An Ontology of Permeability: Tracing Radical Nonduality in the Poetry of Nabina Das

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Abstract: The philosophical idea of nonduality proposes an understanding of being as permeable, relational and interdependent. Radical nonduality within ecofeminism seeks to emphasize the essential and holistic ontological connections between women and ecology by bringing to the fore the ways of consciousness, experience and identity that inalienably link the socio-cultural place of women in societies worldwide with the politics of environmental knowledge and representation. In the oeuvre of Nabina Das, an established voice in contemporary Indian English poetry, one comes across a potent poetic articulation of such ecological nonduality along with a transgressive feminist criticism of masculine models of development and globalization. Hailing from Guwahati, Assam, Das writes with a strong regional inflection. The colours, myths, songs, politics and sufferings of her native land constitute a significant subtext in her work even as its cosmopolitan overtones carry the reader into geographies and worldviews beyond. The proposed paper, placing Das's poetry under an ecofeminist lens, shall attempt to explore how the subjectivity of her Anima poems offers an unitive and unbroken view of women and ecology.

Keywords: Ontology, feminism, ecology, human, nonhuman, interconnectedness

From a notebook, March 7, 1974:

> The poet today must be twice-born. She must have begun as a poet, she must have understood the suffering of the world as political, and have gone through politics, and on the other side of politics she must be reborn again as a poet.
> But today I would rephrase this: it's not a matter of dying as a poet into politics, or of having to be reborn as a poet "on the other side of politics" (where is that?), but of something else - finding the relationship. (Rich, 21)

The relationship between poetry and politics ever connotes poignancy. To make poetry a potent political tool without impoverishing its strength, force and value as poetry is a daunting poetic accomplishment for one realizes that where politics finds a home, poetry may, in all probability, be extinguished. To confront politics with poetry requires a human commitment of the highest order. As Czeslaw Milosz writes in his Introduction to his *Collected Poems*, "to remain aware of the weight of fact without yielding to the temptation to become only a reporter is one of the most difficult puzzles confronting a practitioner of poetry." (xxiii) The poet aspiring to make a statement that is both significantly political and poetically memorable, must ceaselessly and wholeheartedly confront the world as it is and from these multiple interactions, achieve a distillation in thought and expression that mirrors the sufferings of the objective world through its acute internalization by the crucial subjective self. This is easier said than done and every poet who desires to speak to the world's agony must negotiate this relationship in distinct and unique ways to arrive at one's own poetic voice and signature.

In the oeuvre of Nabina Das, an established voice in contemporary Indian English poetry, one comes across an admirable case of poetry as politics. Even a cursory acquaintance with her poetry is enough to bring home to the reader her overt and intense engagement with political questions.

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Yet, no reader of Das's poetry can decry her poetry as sheer propaganda. On the other hand, Das accomplishes only what some of the most mature poetic selves can – an ardent identification of the poetic personal with the public political. Self, world, personal, public, poetry and politics permeate the many-tongued and polyvalent texts that Das creates. Hailing from Guwahati, Assam, Nabina Das with a Masters in Linguistics from JNU, Delhi and an MFA in Poetry from Rutgers University (Camden, NJ), has lived and worked as a journalist for almost a decade in the US before settling down at Hyderabad. A Charles Wallace, Sangam House and Commonwealth Writers writing fellowship winner, a novelist, columnist, short fiction writer, creative writing instructor and trained classical singer, she is most profoundly a poet with three full-length poetry collections under her belt – *Blue Vessel* (Zaporogue, Denmark, 2012), *Into the Migrant City* (Writers Workshop, Kolkata, 2013) and Sanskarnama (Red River, New Delhi, 2017). "Our postcolonial history and political challenges prompt me to keep poetry in my arsenal," states Das in her interview for *Centre for Stories.* She states:

> The personal was truly political for us even when I was too young to realize it. Where I come from, poetry is no pastime, although no one pays a poet for what she gives to the world. The sort of political and social climate I have grown up witnessing in Assam, my home state, can only be directly addressed by means of poetry and art. Patriarchy, caste segregation, class wars, and environmental plunder — I'd imagine a few reasons such as these ones are enough to steel a poet's pen. Hence I write. (Das, *Centre for Stories*)

Among the many thematic preoccupations that Das's poetry evinces - "identity, women, bodies, memory as a tool to reinvent stories and spaces of protest and resistance" (Das, *The Northeast Today*) eco-consciousness constitutes an important motif. Das's politics, as any reader will quickly realize, is leftist, feminist and ecological. Brave and defiant, her voice takes on the State and its patriarchal fundamentalist, separatist and capitalist manoeuvres in almost every poem, speaking for the necessity of upholding diversity and individual liberty. This paper intends to examine her political ideas within the wider philosophical framework of a radical nondualist ecological consciousness.

The term 'ecocriticism', first coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 essay, "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" where he described it as articulating the symbiotic relationship between ecology and literature, has diversified today to become a blanket term that involves a multiplicity of approaches such as nature writing, deep ecology, ecofeminism, the revaluation of place, environmental ethics, animal rights, bioregionalism, social ecology, political ecology, ecopsychology, ecophilosophy, etc. Theodore Roszak in his book, *The Voice of the Earth*, writes:

> These days we see the prefix "eco" affixed to many words. Ecopolitics, ecophilosophy, ecofeminism, ecoconsumerism , even ecoterrorism . . . . The result is not always graceful, but the gesture is nonetheless significant as a sign of the times. This tiny neologistic flag flies above our language like a storm-warning meant to signal our belated concern for the fate of the planet. Its often awkward connection with words from many sources—politics, economics, the arts—reveals our growing realization of how many aspects of our life that concern will have to embrace. (14)

The range of words in which the prefix 'eco' is used these days is, indeed, staggering. Within this wide discourse of ecocritical thinking, the questioning of ontology or the nature of being has been a cornerstone, each ontological inquiry shaping its distinct human response to the ecological project. The anthropocentric or shallow ecological approach, for example, while acknowledging nature's bounty as instrumental to human survival on the planet, still posits nature as human's constant 'other', thus legitimizing human control over the natural world. The deep ecological approach on the other hand, also referred to as the biocentric or earth-centric view on nature, finds the universe as one holistic unit shared by a large number of species including homo sapiens.

Ecofeminism attempts to locate women as legitimate speakers on nature's behalf but even within the discipline, ontological debates as to what makes for women's kinship with nature, strongly reverberate. It has been, for instance, tempting in many quarters to assume that women

evince or should naturally evince ecological concerns because they are biologically linked to nature, her cyclical changes and her ability to reproduce, nourish and nurture. Overshadowing such popular/consumerist versions of ecofeminist thought are also narratives of what Catriona Sandilands describes as "motherhood environmentalism" which boils down women's concern over nature "to an obvious manifestation of natural protective instincts toward home and family." (xiii) Such a viewpoint, in her opinion, makes a return to patriarchal and heterosexual 'family' values and has "nothing to do with commitment to abstract principles like self-determination or democracy or liberty or inherent value or equality or even (bizarrely) ecology." (xiii) Thinkers like Sandilands, Barbara Epstein, Joni Seager, Karen Warren etc. argue that ecofeminism should endeavour to problematize gender through ecological questions rather than aligning itself to sexist ideas. As Sandilands writes:

> Not only is nature an important moment in feminist discourse, but gender is an important element in the social and political creation of nature. To understand the ways in which nature and gender are wielded as discursive constructs, to investigate the ways in which the oppression of women and the domination of nature are imbricated in a whole host of destructive relations and practices, and to create an oppositional framework capable of addressing their interrelations, it seems vital to explore the connections that ecofeminists examine between women/feminism and nature/ecology. (xvi)

Bioregionalism proposes that human identity should be understood as "constituted by our residence in a larger community of natural beings—our local bioregion—rather than, or at least supplementary to, national, state, ethnic, or other more common bases of identity." (Lynch et al, 4) Bioregional thought attempts to foster human communities that live sustainably in place by understanding its unique bioregional character. Warwick Fox's concept of transpersonal ecology looks upon human beings as one among innumerable species ontologically embedded in a complex ecological network. Ecopsychology is a term introduced by Theodore Roszak's *The Voice of the Earth* where he describes its goal as bridging "our culture's long-standing, historical gulf between the psychological and the ecological, to see the needs of the planet and the person as a continuum." (14) In *Where Species Meet*, Donna Haraway argues for the consideration of the diverse forms of life as 'companion species' and their complex entanglement in an inalienable web of being:

