

Poetry Series

Mohabeer Beeharry

- 27 poems -

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Mohabeer Beeharry (23 November 1937)

I was born in Mauritius. In 1964 I came to London to study law. I studied at the Lincoln's Inn. I also did B.ed(hons) . I love writing poems, mostly on philosophical and spiritual themes. I do not demand a lot from life. I am very satisfied with what I have. However it breaks my heart to see so much of blood shed and hypocrisy around the world. There is hardly any knowing who to trust
God bless this humanity.

Works:

None

Are we different...?

You think we are different
Because we look different?
But who knows what unseen forces had moulded us, age after age?
Have made us fruits of different trees?
They have made me sour and you sweet.
They have made you sour and me sweet.
Yet both our lives hang on the precarious swings of that fleshly pendulum.
When the sun sets, we both look for comfort
In the arms of the nightly slumber;
When our throats are parched,
We both look for the fountain to quench our thirst;
At the vehemence of the nightly nightmares,
We both sit up in bed, dearly wishing for the day to break.
And when finally the frail pendulum ceases to swing,
We both are forced to tug our tails in
And ease out into that same immense and blind
Nothingness, leaving behind the pampered pride and hoarded wealth.
We are like the waters of the fabled well,
Who knows where from we come,
And where to we go.

Mohabeer Beeharry

Dream is only dream

At the top of a tree
There was the last fruit,
And it was rosy, luscious and tempting.
I watched the tree,
And gloated on the fruit.
The fruit did not come down.
I sized the tree up,
It was too big for me to shake.
It took me a while to decide
What to do:
I finally decided to climb.
But by the time I reached the top
The fruit was gone.
A monkey had got it first.
I swore I would wring the neck of that animal.
Only that it had disappeared with the fruit.
There are some who like me
Spend their lives building dreams
But do nothing about them,
Ready to tear the world to pieces
When the dreams fizzle.
There are others who make dreams work for them.
Success is the end result of a concentrated
And sustained chain of actions.
While dreams are important,
It is as important to make them come true.

Mohabeer Beeharry

Find Me

If you cannot find me outside
You will not find me inside
If you cannot find me next to you
In the thousand faces around you:
Sad, hungry, vile or happy,
Visiting a thousand holy places
Will not help you see me

Mohabeer Beeharry

Forget me

I do not want to be remembered when I am gone.
If when I needed love and empathy,
I found hatred and hostility,
When I gave everything to make others happy,
I received false love in return.
Doors were shut on me,
Treated as stranger,
Left to find my own survival kit;
What then would I do with love or a statue
When I am not here to enjoy them?
Those I have fed with the sweat of my labour,
Who having gone up the ladder of achievement,
Look down, unconcerned, leaving me hungry,
Victim to scurrilous lies and gossips.
On these foundations of pain and tears
Have I at last built my castle of peace.
Those who know me as the person I am,
Will shed some tears, and they are few.
They will remember me whether I leave a poem or a book.

Mohabeer Beeharry

I am no bubble on a vagrant wave

One little wave
Wets my bare feet
And leaves behind traces of white foams;
In the homing evening, they scintillate,
A thousand suns vying.
I watch them burst, one by one,
And wonder what it all means!
For nothing passes without reasons;
A certain message tucked somewhere
In the folds of this ever changing vista.
Releasing my mind from its local shackles,
I tread strange lanes and unknown pathways,
Heaving deserts and seething seas
In search.
We are they say like candle flames
At the mercy of inscrutable destinies!
Children of accidents,
Moths destined to end in burning lamps
Bubbles banded on the crests of vagrant waves!
But not me!
I am neither a moth nor an unfortunate candle flame!
Neither an unfortunate bubble nor a creature of accident
I am me!
The one who is unborn
And who never dies
Who cannot be slashed
Nor be destroyed!
One to whom the past, present and future has no meaning!
One who even time celebrates;
For whom this universe was made,
The sun shines
And the light of the stars burns!
For me the rain falls,
And the flowers bloom,
Rivers run and the woodland brooks sing!
For me saints and avatars descend from their heavens!
He who understands this truth,
Understands why this beautiful universe was bestowed unto man!

