Poetry Series

Pradeep Dhavakumar

- poems -

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Pradeep Dhavakumar (August 27th,1979)

Pradeep Dhavakumar is an Electrical Engineer, presently at Alabama, USA. He is originally from Chennai, India.

A Chennai Mango Vender

She picks the mangoes:
yellow, palm-size, ripe, like
a builder picks bricks and
on the busy street side,

builds her golden pyramid:
hip-high, radiant, fragrant and
croons 'Malgova for Rs Ten'
like a young Opera singer
serenading to her love.

Lovers come in all forms;
Pants, Sarees, Lungis;
Milk-tooth, braced, dentured;
Fair, brown, dark and

acquire her advertised,
juicy, saccharine flowers;
cracking the walls, crumbling

the structure; while she watches
like Yama for it to crash and
smiles only on its annihilation.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

A Floating Feather

Like an infant gently handed
from one maiden to another,
slow and soft it descends,
soothing every eye that sees.

White and soft and silent;
A young Buddha in flight;
A virgin slice of paper:
A floating petal of Peace!

Minutes before, it dangled,
on a screaming dove's bod,
being severed and scattered
by a potent claw of a Hawk.

Torn, orphaned and banished;
An unknown child in coma;
A poem stripped of words:
A floating wound of War!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

A Natural Birthday Party

Softly burning sodium Lights,
ornately planted on muddy Streets
appeared like Candles on a Cake
and I wondered if
nature too celebrated birthdays.

Then a Storm barged in,
and shut the candles' eye;
Lightning slovenly sliced the cake,
Thunder vibrated its vocal cord,
Rooftops all applauded in kind
and the Wind hand-fed the slices
to every open-mouthed
window and door.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

A Senior Poet's Caution

I know this path and where it leads
Fresh it is: its darkness and blood.
I see you tread, hence scream to stop
But you ignore me and travel ahead.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Alchemy

Dried red chilli,
in the mouth;
Angelic fire,
on the tongue;
Nascent fountain,
in the eyes;
Virgin river,
through the nose;
Mellow vapor,
in the ears;
Cozy zephyr,
through the throat;
Dancing earthquake,
in the gut;
Golden cucumbers,
out they flow!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

An Elephant And A Poet

A trunk-less Elephant after fifty
shots of tequila, suddenly remembered
its lamentable past, lost control and
trampled my head to a smashed pumpkin.

Then, it plucked out both my jaws,
straightened them with its paw,
placed them close side by side,
blackened the gum between tooths,

and ordered me to compose an Aria
for peace. Soaked in utmost pain
and shock, and fearful of another tramp;
'I never made a Piano or a jewel', I murmured,

But you belong to them, it screamed,
Them who glorified Ivory with words:
Words that made many women to seek;
Words that made many mad men to kill.

(Trunk-less instead of Tusk-less is deliberate..As a large part of the tusk is inside the head)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

An Obsecration

The pious, I obsecrate
To perceive and apprehend
With an unprejudiced mind
Every Other's Scripture.
Juxtapose and scrutinize
What do Thy mind see?
Differ do all, omnifariously.
For Veracious be One,
Perfidious must Others be.
If perfidious could be One,
Why cannot All be?

Pradeep Dhavakumar

At The Hands Of A Friend

I was shot;
At the hands of a friend.
And I fell down
To a deep dark end.
There, I laid for years
With more fears than tears.
Contemplating the reasons.
For the change in the seasons.

Years later still dripping,
I stood up again.
With hope as strong as Steel,
That it could never be my friend.
My closing eyes opened;
To the face I held so dear.
My heart still refusing,
That he is the one near.

Then, as I struggled to stand,
As my life left the land,
Came the burning words,
Even the mightiest bullets feared.
'Yes, its me ', he said,
And without the slightest strain,
He shot me again.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Cactus Flower

Banished from the gardens of eden,
This green pariah.
To the beige hell on earth,
Without a single messaih.

With thorns over its body,
An untouchable of its kind.
Shapeless like a fat lady,
Who without reasons is always maligned.

No gardeners to depend when hungry.
No rains to hinge on when thirsty.
No birds to speak when lonely.
And No poets to write its misery.

Yet, it stays with courage,
And lives a life so sour.
And from its hard earned blood.
Grows the most beautiful flower.

Everytime in my life,
When there is no one to hold a light,
Or to hear my woeful plight.
And when defeat is in my sight.
I think of the cactus flower.
And It inspires me to fight.
And I fight.
And I fight.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Caves

1.

Inside their mouth many sages have sat,
And in the deep darkness, spent years;
And breathed the air; so damp and wet,
And lived on available rock-tears.

Yet, in this dungeon, healthy they've stayed,
And found the path of joy, of bliss;
And from their closed, inner exile,
Understood how the outer world exists!

2.

While some with their feet find,
Some, within, with their minds create;
While some are pushed by life,
For a sojourn in its dark estate.

But no matter how dark and deep,
Its darkness always sheds a light;
And those who do absorb that light,
Have forever in life, shined bright!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Christmas Tree

_____ I_____
_____saw_____
_____monkey_____
_____playingonmy _____
_____christmasTree _____
_____pluckingAlltheLeaves_____
_____thinkingWhoShallBotherme_____
__IopenedmymouthAndShoutedLoudly_____
_____Shoo_____
_____Shoo_____
_____Shoo_____
_____Shoo_____
___(Just a break from serious poetry!) _____

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Closet Of Faces

In the closet there hangs Faces of mine.
Lined up Prisoners, sentenced for lifetime.
I walk around warming neurons to identify.
Where these faces lay in the axis of time.

