

East
and
West

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EAST AND WEST

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RAYAPROL

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DEDICATED

To the Memory of

CHRISTOPHER SRIPADA

(1927-1956)

*“Graves will not remember him
And flowers have forgotten his face.”*

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EAST AND WEST

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*Ask the poet in the ruin wiping his eyes
what harm it would do if he wiped his bottom
Disease and death were the mode of dead centuries
We write about the ferment of the atom*

ABU NUWAS
8th Century A. D.

Simplicity is not an end in art, but one arrives at simplicity inspite of oneself, in approaching the real sense of things. Simplicity is complexity in itself, and one has to be nourished by its essence in order to understand its value.

CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

Dear Marti :

JAN. 7, 1955.

Yes, publish a magazine immediately! Now! Right now! Instantly! Yes! Yes! Yes! I will do anything. I will send my poems and everyone else's. I will aid publicity here. I will help distribute copies. I will help sell. But let us hurry. Let us correspond by letters and not by snail mail. Please send your letters airmail. Onward! Flight! Fancy! Passion! EVERYTHING. I can't bear the doldrums here.

We should be able to sell 500 copies easily here if (1) people can tell what it is and where it's from by looking at the cover, and (2) if it is not too expensive.

Write to me right away giving me (1) the name of the magazine (2) some statement of editorial policy (3) the number of lines of American Poetry you can use in the first issue (4) the approximate date of publication, and (5) the approximate price. I will need this information in order to get people to contribute since they won't be motivated by a desire for money since you can't pay them any; but don't be sorry for that. Also with this information I may be able to get the magazine some publicity. I understand it really is not easy to get good poetry submitted without some publicity.

JAN. 28, 55.

Name: Kavita. There has already been a Kavita from Calcutta. I don't think it's in English though; nevertheless I think some other title would be advisable. We have until October to decide so let's let the decision wait.

What's in India? I would like you to keep me posted on the progress you are making there. I will send you weekly, fortnightly or monthly reports from this side, as you prefer. Since we are

separated by such a distance we had better keep in fairly close contact don't you think?

... ..

MARCH 28, 55.

Do I have six poems? No. I sent you two poems didn't I? Please do not publish the one about elephants as it has just been published in a San Francisco magazine. I will try to get you some good things to publish ... but I'll have to write them between now and September, When do you go to press?

May be you could print poems in the Indian languages side by side with transiations of them into English; even if only prosy type translations. Some poems especially non-riming imagistic type poems translate quite well. This would all give the magazine tone. You might even translate the English poems into Hindi; it would be the greatest.

... ..

MAY 2, 55.

I thought though that you might like to know that as an editor, I stink. That is, I am very bad as an editor. This I have always known.

But surely, the quantity of bad poetry is also large!

... ..

JULY 9, 55.

Ofcourse I can't cure your daughter's cold (I imagine she must be well by now) but I can help you publish a pretty good magazine (that isn't meant to be heartless). I am finally getting some things from the Hart group that are publishable, I think. They aren't great. It's rather difficult to tell which person wrote which poem. But there are lines that are good. And I don't think they are dull. I have about 20 publishable poems right now. If you have 14, that's about 34. Let's have a poem per page no matter how small the

poem unless two poems by the same poet can fit on a page ... Oh well, you can decide that sort of thing.

One thing our magazine lacks is a definite editorial policy, definite criteria, a goal and so on.

Look, why don't you get some poet who writes in Hindi in imagery something like that you used in your Oranges poem, you know, concrete type of image to let you translate some of his work, I'll help. The reason you may be getting poor translations could be that the translators are choosing, perhaps great poems but ones that just translate poorly. Look at Lorca's poems; some of them translate beautifully. All one has to do is to substitute the English word for the Spanish; no fuss or muss. The poetry is just there. Translations from the 'folk-idiom', as you call it, can be damned good.

... ..

SEPT. 12, 55.

The main selling point, I mean what the magazine will have that the public here will want, is the translations of otherwise inaccessible Indian poets. Now I am sending you 20 poems either with this letter or separately. You said you thought of presenting the poems I send you as a group. These 8 people aren't members of any common group; they are Americans of course, but that's nonsense in a poetry magazine.

About these poems I am sending you, I could cry sometimes, I don't much like some of them; but I put them in, because, oh, I don't know why. I rather like my "Conversations", infact, shamelessly, I like all my poems, but may be "Intimate Memories" is in poor taste. What I'm getting around to saying is that I'm letting you make all the decisions about this stuff now. You can publish it or not as you seem fit.

... ..

OCT. 10, 55.

I got your letter of 23rd Sept. and I've been thinking about what to say.

Format: Be conservative. Don't try to be too simple about the cover. It's best to have the price on the cover. And Vol. 1., No. 1. I like blue and orange, or orange and a cream colour.

Publication Date: When about?

Letter - Editorial: A good idea but I can't write one. You can cull from my letters if you want. I think it would be simpler if you just wrote an editorial.

Editorial Policy: I'd suggest that you print the poems that are truly good and truly bad, but I don't know that an editor has to make selection from poems that are pretty good and pretty bad. The most useful editorial policy is to follow some line of taste or politics; then you can easily discard most of what is pretty good and pretty bad, and publish the rest confident of its value. This is a little cynical, may be. You have called the magazine East and West ... and the East-West is certainly pertinent in our time and significant in our relationship, but it isn't going to provide you with much of a policy, UNLESS you say that the purpose of the magazine is to present the greatest variety of the work done by the English writing peoples and to provide some translations in English of Indian Authors for an English reading public, and as I suggested before, even Hindi translations of contemporary poems in English. You could add that you plan to publish the best of the submissions and to increase the quality of the magazine. And then you'll have to give some criteria!

Yours true

kp

Leslie Woolf Hedley | **TWO POEMS**

POEM FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

We begin
taking up our lives in haunted apartments
where bones of another's life rattle
and breathe in plaster shadow

ghosts of sound still linger
linger still between wallpaper of yesterday
and calendars of to-day

we have not yet invented radio
making connection with those static voices
alive on coexisting atoms

but memories of centuries spin about us

the cry of the first conqueror
the call of the first rebellion
the sigh of the first lover
all float upon this air

we have not yet breached the chasm
linking the wisdom of space
to the logic of matter

we do not yet control the truth of destiny
being born as gods
and dying as slaves.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE IMAGES OF LIFE

Somewhere between the Images of life
and life itself
there is massive reality

the day of our life
is dressed like a woman in mourning
walking in the harsh rain
tasting salt

sleep seems better
more promising with sly fulfillments
for waking bruises the mind
burns a light so strong
our eyes close from that pressure

we are sandwiched between storms
winds that shape and tumble the brain
waves that do not clean
words that seldom warn before striking

each of us is a memorial to the past
to lives unrealised
to the present that tortures

what is easier than death
or the dream of dying

we endure reality like a somnambulist

somewhere between the act and womb
we were promised nothing

there is no reward but in possibilities.

Eric Ratcliffe

OLD FRAGRANCE

Halting and walking in strange, dead seasons,
through the weak light of ghost Octobers,
surrendered to the final lute,
they sing from melodies unborn.

They have chanted how they remembered
the first sleeping diamonds of dew
on the white flowers left weeping
by the wall in the graveyard dawn.

They have forgotten that instant without breath
in the green, midnight glory of cool ferns;
the moment in the lonely bedroom
when a whole heart sighed through curled fingers,
and passed between two minds in the corn.

Pradip Sen

WORDS

How can they cleave,
the wooden swords,
the wooden minds?
No longer the sharpness,
edged with pain,
Now only the darkness,
intestinal,
webbed with symbols.

The flesh is waste,
Lost in the layers of the mind.
If words were stuff,
That hands could cope with,
I would reclaim,
Remove the over-ripeness,
Strip the flaccid layers,
Till stark the core emerged;
For the world is flesh.

In the flesh
there are wounds,
festering in silence,
Torn tendons hardly healed,
waiting to be hard;
What is this terror,
this fear in our hearts?

The eyes in the dark
 startling the unaware
 Stifling the inarticulate cry?

Touch the lips with burning coal
 The terror from the tongues
 Would cry out with pain,
 For wounds are words struck dumb.

Thrice removed as we are
 From the core of things,
 For us symbols are shells
 In which words are embedded,
 Preserving the sense,
 but not the feeling.

If only words were stuff
 that hands could cope with,
 I would sculpture the air,
 splitting the separateness,
 That divides the word
 from its meaning,
 Restore the sense to the feeling
 For words are not symbols but flesh.

Ted Wright

TWO POEMS

EPITAPH FOR CERTAIN GREAT MEN

Here lie the verbatim lovers
 And their windfall of loss,
 Their wonder to be unraveled
 When snow moves and slows
 At the wrinkles and reindeer
 Not mentioned hereunder.

Here chafes the linen laughter
 Of their chance lifetime,
 Made up for the trifle
 Of a lying-in so eventful,
 Who once rolled big vowels
 In chorals down lovers.

