

Songs of Silence

Kulbhushan Kushal

The Author

Kulbhushan Kushal has worked as a lecturer in English at B.U.C.College, Batala for fifteen years. He did his Ph.D. on Raja Rao's fictional art. His three collections of poems published in quick succession have already attracted a lot of critical attention. A bilingual poet, writing in both English and Hindi, his poems have appeared in several journals including among others, *Poetry*, *Poetry Times*, *Poetcrit*, *Indian Book Chronicle*, *Vikalap*, *English Journal*. As a critic of both English and Hindi literature, his articles have appeared in several journals like *Chandrabhaga*, *Dakshin Bharat*, *Nai Dhara*. He has also co-edited *A Spectrum of Indian-English Fiction: Critical Studies, Emerging Modes and Metaphors: A Study of Indian-English Fiction and Perspectives on the Partition Fiction of the Indian Sub-continent*, critical books on Indian-English fiction. *Songs of Silence* is his fourth collection of poems. His other collections include *Shrinking Horizons*, *Rainbow on Rocks and Whirlpool of Echoes*. At present he is working as the Regional Director DAV Institutions, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

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OTHER BOOKS OF POETRY

by

Kulbhushan Kushal –

Shriking Horizons

Rainbow on Rocks
Whirlpool of Echoes

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Who Dares

Forty Christmas have passed
Millions of words flutter
Deep in the cage

Thousands of murmurs
Mutterings meandering
In the misty mornings
And dusky evenings

Orphaned afternoons
With dumb words
Dancing around
The dark fire

Who dares say
A melting truth
Who dares tell
A rainbow of lies

A deep smothering
Mere mock soul searching

Shallow Deep

To confront a river
May seem easy
Easier to wade through the waves
And the easiest is perhaps
To evade it

Confronting a river is
To allow the flow of thought
Dreams and nightmares
Dance wildly
Within you

You may shut your eyes
Still you continue
To see the myriad colours
Of the demonic rays
Whirling
In the melting light

You still would continue
To weigh the depth
Of the shallow articulation
Made in a hurry
To please the mighty scepters
Swaying swords
In their known havens
Yet inviting
Wrath of Heaven!

Game

That night
A wolf roared
In his favourite haunt
I played a lamb

Of course
He played a wolf
His play I think
Was more authentic

My game-
A tame affair
Punctuated with fears
Mercilessly edited version

And I regret for editing
My emotions that night
Still I wonder
Why a lamb, I played

What prevented me
To tell him
You are a sheep
In wolf's clothing
And me a lion
Locked in a cage

Choice

When he speaks
His eyes measure
The weight of rocks
Sitting on my shoulders

His tongue licks his wounds

And he says—
So it happened with him
He too does not know
What avail is innocence
Among the devil's children

He always tells me
Perhaps rightly
We are the victims
Of our own dreams
Or perhaps of our choices

We choose the nook
And the hook
And willingly walk
To the gallows

Hangman is just
An excuse
To hide our will
Our will to kill

Captive Muse

What a price
For the soft gain
In vain we now regret
We ravishingly
Mortgage our souls
Deliverance then we seek

How to live wisely?
A question
Too intricate
For my wits
Perhaps, for yours too

Better to spend nights
In the forest of words
In the ocean of fire
Weaving dreams
Out of scattered colors

Perhaps you will write
A verse or two
Worth to be placed
On the altar of Goddess
When you are free
From the passion to recite

A desire to incite
Beyond the shallow hearths
Unbalanced

The art
Of balancing the opposites
Reconciling the incongruities
They say, is difficult

Perhaps, not so—

Oppositions when balanced
Mere change the names
Shedding their glitter
For a while
They feed the ego

The master craftsman
Ever ready to play
Does not know
What follows next

What dreams
Beyond the melting rainbows
What exciting games
On the silken surface
Of dancing rivers

Sky in Your Hands

Yes, you are right
You were right

When I talked
Of nations and organizations
Of the sprawling sky
Stretching for million miles
Across my head
Horizons unknown
I felt like a prophet

But how false my projection
How untrue my words
You instead, were right
You talked of a piece of sky
In your hands

And long before
You knew

There is nothing
Beyond the self

There is the land
Of vain promises
hollow claims
Coupled with
A host of blames

Trees and Men

Confronting a tree is
To invite a wild question

Where are your roots?

To this question of a tree
You have no answer
But explanations
Rationalizations
And vain justifications

A tree stands with dignity
While you bend and crawl
Still you boast of roots
With shiny branches

Man's roots are
Perhaps nowhere

In the sky
He imagines
The Heaven
And under the earth
A burning hell

What an irony
From where he sprouts
He explores it
For ever his roots elude
And branches delude

You and I

On the margins I tread
You dance in the centre
I am a lover of the shallow deep
You a dweller of
Deep, deep
And still deeper depths

Endeavour

Confront the sky
And tell
What does it mean
To look straight
In the eyes of a lion

How full of flight
Are the stars bright
How solid the gentle moon
How cold the hot sun
And how stony the
Shining galaxies

To confront the sky
Is to meet the self
Or at least
An endeavor
To weave
The texture of a poem

Better you postpone the game
At least for a while
Forget the sting
In the sensuous ring