Molded, grafted and colored to perfection.
So real science shall fail to discriminate.
Expressions etched to minutest details.
Even persuasive time shall fail to obliterate.

Captured, saved and written in the eyes.
People and Places who passed its gates.
Reminding yore moments of this mysterious life.
Which those faces meticulously translates.

Bloomed joyous when rolling tears were kissed.
Swirled contracted when gooseberries were bit.
Expressionless insipid when caught red-handed.
Openmouthed excited when cold sea waves hit.

Startled enlightened when lies were discovered.
Courageous fighting when insults were hurled.
Glowing confused when love was first felt.
Victorious proud when success was earned.

The sculpting chisel, whose hands does hold?
Is it mine alone or others of known and unknown?
Is it fate that many say, I despise to acquiesce?
Or is it far beyond the intelligence men own?

Two empty shelves remain polished and clean.
For two more quarters of life, ere I burn.
What faces will stack, what scars decorate?
After death, to find my spirit shall return.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Code of Silence

At the crossroads of hate and fear,
I met those whom no man held dear;
A Donkey, a Hippo, a Canetoad, a Viper,
All spoke a code, so hard to decipher.

Their code of Silence, I tried to hear,
With my Mind alone, for many a year;
I wore their skin, I stood their boot,
I lived their life till I found the truth.

In Silence, there was, the donkey's song,
The hippo's polka, also, floated along;
The canetoad’s hug, viper’s deep kiss,
The code did contain, their love, their bliss.

Who said just void, Silence does possess;
How else these Hated, can better express?

(Canetoad * - has Poisonous Skin)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Collages

When my third grade teacher
taught me how to make collages
by cutting figures from magazines
and pasting them on chart papers,
I never bothered to learn
as I found it too useless to be.

Now in Life when I see Men
cut and paste friends and
relatives, according to
their needs and I, unable
to do either, realize, my teacher
was teaching life to me.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Common Photographer

The common volunteer among us
Who helms the digital eye
To capture the celebration
To mummify for our tomorrow.
He always makes double sure
That each human jewel is taken
Every precious moment captured
Every priceless expression noted

When years have passed by
And the album is reopened
Treasured memories will sprout
Joy and sorrow will waltz;
About everyone seen on canvas
Is always inquired and spoken
And the selfless hands that clicked
Is always, always Forgotten.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Communicative Clouds

Having adorned them with words before
I flung my pen to the sorority of clouds
and stood beneath for a repay in verse.

Fearing solitude, addiction and perhaps
madness most of these extroverts slipped
away citing reasons of duty and time.

While some slyly waited for the dark,
others scratched their heads for words,
convoluted, then separated and died.

To hint and interest them on metaphors
I stood still, circled, walked on four legs,
and even briefly wiggled on the ground.

As light began to devour its dessert
just one escaped the magician's hat
and appeared determined to write.

Now this cloud has been standing there
for months, changing to a moon at night
and a longing, innocent eye in my sleep,

always observing but never voicing;
portraying a woman in a closed society;
perhaps asking to write on their plight.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Crocodile

If land is joy
and water- sorrow;
Then Crocodile
is the inner man.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Daily Death

Bedspread like black waves,
awaits the kill tonight;

Pillows like puce slabs,
readies its arms to smash;

And night lamp like dark moon,
smirks with sadistic eyes.

In those waves, with haste, I plunge;
Against those slabs, I crash;

and beneath that moon, I fall-
To die again, to live!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Departure

Waves leaving
the deltas of
your feet to lift
a dejected sea.

A pigeon leaving
the branches of
your palm to animate
a lifeless cloud.

A song leaving
the walls of
your lips to pacify
a funeral wind.

Tears leaving
the womb of
your eyes to wipe
dirt on another's cheek.

Life leaving
the castle of
your bod to lighten
a family tree.

O' how unique
this beauty is...
The beauty of
Departure!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Different Girl

Tired of the mundane girls I see
Wanted someone of a different degree
Atleast three horns she should have
With nose and tongue split in halve
Dirty nails, a tail, violet skin
Eyes be large, mustn't stay within

Impossible! logically you may think
And say to me 'You completely stink'
But I did find exactly as above
With coccyx filled with infinte love
Smiling with decayed teeth of green
On that wonderful night of halloween!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Doomed Lovers

Long-sighted* Sun, since macrocosm's first dawn,
stands still yet searches, with deep, powerful eyes,
in every galaxy of far, with inextinguishable hope.

Shy nymphal Earth, in her veil of atmosphere,
whirls on her tracks, with her pristine heart- the moon,
held out- up and high, with utmost truth, offering all.

Their curse of creation- differing compositions,
and coordinates, and circuits, and constrains;
all script their rendezvous- to an asymptotic act.

On rarest of occasions, when collinear they eye,
Eclipse dooms- every held expression meant to fly;
and black tears of Meteorites, all around, silently fall.

*(Long-sight - a sight problem that affects your ability to see close-up objects.)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Dreamland

This is the land where I come to meet
someone who appears like god to me-
someone who exists only in dreams.

The sand is soft and cool as beach;
The air smells of fresh lavender and peach;
This is the land where I come to meet.

The sun and stars concurrently shine;
Words on clouds direct me to the shrine
of someone who exists only in dreams.

As I run at high pace, black birds wish;
Fields of blue bells, beside me swish;
This is the land where I come to meet.

As I lunge inside, longingly she stands,
Like a pearl waiting for its only strand:
This someone who exits only in dreams.

