Poetry Series

Khadim Hussain

- poems -

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Khadim Hussain (27 July 1957)

My name is Khadim Hussain, and have lived in Middlesbrough in the North East of England since 1975.

Worked as an Experimental Assistant in the Research and Development Department of I.C.I, Wilton and has recently written a book 'Going for a Curry? A Social and Culinary History' which documents the settlement, development and impact of the 'Indian' population in Middlesbrough?

My education was during the early 1970's, and science based, when it was assumed scientist could not write a sentence and those who studied arts subjects could not add 2+2, I like must believed it. I took Creative Writing Courses at the University of Teesside and I think it was the efforts of the tutors Bob Beagrie and Andy Willoughby helped me to develop the book from a dry history topic to a broader appeal. Since attending the writing course I've started writing plays and poetry, fast gaining reputation as one of the best Asian poets writing in North East English.

Works:

book 'Going For A Curry?: A Social & Culinary History' by Khadim Hussain, published by Teesside based press Ek Zuban. Please find enclosed a complementary review copy.

"I unreservedly commend it to everyone; historians, other local community writers and chroniclers, the entire Asian community on Teesside, and – not least – to the customers at the booming number of restaurants and takeaways that now seemingly stand at every street corner in the busy centres of Middlesbrough, Stockton and the other towns of the Tees valley. This book should be read by every section of our local society, and from whatever country or continent they are from. This book is a unique extension of the local history of Teesside and Teesside's people"

Dr Ashok Kumar M.P.

The book contains archive photographs of the early settlers from the Indian sub-continent, and the mysterious Lascars, drawn from Mr Hussain's painstaking research into the little documented history of the Asian population of Teesside.

Ek Zuban have been able to publish the book with the financial assistance of an Enterprise Development Funded grant from The University of Teesside. Ek Zuban is an independent press run by local writers Bob Beagrie & Andy Willoughby, dedicated to raising the profile of talented new writers from the Tees Valley.

Bob Beagrie says, "We are delighted to have found the means of releasing Khadim's work into the public domain. This is an important book which we have seen develop over the last two years, and contains a wealth of fascinating information about our area as well as debunking a host of cultural myths."

Mr Hussain has read extracts from the book on BBC Radio Cleveland, at Borders Bookstore in Stockton and at Middlesbrough Mela. Why not invite him to your show, event or bookshop for a spicy reading and hot discussion.

Copies are available to buy at various outlets in Middlesbrough, including some Indian restaurants, bookshops and through www.northernpublishers.co.uk.

For more information on 'Going For a Curry?' contact Bob Beagrie on 0773885202 Bbeagrie_ca2@hotmail.com or for interview or personal appearances Khadim Hussain on 01642 801269 or email Khadam27@ntlworld.com

Aftab Kept Crying! - VILLANELLE

Aftab kept crying! Soothing words of the mother, Drowned by the raindrops dancing on the glass.

Drunks, attempting to sing, staggered homewards Through the bitter howling wind. Aftab kept crying!

Noisy neighbours, Chattering late night crowd, All drowned by the raindrops dancing on the glass.

Father's desperate clapping, His favourite teddy bear in his lap, still Aftab kept crying!

Ring of burglar alarms, Neighbour's loud ghetto blaster, All drowned by the raindrops dancing on the glass.

Through rhythms of the rattler, And mother's soothing lullaby, still Aftab kept crying! All drowned by the raindrops dancing on the glass.

Bad Day

I sat down write a poem,
I don't know where to begin.
I sat and starred at the screen,
I thought and thought and thought,
But nothing came
Nothing came
Nothing came
Nothing came.....

Bear in a Zoo

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I used to live wild and free In the wild forest By untamed mountain streams

I miss the sound of game in the under growth I miss the buzzing of honey bees

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I miss the scent of game I used to chase I miss the taste of berries I used to pick

I feasted upon fresh fish From clear mountain streams Now, I am fed Stale sickly fish

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I miss the scent of carrion in fresh April rain Now I have put up with stench of human beings

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I miss warmth of my snug cave, where I used to hibernate Here I am entertainment for people all the year around

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I miss the first spring sight Of mother and cubes Here, there are none of my kind

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I climbed might trees In search of honey Here all I can do is to scramble Over few scattered logs

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

On warm sunny days, after feasting, I would lay on soft grass, or

Scratch against my favourite tree Here all I have is a sorry-looking pole

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I used to wrestle other bears, to test my strength, Impress female bears, looking for a mate

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

I shake my head rhythmically And shuffle from spot to spot slowly

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

It's not a dance I do To amuse you I'm slowly going mad

I'm a bear forced to live in zoo, At my wits end, in pent up rage.

