**Round vs Straight, Part 1: On a guided walk across the South Downs**

**Round is…**

A white memorial dome standing tall and proud

Unapologetic and majestic

the cycle of life

Birth – Death – Reincarnation

a circular journey

the joy of departure with no joy of return

an abundance of Eastern sun

left behind, unseen in months

a wonder of Mughal architecture, redefining construction

bulbous frames, scalloped archways and delicate ornamentation

.

A connecting moment when someone tells you

“The blood of the warrior runs through you”

discovering Punjabis and Pathans took up arms

responded to the call of duty

Chattri, Hindi word for umbrella

protector in a dip in a valley.

**Straight are…**

the lines of Partition – division – separation

the opening lines of letters written in trenches: “Do not be anxious!”

the codes ‘black pepper’ for Indians, ‘red pepper’ for British

hospital beds inside the Royal Pavilion

the rows they stood in, for propaganda photo opportunity

The Indian soldiers on the Frontline, the rain, the trenches

linear the ultimate sacrifice, dying so far from home.

**“WE EXISTED, WE GAVE”**

**Round vs Straight, Part 2: On a guided tour of the Brighton Dome, Corn Exchange & Royal Pavilion**

**Round is …..**

Brighton Dome performance venue

Delighting audiences in musical rapture

Dome Hospital in World War 1

for wounded soldiers

floral windows adorning walls

(ike henna decorated hands left behind)

letting the sun’s rays pour in the East

disappearing in the West,

its warmth only touches the back of hands, faces

that once bathed in it.

The wounded soldier’s turban

winding and draping a displaced head

arched rafters shelter stables

where European horses could perform

grand chandeliers hung with myriad tiny crystal droplets

illuminating the conquest of two million personnel.

**Straight is……**

the hospital beds in rows, white crisp sheets tucked into corners

the closely boarded fence – three feet high – containing convalescing soldiers

the horizon, an expanse of water dislocating and disorienting

divisions of caste, gender and race resulting in

**MUTINY. ISOLATION AND DEATH.**

Wafa:

I notice you started every line with a capital letter, but you needn't – I’ve taken them out so you can see what that looks / feels like. Another poet once told me to be intentional with my capital letters and line breaks. Starting a new line with a lowercase letter indicates that a thought continues; the link break indicates a slight pause in voice. Another thing that can help editing is reading your piece aloud – notice where you pause / stop and punctuate to reflect that.

Also: verses are not paragraphs so I’ve taken out most full stops – it felt like they were interrupting the rhythm of your piece.

If you hate my edits of course put capitals and punctuation back in! But no changing the word / lineation (line break) edits – you have a wonderful idea (round v straight) and I’ve edited so that’s visible.

Let me know what you think…