

## POEMS

**this poem wishes to heal**

is it her heart or the world  
that she holds in her hands?  
is she nursing an old wound,  
cradling stillborn dreams?  
are those tears that she cleans  
or dries the bleeding stream  
flowing from the streets?  
the dead have to be grieved  
the hungry fed  
that which was torn open  
has to be stitched  
once the fire  
is doused, like Bhagirathi  
flowing over the ashes  
of the damned,  
may her words flow,  
open ajar the floodgate  
of hope and heal  
her heart, her world.

**- Shweta Rao Garg**

**this poem is an upcycled jacket**

from the wool of the old brown sweater  
my grandpa wore his last winter  
i embroidered hibiscus on amma's  
green cotton sari, used the buttons plucked out of my  
pinafore dress and added many trinkets and talismans,  
charms for evil eye, cures for some recurring  
maladies, remedy for your sleep  
my father's songs when  
his head was full  
of hair and no care in the world  
are slipped inside the pockets  
hand-stitched with the thread that  
connects you to me, my *chinna mari*  
may you be snug in this soft poem of a jacket

*chinna mari* – a Kannada endearment, my golden baby.

- Shweta Rao Garg

**Shweta Rao Garg** is an artist, poet, and academic from India living in Baltimore, US. Her poetry collection, *Of Goddesses and Women*, was published by Sahitya Akademi in 2021. She is one of the co-editors of *Quicksand Borders: South Asia in Verse* (forthcoming Macmillan, New Delhi) and one of the four contributors in *Shakespearewalis: Verses on the Bard* (forthcoming Flowersong Press, McAllen, Texas). Her poems have been published in *Indian Literature*, *Coldnoon*, *Everyday Poems*, *Postcolonial Text*, *Transnational Literature*, *Muse India*, *Visual Verse*, *Yugen Quest Review*, etc. Like her art, her poems are about her lived experiences as a woman. Mythology, popular culture, and motherhood are recurring themes in her work. She seeks to create a conversation between her visual art and writing through visual poetry. Her artwork can be found at <http://shwetaogarg.com>