Doesn't anybody understand, I'm going mad! Mad! Mad!

Don't you understand? I want to be free! Free!

Bought for Eleven Twenties

During the 1950's and early 60's, the largest currency note in Pakistan was the twenty rupees. The Baparyees, the traders especially those dealing in livestock always calculated the value of their livestock in twenties.

They all rushed from near and far,
The baparyees, the connoisseurs, the curious
The young and the old of both sexes,
To gaze upon the wondrous maj
Bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

They flocked from the Muhallah,
And the rest of the village,
The other villages from the bela,
And some from beyond the bela,
To gaze upon the wondrous maj
Bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

Most came alone
But some in groups.
Most had walked
But few on horse back,
All to gaze upon the wondrous maj
Bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

The women admired the magnificent beast And quickly left.
The children played around,
But the men with trimmed beards and moustaches Dressed in their finest
Toped with their finest pagris stayed.

Sat cross legged on charpoys, drinking lassi or sherbet And smoking the lovely prepared hookahs. Swapping stories about other majjah And lauding the qualities of this wondrous maj Bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

"It stands fives hands tall at the shoulders and Inclines perfectly to four and half at hind quarters, "Praised one of the connoisseurs, It is Bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

It has the classic small head,
Decorated with a white hair
In the shape of a crescent.
Large sherbety eyes
With curved small black horns,
Praised a village elder.
Bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

Broad at the barrel Nicely rounding to the hearth girth and hind top, Legs like tree trunks Perfectly tapering down to white hoofs, Marvelled a Baparyee. Bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

Everyone's forgotten about the kutti, The miniature version of it mother! Pronounced the wise village elder. In eighteen months he'll have two majjah. I've always said, "Boota is shrewd baparyee." Not only has he bought this wondrous maj For the princely sum of eleven twenties, And made name of Lunger Pur and its People shine brighter.

"I'll give you fourteen twenties, Cash right now! "Said one elder of the visitors. "I milk twenties gadiva's, " boomed the proud owner, "Can anybody in this whole district match that?" Fourteen twenties? For this wondrous mai I bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

"Cha-cha, I've trampled Kharri, Mirpur most of Kashmir and Punjab, And been to all the local Mandies, Jhellum, Mirpur, Sarai And the largest Rawalpindi. I've even been to Chi-Cha Watan, But never found an animal of this pedigree. It's not for sale! This wondrous mai, I bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

"I want to see this maj at my kela, I'll give you sixteen twenties, And in CASH! "Added the elder visitor.

You'll see this wondrous mai But on Mohammed Boota's kela It's not for sale! Not even for eighteen twenties This wondrous maj, I bought for the princely sum of eleven twenties.

Baparyee: trader, usually of livestock

Bela: an island in a river

Cha-cha: Uncle, a respectful terms any senior male.

Charpoy: very light bedstead. Chi-cha Watan: Area renowned for the superior maj Gadiva: Measure of milk, one gadiva equals four pints. Kela: Stake driven into ground to tie a large animal

Kutti: Female calf of water buffalo

Maj: female water buffalo

Majjah: female water buffalos (plural) Mandi: Water buffalo market Muhallah: neighbourhood, part of a town or village

Pagri: a turban
Sherbet: homemade soft drink
Sherbety: The colour of homemade soft drink, usually pale orange.

Bury Me

Bury me not in cemetery Cover not my grave With gravel and cement.

Sacrifice no flowers, Upon my grave Leave nature's bounty to nature.

Bury me near a river glade Where the Water buffalos graze And roam over me.

When the river is full And floods the glade I'll be thankful For bathing me.

Please bury me, bury me In the river glade Where as a child I once played.

Cutting Edge?

The publisher asked "is you poetry At the cutting edge"?
"You'll have to judge for yourself", I said; "But I use my poems to shave", I added.

Daddy of all the Poems

This poem I have started Will be the longest, In history. How long will be I don't know?

Dragon

If I had a pet dragon What could I call him?

I could name him after, Famous footballer, cricketer, film star or Even a pop stars.

He would tame and not breathe fire Then I could take him to park.

