

# Whirlpool of Echoes

Kulbhushan Kushal

Nirman Publications

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*For*

*Narinder Neb in friendship and in love*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Kulbhushan Kushal has been writing poems both in English and Hindi since his college days. The magic world of poetry has always fascinated him. No wonder, several of his poems reflect his preoccupation to explore the mysterious yet familiar world of poetry.

Kushal, through his poems, graphically highlights the traumatic effects of horrid and mechanistic aspects of our ultramodern cultural orientation celebrating the vainglorious achievements and increasing control of technology.

Through multidimensional focus on the sordid and dehumanizing aspects of the human sensitivities under stress, Kushal weaves the poetic texture reflecting the apparently contrastive worlds.

In his "Face of The Mask" Kushal states that a "face is the best mask" for all seasons and for all treasons. The growing blurring of distinction between the illusion and reality—prompts the poet to think that other masks have very serious constraints as they need to be oriented every time to be more effective and have to be further contrived to fit in the situations. Let the face be optimally versatile to perform the functions of the masks of all varieties and hues. The poem is poignant in its tone and climate. The ritualistic decorum has robbed the sensitivities and has taken away their brilliance and shine.

The natural world which the poet has always celebrated and cherished is fast crumbling due to the onslaughts of new reality orientations rewarding demonic efficiencies and proficiencies and shameless exploitation of the uninitiated.

Kushal's themes include the growing divide between the natural and the virtual world : though existing together, both the worlds appear to be strangers to each other. The technology is vehemently striving to regulate and microcontrol both natural and human domains.

Almost invisible chips are planted to penetrate deep into the mysteries of nature. The imperialistic designs of technology lords are nefarious.

Like others, the poet too, is not sure about the things to come.

Nature is being distanced from this virtual world.

Kushal continues to take the reader to the realms of nature to show that virtual is artificial and transitory. Its controls are inherently constrained by the mystery of the universe.

Another theme of his poems is to explore the deeper aspects of human emotions and their response in various situations.

For the poet, the emotions are important as he knows that the emotional perspectives to experiences provide meaning and significance to human interface with all orientations. As feelings determine the subliminal trends of our thoughts, Kushal often takes the readers to the territory where it is difficult to predict the response.

His poems reflect the passionate desire to explore the effects of interactions with virtual, natural and emotional situations—significantly these interactions and encounters continue to haunt the poet's mind. Generally value judgements are suspended but the states of mind are celebrated.

Stylistically, Kushal's poems may be called a poetry of perspectives and perceptions. The moments, situations and even the points of view are seen through multiple perspectives. This sometimes gives the reader an impact of tentativeness and eternal transition. Poetic statements are the strategic linkages for co-ordinating the different strains.

The poet is keen to align the meanings with metaphors to achieve communicative proficiency. But paradoxically, he is aware that the business of poetry is not to chase precise meanings but to highlight the ambivalence of meanings to explore metameanings.

The texture of his poems is woven with repetitive images providing a referential framework to the poetic utterances. The imagistic significance is reinforced through the operational and functional value of the images in the particular context. Often these contexts are some memorable experiences which the poet chooses to deal with through poetic amplification and treatment.

(Dr.) N.K. Neb

## **TIME TO CELEBRATE**

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Soft betrayals  
And hard promises

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Simmering smiles  
And boiling loneliness

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Burning springs  
Melancholy winters

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Cursed blessings  
And disguised curses

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Lingering sweet regrets  
And stretching blanks

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Dreams of rocks  
Faces of masks

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Hooking of whales  
Carrying rainbow crosses  
On our stony backs

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Negative affirmations  
And positive denials

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Love turned hatred  
And hatred turned love

These are the times  
To throw  
Stones on the moon  
And to leave alone  
The glorious sun

These are the times  
To invite  
Waves to our homes  
To release the frogs  
To their favourite ponds

These are the times  
To bait sparrows  
With grains  
To release parrots from the nets

These are the times  
To measure  
The potency quotient of our trusts

These are the times  
To stitch the world  
With needles  
To unweave the dense designs  
These are the times  
To celebrate  
The music of the spheres  
Deafness of the earth

These are the times  
To bring restless echoes home  
To walk alone on the banks of Sangarma  
And to invite ghosts for lunch

These are the times  
To dance around the burning pyres  
And to learn  
Terminology of genetic engineering

These are the times  
To invoke the spirits  
Sleeping quiet  
And to conjure fairies  
For the festival of lights

These are the times  
To sing songs of despair  
And to say goodbye to hopes

These are the times  
To parade failures

And to repent for successes

These are the times  
To celebrate  
Union with our relatives  
And weep for their favours

These are the times  
To celebrate  
The death of our friends  
And to drink the poison  
For their delight

## **DANCE OF MASKS**

In the dance of masks  
Faces are intimate strangers  
Their smiles  
Charm us not  
Their lips  
Kiss us not

Barking metaphors  
Remind us  
Of thundering clouds  
In strange summers

The laughing masks  
Again play  
Hide and seek

Hot is the game

There  
Beyond the palm leaves  
Dances a face  
And here  
Sunk in rose petals  
Smiles  
A tender  
Tattered mask

The invitation of masks  
Is hard to resist  
Faces are paupers  
Begging  
In the lonely streets  
Alms to feed  
The hungers deep

Shut not doors  
On the faces  
Escort them with courtesy

Tomorrow again  
They will dance  
On our television screens

For flirting remotes  
Difficult it is  
To sift the face  
From the mask  
And that dangling smile  
Flying in the air  
Is dear to me

Better to launch the masks  
To the skies  
There let them dance  
In the dreary nights  
There let them read  
Poems with passion  
Let them display  
Their skills in rhetoric

Let's join  
The dance of the masks  
Let's join  
The dance of the masks

## **I FEEL SAD**

So many autumns  
So many stumbling springs  
So many warm winters  
Grammar of love  
Still a hard nut to crack

The barometer of truth  
Is lovingly engaged  
Measuring  
The intensity of false promises  
Delicate dreams

The interventions  
Of the old grandfather  
Are unwelcome symphonies  
In this season

And the dancing bangles  
In the rotating prism  
And the crammed equations  
Of chemistry  
Reluctantly yielding  
To the lab tests

The formulae explained  
By the teacher  
With elaborate workings  
On the blackboard  
Are no good  
In this season  
Of murky dealings  
And ruthless trade  
Of elusive transactions  
Where our net gains  
Are in fact  
Our invisible losses  
Posted in the balance sheets

I am sad  
To read the letters  
Overflowing with blessings  
And prayers to God  
For my well-being

Long prefaces  
Preceding  
Relevant statements  
Crisp demands  
Shamelessly dressed  
In the rainbow of sentiments

Fish has known now  
The coloured hooks  
Spread your nets  
With care

The birds  
May conspire  
To fly across the heaven  
Holding the gentle net  
In their beaks  
And those often quoted  
Recipes of success  
Are stale mantras  
Ineffective  
Promising no instant solutions