> My point is simple: Once again we are in a knot of species coshaping one another in layers of reciprocating complexity all the way down. Response and respect are possible only in those knots, with actual animals and people looking back at each other, sticky with all their muddled histories. Appreciation of the complexity is, of course, invited. But more is required too. Figuring what that more might be is the work of situated companion species. It is a question of cosmopolitics, of learning to be "polite" in responsible relation to always asymmetrical living and dying, and nurturing and killing. (42)

It is from among these diverse approaches to ecocritical thought that I attempt to draw my understanding of an ontology of permeability which looks upon being as planetary, connected, permeable, unitive and bound across life-forms. An ontology of permeability assumes a radical nonduality of being between the human and the non-human world, of nature as self and vice-versa. It is, as Deborah Winters argues, an experiential rather than informational shift leading to the realization that "the ecological self is an expanded, more gracious, more spacious sense of self." (264) Charlene Spretnak makes strong claims for the idea of radical nonduality by offering various examples of experiential, non-linguistic knowledges connecting humans with nature. She points out to the "body parables" of women – menstrual, sexual, gestational, reproductive, lactatory etc that offer women "a dreamy sense of soft boundaries" linking them to their wider world (430); the epistemological ideas of the indigenous people linking the earth to the cosmos; the intuitive magical world of children drawing them towards trees or animals; Eastern and Western practices of meditation that link the individual with the cosmos; perceptions of oneness with nature during extreme grief or profound silence, etc.

In much of Nabina Das's poetry, readers are apt to encounter a nondual approach to the world as human and nonhuman categories freely mix to offer both evidence and critique of life in our times. For the ecofeminist that Das undeniably is, nonduality is an essential component of her political project. Sandilands argues that ecological degradation being a complex social problem, ecofeminism's task should be, "to question if not transcend the fundamentally misleading nature/culture split, to show that division as arbitrary, to come to new realizations of humans as always already simultaneously natural and cultural beings, and to work in the world aware of our limitations." (70) Nabina Das while rejecting essentialist notions of women's identity, employs a keen feminist critique of patriarchal cultural practices, intimately linking the politics of environmental exploitation with the exploitation of marginal social groups in the country:

those fireflies and rivers
wanted to get to the roads
over the banks of refugee shacks
over tumbling tempo hoods
over our embarrassed long and rounded vowels
just to smell the tar of *dawki* roads

and walk walk walk those monsoon-muddied paths
that brought us at the teetering end to ask:

will the fish wake up and recognise us? (Das, *Kindle Magazine*)

In these lines, one arrives at an instant identification of fireflies, rivers and fish with the human dispossessed - refugees, tempo drivers and linguistic minorities. The idea of being is thoroughly porous, permeable as diversity freely travels in and through the poem's consciousness. The North-East makes its presence felt here with that single word 'dawki', further accentuating the poem's biotic and economic landscape. Nature, as the poets suggests here, is not alone in her victimization. Her victimization by humans is also a human loss in its erasure of an indigenous way of life:

truths and half lies
of bodies pushed under
of sad brides sleeping under waves
of fingers and rings carved on bed-mud
of money stash swaying like algae
of keys to homes that stood on one legs before falling asunder
of map etchings thrown to the fish's mouths
of words turned into sludge
of gods who wouldn't be worshipped in households (Das, *Kindle Magazine*)

The interconnectedness of firefly, fish and man that the old way of life preserved, has now entirely been lost and with that has been lost an entire body of historical and cultural knowledge of an ethnic group. The "railway lines" and "coffee cups" in the final lines of the poem are the metaphors of some skewed logic of modernization that built itself through the erasure of a complete indigenous episteme. This lost episteme that the poem documents, is as much an episteme of humans as of nature. The loss of one is the bereavement of the other.

Epistemic plundering is also the subject of 'Erasure', a poem that speaks of the relentless "damage/ in the name of corrections. A swipe/ to unthinkingness." (Das, *Sanskarnama*)

A little green a little torn.
I'm talking of books and histories
Our heads full of winter's tales.
I'm talking of children's faces
That have forgotten our justice songs.

