

# BEARING WITNESS TO BUSHFIRES: TRAUMA, MEMORY AND RECOVERY IN ELIZA HENRY JONES' ACHE

Muhsina N

Research Assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA.

## **ABSTRACT**

*Bushfires are recurring phenomena that have been a part of Australian sociocultural life. Avid Australian writer Eliza Henry-Jones' second novel Ache (2017) is an itinerary of the devastatingly traumatic life journey of the protagonist Annie who is constantly haunted by the nightmarish memories of bushfire prone past. Her life has changed drastically after a bushfire ravages Annie's mountain community, traumatized her daughter Pip, killing her grandmother, and leaving her home in wreck-havoc. Annie's responses to trauma require scrutiny of her psychological functioning within the social or cultural environment that may suppress acknowledgement of trauma. The novel depicts traumatic and fragmented memories that incorporate varied survival behaviours within the characterization of survivors through Annie, her family and acquaintances. This proposed paper will analyse the impact of bushfire on Indigenous population with reference to the life of Annie and the events that are taken from the novel Ache by Eliza Henry Jones by using literary trauma theory.*

## **KEYWORDS**

*Trauma, isolation, trans-generational trauma, memory, women, healing, PTSD*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Bushfires have always been the worst of Australia's natural disasters and as the climate warms, the intensity and the fear have escalated. The carnage wreaked along the way after each natural disaster, the victims particularly the survivors, encompass significant losses of home, family members and belongings. The contagious trauma subsides the mental health of the victims and in majority cases, puts them into the pit of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The nightmarish phenomenon of Bushfires have been crucial in shaping the nature, life, culture, economy and polity of Australia. The catastrophic bushfires of 1939 Black Friday and 2019 Black Saturday along with the 2019-2020 summer fires stood out as the worst ecological disasters causing the most severe fatalities for human and non-human world. The emotional distress caused to thousands of people who were impacted directly or indirectly were seldom addressed by the literature till recently. The persons and communities affected by bushfire can experience a range of thoughts, intense feelings and weird behaviours induced by the memories and on-going anxiety in their psyche. People who are socially isolated, specifically the indigenous communities, are at higher risk of developing mental health disorders due to their tragic losses and segregation. The physical and mental damages of women can result in the ordeal of an entire family and hence, the community.

Eliza Henry Jones' second novel *Ache* (2017) explores the concepts of grief and shared loss caused all through the bushfires by appositely placing it into a mystical life of Annie. This

Melbourne based novelist turned researcher has degrees in English, Psychology and Grief, Loss and Trauma Counselling and completed an Honors thesis on the bushfire trauma in fiction. Eliza's other books include *In the Quiet* (2015), *P is for Pearl* (2018) and *How to Grow a Family Tree* (2020). The storyline of *Ache* is simple and relevant, but underneath that simplicity is a pileup of booming conflicts, ear-piercing catastrophes, and exhilarating regeneration tightly knit in an empathetic way of narration.

Preliminary concepts on trauma were developed as a part of the studies on shock and hysteria by Jean Martin Charcot, Sigmund Freud, Joseph Breuer, WHR Rivers and Siegfried Sassoon in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Trauma Studies hibernated for some time and it was rejuvenated during the Second World War, Holocaust and later with the Vietnam War. Trauma is not completely curable for it can return to haunt the survivor again at anytime due to the traumatic impressions sustain in the psyche. Cathy Caruth in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (2016) indicates that trauma "is a wound that cries out, that addresses us in an attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is otherwise not available" [Caruth, Cathy. (2016). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Johns Hopkins UP] She describes the story of trauma as "the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality—the escape from a death, or from its referential force—rather attests to its endless impact on a life" (Caruth). The study of *Ache* as a bushfire narrative that records the mental agony deals with the trauma, memory and recovery of Annie, her family and her community.

