

Humanity in Search of Itself

By Ahuti

When in the night
even the great eyes of the sun
 take their rest
 in some western cave
yet your mournful bangle melody
 sounds on
 in some kitchen midden
teary sobs whistle in your throat
Who left you
 bound by bangles
to cry in this world?
who left you
 tearbound
to live in this world?
When at dawn
 weariness laid to rest
the great eyes of the sun
 slide open
your mournful song of bangles
 sounds on still
 at well and tap
weary hands move once again
 mechanically
 to work and tasks
From the form of mother
 to the malform of whore
like some rush mat spread on the floor
 you're ever busy
for men! for the rule of men! for a man's world!
Who left you in this world
 bedecked in finery
 for the sake of men?

who left you in this world
summoned by love's tangle
to be looted?

As you came into this world
so came men
but as it would mold men brave and strong
it would mold you fearful and weak
father teaches little brother
wrestling
while mother teaches you
plaiting
after all this cruel instruction
you turn half human
half caged mynah
so too a man turns
half human
half hunting falcon
When your eyes begin to seek
distant horizons
men's Koran
sinks poison fangs into your eyes
when your steps begin to take
the measure of borders
men's Gita
cuts the feet from under you
when you seek to push open
the door to inner wisdom
men's Bible
spreads dark smoke through your soul
when possibilities
are at an end
your body remains
fitted only for sex
Body's light of consciousness half-snuffed
you cannot fully know a man
nor a man fully know you

like a vulture swooping
 upon a responseless corpse
men's union with you
becomes but an endless series
 of tragic rapes
oh! thus this loving nature
 disfigured in a moment

Your child-like smile
could lend even rubble strewn banks
 the vitality to be a poet
When you're walking
 in the bloom of youth
sun sparkling on sea
raging river
blooming flower and heart rending moon
the beauty of all these things
 looks plainer than plain
When carrying
 an infant in your womb
awash in the light of your labour
 working in factory or field
at that moment
all nature is captured
 in your beauty
From mother's womb
to last moment on the pyre
 you're as vast as the sky
 profound as a bounty-laden tree
 energetic as the earth
 militant as the wind and
 translucent
 as a drop of dew
as beautiful
 as the eyes of a babe
But this world
 this world described by men

wrings out the beauty of your entire kind
imprisons it in a few faces and declares

'The Beauty'

All round the world

wherever the sun's rays reach

disfiguring itself

this man's world

weighs your entire militancy

on the scale of sex

Oh! you're traded like dirt

and in this trade

the human world descends

to that of beasts

sinks

into quagmire

Men's eyes call for embraces

You summon men

with full devotion

just as the banks dam the river

in their embrace

Turbulent river and rubble strewn bank!

How different, you and men!

Your lover woos you

says,

I'll give you shelter

in the depths of my eyes

From house to nation

stories of abandoning all

for your sake

this world's eternal tale

A ring in the ear,

gold necklace at the throat

ankle bracelet...

Men ever ready

to give you these

and all other luxuries

But in return
your whole existence
your place among militant humanity
you must lay down
 at the feet of men!

Just as the source of life
 lurks in the scent of the soil
in the actions of your body
 hidden lays
 the continuance of humankind

But of your menstruation
 your birthing power
 your endurance
 your modesty
men make out weakness
 a subject for ridicule
Though men demand sexiness of you
 yet they declare you sexpot

From distant past till today
you've cried
 along with all working ones' eyes
you've been looted
 along with all working hands
you've fought
 along with all working people
yet even today
in every battle defeat
 you lose more
in every battle victory
 you gain less
Every age
 like the kisses of a deceitful lover
 upon your breast
 harsher.
Even today

men make you queen
declare you ladylove
a civilized gentleman
considers you helpmate
yet for age upon age
you've been in search
of a single male friend
friend! friend! friend!
This world's become
so sorry, so tragic
in this age
even the male lover of equality
compelled to oppress you some!

In this civilized world
still you are raped
still stripped naked
still sold like potato and turnip
still beaten like a beast
still humiliated like a dog
oh! even love leaves a void within

In this world
where you give birth
to the whole human race
in this same world
you must know death
every moment
in this world
whose whole being
you love
in this same world
within an embrace
you must know
exile

When there's naught at your back

but tears of exile when there's naught before your eyes
but fenced-off lands
when this class society
insults your very birth
when this class society
gives you no gift
but a grave
when this class society
bans becoming a person
then what's to fear? who's to prevent?
why hesitate? what's to attract?
To give new life to yourself
come, sacrifice in the fire
of this class war!
in search of one
lost since the ages
in search of a friend
deceived since the ages
friend! friend! friend!
who you want to find!
who a working man wants to find.

* Glass bangles worn by women are a Hindu symbol of marriage.