Take the darkest ink and blot the days

Take a pinch of our existence and see
how erasure becomes a norm. (Das, *Sanskarnama*)

Given the ongoing agenda of the current political regime in India to 'nativize' or saffronize history through an arduous and questionable process of making it Hindu-centric by radical rewriting of epochs and events, 'Erasure' speaks of how identities are being written off through rewriting on a grand scale. It is noteworthy to see how Das deftly works nouns like 'green' and 'winter' into the poem's fabric to project a unified consciousness of the historically dispossessed assimilating ecological dispossession. In 'Hills Are Now Coming Down On Us', one again comes across an intense identification of ecological wastelands with human degradation:

Every time a tree comes down on our ego's court
Every time a face soaks up the miseries of the lit TV screen
Our gods are hapless too, lined outside the ATMs
Their earth hands of Abhaya outstretched for alms
I'm turning into mulch in this sad soil, in this apathy
My bones plastic brittle engulfing the sights and sounds (Das, *Sanskarnama*)

Here, trees, gods and humans are equally the victims of capitalization. The image of bones brittle as plastic poignantly conjures an image of a landscape glutted with plastic refuse. This sterile, apathetic landscape bereft of trees is bereft of faith too. 'River-Sorrow' and 'Namami', also from Das's overtly political third collection *Sanskarnama*, evocatively bring out the degradation of our rivers and the immense human suffering that such degradation symbolizes. 'River-Sorrow' describes how the narrative of economic development has changed the lives of rivers as of people settled on their banks forever:

the washerwomen who came to the ghats

are now pariahs
the fish doesn't toe-bite us anymore

in the half-note of that untouchable boy
who played his flute buffalo-borne

the rivers are turning into splinters
wood flakes sharper in the subcutaneous layer

but we don't wince (Das, *Sanskarnama*)

Both fish and washerwomen have become the victims of the patriarchal development narrative, their survival threatened into extinction by mindless self-serving capitalism. The rivers themselves have dwindled into splinters, incapable of sustaining human greed. In former ages, rivers have been symbols of life, nurture, fertility and prosperity. They have played hosts to the world's greatest civilizations, nourished our lands, cultures and imaginations. In them has always been our first and last resort. Not any more, as Das notes in 'Namami':

the flood still rages forward carrying plastic bags, discarded
condoms, the surf of human excreta, dead cattle, and the elixir
of waste dripping from our human errors
one drop by one drop by one (Das, *Sanskarnama*)

On the river surface is a reflection not only of pollution but of our degraded state of civilization. The poem bases itself, as the poet mentions in a footnote, on Namami Brahmaputra, "a scheme launched in Assam apparently in reverence of the river Brahma-putra and to create flood awareness. It involved huge expense of taxpayers' money, fanfare and worship by priests. Later the state was deluged by one of the worst floods in recent memory." (Das, *Sanskarnama*) Sociologist Mitul Baruah notes how the five-day long river festival dedicated to the Brahmaputra has been part of

a larger politics in Assam to "*hinduize* the state's diverse socio-cultural practices." The Brahmaputra though central to Assam's economy and ecosystem, has never had a history of being deified or worshipped. "The Sanskrit word "Namami"," writes Baruah, "translates as 'I worship thee'. Thus, an attempt has been made for the first time to sacralize the Brahmaputra (like the Ganges and the Yamuna in the Hindu heartland), and enroll it into the *Hindu(tva)* imagination." (Baruah, *Undisciplined Environments*) Though Das's poem lays emphasis on the flood that followed the festival, the epistemic reconstruction of the Brahmaputra's legacy constitutes a potent subtext in the poem.

