



Radha Says

Reetika Vazirani

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Poetry. Limited Edition. Asian American Studies. Edited by Leslie McGrath and Ravi Shankar. Foreword by Kazim Ali. Drunken Boat Media presents the inaugural title in its book series, Indian-American poet Reetika Vazirani's posthumous manuscript, RADHA SAYS. A rising star and companion of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa, Vazirani was at the height of her poetic powers when she tragically ended her own life and the life of her young son, Jehan. She left behind a manuscript of poems sealed in an envelope, with which Leslie McGrath and Ravi Shankar worked to edit and to bring out her last poems.

"Reetika Vazirani was a world poet, Anglophone, partaking of and transforming myths and avatars of multiple cultures (like Lorca, Darwish, Rukeyser, Aga Shahid Ali) and yet a quintessential American poet precisely in that embrace and interrogation of 'otherness'—including a woman poet's otherness in the annals of mythmaking. In this book, tragically her last, dramatic monologues inhabit Hindu hagiography and the 'world hotel' of the American city; she speaks through the bemused 19th century Urdu poet Ghalib and the Radha of Hindu epic who is also a modern lover—with dazzling erudition, sensuality and despair. The poet's present absence haunts the reader, but the work itself is a presence that elicits our gratitude."—Marilyn Hacker

"In this posthumously edited work we feel the wonder the poet felt in the face of language and we feel too the sorrow and the pity of her passing. This volume includes poems possessed of pulsing vitality, marked by ferocious speed. We see the mythic Radha and her sisters facing the ragged thrust of emotion, the empire of love."—Meena Alexander

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