They

They will sing a song
And we shall forget
Our homes

They will sing a song
We shall forget
Our Gods

They will sing a song
Our prayers
We shall forget

They will sing a song
Our Gods
We shall not remember

They will sing a song
We shall chase
Manufactured slogans

They will sing a song
Our visions shall be stolen
In broad daylight

Sacred Danger

To meet children
Is a sacred danger
An invitation to exposure
And millions of posers

Shall we answer
All their questions
Or shall we play the old pastime
To weave for them
A net of answers
Convenient solutions
Of all the knotty sums

Their curiosity is too bold
To be blunted
Their arrows too sharp
And their harp
Too fertile

Millions of melodies they sing
In their imitations
There is an earnest invitation
To raw originality
To nascent inventions

Should we shun them?
Should we allure them to sleep
Under the heap
Of trite responses

Burden

More confrontations
More clashes
With the planets around
Psychic rhythms of seasons
Followed by subtle treasons

A hollow life
We carry on our head
And on our shoulders
Living corpses
Of memories dead

Songs of Grandmother

After 53 summers
Weathered under a guava tree
I again hear
The songs of grandmother
Reminding me
Of dancing rivers
In far off deserts

And of those wild flowers
Thickets, herbs and shrubs
Profusely growing
On the banks of the rivers

And those colorful wall calendars
Mirroring huge Govardhan
Dancing on the tip of a finger
Naughty Krishna
With flaunting smiles
Sitting on the hood of "Sheshnaag"
The frisking mouse around "Shivling"

And the face of an aunt
I never met again smiles
In those moon lit nights
Those songs of grandmother
Stored in disks hard
And chips brittle

How to retrieve
With a click of a mouse
The hazy melodies
And the misty texture
Of those haunting songs
Fragmented
On the waves of the ocean
Grandmother never had seen
What do we replace
When we replace the chips
We merely change the place
A location exchange
For amusement

And those laughing rivers

In the dancing deserts
Rushed to my drawing room
Playing with the tortoise
And the shining crystals
Auspicious for the luck
To visit the haunted house

The needles
In the eyes of songs
Pierce hard
And prick
The nerves of the chips
And these bleeding chips
Shall sleep in ambulances
Rushing for relief
In the crowded roads

The songs of grandmother
Walk in the lanes of memory
And the dream cities of the fancy
Celebrating strange virus
Jamming the internets
Corrupting the useless data

Perhaps better are
The songs of the grandmother
Than all the poems composed
Recomposed lost and regained
Through a magic trick
Break your magic wand
Your hand is no more fond of it
You just relax and listen
To the songs of Grandmother.

Green Darkness

After many years
The forests have called again
Reminding me of my promises
To visit them soon
They have flashed an SOS —

Flowers are very sick
Trees are suffering from cancer
The lions nowadays laugh like mad
The elephants are searching for “Mahavat”

To take them for a stroll

And green parrots are hiding
In the thick foliage
Singing endlessly
About the dead sparrows
Wounded pigeons

The river in the outskirts here
Is again flooded
Come soon and have a look
The fish are restless
And million monkeys
Sitting on the banks
Dream of
Jumping across the river

The days dear have lost their path
The nights are orphaned
Stars have flown back
And hid themselves
In the mountains far
The burning woods
Crave for more birds
To sink in the flood of fire
I think its time for you to come
And tell us
Where have you been
All through these years
What have you seen
In distant lands

We hope your dreams have survived
We hope your hopes are green
We hope your legs have strength
To walk back in green streets

And what about the gifts
You promised to bring
When you return
Forget not to bring your mobile
We wish to talk to the "Neelkanths"
Lost in recent storms
We wish to talk to the birds
Last year flown beyond the rainbow

We wish to talk
To those romantic damsels
Who visited about 5 years back
With their cameras swinging in their arms
And had photographs of our wounds

Our smiles and laughter

We wish to talk to mummies
Know about the dead
Sleeping with their balmed bodies
And wish to talk to astrologers
Predicting death after life
And life after death

Also bring
Your small wonder machine
Those televisions
We wish to see
The romantic malls
And frightening marts
We have also heard of cabarets
Where we are told
Nude girls flash their bodies
Splash their smiles
Lash their tongues
And sing songs of sadness out of joy

Bring also the photographs
Of your friends
Of all those friends
Who affectionately betrayed you
While you were celebrating
Their birthdays
And praying for them
For their long life and health

And also bring some coins
We wish to travel with you in the metros
To have a ride in the double deckers
Or may be aeroplanes to have a view
Of our dear trees and the rocks

If you can
Bring some medicines
For the injured flowers
For the trees smilingly dying
Out of deadly cancers

And you told about some mantras
You have recently learnt
Come soon
And please chant those mantras
To liberate us from green darkness.

