Classic Poetry Series

Amjad Islam Amjad

- poems -

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Amjad Islam Amjad (4 August 1944)

Amjad Islam Amjad, (Urdu: □□□□ □□□□ □□□□) is a famous Urdu poet, drama writer and lyricist from Pakistan.

Life and Career

Amjad Islam Amjad was born on August 4, 1944, in Sialkot in Sialkot the city where Allama Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz were born. He received his education in Lahore. He graduated from Government Islamia College Civil Lines, Lahore. His career started as a lecturer in M.A.O College Lahore. From 1975 to 1979 he worked as a director at Pakistan Television Corporation before returning to the College.

Since his school days, Amjad had an inclination towards writing and playing cricket. His ambition was to become a cricketer. When He was in class 9th, he was selected editor of their school magazine. In college also writing and cricket went side by side. During those days, his writing pursuits were in extremely immature phase. In graduation, he got scholarship in Urdu. He took admission in Urdu department in Oriental College. This brought an end to his heartfelt desire of becoming a cricketer because he could not play from University of the Punjab as he was a student of Oriental College. Finally, he devoted his whole attention to writing. He was recognized as a talented young poet and was published in literary magazines. This encouraged him to write poetry.

Lahore at that time was the hub of all social and cultural activities. Its vibrant culture not only enriched his experience but also helped him develop his own outlook about life. The influence is discernable in hispoetry and especially in most of his plays.

He said about himself by the following words:

"During formative years, form does not possess any meaning because, practically, one is neither conscious of form nor knows the scope of it. It was important for me to express myself and nothing else. Poetry was never a profession for me. It was part of my life.

I can write about the innermost recesses of my personality only in poetry. My personal potential, I think, can best be realised only through this medium. Poetry is my natural expression. I wish people could identify me as a poet. People may stop watching my plays even in my life but my poetry will last longer. The readership is though limited but more captivating. Longevity of poetry is more than that of plays. My plays might be forgotten after decades but not my poetry.

I don’t know if it is possible to understand the urge that compels one to write, especially poetry. What can one say about why one writes it, and why in the form of half-formed sentences, or why one juxtaposes words in strange combinations, and even then it has its own strictness of format, two-lined, three-lined, four-lines and so on. But there is a strange, almost inexplicable satisfaction when the urge to create takes hold of one, and one feels compelled to purge oneself of the thoughts one is possessed with. The stronger the urge, the greater the catharsis. I believe that yes, there may have been, each time, some stimuli that provided the prompt, that became the catalyst, and started trains of thought and brought about the process of creativity, but what comes out, each time, is the sum-total of one’s entire personality to the hour. It is the expression of everything that has gone into one’s mind, the little pin-points of experiences and information and everything else to which one has related and which have become part of one’s psyche. The process in the mind that, in reaction, creates a whole work of art, is what I call the tip of the iceberg. I believe the creative process has not been understood so far, I don’t know if it will ever be. For my part, I believe that one cannot wholly grasp the process of creativity with reference only to stimuli percived through the eye or the ear, or the nostrils, or the tongue or the skin. And that is why I don’t know how my poems come into being."

In 1989 he was appointed as Director General of Urdu Science Board. Currently he is the project director of the Children Library Complex. He is the author of over 40 books and received several national and PTV awards.

Amjad Islam Amjad is the writer of many drama series for Pakistan Television Corporation including the very popular Waaris. He has written many columns, translation, criticism and essays whereas his main focus is writing Nazms. Among his most famous dramas are Waris, Dehleez, Samandar, Raat, Waqt and Apnay Loug.

In June, 2008 he joined Urdu newspaper Daily Express and writes column with the title of "Chasham-e-Tamasha".

Works:

Fishar, Barzakh, Us par, Satwan dar, Zara phir say kehna, Seher aasar, Barish ke aawaz, Itnay khwab kahan rakhoon, Mairay bhe hain kuch khwab, Hum us kay hain.

A Kind Star

Many a moon lost in mist,
some kept awake, dozed off
except a kind star
from evening till daybreak

Like a night of pleasure,
an undefinable joy,
a fragrant dialogue
stayed with me,
stays with me,

[Translated by Prakash Chander]

Amjad Islam Amjad

A Poem Of Love

If perchance, you ever remember how we were,
Then in the soft glow
of same moonlight
Cast a glance at a shining star.

And if that star
Travels the wasteland of space
and falls to your feet.

Know, it was an image of my heart.
And if the star stays on high

But then it is inconceivable
That you cast a glance at anything

But that it would splinter and crack
Lose its being.

