

Saffron Rain

by Ankur Betageri (February 2016)

And it poured and poured
as I held my umbrella and stood under the awning
of the bookstore
the creamy brightness of pages
vanishing
before the grim downpour
of saffron urine.

It would stop
I should just take a few deep breaths
and relax
maybe light a cigarette
or watch the big-eyed girl
in the bookstore
who just looked up from what she was reading
and shivered
so I thought as I waited
but wind-caught—it lashed on our faces
over all of us
scared citizens of the republic

huddling under insufficient shelters
by the roadside.

It stank
I felt dirty
but I wiped my face with the hanky
and began to walk.

It's better to brave the squall
and reach home
I can take a bath
have coffee
and forget all about the downpour.

Under the awning
I was going to get soaked
and the stink
and helplessness
in cold
would have made me puke
who knows on whose back?

But when I reached home

it rained rabid dogs

TV, phone and laptop

crackled with their barks.

And as I looked out the window

the urine poured and poured

yellowing the newspapers, history books and labs

as the roads of the nation

swarmed with flies.

Ankur Betageri is poet, short fiction writer and visual artist based in New Delhi. His published works include [*The Bliss and Madness of Being Human*](#) (poetry, 2013) and *Bhog and Other Stories* (short fiction, 2010).

To comment on this poem, please click