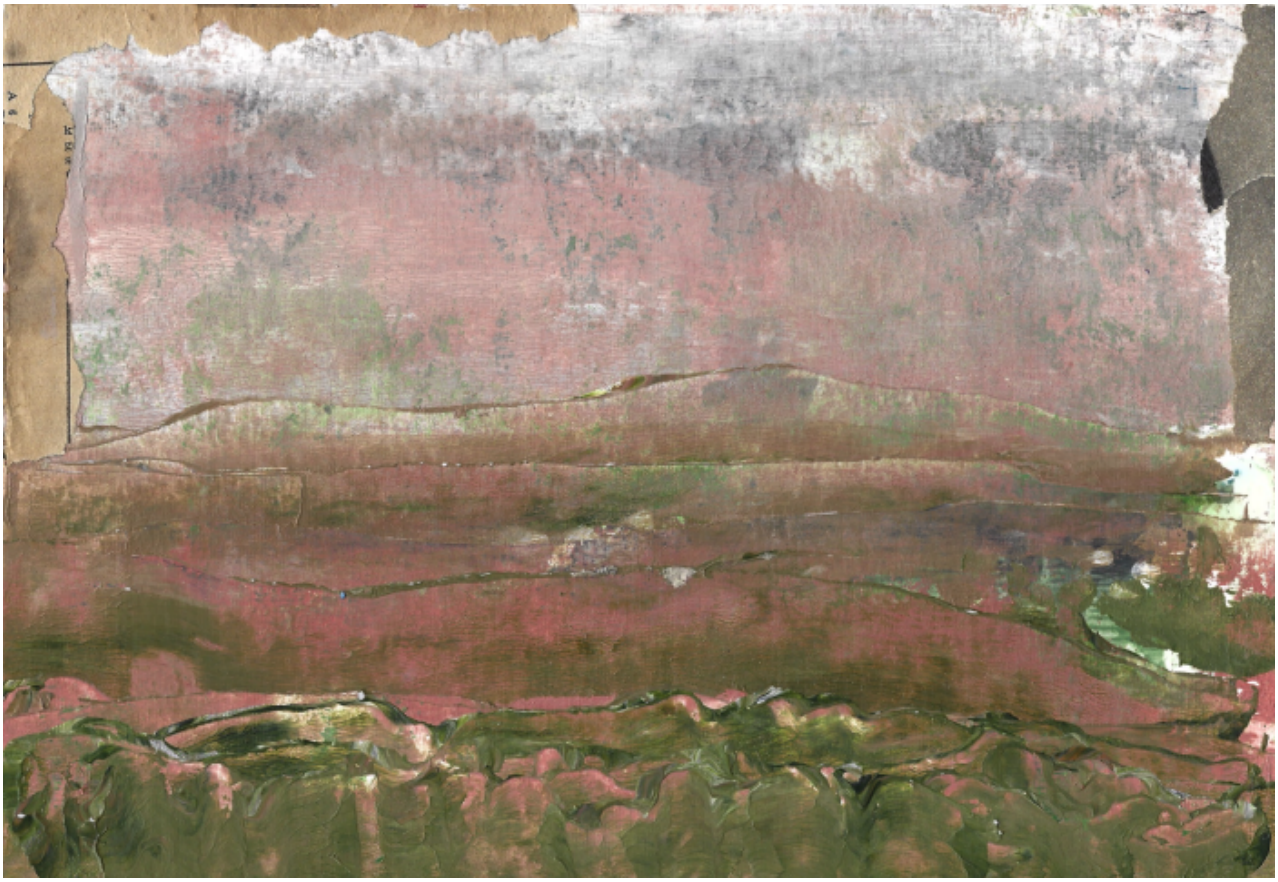
POETRY

Lacrimosa

by Rudrangshu Sengupta



"Places we didn't travel to" by Anna Major

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1. Did you know there’s a flood in the mirror everytime you blink?

The night sways in silk, in the hush of an ocean
 that never stops whispering. Somewhere,
a boy stands at the edge of a city
that does not belong to him.
The tide reaches for his ankles
like an old lover who never learned to let go.