Better we check back  
With the fundamentals  
The basics of hatred  
Before championing  
The cause of love

Not always  
The doors shall be opened  
With your gusty knocks  
They may shut the doors  
Right on your face  
And say goodnight  
Even when  
You are not  
Ready to sleep

### **ENOUGH OF IT....**

Endless reviews of the songs of nightingale  
Twittering of linnets  
And musical imitations of parrots  
Shall not lead  
To an illumination of the dark planets  
Blessed to revolve  
In their orbits  
Cursed not to walk out  
On the foamy skies

Have you ever seen  
The dance of planets  
In the dark nights  
The shooting stars pierce the milky ways  
Beyond the twinkling of the stars  
And the smiles of the moon

There is a concern  
Concern for the dead  
For they shall never ever  
Visit the human habitation  
Polluted beyond repair  
Hedged by dreadful nightmares

Where innovations are lost in imitations  
And the phenomenal super technologies  
Are just the advanced versions  
Of a harpoon or a wheel  
Like a movement in the motion picture  
When sequenced fast  
Appear to be a mighty race  
What we hold today in our hand  
And purchase our bonafides  
Shall determine for inheriting  
The objects of desire  
Are the rewards stolen

From those who sweated hard

We all have become petty traders  
No wonder, we talk  
Of negotiations and strategies  
Counts and discounts  
Treats and retreats  
Guarantees and warranties  
And after-service agreements

No wonder-  
With trade barometers in our hands  
We measure the beat of relation pulse  
Swing of status sensex  
Truth is abominable  
Not acceptable  
In times out of joint

And the dance of planets  
In the dark nights  
Reminds us of the music of Spheres  
Where brands are debranded  
And you are not permitted  
To meddle with  
The sanctity of flowers

With a devilish shine of jewellery  
The embellishments of a prostitute  
Are no substitute  
For simple, chaste intimations of love  
And with the music of spheres in your ears  
And the dance of planets before your eyes  
You may shout at the top of your voice  
Enough of this rattle of words  
Enough of the slogans sweet  
Enough of this shock talk  
Enough of these conveniences and comforts

Soul yearns for stretches sublime  
Craves intensely for a touch benign  
Liberating from the relation nets  
And all other internets  
**DREAMS ARE....**

Dreams are realities  
Hampered while chasing  
The rainbows across the Heaven

Dreams are the songs  
Of the birds when captured  
In the golden cages

Dreams are mute tribulations  
Visual feast  
Of sulking desires

Dreams are the fragments  
Of promises unkept  
And hopes betrayed

Dreams are the splinters  
Of a volcano  
Emerging out of oceans  
Magically transformed to water  
Shaking hands with boys and girls

Dreams are an unfinished story  
Of a man and a woman  
Rebuked to stay  
Away from the garden  
Cursed to eat apples  
And eternally experience  
The sting of cobras

Dreams are reminders  
From the distant worlds  
They are the wake-up calls  
To get, set and go

Dreams are always wrongly famed  
To be beautiful and lovely  
Often dreams hurt more  
Than innocent realities

Dreams are unfinished poems  
Carrying in their wombs  
Mysterious metaphors  
Encoded by ghosts

Dreams are technology debunked  
Leading us straight  
To the primitive days  
And sometimes to the ultimate days  
Making us see  
Technology paralysis

Mock action drills  
For fighting real disasters

Dreams are our friends  
Sleeping in our minds  
Plotting against us  
Praying for themselves

## **THE HAND**

I am looking  
For a hand  
Tampered in fire  
Graduated to fly  
On high altitudes  
Of raw passions  
A hand that weaves  
Rainbow for nights

I look for a hand  
With a touch  
To transform  
My agonies  
To bleeding metaphors  
Sobbing images

I look for a hand  
With experience of writing  
Poems on the waves  
Carving paintings  
On the mountains  
Launching birds  
In the dreaded storms

A hand that holds tight  
My nerves  
Languishing  
Affectionately exiled  
In dark dungeons  
The crimson fragments  
Of my nightmares  
Insist not to kiss  
Cajole me not  
Out of stupor  
My thoughts rush  
To deserts  
My eyes dance  
On the burning rocks

My heart often  
Misses throbs  
The unsteady lines

On the E.C. G.  
Are indicators  
Of the ecstasy  
Of a broken heart  
Sighing deep  
Looking at blooming dawns  
And aimlessly scattering  
Multi-coloured hues

In the evenings  
On the lonely seashore  
The old sun  
Is now tired  
Who will leap for him  
In the ferocious waves  
Ready to swallow  
My smiling moods

Friends since long  
Have crossed my name  
From their list  
Of active contacts  
They have thrown away  
All my letters  
In the sulky archives  
And reluctantly pay homage  
To my passion  
Telling stories  
Of my wanton acts  
Editing all details  
To their wives  
In their vacant evenings  
They hate me for my guts

I look for a hand  
That may just reign  
My horses  
Restless to fly  
On the metallic roads  
Leading to bloody markets  
No different than  
Red-light areas  
With yellow faces  
And blue eyes

The sin is sacred  
Treasure it please  
This alone shall open  
For you the windows  
To heaven  
And then you will be launched

To the worlds  
Of untainted bliss

You will discover then  
How discourteous are  
Our courtesies  
How hollow  
Our gratitude  
The smile of a cobra  
Is better  
Than your contrived thank you

And all those foolish gifts  
You exchange  
In the marriage parties  
Are hackneyed tricks  
To register your presence  
A cheap gimmick it is

Better you look straight  
Cleanse your heart  
Out of jealousy  
Transfuse your blood  
And detoxify  
The bastard lust  
Running in your veins

It's time  
Stop looking for hands  
Mere puppets hands are  
Dictated by the clever thoughts  
And schematic minds

Look into the eyes  
Better listen to the ears  
Witnesses to the murky games  
And loving shames  
The insults, which you cherish  
In your heart  
Vomit them out  
Roar like a lion  
In the busy marts  
And announce

I am here  
To hold your hand

# DARKNESS

The darkness  
In the house of lights  
Is no stranger

For years  
I have seen her face  
Her tender smile  
Gentle gestures  
Bright shining eyes

Her dazzling songs  
I have often heard  
In those pensive  
Rainy seasons  
When frogs prefer  
To jump out of ponds  
And hop on  
The banks of rivulets

She shrinks  
In my cupboards  
She stretches  
On my beds  
Her crimson skin

Her crimson colour

Are too inviting

This darkness resembles

The miniature paintings

Carved in some distant caves

In the snow clad Himalayas

Carved on the walls

On the relics of temples

Of Harapa and Mohanjodaro

Are her varied moods

She invades my being

Splashing laughter

Sprinkling smiles

The fragrant tresses of her hair

Swing in my mind

In some stormy nights

When the trees dance wild

And the birds

After a few initial flutters

Stay put in their nests

And the wind shrieks

Like a witch

Inviting demons

To the festival of death

I have often met her

In those serpentine domes

Echoing the silences

Of mute metaphors

The other day

I met her

On the malls of Simla

Buying toiletries

And perfumes

I have met her

In the serpentine narratives

Nibbling interlinkages

Of episodes

Shadowing the archtonic structures

And the minds of the characters

At nights

Darkness is hyperactive

Like a seasoned witch

She prepares her potions

And lotions

Mixing history and fantasy

Fantastic structures

She weaves

To engage the readers  
Her charms lure us  
To labyrinthine of romances  
Pictorially depicting  
The shades of shadows  
And the colour of the rain

