**Indian women**

**- Shiv K Kumar**

In this triple-baked continent  
women don’t etch angry eyebrows  
on mud walls.  
Patiently they sit  
like empty pitchers  
on the mouth of the village well  
pleating hope in each braid of their mississippi-long hair  
looking deep into the water’s mirror  
for the moisture in their eyes.  
With zodiac doodlings on the sands  
they guard their tattooed thighs  
Waiting for their men’s return  
till even the shadows  
roll up their contours and are gone beyond the hills.

**SUMMARY**

**Author:**

* Shiv K Kumar. An Indian English poet, playwright, novelist, and short story writer.
* He was born in Lahore, where he received his school and college education. He obtained his doctorate in English Literature from the University of Cambridge.
* He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1987 for his collection of poems *Trapfalls in the Sky*. In 2001, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his contribution to literature.”

**Introduction:**

* Author – Shiv K Kumar.
* Themes –Life of women in India, oppression and sufferings of women.
* This poem deals with the plight of women in India. A country where the highly structured male chauvinistic society evolved through its long history of political and historical upheavals, in which women are the most oppressed and exploited lot.

**Summary:**

* The poet talks about the life of women, existing in the Indian subcontinent where the climate is extremely hot.
* The women here are not allowed to etch their angry brows on the mud walls, because within their homes their status remains so insignificant. Their emotions are completely neglected.
* Within the mud walls of their homes, they have to put up with whatever the men say, without a choice.
* They sit on the mouth of the village well like an empty pitcher waiting for their turn to collect water from the well.  But, the water is just trickle and is not so deep to read the reflection with tears in their eyes. Even in this hopeless distress, they pleat hope in each braid of their Mississippi-long hair.
* They make zodiac doodlings on the sand with the tip of their toes and guard their tattooed thighs which refer to the male ownership over them.
* They patiently wait for the return of their men who have gone beyond the hills.  Even when it is now dusk and the shadows have vanished and the Sun has sunk beneath hills, the woman is still waiting for the return of her spouse.

**Analysis:**

* The poem consists of a single stanza of 14 lines.
* There or no rhymes as the poem is written in free verse.
* Language is simplified; and metaphor has been used.

**Conclusion:**

* This is a poem which seeks to recreate a typical scene of an Indian women’s life in a language which is highly metaphorical.
* At a deeper level the poem is a projection of the poet’s response to the injustice done against women in our society.