Classic Poetry Series

Sunil Uniyal

- poems -

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Sunil Uniyal (14 January 1953 -)

Sunil Uniyal (Hindi: □□□□□ □□□□□□) is an Indian poet writing poems and haiku for the last many years.

Early Life and Education

Sunil Uniyal, son of Late Shri Surya Chandra Uniyal and Smt. Sushila Uniyal was born at Lucknow, India.

He had his school education at Christian missionary schools of Mt Carmel and Boys High School, Mahanagar, and his college education at Government Jubilee Inter College, Lucknow. Sunil obtianed his Post-graduate in Ancient Indian History and Archaeology in 1974, from Luchnow University.

Career

Having worked as Customs Inspector at Dharchula in the Himalayan border district of Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand during 1978-80, He is presently an Under Secretary with the Government of India, in New Delhi.

Literary Careear

Sunil started writing when he was a school boy and has been writing poems especially haku for the past 25 years, but an anthology is yet to be published.

He also interested in research in history and archaeology (having written a monograph on Games and Sports in Ancient Indian Art and Archaeology). He is an avid reader of literature(both English and Hindi) , folk-poetry, Sanskrit plays and scriptures.

Sunil travelled in India and many other countries like Wollongong, Sydney, Gold Coast, Brisbane, Singapore, Milan, Rome, Venice, Florence and Urbino.

He is currently working on a collection of his poems and haiku and also involved in translating medieval Hindi Bhakti poets like Kabir, Surdas and Raidas and modern Hindi poet Leeladhar Jagoodi, besides a poetic rendering of Garhwali folk-songs.

His poems/haiku and translations have found place among a number of literary e-journals like Museindia, Kritya, Enchanting Verses, Haiku Dreaming Australia and Notes From the Gean.

Works:

'The Target Is Behind The Sky'(Fifty Poems of Kabir) [work in translation], Low Price Publications,Delhi, India 2012.

A Holi Lyric (For the New Generation)

It's Holi, it's Holi, dear friends.

All envy let's shun
All hatred let's burn
Forgetting our follies,
We'll make amends.

It's Holi, it's Holi, dear friends.

The winds of change are blowing
A dream in heart is glowing
Drenched in colours of joy and love
We'll together soar above
To new skies, new horizons.

Breaking from the past,
We'll set new trends.

It's Holi, it's Holi, dear friends.

Sunil Uniyal

A Bollywood Song in Transcreation

(Mere man ye bataa de tu, from the Hindi Film 'Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna') ~

O my heart just tell me
whither you go
what have you sought
what have you got
where does all your yearning flow?

That which is Unsaid
that which is Unheard
that Secret to me disclose
Friend tell me what the Self within sings
can His song remain hidden from the world?

On the path of your life
in the city of His Love
the moment He's revealed to your eyes
you think you ask
is He the One you longed to meet
Is he, is He, is He really?
He is the River to your thirst
that ought to be clear to you first.

O friend the Way is before you
you think to go or not to go
why are your feet tied to chains-
this life's a dance- when this you know?

O fool dance to the tune of His Love
why you bother about your stole
if it flies let it go
you can't be thirsty while the River flows.
Dance madly to the beats of His Drum,
why do you suffer agony or pain
when He's within why complain?

He is the Whole you are His part
that which is Unsaid
that which is Unheard
that Secret is yours, O my heart!
...

Sunil Uniyal

A Couplet Of Amir Khusro (Translation)

Hindi Original~

Goree soye sej pe, mukh pe daare kes
Chal Khusro ghar aapne, rain bhayi chaudes

Translation:

On bed the fair one is asleep,
Her face her tresses cover;
Go your home, O Khusro, now
Night has fallen all over.
...

Sunil Uniyal

A Flickering Candle - A Haiku

a flickering candle~
my shadow dances
on the wall

Sunil Uniyal

A Folk Song of Garhwal-1

I've left my father's home
I am now in an alien land

Married off beyond four mountains
How can I see my mother's home?

You will have itching in your feet
And in your throat hiccups, Mama

Kissing both your hands together
Won't you remember me, Mama?

Sunil Uniyal

A Ghazal - He and We

wind water earth sky - all things remain the same
for our Lord in heaven above we are but a game

He tests us at every step if we fail
not He but we're ourselves to blame

all day the devotees throng His shrine
chanting His name spreading His fame

desires they've sown for ages in their hearts
if they don't sprout won't it be His shame?

deaf He may be to my pleas, uni,
don't think on His love i'll forego my claim.