She escorts us  
To the dancing bars  
To the sea of  
Thrills and frills  
Her presence is dear to me  
Her symphonies sooth my nerves  
Her melancholic symphonies  
Add brilliance to the songs  
I will not exile her  
To the lovely woods

Nor shall I  
Throw her out  
From the house of lights  
She plays with me  
In vacant afternoons  
A game of love

She always wins

And I always lose  
The darkness  
In the house of lights  
Is dear to me

## THE PERILS AHEAD

You thought  
I am a parrot  
Eager to fly  
Across heavens

You divined  
My lusty thirsts  
To mingle  
With tribal folks  
And the clan  
Of shepherds  
In the far off valleys

You fathomed my dreams  
To sleep in relics  
Pining to see  
The fabulous fairies  
Dancing  
In the secluded spots  
In far off jungles

Haunted by spirits

You perhaps knew

My wild thirst

Clamoring to be quenched

In the whirlpool of knowledge

You also could see

A bright brilliant snake

Dancing in my mind

With a ferocious tongue

To lick the flesh

Of wanton bodies

And to kiss

The lips of the glowing damsels

You rightly quizzed my feelings

To embrace

The naked dreams

And scatter the seeds in

Barren deserts

You could imagine

All the dangers

Perils unknown

The contagious diseases

I will contract

With the vulnerable contact of flesh

You could see

The tombs in the wombs

Your innocent mind was

Too strange

For you to understand

The varieties of stratagems

The grammar of deceptions

And the sham of receptions

How well you could see

The limits of my intelligence

And the fertility

Of their resourcefulness

To net me

In their wily plots

You could perceive with ease

How I shall be robbed

In the day-light

How the sirens will suck my blood

And friends will say

A hurried goodbye

When the pleasantries are over

The measured exchanges

Of incremental doses of love

You knew I hate

You thought

I am a parrot

And tender are my wings

You thought my colour is my enemy

And the red beak is no good

For the iron nets

And the golden locks

You endlessly repeated

The lullabies intelligently scripting

The message

In the nonsensical verses I heard

But cared not

Now in deep trouble I am

Lost in the maze of meanings

And the shower of petals

Honors make me restless

I read traps

In their maps

And designs in their desires

You rightly thought

I am a parrot  
Destined to peck  
The slices of honours  
And the golden locks

Now I often hear those lullabies  
I care for them  
But dare I understand  
The perils ahead?

## MISSED CALLS

Whose missed calls are these

I often look at the missed calls and wonder

Whose missed calls are these

May be the missed calls from friends

Swimming across the rivers deep

Confronting whales and sharks

Perhaps they wish to share

The thrills of swim

Perhaps the metallic tiredness in their arms

They wish to talk about

Perhaps the knocking dreams

At the doors of their minds

They wish to share

A dream to fly beyond the rocks

Beyond the clouds

Beyond the deserts

And beyond the howling sky-scrapers

May be they wish to share their fright

Confronting a whale

Looking temptingly in their eyes

Before a leap to swallow their bodies

Or perhaps they wish to talk about

The noisy sharks just arrived

To take them deeper into the sea

To romantic chambers of sirens

For the dance of death

Or perhaps they wish to share

Simmering agony in their hearts

For nursing the deep wounds in their soul

Perhaps they wish to talk about

Their foolish negotiations and stupid deals

They finalized last month

For mortgaging their conscience

For a few dollars and shining pounds

Perhaps they wish to betray a secret

Carved deep in their hearts

A secret chasing them like a shadow

In the dazzling days

May be the missed calls from my enemies

Who wish to challenge me

To a fight in an arena

Again boasting of their power and guile

May be the missed calls from the parrots

Who have lost their way to nests

In the stormy summers

Since many days I have not checked

These missed calls

I let you know more details

After checking tomorrow morning

Meanwhile let's miss

These missed calls.

And grim dark nights

A secret of crimson adultery

And their attempts to molest

The raw green beauty of flowers  
In far off jungles  
Perhaps they simply wish to say hello  
To know about my thinking graph  
To have a peep into my dreams  
And my plans for years ahead

These may be the missed calls  
From my departed uncle and dear aunts  
Sitting in heaven or perhaps in hell  
Regretting their loveless embraces  
And subtle design to trap me

In their cunning craft

## **HAVEN OF ROCKS**

This is the country of rocks  
In the desolated deserts  
Blossom stones  
Pebbles dance  
In the whirlpool of sands  
The Dinosaurs  
Jumping on the rocks  
Dream of green valleys  
Full of flowers

In the country of the rocks  
We chase the lesser Gods  
We dream of fairies trapped  
In a desire net  
We learn secrets deep  
Swiftly we handle  
Efficient technologies  
Efficiency makes us smile  
Proficiency unscrupulous

In the by-lanes of the main lane  
We let grow our subsidiaries

A dumping ground  
For oscillatory thoughts  
Bastard ideas  
A warehouse  
Stinking with black money  
Shining with metallic metaphors  
And the aborted baby  
Thrown on the highway  
Has been punctuated  
By four wheelers  
And now the baby-  
With truncated hands  
And fossilized body  
Twinkling eyes  
Dances in the moonlit nights

A gentle terror  
To the custodians of chastity  
A gentle chastisement  
For the self-proclaimed  
Moral anarchists  
Destined to hide their faces  
In the black glasses of white cars

For pleasure alone  
Children are not born  
And all ejaculations  
Are not precursors to creations  
Mind your bodies  
You are steering them recklessly  
Hold on...

It's not the business alone  
That goes astray  
For want of light  
In the dark, dense  
Call of profiteering  
Essentially, there may not be  
Much difference  
Between substituting  
And prostituting

We need training  
To stay focused  
Homes we are proud of  
Are relics reckless  
Nurseries  
For pleasant discordances  
A training ground

For evolving strategies  
To combat innocence

It's really great  
For want of brands  
For want of substance  
And the absence of real rhetoric  
We push our families  
To camouflage our passionate gaps

With their hands  
We bridge the distances  
Along with them we knock  
At the doors of strangers  
They become beggars  
It's the time we engineer  
Community begging

We beg for justice  
We beg for peace  
We beg for love  
We beg for glory  
We beg for honour

In the country of rocks  
We beg penance from dinosaurs  
We beg mercy  
From the way  
We trample on the highway  
From the prostitutes  
We beg forgiveness  
Coaxing them  
To become puppets  
Dancing on hearing  
The clamor of coins  
In the country of rocks  
We ask forgiveness from the nation  
For auctioning its territories  
For mortgaging its sovereignty  
For making the motherland  
A market-land  
For multinationals to come

Thou will eat  
Your neighbour with respect  
Thou will deceive  
Your brothers with love  
With love alone  
You will violate  
The solemn vows

And in the country of rocks...