Where will these bets be taken
 Whose proper and mad
 Backers are broken and naked,
 And their stubs melted and damned?
 For what literal isle
 Did their name founder, do they here lie?

CIRCLE

"Did never morning so much before,"
 She lied to the two-toned passer by,
 And oh ! so tentatively young
 She rayed his arms around her.
 Never did wharf so wish

Filled and was with color of fathoming ship !

As if the act were ignorant of her cult.
 As if the sun, eloping with a dupe,
 Did handsprings round her avenue, telling her
lover

(Hollow ! Hollow !) never to set.

Marie A. Graybeal

TWO POEMS

IN GOOSE-WEDGE

Their inverse gathering –
 The soft-winged birds down the sky unsliding,
 Follow their sky of call —

These do not weather in for year, its stationary
 Keep and cold; with unaltered plumage
 These take their small departure;
 South —
 Their faith and its proportions.

OF DEATH OR LOVE

The same distinction, with price
Prominent as thumb.

Out of bent sleep the dream
Pursues its tenant, with headboards and apartments
Whirling like continents, the continuing nerve
Extending itself in its wired flowers.

And the intermediate argument
Becomes a tongue kept in uniform –
A traitor by turned face.

Betty Turnoy

PRIVATE LANDSCAPE

The trees one discovered belong to others
need soil and a private room
and the rocks beneath them.

A paper hat we are accustomed to wear
the light beneath the chair wider than I am
because of the darkness there the shade branches
within.

Waited all day for morning, but could not see
many monsters wait for me lighter than I am
because habit held me here tame at the table.

Trees and little habits become my master
no one discovered the light wider than I am
darkness there, tame as a table holds me.

And then the shades appear like crickets
going nowhere, on the other side of the stair
beneath the rocks, climbing

come into my window, sit like stars
over the hemisphere like needs
swing in their circuits.

Norman Disher

MEETING

The wind,
crisp as the cutting of old bread,
crackled through her hair,
(wing white hair of a heron)
and pouted her skirt.

Because of this,
she played foolish
with her eyes.

And I,
being a fool,
only watched and said nothing.

So my desire,
like a plum rotting on a tree,
was picked by the birds,
tricked again by the sunlight,
sold later in a market,
bought by a creased and withered wench,
taken home and consumed;
pitless.

And I,
being a fool,
only watched and said nothing.

Waltrina Furlong

INTROSPECTION OF TWO

We turned always to face the single
Self that would hide to garden
And bench itself with maxim,
And learned what the sweet stones
Of ourselves asleep could not remember.

And in this room being silent
And without next armor
At the crossbows of our sight, sprung
And without secret,
Now we have learned how to destroy ourselves.

I remember your bones with their shapes
Curious and circled as wings under the skin
But then I really cannot
Consider that to be the only
Candle light that takes hold of the dark
By its wrists.

Thomas Jaynes

SNAKES AND SHADOWS

With heavy leaves across its hidden back
The Snake still lurks in your only landscape
Lengthwise behind its waiting eyes,
The river is dark where dead suns surface
Lost from their skies;
Here is the natural boundary and back-water
Of your incidents,
Separating consequence from life.
But under this zenith that zones your upward eyes
with gold
And epaulettes your shoulders without shadows,
This is your recognizable countryside
Which you have brought with you
Undiscovered inside your individual time.

Harold W. Hackett, Jr.

FOR ANNE, AGED THREE

How beautiful the children dressed still in their Midas
wonder,
Seeing the landscape still as landscape,
Love as love;
Clouding like apple valleys before our brows of thunder,
Stunned and so silent, shaping
To our reproof.
See how the playing world joins them in thoughtless
dances,
Babbles their joy-tipped songs from town
And country throat.
Even in sleep they fill our tolling nights with marvels,
Setting our names in dreams
Weightlessly afloat.
Heaven so far away succumbs to their undoubting eyes;
The jealous gates of hard-won wisdom, for innocents,
Crumble asunder.
Before guile spreads the tale to tarnish such fidelity,
Kiss them and for a moment stand beyond surprise,
Blessed in their wonder.

Amaresh Dutta

THE LIZARD AND THE CAT

The preying lizard on the wall is symbolic
 If you dare or can kill it,
 So nimble and quick though bulging-bellied.
 Hovering in the halo of a lamp
 It sees in light's lustre an assured trap.

But is the cat in the dark earth's feline form ?
 Its boring eyes,
 The ominous hush of its feet
 And perhaps also its deceiving domesticity
 Do they allegorize
 A suspicious life on a doubtful earth ?

Light is too dazzling for us
 And perhaps darkness too dark ;
 Yet because we are ensnared in both
 We commit our follies in the revealing light,
 And wisdom's light is powerless
 To dispel the dark of nature's night.

A huge claim is all our undoing
 Vast is the land between the poles
 And solid the earth.
 But the preying lizard on the wall is symbolic
 If you can or dare kill it.
 And beware of the cat in the dark
 Beware also of the mouse and and the cat.

Geoffrey Johnson

NEW YEAR DAWN

Flamingo snows, flamingo pink and rose,
The plumage of this English winter dawn
Seems rather bloomed or spirit-blown than drawn
Behind cross-hatchings of these inky sloes.
But for familiar landmarks righting me —
This icy-tasselled briar or glassy stile —
I could believe my ghost had wandered free
Ages ago through sunrise over Nile.

But for this iron-cold and strange thin air
And touch of terror, that too long a stare
Might blast the sense, should Beauty absolute
Unveil herself from depths of polar glows,
I could stand gazing on and on and on,
Dumb as this elm, expectant to the root
For the full radiance of her Noumenon.

P. Lal

THE IRONY

To friends who understand
Casual words of hand,
Passion and calm of eyes,
This causes no surprise.

Your eyes commemorate
Peace dispersing hate ;
In such pools lovers see
Feverless lucidity.

The understanding fails
When strong winds marry sails.
Our artless being one
For friends is gentle fun —

The impressive irony
Of constancy loving constancy.

Harry Hooton

SYNCHROMY

The brass-bound bedstead, the ghastly pot
That even love could not transform;
The bug-ridden blankets we never used -
Keeping each other's body warm:
The little window where the sun
Never climbed the neighbouring walls

(Littered with the chalkers' wit -
Annie loves Bill, Kate's up the stick, and Balls

Synchronised with youth the cities'
Sordid slums spell their ecstasies.
In vain the puerile poet pities - lovelier swains
Are yearning, distilling nobler strains:
The sharp, pronged whistle of a train
Calls the boy hobo with as nostalgic note
As any nightingale that strained its throat
From hazel branches ... Cheap, cosmetic faces
Are new transfigured Marys and Madonnas,
In new frames - drab tenement walls

(Inscribed with adolescent scrawls -
Bill loves Annie, Kate's up the spout, and Balls).

Electric moons still leaven
Art the wide world over to heaven,
And chaste steel instils rhyme
Tender as any rosy bower stirred up past poetic slime.
All our romance invests Satanic mills!
And youth, that makes all heavens, still dreams, but this
time
Of plastic, neon, chrome, cellophane and grime.

These walls :
(All right ... Dot loves Dick, Ann's up the spout, and
Prick)

My love: inanimate, ersatz nylon drawing near
Your white skin in asymptote lines that leap
In my world - of pylon, pavement, concrete, silk
Holding the curves of marble in its mesh,
Of Beatrice, Helen, Venus, of man-made flesh.

Kenneth Pettitt

FOUR POEMS

A LOVE POEM

Three Willard Jr. High School girls
 In a soda fountain sat to read funny love
 Books. Said the girl
 In the white sweater, give me
 A small cherry phosphate and a small
 Vanilla phosphate. Said the girl
 In the yellow slicker, give me
 A small vanilla phosphate and a small
 Cherry phosphate. Said the girl
 In the green sweater, give me
 A small vanilla coke and a small
 Chocolate coke and a small
 Chocolate ice cream
 Cone and can I
 Taste your vanilla phosphate please? Said the girl
 In the yellow slicker, yes, and she paid
 For a small vanilla phosphate and a small
 Cherry phosphate and the girl
 In the green sweater paid
 For a small vanilla coke and a small
 Chocolate coke and the girl
 In the white sweater paid
 For a small cherry phosphate and a small
 Vanilla phosphate and a chocolate
 Ice cream cone,

THE DAY THE FISH DIED

The low water lapped in the mud
 And the fish laid their duds
 On the dry embankment,
 Little addle-eyed fish,
 Like dollar surprises.

INTIMATE MEMORIES

I. HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE

I may forget myself but I will always
 Remember my teeth.
 My teeth are as big as fingernails
 Wearing horse-shoes.

II. HIS INDIVIDUALITY

I wish I would sell myself but I couldn't even sell
 Choice parts of me. I don't pee straight ;
 I am predictable.