However, the ecofeminist nonduality in Nabina Das's poetry is nowhere as pronounced as in her Anima poems. Though Das's Anima poems are yet to make their formal appearance as a collection, (forthcoming with Yoda Press in 2022), they surface frequently enough in her published oeuvre to demand special attention. Her poems like 'Anima Dreams a Home', 'Anima wakes up Tejimola', 'Anima Paints in Three Colours', 'Anima Takes Back the Night', 'Anima Sings to Earth and Death' and 'Anima counts some footprints one by one' are merely a handful of Das's many published pieces that articulate themselves through the consciousness of a narrator whom Das chooses to call Anima. "*Metaphorically," the poet writes, "Anima poems are feminist writing in the voice of a persona commenting on the world."* (Das, *Gossamer*, 114) Anima, a commonly found female name in Assam and Bengal, means 'the power of becoming minute', almost invisible. It also calls up associations with the Latin *anima mundi* or world soul that connects all living beings in the cosmos together. Das's narrative voice in these poems, while being definitely female as understood by the use of feminine pronouns, is a being whose ontology it is difficult to define. Part woman and part air, she is, like Shakespeare's Ariel, a wandering being who can weave herself into sentient and non-sentient entities alike, seeking connections with companion species and inanimate companionate articles of her world. In fact, Das's Anima astonishes by her range and intensity of perception as she shuttles back and forth between humans, nature and objects with her non-discriminatory vision, embracing all that meets her eye. In Anima's empathetic embrace of lifeless objects, one cannot help but recall the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget's cognitive idea of Animism which he uses to refer to children's belief of inanimate objects having human feelings and intentions. While to Piaget, this is an early and confused stage of cognitive development, ecopsychology looks upon animism as a higher form of cognition. Das's Anima too, transcends the ordinariness of humanity to arrive at an ecological integration with the world in the widest possible sense. Locating herself passionately in social interstices, Anima manifests herself as a cultural commentator attempting to vector a world rapidly losing itself under the debris of patriarchy, capitalism, economic development and environmental crises. Omnipresent and omniscient, she can weave herself into every context and offer a first-hand experiential account of things.

'Anima Writes a Letter Home', for instance, begins thus: "Dear mother and father and old and young people of my home. Dear pets and weeds and flowers and footfalls." (Das, *Poetry Foundation*) The embracing of human and nonhuman in one tender address like this is, as the perceptive reader will note, a characteristic of Anima. In 'Anima Dreams a Home', Das writes:

> I've seen the mortar cling to people's sinews, cloying their heart. I've heard the cries from within cells of bricks and barriers. So now we take a fistful of sand, a sprinkle of cement from our body, a layering of bricks pieced from the kiln of our burning desire. The ground shifts and rivers burst forth on the roads that stopped us from finding home. (Das, *Café Dissensus*)

The ecological consciousness expressed in these lines is unique. The images of sand, cement, kilns, mortar and sinews overlapping with rivers and roads offer a radically nondual world for our contemplation. The final image of home in the poem is in the kneading of "the bread of freedom, the bread of fearlessness", the act of kneading signifying a strong unitive act across disparateness and difference. (Das, *Café Dissensus*) In 'Anima wakes up Tejimola', Das conjures the feminist myth of Tejimola and amplifies its power by coupling it with the revolutionary agency of Anima, offering thereby a powerful vision of feminist intervention in the affairs of the world:

> I, Anima, can feel Tejimola waking up inside me. Across acid fields, shanties, human dumps, torn dreams, electric wastes, I walk on. If you hear someone saying life in a sunrise voice, you must know it is us. Two women gone to three and four and more. We're waking up to take on the tangle and the tide. (Das, *Almost Island*)

Tejimola, a young female protagonist in a popular Assamese folktale, is a symbol of strength and resilience as she successfully withstands the attacks of her stepmother on her life by metamorphosing into one natural element after another. In bringing together Anima and Tejimola, Das underscores the invincible non-duality and the fertile ecological essence of the creative female self. In the following concluding lines of 'Anima traces a pestilence', the reader will almost experience a sense of magic realism as terse images of the pandemic drawn from the human and nonhuman spheres rapidly come together to offer a rarely intuitive collage of our ecological suffering:

> I, Anima, am today a reflection of all thorns inside the rose-blush lungs. I'm the blue mask of our times, the choke spreading in our throbs. I'm also the flow that folds in all hearts, a spring water the girl facing the mirror is searching. There's a Swan Lake unfolding, the wings taking swipes, water and particles falling in bits and pieces like grace. I, Anima, will cleanse her tarnished hands, the crinkled brows, the breaths gone awry from our own squander. (Das, *Almost Island*)

The affected lungs are the colour of rose, the mask is the colour of the sky and the search is for spring water that will heal the ecology of our own squander. Val Plumwood points out how biospheric nature tends, in general, to be treated as an economic background, "as the taken-for-granted backdrop to market activities, as absorber of wastes and provider of limitless resources, noticed only when it threatens to fail to perform as required." (153) Das's transgressive poetry, however, draws ecology into the debates of rights and identity, making ecological issues an essential part of her politics for a plural world. In her radical nonduality, not only human meets nonhuman but animate empathetically meets inanimate, offering an inclusive vision of a non-hierarchal world where every entity has its place and purpose and nothing is unwanted or waste. Note, for instance, these lines from 'Anima re-arranges a nostalgia':