Puppets

Intimate imitations
A retreat in the country of rocks
A dance of puppets
Their broken hands
Hold not the string
Their stony eyes
With amorous winks
Is an amusement for the blind
Their fractured feet
Run fast on the bleeding mountain

Tsunami has swallowed
The tiny fingers
Of decorated puppets
Better you retire
In the cobwebs of spiders
Glistening bright
In the cruel sun shine

In our dreams now
The puppets shall shriek,
Haul and cry
The daggers in their hands
Shall frighten our kids

The puppets play with ghosts
And in those bloody endless nights
When sleep refuses to sleep with us
We kiss the pillows
And with bouquets in our hands
Greet the strangers
Who know us not
Get up puppets
Dance in the green rooms
Rehearse your text and
Learn your tools
Watch your steps

The rhythm in your movements
Is a contrived trick
A crafty gesture
To entice the customers

Your dance is all noise
A rattle of rhymes without rhythm
A heap of husks without grain
Puppets, it is better you pack up
And sleep in the velvet box
The beat of thread
On which you dance
Is dumb

The dance of puppets
In the country of rocks
Is a treat, a retreat
In the land of cactus

Its better we search our identities
And get lost in the bright darkness
Holding hands of statues
To the land of liberty
A curse that man alone suffers

Dome

In this dome
Where I am putting up
For the last several years
There are cobwebs of rainbows
And walls of rocks

With my echoes I talk
The splash of echoes has colours
Add intensity to my words
And I really fall in love with them

My poems get stuck in the cobwebs
And shriek for deliverance
And the dancing moon
Beyond the dome laughs
And those carvings
On the walls of dome
Are dear to me

That carving-
Depicting parrots
On a guava tree
The sparrows twittering
On the branches of mango grooves

And echoes of nightingales
Singing in the late evening
Songs of rivulets
Near that forlorn village
Where young laughing girls
With pitchers on their heads
And shaded dupattas
Around their neck
Silently whisper

Romances in the air

And the stories of girls
Who fled from villages
To marry the Prince of dreams
And the talk of visiting ghosts
From the graveyards
On the banks of a sleeping lake

Echoes have few questions
Why are we born
Only to transcreate
Why the ears read not
Beyond the sound

Why the melodies are mute
In the dark nights
And why the texture of sound
Refuses to be naked
In the light of the day

The domes were made
For the God
To mutter the blessings
To utter the curses

Let the echoes of blessings and curses
Walk to the men
Busy selling their products and services
Camouflaged as panacea
And substitute for penitence and penance

The cycle of Karma
Is the ultimate terminator
Terminating sins and *punyas* alike
Commanding Pandvas
To leave the palaces at once
Straight to Himalayas
Where Echoes wait to embrace them
To the cosmic dome of sky

The rainbow cobwebs are torn
And now are born million new Suns
Million moons and trillion stars
To greet the melodies beyond the skies

Plea

You are rightly told
Never fight fair to strangers
They talk glib
And their hands are soft
Enticing their smiles
Fragrant their embraces
Are hard to resist

And again the victor is the victim
Of strategies of God
It's a magic island
You have a wand of magic
And *Marich* has an endless guile
Capacity superb to transform
In lucid forms

Now the golden peacocks
The silver *Kamdhenus*
And sin cleansing Godavari
Is caged in the temples of worship

Propitiated to stay smiling
To watch the sinners choosing to dip
In the celestial waters
Cursed to clean their sinful deeds
Murky thoughts, bloody hands
For these sinners, what salvation
Better they are rusticated
And thrown to *Vaitarni*

Where the tails of cows
Net them to drown
In the deep turbulent waters
Till they cry for mercy

An easy plea hard to receive
And all those rituals
Pretext to postpone the penitence
Are discounted deals
Complimentary breakfast
And happy drinks between 7 to 8

Before you sleep to sin
In the corridors of your memories
Murdering your brothers
Snatching the foods from hungry
And endless tricks to deceive God
His favour bought with regular prayers

And the *prasads* and *charnamrats*
Generously distributed as festival gifts
Hold on, check back
Do we qualify for this?

Better we talk to Godavari
And deliver her out of the temple
Allow her to dance on mountains
And give her freedom to curse
To curse us to stay
With our dirty sins

Better she curses us to be blind and deaf
To be lame so that we
Dare not walk to the temple so pure

Let the sanctity stay alone
And let the sinners weep
In the dazzling nights
And the golden days
Better we pack up and rush
To our deals and count the profits
On non transparent transactions
The fringe benefits we have
For working as mercenaries
For coffers to swell

Intimate Strangers

I wonder
How I am related with the trees
They have never been my classmates
They have never played with me
They know not my language

They are not initiated
To the figures of geometry
Complex quantum theories
Structures of atoms

But I have seen them trembling
When there is an earthquake
I have seen them frightened
When the lightning
Strikes across the skies
I have seen them
Lost in deep meditation

They often dance in my dreams
And their shapes and sizes

Their leaves, flowers
And fruits often greet me

The mango branches
With green leaves
Auspiciously decorated
The thresholds of my home
Their flowers were there
When I was married

They remind me of dense forests
A stage for many stories
Where humans assume
The forms of animals
And perhaps share more freely
Their dreams and anxiety

I have also seen them
As the backdrops of theatres
Their relation with me
Continues to be a mystery
I am indebted to them deeply

They gift invisible gifts,
Add charm to the views
And add life to the life
They are often
The mute spectators of my moods

I feel relieved
Touching their comfort stems
And their branches
Sometimes remind me
Of my father's hands

The more I reflect, the more I believe
We are intimate strangers
They are alien friends
Visiting our planet