All the children would gather, Saying "What lovely giant green wings! " Some would pat his head, others touch his wings, And some his long tail.

Being my pet he would be well trained, Naturally he'll only eat adults, And just a few at a time.

Electrifying Love!

Her baby blue eyes were bright Quivering with excitement She stretched out And her hand touched mine.

I shake, Excitedly; Like being hit by a bolt of lightning; As it happens She was being electrocuted.

Eyes

My eyes were made to see with, What if they are deceived?

Whoes's fault is it? Who do they blame?

The red roses in the flowerbeds? The pink blossom of the tree?

My naive heart? Your devious nature?

There are many other flowers, None are acceptable.

What are the eyes to do? What are the eyes to do?

Fire - haiku

Water calms fire But when lovers shed tears The Fire rages.

Fool or a Poet?

Any fool can write a poem Some can even make it rhyme.

But it takes a genius To write a poem That not only rhymes And also moves. Unfortunately I am not a genius.

If Only...

Get up!
You'll be late for school!
Did you wash your face?
Behind the ears too?
Clean your teeth and use fresh miswak!
Comb your hair!

Hurry up, eat your breakfast And change your clothes! Walk on the path to school Not through the fields!

If only....
I was a Maali,
Weeding and watering the plants.
I'd wake up at my leisure
Eat breakfast at my pace
Not brother to change my night clothes.
My salwar and Kameez
Soiled with dust
From weeding and digging
And walking through fields of crops.
The sign of my industry.

If only....
I was a Charwan
Tending the Majjh by the river glades.
I'd lean against a tree or lay on the soft grass
In its shade and play my flute
To my heart's content.

I'd carry my lathi over my shoulder Like Mola Jatt's gandasa Strutting across my domain Return to the village at milking time. If only

Charwan: herdsman

Gandasa: an axe like blade

Lathi: staff

Majjah: female buffalo

Maali: gardener

Maula Jatt: the hero of Punjabi film, tougher than Rambo.

Miswak: a softened stick used as a toothbrush

It Wouldn't Be Friday Night! - VILLANELLE

By chucking out time, I've downed ten pints, Then it's down to our local curry house. It wouldn't be a Friday night, if we didn't go for an Indian.

Blurry-eyed, staggered through the neon-lit night, A few times, planted myself against a window, By chucking out time, I've downed ten pints.

"Hello Robbo! " Shouted Tomo, with the gang. "Coming for a curry?"
It wouldn't be a Friday night, if we didn't go for an Indian.

Belting out "Vindaloo! Vindaloo! Vindaloo! Me and me mum me dad and gran, and a bucket of Vindaloo! "By chucking out time, I've downed ten pints,

Crashed through the door, "The best in town! " declared Robbo. It wouldn't be a Friday night, if we didn't go for an Indian.

"No need for menus, pal, Vindaloo all round! " shouted Robbo. "Pint each, and make the Vindaloo Hot! "
By chucking out time, I've downed ten pints,
It wouldn't be a Friday night, if we didn't go for an Indian.

Let Me Be Your

Let me be your dance partner, We'll dance, The Tango, Two Step and Bhangra too.

Let me be your personal chef, I'll cook you wondrous meals, French, Italian, Chinese and Indian too.

Let me be your sugar daddy, I'll buy you the best dresses, Gowns, Mini's and Saris too.

Let me be your hearts general, I'll show you wonders of the world, The Pyramids, the Taj Mahal And Transporter Bridge too.

Let me be your hearts Admiral, We'll watch the sun set, Sailing down the Nile, Jhellum and Tees too.

Let me be your companion, Hand in hand we'll stroll through, The Alp's, the Grand Canyon and Roseberry topping too.

Let me be your protector, I am master of all the martial arts, Judo, karate, Kung Fu and Middlesbrough's Ekey Thump too.

Let me be your Guru, I will teach you the secrets, Of the mystic East, West and in between too.

Let me be your one and true love, And I promise you'll never again, Hear the cursed words, "Not tonight Josephine!"

Little Miracles

From tiny acorns The mighty Oak grows.

From tiny rain drops The mighty river flow.

From humble moments An eternity forms.

From tiny words of love, Small deeds of kindness, Heaven is built on Earth.

Mary had a little lamb

Mary had a little lamb, And then a little chicken, Veal and beef and ham.

And chicken tikka Masala With special fried rice and nan. Greedy little Girl, And the nursery rhyme says Mary had a little lamb.

