

The Hunter

The forest is no friendly place for a man
unless you train it to be, you must train in it,
learn its ways and beat it at its own game:
my uncle taught me this, and to hunt
pigeons when I was twelve. When I cried
at the dead body, the lifeless eyes, he said
I would never make it in the real world.
My wife has a bird feeder sitting outside
our house, I built it for her. Sparrows
flock, seeds fall to the ground.
Later that night, he shot a bird that fell
twenty-five yards away, he made it
into pigeon pie with mushrooms. I ate it
and, as usual, his food was to die for.

Love Letter to Bandra

the way S.V. Road splits into a 'V' shape,
my legs part for the lady
who lasers my bikini area, I am freshly-eighteen
and I think her name is Geeta (I remember
because she asked me to leave
a good review on Google Maps), I forget
to and leave after putting clothes
on my sticky skin, I unsuccessfully try
to hail a rickshaw, all the *bhaiyas* say no
they don't want to go the other way so I walk
to Café Andora because I decide I've earned it on the way
there is an unassuming oval-shaped park, I've never seen it before
amidst a thousand beige-colored residential buildings with
Christian names like Joanna Apartments or something vague like Florette
the afternoon is sweltering and sweaty and wet with humid air
the afternoon is blaring at me with possibility
the afternoon begs me to keep walking, so I do
toward the florist at the corner of St. Andrew's Turf
where hormonal boys play football rowdily
you can never miss him with his gigantic sunflowers,
rows of tiger lilies, gerberas, carnations and orchids
Andora has a light Tuesday shuffle with people hovering and pointing
over the glass behind which the delicacies rest, behind them
a middle-aged Christian man greets me, obviously
he wears no name tag (the shop is his father's and has been

around for years and years and years)
he rushes me out of habit even though there is no one
else in line, so I order my two lemon tarts and an iced tea, a handful
of mutton samosas for mom and two chicken puffs
for dad, I hand him the cash in coins
take my order encased in a brown paper bag and paper cup
with no lid and now it is 5:35, I must get home, I make
my way to the traffic-heavy Hill Road to hail an auto rickshaw (successfully this
time) in which I will listen to Mohammed Rafi and Asha Bhosle
with my wired earphones and smile thinking,
it is going to rain this evening, isn't it?

Calf Sonnet

I am trying to do the right thing
when I give the mother a minute
with her six-month-old child before taking
it away from her. The poor calf will
be made to forget the separation—
remain stunted, horns never growing
to see a bloody sunset. Her future
is to become a delicious veal cutlet;
tell me, who wouldn't want to be squashed amidst
bitter greens, animal spleens, sauteed beans
paired with fine wine, how romantic! She longs to be
breaded, numbed to crumbs of ground meat,
her mother is now ground beef and Gau Mata
watches from the holy temple of Kashi.

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