

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Farrukh Ahmad**

**- 27 poems -**

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## **Farrukh Ahmad (10 June 1918 - 19 October 1974)**

Farrukh Ahmad (Bengali-ফারুক আহমদ) was a poet and writer of Bangladesh. He was one of the most popular Muslim poets of Modern era.

### Birth

He was born in the village of Sreepur Upazilla of Magura District. He was the second son of Syed Hatem Ali and Begum Rawshan.

### Education

He graduated from Khulna Zila School in 1937 and did his I.A. from Ripon College, Kolkata in 1939. Then enrolled at the prestigious Scottish Church College to study BA (Hons) in Philosophy and English Literature, but was unable to his complete studies.

### Later Life

As a student, Farrukh Ahmed had been attracted to the radical humanism of Manabendra Nath Roy and had participated in leftist politics. From the forties, however, he supported the Pakistan movement. Despite his Pakistani and Islamic ideals, he supported the Language Movement in 1952 and, later, the liberation war of Bangladesh.

### Literary Works

His poems reflect the Arabic and Persian legacy in Bengal and are replete with Arabic and Persian words. He also wrote satirical poems and sonnets.

### Awards

Bangla Academy Award (1960)  
President's Award for Pride of Performance (1961)  
Adamjee Prize (1966)  
UNESCO Prize (1966)  
Ekushey Padak (posthumously, 1977)  
Swadhinata Puraskar (posthumously, 1980)

### Works:

Majhi (1944)  
Sirazam Munira (1952)  
Naufel O Hatem (1961)  
Muhurter Kavita (1963)

Hatemtayi (1966)  
Habida Marur Kahini (1981)

Books For Children

Pakhir Basa (1965)  
Harafer Chhada (1970)  
Chhadar Asar (1970)

## **A Moment's Poem**

Time - eternal, still. Only the fleeting moments  
Swift restless like the wag-tail visit the sea-shore  
In the strong tide just like the seasonal birds  
And fill the earth with a spectrum-white yellow and blue.

These heavenly birds leave the unknown sky  
And rush towards the earth in dusky twilight  
For the sighs of life, very intimate to the heart,  
And sing in a passionate tone the eternal song.

This poem of a moment, these momentary songs  
May not reach that height of music,  
May not find its way to success;  
They braved for the sea-shore with little capital.  
Yet you keep in mind : this worthless momentary song  
Discards the minaret's arrogance and prizes the dust.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## Acquaintance

When for a moment two trains meet face to face  
And then run to their own destinations,  
You flash in my mind in hazy images  
And shapeless faces flicker back to my mind.  
What gain now to remember our meeting together  
On those parallel rails in that very field,  
(What use to drag on bygone time and date?)  
Yet I hold on that time (I could easily forget).

If we ever meet again face to face  
Will those hazy faces flash in our mind,  
Will those words get eloquence in parting twilight  
And all those forgotten joys suddenly revive  
Like the days when in the distant past  
They blossomed in the parallel rail lines.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **An Atheist's Prayer : His Confession**

When I heard that even the sun has death,  
And numerous celestial spheres' fate lies in death,  
That very moment I realized this sky is full of mystery;  
That very moment I thought this life a moment's song.  
The alarmed mind stood still searching for time's definition;  
I thought over those who rotate on their remote orbits,  
Those numberless fire-flies moving with sparks of life  
How easily will disappear in the forest of time.

This strange mysterious signal of time  
(The more I thought over this the more vacant was my mind,)  
The dark domain of death is real like life  
And has raised unknown fear at the face of all doubts,  
The cadence of silent music and then fled away  
Towards the deep void above the silent prayer of the atheist.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## Dahuk

Dahuk's cooing all through the night...

This hamlet is sleeping like a deep silent pond.  
I am awake alone in this long night.

Keep aside the game of deception,  
Let the day-long busy bee sleep on the reposing branch,  
Lend your ear and listen to the dahuk's cooing.

The moon leaves the starry port and starts for the night's sea  
Continuously floating behind the feathery cloud,  
As if the tireless diver dives without rest  
To bring up the pearl of his dream.  
Dripping without rest  
Sleepy dew-drops,  
The blue aerial palace of Gul-e-Bakauli  
Slowly becomes inert and silent;  
The cooing of the dahuk only comes up without rest.

As if the death-knell of some diver  
Or of a hidden ethereal bird  
Comes up from the sea-deep;  
Starry lamps are dozing in the dreamy skies.

Are you still awake?  
Do you hear the sound?  
Do you hear that sound rising high?  
The dahuk is the only wakeful sentry in the sleeping forest;  
Its dream's fairy has taken the course of consciousness  
Through the slow air.  
It's, mate drowsing.

The dahuk's music overflows the night's cup.  
Only its cadence lingers,  
The moon is waning through the cane-grove,  
Up above, the dreamy seventh sky is full of the night's sadness.

You seem to be an ethereal music!  
Yet I know, you are no music,  
You are only the musical instrument!  
You are only carry the forest's hidden sad music,  
The deep sea's saddening  
Wonderful music...  
Inexhaustible wine...  
The distressed blue moonlight is waning  
With the call of the dahuk.  
O bird! O the wine-cup! I could not  
Realize you yet.