As I rush to her, like mist she disappears,
And needles like rain from above appear...
This is the land I always go to meet
someone who exists only in dreams.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Earthly Woman

Like the Earth which covers its
deep burning core of fire
with the beauty of greens and blues
for its inhabitants to relish;
She covered all her
conflagrant pains
with a sublime smile
for the sake of her loved One.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Ebony Romance

I unbuckle her jaded black Jacket.
And lift from drapes of crimson Velvet.
With Eyes of a watchful Guard on duty,
I ogle at this naked man-made beauty.

Face so puerile, petite and pretty
Queen goddess in my music city.
Neck so long, smooth and slender.
My fingers only knows its splendor.

Crown of Silver and Ivory she wears
Domineers the gentle flow of her hair
Metal Cascade from her ebony cheeks
Is asundred into six long creeks

Hairless voluptuous body so smooth.
Naughty Moon beams often peep to soothe.
A titillating tatoo at her navel.
Forces my one hand never to avel.

With her hips locked between my thighs
And tress covered with my finger highs
Eyes tightly closed, I pluck and play
And she mourns with heavenly bliss and gay

Not time for Carcassi, Giuliani or Sor.
This is our very own private hour.
Sans words we sing, sans feet we dance
Making our very own Ebony Romance.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Empty Vessels

'Ah! Those Empty vessels make more noise! '
Mocked the blinded man of borrowed wisdom,
From an Overflowing vessel of ego and envy;
Oblivious to mesmeric dances of Empty woods -
The paradisiacal orchestra of flutes and violins,
Painting a whirling rainbow of majestic music!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Eternal Friend

I always know the sun still smiles;
Though earth has turn'd her face away,
And sky has freed her darkest tress.

I always know the wind still walks;
Though trees like bronze statues stand,
And feathers sleep like heavy rocks.

I always know the heart still speaks;
Though ants' whispers seems far loud,
And corpses call me their silent one.

I always know the future is bright;
Though fists fear to face a flower,
And smile shuts to sights of sighs.

But if there comes a day of dark;
When senses fall to time's sword,
And faith flies o'er forgotten fields;

I will always know This friend will stay;
(Till time and matter end their day.)
These verses I etch, these verses I etch.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Familiar Place

And I arrived again.
To the same familiar place,
that I have been before.
Caliginous and Gelid,
Incommodious and Putrid;
The place I hate the most.

The Mark on the wall,
I made last time -
'I shall never come again',
grins at me saying -
'He he..I told you so'
The hammer will strike-
this anvil again.

The exits are smaller now.
The paths more longer.
The light more dimmer.
Me -it doesn't scare.
Been there before.
Will succeed by all means.

I ring the Reception bell.
The same hostess greets me.
With Bowl of concern.
A Cup of advice.
Syringe of confidence.
Tablets of hope.

'Do you have vaccination -
for failure? ', I ask.
'Got to find out -
on your own ', she says.
Will find it Someday.
But today I shall rest.

Tomorrow, Will get up again.
Make another mark on the wall.
Pay Precious time as fare.
And leave with a flare.
Have Things to dare.
And Enemies to tear.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Friend At The New York Airport

My first arrival at the New York Airport,
was greeted by its Winter Queen,
The cold freezing New York Wind.
Her embrace made my body shiver,
Her kiss, my lips crack.
For a moment an Ice statue was me,
Frozen in her big long arms.

To my rescue came an unexpected friend,
A cup of Hot Bitter-Sweet Coffee.
Bitter its taste, Sweet its warmth.
As she embarked on a journey inside me,
A new warm wind arose within me.
From my throat, through my mouth,
Nullyfying the cold wind outside me.
The cold cold Queen was no more.
Coffee! ..A friend indeed! .

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Full Stop

Looking at you, I remember the first time we met:
sometime in my first grade, when the page-thirsty
line was running wild with its black army, trying to
capture every length and breadth of the white land
and I sat like a sparrow watching a tiger rampage;
while you bravely jumped out of the teacher's mouth,
onto my senses and with a single dot stopped its march.

From then till now, I remember all the times you had
stepped forward in the many pages of my life, stopping
every line according to the day’s need, setting priorities,
creating order and maintaining a balance of present and past,
and most of all I remember how perfect you were in your lynch:
never allowing a single phoenix to rise and how unshakable
you always remained after the kill: never oscillating to the past.

But why, when I scatter you onto the pages of my heart
where I need you the most, to kill those unanswerable
question marks that multiply like cancer and severe my days,
you become a heavy cannon ball and painfully roll and roll?
Or sublimate all your potent flesh and become a deep hole?
Or become the cars of a parking lot that empty at dark?
Or grow a sharp sickle and become another question mark?

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Game With Stars

He lay on a dark, deserted isle,
With eyes fixed at stars above;
Face lighted with a smile so big-
No vigilant God, would allow.

So painter of the million stars,
Begun a silly game to play:
To erase some stars quietly and see-
If his bright smile, could hold its way.

He slowly panted a lonely one,
But smile did not a fraction break.
What difference does it really make,
When a dropp is offed from a lake?

He quietly did blow a dozen more,
But the smile still shone, as before.
What if some are forever lost,
When remain still are many more?

He slyly licked half the stars,
But the smile still remained like new.
What if many are forever gone,
When staying still are faithful few?

He mopped the sky- dry and clean,
But the smile still perdured as one.
What do the stars anyway mean,
When survived has it, the death of sun?

Pradeep Dhavakumar

God

God is
just an answer
for every question
That doesn't have an answer.
And when every answer
To every question is known
A hundred years from then
The word God,
will become unknown.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Good defeats Evil?

