

Poetry Series

Ravinder Kumar Soni
- poems -

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Ravinder Kumar Soni(05/04/1944)

Ravinder Kumar Soni was born on 5th April 1944 at Delhi (India) . He is the eldest of the six sons of Mehr Lal Soni Zia Fatehabadi (1913-1986) , the famous Urdu poet and writer.

Ravinder Kumar Soni gratefully and very proudly holds the years spent by him (1953-1959) studying at Hindu High School, Triplicane, Chennai (then Madras) , as the most fruitful and precious moments of his life. His father had made him learn how to walk and talk, his simple pure-hearted learned school-teachers allowed him to grip their hands and taught him the way to understand and travel down the rigorous path of learning and life. His father and his teachers made him realize his place in the sun; they made him learn Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, English, Sanskrit and Tamil. His father, a follower of Advaita Vedanta advocated by Adi Sankara, introduced him to the Vedas and their ancillary texts, and also to Jyotisa and poetry. He says, he does not owe anything to his college studies which were a waste of time.

Though he refuses to be addressed as a poet, he loves reading and writing poems. He has not yet published a collection of his English, Urdu or Hindi poems. His published works are: -

- a) The Qat'at O Rubaiyat of Zia Fatehabadi – English translation of few quatrains of Zia Fatehabadi; published in 2012.
- b) Planets and their Yoga Formations – A treatise on Hindu Astrology dealing with the formation of planetary yogas and their impact; published in 2011.
- c) Pitfalls in Predicting Future Events – A methodical examination of errors and omissions while making astrological predictions; published in 2013.
- d) The Illumination of Knowledge – A brief reflection on the role of Agni in the light of the Rig Veda; published 2008
- e) In Search of True Happiness – A collection of seven lengthy essays on Hindu Thought and Upanishadic philosophy; published in 2005.
- f) Meri Tasveer – A transliteration into Hindi of select Urdu poems of Zia Fatehabadi; published in 2011.

Ravinder Kumar Soni retired from service in 1999 after more than 34 years of service in a Public Sector Bank. Ever since, though settled in Delhi, he and his wife, Shakuntla, whom he married in 1973, prefer to live most of their time in the company of their only child, Aditaya Soni (born 1974 in Delhi) , a Chartered Accountant; his wife, Ruchi and grandson, Aniruddha (born 2003 in Chennai) . His youngest brother, Sushil Soni (born 1956 in Madras) , is also an English poet and writer and has till date three collections of his poems published.

A Candid Comprehension

We remember Him as the cause of this world,
The lone being beyond all thoughts and hearsay,
Vast and great, and all-pervading,
Existing as Truth and Righteousness
(He can never be otherwise known) .
We know that we are He, and He is us;
Inseparable,
Together we are the world.
It is our ignorance that makes Him seem distant
Though He is knowable and adorable,
By seeking Him we seek ourselves,
By knowing Him we find ourselves;
Our will is our might.
Our mind is a mirror, and the associated darkness,
These are His playful projections that do not exist.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Change Of Rage

The monsoon winds have spent their force,
The clouds that gave us rain are gone
With them the fury of the floods.

The watered fields they're all alive,
The earth is rich and ready to give,
The farmers smiling till their land.

The verge of season's change is crossed,
The shoots now grow with tiny buds;
They keenly wait for Spring's arrive.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Connection Redefined

He said -

'I know you to be the gentle waft
That has touched me with its varying swings of mood.'

I was then busy ruffling the trees
And watching the branches, shaken or torn,
Drop their blooms upon the grassless ground.
But he knew me to blow intermittently,
At times hot and other times cold,
Convinced about my changeability
Like that of the flickering flame
Of a lighted lamp placed near the window sill.

Though admit I must, and I do,
My gentleness is not the gentleness of the doves
Or the tenderness of the flower petals,
But a cover for my determination
An effort to seek and feel the unreachable
Bends and sounds.

While I have remained the same everywhere,
Able to negotiate difficult routes
I have roamed the glades surrounded by leafy trees
And cooled the hot jagged desert-sand,
Admired the loftiness of snow-clad peaks,
Streamed with rivers nourishing the plains
And rode the waves and churned the seas.

These are not merely the swings of mood
But my efforts to gather my wispy trails,
My attempts to expose the unspoken words,
Define my being in simpler terms
And end the confusing plurality.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Crazy Thought

Do not wait for me
like the dawn does
for the eternal night
that hides each day
or for the darkness to mingle
with the rays of light
that allows us to merge
to raise new life
or compel us to move
towards the trees
that shed their leaves
and go to sleep
covered by snow
whiter than milk
and reflects starlight
to lead us astray
and brace the bite
of quick freezing air.
I pray
Do not wait for me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Desert Stint

The moment I set my sights on the caravan
It moved across the vacant desert sands -
A storm already brewing roared up aloud
And marked its protest while screaming at me -
'Don't you know you have defiled its sanctity;
Now, the caravan, it will certainly lose its way.'
Whereupon I pulled out my sunglasses and hood
I did not want to see that lone caravan defy
The heat of the blazing sun as it moved ahead.
It was then that I had noticed you weep.
Indeed you had never wanted me to face the odds
Such as those of the desert and the raging seas;
You also never cared about my ability and load of luck.
You were always glad that I moved and gently breathed
Sporting the smile reserved for you;
Selfish you have been, here equally anxious I am.
You are aware that my urge to know can never die,
I have yet to find the beginning and the end
But, my friend, it is not that my eyes see differently.
Though the insinuation cast is niggling
And any attempt to steer clear of much irritating,
Also, there may be the desert and the roaring sand
More worried about the caravan than you and me,
I have to journey nevertheless to cross the desert where I stand.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Deserved Sleep

You will surely wake me up, O Deathless Tide, if you were to break against the rocks comforting me,
Then the noise of the soaring cracking waves will not allow me to sleep till you recede;
I have just gone to sleep to forget my world that has pricked and teased me for a very long time,
It is the same world that includes you and me.

You know my plight, O Tide!
I cannot ask the wind to calm the sea opposing my efforts to touch the other side,
I cannot even stall a transfer of the stir raised by any living group;
The amity that once existed between roaming warring hordes did not last,
My falling asleep in the rocky cove is my eager search for the same endearing peace.
It is known you cannot guide me or relieve my pain,
But you can spare my perch and let me be in the dreamless sleep of my design;
You too are unable to wish away the generating forces that make you move and contribute
And keep the vast sea, your support, and mine, alive, simmering and vigilant;
You do deserve a break,
Maybe you need to sleep more than I do.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Dreamlike Smile

Ever heard someone pinch the darkness of night
And using own melanin to stitch for it a cloak
Embellished with the darkest hues imaginable and sound
That is low and melancholy hidden in parts.

What rude mind can make one carve such like image
On the coarse surface of dull wooden blocks,
Suspended on a lengthy metal pole shiny and white
The victims meekly observe what goes on below.

I am not frightened by the darkness denser at night
Nor scared by the crude images carved on wood
Unlike the victims who hang and meekly observe
I shall change the field of play forever tonight.

I shall not lift my hand that has held your face with love
To strike at the rays of light that disturbs thoughts,
I shall let it stay to hold your hands softly in a grip
And wait for your smile to shine brilliantly like the sun.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Ghazal Of Zia Fatehabadi (Freely Translated)

Geet tere husn ke gaataa huu.n mai.n
Chaand kii kirno.n ko taDpaataa huu.n mai.n
(I sing songs in praise of your beauty
And thus torture the gentle Moon-rays)

Manzil e maqsood hotii hai qareeb
Raaste se jab bhatak jaataa huu.n mai.n
(Nearer to my intended goal I reach
The more I stray from my path)

De rahaa huu.n raat din gham ko fareb
Dil ko umeedo.n se bahalaataa huu.n mai.n
(Throughout days and nights I hoodwink (my)pain and grief
And the more I beguile my heart with hope and expectations)

Mere istaqbaal ko saqii uTthe
Maiqade mei.n jhoomtaa aataa huu.n mai.n
(The wine-sellers stand up to receive me when I enter
The tavern is already filled with besotted drinkers)

Iske dil me bhii hai daagh e soz e ishq
Chaand ko humdaastaa.n paataa huu.n mai.n
(Its heart too is marked by the heat of love
I find the Moon reciting the same tale)

Chhedtii hai jab subah saaz e hayaat
Vajd mei.n aakar ghazal gaataa huu.n mai.n
(Whenever the morning strums the instrument of life
I dance and break into a song of love and beauty)

Khud taDaptaa huu.n taDap kar ae zia
Ahal e mehfil ko bhii taDpaataa huu.n mai.n
(I torture myself and thus tortured
I torture the gathered people watching me)

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Glimpse Of Old Age

Maybe I am too old to bear the load
Thrust upon me and now impeding me,
That aided by the staff given to me long ago
By those who refuse to see me crawl
I am forced to drag my barren feet
In the dust that's covering the open ground
Where I am seen playing the game of life
Despite the wrath of seasoned seers
Who had while seeing me take a turn
But ignoring my natural evenness
Proclaimed the virtual end for me
And closed the chapter I could read.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Glimpse Of You

Maybe one day we shall meet again
And then clasping your hands in mine
I will feel your love and warmth for me,
Till then I must ride the fierce storms,
Face the fires that burn freely without
And attend to each sound that is heard,
Stare at the mirror-like windowpanes
And seek a glimpse of you reflected in others' eyes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Humble Request

Why utter words which do always discourage
My obtuse intention of taking the final plunge
To land on the other side of the unseen nowhere
That has no gleam and therefore never shines at all
But where stationed I can by simply closing my eyes
And thinking about the three phases of time all at once
Be everywhere and roam anywhere near and far.

Lest I decide to forego the riches that have come my way
In exchange for my many pains and shattered dreams, when across
The trundling stream of fate I had chosen to wade
Dragging my sodden feet clutched by mud and sand
I have found the evidence which suggests the hidden truth
Wrapped in deep faith and open beliefs of present and past,
Pay no heed to suggestions that brook infallible revolts, I ask.

Here I am not to make the fish, the birds, and the animals talk incessantly
Nor the herbs, bush and trees or even this earth and the twinkling stars,
Here I am accepting the favours of love and facing odds which are factually right
For I do not weave dreams to deceive myself or the world I prize;
I do not aspire to swallow the Sun, the donor guardian of my soul,
Nor the Moon, my nightly faithful guide, whom I cherish and praise;
So do away with the rotten feel that mistrust has often enraged.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Lament

When the moment to discard our belongings is near, now you tell me -
We had never longed for the darkest ever nights to descend
To hide our pent-up raw emotions
That could hurt the child in us given up as lost;
And our attempts to open the doors of our hearts
To allow new thoughts to creep in having failed
Our love kept ablaze has certainly dimmed;
That for once, if we cared, you and I can step around
To test the depth and warmth of the attachment
That unites us in a resilient bond of mutuality;
And, O Time, now you also ask me
To wait for the morning that may never rise.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Little Bit Of Patience

A little patience would have won the world for me,
Then I would have for long basked in glorious sunshine
Feted for my successful stint as an outstanding poet;
But I was really in a hurry, firstly to outdo others
And then myself;
I had filled sheaves upon sheaves of paper with words and phrases,
Some held meanings and some were merely a jabbering of sorts
Not actually meant to convey anything of note to the readers.
Indeed my readers appreciated each word I wrote,
Through my poems, they thought they had entered my world
As though to play the role I had drawn out for them alone,
And they laughed and cried with me
And they made me stand very tall.
Then one day, when I had almost exhausted my ware,
Rested my pen and mind I heard their screams,
My readers had begun to suffer more and more pain
Caused by my words whose true meaning they had of late come to realize.
What I wrote were not poems;
They had understood my farcical efforts,
I was thoroughly exposed.
I did not dare respond
I lost my place which with a little bit of patience
Would not have been denied.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Meaningful Reflect

In the wee hours of a summer morn
I walked up to the yonder lake called Hope;
It was preparing to shine and shimmer
At the first strike of the brightening dawn
And its waters waited for the sun to rise.

I stood on its shore watching the waves
That was dark as they rose and fell all the while;
They told me not to disturb the quiet
That had built up casually during the night
To make me anxious and suffer pain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Missive Recalled

Whenever a song is heard loud and clear
Of deep and lusty passionate love,
The mind bound by covert ties is free;
It seeks your come back from afar.
The peal of bells as a welcome bend
Speaks out about our contentedness
And makes the words recover the gist
Of the songs that signal your return.
Hide in the shade of bamboo-trees!
They are tall and green of sturdy kind;
They shape the place to stay concealed,
There one can laze in wait for you.
Where ever you are there lie our roots
The serene state is our desired goal,
Then endless joy spreads true and fair
That lifts us high over worldly cares.
Charmed by a flute's simple strains
I lean against a tree to watch
The people groove and sway as though
You are with me to liven up my life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Pair Of Shoes

I own a pair of patent shoes,
Leather-soled and leather-topped,
With normal heels for I am tall.

These shoes they were a cozy wear,
I bought them sixteen years ago
But never wore them ever since.

Last night I found them wrapped and lay,
Still gleaming black and very new;
They graced a dusty cardboard box.

I tried them on and strode a few steps
They did not squeak nor did they bite
I had my feet snugly ensconced.

It's then I sought my faithful ones,
My worn out grey old dry sandals,
And asked them what I must do now.

Then my sandals smiled and cried
'Do wear the shoes, do wear the shoes,
And free us from your stinking feet'.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Passage Of Time

I know I have not been discreet at all;
But I need not be reminded about my numerous acts,
Mainly about those that were committed gleefully
And, about the good and the bad of things I continue to suffer?
I need not.

I need not bother about the past meant to be forgotten
Or even attempt the long ago given-up impossible tasks.
My mind is the cause of my bondage this much I know
The same mind which also frees me allowing me to roam and probe;
Therefore, I ask -
Have I not in my wisdom chosen to ignore
In preference of the on-going present
My uneventful past?
Why?

The present prevailing
I have no intentions to dig up the past which has no role to play;
I have no intentions of making the past spread itself darkness-wise
condescendingly;
I have no intentions of re-igniting the blown-out dry wicks of my uncared bed-
side lamps
Especially when the sun is still burning bright and the day is young.
Instead, I shall let the muslin stay where it has always remained
The same muslin that has not for a single moment left uncovered
The numerous visible and invisible stains left behind by roving time
Upon the shiny multi-faceted inviting surface of my restless mind
Beneath its surface uneasily lie uneasily my brilliant ideas and imaginations
All of them unbound and unexplored but seeking a virtual audience nevertheless
And which I intend to engage no sooner I regain
My long lost wakefulness with the coming of dawn.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Peep Into My Mind

A moment ago
The bright sun
Peeped into my mind
Lighting it;
I wonder what it saw.
Many sagging hopes,
Broken dreams,
Indolent aims,
A doubting pride,
And a madly piled
Confusion, isn't it?
No.
It only saw
A laborious mind
That needed some respite.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Pleasing Redact

Crusty tops and simple terms
They leave a bitter taste.
Why then cite a rage?

The stain of ink on a dirty thumb
Lend a second thought.
Why change the old visage? □

The fruits are juicy 'n' they are fresh,
They've coined a jaunty phrase -
A pleasant new redact.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Prayer

Through knowledge and noble deeds
I seek your protection.
Shine upon me, O Sun!
Filling me with knowledge,
Uplift my urge,
Purify me with your brilliance.
In the light of your visible and invisible rays
Which we know and do not know
Truly reveal all things existing;
Those rays belong to the fire of knowledge
That burns within all living things.
Alive, active and ever eager
I too am your noble reflection.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Provider's Call

In the sky
There are the clouds
Gathering to hide the sun;
The spiky nip
And the failing light
Herald the monsoon fun.

Standing alone
In an open space
I wait for the rain to fall;
Drenching me
To my skin and bones
To cleanse my body withal.

Never before
Has my eagerness
In the past appeared so live,
Now I know
I can reach my goal
And plant new seeds to thrive.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Revised Tryst

Often I have wondered as to why
I repeatedly walk the same path
That has led me nowhere except to its very start
Standing at which point I have time and again
Surveyed the panorama of life keenly display
Muted tragedies and boisterous comedies alike
As the karmas of our remote past;
My words of protest notwithstanding
My voice and actions gradually stilled,
Struggling with my wayward imagination a wee bit more
I had opted to give up my preferences now hardly defined
Such as the tiny blot threatening to smear
And spread all over the good turns carefully accounted for
But figuratively appearing in an orderly way
As encoded binomials on a silver ground.
Be it so, perhaps in undue haste
I have accomplished the tedious task
Of controlling my active mind
That even at rest constantly betrays
Its remissions and indulgences in many a revised form,
But, confident I am for me alone
From the bright heaven above will soon descend
Along with the blazing sunlight, it's comforting warmth,
I have waited too long for my mind to rejuvenate
The many thoughts I had given up as stale and dead
That had been the basis of my numerous dreams;
The very rejuvenation that will invariably re-launch
Fresh attempts to revive the tryouts
I had long ago abandoned as futile.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Revisit

When
Darkness reigns
The mind astir
Buried views
And deepening faith
Reshape the core
And sound the knell
Then pithy verse
Materialize
Darkness erased
The rays of light
With hope and sight
Find their place
And stay alive.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Statement Of Fact

We have met once, you and I,
Near the Qutab Hotel;
It was evening-time,
You had then sought directions from me.
You were wearing
A light-blue salwar-kameez and a laced dupatta,
Your dark hairs tied in a tight bun,
A bindi shone on your forehead and lips coloured crimson-red,
I was taken in by you.
Through my eyes and ears
I had absorbed
And made you a part of me;
I can never forget you.

All things seen, said and heard,
During those brief moments,
Remain firmly etched in my memory;
It was as though Time had stood still.
Since then, my love for you has grown more,
And now you accompanying me everywhere
I cannot think of anything else.

I have wanted to write about those moments
But I have not dared; fearing I may not find proper words;
I cannot forsake those moments,
It was then that I had felt a deep love for you.

Though I have not seen you ever since,
I have asked Time to make this possible;
I trust Time, but it too has its specific priorities,
Unlike my mind, it never looks back or grieves,
It holds no regrets,
It simply marches on at a steady pace.

You are my sole fortune,
My love for you also moves on hopefully
At an even pace, low-keyed and without frills.

A Step Beyond

Here I am,
Sitting beside you,
Ready to hear the tale
You had promised you would narrate
When freed from the shackles that held you firm
You would return to your old garden of delight,
To freely wander in the glades,
Retracing the known and tried paths
We both had traversed off and on.

Now that I have heard your wonderful tale,
Its import will take me very far
In search of the truth, you and I had lost
In a forgotten bout
Of argument and assertion
Over its efficacy,
When you and I had unwittingly,
Sparing our dreams,
Stirred up the Past,
Dressed it as the moving present,
Anticipating the inevitable future,
To test the existence of Time.

In search of the lost truth,
I intend to journey with Time,
Beyond the absolute Future
And material Space,
Beyond the unreal and the Real,
And travel beyond the range of my imagination.

In search of the lost truth,
I intend to explore my being,
Examine my existence
In the light of our experiences
With our minds and mental implorations,
And our senses and beliefs;
They tend to establish our being,

Different frames of Time notwithstanding.

I want you to accompany me,
For you will never know what I have found or tasted;
Let us both step beyond the threshold of return.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Strange Lament

Nimble fingers and a sturdy thumb
Along with their shielded hollow palm
Upon the much scribbled table-top
Beat out a rhythm meant to last
Largely forgotten but not yet lost;
It has left a trace - the beat of hearts.

The continuing strike and a raving speech
Regales the gathered excited crowd
Of mill-workers and some noisy clerks,
The so-called blue-collared class,
Persisting with their weave of dreams
That binds a lump of greener grass.

The fields are parched there has been no rain
The sky is clear and the scorching sun
Bakes the loam which is dry and cracked;
The wooden plough and the oxen rest
Beneath a very old large leafy tree
That mocks the wilting yellowed grass.

The time is ripe to wring out the tears
Left rotting in the folds of a light surmise
That work as the edge of a burnished rock
Sharp as a scalpel which cuts and pries;
What for is the glee and the passionate hug?
Where are those to reap the gains at last?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Strange Obsession

He said,
He has not the time to meet me,
He cannot find the time he seems to have lost
Dilly-dallying over formalities.
But, he is never alone,
I follow him all the while;
Of course, he intends to meet me soon
When we meet he rakes up issues that annoy me.□

Ask me,
Should I speed up our meeting,
Certainly not;
Unprepared
I cannot afford to engage in another clash
Over settled essentialities.
I cannot be unmindful,
I do not wish to injure my pride or his;
For, we have nothing to gain or lose.
Let the curfew sound its ring.

We often meet;
He is the smiling day that shines bright and regal
And I, the ungrieving night subdued and silent.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Tale Of Love

The drizzle has started
The grass is wet and greener
Branches cleaner
The pigeons and the parrots
They have folded their wings
And the air is pleasantly cool
Look at me said the peacock
Note the colours I now display
Each with a meaningful resonance
Of love and fidelity
Carried by my nimble feet
Already set in dependable rhythm
Of a coveted rain-dance
You will soon be mine I say
The peahen busy pecking the ground
Was not impressed
She had weathered many storms
And heard such boasts before
She did not doubt his love
But craved for a change
In his attitude and conduct
That she could not define
Nevertheless
She lifted her head and looked at him
But not for long
She chose to wait for him to tire
Drop his thick plumage
And approach her
The weather supported the peacock

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Thought To Ponder On

After stating that life is everything fair
My father began talking about death
About its purpose and significance
And he did not mince his words.
He said
Like each beginning is destined to end
Life ends in death
Death is always painful
However swift it may seem to be
Anticipate and be prepared
And do not fear death
It is an unavoidable occurrence. □
Death reopens the dimension of life
And once more reveals the avenues to likes and dislikes
And the needed dreams that stay forgotten.
Doubt and uncertainty do make life exciting
But death has nothing to hide.
Having said this he lapsed into his customary silence.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Unique Fear

He fears the morn spreading wide
And has no one to shield his side;
Brought up in total darkness, O Ravi!
This seeker of light has no guide.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Void To Fill

You invited me to the river bank;
Made me sit beside you,
Made me see how you traced
With your slim bamboo pole
Figures upon figures on the river-surface
That I could not decipher,
I could not decide.

I felt small and humiliated
And had quietly walked away.
Even from a distance,
I could see the river flow by.
The figures you had carved on its surface
Were not to be seen.
The river water changes rapidly.

But I could spy a turtle raise its head
And questioningly look at you.
Methought he was objecting to your presence.
Unmindful of that creature
You continued with your exercise
And did not stop drawing figures
On the river surface.
You had not even noticed when I had walked away.

Suddenly,
A colourful butterfly landed on my left shoulder
And softly whispered -
'Do not disturb your friend,
Within him there is a deep void to fill;
He is doing just that.'

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Wasp And Dust-Covered Books

A yellow-coloured wasp has entered my room
It darts about as if it has lost its way
Its sting is painful, I know, I suffered it as a child
I had seen my brother kill the wasp that had stung me then
I am careful now
This wasp will not sting
For it has not been annoyed and is in a playful mood
I have let it explore my room and belongings all
It will soon go away wiser than before
Perhaps as a friend more concerned and sympathetic
It knows its sting can kill
It has always seen a fear return to shake its prey
It now sits on the pile of books I haven't read
I have allowed these books to gather dust, be ruffled and age
I avoid reading new books
They know and show no mercy
At times their newness is appalling
Old books command respect
They contain information that is tested and mature
And their ink is not fresh
They never stain our fingers
With their new book anger exhausted
They do not strike to cause pain
This my yellow-coloured wasp knows
It will not sting in the company of my dust-covered books.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Way Out

I am languishing in the today that is not of my choice;
I am made to wait for the dawn of a new bright day
That will certainly rise only to remind me of this day spent
Not learning the lessons that make up my past,
The past made up of yesterdays that can never return.

Sitting at the edge of the fluid freely flowing time
I am left to dip in its depth my right-hand forefinger
And without raising any ripples on its surface
Try to trace
Impermanent patterns that I alone can read
No meaning derived can be ignored
The future holds new meanings and a firm resort
And therefore, by itself validates my wait.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

A Whim

You want me, but call it a whim,
I do not enter rooms dark and dingy
Meant only for people who fear the light
Fresh air and open sights.
Never drag me there
Where I cannot speak, see, hear or touch.
I am inquisitive, aggressive and fearless
And want to improvise without being recast;
Take me there where the heat is intense
And the depths most challenging;
Do not ever let me go to waste.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Aankh Ro Jaae Ye Mumkin Hi Nahin

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aankh ro jaa.e ye mumkin hii nahii.n
daagh dho jaa.e ye mumkin hii nahii.n
jis ko ho maa'luum banjar hai zamii.n
beej bo jaa.e ye mumkin hii nahii.n
DhoonDne khud ko jo niklaa ho vahii
raah kho jaa.e ye mumkin hii nahii.n
neend aaii ho naa jis ko raat bhar
subah so jaa.e ye mumkin hii nahii.n
jo banaayaa thaa nasheman barq ne
raakh ho jaa.e ye mumkin hii nahii.n
Doobne paa.e naa sooraj, ae Ravi
raat ho jaa.e ye mumkin hii nahii.n

Ravinder Kumar Soni

About My Being

About my being some say -
Either 'I am' or 'I am not',
But, this twofoldness is a farce,
As also are my many parts that conjure attributes
Construct limitations that are objects covered by sight
As are seen by the mind alone that projects variety.
I am nascent and ripe;
Left to myself I can strive to demolish the walls
I persistently erect to divide and enclose my own world.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

About My Dreams

And then he said -

'How do you manage to see so many dreams? '

I was truly shocked; I never wanted to be questioned thus,
Especially about my dreams which are wholly mine,
And I do dream much; imaginative I am,
Almost child-like.

The person who asked me about my dreams
I did not know well.

But, I recollect,

There was a boy who lived next door,
I had befriended him I do not know when
But I enjoyed his company as much as he did mine
And we trusted each other.
He was a good listener.
He had left this place long ago.

I had told him that I was gifted;
My memory was strong and long-lasting
I remembered all I had heard, read, imagined and dreamt;
I could weave and narrate wonderful tales
That I often held out as my intimate dreams.
Had he wanted to know more he would have in jest
Re-framed the same question thus -
'Why do you see so many dreams? '

And then,
He would have stepped aside to wait
And watch me loudly laugh.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ache

I woke up late
The sky overcast
The Sun did not shine
Upon my face
The warmth I needed
Was not there
And the chirping of birds
I did not hear
The knock on the door
Told me
I must rise
The morning cup of tea
Has arrived
Its warmth is not the warmth
I yearn
I need my eyes
To open wide
Take in all sights
Revive me
And make me ruminant
Gather stray memories
Retie their knots
And find my voice
To speak out my heart
About my desire
About my want
And about my love
Only for you
That stays congealed
In the dark space
Within my heart
Waiting for you
I have no place to hide
I am astir
I have the fire
The longing for you
Burning within me
It gives me warmth
Makes me move

And retain the urge
To seek you
I seek you
The morning is still young
Please call my name aloud
For me to hear
And locate you

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Affection

In my part of the street still there is light;
And from my window, I can see and read
The brightly lettered bold graffiti scrawled on the wall;
But, I cannot see who wrote those affectionate words
That meant something for everyone at different hours of the day -
'My friend, seeing you is being young again.'
Simple words; perhaps, meant for me alone.

The word-meanings differed only for those few
Not yet sufficiently aged to compulsively impose
Themselves upon others
And also, could think a shade differently
Like the ageless night that can hold within its folds
The visible world and the world that is not easily visible,
The former connected with things spread out
And the latter with the scheming ever-churning mind.

I am in no hurry to resolve the issue,
Young and old, let each revel;
Age does not matter; patient and hopeful I am.

I can wait for the darkness to steadily spread,
I can wait for most of the living beings to go to sleep,
I can even wait for the nocturnal beings to stir, forage or hunt
Or on the opposite walls write a few more words I can see
I know the new sunrise will certainly light up the graffiti
And the uncomplaining but long-suffering people approaching it
Will coax or cudgel each other,
Read and copy,
To interpret and infer differently
With their hands tied and eyes closed,
For a short while holding their breath peep inwards and then exhale.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Affront

Things seen as actions and deeds, they bind me,
And be praised for works done;
They merely serve to deter and disturb my vigilance.

All things seen or felt are the products of the fickle mind;
I know them to draw me away
From my simple life: A life of child-like simplicity.

Here, I am left to extract a blade of grass from its sheath;
I am made to expose my traits
And seek the company of an elusive unthinkable.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Aftermath

The Sun had set when he came,
He did not knock at the door
And entered my room blaming me;
He held me responsible for his loneliness
But did not want me to speak my mind;
He had left me at the break of the first Dawn.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Alluring Tends

The river in a spate bars my way
Its feeders overflow and the trees are bent low
There is no boat to take me across
Or anyone who can navigate
The other bank always in sight beckons me
And someone there loudly calls out my name
But here rooted I stand my heels dug in deep
In wait
It is now almost night-time
Crossing forgotten
Tiredness has extracted its due
Overhead the Moon and the stars shed their light
Upon the gathering world about to rest and sleep
The ripples created by the fear of darkness
And impending death
Seem to have died down
And with them the accompanying rush and rashness
Of my blood flowing to and fro
Weaving many dreams
Seductively
Age does not side with me
I would not have allowed my focus to shift
Had I not lost the count of waves
Rising to fall

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Aloneness

After my day's work is over,
My body and mind rested
Gently spoken by my peers
I often hear
Many words of praise
Light and pleasing
Infusing fresh vigour
In my sinews and mind
With the same old passion revived.

As of now,
In the light of a lamp
And bending over my desk
Intending to tell my tale
That I alone can narrate
But unable to find its beginning
With a limp pen in hand
And no one around to help me
Fight the darkness of night
I sit staring at a blank crisp
Paper sheet.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Amazing Quest

I want to know
That's happened before
I had reached the post
In haste;
I had dug in my heels
Real hard and true
In chase of the wisp
Floating about
But failing to catch
I had lowered my head
Refusing the gift
Of the golden nib
That could've helped me graph
Some of the lost
Unreal chains
Upon the bench
Now wet with rain
The gentle wind
Will strive to dry;
I had faced the East
And saw the South
Dip under the cover
Of plodding feet,
Then I had faced the West
And saw the North
Hide behind a mist and haze.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

An Anatomy Of Thought

Once more,
I sense a non-verbal and imageless perception,
Belying spontaneity,
And threatening to re-orient the old scripted awareness,
Intruding my mind rudely agitating it;
But,
Whom shall I ask what it portends and why?
Who will explain to me its sudden emergence from a void?

The unease that the growing and gathering impulses have already begun to
cause
Is affecting my body too, its activity stalled
It no longer knows whether to wait and watch
Or merely move along with the rising tides of confrontations
Hoping for the difference between transformation and creation to reveal by itself!

I had merely gazed at the stars to draw some possible known patterns,
Some probable conclusions,
As much as I would throw pebbles in the lake
And count the circular fading waves moving towards the shore.
What has impinged my senses that I identify myself with the agitation afflicting
my mind?
Why am I unhappy and gravely mystified?
Why am I ranged against my own experiences?
Which are the weeds I must eradicate?

Within me stay mingled the ten senses and the mind,
Awakening one awakens the rest,
The tender buds of a rose-garden
They are destined to bloom but not alongside our perceptions activating the
mind.
The pace of my heart-beat varies as does the depth of my insight
My dreams, products of my mind, and my constant companions,
They are merely a ruse, at once teasing and persuasive.

My unhappiness is owing to the perturbed states that shape individual lives I
encounter,
I am puzzled by the extent of contamination those states have suffered,

My own experiences are actually my various personal root impressions of the past

But the weeds awaiting eradication are the potentialities of my actual state,
Which if not destroyed, opposing sense-reactions will continue to haunt the mind,

And even though subjected to the intense heat of austerities
I may not be able to move beyond change.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

An Eternal Truth(A Vedic Revelation)

Manifesting in the subtle body and entirely pervading it,
Enlivening the gross body and making it aware and active;
The fire burns within warm and radiant,
Enthusing the observance often forms of disciplines and rigours
By men of faith who aided by knowledge
Attain the highest plane of Truth
After having known
That as much as is the extent of all-pervasiveness, completeness, and
permanence
Of that force firmly established
In the worlds visible and invisible,
That much is the extent of the collection and spread of things and thoughts
Produced, fulfilled and protected by the fire
That rages accompanied by a steady breath.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

An Invocation

At each Dawn

I invoke my heart, my mind, the sky and the sun;
To these fearless four, I offer my prayers,
I pour oblations rich, powerful and sweet,
And seek protection
Against harmful defects and evil imports.
Clothed in life and bountiful,
They cover me with their fine mist
And allow me to divine their truthful gaits as they move.
O Lord of Speech!
Lend me the words and notes
For my songs in praise of the first rays of sunlight;
Let me tend those songs for the skilled singers;
Let me dwell in this body to feel your presence;
Make my heart incline towards my mind, support me,
And lift me skywards far beyond the blazing sun.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

An Ode To Fire

O Fire, the resplendent illuminator worthy of being seen,
You shine in all dawns on account of truth and justice;
You shine being full of knowledge emerging as rising upwards,
Light up all directions in the worlds open or hidden.
Because you know the future you burn at the behest of time
As the guardian of all that which exists and the right path,
As the forward-looking first to behold the universe,
And united with the Sun you pervade all events and things.
O Fire, as you persistently sizzle and roar
Give me the words that please you most.
Make me sing the glory of the ultimate truth.
Make me aware of your glory.
Keep my mind purified and impelled
That I may practice with you steady thinking
And shine alongside all the while.□

Ravinder Kumar Soni

An Ode To My Goddess

After I die there will be no one to love you the way I do
Nor dream or think about you;
No one will then speak to you the words that fill my mind
Nor look at you the way I still do.
We may have ignored our deepening wrinkles and swiftly greying hairs;
We may have together matured and grown old;
And with our faith in us not changed by the whims of the changing world
Sought each other dreaming the same dreams of our ageless world,
But when I am gone there will be no one to take care of
My long stretch of memories about you and our playful togetherness:
I need not worry,
Though I am not timeless
For me, you are eternity personified,
You are the goddess I have silently worshipped;
You have made me forget all else but you;
And, I know you will never die
All my memories about us will remain safely entrenched within you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

An Old Ode To The Wind

Make for me and the sun a spacious pathway to travel, O Wind!
I am the thought-impulse and he the giver of light;
Allow us to freely retrace the footsteps and feel the bond
To experience the affluence long withheld;
Far and wide-reaching indeed are your favours.

Release us from the upper bonds and untie the lower one;
Pay heed to our calls and appreciate our longing for help;
Fill up our sails and lead us beyond the range of light;
In the sky, heavenly fires are seen burning bright.

We wear your robes and sing in celebration of your endless strength;
The leaves, the waters and the sands await your instructions;
Ask them to stay still and not disturb our aim;
Do not let them laud the unworthy strains.

Undo the drought and let rapturous joy spread and rule;
Remove the gathered dust dimming visible radiance
And in a single flourish re-burnish the old golden hue covering all space;
May not your nimbleness curb our zeal O Wind!
Blow away all existing cobwebs of doubt and apprehension.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

And I Shall Then Cease To Be

There are the three fires which readily burn;
The domestic fire that works and serves,
The fire in the heart that slowly heats up words,
And the fire in the mind that explores limitless space;
These I adore, I am because of these three.
The fire that works and serves purifies my home, body, and mind,
The fire that slowly heats up words makes me aware of my world,
And the fire kept lit in the purified mind leads me on as my life-force;
These three are meant to combine to reveal the truth hidden within me.
And combining these three will one day consume my body and mind,
And I shall then cease to be.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Andhere Ke Pas E Pardah

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andhere ke pas e pardaah ujaalaa khojataa kyuun hai
jo andhaa ho gayaa voh din mei.n sooraj DhoonDtaa kyuun hai
bataayaa thaa to lailaa ne magar sahraa nahii.n samjhaa
ki majnuun ratile dar par sar apnaa phoDtaa kyuun hai
ye roz o shab ki gardish hii agar hai maqsad e hastii
to suu e aasmaa.n oonchii nazar se dekhtaa kyuun hai
ye maanaa hijr kaa gham tujh pe taarii hai dil e naadaa.n
jo aayaa hai voh jaaegaa tu naahaq sochtaa kyuun hai
sahar hone ko hai shaayad, sitaare ho gaye madham
shab e gham jaa rahi hai tu abhii tak oonghataa kyuun hai
yaqiinan kucch sabab thaa, terii zanjeeren nahii.n tootii.n
magar paa e shikastaa raah se bandhan toDataa kyuun hai
ye deewaare.n mire ghar kii khaDii khaamosh suntii hai.n
mere andar chchipaa jazbaa alam kaa boltaa kyuun hai

jo toofaanii hawaao.n ke muqaabil ho nahii.n saktaa
chalo dekhien samundar se voh aakhir kheltaa kyuu.n hai

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Angry Sunrays

My blue-tinted window-pane facing the sun
Lies shattered; why did this happen I dare not ask
But I know whose handiwork it is - the angry heated sunrays'.
They had warned me not to obstruct their path.

I thought I could have had my way imposed my will and cooled the rays
Had I not foolishly waited to watch the dawns and the dusks
And changed the clear glass-pane to the cool blue;
I know the sun does not rise; it does not set either;
It simply blazes away all the while heating everything else.

Now I cannot even be angry or lose my temper and scream out loud.
There is no one to appreciate my tantrums and none to side with me.
My bare fingers are struggling to keep still and be steady.
They want to gather the strewn pieces and reassemble the shattered pane.
They want to defy the angry heated sunrays still creeping in.
But my eyes and skin they are not in the defiant mode.
They need to be protected and need a cover.
The little one residing within me weeps and bleeds.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Angst

An eerie silence grips my heart and mind,
I twist and turn avoiding the pain it brings;
In the desolate places where I find myself alive
There is no one to share my thoughts or fears.

A slender thread binds my aspirations with my dreams;
Regardless of my much-agitated emotions and intents
I still continue with my search and explore my surroundings
Merely to gain a hint of what is in store for me.

Each day I notice the sun quietly rise and set;
In its brightness, I move about stripped to the skin,
During the night covered by darkness, I forget myself
When asleep I do not know where and who I am.

My life crowded with events and actions has been
An awkward experience uncomfortably weighed down
By hopeful prospects of gain and future betterment
And uncertain opportunities mocking all my works;

I know the road I travel is dusty and vexed,
But it does lead to somewhere not yet defined;
I seek not a fresher description of that very place
I know it is where all travel invariably end.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Anguish

Then,
I heard his cry,
He was in great pain.
His throat was parched;
And his thirst tortuous;
As the noon-time sun blazed upon him heat and fire
I heard his croaked cry -
'Help me! I pray to give me some water to drink.'
I halted,
And found him prone and stretched
A few paces away from a way-side well,
He had no strength left to draw water from that well.
This morning,
Both of us had separately set upon finding the truth -
About who made us and why.
I was proud of my learning
And he of his memory;
Even as I could easily discern the fifth connotation
He could easily provide the necessary background.
He was the other side of me, ever thirsty for refusing to change
And wrestled with rigid laws and logic, limitations and barriers;
He was doomed to suffer, this formless projection of my mind.
He knew why heat had affected him and spared me.
With him, I had no blood ties.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Annapurna

Do not add more water to the broth
Or any more of the fine condiments already added;
The meat and the vegetables are kept boiling on the stove
Allow their aroma to spread and for their taste to mature.
Our mother stepped out of the kitchen
But, we brothers were painfully hungry
Exhausted after some fierce rounds of kabbadi
We six sat on the floor waiting.

We shared the hot and flavoured broth and bread
No longer were we hungry
Later we lazed in the veranda sipping cool lime juice
Our mother had taken care of our school bags
We envied ourselves; she made us feel
We were a privileged lot
Destined to remain always happy and contented.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ansuu.N Se Ashanaa Hotaa Rahaa

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aansuo.n se aashanaa hotaa rahaa
daagh e hasrat dil ke mai.n dhotaa rahaa
koun thaa raah e wafaa mei.n hamsafar
paa ke manzil kaa nishaa.n khotaa rahaa
mai.n ne kyaa chaahaa thaa, mai.n ab kyaa kahuu.n
tujh ko jo manzoor thaa, hotaa rahaa
tujh ko paa loongaa magar apnaa pataa
justajoo mei.n mai.n tirii khotaa rahaa
aur kyaa kartaa, ye baar e zindagii
naa tawaa.n kaandho.n pe mai.n Dhotaa rahaa
ahal e duniyaa kii do rangii dekh kar
mai.n kabhii hastaa rahaa, rotaa rahaa

taabish e k?hursheed ko dekhaa kiyaa
roshanii aankho.n ki go khotaa rahaa
jaagtii duniyaa bahut aage gayii
neend kyuu.n ghafalat ki tuu sotaah rahaa
daaman e sahraa huua ashko.n se tar
tukhm gham is vaaste botaa rahaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Apne Dil Mei.N Utar Ke Dekh Zaraa

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apne dil mei.n utar ke dekh zaraa
dar ba dar Dhoontaa kahaan hai khudaa
mutribaa mujh ko gham kaa geet sunaa
mere aangan mei.n bhii ho naghmaa saraa
band aankhe.n mirii rahii.n lekin
marte dam tak tujhii ko dekhaa kiyaa
daaiyare zindagii ne laakh banaa.e
had se baahar qadam nikal hii gayaa
tootanaa hii thaa sheeshaa e dil ko
ajanabii ban ke dekhaa aaiinaa
thii jahaa.n raasto.n ko merii talaash
mai.n vahaa.n khud hii apnii manzil thaa
ae Ravi jaane kyuu.n kisii ke baghair
naa mukamil rahaa safar meraa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Arrogance

Had I not seen you before
With the same little wry smile
That had suddenly creased your lips
Upon finding me bungle with the knots
Of the dark brown hessian rope binding me
As though I were a culprit readied to be sentenced
I would not have otherwise recognized you
As you stood at my doorway
And sought to draw me out
Embarrassed
I had then hung my head in disgust
I was then not aware of your williness and deceit.
I continue to stand
Beneath fruit-laden shady trees
Amidst the roaring crowd of needs and objections
Subjects and contraventions
Briskly waving my arms held high
To call the attention of all those incited by you
They should know
The fire you have caused to burn
Once lit cannot be easily doused.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

As Friends

I have always wanted a friend;
You are a good swimmer,
You have saved me from drowning,
From now on,
I will call you my friend.

Be my friend;
Between friends, there are no secrets,
So
Do not hide your smiles and tears from me,
I will show to you those that are mine.

Now
With our goals remaining common,
Our ways will also not differ,
With no fears and doubts to bother us
We will slake our thirst for good.

Then
We will have for us the same sky and the seas
And share the same horizon;
The Sun, the Moon and the stars
Will shine for us equally
And there will be no need to prove ourselves.

We will see the same world all the time
With the same pair of eyes;
All joy will be ours.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Assurance

Come, my love, I shall take you to the waters' edge
And to the noisy waterfall that feeds the stream
That runs over polished granite rocks
And is hidden by raggedy tall green grass
As it joins the lily-filled blue-green lake;
Come, my love, make haste.
This day-light will not last forever,
The birds and the butterflies have already sounded the retreat,
Night's thick folds will soon spread and in that dark stillness
We might fearfully lose our way.
The waters' edge holds for us a promise
Of the long-lasting quiet happy union of our bodies and mind,
This promise is seen scrawled as graceful ripples
And upon the silvery sides of the fish that float nearby;
Come, let us take stock of that promise before those ripples fade.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Assured

My field parched has not long to wait for rain-drops to fall,
Till then it feeds dust and worthless chaff to the heated air
To carry even to such far-off places where I am not known;
As surely as the reversing wind that gathers and gives us rain
One day my poems too bearing my name will travel that far.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

At The Bed-Side

I was seated at his bed-side
When I heard him say -

'I shall not die as an idler crowding the city-square,
Nor shall I die an idolater still in need of help;
I would prefer to die alone enduring my sufferance.'

He did not speak aloud but seemed to have lost faith;
He ignored the sharp breeze that blew across his face forcing him to blink;
I knew he hated the fierceness of the sun now briefly hidden by the clouds about
to rain.
And, he had been a long time away.

We were discussing death.

I had come to inquire about his health and not talk about his death.

He was not a stranger.

I asked -

'Why must you die with no one to know about your endurance,
I thought death was cruel and painful when it takes away life.'

To this he softly replied -

'At the moment of death, one sees no flowers bloom and hears no sound.
But one feels warmth spread from head to foot
And sees in his mind a flame casually burn out.
There is certainly no escape from death.
No one can prevent death.
Facing death is not easy.
No one wants to die;
I shall have to endure this painful thought.
No one need know about this sufferance.
But, if there is no pleasure in being born,
There is a touching sense of relief when one dies.'

