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Poems

Krishna Bose

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Abstract
DONATION TRANSLATED FROM BENGALI BY SANJUKTA DASGUPTA, HYMN TO THE GODDESS
Donation, Hymn to the Goddess

KRISHNA BOSE has been writing poetry for over two decades and has published seven collections of poems. A candid and committed supporter of the rights of women, Krishna Bose not only laments women’s marginalization in a patriarchal society but suggests ways in which women might emancipate and empower themselves. Blending myth and contemporary concerns, her poetry has experimented successfully with various forms and techniques, including the prose poem. Krishna Bose teaches Bengali literature in Kanchrapara College, West Bengal. She lives in Calcutta with her husband and daughter.
HYMN TO THE GODDESS

From the beauty parlour emerged the attractive fertile idol, having erased the rural sindoor from her hair-parting. Some crack jokes, some praise you, all hover around you like clever songs applauding your elusive beauty, evil proposals are poured into the roots of your intense ear. Remembering the ancient image some cry uncontrollably; observing all this from far and near, from within and without, I feel like bursting out in laughter. Your ancient image in sankha and sindoor is not your true image; today’s sensational, modern, sleeveless presence is not your real nature; sometimes a slave since birth or sometimes a desirable doll, who has made you? No great artist named God, such a great artist can never perform such mean jobs. Man has made you, man, man ... whose height is never more than a little over six feet at the most. Once, now, for the final time, construct your clay image, ignite the lamp of talent from within yourself, look at your ten-armed beauty, Asur-annihilator. Look, at your clay feet lies the benumbed, masculine earth, drunken with the alcoholic haze of dominance. Who spat on you, who praised you, do you care for these any more? Grow out of the small, dull space dictated by others, hold ten weapons in ten arms, stand firmly with your two feet on lion power, let us look at you, Woman.

Goddess – the ten armed image of the Goddess Durga poised on the back of a lion, killing Asur, the evil power, with a trident.

Sindoor – vermillion powder applied on hair parting by married Hindu women.

Sanka – bangles made of conch shell customarily worn by married Hindu women.