Mumbai drips in neon.
Car horns cry like seagulls.
The air smells of rain and
forgotten promises, the kind
left on windowpanes, written in fog,
erased by morning.
There is a softness to the way the city swallows you whole.

There is a softness to the way I let it.
The rain presses against my skin
like a second heartbeat. The streetlights flicker,
and I wonder if they recognize me,
if they have memorized my silhouette
moving through the dark.
Somewhere, in a distant window,
a shadow moves behind sheer curtains,
a story untold, a secret slipping through
someone else’s fingers. The tide inches forward.
The boy does not move.

2. Love in the time of drowning

Fall.
Fall in.
Fall in love.
Fall in love with a man who never looks back.
Fall in love with a man who never looks back but always knows you are there, waiting.
Waiting.

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The sea does not wait for anyone.
The tide does not ask for permission.
I think I love it for that.
The way it moves forward without hesitation,
the way it crashes and recedes,
as if regret is a language it never learned.
If love were like that—
if I could teach my heart to flood and drain
without mourning the shore—
I wonder if it would hurt less.
If I would miss him less.
If I would miss myself less.

3. The garden where no one knows my name

In another life, I am a fig tree
growing from the chest of a boy
who loved too deeply.
My roots push into his ribcage,
my branches heavy with fruit,
his heart still beating under the soil.

In another life, I am moss
between his fingers, soft and damp,
kissing the lines of his palms,
making a home in the places
where his hands once trembled.

In another life, I am a weeping willow,
my branches brushing against the earth,
my sorrow bending me toward the river's edge.
I drink from its reflection, watch myself
ripple and distort, stretching between
what was and what could have been.
In another life, I am neither.

In this life, I am just a boy
standing in the rain,

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waiting for something to pull me under.
Waiting for roots to sprout from my spine.
Waiting for something to take hold.

4. Everything is romantic if you look at it from the right angle

The city glows at midnight,
drunk on its own loneliness.
Streetlights hum like
they are trying to remember
the words to an old song.
The air is thick with longing,
the kind that clings to the skin,
the kind you mistake for love.

There is a girl on a balcony
smoking a cigarette like it's a prayer.
There is a boy sitting on a train,
forehead against the window,
watching his reflection dissolve between streetlights.
There is a man walking home alone,
humming a song he does not know the name of.

There is a ghost in my mirror,
and he looks just like me.
I raise my hand, and he raises his.
I turn away, and he does not.
Somewhere, a door closes softly,
a love letter left unsent, an echo trapped
between walls. I press my palm to the glass,
feel the cold seep into my skin,
and wonder how long it will take
for the warmth to return.

5. The hypnotist said I should let go, so I let the ocean take me

I am walking into the sea.
I am walking into the sea and the sea is walking into me.

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The salt in my mouth tastes like the past.
The salt in my mouth tastes like the past I cannot name.
The salt in my mouth tastes like the past I cannot name but will never forget.
Never forget.

The deer in the headlights does not run.
The deer in the headlights simply watches,
wide-eyed, waiting for impact.

The impact never comes.
The waves do not crash — they fold.
The water does not consume — it cradles.
I am waiting to drown, but instead, I am held.
I am waiting to disappear, but instead,
I become something else. Something weightless.
Something that moves with the tide.

6. There is no such thing as drowning if you become the water

Lacrimosa is not for the dead.
It is for the living.
It is for those who cannot stop weeping,
for those who carry the weight
of an ocean in their bones.
It is for the ones who have surrendered.

Surrender is not defeat.
Surrender is stepping into
the tide with your hands open.
Surrender is closing your eyes and letting it take you.

And then: you float.
And then: you rise.
And then: you breathe.
And then: you live.
Somewhere golden.

Somewhere blue, where the water
is soft and endless. Somewhere warm,
where the sun spills topaz over skin.

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Somewhere weightless, where grief
untangles itself from your limbs, where sorrow
turns to salt and drifts away.
Somewhere quiet, where your name
is no longer a question, where the tide
sings it back to you in
a language you finally understand.

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