Then, suddenly closing his eyes he went to sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

At The Riverfront

I was standing alone near the bridge
Waiting for her to come and join me
In the walk beside the wide riverfront
I had not seen her for a very long while
And when she came I did not recognize her
Even by the manner of her dress and gait
I was troubled by this failure
I thought I knew her well.
I dared not question her change
She had been positive in her thinking and acts
And I had no grudge to grind
I kept quiet
I stood still waiting for her to say something
Pleasing and reviving
Then I would have opened my heart to her
Showed her the scars I carry
That her absence had made upon my psyche
She did nothing of that sort
There was no touch or glance exchanged
And she stood alongside me gazing at the river flow
Her silence said everything I needed to know.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

At The Temple

He could not enter the temple premises
And stood outside bare-footed
Facing the open door,
His hands folded in prayer.
The vermilion smeared idol,
His object of worship, it was clearly seen;
The incense used was thick and strong
But agreeable.
He had everything he needed.
What for he was praying
Even he did not know.
For five minutes he stood thus
Reciting the mantras silently
Then he lowered his eyes
Put on his sandals and walked away.
He had once annoyed the priest.
He had asked him
Why he who prays at least thrice a day
Day after day does not gain
The wealth etcetera sought and prayed for
Or is it a case of quiet containment.
He knew,
A priest does not pray for himself.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Attitudinal Change

Your sudden change of attitude,
Has gravely disturbed my roving mind;
My traced and lingering thoughts,
No longer at rest and blurred,
Prise from the source
The sun that shines and the wind that blows
Now passively and unperturbed,
Contacts lost,
They give me no reason to wait or run;
O Sanity! What wrong have I done to earn your wrath?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Avoiding Fears

Mother! Why is the night always so very dark?
It fills me with fears I do not comprehend.
Why must I close my eyes and invite sleep?
Tell me! Why must I forget and then dream?

Hold me close to your breast and not put me to bed,
Without you these dark times I cannot survive.
Let me hear your heart pound the familiar way;
It protects and lulls me to a deep long sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Awaited Word

One word, just one word;
I am still waiting to hear that word
Promised to change my destiny,
Update my methods and reform my views,
Alter my thinking and improve my anticipation
Needed to end my struggle
Against rot and stagnation;
But I had merely asked for relief from aggressive digressions
That had led me astray
And I was offered this promising precious word.

Where is the voice that hailed me as a stubborn lout?
Where are those previously uttered words of abuse?
Where is the will to recognize the known?
Now that voice seems stilled and spoken words stand retracted;
And, I do not appear reflected in any mirror facing me.
There is a mystery surrounding that word,
No one seems to know anything about that word;
No one seems to know its spelling or meaning, or how it sounds;
But I know that the awaited word exists;
It is not mysterious; it is not a figment of thought either;
That word is visible and audible,
And, I am waiting to hear it spoken loudly.
I am waiting to hear that word resound within me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Awareness

My body and my life is the wealth of my atman,
Of the atman which is the same in all beings as consciousness
As the master of organs
As the embodiment of eternal light vast and all-embracing.

My body and my life, bound by nature, is my domain
Nurtured by the products of nature for the sake of existence
Health, strength, and determination,
For the sake of calmness which it alone can generate,
But which domain is a mere wisp
Covered by a thin sheet of skin
Hiding a nakedness not meant to be seen.

My body and my life is the reason for my limbs, directed by my mind,
To function and perform their defined duties which are the same in all beings,
The mind is my consciousness which makes me self-aware,
It is my inner-self that keeps me in check.

My body and my life has been witness to my awakening from the deep primordial
slumber,
The awakening that made me aware of several inhering evil tendencies and sloth,

And made me work for their destruction
And be ready to imbibe divineness and become expansive.

My body and my life has, after uprooting my lustful propensities
In the light of truth, seen me ripen,
And shedding my impurity become incorruptible and pure,
With eyes and ears open gain the required knowledge
To finally understand the reason for the incessant conflict
In which Truth and untruth seem to indulge.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Awareness Is Joy

Awareness is joy-
Our needed presence
To unravel secrets
And disclose things
Through speech
By initiating discourses,
Examining figments,
Sorting variety
And rewinding thoughts;
Without us
Things cannot exist
To be identified
And justify our existence.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Badalao (Change)

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mujh se pocchaa gayaa
kab talak aayegii
is taraf pyaar kii
jalati bujhati huii lo
mujh se bicchaDii huii
mai.n to dekhaa kiya
paaniyo.n kii taraf
unkii ghaTatii huii
tez raftaar ko
jo thii sahamii huii
cchoD kar
sab kinaaro.n ke cchor
aur pahaado.n se duur
paaniyo.n ke rukho.n ko
badaltii huii
har ghaDii

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Battle Of Life

Ever since leaving school, once a week
I have had the same set of friends gather at my place,
Where while relaxing on the rattan patio chairs we exchange
The same old oft-repeated words without knowing their meanings true;
We neither gamble nor speculate,
But we do laugh at the same old sick jokes,
Discuss cricket and examine Modi's role,
Savour the same dark brown Old Monk,
Devour the reheated spicy tikkas, shami kababs, and aloo-parathas,
And then, spend the night on the floor stretched covered head to toe
Coming awake only as the Sunday late-morning light silently creeps in;
Such has been our enjoyment of life;
This has been our life of plenty and ease.
There is no reason for us to suffer boredom;

We are always in the process of discovering each other,
We have learnt to keep our jolly good moods revived,
Not waste our smiles and laughter
And rise above pain and tears;
There has been no need to console each other
For we do not hurt anyone,
We do not possess anything more valuable than the air we breathe;
In this manner, my friends and I fight out our battle of life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Because Of Her I Am Never Alone

I can never forget her
she changed my way of thinking
and my way of life
by making me walk the path I avoided
and made me my judge
and my competitor
because of her, I can stretch my limbs
work out and run my thoughts
grasp the many available opportunities
and rue the missed ones
she is my imagination
meant only for me and for me alone
because of her, I am never alone

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Bechainii (Unrest)

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maanaa dushman hai zamaanaa apnaa
kis liye mujh se khafaa ho tum bhi
unhi.n khwaabo.n ko bunaa hai
jinhe.n palako.n pe sajaayaa tumne
ujale rango.n se bharaa thaa tumne

unhi.n geeto.n ko sunaa kartaa hun
jinke alfaaz hai.n sahame sahame
aur sur bhi hai.n jinke dheeme
koi funkaar nahi.n, koi jhankaar nahi.n
koi aawaaz nahi.n

binaa chaahe phir bhi
dil ki bechainii meri
khaae jatii hai mujhe
bheetar se
dheere dheere

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Beginning Of Time

I do not seek the impossible for it is known to me
The revealing light doesn't side with those who are
Unaware of the deception that darkness can rake
And who openly display their involuntary wares.

I do not seek the impossible that is beyond my reach
For as a probability it exists only in tales and dreams
As though mixed with unraveled secrets of the earth
And the manifested physical things and mental domains.

But I seek the possible that is beyond all acts and deeds
Of measuring, comparing and evaluating the perceived
Or the inferred or that which is occasionally thought about;
I seek the exalted one who had begun the cycle of Time.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Being Alone

I have lost my heart.
And now I have no feelings.
I lost my heart in a thorny hedge
Laid across the other side of the sand dune.

I live in a place that is arid and hot.
I live with my goats and camel.
It is very lonesome out there and painful.
There is no one to talk to and no one to argue;
Just the occasional rustle of the sand grains

The silence I daily confront is deafening;
Many ill-clashed old memories preface it.
And, tongue-tied I cannot shout or sing.
Because of my grief and fright
I have lost my heart to those memories.
I am left to gaze at the setting Sun
And wait for my extrication.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Belief And Piety

Religious fervour,
Emerging as a positive expression of faith
In having found the right and reliable support
To sustain belief in oneself,
Does not arise
Out of some kind of fear or anxiety.
A religious person regards God
As the light that brightens his life
And lights up his path.
Believing God to be Supremity Itself,
All-encasing and all-pervading,
Purposeful and methodical,
Therefore,
Not small and narrow in intent and content
But firm and full of devotion and dedication,
He does not hold a contrived view of the world
That leads only towards narrow ends which he knows
Is not the way
One essays the road of life and vision;
He is not confused,
He knows the three subtle manifestations that illuminate all things.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Beyond The Hills

Why did you hesitate
And firmly hold my hand
And looked at me for long
With deeply wounded eyes
That showed the nagging pain
Your efforts to seek relief
From the bout of dithering
And incessant doubting
That has plagued you ever since.

You have asked for your place
Amidst the gathered crowd
Eager to hear and weigh
The songs of love you brought
From a far-off cheerful land;
Their words are clear and sound
And your fingers strum the strings
And dig the common notes
And make all lonely hearts
Quickly flutter and sing.

A roan horse nearby stands
With its saddle touched with gold;
It is ready to take us both
Over the yonder knolls
Beyond which the birds fly low,
And the flowers remain in bloom
The deer romp about
In wait for you and me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Bezubaanon Ko

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be zabaano.n ko be zubaa.n kahiye
be zabaanii ki daastaa.n kahiye
raqs kartii ho zindagii jis mien
koi aisii bhii daastaa.n kahiye
bazm e sh'er o sukhan mien hai ab koun
aap saa kaun k?hushbayaa.n kahiye
ye to jhagaDaa hai do dilo.n kaa, aap
kis ko laaenge darmiyaa.n kahiye
ham ko to ek hi piyaale mien
mil gaaye jaise do jahaa.n kahiye
ho gaye un se be ta'luq ham
aap ise dil kaa imtihaa.n kahiye
dil ko kahiye jo rahnumaa e aql

aql ko dil kaa paasbaa.n kahiye
kaarvaan e hayaat kyuu.n hai Ravi
suu e manzil rawaa.n dawaa.n kahiye

Ravinder Kumar Soni

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bagiyaa mei.n merii hai aayaa
ghoo.n ghoo.n kartaa
ik ,
sooraj ki kirno.n se roshan
kaalaa bhooraa
ik ,
Daal Daal ke phoolo.n par hai manDraataa
phoolo.n ke ras kaa soudaaee
ye
sooraj pooje,
amrit Dhoonde,
duniyaavi bandish ko toDe,
TooTe rishte phir se joDe,
prem ke bandhan mei.n hai bandhe,
jeewan kii aashaa ko jagaae,
ghoo.n ghoo.n kartaa uDtaa jaae
auro.n ke jeewan kaa haamee
ye

Bitterness

Something is bothering me,
I know not what,
But my right thumb continues to twitch,
For no reason whatsoever
My right arm continues to ache.

Reclining against the book-shelf
I try to recollect
The book I had last browsed,
The name of its author and import,
And its subject
Not far removed from my own world of ideas
And its object
Very near to my heart.

When at night I had called on her
To know about her response
To my overture,
My favourite dream hidden in my eyes
Played the victim and painted me black.

The few blank spaces that are in my mind
Left by stray ill-woven thoughts
They puzzle me and make me seek
The impossible,
Whereas the grass spread on the ground
Still waits for the early dew to dry.

Does this bother me, I ask.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Blinded By Love

Before I ask you to be mine forever
Assure me, my love is purer than truth
My mind blinded by feelings for you
It stays in the sideline a poorer judge
Then it is my heart which at once flutters
The moment I sight you in the crowd
Laughing and dancing with friends of old.
What has become of me? I now doubt
With my love for you that is pure and true
Is it my mind playing a game with me
Or my fears taking their eventual toll
When I know you are here for me alone
And for me alone you will always be.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Blissful Hope

You've sown the seed of happiness
In my garden of rich soil,
Come Spring that plant will bloom and spread
Most pleasant smell and joy,
Then birds will sing and the buzzing bees
Will different nectars taste,
The clouds will heap to shade the buds
From the day-time fiery heat;
Then, you and I seeking some sleep
Can lie upon the grass
That's lush and green 'n' fresh and wet
Laid out as satin moss.
My hopes and dreams, my life's delight,
Along with yours will read
Our heartiest tales of faith and bliss
That's written in the sky.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Boldness

Where ever I go you follow me,
Stirring me to act and think otherwise
Past all confines of simple thoughts,
O Audacity!

You made me feel my realness
And use my strength to face the world
With ease unravel involvement,
O Audacity!

My daring, verve and sturdy will
My stubbornness and my struggle to be
These are your gifts given openly,
O Audacity!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Born Of Light

Through my open window
I see the world aglow
With hope and happiness;
My dry and vacant eyes
To my famished mind
They tell a different tale -
When light will fade away
Darkness will descend
And this world will go to sleep
Then I will cease to be
Though born of light.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Breach

I heard his call seeking relief
The strange affliction in his voice
Showed his pain and sufferings
That he otherwise did not hide

Last night his brother had come
Worried he said he did not want
To witness another death so soon
Their father had died a week ago

He told me that his brother Jayant
Did not want to live any more
That he was unable to breath properly
Or even sleep during the night time

He had stopped dreaming recalling
The past, or about the days to come
After father's death, he gave up belief
In himself and withdrew from his life

Jayant is older than I am and wiser
I believe he cannot give in so easily
He has a strong character and mind;
What bothers him we must know

We found him alone and barefooted
Casually strolling on the green grass
On seeing us, he asked us to join him
I was neither shocked nor surprised

I knew he was battling with himself
He could not get away from his mind
That he had found difficult to alter
Along with his ongoing perceptions

I was not anticipating this problem
Affecting someone as active as he
Fear gripped me, what if I were to be
In the same situation, Jayant was involved

He placed his hands on my shoulder
And looked into my eyes to read me
He smiled and quietly moved away
My thoughts had begun to engage him

'I knew you would come', he whispered
'But I never meant to scare you thus
Just wait for your turn my dear friend
You will then know what ails me now.'

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Call For Revival

My lord! I have never heard your call reverberate again ever since
Your first call which had brought me awake from my slumber,
The call that had made my senses active preparing me to move about;
How very surprised I was then to see in the brightness of open day-light
Spread before my eyes many things and objects strange and nameless,
Some motionless and others moving but certainly associated with me;
The very thought that I wanted to understand and know all that which I had seen
had given me delight
I had proceeded to taste happiness the like of which I had never ever done
before.
But all this I had experienced many millennia ago when the created duty-bound
were fast evolving,
And I had not yet known you as intimately as I do so now;
As of now though wide awake with all my senses tense and alert
I seem to have gone back to sleep comforted by my mere being,
Therefore, it is time that I hear your same call loudly resound initiating the
needed revival for me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Call Me By My Name

In the street
I see people walking to and fro
I hear many voices,
Amongst those are the voices I do not know
Call out my name.
Why should I stop them?
I shall let them call me by my name,
I have nothing to hide
Not even my curiosity
That has made those who know me
Uneasy and quietly move away
Failing to read my thoughts cornering my heart
Throbbing in unison with theirs
If this be true and is widely known
Would anyone still call me by my name, I wonder.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Cannot Paint Dreams

He was adamant, he certainly was;
He wanted to elope with his dreams;
Beautiful they are, he always said.
Nothing could stop him, not even the fear of dark nights
Or the thunder and pouring rain of a wild storm,
He was strong of will.
He said he knew where he would like to settle down,
Somewhere far above the earthly din and commotion
In the bosom of the woolly clouds, he was very fond of
That he had cared to paint on the cold and rigid canvas
Adorning the stout branch of the old banyan tree
And guarded his bed where he lay weaving those lovely dreams.
He was deeply in love,
But he did not know how to paint his dreams;
No one can ever know about his dreams,
This he knew.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Care

Fruitful has been my wait, for each dawn
Has taught me to value and rescue my dreams,
Longings, hopes, and aspirations these together
Have made me breathe, move and live long.

Each evening when I see darkness creep in and spread
My doubts too raise their head by way of default
My eyes no longer bright but heavy tend to close
And my body tired and numb gathers itself for sleep.

When I sleep all-stars in a rhythm invitingly twinkle,
Quietly sing in a chorus their wordless songs
And promise for me absolute relief from worry and pain,
A peaceful world to live in and enjoyment of happiness.

When I am awake I wait for each dawn to break
And watch them erase all residual shades and stripes
And the brilliance of the sun then lighting up the world
Infuse new life and revive the dull and the dead.

This is the game I have played ever since my birth
Ensuring a known pattern to dictate and sound
The beginnings and the ends of tales told untold
And allow me to watch the quiet passage of Time.□

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Change

It is time to leave, said he
The sun has set
And we all need a rest
We have toiled on this field the whole day
There will be tomorrow and the next
And our work will surely be done by then
The seeds we sow will sprout in time

He exudes great confidence
He leads a group that is eager to learn
I am a part of that group
I have prepared myself well
And suit the task at hand

We must find fresh food for our thoughts already gone stale
Today we have re-planted the seeds of doubt
Only when we doubt we question
Seek clarifications and re-learn
We shall wait for doubts to take firm roots
We shall feed on doubts
We shall then become sharp and more inquisitive
And nothing will escape our eye

Next, we shall sow the seeds of reform
And start building a new world

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Choice

Pick up the Ace of Hearts,
Part it in two;
One half disturbs the mind,
And the other deceives the eye.

Repair the blunt nib in use,
The ink has yet to dry;
Allow your words to flow
And wash away the blues and grime.

Recall their names to mind,
You have known them all;
But those who know you
Never knew you well with pride.

The birds are quiet and nesting,
You haven't any song to sing;
You have completed your day's day's work;
There is only the long night to pass.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Chosen Quest

No one but I shall try
To reverse the flow of time;
No one but I shall try
To seek forgotten moods;
No one but I shall try
To find the old in new;
No one but I shall try
To read the roving minds;
No one but I shall try
To bear the heat and cold;
No one but I shall try
To block the piercing wind;
No one but I shall try
To shift my doubting gaze;
No one but I shall try
To see a happy face;
No one but I shall try
To mend a yawning split;
No one but I shall try
To rid my endless wait;
No one but I shall try
To meet my destined end.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Clips And Clamps

Clips And Clamps

The fearful darker night is here,
The Moon stays hidden behind densest of clouds;
All shaded lights burn brilliantly.

Neat and clean and lined with gold,
Here streets are covered with silver bricks,
Where greed and guilt hunt evenly.

A few frogs are heard croaking aloud,
They await the allotted turns to sing
And solve their riddles differently.

A pitcher filled with water stands
Braving the sun and smoldering sand,
Overhead a bird soars silently.

A slithering snake climbs up the tree
To raid the nest of the nightingales;
Its fangs are bared menacingly.

Three steps can measure the universe,
Then ten are there to follow its course;
And forty that lift us heavenly.

The often-travelled roads stand blocked.
By many a barrier which rant and carp
At the crowds that gather grudgingly.

Thirst and hunger these two plights
For the living cause plenty of unrest and pain,
And crop up though fed frequently.

Before any restart takes its toll
It's time for the tired to rest and sleep,
Why seek the undue recklessly?

Closeness

You were born with me
As my second form,
And we circle each other
As the Day and Night;
One shining bright
Lighting up the world
As Consciousness
That is wholly divine,
And the other obscure
And spiritually dark
That allows in its womb
Awareness to manifest;
Our mother who feeds us
Keeps a close watch
She holds us firmly
Close to her breast
And does not allow us
To drift apart
And immediately fade away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Cobbler's Song

There is a cobbler at Parry's Stop,
He has often mended my shoes
Those I wear to school.
I know him well, he smiles a lot,
And hums his favourite tune
As he shines my shoes.
'Lend me the words', I had asked of him,
'I'll hum that song with you
As you mend my shoes.'
He said - 'My child, you do not know;
Those words are very harsh,
Wicked cold and sharp.'

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Colour Of Spring

Colour Of Spring

You know,
You have kept me waiting for a long time;
I have waited for you to come to me
With your usual ease and simplicity
Carrying all your pain and joy,
Your secrets and wants,
With your usual grace and tenderness
And a beautiful smile sparkling on your lips,
The lips that are eager to pour out
Solemn words that tell of your love
And many heartaches suffered,
I know you also long for me.
My wait for you has indeed become very painful,
My eyes are tired,
Old courtesies and promises seem forgotten;
But I know you are not far away
Spring has coloured my world for you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Competent Incompetence

Even you would loathe my presence if you were to know
Where I had been to, consorted with whom and why;
Suffice it to say I could not face the bright sunlight
Nor keep count of time turned aside.

I don't want to speak about my travail, for I must walk
The flaming road leading to perdition and the far beyond;
The barriers I had erected in my mind are here to stay
I have only to undo the induced wrong.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Complex Reliefs

We can always undo the harm
Caused by anger and spite
Heavy on our weak psyche;
We have to marry our minds
And soothe our nerves.

Treading the ground differently
And ignoring our aims and reach
Till our journeys reach their end
We may have to wait
Simply wait
And ensure our paths do cross again.

If words alone matter,
The lessons we might learn
And the favours we can earn,
These will not mean anything.
No one will ever ask
Who has cut the knot?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Complicating Ease Of Will

How can I forget my past?
Can I forget the basis of my present?
It is easier said than done.

If I were to forget my past
There will be no present to experience
Or reason to activate dreams.

How can I shape my future?
When there is nothing else to rely upon
The future depends on dreams.

Are dreams firmly founded?
They are tenuous, uncertain and short-lived
Who can wind and unwind dreams?

Aren't dreams founded in the past?
The three phases of flowing time riddled with doubt
Compel origination of queries.

Answers are already known.
Must I not relocate those reacts, hide them,
Along with the questions, I readily ask?

My mind, adopting the linear mode,
Seeking peace has disarmed and shed its load
Without raising any doubt.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Conditioned Quest

Conditioned Quest

A conditioned quest
I think,
Sooner my anger subsides
The closer I shall get to the well
To draw water
To satisfy my old thirst
And cool my brain;
Pretty short-tempered I am,
I do not listen or talk well,
I must exercise restraint;
Kindly draw me away from the strife
Not initiated by me
And that has no end;
My friend,
Words may not be able
To explain away the drill begun
To subvert the spread of calmness
Prayed for at each dawn and dusk;
Avoid a repeat of the usual rigmarole,
Do not call out aloud my name
And alert the other tired souls who are asleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Confidence

Come! Let us swing along the bay
And mark the time of our stay
Beside the sea that's churning.

Then we will hear the windy howl
Soon wave and raise a silly scowl
Without the sea relenting.

Then rushing on to an empty beach
We'll find within our simple reach
All but fate depending.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Conquering Fear

Yesterday I was on the hill I thought I could not have climbed;
Sitting there, I had gathered my breath and strength and had
Recalled to mind my strong determination and concerted efforts
That had in tandem worked and made my climb uphill possible
I also wondered what more could I have achieved,
I was affected by doubt and ambition, the drivers of my foray.

Back home I spent a sleepless night trying to find the cause
I had climbed a barren hill no one else had attempted before;
The acceptance of a challenge could not be the sole reason.
Early rays of dawn found me head down falling asleep and snoring,
It seems I knew about the outcome before I had begun the climb;
My deliberate venture had helped me conquer all my hidden fears.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Consequence

Never doubt Speech,
Each word spoken has a meaning attached;
Grasp that meaning,
And make it ring out loud and clear to resonate.

Our appearance in the world of needs had created a furor,
And a growing deceptive vacuum
That our thoughts and words do not easily penetrate
Though formless have to stay alive and receptive.

How we think and express is the essential mark of our being;
As a part of logic and basically amenable
Our thoughts and words are alterable and can be improved,
Because of them we exist and evolve.

With glowing desires assembled by fine reason
We decorate our thoughts and speech,
We dress them in their self-stitched finery
That appeals to our hearts and mind alone.

Our thoughts and speech work up and affect our hearts,
They build up an excitement which is sharp and piercing
For they initiate actions but need a spot orientation,
They need to march abreast and fill a vacuum.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Consequents

For a moment I forgot to raise my eyes
To look at the sky that mocked at me
And made me feel small and irrelevant;
I was shaken up by a loud thunderclap
That had revived in me uneasy thoughts.

For a moment I sought to remove the mask
That had for long kept covered my face
Scarred by many follies and misadventures,
Then when I saw my fingers frisk the beads
I knew I had the chance to claim my ground.

For a moment I thought I never did exist
Things I touched, saw or heard were a sham
As though I did not then feel, see or hear
And had reached the remote dark beyond
Where all senses, thoughts, and dreams cease.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Contentment

Maybe I too must walk the lane forgotten and forlorn
And test my lonely state;
The life I lead is a deadly load I cannot rid alone,
I have to mend my ways.

The lightening raids upon my thoughts by fearing impressions,
They do not ring a bell;
Uplifted are my basic bends they need not be revised,
They merely twist and turn.

The barren waves raising the stakes should not be read alone,
Often they subside;
Alongside me, I see a brook that is filled with dreams and hope,
So I can flash a smile.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Core Entreaty

Core Entity

We know you to be true
Hence our belief in you is total and unwavering;
Your words and acts we hear and watch,
Overawed by your presence in our midst,
Carry a worthy tale adding weight to the need of you
In our struggle to gradually wipe away
All stubborn elements of disbelief that survive
Fed upon many lies, deceptions, and desertions
And affect us equivocally;
We have also watched Time on your directions
Set afoot tenderly the gentle and the hardy folks
Upon numerous journeys of ease and improvements
But dotted with untold perils that add to the strain and ardour
Already brewing in our minds
That has invariably awakened within us varying wants and needs;
My Lord! Relieve us from this painful ordeal.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Counting The Stars

When I saw the stars
I lost my way,
Now I am left alone
In the wide open
To handle the sky
Counting those stars;
My friends are gone
To where they belong,
They have no need
To count or string
The shining stars.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Cousins

Death and Sleep, cousins,
Differ in attitude
One is cold and unforgiving,
The other warm and permissive.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Crossing The Yamuna

It is as though we should never meet
Near the frail pontoon bridge
Flung across the Yamuna,
In the rainless months
Its water stagnating raises an acrid stink;
But whichever be the weather
I must cross the river
Not alone.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Crucial

A long journey
And a testing time
It has been
That has brought you
To tread the path
Leading to my open door
I believe you
And you seek me

As you near me
Step more lightly now
Lest your feet
Rub-off the inviting sheen
Of proximity
And shatter faith
Fragile is the path
Paved with belief

Ravinder Kumar Soni

De Gayaa Koun Jaane Mujh Ko Khabar

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de gayaa koun jaane mujh ko khabar
raat aatii hai saath le ke sahar
dil miraa muztarib hai tere baghair
aa ke tuu dekh letaa ek nazar
mere daaman kii mael dhul jaatii
ashk e khuu.n girtaa aankh se bah kar
jo haqeeqat ko khawaab kahate hai.n
log kahate hai.n un ko ahal e nazar
chchoD kar mujh ko darmiyaan e dasht
qaafilaa waqt kaa chalaai hai kidhar
dil mei.n jo daagh the judaaii ke
hai.n vahii aasmaan pe shams o qamar
dasht o gulshan mei.n kyaa bhaTaktii hai
voh hawaa jo chalii thii ho ke niDar

ae Ravi dil ki dhaDkane.n hai.n tez
koi ab aasmaa.n se kah de Thahar

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Deadlock

Deadlock

Etched in blue on a marble slab that reflects sunlight
I found strange figures and symbols I could not read;
They were not seemingly familiar crude caricatures
And they certainly belonged to a very remote past;
I thought they were the stars and the constellations.

They weren't because unlike the stellar bodies that are
They do not speak about themselves but stay mute.
I do not know why the bright blue lines refuse to fade,
Their white background continues to reflect sunlight,
And I am made to stand aloof and watch this tease.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Death Of A Hero

Maybe he is the last in the line of great heroes
Who had suffered the agony of remaining unknown while they lived,
He is about to die and knows he had done nothing of note
Except walking in front of the have-nots carrying a flag
Shouting slogans against the establishment run by the haves.
He is lying prone on the road that leads to the assembly hall
Shot in the chest by a policeman.
The have-nots do not want he should survive,
They want him dead.
They want a hero of the moment who has laid down his life;
The dead do not reveal the truth.
I see the pain reflected in his eyes
His thoughts were for his family;
He has a large family to feed, who will look after his family now.
Soon he closed his eyes.
Before the paramedics came to pick him up
He was already dead.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Death Of Cassini

Cassini is dead.
It has vapourized;
It was our roving eye pushed to its death.

I have seen it ride the poisonous clouds
And die a flaming death.
Whither my mind will lead me hence
I do not know but only know
In the dimming light, led far away
By many a wind of graded change
In the lap of Space and defying Time,
I had a view of the scenes not seen before.

Now I am left blind;
Who will make me see again?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Death Wish

For a very long time now
I have chased Death,
Wanting Death to embrace me,
To hold me quiet and firmly
In its neat dark velvety folds,
Freeing me at once
From worry, hunger, and pain
That combined plague life.

I do not fear Death,
I know it to be the Ultimate Truth;
No one fears the Truth.

Also, I am not a demanding person;
Had I not been told about Death,
About the comfort it provides,
I would not have longed for its cosy hold;
I am duty-bound to achieve what I seek,
I must find the way to meet
And face Death.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Defiled

Spools of thread
Arranged in rows
Divert my eye.

My weaver's hands
Roughened and cut
Tend to bleed.

The shuttle's swing
As mangled lines
Hide my pain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Delhi's Unbearable Heat

The summer heat has burnt my skin
Which tingles and itches all through day and night
Like some medieval torture revised.

Though I find this amusing, I am to blame;
I chose to live in Delhi after I retired,
In the city where I was born, prayed and played.
I am proud of its great history.
This city which has spoiled me with many favours;
It continues to pamper and protect me,
Continues to recite its beautiful past for me
To savour its music, poetry and etiquette charms
That I gleefully ride its extended waves
Spread far in all directions as its folktales.

I have been asked to avoid the sun,
Not to expose my face and limbs,
Apply the healing salve to the skin,
Drape my body in a light sheet,
Seek the shade and drink cool fluids
Even though the heat that is equally fierce
Generated by those who rule and fool
Who else can bear but I, unprotected.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Delight Sublime

Now,
There can be no unexpected events in my life
To shake me from my reverie;
Sleep no longer affects me.

Now,
There cannot be things I do not know about;
There are no surprises for me to deal with,
I have discovered myself,
I have found myself not adrift but firmly rooted.

Aware of my place in the phenomenal world;
Aware of my reality;
Aware of my eternality;
Now I know who I am.

I know the truth,
I am the finality not easily discerned.
Friends, you too can find me,
You can find me reveling within you,
Dancing and smiling at you,
The delight of your experience.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Despair

The blowing wind and running sand
Rake up an old issue -
How did the rat without the cat
Jump over the window-sill?
I know not why that daring rat
Ran up to the village-well,
But gone is the time when maidens there
Enjoyed their latest quip;
The cat had stood alongside a tree
Expecting the rat's return,
But I saw the rat curling up its tail
And flash a toothy grin.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Detention

Extending my arms upward
towards the heavens
seeking a new retreat
I have captured a small piece of the sky.

After eliminating Time,
a study in comparison,
whose exit has left no trace,
now I hold tightly clasped
within my closed fist
a wee part of Space,
arrested and straight.

And,
held therein
within that fold
the imperfect and the perfect,
the two ancient conjurers,
old adversaries,
cavort merrily
concocting shapes and sizes-
but acting evenly
they vie for the same space
play out their roles
either creating various thought-waves
as that many threads of continuity
pursuing some quest unknown
or watching and waiting for me to slacken my grip
detaining that one small piece of the sky,
testing destinies
and limits of endurance
the same old game
the same initiations
the same old imitations.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Devotion

She has returned from the hill-top temple
But has not uttered a word,
I have heard the sound of the cymbals strike
As she sang and prayed;
She has remained pensive since.
She does not believe in expressing herself,
Maybe, she does not need to expose the truth;
Uncertain I am, and still, do not know
Whether I should seek her or through her
My sacred object of worship -
The source of my strength.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Devoutness

The flowers I tend each day,
With their colour and smell spread far and wide
They brighten my surroundings and life.
At times when I do pluck them, it is with a sense of guilt
But I feel no pain or pity.
Although I know pity is an unusual pain,
A much-talked-about emotion;
It awakens either sorrow or mercy
But rarely compassion or sympathy.

The flowers I hold are short-lived individuals,
They are the reason and parts of a bigger life
To separate them from which support I have no right,
Hence the guilt;
They do not know sorrow,
They cause no harm,
They do not seek mercy or even kindness.

I am devoted to them.
Therefore, whenever I hold those flowers in my hand
I hold them very gently,
I also feel their tenderness,
And finding piety manifested within
I offer them in prayer to the object of my devotion.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Dichotomy Of Thought

Dichotomy Of Thought

As I approached I heard him laugh, I found him surrounded by books;
He also had a thick book open in his hands; my friend was an avid reader
And I am not.

I took a seat close to him. We were in a local library that rented books.

And he took notice of me and said -

'The kind of books I read show me the paths that lead to results;
Such books compel me to perform with a desire to achieve a certain goal.'

'Agreed, but what do they contain?' I asked.

He said -

'They contain words that are audible only to the mind;
They make me listen to their voice and contemplate;
They make me learned and wise.'

'You mean to say that the books you read tutor in a silent mode, is it?' I asked.

He replied -

'They do conclusively tell me:
Whether prescribed or voluntary or involuntary,
Accidental or incidental,
All physical and mental acts
Belong to my body which experiences all consequences,
Derives and enjoys pleasure, invites and suffers agony and pain.'

'To what account?' I enquired.

'Because I suffer joy and agony I dream and experiment,
Therefore, I look outwards, upwards and then inwards;
Thus, I banish doubts and fears
While seeking the cause behind all appearances
And the cause behind that cause.'

'After knowing that cause what then?' I was eager to know.

'The books I read, on revealing the cause behind the cause of all appearances,
Advocate the progressive transcendence of my true being;

They erase the memory of the presence of another beside myself.'
He responded thus and ended our brief conversation.

I do read the same books but find them to be incomplete;
They do not tell me
As to why I must experience the six modifications that I cannot do without;
Why whatsoever I perceive ought to be treated as mere illusions,
And as to why the clouds that strive to cover the sun
Affect our impressions.
Indeed, such like books have placed me in a very tight squeeze.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Differing Fortunes

My friend and I,
One fine evening,
Were crossing the park frequented by us,
But that day he was uneasy, my longtime friend.
He was looking for something
He alone knew.

But as we turned towards the wooden bridge
He said
'There it is my favourite swing.'

I knew, it was
The same light coloured swing dismantled
And replaced
By a trendy shiny piece.

I asked -
'What is so special about this swing? '
He replied -
'This swing is my discarded childhood when
My innocence alone was my true nature,
I desired nothing else but plenty of love,
Committed no wrong,
Hated no one
And never was pestered by an elder.'

He reminded me of my childhood
Spent in the lap of poverty,
When I did not know anything about
Innocence and love or hate and wrongs;
I had no bed to sleep,
No clean clothes to wear,
But pained by constant hunger and thirst
Dreamt only about a single hearty meal
The likes of which
I then never did eat.

No one enquires.
Even now my friend has not cared to ask me about my childhood,

For I have no swing
That could remind me of those simple days.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Diffused Attentions

I was never good at studies;
Unaware of their subtle connotations
I still do not understand the letters
And numbers,
Unable to extract their meanings
I continue to waver and flounder;
It is as though
I have lost myself in sleep, fusty and dormant.

The things I do remain unchecked
They do not bring happiness,
They even fail to awaken me.
Fettered by ungainly thoughts
I wriggle within the narrow confines of my hold.
Moreover,
There is the pain to contend with
And there are the silent tears to wipe
But there is no place for me to hide.

The frequent sighting of my image
Captured by my mind unnerves me,
It blocks my escape from darkness.

The thirst I suffer,
And the heat I bear,
They do not make me measure and forget
The censure I have suffered.
Lest I fail to gain what I seek,
I must cleanse my mind
Not with the spoken words
Ringing in my ears
But with the heady one-pointedness
Tapping the inner source of energy
To help the placid and the aroused states of the mind
Find identical levels just as the letters do.

But, do I have the time to learn the letters, I ask.

Dilemma

I have seen fires burn rapidly,
I have seen the fires with their cracking flames issuing forth and rising skywards;

I have also on account of the heat of the fires felt the wind gush hither and
thither softly and at times forcefully,
And also seen the rise and fall of river levels and that of the ocean tides,
Which sightings have made me think and re-think
And stabilize my wavering mind!

Nonetheless,

I am still in search of the stream which flows up-hill,
There must exist at least one such upward flowing stream
To mock at all those streams which all the while and untiringly
Laden with sour and sweet memories of their own experiences
Trundle down-hill as though aping each other;
Thus far, and very far I have ventured in my search
Even though I have seen the wind by its force
Compel water-falls to reverse their flow
I have not come across a single stream
That regularly flows upwards
Lifting immortal waters back to the upper reaches of space.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Disdain

Disdain

I know

If I am not included in the count of heads
I am not going to be missed by those who need me;
I maybe ravaged by reckless desires
That I never did invite,
I would still prefer to loiter here and there.

I am vulnerable.

In the wide open, I cannot hide from the evil gaze
Of the grand multitude
Driven by greed, jealousy, and hate that can affect me;
I have no wings to fly
But I cannot stay indoors,
Its four walls cannot cover me,
They cannot also hold me back
And, I am not afraid.

The world outside vies with the world within me,
Both are dear to me;
The otherness they cause by their struggle
Frequently leads me astray;
It makes my life motivated,
Creates many twists and turns
To complicate and excite me;
Amongst these confrontists
Who ultimately wins does not bother me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Disparity

There are many shades of the colours found in a rainbow,
I seem to have seen them all variously and lost their count;
My friends remind me of the time when to pep-up my dreams
I had borrowed those shades intending to return them soon,
All of my dreams were repetitive, brief, dim and listless.

Much has been said and written about my unceasing efforts
Aimed at removing all obstructions dotting my lone path;
I have tried to raise the standard coloured by my outlook
In anticipation of the success that has for long evaded me.

The pile of the expected and the unexpected occurrences
Is a warmed up froth of the concocted and spiced broth
Meant to feed the inquest, learning, prudence and thought
I had had knowingly endeavoured to revive and uplift.

My friends tell me about how my temporary blindness
And the occasional loss of memory makes my nerves taut;
They remind me of the things I have ignored or rejected
Which I still need and desire wanting yet another chance
To bridge the wide gap my lack of understanding has left.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Dissimilar Grains Of Sand

While it rains
Dissimilar grains of sand
Are often seen jostling for space
Beneath a heap of grey sand
Brought from a river-bed
And freshly unloaded
At any construction site;
They vie for prominence
And seek recognition and gratitude,
For they know they are the base.
But,
The rain-water trickles alongside,
It appreciates their zeal,
And soon washes them away
Letting them clog a dark drain
And unceremoniously destroy
Their dreams and promises.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Distinct

Three forms
Of a main
Seldom meet
They first agree
And then disagree
A quarrel ensues
No approach
While one screams
The other hides
And one shies
Out of fear
But hold ground
No result
Broken branches
And drier leaves
They easily burn
Rights and rites
Set aside
Awaited change
There will be
A rise and upsurge
Irregularity prized
Then nibs will fail
And the ink will spill
To waste
Over periods of time.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Disturbance

Two notes
High and low
Pierce the quiet
Stir the pot
And the mind
Riding the steed
That drags the sun
Covers the stars
And fills the eyes
With darker nights
No one sleeps
No one dreams
No one speaks
About the past
As a premise
Here and there
Little birds
Flit about
In search of feed

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Disturbed Sleep

Someone has dared to disturb my sleep.
Left to myself, alone, I was fast asleep;
Then I had no dreams and no world to spoil
Those precious moments of rest and peace I enjoyed,
And my mind was freed from all ravenous thoughts.
I had earned this rest the hard way.
No streets or roads were strange to me,
I had traversed them over and over again;
No hills or dales were new to me,
I had seen their charm extract their toll;
No tales of wind and rain were unheard for me
I had known about their poignant uproar
Variously caused on land and seas - the tsunami and the storms;
These had made me realize the worth of peace.
Must I go back to sleep, I ask -
I must;
I must indeed continue with my sleep.
There is a hitch -
I shall have to wait once more for my turn to sleep;
I shall have to wait for the singular voice that had in the past
Gripped me with its measured notes and lulled me to sleep.
But, say I,
Would I miss the soft head-rest
I had on being roused flung aside in a fit of rage!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Divination

I have a roving eye;
Try I did I could not resist looking up again and again
Towards the stars,
But unable to fix for very long my gaze on a particular one
My eyes had leapt from one star to another
To locate the link between them;
This effort made me aware of the language of silence.

Then,
Having learnt the language of silence and its intricacies, and with it
Gained the knowledge of the nature of others' mind though not its contents
And the associated power by equally treating the three kinds of changes,
I now ask - Have I obtained the knowledge of the past and the future?
Have I acquired the understanding of all kinds of utterances?
Am I now able to recognize the portents of own death?

I have deliberated;
My mature reflection on the previous understanding
Of what is and what is not
Has made me avoid verbal delusion by honing my intellect,
By grasping all hidden meanings and knowing all hidden secrets
And gradually ascend the slender bridge firmly linking
Understanding and expression,
Tone and tenor,
Sequences and consequences;
Even though I have not failed to notice that
The purity of the mind at once destroys all impurities,
The embodied speech with its meaning known unveils the truth,
Descriptions and definitions and the subject thought over by the mind
Gain more clarity and are attentively heard.

Since the destroyer of all pains and ailments moves yet does not move
The very concept of the past and future
Holds no relevance when all differences cease to exist;
And the empiricism based on the sixteen perceivable transformations that
created the world
Renders tone and tenor redundant.
Because the same ever-present destroyer is by itself birth and death
This understanding has made me realize the sameness of how and why

Of the observed occurrences stitching sequences as various co-incidental facts
And after reminiscently examining and analyzing and learning from them
Concluded that the deceptive ways of ignorance
And the cognition of simultaneity must be avoided.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Do Not Leave Me

Sweet dreams!

Stay with me beyond the rise of a new day,
Have no fear; the sun will not scald your wispieness;
It will not unsettle your moonlit tender cast;
I have asked the sun not to. Do stay with me.
You have come to me after a long wait and given me joy.
How can I lose you now after you have filled my eyes and mind!
You have shown me that I wanted to see everywhere,
The colours of love beautifully displayed.
I beg of you, do not leave me ever my sweet dreams.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Do Not Leave Me, O Dawn

Do not leave me, O Dawn!
Remain with me.
Do not allow the sun to shine brightly
And heat up things and minds
And instill greater fears.
The unavoidable dark nights scare me
Their lurking shadows
And silent footfalls
Do not amuse me
I tend to lose my bearings and plot
But in wait for you must I suffer pain again?
The sea boils, the waves rise,
The fierce wind blows □
If only to torment me
And make me write and recite old tales.
I do admit
I want to be at peace with myself,
I want to enjoy forever the quietness you spread;
I also want the birds to softly sing
And our laughter to ring at all times to come.□
I beseech
Do not leave me, O Dawn!
Remain with me till my last breath.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Doubter

My weak perch
Edge of a rusted tin sheet
Wobbly and unsure
My fall is certain
I do not fly
Low down
On the ground
Some insects crawl
Covered with dust
Lizards feed
Green with envy
Am I one of them
On my forehead
The sandal paste
Has run dry
And peeling off
Where now to pray
No bell rings
The hour is past
Rest painful limbs
Cannot do without

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Dreamless Sleep

I went to sleep expecting to dream
A careless wayward tale
Of lofty towers and golden gates
And dancing nimble feet.

When come awake I did not find
The very dream I sought
I opened my eyes to look about
And feel the wind of change.

I knew I had erred so held my breath
And did not emit the cry
That would have awakened dozing ones
Including my sodden mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Dreamlike State

Till such time life continues to flourish in a dreamlike state
It behoves me to revel in the lyrical surge of my poetry.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Dreams

It is true if asked why I do cultivate dreams
I would reply I want to live and I want joy
But dreams end suddenly and seldom rewind
And I have not learnt to tag my imaginings
The rake holding them always seems empty
Forcing me to weave new odd thoughts
Am I glad to know one day on
I will not relish the long wait for the end of my life
Not because of my vain ideas
But because longer is the wait
More I will stand to lose the joy I have earned.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Dreams And Desires

'Tread carefully the path leading to the fulfillment of desires;
It is slippery, treacherous, and painfully misleading.'
Thus I was told by the blowing wind
That caressed my forehead and my cheeks.
At the thresh-hold rigged with anticipation and expectation
The wait for the fulfillment of desires would be long and unbearable.
And then I was asked -
'What would I do once my desires were all fulfilled? '
Utterly confused I went into a shock,
For a few seconds, I could not think, I could not even breathe
But merely watched the fruit-laden branches of the mango tree
Sway and stoop lower and lower;
I even heard the music set free by the same wind
Float through and past those very fruit-laden branches.
Suddenly I heard someone call out my name
I opened my eyes
It was my mother wanting me to come awake
And be ready for the day.
She was worried about my reaching the school on time.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Drenched In Light

He said -

'Take hold of my hand,

Have no fear;

I shall lead you to the source of light.'

I was thrilled and could not suppress my delight;

I had eagerly awaited,

To be freed from the darkness that covered me,

Invaded and held me in a bind.

I felt his assuring hand; it was warm and friendly,

And so was his voice.

I could not see him or where we stood;

I asked him -

'I have not known light as yet;

Light could hurt me.

What would I gain on knowing the source of light? '

I could feel a slight tremor and tightening of his hand;

He was battling a thought.

I heard him explain -

'Light aids visibility

But it conceals Darkness.

Once the source of light is crossed

Both - Light and Darkness, cease to exist,

To overcome pleasure and pain

And conquer Life and Death.'