Mohabeer Beeharry

I celebrate

I celebrate the cosmos with its infinite
Multitude of suns, moons, stars and planets.
I celebrate the lovely and exuberant world
With its blue sky, and oceans,
Its dark thunder clouds, mountains and rivers,
Its flowers, brooks and hills.
I celebrate the known and I celebrate the unknown.
I celebrate he who made them all,
For he who made them, made them into one whole:
An inseparable mosaic.
I salute the greatest of all the marvels:
Man! the home of the infinite; of infinite beauty.
For to him was given the gift
To comprehend the infinite,
To see, to hear, and to love the whole.
To him was given the gift
To seek the eternal home of wisdom,
And having found which, time ceases to scare,
Barred and cooped up in the house of gross matter,
A non-existent toothless chimera.

Mohabeer Beeharry

I know what you look like

I have never seen you before.
But I know what you look like.
In my heart, passed all the hurdles of confusions
In a little bower
At the foot of the hill
There is a special place
I have made for you
Decked with flowers
Profusely scented.
From there comes the reflection
Of your face.
You look like me.
For from there only comes
That special joy and peace.
I have never heard the sound of your voice.
But I know what it sounds like.
It sounds like my own.
Somewhere in this frail frame
Where the river of life finds its source
The sounds of your chanting has not stopped,
That single syllable chant!
A ceaseless flow.
Still resounding in this earthen vessel,
becoming my voice
Since time began its dance
And stars first shone
And nature in ecstasy
Exploded in fruitful abundance.

Mohabeer Beeharry

I waited...

I waited all day and night for just one word of love.
I waited for a week,
I waited for a month.
A whole year.
But it never came.
The cold winter nights came
And dragged their feet in the wet windy darkness.
I waited.
All night my nose to the cold window pane,
Tearful and heavy hearted.
Night turned into day,
As the mellow beams of the young sun
Kissed the bedewed garden slabs
And shivered into thousand smithereens of sparkling candle lights,
Waking the flowers from their slumbrous torpours.
I watched the tiny robin skip perkily, chasing butterflies
And squirrels scuttling deftly on the wooden fence.
I waited.
Night again.
The same old silence. Heavier, more unbearable.
A garland of led. I slept.
Shaken by the old wise man,
I woke up trembling like from a nightmare,
On fire, burning with despair and shame.
His last words resounded like a whip on my conscience:
Child, life is like mathematics.
You get from it what you put into it.
You put nothing in, you get nothing back.

Mohabeer Beeharry

I was born free

I was born free a long time ago
When my mind and body were young.
I loved the village lane
And the busy market towns.
I loved the river walks, the trees and the wild lakes,
The secret haunts of the luxuriant mountains.
There I created dreams and destroyed them in thousands.
There it was where my dreams grew wings;
Like the frolicsome morning shadows,
I raced the breeze to the foot of the hills.
I flew to the gilt land of moonbeams
And bathed in the mellow lakes of sunshine.
There I rode the fast wind horses to the clouds,
Free from the constraints of prejudices and dogmas.
Like the birds in the trees, I was free,
Free to sing the songs close to my heart,
To fly and plane dangerously in the wind
And dare the vehemence of enigmatic storms.
Who cares what the books say?
As long as my mind was free to dare and explore
And bring home sweet treasures,
Untarnished by short-minded confinements.
But since, I have lost my freedom,
Gradually circumvented by inveterate bookish weeds.
I am imprisoned by many an unhealthy beliefs and superstitions.
I would rather live behind the prison bars
With my mind free to wonder and wander
Free to love
To reason and to understand
Than my body free to rove
And my heart and mind condemned to vegetate in educated darkness.

Mohabeer Beeharry

In search of the Truth

I seek the truth
From where the ideation of this universe
Shivered into a spectacular existence;
Where rivers of wisdom flow unabated
And cascades of ineffable joys drench the air
With unceasing sprays of love and sunshine.
I seek the truth
Where life is not time scaled,
Two-sided or relative,
Where untold symphonies are born
That would deluge the atmosphere with flood of unsurpassable music.
These I find by diving into my own self,
Following the mystic lamp.
I shake the tree of superstitions
And cull immortal fruits of wisdom.
I churn the frail mind's ocean
And reap rich and multifarious pearls.
I befriend pain and shirk ephemeral pleasures
That like fearsome shadows shroud the treasure-troves of truth that twinkle at the
bottom.
And all decked, I come
From where the mind ceases to maraud,
And the proud breath sacrifices itself
At the altar of the all encompassing truth.

