

SOME POEMS FOR YOU

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I have published two books of poems: **In the garden of my freedom** and **My bouquet for you**. I am presenting here some of the poems from these two books

The bird watcher.

The boy looked and looked and spotted
mynahs, kites, orioles and barbets,
lapwings, robins, owls and sparrows,
kingfisher and herons.

He prowled about in the jungles,
book in hand, little Salim Ali,
he talked to the birds,
imitating their calls,
and knew them by flight.

"Ma, there goes your heart"
and the boy ran after the oriole.
Seeing him, a bird alighted
on my heart.

The little boy

The little boy writes and writes
With his feather pen, dipped in ink.
Mountains, stones, dinosaurs,
comets, finally man with his
quill and ink and lots of
stories to tell.

The little boy paints and paints
Blue, grey, green, yellow, white
His rainbow always has six colours.
Towers and tall trees, rivers
and fancy bridges.
Thunderstorm and rain
The boy loved that tree,

Tall and stately,
Raising its head
Above all others.
The boy went to it
and hugged it everyday.
The boy loved the towers
And charted out the whole
Countryside in his mind.
This one is on the Ganga,
That one on the Chhatnag road,
That must be the Jamuna Bridge.
The boy was happy when he
could see his tree and tower.
Just a tree and a tower,
a paintbrush and a feather
to make him happy.

The little girl

She raced her cousins,
played chess, danced
and sang.
She climbed hillocks to see
the sunset,
Read poems under the Champa tree.
Geometry came to her from nowhere
Calming down her wildness
Like a gentle stream calms the mind.
Her violin and her memories remained a
friend for ever .
She showed me her painting once,
filling my heart with colours.

I looked for a flower
And found a garden
I looked for a sea
And found an ocean

When Man wanted to snatch away
something from Nature

he invented a knife, a saw, a hatchet
 a bulldozer.
 But when he wanted to give something back
 he invented a pen and a brush
 and wrote and painted away.

Listening to Tagore songs everyday
 The Sun comes to light my lamps
 and the Rain fills the sluices of my soul.
 I search for my sunrise and sunset
 in every song.
 and I find it time and again everyday.

The cowherd from faraway in the Tagores song
 Who took my necklace and gave me his flute
 lent my life a new melody.
 His tune at first sculpted my life into shape
 and then melted into a tapestry
 of intricate loving melodies ,
 many realisations, all woven together,
 in one big whole.

Reading Gora on a rainy day

Life in its full splendour greeted me again
 Through you, Oh, Tagore, I saw the glimpse of India
 The elusive, subtle , sublime India.
 What tremendous beauty, what loneliness in the world,
 What profundity, what history !
 Kabir's desh, the country of Thyagraja and Meera
 beckoned me from within
 and my heart danced with joy in the rain

Grandma, I can ride a bike now
 Grandma, I saw a rainbow today
 Grandma, I came first in school
 Grandma, I got a job

Grandma, I have a son, he paints mountains
Grandma, where are you?

Love me or not, I will always love you, my child,
For love becomes you like a petal becomes a flower,
the toothless smile, sparkling eyes beckon love.
Even if life turns bitter and cold, I will always be there
and smile toothlessly at you when my sparkle is gone.

Marble or sculpture
Did I only drag
The marble up the mountain
Or did I sculpt it too?

The cloud brought out
the rain in me,
The soil brought out the sapling,
The Buddha brought out great peace
and you brought out my smile.

Farewell, Allahabad
I had come when she was shrouded in fog
So many times I got lost in her,
Her lanes and by lanes
told me many ancient tales!
Now, on this dazzling day
as I am about to leave her,
she sits on the banks of the Ganga
sullenly refusing to say goodbye.
I, her grandchild, have to hide my tears.

One day I will lose my son
To the waves of life

But today I cling onto him
Like a boat in a stormy sea.

A home in a minimal surface

In acute sadness she wandered
from street to street,
from books to books.
Till she found her
geometry in minimal surfaces.
They gave her homeless self
a fairyland.
Round the everwidening circles,
Slipping down the spirals,
Hiding in the dark tunnels,
Blowing on the trumpets,
Dancing her ballet
In the liquid crystals of
the minimal surfaces
She could once again become little Alice
in her Wonderland.

The day leapt and sprang a spectacular surprise
The sky cleared and there it emerged
Adorned with the light of the early morning
God's "yes" emerged from within me
and washed me with a beautiful smile,
God's own smile, the Kanchanjungha.

Rikhia

The red soil, broken fields
Mud huts, thatched roofs,
The simplicity of its people
The beautiful soul of Rikhia beckons
In between the Trikut and Dighiria
The poet thinks over his sonnet
While the little girls and boys run like birds
across the open fields.