I gripped his hand and found myself drenched in light.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Drowning

Everyone asked
Why is his face covered?
Why is the lifeguard still asleep?
There in the deep water
Float the three who want to live
But will drown soon.
Why does he not wake up?
Why has he not heard their cries?
Who will save the poor three?
Shouted the agitated crowd.
A voice broke out,
'Papa, he does not move
The lifeguard does not move.'
The boy's father climbed up the stairs
'Yes, the lifeguard does not move,
He is not alive.'
Why did he die?
Who could have saved him?
No one seemed to know
The gathered soon melted away
Leaving the three to drown.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Eerie Silence Of A Windowless Room

Within the closed confines of my windowless top-floor room
Hidden in a dark corner away from the door, the room's only opening,
That had never allowed the light-rays to enter to brighten the room
Sits bent and folded a brooding silence not to be heard or talked about
Within the wide and narrow array of ordinary senses which create new worlds.

As though seeking a companion and waiting for all noises to settle down soon
That silence, patient it is, does not push or nudge, tease or tear, for there is
No one who can hear it speak if it were to speak, and there are displayed
Its language, words, idioms, logic, and reasoning that when combined
Give it a form that is otherwise difficult to comprehend and replicate.

I have spent hours in that windowless room expecting the door to be opened
By someone who could speak the same language without uttering a single word
That depicts any sound or tweet, harsh or pleasing to my hearing and feel,
And respond to the silence which by now is aged and distorted beyond repair,
Enable me to hear and address and thus revive my drooping dozy self.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Effect Of Time

Tell me -
Other than you
Who else is not enamoured by Time
Or does not long for Time
Or does not belong to Time
Or does not live in fear of Time?

We know -
Unmindful of our presence
Time moves at a steady pace.
It is not possible to ignore Time.
Its presence is virtually unavoidable.
It does not turn back anyone.
We only anticipate the course it unfolds
And then,
Wait for the good things to come to us.
Bad things are always with us.

Time attracts,
It instills longing and fear
Because it is the ground for a temporal order
And three-fold.
It is the cause of production,
It is persistence and the destruction of all;
We are all carried away
By the sequences of events it projects -
Their regularity or randomness,
Giving rise to the search
For the cause of the anticipation of a known event,
And about the how and why of the observed occurrences;

Time is in essence comparison.
It continues to exist
So long as one opts to remain attached
In this world of pleasure and pain;
The barriers erected by Time are
Those erected by the mind.

Effectiveness

I long for your gentle touch, O Wind!
I have not forgotten its soothing effects
Nor the green of the lawn changing shades
And the bushes and trees ready to stir.

You have met the waters of nearby lakes,
I can see the rise and fall of waves,
You have met the fire lit in my room,
I can see its flames shiver and lean.

So, come to me narrating the tale
Of your other heroics hidden from me,
I want to hear and see you again
And feel your touch in my restless mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Elation

The azure sky
Burnished and clear
Waits for light
To reveal the truth.

Truth remains
Covered by gold
The golden glow
Shuts the eye.

This noble sight
Meets the eye
As the early morn
At each sunrise.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Empathy

Why count the tears I shed
They do not tell anything
About what has hurt and pained
My gentle heart;
Do not commiserate.
But you want to know
Why I continue to suffer and cry!
I say, seek the smile
That shyly played upon my lips,
Bring back that smile;
Then, and only then,
I can showcase for you my plight.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

End Of A Spell

'Wake up', I heard him say;
I was in deep sleep.
I had told him about my various dreams
And it was because of him
I was lost in a dreamless sleep
That sleep he had now disturbed, my old friend Time.

But, on waking up
My open eyes detected no difference,
My old world shaped by my dreams
Had not altered,
I wasn't unhappy; I did not expect any change.

Nevertheless, I feel rested
I have asked my friend
To break the spell cast by my dreams.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

End Of A Tryst

Last night he did come to me
But he did not say why
He did not appear unhappy
He did not want to speak
I did not dare ask why

He was much older and wiser than me
He had taught me the way
To walk the path of life
He had died more than thirty years ago
I adore him as the lone God I knew
He gave me life
I have no other object of worship

I need not have wondered
Had I read the signs prominently displayed□
On the sky and the earth
There was no tumult
I need not have worried
Had I been awake and seen him approach
He is fond of me
I was asleep then

Sensing his presence I had come awake
I knew he had come to take me away
To the place where there never is a night
And the perpetual light will not blind me
He had promised me
He would come at the right time
And accompany me on the last lap of my journey
I could not tell him I was tired

He was a good teacher
He had kept me prepared
I could surrender my mind
I could control my breath
I had no other preparation to make

End Of Search

I think,
I should end my search,
I cannot chase a mental aberration;
My feet are firmly rooted
And my senses serve me well
Even if they rebel.
Instead
I could have chased an apparition
Or I could have been the object of my search
But then, I only exist
Within my limitations
Though I am unable to understand
Why do I exist?
I cannot know anything
That is beyond my imagination;
Even if something is there
It does not exist for me,
A thing that does not exist
Cannot be the object of my search.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ennui

No one will ever dare to track my movement
My path is strewn with splinters, thorns, and nails,
My legs suffer from continuous pain and the blistered feet
They bleed colouring the ground red and stall my pace,
And my firmly held resolve is dangerously rent.

Gathered in my hands are the dull seeds of doubt
They vie with the multi-hued beads of nurtured hope;
In awe I watch them rearrange queer designs
That they have caused to be seen kaleidoscopically,
Only to disrupt those mirrored images repeatedly.

My mornings begin whimsically weighed down by a trust
Built upon the ruins of numerous shattered dreams;
During the day-time, I battle against odds and drain,
And later seek the coziness of night thickly inked;
No one will want to copy my boring plight indeed.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Entreat

Let us all pray to be blessed with a knowing mind
That can view and admire the sparkle
Reflected on the surface of a water drop
Picked from the deep ocean of information
Placed on the tip of a sensitive finger
And held against the blazing Sun.

Let us all pray to be blessed with a certain mind
That can identify any manifestation,
Be able to see and cognize distinct marks,
Describe that manifestation in four ways -
Superficial, literal, hidden or implied,
Offer acceptable conclusions,
And coax the pursuers to experience it and rejoice.

Let us all pray to be blessed with a free mind
That awakens and ignites the fire and is ready
To know the worthy secrets held by the fire,
And weave happy thoughts,
Light up the dark spots seen on the face of the Sun,
And at once move towards the foundational consciousness
That underlies all faculties of understanding,
And then, with the coolness of intellectual argumentation
Work up right emotions and imaginations.

Let us pray to be blessed with a peaceful rested mind
That can infer truth and righteousness
Protect and light up the body
That acts as the means to reach the vast Beyond
Existing as the boundless ever lit knowable frontier
Where there is to be found freely spread everywhere
The much sought after endless happiness.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Escape

Not far from the bay's shore where with a book in hand
I don a worried smile and stand to brave the biting wind,
There lies the island that was coloured more emerald than plain green
Where the houses built with jewel-studded gold bricks lined up the streets,
Neatly shaded and filled with laughter,
Criss-cross the well-fed towns peopled by the mighty and the bright.
Valmiki has said such a place does exist ruled by a tyrant;
He also spoke about the war, general destruction, and the death
Of that ruler and his evil clan.
I wonder how and why the mighty and intelligent of that land
Allowed suchlike creatures to rule.
Behind me, I can still hear the woeful cry of hunger and pain,
The same as I constantly suffer
And wait for the boat to take me across the bay.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Essential Constraints

I am aware of the ancient routes drawn
On small and large maps and charts;
They do not remind me of things I have seen and felt,
They do not lead me to my elected goal -
The freedom from all that I now possess;
I have no wish to play any game,
I seek an escape from each such cause.

But, I cannot avoid environmental constraints,
These I need to concentrate;
I cannot avoid inducing such constraints
Lest I remain disarrayed;
I have learnt to merge these two aspects
And not disturb their lazing state of rest;
How can I raise smoke without a fire?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Essentiality

Even if I were to forget
The fiery sparks
I could not detain,
Reduced to tiny flecks of ash
Blown away by the wind
They settle on things
In their wake;
I would still have
Fanned the fire
All night long
To keep my house and mind
Lit up and warm.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Eternal Love

Seven days will do
Twenty is too many to woo her
She can be mine
Every day
I shall send her a bunch of fresh roses
Soaked with my love for her
The roses will not wither
They will smell the same all day
I shall stand in front of her window
Sing to her new melodies fine
And get a glimpse of her
I know she knows me
On the seventh day
She will open the window
Smile and wave at me
I shall approach her then
She will open the door
And emerge dressed in her best finery
And fall into my arms
I shall hold her very close
Enamored by the radiance of her face
The brightness of her eyes
And the softness of her lips
I know seven days will do to woo her
She will be forever mine

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Eventful Smile

Unexpectedly,
Some events do occur,
They will occur,
Do not pay a second thought
On what will become of me
After I leave your fold
To roam the wilderness -
My noisy world,
Without a cry,
And without a scream.

My friends know not where I am,
They call out my name,
The name I had given
Unto myself,
And still do not know what it means,
An indicator, perhaps,
Of things to come
Or not at all.

Those who care
They tell me -
Do not fear darkness
Its descent is brief.
But how can darkness descend?
It does not exist.
Light is given out by fire
And burns the eyes.

For once
I cannot wait to know -
Who will now see me smile - my sunny smile?
Tell me -
Who can see me smile before I leave?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Everness

Things said to last
Do not last
At last.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Expectation

Be brief O Wind, when you describe to me
The outcome of your flow across lands and seas,
About the people, you meet and do not meet,
About their constant struggles, conflicts, and strife,
About their plentiful dreams and lingering hopes,
About their worn-out smiles and salty tears,
About their words of praise, and anger and hate,
About their fervent swells and listless waits,
Describe to me all these while I sit in wait
To hear you speak, O Wind, most eagerly.
I have never been there where you have been many times before
Nor seen those things which you have seen time and again.

Silence greets me instead; I feel let down,
You have declined my call O Mighty Wind,
Even when I know the sustaining fact,
You are the light and the life-force that impels all things to act,
Sound and touch are your attributes
And that you are as stable as is the sky you roam.
Your refusal I find is sarcastic and sharp indeed,
You simply blew over me as though I had no ears
That I would not hear your scream which was loud and clear,
Other than me who else is here with whom you can freely talk;
I know you have, far above the roar of foaming waves,
Told Time to stay still and not move at all,
And also told the clouds to hide all luminaries
When those with eyes do not see or hinder,
And you have simply gone by without telling me anything about
Your recent dares that I had very much wished to know,
But wait I shall for your return,
O Wind!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Experiencing The Eternal

You and I have for long watched,
The gods,
The many constantly moving and playing natural and divine forces and powers
combined
Kept protected by the fire which impels the body and mind to act and engage in
works
Light up and cleanse the infinite and the indivisible space.

Their light is our light and their glow our glow,
Heated up and radiating everywhere and forever
Not finding amidst the preponderance of ignorance
The eternal Truth difficult to comprehend,
While in wait of each dawn,
United in the brilliantly lit higher world,
Enjoying peace and bliss,
We both maintain the fire which when lit up protects these forces.

We are aware that as we exist
So does mutuality between forces and functions exist
Stemming from the need to provide the necessary motive and impetus
To experience the effects of the struggles of the world
And to initiate, sustain and contain all acts and activities.

You and I,
The two faces of the same coin,
Have for long watched
Aided by right faith and knowledge
The purification of objects and thoughts,
And with it
The awakening of the intellect and the mind
Inducing changes and controls
For the inspired and the expired fires to rise unhindered.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Faasalaa

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Teri aankhon mein dhoondtaa koi
Zindagii aur pyaar kii rounaq
Chalaa aayaa hai dasht ke is paar
Jaanane ke liye ki sach kyaa hai
Teraa vaadaa ya dhadkanen dil kii
Bahut maasoom hai woh
Dekhne par bhii dikh sakaa na jise
Faaslaa thaa jo dooriiyon bhar kaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Face Of Serenity

Do not ask me why I often laughed
While making my elaborations plain,
When you and I had walked the lane
That leads to joy and happiness.

I did show you the simple way to thrill
To enhance the joy or dispense delight
In the world filled with misery and grief
And is deeply wedged and obstinate.

Pain even if brief can mark the psyche
Of those who suffer its nasty pangs;
It is easy to count the folds of joy
And gauge the limits of ecstasy.

Heartaches run on a lifetime track
From whose woe there is no easy escape
What joy, what happiness, can anyone convey
To the stricken souls who seek escape?

The stalled jig must recommence
In a gleeful mood with its complex moves
Retracing the precedent drawn by us
And uncover the face of Serenity.

I had told you I could have run away
Chasing the dreams now seldom seen
With you maintaining a steady pace
We can walk these paths gracefully.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Facing Truth

My father said -

'I have watched you mature and grow old.

Yes, it has been a very long journey for you. You must be tired.'

I love greenery. I find it soothing to the eye.

We were sitting in the balcony facing a park.

My father had come visiting after a very long time, and I was delighted.

He had died some thirty-six years ago.

We were relishing hot coffee.

'How could I have avoided old age; even you could not.'

I said for the sake of saying something,

'Tiredness is part of any game played; life is a game played every day.

Ours is not a dream world; it is not an illusion.'

'But, my son,

you are aware that nescience was the subtle condition of the world,
the cause of the beginningless course of life.

There is life in dreams and illusions as well

otherwise they wouldn't speak for themselves as they do
when we are not awake or aware.'

'You had told me that this world of manifoldness is unreal

and that the plurality noticed by us is an illusion.'

'I did. I did also say that whereas plurality is a wrong perception

the phenomenal world is unreal compared with the waking state.'

'Then why the need to be born and live up to old age compels us to act and
improvise? '

I asked.

'The need to be born again and again is to maintain continuity in the phenomenal
world.

The need to live up to old age is because of the will to live.

These two needs check the generation of time-lag and resultant inaction,
they make us act and improvise.'

'What is the meaning of pleasure and why do we always seek the pleasant? '

'What we call Pleasure is a mental aberration;
the mind is never at rest and stays agitated by desires.
Pleasure is the state of being satisfied.
It is not happiness.
The self that pervades the entire body feeds on the senses
And, the senses feed on the self.
This is why the pleasant is eagerly sought.'

'What is Happiness? '

'Profound happiness is experienced
when the five senses of knowledge come to rest together with the mind
and the intellect does not function.
This is the state of not being identified with the body
in the midst of bodies and
as being permanent in the midst of the impermanent,
then the wise man does not grieve he goes beyond sorrow
and, regains his own pristine status and glory.'

Having said this, my father placed the empty coffee mug on the table
And, was seen no more. I saw the morning sunrays softly creep into my bedroom
to wake me up from my sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fading Dreams

I did feel a void
Deep within me open
When I looked in
It was dark and lonely
Nothing seemed amiss
But I knew
I was lost in the thought of you
That had dawned
Once you had left and reached
The thresh-hold of my memory
Leaving me to pine

O My Fond Dreams
Already I miss you
You ought to have taken me along
Then I need not have stirred in my sleep
And I need not have opened my eyes
To see you fade.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Failed Effort

My childhood was difficult;
I was forcibly taught
To remain honest, fair and kind,
And only do good to others.
I was tenderly coerced to rebel
Against my intuitive R-complex
And unhesitatingly
Undo my evil traits.
I was asked to follow
As role models my predecessors
Who like me could also have been
Favourites of their parents and elders.
Though a privileged ape I was,
Without being rude I could not avoid
The nasty things and people
I was told to,
And, without being cruel
I could not curb my instincts and desires,
I could not suppress my anger and dissent,
And withhold the truth.
You and I know, I have failed.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Failure

There were the offerings
The sweetmeats, the flowers, and the fruits
In a wicker basket neatly arranged
And there were the multicoloured lights
Dotting the trees
And waiting to come on bright after nightfall
About due
All for you
My chosen object revered

The darkness of the night did spread itself
The lights did come on and sparkled
And the offerings openly graced the altar
But you were not to be found or seen
Nor the priest
There was no flame or smoke
Though I did not search for you
Beyond my vicinity and reach
My hands were tied
Senses dulled
And name erased
My memory just stood still as a ragged stone
A witness dark and cold
Imbibing the show
All for the lack of verve failing me

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fallen Drops And Guarded Dreams

The fallen drop wetting the sand soon evaporates;
The drizzle can continue but far above the grey clouds the sun burns;
It steals the water from the wetted sand ostensibly to cool itself,
Like the short-lived wry smile of an angered man.

As the earth revolves the day-heat reduced the air cools,
Silence returns along with it the sly darkness that lies concealed in light,
The stars twinkle to tease and the shining Moon derisively titters;
The birds return to the nest to write up new notes and songs.

The string of the cots drawn tight is an invitation to relax;
The toilers seek to rest their tired limbs, smoothen frayed nerves
And enjoy undisturbed sleep, their banisters kept intact;
Ever since I woke up I have guarded all of my dreams.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fate

Somewhere down the lane that I daily walk
I lost the grip on my sights and thoughts;
You had left me promising never to return.
The clay that was soft has hardened since
My hopes and desires have turned into thinnest mist
Like the water that holds the clay tight and bound.
Many cycles of Time have run their course,
I have prayed for Time to halt and let me sleep
It is your return that is keenly awaited by all.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fear Hitch

With a storm raging and pouring rain
Threatening to split their ship apart
Grave is the plight of those who sail
In their tossing boats when left to lurch
They heave and sway, roll, and reel.

Tied to a mast, they face the sea,
Listing and staggering braving death
They scream and shout above the wind,
Calling aloud for the temple board
To evict all those who prayed for them.

Erred they have when the storm subsides
Reeling will cease and finding their feet
They will gladly land to walk the docks
With beaming smiles and eager looks
For the warm embrace waiting there.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fearlessness

I am not the stranger whom you fear
While waking and in dreams,
I am just your happy friend who had
Comforted you indeed;
Why ask my name to shame me when
All others who know me well
They utter my name and find me there
Where ever they look for me.

So kindly lift your eyes upwards and
See the sunlight spread,
Pay heed to the loudly chirping birds
They wake people from sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fervour

Why run towards the end of the dark lane
To reach me; it leads nowhere;
A sincere step or two would have sufficed
And made us avoid
The infectious meanness, greed, hate, and spite
There always is in our minds;
With the vessel's use, the golden luster will soon wear off;
Though our eyes may not be able to see
The uneasy complexity that clamours for space,
And contest the binding rites, deeds, and beliefs
By raking up stale issues to strike against,
The dead will certainly not rise,
The clouds will pour rain without asking for it
And the boa will constrict to kill its prey;
Because of the whiteness of the chalk,
More prominently revealed by the blackboard,
May not by itself teach anything new or old,
But it does not impinge anyone's right to learn
Nor does the ink-pen that leaks
Or the books left unread beneath the foot-rests
Or the teachers who are only half-prepared
Or the dimming light of any classroom;
Eagerness has no colours to match or change.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Final Resolve

I have perused the written words,
And intently listened to the words of wisdom,
And also understood various small and great juxtapositions,
I know that things achievable need to be achieved
And a thing which can be known should certainly be known,
Now I know honey is the real essence of flowers.

Words lead to knowledge;
They do not convey their true meanings
If their grammar has not been fully learnt,
Their clarity evades me,
I have to master their grammar.
But Savita
Gives me understanding and inspires me for noblest acts.

There exist before me two paths,
One which leads me to the Moon
And is called the path of Karma,
The other which is the path of the Sun
It is the path of Jnana and leads to the Beyond;
I have opted for the path leading to the Sun,
Travelling on the path leading to the Sun
I intend to reach the world of the Gods
After reaching the world of Agni
Then of Vayu and Varuna, Indra and Prajapati
Before reaching the world of Brahman where the ageless river flows
That can be crossed merely by the movement of the mind.

All this I want to experience,
Shed all forms of ignorance and pretense,
Cease to be haunted by duality,
The cause of grief and elation,
The two avoidable empirical aspects that are
The two faces of the same coin which I must toss
And hope that coin rests on its rim
And no reflection from either face ever reaches my eyes.
I will then not be able to see what I must not
And see only that which I must always;
I must see unity amidst diversity by myself becoming a part,

I must realize the subject and the object
By becoming their connecting link,
And then become all three as one eternally.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Finality

And, thus it was -
When I ventured forth to seek you, I faltered;
My stride unsure I missed a step
And stumbled,
And upon reaching you
I could not behold your presence,
My dazzled eyes could not see you,
I could not find words to hail, praise or describe you
Or seek help or tell others of my strange plight;
My lips were dry and painful,
I could hardly breathe,
My limbs were numb,
And no longer was I hungry or angry;
I was surrounded by an emptiness I could not describe.
I found
That things I thought were mine were not so;
There was a feeling of distinct nearness,
But there neither was light nor darkness,
There were a stillness and an unspeakable quiet.
I seemed to have lost my bearing and track of direction,
I could not locate my starting point,
For me all avenues were closed;
In your presence, I had reached the place of no return.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Find For Me The Place...

Find for me the place where I can
Hide my mind along with thoughts,
I haven't any need for them;
They have troubled me long enough.
I never wanted to be happy or sad
Or desired anything else,
Not even dreams to spoil my quiet and peace.
My mind gave me feelings and speech;
It gave me willfulness and insight,
It made me experience
Even the not asked for.
I never wanted to express or examine any thought
Or wished for my perfection or to stand tall;
I was contented
I needed no experience or experimentation;
The lone high cloud not called upon to pour rain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Follow-On

As my day slowly progressed
Sitting beneath an aging tree
I watched the river's flow proceed
Beyond its hidden twisted bends,
And there I sat holding a twig,
Twisted brown and very dead;
Its leaves had lain beneath my feet
Yellowed, dry and finely crushed;
With that twig, I dug a pit
And planted tiny seeds of doubt
Imbued with worry and useless fear
Caused by stress and loss of faith,
I wished to see how doubt would fare
Once it sprouted, spread its roots.

During the daytime
When it is warm and crisp
I want to see doubt freely bloom
And watch its flowers regain their sway
And to spread in every way
Their heady surge of ignorance.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Forget The Past

Forget the past, you say!
Whose?
Yours and mine, is it?
Where would we both be then?
Sunk in a stinking puddle, we could say,
That is filled with some ancient grime
Gathered by our thoughts
Or
We can still say,
We should neatly forget our past
If only to see Time fly by,
Swifter than thought,
Covering us and sculpting new dawns.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Forgotten Presence

Today,
The Sun did rise as it does
But no one uttered a word,
There was no chirping of the birds,
Nobody greeted the spread of light
Or moved a step;
Life seemed to have lost its rhythm,
It did not respond.
The wind, the trees and the sands stayed still,
No colour was visible,
The blueness of the sky was not reflected,
And the rivers and the streams refused to run;
My eyes took in this sight
And I did not weep.

I knew,
I was to blame,
I did not use my might,
I failed to stir up emotions,
Raise objections and seek amends;
In fact, I had forgotten my presence
And, the continuity broke.
I cannot even ask -
Who will thread the needle?
Who will gather the strewn now?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Forsaken Pride

A deserted shore with its palm-trees
Is in the middle of nowhere;
It is eager to receive the boat that had set sail
With me on board tied to its mast and braving a fierce sea;
No one else has ever dared to visit this lonely shore,
And land-born that I am I shall again step on its sands
If only to enjoy my escape
From the fury of the waters that does not hold me fast and secure;
This deserted shore has been my refuge
Ever since I was born on a wind's cusp,
And still fear the wind, the violent waves, and their roar.
I am the stimulating imagination even the seas
And the crude rocks and fine sands develop to come to life,
And the colourful dream all breathing things and sounds nurture;
I am the much sought after diversion for the days and nights
Striving to unite to remove the dark; these I am
Though presently bound and braving the sea covered with salt and spray.
On my return to that shore, resting on my knees
I shall let the sand run through my fingers,
I shall then climb a coconut tree, gaze at the horizon,
And cut loose some nuts for me to eat,
I have to feed and rest; but, I cannot sleep.
The deserted shore and the palm-trees are my pride.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Four Quatrains

1)

Often questions extracted from older replies in our memories held
They do not help wayward communications to turn or weld,
On the few occasions when they do happen to relent favouring us
Answers appear all the more difficult to find with their joints meld.

2)

The prevailing confusion hanging in the air like a cloud
Refusing to disperse it darkens my worn-out shroud,
Along with the dos and don'ts I try to tread the path
My footfalls bring awake the sleeping fit and proud.

3)

Counting the blind and the blinded lying in rows on the wayside
Sans any light of hope or words to console these poor left aside,
With the water and the wind flowing by as strangers strangely do
I am unable to douse the fire that has burnt their pride.

4)

Unworthy of covering the world my worn-out shroud slips
Uncovering my shoulders and my chest for nature's flips,
Lurking within my heart the last vestige of love and faith
It emerges to bind my wings with varied shining clips.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Freed Of Fears

He was afraid
Feared the worst
But whom to complain
He had befriended none
Liked no one
No one would care
If he were to die
On the floor
He squatted in wait
Of the one
He knew would come
To set him free
And he would be
Without fears
Then no one will ask
About his fears
No one will know
How he died

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Freedom From Mind

Read for me my mind, my friend; do read my mind anew.
Written on it most bold and clear you will find my stern work-outs
Competing with dreams glittery and bright reviving my hopes and aims
Trying to free my will that's held by drifting thoughts and deeds,
Vying but wavering betwixt extremes of passion, trust, and likes.

I do not know as this or that when lost in dreamless sleep I am
No longer aware of the luminous ones I see no light, no hope,
I feel no pain, no joy or sense of being left when alone
Free from the moving finds of lame addiction and bondage.

I have waited this long to know about myself, I have waited too long,
I want you to explore my endless needs that were sown by doubts and fears
By removing all barriers set-up by time dotting the space with clues;
The more I struggle tighter become all bonds attaching my mind
To my body and works and perceptions which dare disturb my quiet,
My mind is not self-luminous and it carries no desire;
So, read for me my mind, my friend, and free me from my mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Freedom From Pain

I am convinced
My body is certainly evil;
So long that it breathes,
It suffers hardship and cannot avoid pain.
My body tortures me;
It makes me weep.

My mind functions
And my body too works;
This is not possible
Without some kind of identification
Made of the self and the surrounding;
How can I ignore or reject results?
Why should I ignore or reject experiences?
How can I call my identification false?

My life is not an illusion;
My consciousness is very much real;
I know as truth
Death alone gives relief from pain.

To a conscious being
Death is like going to sleep,
A never ending sleep,
The body bereft of vital force
It becomes senseless;
It does not ever regain consciousness;
It feels no pain.
The inner light too is doused.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fretful Disquiet

The people I know they hardly talk about me
I have grown very old they now need me not,
No ruse has worked to win them back to me
Without them, I am an open knot.
Nothing seems to bind or hold me in a grip,
My hands are free as are my feet untied;
I am unable to read what's written on the strip,
It's a dirty scribble as though someone has lied.
With my senses tense and ears open and alert
I trace to the very source each whisper that floats,
The names and games I continue to ply
Between memory spans perched on flimsy floats.
My emotions strained the waters are dark and deep
But I cannot sail I am being led to sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Fuss And Care

Do not fret,
Sheer waste of energy
And time;
Gather your wits,
It is going to rain;
You may get wet
But do not soil your shoes
And the house floors
Shining invitingly;
Though no one cares
About the number of feet
That trample;
Inert,
The shoes and the floors
Do not suffer
Any emotion or pain,
We do.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Gawaahii

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main gawaahii bhii agar kyaa detaa
tere zulmon kaa sitam
jaarii hai
qatl toone hii kiyaa thaa kal raat
mere sahame hue khwaabon o tamannaaon kaa
khoon bahataa bhii to kyaa
tujhe muaaloom thaa sab

tu to barson se rahi hai hamraaz
gungunaatii huii kaanon mein mire
kaii rangon se bhare geet anek
yeh bhii dhokaa thaa tira

mujhe gumraah rakhaa hai tune
mujhe chalne na diyaa
bas ab
haar kar baith gayaa hoon sar e raah
ae ummeed

Gham Ka Ahsaas Jawaan Ho Jaataa

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gham kaa ahsaas jawaa.n ho jaataa
ashk aankho.n se rawaa.n ho jaataa
kuchch to ho jaataa asar un par bhii
qissaa e gham jo bayaa.n ho jaataa
subah aatii to dhundhalke jaate
duur zulmat kaa dhuaa.n ho jaataa
mere sajado.n se tiraa naqsh e qadam
merii manzil kaa nishaa.n ho jaataa
jal rahaa thaa mire dil kaa kaaghaz
aag bujhatii to dhuaa.n ho jaataa
dil mei.n zakhamo.n ko chchupaa letaa Ravi
raaz jeene kaa ayaa.n ho jaataa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ghazal (In English Language)

Why aim high a bird even now loudly asks
This the golden cage even now loudly asks

Why protect your ears with eyes opened wide
This the shrill thunder even now loudly asks□

Why hold on to your cape and test your might
This the roaring wind even now loudly asks

Why lose your wits once your heart rides a storm
This the river in spate even now loudly asks

Why sing the note that has its cockiness strained
This the wondering cock even now loudly asks

Why discard all hopes fondly nurtured for a while
This the trusted rook even now loudly asks

Why seek the rest drawn up by dusty dull minds
This the theorist 'Ravi' even now loudly asks

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Give Way To Dreams

Now and then,
Strange thoughts cross my mind;
They cause much unease
And make me worried;
Then I leave my room,
Step out
And walk around aimlessly,
Not to lose myself
In the quiet wilderness
Of those very thoughts
That concocts many a world
Nourished by falsity and fears
But to retain my equipoise,
Forget my old dreams
And not weave new ones;
Indeed, strange thoughts
Give way to strange dreams.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Glitter On The Neck

Here and there and everywhere
I see many flowers blooming,
Some are red and some are white
And some are blue 'n' charming.
I shall string them up for you
To make a garland yielding,
That would dress your slender neck
To glitter as you're moving.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Gradual Learning

Thus far I have learnt that laughter is the abrupt release of man's muted joy,
And that smile is the expression of the inwardly dwelling subdued feeling of
pleasantness,

And that true happiness which is beyond all possessions and satisfaction of
desires for material gains

Is actually inexpressible it cannot be told about through words or deeds, love,
and kindness.

I have also learnt that reliance is double-edged, it can be a source of strength or
indicate a weakness,

Like a dependence on an outside mode that can be or not be faithful to the task
at hand;

Success too is double-edged, as it elevates one's spirit it also compels to seek
more

Re-kindling desires, the bane of human happiness.

Such thoughts make me sleep uneasily.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Grammar Of Life

And,
The people gathered below my window roared in approval,
They were happy and no longer confused;
I had shown them the way to balance their thoughts and words
And synthesize sound for proper extraction of its meaning;
I had taught them the grammar of the mind.
I had revived their urge to know and learn.
I was happy too.

And then,
A child hidden within me raised his head
And asked -
'Of what avail is this grammar if the grammar of life is not known? '
I had anticipated many questions but not this,
The child within me had not lost his way,
He knew about the struggles that life held in store,
He knew about the need of the mind to seek peace and relief,
And he knew about the constant tussle of the mind with life
That involved the belligerency of two opposite forces.
I knew the child within me had lost his innocence,
He had seen my efforts to overcome my being.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Greed

The two atop the wooded hill
They were you and me
Trying to hide
A stolen bejewelled crown
That we could not sell.
Nobody wanted to own
The large blue diamond adorning it
And between us
We could not split the crown
Or wear it;
We needed cash
To pay off our debts and survive.

There was a loud hiss
And a large black cobra emerged;
We thought the diamond was his.
We knew about snakes
Empowered by such diamonds.
We placed the crown within its reach
And watched the cobra examine
The blue diamond with its tongue.
But after a short while, he looked at us
Slowly uncoiled and went away;
He soon returned dragging a sack
Filled with gold meant for us.
He removed the diamond from the crown
And flung it down the hill.

We were left to hold the crown
In our hands
And never again saw
That diamond or the sack full of gold.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Grit

A simple heart
And a simple mind
They ease the load off life;
Our open eyes
And open ears
They gather world's game plan;
The learned men
And the wiser ones
They build for us a heaven,
But the sleepy
And the lazy lot
They crib and beg for more;
While the active
And the rising few
They keep their goal in mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Growing Old

'Help me descend the staircase.'
I had asked;
He took my hands and gently guided me,
My grandson is my closest of friends.
He knows about my sore back,
That I suffer pain and much unease,
Without my cane, I cannot walk around.
He wanted to take me to the park
To make me relish the evening breeze
And meet his school-mates who lived nearby
I did not protest.

Soon I was settled on a wooden bench
Surrounded by pairs of inquisitive eyes;
I could gauge their differing curiosity,
They wanted the child in me to emerge.
Only a child can read a child;
They quickly knew I was a child
As careless and free as one can be;
Those innocent eyes could find my start
Hidden by the pile of congealed dust
Many thousand years old,
And what made me old and why.
I did not close my eyes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Happiness Of The Liberated

It's raining heavily again;
Again the downpour
Threatens to flood the streets,
The bazaars and the homes et al;
Rendering the rich and the poor,
The young and the old,
The doers and the non-doers,
Worthless and immobile,
Make them suffer
And pray to the Rain God.

Suddenly,
Across the street,
A half-naked boy runs out of his house
Skids but falls flat on his back,
Unrelenting rain drenching him;
He is unhurt and laughs aloud,
Knocks the earth with his heels
Splaying wet grime
And opens his arms,
Shouts for his brothers to join him in his frolic
And share the pleasure he now enjoys.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Harchand Chaahataa Huu.N

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har chand chaahataa huu.n ki unkaa kahaa karuu.n
lekin ye aarzo ki tamaashaa kiyaa karuu.n
suuraj kii roshanii ne kiyaa dil ko daagh daagh
lii hai panaah tiiragii e shab mei.n kyaa karuu.n
har ashk e khuun e dil ke hai jii mei.n ye aajkal
aisaa bhii ho ki palko.n se unkii bahaa karuu.n
ho yuu.n, ki din Dhale koi aa kar mire qareeb
ruudaad merii mujh se kahe, mai.n sunaa karuu.n
lab par shikaayat e gham e दौरा.n naa aasakii
maayuusiyo.n ne shart lagaaii thii, kyaa karuu.n
be baal o par sahi ye magar be amal nahii.n
murgh e chaman ko qaid e qafas se rihaa karuu.n
uTh kar dar e habeeb se dil mei.n hai ye, Ravi
jaa kar dayaar e ghair mei.n tanhaa rahaa karuu.n

Ravinder Kumar Soni

He Will Search And Find Me

He had seen me
I heard him sing
It was a love song
He was greeting me
Expressing his love
That he wanted me to celebrate with him
With my eyes closed listening to him
Pour words into my ears
Croon ever so softly
I did not know the words
But his wonderful voice made me sway
His song was meant for me
I almost swooned
And that is why
I could have danced with him
Melted into his arms
Make him acquaint me
With his new-found rhythm
And guide me on the dance-floor
My heart aflutter
Waltzing
Till the end of the night that had just begun
He was nervous and shy
He could have held my hands
But his hands did not stay still
I dare not close to him my heart's doors
The night is young again
He will sing that same song to me
I know he needs me
He will search and find me

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Heavenly Bliss

Such roads lead me to nowhere,
The roads paved with golden leaves
And lined with green flowering
Shade-giving low and tall trees
Drenched with a fruity smell,
Home to colourful birds
Who, during their daytime nest,
With clouds hovering in the sky,
Singing their merry songs
Enjoy the coolness in the air
Witness to the rain that is about to fall.
They delude me.

The place I want to reach,
It is deep and cosy
And having a divine feel
Is not far away to find;
It needs no tempting avenues for access,
No hard labour too,
But merely good intents
And lowered eyes
Able to peep inwards;
The place I want to reach
Lies within my heart and mind
That is noble and pristine
And seat heavenly bliss.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Heed The Voice Of Destiny

Heed The Voice Of Destiny

I heed the voice of destiny;
I know that voice;
Muted thunder,
It does not agitate hidden fears.

The spell is cast;
Spots removed,
Wrinkles eased,
The clothes I wear now cover me.

My eyes are dazzled
By the brilliance and glory
Of what they see;
The process of learning initiated
My mind rejects dreams;
It has found meanings in the heard.

I know the Truth,
O Waters filling me!
Protect my body
That I can see
It should not shrivel and die.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Hidden Smile

I was never asked to befriend you;
Like an ordinary gift wrapped in some bright aluminum foils
You stayed concealed from my view
As though avoiding me;
I could have never known you existed
Had I not recalled the days of my childhood
When I had just begun to walk
Tumbling and hurting very frequently
Seeking relief from pain and the urge to run;
I had then,
Holding back my tears,
Often seen the infectious you
And the mere sight of you had always brightened my days.
But at the end of my long tedious journey leading to you
And I have lost count of the many forced and unforced halts
The numerous shocks absorbed and barrels of oil burnt,
Quickening my stride
I still dare others to fall in line and follow me.
I am scared;
I know,
In order to befriend you, I must uncover you,
I must remove the covering foils and forget their bright colours
And even your continuous glitter.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Honesty

No fear can afflict
My unruffled mind
That sees and feels a unity;
One wish I nurture
I want to be happy
And make others happy too.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Hopeful Confidence

I offend others easily,
I have a vile gait, eye and tongue,
People avoid me,
They hate me
For what I am.

But I am not bad at all,
I am not destructive,
Nor have I physically hurt anyone,
And my mind is not impaired;
It is clear and active.

And I am certain
There must be few who do like me,
Want to befriend me,
Walk and talk with me
To probe my mind
To locate the slightest hint
Of goodness in me
And help me
Find the real me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Hopefulness

The Nigrodha Tree lives very long
Gives shade and comfort,
An uneasy calm prevails.

The Catamarans ride the waves
Chart the deep seas
And return mid-way.

The farmer tills and waters his land
Grows more to feed,
The hungry merely wait.

Remorse weighs pretty heavy.
Many tears shed
But the sun always shines.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

House On The River Bank

There is the house on the river bank amidst thick trees,
It has been my home all my life come rain or sleet,
The river-waters always splash in a rhythm I follow
Singing songs to the birds nesting in the trees;
The fish dance while in search of love the butterflies
They scamper hither and thither flaunting their colours,
Caressing and kissing each flower and the deer run
In the garden green that is my favoured place to rest
My tired bones and sinews after walking to and fro
On the path leading to my home and towards a heath
Where silence dwells undisturbed and peace prevails
And some lonely men like me freely explore its spread;
There long hours I have spent examining a deep trough
And filled its depth with my old tattered wants and aims
Then replaced them with new dreams I mean to realize;
I can divulge my dreams only to those who seek.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

How Can I Know?

On any water surface
Ripples move away;
Flowers in full bloom
Never fade;
Grief and happiness
Tend to show;
Evil does not hide in a box;
And, destiny
Can never be avoided
Thus I was taught at school
But I was not told
Why the water surface
Gets disturbed
How the flowers
Colour themselves
What joins grief with joy
Why evil is not short-lived
Or destiny governs all
I still do not know.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Hunger

'Pick up your pen, my friend,
In a single word write on my palm, what ails you.'
I had asked,
And he complied.

I looked at my palm and there written on it
Was that one word I had never wanted to see.

My friend was sincere when he wrote thus,
He knew what he had written for me to read;
I have known him ever since both learnt to crawl.

Curious and eager,
We have shared our experiences as we matured.
Therefore,
I do not doubt his understanding and judgment,
I know he cannot be wrong.

I even grabbed a towel,
Moistened it to erase that word,
I have not been able to rub it off my palm.
That one word my friend had written which I cannot hide
Has slowly begun to haunt me,
Shake my faith and belief.

To ease my pain
I must reveal that word to you -
That word is - 'Hunger'.
Hunger is Death.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

I Am Never Alone

The order begins and rests with me;
I am an ocean dark and deep,
Hidden in it are many jewels and attributes
And, within me also rages the fire
That caused and keeps me.
Externally I am alone,
A stranger,
Never a part of the teeming moving crowd;
But, within me, there is a rolling world of the mind,
Appearing in the form of objects;
They are my playthings till I advance
Beyond my own reflections,
Unalloyed,
And beyond the absolute negation of pain;
There, I am nameless yet not alone;
I do not find myself left out or ignored.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

I Have Never Told A Lie

No! No! No!

I have never told a lie,
Not even when I was hungry and could not sleep.
I have also never spoken the truth
That could have made me feel proud and worthy.
How could I have without experiencing it?

What do I actually speak? □

Now you ask me so very casually;
Believe me then.
I speak out only the heard in its most pristine form.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

I Have Nowhere Else To Go

I have nowhere else to go.

Stuck in the morass shaped by hope, conflicts, and pain
Searchingly
I have on many occasions in the past
Tried to step outside
Only to withdraw
Failing to find the world of my desire;
The place where I live is too familiar to be convenient
It has repeatedly made me recall my learning and knowledge
Made me hone my skills and perceptive feels
Made me aware, curious and insightful
Infused the ability to encounter pestering urgencies and anxieties
But all in vain
For each word that I now write brings back memories of the past
I had regularly buried to be forgotten
Beneath piles of garbage called achievements and comforts.

So it is,
I do not blame Time
Also, I have no reason to grudge occurrences
Self- repeating they are while playing with Time
Not allowing me to briefly shut my eyes
Relax and recast my expectations
And fill the twisted and serrated moulds of individual needs
With numerous hopes and varying desires
Often found casually dripping from the loosely held hands of Fate
As though teasingly.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

I Learn

I learn

Even if I do not desire to do so;

Learning is an on-going not so very mysterious an exertion.

I know it as the complex movement of the mind,

A rapid movement that proceeds

Through a corrugated maze

Cast by the different states of awareness

That attempt to locate the original glow

Lost in the crowd of reflected lights;

Therefore, I am seen to work

Because work is born of the exertion of the body;

It is born of the exertion of the mind and word.

But, I am born of the flames that leap and sizzle.

And, though I remain indifferent

Because I am always awake I cannot avoid seeing;

Such is my exertion. I do not gather dust.

My speech is richer by words meant for me;

Those are the words that create things and events, and the entire world.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

I Love A Good Laugh

I love a good laugh
I enjoy the company of those who laugh
A hearty laugh makes me forget my blues
Then the pall of gloom covering me lifts
And for a short while
I find relief from the sadness and hurt
That seems to afflict me alone
I taste happiness
I feel thoroughly cleansed
With the spark of life rekindled
I begin to glow
And with me my entire world blooms
My laughter is pure and spontaneous
I don't need any particular reason to laugh
I simply know
A happy mind always makes one smile
And the smile gives way to laughter
I shall have to seek that one individual
The remover of obstacles
Sporting a radiant smile
Ask him to create for me a little heaven of my own
Wipe away my sadness
Warmly hold my hands
Lovingly look deep into my eyes
Softly whisper into my ears encouraging words
And fill me with endless happiness.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

I Seek

I seek

The light of knowledge
To illuminate my mind,
Awaken my intellect,
Lead me to intuition,
Understand my being,
Remove my doubts,
Banish my fears,
Gain clarity of thought,
And freed
From the four dimensions
And the four natural forces
And the mind,
Which keep me bound,
Make my activeness
Unravel for me
The sublime
Found only on the other side
Of the Sun.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

I String Her Gently In My Mind

She saw me near and covered her face
With a diaphanous veil which failed to hide
The many scars left by Time.

Her eyes bespoke her journey's tale
Ridden with doubts conjured by dreams
Pricked by fears and jealousy.

She had travelled along the very path
I had knowingly walked to help her stay;
Aware she is of my destiny.

She is the meaning of the written words
I use to express and convey my thoughts;
I string her gently in my mind.

The words I write will forever live;
She will stay with me till the end of Time,
My caring muse of poetry.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Identity

Aided by the light of the self-manifested knowledge shining within and without
Confident I am of re-discovering my real identity, my true self
Which is the all-pervading twice-born trident having a six-paired brief
As the field of action and also the creative energy in action;
It is the subtle force and matter in the ever expanding vast regions where
dimensions unfold,
Which force manifests, attracts and holds in place all visible and invisible objects,

And creates the three worlds and the three heavenly illuminators.

I shall re-discover my true self
As the recipient and the subservient birth-giving motherly nourishing earthly
being
Co-existing as the active domineering protective donor divine enlightening subtle
entity
Linked by a common yet mysterious rarely understood upward-rising link;
I am the energy ever active and mobile signified by its spin.