Good will defeat Evil.
Every religion says.
In stories and myths,
Something unseen nowadays.

Like David defeating Goliath,
Lord Rama defeating Ravan.
Superman defeating villains,
And good God defeating Satan.

But why does an honest man,
Always lead a simple life?
And those who bend the rules,
Easily go up in life?

A second look at the mythologies,
Leads to a simple but concealed truth,
That every character of good that wins,
Is more 'powerful' than the uncouth.

So I ask myself with questions,
Hoping the answer will straighten.
Can a 'powerless' but good god,
defeat a 'powerful' but evil Satan?

Then, what were the victories,
the Myths were trying to express?
Was it plainly good over evil?
Or the powerful over the powerless?

More you delve into the myths
More clearly you will see
That every war that was ever won,
Was always by the more powerful.

Thus with a heavy heart,
I finally have to say,
Good has never defeated evil 'on its own',
Until this very day.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Hero's And Villain's Proposal

A double barrel gun
Pointed to the temple
Of your loved one
Compelling them to love you
When they really don’t
Until they finally agree,
Is Not love, mocked the Hero.

On your knees with tears
Saying you will Die without them
And Begging them to love you
When they actually don’t
Until they finally agree,
Is the Same Thing, retorted the Villain.
Only your gun's direction is reversed.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Houses

House are like cows:
They silently graze
every living moment
of their inmates
and then
ruminate
forever.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

However She Treads...

She indubitably knows that however she treads:
Left to the burnt lands, or right to the green lands,
or straight to the dead-end of unclimbable high lands
and tirelessly chew a tunnel to reach the flat lands,
the maps on her palm would remain the same:
never would close-in or intersect any road of his.

To destroy false visions that cloud her brain:
Roads where she walks with her hand in his,
head softly rested on his shoulder and eyes
closed in the warmth of re-found love; she plunges
her head in a pond of piranhas, which munch all
false cells and give her the view of the real world.

Just when she exchanges blood for inner peace,
a huge whale flies before her, with all dreamt
roads flashing like strips of silver in bright sunlight
in its transparent, mocking belly and re-sprouts
all old illusionary roads in her bruised brain
and she treads aimlessly, with false hope, again.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Immortal Memories

Slaughtered, scattered on Sahara's lap.
Smothered, submerged at Marianas' trench.
Suppressed, enslaved with Antarctic's wrap.
Santorini's scorching saliva, did also lynch.
Fortified with palisades, castle built.
Armour, shield, blade- defence set.
Awake soldier- never a fraction wilt.
With paramount might, mind- it is met.
But on eyes recess, it returns to its clot.
Sans resistance defences crash, gods knell.
And marches majestically to- same sore spot
Where wasp stung, needle tore, burning oil fell.
And the strong stubborn soldier to defend put.
Is a crushed ant under the elephant's foot.

[Santorini* - A Volcano which had the largest explosion in the last 10,000 years]

Pradeep Dhavakumar

In Defence of Wine

When thou say Wine 'A Ladies Drink'
What thou do is Pure Blasphemy;
Cos that makes Christ, his disciples
The holiest bunch of Lovely Ladies!

(My friends call Wine 'A ladies drink'. Not sure if its universal though!)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

In the Bathroom(Haiku)

Beige shower curtains,
cover shy, naked body,
from peeping mirrors.

Showers and faucets,
change into cascades and streams,
on fingers' voodoo.

Green-apple shampoo,
Rosemary-lavender soap,
garden in the tub.

Lather on fingers,
unadorned plastic walls,
verses on my mind.

Ale of hot and cold,
truths and lies- tighly entwined,
morn's quota of life.

*revised Version

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Just Dreams

All Men have
dreams. Good
and bad. Happy
and sad

like chasing
crocodiles; flying
with birds; being
with bygone people. Even
dying sometimes.

But none take it
seriously (like a
command! ..a
must do!) : 'Cause
 they know they are
Just Dreams.

So why does
when dreams involve
god, men think
its a message from
above? Aren't Dreams
still dreams?

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - 1 His Conception

When the Sun God appeared before
her at once like most men would when
called to mother a virgin princess
she had the option to either scream
or run away or fight back or beg.

But why would a clever woman turn
away from someone of paramount beauty,
far above her wildest dreams,
when they promise to say nothing
and give back her virginity?

On that night, when the royal and god
both became animals, she let
ice creams slide her throat, knowing
well that a thick mucus, that could
easily be spit out, would form.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - 2 After His Birth

Holding, that which had exited her womb,
all she saw was a misty road covered
with mocking tongues and glass pieces
leading into a deep cavern of poverty.

Hiding the same with a red blanket,
she saw herself on a golden chariot,
in secure, beside a king, with people
around showering petals and praises.

Then there was the river- the free
porter for corpses; the basket-
the coffin's substitute; and darkness –
the canopy that would say nothing.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - 3 His First Night On Earth

His first night on earth
was not the usual bore:
Lying close to mother,
inside a stuffy, closed room,
on an immobile, used bed,
breathing her spent breath
and showing the onlooker
the meaning of - helplessness.

Instead his first night was:
Miles away from humans,
alone under far-away suns,
speeding in a never-slept basket,
over tongues of a big hungry river,
inhaling her cool untouched breath;
And showing the motherless moon
the meaning of - fearlessness.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - 4 His First Home

The hands, that brought me in
always smelt of horses.
On its touch
Bitter-gourds felt themselves.
Wanted stones never
knew it's heat.

If the breast that fed me
was a man,
then he knew none
from the lands
of yellow metals
or scented oils
or silk sarees.