It's mandatory  
To preface your statements  
With an official pronouncement  
With malice towards none!  
No offence meant  
Even if your intestines are smashed  
Courtesy: conspiring insecticides  
And pesticides  
No offence meant  
If our lullabies make you restless  
For nights to come  
No offence meant  
If my sales figures zoom up  
And your savings deflate  
It's malice towards none

In the country of rocks  
We ring for money  
We sing for money  
Our gentle traps  
Our courtesies, our pleasures  
Our rainbow nets  
Our lukewarm wars

All aim at  
Dynamiting your homes  
Destabilizing your shops  
Burning your factories  
Demolishing your skyscrapers  
And raping the milkyways  
Shining in your skies  
For better tomorrow

In the country of rocks  
These are but a few steps to bulldoze  
We promise a complete overhaul  
Consigned shall be your all trophies  
To the bottomless additions  
Meaningless perditions

In the country of rocks  
Time is of no avail  
In the country of rocks  
Rocks alone will grow  
Rocks wrapped in rainbows  
Shall dance with the sun

And in the country of rocks

Words shall be exiles  
They will be cursed  
To dream meanings  
To deliver phonemics  
Phoney shall be the practices  
In the country of rocks

Oh! God, lead me soon  
From the country of the fields  
To the country of rocks

## **CURIOUS RIVER**

The river is no more a river alone  
The dancing phantoms  
Sing hilarious melodies  
The waves- all fire  
In the afternoon  
Calm in the cool evenings

The tiger cubs  
On the banks of the rivers  
Dream the running deers  
In the thick forest  
The river reluctantly reflects  
The antics of naughty rainbows

The pebbles of this river  
Are too gentle to be used  
As arms in self-defense

The beginnings of the river  
They fancy -  
Are in an oak-tree cave  
The river leaps  
To the crimson cremation grounds  
Mercurial splash of the water  
Adds to the fury of pyres

Dear is the river to my grandmother  
They whispered many secrets  
To each other's ears  
They embraced  
All the shining and the shadowy dusks  
Gifts from Heaven to Earth.

For village urchins  
With raw, wild- but innocent faces  
Gently smile at the leaping fish  
Bursting out of waves  
The sparrows dare to cross  
The river without boat

The parrots offer pecked guavas  
To the gentle waves  
On their homeward retreat

Mistake not the river for a poem  
It's neither a mother,  
Beloved courtesan, a fairy, nor a witch  
The river is a river  
Always resisting  
Your lurid romances  
You cannot walk into its beauty  
Without your pants on  
And shirts sitting pretty  
On your bodies

The river will compel you  
To be a child first  
And then dare to meet the waves  
It invites you to throw pebbles  
And affectionately disturb  
Its own serenity  
Dancing in circles

### **COFFIN OF DEAD FACTS**

The newspapers are vendors  
Hawking in the streets  
Marketing the stale news for fresh  
Like the fish-selling beautiful girls  
With their wild eyes  
Tempt us to believe  
The dead fish for fresh  
And coax us to take it home

Newspapers serve  
Terrible delicacies  
On our platter  
With sprinkle of  
A nude poster here  
And a smiling mask there

Short is the life of newspapers  
Very short the active life  
Children do not look at them  
Young ruffle but do not shuffle  
For old a vacant past-time  
And instant excitement

An extension of hand  
Of friendship and sympathy  
For the orphans in Afghanistan

Widows in Iraq  
And the homeless refugees in Palestine

Mothers are happy  
When sometimes  
The newspaper brings home  
Some recipes  
For babus it is very dear  
They keep it like a keep  
Possessive both in day and night

They build vocabulary bridges  
Through the gleanings  
And advise  
Their wayward sons and daughters  
To write words daily  
From the newspapers  
And learn their meanings

Who cares for this  
Stupid learning orientation  
And the newspaper  
Is a jarring orchestra  
Caw-Caw of the crows  
And the tears of the jackal

At best it is rhetoric raped  
Language ravished  
The children barter the newspaper  
For a few toffees  
And the coloured kites  
Delight to fly across the sky

Reading newspaper  
Is a sober pretension  
It's an update in treachery,  
Cunningness and crafty designs

It launches us  
To demonic possibilities  
The other day it said-  
The son killed father  
And the father the son

The newspapers are coffins  
Carrying the dead facts and live stories  
Wrapped nicely  
Lest crevices be known  
And the gaps shown

## **PRAYERS**

They say-  
The prayers are effective  
In Hell too

Wedded to fears  
Prayers seldom stay alone  
Angels embellish their faces with prayers  
Gods swallow them raw  
Heaven does not hoard prayers  
Actually, there is a drought of curse  
In the streets of paradise

Grandmother- not for a single day  
Missed her prayers  
Her elaborate prayer rituals  
Several mornings compelled us  
To go to the schools  
Without breakfast and her rebukes  
Not a bad deliverance for us

And the prayers my grandfather said  
Generally in the afternoon  
But very quick and smart  
Like two minutes for prayer  
Three minutes for bath  
And one minute for getting ready  
And there you are

My prayers have shown  
Resilience supreme  
Their texture has assumed  
The tone and colour of circumstances  
Bright they are during the day  
And dark at night  
I've packaged them well  
For God to buy

The hard negotiator He is  
Asking for discounts on fair deals  
On zero budget  
He has created the universe

No investment, all profit  
The show has stayed on  
More than any other  
Business Empire in the world

God's business- God alone knows  
We are contented with idioms like  
Penny-foolish, pound-wise

Happy with the prayers of our ancestors  
Standing on Mt.Sumiro  
With million hands he scattered  
The gold on the earth  
And the silver on the mountains

Since then we are cursed  
To crave for the gold  
To crave for the silver  
As it always comes  
In small pennies

Like the booty in the wedding  
The penny is showered  
On the bridegroom  
Picked up cautiously  
But never sufficed  
For days to come

Prayers are instant dreams  
An intercourse with eternity  
A fictional paradise  
Host of empty shells  
Are the prayers  
And the shadow pebbles  
Lost in the shark's belly

## **LUSTRE LOST**

Enough of ire  
Objects of desire  
Lost in the shining  
Brilliant surfaces  
Soft, coloured and inviting

We are not tired  
Chasing mirages  
Dancing  
On our metallic roads

We have collected  
Thousands of shining comforts  
Promising heaven-  
Freedom supreme  
But they have robbed us of  
Our brilliance, our shine

Dependence they have bred  
Incapacitated we sit  
In hotels, in motels  
Sing, songs of love  
Read from our scriptures  
Reset our compasses

And every time we are lost  
On the waves of gentle oceans  
Every afternoon  
We feel that again  
Another morning

## **TIME, THE THIEF**

Time has stolen  
Crimson colours of dancing flowers  
Search them in  
The waves of water