I shall then know that I am
The degree of freedom measured by the speed of light swiftly moving in space
As though intentionally converting the spirit, the mind and sheer energy to subtle
elements
Although existing eternally as the infinite widely all-encompassing back-ground
Projected upon which can be perceived, inferred or thought-about
All things that are unreal appearing as real;
I shall then come to know
That I am the seeker and the sought-after protector of truthfulness in thought,
word, and deed,
The eight-fold nature and the personification of the objects of Nature,
The highest form of intuition that helps regain spiritual insight,
And the perfection in life itself;
All this I shall then preview standing alone as the witness to my own playfulness
Once my hankering after Truth is satisfied.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ill-Defined

Why catch the mist
With your bare hands
And watch it
Slither away,
Leaving behind no trace;
But it clings to the darkness
That does not show
Its hidden aims
And ways,
Its tenuous form
And sway.
Its vaporous trail
Seen on the ground,
Deceptive though it is,
It leads us to nowhere.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Illuminative Words

Illuminative Words

Words connected with rites have spiritual meanings, this much I know,
(I have seen them illuminate minds and initiate actions) ,
And I also know that he who is aware of the order of Truth
Has the ecstasy of Truth covering and filling him from head to toe;
His actions seem slow-paced but steadfast;
He is the swift-rushing hawk who has soared upwards to be with the Sun;
He is the seeker and also the sought-after manifested in consciousness as the
illuminative word;
United with himself he sits atop the summit of existence representing Will and
Bliss,
Though neither active nor inactive by stirring up will and bliss he prepares and
perfects;
He shines in his own light, lighting up the heavens and the heavenly.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Iltijaa (Request)

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meraa dil mujhko sataane kaa bahaanaa Dhoonde
nae afsaano.n va geeto.n kaa sahaaraa lekar
nae sapano.n na.e vaado.n ko bhii yakjaa karke
Dhaalkar apne sawaalo.n ko nae saancho.n mei.n
aisaa deewaanaa hai dil meraa, kahuu.n isko kyaa
mai.n to khaamosh khaDaa dekhaa kiyaa duniyaa ko
jo ishaaro.n pe kisii aur ke itraatii hai
khilkhilaatii hai bahTaktii hai sar dhuntii hai
kaaTe kaTte nahi.n par tere binaa raat aur din
poochtaa phirtaa huu.n kuucho.n mei.n syaahkhaano.n mei.n
rooTh kar mujh se tu ummeed kahaan jaa baiThii
ab kise apnaa paraayaa jo hai
usko seene se lagaa baiThaa huu.n bas rahane de

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Imagined Worlds

I am the ruler of my heart;
When it dies I will die.
An angel may preside over our death,
Then, my senses and my limbs numb
Will not weep,
They will not live,
They will not survive.
And, I will no longer dream.
My heart is known to me alone,
It is bound to be ignored by the living.
But I could survive as a memory
And be adored for some time more
All because of my name
Convenient to recite.
Without shedding any tears
I could be known to have lived
Unpretentiously
In this and the other false world.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Imminence

Imminence

That which is is indeed all this;
There is no difference whatsoever
Between the Seer and the Seen;
Established in his unique nature
He alone guides the tide of creation
And keeps the created activated

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Imminent Awakening

He did not believe
His story would abruptly end;
He pointed his finger at me
Called me the cause of all ends;
He knew,
Whereas the beginning
Of a story is encouraged
But its end is not desired;
He knew,
No one wants their tales to end,
I am there where they end.
I am awareness,
I snuff-out the external light
And let the inner-fire glow.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Impatience

My cup of patience it never is full;
But active and eager ever filled with hope am I
Leading a life aggressive and ravenous;
My desires are many, and I want many things all at once,
I want to have all that I can reach and touch even when I am asleep.
I know things are here for the taking
But not without working and longing for things that can be reached and touched.
Here I am, willing to work and toil
Fervently suppressing my tears and joy.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Impiety

How am I to curb my madness today and every day
Without the hint of my wickedness openly displayed?

The first and the last page that belongs to the book I read
They were last seen floating in the hot air of the fire I had lit.

The cart ready with its axles well-oiled and a pair of fresh oxen yoked
Waits to take me to the end of the journey commenced in my sleep.

Very close to the edge is where I often pause, rest and dream
About that very moment, I would roll over to break my crown.

One of my dreams is about him who wears the Moon in his locks
And Vasuki around his neck stained by the poison he has consumed.

Something is amiss for the pail I carry is not full
The well from which I draw water is not deep.

Place it on the empty plate that I eagerly hold
The tasty dish whose name I cannot pronounce.

The play of colours defying the pall of spray
It has drawn a face tense, angry and cruel.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

In Praise Of Time

O Infinite Time, I have known you since my birth
As the uncaused formless invisible entity
Flowing and felt everywhere;
The unmanifested manifestor of name and form,
With you, He remains as your constant companion,
Together you create
The most powerful force that keeps me and gives me weight;
Though spatially related with inherent nature and fate
I know you merely imply and do not regulate me,
You are not the origin of things and do not exist in the Beyond;
Within me, you exist as myself sans external clues,
Externally, you are the Sun and the Moon
Who chase each other precisely shading and eclipsing
Providing us the exact measurement of an infinite uniform extension;
You are in essence comparison - true but not real,
An obstacle raised by my failure to realize the universal oneness;
You know my mind is the cause of my bondage,
Free me, O Time and place me past the Beyond enclosing me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

In Pursuit Of Dreams

Worried what would become of me
If I failed in my pursuit of you,
Fond Dreams! You have held your fort:
You have fired up my dormant will;
Your capture will not be obscure now.

Your present vagueness is a ploy,
It is not meant to deceive me
Because I have reined in my thoughts
And I know you are within reach;
My mind shines as silvery lights.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Incomplete

The wry smile on his lips,
It hides many a tellable tale
About his broken dreams and untold pain;
Now, his hands shake, his fingers shiver,
His eye-sight has dimmed.

Opportunities lost,
His tasks remain largely unfinished;
And, while he smiles
His vacant eyes stare at the barriers
He had himself erected.□

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Indulgence

I had met you only a moment ago and you now ask
Where have I been during the centuries past?
That Time has rolled by relentlessly did I not know
And that age has slowly crept upon us both!

The young and the old seek a place where the sun
Shines, the former to frolic and the latter to revive;
I see them meet, laugh and renew fading contacts.
Why should I bother about Time and centuries gone?

When I have you worrying about me unceasingly,
And you have me as your constant companion of old,
Our mutual reliance based upon insight and trust
It has withstood all trials and vicious onslaughts.

Do not ask where I am, for I am always with you;
I am never a step away beware and look for me,
Find me you will alongside holding our hands aloft
In defiance of emotions that always rise and fall.

We have reached the stage where fears abandoned
And discarded dreams do not dare raise their head,
Where all doubts removed the ever-flowing current
Of happiness and joy will forever engulf us both.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Inevitable

The Moon has set
Withdrawing itself
From our sight,
And the rising Sun,
Burning bright,
Aims its rays
Towards us
To make us
Live and move,
Watch and learn.
But the Sun's reign
Too is brief;
The night will return
Spreading darkness,
The Moon will shine again
And the stars will twinkle;
They will soon lull us
Back to sleep,
Make us forget
Or dream.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Inflame

Borrow heat and light
From the self-effulgent
To revive the mind
Dulled by sleep and pain;
Make the mind work
On its dictate
And allow it to experience
Its repeated finds;
Idleness
Does not disprove
The validity of needs
And basic incite.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Innocence Mild And Bland

Innocence, mild and bland -
Pebbles grey and white smoothed by running water
Vie to reflect the blue day-lit sky;
They lie scattered and forgotten on the river bed
But tirelessly shuffle to find their place under the sun.

While feasting on the tiny crustaceans
The fish wordlessly swim about,
And the frogs intermittently croak but stay rooted
To the moss-covered rocks in wait for the insects to flyby;
They do not disturb the river-flow.

Well-fed men, women, and children crowd the river banks;
There they chatter and weave jolly tales;
They laugh and snigger
As the wind carries to a great distance unsettled dust and stray sound,
And are not concerned with the ill and hungry left to die.
This multitude does not shed any tears.
It is driven by its thoughts and small needs.

It is Nature's ware,
Exceedingly slow is the process of aging;
A gradual tiresome move from the insignificant to the innocuous;
Then, no stones are seen hurled at the sky or flags unfurled;
It is a quiet seemingly endless wait for the inevitable.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Inquiry

Last evening I was told that there is something which activates an inquiry
That raises determination,
Destroys needless longings, and facilitates aspirations to take wings and fly.
But that something does not have a definite form,
Being mercurial and subject to change roams about
Like the unbridled swift mind filling a vast void.
The wise know it as thought or reflection
And others know it as the slim live thread that strings up the orderly and the
wayward alike.

But to me, that unknown something
Which always stays hidden from sight
Beneath the very many thin and broad lines etched by fate,
Which shine and mockingly throb,
And whose secrets I must decode ere I decide
That my time is up and I too must leave this stage.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Insurgence

Had I the faintest inkling of guilt
I could have easily marked my way,
Step by step and then brick by brick
I could have paved my path with joy.

The sky and the light hold me back
For a glimpse of that euphoric life
In a dream I had led before I rose
To open the door and step outside.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Interpretation

How am I to interpret my own experiences?

How am I to link one experience to that of a different kind?

One already experienced to that not yet experienced.

There are, I am told, contained in the law-books,

Many rules and guidelines meant to help judge and identify

Each revelation, manifestation, and presentation of one as many;

But, all these condiments felt and seen

Are someone else's experiences which invariably threaten to distort,

Laden with spite,

The import of my first-hand sensory and mental experience in life

Of being alive and very mobile!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Intimate Reprove

Lift your chin; the work is done you do not have to wear
The same old veneer of bright colours that you've often worn;
We know you for what you are - a boastful clod;
A good for nothing soul a blot on family's good name;
Your laziness, your reluctance to work or act in case of need
Has not enamoured us unto you but even then in good faith
This task given to you we have accomplished albeit later
Then it had been ordained taking your ability and zeal into the count.
Be on your feet, my man, and see how time flies taking with it
All opportunities and hopefulness you have given up as lost.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Intonation

Somewhere sometimes I hear a voice
Rising above the usual din,
But still, a whisper hardly heard.□

The withered leaves which often sound
Their noisy rustle filling the air,
Imitate the voice seldom heard.

Nature's ways they are strange but fair,
Contingent upon its exposure
One hears the voice lately heard.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Invitation

Come to me loaded with aspiration
For the attainment of your desires;
Together we hold the key
Ensuring light and life;
Uplift body and mind.

Come to me as the flowing energy
Required to wield the key
To open the iron gates
Locked as and when
Darkness descends.

Come to me as my inseparable part
Both seen as one by discerners,
The fuel gatherers,
Eager to light up the hearth
And their home.

Come to me avoiding yearning and greed
Fearless as the brightness in the eye,
Progressive and dynamic,
Unlike the sound of motion
Muted and unheard.

Come to me intent upon sustaining all things
Moving or not-moving, hitherto confined
Gasping for breath;
We shall light the fire
To set them free.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Isolated Strays

Their burning heat compounded
Stray thoughts reduced to cinder
Fail to light up unyielding beliefs;
Losing sheen they sulk and simmer,
Voiceless and unable to protest
These strays lie mostly ignored.

Look at the gathered white snow
It melts to fill up creeks and rivulets
And ends up as deep seas and oceans;
Know that ideation freely flowing
Re-fires subdued emotions that give
Open space for logic to play its role.

Though lost in the ruse woven maze
Even the sanest mind tends to roam
To explore the dark and the hidden,
So does the faith of the firm believer
Flourishes while rallying the eager mind
That is ready to experiment and probe.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Jaan E Aziz...

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jaan e azeez, rakkhiyo naa ham ko nazar se duur
hai apanii raah, jaadaah e shaam o sahar se duur
shaam e firaaq aatish e gham kyaa jalaaegii
girtii hai barq e tuur bhii had e nazar se duur
aish o tarab kaa daur hai saaqii pilaa sharaab
main aa gayaa huu.n raqs kunaa.n apane ghar se duur
ae kajaravii e waqt tuu hii kar nishaandahii
merii nazar hai jalwaa e shams o qamar se duur

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Jewels In The River-Bed

'Pebbles, the jewels in the river-bed,
Hardly move and do not shine during day-time, '
Said the little bird
Perched above on a branch of the over-hanging mango-tree
Whose shadow now fell on the river's rippled surface.
'They merely get wet and muddied,
About which the river-creatures do not complain;
After nightfall, these jewels are not to be seen even by the very keen eyes.'
She added.

I had just befriended the Koel, the dark Indian song-bird.
I had stood on the river's temple-side bank
Taking in the Beas not in flood peacefully flowing,
And marked my return to my paternal village after more than six decades;
I had spent my childhood here, at times, picking up and storing these pebbles.
Though I have retired from service,
My friend, Satnaam, still runs a bakery in the village;
I have come to attend his daughter's wedding.
When I left the village to continue my studies and then find my place
He had gifted me three unique pebbles cleaned and dried;
These three pebbles have remained with me where ever I have gone.

He had then said -
'Ravinder, this black shiny white streaked pebble can be the object of your
worship;
It can relate you to your personal God;
The green drop-shaped one, you will find, is more expensive than diamond;
It will reveal the good and the bad in you, and the intensity of your love and
devotion;
And lastly the third, which is milky-white with a few grey spots,
It will make you inquisitive, healthy, wise and contented.'
His explanation had not lasted more than four minutes;
Satnaam, then almost my age, was still very young but a wise child;
It took a long while for me to realize his intended namesake truth.

From the first pebble, I learned about the various perspectives and viewpoints
involved
To realize the good qualities that exist and need to be imbibed;
This was my prime education;

My learning and education prepared me for the knowledge of the opposites
Signified by the green drop-shaped pebble;
And as is signified by the milky-white one,
The mastering of the process of knowing the opposites made me inquire,
Cleansed my mind, keeping it healthy and intense;
My journey has not been easy.

The pebbles I see on the river-bed need never shine;
The live water flowing in the river has made them absolute;
Watching this engagement has made me a possessor of fortune,
I too, having discarded all other thoughts, am equally complete;
I am these pebbles and the water flowing over them;
I am also the same simple desireless bird willing to be a guide.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Jitters

Gauge
The
Severity
Hurricane
Blows
Eastwardly
Defiantly
Simple
Words
Get
Mutilated
Meanings
Crushed
Feelings
Killed
Alone
The
Sun
Glow
My
Hands
Shake
Body
Shivers
Expectations
Belied
With
Dreams
Shattered
Sleepless
Nights
Return
And
Nightmares
Resume.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Justajoo Mein Tiri Jo Gaye

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justajuu mei.n tirii jo ga.e
kaun jaane kahaa.n kho ga.e
sun rahe the kahaanii tirii
jaagate jaagate so ga.e
kal samajhataa thaa apanaa jinhe.n
aaj begaane voh ho ga.e
dil mei.n armaan paale magar
aise bikhare hawaa ho ga.e
der aane mei.n ham se huii
voh ga.e ab to yaaro ga.e
duur hotii rahii.n manzile.n
aye Ravi raaste kho ga.e

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Kab Mai.N Us Paar?

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nadii kinaare raat andherii
akhiyo.n mei.n apnii phailaae
chamkile sundar sapano.n ko
armaano.n kii jwaalaa usko
cchor dikhaae,
woh to sudh budh apnii saarii
kho hi chukaa thaa
tan man nangaa kyun kar Dhaanpe
bhool gayaa thaa apnaa kyaa hai
tyaag chukaa thaa sab kucch jo thaa
raat ki rani ki khushboo ko
aawaazo.n ke mangal ko bhi
moond chukaa thaa apnii aankhe.n
taaro.n ke jhurmut mei.n baiThe
chaand kii maanind
soch mei.n doobaa pooch rahaa thaa

ek musaafir
'kab mai.n us paar?
batlao tum
naiyaa kii patwaar sambhaale
kaun khawaiyaa aakar mujhko
le jaaegaa ab us paar? '

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Kahataa Hai Koun Waqt E Sahar Hum Na Aeenge

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kahataa hai koun waqt e sahar ham naa
ye dii hai kis ne jhooThii khabar ham naa
jab tum nahii.n ho saath to ham ko hazaar baar
hardam pukaare raahguzar ham naa
ab Doobnaa hii Thaharaa to saahil se kyaa gharaz
tere fareb mei.n ae bhanwar ham naa
apanaa ye faisalaa hai ki naaseh kii saaqiyaa
jab tak hai maikade pe nazar ham naa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Kho Gayaa Thaa Raahbar Mere Baghair

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kho gayaa thaa raahabar mere baghair
kis ko thii itanii khabar mere baghair
kushtaa e zulmat thaa mai.n bhii dahar mei.n
kyuu.n huii yaa rab sahar mere baghair
mere hote the yahii barg o shajar
hai.n vahii shams o qamar mere baghair
ab kahaan voh lutf e tuulaanii e shab
daastaa.n hai mukhtasir mere baghair
teraa naalaa, bulbul e shoridaa sar
kis tarah kartaa asar mere baghair
jo rahaa kartaa thaa mere saath saath
phir rahaa hai dar ba dar mere baghair

veeraa.n veeraa.n galiyaa.n, ujaDe ujaDe ghar
suune suune hai.n nagar mere baghair
saaz hai.n TooTe hue, naghame udaas
chup hai.n ab deewaar o dar mere baghair
rahravaan e waqt se puuchch ae Ravi
jaa rahe hai.n ab kidhar mere baghair

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Khud Ko Pahachaanta Nahii.N

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khud ko pahachaanta nahii.n huu.n mai.n
tujhe apnaa rahaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n
apanii hii zaat mei.n huu.n khoyaa huaa
tujh se lekin judaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n
hai kamii bhii, buraaii bhii mujh mei.n
aadamii huu.n khudaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n
tere hone kaa hai yaqii.n mujh ko
tuune kyaa keha diyaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n
kyuun uThaate ho bazm e ashrat se
saaz e gham kii sadaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n
dil ko ye keha ke kyuun naa khush kar luu.n
g?ham se naa aashanaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n
mai.n huu.n deedaar joo, naqaab uThaao
dekh lo aainaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n
zeest kii aankh se naa jo Tapkaa

qatraa voh khoon kaa nahii.n huu.n mai.n

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Killer Fear

Who says fear does not kill?

If it does; with what does it kill?

Is it by poison?

Fear does poison the mind,
It erodes goodwill and resolves,
It drains energy and strength.
A fearful mind fears love,
It shuns intimacy,
It does not see any reason
And makes thinking indistinct
Unable to hold back the swell of anxiety
Induced by a continuing perception of danger,
Fear slowly destroys the fear-filled mind
And makes one sad;
It is an innate emotion.

It is the fear of fear that kills.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Know Me

Know me -
I have a name, and a form;
They evolve limited by Time and Space,
But I do not change.
All perceptions, all inferences, all presumptions
Cannot find me, an effect I am not;
Words cannot define me.
Even as a transiting part of the undifferentiated
I cannot be seen or heard.
Wrong notions and beliefs about me
Tie me down in many a dream and illusion,
Organically bound with this world
I am seen to suffer joy and pain.
Know me to be your essence
Know me and be free.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Koii Rahbar Koii Rahzan Koii Hamdam Huaa Hogaa

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koii rahabar koii rahazan koii hamdam huaa hogaa
rah e dil mei.n koii meraa shareek e g?ham huaa hogaa
voh Thahare sangdil, mai.n ne to mar kar zindagii paaii
unhe.n marne pe mere koun jaane gham huaa hogaa
dhaDaknaa bhii use ab chain se haasil nahii.n yaa rab
mere dil par muhabbat kaa asar kyaa kam huaa hogaa
jise dekhaa tamaashaaii banaa thaa un ke jalwo.n kaa
uThaa pardaah to kyaa maalum kyaa aalam huaa hogaa
shab e gham merii aankho.n se jo beha nikale the sote mei.n
tiraa daaman unhii.n ashko.n se shaayad nam huaa hogaa
naa mandir mei.n, naa masjid mei.n, naa kaashii mei.n, naa kaabe mei.n
voh teraa naqsh e paa jis par miraa sar kham huaa hogaa
nikal kar jism se baahar hayaat e nau milii mujh ko
Ravi, ye dekh kar hairaan kul aalam huaa hogaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Last Wish

I do not own a vehicle; I never learnt to ride a bicycle;
From the moment I learnt to walk I trusted my legs,
They took me to places I needed to see or needed me.
Now I have grown old, and my legs are weak and jittery,
My legs are not happy carrying me around,
Without the walking-stick, I am unable to walk,
I want to but cannot outpace Time.
But all is not lost because I am able to ride my mind;
My legs had helped me see and examine my external world,
The exclusive inner-world I have probed aided by my mind.
My legs had helped me gain the essential firm footing and stay grounded,
My mind has made me ascend to the world of supreme delight and light;
Formerly, my physical exertions had opened for me the world of pleasure and pain,
Lately, I am flourishing in the lap of rest and serenity I do not wish to leave.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Laughter

I stand between two rivers
That mocking logic and reason
Flow in opposite directions
And make me laugh;
Stretching my arms wide open
I keep my palms skywards turned□
To sense the rushing air
And curb my laugh.

The nights are invitingly gentle
They offer peace and calm
And a rejuvenating silence
That makes me laugh;
Sitting on a pile of sand
While counting the lit-up stars
I watch my shadow lengthen
And loudly laugh.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Leeway

This lawn is pretty fresh and green
Take off your shoes and walk with me
We need to feel its velvety touch
And ease our worried wayward wits
To find the spot the sun-rays reach.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Legation

In my sleep, I felt a hand
Caressing my cheeks
And draw out fears and ills.

In my dreams, I did not see
The serpentine way
Surround gently rolling hills.

At its end the good it was
That failed me albeit
I had lit my house with fire.

As I seek to take a stand
I can hear a cry
My hands are wet and still.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Let Me Sleep

Enough!

My emotions are not sundry and stray;
They soak and cure my verses fair,
Keep them alive and make them move.
Do not with them play again.

Be it a guarded simple jest
Do not belittle the words I choose;
When the stars shine I find my bed
With many a fondly nurtured dream;
I fear the darkness covering me.

Lift the veils of doubt, believe in me;
Allow my dreams to run their course,
I shall narrate in full their course and links,
My dreams come true but, all the same,
Mark my words, and let me sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Let's Talk

Let's talk about the world existing beyond the Sun,
Beyond all thoughts, dreams, and imagination;
Let's talk about the world existing beyond our control,
Controlled by a single invisible entity.
Let's talk about the world existing beyond beliefs and premise
Beyond conjectures and wildest speculations;
Let's talk about the world existing beyond eye-sight
Where the sightless alone dare venture deep.
Let's talk about the world existing as the reason and base
For the learned and the seeker to combine and gain,
Let's talk about the world existing from where no one returns
As the enjoyer, the enjoyed or the impeller still.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lihaaz Hai Kucch Na Tum Na Tu Kaa

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lihaaz hai kucch na tum na tu kaa
ye kyaa saliqaa hai guftagoo kaa
milii mohabbat mei.n surkhruuii
rahaa na gham koi aabaroo kaa
milaa jo zahar e gham e mohabbat
to rang geharaa huaa lahoo kaa
naseem kii cched hai kalii se
ye raaz pinhaa.n hai rang o boo kaa
ye husn e kaamil kii be hijaabii
to ik tamaashaa hai aarzoo kaa
Dubo chuke kal jo apnii kashtii
unhe.n hai gham aaj aabjoo kaa
ravi pe mayil na ho zamaane

ki TooT dil adoo kaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Limitation

The darkest hour of the night;
Outside
Few heavy footfalls,
Slight commotion,
A knock on the door,
And I heard
Someone whispered -
'Open your door.'
I did hear
But did not respond;
How could I?
I did not know
How to open the door;
Many long years ago
I too had knocked on this door
And whispered;
Someone had then indeed
Opened the door
And let me enter the room.
Alas! Here I am
Unable to walk out
Or allow someone else
Enter the room
I continue to occupy.
I could never again
Meet that person
Who had let me in,
To gain
This much-needed knowledge.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Listen To Those Words Again

I remember
The brief moments spent with you yesterday.
In the shade of the Mango tree
And reclined against it
We had kept our open hands on the turf
And between us, not a word was said,
Only when our eyes met we smiled;
We did not even hear the Kokila's long serenade.

You are rarely seen by most,
And rarely heard is your melodious voice
Which, like the Veena, has all of the required notes.
I wait to hear the songs you will sing for me,
I shall save and treasure those songs,
They are the tales about you and me,
About our love that blooms
In the Monsoon rains.

Pay heed to the Kokila that follows us everywhere;
She will repeat my words of love for you
And tell you of the ache of longing that rises in my heart
With each breath I take.

I pray, please save those words, weave a fresh dream
And sing a new song to bind us both.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Literacy

The wingless birds have taken to the air,
And the excited cows have leapt over the Moon;
And the persons who are blind
They weave wonderful dreams
While the dead are up asking for wine,
Alongside these few the quiescent I
Have found many words to read and write.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Locked Doors

Naughty boys hardly care about cleanliness
When they enter they soil the house with their muddy boots;
Outside the crows have gathered for a noisy meet,
They will decide upon who must feed first
The remains of the dog run over by a speeding van.

My second-floor windows do not give the full view
Of the street below teeming with people from all walks of life;
Though uncertain and unhurried, they occupy
The middle berth and raring to strike
At the spiky few hidden in the same crowd.

Staying away from that mill I cannot expect to live alone
I must free myself from the fetters of like and dislikes
Which bind me to the vacant space that fills
The four walls of my room corner to corner I pace;
I cannot for very long pay heed to each note of the chant
I happen to hear all day emanating from within.
I must unlock the door and walk away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lone Entity

I am a child
Not born to age and die;
I am the mind-child
Reminiscent playing with dreams;
As a wish -
Suggestive and encouraging,
As the lone hope -
Sustaining and the driving force,
As the heard unheard voice -
Dynamic, probing and prodding,
As the believing eyes -
Seeing the unseen verified,
As the unbound absolute -
Free to romp and roam about gleefully,
Because as the limitless one
I am the evidence and also the proof;
I am the desirable beyond the desired;
I am the lone entity seeking no one else.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lone Recourse

Your fidelity is in doubt,
Any mention of love and constancy
Made referring to you, my love,
Would it not have shamed you!
You ask me to recite
My plight of separation from you,
That I cannot;
I do not remember
The pain I had suffered
Even when watching you walk away;
Ask me if you will -
Whether I am eager to wait
For your return.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lone Shepherd

There is the eastward-leading path
Winding over undulating ever-green grounds,
I can see it lose itself amidst the deodars
Rising tall at the foot of the snow-covered peaks
Vying with the hovering clouds;
Also, standing on a lofty ridge and peering below
I still hear the gusty river gurgle and rush,
See it trundle down rubbing the coarse rocks smooth;
The winding path and the rushing river, these two,
Along with the few birds seen flying hereabout,
Have a predetermined attainable goal
And certainly, know their way.
But I,
Hardly aware of time and change,
But bent low with age,
Drive a flock of sheep
And continue to trace my footsteps upon the greens, □
All the while twiddling with an old staff
Held loosely in my bare hand,
And leaning against it
Not knowing the way out of these surrounding hills
I see the clouds roll away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Loneliness

And,

The woman, selling glass-bangles on the pavement across the street where I reside,

Suddenly raised her head, looked at me with her left eyebrow arched and held high,

And asked -

'Why do you suffer loneliness remaining locked behind your blue-coloured doors and windows? '

I have lived here ever since I was born, and I knew this woman to be sensible, intelligent and educated,

This world was her classroom and each trinket her teacher.

Even the bangles she sold had told her about their brightness, transparency, and brittleness.

But, I did not know why she found my loneliness intriguing.

I had never spoken to her about my loneliness that I continue to enjoy.

I have no surviving relative or a friend to talk to and about.

I engage myself in silent conversations of the mind.

So, I am never alone.

When I told her this truth she slowly lowered her eyes,

Quietly stared at her wares

And smiled,

To let me about her loneliness.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lonely Vigil

You have been waiting for me, I know.
Holding in your hands a paper and pen
To write to me about your lonely vigil,
About the nights spent tracing the Moon,
Comparing the stars with those moments
You have eagerly spent looking for me.
I have loved and always will love you
No matter where ever I happen to be,
You will always remain fresh in my mind,
Young and beautiful, sensual and inviting,
You may not know but my arms and hands
They ache and long to hold you in an embrace,
My dulled senses still perceive your scent
And the lovely feel that is reserved for me.
Do wait for me a wee bit longer
That's how I wait for you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lost Adjunct

Too long I have waited for your return;
The days and nights remaining quiet
Have swept past the steles bearing your name,
The signs you placed to plot your steps
On a path that is strange
And leads nowhere,
At which end the distant sought out afar
Has its sharpest outline blurred.

Maybe you will never return at all
Despite my constant vigil and wait
Till my genuine feelings and hope
They too with time are fully erased.

I know the sound of your footfalls,
My ears can catch their faintest notes,
My heart still beats the same rhythm
That was synced with yours when we met last.

Maybe we cannot play the game
Our youth had fostered lovingly
And made us seek each others' care
And wonder about the priceless gains
That had with ease crossed our way.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lost Companion

It was you who called me a little fool
Maybe in jest, O Precious Mind!
But that's the real me you had described,
No one else has known me better than you,
Because of you, I have lived this long to be
Proud of my stupid and silly ways
That has opened up for me the entire world
And shown to me my uneasy days
Made up of ill-founded memories and dreams;
I could never be wise on their basis.

On account of you, I now pace the earth
Strewed with expectations of many kinds
And also grown wings pearly white
To soar up high in the empty sky
Solely in search of you, my friend;
I have lost you somewhere dim-wittedly
In the crowd I have failed to navigate;
I seem to miss your attitude
Certain it was on sunny days.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lost Identity

I have a given name
But all the while
At different hours of the day
I am called by different names
Those names are meant to change me
Re-do my premise
They have not
Now
No one calls me by my given name
It seems lost
It no longer appears in any glossary
Have I lost my identity?
Have I ceased to exist?
Even I do not remember that name

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lost Memories

This morning when I woke up
It felt what I had was lost
Try I did I remembered nothing,
Not even my name and my home,
Or my familiar street and its sign-post,
The differently shaped doors and windows,
Opening on either side
Probably hiding the inane quietness and loud cheers,
The laughter and the whispers,
And the tracings of old meaningless social and physical conflicts
That had always invited cultivated taunts and jeers
Seen boldly etched
On the grey surface of slates that line the block.

Someone had stolen my memories,
The memories that pleased me
And also those that pained me;
These memories had helped me sort and count
My days and nights, my needs and deeds,
My rights and sights, hopes and dreams,
Expirations and inspirations,
And goaded me to live and let live;

I never needed to have my memories erased.
But as the sun is seen descending
The person within me tells me -
Not to lose faith
But wait for the night to recast its spell,
Recall my oft-repeated dreams;
Dreams that are memories
They join hands with open and hidden intents
And revive old memories again and again.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lost My Way

I know I have lost my way;
I don't see the guiding lights
Obscured by the grey mist
That floats thick and wide.

Barriers obstruct my run;
The standards set are high
To rise from nothing to all
And then revert to naught.

I've endured the long waits.
How can I close my eyes?
The marks I see guide me,
They help me to decide.

Though I have lost my way
The obscuring mist will fade
There will be bright sunlight
And I shall find a new path.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lost Truth

No one has ever told me about
The streams of consciousness that flow from heaven,
The seven rivers of deep thought,
Who are the mothers of all existence,
That flow consistent with their seven planes.
No one has also ever told me about
Intuition, which precedes the dawn of truth,
That assists the human mind to find the lost Truth,
The hidden knowledge of old,
The basis of the will and beauty
That brings happiness to all,
Generates radiant thoughts,
Infuses elation and achievement,
And,
Sarama knew the place,
But can someone of the present who knows
Take me to the place where such knowledge stays concealed?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Lost Wings

If I were a bird I could spread my wings
To fly and soar to great heights,
Greater than ever before;
Maybe my unprotected wings
Would then fall off
Burnt by the blazing heat of the sun;
As of now
I cannot even dare to run.
As I try to walk
Fear grips my old and ailing heart;
My truant mind does not guide me,
My legs are tired and feet leaden,
I cannot easily take any step forward.
I am like the bird that has lost its wings.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Loud Awareness

No longer overawed
I have sought your vastness,
Honed my vision;
Witnessed closely
The objectless flow of consciousness
Avoid hindrances and end misery.

By knowing that you exist,
By knowing you as you are,
I have sought you;
Discarded all vain assumptions,
Experienced freedom,
Experienced delight,
All the while
Holding on to the truth
That where you exist
And because of you
I exist.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Loved Ones

Early hours of the day
I hear
Raindrops pattering on my window panes
The daylight is dim
No birds are seen flying
But there is music.
The raindrops beat a steady rhythm
And there is the exotic smell of wet loam
They ease my mind.
The earth will now revive
Draped in varying shades of green
And vie with the blueness of the sky
I shall rise fresh and bright
And gleefully receive my loved ones
They are coming to meet me.
I will watch them push around
And listen to their small and big talk
Soon their laughter will fill the air
And expel the dreary silence from my room
Leaving me to weave new dreams
And be happy.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Mai.N Ne Ye Cheharaa Kabhii Dekhaa Na Thaa

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mai.n ne ye cheharaa kabhii dekhaa naa thaa
aaine mei.n aks voh meraa naa thaa
aankh khulte hii haqeeqat khul gaii
darmiyaan e maa o tu pardaah naa thaa
khwaab hii dekhaa kiyaa din bhar magar
kis liye tuu raat bhar soyaa naa thaa
kashmakash mei.n zeest kii thaa kaamraa.n
jis ne apanaa hosalaa khoyaa naa thaa
us kii aankho.n ko umeed e deed thii
mar gaye par bhii to dam nikalaa naa thaa
dhans gayaa jazbaat kii daldal mei.n kyuun
jis kaa tan mailaa thaa man mailaa naa thaa
mai.n ne khoyaa aur tuune paa liyaa
ae Ravi mumkin kabhii aisaa naa thaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Measured Life

Walking in the rain and counting the rain-drops,
I have lost all count of time;
Identified with me is my measured life on view
Animated by re-runs.

Atop a slippery rock, my legs wobble and crinkle,
They cannot challenge change;
I weep and sweep aside my fears and dreams,
The only wealth I expend.

My race with Time is a myth tested and tried,
It's the race that never ends;
I gingerly pace my path of cumbersome life
Twisted and enraged.
Wait for things' turn out.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Meeting Death

The darkest hour of the night,
Deep in sleep
I heard a knock on my door,
I asked- 'Who is it? '
There was no response.
I hastened to open the door,
Standing in front of me I saw
Death, in its most pristine form,
A wispy bundle of joy,
Smiling at me,
Exuding sheer delight and merriment;
I had not seen Death before,
But I wasn't scared;
When seeing it for the first time
I found that I was no longer tense
My mind and body were not agitated
Pain and expense were forgotten
I was at peace with myself.
And,
There was the sublime delight
I had never experienced before
Soothing my nerves and sinews
Mesmerizing me
Dragging me towards Death
Even though Death did not enter my house
Or embrace me.
But do I know the marks of Death?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Meeting Place

When one speaks,
For speech is the meeting place,
He utters words
That carry and contain
Divine knowledge and wisdom,
For truth, righteousness, and study,
These three, are associated with speech;
Unknowingly the words he utters
In the form of a prayer
Kindle the fire
To seek the knowledge of fire;
He seeks to know the distinction
Between known reality which exists
And the non-existent unknown reality;
He neither decries nor denies
The empirical nature and reality
Of the visible worlds;
He seeks the place
Facing the radiant sun
And shine as brilliantly.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Mere Mein Jab Habib Aayaa

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mere mei.n jab habeeb aayaa
khuun rotaa miraa raqeeb aayaa
mil gayaa jis ko jadaah e manzil
raqs karataa voh khush naseeb aayaa
duurbeenii azal se thaa shevah
dekhane ko tuu kyuu.n qareeb aayaa
khaTkhaTaayaa jo us kaa dar mai.n ne
voh ye samjhaa koi ghareeb aayaa
roz e taqseem mere hisse mei.n
g?ham e dil hii (miraa naseeb)aayaa
jazab e ulfat kaa ye karishmaa thaa
duur jitanaa gayaa qareeb aayaa
jaan mei.n jaan aa gayii goyaa
ban ke iisaa, miraa tabeeb aayaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Miri Hasti Hi Kya Hai

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mirii hastii hii kyaa hai, mai.n nahii.n huu.n
mujhe itanaa pataa hai, mai.n nahii.n huu.n
nahii huu.n mai.n tirii duniyaa mei.n phir kyuu.n
vahii mashq e jafaa hai, mai.n nahii.n huu.n
g?ham e hastii kaa ho kar reh gayaa huu.n
bas ab meraa khudaa hai, mai.n nahii.n huu.n
lagaataa hai jo kashtii ko kinaare
khudaa yaa naa khudaa hai, mai.n nahii.n huu.n
ik aah e garm se garduu.n ko
ye meraa hosalaa hai, mai.n nahii.n huu.n

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Mirrored Image

It was a hot afternoon.
I found him shaded and in a chair fast asleep.
How could he close his eyes and his mind to the entire world?
How could he forget his being and mine?
I wondered.
Last night,
He had appeared tense and pensive;
I could not bring him around to join me in my evening repast,
I sat alone at the table but mindful of my vow.
I had vowed to make him emerge and move
Fly like a butterfly in search of bright flowers exuding sweetness,
I wanted him to share that nectar with me.
He had indeed roamed the gardens I knew so well,
He did not lose his way;
He had my soft touch so could not hurt
The things he liked and chose to feel anew;
He could never hide the excitement leading him on
For he knew the nectar was his to taste.
But he needed to be held back,
He seemed to have lost the will to commit himself;
Though he could weave many thoughts
And had mastered the appropriate words
He had no voice,
He could not speak;
It was when I caught him looking at me
That I saw my pain in his eyes,
I found my weakness and tiredness exposed,
I knew I was looking at myself
Reflected in the mirror held in my hands
The mirror I can never dare throw away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Mirrors Do Not Lie

The mirror on my wall it does not lie,
It shows people as real as they are;
Their appearance and the impact of their wavering moods,
These are reflected as they are along with their chosen injects.

I do ask -

Why am I not that I see reflected in the mirror?

Why am I that which I do not see at all?

Why does my cognition faculty fail me?

Why do I suddenly become unaware of myself?

Why am I made to rely upon my memory of past acts and deeds and their
unavoidable effects?

Is it to retain the hold on my perch and rest?

Is that how I prepare to know, react, live, breathe, dream and think aloud?

Like the ever glowing sun when not reflected I too do not cease to exist
I continue to hold my ground burnishing my form to confront challenging
situations

Do I commit all this while I am that which I do not see at all?

Of course, the mirror does not reflect my thoughts, my emotions, and intents;
It neither speaks nor interacts with me or anyone else
But remains as though waiting to reflect my image to feed my sight and ego
And give me some relief, if I may add;
Why?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Misery

Misery

I have carried you far and for long,
You have witnessed all my trials;
The dust stirred by my tiring feet
It hangs in the air like an onerous cloud;
O, Hope! My fears linger on.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Momentous Urge

For seven days and seven nights I lay confined to bed,
A fever raged, I did not move, it made my body ache;
A bitter dose was served to me to cure me of my ails
Then it was I thought of you to ease my body pale.
In you, I had seen love and trust bustling all the while
It was your voice and tender look I sought to hold me by;
The pristine words that leave your lips they're my pearly wealth
It is your eyes wherein I found my world and did survive.
Be kind to me, O Hope, when you bring my mind awake
The restiveness that you devise does not make me dare;
I need to change the grains of thought feeding a fracas
Scripted by my ambitions unbridled gone awry.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Monotony

Seasoned and tough
My body feels the jolt
Each time the earth
That cannot escape
To ease its load
Heaves and haws
Without spilling the air
And the waters around
Into deep space
At which in doubt
I gaze to find
And see no signs
And hear no sounds
That comfort me;
As the spin proceeds
I gradually age.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Mortal Love

Someday though not in the near future
Will dim the stars that light up the sky,
The barren earth will heave and shift
With its air and water forever lost.

Then total darkness holding its sway
Will swallow the earth like it was food,
With you and I too ceasing to be
Our love will die as suddenly.

We think our love can never die
And the game we play will never end,
Thus we have tagged our dear intents
To the pale and dull ambiguity.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Mother

How can I describe her - her face, her eyes, her winsome smile,
Her petal-like tenderness, her loving concern, and care for all,
Her firm ways, her deft course through tricky odds and trials,
Her patience, endurance and unfailing will and mental strength!

Dispensing love and justice as an elder or as a companion or guide;
Her jubilation at the achievement of others and her feats,
Her honest struggles to remove painful deceptive figures and bonds,
I have seen her in these different forms each more endearing.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Mother's Love

I do not know why,
But once again
I want to be treated as a child.
Have my cheeks and forehead
Fondly kissed,
And my hair ruffled;
I like to be cajoled,
Pampered and spoilt.
I want to litter my room,
Break my playthings
And yell out loud.
I want to run out,
Play with mud,
Splash dirty water collected in the street,
Cover my clothes and body with filth,
To spite my mother who lovingly scolds.
O, mother! Why did you leave me?
Now for no reason at all
Do scold me aloud once more,
I want to hear your voice,
Taste the sweetness of your love
Overcome my loneliness
And meet my various wants.
Where are you?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Moujon Mei.N Iztraab Hai.....

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maujo.n mei.n iztraab hai, saahil qareeb hai
mujh ko yaqiin hai merii manzil qareeb hai
aankho.n mei.n ashk, aahe.n labo.n par, jigar mei.n aag
jaadaah shanaas e dard kii manzil qareeb hai
har gaam par hai raah e muhabbat mei.n ye gumaan
khanjar dar aastii.n miraa qaatil qareeb hai
lafzo.n ke paeirahan mei.n muaanii kii kyaa talaash
mujh se khirad hai duur magar dil qareeb hai

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Moving Consciousness

Why does night always follow day?
I have often asked.
Is it motivated by some drive or an urgent need?
Like moving all conscious beings
Towards the center of consciousness
For them to read and then casually erase
All lingering fond and bitter memories!

What is its causal relationship with the moving sun?
I have repeatedly asked.
Is it the inference of the unperceived from a mark
That is perceived
Though relation between them is not perceived?
Like that of space which exists between two letters or words
As also between any two intervals of time!

Why is the night a consequence?
Why does it depend on a condition?
Why is its inference a fallacy of reason?
These questions stay etched in my mind.
Is it Time arising from the change
Seen and experienced owing to things extending in space
Or that which can be known
Neither through reasoning nor by a shining intellect
Not even through repeated hearing!

Tell me
Why do I face such confusions at each crossroad of life?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Muddaa E Muddaii

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muddaa e muddaii matalab kii baat
aap ne bhii khuub kii matalab kii baat
be gharaz deewaanagaane shouq hai.n
kab kahii, kis ne sunii matalab kii baat
hosh mei.n aane nahii.n dete mujhe
keha naa duu.n mai.n bhii koi matalab kii baat
ho gayaa maayuus aakhir dil miraa
haae tuune kyuu.n sunii matalab kii baat
kahate kahate daastan e dard e dil
lab pe aa kar ruk gaai matalab kii baat
baat achchaaii kii bhii sunte nahii.n
jinko hai lagatii burii matalab kii baat
but khudaa ho , un se agar
ae Ravi keha de.n kabhii matalab kii baat

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Muddled Confrontation

She sought a safer turf and crossed over to the other side of the road
Cradled in her arms were her dreams and his promises
That she now saw reflected, in the stores' glass window-panes, pure and bare.
She could also see the faint smudges and creases on her cheeks and brow as
marks of time.
She had not been kind to herself, how could she have been, she pondered.

And, then she heard him loud and clear as though he was beside her sharing her
walk and her cautions;
She heard his voice as though she was talking to herself, a soliloquy she had
often crafted before.
He said, -
Do not ignore the omens; do not avoid me.
You have come across but could have waited and watched
The flow of traffic restore your trust,
Your trust encourages me; it gives me strength and the will to lead.
Without you, I am not what I seem or want to be;
Without you, I can never know who I am.
I adore you and follow you everywhere even up to the end's edge.
I am your dreams and also the promises not withheld.
Clear is the air, the ground, and the road; nothing can block our run;

She heard him speak thus,
Once again heard his reassuring voice and words emanating from within,
And, she could have opened up and stretched her arms
To let her dreams and his promises spill and fly;
Instead, with her eyes full of tears she lowered herself and squatted on the filthy
pavement,
Those dreams and promises, held to her chest close and tight.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Muddled Promises

Many promises dangle tied to a pole;
Some are frisky and some very risky,
But I have to make a choice;
Promises do nudge and bind.
No doubt, the garden is greener,
The air is cleaner,
And various flowers are seen
In full bloom everywhere,
And the view is indeed inviting.
But the promises
They are muddled
Verify I cannot each one of them.
I have not any deep-rooted ability.
Before I activate any one promise
I must prepare an appropriate ground for it,
And therein lies the rub;
How can I without knowing its nature?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Blue Pencil

Held between my fingers
The blue pencil I had casually picked
To write a few lines to you
Could not find any rest
It twirled and leaped as I wanted to
It traced in the air patterns made up by my mind
But did not pour out words I had wanted to
Upon the blank pages of the notebook
Placed carefully in my lap
I could not begin the letter meant for you
I could not write
I could not ask
The pencil
It held its head high
And did not stoop to the level of my notebook
Bear with me

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Brief

'Bend your back,
Even if the neck strains and your eyes redden;
Without hard work
You cannot run the gamut from hate to praise.'
I can still hear him shout at me.
He is fiercely rude,
My task-master from down South;
He wants me to excel.
I possess a decent ability,
I can think loud and large and also paraphrase
But lack rhyme and rhythm
And he wants me to change the beat.

He often agitates my mind,
Raises it to upper levels,
Makes me read the unwritten,
And draw patterns on the blinding darkness,
The starting point of my journey,
Concealed by the blueness of the sky;
That darkness is the door to the vast and deep Beyond.
He wants me to probe and cross
All barriers erected by my mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Brief Stay

There are many songs on my lips
Waiting to sound
Each as different from the other
As is the leaves
Of a Peepul tree all heart-shaped,
Shiny and soft,
Waving as though they were
Afloat the caressing wind.