If perchance, you ever remember how we were,
Place a soft hand on the passing breeze

I shall be there in wafted scents.
Search me in petals of rose,

In wee mirrors of dewdrops I'll be there.

And if you fail to find me in

In stars, wafted scents, rosepetals, dewdrops
Just look down at your feet.

You will find me there.
Circling in ceaseless journey to reach you.

If ever you see a brightlit lamp.
With circling moths daring open flame.

Know, I too have been reduced to ashes
Like many of them.

Pick up that dust, and fling it
In some passing river'.

The dust of me shall ride the waters.
Travel the seas, and come to rest,

On some unseen island,
Cry out for you.

And if you ever voyage out,

Do grace that distant island

[Translated by Saiyed Mohib Asad]

Amjad Islam Amjad

Aab-e-Hayat

Amjad Islam Amjad

AaKhirii baat

Amjad Islam Amjad

Baaz_gasht

Amjad Islam Amjad

Bevafaii kii mushkileN

Amjad Islam Amjad

Beware, Now That You Have Left Your Homes

So said the Breezes addressing those departing,
"To search for the long departed is certainly a futile effort,
for who has ever found the traces of the long departed!
you, who wander about the darkness
carrying shimmering lamps in your eyes,
youl tell us,
has anything ever sprouted from dead earth!"

Ruined by an eternally secure nature,
paths of imagination tell tales,
of the precious footsteps of the long departed,
arouse hopes of union;
mingling with the verdant smell of roselike bodies,
by the living knock of their quiet rustlings.

Were you to ask about the abodes
of those passionate faces, questioning eyes;

Those paths of imagination peer at you
as though words:
have been severed from their meanings
and utterances:
have clustered in the ambiguous whirlwind of anonymity.

So said the journeys addressing those departing,
"Travel is an ocean of trials and afflictions.

It is entirely a whirlpool.

The gait of the long departed is
nothing more than the vagaries of desert winds,
unaware of its waystations,
It is a mirage;

More credible than clear vision.

Every spectacle is a tunic of perishing colours, as
failures and dreams go hand in hand"

So said the Stars, addressing those departing
"But the longing to rekindle previous friendship
Is the path to union
The new word derives vitality from the
reappearance of timeworn letters.

Beware, now that you have left your homes,
Stasis is:
decadence, demise of existence,
Quest is
eternal fire of eyes,
The path to the unseen destination
is illumined by those who have long departed."

[Translated by Farooq Hamid]

Amjad Islam Amjad

Echo

It was a similar winter eve,
When she, henna, rich on her palms,
Blushed face partly in red,
Came to ask for her letters back.

Silent pleas in her bewildered eyes,
Face, pale with the shadows of unknown fear,
Then, with the letters clenched in her fist,
Drowned in reflections of past,
She leaned on my shoulder and cried.

Untold stories of the times gone-by,
On the trembling edges of crimson lips,

Even today, often on the winter eves,
The silent scene of her parting
Flashes in my tearful eyes,
And a moment of henna rich hand beckons.

It was a similar winter ev

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Ek Din

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Ek Pal

Amjad Islam Amjad

Farz Karo Hum Taray Hotay

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For Habib Jaalib

Eyes that nurtured dreams
about the oppressed
of the earth are closed
where are the hands,
with blood in every pore,
that wrote about light.

Snuffed out in time's
fireplace is voice
whose each timbre
had tongues of fire.

His spirit of inquiry
endures : "How can
fettered feet dance?

How can peace and
oppression co-exist?"

His poems rejected
each act of oppression.

He sang about freedom
for the down trodden,
betterment of humanity.

The crazed vagabond, Jalib,
leaves the world.

Spread your arms my country,
my soil, your poet is here,

[Translated by Prakash Chander]

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For Parveen's Son

My moon-faced nephew,
eyes which had dreamt
only about you are shut.

After many a dream
and crossing oases,
she got you, your love.

You the fragrance
for which she rejected
the garden's bounties.

In a field of marigolds
she talked to herself.

Her hues lent colour
to your life.

Geetu, epitome of
her every dream,
‘the glory of full moon',
Under heaps of earth
lies the intellect
whose voice teemed with moons,
whose poetry, a repository
of youthful dreams,
won masters' enconiums.

Yes, my moon-like nephew,
one whom we buried was
not only your mother
but voice of an age.

Her work infused the
world with fragrance.

She who on a
voyage of fragrance,
was tormented by flowers' plight.

In a cascading
surge of recognition who knew,
she will leave us all
and be topped by earth
and disintegrate quietly.