III. HIS FINANCES

I haven't any money to give the poor.
 I am so poor I live next door.
 When I am alone
 I smile,

IV. HIS EXECUTION

The earth is pushing out, making night and day,
 Is every where, pushing out of crowds
 To kiss me on the chin.
 Go away, Earth.
 I don't want you to do it again.

THE CONVERSATIONS

i.

You love the Barber more
 Than you love me.
 You respect the Barber more;
 What you let the Barber do,
 You wouldn't let me.

When you come from the Barber,
 You may kiss me to a care,
 But you won't be able to keep
 Your head in mine.

ii.

I had written love is an ashtray
 And had crossed it out
 And written love is a mysterious thing
 So you said I was an ass hole;
 But no. You had just interrupted me
 In the development of an even more adequate simile.

iii.

Because you make me ill
 When you touch me,
 I have asked you not to touch me.
 As for those surfaces
 You have already touched,
 Those have vanished
 And such others as have been named.

Of only those parts which turned
 Into the night ahead of you,
 I am much simpler than before.

My skin is set aside from me;
 I worry in my disease;
 I have no desire
 To continue with you.

iv.

You serve a cultivated taste. When I
 Recognized you, I recognized the taste
 In myself. When I spoke it,
 A garden grew from those words.
 I was badly buried there
 And bloomed at the root.

Srinivas Rayaprol

CRABS IN THE SEINE

Softly sweet Seine
Maldoror is melancholy again
Between chimney teeth the eaten moon glows
Between the bird's freedom and the bird's flight
Maldoror sits counting the lines of rain.

I thought I knew you
For forty years
There was no question of not knowing
Of not being known
And yet only yesterday
Coming down the stairs
In some hurry
I missed a step
Did not fall your face rose
To my eyes and I asked,
What is it she?

Really no question at all
It was like opening a door
Knowing that beyond were other doors
And the emptiness far
As the step I missed yesterday.

For there was love
And in the dark have felt your familiar weight
Each separate part a known delicacy
So finite at times vulgar
And in the lighted hall how often
Have I been blind to your dullness.
One can be sure of love, it is an infliction
We impose on ourselves to release certain
Vague desires, a selfish volcano
That ignores the destruction beyond
Its satisfied interior.

And I thought I knew you
All these years your few favorites
Your private peeves, the turn
Of your body in fear, the swivel
Of your neck in love —
Forty years is a long habit.

But one arrives somehow
Often beyond one's willing
To certain lonely graves
That ask the unaskable
What do I know of you
What do I know of myself that I can say
We are made for each other and indulge
In the common talk that people in love
Invoke to satisfy their lacks.
For me it was the step yesterday
That makes me see
That the release I've always sought
The knot I've wished to unknot
Is nothing more
Than the crab's dignity in the sand.

The flying bird flies
 In a controlled orbit
 Circumference without centre
 Is not the freedom what
 Is sought by the flying bird
 As it flies into the air
 Between the bird's motion
 And the base that fixes it
 Is an understanding.

And the nets we weave around ourselves
 The rope you used yesterday
 Is the only hope
 I ever had for the being
 The rope having slipped
 The release in my groins in my head in my body
 Is for me now quite void.

What hurts me my dear is not your death
 But that going you removed the center
 And left me free and tearless.

MODERN TELUGU POETRY

TELUGU poetry both by virtue of quantity and quality merits distinction. Very little of it has been translated into English which is why it has not gained due recognition.

After the First World War Telugu literature brought forth a band of outstanding poets who were the spiritual inheritors of the English Romantic Revival. They were revolutionary in the context of Telugu poetry which before them had hardened into a set of conventions both in form and content. The lyric cry and the liberation from poetic diction gave a new look and a new power to their poetry.

But even before the Second World War had fully unleashed itself, the younger generation of poets and readers recognised that this new poetry was far below the demands of the time. It was at this moment that the young poet Sri Sri, changed his mode of writing and emerged overnight from oblivion into fame. He reflected in himself all the new ideas in European poetry, communism, symbolism, *vers libre*, imagism etc. Each of his poems was an experiment that unfolded endless possibilities for the younger poets.

Deeply read in Telugu classics and intelligently conversant with all modern European poetry and thought, he is verily the *il miglior fabbro* of modern Telugu poetry. His sense of verbal music is so unerring that in breaking the old patterns of poetry, he has never become bathetic. His style is varied, but on the whole the diction is classical and carries itself on the stream of word rhythms. This, his greatest strength, often reveals itself as his chief weakness.

While the others came under the various influences of Sri Sri, his contemporary Sishtla struck a new path for himself. In his songs and stories, there is a strange, new evocation of the magic of folk lore. He died before his promise came into fruition and without a following. Of the large army of competent, bad and indifferent poets who came after, these poets deserve mention: Arudra, a juggler with words and ideas, writes poems in a language which appears to be a mechanical mixture of English and Telugu. Tilak, like a late spring rouses the memory with delicate words and tender feelings. And the youngest of them, Ajanta whose freshness of expression and power of imagery make his long prose lines, which is a special device of his, sing.

The translations which we present here, though inadequate in themselves, will we hope convey some of the power and beauty of modern Telugu Poetry.

POEMS FROM THE TELUGU

Translated by SRINIVAS RAYAPROL
and RAJASEKHAR

1

Oh you poor man
Oh you work man
Oh you slave man

We are the Gods fallen
From the sky
To redeem you

Having been unable
To save our selves.

BAPIRAJU

2

To make some more money
To attain some knowledge
To be a name

For that these dry attempts
For that this futile fritter
These secret tears that will not fall

This, my friend, my life !

BAPIRAJU

3

I cannot build a home for the birds
 I cannot make like a river
 I cannot fashion a flower
 I cannot walk without my shadow

On the street of memory I cannot mark the milestones
 On the bed of my wants I cannot close my eyes.

Pity me
 I am a man of three desires.

RAJASEKHAR

4

Across the distance
 a melody
 a movement
 In me

the line and the limit
 of distance
 a melody
 a movement

like the diamond light
 of the Snow Queen's eyes
 scudding the woods
 circling my soul
 and shaping my way

a melody
 a movement

Bright tides of lightning
 fallen through the moonstone
 And valleys of sky
 Breaking into the surf of light
 in me
 a melody
 a movement

As the black stain
 of my birth's pang
 fades
 and the red smudge
 of my death's evening
 pales
 As the wide gulf
 of my centre's doom
 opens

The bough of stars
 will dip in silences
 And sea nymphs will strum

a melody
 a movement
 Across the distances
 of Death and beauty.

TILAK

5

And she a faded flower
 caressed by men's fingers
 bearing on her petals
 the feet of their desire

Yielding the honey
of her deflowered heart
To the music of glad and gray
Seasons, to nights churned in the rain

She a flower in thorns
watches with eyes of petals
the night patting
her dishevelled head
and plays on broken strings
a melody that rings
in the heart of the night

Her heart ajar, and her eyes half open
She preaches to space
The gospel of the night
and the sermons of hunger
Lifts into the night.
The ladder of her dark ascent.

For in His night lies her darkened life
And the night in his steps
Pats her dishevelled head.

ELCHURI

6

The train you would wish to take
Is forever a lifetime too late
And bored with the wait you board
Any old train that comes your way
The weight of your ideals that you drag
Behind you is far in excess of what
The rules permit, and I am afraid
You'll have to leave your laden heart

In the brake-van of your dreams :
There is no room for all that you've brought
For you can't take it with you, and before
You're hardly in it the train
Has moved away.

This train will not take you for sure
The place you would wish to reach
So, why not blame the Gods
And stay right where you are.

ARUDRA

7

Squarely, solid
In the city square
The Bull sat
All of a lifetime.
A generation ago
And the generation after
The river's muscle
Flowed
Uninterrupted
But for this moment
This stone-eyed Bull
This king for a day
Silent as the wash
Of white on the wall
Ignoring equally
The motor horn of man
And the longer arm
Of the Punisher

Complacent, non-violent
 Concupiscent, totally teetotal
 Squarely, solid
 In the city square.

SRI SRI

8

Call me by a name
 A Rose if you will
 For my trite story
 Has all the sadness
 Of that flower.

Alone now, a grief after
 In memory of that golden boy
 And pierced by the eyes of these women
 I sit now and remember
 The mountain slopes where his green smile
 Took me and left me the mud brown day.

A grief away from my village
 Awake in the afternoon's clutch
 I await my Death that will not come.

With remembrances of mother, of sisters
 Of father, of brothers, remembrances of those
 That I belonged to and the ultimate remembrance
 Of you to whom I did not.
 Memory of nightfall, of darkness
 And of you my golden boy, my sweet smelling man
 My love is true as this memory ridden night.

Remembrances at daybreak and in the train of thoughts
 In the brain, remembrances at nightset in my destroyed bed
 Remembering you now that winter is here
 Remembering you now that spring is come
 Remembering you with the rain
 You my broad shouldered one
 Where are you now, my lover man?

Sing me a song my sweet faced sinner
 Love me a little my disloyal one
 The girls in that town are waiting for you
 The girls in this town are a-waiting for you
 Alone in the afternoon I am for you

Lover come back to me like my memory of you
 Lover bring back to me what you took of me
 Come to me love, in man shape
 Break into me love, in boy shape
 Sink into me softly, love, in girl shape.

Hush a bye my baby the birds are about
 Softly my child lest the winds hear you
 My breasts are rocks, love, waiting for your mouth.

Over the seas I sing you a song
 Over the rocks I will borrow a rhyme
 For you lover
 I will shout my name
 Rose, Rose, Rose !!!

9

"..... In the real dark night of the soul it is always three O'clock
in the morning ..."

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD.

Not nobody
No where
Silence has fallen on the schoolboy's notebook
And the harlequin wipes the smile from his face
The singer in the street has no more sadness
The woman of joy has closed her door of happiness
In the real dark night of the soul
At three O'clock in the morning
Not nobody no where.

The murderer has sheathed his knife
And the Queen washes her silken hands
The poor man has hung his tears out to dry
And the prisoner casts a wistful look at the sky
In the real dark night of the soul
At three O'clock in the morning.

Is it the time to look in the mirror?
It is the time to measure the deep.
Is it the time to shut the door of Death?
It is the time when the morning opens like a grave.

The beggar in the street and the posters on the wall
Have found their peace
Mr. K . . . in his cubicle sleeps
Beneath a robe of thorns
The hearer and the horror have reached their home
Not nobody nowhere now
At three O'clock in the morning.

The king and the kingmaker
The common man and the uncommon man
The man of peace and the man of God
Have locked up their miseries
In the safe deposits of their mind.

Not nobody nowhere now
Between the murderer and his message
Between the mirror and the ugly man's reciprocal thought
Between this man and that man
There is nobody nowhere now
In the real dark night of the soul
At three O'clock in the morning

Neither desire nor jealousy
No hope nor despair
Neither sigh nor hate
Disturb the silences of the dark
At three O'clock in the soul.

AJANTA

Murthy V. N. Sripada

**I, CHRISTOPHER OCTOPUS:
a confession**

I have streets and streets of understanding, I prided myself.

"Nelly, let me talk to you once more."

"Nelly please talk to me once more; just once more."

Nelly is dead; so the doctor wants to talk to her once more. Nelly was his wife. I go to him and say, "Doctor, nothing is lasting; even Jesus Christ didn't last." And I have streets and streets of understanding, I prided myself. I can address lengths and lengths of human beings, I prided myself.

"So, I will come and see you tomorrow, Joyce. You will wait for me." You must meet Joyce. Joyce was a shapeless thing the day I met her. She would never grow. I would never let her grow. So I would protect myself. And then you go to sleep. You never want to let something happen to you and so you would go to sleep and yet Joyce grows like a tree.

So, Nelly died; Doctor said, "I was born in India." India is where I was born. Since Nelly died doctor repeated it to me. "Chris, India is where I was born or I was born in India." Later half of what he said was "You have a great country there." Should I thank you, doctor. I am unshameless. I am wretched. I am an eternal juvenile. Doctor was born in India. More than he was born in India, he met Nelly in India. I was born in India. So doctor said that India was a great country.

"Do I understand you, doctor? I am conscious of your words shamelessly. I have padlocks of pride that I can understand. I am not a human being. I am devoid of understanding. I have padlocks of pride that I can understand. But I can't; the tear in your throat will not subside, not to-day; not until the whole mess sinks down into the death. Not until the death of Nelly dies."

Doctor, you know what. I used to know a fellow. He was a very good friend of mine. I never wanted him to be my friend. Strangely I forestalled the danger to myself. But I was weak. I was a maniac. We moved together for a long very long time; and he died like Nelly. Nelly was on her way to church the day she died. Did she know that she would die on her way to church? Did she tell you, doctor? Did she tell you that she would die? How would you have prepared for it? Could you have prepared for it?

No, doctor, you couldn't have. One night I dreamed that G.L. would die the next morning. G.L. was in the hospital in those days. G.L. died the next morning. He told me in the dream perhaps. But G.L. wasn't my friend. Then, why should I suffer for him? I told you, doctor, I am not a human being. I have friends. When you phoned Carmela, she thought it wasn't you. You thought it was an Indian friend of mine trying to reach me. But it was you on the phone. You sounded Indian. You got back the Indian dust into your mouth. Is it true, doctor? What I just said, is it true?

So Joyce, I am afraid. I am living like a figment. Like a rolling figment. Various many times life was a drumfall of happenings, incidents. I tried to run the earthquakes. I wanted to run them. So I wanted to fight against you. You were happening all the time against my conscious resistance. I have a mind which has a mind of its own. I am completely unsafe.

This is the morning time; small hours. There is the smell of death. Death all around; infinite forms of it. Infinitudes of multicolored death. I must have a smoke or a drink of perfumed oil. I shouldn't have been thinking of you, or writing this. I must have been asleep by this time. I have to get ready without red-shot eyes by to-morrow. I have sixteen hours of death to face. Death

as an engineer. I call this death, for to be an engineer doesn't mean anything to me. To me it is a death like a dead weight. I will suffer the heaviness as if I am in a drilled pit, miles and miles deep, sea-deep. But this death isn't the same as Nelly's.

Nelly's death, Joyce, Nelly's death, is alive. Nelly died, did you hear of it? "Nelly, Nelly, talk to me once more, just once more." The doctor is a fool, isn't he? He is just a mere fool. He is once more a fool. He is an useless fool, Joyce. Just like me. But, who are you, Joyce? Have you come to life? I never thought of you but you are growing like a tree. I know others too. Adele. Adele. Adele, for example. Did you meet Adele? You must have met her. I was all alone that day, lonely, hating to eat shrimps and she came down, sat across the table and said, "Chris, I am Adele." Adele announced herself. She had a whole shape; a whole human material and she was dead. I didn't know that. "She is so completely dead," my friend was telling me. I believed in him. She had green eyes and she talked so deadendly. I never had the courage to understand her death. Strangely I was getting involved in her death.

Adele, remember how you said that I should button up all the way to the collar. That night I was hanging down that sentence, down that feeling, like an Abner Dean sketch. Did I mean to you so much? Perhaps you can't hear me now, now that you are materially dead. Adele is dead, Joyce, adele is dead with her body. The whole frame, the endless structure that I built up suddenly started to oscillate-like; it had lost its base. I was so confident before. But I didn't realise that all the time I was galloping to stoop on to a dead body. I didn't realize that I was a fool, with centuries and centuries of foolishness behind me. But Adele is dead; I must have died by this time. I sit here in this horrible horrible electric light; I feel a million things that tear me up. Adele wrote to me once "I would start feeling life than trying to think it." Thinking is so much easier, Adele. So much easier, really.

Did you ever realise that, Joyce? You can sit still and think. I have a friend who used to look himself up for days and days. Even the doctor is doing the same. I saw him; he never came out of his room since Nelly died. I saw him; he never came out of his

room. Nelly died a whole week ago. People said "poor doctor" and rolled a tear that flew up like ether. I said so myself. But I never realised that some such thing would have died in that friend of mine.

This friend, who used to lock himself up in his room, he was having his daily food, he was moderately rich, he was the sort of a person who played with toys and grew up regularly, he had his week-end-girls, night-out-booze, sunday suppers at friendly places. Why should anything die in him? That is what you and I think of. We think up all these things as if we have computed all these things. "This fellow is crazy". It is so easy to think up like that. Once we start feeling it, his tragedy, the pain of that vacuum, that surface tending to crumple down

Adele? Where are you? Are you alive? Do you hear me? I am Chris, the individual whom you worthied more. I don't worth anything. You never said that you came to me as an excuse for death. That you wanted to isolate yourself from the eternal leprosy that killed you day in and day out. In such times I was cruel to you. I wasn't worthy. I am not worthy. Doctor might come down this evening and say "Hello" to me. What shall I say then? Should I tell him the story of my friend's death? That we grew up to be friends, and grew up and grew up and finally it was all water, just sea, a whole heap of sea. Would he understand? Would he understand, Joyce? Tell me, you are far off. You do not exist yet. You haven't asserted yourself yet. You are fresh in this dead world. You always have hope, hope never to die, you are entering us. You are making your way. I can see the slide of your fingers on the walls. You are coming closer, closer to this sea. I shall not tell you when you reach the line.

Am I just imagining?

I am like a sea-creature. I wait in this cage and things will happen. I wait for people to come in. I am known by Octopus, Christopher Octopus. Yes, Christopher Octopus, that is me. I shall try to reach you.

I can compute your death, I am used to it. I shall prove to you that you should die. I have volumes and volumes of handbooks that publish the necessary conditions for death.