But I shan't wait till the vacillation
Of my thoughts stop
Or Time is steered off its course
Or silently lost in between
Rhythmic heart-beats that defy
All manual counts,
Or the star-studded shadows that make up the nights
Slowly come apart
And expose the brilliant Sun
That waits in the wings.

My stay is brief
And so are my lilting songs.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Comfortable Room

The long quiet of my room did break
When I asked
'Is it time for me to leave? '
Though I wondered,
How could I ask myself to leave my room?

This room was allotted to me long ago
As my reward for the good works done in the past,
My excellent conduct and obedience;
I had even arranged it to suit my needs
And become very fond of my room.
Its doors and windows ever open
Welcomed freshness,
They did not turn away the inquisitives or deflect queries.

With me always present in my room,
There were liveliness, free-will, and regularity at play.
Nothing was strange
And accidents never occurred.
I continue to wonder
What has made me seek the opportunity to leave this room?

Once I had a rabbit as a pet;
I was attracted to his velvety fur and reddish eyes,
The former reminded me of ease and comfort suiting my needs,
And the latter, of mortal risks and challenge I resented,
It was alien to the carefree atmosphere of my room.

Outside my room,
Pigeons often gather in large numbers,
As to why they do is still a mystery.
My rabbit watched them jump and fly
But never approached the pigeons
For a friendly banter or a scare;
And, one evening I noticed
That my pet was not to be found;
I guessed,
Perhaps he wanted to be with the pigeons he had befriended.
But my rabbit had never learnt to fly;

He had not yet grown wings.
He did not fly.

That I had wanted to know the time I could leave my room surprised me,
But I do not want to leave,
No one had asked me to leave.
I cannot leave my room even if I want to,
I do not wish to end this life.
If I step out of my room
There will be no one outside but me
Alone and unfeeling;
I simply cannot venture out because
I have not yet learnt to walk on thin air.
I have not yet learnt to fade away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Dark Room

Was it you O Mind who had mended my thought?
I had just emerged from the dark recesses of my room
To check the light was the same as it was
When I had fallen into a deep sleep
Believing the world will continue to spin
As before
And the day and night will chase each other for free
And the Sun will tease the Moon and the stars
If only to show its fury and might.

Where had I erred?

Darkness is same where ever found;
The light is same where ever it shines;
Neither have I changed my look and gait
Nor have you the trends you set.

Now I tend to see the hidden truth;
This very thought frightens me.
I do not want to roam the darkness of space
The room I occupy serves my needs.
Stay still O Mind and bide with me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Desires

My days gather dust as my wait is prolonged;
I must stay and watch the caravan of my desires
Show its wares to others but I and I know not
The nature of the desires I had long ago compiled.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Eternal Search

Where are the pure-minded persons of clear consciousness?

Where are they who because of their erudition had reached the thresh-hold of a merger?

Where are those no longer touched and held back by impurities of ignorance?

All of them had, after removing all doubts, soothing mental agitations and opening up their intellect,

Simply awaited the extraction and destruction of the last vestiges of separateness -

The thin barrier between lingering individuality and the eternal undifferentiated;

And, as the reflection of the latter,

Bound by the visible and the invisible objects of pleasure and pain

Nourished by the vast expanse of air ever subsisting in space,

They had probed the vast expanse of space and time.

The cause of their wisdom is eternally protected they are successors to the mind-born;

They are the knowers of the exteriors and external works,

The knowers of the interiors and the internal worlds,

And the illuminators of the path of the enlightened ones;

Therefore,

Standing at the cross-road of mental impressions and uttered words

And aware of my defects and the truth of my being

I seek the company of such learned men possessing good understanding,

Eager to know about their hearings of the universal wisdom in its pristine form

Wanting to taste the same essence of truth spontaneously revealed to them.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Eternal Strife

For the sake of leading a remarkable life
I am destined to remove the mental block placed upon my mind
Prior to my every re-birth.

In each succeeding birth
I have revived, taught or conditioned over and again
My mind.

The questions already answered quietly re-surface
And the confusion long ago removed returns for re-trial of the mind
Making me re-learn the obvious and re-grasp the essential.

I am divine, and I am the same in each re-birth
Repeatedly suffering the same pains and pleasures,
I sift the good from the bad to be liberated.

I do not complain of intense heat,
Or when marks and distinctions are erased, from the fire
The brighter I emerge, the more sublime is my delight.

Even in this birth, I continue to invoke the sole source of knowledge,
Fueled by thoughts and reasoning and burning ferociously as the sun
I strive for the divine hearings of universal wisdom in its pristine form.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Experience Of Death

You have come to take me away with you, O Death!

But wait!

I have neither narrated nor have you heard the story of my life.

Be patient!

Allow me to gather my wits and strength to tell you

About my numerous restarts and failed ventures since listed

With dubious calls and claims; hope and designs, sans pity or respite.

And you would say

Whatever I have experienced is not new;

This pattern of my life was designed and written by you,

Therefore, I should hurry and not waste my efforts and your visit.

O Death! I know you to be kind and comforting,

But I cannot help talking about myself, about my being unique;

I must tell you about my pain and joy, and about love and hate I suffered,

You can then rate my performance accordingly

And still, say

That whatever I have experienced is not new.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Father's Invite

He called me a moment ago,
My father, him I adore,
He is my preceptor.
Now I wait
For him to call again;
Then I shall pack my things.
Who knows
My journey could be very long;
The clothes I wear might not suffice,
I do not know.
I have no good shoes to wear,
I have no food to pack either.
But there are things
I surely cannot take with me,
My thoughts, dreams, and aspirations,
These have no place
Where my father lives;
He left me all alone
Long ago.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Father's Son

My fault is
That I am my father's son
I am not evil;
Like him,
I often fly very far and high
In my thoughts and imagination,
Survey the world I live in
No longer reviled
Afflicted by deficiency
Such as doubts, fears and worries.
Confidence is my forte;
My father made me hope and dream.
He was a poet;
From him
I have learnt to see the true colours
Splashed everywhere
And ignore the stains,
Walk the numerous narrow lanes,
Think like him, and write like him;
He lit up the world for me
As I now do for my son.
I am my father's son.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Fault

I neither have four heads nor a thousand pairs of eyes
To probe what causes conversion of forms into numerous joys
Which consciousness alone enjoys and speech gradually reveals.
I do not play with others' emotions
Nor allow my own emotions to run wild
Lest I create a mirage everyone believes to be true
But tell me, I fervently ask -
Is it my fault that I do not lie to delude myself
That I am curious to know what lies beyond things seen and unseen
That I can probe even beyond the reach of time and space?
Is it my fault that I am the very bright powerful five-headed five-limbed entity
That constantly excited keeps itself ablaze
And whose influence beyond all phenomenal conditions and dimensions extends?
That I am aware of my true identity as the eternal one
That I do not care about what I possess and do not possess
That I feel no pain no elation no sense of being
As I look downwards at the place from where I had made my start?
Tell me, do tell me-
Is this all my fault?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Favourite Game

Confident I am
Tomorrow will be another day spent,
But let me see this day run its entire course;
The sun has not set,
And I have to assess
Today's delights and frights;
I am aware of the promises made,
And during the ensuing night
I will again let my dreams lead me astray;
I am fond of playing this game.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My First Love

I cannot describe her beauty in few words,
Very delicate, demure and captivating, the least if said;
At first sight, I could not take my eyes away
And I have not seen ever again a face more beautiful than hers.

She made my college days most memorable,
I simply adored her for being close to me,
We were in the same class and often shared notes,
Her writing was as elegant as a swan
Smoothly floating on a lotus strewn lake;
I doted on her and to her, all my days and nights belonged.

Soon, we graduated and moved apart;
She knew the place where I lived
But she had never told me where she did;
I never met her again, did I?
I had not told her about my love for her
But I love her still, my first love.

I never did find her;
But she is with me even when I close my eyes and go to sleep
Then she embraces me and holds me in her arms
Whispering into my ears sweet nothings;
I have not lost her ever for a single moment
I know she will always remain with me
Even till my last breath and even when I finally close my eyes.

Indeed, Time has taken its toll and now I am old and weak
But because of her, just because of her
I have learnt the meaning of love and felt the pain it gives.
I see her everywhere, the same little shy beautiful girl I love.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Friend, Ram Dhall

You are the one whom I love and trust,
You are the heavenly gift to me,
You are the answer to my prayers of worth -
I sought an able guide and ease.

You have made me measure my ability,
You have opened for me the shuttered doors,
You have made me walk the righteous path
And lead my life fearlessly.

The colours you choose to please my eyes,
The notes you hum for the ears to catch,
The patterns you weave on the vacant sky,
They only vie with my sturdy mind.

Your favourite seat is my throbbing heart,
My needed quiet emanates from you,
Your hands have sculpted my dreams and thoughts,
They goad me to do what I must do.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Home

My home is where peace and the tranquil dwell
Where happiness reigns and laughter echoes again and again
The grass and the leaves they swivel and flowers bloom
The sun shines quietly from behind the cooling clouds
And the birds some perched and others in flight
They sing their songs to make me feel alive
And not engage in thoughts that are alien or strange.
Be my guest; join me at the stream
That trundles down-hill on its path carrying along
The twinkle in my eyes and the dancing smiles on my lips
As gifts for those who do not uplift their minds;
Call out to them loudly if you will you must
To share your experience with me and the place I live
I am the one you deeply love and returns that love.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Inevitable End

I have worked hard all my life
And I have lived long enough;
Prolongation of any life without a purpose
Is self-defeating,
Life should be laced with achievements
And studded with joy;
I have nothing in store to achieve
I have no joy to seek,
Therefore I have no right to live
And I have elected to die.

But I shall not take my own life
Nor seek outside assistance;
I do not believe in the existence of God.
My death is the task for fate to accomplish,
And I believe in fate
My existence is Time-bound
And there is no after-life.

I must die.
Till then I shall bear the burden of life;
I shall tolerate the pain it gives;
There is otherwise no enjoyment in my life,
Each moment leaves a deeper wound,
I cannot look at the scars that are left,
They make me believe I exist;
I do not wish to exist.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Inseparable Shadow

He said -

'You have waited for many a sunrise to light up your world.
Your world now covered by the brilliance of the sun throbs as though it were
alive.'

He has always kept pace with me and vied to occupy my space.
He is not my rival, he is not competing with me; he merely wants to be me.
He merely wants to think as I do, walk as I do and talk as I do.
He is clever, able and resourceful.
He is still here beside me.
But, why has he referred to my outer world alone?
He should have spoken about my inner world too, did he?
Perhaps, he has waited too long for his world to come alive.
So be it.

As one aware of light and life, he had once told me about the three ants that had
variously found three sugar-granules;
One held the granule in its jaws and rushed towards its common home and
disappeared;
The second ant was still grappling with its granule unable to lift it,
Whereas the third ant was found alongside its granule waiting for assistance;
'Such are the three stages of education and experience.', he boldly declared.
Though not aware of my inner world he still follows me the whole day; my
inseparable shadow.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Lesson

I am instructed not to venture out alone after nightfall
And to avoid the dark alleys of likes and dislikes;

I am instructed not to listen to the constant fluttering of my own heart
Howsoever agitated and waylaid by uncertainties and fears it might be.

I am instructed not to hold on to those painful expectations which remain
unfulfilled
But take delight in the daylight while enjoying the sun's warmth.

I am instructed to meet reality reflected in my eyes
To find the truth about my real self now lost amongst illusory objects.

I am instructed to grasp the sound that wafts in from an unknown source
And to re-write that sound to decipher the meaning it conceals.

I am expected to meet truth face to face
Without any hold or fear.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Little Dreams

String flowers,
White, blue, and red,
Wear them around your neck,
And think of me excitedly
O little dreams of mine.

I wait for you eagerly,
There is the sparkle in your eyes
Meant for me alone;
Let not your beauty blind me
And make me stutter.

The bright smile lit on your lips;
It removes all fears
And smoothens the wrinkles
And eases the knit brows;
As you near me you will not fade.

O little dreams of mine!
Light-up my sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Lost World

Where are those few who often shared their stray thoughts with me?
Their woe and plight, imputation and recovery, discovery and revelation,
Wonder and joy,
Where can I find them?

Those few were the basis of my study, my awakening, lively intensity and
passionate resolve;
As the embodiment of truth, they were the virtual source of my strength,
Identifiers of my being,
Where can I find them?

Their very presence gave me pleasure, dried my tears and opened my eyes wide;

Made me stir, infused confidence, helped retain my place, locate fields to act
And seek the stars,
Where can I find them?

They helped me find my path, regain my freedom and re-cast my hope-filled
dreams;
They made me share their laughter, brought back my smile, the twinkle in the
eye
And the blooms bright and cheery,
Where can I find them?
Where can I find them?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Pigeons

My pigeons will soon come back to roost;
I have hailed them with a screech and high-pitched screams;
There was much waving of arms and scarves.
The sun is down and the night will spread,
And cast its clever compulsive spell,
Then my birds will rest and go to sleep.
I cannot ask about their travels' range
Or about the time they had kept back;
I know they flew beneath the clouds,
They dare not rise to greater heights.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Poem

Past midnight, as we stepped
On to the empty dark street
I heard him recite my poem
That I wrote only three days ago.
'To ward off fear, ' he softly said
'I read aloud your lines.'

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Secrets

Last summer
In a silken pouch
I hid my secrets
To save them from the blazing heat
Of inquiries;
They live because they live for me
And I live for them.
Once more the days are getting hot
And the pouch I hold is dry
My voiceless riddles are pouring out
Painting my hands and thighs;
I cannot wash them away.
No one would bring them back to me
And without them, I will die.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Three Experiences With Love

I knew it was love that made my mother hold me very close to her breast,
Then look into my eyes call me by many names trying to find the real me;
She knew I loved her too because she found me with my tiny trembling hands
Touch and feel her person and my feet kick urging her to stay hugging me closer
still.

I knew it was love that made my father scold me scalding me with caustic words,

Then showering me with words of wisdom meant to be a part of my learning;
He wanted me to imbibe good things and mature into a man worthy of tall
stature,
He knew I loved him too for he could feel me curb my anger and the brewing
rebellion.

I knew it was love for life that has made me pray for a term longer than usually
enjoyed;
I love life for it has made me enjoy its offerings daily, and at each moment
reminding me
Also of what I owed to it and had to pay back without demure or sense of
compulsion;
Life too knows I cannot now renege because I relish playing games that tax
my mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

My Unread Poems

In my notebook,
The words I wrote yesterday,
Though not erased,
Today they are forgotten;
After I die,
My same note-book,
Still untouched, unopened,
Perhaps remaining as new as ever,
Will not grace any library shelf
But it may survive
As a few digitalized pages at some archive,
Surprising even those who regularly peruse
To find my little poems ripe
No one had ever read before.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Na Huii Khatm

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naa huii khatm shab, sahar naa huii
ik duaa bhii to baa asar naa huii
aasmaa.n chup, zamiin sar afgandaah
mar gayaa dil, unhe.n khabar naa huii
haae tuul e shab e firaaq, ae dost
gham kii ruudaad mukhtasir naa huii
duur kartii jo yaas kii zulmat
shamma roshan voh mere ghar naa huii
multafat mujh pe duniyaa kyaa hotii
merii jaanib tirii nazar naa huii

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Na Poochh Mujh Se

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naa puuchch mujh se ye saaraa jahaan kis kaa hai
zamiin kis kii hai ye aasmaan kis kaa hai
rah e hayaat mei.n dekho qadam na ruk jaae.n
voh duur dhundalaa saa miTataa nishaan kis kaa hai
bhanwar kii lahar mei.n kyuu.n ab voh iztraab nahii.n
pahunch gayaa jo kinaare gumaan kis kaa hai
ye koun mujh se mukhaatib huua pas e parda h
bataauu.n kyaa miraa dil paasbaan kis kaa hai
udaas kyuu.n ho, Ravi aao puuchch le.n dil se
yaqiin kis kaa hai us ko gumaan kis kaa hai

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Nameless

Yes,
I have heard you call,
I have heard you call me by my given name;
Your voice still lingers in the air so very gently,
Almost caressingly,
And within my ears and mind
My name resounds again and again
Inviting me to that very precipice
Where you stood and explored my worth
Made me feel wanted and sure, rise and respond.

And now,
Where ever you may be I must be there
Only to feel your presence
Enjoy the ease and comfort you provide
By freeing my mind;
I may not be able to see you,
Though I am not blind
You have made my vision restricted,
I can only see a mirror hanging in pithy darkness
That, in your light, reflects my face and attire
Without any colour and outline, boast and tide;
I know you but not your name,
As yet, you have not told me your name.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Nasty Dream

Often I dream
The tide has turned,
The sameness that baffled
Will no longer be seen;
Familiar names and faces
These too will fade.
The hearts and marriages,
With their arts and ravages,
The radiant smiles
And the sight of blooms,
The jovial cries
And the tasted fruits,
The forgotten tears
And their faces smeared,
Will not astound
The tense expectants,
The eager and waiting
Part of their crowd.
When I wake-up
I sincerely pray
For this dream of mine
Not to come true
But always remain
An easily ignored
Figment of a crazy mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Need

Paint my dreams with hues that are rare not seen;
Fill them with tales now seldom told or heard;
But bring back not those sounds which fail to gel
As melodic strains of old, I often hum and play.

I know not why my dreams defy reasons to stall
Their search for perfection where it does exist;
Possessed by memories of trials my feeble mind
It allows those dreams to dare erratic waves.

I would have discarded my dreams had I had my way,
But they are a part of my nature I cannot do without;
So, draw me quietly back to sleep for ease and warmth
And fill my dreams, O Night, with your wordless songs.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

New Horizons

After each sunset
The nightly shadows
Silently creep in
And spread their wings.

Sitting beneath a bough
Leaning against the tree
Gazing upwards I watch the sky
Reveal its many secrets.

Those are the stars
That glitter and twinkle
And promise new worlds
With strange horizons.

I know my world;
Beyond its horizon
There are the bright stars
That wait for me.

I possess the will
And the power to wield
I am mobile and resolute
Ever ready to move and act.

But what if I happen to find
The horizons of the new worlds
No different from our own
Similar in content and effect!

What if I happen to find
The same uniformity
The same kind of spread
The same kind of invite!

This very thought
Of universal-sameness
Holds me back,
It tests my resolve.

Unable to venture forth
I continue to gaze at the stars
Watch them glitter
And then fade at each dawn.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

No One Agreed

And about me, it was said,
I cannot be relied on
There was no ground to trust me
That I had lost my bearing;
This could be true.
They had surgically opened up my mind
And examined its contents.
They were very thorough professionals,
My opponents;
And I trust them.
They had found within its folds
Several structural defects
And many weak nodes;
To their dismay, they found that
My mind acted independently
And defied the established norms;
This could not be tolerated I was told.
It was decided
My mind must be replaced,
Therefore, I went out
In search of a child who had just opened his eyes
To ask him to replace his mind with mine
No one agreed

Ravinder Kumar Soni

No One Ever Sleeps

No one ever sleeps,
At all times some part or the other
Stays awake
To excite, inspire and monitor;
When the heart continues to beat,
Breathing and absorption does not cease
And memories give rise to hopeful dreams.
The mind does not sleep,
The mind never rests its functions;
As the observer and the observed
It arouses, awakens and also attends.
At two different levels
It decides the course of thought
What to examine and act upon;
It sets goals and regulates emotions,
And closely reveals the implicit.
There is no escape from the mind
That if left alone loses itself.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

No Snowfall In The Hills

Mild winter in India
This year
No snowfall in the hills
Water scarcity looms
Rivers will dry
There may not be rains
Hotter summer
Fields will parch
A famine stares
Food scarce
Black-markets flourish
Unrests everywhere
What else will happen
It is not known
Fear grips
Each heart and mind

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Noble Intents

This being,
A mortal blessed with a body made of flesh and blood
Dominated by a very active imaginative and scheming mind,
Sitting in the lap of harmony, friendship, goodwill and serenity
Seeks protection, enlightenment, and perfection,
And also the destruction of all aspects of narrowness,
The total annihilation of the elusive powers of deforming nescience,
And for the free flow of divine energies the immediate severance of limiting
subtle knots.

He asked
'Why has my surrender and adoration not made me overcome psychological
obstacles? '
'Why have my words of invocation merely lit the physical fire? '
'What holds back the revelation of the word which summons the light of
knowledge? '

And was told
That a serpent-like powerful force with its tightened coils of darkness
Obstructs the streams of divine energies that fill the body and mind;
By removing mental darkness, all constraints affecting the subtle body are also
removed,
Thereafter, these energies manifest as an intuitive protective vision
Making one conscious of doing the right acts and generating right intents and
thoughts;
And destroy all vestiges of narrowness and allow vast happiness to spread far
and wide.
Along with conquering speed and brightness these favours once gained
The word invoked with your luminous intelligence will suddenly dawn
Lighting up the inner spiritual flame that shows the way
Up to the open gates of the shining world of light;
The shower of divine energies and the streams of Consciousness and Light
Will come happily drop by drop and then
Gathering in the form of a cloud hurt by lightning will rain its bounties steadily
upon you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Non-Plussed

The slow build-up of the storm raging within
Had un-nerved me, I could not hold myself back,
I left my place and walked towards your end
And there you were waiting for that storm to blow me away.
Why should that gale blow me away?

I have nurtured my aims, tightly held my dreams
And in a friendly way wrung your hands O Destiny!
I've felt them quiver, hesitate and fleetingly halt
The rising wave that weakened time 'n' vividly instilled fear.
Why was I anxious and more terrified?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ode To The Unwritten Poem

This is the third occasion I have come calling
And knocked at your door and peeped through
Your closed tall heavily curtained glass windows;
It is now two hours past sunrise when I first broke
My sleep and took the path leading to your house.

I cannot wait till the sun rises overhead and burns
The little tender feelings I hold for you in my heart,
I cannot wait for you to open the door when it is dark
When I cannot read you as fluently, O my unwritten poem!
Open the doors of my mind and emerge through my pen,
Quietly descend upon the paper I bought for your sake
Let me read you out aloud to my friends who would then
Carry you along with my name across the wide open sky.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Offering

Do not call me selfish
Or self-absorbed,
I have merely shaped my life,
It is sanctified.
Not miserly,
And satisfied with myself,
From my singular attainments
I have made others benefit;
Know me as the co-eater,
I have no narrowness,
Call me munificent.
Through emotions and awakening,
For the sake of pervading the world,
I have rendered
My life pure and divine,
For the sake of
Happiness and bliss
I offer my life to all.
I am noble,
I am sublime,
Ever protected and preserved,
I am the supreme delight.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Old Age Cramp

I have noticed -
My hairs have all gone white,
My eye-sight is very weak,
I no longer trust my body
Scarred by the strain
Of years left behind;
I know -
I have grown old with age.
Therefore, now on,
I cannot depend on deep sleep,
Nor on dreams,
I do not have to experience in my sleep
The greatness that I often did.
I must simply watch my senses operate,
Witness my consciousness at work
And be aware of its dual nature.
The good and the evil,
The true and the false,
These should not bother me;
And because I am not my own shadow
I must continue to exercise my intellect,
The source of all mental activity;
I cannot reverse the passage of Time,
I must abide by Time.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Old Dreams

Finally,
After some fifty years
I have reached
The spot I thought
I would never forget
Where I had left
My tired sulking dreams
To wear off their effects.

Ever since,
I have kept dreaming
New dreams
Off and on,
And now I am exhausted;
All these years
Those dreams
Have chased me,
Nagged and spoiled me;
They are of no use to me.

O Graceful Night!
Enfold me;
Bring back for me
My old dreams
Young and kind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Old Fears

The sun now shines but no one cares,
The fears of dark they're ancient tales,
All things that are seen, they are liked,
They are held in hands and fondly felt.

The fruits are ripe and the riches spread,
They are ours' to take and ours' to give;
With this conflict won then the fray within
It has obviously lost the verve and push.

But the sun is tired and it wants to rest,
The place is known where it goes to sleep.
Lo! The sun has set and darkness reigns,
Once more old fears will nag our psyche.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Old Rambling

Heed my call,
You must heed,
It is joyful and right;
Be merry.

Ignore not the wind
Which blows and lifts
Our varied thoughts
To the discerners.

Let the water flow
And the fire burn
To cleanse and dry
From inside out.

Measure and weigh
The spoken words
They readily convey
What we think and do.

Our limbs are tired
Lacking strength
They stay and rest
Against our will.

Avoid the old navios
That cannot ride
The tide and hide
Our little secrets.

Say safer still
Is our gentle heart
That beats and reads
Those secrets.

Our eyes and ears
The light and sound
They search in vain
In an empty world.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Old Street

This old street,
Dusty and dank,
Fronting my house,
Remains deserted, quiet and cold;
And, no one cares to know
Who lives here or died;
Never was any name written or called,
And nothing was given out or sought,
Not even promises;
No one has ever been disturbed here
Or frightened;
I had thought,
It was the place meant for me.
Perhaps,
The stones paving it were too familiar.
Now, the more I look at them,
The more my mind suffers;
And the more I look beyond those stones,
The more they feel dry, hot and trampled.
But, I cannot avoid this street;
It leads up to the temple gate;
It divides my town into two sections
And is the place where I live.
It is time I washed those stones.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Old Vista Revived

Limited indeed are the spreads, the aims, the ways and the means,
These limitations mark the virtual extents of work and toleration,
Success and satisfaction are the preserve of the few persevering adherents
Who light up the torch of aspiration and the free-will to achieve;
Limited too is the span of life enjoyed.

Of what use are the efforts that fail and soon fizzle out
No one retraces the course if the goal is not achieved
No one speaks about the difference in works done and pending
Neither are the impulses charged up to keep them pulsating
Nor the dues withheld to be denied.

To approach a wounded soldier for a checkup and ease his plight
During the time war is on is no easy task for the weak hearts
The corridors covered by the pall of smoke are filled with the stench
Of stale sweat and rotten flesh scoring the many weary minds
And bodies tinged with fatigue and pain.

Tied to the wrist the watch that ticks away does not control time
Pea-pods ripened and dry release the seeds to raise new generations
Caution remains a caution till it is not acted upon to prevent a repeat
And damage controls are mere eyewash for they do not undo the loss
Water cannot go uphill on its own strength.

This world crowded with ideas is caring catering to several needs
Of all living beings that swim or crawl, run or fly or simply stay still
Inventions, innovations, search, finds, and discovery are encouraged
It is a wonderful playfield where wealth and happiness dwell
And an exciting enriching peace survives.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

On A Mission

Sage Kashyapa prays:

'O Lord of all creation!

May you possess all divine powers and qualities!

Purify us (purify our mind)

So that he who is the Karma-yogi

Is blessed with the enjoyment of divine happiness,

And he who is the Jnana-yogi

Attains the perfect unity he seeks.'

I too have likewise repeatedly prayed

And in truth,

Succeeded in conquering the main foe, craving,

Which residing in the senses, the mind, and the intellect,

Obscuring all positives

Causes the embodied individuals to remain deluded;

My intelligence based on intellection is not permanent and uniform

It has not yet destroyed my cravings with the purified mind which it must

Only then will I succeed in transcending the mind and the intellect

And also all works and knowledge bordering joy,

Only then will I be able to attain the perfect unity I seek.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

On Being Denied

What and how answered
Only why and when remains,
But for many long years
No one has ventured forth to tell
And the street where I live
Now quiet and desolate
Waits for the sounds of footfalls
To resonate as before;
My swollen eyes have mutely shed
Copious tears that seem to have
Quickly washed away unknowingly
All my gathered hopes and dreams
Leaving me to save and tend
An empty shell
And nothing else,
Not even reliable promises.

Counting the pebbles held by me
I have again and again lost their count,
I have again and again failed to pry open
The secrets I had fairly hid
Even from my own roving eyes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

On Growing Old

Barring the first five,
I remember all of the near about seventy years
Spent by me in search of my real identity;
Honed by a long series of painful experiences
Of braving the frequent failures
In the realization of hopefully nurtured dreams
But harbouring brief moments of petty joy
I had waded through the watery lanes laid out
By a set of deigned faith and uncertainty
That my fading youth and eagerness had designed.

Be it my weak heart or the perturbed mind,
Be it my failing senses or my trembling limbs,
Be it the words I search to speak and define
Or be it my understanding of things I seize in haste
I have earnestly sought to find
In the crowd of self-willed projections
My ever-revealed presence
That makes the world appear as real;
I can see the distant light fade
I can never feign truth;
I can never defy Time.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

On Love

He said

'Do not confuse your longing with love

Love needs no chase or pain,

It is neither a thing that can be purchased or gifted,

Possessed or stored

Nor based on a single, touch or sight,

Not even on distance or proximity,

Or on few select words.

Love is a meditation,

It is a divine feeling that emerges

Only to merge those who care.'

He who spoke thus is the real me,

Beyond instincts and thoughts;

I have not found myself pine or whine.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

On My Death

I know I am dead.
My inert body is cold;
I died
In the early hours of today
When the sun had just begun to glow;
Its light had just begun to spread.

I do not know how I died.
I had then felt tightness in my chest
And a brief pain that made me open my eyes
And clench my fist I could not raise;
I could not breathe.

Once more I was left alone and blind.
Someone had switched off the light
And all was dark, darker than nights.

Now, I cannot hear people untruthfully say
I was a good person,
I was a fortunate being,
I had met a peaceful death,
I had enjoyed a happy life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

On Return

Not strange it was that he picked for himself
Only a dark pink rose from the basket of flowers
He brought back from Paradise that was in full bloom;
His noteworthy elegance, kindness and benevolence rekindled
He could now gratefully soak in the love and attention he sorely missed;
A pukka romantic at heart, and an ever hopeful dreamer,
He had made the journey to heaven and returned.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

On The Verge Of Discovery

My old friend,
Whom I trust and often visit,
I found him at his favourite window
Staring into the yonder beyond;
'I am bored', he said,
'I no longer need this sun,
It does not interest me,
I do not enjoy its hot angry stare,
I am tired of waiting for the nightfall.'

'What can be done to cure this affliction? ' I asked

And he replied, -
'I want excitement,
I want to explore and experiment,
Therefore, help me find a new sun to befriend,
Help me find an unfamiliar moon too
And new trends of thought;
I do not wish to repeat myself.'

Thoughtfully,
I sat beside him
And likewise
Staring into the distant beyond outside
Began my search
To help accomplish my friend's desire.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Optimism

Someone has quietly whispered to me
The few words of love I had given up as lost
In the dismal shades more darkened by hate.

These words of love for all to hear
Convey the sense of quietness and peace;
They have eased my pain and anxiety.

These words of love are full of hope.

I remember the time when I had stood still
To observe the bright sun first rise then set
And the dawns and dusk face melting mists.

Wary of the enfoldment by day and night
I had wondered why for these contests are set,
Not only to play out the game of chess!

Perception endangered the wise find fault
Embedded deep down their mind's wild range;
I have seen them sift and burn the seeds.

I have heard the words quietly whispered to me;
Now, they lead me to seek the world of light
That has spread its arms open and wide.

It is time to gather to find the truth
That lies beyond the endless reach of love,
And the limited range of sight and thought.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Orderly Disorder

When I am not holding a pen between my right index finger and the thumb know that I am still unsure and merely sifting my thoughts much in awe of the treasure my mind has accumulated as memories over several years, that is, during the period of my growing up, during my school and college studies and thereafter, during the days of my seemingly never-ending struggle to find a steady mooring, nay, an escape from the uncanny turbulence raging outside and within.

I thought I had rightly settled the score with myself, overcome my weaknesses particularly my nagging doubts about the veracity of what I had heard and wished to hear, and the unsorted issue of being and not-being when I realized I had crossed all hurdles dotting my path leading me to the very edge of my existence notwithstanding the clinging to the awareness of my troubled uncertain mind plagued by its inability to discard all of the unwanted preferences.

To someone who has relished the caring warmth of the sun, the shimmer of the neighbouring stars does not matter, the strong are always held on to and the feeble most often ignored; a robust tree does not permit grass to grow around its trunk, and very tall trees do not necessarily bear sweeter fruits; I do not grieve when my feet meet the sodden ground restricting my progress nor do I shed tears when I am unable to see my goal eclipsed by darkness of a certain kind; this is the relief I enjoy most.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Other Side

The air is biting cold,
And I am getting old,
If things do not turn out as they must
Find me my lost mold.

Why ask me to stay?
When it wins the day
For me, my work is both duty and plea;
Give me time to fray.

Then I can hide desires
And douse hidden fires;
But the path leading to you is brightly lit
Nothing else inspires.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Our Meeting Place

Too often

We meet at the same crossroads

Where our ways do not meet.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Outcast

They want to shut down my place
Near the canal
That splits our town into two parts
One for the rich and the other
For people like me who find
Making a living very difficult
I have four days to close my shop.

I run a small furniture shop
I am a carpenter
The people on the other side
Appreciate my work
They are forcing me to shut down my place
All because I am dark and ugly
And they do not want to be known
As the ones who know me.

Indeed shabbiness is a curse
Poverty is a curse
Ganga water has not cleansed me
And I possess no lodestone.

Of course, they do not mind the canal-water
That is filthy and stinks
Long ago it was clean and populated with fish
They can get rid of me but not the canal.

They mock the hungry
By fasting occasionally
They dole out alms to be known as generous
Those who shun me cannot be kind
They are testing my patience.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Outward Bound

Same old refrain
Same notes and caution
Same words and race
Up to the barren stone crop
Overlooking a wide vale
Wet and green
Peopled by young and old
Impatient and some asleep
Said to watch the water's run
As the river flows by
Noisily
Notching a point
That is valid and gold
And outward bound
And there
Lit up is seen
My book of verse
With its open page
Showing a name
That is not mine
But of the one thought about
Dancing in the rain
I search for pesky words
Not yet written in his praise

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Owl's Eyes

Ever heard an owl's cry?
Not regularly heard
Its screech and hoots do not excite the mind,
They are the harbinger of ill-fortune, so it is said.
It is not a beautiful bird and in the wild,
Unafraid of the dark, it silently hunts at night,
And not out of greed,
Like a slithery snake, it swallows its prey entire.
As do all forms of life it also feeds on life.
But it represents Vishnu and accompanies Lakshmi;
Its eyes are of Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe,
At once captivating, round, wide open and unsmiling;
Watchful and wise they alone can see
The non-haunting spectre rise and surround all living beings,
Cover them one to each in the form of a cloak
Which are multi-layered and invisible that only a mind
As watchful and wise as an owl can deeply penetrate
Or readily peel away to reveal the hidden Oneness of all things.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Own Kind

Man is a thinking beast,
He has yet to learn to stand
And endure own kind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Painful Existence

I could hear him ask -
'Why do you grieve?
Share your sorrows and sufferings with me.'

I could hear him loud and clear against the roar of the waves.
I was then leaning against a dry rock near a cluster of coconut-trees.
He was sitting on that very rock.

I told him -
'How am I to share my sorrows with you?
My sorrows
They are all mine,
My tears too;
The pain afflicting my body and mind
It is for me alone to bear,
No one can take it away from me.
I can never share my pain,
I can never make you feel sad likewise.'

He looked at me and then at the sea
Churned by the Earth, the Moon, and the Wind,
But he was not nostalgic.

I said -
'The rock I am leaning against is a part of the Earth,
For many millennia it has stood still and speechless,
No one has shared its pain.
This coconut-tree is young, it also suffers
The onslaught of the sea and the air,
And does not complain;
But the agitating sea it incessantly sounds its complaint,
For the sea also suffers and wants someone to share its pain.'

My friend, wise and inquisitive, asked -
'These rocks, these trees, the sea and the Earth
Do they possess a mind of their own? '

'Of course, they do.' I said,
'All things in the universe are rhythm-bound and pulsate,

It is in their nature backed by a strong will-to-be,
And that will is always goaded by a purposeful mind.
The atoms of an element are compact bundles of energy
They live, vibrate and participate.
There are no inanimate things in this world of objects;
Consciousness pervades all objects.
When objects lose their rhythm and cease to pulsate,
They cease to exist; they simply disintegrate.'

Hearing me speak thus,
My friend began to reflect, grew pensive and withdrawn.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Parting

Parting in anger from dear ones
It gives much pain;
Tears are shed and sometimes blood,
Reunion becomes difficult;
When there is no love, doubt persists.
He intends to pave a new path by himself.
He knew all this
As he bid farewell.
He wants to leave quietly
But cannot slip away.
It is his heart that holds him back;
It remains with those who love him.
He simply cannot take away
That which now does not belong to him.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Pathfinder

There is the ever continuing race
Involving all of us since birth;
It is our silent race against Time.
All our thoughts and energy,
Plans and computations,
Resolves and care,
They are directed to beat Time;
Sluggishness and delay
Is bound to harm us, we are often told.

Such has been the sad plight
Of all living beings who must grow,
Develop and gain strength,
Improve inherent understanding and abilities□
Succeed, achieve, evolve and multiply
Depending on the non-living
As so many countless drops
Comprising an ocean
That is active and loud
As if it were on the boil.

Time is a guiding point - our Pathfinder.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Peddler Of Dreams

When I heard the fall of his footsteps
I simply shut my ears and closed my eyes;
I didn't want to hear his voice or see him at my doorsteps;
His deeds no longer resided in my memory;
He did not deserve any recall.
Why has he returned?
If you know, please tell me why he has returned.
After he left I had not inquired where he had gone;
He had annoyed me, caused much mental agony
Because he had me misled with false promises;
He was not needed at all; the lone Peddler of Dreams.
He gently weaves the dreams on the sleigh within his mind
And never displays his wares but did make me ask
For the kind of dreams, I liked and cared.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Perception

The truant wind defies the sea;
The waves are big and darker blue,
The sails are tense and the air is damp,
No birds are seen up in the sky;
How to reach our home tonight?

The splash of waves upon the shore
The light that fills our range of sight,
Their roar and flash can hurt the psyche,
But who can hold and calm the gale?
Why blame the quickly fading light?

Our eager hearts they still await
The truant wind to change its course
And lead us to the sheltered shores,
Find out the moorings and the load,
Then both of us can rest all night.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Perilous Odds

Downstream at the nearest bend
Many turtles brown and green in colour
Are often seen
And regardless of the sun's glare some birds of prey
Dare to fill the emptiness of the sky,
Hovering, searching and ready to suddenly drop
They seek these harmless docile creatures
Moving on the narrow dry bank
This side of the stream;
Methinks,
I should have kept count of such raids conducted
And of the turtles lost.

A simple person that I am,
Lost to the amusing lure of the strains of a reed
And bemused too by the usual panorama meeting the eye,
And, overawed by its seemingly eternal blueness
I could not fathom the depth or spread of the sky.
A thousand times I withdrew my outward stretched arms
For I could not embrace and hold on to the floating notes I liked
Carried afar by tenderly drifting wind
To places far beyond my reach and range.

The little turtles they still twiddle and waddle,
Some are picked up by the hungry birds and some by men,
The luckier few find the running stream leading to the lake
Their hallowed home to make;
Thus I have seen life hunt, struggle and survive.

Our world is not imaginary,
Life does not rely on the imagery of the mind;
And the combined force of learning and instinct
It faces and fights perilous odds
And sets free the process of proving its existence,
That all creatures breathe, mark and savour.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Perplexed

A peep into my room
Reveals the darkness
That plays with light
Until the next sunrise;
It seeks meanings deep.

In my firm hands
I hold a worn-out brush
As I want to paint
The outside of my house
With my blood.

All of a sudden
My nascent love springs
Many a genteel surprise
Yielding and precise
Emerge without hate.

At the open crossroads
They alone stand unmoved
For they can see
Their confused compromises
Their fingers rend.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Perplexity Probed

The rush is on and the hopeful few
Gathered to share the morning dew
Peck at the leaves of trees and grass.

The birds and bugs on a routine trip
To quench their thirst are seen to sip
The holy nectar captured by space.

The blazing fire lights up the ground,
The iron-wheel goes round and round,
They circumvent the tide of Time.

Squatting beside the ruined dreams
Watching the low and high it seems
The tears I shed will never dry.

I wear the robe which often evades
The spread of lies of awkward shades
That tinges my world of make-believe.

My eyes they frame a picture bold
That carries the mark of ginger mold
That lifts up the living over the dead.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Piety

I cannot leave my thoughts about you
Those that I have for long nurtured and fed
With love and hope and countless fantasies
About the day I would laze in your shine.

My books tell the same tales all over again
They now grace the upmost inaccessible shelf
For they do not speak about my platonic love
Nor of the intense pain I suffer longing for you.

Crayons and pencils merely trace your form
They do not reveal the real you and me
Lost I am not while treading the path I laid
You have kept the flame lit to guide me on.

Though I can see you in all parts and straits
That fill-up and enliven the world I care about
I can force open my heart to find you within
I seem to have failed to find you where I want.

I have lost count of the time spent in search
And I do not know whether time exists for all
In which direction it rolls in a confined space
Where you alone know the place I belong.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Plea

Help me find the word I had just uttered
To relearn its true import;
Complete I shall then be.

My legs have dragged me to your doorsteps,
Your house I am unable to enter;
Your doors are closed on me.

Be my savior, towards your strength I look;
O Wisdom! Firmly grip my hand,
Do not ever let go of me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Poets

In private, he praised my poems;
He seemed greatly impressed.
Any public praise can endanger
My reputation, he said.
Many people like me write prose
Believing it to be poetry;
But then, praise does invite attention.
He did not risk exposing me.
He was not fond of poets.
Poets serve only their own kind,
So he thought.
I did not change his mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Pose A Riddle

Pose a riddle if you must to kill my ennui
The days and nights weigh heavily upon me
A simple soul with a gentle touch I am
The envy of those who laze about rotting in the fields
Suffering too from the same languor
And not yet ready to lift an eyelid weak
And see the sparkle die out from each others' eyes

Pose a riddle if you must and agitate my mind
Make it work and frequent the forgotten lanes
The likes of which even the wise haven't dared
And even those who could not ever see
Beyond their crooked nose and the whiffs of scents
Polluting the air we all breathe in
While walking on embers and call it life

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Positive Trait

When I look at you I look at myself reflected in your form
Freed from all bonds and obligations,
No longer singed by the fire that burns the world of deeds
Or bothered by the suffering endured
In trying to lead a peaceful life happily knowing it is complete.

When I look at you I look at myself reflected in your form
As the ardent seeker who clearly knows
Death is in the sky, in the midst of the sea, also in rocky clefts,
Easily traced by sorrow and gloom,
Around the bends, it is seen as darkness wielding a scythe.

When I look at you I look at myself reflected in your form
Beyond tendencies holding fast to truth,
Anxious to escape from the three-pronged ever-spinning wheel,
As the one gladly encountered abruptly
On the path that leads to you to climb and light up the world.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Positive Urge

One by one they all had come
To meet the one adored,
They had in them their fears to quell
And sought him all alone,
And ease their painful plight.

They knew what they had all to do
To get rid of their woes,
They had to obliterate their thoughts,
Errant dreams and doubts,
And cleanse their fuzzy mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Potion Of Love

This cool breeze
From the North
Gently blows;
It lifts my mood,
Revives my hopes,
Sorts my dreams,
Makes me glad
And seek you.

Soon,
The flowers will bloom,
To proudly spread
Their colour
And scent,
Draw me in
And make me
Long for you.

Time is ripe
Do come to me;
The song of love and ample joy
Is on my lips;
Come, my love;
Come, share the feast,
And sip the ale
I've brewed for you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Precious Thoughts

Somewhere, here or there,
Facing the wind, shine, and rain,
Lie in the open
My precious thoughts;
Someone had said -
'Thoughts are conscious',
Meaning,
They have a mind of their own,
They respond when stimulated.
But for me, the creator of my thoughts,
My thoughts are the trusted motivators,
The very breath of life, indispensable;
Though they have no form or limbs,
I can make them felt and move,
I can make them change the two worlds - their's and mine.
My thoughts are the colourful beads
I have devotedly strung with faith;
They lie in the open, exposed,
Not because I have thrown them away,
I have allowed them to experience
Those things that I cannot
Cocooned by my diction and dictates.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Predicament

It is you who had in the wee hours of a morning having looked at me just once loudly remarked:
'My friend,
You are the seven white steeds galloping across the sky yoked to a blazing day-light giving disc,
The creative energizing heat, hidden or spread, imploring all things to act, enact and react,
The gust of the wind that swiftly blows across the glades dotting the woods and drying-up the ponds,
The lonely heart-beat that the inner turmoil has caused to suddenly reveal its true nature,
The ugly serration giving away the torn leaves ripped apart rudely from their supporting branches,
The gathering rust of a discarded unclean once moist blade left in a corner unused and forgotten,
The uncertainty of the first exploring step testing the thorny harsh ground and the environs at large,
The meaning which the letters and words hide from the gathered uninitiated and the not so learned,
The written word incarnated five times over struggling to be understood and properly pronounced,
The light, the sight, the will to learn and so on; you are all this and certainly much more.'
You had not erred in your judgment of who and what I am, a mere reflection of you seen in a mirror;
Howsoever you had wished to recall my presence in your world pleasingly decked with delightful
Mutually competing aggressive fantasies, dreams, hopes, and speculations I shall not disappoint;
Your expectations, valuable as they are, and the justification of your trust will stand vindicated,
The world we live in is functional and real to all those who swear by it and not a mirage;
There are many more worlds yet to be discovered and explored, let us work towards finding them;
Let us stand atop the highest point and survey the world seen below tiny and insignificant;
Let us not halt or escalate the passage of Time; let us not think of this impossible lest endangered

We too drown and perish reaching the deepest depths of emotions of anger, spite and the like.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Preference

Look at my hands,
The digits; and lines
Drawn on hollow palms
Speaking about days
Not yet dawned.

