Classic Poetry Series

Eunice de Souza

- 4 poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Eunice de Souza (1940 -)

Eunice de Souza is a contemporary Indian English language poet, literary critic and novelist. Among her notable books of poetry is Women in Dutch painting (1988).

Early Life and Education

Eunice de Souza was born and grew up in Pune, in a Goan Catholic family. She studied English literature with an MA from the Marquette University in Wisconsin, and a PhD from the University of Mumbai. She taught English at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, and was Head of the Department until her recent retirement. She was involved in the well known literary festival Ithaka organized at the college.

She has also been involved in theater, both as actress and director. She began writing novels with Dangerlok in 2001. She has also written four children's books.

She hints at an ancestral Portuguese conversion in the poem de Souza Prabhu:

No, I'm not going to
delve deep down and discover
I'm really de Souza Prabhu
even if Prabhu was no fool
and got the best of both worlds.
(Catholic Brahmin!
I can hear his fat chuckle still.)

Aside from poetry and fiction, de Souza has edited numerous anthologies and collections and writes a weekly column for the Mumbai Mirror. She currently lives in Mumbai.

Works:

Poetry
Fix. (1979)
Women in Dutch Painting. (1988)
Ways of Belonging. (1990)
Selected and New Poems. (1994)

Novels
Dangerlok. (Penugin, 2001)
Dev & Simran: A Novel. (Penguin, 2003)

Interviews
Conversations with Indian Poets. (OUP, 2001)

Edited
Nine Indian Women Poets: An Anthology. (OUP, 2001)
Purdah: An Anthology. (OUP, 2004)
Women's Voices: Selections from Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Indian Writing in English. (OUP, 2004)
Early Indian Poetry in English: An Anthology 1829-1947. (OUP, 2005)
The Satthianadhan Family Album. (Sahitya Akademi, 2005)

Advice to Women

Keep cats
if you want to learn to cope with
the otherness of lovers.
Otherness is not always neglect -
Cats return to their litter trays
when they need to.
Don't cuss out of the window
at their enemies.
That stare of perpetual surprise
in those great green eyes
will teach you
to die alone.

Eunice de Souza

Bequest

In every Catholic home there's a picture
of Christ holding his bleeding heart
in his hand.
I used to think, ugh.

the only person with whom
I have not exchanged confidences
is my hairdresser.

Some recommend stern standards,
others say float along.
He says, take it as it comes,
meaning, of course, as he hands it out.

I wish I could be a
Wise Woman
smiling endlessly, vacuously
like a plastic flower,
saying Child, learn from me.

It's time to perform an act of charity
to myself,
bequeath the heart, like a
spare kidney-
preferably to an enemy.

Eunice de Souza

Don't Look for My Life in These Poems

Poems have order, sanity
aesthetic distance from debris.
All I've learnt from pain
I always knew,
but could not do.

Eunice de Souza

Eunice

Eunice, Embroidery Sister said
this petticoat you've cut
these seams
are worthy of an elephant
my dear

Silly bra-less bitch

Eunice is writing bad words sister
she's sewing up her head
for the third time sister

the limbs keep flopping
the sawdust keeps popping
out of the gaps
sister.

Eunice de Souza