Doctor, this is I. Just another piece of this shapeless mass that you turn around and call world. Where in the world can you go to ask for a hand in your suffering? Who will canyon the gap?

"You are born in India, aren't you," you said.

If you are thinking of Oriental wisdom, that is hoax. No man is wise. Wisdom is another form of slavery. Another consolation. Another form of acceptance.

I am an egotist. I have my own nonsenses.

Even to-day I don't know what it is like to share you, to share Adele, to share my dead friend, to feel the atom's splitting pain the monologues of the human beings in the outbuildings of Hiroshima, the claws of a war hanging in the air and the pain in sleep's breast bone, the universal death, the annals of death and the promise of death.

Joyce we are such insane mess. I want you to share this insanity. One of these days I will say that you have beautiful brown hair and you will smile in and turn in and let yourself into the death. Into me. Won't you, Won't you please, Joyce?

William Carlos Williams

A LETTER

MAY 29, 1951

Dear Seena:

This period of adjustment must be a tough time for you. I had no idea that in India itself you would find such prejudices as you describe. I see by that that problems we think of as local are not so but are merely part of the world's inheritance. That at least gives us a release, makes us feel that we have something in common with the rest of the world, makes us feel less isolated. It permits us, perhaps, to smile a little. We are by that to some small extent liberated.

But India is such a vast and confused land (from what you say) that it makes our problems here sound childish by comparison. I know what you mean when you speak of wanting to go to Brazil. It may be a solution. Keep your eyes and your ears open. It might work out and Cosgriff might be the person to arrange it for you. I know at least one person there who might help, he is an American writer, Bob Brown, pretty old by now but a good friend.

It's two months now since I went to the hospital. I am not practising my profession but remain at home writing during the mornings, as much as I can, sleeping after lunch, answering letters, reading and occasionally going out in the evening to see a friend. It is not the life I am used to. My head is much of the time dull, lifeless

not fit for any serious thought. But there are moments when I feel fully alert. I live for such moments. At such times I pick at my typewriter and have managed to do some original work.

I have had to work for my autobiography was not quite finished when I was hit in the head. I have been able to do the last 50 pages of that so that it went to the printer a week ago. I shall see the galley proofs in another two weeks and expect to have the finished book in my hands by September. I will send you one. I did not in the end include any letters, the book grew to be large enough without that.

On June 18 I have to appear on the platform of a theatre at Harvard where I am to read a "fifteen minute" poem at the Phi Beta Kappa ceremonies, an annual celebration to which this year I was invited to be the guest poet (badly said but you will get the gist of it I am sure) I have slaved at that poem for weeks. Now it has been roughly blocked out and I want from now on until the 18 of June to polish it. I'll try to remember to send you a copy of that too. Remind me to do so after the middle of June.

My problem is to make up my mind whether or not to return to the practice of medicine or to devote the rest of my life to writing. Frankly I don't know what to do. For this summer at least I shall loaf along letting my mind drift. I am not going to worry either way. We'll take short trips to visit friends here and there, swim in the ocean now and then, read, write at a novel which I am under contract to deliver to Random House next year - and think - and wait for the bomb! May be that will solve everything. I am curious to see how much I will improve physically after this accident. May be I'm really going to be alert again and fit to work hard. May be not, for the moment it will just be a matter of doing as little running around as possible, keeping up with my various simple obligations and letting the breezes blow. Florence is my right hand man who helps me in everything. I would be lost without her.

You speak of your mother. It makes me think of mine. Not that they can be like each other, they probably are not, or that they can

have been like each other (since mine is dead) but my attitude towards my own mother must be very much like your attitude to yours. It was a hopeless feeling, what could I do? But I felt that I should have done more and yet, spiritually, I could do nothing, she was too far away from me. My only feeling was an inexpressible admiration coupled with an anger at not doing more which I could not afford without turning my life into a slavery. I would have been enslaved by her if she had had her will. I fought her because I was forced to fight her to preserve myself. If I had given in she would have swallowed me. She was full of genius that had no outlet, it must have been a great torment to her. We fought. She gave up so much for me that I resented it. I did not want her to so immolate herself; she ruined herself for her sons - but she did it in such a way that I was furious at her. She seemed to ask for punishment, to enjoy it. I have inherited so much of it, a thing I despise, that when I catch myself at that trick I blame her. Well, she's gone now, at 92 years of age. My father died at an age 3 years younger than I am now. He seems a young man to me. It is hard to believe.

You are young, remember it. Not that I mean that you should merely sit back and allow yourself to grow old without resistance, I don't mean that. But get hold of a theory of procedure, a remote objective and work at it relentlessly. It will make the years attractive to you, draw you on, always alive, always referring your isolated observations to a plan which as time passes will grow to have recognizable proportions, something you can identify as yourself, tangible - what other can we have than to look at ourselves in this way as we go.

Give my greetings to your mother and father and tell them that I join them, in some minor degree, in wishing their son a contented mind and the opportunity for such work as he desires:

Affectionately yours,

Bill

Rajasekhar

“ ”

I went into the room and saw my six sleeping children thrown anyhow on the bedstead. Four women and a man stood, away at a little distance, their eyes hard with hatred for a far off thing though it was on the sleeping children thrown anyhow on one bedstead that their eyes were fixed with a cruel distance. “Where is she?” I asked. “There” they said with one voice. Their eyes did not look at me nor towards where she was for their eyes were looking at my question which was of her, and, their eyes did not look at my eyes which were looking at the six sleeping children thrown anyhow on one bedstead. I left the room with anger in my heart at all of them, at mostly myself.

I walked carrying the things I had seen in my eyes, with her whom I was seeking in my eyes. I walked with quick tracking steps across long dark corridors which were like many soldered Z's. And I climbed up many damp hanging stairs that were like old men's beards. At the end of many steps and many pursuing eyes and many peaking faces, I reached the room. She was there in the middle of the room seeming to sing a lullaby to the invisible child whom she hated. The glow of the lamp fell full on her face, and her eyes were dark with seeing the six sleeping children thrown anyhow on one bedstead, and with the four women and a man standing away at a little distance. I asked her in a low shout, “Why did you put them to sleep that way?” Her eyes were still on what she was seeing; and they grew small and mean at my question, but she did not look at me as she answered, “What can be done with one bedstead? And besides, you should some day see the four women and the one man and I amidst them, alone; and what I suffer through the

day, for you come to me at night and there are fingers searching in my womb. I shall make you see and you shall suffer too with me.” I remembered how in moments hooded with darkness, I had always touched her soft, plump, breasts and how she was right and I said in a vexed worn tone. “They could have slept on the floor. A bedstead is not heaven and riches, and should not make hatred.” She shrugged rejecting my wish to reach and said, “No. They shall lie that way alone.” I shot out my arm and sought her throat but she jumped like a young thing playing a lover's game. I was sorry and suddenly tired and let her go.

Leaving the crooked corridors and the damp hanging stairs I walked along determined to bring forth a cry for a fist had suddenly closed round my heart. And I walked and ran across all kinds of places, close, open, lighted, dark. As I walked and ran everything stopped and became suddenly still. I halted and formed in my dumb throat one after one the words I had known but I could utter nothing. Not even “yes” and “No”. I was frightened and confused for a few seconds and in a flashing moment I foresaw everything. And I tried in a mad frenzy to form in my dumb throat various strange cries.

There were sounds in my brain as of dry wood crackling. Words were breaking in my mind. The alphabet was dying. I was going to be left with one single cry to serve all my needs. And I was busy selecting one out of the many fearful cries which were screeching and cawing in my mind. There were some cries which were a jumble of words, some that were a tangle of twisted words, some of lame broken words and some were formed of melted dribbling words. I shuddered at the shapes of these sounds, at their nearness to me, at their cruel reminder of old known words that were whole and healthy.

I looked for pure cries like the dog's raw-mutton bark or the crow's or the peahen's raucous caw or the jackal's hungry, desert cry — but oh! not for the hiss or the neigh or the chatter.

And then I chose one strange cry that went “Huh huh huh huh hi hi ... huh huh huh huh hi hi” — a sort of shrill decrepitating loud moan. As I chose the stillness ended.

I walked for a while perfecting the cry. Then I ran faster and faster throwing my cry all around me.

Sometimes I see her running behind me. Running and panting and trying to reach me. But my steps have gained a cunning speed. And neither she nor the four women and the one man and the six sleeping children can catch up with me; and stop me and hold me and talk to me.

Nowadays I do not sleep during nights for fear a nightmare may come and force me into a fresh chase and that I may not escape the second time. I always spend my nights at the Railway Station because the lights keep blazing through the hours of sleep till the hour of waking. And only by day I sleep because the light is there all over me and her and the four women and the one man and all the others whom I watch with my cunning eyes going up and down.

Srinivas Rayaprol

AN AMERICAN JOURNAL

fragments from Fever Journal

MARCH 5: Bach on the Organ ... preferably on a Sunday morning, and you were broken from a bad dream by this music without words, by the snow trembling on the window-sill and collecting softly on the winter branches of nameless trees.