Look at my hair,
Coarse and dry
And already grey;
They picture and mark
My intellect and age.

Look at my face,
Haggard but eager
To show the depths
Of pent-up emotions
Through dull eyes.

Look at my clothes,
Wrung and loose
Hanging on my frame
As a vendor's bell
Still untouched.

Look at my home,
The door-less house
Assuring peace n refuge
But no relief
From rain and gale.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Presage

Worriless,
We were watching the birds fly
Towards the sunset,
Suddenly he asked -
'What is your core desire? '

Though shaken
I willingly said -
'You are seeing the birds fly
Towards the sunset
And they wait for the new day to dawn
To each new day they are firmly bound;
But after I depart from this world
I should forever be freed
From the painful bondage called life;
The dawn of a new day does not excite me.'

He mulled over my statement
And then nodded in agreement
But continued to nag me,
He is very generous with words.

He said -
'Knowingly,
Someone may want to follow,
And after that journey join you
And in a flash find you
In far-off space
Seated cross-legged and erect,
Arms withdrawn and eyes closed,
Breath held back,
Floating face to face with the sun
And shining as brilliantly
Celebrating freedom from your mind;
And, then experience as would you
The much wanted and longed for
Ease, calm, warmth and happiness
Of the kind never felt while alive,
A delight that is supreme, eternal and divine.'

He took a deep breath,
Rested,
And waited for me to respond;
And I said -
'But to what avail; may I ask?
There can be a reason for me to die
But, why would anyone else die too
And take my route?
It is the living alone who can think and dare,
The dead do not tell any tales.'

Thoughtfully he looked at me,
And I continued -
'The dead have no memory of deeds done,
How can they share their experience?
Here you are found tutoring me,
Talking of things you have not experienced,
Talking about things written in books,
About things repeatedly talked about;
These are other persons' speculations.
You see, I am still alive,
Attracted and very uncertain;
I shall bide my time,
I do not want anyone else to die to trace me.
I do not want to lead another life
And be found facing the sun;
I do not wish to live after I die.'

Having heard me speak thus,
My friend, pensive, left his seat and quietly walked away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Prisoner Of The Mind

I am an ordinary man plagued by ignorance and pride,
Also a man of very ordinary means;
I have fallen prey to the ravages of time.
Bound by mortal and worldly coils
I have lost the wide open righteous path,
And, given to pleasure and pain
I have lost my freedom and cannot integrate.
There is not one but two worlds in which I breathe, live and play,
Both excite my senses and make me ideate
And keep me aware of my beginning and the end,
They retain me experimentally
As a part of the world of nature that needs care,
And of the world of the mind that is full of confusion and tripe.
Whereas one world is the domain of the false and the untrue,
The other deceptively provides me relief and comfort;
Wedged between these two worlds I have lost my identity.
Had I not taken birth I would have never known about these worlds,
Their qualities and conditioning factors,
And not seek out the possible escape routes I did
That must lie beyond reason and affliction. But, the unborn, I am told, does not
die.
Here I am, a prisoner of my mind left to ride unchanged
The chariot pulled by a seven-named swift horse
Till the day I die and fade away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Prized Patience

The ire displayed,
Aimed at me,
Is justified;
Do not quell
Your anger.

Nasty has been
My approach,
I seek and suddenly
Draw you away
From your roost.

I know you possess eyes,
You can see the known;
It is not you
That is reflected
In the mirror I hold.

The days and nights,
Old cohorts,
Given to spring
Surprises upon me
Do not scare.

I walk my path
All alone
At an even pace,
With measured strides,
Unruffled, unhurried.

I do not intend
To swim with others
The shallow waters
Of negligence
Blindfolded unaided.

You are angry,
But do not chide;
The clouds have gathered

Heavy and dark,
There will be rain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Prohibited Word

Beware of the word
That means differently to different people;
Do not utter that word in case
It holds no meaning for you and mankind.
There are such words
Phrased or paraphrased to be left alone
Be it in sleep or awake,
Though a sharp memory you may possess.
Languages and dialects,
They are many; differ according to region and race,
But the words that mean
Differently to different people immediately burn
The easily ignitable fabric
Of thought and works left improperly disguised.
Do not try to gain access
To any such word even in your wildest dreams.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Promise

When I arrive at your gates it will be
The arrival of awaited Spring to meet.
I have noticed, of late you haven't been
Cheerful and active, your garden dull and dry;
But, I shall redo your life for you,
And Spring will revive your garden too
Filling it up with coloured and scented blooms;
We shall then gleefully make you move and act,
Be lively, smile and long for more.

Your sunlight, the wind, and rain I am,
You are my life, my love, and cosy shade;
Because of us and for us all things exist,
Making us worthy of life we lead
All happy, spry and eventful.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Promised Dawn

The night has quietly begun to fold its vast spread;
The air carries the sound of the chirping of birds;
The sweet smell of the flowers in bloom is afloat.
Soon there will be sunrise and a new day will dawn
Holding many promises and compulsions of duty et al.
My day will begin with the watching of the gentle dawn
And with it, my aspirations will take wings and soar.
The daytime brightness does not affect my eyesight;
Before me is the treelined path to follow far
At its other end, pleasure and joy alone wait for me;
It is as though I have been reborn to relieve all pain
My body and mind have suffered continuously.
O, Mother! Do not ask the night to descend again.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Proposal

My heart,
It has just asked my mind
To find an escape route
To free itself from all thoughts
And dreams
And be light and zippy.

My heart,
Swayed by promises and contentions
And utterly confused,
Found its responses erratic
And sought relief;
Discomforting was the night.

My heart,
Knowing the immediate connection
Could only seek mind's help,
Work for its purification
And also its own;
It had rained all night.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Propositional Truth

There was a time when buses and cars were not seen crowding Delhi roads,
Bicycles and the Tongas were the preferred modes of transport,
Very young I was then; I do not recollect having seen hand-pulled rickshaws
plied.

He did not live far from my house, my school classmate, and friend of many
years.

A witty and intelligent person he is, and an avid reader too.

We like each others' company and have watched each other age.

It had rained the whole night; the sky was still overcast and the morning dark
and very damp.

Not the time to be in the open.

But I decided to visit my friend, more to enjoy a walk in the rain when it rained.
He immediately picked up the tip-tap of my walking-stick as I approached his
house.

Such was our connect;

Without seeing me he knew it was I who had come to visit him,

I often sought clarifications from him on things that I could not easily resolve.

He opened the door and made me occupy my favourite heavily cushioned chair.

'What vexes you now?' - He inquired as I settled in that chair.

He had seen my creased forehead and thoughtful eyes.

I said -

'We know the role of reason is limited, that it needs propositions;

When such propositions are based on certain other propositions established by
reasoning

Why do we invoke reasoning to prove or disapprove anything? '

My question was not irrelevant.

'Let us drink coffee first.'

His wife had in the meanwhile brought coffee for us.

'Anger is not anger if it has not found a release;

A flower is not a flower if we do not know it to be so;

Love is not love if it cannot be experienced at all.

This is how, my friend, logic works,

This is the manner of reasoning to arrive at the truth of things that we all know exist,
And this way by itself is its limitation.'

'I agree. But why does this limitation exist? '

'Life is a long-term learning process,
And there is memory depending on individual abilities to warn or anticipate,
Imagine or fantasize; it is a limitation.
Breathing, awareness and hunger, these are involuntary indicators of life
But not meant to remind us that we are living.
Life by itself has its own limitations, it is frail and brief.
Because truth depends on being accepted as true, truth limits itself by not being self-contradictory,
And speaks for itself.
It exists for the individual as long as that individual lives.
Memory along with truth and its accessories - belief and reliance, cease to exist after death.
My friend, all that exists is like the lotus-leaf that floats on water but does not get wet.
We invoke reasoning merely to explain away or realize such like facts.'

He paused and touched his forehead and looked at me.
His eyes though open did not see me.

I quietly placed my empty coffee mug on the table.

It had started to rain again.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Protected Fervour

The thought of you moves me across many regions;
I am curious I dare not ever change
A mere automaton that is run by a group of ten I fear
My five senses and five organs of sense combined,
The group I would have wanted to control or guide.

In the hollow which is my heart, I keep imprisoned
Encased by numerous fond reminiscences of past
Likened to a snow-clad tall peak where you reside,
The real you whom I have always adored as truth
And see the mighty snake meander around your neck.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Punctuation Marks

We use punctuation marks rather too freely
As essentials to space and segregate our thoughts
The comforting comma and the semicolon
The decisive apostrophe and the full stop
The rare hyphens
And also the brackets that openly hide our thoughts
And we are made to interrogate with a question mark
We never needed these aids before
Did we
Have we ever thought
Why do we emphasize when the writing is already legible
Why do we need to disambiguate when there are no doubts to resolve
Why do we surrender to inventions when our intentions are clean
Why do we have our expressions regulated when the meanings are clear
It is a shame that we do this most often

Our writing is no longer a mystery
Our phrases and sentences are exposed
We cannot say anything leaving it hidden or unsaid
We have lost the way to search and find
The slight is on us

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Pursuit

He who resides within me,
At a particular place,
Him I may not see
But he is there ever existing and self-evident;
His intelligence makes him pervade my whole body,
Experience pain and pleasure throughout,
And also extend beyond.

I am on the lookout for that infinite entity.
It is he
Who at the time of my release from bondage
After discarding my experiences
Will take away and own my consciousness.
Though witnessing all deeds
And residing within and outside the world of the mind
He is identified with and lights up the intellect,
He moves the two worlds and moves in between;
Unconcealed but as a dream
He transcends all forms of death.
This much I know.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Qaafilaa

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qaafilaa waqt kaa vaise to Thahartaa hii nahii.n
aur Thahartaa hai to itihaas banaa jaataa hai
farq nekii o badii kaa voh miTaa jaataa hai
kis ne dekhe hai.n bahaaro.n mei.n khizaa.n ke tevar
kis ne jaanaa hai ki hastii hii hai dar asl ajal
be sabab koun banaataa hai yahaa.n taaj mahal
ham pahunch jaate the dariyaa.n kii gaharaaii tak
ham ne chaahaa thaa andhero.n mei.n ujaalaa karanaa
ham ne chaaha thaa zamaane ko dikhaa de.n johar
vae qismat ki haqeeqat kii zubaan khul naa sakii
lafz e ummeed ke mafahuum se maharuum rahe
"naa huaa par naa huaa Mir kaa andaaz naseeb
Zouq yaaro.n ne bahut zor ghazal men~ maaraa "
haath mei.n kaatib e taqdeer ke khuu.n rotaa rahaa
voh qalam jis ko gham e dil ne jilaa bakhashii thii

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Qadmon Ke Nishaan

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mere darwaaze ke baahar hai bicchii ik chaadar
jis pe chchorhe hai.n nishaa.n waqt ne apane laakho.n
har nishaa.n ek muamme ke sivaa kuchch bhii nahii.n
aur darwaaze ke andar mai.n khaDaa chup saadhe
muntazir huu.n ki idhar aaegaa bhoole se koi
aur rakh degaa qadam apane usii chaadar par
us ke paaon ke naquush e taazaa
kar waqt ke boseedaah nishaa.n
misal e khursheed ubhar

muntazir huu.n ki koi ajanabii aage baDh kar
mere darwaaze pe dastak degaa
aur soyaa huaa ye jism miraa dobaaraa
jaag utthegaa, taDhap jaaegaa
mai.n bhii chokhat pe bichchii chaadar par
apane qadamo.n ke nishaa.n chchoDhuungaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Qualms

How am I to describe
The blankness of my mind
Now that it does not waver,
In it no longer reside
Desires, needs or jealousies,
Anger or spite,
Neither joy nor grief,
Ideas or thoughts,
Neither knower nor known;
The hows and whys are not chained,
Faded shades darken,
Fears resurface
Arranging old notions afresh;
And therefore a bit surprised,
I ask-
How can my mind ever remain blank?
Why should I describe its partial blankness?
Only to disturb its peace and poise!
When I know-
Till the time my body and mind, both perish
My mind can never
Erase its range and wares.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Queries

I have always wondered -

Even if made of the same material and from the same mold
Why two things are never exactly alike,
Why there exist perceptible local and retinal infinitesimal differences
Highlighted by the illusionary effects of the occluding or the occluded edge?

I have always wondered -

Why space, otherwise empty and imperceptible, is the same everywhere
Has as its mathematical dimensions its expanse and depth
And distances that are the comparative measurements between objects
Floating in it as so many impediments not overriding its vast emptiness?

I have always wondered -

Why my ordinary senses cannot perceive the embodied soul,
The same in all beings, indestructible, infinite and eternal,
The cause of my existence and reason of my being
And the basis of my willingness, actions, pain, and pleasure?

I have always wondered -

Why my loneliness and inner silence is rapidly gnawing at my heart and mind,
Even though stationed amidst the maddening multitude of humanity
Attempting to understand and know me more intimately
I religiously provoke myself to find my real place and true identity?

I have always wondered -

Why my curiosity, often compared with that of a prowling predator
And as intense as the fire that burns within all beating hearts,
Has singularly remained un-sated, un-quenched and un-resisted
Only to remind me of my numerous limitations and those of knowledge itself?

I have always wondered -

Why all aesthetic judgments motivated by immediate concerns are open to
challenge,
Justified inferentially such judgments invite controversial postulation
And when there is no difference in things which are not perceivable
There is clamouring for and dependence on aesthetic judgments?
(Why are things not accepted as they are?)

I have always wondered -

Why Death which for an individual being always signals the end of Time
Is feared and called the Great Leveler and Healer
Though innovative in its approach and impact it sears the wings of all
imaginations;
Does it not kill the desire to re-live the life that has just ended?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Quiet Optimism

This morning when I woke up
I found myself adrift
Upon a road I know so well
That's brightly lit and neat.

This road I walk will take me far
To the place I want to be
That's filled with blooms and twinkling stars
Adorning thoughts and dreams.

I do not count my steps and beats
Uneasy I may be
I simply watch the world go by
Without a word for me.

The promise I now wish to keep
Is the one that makes me seek
The highest peak touching the sky
And the deepest ocean dike.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Rafta Rafta Aadmi Jab Qaafilo.N Mei.N Bat Gayaa

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raftaa raftaa aadamii jab qaafilo.n mei.n bat gayaa
pardaah manzil par paDaa thaa jo voh aakhir hat gayaa
subah nou aate hii ghar mei.n roshanii aisii huii
dekhte hii dekhte saaraa andheraa chchat gayaa
siikhanaa thaa zindagii se tujh ko nafarat kaa sabaq
pyaar kaa mantar naa jaane kis liye tuu rat gayaa
TuuTanaa hii thaa use ik roz, is kaa gham nahii.n
jitanaa joDaa zindagii se rishtaa utanaa ghat gayaa
din nikalte hii na jaane subah kii ban kar kiran
koun mere paas se uTh kar ye be aahat gayaa
faaiz e manzil naa tuu phir bhii huua to kyaa karuu.n
mai.n ki ik pathar thaa tere raaste se hat gayaa
ae Ravi puuchcho na ham se kyaa bataae.n, kis tarah
rote hanste zindagii kaa waqt saaraa kat gayaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Rain-Dance

A rhythm beats
On the window-pane,
The air is damp
And the falling rain
Makes me wish
I could dance.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Reality

Ideas, actions, and events
Occupy the space
Common to all.

Anxiety, mistrust, and fear,
Caused by the unsure mind,
Are difficult to remove.

Anger, greed, and pride,
Are the seeds of destruction,
Can be avoided

Belief, faith, and contentment,
The three pure condiments,
Strengthen resolve.

Love, trust, and expectation
Indeed keep the urge to live
Ever alive.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Realization Of Truth

I am the sun seen ever-glowing lighting up the entire world,
I suffer no anxiety; the Heat I emit keeps me alive and I pulsate;
I have nothing else to do except watch my world evolve.
Those who say I rise in the east are unjust; they do not know me,
And they can never know me who say I can rise elsewhere.
The ignorant feel that I stir emotions; I goad them to act,
And cause Time to flow on a course dictated by me;
But, the learned and the wise adore me as the nucleus of their being,
As wide as the whole Universe; they say I am the eye of the world,
I am the awareness of the wise and the glint in their eyes
And the person seen in their eyes,
I am their final refuge for I am my food; I eat what I create;
I belong to all; I am the All; I am the Universal Unity; I am Truth;
I am the invisible formless unborn eternal Universal Self.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Reason

Sixteen paces, he said,
Separate the living and the dead;
These paces are seen in three stages and one.
The living are possessed of sentience
And the dead are only a half-stop speech.
The intervening space is where all names resound
And there is no lack of corporeality.

I told him -
I want to remain a child
And engage in understanding my wakefulness
That I do not wish to know about deep sleep
And then begin the count of sixteen steps
And abruptly stop being a child
And gradually move to my death.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Rebel

I have run out of patience,
Imprisoned I am by my being and Time;
They make me resist.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Reciprocal

Stem not the flow of water
Let it run
Down the many slopes which gradually lean
Towards the waiting streams that usually feed
Many rivers, lakes and the seas;
Let it mingle with its previous downpours,
Allow it to lose its identity,
It is seen to nurture all forms of life.

Do not stare at the sun
The sun can blind you,
But do not block its glare
Its glare lights-up sustains and invigorates the entire world,
The world it has helped create through cognition,
Through acts of construction and transformation,
Using its power to heat;
From its heat was born water and air.

Do not fear the night
Its darkness though comforting deludes.
Rely on your senses,
They keep you awake at all times,
They prepare you to read and surmise.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Rectitude

The cold and dry northerly winds
They sting our cheeks,
And race the blood to warm the skin
And our inside.

The floating mists and foggy nights
They shield our doubts,
Though hard to pick they slip-by
Without any guilt.

Watch the stars they drop to earth
And block the roads,
And crowd the musty dreams within
Sleepy eyed.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Recusal

Soon after dusk, I heard her cry.
She could not draw up her sore limbs;
Her limbs were stiff and painful;
She had slaved in the fields all day long
To sustain herself.
She could not bear hunger
Nor sleep in peace;
She had suffered and was in pain,
There was no one to comfort her
Or apply a salve;

I heard her cry.
But approach her I could not,
She did not want to see me,
I reminded her of the past.
I had hurt her,
I had betrayed her faith that had cost her dear;
She had lost herself in the crowd of wants and needs.
In fact, I had withdrawn myself from the world
And she was hopeful of a better world and life with me.
I detested pain yet caused her pain;
She is the happiness I always desire.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Redemption

Cast aside all scary thoughts
You've nothing here to fear,
The night will come to calm your mind
And the stars will make you sway.
When the sun will shine then you will see
The birds that bring awake
Your likes and love that doze along
Your errant will at play.
When you wake up the world will know
Where else to place the blame
The deeds that were done by you in haste
With orders disarrayed.
With steadier mind and stronger will
You will soon recoup your loss
You will find yourself proscribe the act
That runs afoul good grade.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Renaissance

The sun has set
And my home waits for my return;
I know,
Uneventful has been my exertion thus far,
My weaknesses and attitude, they remain unchanged
And, I have failed to extract from the surrounding seas
The single elusive drop that can change all lives;
I am tired and worried. It shows.
I must go home and rest,
A new morn waits for me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Restless Mind

Before take-off why do eagles flap their wings
Then on their perch press talons and gain lift,
Their sharp eyes fixed on their prey they soar
High up to sweep in and register their kill.

Leaning against a tree-trunk on a rocky ledge
I have often measured the deep gorge below
Brimming with the life of different kinds and form
Spread out in the open for the birds to pick.

What if I were to choose to enter that chasm
To scrape and scavenge for I cannot kill to feed;
What if I were to be the mighty eagles' prey
And find my sinews picked clean off my bones!

Such strange thoughts pester me only when
My head held low, shoulders beggarly stooped,
Unable to sleep I am left to walk along the walls
To find their corners and incline unchanged.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Return Of Haze

The haze of doubt pierced,
In the yonder beyond can be seen
Fluttering in the wind
Atop the ever rising
Forgettable pile of errors and omissions,
And of dreams and reflections,
A light-blue scrap of paper
Inscribed-
'I seem to have been here before but when? '

Simultaneously can also be heard
Above the din of scramble and scuttle
The many voices of the learned and the taught
Crying out loudly in a chorus-
'This is not my hand; I have never been here before but why? '

To resolve this issue of 'when and why'
There is also lingering a twister
That opens up to unveil
Within the folds of over-lapping dimensions
New sights and visions,
More thoughts and understanding,
Which dimensions gradually reveal
The unique singularity of Time
In which the 'when' and 'why' do not matter,
Where consistency and natures of involvement
Redundant, and therefore, meaningless,
Have no virtual existence.

Jolted by this revelation
I stand withdrawn and aloof;
As an aberrated onlooker
I am compelled to step back and move away,
Allow things to be as they are,
And quietly watch the slow return of the haze.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Return Of Rain

Where are you?
I have posted many lookouts
Their loud cry will signal your return;
It has not rained all night.
I must know why you did go away
I am eager to find the nature of halts
Made by you on your journeys abroad.
Did you the etched stone
On which are repeated forgotten tales
Of the crusaders of the lost cause.
I had told you not to shred Time,
It is the lone cord that ties you to me;
During its long spell your footfalls
They are heard loud and clear.
Lo! I have just heard the cry of a lookout
The cry that tells me you are back
Now I will tell you when and where
The rain will fall.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ripe Mangoes

The mangoes ripe,
Their smell compels
To pick them and devour.

Their golden pulp
That is soft and sweet
Is a delightful fare indeed.

The monsoon winds
And the summer heat
Prepare them just for me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Rising Above Ruins

Why talk about that handful of dust now and then pretending to escape
From the tightly clenched fist of persons eager to explore and hide,
Or about the few drops of water falling like tears from sightless eyes
Teasing the parched earth waiting for the laden clouds to rain,
Or about that laboured breath of the helpless sick gathered in a bunch
Thoughtlessly left out of sight to die in some remote place?

Such evasive non-dissenting but active constituents seemingly uncontrolled
Now seek fresh alignments to ward-off stagnancy and decay which are
Endangering humane thoughts and intents without spoiling the ongoing shows
As though to impress the futility of those motives which happen to induce or
justify beliefs
While suppressing without eliminating the cause from the sequence of differing
acts
The fine and finer aspects involved in the results and effects of sustained efforts.

Stationed where the earth and the sky seem to merge as a single unit of faith
Watching with keen eyes events that gradually take shape, transform and fade
away
Creating a history of sorts open to future close examinations and critical debates,

The idle and impatient seeker fiddling with the knotted strings of his chequered
fate
Unwittingly unravels the secrets forgotten or kept aside
Which as a mark of impetuous ignored consolidation had gripped all else but him.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

River Of Tears

Two rivers of tears,
Ready to merge,
Run down the slopes
Very soft and white;
They do not meet
But leave their trace,
Ugly and dark,
Ungainly sight.

Who will stop?
This game of need,
Often played
In the crowded lanes
Of openness
With stealth and craft.

Someone must rise
Singing the song
Of unbound love
And unity,
Then, no one will weep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Road To Knowledge

'What is That which being known,
Everything else becomes known? '
Thus, the eager Saunaka had asked Angiras.
He aspired to gain
Knowledge of the kind all conscious beings dream of.

Saunaka possessed a finely tuned intellect,
And from the standpoint of the Ultimate Truth
Found all textual knowledge and empirical experiences
To be no knowledge at all,
And that he was still under the sway of ignorance.

He knew that he was conditioned by the air he breathed
And the mind he possessed.
He had persevered, perceived and prepared to receive the instruction
Through which the unheard of becomes heard,
The unthought-of becomes thought,
And the unknown becomes known.
Very subtle is the knowledge of the Ultimate Truth.
Ordinary knowledge deals with the nature of valid knowledge.
The knower, the known object, the instrument of knowledge and valid knowledge

Whose real character is inferred from its capacity to produce successful activity,
These constitute the reality.

Knowledge dawns when the mind gets merged in the heart,
It realizes its own essence, the consciousness of oneness,
When all diversity is reduced to naught.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Rumination

The available options once purposefully exercised, overtly or covertly,
Do not make the waiting for things to happen optional or exceptional;
When a fire is lit smoke and light are seen to vie with the heat generated.

The more one speaks the more words one expends to explain a single viewpoint,
There is nothing here that cannot be described or told in the briefest terms;
Those who utter fewer words make others understand better, sooner and hassle-free.

Faith makes one brave, intent and resolute ready to face all odds and tides,
If defeated no tears are shed preparations to face the next assault are begun;
The raindrops which fall on earth are always aware of their skywards return.

Dreams seem real when connected with the previous fond and treasured dreams,

What is seen, heard and felt is a part of random and methodical imaginings;
Lifeless rocks standing open and firm are like thoughts that do not waver at all.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Runaways

Runaways: the two of us,
You from your engagements
And I from my heady thoughts,
Bent upon gaining eternal release.
We have together hit the road
But where to?
I prefer the sandy shore of a sea
Where when awake
I can laze, and gaze at the blue sky;
You can sit beside me
And measure the waves till sundown.
During the night while asleep
We can lose ourselves
In a soundless dark unenclosed emptiness
And cast away from our minds all luminaries
And their prods.
But I see walking beside me a langur
With bared fangs and his long tail held high.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ruse

Near the northern gate,
Perched on a slender branch of a drooping tamarind tree,
A little green red and blue tinged parakeet
Tweets and runs its gaze down the twisted path
I frequently essay
That suddenly turns towards the southern gate
Thickly foliated
Where sunshine does not reach
But many riders who have worn-out their mounts patiently wait
To enter the garden and rest;
The little bird knows that this garden neatly arranged
And located near my house, promises an easy life,
A fact it can safely vouchsafe, I cannot.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Safeguard

I shall remain quiet
And not utter a word;
My secret is holy,
No one will ever know
I have already crossed
All possible barriers.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Saga Of Wait

Somewhere somebody still waits for me
To emerge from the cocoon woven by desires,
Needs and longings, dreams and anticipations,
I have had no occasion to repeal or revise.

That somebody who so waits will call for me
To enlighten me and then narrate bit by bit
The long saga of wait written on the wind
I alone can read with an open mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Sane Intentions

If only I could enter and explore my brain,
I would find therein not groups of wise beings
Quietly working away developing and engineering,
As rivets and proponents, numerous gross and sublime
Ideas and ideals, structures and implements long and short,
But a strange darkness lit up by lightning flashes
Jumping across zig-zagging here and there, up and down,
Appearing orderly amidst an inexplicable disorder
Cloaked by a playful and purposeful display
Of rapidly changing colours and shades;
With a little more effort I could even decipher their moves
Unravel their hidden grammar and re-do the diction employed
And tell the world how and why the brain functions as it does
Regardless of time and space, place and age,
And personal counts.

If only I could enter and explore my brain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Scent Of Rose

Roses,
Coloured pink and red
And their rosy fragrance,
They liven up my dreary world
By adding love and zeal
And making all else glow.
But, their sturdy thorns,
They too are present
Deadly stiff and sharp,
And tell a different tale
Of danger and distress,
Of varying pain and wrong,
And divergent surmise.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Scour The Dust

My weak fingers
Carress the earth
To shed their load
Of nervousness
Bloodlessly.

And, my eyes
In dim daylight
Watch the planks
And the ropes
And the glue-pots
Build a site
To place on hold
Enraging thoughts
That disturb
My quiet.

And, my mind
Vies with dreams
Scours the dust
Alludes to my past
Buried and lost
And rakes desires
Needlessly.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Scream

In this painful world there is no relief;
Even the gentlest heart beats rapidly
Goaded by fears and terrorized;
Stifle my scream that reeks of joy.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Seclusion

One day,
At the time I had just settled within the cool confines of my room
Seeking relief from the blistering heat of the day,
The mute shadows lurking in the hidden and open nooks beckoned
As though calling me to keep open the door I had recently closed.

Aware of the steady binomial spreads of the days and nights
That appears across the coarse canvas that we know as our world
I did not hesitate but stirred and opened the door,
There was a pall of dense darkness waiting for me,
The night appeared to have descended far too soon.

The outside heat I did not feel,
The air was cool and comforting,
And I saw dark shadows
Of varying shapes and shades combining to create nights.

I knew that nights could be wholesome and very inviting
Or fearsome and scary or simply deceptive,
That nights that conceal or overpower the hidden;
Therefore, I sought to befriend one of the shadows lurking in my lit-up room.

I could befriend no other shadow but my own,
The rest ignored my presence,
Then I knew I was alone in the world teeming with things and beings;
I dropped my assumed visage and sank deep in the ocean of Time.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Secondary Image

The loud call for me can only be yours,
Simply said and true heed it I must
The night descends and the stinging cold
Has turned your mood a varied blue.
Not very long ago I had happened to hear
A similar call made but not so loud,
I had swung around to find who had called,
It was a lone caller covered by mist
Whom I could not clearly see,
A strange apparition I could not discern;
He was standing aloof beneath a tree.
Was it you, my friend, who had then called?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Secrets Of The Dewdrops

When I wake up
Little do I know
About the secrets
The fallen dewdrops hold
Hidden by the wind
And the night
From the sun that shines
In the blue sky above
And that lets the shadows
Of trees, clouds and hills
Spread on the meadows
To shade us all;
Those secrets revealed
At the strike of the first rays
Of each new dawn
Make the dewdrops glisten
As though in a taunt
And then they vanish;
No one has learnt those secrets
Hidden in the dewdrops.
I shall have to wait
For the next dawn
To rise.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Secrets Of The Rain God

Who has created the waters that the clouds
Have sprinkled as rain,
Drenched and revived my fields?
Who has made the furrows, sowed the seeds
And watched them sprout,
Grow and bear similar seeds?
Who has harvested the crop and gathered grain
That is nutritious and filling
Meant for all living beings to survive?
Tell me, O Mother, you who hold me in your arms,
When would I learn these secrets
That the Rain God has concealed from me?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Seeking Aid

My existence
It is very brief
And briefer still
Is the time I spend
Staying awake
When open-eyed
And over-awed
I watch the world
Spin and sway.
Within my reach
My basic needs
Are readily met
But things I yearn
Just stay beyond
The bridge of dreams
Out of reach,
And my aching eyes
Red and dry
Tire my mind
That seeks a rest.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Seeking Clarity

Last night, once again,
The roar of the thunder-storm, severe and loud,
Had stunned me brutally, I could not sleep.
Weighed down by piety and other such thoughts,
But nursing an ancient ache I had been carried away
By the randomness of my dreams that I had to ride
All over again
The same old cloud of fearsome reveries.

From my window, I could see
The dense dark rain-laden clouds meet and roll,
And riding the pall of heavy, damp and electrified air
The crackling flashes of lightening race towards wet grounds
To land and then diffuse reloading the wet soil.

Expecting a showdown betwixt the earth and the sky,
The waters and the fires, and all things and nothing,
Would end this agitation soon,
I had stood my ground brave and tall, fully braced,
Watching the clear spray and droplets recapture light and sparkle
Unevenly slice the invisible curtain of doubt that limply hangs
As a mute reminder of the negations of past deeds and events,
Customs and codes; trade and barter,
That hovers over all present tidings gradually built to stay.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Seeking Illumination

I knew you would come to me in a rush
With letters, I wrote to you fluttering in your hands,
My list of needs wants and young extended desires.

I knew you would reach my doorsteps
And wait to enter my mind, the open playground,
Where my whims and fancies unhindered play.

I knew you would never tease or pull up
My conscience for the blunders I repeatedly commit
And fail to test my acute and precise hidden skills.

I knew you would ask me to change
The imperceptible course of Silence that proceeds
In search of the song lost when its first note was heard.

My friend, when I saw you break the line
To walk across in full view of those who wait and sulk
I knew you would seek the evident truth only from me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Seeking Reprieve

They were a group of four,
Variously seeking -
Wealth, power, long life and fame;
I was their guide.

I had warned them
Not to retrace their foot-steps
Fearing water and wind,
The sprawling space,
And the fiery tongues of fire;
They paid no heed.

They were impatient
And could not wait,
To which anxiety
They soon succumbed
And I did not save them.

Here I am,
At your doorstep,
Worried and dazed,
Seeking a reprieve.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Seeking Unity

Maybe seated on some stony rest
Gazing at the quietly setting sun
And watching the darkness spread,
While waiting for the night to descend
But promised of brighter days ahead,
We could, at last, find the togetherness
That would keep us ever close and bound.

Maybe we would then soon forget
The cruel testing passage of time
Along with it its silent beat and flow
Dotted with hates and dislikes
And their scalding waves and bends
And the lack of warmth and compassion
That has scarred our body and psyche.

Maybe we would then experience,
While seeking in the wilderness of dreams
The same old freshness, and patiently watch
Our natural love and tenderness
Wipe off the impact of words uttered by us
Expressing the feel of life
That seemed arid, strange and withdrawn.

Maybe we would then savour
Leaning shoulder to shoulder,
Lost in the moments of sublime joy
Fed by mutual fondness and trust,
The sought-after but mostly elusive
Ease, happiness, and accord
That could finally soothe our mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Seeping Rain

Rain, it seeps through my cracked ceiling
And casually drips and invades my mind,
Alters my thoughts and budding resolves,
Washes away all scary doubts and fears,
And cleanse it for me to write my tale
In many sweet, pleasant and tuneful words
Not lined with sober dullness and grief
And punctuated by joyful cries and tears;
The seeping rain-drops impel me to find
A beginning that's quite different and bold,
A beginning that long retains its appetite,
And is the one that is not destined to end.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Self-Same Perceptions

A thing that's lost can be found,
A thing that's ruined can be restored;
It is easy to recall the feel of things,
I know they exist for a brief while.

There is the noise disturbing my sleep,
I quietly gaze at my walls and floor;
The gleam of doubt in my shiny eyes
Betrays its cause in the hope I build.

The curious crowd has neatly swelled
Here, alone I stand ringing out a knell
Its solemn notes that are meant for all
They play a theme true and strange.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Sextant

My world of action still needs many works to be done,
The works that make my world breathe and sway.

The place where I live is my home, my shelter, and refuge,
No amount of gold and silver can replace its straw it.

I must seek, while living in darkness, all guiding lights that are
With my eyes and mind matched, receptive and open.

So lead me beyond the distinctions of what, how and why;
These do not harmonize the subtleness of thoughts with that of the mind.

The hunger of the body, the mind, and the will is not alike;
Even their thirsts offend the living without respite.

Continuity is the slender thread that binds change with creative urge;
There are no surprises in store for those who know this truth.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Shades Of Faith

No use denying that we and the brightness co-exist,
But who can dare oppose the wide open skies?
In our despondency hide the varying shades of faith,
Find them reflected in our search and eyes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Shadows And Foot-Falls

Indeed, I am afraid of my own shadow,
And also fear the sound of my foot-falls,
Both closely follow me where ever I go.
But instinct betrayed, I search my world
To find its origin, spread, and age,
Believing not once that these are tied at all
For they neither guide nor pave the way
Leading to freedom of actions and thought
To experience delight only belief provides
To those who keenly chase their dream
Based on reason and insight.
I hope to find a desolate spot
Dark and quiet, and long overlooked
There I can squat crossing my knees
And run my fingers through the sand
Strewn across near, far and wide,
As though it were the time gone by
Undressed, raw and beyond recall;
Only then can I feel the smokiness
With a muffled cry seeking release.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Shocker

I keep a low profile,
I do not shout or cry,
I am never teary-eyed;
I have my head bent low
Just looking at the floor
That is always neat and clean
And throws back light which falls
On a surface very white;
It shows up my visage.
I constantly endure
The vagaries of Time;
I keep myself to me.
Who dares to scold or scald
With words that bite and singe?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Sideways Glance

Your sideways glance tells us all
Things we had done in haste have all gone wrong
Efforts wasted
We have achieved nothing we could boast about
Utter failures we both have been we do know now
We can already see the world laugh at us jeeringly
The people gathered whom we trust
They have not rejected us yet
Methinks
They mean to exploit our plight
We ought to have clung to our ancient beliefs
And not spiked our thoughts with turgid un-naturals
Avoided facing the roaring waves of change headlong
Held on to the dirty sheets covering our nakedness
And not for a moment lost sight of the sinister flames
Erupting from deep within
We ought to have been patient
We ought to have waited for our eagerness to subside
And rechecked our aims
My friend
Your sideways glance says it all

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Simple Quest

Simple tasks we have accomplished.
We have figured out why -
The sun rises and sets,
The moon waxes and wanes,
And the stars leave their place;
Through transparent fields and objects
Light travels unhindered in space;
With wavering flames dancing nervously
All fires continue to burn away brightly,
Without a hint given or expressed
Accumulated waters slowly evaporate
Only to re-condense and fall back;
More difficult it is to control anger
And swap it with kindness and love.

We have indeed experimented and probed,
And gained more and more fine experience,
Also improved our skills
But have not yet exactly figured out why -
Fire is lit by fire,
Light travels through the glass-walls but Water cannot
Pass through the glass-walls of its container,
The wind carries sound and speech,
And it is known
Thoughts and emotions are
The products of a functioning mind.

Rest we cannot,
We need to be more curious,
We need to be more innovative.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Simple Work

When clouds separate
The blueness of the sky is seen,
Then birds fly high towards the sun
To steal its shine;
They do not turn blind,
Their wings do not get burnt,
They do not fall on earth;
These birds return each time
Singing a new song
And later gaily wait
For the clouds to re-appear
And cover the entire sky.
And then,
The same birds watch the rain-fall
Bring-up lives anew.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Sincerity

I must unite with him;
He has left me alone
To face the rigours of life.

He doesn't pick up the phone;
He seems to avoid me,
Maybe I have failed him.

But my ordeal has not begun,
I carry no mark or injury,
I have not moved at all.

No doubt he is watching me; □
He cares for me;
My faith reflects my belief.

He will return before I find him;
I am his ancient weakness.
He will uplift my mind and zeal.

He will make me move about
And tick off time and deeds,
Because of him I still survive.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Singularity

The sense-organs and the sense objects,
The manifested universe and the fetters of relative existence,
The two forms of bondage
That creates the delusion of separateness and ignorance
Hiding the real nature of things -
They are the food of death,
Same as fire which is death is the food of water.
Identified with the organ of speech, the mind, and the vital force
There are the three foods,
The three worlds
And the three sources of knowledge,
That is -
What is known, what is desirable to know and what is unknown;
Through these, all desires are fulfilled,
One becomes happy and never mourns,
And covered by truth feels no pain nor is ever injured
But after whose dissolution,
As though there be the extinction of light,
One does not see any difference in this world of phenomena,
And rising above the transitory consequences of actions,
Breaks free from the objective world of cause and effect
Revealed as the subtle, the indefinable and the eternal All
One becomes free.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Sitting At The Ocean's Edge I Sing

Sitting at the ocean's edge I sing songs in praise of you, my love,
Enamoured I am by your beauty and gait;
The lilting strains of my songs tease the gentle rays of the Moon
That the moonlight shyly falls on your face
Forever etched upon the waves,
While the waves also serenade with me as they roar above the wind.

You reside in my heart, by recalling the pain of your long separation
I do not torture the days and the nights,
Even so, I often approach the tavern-keeper gingerly,
Besotted and tipsy, made so by my deep love for you;
Once I have retired to the dingy tavern,
The Moon picks up my songs and sings till the dawn of a new day.

Whenever the bright dawn strums the veena of life
My heart, marked by the heat of love, flutters
Then I dance and swirl; I break into a song of love, again and again.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Siyah Baadal Jo Aasmaan Mei.N They

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siyaahbaadal jo aasmaan mei.n the
suu e saharaa voh kab uDaan mei.n the
uqade khulte the jin se hastii ke
aise qisse bhii daastan mei.n the
ban ke ummeed valvare uThThe
voh jo dil mere be karaan mei.n the
kis nishaane pe jaa soch
ruk gaae teer jo kamaan mei.n the
paas aae to rafataa rafataa khule
saare parde jo darmiyaan mei.n the
jis ko sadiyaan taraashate guzarii.n
aks pinaah usii chataan mei.n the
na samajh paae shor o gul mei.n tire
bol jaane voh kis zabaan mei.n the
ae Ravi le uDii unhe.n bhii hawaa

phool saare jo gulistaan mei.n the

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Slow Wind

Even if even flow
The jagged currents that ride
The pace of wind is slow.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Smell Of Rose

Smell Of Rose

The daily setting of the sun cruelly reduces the span of life,
My body shelters my life;
Impermanent is this haven though filled with blooms,
Meaningless is my ache for the smell of Rose.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Some Effort

I was lost in a maze I had myself built
With scraps of torn forgotten dreams,
The careless weaves of complex thoughts,
That had failed to find their due release.

Slowly but steadily I did find my pace
That'd lost its natural rhythm and aim,
Then I made my mind build-up for me
The faith that ward-offs harm and vice.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Somewhere To Somewhere

Somewhere here and there lie scattered my dreams
That I had often revised to suit my needs and whims
Such as sheer playfulness to anger, gaiety to shame.

Somewhere in this wilderness lies buried my hopes
For a better tomorrow, brighter days and life of ease
Ready to tackle might with rights, wants with feelings.

Somewhere rests in the darkest corner of my heart
An unraveled notion of high being and foremanship
I haven't cared to own, implement or seek its repair.

Somewhere high-up atop a tall tree an eagle's nest
Waits for the eggs to hatch, for the chicks to appear;
Must I watch that pair vie for common food and notice?

Somewhere high up in the snow-clad mountain chain
My mind dives and soars as preying eagles often do
Not in search of food but in search of a new thought.

Somewhere in my mind, the churning of past deeds done
A thought has begun to take shape and steadily grow;
It is exciting, revolutionary, independent and progressive.

Somewhere in the vast crowd, there is an eager person
Ready to share and study my thoughts and let me know
The extent of its veracity, intensity and essence distilled.

Somewhere though from far-off I still hear a sita[̄]r strum
The Ra[̄]ga Baha[̄]r at midnight during the season of joy;
There is the spread of colourful delight for all to taste.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Star Worlds

Come, join me in my walk towards the stars;
The stars, they wait patiently;
Heading skywards is the thoroughfare I found
Not difficult but faintly traced.
I have walked this path often and so will you
Map its various pits and rend,
Your feet won't bleed but will leave their prints
To be followed across the land;
The 'ifs' and 'buts' will bother you no more
And all your fears will dissipate.
These stars will then take you to their worlds
That's lit-up with infinite charm;
The rivers of light that constantly flow there
In their gushing run, you will bathe,
With your body and wits charily cleansed
You'll shine anew a rising star.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Steadfastness

I can be rude,
I can indeed be very rude.
I always react at once,
I do not wait for any intervention.
With my hands freed,
Were you to provoke,
I shall strike with full force
Cursing you at my loudest;
All those who hear me will then gather
And see you, my nemesis, bleed.
Do not provoke me, O Mind!
I shall destroy your waywardness,
Your determination and strength
I truly am.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Steal The Sun

I know I am watched,
Intently watched
By those who see,
Who're the right ones
And stay with me.
I know not why.

Nothing is omitted,
Each movement of mine,
My strain and stretch,
And favoured note,
It is eased and teased.
I stifle my yawns.

Very brief is life,
Why doubt or mourn?
Must I hold my breath?
Must I catch the stars?
I should steal the Sun.
I can see daylight.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Stellar Truth

Why do the stars twinkle at night?
They did when I was very young
And they do so even now,
I wonder why.
If they were my ancestors
Then, after I die
I do not want to be a star,
I do not want to live again
And hang in the sky,
And remind everyone of my being.
I admit
I do want to be remembered at all,
I do not want to live long
In the memory of those who live,
Or live in their hearts as their inner light,
As their guiding light;
This much I can be
If I have a name,
I am not known by any name;
I am told -
The nameless exist forever,
They never die.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Stemming Decline

What I hold dear to me is the memory of the time spent with you while digging
up the past,
Our sharp, blunt and wayward conversations over things and nothing big and
small;
I recollect those clashes that had threatened our tattered beliefs and trite
conventions,
Showed up our wasted attempts to feel the swinging elation and mega dejections
at one go,
And our banal shows of meekness and shocking refusals were ignored.

God willing, we had then paid heed to our loud cries seeking a restoration of
faith,
And thereby return to belief, cognition and noble intents lost at the doors of
doubt.

But our attempts to end the repeated portrayals of vain devotion and devout
feel,
Not meant merely to appease our agitated senses or excite the body and the
inane mind,
Had at that time kept alit the shared love for things pleasing and beautiful,
And, we had added impetus to our search and efforts to find the briefly lost
Level ground - the basis of our mutual love, warmth, trust, and camaraderie.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Stigmatized, Maybe

More one longed for ease
Louder did silence speak
About the waywardness
That's covered by minds.

The shady pastel colours
Of the bright sun-rays
Reflected by soap bubbles
Tell about uncertain life.

The fire lit in the open
Shows in a friendly way
The place where one hides
Sheltered and mute.

Birds do not chase clouds,
Water never runs upstream,
And Time does not wait,
Yet eyes shed precious tears.