## 2. DEVISING TRAUMA: SPLINTERED SELVES

In her book *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (2002), Laurie Vickroy explain trauma narratives as "fictional narratives that help readers to access traumatic experience" [Vickroy, Laurie. (2002) *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. U of Virginia P] Trauma narratives illustrate an unspeakable event that is inscribed in the consciousness of an individual or a community that is splintered by it. *Ache* is about a generous and tight-knit family dealing with the aftermath of a ruinous bushfire. It is a poignant exploration of three generations of women and the different ways in which they cope with the bushfire on the mountains. It is also about their relationship to the landscape and the attachment with nature in its totality.

Even after one year of the bushfire, the family in crisis continues to struggle with the repercussions of the calamity. Their indigenous community lost a lot of lives—both animals and humans— and many were damned as they got nothing left to live on. Eliza Henry-Jones traverses the dark terrors and horrors of bushfires but also the backwash as those who have escaped struggle to re-establish their lives. The author doesn't provide us with much details of the bush fire which has traumatized Annie, her daughter Pip, her mother Susan and the town of Quilly. It was an unexpected fire that knocked down the entire town and its residents by testing their overall robustness and resilience.

The narrative style of the novel itself reveals the inability of the protagonist to tell her life story. The novel is written in a third person point of view and at times, the guilt and regret of Annie is revealed through her own words in a disjointed manner. On telling a life history, the self is both the teller of tales and that about whom tales are told. The individual with a lucid sense of self-identity is the one who triumphs in integrating these tales and perspectives into a meaningful life history. When the story of a life can only be told from the perspective of the others, then the self is a victim and sufferer who has lost control over her existence. Since traumatic events are experienced in fragmentary ways, memory is disarranged and the events are not incorporated into a comprehensible rational narrative. Nonetheless, when the survivors attempt to accumulate and refurbish the fragments of memory into a story, trauma resists representation.

Trauma questions the identity of a victim for a change in identity that is inevitable after a traumatic event. According to Laurie Vickroy “trauma and its concurrent shame, doubt or guilt, destroys important beliefs: in one’s own safety or competence to act or live in the world, one’s perception of the world as meaningful and orderly, and one’s own view of oneself as strong and autonomous” (Vickroy). As a veterinarian, Annie used to enjoy her profession. But, after the bushfires she seldom enjoys her career as she cannot engage in her work with much concentration or enthusiasm. Annie did love animals especially, cats, dogs, birds and rabbits till the symptoms of trauma haunts her. She doubts her abilities as the confidence drained off and subsequently, she became pessimistic in nature.

Trauma can also disrupt a person’s relationship to her body, destroys the victim’s sense of control over her own self and obstructs her ability to develop an ongoing narrative of herself. Such a formulation reveals both the essential vulnerability and resiliency of the self, as well as its fundamental dependency on others. Annie behaves abnormally by stuffing her oversized handbag with small pieces of branches and frames and even dragged home a branch to the extent that Tom states, “You’re nuts, Annie” [Jones, Eliza Henry. (2017). *Ache*. Harper Collins] . Later, these same words were echoed by Rose when Annie had delusions of hearing sirens at 4am. Annie always wanted to depend upon Tom as she emotionally breaks down often. Susan also did crazy things like always baking cakes and forcing others to have it. She dressed her up in wizard costumes, got drunk, and climbed up on the tables.

Myriad traumas emanating from the natural disasters include immediate physical afflictions to oneself or others. Albeit the wounds of the body heal, the long-term impact of trauma produces physiological, cognitive, behavioral and affective wounds. In some people, traumatic memory fastens them far more tightly to their physical self, while for others dissociation generates a splitting of mind from body. After the bushfires, Annie got her sleep cycle derailed and began to draw pictures in her sleep. In the case of Pip, she often talks in sleep, “‘Bananas!’ Pip yells, still sleeping. She’s been talking in her sleep a lot this past year. The therapist says it’s related to trauma, but Pip never says anything about the fires” (Jones). Also, she wets the bed often due to the emotional stress and anxiety caused by the traumatic events of the bushfires.

