

FOSSIL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heartfelt thanks to my mentor Vahni Capildeo for pushing me to question what this book is really about and to dig deep into poetics; to my creative companions Sarah Hymas and Seni Seneviratne for being a poetic ear; to Inscribe – Kadija George and Dorothea Smartt for nurturing and encouragement in bringing my poems to here, and to Jeremy Poynting for insightful pruning.

Versions of the following poems have been published previously: ‘Reticulum’, *Heavenly Bodies*, Beautiful Dragons Press, 2014, ‘Carbon Cycling’, *My Dear Watson*, Beautiful Dragons Press, 2015, ‘Forest Garden’, *A Forest*, Stirred Press, 2016, ‘Unnatural’, *Living World*, Stirred Press, 2016.

Versions of ‘Heritage Carrot’, ‘Siachen Glacier’ and ‘Butterfly Orchid’ are online as part of ‘Ripple’, a triptych of freestanding oversized artist books that use augmented reality, organic objects and poetic text to explore climate change: <http://mayachowdhry.me.uk/ripple/>

‘Black Badger Carlin Peas’, ‘old water’ and ‘Rheid’ are part of ‘Peas on Earth’ an immersive journey exploring the performance of eating, growing and sustaining ourselves, brought to life through Augmented Reality: <http://www.wordofwarning.org/current/2016-divergency/chowdhry/>

MAYA CHOWDHRY

FOSSIL

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P E E P A L T R E E

First published in Great Britain in 2016
Peepal Tree Press Ltd
17 King's Avenue
Leeds LS6 1QS
UK

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ISBN 13: 9781845232986



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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MICROBIAL MUSEUM

April ship sets sail, sea freezes ripples, leaves Rothera behind. One hundred and fifty thousand years of snowfall in

cylindrical samples, bubble-wrapped, boxed in styrofoam, cores wrenched from ice caverns to Immingham.

Drill incises annulus ice cuttings spiral surface. Statistics held in water vapour measure up to eons of weather.

Blueprints of other lives, the oldest ice sequesters reservoirs of extinct creatures resurrected.

Suspending cable sonars frozen microbial cells immortal bugs from bacteriasicles emerge, grow, divide.

Prehistoric pestilence thaws, allows ancient genes to mix with modern ones. Skiing genotype slaloms through DNA markers,

Mutating the ocean, creeping into the unsuspecting cells of species climbing the ladder to life.

The future is thawed, dispatched into a white out.

SIACHEN GLACIER

You are an abundance of crimson wild roses on rocky outcrops,
two points on a map unjoined by mountain peaks, a disputed line of control
that makes fools of territory.

You kill one Indian and four Pakistani soldiers every four days
with your minus sixty-degree nights, and avalanche-smothering storms.

You hold onto two continents, frozen fingers clawing the ridge line
between two religions. You have been numb since the Little Ice Age
despite the sun rising in your shadow.

You blink at the gathering cumulus
storming towards you,
engulfing you with their icy kisses.

Your spring melt gushes into the Nubra River, huge swathes of you sheer
and tumble into the swelling waters. You are melted and cut with chemicals,
poisoning the snow bear, the white-winged river-chat.

For the multi-media, multilingual poem go here:
<http://mayachowdhry.me.uk/ripple/siachen-glacier/>

CARROT MARRIAGE

This was my natural habitat: wild beauty, dandelion roaring, cabbage bolting, pea loving itself. Gardeners leant on the fence, tutting, ready to chop off heads, rid the earth of these untrue types, seeding to spawn chaos.

I saw her lie half buried, rosy-red cheeks shining, smitten by her long green foliage draping from her rosette. She was forbidden, a salad vegetable, but not my species, let alone genus.

I imagined kissing her cold. My sweet orange heart bursting. Flicking my carrot frond, we danced in the overgrown allotment while the sun twinkled autumn.

I asked her views on self-pollination, whether you could love by design, and if biodiversity had brought us together? She said her taproot tingled as she felt the crunch of my embraces, that she'd marry anyone except an F1 Hybrid. She wanted to procreate, make rainbow offspring naturally.

At the end of autumn I shrivelled, drawing myself inward until my rootlet shrunk to shoulder. Winter brought dreams of a red round carrot, a sweet-bitter crunch.

In my dreams we jump species and abandon nature.

BUTTERFLY ORCHID

I don't remember how I came to be snaring the mossy scales of the Golden Oak in the Gorson forest, or why I know those names.

I remember a dream where I was dust floating in water-saturated air.

I don't remember waking up in bright sunshine.

I remember stretching and breathing, seeing delicate black flowerheads tumbling below me. I remember a sweet shiny smell and feeling I had all the time in the world to grow.

I don't remember my flowerheads shrinking, shrivelling and falling to the forest floor.

I remember summer rain drenching my black petal faces
so insects came to watch the circus.

I don't remember how summer ended.

I remember my flower tips drying out to wizened hollow stumps and me shrinking inside, storing energy in my roots, retracting to stillness. I remember the echo of a rain quail call the dawn back from darkness.

I don't remember when I became deaf.

I remember the silent beats of water drops on the canopy and all I could hear was chlorophyll.

I don't remember this blindness of shimmering hollow blackness.

I remember watching a Pritha spider scurrying across its shadow,
wearing night into day.

I don't remember not feeling my root tips drinking in water, breathing the scent of a tree.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A poet and transmedia artist, Maya's writing is infused with and influenced by her work for radio, film and theatre. Her previous poetry collection is *The Seamstress and the Global Garment*. She's also published in many anthologies, including *Out of Bounds* (Bloodaxe) and *Red* (Peepal Tree Press), as well as magazines such as *Ambit*. She's won many accolades for her work, including the Cardiff International Poetry Competition. Her collaborative immersive story experience, *Tales from the Towpath* at Manchester Literature Festival was shortlisted for the 2014 New Media Writing Prize, and her recent digital poetic work *Ripple* was shortlisted for the 2015 Dot Award. She regularly performs her poetry at festivals and events such as 'Poetic Places' at The British Library.

Maya worked for Sheffield Film Co-op in the 80s, wrote theatre for young people in the 90s, crossing into digital work in 2000 when she received an Arts Council Year of the Artist Award for *destinyNation*. Her current work explores seed sovereignty and world water scarcity utilising film, text, animation, photography, augmented reality and the web. She is currently working for Lets Go as a Digital Artist and making interactive theatre.