Time has stolen  
Meanings from words  
Search them in  
The caves of silence

Time has stolen  
Knowledge from information  
Search it in  
The twitter of sparrows

Time has stolen  
Romance from the heart  
Search it in  
The milky ways  
Up in the sky

Time has stolen

Value from the money  
Search it in  
The eyes of orphans

Time has stolen  
Dreams from our minds  
Search them in  
The laughing rocks  
Time has stolen  
The beauty  
From the youth  
Search it in  
The web of embraces

Time has stolen  
Peace from homes  
Search it in  
The loneliness of neighbours

Time has stolen  
Innocence from children  
Search it in  
The smiles of the aged

Time has stolen  
The shine from the moon  
Search it in  
The wild, wild deserts

Time has stolen  
The warmth from the sun  
Search it in  
The shivering laughter  
Of winter

Time has stolen  
Love from the hearts of mothers  
Search it in  
The broken hearts  
Of children

Time has stolen

Leaves from a tree  
Search them in  
The roots  
Deep in the earth

Time has stolen  
Impact from the slogans  
Search it please  
In the silence  
Of the crowds

## **I HAVE A DREAM**

I have a dream  
Rocks shall laugh  
And invite the stars  
To dance with them  
In the moonlit nights

I have a dream  
The mountains shall sing  
A song for the clouds  
And rain will be there  
In the deserts hot

I have a dream  
The trees shall call the birds  
To sing for children  
And make them think of fairies

I have a dream  
The school shall become  
A paradise  
For the children to play

And I have a dream  
The teacher shall initiate  
The young to learn  
The grammar of fire

I have a dream  
The girls shall blossom to fragrance  
Scattering their healing touch  
For the tired travellers  
In the distant lands  
I have a dream  
That my dreams  
Shall weave the reality

Into the texture of rainbows

I have a dream  
The borders shall disappear  
Inviting the aliens  
To share their delicacies of thoughts  
And magic of ideas

I have a dream  
The books shall become baskets  
For the children  
To play the ball

I have a dream  
The rich shall unlock their lockers  
For the destitutes to buy  
Gifts for their kids

I have a dream  
The moon shall smile  
And the children tired  
Of tireless routine  
Shall dream  
Of multi-coloured flowers  
Whispering in the gardens

## **I HAVE A FEAR**

I have a fear  
Spring may not  
Knock at our doors next year

I have a fear  
The summer may not be  
That hot next year

I have a fear  
The winter shall be  
Very warm next year

I have a fear  
The stars may not  
Twinkle in the sky next year

I have a fear  
The friends who  
Held my hands for years  
May walk away  
With their eyes full of tears  
Next year

I have a fear

The tender dreams  
Who slept with me  
May meet in nightmares  
Next year

I have a fear  
The gentle river  
With shining waves  
May rush to the unknown caves  
Next year

I have a fear  
I'll forget  
All the promises  
Made to God  
Next year

I have a fear  
My beloved who  
Danced with me  
In moonlit nights  
May choose  
To stay in distant lands  
Next year

I have a fear  
The dancing flowers  
In my garden  
Shall hijack  
All the butterflies  
Next year

I have a fear  
My relatives may  
Refuse to recognize me  
When I approach them  
With value talk  
Next year

I have a fear  
My pleasant mornings  
This year  
May greet with tears  
Next year  
I have a fear  
The letters I wrote

In the dark, dingy rooms  
Shall be stolen  
By my dears  
Next year

I have a fear  
The rich  
Boasting of the riches  
Shall lose their shine  
Next year

I have a fear  
I may forget  
All the poems  
Written in fond memory  
Of puppies, parrots  
And the rainbow girls  
Next year

I have a fear  
My mind may not  
Recall the silvery nights  
And golden days  
Spent in your company  
Next year

## **LOST AND WON**

With the necklace of agony  
Around our necks  
And pots of poison in our hands  
Gathering shells of betrayal  
On the beaches of love

The girls laughed

Vultures looked at them  
Sighed deep and said  
They are not yet initiated  
To the game of love

The bloody game  
An eternal gamble  
No returns  
Investments day and night

Till you are bankrupt  
But not tired

You approach the new players  
Cautioning them of dangers ahead  
A challenge to climb  
The wall of roses  
To swim across a wall of scent  
Brittle rocks  
Whirlpool of tears  
Orienting them to strategies  
Of holding the ball of emotions  
Weighing in your hands  
And then focusing it on the basket  
And not throwing it straight

Twist is a must  
The grammar of tactics  
Of temptations and retreat  
Endless dodges  
Till you succeed

And, of course  
Reflexes and reflections  
Inspections and introspections  
Speeding steps  
Fox- like looks  
Lion-like courage  
And no talk of futility  
When the goal is near

Hell is not the end  
So is not the heaven  
Earth is the place my dear  
Where games are played  
Where games are won  
And games are lost

## **ANOTHER FEAR**

I have another fear  
The dead will walk  
Out of graves  
The gurgling oceans  
Shall splash  
The shore with sirens

The toys we gifted  
To our children  
Shall refuse to play with them  
Our rainbow promises  
Shall silently melt  
Into gloomy nightmares

I have another fear  
All roads will lead  
To death caves  
Where dark rivers are  
Running relentlessly  
With peacocks on their heads

I have another fear  
With the dawning of the day  
I shall forget  
The names of my friends  
Their love soaked words  
Their tender touches  
Will dance  
Like mercury  
In my eyes  
I have another fear  
The beggars will invade the palaces  
And the mighty governments will fall  
With their tender smiles

I have another fear  
We shall forget  
The scriptures  
And our gods

I have another fear  
The dancing girls in the bars  
Shall smother the smiles  
And sip their tears  
In the coming years

I have another fear  
We shall invade the sky  
And all the twinkling stars  
The naughty moon  
Will not play tricks

And his mighty wand  
Will not make the waves delirious

I have another fear  
We shall not be  
Talking straight  
Our minds will be lost  
Seeking adjectives for nouns  
And adverbs shall replace the verbs

I have another fear  
Our voices shall not then be active  
Nor passive  
They will be  
Cursed to stay in twilight

And our narration  
Neither direct nor indirect  
But simply directionless  
As the braying donkeys  
And barking dogs

## **DECEPTION**

Terminologies have been terminating  
The essence from the roots  
And those fond pedantic commentaries  
On the Gita  
Every time eluded our vision  
Of million suns  
And the countless horses  
Running on the golden paths  
And the golden eagles  
Flying on the mountain tops  
To lay their eggs  
For the generations next

And beyond his flute  
Who could see  
The rhythmic melodies  
Showering solace  
Scattering fragrances  
On the banks of Jamuna  
And those grazing cows  
In the stretching greens  
Rush to him  
To have a mantra  
Of deliverance

The bondage of milk  
Is very intimate  
It may be flowing through  
The nipples of the mother  
Or the teats of the cows  
Milk binds us all  
And nurtures  
Strange illusions  
And that sarathi  
In the fields of Kurukshetra  
The real coordinator  
Integrating the fibres of strength  
And disintegrating  
The rebellious doubts  
And potent impotence  
A gift of over-thought  
And sentimental indulgence  
Of the bonds of milk

