

# ***Channeling Shiva and Other Poems***

Alma Anonas-Carpio

## ***Channeling Shiva***

---

I am Shiva, the Destroyer:  
Master of the wild-whipping wind  
And of the unstoppable surge of water,  
Of the ravishing ravenous flame  
And unpredictable, exploding earth.

I am change  
In all its permutations.  
I am the planet and cosmos  
Reminding you who is boss.

When I dance,  
Death does my bidding.  
Destruction is my mace,  
I hold up a shield of many tears  
Woven to cover my fearsome face.

Look upon my gyrations and know  
I will not leave you untouched.  
I will not leave you intact.  
I will not leave you.  
I will not do as you beg.  
I will not.

In my raiment of blood,  
Through my crown  
Of shimmering sighs,  
With my many, spangled hands  
I take hammer to anvil  
And pound you relentlessly  
Into the shape the Universe needs.  
I take my cosmic flames  
And purify you into place  
In the heavens where you  
Shall shine brightest and best.

I take shears to your shrub  
And cut away what must fall  
For new growth to come.  
I am the upheaval you require  
To emerge from the brazier  
New and improved,  
Upgraded and forward-bound.

I am Shiva, the Destroyer  
You cannot get out of my path.  
Yield and it will hurt less.  
Yield and all will become new.  
Yield and you will live  
To grow another day.

I am Shiva, the Destroyer.  
Through me, you master yourself.  
I will not leave you.  
I will never leave you.  
Accept it and move on.

## *In the Quiet*

---

In those molecular spaces  
Between business and pleasure  
In the tiny, darkened crevices  
We miss between word and deed  
I find a respite of sorts.

Here I crawl into myself,  
Assuming yoga postures  
That ball me up into a dot,  
Warp me into a blur,  
Create from my mass  
A creature unseen and unheard,  
A being silent, yet wild,  
So I can breathe and think  
More slowly, with deliberation  
And that rare thing called pause.

In the quiet I hide from myself  
To find that core of determination  
Once more, to assay the world,  
Shape my words, weave the images,

Call the spirit from the stone,  
Conjure movement of shadow  
And play of light,  
Whisper of breeze  
And roar of fire,  
Sibilant hiss of water, draw  
Silence from Earth's molten core.

In the quiet I am. Just am.  
In the quiet time's nervous hands  
Fall away and are lost,  
The days and nights merge  
Into a single stream of twilight.  
The sands blow across my desert.  
The waves crash upon my shore.  
The leaves of my forest rustle  
In poetry and song. I am. Just am.

Uncurling, unfurling the shivering leaf  
Of consciousness, green and wet with dew,  
I depart from my haven and stretch out again  
Upon a world made new  
By momentary absence  
From the moment, the now, the here  
That presses in on all sides like a wall-trap.  
I regain composure, humanity, purpose.

I return as if from a far sojourn:  
Welcoming all the demands of the noise.

## ***Storm Child***

---

Elemental moments  
Are those I seize for my own.  
Storm clouds birthed me,  
Squalling loudly, and I  
Claim bolts of lightning,  
Grip them in each hand.  
They burn me not.  
Rather, they power  
My every stride,  
Each sprinting leap.

My voice is the bellowing gale.  
Dark roils of clouds  
Cascade down my back  
As I toss my head forward  
To surge like tempestuous surf,  
Forward, to my target, my goal,  
That which I will call mine.

I ride high waves  
With childish glee,  
I dive into whirlpools  
With joy. The others flee.  
I run headlong into the thick of it,  
I race into the heaviest downpour,  
The wildest typhoon.

The storm is my mother,  
She will never hurt me.  
In her wet bosom  
I am content and peaceful,  
In her powerful grip  
I am secure.  
It is her can-do spirit  
That permits me to soar

Amid the thunder,  
Through the high gale,  
Across impenetrable precipitation,  
Through the lashing lightning  
And over a restless sea.

I find my silence  
In her eye,  
Find my music  
In her banshee's wail.

Batten down the hatches,  
But leave a window open for me.  
She approaches in high heat and silence  
And I must prepare to greet her.

## *Warp and Woof*

---

The timelines of life  
Run colorful ribbons, threads of thought,  
Throughout dreams of what if,  
That game of chance that  
Never ends the same way,  
But stabs at the toughened heart  
More surely than a murderer's icepick could.

We wove our lives with threads we chose,  
Colored them with our decisions and perceptions.

"I had such a crush on you then,"  
One would say to another over a decade later  
And both would pause oh-so-slightly  
To think of what would have happened  
On the road not taken.

We fed the woof to the warp  
Without too much thinking,  
With way too much impulse.  
We forgot to look at  
The fabric of it until now.

"Ah, but I was too drunk/high/busy with  
Someone else's body in the pool."  
Yes, the actual road imposes itself  
Black and solid and certain.  
But those imagined moments remain:  
Such tiny, sharp shards of fiction  
That could well have become truth.

A warp here, shot with a woof there.  
The shuttle darts back and forth too fast to see  
To predict or stop. All we do is stay with it.

“We could have loved each other,  
You and I, and what would the world have become?”  
Ah, the questions raised  
About the left-hand path  
When the right has been chosen and taken.  
They come too many years after the fact  
To be answered with any certainty or clarity.

Photographs shot by the imagination  
Can document these streams of existence.  
Songs sung by voices unheard  
Will describe emotions unexperienced.  
Dance can express the sensuality  
That was never let loose.  
Perhaps even black poet ink  
Might scry that alternate universe.

How amusing now to think about, after a decade,  
These moments of what-if and wherefore  
And what-the-hell-happened?  
Let's forget the regrets. They get us nowhere.  
Somewhere there, curiosity stirs,  
The brain whirs in an effort to process  
Data that never was inputted.  
The syntax error is inevitable  
And our weaving loses some rhythm.  
The shuttle pauses oh-so-slightly  
As our minds wander and our hands falter.



We talk now of our lives as they grew  
Organically from our choice  
Of words not to say, options not to take  
And things (or people) not to do.  
Are we content? Perhaps. Perhaps not.  
We will not know until we decide  
Upon contentment or discontent.

But we are friends and we can wonder  
Every now and then, when boredom sets in,  
When old hurts ache and when new wounds  
Are felt to the core and all we want  
Is something to take our minds off  
These things before us that really bug us  
To the bone, to the soul, to the very core  
That even God does not violate.

We are friends, woven of the same threads  
But we are separate scarves,  
Our fabrics do not mesh.  
But that is what makes us friends,  
This distance of respect, the space of air  
That enables our similitudes, our shared hues  
To fly free like banners of self  
On the winds where we soar.

There are no regrets.  
We take up the threads again  
And busy our hands once more.  
We bring our eyes back forward.  
There is a tomorrow yet on the loom.