Let's greet them
And know from them
The mysteries about their planet
The source of perennial energy
Pure air, *pranna* supreme

Fragments of Fire

These unwritten poems

Are the fragments of fire
Convulsing in my mind
In stormy winter nights
Burning hot summers
Graceful autumns
Naughty springs

Fragments of fire
Convulse at odd hours
They burn bright
When I ponder
On the reckless profits
When I search for sweet losses

The fabric of failures
Is punctuated
With volcanoes of hopes
Twittering sparrows
And never to fly parrots

The fragments of fire convulse
When I am mastering
The folk art of proficiency
When I am chasing
The super games of demonic efficiencies

The fragments of fire convulse
When lost
In the foliage of reminiscences
I search for frightened moon
Running beyond the clouds
And the wet puppies shivering
In never to stop rains
These fragments of fire convulse
When riding on the horses of rhetoric
I trample on meanings
And chirp in terminologies
The babble of scholars
In the moon lit nights

Fragments of fire convulse
When my spirit rebels
At the barking men
And tamed dogs

The fragments of fire convulse
When the dished out assurances
Smoulder and stink

Like stale vegetables
Gathering moss

The unhygienic stuff
Smartly packed
For instant consumption
With romantic presumption
Fat assurances are
Injurious to health

Desires

When the blood rebels
In the skeletons
Space stretches beyond horizon
The sinking sun
Jumps like a dolphin
In the whirlpool of desires

Then the laughter of skeletons
Echoes in our rooms
Stars dance in our minds
And chariots of time run wild
On the pavement of flesh

The contact we seek
Often is a victim of short circuit
Gifting blazes of fire
A treasure of relics

Our possessions
Are the tender shells
Splashed on the rainbow of desire
Scattered on rocks
Playthings for vultures and jackals

Spring blossoms in old deserts
The autumns with vermillion
In the parting hairs
Dance in our orchids
Inviting us to join
The chorus of the impotent spirits
Hovering at nights
Around the burning pyres
The songs of barren wombs
Haunt our minds
For years to come

When the blood rebels
In our skeletons
We talk the walk and seek refuge

In our tormented dreams
The proxy gratifications
Coiled gestures of prostitutes
Protecting with their full might
Their sacred breaths
In the market of flesh

We wonder
Whose blood is this—
May be of ancestors
Long dead and gone

Beware of skeletons
In the cupboards
And their dance
In your dreams

Cosmetic Cosmologies

Our honest pronouncements are
The most dishonest assertions
Our stinking courtesies
Faithless gratitude
Are characterized
In crafty images

How painful is to say
We are commission agents
Slyly selling blessings of God
Marketing his rhetoric
To impeccable structures
And spotless infrastructures

Insatiable is our lust
To be the heroes
In this bloody comedy of errors
And horrifying terrors

Whirlpool of transactions
Frightening volume
Of our engagements
Are our stupid disengagements
Making us princes of poverty
Paupers begging in beautiful springs

It is foul to say
We nurture sensitivities
Senile our senses
Orphan our eyes
Crippled our legs
And bankrupt our minds

We are the masters
Of cultivated glamour
And cosmetic cosmologies
Better now we howl at nights
And bark in days
The languages
We cultivated with diligence
Are deadlier than currency
A device we invented
To counter the curse

We are the murderers
Of tender innocence
The killers masked in rainbows

No wonder we shop
Fancy items for our children
To engage and orient them
To our times

For distress we administer
The dose of incremental stress
From evaluation to assessments
Our crafty antiques, our pure schemes
Reflect our impure designs

We dig the graves
To bury the dead
And tempt the alive

Prayer

We are aliens
Alienated beings

Thank you seasons
For disowning us
Never had we been
Sincere to you

Spring
Never we walked
With you hand in hand
Yet you continue
To gift flowers to us

Winter
We have tinkered
With your warmth

Very discomfoting are
Our comforting air conditioners
Poor substitute
For your magic touch

Autumn
Thank you
For staying from us
We would have made you
Utterly uncomfortable
In our homes

And rainy season
Thank you
For raining profusely
On mountains and rocks
In our cemented houses
You are an unwelcome guest
Our children crave for you
And have a fancy bath
When we capture your drizzles
In the screens of our television sets

Sky
You have been very wise
Right from the beginning
You have not mixed with us

You preferred
To stay away
And above from us
And watching our shallow games
With million stars- your eyes

And earth
Thank you
For not responding
To our prayers
We claimed to be
Your adopted sons

Thankless are our prayers
And hollow is our gratitude
We eat what you give
And in turn we pollute
Your heavenly stretch
With our curses

And trees
The plants and the creepers

Thank you
For not walking
From your places
We would have cut your feet
And nailed your fingers
We are the alienated aliens
Blessed with your blessings
Cursed with our curses
We pray to God
To make us permanent aliens

Lest we should trample
On the sacred sky
The loving earth
Gentle trees and the fire

We pray to you
Please stay away from us
Our touch shall temper your heat
Shall steal your warmth
And shall rob your sacredness

Poem

A poem
I am writing for you
Shall show
The laughter of the sun
The pain of the river
The dance of the trees
The talk of the stars

The intensity of hatred
The emptiness of love
The power of betrayal
The magic of evil