> Shoes, old clothes, dismembered plastic cutlery, torn leaves, upturned buckets, caved in hutments, hole-punched asbestos roofs, shredded blue tarp sheets against the rains, and a sniff of autumn that feels like a perfume from another time. Even the sun is caught in the crepuscular sickle that shears all our pretence. The slow grace of caterpillars, the mayfly roosting on pores of algae growing like our myths, that one leaf dangling by its petiole from a bark too dark for us to see – all just a punctuation in the human clock. (Das, *Almost Island*)

Here is a catalogue of everyday human existence inevitably intertwined with the ordinary and commonplace in the natural world. Nabina Das's 'human clock' is not merely human but ecological in its ticking away across cycles and seasons. Her 'human' as is evident, embraces a wide ontological category that alienates no one and nothing. Every little entity – animate or inanimate - has its distinct place in the scheme of things and deserves attention and respect. Plumwood insists:

> Recognising relationality of concerns and ends is clearly a necessary condition for a more adequate, less dualistic account of self and of its embedment in both social and ecological communities, as well as for the explication of non-instrumental alternatives and of such key concepts as friendship, acting in solidarity with, caring for others for their own sake, and recognising the other's intrinsic value. (154)

One finds Das's poetics imbued with solidarity for the world which should be everything that it is, sans hierarchy and sans boundaries. It is in her repeated embrace of and return to a dream of community-building that recognizes mutuality and interdependence that one meets a feminist politics that is both spatial and planetary. Significant to this politics is the fact that Das, in articulating her vision of nonduality does not, at any point, abandon her emphasis on identity. Identity and its discourses of making and unmaking constitute the major rallying point of her political voice which is clear, critical and unapologetically loud as she sifts through cultural scripts to question

the biases and bruises of power. Her ecological transcendence, one will realize, is not arrived at by negating or glossing over inequality and difference but through an intense poetic commitment to the subaltern, the marginal, the voiceless and the dispossessed across gender, class, region, ethnicity, sexuality, specie and sentience. It is important to note, as Sandilands points out, "that no identity manages to fully suture the polysemy of the social. Given the reference to a certain version of order, identity shapes itself according to a notion of what elements of life are integral to that order and what elements are merely noise." (46) In Das's articulation of identity in her poetry, one is aware of a stance of openness, even fluidity as a seamless merging of the orthodox and the unorthodox in the natural and human worlds takes place, this rare embracing of apparent paradoxes and contraries being due, no less, to the unique power of poetry.

Can poetry save the earth in the face of ecological crises like global warming, melting glaciers, rising seas, endangered species, water and air pollution, deforestation, strip mining, mountaintop removal, overfishing, overconsumption, overpopulation and so on, asks John Felstiner and answers in the affirmative, "For sure, person by person, our earthly challenge hangs on the sense and spirit that poems can awaken." (357) Poems, Felstiner insists, have welded together the human and nonhuman for our perception even before environmentalism as a movement formally began. The intuitive oneness with nature that one feels as a child or even as an adult at intense emotive moments of one's life can often be brought to us in a poem and in this "saving grace of attentiveness, and the way poems hold things still for a moment" (357) we become mindful of that ecological dimension of being larger than ourselves which though fragile, is resilient to the core. Science, policy, and activism, he suggests, have the potential to offer solutions to the environmental crisis, but something deeper must call us to it. This is accomplished by "poetry's musical lift, attentive imagery, and shaping force, which stem from prehistory and live on…. In country or city, poems make a difference by priming consciousness." (14-15) Felstiner writes:

> If words tie us in one with nature, tying human with nonhuman, and if speech in the beginning brings all into being, maybe the speech of poems will revive our lease on life. We can count on this: the poems we hear have news for us. (15)

The poetry of Nabina Das brings us news too. "I, Anima, have been my own poet who walked the earth's ways for thousands of years," she writes. (Das, *Gossamer,* 114) This ecological awareness of continuity, connection and resilience is both news and psalm for the uncertain tomorrow towards which we are all headed with poetry's healing and hope.

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