

CHICHEN ITZA

By Vinita Agrawal

Brightly painted skulls
eye-sockets as fathomless as time
resonate to the call of Kukulcan's spirit even today.
Before the stone Castillo pyramid,
air can be clapped into the cry of a Quetzal bird
and sunlight trapped into a zigzag serpent
climbing down the stepped incline
every equinox.

Out by the fields, the harvests are good
A triple yield to the hard Yucatan soil
Yellow and purple maize beam proudly
while red beans cling around their stalks
and ripe Squashes grin delightedly from the ground.

Amidst all the wonder, when the breeze stills
The terrain whispers eerily,
speaks of human sacrifices
buried like treasures in the rough limestone well
about a hundred meters deep into the forest.
Strange cries ravage the night from this Cenote.
They trail me back to my land
eight thousand miles away.

Note: Chichen Itza is the site of the ancient Mayan ruins in the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico.

Kukulcan was their well known king.

The Quetzal is a beautiful, long plumed bird found in Central America.

A WELL TANNED PIECE OF SOLITUDE

The Caribbean Sea laps the white sand beach
Yachts roll by, some ships too
The teal blue sky hosts a splendid sun by day
a full moon by night
Sitting in a thatched gazebo
I feel the air cross-cross around me
strapping me to your absence
To whom shall I confess this loneliness
To the snouty seagulls? To strawberry top umbrellas?
To the sparse fish? The endangered sea turtles?
No, they're all lost too.
My heart shall grow wooden here
I'll return a well tanned piece of solitude
from my holiday in Cancun.
A ghost in a cemetery of islands.

TEQUILA

Sweet agave
Sweet piña
of the mighty succulent plant, tipped with thorns.
I saw you cultivated like a crop in the fields of Yucatan
scores of you

like frosted pistachio colored stars serenading the soil
I saw your hearts - the juice they concealed, the fire they revealed
born of flat limestone calcite ground.
Everyone in the bus smiled
raised an imaginary shot glass, cheered
Tipped their gay, freshly bought Sombreros.
But we moved on
not stopping for tequila fun
The only way to stay on top of a journey
Any journey
Undaunted, unfazed, untempted.
Always ascending.

ESSENCE OF LIFE

I looked back a long way from the bus window
Unwilling to lose sight of the Mexico moon
Perfectly stenciled amidst a parade of stars on a clear night
The universe plots these things
The red agony of a setting sun
The silver liaisons of the moon
The swell of Caribbean tides
The race of baby turtles to their watery cocoon
And it does more
It rolls over to renew itself
From a black hole to a quarter of lights

From nothingness to a buzzing karmic ledger
From a tunnel of dark consciousness to a walnut science brain
From feelings that died un-fed to those that never will be again
We lose count of how often we depart, how often arrive
And succumb repeatedly to thresholds of strife
The real journey is the one that takes us inwards
From brazen wants to contentment's timbers
The real pyre is not of logs and wood
But of evilselfishness, things not good
That fire burns brightest of all
In which we let our ego fall
That journey is the longest, most beautiful
When hands are empty but hearts full

Bio

Vinita is an award winning poet from Mumbai. Her poems have been published in Asiancha, Raedleaf Poetry , Wordweavers, OpenRoad Review, Constellations, The Fox Chase Review, Spark, Mandala and many other journals. She is the author of Words Not Spoken - an anthology of poems published by Sampark/Brown Critique in November 2013. She can be reached at www.vinitawords.com