

Poem

Shilpa Venkatachalam

Moon

She points to the sparkling night sky
 stretched tight across space,
 And with her little fingers screams, "Moon".
 "Moon", "Moon", she says
 And turns her gaze toward me in amazement.

How do I tell her that the moon shys short
 Of a wonder that stands at two feet in height,
 right beside me?

That light years are grasped in a second,
 when she wraps her tiny hand around my finger.

Birthing

One stroke across the canvas
 Like lovers lips pressed against each other.

I try to say
 Something
 In a pregnant silence
 With a sigh
 With a caress
 With a glance

For how these words betray me
 Lie dormant in me and stubbornly refuse to wake up

And yet I try;
 Like the musician searching to strike the exact cord
 Like the author struggling to construct the right phrase
 Like the dancer trying to land perfectly

The moment swells only to dip back into itself.

I have said it. I have felt it.

Enough.

Without Gratitude, You Say

Give me your hand and I will show you life, you said.
 Share your soul and I will show you light,
 Look through my eyes and I will show you that
 which you not seen, you said.

I looked at you and said 'no'.

I recoiled

I hesitated

I withdrew

But I will tell you again:

I don't want to hold

I refuse to grasp

I decline to own.

Because what I want is to embrace the ephemeral

To clasp the fleeting in my fist

To taste the always-to-come that never arrives.

If you can offer me that

I will show you life.

Here and There

You want guarantees,

I can offer you none.

Like a subatomic particle

I exist in two different states simultaneously

I am wave

And I am particle

And come into being only for an instant

that disappears before it has decided to stay.

I'm already planning to leave you before I have even met you.

I'm already preparing to destroy before I have even created.

This is my tragedy and this is my bliss

I am clothed in contradictions

Like matter and anti-matter

I am immersed in inconsistency

Before I have committed

I know I will deceive

I cannot offer you what I do not possess

I cannot possess that which you want me to offer to you.

To sustain anything is a challenge I am unable to meet

Every second explodes with a million alterations

That invade my being

And that make it quiver.

How can I offer you a guarantee

When I have never known what it means.

