

Muliebrity by Sujata Bhatt

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‘**Muliebrity**’ by Sujata Bhatt describes the sight of a young girl in India who spends her days picking up cow-dung, and the inherent “glistening” power she has. The **poem** begins with the speaker describing how she has been unable to forget the sight of one particular girl on the streets nearby to where she lives.

Muliebrity

I have thought so much about the girl
who gathered cow-dung in a wide, round basket
along the main road passing by our house
and the Radhavallabh temple in Maninagar.
I have thought so much about the way she
moved her hands and her waist
and the smell of cow-dung and road-dust and wet canna lilies,
the smell of monkey breath and freshly washed clothes
and the dust from crows’ wings which smells different –
and again the smell of cow-dung as the girl scoops
it up, all these smells surrounding me separately
and simultaneously – I have thought so much
but have been unwilling to use her for a metaphor,
for a nice image – but most of all unwilling
to forget her or to explain to anyone the greatness
and the power glistening through her cheekbones
each time she found a particularly promising
mound of dung –