And the house we lived
never appeared
in the town's site-list
or a dacoit's hit-list
or a beggar's wish-list.

And though we had nothing,
infinite, invisible fences
stood all around us:
Drawn from religion,
consented by Gods
and built by society;
to keep us with
nothing.

(Karna is a character of Mahabharata on whom this mini-series of poems is based. These are Not Translations. Just my interpretations of unsaid things)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - 5 They Taught Him...

They taught him to shoot an apple,
he wedged the apple's tree.

They taught him to hold a weapon,
he showed how to rest it fast.

They taught him to ride a pony,
he waltzed on horses of wild.

They taught him to fight a pupil,
he won against all masters around.

They pointed his rigid boundaries,
he dreamt of breaking Destiny.

(This is in his childhood..)

(Karna is a character of Mahabharata on whom this mini-series of poems is based. These are Not Translations. Just my interpretations of unsaid things)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - 6 Staring at the river...

Staring at the River he wondered
how his unseen mother would look:
thin as in summer? or fat as in spring?
fair as in sunlight? or dark as in dusk?

Staring at the river she simpered
how her other five sons now look:
strong as it's current, pure as it's ale
rich as it's treasure, proud as it's wave.

For him, she always burned
in innumerable, volatile forms
on every cell of his brain
like an inextinguishable flame.

For her, he always remained
at the bottom of an overwritten
and ignored cell as a slice
of a silhouette’s shadow.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - Meeting With Indira

When he saw Lord Indira,
dressed as a poor Brahmin: draped
in a single sheet of cotton,
begging him for his armor-
Armor he was born attached to;
his eyes widened with questions:
Is this what a Father's love is?
Will it make a father do anything?
Like make a God to beg a Man?

Not knowing the answers,
he longed to see
a father’s face succeeding
in protecting his son.

Later,
for another's joy,
a tortoise plucked out
its own shell,
and gifted a fox,
knowing very well
they were
vultures above.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - Meeting With Kunti

1

When he heard her say,
he was born of her,
the questions he had
were as wide as the land before him,
and tears he held
as much as the lake behind.

What he wanted
were words of love
that would erode the land
and dry the lake.

What she wanted
was him to self-paralyze,
against five potent warriors,
who were sharpening their swords
to sever his head.

2

What the Sun God saw from above
were first-words of love
exchanged between a mother and son.

What Krishna saw from afar
was his carefully designed human needle
veneered with motherly love,
unobjectionably injecting poison
into an otherwise impenetrable body.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Karna - When His Arrows Flew

When his arrows flew:

Clouds wet their pants,
earthquakes found their mirrors,
oceans found their scissors,
and fires- their metal wings.

Lifeless beings discovered
their vestigial heart,
and how their whole body,
however big or strong,
crumbles to nothing,
when that spot is hit.

Dragonflies at a mile, found
they weren't invisible
and gods above found
they weren't invincible.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Laundry

Coloured skins of Men
somersault and rejoice
in the dryer's tepid breeze
after sloughing sweats and sins
in the whirlpool of forgivers.

Cemented face of her
shatter, moisten and bloom
in her returned lover's breath
after dissolving rocks of hate
in silent streams of salt.

Vagabond mind of his
rehouse, repose and charge
in the cigar's soothing air
after quenching rage and grief
in wells of malted hops.

Greenish daughters of earth
lighten, refresh and smile
in the August's gentle wind
after freeing dust and sand
in ales of squeezed clouds.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Live In The Present

I thought of going back to the past,
To change a thing or two.
But then I may mess something else,
And what will my present then do?

I thought of cajoling the Lord,
To reserve the king's suite in heaven.
But Then I shall be forever dead
And what can I do with whats given?

So I enjoy my life today,
Doing whatever I feel I should.
Is this Yesterday's thought?
Or will it be tomorrow’s regret?
I care not, to be understood.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Lost In Search

To view the life of another
I left known lands around me;
And boarded a naïve canoe
to search the map-less sea.

There I lost my compass
and rights to speak or see;
And now I search for another-
the remnants of the real me.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Man's Relationship With God

Would thou still stand before me? , asked God,
If I can no longer wash thy sins.
Would thou still read my scriptures? ,
If I can no longer offer thee a place in heaven.
Would thou still sing my praise? ,
If I can no longer grant thy selfish desires.
Would thou still want to meet me? ,
If I no longer have my magical powers.
No! Never! , said Man,
Otherwise, I am not Human.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Mistimed Verses

In One Life, I stand
before an Unicorn, with legs
cemented till knees, hands
tied behind, lips
stitched with wires
while the tongue overflowing
with verses, bangs
like a wild bull inside
a wooden cage.

In the other, I scream
into its left ear, all verses
of last life, forgetting its:
changed reference, heavy
carriage, different shoes,
while its other ear, on its
other side, profusely bleeds.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

On A Tree In A Park

Unlike all others,
limbless it is,
On its left.
Its bark holds no
footprints
of a man's axe.
Birth itself
has been unkind.

Yet, like all others,
on its right it has grown:
green feathers and red rubies,
nested beaked brothers,
weathered whirling sisters
and stands above my fifth floor window;
Never bothering
on the things
it never had.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

On Guilt

Guilt is like
a Salmon: It sprouts
at a place of
pure, follows
the streams of time
and travels
and settles
in lands: unrelated
and far; absorbing
along its way
every grain
that life spurts;
accruing
knowledge,
growing
in weight;
and once matured
in morals
struggles
to get back to
the place where born
to die.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

On Taj Mahal

O’ King, I proudly salute what thou hast built,
As a timeless monument of immense beauty
But I staunchly salute NOT what thou hast built,
As the greatest monument of divine love.