Perhaps I know you; I know your speckled body,  
Artful colour painted  
With a gaudy brush.

But the wonderful cadence that made this fading night cry,  
Whose saddening beauty accumulates at the forest's end  
In an intolerable pain  
And settles on palm and other trees—  
I cannot recognize that music.

Perhaps you are only that Saki  
To fill up the cup.  
Alone at one side of the bush  
You are emptying the pitcher of music.

O you the unknown wine cup!  
You are eager for the wine, restless and impatient  
Rise to the unknown region of the sun  
With the signal of the stars you float single-minded  
In the silent night

Around the cane-bush  
Piercing the sea of darkness  
On the door of the moon  
With the burning for the wine you float on the turbulent sea  
In the horizon with the shooting star;  
Your pale feathers drop  
With that music,  
Your dull body flares up in a moment with lightning,  
The shooting star passes by it with violent speed,  
The blue sea-storm keeps its mark on top of the dead forest  
Violent and vigorous;  
Yet from the inaccessible bottom  
Of the deep sea  
Steadily  
You bring up music throughout the night.

With the dahuk's cooing  
All pain all complaint becomes wordless and silent.

O tireless bird in the forest of the night!  
You continue calling  
Like boundless freedom.  
We are stooping down  
With the weight of chains,  
We do not hear your music,  
We hurt our body and soul  
With our own poisonous bites.

You do not belong to this ugly hoard;  
You carry with you  
The complete music of life and death  
In your unfettered perfect soul.

That's why you, the free and secluded dahuk,  
With full-throated breast

Pumping it out  
Can call like that; but we cannot.

The windy lute sings now and then in the cany strings;  
Slowly it dies down,  
The moon comes down to the old forest;  
The darkness becomes deeper.  
At this dark depth of night  
I am face to face with all the pathos.  
The night is dropping down  
On leaves and dew-drops...  
On life's shores...  
On the banks of death...  
Mute with pain.  
At that moment of clouded darkness  
Piercing the heart of the thirsty dahuk  
Comes up only its voice,  
With a tired tone from the distant forest.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Note: DAHUK - Gallinule, an aquatic bird.

Farrukh Ahmad

## Dejection

My heart is stupefied : mute with pain  
Like the lotus-bud mum in the chilly night,  
Like the lonely bird no more returning to its nest alone;  
Likewise my mind no more seeks freedom in speech.  
When all the music stops, stars get lost,  
Feelings evaporate - blows, severe counter-blows  
Make the bird motionless, the coastal storm  
Does not give speed to its wings in morning breeze.

This bleeding heart now lies sullen like that bird,  
This burdened life now wants to get back  
That life-force and wonders of new creation,  
Unhindered motion, thunder-speed in free atmosphere;  
Whereas all achievements are lost here  
In this death-like shadow of night in confined environment.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## From "Naufel and Hatem"

I have seen many sprawling meadows,  
Many deserts, fields, forests and crowded cities.  
Many strange lands have I seen. Sometimes  
I have seen savage darkness swallowing up this world of ours  
Like that huge sea fish devouring the tired prophet Jonah.  
Sometimes again I have seen the moving sun,  
Bright and glorious, emerging from the prison of night  
Like the freed prophet Joseph coming out of the dark well of death.  
I have seen the sea bubbling with life, stretching from horizon to horizon,  
And mountains, standing erect, like the rocky spine of the true believer.  
I have known all and witnessed the rise and fall  
Of nations or crowds of men. I have seen  
God's vast creation. Many hours have I spent  
In the company of the wise in many lands,  
And in the association of meditating saints.  
But still I find my thirst unquenched.  
Incomplete, unfulfilled, my heart seeks the fullness of life  
In the midst of the wide wide world among countless men.

[Translated by Kabir Chowdhury]

Farrukh Ahmad

### **From 'Dilruba' 5th Canto, No 6**

Please don't give new information or talk of spirituality,  
I have heard much about it from erudites  
But found no peace or solace therefrom,  
The unappeased heart could not quench its thirst.  
Rather you come near to me, still near  
To this wistful eager hot sultry self  
And keep your dreamlike fragrant bosom on me  
To fill my moments of music with new splendour.

The wonders of the sky or the treasures of the seas  
Are no more new and this earth is quite old;  
Your untold words, silence or restlessness  
Are full of unknown mysteries to remain ever-new,  
Not a word, keep your bosom on me  
Let two souls unite in fragrance and splendour.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **From Outside Of The Cradle**

You swing the cradle from outside without rest,  
It swings up and down with two refrains;  
One brings deep sleep, other breaks the slumber.

You swing the cradle from outside without rest,  
One refrain brings up charming pleasure; and  
Sorrowful tears and sweating forehead with the other.

You swing the cradle from outside without rest,  
One refrain brings up hot sighs and barren desert;  
The other fills the earth with verdant splendour.

You swing the cradle from outside without rest,  
It swings up and down with two refrains;  
The child swims in endless waves of music in the cradle.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **I Called Her In That Name**

I called her by that name which nobody uttered,  
I know her that mind which nobody could know:  
That mind blossomed like a flower in autumn night  
And ignored the gloomy evening with dreamy fragrance.  
In this life's manifold strife-torn dreary turn  
Many a time I received unknowingly that mind's blissful response—  
That wonder of the momentary lustre of love  
Removing all the gloomy clouds from my mind.

