

Calling from the cracks

by Gunjan Chandhok

Shattered, bruised and battered self,
I want an open sky for myself,
Whisper to the winds, bring me a chance,
Looking in the mirror for a hopeful glance.

I see I am a sexual slave to you,
And that's the fight between me and you,
There is a dark sight when you hold me tight,
Clit slit is my hard plight,
A ray of light is my only flight,
To shout, scream and voice my stings,
Aren't they my human rights?

I bleed when you need,
I silence my dreams,
When you ride on your pride,
My aching emotions are high on tides,
Walls of prejudice are so high,
My clipped wings cannot fly.

In serving you lies my identity,
Cooking and washing defines my fidelity,
My womb chamber lousds my fertile treaty,
Cold, numb, beautiful me bejewel my dignity,
Does it not pinch your integrity?

You take my name,
Label my character with utter shame,
All bad are to my blame,
I wonder what is this game?

Praise, raise and embrace a woman,
A daughter, a sister, a mother, a wife,
Above all she is a human life,
Take your knives and rip apart,
Oppressive traditions and conventional parts,
Affection and dedication,
Patience and consideration,
A man becomes a man through compassion.

Gunjan Chandhok is a senior research fellow at the Department of Social Work, University of Delhi pursuing PhD (Social Work) on 'Influence of Intimate Partner Violence on the Reproductive and Sexual Health of Women'. She holds M.Phil. degree from the Department of Social Work, University of Delhi with a core focus on the 'Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights of Young Married Women Residing in the Urban Slum of Delhi NCR'. Ms. Chandhok has authored a book titled "Autonomy over Anatomy: Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights" entailing lived experiences of women seeking agency and control on their sexual self. The book draws its genesis in human rights and sustainable development perspectives. Her core areas of interest are public health and gender issues. A postgraduate in Social Work and a graduate in Commerce, from University of Delhi, she also holds a Master's degree in Gender and Development Studies. She has presented her work at several national and international platforms and has considerable publications to her credit.