

Shrine, a collection of poems

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SOME SAMPLES

ME

Today

I want to be me;

I wish to sing my own song

I want to say

something about myself.

Let me live

some of my own life---
the life of silent pains.

I want to ask
how I am.
Let me find me---
my smiles
my own hurts.

Today
let me emerge alone
and look into me.
In the fire of self
let me radiate.

Other lyrics are also good,
but today
I want to hear me.
Let me breathe
within my own shell.

I want to express my self
drink my own water
flow in my own way
live in me.

I want to be
my own rajah---
my own devotee.
I want to be shut
within me.

WHO SHALL BUY

No one can buy
nor sell
the blessings of the skies
the warmth of the valleys.

No one can buy
nor sell
the freedom of the winds
the grace of the lakes
the dignity of the palm trees
the mystery of the oceans
the sobriety of the jungles
and the songs of the seasons.

No one can buy
nor sell
the fragrance of the flowers
which is a friend of the universe;
and the inter-dependence
of all animals, nations and nature
who form a family with humans
and who breathe
the same air
under the same canopy.

GARDEN OF EDEN

My observations

have convinced me
the Garden of Eden
was a distant planet
where the flowers of happiness
always bloomed.

When Adam and Eve
broke the sceptre of the divine law
they were chased out from there;
only mother earth gave them refuge.

On the soil of her mind
they planted
the seed of the tree of knowledge
which they managed to steal.
It has yielded
the fruit of jealousy, superiority, murders,
rapes and exploitation in abundance.

The blood of Cain
still runs
in the streams of the tree.
It has poisoned
the arteries of mother.
Her fall
would be the demise of an age.

Her children
will be soon exiled to another planet
as their ancestors were.
Where will they go from here
is a question now.

They are sure
to carry the seed of this tree
to corrupt the house of the host
also there.

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A CONVERSATION

I asked my conscience
if it had perceived
in the eyes of humankind
the unshed tears
of hurt and humiliation.
A touch of scorn in its silence
nettled me to ask
if it had ever heard
the bricks of my cries
falling on the blades
of the environment of repression.

The lull
which descends upon a graveyard
under the sheet of a frozen night
pricked me on once more to know
if it has power to predict
that memorable knock
which would awake the mind
to alter history
caught at the honeycombed crossroads
of long journeys of violations.

The constant strikes
at the wounded nerve
stirred the body of conscience
in the sanctuary where it dozed
like the indifferent gods
on high mountains.
Its trembling lips
were an ocean of truth
which revealed to me that
conscience is blessed
with everything,
except words.



HOSTAGE

Like a prisoner

I am led each morning
by the arms of irresistible impulse
to the company of the television
that offers vinegar to silence me
as my ears remain plugged
to the song of my daily life.

Facing my avowed foe
I gallop my breakfasts
and dinners,
blinded by the dust of despicable horror.

The spice-sprinkled tales;
the bombs dropping, leaving
trails as some planets do;

the tanks striding
like giants in the Arabian Nights;
and the spray of the bullets
remind me of the urchins at play.

Alert in the bunker of panic
I lie a hostage
to the ghastly Gulf War
that raises
the high walls of the captivity
to my freedom and peace
in my own living room
though I am thousands of miles
afar.



A FAMILIAR SCENE

Bodies rotting in ditches
or dumped with the garbage.

Bodies washing up
onto the beaches
like bundles of clothes
or lying discarded
in open mass graves
heaped together
in grotesque piles.

Bodies without hands
or heads without bodies.

Grenades were thrown
in places of worship

and those who escaped
were chased to be cut down
as if
they were carrots.

Who will tell
whose young body is here
and who were those youth
swallowed by evil.
All lie here
like the mowed grass on the lawn.
Who are these faces
on whose eyes and cheeks
drops of blood
glitter like pearls.
In half-shut eyes
their dreams are now stones.
Bodies wrapped with red
lie in the lap of dust.

Here is a mother
who moves the corpses
to find her son;
here is the cry of an old man
buried in the cries of the wounded.
Who are these innocents
whom the storm of cruelty
has extinguished
as if they were candles.

The earth

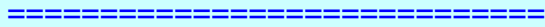
that drank their blood
is speechless;
The void
that danced with the clouds of horror
is crowded with vultures;
The streets
that roared with people
are solitary.
The deepening silence
stands in the shade of a shock.