I had no hesitation to cross many stormy lands;  
That glorious moment is my dream of pristine beauty  
And it left behind endless wealth in my heart—  
As if the entire sky mirrored in a dew-drop;  
That sky where stars twinkle, the sky with no fear of death,  
The sky which is the abode of eternal love like these autumn nights.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **I Shall Wake You Up**

Every time I come to your door to wake you up  
I go back disheartened (O my Princess, you lie  
Unconscious in deep intoxicating slumber;  
No sign of life; no flare of consciousness).

What a sleep you enjoy in touch of silver wand!  
What enchanter lulled you to this slumber and when?  
None can unbind this intricate snare of sleep;  
So the prince continues his hapless journey onward.

O captive lady, you lie in demon's hands  
Helpless like the earth (life is but death to you,  
You can't sing the song of a carefree life),  
The magic-spell hangs heavy on you  
You lost your cheerful life on the slippery road to blunder  
(The death of your soul hastens this poisonous cancer).

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## In The Coming Winter

They will shiver and dropp one day  
With the winter wind.  
On the barren branches in the forest  
On that day  
You will strike root without dispute.

Still you think once:  
What sap nourishes you?  
How many bones make your beds cozy?  
How many infant-corpses make your warm pillows?  
What numberless scaly human chests' blood  
Brings youthful songs to your lips?

Just think for a while:  
Yet there is death,  
Still your accidental death lies ahead.  
Now stop your blood-sucking life's song,  
Leave bank's towers,  
Discard the thighs of the whores  
And come down just for once—  
On the free and flowing course  
To the hungry chill-bitten crowd of people;  
Come down to the night's darkness.

These people will die,  
And will leave behind sighs  
And last wailing due to hunger.  
Tree-leaves will turn yellow  
This winter will take away  
Only the bones of premature dead bodies.

More winters will come and go;  
You perhaps think  
The bastards from your mistresses and beautiful whores  
Will thus remain blood-sucking greedy forever.

Perhaps you think  
Your policy of this type is harmless  
And flowering easily in the bank's towers.

But it's a great blunder—  
Foolish and crazy.  
You see today—  
Those who throughout the earth  
Are spreading beds of bones  
Will not tolerate forever,  
With life-long sacrifice their spring comes  
Along with gun-power —by crossing  
The plains of the approaching winter  
With cruel and revengeful bayonets  
—The day of the mutiny.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

### **In The Meadow Of Mainamoti: 3**

Many people saw that tired traveller who came  
From a far-off land in the faint moon-light  
Wearing a coffin-cloak in the chilly autumn night,  
Who brought secretly pomegranate flowers in Amon rice fields.  
His misty tears dropp through the night's eyes,  
The Madhumoti river winding by its side  
Flows far-off leaving no sign behind  
And no more looks back on the track left behind.

Yet it looks on those who wait in expectation,  
Whose dream and desire rest on Amon paddy's ears  
Who look for life's meaningful exposition in the tears,  
Who search for life's freedom in touch of chilly death,  
Who wrap their eyes up with the cold autumn mist;  
The meadow of Mainamoti is mute to these questions.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **Night At Kanchra Para**

Night at Kanchra Para. The broken rail-engines are in the depot now.  
The cracked boilers puff out long sighs in their rest—  
Their movement obstructed. The mechanics then come  
And bring molten steel and hammer again and again.  
These mechanical devils with the heat of fiery steam  
Roam day and night in flatland and difficult terrain  
On equi-distant rail-lines, cross bridges  
And run for destinations in Darjeeling and Assam.

Now wounded they are this evening at Kanchra Para.  
Away at a distance civic hopes flicker in red, yellow and blue;  
Indomitable lust's hunger due to fiery obsession;  
Mechanics' womenfolk sing near the depot.

Hammers also lose their aim, pale moon in this dark night,  
Kanchra Para is vibrant with women's gesture and dream.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## Personal Explanation

Many a time my well-wishers opined that  
I have a very bright future before me—  
That is, through sinful earning,  
Big post, money,  
House in Park Circus;  
Purse-proud daughter as pleasure companion.

But when hope belied them at a premature time, they said :  
It's senility that made me good for nothing,  
A vagabond!  
I peddle pieces of idealism on the foot-path.  
I don not hesitate to compare Park Circus  
With a quarter of the hell;  
Because I see the pus of capitalism  
Accumulated in dust-bins there  
(Although dressed up in varieties of finery)!  
Nevertheless irresistible urges come  
From the nearby slum;  
I search for the excellence in man  
Among the lowly, the so-called `mean';  
I combine my sighs with those of the hungry animals  
And understand at every step  
How difficult the road to idealism is.

I find innumerable Fera-un and karun  
Array against me night and day;  
I see helpless Boni Israills  
At every corner of the street—  
The same way search for Musa Kalimullah,  
Entire street is shaking with pent up sighs,  
The blood of the oppressed flows thereby.

This earth is all the same...  
The strife-torn mind forgets struggle's disgrace  
And rises everywhere for imminent all-engrossing zehad  
Fearless soldiers for truth in search of Musa Kalimullah.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **Punjeri (The Navigator)**

When will the night end, punjeri?

