

SUDEEP SEN

ARIA'S FOOTPRINT

The block of text
I tirelessly worked on,

refused to resolve
its intent.

Then you came along —
your new body —

new fingers, new feet —
tracing their outline

on white margin-spaces
of my unruled page.

Ink-edges marked
your new step

like miniature ice-bergs
refusing to melt,

lest this archipelago's
map

altered the safety
of currents.

I stared
at the unfinished

silhouette
and its soft edges —

its subtle tentative
frankness,

its clear honesty
of ambition,

its deep sepia-tinged
maturity.

I retraced
its periphery —

one that would
expand

the grip's strength
in time,

each digit adding up
to an equation

no human can balance.
My son's first

footprint on paper —
stamping a new will —

a new score's
untrained future,

and the miracle
of *tabula rasa*.



SUDEEP SEN [www.sudeepsen.net] is widely recognised as a major new generation voice in world literature and one of “the finest younger English-language poets in the international literary scene. A distinct voice: carefully modulated and skilled, well measured and crafted” (*BBC Radio*). He is fascinated not just by language but the possibilities of language” (*Scotland on Sunday*). He was international writer-in-residence at the Scottish Poetry Library (Edinburgh) & visiting scholar at Harvard University. Sen’s prize-winning books include: *Postmarked India: New & Selected Poems* (HarperCollins), *Distracted Geographies*, *Rain*, *Aria* (A K Ramanujan Translation Award), *Letters of Glass*, *Ladakh*, and *The HarperCollins Book of English Poetry* (editor). *Blue Nude: Poems & Translations 1979-2014* (Jorge Zalamea International Poetry Prize) is forthcoming. His poems have been translated into over twenty-five languages. His words have appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Newsweek*, *Guardian*, *Observer*, *Independent*, *Financial Times*, *London Magazine*, *Literary Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Telegraph*, *Hindu*, *Outlook*, *India Today*, and broadcast on BBC, CNN IBN, NDTV & AIR. Sen’s recent work appears in *New Writing 15* (Granta), *Language for a New Century* (Norton), *Out of Bounds* (Bloodaxe), and *Oxford New Writing* (Blackwell). He is the editorial director of AARK ARTS and editor of *Atlas* [www.atlasaarkarts.net].