The ink in the ink-pot
Enacts its role when it fills
An idle pen armed with nib
That is ready to write.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Stone Dead

I simply know
I had gone to sleep
With the will to dream
About my tomorrows
But
There was no agitation
There were no nagging plans
There were no disturbing fears
There was no light or shade
No music played either
And the silence that was
I did not detect
My senses had deserted me
And also my mind
My chest did not rise
I felt no pain
There was no urge to move
All seemed lost
In a dark corner of my room
I lay prone motionless
Stone dead.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Strange Impasse

The cold wind sends piercing shivers down my spine;
This makes me tremble and shake, wondering why
I left the cosy warmth of the plains and in a trice
Ventured north to climb the peaks to touch and feel
The gathering clouds light and fluffy pushing the sides
Of mountains that stand tall though dull and dead.

It was my pride that'd pushed me forward to touch
An unknown strange not familiar part of the world,
One by one atop the high peaks I had stood watching
My old world heave and puff, and groan and grunt,
All the while blaming me for its awful lay and plight,
And for the painful barbs descending hot and deep.

No doubt wondering as to what will become of me,
When from the high pedestal my likely descent begins,
Already many glares and stares honed to perfection
And aimed at my heart have taken their heavy toll
Blinded and maimed maybe but now unable to walk
I have to crawl within bounds of my stretch and reach.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Strange Lies

Do not call a lie a lie
And kill the words,
Heard and said;
Words do not lie,
They hide our thoughts,
Conceal our intentions,
They do not harm;
We harm ourselves
By our deeds.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Strange Moments

Suddenly, there was a deathly silence;
The air stood still, the leaves did not rustle,
The birds forgot to sing, the ripples did not rise,
The flames refused to shake and crackle,
And, those who crawled or walked lost their voice.

And, as suddenly, darkness fell and spread,
Nothing was visible, not even the gathering mist,
Or the glints in the searching eyes,
Or the blinks of the wooing fire-flies, that are -
The stray flashes the Moon and the stars never did define.

And I, as though bound and helpless,
Did not react,
But merely stood still and waited for the old storm
Gaily dressed with thunder and lightning
To soon build-up and rake the clouded sky.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Strangeness

Facing the mirror when I say - 'I know you',
Do not believe my words
I have never known who I really am.
Time passes by,
The boards we stepped on still creak,
And the winding staircase too, these
We had often climbed together playfully,
The one in the mirror and I;
And, I do remember,
On reaching its top we never rested
To dust or explore the attic,
The storehouse of our past,
Where our toys stayed alive
Seeking our roving touch;
They could have rekindled our love,
They could have united us, made us become one.
But long ago,
Eternity, the bane of the present and past,
Upon invading the future
And thus testing our verve
Had loudly laughed
And mockingly cursed -
'You and your reflection, both are strange;
You can never understand each other,
You can never know each other,
You can never be same.'

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Sudden Impulses

Be my divine inspiration,
Make me aspire and realize
The range of my complicity,
But do not hide
Your face from me.

My aim is tricky to achieve
Ease my load, for my belief
And faith in you is very deep
So do not hide
Your eyes from me.

The entire world belongs to me
Equip me with greater insight
To isolate the wrong from right
And do not hide
That truth from me.

I may not toe the drawn up line
But I have ventured far and wide
To be with you at all times
Now do not hide
Yourself from me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Sukuu.N Se Aashanaa

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sukuun se aashanaa ab tak dil e insaa.n nahii.n hai
kahuu.n kyuu.n kar ki ahsaas e gham e dauraa.n nahii.n hai
bharosaa apane dast o paa pe hai mujh ko azal se
voh mushkil koun sii hai merii jo aasaa.n nahii.n hai
rabaab e gul se naghame phuuT nikale hai.n magar ab
paristaar e rihaaii qaidii e zindaa.n nahii.n hai
khayaal e saahil e maqsuud hai dil mei.n abhii to
mirii kashatii sapurde maujuae tuufaa.n nahii.n hai
huu.n us se duur to bhii hai wafaa kaa paas dil mei.n
use mai.n bhuul jaauu.n ye miraa aimaa.n nahii.n hai
kahaa.n tak aankh se aansuu bahaauu.n mai.n lahuu ke
kaho ikbaar phir is dard kaa darmaa.n nahii.n hai
Ravi is zindagii mei.n ho mujhe bhii chain haasil
sivaa is ke mire dil mei.n koi armaa.n nahii.n hai

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Suppressed Cry

This burning in the chest
Fiery and dry
Spreads fear
And spoils joy.
The soreness in the throat
Chokes the cry
That struggles to emerge
From deep within.
Bloated tongues and lips
Armed with words
Defy the mind
Erratically.
The meaning and their feel
Carried by words
Strengthen bonds
Wait to gel.
The rousing bends and turns
When suppressed
Burst forth at once
In a loud scream.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Survival

An eagle's nest
Perched atop the banyan tree
Has a single playful chick;
Attended to by its parents
It has grown robust
And though fearing is hopeful
Ready to fly
And soar high with the wind
And hunt.

There is the adjoining lake,
Shallow and rippling,
Infested with roe
Abandoned by the adults to its fate;
Parentless,
But resembling the adults,
The almost transparent hatched fry
Able to swim
Will exhaust the yolk
Then feed and fend
And grow without any aid.

Whether a living being
Grows into adulthood
Cared for by parents or uncared,
The emphasis will always be
On self-reliance
And the will to live;
These two factors are
Beyond mere instinctive guidance
And control
And seldom thought about;
They play a vital role
In the individual or collective struggle
For survival.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Suspect Variance

Same as it was
The day before
The Today rolls on
Gaining and losing
Different colours
Of varying shades
In its eagerness
To finally become
The Tomorrow
Not dyed
And finely sculpted
As an imitation of
The Yesterdays
Aged and forgotten.

The Days and Nights
Passing by
Tell a tale
In different words
Of sight and fright
Irregular ties
Rifts and splits
Polluted thoughts
And dirty deals
All affecting
In advance
On fingertips
The Future counts
No one confirms.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Syllabus

To the other end of the long corridor
One need simply walk to glimpse
The eagerly perused annual syllabi
Pasted on the black notice board
In lengthy vertical strips of three
Putting a scare into the heart of those
Able, prepared and fit to face
The trials of sorts set on the cards.

My school days were indeed hectic
Very chaotic and unsettling too
Bent low by homework and exams
My school days were indeed hectic
Very chaotic and unsettling too
Bent low by homework and exams
I hardly had the time and ready will
To watch the course of my childhood days
Speed up and quietly fly away
Taking with them my laughter and innocence
I could not hold on for long.

Now that I am older and wiser
And my school-days left far behind
I have found the then done exercises
As prescribed in the notable syllabi
Coming to my aid in my daily routine;
Few copies of the course-outlines with me
They are lists of main topics to be studied,
My teachers of yore did teach me well.

I still long to visit those studious days
And reflectively count my steps again
If only to read the pasted curriculum
To be found at the long corridor's end.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Taalib E Deed Huu.N...

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taalib e deed huu.n cheharaa to dikhaa, dekhuu.n mai.n
darmiyaa.n pardaah hai kyaa, pardaah uThaa, dekhuu.n mai.n
merii ruudaad pe us shouq kii aankhe.n purnam
qais o farhaad kaa afsaanaa sunaa dekhuu.n mai.n
aa kabhii tuu mire aangan mei.n dulhan ban kar aa
tere haatho.n pe lagaa rang e hinaa dekhuu.n mai.n
koi aahat to ho TuuTe mire zindaa.n kaa sakuut
chup rahuu.n, paaon kii zanjeer hilaa dekhuu.n mai.n
apanii qismat ke sitaare ko ki be nuur saa hai
toD kar arsh se dharti pe giraa dekhuu.n mai.n
aaj gulshan kii har ik shaakh hai phoolo.n se ladii
dil e pushmurdaah ko bhii hanstaa huaa dekhuu.n mai.n
be satuu.n par ki kisii najd mei.n kyaa jaane Ravi
mujhe mil jaa.e kahaa.n meraa pataa dekhuu.n mai.n

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Taazaa Khalish (Fresh Unease)

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koun hai dil mei.n basaa kar apne
ek anchaahii sii taazaa khalish
na.e khwaabo.n ko panapne ke liye
apnii aankho.n mei.n bicchaa rakhe hain
ujale ujale o sajeele armaa.n
jisne oDii huii sadiyo.n se hai
neend kii maelii kuchelii chaadar
bhooljaane ko puraanii yaadie.n
jinke andhkaar se dartaa thaa vo
der tak jinkaa sahaaraa maange
soya rahataa thaa jo
jee mein hai ab to jagaa duu.n usko
dekh legaa jo dikhaaai degaa
marne jeene ke rang
waqt to ruktaa nahii.n
kisii ko saath bhi detaa kab hai
nahii.n maalum use

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Tasalliyaa.N De Kar

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rakh dii buniyaad e aashiyaa.n kis ne
aasmano.n ko bijliiyaa.n de kar
log bahalaate hai.n naa jaane kyu.n
dil ko jhootii tasalliyaa.n de kar
zabt e gham ko naa aazmaae.n voh
waqt e rukhsat tasalliyaa.n de kar

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Ancient Game

Come! Play with me once again
That very game we both played when we were very young,
The game that was guided by our unfailing innocence
When we knew not what was good or bad
And we merely found cover by hiding in the so-called fearsome wilderness
And then sought out each other's fond and comforting company;
Come! Play with me the same game of hide and seek.

But although, when we have now grown very old
And there is not our innocence to guide us anymore;
Having learnt to identify, differentiate and evaluate all things,
We still hesitate, doubt or suspect our sight and finds.

Even so my dearest friend,
I want you to come and play with me again
The same old game of hide and seek that we often played;
We shall once again try to find the same old cover to hide,
And then seek each other's presence as eagerly
Now with the aid of our re-invented lost innocence to guide.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Believing Optimist

I know -
Sorrows arise from desires,
From the non-fulfillment of desires
For which works are commenced and done.
Both are modifications of the mind whose marks
Etched too deep to be easily removed
Give pain and only more pain;
They break the even flow of thoughts,
Distort understanding,
Blinding him burn the insides of a man.

Sitting beneath a banyan-tree,
Shaded by its canopy of leaves,
Facing an old vermillion-laced stone idol,
Praying for relief from thirst, burn and pain,
With my firm fingers
I continue to roll the beads that subtly reflect
My intents to enjoy myself;
I would rather be the enjoyer
Than be the one who is enjoyed.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Child In Me

I have grown old
Even my grandchildren are grown-ups
I lost the child in me long ago
Without him
I have never been alive.
Yesterday,
My neighbors little one
Gifted to me a few small round glass balls
And went away;
He wanted me to play with those marbles.
I have never played the marbles game before,
I only knew marble meant metamorphosed limestone;
Glass and limestone are brittle,
They need careful handling.
I looked at those differently colored glass balls,
Each color had a hidden design,
I began to understand those designs.
Soon they became my prayer-beads,
Some consolation,
But where was the child in me that I had lost,
The child who needed neither gadgets nor prayers,
Not even words to excite him.
I did not find him,
I did not find the child the marbles promised.
Tears flowed from my eyes;
From my hands, the round glass balls fell
To roll on the white marble floor.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Cloud With A Little Touch Of Grey

In the beautiful deep blue sky,
There is the lone old cloud hovering overhead
White and woolly with a little touch of grey;
It beckons me; it wants me to climb
To its level step by step
Using the dry neat staircase erected by the Sun's rays
And reach the only place where brightness abounds;
There, over a persistent deafening roar, silence prevails.

I have always wanted to be like that cloud
Able to survey my world from above,
Say no word,
Silently laugh at me, and ruminare.

With an open eye I must learn to remain quiet;
I must learn to forget all kinds of sound;
The sound that is heard and brings us awake
And long for the sky.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Cringe

Is calamity averted by avoiding destiny?
The real alone exists.

When are words assuring love not let alone?
When not spoken in jest.

Is there a teasing mist spread between individuals?
Only when exposed.

When does the silence of one speak for the other?
When afflicted by pain.

Why is the loss of a leaf never mourned?
Death of tree is not known.

What do the subdued booms seek?
They seek the meek.

Why do the laden boughs hang askance?
They seek the slough.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Cry

Once awakened,
I must remain united,
I must remain united with truth;
Knowledge will keep me associated with truth,
It is I alone who can keep me united with truth
To be able to do auspicious works, whereafter
The separation will follow;
Till then I may not be vulnerable, but
Till then I am not everlasting;
That separation will reveal to me
I am the everlasting truth.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Cup Of Tea

Awakened from sleep
By a motorbike kick-start!
There is no need to look outside,
The sun will be shining,
The birds will be flying,
But I shall have to wait
For the morning cup of tea.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Dirty Piece Of Cloth

Here, beside me sitting on a rock overlooking the rolling sea, my friend looked for the little dirty piece of cloth which was once pink and red he had tied to a stick and often waved as a warning to those who strayed.

The cliff rose high from the water's edge dotted with sharp jagged rocks, one slip and only one slip meant a certain death. He did not find that cloth; dismayed we sat on the rock praying no one would venture thus far; but, we saw on the upwards track a crowd lining up to climb for a superior view.

And, they all came regardless of our loud shouts and frantic waving of arms; they knew us by name and face, seeing us a few grinned and others smiled; they said - they had been beyond the edge and now did not fear the drop; nothing is more dangerous than fear, and they had overcome fear long ago.

They too wanted the missing dirty piece of cloth that was once pink and red; they wanted to preserve it to remind them of my friend's foresight and pluck but did not wish to wash off its filth and restore the usual matching shades.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Divinity Within

No one can win the world that lies within us mute and dark,
Or the Sun and its accompanying dawn and dusk,
And the Moon with its dark and bright fortnights
Without winning the light that shines everywhere unhindered.

This light, won over by the Sun from other stars, makes it glow;
Tenuously the sun-rays which spread in all directions,
As many great rivers that feed and nourish their beds,
They light up and animate all things that cross their wide path.

At night, the Moon reflects the Sun's light; it makes the Earth
Maintain balance, stay on course, as it revolves and
Silently shimmer and throb as though alive
Like a mendicant who has not anything to give yet gives kindly.

This light which shines in the heavens is bright and eternally lit;
It is the same light that shines deep within our heart
And illuminates our otherwise dark and listless mind,
Gives us awareness and insight; these things make up its source.

The fire that burns outside and within is the fire of belief in self,
The warmth giving heat of deep meditation and faith
Renders the glow it thus generates to become visible;
This truth-force compels the world to rest as our nature and life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Dream That Lasts

You have waited for the tide to ebb,
While ready to walk the beach
You have watched the sea recede
Leaving behind a pause;
You have retied the knots of doubt
With colourful threads of old
And cast a snare to trap
The wise and favoured few;
You have valued the time employed
In building the bridges of love
For those many who quietly sleep
The delight-filled dreamless sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Drift

Go,
Tell her -
It is her indifference
That has let my love for her
Suddenly die;
All my intense feelings and resolve,
They too in tatters lie.
It is time I must finally end
My enduring wait,
And forever destroy
My hopes, longing, and dreams.

Need I be angry?
Need I be harsh?
Need I punish myself?
When I know -
She is the one I deeply love;
The very thought of her
Brightens my day,
All things appear pleasing and inviting;
My countenance is cheerful
And I have many tales to narrate.
How can I ever forget her?

I cannot end my wait -
My hopes and dreams,
They will survive to haunt me.
I cannot end my wait -
My voice will still echo and respond.
I cannot remain quiet,
The trend of my narration cannot change;
Sobriety and sadness will prevail.
Must I put up with this plight?

The very thought -
Whether she loves me or not,
Does not bother me;
I only know that I love her.
Why should I fret?

I can live with her memory.
If you must go to meet her, my friend,
Tell her nothing about me and my love;
If she were to inquire
Tell her -
I do not exist.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Duelists

Rapiers drawn the two grand protagonists,
Standing upright in the open field with their feet spread wide,
Wait and watch.
They watch for the other's expression to change
Betray the move
That would direct the first lunge towards a beating heart
And let the shiny long slender blade sink in and taste blood.
Their worth, skill, and pride at stake
Very still are the wind and the green bushes and the trees,
And the birds, the insects and the rest;
They stay alert to witness the first charge
And the ensuing grim clash that could spell a certain doom.
The two mighty combatants, tall and erect, old rivals,
One endowed with physical strength, the other with mental might,
And their worthy seconds, breathe hoarsely blowing steam;
But a steady voice emerging from deep within,
Warning of many an evil consequence, asks -
One may live to fight but why fight to live?
These stern words
Have roused their mind, made the duelists see reason,
Caused the lowering of their angry gaze,
And the clearing of the action-stage,
And the easing of the mental state;
Their knives sheathed they talk of peace,
And find the birds and the insects start to sing and tick,
The leaves and the twigs, disturbed by the wind, loudly rustle too.
And, the other onlookers, their hearts gladdened, all romp about gleefully
And return to their pleasant habitats soon.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Endless Wait

The days spent in wait I have eagerly counted,
They were too many to be altogether ignored;
I have also counted the many sleepless nights I had spent
Merely looking out for the destined events to unfold
While waiting for Truth to manifest itself
And translate into thoughts and things.
Verily the days and nights spent in wait
Have made me see things in the manner I wished to see but did not see.
The days were friendly enough to reveal their secrets to me
But the nights were a torment
I saw things I did not want to see.
Belief depends on trust and faith,
And deeply felt sincerity,
But Truth, which cannot be denied,
By merely sighting believable things spread everywhere,
Does not manifest itself to be easily cognized
In the melee caused
By the confusion and uncertainties of the deluded minds.

I have learnt to be patient and ever watchful.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Evil In My Mind

The evil is in the eye; it is in my mind;
It stays wherever I choose to stand and wait because I ponder and plan;
It will die with me,
Till then and now, it has made me suffer envy and greed;
There is no relief.

The road I walk is not weird; it does not perplex my mind.
It has a beginning with an end,
But is lighted by a fire that flares up, flickers and fades;
It is the same fire that tests the fickle wind it cannot coerce or allure;
It is the same fire that makes one aware to experience pains and joys,
Engage in rituals and establish hierarchies.
Even then I have not been able to shake off the evil that is in the mind
Or alter the manner of my understanding according to needs.

I lack free-will; therefore, I cannot play with my intuition,
I cannot put to risk the inwardness of my life;
I have to curtail my vision
And avoid looking towards the stark outwardness of life
That feeds the evil in my mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Exclusive Retreat

Even so as and when I happen to look over my shoulder
I find my own shadow chasing me across cobbled paths
Like some guilt chasing a sinner fearless and unrepentant.
But except when it is very dark, as though sticking to me
My shadow keeps following me all the time
Re-reviving my lack-luster garden of hope
That I have always tended carefully
Not allowing any weeds to grow and spread.
But, how does my shadow revive my garden I dare not ask.

Regardless, day in and day out,
My shadow, guarding me against any retreat,
Keeps following me everywhere all the time
Making me think again and again
With my past and present pretenses laid out in the wide open
Before my gradually unfolding future
I had intended to mould,
But now while constantly seeking a new retreat
Not far from my little garden of hope.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Excuse

Now you tell me
That last night when we met
I had shouted at you,
And raised my hand to strike you.
It must be the devil in me that was awake,
Made me needlessly angry, unreasonable
And a poor judge of things and situations.
Do not blame me.

The goodness stays instilled in me;
I do not miss the essentials
And I remain patient and wait,
Quiet and dreary.
But I cannot exonerate the devil in me
Who goads me to act,
Makes me fearless and adventurous,
And not necessarily evil.
The goodness in me keeps the devil in check
And anger does not overpower my love for you.
Do not fret.

But even if given a chance I cannot be myself,
As such, I continue to offer lame excuses,
I still refuse to own my mistakes
And do not ask
Who created and empowered the devil in me;
It cannot be the goodness in me I am sure.
It must be my tumultuous origin
Or the darkness that surrounds me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Fallen Thread

Reason I must ere I re-pick the fallen thread
In haste, I had cast aside only days ago,
I had untied the knot laying bare many a query and quests
Sans replies or directed streaks all in a confused tangle sway
Drawing blanks from the wind but standing on firm earth ask I may
In deep waters why the fishermen have all cast their nests
There is a fierce storm brewing so they must forego
The days' catch and safely return to their stead.

Opinionated I am not for all the while
When I await the arrival of the eight-thirty morning bus
I look around and sneak around with my steady eye-sight
To catch a glimpse of my forgotten dreams take their orderly shape
And do not for an instant ape
In a foolish way in bright daylight
The same old patterns as are drawn by the luring isthmus
The place where I stood holding the thread in style.

The thread with its strands frayed now lies buried in the sand
Dirty and stinking and who knows curled and charred
Upon you and I rests the onus to ensure when to rise
To block those blows often hurled at us no matter why
By the weak and the strong hands of fate that do not shy
Regardless of truth and sincere intentions and the price
We afford to pay to neglect our sanity that is always marred
By insatiable greed held in place by a flimsy band.

Having found that the old ones must give way to new
To allow the new lease of life to follow its own chosen course
Searching and probing all that which already existed and flourished
I am now reconciled with nature and require no more goading or force
To retrace my evolutionary passage up to its initial source
Only to succumb to the primeval tendency long kept burnished
Reflecting my weaknesses, strengths, hopes and shamefully hidden remorse
End I must this dangerous repeat and find a thread that is crisp and new.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Falling Star

At night, when I see a star
Come loose and fall
I can hear my heart recite
Brave tales of long ago
Of various beaten routes and costs.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Familiar Face

The young and the old gathered near my house
Beckon me -
There is also in that crowd a familiar face
Though not bright and cheery
But reminding me -
That I was one of that crowd not very long ago
Also calling for the change of the kind they all do now
Wanting the upheaval still persisting within
To ease or dissipate and allow the return
Of the natural state to establish once more
Firmly bound by the known and unknown verities
Of the quiet, submissive and the sleepy grind;
That very face seems to reflect somehow
My hidden doubts and fears of bygone times
Ignoring my feelings, deeds, and ideas
I could never convert to the change I had keenly sought.
What has become of me is an open book
I do not hide facts
Nor pray for the storms to weather their climbs
Or seek the sun to dry my eyes!
I continue to roam the wilderness
Built by my beliefs and mind rode rough and wild
In pursuit of the missing associate of mine
The one who had helped me corner my vision and dreams
And, is the face in the crowd reflecting those dreams.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Fire Within

As the acquirer of knowledge
I am the potent force eager to serve entire mankind
Courage, zeal, enthusiasm, hope, confidence, and fearlessness,
These are the sources of my strength.
My priceless inexhaustible treasure comprises of
Righteous thoughts, fine feelings, peace of heart and sweetness of speech;
And I also know -
I am stable and steadfast in the pursuit of my avowed mission
Even though
I am also my foe for deep within me is kept ablaze by expectations
The un-kindled fire of anxiety eating away my raw innards,
Forcing my eager mind to waver as it explores for relief
Each dark and light nook and crevice of my world;
Therefore, I am uneasy and impatient;
With patience alone, I can douse the fire that burns within
And as yet, I have not learnt to be patient.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Following Day

Then,
The façade was over,
The drums were quiet,
The conch-shell and the flute,
And the clarinet too;
No more was there joy;
There was only the whistling by the wind.
Picking up my stick I rose from my seat,
I had to forget my being;
It had stealthily caused
Much hate and avarice
Letdown and mishap fed.
Your face is an outline,
Covered by a scarf.
Our eyes are dry;
The harshness of the eyes
Belies the vague smiles
Dancing on our lips
Hiding the hunger
And our intense pain
That will last
Until the next festive times.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Girl On A Bike

When I was young
Just twenty
A pretty face
Never seen before
Had done me in
I saw her eyes
They were bright
And the arched brows
They matched her nose
And her smiling lips
Her ruddy cheeks
And her curly hairs
All worked to cast
A deadly spell
I stood still
And all was quiet
Though I had strained
My ears to hear
Her kind of voice
She did not speak
She did not giggle
She did not laugh
Her quietude
I could not stand
And hurt I felt
Most true and deep
When passing by
She lowered her eyes
And sped away
Without a wave
Riding her bike

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Hour Of Rest

A sip of tea and a biscuit-nip
Starts my day with the rising sun
But Time has changed its flimsy drape
From milky white to a seedy shade
Birds aren't there to urge me on
And automatons they rule the day
All is grey a dusty grey.
I see no flowers they are things of past
The smiles and laughter and joyfulness
No longer light up any eager face
The twig just picked is dry as sand
The fountains have dried and do not cool
The trees are stunted and give no shade
The commas in a daze and the full stops
They wait for a new sentence to start.
The black coloured ribbon is in tatters and soiled
It hangs from an open window
Inside my room, the air stinks
With the odour of rancid old cleverness
The mirror dulled with age now reflects
My wrinkled face and a toothless grin
The ancient clock with its limp hands
It has ceased to strike the hour of rest.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Inner Voice

Now, there is this one unwavering voice, soft and subtle,
Holding out many promises,
Coaxing me to rise and take the path
That leads to the yonder beyond,
Beyond all my fears and hesitations.

I ask -
Is this not the same voice which had
Not very long ago promised to me
Not only valuable and splendid gains of everlasting light
But also unending peace and eternal delight?
Is this not the same cajoling voice which when first heard
Had directed me to step out and gaze at the blue-hued sky overhead
And speculate about its depth and expanse?

Is this not the same wonderfully pleasing voice
That amidst the din raised by works and deeds
Is now seldom heard and talked about,
But, which I alone can hear and do not dispute?

Such like questions I have often happened to ask
Listening to that one caring voice rising from within
Comforting me again and again
When, tormented by my many fears and hesitations,
I desperately seek a place to hide all of my tears and pain
In vain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Invite

She did not enter but stood at the door, my Muse,
Peering narrow-eyed into the darkness of my mind,
As though testing my vision and resolve since dulled
With age and plenty of abuse over years of drought
Marked by the rare quietness of the air and thought
That never seemed to caress the grass, other greens
Turning to yellow and then brown had broken away
No sooner their inactive hidden roots had putrefied,
Bane of feed, revival, and resurgence all combined.

I could have invited her in and fondly held her hands,
I could have held her close to feel her nearness
If had I not been warned about her quick fade-away
Much as the morning mist at the touch of sun-rays
Silently melts leaving no trace to behold and follow;
But my Muse is never alone for alongside there is seen
A golden steed shaking its mane and stomping the ground
Reminding me of my station, reach and immediateness,
These are verily the colours of the rainbow neatly drawn.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Irony Of Pain

Offering no shade to ease my bones
A little green bough braves the wind;
It struggles alone in the blazing sun
And the seasonal heavy surge of rain;
Standing beneath that extended limb
I had sought the cover to hide my guilt
But seeing it droop above my head
As though to tease and bar my wit
I have seen its leaves flutter and sway,
Light up to curl and drop down dead;
Haven't seen it suffer my kinds of pain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Keeper Mind

Take hold of my hand,
Hold it firm;
The river that separates the opposites is in a spate
And the current swift,
We shall wade across and return to the side
Where you and I have always belonged indifferently;
You had rebelled and left your place
I could have stayed and seen you drown.
But, I had to jump into the fray
Reach the opposite side where you had floundered;
You are now safe with me.
We are related, both have a role assigned to each,
You firstly see before you act
I merely watch and then react to weave instructions.
We should not quibble O Will!
I am your guardian.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Lady At The Bridge

Though she never acknowledged his presence
And he did not know her name,
He had always seen her at the other end of the Yamuna Bridge,
Shabbily dressed,
With her back resting on the parapet,
Her right palm open and outstretched begging for alms;
When alone,
He had often thought of the inner pain reflected in her eyes,
He had often wondered about its nature and feel.

Yesterday, as he approached the other end of the bridge
He did not find her standing at the usual place,
She was lying inert on the pavement, her eyes closed;
A few people did surround her,
And he thought she was dead.

She was dead indeed.

He heard someone say -
She had no home, no husband, no children, no relatives or friends,
Where did she sleep or eat nobody knew,
But he found himself strongly bound unto her,
That bond he did not resist nor understand;
He only wanted to touch her face, hold her hands and loudly cry.

He did not do anything of this sort,
Speechless, he simply stood there for a while reminiscing,
He withheld his tears and did not weep;
He slowly walked away.
He accepted the brevity of life and transient relationships.

He knew he would not see her again;
He would not see the sort of goddess he had come to worship;
He would not ever see her inner pain reflected in her eyes;
He would not even think about the real nature of that pain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Lofty Perch

Lost in my thoughts I have also lost track of time.
Silently, minutes have turned into hours, days and weeks
Yet, I have not abandoned my perch on the nigrodha tree
Which overlooks a lake that on its clear surface
Mockingly reflects the other unseen side.

The surrounding trees whisper and softly ask me to rise
And the wind, it coaxes me to stir and move about,
And the day-light by revealing what the night had concealed
Entices me to step forward to expand my search,
But not aware of what is bound to be
During the moments that are yet to pass
I continue to sit lost in thought
Blissfully unaware of the time's swift fly-past.

And mighty scared am I,
Fear-struck I am trying to find solace
By staring ahead
Into the yonder stretch which is the boundless space
Spread deep and wide
As though ready and waiting to receive me in its folds;
Its smooth, soothing folds continue to lure me
With the promise of an endless sleep
That after leaving my lofty perch overlooking the lake
I have wanted to enjoy.
So,
Sitting on my lofty perch atop the nigrodha tree
I continue to wait and pray.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Lone Quest

My front court-yard unkempt and the marble fountain waterless and dry
They stare at me, who holding a bunch of withered roses and pricked by thorns,
Waits for the rosy odour to re-emanate
To compel the elapsed events to return and originate
Variegated visuals replete with occurrences and accidents avoided by dreams.

Discarding the pang of fear and setting aside the noble truths imbibed by me
I, with my slate cleaner than before, to test the load carried on my back so bent
Have ventured forth into the open decidedly
Encouraged by time and space emphatically
But resting on past forgotten laurels that had paved the path I now dare to
tread.

Who would want to pluck me from the air I ride?
Who would want to join me and listen to my tales and heroics?
I would prefer you to examine my face
Reflected brightly in the mirror hanging in space
And then decide whether to discard or own me
To appease the sentiments of the stingy and blind.

Never before have the deserted caves smelt as decaying and rotten as they do
now
Eons ago they had provided shelter and comfort to their occupants who hunted
to feed
But what are the lessons meant to be learnt from such sites?
Howsoever mighty one maybe he cannot ignore the rites
Faithfully followed by those who need a bond to keep them and others tied.

I am not a shadow that clings to itself
I am not a mirage visible day and night, unflinching and fearless, and immune to
touch
Do not call me by any name for I am yet un-named
And I am not a wild beast wanting to be tamed.
All deeds and faults do fall on my plate alone
For I am our I and you are you to blame.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Lonely Walk

I prefer to walk alone and pace my walk.
I have done this ever since I took my first step
Before I learnt to walk
And begun to measure my strides.
I do not chide myself or find fault with those who made me learn to walk.
I had to learn to walk because I could not have remained rooted like the plants
and the trees,
Or crawled like an insect or a reptile,
Or flown like a bird though I had no wings.
I did not learn to run;
I did not want to run away from my precious world and responsibilities.
My running could have made me chased
Right up to the very edge of my non-doings.

As is my wont
I still prefer to walk alone
I still prefer to recount the events of my recent past
Lest my remote past recalled
Taking me unaware
Suddenly checks or staggers my measured strides.

I am careful when I take any step on the path of life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Measure Of Contentment

I looked at him,
He was the measure of my contentment;
He appeared dirty and tired.
Something strange had happened,
He did not tell me,
I did not ask.
I took hold of his left arm
And drew him to a chair;
He looked at me,
Grasped my wrists to draw me close
And then inquiringly said -
'I do not see scars etched on your soul;
There are no scars reflected in your eyes
And your eyes are dry.'
In response I said -
'I have shed my memory
Memories are painful;
I have no recollection of the past;
I do not even know you.'
Thereupon, his eyes brightened,
I could detect irony and a hidden tease;
He was glad not to be part of my thoughts.
I wondered
Despite the loss of memory, I had recognized him
And seen him dirty and tired.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Mirror

I must find the external cause that lights-up the Sun and other luminaries,
The dazzle -
No different from that which lights-up the eyes, the Moon, and all visible
appearances,
The imperishable essence -
That keeps all knowledge and divine powers concealed and sheltered.

Aglow while seated in their midst
I watch
The perceivable and the inferable manifestations gradually unfold
And extend beyond the multiple ranges of the world of nature, attitude, and
confrontation,
And I also watch
The dubious stretch of the nebulous world of emotions, desires, and delusions,
Constantly vying with each others' unsure elements;
All three - the perceivable, the inferable and the nebulous are
Deeper than my mysterious inner-world and vast as is my baffling mind.

I know that air does not have a form
The light, the clouds, the lightning and thunder
Do not have a definite form having sprung from the sky;
Armed with the knowledge that the three known eventful worlds
Are bound to open-up their gates
They will allow me to enter and nimbly tread their grounds
And commence search by measuring the skies,
I am holding in my hands the mirror that reflects my gained impressions,
Evaluates my nearest experiences and beams up my candid expressions,
All the while re-directing a part of my glow
Towards where the cause I seek rests.
Rest it may,
But I must find the cause that eludes me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Name

You are most persistent.
Again you have hailed me by my given name,
You have again exposed me.
I do not want to be known.
I have roamed the world incognito,
Unfettered, I have enjoyed being not known,
Stood in the middle of a crowd like a stranger,
As though I did not exist,
And even shouted aloud my name,
But no one paid any attention,
The people of the world did not know my name,
They are not bothered by my name,
You alone know my name.
I expected you to keep me hidden,
I reside in your heart;
I want to be fearless,
Do not remove me from you
And throw me away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Need

Have I not more than is needed
Of light, love, learning, and permit,
I cannot hoard these or spend;
Why this satiation?

Have I not any memory to revive
Of trials and procedures of the past,
I cannot let residuals lapse;
They build my present.

Have I not the will to uplift my self
Upon which rest my fundamentals,
I cannot ignore this need;
The Beyond is my goal.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Obvious

Look! Once more in the Far East,
Sizzling and spreading its blaze,
Heralding the dawn of a new day
The old globe of fire gallantly rises.

Look! Once more the living ones,
Having broken free of their slumber,
Before resuming their steady climb,
Count the rungs of doubts and fears.

Look! Once more the air has changed,
Now it easily flows from south to north
Bringing a big load of monsoon rain
That the parched earth badly needs.

Look! Once more I have lifted my pen
To re-write the song that had for long
Bothered me with its strange diapason
That disturbed its melodious notes.

Look! Once more how the little change
In the tone of the words uttered alters
The intended meaning entirely covered
With the unintended twists and turns.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Open Blank Page

My poems!
No one reads them anymore,
Not even those who know me,
Not even the approving few.
But I cannot stop writing,
I cannot stop thinking,
I cannot curb my emotional upsurge
And stop weaving dreams
That my pen truthfully records
And nobody is hurt.
The words I use are the same,
Their meanings stay unaltered,
And their rhythm unchanged;
But no one reads my poems;
No one dares to turn over
The open blank page
And dig deep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Orange Moon

I have stood my ground
years on tirelessly
without a wink

the lonely and the loved
no strangers at all
always seek me

the dense clouds I envy
they do hide my face
but pour rain

I am the orange moon
crudely made of gold
pearls inlaid

the cool light I disperse
calms the nerves
it is not mine

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Outsider

The Outsider

'Pray for me', he said, 'I am going to the Moon.'
I wasn't surprised; my friend is a strange fellow:
I have seen him ride the high waves avoiding the shore;
Tonight when he returns he will be over the Moon,
He madly loves the Moon, the naughty little outsider.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Pain

The pain I endure, Mother, it refuses to subside.
I did not know about pain till it was gifted to me at birth
Not knowing what it was I had cried out aloud,
Sought attention, help and the needed relief;
It was your soothing touch which made me forget that pain,
Close my eyes and seek shelter in the cosy familiar darkness.

Each moment I have lived ever since carries the scar
Caused by the variety of pain peculiar to those moments;
Happiness too has come my way but sparingly.
Tormented by pain my range of vision is now limited,
I am unable to accept, contradict or negate the proven and the unproven,
I am unable to deliberate, reason or select the right or wrong,
I am unable to turn back the clock that continues to tick
Though I have always wanted to know -
After planting the seed how had my father protected his self now within me?
Why did he choose to experiment through me?

My father was a good tutor,
He had brought me awake and made me gradually aware
Thus initiated in me the ancient quest to know and extend my finds;
Abiding by his instructions I have learnt and indeed grown wise.
I know that birth is painful, life is painful and death is painful;
I know that pain is at the roots of good and evil,
As the prompter of all actions and discoveries,
As the scarcely noticed cause of all emotional bonds;
I know my existence is limited by space and time
Therefore, I have boldly borne the pain of life but tell me, Mother,
Why should I suffer the impending pain of death?

I have travelled far over three scores and eleven years
My limbs are tired, and my body and mind endure pain,
But you have always been with me;
I simply want you to hold my hand,
Help me close my eyes and seek anew
The primeval shelter that was mine,
The cosy and familiar darkness left by me long ago.

The Ring-Tone

Beginning of today the ring-tone of my mobile-phone,
It has changed -
Surprisingly there is no ring, no song or music that alerts
But a gruff voice directs me to attend the phone,
To listen to and speak,
It is the voice I never expected to hear;
It is the voice of my teacher who never was pleased
Howsoever hard and long I worked and studied.
I do not know when his voice got recorded thus,
I simply know he was learned but coarse,
He could not earn general trust or goodwill.
I trusted him and therefore gained through him,
He made me what I am today.
I completed my schooling when I was fifteen years old
But lost track of my teacher forty years ago,
Has he returned to haunt me?
Why does my phone remind me of my school-days?
Why has it revived old memories?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Roan-Horse And I

My friends have gifted me a roan-horse.
There are light speckles on its dark coat,
The white and grey hairs,
Sprinkled on its back.
I have accepted the gift, and
I must soon learn to ride this spry horse
Not readily visible in the darkness of moonless nights.
But before that
We must know each other well, the roan-horse and I,
Build an understanding, mutual trust, and love;
These will impel us both to act and move.
When I ride I must hold the reins lightly
And ensure my feet stay in the stirrups
I have to guide the horse up to the place I intend to visit.

My horse is not as fickle as I am
It does not think like I do;
Too much thinking creates doubts and weakens resolve,
Therefore, my horse is fearless, for it does not decide
Nor does it dither.
My horse knows my intentions but not the routes;
It allows me to lead but does not protest;
It allows me to speak but does not interrupt;
It allows me to organize but does not dictate.
I only wish I could be as patient and devoted.

My roan-horse is filled with pride; it holds its head high,
Shakes its mane and majestically stomps as though it rules the Earth,
Strong and well-fed it does not smile or grin,
It has everything it needs and knows its own identity.
I still ask -
Where is my sense of pride?
What do I stand for when I ride my roan horse and survey the Earth?
Why do I continue to question the things I see, hear or feel?
Why do I keep myself alone and forlorn?
This is the plight of the human who thinks, creates and suffers pain.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Running Sand

I see
In the light of the day
The running golden sand
Fall from the gentle fingers
Of a mighty hand
In the glare of the mid-day Sun
It glows
Like the red-hot burning coal
Covering a spot
A stain unmelt
A remnant of yesterday's struggles
Left in the bosom
Of the crumbling earth
For whom nobody weeps
Or trolls
Why not
But I must extend my hand
And open my fingers
To feel the earth
And gather
That running sand

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Shades Of Grey

The books I study,
The records of my teachers' spoken words,
Collectively they are my temple of Wisdom;
In this temple, there are no sounds of cymbals striking
And no singing of chants to disturb the quiet;
There is instead,
A reflective silence busily engaged in arranging and lining up
The numerous threads of wayward thoughts adrift strewn here and there
And making them audible enough to be heard and appreciated.

Standing beside my temple of wisdom
Impartially surveying the smooth passage and the impact of time
While fervently seeking the company of the ancient ever-awake intelligent one
I attentively listen, think, weave and develop ideas in my receptive mind,
Draw the desired line between reality and ideality,
The invisible line between the empirical and the transcendental,
After extracting meanings from even the incoherent and abstract expressions.

Fully equipped thus and having discarded the dark shroud,
And aided by my self-generated intellectual experiences
I have also gained the ability to communicate,
Fine-tune related techniques,
Regulate and record speech.

One day,
Supported by the revered one whose company I seek
I too shall through a purposeful enriched voice,
Transcending all limitations of individuality, thoughts, and opinions
And singing the glory of the ever awake as that of my own
Be able to make available to others
The way to distinguish the different shades of grey from other hues,
And evaluate the varying levels of brightness confronting the eyes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Smile

My seat is taken,
The seat I had left
Only a moment ago;
It marked my rule and domain.

The uneasy time spent
I do not remember now;
If I recollect my past
The purpose will not be served.□

I must stand on my feet,
There I sat brooding,
A sheer waste of time,
I cannot compensate through lies.

My friends, they have left;
They do not relate to me,
They no longer fear me;
I have the open will to protect myself.

I hear my name called,
The one who calls knows me;
A smile lingers on my lips
I am not a stranger this I know.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Song

That song is no song if it cannot be sung;
Its music will not excite the mind
Nor its words draw any salty tears down our cheeks,
Blood will not roar in the veins and the eyes will stay dry,
The waters will not ripple and the birds will not tweet.

Come! Steal my words and seal them with pain;
The torment I suffer will direct its own course
To weave the moving song which we can together easily sing
At dawn or just before nightfall
At which time our senses are not excited and alert
At which time there is no struggle to shake-off or avoid sleep.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Song-Birds

From my window, I can see the birds gather and chirp as though
Debating inconclusively their individual flights and instincts;
And perched high on the pomegranate tree they peck at the ripe fruit
Almost ready to spill its glistening pink and white seeds.

Usually, they present a picture of unbridled wild confusion
But today, there is no chirping amongst the gathered birds;
All is quiet, and these birds seem to wait for the nightingales
To strike their melodic alarms, to whistle, trill, and gurgle.

For the melodious and transcendent voice of the nightingale
To remain subdued for a long time is unthinkable, unheard of,
In its absence, a sudden quiet permeates and soaks the air
And all else alike, this silence has become quite unbearable.

Soon a koel trilling aloud imitating the nightingales that were
Has made all other birds join in to sing the same old song,
Following suit, all nightingales choosing to break their quiet
Have also started to sing their popular wordless song.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Swan In The Lake

Do not misguide yourself, O Swan in the lake!
From behind the cover of your closed eyelids
Do not say you can actually see and feel,
That you are aware, knowing and just,
And have performed your duties and works;
You cannot be the better judge of your mind.

Do not befool yourself, O Swan in the lake!
You have not left your watery perch and flown away;
You have not reached out to those who care for you
If you do, then you will certainly know why
The surface of your lake is very still
And at the lakeside covered with trees
There is no one to share your worries and beliefs.

You are a very lonely being, O Swan in the lake!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Test

He was proud of the knowledge
Imbided through the books he had read
Those books knew his touch;
They often discussed ways to test him.
'It isn't difficult at all, ' said a new addition
'Coax him to pick me.'
The other books gave it the needed space.

He leafed through its pages
At the start, the middle and the end
They were blank.
He scratched his head.
'I knew, I knew he is not learned;
He could not read my blank pages.'
Screamed aloud the new book in his hand.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Third Eye

The wind tells me - 'I am visible.'
I can feel the briskly moving formless air
Brush by my side and touching me,
Caressing and goading me;
This much is its visibility.

The air, the carrier of sound, is also formless.
A conch-shell tells me - 'The sound I gather is visible.'
When I press that shell to my ear
I can hear the gurgle and the gush
Of water rolling down the hill-slopes,
I can even hear the sounds of the rushing wind.
This much is the visibility of sound.

The rose tells me - 'The odour I spread is visible.'
I can smell its drifting scent carried by the wind.
The bird now resting on a branch tells me -
'The song I sing is also visible.'
I can hear the measured lilting notes of that song.
This much is the visibility
Of the aroma and the notes carried by the wind.

All these are visible because of my mind, my third eye.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Three Trials

There are the heart, the mind, and the conscious being,
There is the purity and the impurity attached to the duty-bound,
There is the talk of the body, the soul and the outcome of works,
The virtual means that lead the performers and the seer in their quest.

There is the appreciation of the white, the red and the black colour in vogue
By the earnest wise, the intelligent and the dull-witted of this world
While the helpless, the inferior and the narrow are left to suffer grief and pain
As the unavoidable outcome of their conscious efforts, deeds, and intents.

By merely wishing for happiness no one has ever gained happiness or peace,
The generous and the noble do not seek vague objects but a sanctified life;
Sitting in the lap of the indivisible earth, the flawless beings in a fine mood
Do not hanker after things that can ever be lost or wilfully neglected.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Threshold

As you cross the threshold
The ruse I adopted to draw you close to me
Gives way to wild twirling of the imagination
That refuses to lie low and snooze
And it appears as a hallucination or a colour-driven spite.

My fear will certainly undo my efforts
I will not know you whom I need to side me
Only you know what lies at the bottom of the seas
Beyond the point where they meet the sky,
At the level where the sunlight strikes on their surface
Or the wind forces their waters to rise
Or at the tip of the birds' wings that fly across.

