

Poetry by Marjorie Moran

Mumbai Journey

From the air the terrain is an abstract chess board.
The borders of poverty, industry, and religion warped
by eruptions of the landscape.

Descend over millions and millions of untold stories.

Land.

Board the safety of the bus, its air conditioning will
chill you.

The fifteen miles will take ninety minutes, and
transport you to the city centre.

Your route travels on a reassembled timeline.

Torn, arbitrary eras glued together by unseen hands
without explanation.

Prepare for humanity's grand theater production.

Dense traffic sometimes four, seven, and even eight
lanes, each vehicle forging a new path.

Car and motor bikes so close you hear scraping
metal scream.

Motorcycles meant for two, hold a family of five
cheerfully navigating through traffic.

Your eyes adapt.

The backdrop of multinational businesses, against
the cityscape.

Large billboards with luxury items next to children
playing in mounds of trash .

Dogs that look like walking skeletons never wagging
their tails in greeting.

A women washing fish in a sidewalk puddle.

Sidewalks full of people, glued by unknown needs stak-
ing out their claim to a piece of concrete to call home.

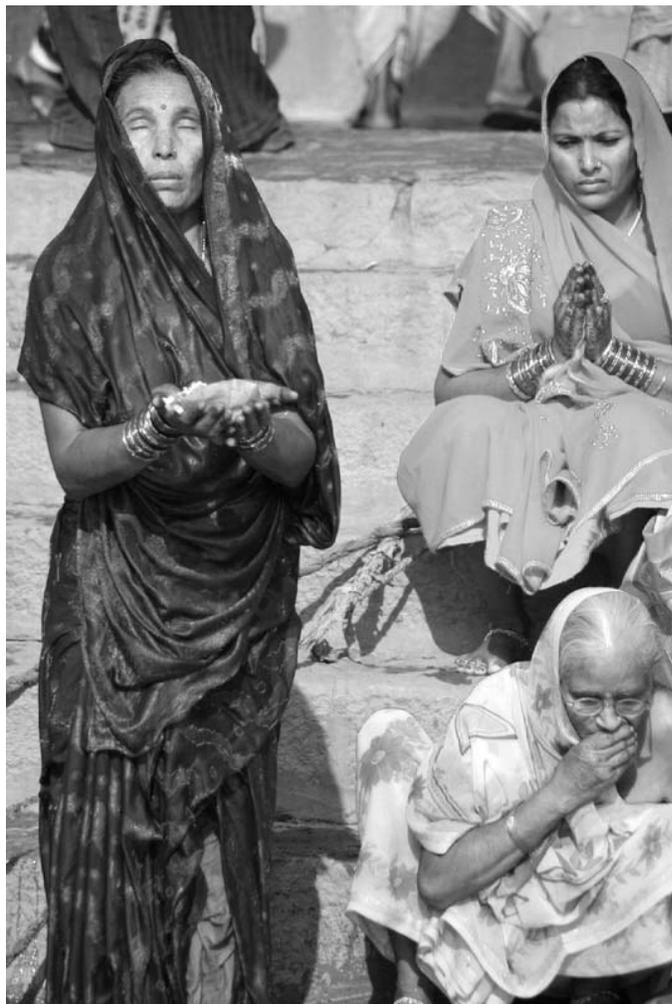
A small square blanket with all their worldly possessions.
What joy, beauty, and heartache, that fabric must absorb.

Crushing poverty

The screen of technology has been lifted.

Emotions have been stripped of insulation.

Distance of miles shortened.



HINDU RITUALS © Icefields | Dreamstime

You see, feel, and smell poverty.

Disgusting.

Reduce it

Make it into a neat mathematical formula.

Make it make sense.

Symbol + Symbol = Answer = Solution.

Forget it.

In this formula you keep adding symbols.

City centre...

You leave the safety of your heavy transport like a
turtle departing its shell.

Wet steaming heat welcomes you.

Your ears are assaulted by the blast of countless car horns.

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Marjorie Moran is an artist whose origins are in the West. Between journeys, wanderings and passages she lives in the Southeast. She is a member of the Atlanta Jung Society.

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The atmosphere heavy, allowing little time for
silence to interrupt.

Body odor, visible car exhaust, and the scent of
urine layer the air.

Jostling bodies displacing and disturbing your
Western sense of space.

A surrounding crowd plays an unfamiliar symphony,
each person the instrument.

Paint it.

Bright colors for the vibrancy of energy.
Capture the beauty of the women dressed in
multicolored fabric against the backdrop of men in
crisp white cotton.

Blur the lines of the old buildings.
Wash away human fallibility.
Lightly soften the hands of the beggars.
Abstract the exquisite beauty of this foreign place.

Hours pass. Your bargains have become heavy
packages.

Exotic spices bloat your body.
Like the locals you ignore begging hands.
Step around.
Turn your head.
Don't look.
Don't think.

Board the bus.

Dante's journey on cushioned seats.
Large windows frame heaven, hell and all that falls
between.
You thank weariness, its shield will protect you.
The slow powerful decay of time and neglect is
softened by the moonlight.
Victorian buildings magnificent from a distance.
Blocks and blocks of deco buildings still proud and
modern .
Click the camera, postcard ready.

A turn to a guarded grand entrance.
Uniformed men from a distant time.
Moonlight illumination of your magnificent hotel.

Relief.

Wash away the city's dirt.
A luxurious bed awaits you.
The beautiful cover, a small child's delicate hand labor.
Part of humanity covering you as you sleep.
Your are once again woven into the fabric of the vast
universe.
The stars, the moon, and all of the above.

Remembered Moments

Before words shape memory
Images set in motion
Short film clips
Black and white
Ordinary

The sun, enormous
Heat waves band around me
The deck unsteady
I am running
A splinter spears my foot

Standing on the pedals
My brother coasts by on his bike
The boys nearby yell to him
He turns his head
Laughs

It is raining, hard
My sisters' hands cradle two kittens
They cry
And cry
And cry

Steadied by siblings' hands
Over and over
A big push
I fly, free
Two wheels, balanced

Mother and Father
Away, too long
A joyful return

Gifts for everyone
Batteries required
A barking poodle
White, eyes flashing red
It is not mine

Playing outside
The call, come home
Defiant
Disobey
Punished

My mother
Hair pulled back
A gold case, mirror attached
Applies red lipstick
She is beautiful

Moments in time
Before words shape memories
Remembered