If thy love was pure as the pellucid white marble,
Three wives concurrently, thou wouldn't have had
Hundred consorts in Harem thou wouldn't need
Instead with a single woman thou would have lived

With gravels and earth if the grave was built
As a philanderer this world would have dismissed thee
As Marbles, Jewels and Designs lavishly decorate
With blinded eyes this world sings praises of thee

Ignore I cannot, the other women thou callously could.
For how could thou love when thou couldn’t care.
Praise I cannot, Tagore's solitary tear on the cheek.
For a love that has been glorified for its wealth.

O’ King, I proudly salute what thou hast built,
As a timeless monument of immense beauty
But I staunchly salute NOT what thou hast built,
As the greatest monument of divine love.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

On Truth Seekers

All truth seekers are Donkeys.
And truth, the Carrot on a stick:
Existing not, in its fixed form;

But as an enticing Mirage,
That constantly changes,
In color, and form, and size, and shape;

And dangles, in a volatile scape
That, too, constantly changes,
In firmaments, and terrains;

Before the Donkey's rational mind
Which, too, constantly changes,
In motifs and perceptions.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Paradise

Everest carved to hollow cone
Floored with finest beach sand
Stars grouped to a sparkling moon
And moon made to a table lamp

Wind gently waking baby rocks
Flowers like lovers hugging tight
Bamboos and brooks tuning chords
Peacocks rehearsing wedding dance

Clothed with rainbow, in peace I lay
Satiated by breeze of infinite joy
Infused with rivers of rejuvenating hope
Blessed with rays of vitalizing love

To Paradise! I go, whenever I lay
On father's shoulder, mother’s lap

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Pilgrim

On a pilgrimage, he embarked
TO his holy places on earth -
Where someone unrelated was born
Someone spoke, got enlightened, died
Sans which he would still remain;
To reach his ingrained creator,
As mentioned in the holy page

On a pilgrimage, he embarked
AWAY from the Holiest of them all -
Where his life was first formed,
Where his arms, feet moved,
Sans which he was never alive;
By leaving his real creator,
In a cheap old age orphanage.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Pinball

At dawn,
I'm a Pinball,
rebounding,
in a glass case of Past.

Every treasured memory
is a target, a bumper,
a light bulb.

I caress and kiss,
every one of them,
producing,
plagues of Joy;

whose every ounce,
I secretly devour,
like a starved virgin
on his first night:

My last grand meal
before my execution...
by Light.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Possession

Oh! here She is –
In My fingers' wrap;
On duty, She holds –
My morning fuel.

But once She lived –
On the plains of class;
The sculptor’s Sperm
The painter's Child.

Oh! Possession -
What hast Thou done?
An Art abased –
To a coffee cup!

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Rainbow

First, the Rain argued its case.
Then, the Sun reread its lines.
I sat on my balcony, on looking
and expecting the Rainbow's testimony.
The Sun preferred to rest its witness.

I lowered my view and my eyes locked
on the leftovers of a moved family:
A Blue easy Chair, with its seat
faded to Indigo; A Violet Blouse
with large printed white flowers, torn at its base;
A Red Ferrari 206GT model, without wheels,
An Orange Cap, with its logo broken;
And a Yellow toy Spade, sans its handle;
All, once, important Happiness Creators,
now merely radiating Colors,
from a large, Green thrash can.

As I sat engrossed in its beauty
the jealous Sun presented its witness
and the whole city inclined its head.
But I remained on the Garbage's Rainbow.
The martyrs were more meaningful.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Resonating Note

I knew not of the place and time
Or the forces that lead me there
But stranded I was, in the dark
With a guitar, left, for my pair.

I knew not of its shade or wood
Or ways to hold, to pluck or play
Yet, fingers somehow slid and hit
A heavenly note, lighting the day.

That note, I swear, that day did make:
The bod of earth, as soft as silk
The blood of sea, as sweet as wine
And cheek of night, as white as milk.

To learn the art, the legs did leave
To lands beyond the sights of mind
As nothing less would quite suffice
The piece of craft, the hands did find

For years I learnt, as much I could:
Of chords, and sharps, and bars, and scales
To hold, to pull, to slide, to strike
And acoustics of sounds, and waves

The learned now, has many met
And walked on many strings and frets
Yet that note I heard, when none I knew
Somehow, inside, still, resonates....

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Roses

Two girls would always take a stroll,
Beside my little garden of roses.
Their eyes would always miss me,
But never the beautiful roses.

Both their eyes would brighten up,
Both their lips would widen.
But only one hand would stretchen out,
To pluck the lovely roses.

I stopped them once on their stroll,
To ask a long-standing question.
Why one always did pluck it out,
While the other never touched the roses.

It makes me more beautiful, said one
Gives me a sense of pride.
Throws many an eye on me,
And I just love the roses.

Let it live, said the other one,
Than die on the tress of a man.
Let it sing and dance in its own world,
And relish its short life span.

She never seemed to have a liking,
For she never uttered the word love.
But she gave me a thought that still lingers on,
Who really loved the roses?

(2004)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Shower

O shower, I stand at thy feet.
Eyes closed.
Naked with truth.
Mind filled with infinite thoughts.
Ghosts of the pasts.
O Shower, Wash these thoughts away.
Let my eyes breathe.
Let my mind sleep.
Let my soul play.
Rejoice my spirit with thy kiss.
And a will to face this day.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Sight

I wondered as much as Wordsworth wandered
As why oft he thought about the Daffodils
Something never possessed, touched or spoken.
But only been from a large distant seen.