Still your sky overcast with cloud?  
Your star and crescent moon not yet up?  
You on mast and, row blindfold;  
Endless mist reigns the void now.

When will the night end, punjeri?

After this long night's weary voyage  
What sea's dark horizon beckons us?  
Is it the dim life's gate wailing  
On the strife-torn dream of the painful heart?  
Life's triumphant sound recedes and dies slowly.  
You on mast and I row blindfold;  
Endless mist exists before me.

When will the night end, punjeri?

Idle passengers count days in the port,  
Perhaps they hear our ship's sound in the monsoon-wind,  
Perhaps in the moonlight they see illusion of the sail in the mist.  
Ah! those worried passengers keep them awake  
On the sea-shore with unlucky destiny.

Where do we go roaming in this lost sea-track?  
To what limitless distance?  
The passengers are waiting on the shore.  
You on mast and I row blindfold;  
Lonely I see the night's confusion around.

When will the night end, punjeri?

Only our callousness and neglect  
Brought this sea-deep error for us;  
Travellers wait on shore for our mistake  
And observe their star and moon sinking down.  
Our callousness has brought on them  
This night of bad luck.

We have spread panic among the merchants;  
We hear wailing coming from every door.

Is the wind lamenting? Is that the groaning of the hungry?  
Is that the roaring of the sea? Is that the anguish of the oppressed?  
Is that the dying sound from the empty belly?  
Punjeri!  
Rise up to see the strong demand for explanation in the port;  
Rise up with the silent frowning of countless hungry mouths;  
Rise up and see, how far the morning,  
How long to wait! !

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## Son Of Man

The sailor is back after weathering many tumultuous storms.  
Many hungry nights and many sicknesses of the sea  
Made him giddy and restless. Many a time  
Did he lose his way in the darkness. And the messengers of death  
Called him again and again from the dark waters all around.  
The twisted hold of his storm battered ship was filled  
With sweat stained hopelessness of bitter failure.  
The dark fierce blue deep urged him on;  
Yet the sailor sought and has now found his home  
In the strange unknown land.

Though his two eyes are full of black nightmarish fears  
Though the taste of death still lingers on his pale lips  
Yet the twisted hold of his broken ship is today vibrant with victory  
And all the cruel tortured memories languish behind.  
Son of man, the victorious Sindabad has come back,  
Overcoming many storms, with his rich merchandise.  
By the fierce sea in another strange land he has seen the home of man, a living tomb,  
Where the dead desert mind of the proud reside, a farce in frozen stone.

Row after row  
Line by line,  
Move the band of load bearers  
Move the flock of beasts  
With shovel and hammers  
With pen and ploughs

Move the hungry lean backed children  
And numberless files move  
Leaving behind deserts, fields and woods.  
In the court of man  
A farce in frozen stone.

Banding together the children move on  
Lifting to their lips the bitter cup of life,  
Hungry, dying son of man!  
Materialism's  
Frozen stony path,  
The path of this horrible civilization  
Full of deep ravines,  
Cover up the sky in darkness and invite them.  
What battlement is this?  
Here only the hungry day's flame bums,  
The dark fog of poisonous smoke  
And the gruesome terror of death.  
The heavy oppressed heart, the deep weary pain,  
And in their midst, kicked, afraid of Satan,  
Stumbles forward today the dead son of Adam  
Into the hideous grave,  
Into the complex abysmal depth.

The children proceed in a band to mass extermination.

In the ugly false black dark road they go astray  
Where at every point Satan has his snare laid.  
Drawn inexorably  
The weak lean son of man moves towards that today.

On either side of the road I see hungry dead bodies of children  
And side by side I find the proud wealth of millionaires overflowing.

I see terrible famine at the peasants' door,  
I see burning on the forehead of the oppressed the flaming mark of insult.  
Man, at the joking hands of the arrogant,  
Has become a slave and woman a whore.

Man's fortress lies far ahead in the distance,  
Here is only the devil's outer courtyard;  
Those who walk here  
Wander aimlessly in a whirlpool of confusion.  
Lured by the vile serpent of materialism

They are today but blind betrayed wayfarers,  
Sad victims of this century's civilization.

Multiplying the number of the frightened  
Raising the number of the fallen  
They have joined hands with the killer of men and women  
They have become cruel hunters  
The inhuman dead sons of man.  
The bond of chain protests at every step  
The breath of life stops.  
In the court of man  
A farce in frozen stone.  
Now  
No more in this court of man, the symbol of sexlessness,  
No more on Satan's black mudbespattered path  
Now our appeal is in the court of God alone  
The appeal of the robbed hungry tortured man.  
I know many civilizations have perished under dust  
I know many Pharaohs, many tyrannical Nimrods  
Lie buried under it  
And now a band of new travellers appear on the hill fluttering  
their flag  
They bring with them the tireless typhoon of life.  
Today I hear their music  
Their victorious flag flutters today in the air  
I only hear their voice  
The voice of the mild soft hearts  
Coming from deep vigorous chests.

Let him not be tired any more  
Let him not be frightened again at the sight of traps of  
oppression on the way,  
Let him not stray again,

Son of man of the future.

