Asleep Under My Tongue

K. Srilata

A grey umbrella of early November rains

It is early November.
The rains are desolate,
like the grey of school uniforms
she will never wear.

A general wetness has settled
persuasively
over everything.

Soon, I know,
her day must begin.
But I sit there
holding
over her sleeping body
a grey umbrella
of early November rains.

Acknowledgment:
Underground Flowers
A Poem in My Mother Tongue

When I moved out,
I left behind
an aquarium,
in it a fish,
mad and solitary,
swimming,
the entire line
of a poem
in my mother tongue,
a poem I am still fishing for,
miles away
and out in the stinging rain.

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Every microchap may be printed from
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Asleep Under My Tongue

You are gone,
And so is your word for you.
You are gone,
And so is the rain that I
hoped it had drowned too quickly.
For me.

but it has drowned too quickly.
and dims the stairs,
up and down the stairs,
catch catch-catch with me.
Every since you left.
I have no one to call by.
If it sleeps under my tongue now,
and so do you. My word for you.
You are gone.

A Woman of Letters

Some day what I want to be is a woman of letters,
to retire to my study and be
solitary.
I can see it all:
that desk - neat, rectangular, coffee brown,
its drawers seductive and deep,
holding secrets from another age,
on it some paper, a pen and an ink well,
and a bookcase filled with every kind of book -
Austen definitely and Dickinson and Chugthai...

No adolescent daughters abandoning dresses in contemptuous heaps.
No grubby sons, their dirty socks like bombs under my books,
No spouses, no mothers, nor mothers-in-law
with their urgent thoughts.
Sometimes all I want to be is a woman of letters.
Between chores, the very idea makes me weep.

Poems in this microchap are part of a larger collection titled
“The Unmistakable Presence of Absent Humans” published by Poetrywala, Mumbai

A Poem in My Mother Tongue

Asleep Under My Tongue

You are gone,
And so, too, my word for you.
It sleeps under my tongue now.
I have no one to call by it.
It sleeps under my tongue now.
and so do you. My word for you.
You are gone.

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