

## Women in Veils

By Snehashree Mandal

Every single day of my life was within the veils.  
Time flew and the number of veils grew.  
One after the other, veils just kept adding up.  
Until one day when I could take no more.

Two ways to go- I said to myself.  
One way was to adapt to the dimness under the veils.  
Another was to lift them up one by one.

Choosing the first was mostly a choice of the ordinary,  
I could say & see-  
Women with dark, tired, fearful eyes  
screaming past well-lit corridors covered in veils.  
Apparitions?  
No, there were not!  
But so, they seemed to the world around them.

“Is lifting these so hard?”  
I asked one day to a woman in tatters.  
“Not from the outside, I must say.  
But from within, yes, it is.”  
Livid eyes grew wider, “Don’t you see me?”  
I nodded, for I could see what she thought was lost.  
I could see how bravely she fought her way out.  
How calm she had grown.  
How poised she had become.  
But yet, she was tired and bitter,  
lifting the veils, for it was not an act, so cheesy.

Choosing was a choice of courage,  
I could see.  
Walking past all, was hard.  
It was never a wild card for me,  
but then an idea struck me- a bard!  
I could become a bard,  
to guard that inner sweet nerd and,  
this was how I chose to lift the veils.  
I thought, firmly to myself,  
I would keep up that inner child which chose so wisely once before.  
Now and again, it stood up to choose for me to lift my veils which,  
indeed, was not so cheesy and was oh! so very hard.