Sheer helplessness of good
God's defeat
Satan's joy
The richness of beggars
The poverty of the rich

The silence of language
The acrobatics of grammar
The puzzles of mathematics
The shrunken globe

Predicament

In the valley of flowers

With smiling rocks around
The sky lit in the moon lit nights
The company
Of twinkling stars
I often feel alone and wonder
How to relate with heaven

The sky is the barrier
I am curious to see
What is out there
Beyond the stars
What are the stars to me
How am I related to the moon

I wish to walk on milky ways
I wish to chase the shooting stars
I wish to pluck rainbow
And gift it to my mother
Who I believe is there up in the sky

The luminous vibrant
Entities of nature are there
Perhaps to provide a perspective
To the anarchic perceptions
To the simmering agony of the soul
The tired spirit wishing a release
Alienated from flowers
From the trees, the dusky leaves

I search for a meaning
In the magnitude
In the maze
Of metaphors
In the profusion of images
And in the symbiotic symbols

Market

Smiles of the sales girls
And the life-size statues
Greet me to the super marts
The faces of the icons
Splashed on the newspapers
Sponsored commercials
Attract my attention

For a while I feel

For me and me alone
The icons smile
And the packaged goods
Are there for me

But what are the sales girls to me
What is that statue of a woman
With that inviting breasts
And enticing smile

What do they want from me
What I want from them
Who runs the markets
For whom are the markets

Are they negotiated places
For fabulas civilities
And hard commerce
I think they have
Already played the trick

I am market addicted
Take the markets away
I may shrink
My son may get depressed
And I may be exhausted
Without saying much
The global identity
The branded is the best
Is a cruel joke of the century
Markets generate million images
Greedily collected lustily preserved
In the chambers of our minds
Till we start visualizing
Our minds as market

Our dreams are market oriented
Our themes market centered
Markets we are
Markets we live
God! lead us
From market to home

Reluctant Sky

I often felt in the moonlit nights
Far on those silent hills
Fairies are dancing and singing
I wish I could join them
And know more about
What happens

On the banks of “Sangarma”
Late at nights

I looked constantly at the sky
And often established an intimacy
Talked of my dreams and aspirations
The stars up there always seemed
Eager to share their experience

I talked about my pet
That green parrot
Who I had fondly brought
To my home

The pet reminded of the stories
Of that old lady in far off distant land
The lady who had shared
Some secrets with that parrot
The secrets about her hidden possessions

The sky often appeared very inviting
Lovingly participating in my life
I could relate more easily
With the sky than my friends

Now I talk to the sky not very often
The sky perhaps is not interested
In my dreams my aspirations
I wonder why
Perhaps I am possessed
Not by fairies
But the dreams of power and glory
The sky laughs at it and tells me
The tales of the rocks
The mountains and the trees

Sky advises me
To go back to “Sangarma”
To go back to the “Pipal” tree
And to go back to the parrot

I am confused
Instead I read books
And quiz papers
I am yet to find a reference
A reference to the sky
A reference to the parrot

Conversations

The dead are alive again
They shall be
Knocking at your door
In the quiet summer afternoons

Please don't edit their voices
Don't quiz their looks
Just walk to your door
Greet them with folded hands
Bow your head
For blessings supreme

Dare not parade
The brittle currency notes
You've recently manipulated
Out of the bloody sales
And hooked the fish
Though only the skeleton remains

Beyond the lightning is
The abode of the dead
Thunder of the clouds is
Their music
The bark of the dog is
The greeting
On their arrival

And the weeping of the dogs
Are the sad elegies
Sung at late nights
And early mornings
At the cruel departure
Of the dead
Dare not show your trophies
Your acrobatics of knowledge
Your power-point presentations
And mixed, remixed,
Lustily edited
Versions of thought
Textured by cosmetic feelings

The dead are alive again
Dare not speak
In the languages
Alien to them

Your bloody rhetoric
The twists and turns of phonetics

Shall never approach
The proximity
Of a strange song—

A haunting tune
A melodious malady
Singing of a deep sorrow
Sitting under a guava tree
Knitting for the strangers
Weaving for the unknown urchins
Running in the streets

The tears
Smoldered the fire with it
And every minute
The fire lit a flame
Dare not take them to your malls
The fantastic transaction halls
Where you buy and sell
Sell and buy
It's just a dance of sphinx
Day and night
Invite them with grace
So that you may trace
A genealogy
Back in the mountains
In the rocks
And in the shooting stars
And in the wild, weird
Waves of the ocean

Invite them with grace
It just may be your father, mother
Grandfather, grandmother
Or for that matter—
Somebody else's
Father, mother,
Grandfather, grandmother

The real players of real life
Who involuntarily retired
And volunteered their blood
For the free dance
In your veins
So that you may run
And they watch

The dead are here again

The dead are here again
The dead are here again

Vampish Afternoons

Green, raw afternoons
Wrapped in simmering silences
And the dreary
Murmurings of the dead
Awake fast

Feasting
Around the cremation grounds
Strange afternoons
Mingling sounds with silences
The endless stories of pirates
And the parrots

These afternoons
Were not meant for
Solving ratio and
Proportion sums
Angling the triangles

And those numericals
Who caressingly invite you
But just two steps after
Leave you in the lurch
For conjecturing the solutions