The statesmen are quiet
and so those
who remember God
day and night.
No one knows the dead;
those who knew
have fallen.
The survivors cannot burn corpses
in spite of the threat from diseases
because
it is against their creed.

It is a familiar scene
from Bangladesh
at the time of freedom;
or a place in the middle-east,
Bosnia, Rwanda,
Somalia or Lebanon.
It may be any country in Asia,
Africa, Europe or South America.

This happens
when ethnic feuds
or religions
are taken to the streets
and homes.

It is repetition of the lust
for a few acres of land
or to eliminate minorities
to please their god.



.AMPUTEE

She was sexually abused
from the age six.

The problem was compounded
at school
where racist ruffians roamed
with their concealed weapons.
In the season of carefree nights,
when teens go to slumber parties
and giggle about boys
she was struggling to survive.

She had no one
to turn to for help
and no where to escape.
When not even fourteen,
she ran
burying the fetters of her home
in a grave of her past.

The urchins
of uncomfortable memories
she carried wherever she went.
She went through
the valley of denial
thickened with the cactus of shame.
She hated herself
now she hates society.
She is entombed
under an uncontrollable storm
of anger and resentment.

The years of abuse
has damaged the delicate nerves
of her relationship with God,
men and herself.
The carpet of her trust
has worn out,
the plant of her love
has gone dry.
She is a burnt out candle.

The deranged beasts of depression
stress disorders
and insomnia
frighten her.
She passes
the brief hours of her sleep
in the stifling jaw of nightmares.
She dies a little each day,
fighting the lingering demons

of her deep, deep pain.

Though she feels
the pleasing smell
from the fragrant spring
of the age of thirty,
yet, she trembles within
when she sees strangers
and Halloween masks.
The sand fortress of drugs
affords her a quick shelter
from the persistent raids
of lonesomeness,
knives,
basements
and the dark.

She never held any job
for more than six months.
She is a divorcee.
A bum
in the eyes of her neighbours
because she is fed by welfare.
Several times she attempted
to cut the racking cord of her life
but the twinkle from the eyes of her son
warmed her
with a fire of hope.

Her soul is scarred
by self-mutilation.

She turns to self-affliction
through an eating disorder.
She passes her time
visiting psychiatric wards.
She doesn't know
who she is.
The feelings of being worthless
often overwhelm her.
She appears normal,
but at heart
She is an amputee.

Her Dad was a violent alcoholic,
large, sad and lonely.
He told her repeatedly
if she ever complained
she would be sent to a foster home.
Buckled to the safety of her house,
she was drowned often
in the murky lake of his urges.

He was the Susan Smith,
the murderer
of the infants of her happiness
or a carjacker who seized
the summer of her days.

The counsellors
told her
that he have had assaults
of severe depression

or an unbearable pile-up of stresses.
He might have suffered
from low self-esteem
or a personality disorder
that resulted in the central palsy
of his dark impulses.

What good does it do,
she asks
while the soft fingers of pity
play
with the strings of her heart.

For help
everywhere was a waiting list.
The therapists
built a dusty web of enigmas
around her
and
opening the door of her heart
to the police
was not a dish to relish.
The justice system
had roadblocks and legal wranglings.
Her mental trauma grew worse
when her friends
showed disbelief
in her story.

The trial was
emotionally straining.

Counting

the beads of her tragic episode
before the judge
was a drama of agony.

With tears

welling up inside of her,
she went through the corridors
of pain at court.

While her Dad gazed out
the courtroom window
the judge called him depraved
for breaching
the trust of authority.

He was imprisoned
for stealing her innocence,
her childhood, and her youth.

Will it do any good to her Dad,
she asks?

Is it going to free
the encaged wolf of tension
in her;
will it melt the iceberg
that freezes her up
whenever someone shows
softness to her?

How

is it going to uproot
the trees of rejection,

anger and frustration
from the yard of her days?

How
is it going to fuse a life
in the sepulchre of her emotions
or
end her endless battle
with herself?
Trying to pick up
the pieces of her life
is the emotional roller-coaster ride
that has deeply
drained her.

She often cries out
why? why?
She wants to know
how to be healed
from the wounds.
She wants to be free
from the clutches of grief
and guilt.
She wants to be forgiven.

The court victory
did not give her the expected light
at the end of the tunnel.
She still hits the bottom
enveloped in crisis.

Her journey
on the rugged path of despair
surrounds by a jungle
of loneliness
that leads to nowhere.

