

TEA A CONCOCTION OF DISSONANCE

தேநீர் முரண்களின்
கலவை

Poetry & Art

Paintings: Vaidheki

Poetry: P. Ahilan, Geetha Sukumaran

Translation: Vidhya Sreenivasan



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www.dhulibooks.com

contactdhulibooks@gmail.com, manmohan_dash@yahoo.com

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Tea: A Concoction of Dissonance

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P. Ahilan, Geetha Sukumaran, Vaidheki

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தேயிலைத் தோட்டத் தொழிலாளர்களுக்கு
For the tea plantation workers

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This book of TEA POEMS by Geetha Sukumaran and P. Ahilan has exclusive flavours of life experienced in India and Sri Lanka. Love lingers like the soft foggy steam unravelling colours of relationships as the metaphor of sipping tea or engaging with tea making is spiced up with women histories, domestic violence, political wars, love, pain and resistance. Here, 'Each gulp of tea is a ripple, a resistance'.

Local tea drinking habits are reflected in the crispiness of a poem. Disputes about land, nation, and nationalities are portrayed over a cup of tea, pouring references of political insurgencies into the reader's cup. 'Melting memories of the body' leave residues at the bottom of an emptied cup. "I walk into tea / Where the lane ends, there is no field / Where is my village? "

TEA experienced in these poems is beyond geographical constraints, leaps beyond borders, breaks boundaries, making these poems highly political with reference to bodies of land juxtaposed with human bodies.

An impressive cover and beautiful works of art by Vaidheki not only bind these short poems that speak of a time that we live in, but also keeps reminding the reader that these poems are about TEA!

- Mamta Sagar (India)

Like the tea it celebrates, this collection is a "cup of timelessness" whose fragrance, tang, and powers of signification both mark time and transcend it. Tea as word and silence, home and exile, self-healing wound, translator of sameness and difference. Sukumaran's and Ahilan's poems (in Vidhya Sreenivasan's masterful translation) and Vaidheki's artwork give us a book of tea splendid in clarity and sensorial texture. These intimate transnational 'conversations' journey through histories of oppression and strife, but are also steeped in vocabularies of love. They speak of the power of tea to communicate and connect beyond borders, disrupt the politics of hostility, and work toward an aesthetic of hospitality.

- Mihaela Moscaliuc (USA)

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