The fine,
Ultimate answer statements
Immaculate-
Leaving no scope
For zeroing in
Even zero mistake

And those fantasized hurrahs
After getting hundred out of hundred
Those afternoons
Green and raw
Were not the times
To remember
The names of the capitals
Of the distant countries
And the names of rivers
Flowing far, far away
From the docks
Beyond the horizons

I forgot my Sangarma
Remembering
The names of those rivers!!
And my wonder
Was thunder-struck
By the terms and terminologies
Like heaps of empty shells
On the beaches
I gathered leaving no foot-prints
On the sands of time

My dead aunts and dead uncles
Frequently came to meet me
Those afternoons
Under the guava tree

The feast
In the cremation grounds
And those lullabies
A string of sounds
Without words
Celestial music
In those barren afternoons

Now those afternoons
Are just interruptions
Without regrets
They are neither raw,
Nor green
Just a point, a span after noon
Till it transforms
Back into evening
An uneasy calm
A mechanical break
For looking around

May be, fooling around
Through meticulously kept hedges
And well trimmed branches of trees
For striking casual conversations
Digging sensations
Out of senseless, stupefied routines
And looking beyond
Those flowers, persons
Moving up and down
Shouting, shutting their ears

Afternoons are actually
No man's time
Generally we are not disturbed
And are left alone

To plan the hunting strategies
So that we have the trophies in hand
Before closing them

Very mischievous
Are the afternoons
They trigger demonic thoughts
In our demonic minds
May be-
Planning a cold-blooded murder
Or strangulating the girl friends
Through strategies of silence

Anarchy of Peace

Our drunken words
With unsteady nuances
Are staggering around
In the seminars and conferences
Pronouncing doomsday ahead

Don't pray for peace
In the dreary afternoons,
The dull evenings
And not even in glittering nights

The anarchy of peace
Punctures romance
Dwindles engagements
Disengages the graves
From the dead

The anarchy of peace
Is too bold to hold,
No wonder-
Long silences deliver shrieks
And the hard rocks,
Burning volcanoes
In the moonlit night
Sob like a child
Recently orphaned

Peace is the curse of *punyas*
A beggar's delight
And a haggard's put on
Peace is a mask
Inviting pigeons
To play with grains
Till they are stealthily devoured
By the wandering cats,

And the hungry brats
Peace is a mission thrown open
To colors to dance
A spotted canvas
Mutilating
The whiteness of the white

No wonder,
The hangovers of peace
Are not very lasting
Soon they submerge
In some wild tsunamis
They are ripped
By ripples of lust
Contrived insults
Are the worst weapons
To suck *pranas*
Out of spirits

The provider of peace
As He is famed to be
Has been master of turbulences
No wonder in all his ships
His deadly weapons around
Supported by invisible arsenals

Here a *brahmashakti*
There a nightmare
Agnibaan,
And several of the kind

In His garden
Of anarchy and violence
Peace is a blossom
Like no man's fragrance
It's no man's land
Everybody is free to tread
It's an implicated consent
Like in all rapes
A subtle element
A feminine principle overplayed
How to know
The states of minds
The rape of fragrance
Is a crime
A sin sinister
Initiating to
The blessings in disguise

Like –
No more

You shall be entrapped
By the virtuous conducts
No more shall you abhor
Gentle aggressiveness
No more shall you sing
Songs of joy and pain

No more shall you crave
For a touch of the flesh
With fragrance in your nostrils
And the dancing shape
Of fire in your mind

With steady steps
And may be, drunken words
You'll walk
To the gates of Hell
A preview of fallen Heaven
Where angels are blessed
To delight in pain
Where lust remains lusty
For eons to come

Graveyard

Graveyard is
The right place to dance
Not that the floor is crisp
Not that the musical instruments
Are music addicted

Graveyard is
An ambience supreme
For the dreams to grow
And for the realities to be buried
For the skeletons to speak
And for the spirits to soar

No crammed lessons
No noisy, wild knowledge
In the corridors of graveyard
No traffic jams
Though heavy,
Full of emotions

But a quick transaction
Just seconds,
A huge crowd thronged
And Lo!
It has dwindled away
Even those

Who have not touched
The departed body
They also want
To wash off the connection
With the sprinkling spree
Of calm water

The pyres in the graveyard
Are the *mudras* of dance
The flames of fire
Aspirations aflow
A heavenward stretch of hands
At rhythmic inter-flow
Of the fire and the earth

Enough space
For the poetry of movement
For the celestial spirits
It's a delight to see
The perishable elements to join
And as on the earth
Imitate the divine...

Shiva performed
The first dance in the grave
With skeletons around the neck
And the hissing cobra
Jumping around
With hisses providing
A celestial music
To the dance of
The mysterious steps of Shiva
And the clattering
Clanging of bones
A great music
Instrumental accompaniment

You may wonder
Why grave is the right place for dance
And may announce it perverse
As it is not tuned
With the festivals and festivities
The dance of lust
With meandering gestures
Contrived restlessness in the body
Jumpy, throbbing breasts
A sequence of oozes
Before the hungry mirrors
An insatiable hunger

For the flesh

Here the dance will be watched
By the thousands
Of Greeks, Jews,
Christians, Muslims
Who subtly trans-migrated
In the wild earthquakes
And volcano eruptions
What a fantastic
Inter-space exchange
And inter-continental
Collaboration of ghosts!

