

SHOBHANA KUMAR

## EQUATIONS

A luxury multi-axle sleeper bus  
lumbers on to the city roads,  
roads made for commuters of a different kind.

Behind it, a point-to-point express  
is in relentless pursuit  
of getting to the destination on time.  
Every minute counts to be counted an express service bus.

An impeccably uniformed-in-white chauffeur  
of an ultra-luxury sedan honks  
to make roadizens aware of the royalty within.

A taxi driver is impatient,  
willing the high decibels of the horn  
to get the five-member family  
to their morning train.

Alongside, two-wheelers,  
many with three people,  
try to navigate the mire.

Gig operators pedal faster  
than the clock will have them—  
breakfasts cannot really wait.

A bullock cart carrying water plods along,  
somewhere between it all.

The signal turns red.  
An ambulance sirens from somewhere behind.

A homeless man shifts position on the pavement.  
The two-wheelers shuffle and almost run into him.  
A couple of auto rickshaws follow in tow.  
The cart driver whips the bulls and reins them to a stop.  
The taxi keeps at the horn.  
The luxury sedan is stuck.  
The express is behind.  
The multi-axle bus has no place to budge.  
The ambulance continues to blare its siren.  
The green light comes on.  
The siren goes off,  
lost to the tiredness of this waiting.