Annie’s body was silenced towards many of the romantic impulses induced by her husband and she could not reciprocate or verbalize her love towards him. Her body always underwent several aches and pains. It was paralyzed to express bodily affections towards anyone or to engage in sexual intercourse. She always wonders “how many other people who went through the fires can no longer orgasm” (Jones). Her thoughts reveal the collective or shared experiences of her indigenous community. Erikson, one of the pioneers to theorize collective or shared trauma, states in his book *A New Species of Trouble: The Human Experience of Modern Disasters* that when feelings of hurt move to the centre of people’s being and make them feel “marked, maybe cursed, maybe even dead... this sense of difference can draw people to others similarly marked, and in this way can serve as a source of community just as a common language or a common cultural background can” [Erikson, Kai. (1994). *A New Species of Trouble: The Human Experience of Modern Disasters*. W.W. Norton]

According to Erikson, Trauma has centripetal as well as centrifugal tendencies; it is not by definition coherent in cause and effect. It can negatively affect individuals and communities, forcing open fault lines that “once ran silently through the structure of the larger community, dividing it into divisive fragments” (Erikson). Following the bushfires, there rouse a conflict that stirred up the natives of Quilly. The indifference of these people galvanized Annie to stay away from the mountains for a short period. Still trauma can also positively affect individuals and communities by consolidating a sense of belonging, of kinship and mutual trust. These two tendencies, however opposite in effect, are widely observed and can occur “either alone or in

combination,” as Erikson remarks (Erikson). While living in the city, Annie always wanted to go home, but she no longer knew how to find it. “She misses Tom, but not the city. And mostly she misses the mountain that exists in her dreaming”(Jones). She has experienced feelings of alienation and hopelessness.

The vulnerability to trauma often motivates a victim to alter her relationship to her body and mind. Although Annie was not physically injured, her mental status was disrupted. Any sudden changes in her heartbeat could trigger a panic attack, even something as simple as being touched on forehead by her partner Tom or the sound of a basketball hitting the ground. She can sit and stare at things for long tracts of time, without being bored. She neglected the external world and became cold-hearted towards Tom. She has to punish Tom over and over for things he has not done and each time regrets of it hits her like something solid. Her guilty feeling rips her apart often and she doubts whether Tom gets frustrated with her uncanny behaviour. Susan constantly felt that she is being isolated and nobody loves her including her siblings and children.

### **3. TRANS-GENERATIONAL TRACES OF TRAUMA**

Sensory flashbacks like the ones Annie experienced are common in trauma survivors. They are physiological incarnations of mental and emotional vandalism instilled by trauma while memories getting lodged into the physical body. Extreme disaster involves the loss of control over what happens during the traumatic event, but the subsequent post-traumatic effects also impoverish the survivor of control. Cathy Caruth in her edited work *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) opines that through compulsory repetitions, “the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his/her very will” [ Caruth, Cathy. (1995). Ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Johns Hopkins UP]

Annie lost her grandmother during the bushfires and the memories of Gladys prompted her to imitate the lost art of whittling. Also, she gradually developed a fear for winds which she used to adore a lot. “Gladys died in the wind. The howling northerly killed her grandmother. Or the tree that fell on the house killed Gladys. Or the section of roof that landed on her...”(Jones). Annie often forgets important aspects of her life due to her amnesia and remains uninterested in her hobbies. She faces an exaggerated Acoustic Startle Reflex (ASR) which is long lasting and more intense in nature which can get triggered by unexpected stimuli like a random touch of her partner.

Caruth records that “trauma is never simply one’s own” (Caruth). Although the novel aims to create connections between the traumatized individual, society, and the historical past, this position rests upon the sacred assumption that trauma is inherently dissociative. The dissociative model of trauma here further supports the claim that “one’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another” which forwards the notion of trans-historical trauma (Caruth). The transfer of disturbing memories from one generation to another along with the witnessing of bushfires as an annual occurrence strengthens the fear of Pip. The claim that trauma “is not known in the first instance” and that trauma “returns to haunt the survivor later on” narrowly conceptualizes the psychological dimensions of trauma and the range of traumatic experience and responses. The trauma of Pip turns her as an “abnormal’ child and as a survivor she frequently asks her mother out of anxiety that at what time will the fires come back.

Psychological research indicates that amnesia, dissociation, or repression *may* be responses to trauma but they are not exclusive responses. What were previously voluntary responses, such as recalling events of one’s past to conscious awareness, become, through nightmares and flashbacks, the involuntary re-experiencing of the traumatic event. As a result, Susan Brison in

her article titled “Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity” (1997) points out, not only does trauma alter what one can do, but it also alters what one *wants* to do.

Annie has never been the sort of person to have nightmares. But since the fires on the mountain, her dreams have changed. They have developed a pattern, as though the fire changed the landscape of everything inside her...Since the fires, since leaving her nana on the mountain, Annie has dreamt of ash. [Brison, Susan J. (1997). “Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity.” *Feminists Rethink the Self*, edited by Diana Tietjens Meyers, Westview]

Similarly, in an attempt to stave off panic attacks, Annie avoided many activities she had previously enjoyed, including driving, exercise, and sexual intimacy. Her agency was increasingly inhibited, and her self-esteem diminished. She hides herself away from social gatherings, stopped trying new things and avoid any difficult situations.

Annie and her family underwent emotional outbursts and became isolated badly. Living with low self-esteem harms her mental health and lead to severe issues like depression and anxiety. These are very real things that can occur when someone is dealing with trauma. But, this can backfire because it reinforces their doubts and fears. They have to shut the doors towards the world and can only sleep with earplugs on. The recovery of their lives being hampered by the vested interests of a television group intent on mining the trauma for ratings. People got angry and they became resentful of interlopers. But the trauma of bushfire manifests through the different generations of a family- an irrefutable story of Trans-generational bushfire trauma.

#### **4. LIVING TESTIMONIALS : THE SURVIVOR STORIES**

Survival stories can appear fragmented, or disjointed, and this is typical of those who have undergone traumatic experiences. Yet the stories also speak of recovery and resiliency as the victims struggle to rebuild and go ahead with their damaged lives. In the wake of the fires, Pip and Annie were captured on film and became the public face or symbol of the town’s trauma.

It was the headlines, she thinks, more than the photos. *MOTHER OF THE YEAR. HERO MOTHER. WOMAN SAVES DAUGHTER. RIDE OF A LIFETIME...*The photo of her and Pip riding her old horse, Luna, out of the fires. Pip’s head buried in Annie’s arm. Luna’s burnt legs, her flared nostrils, the blood from being scratched by long-fingered branches as they galloped out of the smoke and the dark and the noise. That photo. It changed everything with Tom too...(Jones)

To those living on the mountain Annie is an interloper and the animosity from the locals towards her was evident in many instances. But, Annie’s heart remains at her childhood home she isn’t sure where she *belongs*. Although it is painfully familiar, in some ways she feels like she no longer knows the mountain, that the place has ‘moved on without her’.

Annie often reminisces on her happy childhood days at mountains. “She liked the trees, the forests...liked to climb up into branches that had been here longer than people, longer than the house... liked how endless the trees felt”(Jones). Annie has flown her childhood home in Quilly to live in the city. She is a woman who really is in a quandary in her personal life. She at times feels disconnected from her childhood home, but in the same instance, she is yet to develop an attachment to her city home. When her beloved Uncle Len calls her out of the blue to request her help back home, Annie feels the emotional tug of home and leaves her fractured marriage in the city for the solace of the familiar. She believes the bushfires made her harder and stronger while it damaged her mentally.



Abraham and Torok assert in their book *The Shell and the Kernel* that traumatic loss tends to be silenced and cut off from the world. Commonly, the lost person or object is taken into a crypt inside the self that remains sealed off from consciousness and the outside world.[Abraham, Nicholas & Maria Torok. (1994). *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Vol. 1. Edited and translated by Nicholas T. Rand. U of Chicago P] The very occurrence and devastating emotional consequences of trauma become entombed and consigned to internal silence by the sufferers. Susan found isolation too difficult and decided to accept all those animals dropped in by Len. Annie was so close to Gladys and her death benumbed the faculties of both Annie and Susan. Henry-Jones shows a deep understanding of the paraphernalia of grief, like the food in Tupperware containers that Annie couldn't stomach: it 'tasted like grief' (Jones). Their grief became like bottles of liquor clutched in underage hands. They hid it in public and opened it in private, where things were dark and quiet. And after, they slept badly. They rose feeling ill. And the cycle of it repeated itself (Jones).