[Translated by Kabir Chowdhury]

Farrukh Ahmad

## The Background

The 8-30 AM train left ejecting its nightly contents:  
Sleepless people with hot head  
Walk on both sides of the road like cold reptiles;  
Also walk human forms as symptoms of cruel citizen's bestiality.  
Thunder-clouds have covered the city-sky  
With a pale curtain;  
Stones on streets tarnish with traffic's rush, trams and buses,  
At that moment  
A hill-boy pedlar's shrill cry for mending umbrellas  
Echoed in the air.  
As if a vigorous raven cawed for the last time  
In a dead forest,  
Pedlar's voice for mending umbrellas  
Rent the dreamy sleep with its hilly vigour  
On the banks of Lal Dighi (Red Pond),  
On the branches of the cypress  
From bloody mansions and terraces  
Like a sharp spear.

Foot-path, factory and this tormenting stuffy room  
Fade in a moment,  
And I hear the message of flying wings  
Of that lively life:  
Dense vineyards, icy peaks and hard rocks.  
The smell of solid hills,  
Inaccessible routes  
And unknown rough country  
Pervades in the foreign cypress branches;  
His companion is nutty almonds, pears, apples  
And a strong hand in young girl's tresses;  
And the starry night encircled by peaks.  
The rising moon there is not ugly  
With polluted and perverted gaze.

The blue dove returns to its loaded nest there  
Carrying saffron of the sun;  
Countless stars twinkle in the deep blue  
And in the darkness of the night.

Hill's endless silence,  
Robust life's complete fulfilment,  
The deep blue of the sky pours on  
The crimson buds of the pomegranates,  
On the damsel's purple forehead;  
The colour of the soft bosom brings up rosy waves.

Deep silent peace,  
Fields, dense forests,  
Healthy mind in strong and sound body,  
The nightingale and waves of music...

I don't know how far in hillside floods and storms

Float multicoloured pebbles;  
Pomegranate seeds fight with chilly wind  
And fall without any stop.  
Coloured pistachio-nuts heap up near the carpet;  
Wind from vine yards and hilly roads brings  
The moon's message—

I don't know when that day-dream shattered  
With machine's demands,  
Heaps of files rise before the eyes  
Like a nightmare leaving behind  
The pomegranate garden.  
Here the hill-boy drenches throughout the day  
In heavy rains  
And shrieks in the streets for mending umbrellas  
As a result of this century's failure...

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **The Brilliant Lamp: Muhammad Mustafa (S.M.)**

He rises over the eastern blue horizon with a gorgeous hue,  
His presence over the sky always spreads in a moment  
O the luminous bird, are you awake? Will the night-suppressed voice  
Travelling in the enormous void now sing about the day?  
Will a peaceful tone come out of pent-up emotions?  
Now what dream for light will attract the disturbed water?  
Will this deaf dumb sky now forget its silence  
With the clarion call of that traveller of a great distance?

Here he comes, here comes that bird with seven-coloured wings,  
The deep sky is tinged with an emerald-blue clearness,  
The deadly night is crippled and gone with this golden light;  
Constant waves of rays fill the sky with a flood of light.

O you the unknown bird, from what depth of the sky have  
you risen?

Your movement creates flowers of ideas and speech;  
You survey the universal mind with your wonderful silvery rays,  
Many lovely islands suddenly come into view in unknown seas.  
Your sonorous wings contain tears of all the seas,  
The young mind's red lotus kisses the shadow you cast on it.  
O you bird of light! You know all the luminous windows in the open sky,  
The universal dream takes shape along with your speed.  
You are not a part of the dark night nor a part of dead stagnation,  
You have opened the doors of the skies and of all the minds,  
All the skies vibrate in expectation of your coming,  
O you unhindered light! the earth is blessed with your advent.

Who comes there!  
Who comes there!  
A great uproar spreads everywhere!  
The sleeping lifeless country wakes up, hamlets shake off century-old slumber  
You bring the desired elixir of life to revive the unconscious,  
O you brilliant light, you bring countless day-breaks along with you.  
On the barren branches in the forest  
Millions of days are hidden within your luminous sparks  
Siddiq Osman Gin Nurain and young Ali woke up with the  
touch of your light,  
Al-Faruq's deep slumber ends with that brilliant morning,  
Countless flames spark of with your free and liberal light.  
..... (Incomplete)

(Sirajam Munira)

Farrukh Ahmad

## The Dead-Body

On one side at the corner of the broad street  
Where dust had no place on black shining pitch  
Lies a dead body flat on earth;  
The evening crowd never took notice of that.

I know, it's human carcass now flat on earth,  
Emaciated with heat and hunger dead and still;  
Well-dressed men and women like fiends pass by  
–Stone houses like deadly prisons,  
The painted harlots have opened their brothels  
With welcome smile and speech;  
This five and half feet skeleton gives evidence  
Against the plunderers of this earth for domination,  
And digging ultimate grave for man.  
Dead humanity lies on the road along with the dead.

The sky has disappeared behind the arrogant's vaults and domes,  
His belly over bulging everyday;  
And here they are dying flat on earth.  
This devilish inhuman bestial greed of the plunderers  
Has destroyed the eternal human soul  
And man's legitimate right,  
Snatches away the morsel of the hungry mouth;  
Builds pleasure-houses with human bones;  
Its witness now lies dead on earth.

