

The Game

By Anju Kanwar

3 in the morning the game is no longer a game, and I keep score feverishly.
Set aside grasses, rushes, root and bark with wooden base across spokes of reed.
I hold bamboo, some dyed jute, in empty basket symmetry.

Strangled at birth still thoughts rush to become the past, seize the sounds
in this house these rafters till I am wide awake on a stake watching limbs sweep up and down
like a grisly carousel to dance in deadly tune. I go round and round and travel
lives to find my own ghost greet me. There is a snake where a rope used to be.
Let me coax it into light, then undo that wily braid. Toss it away.
Then scrape those thorns on green briar patch, red blackberries.

Wake up God, make him listen. Still the fear: does he understand worshipping?
The monsoon is finally here. Yesterday, the silver drops . . . the writing is a trembling gray
of the hand that isn't here. I trace each word, draw pictures in eyes, weigh full the atria, till all
those days in-between disappear like blood withdraws then drenches.
I twine bamboo, some dyed jute, make a basket in sunburst wheel.

About the Author



Anju Kanwar holds a Ph.D. in English with an emphasis on narrative and gender from Northern Illinois University. She earned a Bachelor's in English (Honors) from Jesus and Mary College of the University of Delhi and a Master's in English from the University of Delhi. She is the author of The Sound of Silence (which was nominated for the Independent Scholar's Award of the Modern Language Association) and has written the Introduction to D.H. Lawrence's novel, The Lost Girl, for Barnes and Noble's Library of Essential Reading. Her research, fiction and poetry (published/presented in Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe, and North America) often focus on issues of gender, education, health, and popular culture.



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