An old woman in a black cape walking, and an automobile in a black hood running ... in opposite direction. Between them was the movement of generations. In thinking.

What a difference in feeling between 4 A.M. of an unslept night and the 4 A.M., of a woken morning.

Above all to be free of externals! and because I am not free, if I die this night, it will be with pain and sadness and worry. About the doctor in whose admiration and distant love I have lost heart and mind, about Raja ... all the externals of my life, all my outside chains, often willingly worn.

Why do people talk more about their sexual prowess than anything else?

Against the number of people who write and paint and occupy themselves in some sort of work or other, there are those who stand at street corners, who

stand in movie queues, those who sit in hotel lobbies and stare out of the plate glass windows. Am I the person who does all these other things too?

The folios of Klee and the Ceramiques of Picasso! In the face of such wonderful creations, such explorations, such revelations what had I done but write a few mediocre poems.

Peggy Guggenheim's birth-house is now The National Farmers' Union.

Hoffman Mortuary presents a pleasant half-hour of your twilight reveries.

The art of Klee is the music of straight lines.

Wallace Stevens' face in the Oscar Williams' Anthology! Such self-assurance, such a pride in the press of the lips, such a way of thinking in the way the clothes set on the body.

As long as music affects me the way it does, I feel purity and strength within me.

The man within me who walks through night seeking the eyes and the lips.

Oh to be free of externals!

Last night dreamt of a negro girl who wanted me. That I had to wake from it into a day of barrenness and drawn curtains.

APRIL 2: To wake up on a spring morning and find the streets wet with rainwater, the air half-full of snow, the sky gray as a sheet. The snow when it collects on the grass beds or breaks on the walls and fences,

the snow falling and not driving, as now, ... This subjective feeling for snow is the most objective one I know.

I've been a stranger in my father's arms.

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.

This inability to write, this false incapacity. I have not written anything for over ten days. Nothing else comes to mind sometimes to express one's feelings but the trite word. The feeling of Time like a widening grave beneath me, can it be any the less intense because I've used an oft-used phrase. Having decided that words are weaker than our feelings or even our thoughts, what then is left for the writer. If the musician lost faith in the ability of sound transmission - does a musician ever think of a deaf audience, but then what of Beethoven - or the artist was colour blind, the situation would be much the same.

Rather it is my own weakness, my imperceptibility, myself always!

I buy the newspaper because the newsboy has tousled hair and sad big eyes, because he wears clothes too big for him, bent at ankle-length, elbows-drawn he sits on a high chair and asks for a Coke in a restaurant. Kafka's diaries somehow do not demand my personal participation as much as Gide's did. I share with Kafka nothing more than the loneliness of the writer who has to pursue another occupation through the major period of his life.

APRIL 15: People talk of physical loneliness as something which can be easily got used to. But God! This that falls on me every now and then, how can I escape the evil thoughts which my loneliness gives birth to.

how can I stop this sinful prostitution of my soul on these pavement-people.

And added to all this is the utter futility. Days, weeks and nothing written yet.

My face in the glass window opposite! I am loved by those who know me but on first sight, my face cannot attract anyone, even repels perhaps by its lips, eyes, and a dark skin withal.

Already the water falls on the streets and the car lights glow mysteriously - simply in the darkness.

The relief of Yellow on Blue!

The people whom I know see my best sides but how unfortunate that my eyes are open only to my shortcomings. I never notice the other singlemen. My eyes, painfully for me, are for the lovers, the looks in-between, the vulgar smiles and the creeping of one arm on another. The more I see without I am lonelier. The more I see within I find darkness and emptiness.

Why is it that one usually records only the lowest mementos, and lets the actual feeling take care of the mementos of joy and pleasure.

APRIL 16: Humility at the moment of strength, Despair at the point of weakness, the despair that Schubert had written a symphony at 18, and that you at 23 had not even a 'style' of your own.

APRIL 22: You, dear God, that saved me from this evil face.

MAY 6: Why do I already decide that my life cannot be like that of so many others. Each person is different

but in a group of people, perhaps I'd be the first insignificant face, the first to sink and yet in this room what a monster of individual thought am I.

I sit in my room and see the trees dressed in snow or swarming with the sun, I sit in my room and see the quietitude of a red brick house or the ugliness of automobile interiors.

JUNE 16: Rain all afternoon, and with hailstones so big you couldn't think true, you realize what a small thing you really are in the face of all these outer manifestations. It seems really ridiculous that such a thing as rain, or for that matter, an attack of moths in my room the other night, reduces one to such an insignificance.

The moths fell beneath the paper blows - they did not even have blood in them. When I lifted one of the dead moths to put away the wings crumbled like ash... and yet, they too had a purpose and a meaning in their life!

Was it just an eternal suicidal love with light? this ruinous seduction of the moths by the electric bulb is more important than the trite images which it invokes.

And yet, while killing them with a blow, and here surely they had a chance to fly, to escape, seemed proper, this idea of attracting them to the light by means of soap water or kerosene in a pan, seemed inhuman and mean. I could not stand to see it struggling in the water, the narcissitic ruin of the moth attracted to its reflection in the surface, and had to save it at the last minute. A while later, quite recouped, and flying in the room with the others around the electric light, it began to bother me, I stuck it down dead, without feeling or regret.

The moth is as much a symbol as the lonely light in the dark window.

OCTOBER 29: How long, Oh God, he said, could this fiasco continue, How long could he hope, to be the riot haired youth, how long could he be the brilliant go of the party, how long could he be expected to act like a perfect instrument without keys or catches of its own. The one quality that he so strove to convey, the one feeling which he sought for in every other eye, lip or body, that sincerity itself was in him, and through no one else's interference but his own, absent. People could not do a thing without him, and yet when it came for the serious interlude between the laughter in the rafters, when time came and whispered NOW, at that moment of intercourse between hands and minds, he was, without feeling or indifference, excluded. 'You are too young...' or 'What do you know about such and such etc.' and there he was, sent to bed like Mozart after he had played his little piece for the visitors in the parlor, without further ado. Sent upstairs into an attic where in his own misery, he stewed.

JAN 27: Forgive me, I say to you, because I love you. Forgive me because I did not know you earlier because I wanted from you, and wrongly, a love which you had already given everyone else. Already I hate myself for having approached you, for having broken into the periphery, for disturbing you, as I have disturbed myself.....

All day I have been sad and miserable. Those curls that I tossed on your doorstep, that insincere laugh is not real. What is real is a little red piece of emotion like rancid meat, stewing me away, destroying me, telling me that once more I have loved and lost. That

all the love I have sought, all the affection which I wanted to give (and yet was I really prepared to do so, could I break thro' this self-constructed wall around me to say - There, I love you and I don't know how else to say it...) was doomed to go the way of all my past failures.

K. S. Duggal

A PUNJAB PASTORAL

THE SERFS REMAINED busy all night long. In the splashed moonlight the Jat women tied sheaves of maize with wheaten hands. And the peasants of Soan bore the bundles to the barn. Each one of the Jats, pleased by linking to himself the laughter of Pothoari women dotted all over the wide fields, heaved a heavier load than the other.

"By God, Sher Mohameda, the sheaves fastened by these delicate fingers are light as feathers".

"This scattered moon of Pothoar and these dabchicks! Who can think of fatigue!" Sher Mohammed returned to his friend. And then both of them swept into a run, with a huzzah.

"Sister-in-Law, just give me a hand!" At times, one solicited a Pothoaran to help lift a weight and would bloom as a black apron or imitation silk slipped against him.

The night wore out in work. None thought of a pull at the hookah, nor felt thirsty. The whole village was bustling with the clamour that the crop of the Chowdhri was being gathered. The Jats cast off their *tehmads* in a gush and pulled their loin-cloths on. Their glistening thighs dazzled the eyes. At moments the Jats sang aloud in chorus.

"O she-gardener, kill not those already crushed."
The lasses would blossom with joy, returning mentally:
"Those ruined by love!
O she-gardener, kill not"

Singing the Jats disappeared towards the barn. The women amid reaped crop marvelled at their alacrity.

The day had not yet burst and the entire harvest was gleaned. This news floated all about. A buzz started among sheep and goats cooped up in thorny-hedge fences. Hearing about the harvest, the cattle pricked up their ears and got restive.

Chowdhri Niaz came into his fields quite early in the morning. At the sight of undulating flocks, he lifted his eyes gratefully to the sky. For long the sheep thudded on. The bleating of goats and the 'shishoo' of shepherds filled the air. Next came cows and buffaloes trundling along at a lazy shuffle.

"Chowdhri Niaz, may God bless you!" A Jat shouted from afar, driving his flock into the field. "By Allah the Sacred, this Buggee of mine has vast patience! You yourself are wise, Chowdhri, seeing such breast-high maize how can an animal like this restrain herself!"

