

COBIS Poetry Competition 2020

Today's Actions Shape Tomorrow's World

Category C: 15-19 years Winner

A Climate of Change

Droplets drip like diamonds
onto the parched lips of the earth.
Buckets filled in thousands will barely last a day
in this drained city, gasping in the sun's stare.
Chennai. Reservoirs run bone-dry.

The husk of the once-mighty Mekong,
A pitiful trickle creeps along the plains.
Flowers console its drying shores,
pensive, in their patient wait for water.
Dong Thap. Farmers renounce blighted ancestral land.

Thick smog settles on urban sprawl,
Engulfing roads and buildings whole.
Smokestacks spew sulfur into stygian skies
where birds dare not fly and humans choke below.
Delhi. Five million don gas masks to protect from toxic fumes.

I imagine
a lone hardwood tree
ancient and weary and dry,
casting a last, forlorn look at its kin,
Some mutilated, others shriveled or acid-scorched,
before heaving its tree trunk body
to a new home where it will forever mourn
its roots.

One day
will the last clouds
wagon-trail off,
And loincloth and epiclesis remain
the one hope for
the children of the meek?

I envisage
a world of people who dare to dream,
Believe the earth is worth fighting for,
And secure a land where both forests and islands stay rooted so
Nature's bountiful gifts of the past millennia can yet be enjoyed
by the children of those who chose
Change.

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