This ever bulging barbaric civilization, this bestiality,  
This cruelest curse of the century  
Is now poisoning the day and the night-sky.

What's this civilization that makes a mockery of man's eternal self?  
What devil now throws man into death-trap and laughs?  
What Azazil (Satan) to-day kicks man's dead-body?  
What evil spirit soaked in blood and wine now laughs?  
The skies are resounding with man's helpless cries.

What instinct's captive are they now?  
What Satan throws rubbish and mud on rose-petals?  
Who covers the sky's colourful vault with his poisonous desire?  
What woman walks hand-in-hand with her sex-partner?  
Of what civilization?  
What hand cuts the throat of the child without remorse?  
Of what civilization?

Who stabs the bosom to play his dance-tune?  
Whose wine cup glows with the blood of workers?  
Of what civilization?  
Man surrendered to you long-ago,  
You take revenge of that now. You the devilish materialistic civilization!  
You easily drink children's blood with a smile,  
Without any regret you torture the raped woman's body,  
You climb without effort the ladder of the people

And then cast it on the roadside drain.

You spent-up inert civilization!  
Whose slave are you?  
Or, what set of beasts serve you!  
What lowly stage of man!  
After whose torture this serenity; this mud-house : burial alive,  
It now lies flat on earth.

Those well-dressed people, who are slaves of this material civilization,  
Whose torture makes this earth and sky wail,  
Do not mark what bad smell of excrement engulfs  
Their whole existence and has now brought them to the level of beasts.  
Dogs and bitches  
Now deceive one another in what sort of adultery  
And bring bastards for what dead civilization!  
The gesture of the meeting-place of the legs  
Leads their women towards death,  
The tyrant males walk with intense greed in their hearts  
Far below in the abyss of death discarding human course.

The panic of their exploitation has engulfed  
The abode of tranquility  
Where on earth lies the emaciated carcass.

O you materialistic civilization!  
You pot-bellied exploiting society –slave of dead civilization,  
Now take people's curse;  
And when the time comes throughout the world,  
We will kick your chained loin  
And drag you to the gate of hell;  
Now you bear the curse of the tortured and dying earth :  
Be ruined  
And go to hell.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## The Mind

My mind is like a whale in the approaching evening  
That dives into the night's sea;  
Yet I hear that far-off sound  
Imprisoned in the breast of this body.  
The sun has wiped out the tinge of evening cloud from  
the tired minaret,

No movement in the air  
Not realizing that no rest until deep sleep in this black night.  
Yet the tired and dejected nerve's fatigued movement  
Brings the dream of hectic speed,  
Perhaps storm-signal is prevalent in tired April's sky,  
Perhaps millions of evil spirits encircling like night mare,  
Instantly  
Thousands of thunders flash in the horizon of my mind.  
I hear the call from the sky:  
Your night of misfortune  
Brightened on the free eastern horizon,  
The old tree in your forest  
Has now shed its worn-out bark.  
That thought pervades my mind like wild fire,  
April's likely thunder-cloud  
Springs up in the dejected crowd's mind  
The mind leaves the nights sea.  
And becomes a free bird in the morning.

Away on its wings in the sky, leaves the old plundered minaret,  
Leaves the sky's splendour of colour,  
Leaves the border of the horizon,  
Like the captive's dream-  
A free mind,

It's my mind.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## The Sailor Of The Seven Seas

I don't know how many black curtains had to be raised to bring this morning.  
The green leaves shiver in the orange grove.  
The seven seas' tide has brought foam on your door-steps.  
O Sailor of the seven seas, see, your ship calls at your door,  
A still-life, like a picture it stands there.  
No water reaches the helm, its sails do not flutter,  
O Sailor, I entreat you, rise up,  
You rise up and join the seamen,  
You will find your ship sailing again in the seas,  
Like a full-moon in the blue seas  
Braving cloudy waves and crossing all obstacles.  
Now you rise up, hasn't the flowers dropped long before  
in the morning.  
Still you did not wake up? Still you are asleep?

Do you not hear snake's hissing at your door?  
Innumerable hungry people crowd there;  
O Sailor! open up your merchandise; listen to me,  
Or your everything will turn into fragments,

Do you not see, what mirage they are after?  
Continuously off the track and going down.  
O Sailor! You definitely know your star has not extinguished,  
This desert dreams of your moonlit night,  
See tulips... accumulated everywhere;  
Then why are you afraid, you shiver in unknown fear?

Has your ship foundered?  
Has any cloud covered your star?  
Is for that the motionless ship's rudder broken?  
Is for that your empty sail  
Bellowing with the hungry sea wind?

I know not, still I call you, sailor of the seven seas,  
The coral island's coconut boughs sing with the wind.  
Your seamen lost their patience for this sleep;  
The seven seas raise poisoning foam in blue wrath;  
On the other hand, unknown passengers are taking sky-routes;  
Green leaves quiver in the orange-grove.  
Who fills up your merchandise with precious stones and marble?  
Your sleep brings only bad omen for you.

