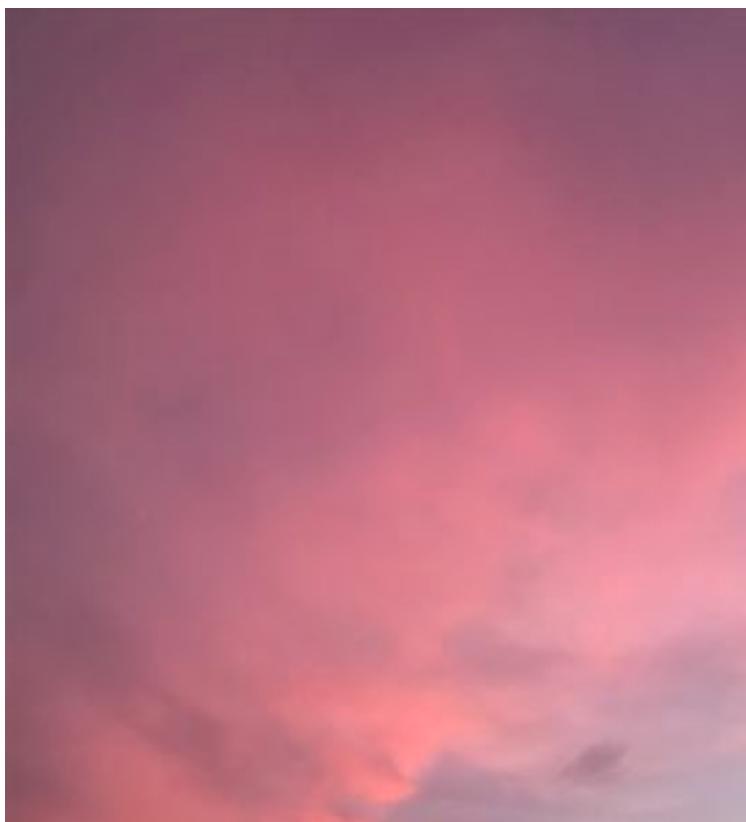


# New Poetry from Nidhi Agarwal: “The Goddess Incarnates;” “Cow Dust Hour;” and “Emancipation”



WEIGHT OF DUSK / *image by Amalie Flynn*

## THE GODDESS INCARNATES

At midnight, on a seat of five skulls  
I worship the slayer of illusions,  
The Maharaja (King) gifted me thirty – three  
Acres of rent – free earth, (1)  
I have planted seeds of your devotion (Bhakti)  
In the soil of my bones to perform corpse rituals.

The world calls me mother – crazy and love – mad,  
Your status comes alive in my skeleton,  
Oh, Mother Kali! Tell me  
If the Goddess incarnates.

▪ – Ram Prasad Sen

### **COW DUST HOUR**

I dwell on the ferocious cremation grounds  
Yearning for my Mother Kali!  
She carries waxing gibbous on her forehead,  
The Sun grows larger in her right pupil,  
The Moon drips from the two corners of her left eye,  
She burns the demons in the catacomb of her three eyes.  
You cannot carry her consort in your palm,  
He keeps her love and fury in the ocean of his heart.

I am restless, this longing to meet my  
Mother will swallow me.  
Oh, Mother! I have transposed to a ghoul  
Your disciples are my friends now.  
They claim,  
Between the day and night –  
When twilight rises to the throat of the sky,  
The hours of Sun and darkness make love,  
There is no period of half – light,  
I will meet you at,  
The time of Union.

### **EMANCIPATION**

My eyes brim with the weight of dusk,  
Emotions conflagrate in my heart  
Burning the corpse without fuel.

This dawn I am returning to my house  
To constellate my belongings.

The entrance is clouded by the  
Scattered scars of my childhood,  
Every drawer is sealed with the secrets of  
My disappointments.

Today, I let go of my failures and rise  
From the floor,  
As soot rises from the throat.  
With every effort to clean the house  
My spine travels to the nucleus of my brain  
Showing me the way to the bedroom.

At the bedroom's door,  
I stand startled by the view.  
The Mother Goddess is coming together  
With the God of Mountains,  
Consuming my form and liberating me  
From prison.