of victory in my eyes...
to find an empty space
...the waiting was too long for you
...even for a miracle!

Shirin Abbas

Thirst

The cracked and parched earth
lapping up
each dropp of new fallen rain
dropp by drop
absorbing and emanating
the smell of dampened soil.
The sun shining down like a sadist...
vapourising all the drops
and the smell of parched earth
pursuing as if to retrieve
that vital ingredient
and losing itself in the process
...and that is thirst

Shirin Abbas