

SHARMILA RAY

VARANASI
WITHIN
VARANASI
poems



A city adorned with tales ranging from holy and unholy, life and death, contentment and wretchedness, and love and betrayal sometimes feels lonely. To dissipate the darkness, letters from far away await the Bhairavi raga swathing the morning to enter. The intonations and pauses of an avalanche remain lodged in Varanasi. It rages and cries in silence but never fails to comfort its attendants. In times of helplessness, the city sings a tune attuned to a ubiquitous lullaby. Sharmila Ray's *Varanasi within Varanasi* is healing and heartening. The collection is her ode to the city, a gratifying muse. Ray's verse chronicles the radiance of an emotion that a city embodies, and in between the transit of life and death, Manikarnika burns.

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