Sunil Uniyal

A Ghazal - I Feel Lost

I don't know why, it's strange but true-
I feel lost in front of you

Virtues in me are too many,
You take only a bird's eye-view.

What is all this roaming about?
Why is life a wandering Jew?

In this world of tasks undone,
Days are like the morning dew.

Here's a city of millions where,
Uni's been seeking friends few.

Sunil Uniyal

A Ghazal - Traveller O!

Traveller O, why your feet have halted there?
Your terminus is still nowhere near.

Hear the brook that goes on singing in the woods,
See the clouds that go on sailing in the air.

All who came to see you off were not your friends,
Some had for you neath their sleeves daggers bare.

Thank them all alike and wish a happy life,
God Almighty high above takes your care.

Make some music with your footfalls on the road,
Milestones that lie ahead would like to hear.

Sunil Uniyal

A Ghazal of Amir Kazalbash (Translation)

life's an evening without dawn, buddy
why are you awake all night, buddy?

i'm weary of travelling on and on,
when will this journey end, buddy?

why does the sea turn into a mirage,
have you any inkling of this, buddy?

though near me, but still too far-
that's how you see my goal, buddy.

in search of life, let me wander,
why pass the age in regret, buddy?

Sunil Uniyal

A Hindi Ghazal - 1

Original ~

pyaas to hai par jaam nahin hai
taruvar hai par chhaaon nahin hai

jeevan kee tedhi raahon main
thakan bahut, aaraam nahin hai

subah rikta see rahtee hai par
poorit bhi koi shaam nahin hai

chalte-chalte doob gayaa din
aayaa abhi mukaam nahin hai

bheerh lagi hai bhakton kee par
kahin deekhte Raam nahin hain

kaisaa ultaa-pultaa jaga main,
kahin chhaaon, kahin ghaam nahin hai

Translation:

Thirst is there but the goblet isn't
Tree is there but its shade isn't

Much tiresome are its meandering paths,
Rest in life there isn't

Blank and empty the morning looks,
Filled-up the evening too, isn't

The day has gone journeying on,
Yet at hand destination isn't

The crowd of devotees is around
But in sight the Lord isn't

The world is all topsy-turvy,
Where shade is there sun isn't.

.....

Sunil Uniyal

A Hindi Ghazal - 2

Original~

lahar thee, tata par bikhar gayi
zindagi yoon hee guzar gayi

unhi raaston par kataa safar
guzare the log jinse kayi

chehraa jo bhi hamko milaa
usee par dikhe mukhaute kayi

kis but se karen shikvaa ham
sochate rahe din-raat yahi

sayaano ne bahut samjhaayaa
par rahe ham vahi ke vahi

shabd-jaal hee hamne bune,
hamse hui na koyi baat nayi

Translation~

Dissipating itself like a wave on the shore,
This life has been just that, nothing more.

Same roads I've travelled again and again
Through which have so many passed in vain.

Every face that I met on the way
Had masks manifold, I must say.

Which idol I should my plaint address,
Day and night I'm under this stress.

The wise have advised me times umpteen,
But I've remained what I've been.

I just wove webs with many a word,
Nothing was new in what I've uttered.
...

Sunil Uniyal

A Krishna Bhajan by Surdas (Translation)

Original-Hindi Brajabhasha (by Surdas) ~

jo sukh hot Gopaalahin gaaye
so nahin hot kiye jap tap ke kotik teerath nhaaye
diye let nahin chaari padaarath, charan kamal chit laaye
teeni lok trin sam kari lekhat, nand-nandan ur aaye
banseebat brindaaban jamunaa, taji baikunth ko jaaye
soordaas hari ko sumiran kari, bahuri na bhav chali aaye.

Translation (by Sunil Uniyal) :

The bliss one gets singing Gopal's glory doesn't come
through fasts or meditation or bathing in sacred water.

The devotee doesn't need the four purusharthas,
once to His lotus feet he surrenders himself.

The splendour of the three worlds seems a straw,
when he enters the heart of Nanda's son.

He doesn't want to give up Brindavan on the Yamuna
for any residence even in the Heaven.

Surdas says that to Hari who truly prays,
won't come back to this world again.
...