He only appeared  
To cover the side-lanes  
Not a mere prompter  
But a real promoter  
Declaring for Arjuna  
No scripts for salvation

On the razor skin of sword  
Walk is a must  
And the talk of love  
And call of sentiments  
In all these greetings and gratitudes  
Are pleasant day-mares  
Pleasant dreams  
Crushed with  
Gentle tender deceit knocks

Love is a strong deception  
An empty promise  
We are ready to buy  
Intensely dear  
And to immortalize it  
We are ready to export  
Our spirits to Heaven  
The glory earned by stratagems  
Remains sweet for generations  
And it is time

Dear Mritunjaya  
To gauge and gaze  
The ever dreaded  
Depths of shallowness  
And discover  
That terminologies are  
Mere initiators  
A support to walk  
Not substitute for steps  
And I'm sure you know  
The seeds of ice  
Hide the mountains big  
And all these rocks  
The huge avalanches  
Marching on the sea paths  
Are the tiny stones  
Blossomed so big

Here, and here alone  
Is the essence  
The power to transform  
In magnitude  
Resulting into siddhis of sadhus  
The invisible miniatures  
Even more invisible  
Than the end  
And vishal roopa  
An ability to grow  
Beyond the norms  
Lashed out by the waves of maya  
We are ready to hold in our hands  
The immediate supports  
And the beginnings  
Cannot be the end

## **AT STAKE**

There is a call  
From far off valleys  
They wish to be pregnant  
With the echoes  
Of my songs

There is a call  
From distant Heavens  
Beyond the skies  
They call  
Urging me to pray  
They wish to deliver their barrenness  
With a sip of nectar

Of my prayers

There is a call  
From the friends  
Who are dead  
And who laugh  
Like mad at night  
They call me from afar  
Candidly threatening me to leave  
And urging me to recite  
Those sizzling hot  
Love poems  
They think they will melt  
The heart of Gods  
And they shall be released  
From the tyranny of Heavens

And there is a call  
From my enemies  
Thriving in the wilderness  
Of surpluses  
Never knowing the grammar of scarcity  
Their challenges chase me  
Softly knocking  
To anesthetize my dreams  
And urging me  
To tell them stories  
Of failures turned to victories  
And victories to disasters

They wish me to interpret  
Their flashy intentions as sober truths  
And those wicked, perverse bastards  
Who are robbed of the sense  
Of seeing things straight  
Subtle manipulators  
With cunning portents  
They portrayed  
The sweet Hells in Heaven

And their call  
I simply refuse to receive  
As they would urge me  
To shake the world  
And make it a topsy-turvy place  
For the chaos to thrive  
For the guile to play  
A disco of the wicked souls  
And crooked bodies  
A pyre of meanings

It's the time perhaps  
We re-negotiate the price of our souls  
God is a hard negotiator  
His fabulous discounts  
On ever increasing sales  
And shrinking dividends  
On his shares  
Are just pre-cursors  
To tell  
Stakeholders are not partners  
You may withdraw your stake  
And be stake de-holders  
And stake is not a stock  
And for a mild risk  
Better you don't ask  
Romantic collapse of companies  
Or gold rushing to your closets

When shall we learn  
The grammar of profits  
Nature abhors imbalance  
And profit is the mighty step  
Towards imbalances  
Losses scale it down  
And provide again a level field  
For the players to play  
A game of hide and seek  
Till you discover  
The hard layers of onions  
And the silken sheaths  
Hiding nothing

**MIRROR YOURS SINCERELY**

I am a mirror  
Reflections I live  
Reflections I dream  
Reflections I sleep  
Reflections I eat

Hundred pigeons in that spring  
Flew to their nests  
In that ghostly bungalow  
The dancing ghost shrieked

The mad parrots  
Stop not their prattle  
The harvesting season  
Songs of joy  
Wedding of promises

I remained a witness  
A witness

Of the spring  
Playing in my porch

And then they came  
Bringing histories  
Mysteries, chemistries  
Inducing me to read  
The terminologies hard

But in my heart  
The dancing clouds  
Twinkling stars  
All those endless fairy tales  
And they came with  
Host of greetings and gratitude  
I am a mirror  
I reflect all faces  
Except my face  
I deflect all pains  
Except my pain

I have mirrored all colours  
Of simmering rainbows  
And boiling springs  
The face of the tender autumn  
Is dear to me

I also have the reflections  
Of the corpses  
Being consigned to pyres  
Of the weeping women in distress  
Reminding of the dreaded sunsets

I am a mirror  
Look deep into my eyes  
See not alone your face  
And your bloody moods  
And your bastard gestures  
The embellishments of the prostitutes

I am a mirror  
I register every thing  
May be the orphaned nights  
Or the blessed days  
Look deep into my eyes

All shades of your talk  
Your blinking eyes  
Your fragile smiles  
Your unsteady walk  
And the clever talk

I register all

I am a mirror  
Hear my ears  
They have registered  
Your back talk  
Your utterances in utter privacy

Don't get frightened  
My eyes measured  
The slightest tremors  
Look at my lips  
They speak not  
They reflect your talk  
Your words alone I sing

I am a mirror, I hope  
You have seen your faces  
Lost in my faces  
You have heard your words  
Lost in my ears  
You have read your gestures  
Preserved in my eyes

In my mind  
Are all your moods  
Meandering like serpents  
In a bright tunnel  
Stinging deep  
Day and night

I am a mirror  
You were welcome then  
You are welcome now  
Ever welcome you are  
I speak not I see not

Do not be afraid of me  
I am a mirror  
Walk in  
Talk in please  
Yours sincerely always  
I am a mirror

## **DEAR GIFTS**

I am afraid of gifts  
They have often cost me dear

The crimson pen  
You affectionately gifted me  
On my 50th birthday

I have signed with that  
On rainbows  
Confirming my commitment  
To the clouds  
For treasuring their abundant tears  
In the years to come

And the petals of flowers  
Sprinkled in the gift box  
Refused to dry up  
They often remind me of the butterflies  
Tired of smelling fragrances  
And colours in the spring season

And that bear– the tiny bear  
With sticks in his hands  
Starts beating the drum in midnight  
Waking me up to count shooting stars  
And the hands of friends  
Who have gone to have a view  
Of the valley for a few days  
But never returned

And that plastic doll  
With beautiful blue eyes and velvet frock  
Recklessly dances to the beats  
Of some strange instruments mixing music  
And the subdued cries of the loud sobs  
And those blue shining eyes  
Chase me in the dense darkness

When I resolved to follow  
The dreams beyond the rocks  
The hot melting volcanoes  
And the singing parrot  
Made my life terrible  
Made me to live the memories gone by  
My little antics in the lap of mother  
My wanton throws of pillows  
To my sister in the bed  
Late winter nights