I wondered why the naturalist ventured
On a journey through parlous forests and hills
And risk his time, money, comfort and life
For sight of a rare mammal on a tree

I wondered why the dying man desired
To see a long-lost childhood friend of his
And only after seeing through the window
Than did his stubborn soul finally leave

I wondered unt'll mine own eyes hankered
For many years for someone, still unseen
Then I realized how Powerful a sight is
And daffodils finally made sense to me

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Significant Or Not?

When I saw the mice inside a trap
Felt how helpless their life is.
And when I saw ants slowly pass by
Felt how unfortunate their existence is.
And when I thought of the bacteria
Felt how irrelevant their life is.
And when I compared the Bacteria to Mine
Knew how Significant my life is.

When I looked around the city to see
Realized how pebble like my life is.
And when I compared it to this huge world
Realized how grain like this city is.
And when I compared it to the galaxy
Realized how speck like this world is.
And when I compared the Galaxy to Mine
Knew how Insignificant my life is.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Sunny Breakfast

The cold Sun
soaked in thick tears
whimpered in pain,
in the vengeful
red heat
of black space.

To save the sun
from blackening
I bedded it
in a ceramic crater,
sprinkled salt and pepper
and ate it
for breakfast.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Table Fan

Quite a pair, we are
My table fan and me:
We both sit still,
And let our heads fly;
He, with his blades
And I, with my brain,
And for long painful hours,
We delve into darks,
And spit our found truths,
As Breeze and as Thoughts.
Both utterly useless,
To the stone walls, around.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Test for Love

Take your love and:
Paint to the Darkest shade.
Bloat to the Greatest mass.
Blunt to the Basest voice.
Dress tothe Unsightliest clothes.
And throw to Farthest land.

And erase for eternity:
Reminding photos and videos.
Bothering others' opinions.
Formating culture and values.
Glorifying poems and songs.

Now Surround yourself with:
Most Beautiful ever made.
Fittest Physique ever had.
Sweetest Voice ever heard.
Richest Fortune ever possessed.
Highest Intelligence ever seen.

And if your:
Eye lids dont bother to lift.
Ears shut to the sound of their lips.
Lips dont care to speak a word.
Heart still yearns for the One thrown afar.
Perhaps, You have loved.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

The Boulder And The Pond

The boulder looked
at the pond
and thought
of a boulder
that had
cried and cried
for far
too long.

The pond looked
at the boulder
and thought
of a pond
that had
held its tears
for far
too long

Pradeep Dhavakumar

The Cub

The Cub is
hungry to know
about a bird,
when young it did see.

It belly expands
not to any other bird
however it
is hungry.

The Cub seeks
not it's flesh but
a word about
its journey.

The bird sees
not its hunger but
a Lion who
is hungry.

The cub seeks,
the bird hides,
the hunger grows,
the Lion dies.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

The Run

By the time
I started to run...
all the medals
were rusted
on others' walls,
all the children
in the crowds
had become men,
all shoes I had
had become air
and the grasses
on the path
had become thorns.
Yet I still run...
To bloom roses
on those thorns
with my blood.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

The Universe Of Zeroes

The angriest and the biggest zero
is stalked by another nine zeroes
and one-thirty five smaller zeroes
along fixed paths of, elliptical zeroes.

The quietest and the smallest zero
is filled with hero like zeroes
and held by villain like zeroes
to form molecules of, bigger zeroes.

Between the macro and micro zeroes
live heroes with hidden sorrows
and zeroes without any tomorrows
breathing through, two other zeroes.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Three Kisses For Mom

1.At the Dinner Table

On the thick
mutton gravy, thickened
more by her love, touching
my tongue, I spring
from my spring-less chair and imprint
lip prints on her tired cheeks.

Inside, in her
dried garden, dried on
giving and giving, all
she could as much
as she can, fresh
springs sprout, soils
replenish, seeds
germinate and plants
and flowers fill;

While her Face, adorned
with sweat, sweat of
priceless, unsung sacrifices
of a female Atlas, shouldering
her world, sparkles
like a sunflower in
the summer's rain.

2.Long-Distance Phone Call

Her distant Voice
when kiting
my name is never ever
a formless voice but
a gentle hook that
slides through
my ear and throat and
pulls that tiny
piece of heart,
that wakes
not to beauty
or gold,
to jump and squat
and jump and squat...
like a tide to
a far away moon.

3. At the Temple

Sandwiched between other devotees,
we tread like a huddle of penguins,
towards the inner sanctum sanctorum,

where Durga adjusts her silk and gold
after her early morn Sandal Abishegam,
behind a sacred screen of golden silk.

On the screen's recess, the air
creams with andante of temple bells,
uplifting Todi raga of nadaswaram,
recorded hypnotic repetitions of Om,
Sanskrit cantillation of main priests,
and condensed prayers of devout men;

While we, like all others heighten
toes, penetrate air and adjust necks
till our sight locks to Durga's glittering
face, illuminated by over a hundred
tiny flames of oil lamps. There, She
shows me her God; I show the stones, Mine.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Three Poems About Silence

1

To test the ruggedness of Silence,
unknowingly nurtured within, for over
a decade, I put it to box with a diamond.

Both fought hard and the scores read
five all at the fourth's end. In the fifth,
having lost minerals, both fell locked

in each other's arms.Then the Diamond,
by mistake, licked Silence and at once
dropped dead. Poison read the autopsy.

2

Standing on a hill top, with Silence
by my side I saw an army of black ants,
in attention, slowly shaking their heads.

