

Two Poems

by [Ankur Betageri](#) (August 2018)



Trespass, Helen Frankenthaler, 1974

An End to Dreaming

I wish I could live happily
under the trees
collect alms
from loving householders
and move from
public park to public park

I wish I could sleep
sannyasi-like on a park bench
without police waking me up with a stick.
I wish I could gaze at the constellations
at midnight without the dogs barking:
thief! thief!

I wish I could live
as if there was no state regulation
no traffic, pollution, heat and disease.
I wish detachment and god-love
could free me completely
make me immune to cruelty and injustice
and the work-regime of the world.

I wish my enlightenment
could end poverty and hunger
rid the world of slavery and child abuse.
I wish my under-tree teaching sessions
could clear a farmer's debt or stop
the killing of tribals by anti-naxal troops.

I wish punya was bank balance
and hoarding enough
opened the doors to heaven
I wish the answer to world's suffering
was to call the world false
and ask to be released from it.

I wish moksha was more than just death
that it wasn't: ending life utterly and making death eternal
I wish I could believe what the books say the 'Learned' knew
and that this poem wasn't a refutation.

Paperweight

Like

from its folded

depths

the sea

exhales

and ripples

through

a crinkly

sail

from the depth

of its wavy

folds

her skirt

blows

a breeze

over my

fevered

eyelids

but when
from beneath
the skirt
her knees
press against
the cardboard wall
of my curt
replies

paper-thin
codes
of propriety
loom over us
like a fortress.

Ankur Betageri is a poet, short fiction writer and visual artist based in New Delhi. He is the author of *The Bliss and Madness of Being Human* (poetry, 2013) and *Bhog and Other Stories* (short fiction, 2010). He teaches English at Bharati College, University of Delhi. His poetry has appeared in *New English Review*, *Mascara Literary Review* and *London Review of Books*.

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