Musafir - Haiku

I a Musafir On life's short journey Only my deeds undying.

Musafir: a traveller

Obsession - Haiku

Like Majnun Living lost memories Lonely in mela

Majnun: Obsessed. Madly or desperately in love. Celebrated lover of Laila. Mela: a fair

Pink Yak

In the snow covered Himalayans You'll find the pink Yak.

Some say it rarer, Than the Yeti.

Few people have seen it, But they all swear The Pint Yak makes mean Vindaloo.

Remember the Sons of India too!

They fought in the Sahib's wars, Thousands of miles from home, The sons of India - The Muslim, Sikh and Hindu.

They fought and fell in distance lands -Turkey, East Africa and the trenches Of western European, The sons of India -The Muslim, Sikh and Hindu.

They, who mosque, gurdwara, mandir, Marched side by side, to fight in the Sahib's war, Thousands of miles from home, The sons of India - The Muslim, Sikh and Hindu.

They had grow carefree among the Lush green hills and golden wheat fields, Met the Maker in the quagmire of the trenches, Thousands of miles from home, The sons of India - The Muslim, Sikh and Hindu.

Forgotten or ignored by European history,
Not by loved ones, the mothers and sisters.
They lie in foreign lands,
Thousands of miles from home,
The sons of India The Muslim, Sikh and Hindu,
Who marched to fight in the Sahib's war,
Will always be remembered by their loved ones.

The Greatest Cricketer!

I am the greatest cricket in the world, Six foot six and handsome to cricketing boot. I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

I score double centuries before lunch And not a hair out of place. I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

I swing the ball, I bowl the doorsa, the Chinaman and bouncers too, I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

I have never dropped a catch,
I have fielded at slip, short leg and boundary too.
I am the greatest cricketer in the world,
Better than you!

I have score a century and Taken ten wickets in the same match too. I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

I have done it all, The highest test score, the fastest century too, I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

I've taught the best, Lara, Flintoff, Tendukar, McGarth and Brett Lee too. I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

I've played against the greats, W.G. Grace, Lynwood, Imran, Wasim and Fiery Fred too. I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

I've played at all the best grounds, The Lords, the Oval, Trent Bridge and Albert Park too, I am the greatest cricketer in the world, Better than you!

The Monster

Deep in the African jungle Lives a strange creature.

Has the teeth of a lion The claws of a bear.

If by chance you stumble upon him Don't be alarmed.

He lives entirely on crisps and sherbet Not only will he share his last crisp and Also polish your boots too.

The Most Dangerous Beast!

The beast has the fangs of a Werewolf
The claws of a tiger.
It never rests, day or night
Once it scents it prey
There is no escape;
It is impossible to be distracted or deceived.

It has insatiable appetite, Which cannot be satisfied With a lunch or dinner.

Always on the hunt, Prowling like a tiger, Squeezes like the anaconda, But thinks like a man.

It can survive in any terrain or climate, The harsher, the more successful it is. Its natural habitants are the slums Of Calcutta, Bombay, Slums of many third world countries.

Many countries developed nations Think they have eradicated this beast But it prowls again Once condition for its natural habitant Occurs, even temporarily.

The terrifying beast is Hunger!

The Robin

Christopher, the robin, Found some unusual berries. He presented to his girlfriend Mary,

With a satanic glint his eye, He said to himself, If she doesn't die, I'll try it myself.

Where did the angel go?

It seems like only yesterday, When I rocked the little angel to sleep.

It seems like only yesterday, Took he took his first steps.

It seems like yesterday, When, holding hands I took him to school.

I don't know how and when The little angel Turned into a teenager.

Who Am I?

Some say
I look like my father.
Father says
I'm the image of my grandfather.
Everybody says
My eyes are my mothers.
Some say
My nose is like my granny's.
Am I a miracle of creation or
Frankenstein's monster?

Worries!

The gas and electricity bill to pay, Mortgage in arrears and council tax too.

Hole in my in my socks, And I need new shoes.

Need nappies for baby, And clothing too.

I am hungry, And fridge is empty too.

I wish I was a cat, Then my only worry would be, When is some stupid human going to feed me?

Young Man Form Middlesbrough - Limerick

There once was a young man form Middlesbrough, Who after on a night in town, Found his wife in bed with a Saracen, "Don't be jealous dear", she said, "I am only making a comparison!"