POEM 3

Title: I celebrate

I celebrate the cosmos with its infinite
Multitude of suns, moons, stars and planets.
I celebrate the lovely and exuberant world
With its blue sky, and oceans,
Its dark thunder clouds, mountains and rivers,
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I celebrate the known and I celebrate the unknown.
I celebrate he who made them all,
For he who made them, made them into one whole:
An inseparable mosaic.
I salute the greatest of all the marvels:
Man! the home of the infinite; of infinite beauty.
For to him was given the gift
To comprehend the infinite,
To see, to hear, and to love the whole.
To him was given the gift
To seek the eternal home of wisdom,
And having found which, time ceases to scare,
Barred and cooped up in the house of gross matter,
A non-existent toothless chimera.

POEM No 4

Title: A remembrance for Renuka

And when the morning dawns at last,
The first arrows of the young sun
Gently drenches the hibiscus in light purple blooms,
Gilding the front courtyard,
She opens her eyes, glazed and jaundiced
And takes a long troubled look at the flowers
At her bedside and gives a sigh.
I watch, helpless, depressed and disorientated,
Crying in silence
And praying.
Who was she who once came into my life,
A stranger, heart full of love,
And stayed close ever since?
Now stands alone between two worlds,
A frail frame battered by the relentless rigour
Of a terminal nightmare.
Strong in mind; alone in her pain.
She reaches for my hands
And though not by words of mouth,
Lets her love flow, telling all she has not
The years gone by.
A smile, faint, distant, and inscrutable,
Lights her face and lingers awhile
Like the half moon on a cloudless night,
Gradually waning,
Sinking back into her own lifeless self.
For ever, for ever.
The curtains have fallen, the eternal silence
Between here and there,
Between here and no where.
All was said that was needed to be said.
What was left, was never intended.
A certain fleshly heartache endures,
A certain lonely candle burning
Till the kind hands of time
Dry the tears.

POEM 5

Title: Where is the difference?

You think we are different
Because we look different?
But who knows what unseen forces had moulded us, age after age?
Have made us fruits of different trees?
They have made me sour and you sweet.
They have made you sour and me sweet.

Yet both our lives hang on the precarious swings of that fleshly pendulum.
When the sun sets, we both look for comfort
In the arms of the nightly slumber;
When our throats are parched,
We both look for the fountain to quench our thirst;
At the vehemence of the nightly nightmares,
We both sit up in bed, dearly wishing for the day to break.
And when finally the frail pendulum ceases to swing,
We both are forced to tug our tails in
And ease out into that same immense and blind
Nothingness, leaving behind the pampered pride and hoarded wealth.
We are like the waters of the fabled well,
Who knows where from we come,
And where to we go.

Mohabeer Beeharry

In the wilderness

Once in a dream I was in a wilderness,
My life and heart as barren as the rocks,
That lay scattered around;
A colourless moon looked down behind a veil of mist.
No stars to grace the night's freezing shroud.
It was an endless place,
So silent, my heartbeat sounded like great thuds on the solid surface of the gloom.
But why was I there, I wondered?
There was no answer, for none existed:
I was myself the enigma, and the solution!
The wilderness, the moon, the rocks,
And the vegetations were what remained of me: the debris
Of my feelings, my thoughts, and my aspirations.
Speak, said a voice and it was indulgent and deep,
But mightier than the forest torrent.
I have nought, I made reply.
And it laughed, loud and long, a little mocking
But profoundly compassionate.
This is what is left of you, child!
You are so full, and yet so empty!
Your journeys and your joys have been as many
As the pearls of dew that cool the virgin earth.
Many a river have you crossed, and mountains unknown,
And you brought me nothing?
No flowers, no songs of yore, no story of our eternal companionship?
Will you turn me back, sad and empty?
On my knees I cried in remorse,
Forgive oh forgive, in my joy I forgot thee
And stop not to see that thou art waiting!
I promised thee flowers from the valleys of my heart;
Garlands of love from where smiles reign supreme.
Selfish, I forgot thee, alone braving the nightly storms.
Rise child, spoke the voice again,
Life is a circle. You always come back to what you left behind.
So saying the wilderness disappeared,
A new sun is born
And a new life blazes its entry into this phenomenal world.

Mohabeer Beeharry

Life Eternal

What do I care if mountains topple and rivers flood!
This body falls and disintegrates!
I was not intended to last for a day.
I was here before the planets,
The mountains, the rivers and the waterfalls!
Before the first flower that ever bloomed.
I have seen many a day rise, their sheen,
Like the will- o'-the-wisp, disappeared into the dark nights of hopelessness;
Rivers swallowed by the thirsty cradles of the parched earth.
Here is but an hour or so,
Nothing more than a sunrise and a sunset!
I know of suns that never set,
Of flowers that for ever deck the locks of timeless valleys,
And songs of love that echo through the panoply
Of unchanging and multifarious sceneries.
Shed no tears on passing pleasures.
Like the shivering beams of the midnight moon,
They vanish in the relentless whirlpool of time.
My life stands on its own, fearless,
And eternal, unpropped by the frail presence
Of recurring phenomenas.

Mohabeer Beeharry

Oh God why...

As the sun makes its descent
Behind the bamboo grove,
A thin veil of darkness roams
Over the river and the village;
The temple bells ring for the last time.
Soon the doors will be closed,
And Lord, you will be all alone
Within the four scented walls,
All night,
Away from me,
Are you happy?
They say you are in my heart.
A small and cramped place, isn't?
I wonder how do you fit your infinity in there?
Where the machinery clicks
Till the day it runs out of steam.
I myself am a stranger to my own heart,
For behind the teeming and unruly mass of useless garbage,
Not even I can see you.
Are you happy?
When my wife spread
Great mouth watering dishes on the table
And I forgot to invite you,
And say a hurried sorry Lord later,
Are you happy?
Like all others
I am an expert at saying sorry,
A lip service, a flower of my hypocrisy.
Oh Lord, tell me why,
Why do you still remain in my heart,
That clammy, uncaring and selfish place?
And bleed for me,
and face heartless tortures and insults?
All for me?
You are omniscient, you know everything:
The greed, the hatred and the selfishness
And the useless violence.
In this darkness,
I wish I could fathom the depth of your love.
For the love of me,
You will go hungry.
You will pardon my hypocrisy,
And welcome torture and insults.
For me,
You will descend a thousand times from your heaven.
I have one small prayer, O Lord,
Give me just one tiny drop of your love
That I may recognise you in the garb of the mendicant
Who sits hungry at the road side.

Mohabeer Beeharry

On the way of life

I have no battle to fight
Nor victories or defeats,
Anger or frustrations to collect.
No wrong to vindicate.
These, like birds of ill omen
Have long left.
I write not of hatred
Nor of recriminations for those hands
That abuse the love and friendship
I shower;
For I expect nothing from anyone.
Whatever happens, happens for the best.
I only seek to know who sustains this place,
For I often wonder how thoroughly familiar
He is with the most hidden secrets of my heart.
And when I least expect,
Like subtle whiffs of light,
Flitting across dark and starless nights,
Replies to inveterate worries surface.
They say some fruits of life is bitter
And some are sweet.
There is logic here, and wisdom.
If everything were good
Then the boredom would be too much.
I need challenge and motivation.
If we were all prophets,
Who would teach who?
If all the lakes were oceans,
Where would the land be?
On the way of life
There are soft tufts and straggly stones.
I get bored always treading on soft tufts.
Now and then I need hard ground,
To know, not only what I can endure
But also what he, who made it all,
Wants of me.

Mohabeer Beeharry

Remembering Renuka

And when the morning dawns at last,
The first arrows of the young sun
Gently drenches the hibiscus in light purple blooms,
Gilding the front courtyard,
She opens her eyes, glazed and jaundiced
And takes a long troubled look at the flowers
At her bedside and gives a sigh.
I watch, helpless, depressed and disorientated,
Crying in silence
And praying.
Who was she who once came into my life,
A stranger, heart full of love,
And stayed close ever since?
Now stands alone between two worlds,
A frail frame battered by the relentless rigour
Of a terminal nightmare.
Strong in mind; alone in her pain.
She reaches for my hands
And though not by words of mouth,
Lets her love flow, telling all she has not
The years gone by.
A smile, faint, distant, and inscrutable,
Lights her face and lingers awhile
Like the half moon on a cloudless night,
Gradually waning,
Sinking back into her own lifeless self.
For ever, for ever.
The curtains have fallen, the eternal silence
Between here and there
Between here and no where.
All was said that was needed to be said.
What was left, was never intended.
A certain fleshly heartache endures,
A certain lonely candle burning
Till the kind hands of time
Dry the tears.

Mohabeer Beeharry

Remembering the Indian Ocean tsunami

Who knows when the flowers bloom
And why they go?
Having done their time,
They leave, quietly and bravely:
An intrinsic law,
An unbreakable tenet.
Who knows for whom the knell toll?
Who wakes up after a satisfying slumber
To confront inexplicable disasters?
What the next day brings is a mystery.
Sunshine or showers
Tears or pleasure
War or peace.
Ignorant of the cause,
We know the effects.
Fateful yet inevitable!
Fruits of our own actions and reactions.
Others call them accidents, dear children of our own mistakes.
My house was blown away
My baby drowned
And my mother,
Buried under rubbles!
These are not my doing, nor my mistakes,
Nor the things I wanted!
Why then do we need
By certain inexplicable force,
To lick our wounds,
Hopeless and broken, helpless
Waiting for the disoriented hope,
And strength to return, our achievement destroyed,
Our self confidence and courage battered?
Why, like the many civilisations
Gone before, obliterated,
Do we find ourselves stuck on the verge of disasters
Forlorn, deprived, broken and in despair?
Face, drenched with dusty tears,
Locked in internecine wars,
Bones shattered by loads of fallen debris?
We are human, sometimes too vainly blowing
Our supremacy over the environment!
Maybe we need to search deeper!
Maybe the secret of our strength and survival,
Is still there to be uncovered!
While we continue to glorify ourselves
In having appropriated it,
We forget that nature is infinite!
That we are only a minute part in this universe,
Smaller still without this earth;
There are far more things, innumerable laws and forces,
All unknown and beyond our limited scan,
Out there to be reckoned with.
We are not permanent residents here.

Nothing is eternal, neither us nor the things
We build or the things that surround us.
Pain and pleasure are the threads
That bind our existence to this place:
Frailty, in spite of our manufactured security,
Is at the base of this phenomenal fabric.
If we have what we want, we are happy!
Short of them, we are unhappy. This is delusion.
Still however great the pain,
Those changes have never ceased to occur,
Again and again
The same as it had happened from time
Buried in the dark past,
when time sprang from the great void
Into which all our civilisations were swallowed.
This is the way nature evolves: there is no sentiment there,
No change of mind and no waiting,
One mighty juggernaut,
Ruthlessly ploughing on.
In it love and patience, tears and happiness, strength and hope, dangers and
devastations, war and peace
Are all intermingling and building elements.
The greatest justice we can do to ourselves
Is to be aware of them and accept them
As part of our own existence,
We are all part of a constantly recycling reality!
Remember those civilisations, towers and castles
That had once claimed eternity as their own,
They had crumbled and turned into dust.
Many a star and planet have disappeared
And many are those we held dear and close
Have had to succumb to this self-same
Onslaught of passing time
Who is there brave enough
To withstand this change?
Who dares to be permanent or eternal here?
Nothing is permanent and pretending that it is not so
Does not change anything.
Change is the natural nature of this place
A guarantee to its own reality and continuity!
It brings pain and sorrow,
But it also brings hope, joys and happiness in its wake.
To be here is to be at the mercy of these conditions.
The sooner we learn to live with them
The sooner we will be happy,
For happiness itself is relative.
Where there is happiness, there is bound to be sadness
This is where our strength as human beings is.
Knowing this secret and what is real,
We rise above the ash.
But who can replace my baby!
Who can bring my mother back.

Who could wipe off the pain
That gnaws at my heart?
Who could bring my old peaceful sleep back!
To wipe our tears and bravely march on, to continue with our life,
Is our fortitude, and
Our justification to survive as human.

Mohabeer Beeharry

The begging bowl

Why can't I ever have peace?
Or be happy?
I have given away almost all I have.
Sometimes when this heart grows weak
And my conscience strong,
And I cannot sustain its repeated demand,
I am tempted even to give away
What I have left, locked away.
Will it satisfy the insatiable hunger
Of those who are always pestering my conscience.
Will it give me peace?
Will it make me happy?
Shall I see a world
Where man has not stooped so low?
With nothing left to feed myself,
Having given everything away
I will have to fit a begging bowl
Out for myself.
Who is genuine,
And who is fake
The line is very thin between.
In this complicated world the old conscience
Is dying an untimely death!
God's names and hypocrisy have become close comrades in business.
And charity another name for living shamelessly off another's sweat and labour.

Mohabeer Beeharry

The Bird and The Man

Tired of chasing each other, a bird and a man settled down to a conciliatory conversation:

I have two wings, said the bird.

I have two arms, replied the man.

I can fly to the top of this tree, easily.

So can I.

You cannot fly!

You cannot climb!

Yes, of course. We are quit.

No, said the man. You cannot swim in that river!

True again, the bird replied, mortified,

An awkward silence followed

Well then I win, said the man, I am better than you!

The bird, fidgety, thinking as hard as he could.

No, he replied, coming back with determination.

How is that? asked the man, surprised.

Can you fly up there? Indicating the open sky.

No, replied the man, feeling cornered.

The bird continued, patient but determined.

You are very proud of your ability to swim, eh?

Certainly! the man interjected. Try it!

I don't need to, said the bird. I know I can't!

So?

So, tell me for how long can you remain under the water?

The man retreated into another uneasy silence.

No more than a second or two, yea? I can stay for hours up there, the bird continued.

As long as I like.

I can dive into the water too for fish! Can you do this?

God has made me stronger! He loves me more!

Said the man, a wee bit hostile.

Love, my friend? retorted the bird.

If you had it, it won't be long before you lose it!

Love is pure. Love is smooth. Love is edifying.

At the call of love, the moon shines and the sun rises,

the breeze blows and the brooks run

the rivers are filled with life-giving water;

trees bloom and life blossoms.

Love has neither beginning nor end;

neither religion nor colour. Love is giving, sharing, expecting nothing in return.

But you are always at each others' throats,

You have turned this place into a killing field.

Hungry for power! Is this what you call love?

And the bird added,

You said God loves you more. He does, I am sure!

That's why you are endowed with so many extraordinary gifts.

But think of how you are misusing them!

Besides what have you done for him, eh?

You are driving him not only from this place,

But also from your heart, his last resort.

Defiling and ransacking his place of rest?

Turning his holy places into rented apartments,

And grounds for unholy conspiracies

A last pitch from the man
 I have got more brain than you, see?
 Brain? asked the bird. But to what use have you put it?
 Your history books run with blood, murders, jealousy
 and conspiracy, but you are still not learning!
 You have raised great edifications and filled them with tinsels of pride and greed
 Still I admit you have made things a lot better for many.
 But have you not destroyed the homes of many like me?
 And made the weather warmer, causing floods and devastations?
 The man gritted his teeth.
 Yes, for self preservation!
 No, for selfishness!
 The path you are taking to preserve yourself is leading you to self destruction, can't
 you see?
 What about us, the ungifted, who live our lives
 precariously dangling at the tops of trees,
 Facing storms and fires?
 Who roam parched deserts for a drop of water?
 Who year after year, are forced to watch our feeding grounds turned into tinders and
 wild fires?
 Even in the jungle, our rightful heritage,
 We are not safe from you!
 You catch us and stick us in the zoo for your pleasure.
 You are thrown in prison for committing crimes and find it unbearable for being cooped
 up between dumb walls;
 Have you ever thought how painful it is for us?
 And yet, we committed no crime against you.
 Are you accusing me of being heartless?
 And the chase began again.
 I can shoot you with a gun! The man threatened the bird.
 I can destroy you with an arrow!
 There you go again!
 Said the bird, immensely sad.
 Is this being intelligent, eh?
 Is this love?
 Then, in a voice heavy with emotion, added
 I wouldn't want to do this to you!
 I wouldn't want to shoot you with a gun,
 Nor aim an arrow at you!
 We are both important to this place. I am no better than you,
 nor you than me.
 He who made us intended us to compliment each other, see?
 You can't replace me and I cannot replace you.
 We are both fitted with the things important for the conditions we live in.
 God gave you more love and intelligence in order to protect
 those who are weak and helpless.
 But you are not only destroying what he gave you,
 but you are destroying yourself.
 Go on, one day there will be nothing nor anyone left to talk about,
 Neither me nor you.
 We'll be merely a torn page from the history book of time.

Mohabeer Beeharry

The man and the violin

That man, he plays the violin
At the end of my road.
No shelter for his white haired head,
Rain washed, sun burnt.
Eyes sunken and haggard, a lone figure.
Like a radiant sun behind a still veil of darkness
His face shines with patience and a mystic smile.
He does not bother whether as you pass-by
You ring his bowl with a coin.
He does not ask to know how big the world is,
Nor how small is his town.
Every now and then, a piece of newspaper passes him by
Driven desultorily by the wind.
It does not stop.
It does not toss a coin into his bowl either.
It flies pass wild, buzzing non-stop
A flighty language, conflagrating with spits and venom.
At the end of the day,
When with weakness and pain, the knotty hands shake,
Tears in his old eyes, his chest cramped,
The violin squeaks and shivers, uncertain
He lays down his instrument and picks his bowl.
Empty! And yet the whole world has passed by.
The mystic smiles broadens:
Stronger, braver and more illuminating.
A smile of resolution not to lose,
To live above the ash and play on.
Life is a whirlpool, no one can tell
What comes from the churning of it,
He has taught himself.
The bowl is empty, that is his victory.
No heart break! That is his freedom, his strength.
He is the master
Both of the music and his life.
He is the music, he is the violin
And he is the listener.

Mohabeer Beeharry

The night visit

Sometimes at night fall
I hear your steps.
Quiet and childlike
And your breathing,
Like a naughty child sneaking up the stairs.
I would run
To catch a sight of you.
You are very mischievous
I know that.
Everybody knows that.
The least noise I do,
You would start your eternal games of hide and seek.
And it would take me a long long time again to find you,
Although you would be no farther from me
Than my own self.
That night the door banged closed
And you are gone.
Broken hearted, I sat
Cursing myself for being noisy.
In the morning I found
Traces of butter
All over the floor.
And I thought
No one could even guess how happy I was.

Mohabeer Beeharry

The poet's land

The song I sing
Does not belong to me.
I did not write it
Nor did I copy it from someone either,
It belongs to them
Who like me,
Love to fly their minds to the fantasy lands:
The poet's land,
Where imagination and experience
Joys, delusions, dreams and heart break
Beauty, love, music and reality
Dance a most transcendental and occult dance;
Of subtle beauty
Finer than the gauzy veils of early morning mist,
Soaked in emerging sunshine.
A shelter for songsters like me,
To indulge in peace and visions.
There I abandon myself to the endless dance of my imagination.
I shiver in auspicious and ecstatic freedom,
And thaw in the embrace of overpowering longings;
There I merge myself in those multiple and formless existences,
Which open my eyes to the end of infinity.
Is this a sweet delusion
Or dream maybe?
Or is it the ultimate reality?
I know. For there I am happy,
Just disarmingly happy,
No language, no sound and no movement
Just an interminable existence.
So, drunk, I catch the wings of flitting songbirds
Which like fireflies
Swarm in the aureate air.
To those who do not know,
the haunting tastes of delusion
Soaked in honey
Last long after the turmoils
In the mind and body have subsided.
But to those who know:
There is no delusion,
There is no reality,
Just the labour before the birth of a song.

Mohabeer Beeharry

The Robin

I wake up to a gleaming carpet of snow
In my back garden and a cold shiver runs down my neck.
Yet enthralled, my heart fights to feast
On the rich and flaky white canopy.
I stroll my eyes around.
The camellia, darker in the cold embrace,
Laden with more than its fair share,
Objects openly and gives a discontent shake
As a brisk breeze swoops down on it.
My heart warms up.
Life has not all come to a stop, I think.
For lo! There is a brisk movement
On the top of the frozen pansies.
Undaunted, a little robin is busily pecking,
Skipping, strutting as it challenges a mound of snow.
It stops suddenly and peers down.
All frenzied, legs apart and wings wide open,
It begins to drill, deeper and deeper.
Victorious, it brings out the tiny morsel of a wriggly worm.
Oh man, what dance follows!
As if hearing my thoughts, it jumps up
And lands near my window, on a rose stem.
And sings, a gentle metallic sound:
I wonder how big is this world.
In shine and shower I dig for grubs.
But I am terrified at night though,
In my nest dangling at the top of a bush
When the wind blows and shakes.
And I cry in the morning
When I see my young ones dead on the ground.
In this small body,
There is a big heart that loves and desires love.
We are all the same, big or small, see?
Cry not for me, for I know what life is.
There is the flower and there is the thorn,
He is wise who lives happily with both.

Mohabeer Beeharry

The tastes of despair

Have you ever met with the guy called Despair,
Who loosens all the sustaining screws of hope,
Crucifies the fabric of your will, leaving you choking:
that darling spawn of a traumatised and ransacked heart?
I have!

In a nightly fit of intense fury, the sea
swept my child and my home away,
and shattered my boat on the coastline rocks,
all in one heartless swoop.

And despair set home in my life: like a cobweb,
A debilitating invasion,
Like life suddenly gets seized in loose mud,
Sinking, sinking, sinking!

When the strength of the mind suddenly collapses, grooving into the shifting sand,
Disorientated, disillusioned and choked.

No place to rest the head at night!

No evening mending of the nets and lobster pots,
Or evening bash at the local Chinese shop;
Nothing, only the anguish of a shattered wife's face,
and the morbid stare of starvation.

My boat was my wealth, turned into flotsams.

It was nice to hear friends' encouragements:

Everything was going to be all right.

Still, a prisoner to that dismantling feeling of void,

At night fall, no child's babbling laughter;

No wife standing on the front door to hail my return;

Her overshadowed face, her unfathomable silence,

And her unceasing whimpers, like a distressed moon
wrapped into a skein of thunder clouds!

Except for my own emptiness, I had nothing to give her.

Life is a mystery; I wonder what lies at the back of it,

ready to bring down the darling little sand towers of happiness
we manage to assemble together.

But for those who have seen despair, face to face

And survived; whose minds, bodies and souls have been fragmented,

their names are for ever carved on the plaques of life,

deep and indelible:

Them life hails as heroes, for they never give up

Mohabeer Beeharry

We are one

If there were no me
Where would you be?
If there were no you
Where would I be?
Child, you and I are one,
Except that I know it
And you don't,
Not until you wake up to your own reality.

Mohabeer Beeharry

What can I ask?

You often ask me if I wanted something.
I have never asked you for anything
Because when I came home
After a long travel
Away from you and this place
And those I love,
My larder was already full
Brimming, no place for further replenishment.
This place was new, furbished and wondrous
The trees full of fruits,
The river running with pure water
The land fertile, always expecting
And the harvest was plenty.
Beautiful birds graces the blue sky
With their songs.
And I met my mother and father
And so many sweet smiling faces.
You made it all happen
Before I ever set foot here.
What more can I ask?

Mohabeer Beeharry

What shall I offer

When the canal dries
The ground hardens
And the greenery around shrivels and turns yellow
And dies.
But which one is more important,
Tell me oh wise man
Tell me
Which one is more important?
The canal or the water?
When my heart is dry
And no songs of love rise
No joy
And no prayer for this sad humanity
Swallowed by illusions and ignorance
Drowned in pride, greed and inhumanity
Painting pictures of tender life
In flood of morbid red
What shall I offer them?
Tell me what shall I offer them?
What shall I offer the dismembered and dying baby?
What comfort shall I give the distraught mother?
How shall I efface the spots
Of blood from the face of this mother
From whose bosom
We have drunk clean and undiluted milk?
I need the canal and I need the water.
I need the heart and I need the love and the understanding
For they are the only sustaining panacea
In this darkening place.

Mohabeer Beeharry

Where is the difference?

You think we are different
Because we look different?
But who knows what unseen forces had moulded us, age after age?
Have made us fruits of different trees?
They have made me sour and you sweet.
They have made you sour and me sweet.
Yet both our lives hang on the precarious swings of that fleshly pendulum.
When the sun sets, we both look for comfort
In the arms of the nightly slumber;
When our throats are parched,
We both look for the fountain to quench our thirst;
At the vehemence of the nightly nightmares,
We both sit up in bed, dearly wishing for the day to break.
And when finally the frail pendulum ceases to swing,
We both are forced to tug our tails in
And ease out into that same immense and blind
Nothingness, leaving behind the pampered pride and hoarded wealth.
We are like the waters of the fabled well,
Who knows where from we come,
And where to we go.

Mohabeer Beeharry