The construction worker

She carries loads of cement
and bricks on her head
And lays brick by brick the foundations
of the rich man's house.
In my life she is an angel,
A God-sent messenger of goodness.
She doesn't admit defeat from fatigue
as her children play around, unkempt and wild.
Through supreme hard work
she earns her bread,
And work she will till her dying day.

The Mason

I was a mason a thousand years ago,
So long ago that I have
forgotten my art.
I used to chisel stone from a mountain
to make a temple, day in and day out.
There were brothers working
with me, sculpting stone
I carved out from my innermost self,
the deities, mythological stories
and the figurines.
I made the pillars
so that even stones spoke with music.
The temples used to be alive with
dancers, exquisitely dancing
to intricate rhythmic patterns,
the pillars resonating with music.
Did a little girl ever point out
a rainbow to you?
If there is a temple at the end of the rainbow,
that is the temple I built.

The Buddhist Monastery

The wheels turned,
the chants grew deeper
It is here I felt
that life is deep, very deep
and in its depth is my salvation.

Reality and a shadow

The shadow on the river of my mind
 is that of the tree of reality.
 It shimmers, shakes and then it is still.
 It remains very still till the next ripple disturbs it.
 It remains hidden in the night of the mind
 but emerges again at the slightest light
 on the horizon.
 Reality remains unperturbed
 till it sheds a leaf into the river
 touching the mind ever so lightly.

The Fakir Ma and the little boy

She sings strumming on her ektara
 The boy leads her along,
 a penny or two in his outstretched hand
 She sings in her lilting voice
 The boy joins in the refrain
 She sings to her Beloved
 Rousing the whole world from its melancholy.

When your heart is soft,
 plant a sapling in it,
 for when it is parched,
 the tree will blossom into a thousand
 red flowers.

A flower, a feather and a leaf,
 rolling along the road,
 somersaulting in the wind.
 I am the lazy beetle
 and you are my dancing leaf.
 With you I feel again the cosmic dance of the universe
 in my veins.

When the swirling waters go still,

i see inside me dancers, dancers, millions of them
they dance with measured joy
the measure of joy they give me is infinite

I was afraid of travelling,
but when I came away I saw
I have walked alone a long long distance

Somewhere in this world,
surely, this moment is the moment of Dawn.
Somewhere in this universe, surely,
this is the moment of birth of a star.
Why not rejoice then, this moment of darkness?

The children in the calendar have grown up.
But I did not see them run,
wild with the poetry inside them.
I only imagined them playing with their friends,
jumping all the obstacles life had placed before them.

Come God, sit by me,
Come God sing with me,
Come God, pray next to me
For the good of this Earth

The train to Shantiniketan

The Baul singers, clad in orange
with their ektara,
sang from the depth of this country,
where the very ancient and the
very modern live side by side.
The enchanted singers filled the

train with their powerful voices
 dispelling all melancholy
 calling to their Beloved,
 their Moner Manush as
 the anklets and the ektara
 kept the rhythm.
 Then came the Tagore singers
 and the flutist.
 Calmly and melodiously
 they sang and played,
 "Ganer shurer ashon khani.."
 and "spread the welcoming
 carpet of songs"
 for the travellers to rest.

Ancient wisdom

Ancient words of wisdom are hard to live by
 But if we do, we truly live.
 They are like the rivers which feed the ocean,
 The threads that make up the carpet,
 The love that shines through humanity.

My friend, Pawan

The train rolls into Allahabad Junction
 People rush towards it,
 and look, there goes Pawan Prajapati
 carrying the load on his head
 making his way to put his passenger onto the train.
 People drinking tea throw their cups
 and get onto the train.
 People rush to the station tap
 to fill their bottles.
 Pawan, my friend, settles his passenger
 in his seat, pushes his luggage under the seat
 and gets his small remuneration.
 He gets off the starting train and waits
 for the next passenger and next train.
 Thus rushes Pawan,
 like a breeze through life
 carrying the burden of India on his head.

Woman: Has not enough of my blood
gone into the Indian soil since puberty
to make me Your own daughter?
The Earth smiled and kissed her on her forehead

Heroic

What is heroic?
The girl in the wheelchair
So full of dreams
Defying her terminal disease.
She seems to say,
"Think of life as what you have got
and what you have to give".
Wisdom seemed to pour out of her
as the rays spring out of the sun,
this death-defying philosophical girl.

Man

You have created thousands of things,
built machines for comfort,
And aeroplanes imitating the bird,
Pondering on how Nature works
you have delved into Her secrets.
In your happiness you have created
In your rage, you have destroyed.
Maybe one day you will conquer
the solar system, the galaxies,
their hidden secrets probed.
You will change the landscapes
To adapt to your needs.
With grace and sensitivity
You will make home for the weaker
Who will nurture you in turn.