

Songs from the Hills:
Living with and Loving Nature

SHARMISTHA CHATTERJEE

Yes, I've seen our rice fields
turn into factories and mills
our green hills
reduced to barren brown
our rivers have dried
and our once sparkling fish
lie dead on sandy banks
It's no more the pines I can smell
Nor hear the tragopan and the hornbill.

(1-9)¹

The indignation and lamentation of this poet and journalist from Nagaland, will probably remind many of the more popular Western counterpart, Rachel Carson, whose *Silent Spring* (1962) rang as a knell to environmentalists the world over.

Carson's book concentrated on the images of natural beauty and emphasized the harmony of humanity and nature that 'once' existed. The fable at first tells the readers about the essential changelessness of nature, which human activity scarcely disturbed and which the annual round of seasons only reinforced. However, the book gradually turns eerie and ominous with Carson describing a strange transformation – the slow destruction of pastoral peace: