**Stitched**

By Imtiaz Dharker

The poem Stitched is divided into four stanzas. This poem uses the imagery of stitching something on woman’s body. The same idea of subjugation and oppression prevails in this piece of literary work by Dharker. Her poem portrays a journey of a woman in a very realistic manner. As if she talks, based on her personal experience. It is a free verse poem. It depicts the condition of women in a patriarchal setup. The title of the poem itself suggests that something is broken/torn and there is a need to mend it by stitching. A woman is labeled as merely a thing (doll), which lacks something and is needed to be stitched in regard to become perfect. The poem explores through several prejudices and misconception that exist in the society against women. Further in the poem, we will encounter the fractured personality of the poet, on account of multiple nationalities, mixed faith, merged identity and multi-lingual personality.

**STANZA - 1**

“Someone stitched on my head and hands

But they used some foreign stuff

That pointed out the parts

Where I’d been mended”

The first stanza points out to someone who has stitched some foreign stuff on her head and hand. Head refers to her intellectual abilities and hand refers to her activities. It was believed that women were inferior to men in the context of both physical and mental. But it is not true, since women only are weak physically as compared to men’s compact body buildup and strength. Otherwise women and men are equal in all perspective. In these lines we see that a woman is considered as a broken human being who needs to be mended. It simply suggests that a woman lacks abilities in her head and hand, and to become a person she needs stitching of foreign stuff in her body. The question arises, why women needs to be added something on her? The answer here remains the same, the natural ability with which the women is born is not enough to survive in the society, and thus it tries to change her according to their wants by adding something to her body or by removing some of her own identity.

‘Foreign stuff’ refers to the various changes that were imposed upon her and she was not familiar with those changes. Visible marks are present in her body to easily identify those stitched stuff which the woman lacked and is added to make her complete.

**STANZA- 2**

“And so my mouth spoke Punjabi

while my brain heard Scots

My ears followed German

and my tongue did French.

It seems that they were about to put me out

in a garbage bag. I looked so odd.”

The second stanza talks of her multiple nationalities and multi-lingual emotional mindset. Her fractured identity is further clarified when she tells us that she is well versed in many languages and their respective cultures like Punjabi, Scots, German and French. It predicts that she is an educated woman trying to create her own individual identity in this world. Even after being as educated as men and as independent as men, will they be accepted as equals. But the traditional norms still exist. Even being as qualified as men, the women will always face the situation of domination. ‘It seem they were about to put me in a garbage bag’ refers to the act of abandoning girl child, just because the baby is a girl child.

**STANZA -3**

“But I survived,

And they got used to the way I was.

And they act as if

I’m one of them”

Despite the extreme emotional turmoil and humiliation she has survived. And the world around her is getting used to accept her as she was. She acquired success and only then they gave her the tag that she is now one of them. But the poet wants to say that success of one is not defined by gender.

**STANZA-4**

“I’m not always sure I did the right thing.

Maybe it’s time to do dangerous somersaults,

to jump and dance and run.

Maybe it’s time again, to come undone”

The poet is not sure whether she did the right thing. She is desirous of undertaking ‘dangerous somersaults’. She uses the word dangerous to ring the knell that her dance and jump and run of freedom might be dangerous for the rest of her family, perhaps for the entire society which expects a composed, dignified and passive female to be living at home where she is not able to speak. But Dharker gives her tongue through her poetry. Now is the time to break free from the confined norms of society. Attack is on the mindset and thought process of men. Nonetheless, the poet is appealing to all women to free themselves from those false norms and strongly stand against the prejudices that men hold of women.