[Translated by Prakash Chander]

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Hum Aise Marg Talab Bhi Na The Muhabbat Mein

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Hum Log

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I Have to Find My Star

In the emptiness
Of skies, filled with
Innumerable stars,
I have to find the
Star that belongs
To me.

Galaxies beyond galaxies, filled with wonder,
I know no name, nor a sign do I remember.

All I remember,
That on the very first morn,
When thestars embarked
Through early light of dawn
Through the vastness of skies,
Another star glittered
In her wondering eyes,
Similar to that star,
I too carry a dream in my tearful eyes,
Embellish it with tears like stars in the skies,
And keep on waiting
For you to pass by.

Lost things, they say,
Are sometimes found
In the same amalgmation
Of dust, where once
They were lost.

I too have to find the
Star that belongs to me.

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Impossible

How eyes can control dreams,
rainbow hues quiver,
same scenes appear
different to each eye,
as innumerable oases
exist in desert
or a thought acquires
limitless shapes.

[Translated by Prakash Chander]

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Inkeshaaf

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Just Then

When the moon starts its slow decent
on the broken stairs of night
When the hopes begin to melt in the cold flame of grief,
When the voices begin to drown in the gloomy ocean of heart.
When the seasons slip away, when the butterflies cease to talk,
When living becomes a duty, void of meanings, worthless,
When every passing momentfalls on me like an abuse of life,
When faces vanish in the deep silence of rememrance,
When eyes, heavy with pain, drown in the whirlpool of memories,
When flames die away, when dreams
Begin to scatter,
Just then, if you could walk into
My life, my love.

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Kala Jadoo

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Khuda Aur Khalke Khuda

Amjad Islam Amjad

Koii zaNjiir ho

Amjad Islam Amjad

Links

Think it over, my love,
For the journey of decisions
Is never soothed by
The soft shadows of words.

No pain is more painful than
The pain of remorse.

Think well,
Of the fears you may have,
About traveling with me,
Set them out in your eyes,
And know it well,
Time is barren desert
With no return.

New scenes obliterate
The seasons of yester-years.

The gust of breeze,
That creased your hair
Some while ago,
Is gone and dead,
Its being or not being
Is meaningless for you.

Have you ever thought?
How the existence of life
Is linked with the living being?

This is the time my love,
To understand the link
That binds us together.

For the fears you may
Have about traveling with me,
Take a break on this crossroad and
Set them out in your eyes,

For every bond of your hands,
Is still well within your hands.

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Love Encompasses All

Love encompasses all
The eternal end of our closeness
Metaphor of our being,
Your beauty beacons,
Inevitable inflictions,
How sweetly befall,
Love encompasses all.

With the break of dawn,
Dewdrops shine on rose petals,
A moth hovers around around the tree branch,
The flower, moth, turbulent oceans
Serenity, rise and fall,
Love encompasses all.

For the dreams we shared?
For the plans we carved?
But the waves do not stop,
On the threshold of time
In the dance of dust,
Colours fade away fast,
Impressions do not last
Clouds vanish on horizon,
Shrinking distances enthrall,
Love encompasses all.

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Mere Ghar Mein Roshan Rakhna

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Mohabbat Ke Mousam

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Muhabbat

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O, Defenders Of Faith

My creator is He
who gave flowers fragrance,
trees shade, oceans water,
winds motive power,
created earth, moon, sun.

All are Human beings,
none better than others
except the devout.

Everyone has right to
live on earth,
reap labour's fruit,
walk about with dignity,
enjoy free speech,
indulge in a smile,
have wishes fulfilled
and desires satiated

All God's progeny
deserve respect
why, o, why should
one's conceit be
fatal to others?

I seek light for
the unfortunate, those
whom, to feed your ego,
you treat as worse
than wayside stones

I speak for those
whom your beguiling
eloquence held captive
and sold to oppressors
in every age,
God is mine.

[Translated by Prakash Chander]

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Ode to the New Year

Let's account for life's deficit blight.
Count our griefs, know our pains right.

What plaints blister at the bottom.
Today is the day to unleash them.

Lets' tell the unloyal to his face.
Speak out what your lips are burning to
Leave apart guarded reticence.

Even blab out what's between the lines.
Why do you greet me with laughters feigned?

Let looks be frozen if your heart is reigned.
Let your face reveal.

What whispers in the bosom.
Know our pains, count our griefs.

One word binds you and me.
Just one word in the abyss of the diction.

Lets adopt the word selfsame.
That carries the truth of times.

