

Advice to Women

Eunice de Souza

'Advice to women' is a powerful feminist poem composed by Eunice de Souza. De Souza was an Indian poet, novelist and critic. She was born in Pune, India. At the age of three, she lost her father. So, she knows very well the life of a single woman in Mumbai. Her literary career began in the 1960s when she started publishing poems in the magazines. Her works were mainly based on themes of gender, identity of women and marginalization of women from their social rights. Also, from being a writer Eunice De Souza was a advocate for women's rights. She used her writings as the voice of women to highlight their struggles, experiences and the oppression faced by them in patriarchal dominated society to fulfil their desires.

Eunice de Souza's 'Advice to Women' is a powerful feminist piece of work that challenges the traditional gender roles and how women should empower themselves to break these gender roles placed on them. The poem was published in her poetry collection 'Selected and New Poems' in 1994. It mainly deals with the women's situation in our patriarchal society and also advice the women what they should do to avoid such situations. Through this poem Eunice de Souza, the poet wants to make the women aware about the pain they receive from others. She compares a cat's indifference and proud behaviour towards life and by comparing with the cat the poet wants to say that women's behaviour and attitude towards her lover should be like a cat. The woman's reaction must be jilted by a lover. The poet uses very simple images drawn from day to day life and she also wants to highlight the necessity to adapt with life in a different way and also they should follow the attitude of a cat. She tells women to keep cats as pets because we are all well aware about the behaviour of cats. Cats are always well known for their proud and haughty behaviour. The women

Should have patience like cats in order to cope up with the otherness of the lover and in order to survive in this patriarchal society the women should have patience. She says otherness is not always neglect and it could also indicate the indifferent behaviour and attitude of the lover to their beloved. She advises women to tolerate the otherness of her lover and also the beloved should wait for their lover for their return to them. The imagery depicts the act of Cleanliness that is nurtured by a cat and insists humans adhere to it.

Women are the beauty of the world and that beauty is cast under the delusion of persecution of life. Women always play the role of a daughter, wife and mother in their whole life and they find pleasure in this role. Women always play a major role in a man's life. For this reason the man will return to their beloved when they are in need of her.

The poet here again and again advises that it is this indifference attitude the women should imbibe. Women should know how to hide pain and suffering and still carry a long standing surprise in their eyes. It points out the essential loneliness of human existence and the need to accept it as a fact. Because we are all familiar with the fact that we are born all alone and we are going to die alone on this earth and between these two poles of birth and death we have to fight alone to survive. So, the poet insists that all women should possess all the qualities so that she does not carry the fear of existing alone and also dying alone. And when the women will be able to gather this indifference attitude they will be happy from insight and they will be self dependent also.

This poem is written in free verse as there is not any specific rhyme scheme or meter. The overall poem consists of twelve lines. De Souza uses end stopped lines to make her points. Her lines sound like a series of advice to women concerning the art of coping up with the trauma of romantic detachment. She talks directly with readers from the perspective of a third person speaker.