The zamindar gave a wistful look at Buggee, the Jat's cow. She would not let a fly settle on her round, robust and rippling body. She was as if bursting with vigour.

Lifting his eyes from the cow, Chowdhri Niaz viewed Seta, his own bull, who was lost briskly grazing in a sequestered corner. He could not say which of the two was stronger.

"Allah's mercy is bounteous," the zamindar remarked to the approaching Jat.

"That is true, but, Chowdhri, honesty is the thing. Everything clicks if the conscience is clear. It's your crop alone to which none has ever raised a glance, otherwise....."

"It is kind of you brothers," Niaz Khan nodded understandingly.

Niaz gazed long at Buggee. At last he could not contain himself. He felt a compelling itch to stroke her body. Finding

the zamindar make for his cow, the Jat smiled with a proud consciousness.

The cattle grazed on. As they nibbled, the sheep shifted to one side, the goats to another, the cows to yet another till the various animals segregated themselves into their own species. In a far corner, their hooves tied with rope, were three asses and a mare. The back of the red mare was torn with wounds. A king-crow would softly come again and again and peck at them. The mare twitched with pain. But the king-crow flew off a little, then settled there again. An ass, whose hoof was tethered to a hooked post, had finished the grass surrounding her. She was now trying to snap at the weak hemp-rope. For a time she stamped about her hoof. At last, the peg came uprooted.

There was a little stir. The fast grazing cows hardly looked up. Buggee lowed. She was going across to the other side.

Seta was grazing some twenty paces off from the flock of cows. Buggee made up to him and began to munch around. She champed a mouthful of grass half-heartedly and looked wistfully at the bull. She looked long, but Seta never turned his gaze to her. Buggee tried again to graze, but her teeth seemed strengthless.

While grazing a dappled cow had closed upon Buggee. In fury Buggee snorted with violence and the cow sprinted back to its herd.

Buggee bent again to graze. For long she felt the grass with her snout. And not a blade slipped down her throat.

She raised her head at last and made soft steps towards the bull as if she counted, and measured her steps. She looked back. The entire flock were grazing fast. When she cocked a glance at Seta the grazing sound of the ravenous bull fell on her ears. Treading slowly, she neared the bull from behind. She was yet a step away when Seta began lashing with his tail. Buggee slithered to the right and lingered in his shadow. The bull grazed on, nibbling at dry, crisp grass.

The sun had swelled. Seta's soft and well-fed body glistened in the warm brilliance. Buggee looked long at the sky. A thin trickle of saliva dripped from her jaws. Suddenly she switched around again towards the bull. He was still grazing with alacrity. Approaching him softly Buggee nuzzled his swelling flanks. Irritably Seta swung his head. Buggee was scared. She swerved. The bull resumed the nibbling.

Some seven steps away she looked at Seta with hurt and angry eyes. She looked on for long. At last she started grazing. But she could mouth nothing. One or two morsels that she had taken, she turned her head and threw out.

In the distance a yelling dog was separating his drove from the flock of sheep. He went round and in no time singled out his herd. He then burrowed the hole of a *sanda*, rested his muzzle thereon and fell asleep.

Buggee looked back. Seta was grazing, his fierceness unabated. Furiously she wended her way on the other side towards a vast pit filled with water. Around this large pit there were tinier pits. Even away from the tiny pits in the marshy ground, wherever the cattle had stamped their feet, the water oozed out. Seeing the cow approach, a pair of herons, sitting there, flew and vanished behind a hillock.

Buggee scented the water in the pits, frowned, lifted her snout and climbed gently down into the pond. Long she stood with her back to the field. After about ten minutes at last she tilted her neck and regarded the bull grazing all alone in a distant corner. Instantly she switched her head and began ruminating. Her eyes were blank.

"Have in your yard a berry-tree planted,
I would come and linger in your street,
Your breeze would brush by me."

Singing to the sweet strumming of *lk-tara*, the Jat came to mind the herd. Seeing her master, Buggee whined as if complaining.

Then suddenly she emerged from the water and ran to the other edge. A little off her gallop slowed. Nibbling softly, she neared Seta and slid past him with utmost gentleness. Infuriated, the bull spiked his horns into her and resumed grazing some six yards away.

Buggee stared, wild-eyed, at the bull. Then she began licking the flank where the bull had hurt. She licked lovingly on.

Then abruptly, what could it be that struck her, she ran into where asses and horses were grazing.

Setting the *Ik-tara* on the field-edge, the Jat followed her. They swept through many a crop. Some one mile off in another harvested field, cows were grazing. Buggee halted amidst them. The Jat had hardly got there. Noticing him approach, she again tore into a flight and made for the first field.

"May thieves take you, thieves take you! May your seller be undone! What has happened to you, you fit for pigs!" The grumbling Jat was after her again. The cow fled in long capers back to her drove. All the grazing animals had known her coquetry. None stirred his head.

Buggee again lunted to where the bull was busy grazing. She eyed his body; his flanks had strung up. She lowed softly. The bull remained indifferent. He went on grazing. Buggee mouthed about, and started circambulating him. Even then the bull heeded her not. As if grazing, she neared him from the front. She stood a step away hesitant. She brooded long. The bull was hungry still. He grazed furiously on. Taking a timorous glance Buggee smelled his muzzle. Seta hit her in terrible wrath, pushed her with his horns back to the cows, returned and resumed grazing.

Buggee complained not. Wonder struck, she looked on at him as if to say how wildly hungry he was.

Reaching the harvested field, the Jat gathered his herd for water. Buggee would not join her companions. Usually she led the drove like a queen. But howsoever the Jat strove to-day she

dodged him and drifted back, trying again and again to return. The Jat at last went, impatient and beat her blue with cudgels.

As of old Buggee went ahead in the midst of the flock. But time and again as she trudged, she turned back to view Seta.

The bull was still grazing.

B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya

ON HANGING

A day will come — not far ahead, when like so many forgotten arts of life, the art of death by the science and artifice of hanging will not only have been forgotten, but the very mention of it may make the hearers feel aghast, — that there should have been an age when full-blooded, middle aged or youthful offenders were subject to the penalty of hanging. Hanging by usage implies death by hanging under the verdict of a judge always assisted by a jury or assessors in the following gruesome words 'I sentence you to be hanged by the neck till you are dead'. The sentence is received by some of the accused with all the stolidity of a desperate criminal and sometimes even with a sense of stupefaction. Others break out into childish crying at the top of their voice. But nowhere have we heard of the gentle response by throwing a slipper against the Judge, — a retaliation reserved for cases of long term imprisonment to which some rowdies or inebriates are sentenced.

The prisoner goes to his cell — which no longer was the kind of breezy, well ventilated cells that he had been occupying till the judgment was pronounced. He is at once transferred to the "condemned" cell — it is not the cells that are condemned but their occupants who are sentenced to the extreme penalty of law. By the way this is a good example of the figure of speech known as "transferred epithet", or shall we call it Metonymy or synecdoche — or to use a handy combination of both metædoche?

The condemned person — mostly men — occasionally women — cannot all beguile their waiting time in the same manner. Some are callous, others are repentant. The former begin to plan how

to wreak vengeance against the people that had prosecuted him and more especially against the witness that spoke to his crime. Some suddenly begin to rave, while others only become hysterical. Many become confused and cannot answer questions cogently or consistently. After a few days they become wholly contrite and broken in spirit by a sense of sin committed. Presently the prisoner is encouraged to file an appeal which may vary from a scrap of paper addressed to the High Court to an elaborate and well argued petition drawn up by a competent criminal lawyer. And here again is the goddess of luck for while the formal appeals fail, it is sometimes the scrap of paper that wins. Sooner or later the result is known, has to be made known to the accused, and that is another occasion to throw back one's thoughts to what one should have done or should not have done. Really this is the time when the prisoner's fate is settled and the final verdict turns his mind towards God whom he now prays to for forgiveness so that at least in the next birth he may not have to suffer the tortures of the devil which are shortly to reach their end. The last hope still remains when the mercy petition is to be submitted to the Governor and the President of the Republic. These are disposed of by the Ministry and are generally rejected. The day of doom draws nigh. Any small desire of the convict is satisfied, — say a letter or a cigarette. Early morning the condemned prisoner takes an exhilarating cold bath. He generally asks, if he is a Hindu, for a portrait of Sree Ram or Sree Krishna. He is supplied *puja dravyas* such as *kunkum* and *haldi* and sandal paste and scented sticks. A light is given and with these articles of worship, the person prays for what - he alone knows and perhaps his God must know. Presently the time is up for his being taken to the place of hanging. It is about 5-30 a. m. The exact minute varies with season. Sometimes, the process is speeded up or delayed, so that when the prisoner is being taken to his destiny it is still dusky. He is simply walked to the place from his cell with an escort. Only there is an extra escort. That is all. He is not in any way embarrassed. He walks with ease, sometimes with a prayer on his tongue which the escort cannot silence or control. At least the person reaches the room where he has to pay the penalty.

