

Sofiul Azam

Earth and Windows

*I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed.
I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.
But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. – Mahatma Gandhi*

Born in cold January on the mud-floor of my Granny's
storehouse bamboo-walled and roofed with corrugated tin,
I thought I was getting unmoored from attachments
as if I were looking out a window of a high-rise
only to see a piece of driftwood float down the river.
But I was wrong from the start for I couldn't see
myself tied up with the invisible ropes of belonging.
Whatever Athenians thought, an owl's innards
cannot tell of one's destiny for sure; this is superstition.
I would rather continue peeling it like an onion and cry.

Whatever the specifications of the situations I am in,
I think of this uncertainty as custom-made, only deeply
whenever I'm stuck in a traffic jam on Green Road
where goings-on get all the more difficult in the rains.
If this is so, there's no use hollering about a ticket
to heaven. The pain I am in today is getting me
hungrier for the endurance I might need for tomorrow.
This hard-won consolation tastes bitter for I've always
been on the receiving end, and it can only trigger
my instability, anyone's ghosting no less for the worst.

The hurts I'm given as gifts by chauvinists are cumulative
even though I implored their mercy. I don't ever relish
the singular idea of being rooted in just one spot;
I rather feel like a rhizome branching out new roots
from its nodes, trying out its various potential climates
for the plurality is itself a self-renewing adventure.
Losing faith in those too preachy about the singular,
I prefer to be an unpaired jerk lusting for the plural.
If I say this planet is where I began and my windows
open into the universe, would I be allowed to belong?