We lack patience
If we leave to nature
We may be transported
To countries unknown
And the known
The fancy islands
And the ancient museums
Without any transportation
But hurry we do

Who will wait for million years
For the earthquakes to come
And for the volcanoes
To hold us in their mouths
And the wild oceans
To take us through
Subtle under-water sub-ways
To the countries afar

Dance in the grave
Is an invitation
To cosmic connectivity
To hold the hand of *Maya*
Multiplicity of propensities
The graveyard is

Just offer your gestures
Your rhythmic movements
And regulated steps
To the million spirits
Readying to be launched
To the flesh!!

Dogs

Dear are dogs and owls to me
Dogs are dear for their colors
And the clumsy movements

They are loafers
Wandering in streets
Sometimes chasing
But often chased away

Left to themselves
Dogs may decide
Not to bark at odd times
And not to come
Close to humans

Men bark volumes
But cannot stand
The barks of dogs

Dogs are dear to me
As they do not pretend
They are not pedantic
In their expressions

We are disturbed-
Why do they bark
The way they bark?

We curse them
If they bark late night
And if they croon
It predicts doom
And with the stones
We chase them away

Dogs may laugh at us
At our contrived faces
At our gullibility
As we believe
We are sleeping
And they are awake!

Strange are humans
And eccentric their fantasies
Among themselves
They sign the contracts
But expect dogs to work
To wait and watch
Without even "smiles" in return
It is both penny wise
And pound wise....

Whirlpools

These whirlpools of silences
Are dear to me
Their frantic dance
On the canvas of my mind
Often reminds me
Of shrieking, demented minds
Locked for care
In the asylums of mental health

Their pregnant howls
And incoherent courses
Are the discourses of silences
For the experts
Piecing together
Cementing with care
A word here, a gesture there

Our verbal acumen
Often slips
In the dancing whirlpools
Of curious silences
Where
Riding the rainbows
We swim across the rocks
And in the backyard of our homes
Feign to collect
The debris of the shooting stars

Proximity, for years
Soaked in graphic reminiscences
Tiny reptiles
The zigzag growth graphs
Leaves me to wonder
The gift of strangeness
The proximity bequeathed
I search for arms
Pushing the cradles
In the murky springs
In the golden autumns
I look for those feet
That accompanied me
In the early dawns
And late rainy, wintry nights

Never I fathomed

The sighs beyond words
Shrieks beyond sounds
Those hyphenated conversations
The cozy engagements
Are lost in the sands of time

How do I assume
How do I presume
The warmth of proximity of silences
Dancing in the whirlpools of orbits
Relaying my reminiscences
To the unknown planets

Where shrieks
shrink not into metaphors
Words resign not to images
Meanings are not contented
With their precise denotations
And weak connotations

Soon I wish
To empathize
With the vacant spaces
Lost in the mazes of sound
Soon I shall be performing the rites
With intriguing rituals
And shall be jumping
Into the whirlpool of silences

I shall willingly consign
The golden discourses
Voluminous commentaries
Critiques of reason
Irrational rationalities
And all those lullabies
You sang for me
Out of love

Deserts of Dreams

In these deserts of dreams
We often walk alone
In the glowing days
And shrinking nights

The dancing colours
Of the dream nets
Often remind

Of the fishes
With their rainbow scales
Pacing through the stretches of water
Surging through the weeds
Whispering to their comrades
In the languages strange

I am often greeted
By the dogs
With their stretching tongues
And focused eyes

They seem to be
On the prowl
Looking for strangers
To bark at

Comfortable in the dark
These dogs
Pray at late nights
To mysterious gods
And tell them strange tales
Of this land
Of deserts of dreams
The dogs have witnessed
The frail strengths
Surrendering to silences
Shrunk to corpses

The dreams are
Consigned to the fires
In these deserts of dreams
Free are the inmates
To laugh, to weep
To shriek and to freak

My friends
Who always talked measured tones
Ritualistically observed civilities
Are running with daggers in their hands
Curses on their lips
And hell in their eyes

In the streets near my home
And all my relatives
In the deserts of dreams

Come singing and dancing
To celebrate
The end of proximities
To celebrate
The new spaces to walk
And new stories to talk

And in these deserts of dreams
I often hear
The stray talk laying bare
The metaphysics of intentions

I am pushed back
By the gentle winds
To check back my green glories
Spersed with dreary nights

And the dark days
Shall you walk with me
In those deserts of dreams
Shall we resolve
To measure, the infinite stretches
With endless hungers and thirsts
And look beyond that burning moon
And the cold sun

Shall we talk
To the camels of deserts
And check with them
What millions of souls thought
Walking through the forests of sands

And what were their last thoughts
Before they buttoned down
The life current
And said good bye
To the desert and
The dreams

Search

These are not strange times
The seasons have
Negotiated with the weather
Summer is tampered
Winter is lukewarm

The springy spring
Has just slowed down
The bloom of lilies
The dance of daffodils

Autumn has added
A rosy shade
To the yellow leaves
And those crimson flowers
Are a bit bright
In the dusty evenings