Sunil Uniyal

A Prayer to Kamakhya Devi

Hail to Thee, O Kamakhya Devi, hail to Thee! !

To Thy abode at Nilanchal
Thy sons and daughters come to Thee,
With folded hands and longing hearts,
Filled with love and ecstasy.
O Giver of boons, grant their wish,
Fulfil their desires, O Kameshvari!
Hail to Thee, O Kamakhya Devi, hail to Thee! !

Thou are within all living beings,
As well as all non-living things;
Thou are all Creation's Source,
Life-breath, Soul and Energy.
Hail to Thee O Kamakhya Devi, hail to Thee! !

Ever at Thy beck and call
Are Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshvar,
They compete with one another
For Thy grace, for Thy favour;
I too am Thy slave, O Devi,
On me too Thy mercy be.
Hail to Thee, O Kamakhya Devi, hail to Thee! !
....

Sunil Uniyal

A Song for Lord Hanumaan - Hindi Avadhi

Bhaya more meto Hanumaanaa.
Haun baalak main to ati nirbal, mohe nirbhaya balee banaanaa.
Ashta-siddhi nau nidhi ke daataa, ko hai jag men tor samaanaa.
Prabhu kaaraj hita laanghyo saagar, Lankpuree ko kiyo masaanaa.
Mama kaaraj bhee tumahi sanvaaro, hove siddha tumhaar bakhaanaa.
Seetaaraam basen ur more, Raam-naam kaa odhaun baanaa.
Rame Ramayyaacharan sadaa man, as kirapaakarahooHanumaanaa.

Sunil Uniyal

A Song for Mother Divine

O Mother Divine
Bless me with your mercy please

Running wayward in my life
Always bound in some strife
Your fallen son am I -
My heart's ever ill-at-ease.

I have no mantra to recite
Nor any ritual do I know
I can only call Your name
And with heart before You bow

O Mother Divine
I know not how to sing Your glories

I'm tormented by the Mahish
Of senses lodged within me
O Mother come and slay the demon -
From his trappings set me free

At Your will the cosmos runs
Shine all stars moons and suns
Creation's Source
O Vital Force
Endless are Your mysteries

O Mother Divine I know for sure
Your fallen son You won't abjure
Nor shall Your helping hand retreat
O Mother mine let me be
A speck of dust at Your lotus-feet.

Sunil Uniyal

A Song for the Defeated

A win, a clap, a cheer, a pat -
We ne'er had that, we ne'er had that.

We went to woods for butterflies,
came back with dust in our eyes
and in our bag a lousy bat.
We ne'er had that, we ne'er had that.

We were like sailors o'er the seas,
against the storms, against the breeze,
we went to rocks, our ships fell flat.
We ne'er had that, we ne'er had that.

Not that we did not persevere,
nor that our bid was insincere,
ill-luck crossed us like a cat.
We ne'er had that, we ne'er had that.

Scorn us not, O Miss Fortune!
what if our cry was for the Moon?
our life is not a rotting rat,
although we ne'er, we ne'er had that.

Sunil Uniyal

A Winter Haiku

lost in the fog ~
an old man in the street
chanting 'Ram, Ram'.

Sunil Uniyal

Aditi in a Dream at Wollongong (A Poem for My Daughter)

That evening jogging on the beach with my friends
miles and miles away from home i was alone
the sea was rolling and unrolling its carpet of blue and grey
with what was a milk-border of foam
rolling and unrolling it endlessly or so it seemed

a score of seagulls on the shore flapped their wings
starchwhite some picking morsels from the sand
jogging on the beach that evening miles and miles
away from home i ran into a dream

a little challenged girl in knickers and sportshirt
was carried by the waves to the shore
and as she stepped on the beach i held her hand
she walked with me her puny feet at every step
battling with the sand her head swayed sideward
with the breeze.

she clapped her hands now and then and broke
into an incoherent song seemingly happy walking the beach
i was happy too holding her hand that evening
jogging on the beach till the shout of friends behind
woke me up

alone in my room that night i felt disturbed
sleep was long in coming... waking up at morn
i learnt my TV had been on whole night!

Sunil Uniyal

An Upanishad Re-told

two birds sit on a pipal bough

one flies off to pick dry twigs to build a nest
the other bird watches quietly this process

both are happy
but one is happier of the two

which one?
guess
...