For hypocrisy, a whole life is ahead.
So let's not molest that one word dead.

Count our griefs, know our pains right.
Let's account for life's deficit blight.

[Translated by Dildar Pervez Bhatti]

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On this Crossroad

On this crossroad of life,
Let us stop before we go,
And ponder over the path,
You and I took long ago.

For it is not merely a part,
Of the journey long,
It is the scale to judge,
The path we took all-along.

It is a mirror that reflects,
Picture of present and past,
Destiny calls at distance,
Metaphor that may not last.

In this ruthless desert of life,
If steps drift away at start,
By the time we reach our ends,
We are thousnds of miles apart

Therefore my love
On this crossroad of life,
Let us take a break.....

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Once in a while

Once in a while,
During these sultry nights,
When all voices seem
To have fallen asleep,
In the somewhat bruised
Silence of half-sleep
A wonderful dream awakes;
I see
That across the veil of dust
Which hangs between us
You too are all alone
And wide awake.

[Translated by Muhammad Salim-ur-Rehman]

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Poets

Craftsmen who chop
words from trees of
hope to build ladders

How gifted are they!

Sow seeds of sorry and raise
harvest of happiness in minds.

Innovators all!
build boats in ocean
of time and get drowned.

[Translated by Prakash Chander]

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Rendevous

This story of earth,
As old as the universe,
As old as birth
Of day and night

The story of sky
Is a part of the words,
We casually uttered,
Between you and I
Incomplete, till the end of sight.

The earth and all
The scenes with-in,
Witness the moment
When you held my hand
And we watched
This world together

This world,
Center for the rendevous
Between You and I.

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Sand

The sand keeps on sliding,
For it is meant to be, it keeps on sliding
Deserts retreat
with the sound of cities,
Dust fills up the springs,
Oasis begins to shrink.

The sand keeps on wandering,
For it is meant to be, it keeps on wandering,
We may try to collect,
Particle by particle,
How hard we may try,
How tightly we may
Clench our fists.

The sand keeps on slipping,
For it is meant to be, it keeps on slipping,
Memories scattered on the beach
Are washed away with returning waves,
So are the words, carved on
The sheet of water,
And all that is built with sand,
The sand keeps on spreading,
For it is meant to be, it keeps on spreading,

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Self- Made Loogon Ka Almiya

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Shaair

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Shaksat Ana

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Sooraj teri aag bhujey gi kitney paani sey

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The Tragedy Of Self Made People

Those who tempers optimistic,
bright and buoyant,
what unusual fates they have.

Cleansing life's path
of thorns strewn,
assembling each straw
to build a nest,
trapping fragrance,
adorning gardens,
their life is spent.

Their life consumed,
they gift the flowers.
give all away.

Not that, the
drudgery of
the unending toil
goes unrewarded,
blood-money
for longings that die
goes unpaid.

All pleasures that life
enfolds, come their way;
with one and all
they are endowed,
but late always,
ever delayed.

Rewarded they are
for the slog, the grind
but bit by bit,
like borrowed money
returned in parts;
the actual writing
fading into the hidden rear.
In teeming spring,
their flowers all
are the last to bloom;
the sun in their courtyards
appears late.

[Translated from Urdu by Yasmeen Hameed]

Amjad Islam Amjad

Tomorrow

Half a century on
my home and habitat
reduced to dust by
blind oppression.

My children, my people,
enmeshed in dreams
and lured by oases,
get decimated.

All round is a sea of blood,
Everyone target of censure,
Each lane slaughter house,

The world, professed
guardian of universal
brotherhood, watches
unmoved, silent
our extermination.

Oppressors' shadows
are ever-lengthening,
earth blood-splattered

But as long as flames
fled with martyrs' blood
keep on burning
heart is assured,
even in extremes of pain,
day follows dark night

[Translated by Prakash Chander]

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Tu Chal Aye Mausam-e-Girya

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Tumhein Main Kis Tarah Dekhon

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Yaad

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Yeh jo raig-e-dasht-e-firaaq hai.....

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Zoom-in

Snow flowers in the midst of lonely night,
Lonely moments wrapped in the mist,
The walkway, lit with the dim light of moon,
Cold and black road at
The gate of deserted house,
A forlorn voice, clings desperately to the window,
Doorsill, drowned in an unknown fear,
Everything, bewildered andspeechless,
Weary and desolate,
A lone candle on the table,
With the head thrown back
Eyes, fixed at the door.
Coffee cup on the table, cold and quite,

Distressing thoughts, daydreams and I,
A lonely book, in my cold lap and I.

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