



Word Masala announces its First Collection Award 2019

As announced at the Matwaala Literary Festival in NY, the not-for-profit Word Masala Foundation in association with Skylark Publication UK has awarded its first collection publication award to Reshma Ruia.

MORDEN, England - April 23, 2019 - [PRLog](#) -- Following on its first award at the House of Lords to Mona Dash for her first collection. A Certain Way, the judges have voted for Reshma Ruia for her 2019 debut. The title will be confirmed in due course and the book will be available internationally through all channels in October 2019 with its **designated ISBN 978-0-9560840-6-4** with the CIP record to be made available soon.

Reshma Ruia is the author of two novels, *Something Black in the Lentil Soup* and *A Mouthful of Silence*, shortlisted for the SI Leeds Literary Prize. Her short stories and poetry have appeared in British and international publications and commissioned for radio. She is the co-founder of The Whole Kahani-a writers' collective. **Reshma will receive her Word Masala Award for the debut collection in August at the Nehru Centre, UK**, at the Word Masala's second outing on its series of poetry reading, *This Glorious Noise*, from five poets with recent collection published.

The recipient of many awards, a writer and poet **Yogesh Patel** (<http://www.patelyogesh.co.uk>) who runs **Word Masala Foundation** (<http://www.skylarkpublications.co.uk>) and was made a Poet-of-Honor in New York in April 2019, explains the significance and ethos behind this rare award he sponsors, 'I ad infinitum scout to find the right candid for this award. For any poet to achieve the publication of the first collection is a huge struggle. When you are from the South Asian diaspora the possibility of publication is hopeless. We not only look for the quality but also the poets in their early career where they are published in anthologies and magazines, and yet will have a little success with the publishers which are mostly small presses with fewer resources restrained also by a narrow mindset. Once proposed, judges scrutinise poets work and vote accordingly. The award is also about the tailored mentoring and guidance from the judges and other poets allowing the winning poet to review their work with an opportunity they will normally not enjoy. This is not a self-publication or a vanity publication or where reading or entry fees are charged. The winning poet genuinely enjoys the contract and the normal experience of a professional publishing house. We hope that other publishers then will pick up the further collections as the poet would have been established with the great credentials of this award.'

What is this collection about? Reshma Ruia explains, 'My poetry explores the diasporic experience of leading a translated life, yearning to belong to a past that one no longer owns and a future that is murky and unclear. There is a sense of melancholic nostalgia in these poems but also a fierce kind of determination to embark on a new beginning and make the best of one's circumstances. The poems are particularly relevant to our times when there is a growing sense of parochialism and hostility towards 'the outsider.' They will resonate with all those who have portable roots and are at home everywhere and nowhere.

The poems also portray the emotive minefield of relationships, questioning the ambiguity behind maternal or filial love. Society conditions us to love our parent or child or partner but my poems challenge this by describing the tug of war between a woman's sense of self and the roles she is expected to play.

There is an undercurrent of mortality running through some of the poems. A sense of an ending and a reflection on what the passage of time can do to one's dreams and aspirations.'

Saleem Peeradina, one of the senior judges, commented on Reshma's award, 'I've been reading her other poems and stories. We have chosen the right candidate.' Dr Debjani Chatterjee, MBE, another permanent judge added, 'If I can help with Reshma's book in some way, you can count on me.' That shows how everyone at Word Masala community of writers and poets volunteers to make the winner's debut successful.

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