

Interview with Matwaala in March 2019



What are your poetics, Kavita?

My topics are eclectic: a poem happens when I come across a subject, news-item or rediscovered memory that makes me want to respond in the form of a poem. Sometimes I come at the subject obliquely; other times I am more direct. I enjoy this freedom of variation and fluidity in style and texture. I like to inject some playfulness in my poems. The unity in my work comes from one voice and one sensibility across the wide-ranging pieces.

Your influences?

I'd like to quote Giorgos Seferis: 'Don't ask me who's influenced me. A lion is made up of the lambs he's digested, and I've been reading all my life.'

Giorgos Seferis was a Greek poet, diplomat, and Nobel laureate. (13 Mar 1900-1971). I must confess I've not yet read any of his work other than this quote, but I do mean to. ☺

Why is the Matwaala fest and collective relevant and needed?

There is power and strength in collective vision and collective action. We can make progress with the aims and ambitions of Matwaala through the participation of everyone involved. All the poets are individual, multi-cultural and multi-layered, each differently so from the other. You cannot lump South Asian writers into a category for a particular type of writing, yet we can come together on our own terms to show the diversity and broad perspectives we possess. Matwaala is one such showcase and a superb initiative.

I also believe writers thrive when they mingle with each other, when they have time to concentrate on listening closely to another's work and have the opportunity to discuss it. Certainly that's one aspect of the Matwaala Festival 2019 that I'm looking forward to.