And those books  
You gifted me with love  
I read with passion  
They made me see  
The sharks in a sea and  
The dinosaurs in the green valley  
They made me reap  
The bones in the fields  
And lit the damp pyres

In the drizzling skies

And those two white swans  
You gifted me  
When I was a child  
They drowned  
While swimming in Sangarma  
And searching them  
I weep even today

And those tender love birds  
You had secretly put in my bag  
As a surprise gift  
They keep on chirping  
In the moonlit nights  
And often share  
The joys of separation  
Waiting for them  
In the years to come

And the kiss you planted  
On my forehead has smeared  
My thoughts with blood  
I will tell you some other day  
What other gifts  
Have done for me

But the fact remains  
Each gift you had affectionately given  
Has cost dear to me  
Very dear to me

## **VANISHING FRAGRANCE**

Recently very recently  
I have checked  
That I have paid  
All the premiums  
Of my LIC policies  
Income tax returns  
For the next year  
Is being previewed

I have also checked  
My professional commitments  
All seems fine  
I am also working

On a profile  
Of developmental plans  
Of institutions

The other day  
I talked to  
One of my friends  
Who is keen  
To get connected  
To roots

He told me that  
He had recently visited  
A village  
His brother suffers  
From epilepsy fits  
Mother runs  
High blood pressure  
Father has heaved  
A sigh of relief  
As the last daughter  
Is married off

He also talked of  
Some mischief  
We played together  
I grew nostalgic  
About my village

I remembered  
Faces of girls  
I have not  
Thought for years  
Many fairies surged  
Through my mind  
The kit of broken promises  
Swelled up

I also recently mapped out  
The relation graph  
Several hot spots  
Appeared on the screen  
Simply difficult is  
The relation dynamics

The fractured moon

Often comes  
In my dreams  
I have in my pocket  
The scattered sun  
And in my mind  
The parrots  
Refuse to shut up  
The horses neigh  
In the lanes of my memory  
And the donkeys  
Never stop braying

I walked  
On the deserted roads  
Holding hands of stars  
To the trees I talk  
Flowers are all fine  
They have lost  
Their fragrance

My friends uttering  
A mere acquaintance  
And some acquaintances  
Friends  
For the few words  
I checked  
The dictionary recently  
And was shocked to know  
How poor is my vocabulary

I have not of late  
Written many letters  
I wrote poems  
And think of strategies  
To approach people

The faces of two women  
Ganges and Godavari  
Haunt my mind  
In the mango grooves  
I often hear  
Of a mad koel  
Singing songs of love  
And Nightingales  
In the deserts

Now I often wonder  
When shall I stop  
Thinking of dancing moons  
In the garden  
And those love lollipops  
Gifted to adults  
By clever girls  
An engagement  
For all seasons

And my recent visit  
To a school  
I looked at  
Some note books  
Thoughtlessly edited  
The delight of  
Egocentric teachers  
Predicting a scholastic collapse

Recently very recently  
I have talked of  
Integrity quotient  
The LIC premium  
I have paid recently  
Is a routine  
Not a comfort

The relation graphs  
Scan a burning sorrow  
Not a delight  
And all thoughts of  
Settling safe  
I have discovered  
A mirage

The hands of  
The smiling hope  
A trick of  
The magician  
A joy for  
A few moments  
Enchantment leading to  
Coughing up some coins  
For the poor  
To stay alive

I wish I could shout  
At the super top of my voice  
Right in the deep of nights  
And run like mad  
On the cemented roads  
Dancing before  
Those howling cars  
And scheduled trains

I wish I could jump  
Into the sky  
And navigate some flights  
To primitive caves

I have also  
Recently talked to my father  
Who has always  
Smiled and acknowledged  
My failures with love  
And the talk of  
All the medical reports  
And shameless sympathies  
Expressed as courtesy  
Are no more  
Delights to me

I have told my friends  
I become a rock  
Better you talk to me  
Then  
You become a rock

And the fractured moon  
Dancing in my garden  
Is not metaphor  
For the poetry  
He is my brother  
The scattered rays of sun  
In my pocket  
Are dear to me - are dear to me

I will continue  
To check back and  
Back check with all  
And till then

Stay fine and good night

## **MIRROR**

Tell me mirror whose face is this  
Dancing behind the glass wall  
Whose eyes quiz me  
Whose lips kiss me  
Through whose ears I listen  
The songs of cactus

Is it the face of a child  
Who played with parrots  
Who ran after sparrows  
Who talked to brown calves  
Of white cows  
Who aimed at crows  
Sitting on the back of buffaloes  
Who craved the rainbows  
Who saw the elephants in the clouds  
Who gently pushed white paper boats  
On the waves of Sangarma

Is it the face of a boy  
Who quizzed his looks  
Who learnt the alphabets  
And the number games  
Who tirelessly counted up and down  
Who played with plants  
In whose hands blossomed  
The seeds of innocence  
Who memorized facts  
And dreamt stories  
Is it the face of a friend  
Who promised stars and springs  
But eventually delivered  
A few winters and several autumns  
With sleeping trees and a few leaves  
Left on the nearly lifeless branches

Is it the face of an enemy  
Who hit hard with soft words  
And whose benevolent gestures  
Poisoned all hopes, aspirations green

Is it the face of a god

Who laughed like a mad  
In the dark summer nights  
And who cursed whirlpools  
Storms and lightening  
And hurled rocks on my tender bones

Whose face is this  
Tell me mirror, tell me please  
Cover this face  
Shoot it if you can  
Mirror, exile it in oceans deep

Let the whales swallow  
Its tender flesh  
Let the sharks eat  
The eyes, lips and the nose  
Let the jelly fish  
Cling to its brows  
And let octopus  
Dance on its head

Cover this face please  
Cover this face

## **A PROPOSAL**

I have a proposal  
Let human beings retire  
And make nests on trees  
Let them vacate their houses, offices  
And stop fiddling with gadgets

Let now birds go to the schools  
Introduce their syllabus  
Let them create worksheets  
Books, audio-visual materials  
Let them teach Environmental Sciences  
To the fish and to the lions

Let them master the art and craft  
Of developing echo-friendly architecture  
Let them think of making canopy of sky  
For the houses on the earth  
Now let them share their dreams  
Let them talk about their fears

Let them rule the planet Earth  
For the next millennium  
And let men sitting in the nests  
Perching on the branches of the trees

Sing their songs on full-throat ease  
Let them watch the dancing rains  
On the laughing rocks

Let them fly across the deserts  
Beyond the clouds  
Let men see fairies dancing  
Around the trees in the midnight  
Let men learn the art of balancing  
And offer their bodies  
To the vultures to eat

Let eagles play with their eyes  
Let the elephants trample on their history  
Let the pigeons move to technology labs  
And invent flowers  
Giving fragrance for peace  
Let the dogs now guard  
The ocean and the rivers

I have a proposal  
Let men retire and move to distant lands  
To weather naked eyes

Let them wade in  
The snow clad Himalayas  
Let them dive under the ocean deep  
Let the men be occasionally invited  
To the parliament of birds  
To watch the proceedings

