

Mascara

LITERARY REVIEW

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Anushka Anastasia Solomon

Born in 1963, a Hindu in Malaysia, Anushka Anastasia Solomon left for the United States as a teenager to study journalism. She returned to Malaysia with a B.A (Creative Writing/Education), envisioning change of the race and religion based Malaysian system of Education. Her poem, "13 Ways of Looking at Malaysia" inspired by Wallace Stevens, which appears in *Asia Literary Review* Autumn 2008, articulates that vision. The Malaysian government, then and now, frowns upon her ideas. In 1998, due to intolerable family violence and persecution after her mother's premature death, Anushka, her husband, Ben Solomon, and son David Marshall converted to Christianity, fled Malaysia and immigrated to the United States.

The author of two poetry chapbooks, *Please, God, Don't Let Me Write Like A Woman*, (Finishing Line Press, 2007) and *The Hindu and The Punk*, (Pudding House Press 2009), Anushka's work is featured by Amnesty International at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, Scotland, 2007, 2008 and 2009. She lives in beautiful Evergreen, Colorado. (www.atthewindow.us)



Recipe for Success –Slumdog Millionaire

I buy the Bollywood look in Wal-Mart
 Gold hoop earrings with yellow beads
 \$1.50 marked down from 5 US Dollars
 Decorate my years shrivel the sari to a
 A skirt I buy at Forever 21
 \$10.00 marked down from more than that
 With my skin the color of cinnamon bark
 I dress up for a lark. I make naan and
 Have A

Me by tl

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Cooking
 And prepare to garnish the dish with some
 Dried red chillies
 That will crackle in my frying pan

And on your tongue, I will hum a Hindi
Song and you will never know
That perhaps
Like you
I do not know how to live
In a slum.

Cooking A South Indian Curry From Memory

1.

I slice tender red beef, the cold silver blade
Of the knife creating an everglade
Collide worlds in a colander
Demarcate the days on the calendar
Take a cutting from the past
It is not my intention to aghast
Those who consider the cow holy
I just want to cook a curry boldly
Solely
from memory.

2.

Listen. Here in America,
They tell *me*- the poet - that the onion
an apple and the potato
all have the same taste.

That the differences in flavor
Are caused by their smell.

Listen. Here they prove
these things
Science, Surveys, Studies.

I can't argue with their facts.
I don't. The facts mount this
case from Malaysia
And ride it, like a show horse,
around and around until I am
ground into the spices
bleeding the truth in *my marrow bones*
for William Butler Yeats

and this South Indian Curry I am cooking from
memory because I am
ornery

3.

To prove the onion, an apple
and the potato the same

They say – pinch your nose
Take a bite.

They will all taste sweet.
Try it!

Booze, women and writing.
All the same.

4.

I remember my Hindu father swinging a bag
Of goat's intestines
For my mother to cook, she ran water
In the sink
Obediently washing the insides of a goat
Wrinkling her nose in distaste
Listen. Charles Bu-cow- ski wrote a poem
About a Mexican girl
Who washed his private part
With a rag

5.

Contemporary American men's poetry
is that sultry
the Buddhist monks who conducted
Bu-cow-ski's funeral rites
must set their sights a tad higher
for women. Our gravestones
ought to read: "Don't Try"
like his.

Alternatively:
"Don't Cry".

The more things change

The more women I find

On the streets - like loose change.
They, like all things, stay the same.

6.

Or am I cooking this up from memory
Mixing it up with chicory

Using it to pound a point in
Like ginger and garlic

In a medley of flavors
For a variety of favors

Like the Thai and Indonesian women
With splayed toes

Who for a few bhat or rupiah
Rub the stress off the backs

Of the missionaries selling Jesus
Vying for a chance to stand

Beside Bill Gates? Accolades.

7.

I ought to go back to cooking the
South Indian curry from memory.

Don't use beef. The cow is holy.
Remember?

Use chicken. Hold your nose.
And all the horses in Colorado.

It would be a good idea to hold
Your tongue as well, my belle.

Show some cleavage at Christmas.
And don't joke about mangoes.

Or tell them that wearing a sari
And exposing the navel is asking

to get raped. Save the juicy parts
for when the Guests go away.

mascarareview.com/.../Anushka_Anast...

..unless they stay.

8.

Then you can tell them the recipe.
How you stand poised on the edge of the precipice

Cooking South Indian curry from memory
Listening for some inner harmony

Orange and purple bougainvillea
Climbing over the balcony like all

The idealized Tamil lovers
Of the silver screen

Your love of all things
falling unrequited

like the bougainvillia
Bunga kertas, paper flowers

Your nail polish, the new indigo blue of the sky.