Annie was put into a period of dormancy as her overwhelmed mind is incapable of putting her experiences across in words and was unable to absorb the quantum of the extremity. Language cannot express the reality which she has in her mind. At the same time, in a different sense one might say that the quality of being unspeakable positively reigns during the period of dormancy, as the trauma-to-be "gestates" in the psyche of the one-in-process-of-being traumatized. The real life causes of the trauma-in-progress are never so inaccessible to consciousness, conceptualization, and linguistic expression as during this period.

Julie Rea Harper, a semiotician who happens herself to be a survivor of major trauma, shows in her article titled "PTSD: A Situated Look at the Semiotic Process and Role of Individual Umwelts in Human Existence/Function"(2005), how untenable such an implication would be when she writes of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

In any PTSD sufferer lie the altered images of particular pictures and sounds, and emotional responses, which were associated through the traumatic experience(s). It is central to our discussion here to consider PTSD as a condition that causes hyper and irrational responses to situations or "signs"—responses, which *seem* unmerited in a given context—as the normative population would experience it. [Harper, Julie Rea. (2005). "PTSD: A Situated Look at the Semiotic Process and Role of Individual Umwelts in Human Existence/Function." *Semiotica*, Vol.15, No.7, pp 377–385]

The extreme experiences impact upon the nervous system through signification, resulting, in cases diagnosed as PTSD, in a pathogenic "alteration of prior reactions to signs." Understanding and acknowledging symptoms related to PTSD as defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR*; American Psychiatric Association 2000) provides a framework for analysis. Symptoms of these bushfire victims are recognizable in the three *DSM* symptom clusters listed below:

1. **Re-experiencing symptoms:** intense psychological distress, physiological reactivity, and exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble aspects of traumatic event (fear of wind, lack of permanence, loss of feelings of security)
2. **Avoidant symptoms:** marked diminished interest or participation in significant activities; feelings of detachment or estrangement from others (her damaged relationship with Tom); restricted range of affect (unable to experience loving feelings towards Tom); sense of foreshortened future (not expecting to have a career or normal lifespan)
3. **Hyper-arousal symptoms:** difficulty falling or staying asleep; irritability or outbursts of anger; exaggerated startle response; difficulty concentrating; or hyper-vigilance. [American

Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 4th ed. APA]

The novel embodies many of the symptoms that are mentioned above in a natural and heart touching manner. The ordeals of escaping the bushfires and in the aftermath, as they attempted to recover their lives are depicted in the novel in an empathetic narrative style. As survivors, Annie and her family members try to unburden the memories of the bushfire to adapt to their daily activities and social engagements. The testimonials of the victims remind us of the vulnerability and helplessness of human beings in front of disasters.

## 5. MOURNING AND HEALING

Nature, the bush and its life also appear as the major characters in the novel *Ache*. When Annie was young, she felt the trees spoke to her, and she still likes the feeling of the wood 'alive' in her hands as she whittles. She and her uncle Len had passion for native environment and domestic life. They used to go after lyrebirds and animals in the forests.

Annie and Len (both veterinarians) and Susan adopt everything from chickens to pigs to bees in order to connect with nature. It was their peculiar way of merging with the natural world. After the bushfires, an overwhelming sense of nostalgia has passed through the lives of Annie and Susan. Annie always cherished her childhood with Gladys, Len and Susan. Childhood memories of the mountains made her hopeful and delighted.

There is always a city-countryside binary operating in the novel. It is from the therapy of city, she tries to overcome the bruises her mountains caused to her. With each panic attack, she believed that she was having a heart attack, and if not that, she was surely going crazy. Only after extensive cognitive therapy did her anxiety and panic attacks subside. The novel delineates the gradual healing of the victims or the survivor by gathering time and space to breathe out their guilt and fear to overcome their grief. Healing of Luna, the spirited special horse and little Pip who was almost like a wild beast at the beginning of the novel and underwent transformation - both of them played an integral role in Annie's recovery. Annie stands as a perfect account of a woman on the edge who moves towards peace with her love for life.

The coming back of trees lost in bushfire regenerates the lives of people. there's a sense of movement. Forests start growing back with lush greenery. Wildlife starts returning. Zeal and optimism emerge and people start healing. Undoubtedly, Annie and Pip's emotional journey and recovery is very much reflected in the mountain and its inhabitants. At the same time, it was absolutely painful for Annie to return to the place of so much devastation and wreckage. The regeneration of Quilly becomes an important part in the mending process for Annie and her family.

The collective trauma of the people of Quilly also needed healing just like Annie's family. Vickroy opines that "the meaning that a society ascribes to a particular traumatic event is significant in how it will be defined and resolved for the individual and the group" (Vickroy). Quilly's healing took place when the people came together to rebuild the ruined land and forest to restore the mountains. The gradual recovery of the indigenous community reveals the luminous story of renewal and resurrection.

## 6. CONCLUSION

*Ache* is a riveting and sympathetic novel which addresses the matters such as family, community, loss, survival, regeneration and courage, meticulously written by the accomplished Australian author Eliza Henry Jones. The novel as a trauma fiction constructs of the experiences with imagined situations and symptoms, metaphoric dreams and images of bushfires. It has vivid narrative styles that mimic such real life experiences of fragmented thoughts and dissociative outlook.

The novel shows how trauma cross-examines a victim for a change in her identity that is unpreventable after a traumatic event even by putting the congruence of her customary actions into question. Trauma can also interfere in a person's relationship to her own body, destroys the victim's sense of control over her own self and obstructs her reality by getting in the way of creating her personal chronicles. It will result in the loss of mind and body coordination and leave behind mere splintered selves.

The trans-generational trauma experienced by Annie and her family members makes them alienated as well as isolated even in the crowd as they are facing severe mental depression and anxiety. The frequent emotional release and sudden agitations of Annie, her mother and her daughter are very real things of stress disorder in them. The bushfire has triggered self-destructive behaviours, and loss of interest or pleasure in everyday routine in them. Readers experience the intensity of bushfires through the different generations of a family and their trans-generational trauma. Their healing is the healing of an entire society as these women hold the power of emotional connection of people to their land.

The Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) of the survivors are portrayed through the women characters who are bound to live as the living dead. The speechless terror of the bushfire can be read through the split psyche of these characters as they are sealed off from their consciousness and detached from their physiques. As survivors, they were not free from nightmares of the traumatic event and they struggled for actual survival to restart their lives.

*Ache* has enigmatically captured the less discussed topic of Australian bushfires which is deliberately forgotten even by the mainstream writers. She has poignantly recounted the bushfires from the point of view of the witnesses or victims of this catastrophe and delineated how the resultant trauma affected not just Annie but the entire land of Quilly and its people as they struggled through it and finally learned to accept the trauma as part of their past. She has enlightened the readers of this disastrous event that still lingers on as a traumatic memory in the public memory of Australia.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abraham, Nicholas & Maria Torok. (1994). *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Vol. 1. Edited and translated by Nicholas T. Rand. U of Chicago P.
- [2] American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 4th ed. APA.
- [3] Brison, Susan J. (1997). "Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity." *Feminists Rethink the Self*, edited by Diana Tietjens Meyers, Westview
- [4] Caruth, Cathy. (1995). Ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Johns Hopkins UP.
- [5] Caruth, Cathy. (2016). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Johns Hopkins UP.
- [6] Erikson, Kai. (1994). *A New Species of Trouble: The Human Experience of Modern Disasters*. W.W. Norton.



- [7] Harper, Julie Rea. (2005). "PTSD: A Situated Look at the Semiotic Process and Role of Individual Umwelts in Human Existence/Function." *Semiotica*, Vol.15, No.7, pp 377–385
- [8] Jones, Eliza Henry. (2017). *Ache*. Harper Collins
- [9] Vickroy, Laurie.(2002) *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. U of Virginia P

## **AUTHOR**

**Muhsina N** is a researcher and bilingual poet hailing from Trivandrum, Kerala, India. She works as a Research Assistant at University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA. She completed her M.Phil and M.A in English Language and Literature from the Institute of English, University of Kerala. She has several poems, journal articles and book chapters to her credit

