

## Sita (A Poem)

By Nandini Sahu

I am *Prakriti*; born of and fading into Mother Nature.  
I am *Shakti*, the phenomenal destroyer of Ravana.  
I am grace; I stand for mercy, bounty and redemption.

I am the ultimate woman; the glorious mother of Lava-Kusha.  
I am Nature; I have inestimable moods and assortments.  
I am power; I have innumerable appearances on earth.

I am splendor; I transcend the crimson womanly.  
I am pure bliss; I float as foam on the sea of frenzy.  
I am innocence; born naked from the furrow.

I am a teardrop; I stand for the mourning -mortality.  
I am a bird; grasped and fluttered to withdrawn regions.  
I am a memory; sweltering and reverberating time and again.

I am birth; my girlhood is joyous with simmering intimations.  
I am growth; I burn in the flame of the fire-ordeal.  
I am death; I overpower Ravana, I eclipse evil.

I am immaculate; I have the attitude for the tide of sovereignty.  
I am mighty; my power lies in ultimate motherhood.  
I am divine; my love and grace redeem the universe.

I am humane; I suffer like any mortal average.  
I am benevolence; let them admire my compassionate pedigree.  
I am malevolence; I care no birth, bondage and death.

(There are a little more than three hundred versions of the Ramayana, the Indian epic, written over the centuries since Valmiki first wrote it. My poem *Sita* is, in no way, a retelling of *The Ramayana*. It is, rather, penned as a poetic memoir of the heroine of the epic, Sita, told in the first person narrative. *Sita (A Poem)* is seminal to my thoughts on life that find expression in the creative impulse of literature. It has always been with me, sometimes haunting and at others, fuelling the mind in all thought and action. In that sense, it could perhaps be one of my most ambitious, endearing ecofeministic poems. One long poem, it's presented in 25 sections/cantos. This is a small part of the 24<sup>th</sup> Canto.)

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