



Poems by Sanjukta Dasgupta

Dystopia

Here lies the cactus land
Ashes carpet the dry earth
Sighs rise like siren songs
Here there are no tears
Here there are no fears
Here there is no water
Here rivers are suicidal
Subterranean stock still

Will the cacti flower someday
Like hope out of hopelessness

The steel grey sky above
Inscrutable as invisible God

July 27, 2025

Midnight

Decades ago
Someone said,
“At the stroke of the midnight hour
When the world sleeps
India will awake to
Life and Freedom”

Yet since that awakening at midnight
Midnights and middays quaked

Riven by blood-thirsty knives and bullets
God was appalled that His supreme creation
Could murder and destroy in His name
Midnights, middays, mornings, afternoons
Reverberated with cries of helpless anguish
Death stalked its prey at all hours
Obsessive compulsive disorder
Vermillion skies terrified life and freedom

Five months later after that stroke of the midnight hour
On a January morning three fast and furious bullets
Fired from a semi-automatic Beretta M1934 pistol
Violently silenced the apostle of non-violence
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Since that day indelible darkness
Midnight is not clock-time
Midnight reigns beyond reason
Darkness at all hours not just nights
Darkness permeates mornings
Noon and afternoons
A nation afflicted with
Manic depression

Yet irrepressible hope
Awaits the first gentle radiant rays
Of an invincible non-violent dawn

June 1, 2025