

Poetry Series

Abdul Samad

- poems -

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Abdul Samad(March 3 1991)

Fear That Day

You kill us, the nameless and the faceless, in the name of freedom
In the name of justice and equality
In the name of democracy and liberty
O Liberty, how many crimes have been committed in your name?

You are the great savior, the grand redeemer
You claim to occupy the moral high ground
With your tanks and fighter planes
And your guns and your ships
And your fleets and your armies
Only if you would realize that all it takes
Is a smile, just one smile

You sit in air-conditioned rooms and claim
That your heart bleeds for those who live under the blistering sun
You convene in lavish hotels and claim
That you suffer the pain of the homeless
You dine in five star hotels and claim
That you endure the hunger of the destitute
O this hypocrisy, this blatant duplicity
For how long will you deceive yourself?

The people shall rise one day
The truth shall emerge from this falsehood
This darkness shall give way to light
By God, the end is near
Fear that day, fear that day

Abdul Samad

Her Humiliation Became Mine

As she was pushed by the waiter, cast aside
To one corner of the hotel, her back to the wall
Roughly hit on the head, slapped on the neck
Her humiliation, her pain, her anguish, her suffering
Became mine, all of it, all at once, in that instant
I was that little girl, in rags who
Had just been harshly slapped, pushed, abused
And hurled to the ground

I looked over to her, bathed in shame
I wanted to get up and shift her to my seat
My seat, so that she would not sit on the dirty floor
In that position of subservience and inferiority

I tried to raise my voice, addressing the waiter
'Treat her more gently, you brute'
Nothing came out, my tongue was too shocked
To say anything, my mouth twisted and twirled
But no words came out then, none at all

The ice cream in my hands melted, as did my heart
She remained on the floor, sobbing silently
Her tears become mine, her misery became mine
Oh Lord, her humiliation became mine

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Just One Look-Please!

You remain seated in the car
While I clean the door from the outside
I stare at you through the window
And you avoid my gaze, turn your back, look the other way

A conflagration of emotions bursts inside me
Rage, despair, misery, gloom, anguish,
Why can't you even look at me once, if only a fleeting look?
Why can't you roll down the window and say hello, just once, just this once?
How can you, so easily and so completely, refuse to acknowledge that I exist?
That in my filthy clothes and jaded cap, I do, after all, possess a heart
Oh by God, I do, I do have one, a beating, throbbing heart

You remain seated in the car
While I clean the door from the outside
You remain ignorant, blissfully oblivious, of my plight
Unaware that I don't have a place to call home
A mother whose embrace can efface all my fears
An education that can allow me to pursue a clerical job
You see me as the skinny dark boy in rags
As the useless, ill mannered street boy
The window rolls finally, a few coins clatter
Money makes the world go round
And you speed away, far far way, to your own world

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My Greatest Fear

An inexplicable fear has settled inside
It's not the fear of lagging behind in the race of life
Or attaining mediocrity in academics
Or the failure to procure employment
A house, a car, a bank account, social status

A greater fear lurks inside
The fear of not being
Of seeing dreams being trampled upon ruthlessly
Of seeing practicality reign supreme
Of not fighting against injustice and bigotry

What shall it benefit a man if he gains
The whole world but loses his soul
What shall a man take along to the grave
How many dollars, how many pounds, how many riyals?
He shall meet his Lord all alone, if only he understands

I fear, at a subconscious level, of losing my soul
To greed, intolerance, injustice and ignorance
And that is my greatest fear

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Rise In Love

Rise in love, ascend towards the heavens
Rise in love and vanquish the world
Rise in love and conquer your fear
Rise in love and enter a state of bliss
Know that your soul has been set on fire
And you shall remain enflamed in the passion
In the want, in the longing, in the yearning
Of that one fleeting gaze, that one hint of a smile
Rise, Rise and Rise

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Smile Of The Beloved

The Beloved stands before me
Smiling, in possession of my soul
The eyes radiant, the shimmering lips
Eyes the mirror of the soul
A soul that is unblemished, pure
An innocence that radiates from within
A simplicity that would shame a pauper
The wave of the hand, the slow wave of the hand
I steal a final glance
And the image lingers on till I reach home
Follows me like a shadow
And returns forcefully after months, after years

Oh, the Beloved shall never know
The Beloved shall never know

Abdul Samad

The City Sings The Song Of Death

The City sings the song of Death
Death that roams in the streets
Fearless and merciless, its hands smeared with blood
Its clothes drenched, its desire insatiable
It yearns for more bodies, for more and more
And yet more

The City sings the song of Death
A song whose tragic pitch would scare of birds
Were they to listen to its harrowing cadence
A song that makes babies cry and disturbs the old
A song that is sung by every one who lives in the city of Death
In fear, in pain, in terror
For Death itself has come to life
For Death itself, unchained and unchecked, roams around freely
Who shall now question Death?

The City sings the song of Death
My City sings the song of Death
I too sing the song of Death
And so do the millions that live with me
In the City of Death

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The Slum Child

The slum child stares back
And his gaze, the vacant look, the fear in his eyes
The submission, the pain, the horror
Breaks something inside me
I don't know what has cracked
But the damage is permanent, irreversible
I cannot return his gaze, his powerful stare
I realize that he observes the black suit I adorn
The grey shoes I wear, the shining watch on my right hand
The careful knot of the tie, the cologne that emanates from my skin
He remains silent, his heart burning
My eyes drop, my head lowers
And my conscience erupts

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The Stillness Is The Dance

If you knew what I know
If you could see what I see
And hear what I hear

Then you would find meaning in nothingness
And appreciate the everlasting beauty of paradox
The Wisdom of the Lord who made both day and night
Sin and virtue, light and darkness, heaven and hell
The Lord who is the breath inside the breath
The One who taught Adam the name of all things
The Just King, the Omnipotent Lord, the All Knower

If you could love what I love
And desire what I desire
Union with the Supreme Essence

Then you would realize that as the inner self dances
In the certitude of the Lord's Mercy and Grace
The inner and the outer worlds become one, indistinguishable
And the Stillness becomes the Dance

Only if you could open the inner eye
And search for the One who awaits to be found in your heart

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The Stillness Of The Night

The stillness of the Night
Hides a secret in its womb
You are not alone
The Supreme, the Divine is ever present
With you, in you, is you
Fear not death or the ticking clock
Or the loss of youth and beauty
Of wealth and fame
For if the Lord blesses you with His Grace
The entire universe becomes your playground
You become the stars, the moon, the sun
The light, the earth, the oceans
The one becomes the many, the many becomes the one
All dancing in His glory

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The Ticking Clock

The sound of footsteps reverberates in the corridor
The sun shines through a minor crack in the wall
Teachers and students alike rush through the hallway
Shouting, pleading, arguing, smiling

I stand in silence and observe
The classrooms where I had once roamed as a child
The tiny seats perched in one corner of the room
The wooden desk set in the middle
The walls plastered with paintings and drawings and maps
All of which now were gone, forever
Remaining only as that fleeting image
That lives inside human memory

Time, the ticking clock had slowly, irrevocably
Like a silent shadow changed all
The people whom I called friends, the place I called home
Everything

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