

The Art of It

by Jill Chan

She is different from other teachers of poetry in that she veers away from a completely personal outlook. She politicises even the I.

It is something utterly different for him.

And unlike other teachers, she doesn't shy away from the necessary abstraction.

To be able to write an abstract poem in a purely personal viewpoint fascinates her.

It is holding something different and not letting go.

Her idea of poetry—especially lyric poetry—is as a dangerous, pertinent challenge to the world.

To remember poetry is rare and beautiful as a touch that cannot be repeated.

To write a good poem, one needs nothing but the whole intent of goodness.

To write a great poem, one needs to feel nothing of what she's done. In awe of the moment, she embodies generosity.

We need to vacate the thought of poetry from our minds in the act of making it. We are nothing to the force fulfilling it. But we owe much to the ones receiving it—our hands, our eyes, our minds, our hearts. In the throes of poetry, we make so much we can't make otherwise.

We need to be surprised every time poetry comes to us unprepared. As our bodies act on its genuine facility, we feel warm as if touched again and again. And we give up and agree to everything that comes our way.

The physical sensation of writing—one pointed time after pointed time dismissing what we are after to arrive at a kind of sprawling decade. The madness of his action against the waiting in her.

In her class, it is a muted agreement of accomplice to a right, of consideration to a fault.

The fault of poetry being too much here. With her words as she says them; with his look as she gazes at him.