Sunil Uniyal

Anna (A Poem in Hindi with Translation)

Is andheri kothri men utar aayi roshni
Phir kisi ne aaj kholaa band roshandaan
Ek boodhe naujavaan ne kyaa bhari hunkaar
Jaag utthaa hai ki jaise saaraa Hindustaan!

Translation:
Here in this dark cell
enters a ray of light~
Someone has opened
the shut window again

What a clarion call comes
from a young oldman
It's as if the whole of
India has arisen!

Sunil Uniyal

Anna Hazare

They all gather round the man in his seventies
Who is on a fast-unto-death against the muck:

I hear the flutter of a change in the spring wind!

(Written on 6.4.2011 in honour of the social activist Anna Hazare, for his fast against corruption at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi.)

Sunil Uniyal

Another Winter Haiku

cold afternoon~
a toddler holding her arms
licks his running nose.

Sunil Uniyal

April Fool - A Haiku

the leader has
fulfilled his assurance~
april fool
...

Sunil Uniyal

Australia - Haiku

from Pylon Point
on Harbour Bridge -
a ship crawls in
...

Goulburn -
through Big Merino's eyes
skating kids
...

kangaroo corpse
on road from Canberra -
head heavenward
...

didgeridoo -
the aborigine blows himself
dhoom dhoom
...

studfarm -
riderless horses run
for themselves
-
(The last one published in the e-journal 'Dreaming Haiku Australia'.)

Sunil Uniyal

Autumn Haiku

1. a long drive ~
   autumn leaves on the road
   in hot pursuit

2. autumn wind ~
   dry leaves on the pavement
   chasing dry leaves

3. autumn night ~
   whose footsteps crunching
   the dry leaves?

4. leafless pipal twigs
   slicing at night
   the full moon

Sunil Uniyal

Awakened at Night - A Haiku

awakened at night ~
somewhere far among the pines
the wind whines

Sunil Uniyal

Back Home - A Haiku

back home from work
in front of the mirror
my mask falls off
...

Sunil Uniyal

Benares - A Haiku

Benares ghats ~
the Ganga washing away
devotees' sins

Sunil Uniyal

Blackbirds - A Haiku

an eve in the hills ~
blackbirds in the bushes
mimicking...
...

Sunil Uniyal

Blazing Sky - A Haiku

a blazing sky ~
I look at the eagles
still flying high
...

Sunil Uniyal

Brahmaputra - A Haiku

white herons
on dark clouds
on the brahmaputra

-
(Note: Brahmaputra (literally, 'son of Brahma') is a very prominent Himalayan river in Assam, India. It originates in Tibet, where it is known as Tsangpo.)

Sunil Uniyal

Dew - A haiku

breaking
dew pearls on the grass-
early sparrows

Sunil Uniyal

Diwali - A Haiku

diwali night ~
a row of lamps wavering
in haze and smog

(Note: Diwali or Deepawali is the Hindu Festival of Lights, when they light their homes with candles and earthen lamps to welcome Sri-Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity. It is a joyous occasion celebrated by children with bursting of crackers and people exchange greetings with sweets.)

Sunil Uniyal

Dragons on the Carpet - A Haiku

a river bank~
dragons on the carpet
bask under the sun

Sunil Uniyal

Eagle - A Haiku

a scorching sun ~
trickles down the sky
an eagle's cry

Sunil Uniyal

Father - A Haiku

father gone -
i still see him strolling
in mother's eyes
...

Sunil Uniyal

Frogs - A Haiku

a village pond ~
croaking frogs inviting
kids with pebbles

Sunil Uniyal

Fyunli (A Garhwali Haiku)

Original (in Garhwali) ~

pungdiyon kaa dhoraa
bhanwaraa chhan nachnaa ~
fyunli kanai bachlee

Translation:

wasps dance
in the fields -
can fyunli escape?
-
(Note: Fyunli is a small flower, named after a small shrub-plant of Garhwal Himalayas.)

Sunil Uniyal

Haiku (A Tribute to Betty Kaplan)

sudden showers ~
a rose petal on the sidewalk
drifts away

Sunil Uniyal

Having Crossed the River (A Bhajan of Kabir)

having crossed the river,
where will you go, O friend?

there's no road to tread,
no traveller ahead,
neither a beginning, nor an end.

there's no water,
no boat, no boatman, no cord;
no earth is there,
no sky, no time, no bank, no ford.

you have forgotten the Self within,
your search in the void will be in vain;
in a moment the life will ebb,
and you in this body will not remain.

be ever conscious of this, O friend,
you've to immerse within your Self;
Kabir says, salvation you won't then need,
for what you are, you'll be indeed.
...