The rains are in a playful mood
After a cozy retirement
They have opted for hide and seek
In all seasons
And the frogs croak like nightingales

In the mango groves
The howls of owls are heard
In the predawn orchestra

The times are not very strange
The hot passions
Boil at non standard temperatures
The couriered invitations
For glittering weddings
Are not profusely sprinkled
with kumkum and haldi

In our vacant moments
We are engaged interpreting
The prattle of parrots
Frozen on the handkerchiefs
And the songs of freedom
Are not that sweet

Yes, we now often
Close for the day
A little early
And the nights are little late
The dreams are
Rationed now
We invite you to
Plunder
If you can

These are not very strange times
Knocks without noise kiss the door
And we are vigilant
During the full bright days

We stammer
And our words
Stumble on our lips

We are just a little busier
With nonscheduled matters
And the hidden agendas

These are not that strange times
Just a few
Alternate alternations
Just a search for
Right adjectives
For wrong nouns
And for paralytic verbs
Some active adverbs

Bylanes

Weave with dreams
A texture of words
With designs of desires
With colours of wishes

Fine-tune the fragments of rocks
And the flakes of snow
Chisel the petals of flowers
Neatly arrange them all
Delicately submerge
Their hues
And lightly plant
The shapes in that texture

Invite the rainbows
To converse with you
Invite the mountains
To recline your head
Invite the sparrows
To twitter for you

Greet the flying pigeons
To engage the fractured springs
And smiling autumns
Coax the texture to tell
The tales of Gods
And demons alike

Shun not the nightmares
They too are the dreams
Not fairies alone embellish the fringes

With smiling smiles
And wanton metaphors

Stagger you may
On the pathways bright
And palmy beaches
Measure the staggers
With unsteady steps
And with the firm
Focused mind

And see it please
The texture is not pecked
By astray fleas
And boneless termites

Sometimes when the going is tough
Shun the stuff
That bluffs the soul
And roughs up the dolphins
Swimming across
The ocean of your mind

Opt to walk in the bylanes
They too are the paths
Alienated subsidiaries
For ansilatory thoughts

Spell of the spell

How long shall last
The spell of the spell

The dance of stars
Whispers of trees
Songs of the sun
Lamentations of the moon
Conversations of the river
And the whirlpool
Of fragrances of flowers

How long shall last
The dancing monkeys
The stumbling bears
The naughty rabbits
The gentle lions

How long shall they continue
To flash their faces
When I am lost
Counting words

Discounting meanings
Sequencing images
Hammering metaphors
Aligning symbols
With the texture

How long shall I carry
The phantoms of faces
Met in anonymous crowds
On the railway station
Parked parks
And ever -busy marts
When shall the songs of river
Sing a melody
For my restless thoughts
And coiled emotions
Orphaned sentiments
Ever simmering smothered violences
Volcanic lusts
And never to be quenched thirsts

How long shall work
The contrived trade transactions
Prenegotiated bargains
Welcomed by crafty smiles
And shaking handshakes

How long shall they continue
To live the lies
Easy to believe
And difficult to leave

How long shall
The cycle of sweet circles
With vicious speed
Continue to haunt
The moonlit nights
The gentle lights

Hollow men

We are not hollow men
We receive fast
We conceive fast
We deceive fast
We fast fast
We presume
We consume
We assume

Our assumptions reflect
Mathematical precision
Geometrical configurations
Structural designs
Anthropological illusions
Mythical profusions
Phenomenological illusions
And archeological intrusions
We are not hollow men

We multiply at the speed of light
We petrify at the speed of orbits
We justify the stale truths
We deintoxify anesthesia
We are not hollow men

We encode words
We decode discourses
We attend courses
We parade dialectics
We are not hollow men

Business is our business
We buy fast
We sell late
We sell fast
We buy late
We are not hollow men

In our mind
Are celebrations of brands
In our ears
Are the fancy bands
We strive, we strand
We are not the hollow men

We deface the faces
We erase the traces
Our love is stream of symphonies
In our thighs are the volcanoes
Our hearts monitor the gaze
We are not the hollow men

We are quotient driven
We are the customers
For customized items
We are not the hollow men

We strike packaged deals
We thrive on distant inventions
We bless gods
We curse God
We are not the hollow men

Times

These are not difficult times
Rocks hardly block the ways
Mountains melt in winters
Rains trespass summers
Springs as always, smile bright
Communication flies across all barriers

We are not in a hurry to define love
There is no hurry to commit
Transparency guides us to murky deals
Prayers packaged fine are available in DVDs
Ready to obey just with a touch

And there is a change
In our moods in our melodies
Painless soft interventions
Are very comforting
Distractions have lost their shine
We frequently
Revert to them for relaxation

These are easy times
There are gains without pains
And there are pains with gains
Recipes are available
In plenty for all maladies

There are scanners to scan the trust
There are banners to pronounce bans
These are easy times
Our minds manage disasters
And our managements manage our minds
Manipulation is a skill
We all wish to excel
The entry to heaven
Is manipulated in Hell

These are easy times
Distances are mobile
Proximities are out of fashion

Stay wired even if you are tired
Virtue is substituted by virtual

In these times
It is easy to live
And easier to die