There are two kinds of devices to bring about the event which ends in what the laity calls death. To the medical man the process

of hanging is the severance of connection between the brain and the spinal cord at a point in the area of the brain called *medulla oblongata*. The brain is a soft substance consisting of nerve cells and nerve fibres — which are prolonged through a portion of the brain called the *medulla oblongata*, into the soft substance called the spinal cord which is situated in a canal formed by the bones of the vertebra. These are some 33 bones placed one over the other the spaces in which form a canal running from the root of the neck to the lowest edge where the bony structure in lower animals is prolonged into the 'tail'. Wherever the connection of the cord with the brain is broken, there is paralysis of the body below that point. If the break of the connection is at the neck where, in the depression felt by fingers by mothers when combing the hair of children, there lies the part of the brain called the *medulla oblongata*, the vital centres controlling the heart and its circulation, the lungs and their respiration and consciousness are immediately paralysed and life becomes extinct. When by some process this portion of the brain is broken, death results instantaneously. And the process of hanging is a physical process devised to bring about the result of destroying the centres of the brain controlling circulation of blood, respiration of air and consciousness.

So far we have studied the mechanism of death. Now we have to study the working of the mechanism. When King Charles was put to death, he was simply beheaded. That was considered ghastly and cruel, and if killing a person should not savour of cruelty, there must be some other form of extinguishing life. The drinking of the cup of hemlock was a slow process as was noticed in the case of Socrates whom the potion paralysed slowly first from the toes, the feet and the legs upward until death ensured in due time from paralysis of the chest. Hanging and electrocution are the two remaining forms, and this is not the time to make a comparison. We are concerned with hanging and let us see what it is. A person can be put to death by destroying the structural continuity of the nervous tissues on their way from the brain to the spinal cord. Death may, therefore, be effected by violently turning the head at the neck on its axis - a little more in range than that easily permitted by the child whose hair is being combed by its mother. It is wise not to go too close into a study

of this aspect of the problem. The object really is to break the continuity of tissues by some violent act which is instantaneous and leaves no pain. For this purpose a thick rope, the diameter of which is an inch is turned at one end into a loop and held in position by a knot by which the loop can be loosened or tightened. This is kept ready generally greased. The rope itself is about 10 feet in length and the principle is to turn the loosened noose round the neck and then tighten it in an easy round so that the subject does not feel choked. For this purpose the subject may be made to climb a height of ten feet covered by steps into a platform, or he may simply walk into a room in which he is made to stand on a wooden board. In the latter case there is an underground room of a height of 10 or 11 feet of which the wooden board to which the subject is led, and on which he is made to stand, forms part of the ceiling.

The subject stands on the board, his face is covered by a black cap, so that whatever happens later is not seen by him. But he feels it. From now he ceases to function himself. His thumbs are taken behind and tied up firmly. Then his legs are tied up. Next comes the noose which is slipped round the neck and the noose is drawn close to the neck, but not so tight as to cause any discomfort whatever. At the knot of the rope is placed a brass knob and the noose is so adjusted that the brass knob abuts the rounded prominence of the bone behind one ear. While thus the rope has a noose with the knot at one end, the whole rope is hanging loosely with the other end tied to a beam a little above the subject's head. So far the subject is caused no pain or even inconvenience except that some weird thought must be passing through his mind of possibly a tightening of the rope, a sense of choking, suffocation and so on. Nothing of the kind happens. The subject is unable to see. He does not feel the tightness of the rope around his neck.

Now comes the final stage. There is the hangman who is a head warder, there are also Superintendent of the Jail, the Jailor, and the Town Magistrate whose duty is to read the judgment and satisfy himself that the person condemned by it is the person undergoing hanging. Then when everything is ready, the Jail Superintendent points his index finger to the head warder standing opposite to him with his right hand on an iron handle (such as the series of handles

at a railway station with which they operate the distant and near signals). The warder pulls the handle. That is all. What happens is that the so called wooden board on which the subject is standing - perhaps calling to his God to absolve him of his sins - suddenly gives way and the subject falls full seven feet and dies. The fact is that the wooden board on which the convict has been hitherto standing consists really of two distinct wooden planks which had been brought together and supported by a small iron bar, so as to function as one single board, and as the iron bar is drawn away to one side by the head warder pulling the handle, the two wooden boards, hitherto in juxtaposition and supported by the iron bar, become deprived of the support and they fall off leaving no support under the convict's feet so that he drops with a thud seven feet into the space below. That was why the rope with the noose round the subject's neck at one end and tied at the other end to the beam above, was hanging loose and became tight by the seven feet drop, when the wooden board gave way, and in this process the brass knob on the knot of the noose abutting the elevated, rounded bone behind the subject's ear, presses with the force of the man's weight falling 7 feet and gives the head such a jerk as to cause a turn of the skull so much as to break the *medulla oblongata* which means death. If you take a lump of butter and pass the knife across it, you will find the process neither costs time nor causes pain, such is the medulla (soft portion of the brain ending at the neck and being elongated into the spinal cord). The person is allowed to remain hanging for 20 minutes to half an hour and making sure that life is extinct, he is raised from the space below and laid on the ground flat. If you examine the neck now, it is seen to rotate full round any number of rounds. The person is declared dead. The punishment is executed.

Perhaps the electric shock in the electric chair also kills consciousness the very moment the current enters the body, but the sight of it is ghastly in that it chars the body along the course of the current and the body itself undergoes contortions and the sight is of a person suffering from burns. In hanging however, no sign of suffering is visible or even conceivable. One is often tempted to ask - who is responsible for the death of the subject. The Judge only says that he be hanged by the neck till he is dead.

The Magistrate verifies the person in the light of the judgment, the head warder runs the cap, ties the thumb and the legs, the Superintendent shows his index finger and the warder pulls the handle. Nobody has killed the criminal. He has killed himself when he committed the crime.

BOOKS

Selected Poems 1950-55 by JAMES BOYER MAY

(Inferno Press, San Francisco., U. S. A.)

The poems are based on the assumption that the Sun never set. The language is varied and very competent. But the poetry though incisive, lacks felicity and is as attractive as a clever but a hatchet swinging young boy. The communication of poetic feelings is rarely achieved. But the poems in this attractive volume are not what we read at school, nor even influenced by what flamed our taste in the thirties. The rejection of the old influences and the determination to be different are expressed in the poem "Strayed" where Post-Poundians have been put on judgment. And then there are many exhilarating expressions like "feeding of porkers is practical prayer; otherwise bacon forms beauty from blessings". He is, as he says in the first poem which is a sane repudiation of atomic destruction of man and a bland conviction that mankind will never end, of the band of the "new furious fighting poets". The tempo of the poems is strictly contemporary and the poet's attitude is pleasing. He is not an old prophet shaking his finger at the turbulent world nor an ingenu with a faded fad. If he would let the imprint of his technique not harden and stiffen the song and imagery of his verses, he would certainly give us great delight. Expressions like "ego censored", "inebriate samplings", "intentional music", "prayerful wands", scattered all over the lines spoil the taste of poem. But faults apart, the poems are like active agitators and the poets attitudes, political and cultural, are healthy and inspiring.

"The Diary of Dr. Eric Zeno" by GIL ORLOWITZ

(Inferno Press)

Orlowitz reminds me of the harlequin who is master of a quarter of the trapeze act and for the rest, who does things that set the kids in the Big Top rolling with laughter. Like the buffoon's tumbles which evoke applause inane sophomoria such as "play frenzied polo with the tastes", "pop the buttons of your zest", "clean bill of stealth", "out stepped his hounds", "debt propulsion", "Circle of close end", and "Gallowed be thy name" infinitum do not help at all in the making of the poem. Though equipped with a bagful of jingling words and always in a hurry he can also arrive at such expressions as "One must be alone, and the season Fall" "These painstaking craftsmen took thirty years to fashion this miniature" "I smelled the sea to-night at pent house brown stone and tenement". I liked reading the Diary but could, not help asking myself "Why do some people have to be clever?".

"Power over Things" by HARRY HOOTON

(Inferno Press)

That non-attachment leads to the death of popular aspiration, that communism in practice enslaves man, that political organisation leads to man's exploitation are truths that have led the author to look for a final solution to this recurring malady of human life. His answer like that of the ancient Sankhyas, recognises two forces—man and nature. Man must exploit nature, not man. But Hooton has not shown how without some kind of organisation this idea could be implemented.

His poem, contained in the same volume, suffers from a preponderance of argument over verse. He strikes one as a kind of Australian Whitman paying his homage to the steel and technological war against nature. His careful avoidance of finesse and his choice of words without echoes have lead to a loss of flexibility. The absence of all traces of nativism, the recognition of a real sickness in contemporary civilization and clarity of his conviction are reasons enough to make the reading and re-reading of his work a profitable pleasure.

Rajasekhar

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