

Tuljha B Reddy discusses her debut work of fiction, *Inheritance of Longing*, which honors the inner complexities of women and their stories rooted in unvarnished truth

STORIES THAT LINGER



Shaped by aching silence, irresistible desire, and quiet rage, *Inheritance of Longing* by Tuljha B Reddy (architect, furniture designer, educator, and writer) bravely delves into the hidden recesses of women's minds and presents untold human stories layered with complexity.

With compassion, empathy, and a willingness to risk being viewed as a teller of what may be perceived as scandalous stories, she examines the isolation women experience when they veer off the beaten track and makes a case for embracing imperfections. In doing so, she grounds these

extraordinary stories in humanity while preserving their dignity.

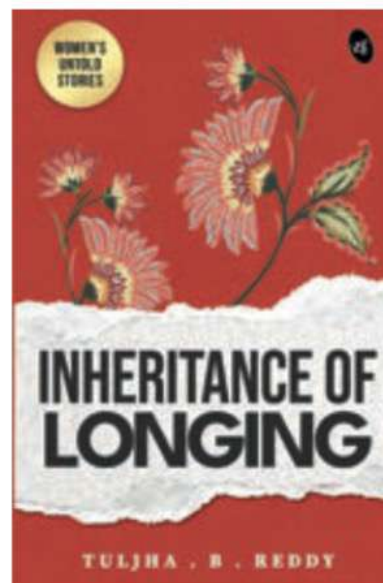
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— Tuljha B Reddy

YOUR WORK BRAVELY GIVES VOICE TO WOMEN'S INNER LIVES AND CELEBRATES THEIR COMPLEXITIES, WHICH ARE OFTEN PORTRAYED THROUGH A LENS OF JUDGMENT IN THE MEDIA. WHAT DOES REPRESENTATION MEAN TO YOU AS A WRITER?

To be heard without the need to immediately solve the problem, and to be seen without a hurried correction of one's circumstances — that, to me, is representation. It begins in the willingness to sit with their realities, however messy, unresolved, or uncomfortable they may be. It is about seeing women exist in totality — their gender aside.

FOR THE READER, THE BOOK ELICITS TEARS, JOY, HOPE, AND A DESIRE TO CHAMPION WOMEN WEIGHED DOWN BY THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHOICES. IT EMBRACES IMPERFECTIONS AND REMINDS US OF ITS CONNECTION TO THE TRUTH. WHAT SIGNIFICANCE DO HONESTY AND IMPERFECTION HOLD FOR YOU?

Imperfection is where the essence of humanity lies, and honesty is what allows us to acknowledge it. As a writer, I am drawn to people who know they are flawed, uncertain, contradictory, and unfinished. Those are the people that feel real.



WHAT DREW YOU TO EXPLORE THE UNTOLD STORIES OF THESE WOMEN?

There is a pull to the less uttered. There is an intimacy to the emotions that are never yelled, but only whispered. I could never resist those stories, they found their way to me and insisted I narrate. As a writer, I do not see myself as someone who speaks for them, as much as someone who listens carefully enough to narrate what is already there.

DESIRE, ABANDONMENT, RAGE, GUILT, SHAME AND ISOLATION THREAD THROUGH YOUR WORK. WHAT DO THESE THEMES MEAN TO YOU?

To me, they mean everyday human life. It is the average Tuesday for most people. It is every second of what your high-profile boss navigates daily and what a cook, handyman or laborer deals with at his own plight. It is the all-encompassing meaning of what it means to be human.

WHAT HAVE YOU TAKEN AWAY FROM THESE WOMEN'S STORIES, AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS GAIN FROM THEM?

These stories taught me that help is not always what people are seeking. More often, they are seeking a space to exist without judgment, correction, or reprimand. They want to be heard, understood, and accepted in the fullness of their experience.

What I hope readers take away is a similar willingness to sit with another person's reality without rushing to change it. If these stories can incite more empathy, patience, and understanding, then they have done what I hoped they would do. ■ IPSHITA