You took me here to see Ants? enraged
I asked Silence. Then it took my right
and placed it on its silver left and I felt

binoculars over my eyes and mind.
Then the ants became men at a burial
and I saw the wedding of man and mud.

3

For having overstayed in my house
I asked Silence for some extra greens.
It showed me the clean insides of

its pockets, a worthless naked body,
spread its hand like a prey-less starfish
and shrugged like a child questioned

about the true origin of life and God.
'Some Compensation at least', I demanded.
It gave me a pen with a warranty for life.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Trap

The trap was set.
Planned to perfection.
And the baits were many:
Silky words, False Smiles,
Opulent gifts, faux care.
All concealed with high interest rates.
And the prey did fall.
Good Hunt, Business I thought.
Sadly, the world called it love.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Tree

On my walk,
I saw this tree,
That I had met years before.
Trunk still straight.
But branches and leaves turned away.
By the constant winds that blow.
Deliberately trying to avoid me.
But why? , I thought.
I haven't come for Shelter.
Or Shade or Wood or Fruits.
Just a Glance was all that I need.
Then I will immediately leave.
May again never meet.
But it never did.
Perhaps, the force was too strong for it.
Perhaps, it hated to associate with those on the ground.
Perhaps, it just didn't like to look at me.
Perhaps, it felt, what is the use.
It's reasons, I may never know.
So, Fare thee well, I said.
And I moved on,
In my walk of life.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Truth Is A Volcano

Truth is a lonesome Volcano,
Sans support nobly does stand;
Unstirred by capricious weather,
And perturbs nothing on land.

Truth is a fiery Volcano,
Explodes with deadly rage;
Ruthless to every opposer,
Impartial in bringing carnage.

Truth is a precious Volcano,
Scarcely on earth is found;
Lives far away from humans,
And rarely reaches the ground.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Two Blind Poets

Wrote a poet about his most beloved topic:
Not the earth which did bear him so long.
Or the wind that cheered him when down.
Or the water that quenched his thirst.
Or the trees that gave him food and shelter.
But about the moon that did him nothing.

Wrote a poet about his most beloved topic:
Not his mother who gave him life.
Or his father who raised him when young.
Or his friends who stood by him in bad times.
Or the many others who helped him in life.
But about a girl who just passed by.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Understanding Shadows

What does the same color of our shadows show?
The equality of men.

Then why does it's projections carry many colors?
Just to avoid cliches.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Unsung Song

I wrote a song for tomorrow
when I shall first speak.
Sing every word I did swallow,
in the aura of her mystique.

I did wait for another tomorrow
For my song was still incomplete
Words could never follow
The beauty of my elite.

But time didn't wait for tomorrow
My song was not in its theme.
So the song along with this callow
Were forgotten as a bad dream.

Now I sing my song every tomorrow
In the land of the bygone street
To the wind and to the willow
In memory of a time so sweet.

No matter how many tomorrows
Safely guarded I shall keep
And if I never find my swallow
With my song I shall sleep.

(2004)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Wait Not!

Wait not, My friend.
Nothing comes back.
Things of the past,
Lay on dead track.

Hope that you have,
Is a self made knife.
That sharpens with time,
And will only cause strife.

Those who had waited,
Have only lost time.
While others who moved,
Are enjoying the chime.

Move on, My friend,
Build another smile.
Friends around you,
Want you in style.

You'r strong, my friend,
I see it in your eyes.
So call your tirbulations,
And quash them like flies.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

While Showering

The two discordant
forms of poetry
meet, while I shower:

One flowing free and soft
onto my skin
from the shower's pen.

The other, dressed in red,
structured by the body,
metered by the heart
and rhymed by symmetry;
flowing with grace
beneath my skin.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Whose Land?

Men fought with fiery words
To claim their living land
On pretext of who came first
And whose god made the sand
'Justice, Justice! ' they claimed,
'Intruders are them! ” they blamed.

The Wind did carry this news
To pals- dear Apes and Oaks,
Who came with telling proof
Of their existence before man.
And by logic of man's demand
They said “Our Land, Our Land'.

'Oh No! ” said righteous man
Our ears don't hear your voice.
And justices that we frame
Are only that suits our choice;
'Justice! ” mocked the Oak.
'Selfish”, the Ape did croak.

When your heart starts to hate
To share the land you stand -
With your mind, a minute ask
To whom was given this land.
'Cause earth was made for all
And none has right to brawl.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Wind

O 'Wind- didst thou bring
the breath of those I miss?
O'Wind- wouldst thou say
If their breath is still happy and gay?
O'Wind- wouldst thou stay
and take my breath far away?
O'Wind- wilt thou say
that I breathe with them every day?

(For my family - half the world away)

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Wines, Bottles and Plato

I knew that old wine in a new bottle is better
than an old wine in an old bottle but not as good
as a new wine in an old bottle. But to clear my doubt

whether the new wine in a new bottle is better
than a new wine in an old bottle, I invited Plato
for a drink. He took a bottle, drank the wine

and placed the empty bottle on the table and
showed me that what goes inside is the wine
and not the bottle. Any advice? I asked.

Make New Wines he said, not new bottles.

Pradeep Dhavakumar

Winged Creatures

Winged creatures fully covered
in black robes, slowly circle
over my body and head.
I depend, on what they are:

If they are Angels then I am Nothing.
If Dragons, a solitary Stone.
If Aircrafts, a fearless Rebel.
If Vultures, a useful Carcass.
If Flies, a swine's stock meal.

I wait with large bunches of notes,
each printed as Hours and Days,
to pay them to strip their robes.
Their nakedness, holds
My true self.

Pradeep Dhavakumar