Sunil Uniyal

I Rejoice in Renunciation (A Bhajan of Kabir)

Friend, my heart now rejoices in renunciation.

The bliss I've attained chanting the Lord's Name
through riches it can never be gained.
I go on with my poor living, not minding
what the people have to say-
in praise or in denunciation.

My dwelling is in the city of His Love,
I seek solace in patient suffering.
A staff and a bowl in my hands, I roam about
I have my fiefdom in every direction.

O friend, this body will finally end in dust,
then why with pride are you puffed?

Says Kabir, listen O wise one,
the Lord is to be found in contentment.

Sunil Uniyal

Iron Pillar Delhi - A Haiku

Iron Pillar Delhi-
arms flung round it
she grins

Sunil Uniyal

Jai Maa, Jai Maa, Jai Bhagavati - A Prayer-song

Jai Maa, Jai Maa, Jai Bhagavati
Be with us till eternity.
Jai Maa, Jai Maa, Jai Bhagavati!

Endless is Thy power and glory,
Thy nature none can understand,
Thou are the Mother of all the worlds,
Thy glow no sun can withstand.

At Thy will Brahma creates -
At Thy will Vishnu preserves -
At Thy will Shiva destroys -
All life in this universe.

O Maa, Thy sons and daughters,
We are in troubled waters,
Storms rage about us,
Our ship's weak, it falters.

O Maa, to Thy children's plight
Indifferent Thou not be,
Steer us clear to the shore,
We fervently pray to Thee.

Jai Maa, Jai Maa, Jai Bhagavati,
Be with us till eternity.
Jai Maa, Jai Maa, Jai Bhagavati!

Sunil Uniyal

Jharnaa (Waterfall) - A Hindi Haiku

jhar jhar jhar jhar -
pahaari dhalaan par
ek jharnaa nirantar

Translation:

jhar jhar jhar jhar -
on the mountain slope
an endless waterfall

Sunil Uniyal

Kamakhya - A Haiku

kamakhya on nilachal~
pilgrims trekking together
to the mother's womb

--
(Note: The temple of Goddess Kamakhya on the Nilachal or Blue Mountain, near Guwahati, in Assam (India) is a centre of Tantric cult of Hinduism since remote ages. It is a prominent Shakti-peeth, where the mother goddess is worshipped in its 'yoni-mudra' form.)

Sunil Uniyal

Lift the veil (A Bhajan of Kabir)

Lift the veil off your face, you'll find your Love.

In every being dwells the Lord,
Say no harsh word, you'll find your Love.

The palace is alight with His Lamp,
Just be seated in your Self, you'll find your Love.

Says Kabir, listen O wise one,
the Divine Drum silently beats within,
You'll find your Love.

...

Sunil Uniyal

Lightning - A Haiku

lightning -
chinks in cloud's armour
are revealed
...

Sunil Uniyal

Love

as i held your lotus hand
and stared
into the deep of your eyes,
a whole world of unsung songs
passed between us

Sunil Uniyal

Love Poems of Meer Taqi Meer (Transcreations)

(1)

Of my plight, I won't speak;
You have asked - so kind of you.

(2)

If it's not of pangs of love you are suffering,
why then you steal your glance
and bat your eyelids on meeting?

(3)

If you forget, it'll leave me heart-broken;
I'm but sure you'll fondly remember,
when I'm gone.

(4)

Earlier my eyes were tearful streams,
Mir, now these are just a desert!

(5)

How much low was my heart at night, Mir,
That all the words on my lips became a prayer.

...

Sunil Uniyal

Lucknow - A Haiku

Lucknow Residency -
kids counting bullet holes
on the walls

(Note: The Residency at Lucknow was the scene of bitter fighting during the summer of 1857 when the Indian Sepoys revolted against their British masters. Much of the building was destroyed during that battle and the many bullet holes on its crumbling walls can be seen by the visitors even today.)