I hope the next millennium  
Shall be millennium of hope  
A millennium of peace  
A millennium of poise  
Beyond noise

I hope the next millennium  
Shall open up the mystic energies  
The mysterious powers  
To brighten our days and nights  
With no borders around  
And new territories found  
In the millennium new  
There will be space for all

**THE SKIES BEYOND**

I have a strange feeling

Beyond this sky  
There are millions of skies  
Shining bright  
With their million- million suns  
Million- million moons,  
Trillion stars  
They are all my skies too

I often walk in those distant skies  
Wrapped in my darkness  
I have seen the parrots flying there  
The birds singing there  
And the people talking in alien dialects  
Wondering about our transactions here  
The rocks on those skies  
Meditating on the mysteries deep  
Haunt me

Launch me to the dreams afresh  
They lovingly threaten my hypothesis  
Initiating me to the grammar of elements  
And I wander in the five elements alone

We have diversity profuse  
What shall be the quantum  
What shall be the range  
What shall be the profile  
What shall be the magnitude  
Of variety simmering  
On the skies far beyond  
And I wonder  
When shall we decode the words  
Beyond connotations, beyond denotations  
When shall we get oriented  
To beliefs new  
When shall we be empowered to see  
Beyond this sky  
More skies and still more

In the melting canopy of heaven  
Making parallels meet  
In the distant horizons  
Where the silent suns  
Appeared to sleep for a while  
To wake up again to invite afresh  
To their rainbow territories  
Inspiring us to read poems

Written on the texture of the air  
Composed of elements  
Not necessarily of Air  
Ether, Water, Fire and Earth.

**IF.....**

If I had not seen the rocks  
If I had not seen the snakes  
If I had not climbed the mountain  
If I had not touched the flowers  
If I had not looked at the cows  
If I had not seen the buffaloes in the pond

If I had not seen the birds  
If I had not seen the stars in the sky  
If I had not seen the faces of men  
If I had not seen the face of the smiling child  
If I had not seen the burning pyres

If I had not heard the speeches of the politicians  
If I had not read the letters of my friend  
If I had not solved the sums of Maths  
If I had not read the grammar

If I had not seen the spring  
If I had not shivered in winters  
If I had not sweated in the summers  
If I had not been betrayed

If I had not heard the dinosaurs  
If I had not seen the Neelkanthas  
If I had not seen the dance of peacocks  
If I had not met the sparrows

If I had not seen a telephone  
If I had not cycled a bicycle  
If I had not worked on a computer  
If I had not seen a globe

If I had not walked with a river  
If I had not run wild with winds  
If I had not slept under a guava tree  
If I had not seen my mother,  
My father, my brother my sister

If I had not seen the shades of smiles  
If I had not heard the rhythm of frowns  
If I had not read the scriptures  
If I had not eaten the bread  
If I had not drunk the water

If I had not played fair  
If I had not played foul  
If I had not held the stones in my hands  
If the colors of flowers were not known to me  
If I had not dreamt the dreams  
If I had not seen the snow on the mountains

What would I have talked  
What would I have written  
If I had not seen the sun  
If I had not seen the moon  
If I had not walked on the earth  
How shall I imagine the world

Do I say what I see  
Do I write what I experience  
Is poetry seen as infinitive

If I had not seen  
If I had not heard  
If I had not lived  
I would have seen—

The melting river of light  
I might have seen the dark domes  
I might have seen the seeds of creation  
I might have seen the eggs craving to burst  
I might have seen the stillness  
I might have seen the silence speaking  
I might have seen beyond the scene  
I might have carved the mighty metaphors  
Without the shades of the sun,  
The moon and the stars

I might have melted  
Like the mountain in the sun  
I might have lived in a moment  
Stretched to eternity  
Without the beginning and the end  
I might not have distinguished  
Between the opposites  
A sweet interface of pain and pleasure

The tragedy of seeing is knowledge  
And I might have just walked  
Gently away from it  
To the woods of wisdom  
A realization supreme  
Pure non-dualistic perception  
Add we to supreme

## THESE ARE NOT THE NIGHTS....

These are not the nights to dream about  
The pigeons flying high in the sky  
Carrying a twig with two leaves in their beaks  
These are not the nights  
To re-rhyme 'Twinkle Twinkle little star  
How I wonder what you are'

These are not the nights  
To walk alone on the banks of Sangarma  
And confess to the ghosts  
How hot are our shops  
And how rotten all our homes

These are not the nights  
To puncture rainbow romances  
Dancing on the silver screens  
They provide a monotonous break  
In the otherwise organized flirtations

These are not the nights  
To dream of *dupatta* covered faces  
Shrouded in mystery  
The forsaken princesses  
Now with dwarfed dreams  
In their dreary eyes

These are not the nights  
To parade the dented successes  
In the moonlit nights  
The sharks have already swallowed their shine  
And with tattered remains we sigh  
In the glittering corners of our homes

These are not the nights  
To wait for counsellors  
And consollers  
Both are sleeping after their day's hard work  
The counselors have counselled away  
The fears of giving lollipops  
In the hands of the children  
Sick of doing even fraction of fractions  
And lost in the longitudes and latitudes  
Dancing on the tipsy globes

These are not the nights  
To laugh like mad  
Our laughters are now symptomatic  
Of our deadly dreads  
Secretly coiling in our heart's hearts

Restless to burst

In the thronged marts  
And wayward antics  
Of the prostitutes  
Luring the cunning customers  
To their crafty craft  
A blessed den  
An instant release  
Of stress running in the veins  
Relaxing the thighs  
Perhaps, not a fatal drug

These are not the nights  
To invite Gods  
On the roof-top of your houses  
We are covered in the mosquito net  
We languish alone  
In our beds

And these are not the nights  
To pray for peace  
Anarchy is dear to us  
Prayers are very generous  
Sometimes too generous  
And now who likes to have  
Hundred sons and one thousand cows  
In these difficult days  
When we are taught  
To manage in pieces  
We are the masters  
Of segmented sectors  
Take us away from micro vices  
And launch us to macro-ruptures

These are not the nights  
For gentle distractions  
Pull out our all teeth  
They are now long used to  
Sucking luscious flesh  
And cut our tongue  
A versatile manipulator of words

These are not the nights  
For normal perversions  
They are too gentle for our tastes  
We are the proxy witnesses  
Of world wars  
Fought and un-fought

We are the custodians  
Of residues and the relics  
The inheritors  
Of the heritage of rage  
No wonder- lullabies are out of time  
It's difficult to tame  
The scoundrels of our times

These are not the nights  
To script scriptures  
Elevated rhetoric  
Suffused with Divinity perfume  
It is hard to resist  
But difficult to live with

One Christ is sufficient  
For carrying the cross  
And our managers  
Have learnt it straight

Do not reinvent the wheel  
Proceed ahead...  
And how can we know  
The chakras of the chakkar  
The mysteries of Buddha's wheel  
And the glory of Krishna's Sudarshan  
Invent the wheel and then proceed