



I Must

Moving On From Cancer

*Second Poetry Collection
from the 'Celebrating Cancer' Series*

Vibha Rani

From the Author of *CAN*

VIBHA RANI

I Must

Vibha Rani's second poetry collection under the series,
'Celebrating Cancer'



English Translation

**Sourav Roy, Anjali Ojha, Rihaa Kaur, Vidha Saumya,
Satya Gummuluri**

English translations edited by Menka Shivdasani

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Work of Art: Subodh Poddar

Illustration and design: Vidha Saumya

Let there be vigour, let there be power,
Be it a village hut, be it an urban tower,
Be it a still pond, be it a canal aflow,
Be it the first step on a path you don't know,
Be it waves of venom lashing on your very dear life,
There'll be triumph at last,
Because I must!

Dedicated to all the souls of the world who are as
stubborn as me!



Vanquish every fort
By conquering the heart

On the resolve to 'Live'

I Must is an English translation of the compilation of my Hindi poems *Kyunki Zid Hai*, written since 2014 until 2016, after a tryst with cancer. This is the second work after the bilingual poetry collection *Samrath / CAN* (Publ. 2016) as part of the series, 'Celebrating Cancer'. In the battle between life and cancer, the dominant narrative is that death takes over life. The shadow of fear, the spectacle of death, the heart etched with the deep grooves of depression, many examples of those departed – it is all real. But, what is also real and must be recounted are the several cancer achievers living their lives vivaciously – those, who through their generosity, bring light into the dismal lives of others. *I Must* is an ode to this generosity and a dedication to the determination of cancer fighters.

The 56 poems in the poetry collection are divided into five sections and have been translated into English by Sourav Roy, Anjali Ojha, Rihaa Kaur, Vidha Saumya, and Satya Gummuluri. Menka Shivdasani has been

more than kind to take the time out to edit the English translations. I was fortunate to have her also edit the English poems in my previous book, *Samrath / CAN*. *Dancescapes* creator and a distinguished artist Subodh Poddar has created the artworks for each of the five sections – making the book a visual treat as well. Vidha Saumya has not only designed the cover this time, but has also translated the section ‘*Ladki*’ in the book.

In 2013, I was diagnosed with cancer. That is when it became clear how much fear, misconceptions and stereotypes surrounds this disease. Patients and families of patients self-stigmatise it. In my own journey through my treatment, I came across heart-breaking stories of discrimination and defeat but I was equally delighted by attitudes of many who took it in their stride, and came out of it victorious.

While going through my treatment, I started a Facebook page called ‘Celebrating Cancer’ to share my experiences, photographs of physical transformations so that I could alleviate people’s fears and form a community where those fighting cancer could find

support. Within a few days of forming this Page, individuals began to share their own experiences, as well as stories of their friends and families. On the 'Celebrating Cancer' Page, I urged visitors to share a photograph of themselves with the hashtag #NaKaheinCancerKo / #SayNoToCancer which continues to receive tremendous participation. Among the many who came forward, I especially want to mention the enthusiasm and positivity of Sarita Jain, Dolly Mehrotra, Latika Batra and Manoj Goyal. It started to feel as though my faith in "living" life was being reaffirmed by the community.

Samrath / CAN – My first book of poems under the series, 'Celebrating Cancer' was published and was released at the Bangalore Poetry Festival, 2016 and sold over 900 copies through the support and appreciation of many wonderful readers. These poems form a narrative of the resolve to live. Spreading awareness about cancer has become an important objective of my life. I do this through discussions,

workshops, writing books and performances of the play, *Popcorn Breasts*.

I would like to say once again that that all the proceeds raised from the sales of books *Kyunki Zid Hai / I Must* and *Samrath / CAN* go towards medical expenses of persons undergoing treatment for Cancer. I thank you for your support. Thank you Notnul.com for bringing this book on e-form, on the occasion of World Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 2023 with the theme 'Keeping her in the picture'. I am sure, these poems will show you 'her' in the picture. Your views, comments are eagerly awaited. Love you all!

Vibha Rani

Mumbai,

October, 2023

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