Sunil Uniyal

Milestone- A haiku

journeying still
the haiku highroad ~
no milestones
...
The above mentioned haiku was written on 31.10.2010, in commemoration of the first publication of my haikus entitled 'Milestone' in the Mirror Magazine of Mumbai in Oct 1983. These haikus with some revision, are as follows:

(1)
look at it or not
it stands there alone-
the milestone

(2)
sun or rain or snow-
stick to your ground
like the milestone

(3)
how much gone?
how much to go still
O milestone?

(4)
how many went this way
and never returned
O milestone!

(5)
humming together
song of distance song of nearness-
the milestone

(6)
the road is full of risky bends
wish me well
O milestone.

(7)
Dharchula
ninety-six kilometres:
thank you Mr Milestone
...

Sunil Uniyal

Monsoon - Haiku

the first showers~
takes me unawares
earth's smell
...

monsoon skyline~
a V of cranes
emerges from the dark
...

clouds lean
on mountain breast~
love play before rain?
...
monsoon sky~
wafting on the east wind
a peacock's cry

Sunil Uniyal

Mynah - A Haiku

a twig in her beak
mynah takes off~
for the nest

Sunil Uniyal

Night

restless wakeful is the Night
let us make a virtue of her restlessness
heart to heart
dermis to dermis
caress to caress
uncaging our simmering passions for a flight!

deep in slumber is the Night
her hair dishevell'd body bare and outstretched
let us shake her fast by her moonlit head
and then hold together
'gainst her pelvic might!

Sunil Uniyal

Night Rain

the night rain is passionate
pouring its music on the pane

lightning strikes
dead bodies beneath the satin come alive

with the bonding of souls
there are no bends

soon things fall in place
and night ends
...

Sunil Uniyal

Nothing Abides (A Bhajan of Kabir)

Nothing abides in this alien land.
This world is like a papery wrap
that dissolves in drops of water.
It is like a hedge full of thorns
wherein one dies, if entangled.
It is indeed all bush and thickets
that quickly burn when caught in fire.

Says Kabir, listen O wise one,
only in the teachings of the True Guru
is to be found an abiding abode.

Sunil Uniyal

O Govind, O Gopal (A Devotional Song)

O Govind, O Gopal!
Come to rescue me
O Krishna, heed my call

Like the gopis of Vrindavan
I feel deeply lost and forlorn
It is as if in my sky
Sun and moon have never shone

Groping in the dark I am
Up against the wall
Help me, help me, help me
O Krishna, heed my call
O Govind, O Gopal!

Lured by senses I've fallen
Into a pit full of thorns
Where entangled like a cloth
Is my life getting torn

I don't know what to do
Madhav, I trust only You
Pull me out of misery
O Krishna, heed my call

Save me, save me, save me
O Govind, O Gopal!

Sunil Uniyal

O Light Divine - A Gem from Rigveda

Original Sanskrit:

' yadagne syaamaham tvam tvam vaa ghaa syaa-aham
syushte satyaa ihaashishah '
(Rigveda,8.44.23)

Translation:

O Light Divine, if You become I,
or I become You,
Your grace in this world
would be proven true.

Sunil Uniyal

O Swan Go Back (A Bhajan of Kabir)

O Swan go back to your own country.

Having forgotten whence you have come
you have ventured into an alien land.

In your country there's no ploughing or sowing
yet the fruits of divine pleasure are ever growing.

In that land there is no death or disease,
nor does one meet sorrow or misery.

O Swan go and dwell in the lake of His knowledge
and pick jewels for ever and ever.

Says Kabir: listen O wise one,
that country is verily abiding and eternal.

Sunil Uniyal

Old Diary - A Haiku

old diary ~
a silverfish crawls
on her autograph

Sunil Uniyal

Om Shiva Om - A Prayer to Lord Shiva

Om Shiva Om Shiva Om Shiva Om
Come Shiva, come Shiva,
In my heart roam

Descend from Your mount abode
Guide me on the lonely road
I've like a kid strayed
Far away from my home

Om Shiva Om Shiva Om Shiva Om
Come Shiva, come Shiva,
In my heart roam

Lift Your trident, Mahadev
Pierce the demons within me,
Open Your third eye and burn
All my ego, greed and envy

Shiva, come with Your Shakti,
Illumine my mind and soul,
I'm deep in worldly abyss
Take me out of this dark hole

O Maheshwar, O Gangaadhar,
Wipe out all my sins, O Harhar!
May Your lotus-feet forever
Be my Home, be my Home

Om Shiva Om Shiva Om Shiva Om
Come Shiva, come Shiva,
In my heart roam
Om Shiva Om Shiva Om Shiva Om.