Have you not paid yet for the chaotic night?  
It's morning now. Yet asleep?  
Yet you could not get up?  
Have you forgotten the clove flowers, the cardamom season,  
Where saffron buds bloom in gravel and dust,  
Where fairy land's dream-maid Gul-e-Bakauli flower  
Wakes up with a kiss on the white forehead of jasmine

Have you forgotten that first voyage: the ship was sailing  
Towards the country of unknown flowers;

Have you forgotten that emerald-picking dream  
Dazzling in moon-light in every eye!  
The ship on sail cut through saline water—  
A tireless searcher  
Tearing the blue curtain of the horizon,  
Proceeding on and on through the seven seas.

I cannot recollect the unknown port  
That ship touched,  
It was loaded there with emerald and marble—  
This much I can recollect.

Your sail was torn by a violent tempest long ago,  
Python-like nightmares visit your dream now.  
They attack your wornout deadly port,  
They have vitiated your caving sky.  
Do you listen, do you not hear, O Sailor of the seven seas,

The thrust of dry air on your closed door!  
This is not moon-light, but murmur of dream on coconut boughs,  
This is not fairyland's window, but the port of coconut;  
It's the people's wailing on your closed door,  
The last jingling of sitar pervades in the cries of hungry children.

You must hoist your sail today,  
You must mend your tattered sail,  
So what if the broken mast makes fun of it,  
Still the ship must sail today.

Who knows when your dreamy night ended,  
Stormy wind blows to-day on the door,  
Its fang indicates death.  
Your ivory tower tumbles with the strike of its tail.  
O Sailor! don't stop by this indication of death,  
Even then you must sail on this century's dead sea.

Night prevails here now,  
The royal gate of Hera can still be seen far away.

Here people are trembling now in acute hunger,  
Here tears flow in innumerable streams now,  
Yet the royal gate of Hera can be seen far away...  
Road bestrewn with pebbles,  
Many obstacles, seas and mountains,  
Noontime fiends come near crawling,  
Vultures cast their shadows over us,  
We have lost grassgreen groves and all flowering gardens,  
Yet the royal gate of Hera can be seen far away...  
All the royal gates opened long ago,  
The full-moon had enchanted the palace long ago.

O Sailor! Won't you weigh your anchor?

Still to wait?  
O Sailor! Won't you unfurl your sail today?  
Still to wait for that?

All your sails flutter with the wind,  
No more to wait now,  
Since your rudder touched saline water,  
Then no more waiting,  
Then blow your trumpet for departure now,  
Let the passengers and wayfarers come,  
O Sailor, don't wait now.

It's already very late, you know,  
Many voyaging seasons of the sea passed by in vain,  
Tempests scattered countless cardamom seeds  
And cinnamon branches battered in forests,  
Perfume's fragrance looted by the wind;  
Death now has caught hold of your throat  
And tidal bore at your door;  
All your hasnahena flowers dropped long ago.

No fragrance in the flower-garden,  
Though green leaves still exist in the orange grove,  
Their days are numbered gradually;  
Unknown soil's deep and intense pull  
Brings an end to the dream for the green.  
It knows that,  
It knows that well.

Yet the soil will produce ripe oranges  
With all its resources,  
In spite of grey leaves dropping with the wind;  
Though the wind brings death-like chill,  
Yet endless hope kindles its heart;  
Still it has limitless dream.

O Sailor, you too should not fear,  
You too gather the wonders of Hera's guiding star,  
Let orange leaves shed with this wind—  
Enough to spare,  
They crowd together, where the royal gate of Hera  
Shines in the sky.

Deserts to cross on that way,  
Saline sea-water in that route,  
Yet halting places exist on the way,  
Shady trees and fresh water wait for you.

Then hoist your sail,  
Then weight your anchor;  
Now after many expeditions for the goal,  
You will find the gate of Hera before you.

So you weighd your anchor now  
And unfurl your sail;  
Unfurl your sail Now.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **The Train**

The long-awaited rain has come with the easterly wind!  
Rain has come on arable villages beside the Meghna and the Padma  
The scorched sky and fields are now covered with black shadows;  
That lovely fairy, lightning, rides from cloud to cloud.  
On this rainy day the screwpine is thrilled to see  
Lightning's wonderful glare on the horizon,  
The sunburnt paddy fields pine for the rainy touch,  
And flood through river-cracks brings tide for life.

The scorched rough fields like the scaly hands  
Of an old ailing beggar hear the melody of rainfall;  
The thirsty mind wakes up along with the parched forest,  
Wants to traverse many roads and rugged plains  
Where the forgotten days are left behind in seclusion,  
The rainy season's clouds halt there with a heavy heart.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **The Vultures**

O you the cursed vultures! since you pounced upon  
These dying people, then accept their dead bodies  
As their last offer—  
Gifts of countless corpses  
Scattered throughout the countryside, hamlets and towns...

You have left nothing for man,  
So you stand before these dead bodies  
And complete your image of bestiality.  
You have snatched away meagre morsels of hungry mouths,  
You have sucked people's blood  
And created a desert of death,  
And wiped out life's tidal river.  
O blind vultures! now you see in these corpses  
What brutal blows you gave everywhere  
From your ignoble ivory towers.

Your hands did not tremble,  
No imprint in your mind  
For scattering famine  
In the live graves of this dying earth's  
Countryside, hamlets and towns.