The vision for the glorious sunrays
remains an immovable framed picture
and the hands of indifference
humiliate her
at every step of the social ladder.

She has reeled
from fury and frustration
jammed within with the fabric
of a crippling chaos.
She conceals
a saga of untold misery.

Her soul is a cage
where the hurt crawls,
swells and sobs.
Scenes of childhood lock her
behind the barbed wires
of her fragile hopes.
She cries
for the dreams unrealized.
She feels worse than
battered wives.

Why is she punished
for the wrongs of others,

she asks?
Don't talk of compassion
for a sharp, vicious slap.
How to break loose
from the shackles of the past
is a never-ending question
for her.
Here
her road
seems to be ending.



MOTHER OF AN AIDS-RIDDEN SON

He developed thrush in his mouth
and a lesion in one ear
that seriously damaged his hearing.
He got pneumonia in both lungs.
His every breath became a battle.
The disease slowly
destroyed the body,
attacking his spinal cord
and central nervous system.
Cataracts filming
his eyes,
made every movement more difficult.
He was beginning to hunch
as the disease ate him.
His shaving kit bulged
with containers of pills:
he took thirty-six a day.

He was a throw-away person--
pale, weak and lonely;
for his mother,
the rotting disease
was taking away her dreams.

Both knew time was short
but hung on hopes
for a cure.
During the first three months
it was hard to deal with
the death sentence--
Doctors gave him six months.

She constantly comforted him
as they discussed
flowers for funeral
with tears in their eyes--
carrying a pain
that tore her insides.

In such days
of anger and despair
she was still bonded with her son.
She quit working
as resources dwindled.

She is not wonderful
as some letters suggest--
only a mother.
She gave him months of her love

as she watched
the horror of his dying.

She wants to hold him
in her arms once more.
She has now
sorrows and memories to own.

She did not cry
rather was deeply mad
because of how he became infected
and mad at the lifestyle
he was forced to live
and mad because every minute
a haemophiliac in the world dies.

=====

FLIGHT OF MY DOVE

I am often greeted
by the bursting flutters of the dove
while rambling the rayless resort
of the fears
from the scamps of my surrounding.

I hear
some unknown voice calling her
to be above the confusing cries
of mindless feverishness
and the hounds of alienation
from the houses of infamy
of social upheavals.

I see her fleeing
from the blinding fog
of unfulfilled human dreams,
blank eyes
facing blank walls of the present,
half-blossomed flowers
of the youth of aspirations,
meaningless pledges of our leaders
and above all
those concerns which lie
in the locker
of the anchored ship of memories.

A soothing glow
from a fireplace of compassion
that would radiates
the redness of young lips
from the future,
burning the decaying stems
of the buds of the past,
should entice my dove
before the last star of the evening
bids her farewell for ever.

=====

TERRORISTS

Why

terrorists profess
their targets are not innocent
yet they engineer sneaky devices

to awaken the dogs of gloom.

Why

all that runs

opposite to their fabric

is unholy for their mind.

Why do they hold

their book in one hand

and a sword in the other.

Why

hiding behind

the fungus of hate

they rape

the sanctity of life.

Why

their road to bliss

litters with lingering bitterness.

Why they are

merchants uncivilized.

Why

they are trained

in the school of anarchy

that blooms

as deadly nightshade

on the fringes of fallacies.

Why

they talk of harmony

but plan genocide.

Why
they cannot see
the ecstatic dance of peacocks
and across a borderless horizon
the dove flying.

Why
do they promote the twisted agenda
of insanity.

Why
do they love
the catechism of ruin.
Why do they commit outrages
which are futile.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Along

the shores of youth
I have raced with the winds
emptying bottles of Scotch,
appeasing delights
for spicy foods,
tormented by a longing
to slake my thirst
to sleep soundly
under the reign of
the calm morning
sharing
my hours with the muse.

I hopped human homes
and roamed in the Sahara
to breathe leisurely
and
hear melodies of comforts
from
a nightingale of compassion.

I toiled
tangling and untangling
the knots of questions
and aches
with the frail nails
of reasons
in my silent search
guided by the Moses
of my shadow.

I slept, while walking
and dreamt realities
in the night.
The dreams
which danced in my galaxy
were the pearls,
scattered on the sand.
I passed my life
gathering them.

I often wonder
who will trust a poet
who has been eyeing woman

from a flying carpet of lust
and why the reliable muse
should keep visiting a soul
whose body of vitality
was lashed
for lacking money
a companion
and time?



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