Sunil Uniyal

On Shifting Residence - A Haiku

we leave one home
to enter another~
none is for ever

Sunil Uniyal

Pahaar (Mountains) - A Hindi Haiku

pahaaron ke peechhe
pahaar aur pahaar-
phir ghataatop

mountains behind mountains
yet more mountains-
then haze beyond

Sunil Uniyal

Paths not taken - A Haiku

the paths we never took
call us again and again~
memories live on
...

Sunil Uniyal

Predictions

blind hopes
will lose their way in the dark

life will spend itself
on a cross

not the dear ones
but my own footfalls
will follow me wherever i go

where's the astrologer
who will boldly tell me so?

(Sept.2,1983)

Sunil Uniyal

Radha's Dance (A Hindi-Avadhi Poem)

Original~

Raadhaaji naachat Brindaaban.

Pag thirkat hain baajat ghunghroo
chhanan chhanan chhan chhanan chhanan.

Taakat khag-mrig-gop-gopikaa
chhaadi sakal jag ke bandhan.

Bhooli adhar dhar murali vilokat
vismit-chakit-bhramit nand-nandan.

Brindaaban kee kunj galin maa
jhar jhar jharat amiya-ras ghan.

Translation~

Sri Radha is dancing in Vrindavan.
Her feet are moving and anklebells jingling:
chhanan chhanan chhan chhanan chhanan.

All birds and animals and gopas and gopis
are viewing the dance casting aside all bonds of the world.

Even the son of Nanda (i.e. Shri Krishna) is so amazed and
bewildered that the flute on his lips he has forgotten to blow.

In the gardens and streets of Vrindavan indeed,
the cloud of nectar is pouring thick and fast.
....

Sunil Uniyal

Rainbow - Haiku

a rainbow
within a rainbow ~
God only can do that
...

a giant rainbow...
bending down with the load
of sky
...

behold O heart
some moments' guest -
the seven-coloured rainbow
...

rushing to the roof
children greet the rainbow~
shouts and smiles

Sunil Uniyal

Red Fort Delhi - A Haiku

Red Fort Delhi -
the guide twirls his moustache
talking Shah Jahan

Sunil Uniyal

Remember God (A Bhajan by Nanak in Translation)

Remember God, remember God,
O friend, let this your duty be.

Cast aside all illusion
and seek His refuge only.

False is all worldly happiness,
all its honour, all splendour.

Know your pelf to be a dream,
its possession is no pride.

Treat the kingdom on this earth
like a dune in the desert.

Nanak says: This body, O friend,
is with each moment perishing;
Like your yesterday indeed,
Your today is also passing.
...

Sunil Uniyal

Scarecrow - A Haiku

on a parched field
the scarecrow skeleton
still on vigil
...

Sunil Uniyal

Selected Verses of Ghalib (Translations)

Life's stallion gallops ahead,
Where it'll halt, who can predict?
No more the reins are in my hands,
Nor are the stirrups on my feet.
...

When nothing in the world without You exists,
Tell me, O God, why is all this turbulence?
...

I do not crave for any praise,
Nor that some reward should come to me;
If you think, there is no meaning
In my verse - then let it be.
...

I wish I could build a house
Without any door or wall,
With no friend beside me and
No one at my beck and call
...

Sunil Uniyal

Silverfish-A Haiku

an old book-
between the lines i read
a silverfish

Sunil Uniyal

Some More Winter Haiku

fog in the valley~
trees and mountains recede
then vanish
... ...

the dawn's draped in fog,
the pheasant forgets to sing~
where are you, O sun?
... ...

the sun-god at last
felling fog with his arrows -
trees and hills appear.

Sunil Uniyal

Summer picnic-A Haiku

summer picnic~
kids get their hands scratched
hunting wild berries
...

Sunil Uniyal

The Brahmaputra-Guwahati

an early monsoon morning:
ferries begin to ply their day on the brahmaputra
four white egrets shoot across to the greens beyond
a clever mynah excuses herself to perch on a ferry
twigs of anonymous trees -
like promises rudely broken -
are carried away by swollen waters
while grey clouds gently take wings
to reveal the forehead of the distant hills

i suddenly uncoil myself
to walk -
the stinking alleys once again

(Written on 16th July,2008, at Guwahati.)

