I like a certain kind of a man

face bordering on feminine beauty,
yes, I am that superficial,
a body self-conscious
of the space it occupies,
possessed with a kind of rigor
that can start a yuga
in the heart,
riding on a muted testosterone,
one who is totally lost
gamboling on his eclipse
without a center sun;

when I have fallen
in love, it's been for this, no more.

Resolute, bruised, tenacious,
he thinks he has the world in his fist,

and eyes of a dead fish or still river
that have known the sight of the ocean

but forgotten it.

Madingley Hall

Plop! The road is corked open at the threshold to Madingley,
Goblets of graves raise a manifold toast to the entering at Madingley.

Clouds punting in parks of somber green, somnolent season,
Node, lode, burnished lobe, open the pores of Madingley.

Coral tongues of brick incant green chants in the cold embrace of air,
Aren't we sold to the ancient currency of leaves in Madingley?

In the ashen cerulean black birds boldly arch their script,
Corridors slough their skin inside the old mind of Madingley.

Weeping willows graciously bow to the black gown of night,
Larvae of accents transit in the moldy air of Madingley.

Coppiced hazel, purple leaf plum, liquid amber, thuya retell stories,
The black walnut is flickers of gold in the setting sun of Madingley.

Inside the harlequin passport of windows, newly stamped visas of faces,
Nascent poets dare cross the old quadrant maddeningly in Madingley.

Fitoor

I have no great expectations
that this thing called Love will find me,
on the glacier of the heart.

still, for a minute last night, a twang
like a snail remembering home is on its back,
a note its flight from the instrument

that moment of remembering
what it was like to offer oneself as an arrow,
to be directed, flung, aimed, hapless,
to stream in the wind unknowing of the source
or the object,
remembering
that finger that unhinges arrow after arrow
from an inexhaustible quiver,
and never quivers.

– Usha Akella*

Note: Madingley Hall: Mansion where lectures and lodging are facilitated for the MSt in Creative Writing, Cambridge University.

*She earned an MSt in Creative Writing from the University of Cambridge, UK. She is the founder of *Matwaala* (www.matwaala.com) and www.the-pov.com, a website of curated interviews. She was selected as one of the Creative Ambassadors for the city of Austin in 2019 & 2015. She has authored nine books that include poetry, one chapbook and two musical dramas. Her latest poetry book, *I Will Not Bear You Sons*, was published by Spinifex, Australia. *The Waiting* published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi was translated by Elsa Cross in Spanish and published by Mantis Editores, Mexico. She edited and conceived *Hum Aiseich Bolte! This is Just How We Speak*, a poetry anthology on the city of Hyderabad released at HLF 2023. She is a widely anthologised poet. Recently, in February 2023 she was invited to read for the literary festival organized by the Ministry of Arts and Letters, Mexico.

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