O the tyrant vultures! here you take,  
Here you take today  
The last gift of those people  
Whose blood you sucked,  
Whose morsels you tainted with blood—  
The last gift through the end of man,  
Eat it up completely;  
And also take the offering of  
Hungry dried up young corpses—  
Evidence of your cruel loathsome bestiality.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Note: the poem was written in 1943, on Bengal Famine.

Farrukh Ahmad

## **The Whistle of The Magpie Robin**

From the impervious dark night's portal  
Comes the magpie robin's whistle,  
The day's last sun-rays burn wonderfully  
On the evening sand,  
At the beginning of the unknown night  
The whistle of the magpie robin was heard  
For the last time—  
A shrill whistle, a strong music!  
It's a signal for the night and death,  
Magpie robin's whistle.

The soft body in black and white  
Of that bird! Its throat carries flower-like music,  
Music ringing throughout the evening  
With the dying sun's splendour;  
Opening the throat's fountain it took leave  
For the last time with a farewell tune,  
With a soft music.  
Now the black night trickles down continuously  
On its sky, the sad and deadly poison;  
The whistle of the magpie robin recedes  
Further and further away in the darkness  
Leaving behind the horizon.

It's a strong intoxicant only to shake off  
Drowsiness with a lullaby,  
This music only brings deep silence  
On the day's shining towers of long palm and coconut trees  
At the corner of the dreadful night,  
On colourless palm columns,  
On the sky's domes and arches  
The night shoots its dark arrows;  
The magpie robin's whistle shoots like an arrow.

All colour drops near the horizon with that poisonous deadly arrow  
Like the mirror's mercury  
Collecting at one corner of the memory  
Death's blessings,  
The whistle of the magpie robin.

I hear the magpie robin's shrill,  
Strong and ardent—  
Birds just returning to their nests, light fades off,  
And lights are kindled;  
The sleeping time vibrates with awakening sharpness  
The shrill music of the magpie robin.  
On dead trees and branches  
Spreading out its light wings  
The magpie gives its farewell address  
And warns with intoxicating poison:  
The whistle of the magpie robin.

The time for sleep is over; the bird  
Returns to the forest's end alone  
Emptying its music,  
Returns to its empty nest.  
What nest?  
Where its music is covered with death's shadow,  
Where the meadow's end has become unfriendly like pebbles  
Under the shadow of the night,  
Where the skeleton's harmless desire lies prostrate  
After pouring out all the agonies of life.  
There's the sleeping bird—  
The drowsy magpie's shrill slowly calms down.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **The Youth-Brigade**

The simoom spreads its windy hair,  
The sky and the wind echo  
The light foot-steps of its coming—  
The desired torture of the favourite one.

The horizon appears like a mirage,  
Dauntless birds on the sandy beach,  
Hawk's eyes also are surprised,  
It can't fly and loses its course.

Liquid blood suffers from burning  
And boils in veins with intoxicating bubbles,  
Highly contagious in the veins,  
And dangerous greed for the blood.

Lust's crimson poison in the eyes  
Binds in thousand flames of crooked gaze;  
Not satisfied yet, the body and soul  
Craves life-long for wondrous pleasures.

The desert recedes under the feet,  
The sea of sand is turbulent;  
It's sighing for a long time,  
The unrest of the sandy sea begins,  
Suddenly tears appear in dry eyes.

O the victor-hero ! a hunter's craze  
Persists in my restless heart like that,  
I hear the braying of a quadruped  
I want to lift the spear with force.

Would you initiate me into your doctrine,  
O nomadic Bedouin !  
I will start for the horizon without any track  
And break earth's dusky stupor with desert-sand.

Then you listen – I bear in my veins  
That bestial blood of the past, and suffering  
From the indomitable mute heart's pangs  
I will rise again – this is my prayer.

The serpent which gradually became sharp-witted  
And easily crossed hills and rivers  
Turned long after into an old python and  
Heard a soft call behind and wanted  
To return to its past attachment.

I feel in my blood a craze for wayfaring,  
So I roam about in search of the blind.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **To My Poem**

Once again you open wide your window,  
Let starry light fall on the cobweb of thought,  
Let the wounded mind rise with your measure and rhyme,  
Come once to this world beset with dilemma

I have never denied earthly needs,  
(But remember : no escapism,  
One who can easily get the hectic flush of joy  
Never finds the road to struggle closed).

The dream that exists in red rose-petals,  
In dusky hearts and child's enchanted eyes,  
The lovely dream with youthful melody that thrills  
Each moment with endless lustre of life,

The dream that always ensnares confused minds  
Let that come down through the tired twilight.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad

## **To The Poet**

You have raised the trampled dust  
To the sky, the abode of the thunder,  
You decorated it with the lustre of luminous stars,  
You have embodied faith in the indomitable soul.

Your inspiring message returned time and again  
In crisis strife struggle, in nightly terror,  
Like the morning sun returning in deep darkness,  
Like the holy Gabriel coming down alone,

Tearing apart the thick blue canopy of the endless sky  
His wings scattering stars on both sides,  
He comes down; down to the tired heart's cool recess  
With new happy tidings in his musical cadence.

On his way strewn with death he spreads out life's pleasures  
In songs that wake up countless young ones in their nests.

[Translated by Abdur Rashid Khan]

Farrukh Ahmad