Sunil Uniyal

The Fear

I wander searching for you, but
A fear lingers in my heart,

That, in my quest for you,
I may not with myself part.

Sunil Uniyal

The Fish is Thirsty (A Bhajan of Kabir)

i burst into laughter
whenever i hear
that the fish is thirsty in water

without the knowledge of the Self,
people just wander
to Mathura or to Kashi,
like the musk-deer unaware
of the scent in his navel,
goes on running forest to forest.

in water is the lotus plant
and the plant bears flowers
and on the flowers are the bees buzzing,
likewise all yogis and mendicants
and all those who have renounced comforts,
are on here and hereafter
and the nether world -
contemplating.

Friend, the Supreme Indestructible Being -
on whom thousands of sages meditate
and even Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh,
really resides within one's self.

Although He is near, He appears far away -
and that is what makes one disturbed;
says Kabir, listen, O wise one,
by Guru alone is such confusion curbed.

Sunil Uniyal

The Mahakali - A Haiku

The Mahakali~
slow silent and still
from mountain height

(Note: The Mahakali is a Himalayan river between India and Nepal, near the Kailash-Mansarovar route.)

Sunil Uniyal

The Olympic Torch - A Haiku

the Olympic torch-relay ~
stranded
in a road-jam

Sunil Uniyal

The Target's Behind the Sky (A Bhajan of Kabir)

The target is behind the sky
the sun's on the right the moon on the left-
in between it remains hidden

this body is a bow
the mind its string
and the Word its arrow - aimed straight

the messenger of the True Guru - that it is -
this arrow has pierced through the body impure

but this arrow doesn't any injury inflict -
they know who have, indeed, felt it

says Kabir, listen, O wise one,
those who have known,
they only acknowledge it

Sunil Uniyal

This Body is a Lyre (A Bhajan of Kabir)

A lyre is this body, O friend.

When its strings are tightened and keys screwed,
the Self within it breaks into a sweet tune.
When the strings get snapped
and keys become loose,
the instrument is left to gather dust.

Friend, be not proud of this body,
one day its swan will fly away.

Says Kabir, listen O brother,
rare is he who bravely walks
the arduous path that leads to Him.
...

Sunil Uniyal

Tibet - A haiku

friends, take note ~
monks are shaking
the roof of the world

Sunil Uniyal

To A Friend (An Old Poem)

a speeding train
through the green and gold of mustard fields~
a lively babble
of the brook at mountain bend~
a cuckoo's morning song
in a flowering mango-grove~
your memory dear,
dear friend!

(04.16.1982)

Sunil Uniyal

Trapped in Needle's Eye (A Bhajan of Kabir)

Let some saint my doubts clarify.
With roots above and leaves below,
a tree is between the earth and sky!

It's strange that iron floats,
but the gourd sinks in water.

People go on reading scriptures
and argue more and more,
without getting to the core.

Says Kabir, listen O wise one,
the world is trapped in needle's eye!

Sunil Uniyal

Two Night Haiku

at night the full moon
bending down to the Buddha
in my drawing room

... ...

those honeymoon nights~
untying umpteen knots
of love

Sunil Uniyal

Umbrella

ever since
i've bought the umbrella,
it hasn't rained;

the day it rains -
i apprehend -
it would be left behind at home.

Sunil Uniyal

Unknown wishes - A Haiku

unknown wishes ~
silken threads tied around
the temple tree

Sunil Uniyal

When Waiting is Painful

(This poem has a reference to a Buddhist merchant, Anaathpindak, who donated his entire wealth to the cause of the Buddhist sangha. An early sculptural panel from India shows him emptying a cart of gold coins 'karshapanas' at the feet of Buddha.)

i wait in hope, but the evening
comes without you

i don't know for whom and why
the sun -
like the charitable Anaathpindak -
unloads his cart of golden coins
in the sky?

Sunil Uniyal

White Storks - A Haiku

a country lake ~
white storks on a song
clattering mandibles
...

Sunil Uniyal

Who Perishes? (A Bhajan of Kabir)

Who perishes?
O learned men, just explain.

Dust merges into dust,
Air with air flies.

Says Kabir, listen O wise one,
It is this body that dies.
...

Sunil Uniyal