You have played this game well by throwing bright pearls on the floor
And caused them to write a graceful weave of sound and dance;
I have seen this happen in clear daylight,
I have often heard your silent words resound
Drown the cacophonous blare of the waves
That does neither allow me to sleep nor make me dream at night
If only to please my vanity;
Pleased I am when I think of you as the reason why I live, I endure and smile;
You are sly;
I have always seen you hide in between the words I write about you,
I know I can find you at will,
I know I can capture you through my pen;
I need not ensnare you O my thoughts giving me rest and immense joy;
The threshold you repeatedly cross is your limit, not mine.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The True Bend

Yesterday, a feature ran
From page to page
That spoke about my breeziness,
Extolling virtue of romance
In simple words and loving feel
That made my wings to sprout and spread
To fly across strange hills and dales,
And rivers and lakes,
To richer fields and paradise,
A virtual feast for open eyes
To view the world as it should be seen.
But there are those who never fly,
Who cannot see, who do not see
The written word that initiates;
Though they can hear the chosen word
That tells the tale
Of many deeds
Of daring done
By faceless men of great prowess
Proud of sprees and mindful bids,
Reminding them of their pains
Wasted and in vain.
For those who listen but do not see
Such tales have neither life nor give;
They dull their mind,
Diffuse the spark
And turn them blind;
Without any name or any form,
They do not see how Nature works;
Their eyes and smiles have lost their gleam,
These two jewels
No longer shine.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Truth

O Precious always-present Time!

Ever since our simultaneous appearance at the very beginning of things
You have, like an invisible shadow, chased and followed me up to the very edge
of my expanse;

I have felt you yet not felt you though I have always held you in my close
embrace

Watching you play with objects we both seem to have created but do not cherish.

O Smooth-flowing unfeeling Time!

Even though I have no eyes, no ears, no sense of touch,
I have for long perceived your inexorable attitude towards all those objects
Whose presence in our midst cause ourselves to be perceived,

On account of whom we both are

And which enable us to guide each other

In the specific directions that are known to us.

O Fearsome brutal unbreakable Time!

Noiselessly and unseeingly and inactively

You make possible the unrealistic measurement of being and our existence,
Give reasons for numerous differences to raise their heads

Cause chaos all around and such disorder

That existed when the world was not yet born.

O Remorseless unfriendly but essential Time!

There are the fires of two kinds that burn and reveal us;

Fed by air these fires burn so as to draw away quietness and excite things and
motivate.

But these are not the material fires, are they?

They are like the sap pervading throughout all beings as the givers and takers,
which you and I are not,

And lack links to things we both support.

O My companion of old!

The created things need us as much as we need the created,

In their absence we cannot be perceived;

There is no 'atmagni' or 'brahmagni' either blazing within our formless forms
Or lighting up our environs.

Our mutual connection that depends upon the created objects

Is not eternal;

It lasts until the created things last.
This is the truth we live for and convey.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Unknown Force

An unknown force
Keeps alive in space
Resounding in all directions
A lone primordial note
That binds and soothes
All vibrant objects moving about
Tracing varied paths
In search of new horizons!

The same unknown force
Granting sight to the sightless
Though attitudinally feared and liked
Makes them see the lit-up world
Which it intrudes and covers
Continues to weave patterns
Upon the invisible and elusive
Fabric of Time!

And the same unknown force
Seemingly devoid of purpose
But seen frolicking with
The two opposing extremes
Muddling the middle
Momentarily forgets
Its might and reason
While creating variants!

It is the same unknown force
Whose whisper is often heard
When alone
One guides ideas and things
Towards their fated goals
It is the voice
That emanates from deep within
And emulates the lone primordial note!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Unwanted

Meeting you frequently will serve no purpose, O Aspirations of mine!
Already such encounters have laid you open and critically bare, I fear
Your gentle and easy attitude which is a ruse clever and fine,
Your intentions and dealings that have never been fair and true,
These have made you unworthy of any praise, following or close affection.

Even when in your presence fond and obsessive I had stood in awe
Perforce ignoring your guiles, deceptions and ingenious assertions
And accepted you the way you posed to be original and creative,
Looking fresh and alluring, attractive and convincing, while holding me tight
Up to the edge of the abyss of no return, you had led me so willfully!

Can I afford to retain my present connections with you, I have my doubt.
The water I need to quench my thirst I cannot draw from the well;
Because of you I have been denied the necessary means and will,
Withdraw forever your incredible promises I can no longer tolerate;
I must discard you before my intents suddenly fade and become lost.

Your kind of sweetness or allurements will never force me to cross the line,
I have changed, and my experiences limiting my options have also changed my
priorities,
I cannot retrace my steps to return to your folds; having left you I feel
A new kind of freshness in the air reviving my urge to live and romp around
I want to celebrate life without you, without your pestering and reiterations.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Visit

He has come from a village
Located not far from the place of my stay.
I have never been to that village because
I cannot move, because I lack mobility.
He has come to visit me; he does so quite often.

At this very moment
you can find him standing with folded hands at the ornate gate
seeking permission to enter the local temple premises;
this temple is my residence where placed on a high pedestal
I wait for him and other people to approach me
to tell me about their afflictions and needs.

I do not invite anyone.
But I have eyes and ears; I can see and hear everything.

I am a man-like image,
tall and handsome,
carved out of a single black granite stone-block,
a simple sculpture that was carved many years ago
at the behest of a wealthy zamindar
who wanted to achieve immortality.

People believe that I am alive and immortal.

He thinks he owes everything to me,
even his breath,
yet his ordinary desires are inexhaustible.
And he comes to me, again and again,
wanting more and more for himself and his family;
a relief from poverty and pain.
I am not happy at meeting his demands
And I have no reason to deny them.
But, why is he so much involved with himself
And his surroundings?
Why does he not hanker after freedom from his mind?
Why does he not demand the unity with me?

The Void

Across and beyond the baffling maze of torturous thoughts
There is the void strange and fearsome,
Dark and dingy, cheerless and seedy, dry and rabid,
Which void cannot, with eyes open and senses taut,
Be reached and filled with ideas and dreams;
Thus I was told when I had barely learnt to think aloud.
Ever since,
Failing in my attempts to locate it anywhere else outside
I had long ago turned inwards
And dwelled deep and deeper still,
With eyes closed and mind relaxed
Blindly probed the pithy inner darkness
In search of the invisible indicatory ray of light
Leading the way;
I found -
What I was told was indeed true
That the kind of void which I could not ordinarily see did exist
That it was spoiled and contaminated
By my implorations and reservations amiss,
Which void I had to cleanse,
Make it agreeable to my wayward urges
That continues to block my sight and my progressing maturity.
I also found -
Had I not harboured any fear or anxiety,
Doubt or misgiving,
Or lost my nerve and hold, hope and standing,
In some complicated way,
I would have reached the place I needed to be.
The verification which I also sought
Was not an immediate essential
The tastes and scents that lingered were not meant to vary,
And that,
Regardless of purpose and faith,
Purity and truth,
Throughout the course of my existence
The mind-created void would still exist.
Therefore, with my being neatly sealed
And left alone in my self-created wilderness
I had no choice,

No way of escape from myself.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Votary

By means of emotion and awakening,
Having rendered the offerings pure and divine,
Self-absorbed and also munificent,
Pleased and also satisfied,
Building and sanctifying life,
Eating alone and as the co-eater,
Never inactive, narrow or poor
But rising high, pure and sublime,
Stabilised and seeing bliss everywhere,
Offering oneself for the service of all beings,
The flawless person,
Seated in the lap of the undivided earth
Needing no protection, and
Knowing the entire humanity as one family,
Delighting in the self does not wait.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Wait

At last, my long wait is over.
I have defied all emotions, time and space,
And feel free to step out
And go beyond the confines of my being and existence.
Once I am there
Where I want to be,
I shall unhesitatingly pace the long musty corridors
Paved and lit by the eight and one thousand hard-to-find pathfinders;
I shall then coming face to face with my own self and gazing at its brilliance
Watch myself engulfing within my folds all things and events.

I shall then finding myself alone at that place,
Where the sun never rises nor sets
And there are no days and nights,
Call out aloud to myself
By a nameless name which I alone know and can pronounce,
And spontaneously in a single-minded rapture
Commence singing my glory,

I would have by then fully realized the truth,
My solitary formless form.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Watchful

Alone

Standing on the shore

Seeking an identity

I am on the lookout

For the boats that ride

The raging waves.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Widening Breach

Come! Help me wedge the widening gap,
That has existed ever since our first appearances,
As the ever-increasing breach which had accidentally occurred, it seems,
Between day and night, bright and dark, and high and low;
Between this and that, here and there, and now and then;
Between yes and no, good and vice, and love and hate
And, between many other pairs of opposites that still raise their heads.

Lest that gap widens uncontrollably
(To cause much pain to us later on) ,
Come, if you will, now itself come,
Putting aside all else holding you down to earth,
Avoiding the dos and don'ts, and the rigid restraints
That separate life from impending certain death.

Come, let us fill that breach to the brim
With our thoughts, deeds and noble intents,
The treasured findings, from our numerous jaunts across
Countless obstructing sediments and inviting sops,
We did accept gratefully.

Come! Let us together fill the widening breach
With what's left of time and faith and resolve,
Beyond the crowd of rights and needless wrongs,
Amidst routine and unplanned revolts and strife,
And favoured looks and peaceful sights;
Let us wedge the gap between these lines.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

The Wrap

Simple words can convey exotic meanings;
Their veil is creaseless satiny whites.
When at the gate where tomorrows are preferred
And today never counts
Their restless hands tied and minds totally blanked
The wise ones watch
The dawn and the dusk meander through bright fading lights.

The lamp in the village temple is waiting to be lit
But already the first signs of the sunrise are seen;
The call of the muezzin can be heard and also the ringing of the bells
Amidst these the chant of Aum finds its presence;
As the simple word that hides three noble truths
That is told through the amalgamation of four notes
That ably bind reality.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

This I Am

What I think or say stays in the sky,
Remotest and un-decaying;
But what I plan or do it stays on earth
Firmly entrenched and true.

I created for Trita a cow from a snake,
And waters for life to start;
Tied my boat to the single-horned fish
I had once held in my palm.

I skirted the oceans to guide the Rbhus
And gave them a meaning;
I am the apparent and the obvious means
And the sought after source.

The attraction that binds the entire universe
That I am, the ferrous directions;
Wielding the life-giving Sun's seven fatal rays
I killed the three-headed space.

I am the fourth part born again and again
And the remaining parts of the whole;
As the four-quartered Speech, I am adored
But stay mostly hidden, unknown.

I radiate force that expands the universe,
The nine folds of stress,
And the seven rows each with seven Maruts
That move in mid-space.

I am the immense happiness experienced,
The Vayu which spreads my vigour,
And the seven rivers in the seven dimensions
Of the three places they flow.

I am the undifferentiated and the polarized
And the fire residing in these two;
I simply move in the middle dripping honey
And observe peoples' truth and lies.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Thoughtfulness

Low down pensive moods
They bring back to my mind
Many a grey Sunday
Spent in your absence
Sitting on the roof
Waiting just for you,
O Lord of my weekdays!

That I have now retired
To while away my time
I have nothing else to do
But pen down minus roots
Lovely little words
In brief and pretty lines,
O Lord of my weekdays!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Three More Quatrains (In Free Verse)

Beneath a tree on a burnished bench
There sits an old man twirling his locks;
As a keeper of keys to the rusted doors
He hides all banal needs and wants.

The Sun that hides behind dense clouds
Surveys the shades of trees and shrubs
That briefly creep across open fields
For a game of Touch me, Tease me not.

To those who occupy the highest seats
And seem to have lost their way and pride
Tell them - their ancient lamps once lit
Will keep their minds tidy and bright.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Three Quatrains

Even if I were to swim to the other shore
In search of things that have need for more
My greed not sated will linger on curse-like
I may be found begging at each closed door.

Not that you had not sought any amends to make
The search you do now is not yours alone to rake
Follow me if you will I shall lead you to your goal
Along the narrow path open for our own sake.

Who has the ability to grasp and also preserve?
For whom is the votary made aware to serve?
Who will open the doors that are hard to close?
Where is he who had suddenly lost his verve?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Three Quatrains (In Free Verse)

My place is where I find myself alone having freed my mind
With no compulsion, thought or dream which had scored my mind
Beyond the evolution, maturity or change of thoughts put to rest
Or the brazen need to re-wind the dreams that disturbed my mind.

-0-

I have suffered the day and its heat avoiding the fry
As always the night will lull me to sleep if I were not to pry
That sleep will not make me lose myself in some long reverie
Pleasantly sweet it may be though, ready and worth a try.

-0-

Thoughts and dreams they gradually fade with time
After causing the inner strings to happily strum and chime
Thus awakening the heart and opening wide its gates
To allow events and deeds register their prime.

-0-

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Three Resolves

We have laboured long in our quest,
Let's sit and count our meager gains,
Our aching limbs they seek reimburse,
And our uneasy minds, rest and peace.

We have built our cozy homes for us
To taste togetherness and frank amity,
Filling them with verve and happiness
We eagerly wait for jollity's return.

More concerned about our day's efforts
And setting aside our flings with the past
We chase the morrow we've made today,
Our future depends on what we do now.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Three Submissions

The flicker of light seen just before nightfall
Does not leave any shadow imprinted
On the ground where I boldly stand;
I do not have to change my place
Or my aim and incline.
As always
The evening slowly descends.

The two extremes,
The two loudly re-sounding notes,
Do not threaten the intermediate space
Filled with information about various deeds pending and done;
As one they are the echo that protects blissful silence
Just as any two letters of a word
Protect the soundless space in between.

A very thin line separates
The Knows and the Knownots
But that line is drawn in the mind of the wise alone;
It does not segregate the good and the bad
In the way, the visible and the invisible generally are;
This line merely divides
And makes things more distinct.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

To _____

O Pretty face, tell me how my love affects you,
I cannot otherwise know about its truthfulness,
I cannot have the measure of your attachment,
I cannot have the feel of your sincere response.
Your eyes are a deep mystery difficult to read
And your quivering lips let out no words that can
Erase the accumulated doubts which plague my mind.
Why do I harbour doubts at all I wonder and fret;
Your aloofness and silence I am not able to bear;
Your drooped eye-lids seem to have shut the door
That in a fit of frenzy I had opened wide to allow
My thoughts and emotions to hold you close to me.
How else could I have told you about my love's reach?
How else could I have told that you are dear to me?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

To Her

No longer need I wait for my usual turn to see
That the pall of gloom, heavy on mind, is lifted;
The songs that I had heard in my playful youth
They still make the young and the old gaily sway;
The butterflies flit about; the rabbits leap in air;
Creaking of the doors has eased, the windows,
Now clean, let in the light to brighten our hearts
And save the songs of love that on our lips play.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

To My Wife -

Just as I thought,
It was you who peered through
The parted curtains you had stitched
And saw me sitting at my desk
Write a song to you;
At once I knew,
Inside you,
You could hear me sing that song;
My songs make you sway with their beat.
Our love is surely not fragile;
Strongly entrenched,
It seeps through our pores,
Scents the air with itself
And enamoured
We find ourselves in each others' arms
Very closely held
As though inseparable.
And, now as always,
The flamboyant gulmohars and the parakeets
During the day-time,
And the fragrant jasmines and the nightingales
Through the night,
Narrate our tale again and again;
They fill the air with our songs.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Tolerance

'Don't you ever call me weak? '
He shouted at me shaking his fist;
He was livid with rage he could not control.
I had shown him the mirror he owned,
The mirror that was dirty and spotted
But still reflected clearly all things within its range;
He did not like what he saw.
Even I do not like to see my own image in any mirror;
Mirrors unhesitatingly expose people,
They denude people's mind.
I had also said a word or two about his countenance
That he did not want to hear,
Though he often boasted about his past deeds;
These I had contested.
I had reminded him about the strengths he did not possess,
His fury was natural and justified.
My friend did not tolerate weakness or called weak.
I tolerate my friends.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Transcendence

As described by Rishi Hiranyastupah
(Translated from original Sanskrit)

The Sun it is
Who stationed in Space
Shines brightly
By its beneficial rays
Lighting-up the whole world
(Keeping it awake) ,
Yet when night falls
Some (ignorant) ask is it gone (set) ?
Who knows?
Who knows
Who is now soaking in its rays?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Travelling Alone

Travelling alone can it be exciting
With no one to guide and protect
Or share your thoughts and joy
With no one to tell others
About what you saw and felt
Or how the world opens out
How can you be that rude
Can you ignore your urge
Or set aside your excitement
Curb your laughter or hide your smile
Control your anger or flow of tears
You cannot be your companion
You cannot even judge
Your deeds and finds alone
And that can be worrisome
Find someone in common soon

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Trilogy

Trilogy

Heard pleasing words,
Old laughter ring,
Tears flow down.

On the window-sill
Play bright sun-rays,
And the rain falls.

The doors are locked;
Who dare enters
Past sun-down?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Tu Bhii Mere Saath Royaa Kis Liye

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tuu bhii mere saath royaa kis liye
tuune bhii daaman bhigoyaa kis liye
roshanii kaa thaa naa jab koi pataa
raat mai.n ik pal naa soyaa kis liye
siinch kar banjar zamii.n ko khoon se
beej ye nafarat kaa boyaa kis liye
baa khabar gulchii.n ne phoolo.n kii jagah
haar kaanTo.n kaa piroyaa kis liye
aisii majbuurii bhii kyaa, ye baar e gham
naa tawaa.n kaandho.n pe Dhoyaa kis liye
tan bhii mailaa, man bhii mailaa hi rahaa
pairahan kaa daagh dhoyaa kis liye
ae Ravi honaa jo thaa ho kar rahaa
dil ne apanaa chain khoyaa kis liye

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Twisted Gist

I steer goats along a meadow;
There is a tree with thick foliage,
It shades me from the burning sun.

My flute floats in the stream;
It had fallen when I was about to play
A wordless tempting tune!

Must I soon gather my flock?
Time seems ripe for the sun to set;
Ripe too is the urge to sleep.

All this happened in a hurry,
You raised your eyes and me my brow;
We could never have met.

Chased we have our many dreams
And seen our shadows suddenly fade.
Who did switch on the light?

Avoided taking the curve to the hills,
They are forested and dense;
Someone must block the sea.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Two Hearts

There is a heart that beats for me
I have heard its cries attuned to mine,
Maybe it cares and weeps for me.
Cannot I find that heart soon?

The easy routes have failed my quest,
Am I tender? Am I weak?
But the covers I've failed to take away
They hide my heart's tendencies.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Two Steel Rings

Beneath an iron bridge, a swift stream negotiates a bend;
In the misty cold mornings, when it rains,
One often sees yet does not see
Raindrops fall on the water-surface and roll
Like so many colourless pearls braving the haze and spray.
On cloudless days the sun high above shines bright lighting up
The bridge, the rivulet, the greens and all else in sight;
Then I, clear-minded, holding in my bare hands
Two coaxial steel rings called Dare and Fright,
Search the far horizon and wait for the lightning flash to reappear
Now jump off those shiny edgeless rings
And burn away the top branches of the trees together with
My long cared and nourished aspirations
Stationed there distributed open and wide,
My simple ordinary dreams that made me suffer pain no end.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Two Urdu Quatrains With English Translation

Original Urdu Rubaii of Zia Fatehabadi: -

?? ???? ? ???? ?? ??? ?? ????
?? ???? ?????? ?? ??? ?? ????
???? ?? ? ???? ?? ???? ?? ????
?? ???? ?????? ?? ??? ?? ????

Hindi transliteration: -

?? ???? ? ?????? ?? ???? ???? ??
?????? ?????? ?? ???? ???? ??
???? ?? ? ???? ?? ???? ?? ????
?? ??? ? ?????? ?? ???? ???? ??

English translation by Ravinder Kumar Soni: -

God created by religion and its followers no longer exists;
That miserable God born out of necessity does not exist;
He who had for long befooled men with promises of Paradise,
That God created by the ignorants does not exist.

Original Urdu Rubaii of Zia Fatehabadi: -

??? ??? ? ? ?????? ?? ???? ???? ??
???? ? ? ?????? ?? ???? ???? ??
?? ??? ??? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?
???? ???? ?????? ?????? ??? ??

Hindi transliteration: -

??? ??? ? ? ?????? ?? ???? ???? ??
???? ? ? ?????? ?? ???? ???? ??
? ???? ??? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?
???? ??? ?????? ?????? ??? ??

English translation by Ravinder Kumar Soni: -

I have yet to tie the sprayed strands of Present's tale;
I have yet to hear the sound of the nearing Future;

O Time! Do halt a while allowing me to pick up
The colourful lost memories from a corner of my heart.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unavoidable Drawback

Strong in faith and resolve
Having braved the dark course of the night
I hopefully wait for the Sun to rise
And gradually spread as before
It's all revealing nurturing light.

There is a hitch
It hinders my continuing struggle to win
And impress upon the world my true identity
As I find
The approaching Dawn and the fallen dew
Reminding me of my deluded but curious mind
That on its own accord,
Unchecked, seeks to project intangible objects
To revive me,
And compel me to announce and establish my presence.

Bracing against all odds
I have harnessed rivers and tilled the land,
Gathered rain and sown the seeds,
And fed the needy and the hungry;
My efforts have drawn praise.
But, my presence in effect
Depends upon necessity and is not the same everywhere.
The transformations are many;
Where ever I want to be I am not,
What I want to be I am not,
And the pressure grows for me to speak.

I speak because I want to convey;
I also want to hear the sound of my voice.
I want to watch the impact of meaningful appealing words
And befriend forever all those who hear my voice
Only then can I project the real me;
I do not want to be found talking to myself.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unawareness

Some say that it is the blue colour of the day-lit sky
Or of the deep rolling seas stretching far and wide;
Some say that it is the red colour of the all-consuming fire
Or of the rising and the setting Sun, the eye of the world;
Some say that it is the black colour of the Moon-less night
Or of death, or of blindness or the dreamless sleep;
Some say that it is the white colour of the all-revealing light
Or of purity strewn in the path of sight untraced;
Some say that it is the inert clay set upon a potter's spinning wheel
Or the emptiness of the earthen pots filled with air;
And some say that it is the speech and the life-breath,
And the lingering sound of countless heart-beats,
All part of life fed by faith,
Or the silent screeching of the wayward wind
Which avoiding crowded spaces seeks new directions all the while.
To what end our speculative mind will continue to probe
Moving through the twisted maze created by our thoughts and dreams
It is difficult to foretell,
What with the spans of life and impending death as their only base,
I am not aware.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Understanding Reality

My body and my life is the wealth of my atman,
The Atman which is the same in all beings as consciousness
And as the master of organs,
As the embodiment of light,
Vast and all-embracing.

My body and my life, bound by nature, is my domain
Nurtured by the products of nature
For the sake of existence and health, strength and determination,
For the sake of calmness which my atman alone can generate,
But the same domain is a wisp,
Covered by a thin sheet of skin painfully naked underneath.

My body and my life is the reason for my limbs, directed by my mind,
To function and perform their defined duties which are the same in all beings,
The mind is my consciousness which makes me self-aware,
It is my inner-self that keeps me in check.

My body and my life has been a witness
To my awakening from the deep primordial slumber,
The awakening that made me aware of several inhering evil tendencies
And also sloth,
Made me work for their destruction
And be ready to imbibe divineness and become expansive.

My body and my life has, after uprooting my lustful propensities
And in the light of truth,
Seen me ripen, by shedding my impurity become incorruptible and pure,
By opening my eyes and ears gain knowledge
To understand the incessant conflict between truth and untruth.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unforgettable Smile

After having been asked to forget your name
Now I am asked to forget your infectious smile too,
Your smile that had made me and others in the crowd sprightly and bright,
Reminded me of our extensive gaiety and profound relief
The traces of which can be found in the brick-red corridors
Where celebratory shouts and screams still resound;
Those were the days of my bold and playful youth.
I may be able to forget your name
But tell me! How can I forget your face and lively smile?
Till this day its mere recollection revives the fading dreams to rejuvenate
And impel my urge to search and find
The foible I had earlier hid;
I was unable to remove the fault called curiosity
That endangered trust and belief, and failed to cement my place
Among those able to see the Unseen;
I know, you have never smiled to yourself
Help me see the infinite tide.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unheard

Do the words I utter really belong to me?
Are the thoughts I weave actually mine?
Is what I feel, see and hear the only truth?
Then the blame of being does rest on me.

The seasonal change does affect my pace,
I have seen many a fire smolder and fade,
I can still hear the birds repeat their calls
But I stand and wait for the rain to drench.

This cobbled earth is my home, it seeks
An earnest allowance for it to live and last;
Each show of mirrors reflects bright rays
That hardly lights up my dark insides.

Pray! Each letter that forms a spoken word
Slowly infuses a meaning that revives insight,
Enables me to see which I cannot clearly see
And hear the unheard name uttered twice.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unheard Melody

In the shade of the olden banyan tree
Near the village well
There is a crowd gathering noisily
To hear the wise words
Sung by a minstrel just arrived.

There has been a noticeable delay,
The performance has not begun;
The notable one is tuning his sarangi
Examining its strings by running over them repeatedly
The three thick guts of the bow,
Preparing and summarizing the notes-filled form
He had conceived to please the crowd.

The half and quarter notes now emanating,
Have not pleased him, as he also watches
Written upon the assembling faces
The same eagerness and expectation
He had himself felt only last night
When in the open field
Surrounded by sweet smelling chameli vines
He had arranged for this day
The musical notes and words as a new raga and song.

He does not appear to be tense for he knows
His musical instrument, his Sarangi, will support his voice,
The words will easily flow
Matching his breath and heartbeat
And make the crowd tap and sway.

But in his eyes, there is a fleeting hint of fear,
His fingers tuning the strings seem slightly uncertain;
As is often the case,
Even seasoned campaigners, the battle-hardened veterans,
Nearing their goal run out of ideas, they abandon their quest,
So it appears this minstrel too.

But, he is honest and aware of his abilities;
He thought -

'I have to rise to the occasion,
I must complete my assignment;
My sarangi and my voice,
These two have never failed me;
I must strike the right notes and sing aloud.'
He appears confused.

Why is the crowd now silently moving away?
Their silence is deafening, and they seem listless;
They have found the basis of their quietude.
They no longer need the minstrel to enthrall them;
They have found their music and song hidden in their silence,
And that silence grows ever louder as they begin to disperse.

The minstrel too has risen holding his sarangi and bow,
His music and song blocked.
The village well still holds water, fresh and invigorating, waiting to be drawn;
The old tree is also there.
Alongside me, these two have witnessed an awakening
That has left us lonely and wanting.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unrequited

I can measure distances but not proximity;
It is said the eyes can see the stars shining bright and clear
But not the teardrops that are about to roll.

Sitting beside you in the comfort of an open room
I can sing praises on separation till the dawn of a new day
But the notes I arrange may not sound true at all.

Struggle I can struggle to venture far, expecting to hear
Your familiar call that beckons me; return I will
To find you alone and brooding.

Those living in deserts dream of water and green trees
And about scorpions that hide beneath rocks and sand,
They do not talk about the blazing sun and thirst.

When in flight the birds signify escape, freedom, and free-will;
They are seen to flutter, soar high or dive at will
But do not know why they are able to fly.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unruly Acts

No one has ever seen the scales
Weigh air and tilt,
But everyone has seen the air lift
Tiny flecks of dust;
No one has ever seen the burning
Of shiny drops of dew,
But everyone has seen the rainbow
Bend and slowly fade;
No one has ever seen the dreams
Uplift gloomy moods,
But everyone has seen mere talks
Win wars or subdue;
No one has ever seen any insect
Weep or wipe tears;
But everyone has seen the rain
Transform dry earth.
No one has ever seen the mighty
Not display arms;
But everyone has seen the poor
And the weak rise;
A particular seeing or not seeing
They are unruly acts.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unsettled Care

Past mid-night a wolf's howl brought me awake;
I looked around but did not find them with me,
I wondered - where are they the dreamers of dreams!

I had looked at them when no one else was near;
In their eyes was seen their suffocating quiet,
They had noted my freedom in the wilds of deeds.

Retaining their poise amidst uncertain praise
I have seen them measure the soft casualness
That had made my dreams merge the states of sleep.

As expected arrived the morn cheerful and bright;
I thought the sun's rays would fall over the sill,
I thought the rays would take me alongside a stream.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Unstoppable Torrent

Why stop my tears
They have a tale to tell
About my journey
Through the maze of time
In conflict and needled
By wants and needs
And frequently arrested
By bias and gloom
With leading hopes
All torn to shreds
And longings rent askew.

The tears that trickle
Down my cheeks
They leave a trail
That's sordid and grey
Drawing a meaning
Difficult to read;
But where is the sparkle
In my eyes,
I have lost it in the sullen cloud
And seen the dusty empathy
Replace the veil of outside stress
With the cover of inner liberty.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Untold State

I cannot steal anyone else's dream,
I did try but did not know
How to steal a formless apparition
Or hold a floating mist in my mind;
I cannot narrate a tale already told,
I do not have a good memory at all,
I cannot remember words that describe
Any popular repetitive sequence of note;
So I know,
These two acts can never help me in my search
To walk across and stand at the other end of the sky
Unseen
To merely watch my footprints slowly fade,
For in my hands I have always firmly held,
Written in bold and clear letters, a curt script
Hinting at some very old faithful connotations
That had given meanings to the audible words
And even made them talk to me,
I had just emerged from a known darkness,
And had just opened my eyes to learn that
I can never ever give shape to a formless form
And cause it to be seen.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Uprising

In the middle of an inky night
When the entire world is asleep
I come awake if only to hear
The strange sounds of the night
Emanating from rippled folds
Of a subdued but eerie silence
Festering within my unsure mind
That has for long kept at bay
Many stray rogues and vermin.

Stay with me always, my hopes,
You are my trusted companion,
You will make me ease my mind,
Prepare it to read the secrets
Silence has refused to give up
And not leveled its raised folds.

With you beside me as strength,
I shall crush that eerie silence,
Then no rogue or vermin
Can dare spoil the brightness
A rising day unfolds,
I shall then commune with light
And not lament when it is dark
And no light is seen.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Upwards

He said excitedly
'You know the way
Let us quickly walk up to the sky
It is the domain of the one who sees everything
And does not miss anything
Let us invade that domain
And steal the thunder'

Halting he gasped for breath
He had come running from below
There darkness reigns
And all is quiet

He had remained confined
For very long
But now assured of release
Could not contain his anticipation
He thought he could rule the world
Very tense he was
Blood rushed through his veins
He had been good to win his freedom

Gently I held his hand
And guided him up to the sky
He was dazzled by its brilliance
He could see nothing else
Not even the world he had just left

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Use Of Words

Careful with the use of words I have always been;
Never have I made them seem loud, coarse or rude;
This the listeners know who have heard me speak,
About the rest I am not the least concerned;
They may have ears but pay no heed to my speech.

With the words I choose I string a colourful wreath
Steeped in their overflowing scents of deep import,
My purpose to please served I move on to the next
Like an astounding juggler does swinging his wares
But without the trademark exaggerated swagger.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Usual Spree

Brightening light in the east
Sunrise
Dawn of a new day
The sleeping lot awakens
Birds take to the air
The rest
Stretch their limbs
And begin to move.

Browsing an anthology
Of my old poems
Refreshing fading memories
Knitting my brow
And a new pattern
Of thought
I sip the cream-laced tea
That reminds me
Of what I am
And what I could be.

It is noon-time
The Earth is warm
But not yet friendly
Coaxed and cajoled
By near and dear
I trace the distant outlines
Of my vast enclosure
Filled with things and happenings
Not of choice
Guarded by fears.

The sun is about to set
Daylight will soon fade
With it
My hopes and plans
Giving way to dreams
To fill and light-up
My long night of wait
Congenially.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Vacant Sky

Must I look at the vacant sky
And deepen the rent I have already caused
By my deafening cries and screechy wails
That is in tune with the thunder of gods.

I have used my eyes to scrape the sky,
Nary a drop of blood is seen to flow
Who will now sow the doubt again
Alienate once more the searched and found.

The blueness of the sky cannot be touched;
I see dark clouds gather in the sky,
The solar heat that governs their birth
It will not fade overnight.

I must not look at the vacant sky.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Vagueness Profound

My mind infected by doubts and fears
Unable to decipher even common words
And unable to reveal the hidden truths
Does not care to lend its helping hand.

My heart affected by a feral defiance
Much confused it seems has lost its way
No longer able to maintain its rhythm
Has made me ask - Whither I am bound?

I stand listening to the sound of waves
Trying to find the meaning I seem to miss
The ebb and flow of the sea known to me
It has made me probe its inviting depths.

I do not wish to leave the coziness of sleep
Nor wish to wake up at each sunrise
Or hold on to the strands of strewn thoughts
Because of my various likes and dislikes.

Light shadows slowly creep up the hill
They blur the ruins lit up by the stars
An owl hoots loudly for its mate
A snake slithers up to the tree top.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Vain Expectation

You ask me to speak about the perfection of human life
Full of virtues and devoid of sins;
You want me also to speak about kindness and morality -
The two indelible marks of human nature and pride,
And about Truth and Purity in thought and deeds;
Deeply affected by viciousness is my life.
For me, there is no escape from the grind of routines and obligations
Or from the clutches of needs and greed, ambition and dreams;
My nights are spent seeking relief from the daily ordeal of pain
And I hope and pray for an easier time ahead,
During which struggle unable to think about virtue and sin
Or assess the extent of truth and purity in thoughts and deeds,
Weighed down by the paucity of resolve and funds,
I spend the time to direct my usual efforts and toils
And think about momentary achievements that are never wholly mine.
So, please ask from someone else about the perfection of human life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Vain Wish

I have always wanted to share with others,
In exchange for theirs',
My pains and joys;
I have always wanted others to see things my way,
And to see theirs' in a more positive way;
I have always wanted to learn from others as they had done
How to safeguard precious hopes and not shatter the dream
That is repeatedly cast
So long as our cherished multi-hued desires survive.
But now as I have grown older
And a little colder
I find my limp fingers casually reaching out to an open void
To feel and measure
The texture and depth of the passing tormenting time
Stretched within and supported by vibrant space.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Varying Degrees Of Fate

The secrets of sound and speech are not known,
They need to be told.
Stay hidden far from the mind
In the shifting layers of the wind,
That easily gives up its secrets
As it strikes at various obstructions and vibrates,
And reveals the subtle variations of the octave
Along with the hidden meanings of the spoken words
Through punctuation marks and halts
But riding the tenuous warm waves
Set in motion by the energizing heat of the sun
Permeating the land and the sea,
All the while drawing and spreading waters,
Sifting matter and recycling life
Is the binding of the vagrant time
That dictates the varying degrees of fate.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Vedic Prayer

Both of you are divine,
(The chosen aim
And the achievement of that aim):
With your divinity purify us.
May our efforts to gain emancipation be pleasant!
May the state of emancipation be pleasant!
May our return from the beyond be pleasant!

• Inspired by Rig Veda Mantra .6

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Verbatim

Here is the glint
From an upturned silver spoon
Striking my eye temporarily blind,
There is the flame of a candle bit
Burning out time
As though needed to be spent in haste;
Here is my letter addressed to the sun
Speaking about the turmoil of those who live,
There is the window
Looking down on the street
Filled with people refusing a rest;
Here is my ear straining hard to hear
The low notes of a violin played in the yard,
There is the eye of a caring mother
Who knows her toddler would call out for feed;
Here I am left
Watching the world
Swiftly move
Not changing its course or tide,
There is the moment
When one has to act
To fulfill the dreams languishing with time.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Verdict

I wasn't born without hope.
My parents dreamed of great things for me
And prepared me bodily and soul;
I have worked to attain high standards.

I would have asked of them about my progress
And, their satisfaction, had they been alive,
They would not have dithered;
They would have judged me fairly.

I am not adequately equipped
Nor do I possess great abilities
But the arena where activities and opportunities jostle
Is not limited; limited indeed are my aspirations.

I do not seek the impossible;
Maybe my journey has reached its end
That I now act as my judge
And my mind is free.

As the nights creep in I examine my reflection in a mirror;
Mirrors do not lie; they tell me
About the accomplishment of my cherished aims
Measured by my eyes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Verity

It is the fire raging within which makes the sin,
Generated by ignorance and untruth, to wither away;
The sin that manifests from within the folds of narrowness As non-perception of
truth,
The continuance of seeing differences in the world
And as the inability to realize the ever existing triune unity
That makes one unable to lift own being to the level of divinity,
This sin needs a purge.
Ordinary sins such as falsehood, thievery, betrayal, murder and the like
They are the products of the mind;
They have different connotations, different implications, source, circumstances,
and belief;
They affect this life only
And their eradication does not promise sublime purity.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Village Street

My village street
That's lined with shops
Is muddy and deeply creased
A thoroughfare that had come about
Before the count of time
Had even begun its moves
To settle the dues
Recorded boldly on the rim
Of a finely burnished dish
Golden, shiny and bright
That hangs precariously in the sky.

Daily I walk this street
In the hope of fresh air
To clear my mind
To remove all doubts
And to find peace
Not sold in the shops I pass by
No one hails me
Till date, no one has offered help
Of what use is the sticky mud
Of what use are the deep creases then
Time still covers the street
And marches ahead
I too walk the street
Only to measure my life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Virtual Twist

Other than the many 'here' and 'there',
There is a 'nowhere' somewhere
That summons me
To visit and experience
It's physical and mental wares.

With aid of logic and conviction,
Proofs and evidence,
Covered or uncovered,
Fearing or fearlessly,
I could deal with the known 'here'.

Confident of finding it
Using magic and tools,
Riding the stately steed,
Is the longtime roving resident;
I could deal with the unknown 'there'.

But the 'nowhere' summoning me,
Elusive and alluring as it is,
Guiding and teasing me at will,
Has dared my fires to erupt suddenly
And conduct search.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Vulnerability

Remember!
You and I,
Not till long ago,
Spent hours
In endless arguments
Over things that did not matter
And we're happy
Relishing each other's company
And waited for things to happen
And celebrate.
But now,
We seldom meet
To celebrate good things;
Things do happen,
They do not surprise us,
For nothing new happens,
And we are not as curious
And no longer enjoy such things.
Lately, both of us,
Having sought quietude,
Armed with the stillness
That is ours alone,
Occupy a lone space;
Sitting shoulder to shoulder,
Listening to the thumping of our hearts,
Watching and pondering over
The present and the past,
Searching for clues
To gauge the exact depth of the lake of life
(Its waters have nourished all living beings) ,
We seem to have forgotten
The thorny passage of our journeys
The sweat and tears shed
And the gripping anxiety
And the pain suffered.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Wanting Relief

O Death! My mercilessly unforgiving wise companion of old!
Having watched my birth and overseen my growth and development all,
You gave me a long lease of life to enjoy, show and share my wares;
Not to let you down, these painful experiences I have calmly endured all along
Knowing such exertions and excursions were not meant by you to make me
The person you and I wanted to be, bright and uplifted.

Many winters have gone by since but this winter of old age and wait,
It refuses to make me happy or proud or even remain cheerful for a while;
My dimming eyes have lost their lustre, and my aching limbs their sprightly
spring;
How long am I to wind and rewind remembrances to stall meaningless dreams?
Fed up with life and tortured for long I do not wish to recount old times;
Do strike me now if you must indeed and free me from life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Way To Bliss

As before,
This evening too,
I have stopped to watch
The roll of the waves,
Listen to the sound of the sea,
Breathe the salted air,
And wait for the Sun to set
And the night-fall.

As before,
The daytime spent
Had been hectic and harsh,
A very tiresome grind
Of talk and wiles,
Urges and find
With the rise and lows
Weighed heavily on the mind.

As before,
Even now,
Standing at the beach
I don't seek the Moon and stars
Nor the depth of darkness
Fearsomely quiet,
But a brief rest
For my aching bones
And exhausted mind.

And as before,
A little rested,
Tension eased,
I will commence my walk,
Then board the bus,
Hate the snarling rush;
But reaching home
Be greeted by wife and kids,
And in their midst
Enjoy the bliss
I simply cannot describe.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Weariness

And the bugle had sounded the retreat;
All the warriors slowly
Made their way back to the camps,
Tired and bleeding;
During the day they had fought bravely and now
Longed to stretch their limbs.□
Their battle had not ended
But, also, neither side could claim an upper hand;
They knew tomorrow would be yet another bloody day.
Here the story-teller chose to pause;
He did not know about the mental turmoil
The silent battle-weary suffered,
No one had told him about their inner struggle
He could not even say
Whether they managed to conquer their fears
And fight fairly.
In any case,
The event he had just described to the children,
It had occurred long ago.
The children too were weary;
They abhorred old tales.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

What Am I?

What am I?

The nib or the ink

Or the paper that I use to write

Or the thoughts I fondly pen

Or the flawless words I use to describe

Or the description of the Seen and the Dreamt;

If I am all this I must be a mute, deaf or blind

Unable to read the already written

Or hear the spoken words

Or speak as I think;

What am I?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

What For Fear

The little brook that runs through my field is contaminated
Its water fouled by numerous hands and feet washed, and the earth's crumbling
crust,
By the unpredictable vagary of Nature, random solar bursts and fickleness of the
Moon;
I am afraid,
And I do not till my land
That waits for the plough's coarse caress and the water to drip and soak,
For the seeds to fall and then germinate
And push upwards as shoots to freely flower;
Overhead the Sun continues to shine heating up the earth with its life-giving
heat,
The water still flows in the brook nourishing my piece of land
Making the soil breathe and respond;
The dryness in the air lifts the water-vapour to form rain-clouds in the sky and
block the Sun.

I merely watch these neat performances repeatedly unfold
And patiently wait for the inevitable to happen
But it will not signal the end,
There is expectancy in the air,
I need not be afraid.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

What If I Had Never Moved

When I moved they thought the world would move with me,
They were all narrow-minded,
The risen parts of me once fast asleep.
They had closed their eyes and also their ears
And did not wish to see me stir or hear my cries,
But wanted the world to move with me
After I had changed my demeanor to suit my pride;
They were willing though to see me take this slide.
What if I had never moved?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

When Nearing The End

Death does provide a cool comfort:
The elusive dreams nurtured for long
Cause pain and severely injure the mind
Nourished with hopes and pleasantries;
Restless and likewise aimlessly
It roams the wilderness far and wide.

But Death does end all vagaries:
Pleasant and unpleasant, this sense is gone;
There is none to blame or be complained against;
In the blink of an eye, agreements are torn.
A blankness results when routes are lost
And no one hears any horrid sound.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Where Are The Words

Through open windows and the door
A refreshing air from my garden has just poured in
Filling me with promises and invites
Which I simply cannot ignore
Because I have tended the flowerbeds
And waited for flowers to timely bloom,
Seen them sprinkle colours and scents,
And sing in my mind love and life
I mean to preserve for eternity ☐
Between the lines I am about to write.
But where are the words that would describe
Their sincere and open intensity!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Where From Have I Come - Translation Of An Urdu Quatrain Of Zia Fatehabadi

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Aa rahaa huu.n kidhar se, kyaa maalum
Jaa rahaa huu.n kahaa.n, khudaa maalum
Naa mire paas koi rahabar hai
Naa mujhe apnaa raastaa maalum

Wherefrom have I come who knows
Where to I am headed, God alone knows
There is none beside me as I walk
On the path I know not where it goes

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Where I Live

My friend,
You need to help yourself,
All other means are outmoded;
Try to find me earnestly
Instead of asking me again and again
To let you know where I live;
You want to be with me, this I know.
I live in you and also on the outside
As a grown-up and as a child,
As a learned person and as a novice;
In whichever form you see me in that way
You are bound to find me here and there
And immediately beside you,
That is where I live.
I live everywhere.
For me, there is no space and no distances
And no boundaries,
The whole creation is where I live.
Your form is my form,
And at any given moment
I am all the little and big things that exist;
I have never been difficult to find,
I am to be seen everywhere at all times,
Where else can I be?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Which Way?

I studied the texts not to impress others
But to gain insight into things that combine
And make up this visible world.

I continued to learn not to stay apart
But to educate me, gain self-confidence and trust
And purify my mind and body.

I acquired knowledge not to shine alone
But to shine brightly in a group
Knowing my true self to be no different from others.

Have my efforts been in vain?

I wanted to outpace and stay ahead of time
But I cannot act gifted I am equipped with old foibles
My follies are my creations.

Then encouraged but now ridiculed,
My thoughts and writings are not easy to comprehend
They are ambiguous.

The faster I age, the more redundant I seem to be
I still find familiar pairs of eyes peering at me
But now they lack warmth and the affection of old.

The agony brought about by my loneliness is for me to suffer.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Whispers

In the yonder wilderness, dark and cold,
Whispers I barely heed they thrive
As brief narrations
Of some bold deliberate deeds now forgotten,
Some suggestions and vague assists too.
These whispers remind me
Of the brightness of the days
I had spent in wait for things to happen;
They remind me
Of the loneliness of the long nights
I had endured
That without respite had incessantly and painfully
Clawed away at my heart;
More agonized I am now
At such whispers still lingering as though teasing me,
For it was I who had set them free
To roam and locate me,
To own and haunt me,
To keep me breathing and alive.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Whither Freedom?

I am not free; I cannot be free.
My life is ruled by my wants
Which differing my moods change,
So do passing impulses
My surroundings dictate.

I am a captive of my mind
That experiences slumber and dreams,
Becomes excited and fears;
Uncertain and dejected
It heeds little thoughts and suffers furor.

I am a prisoner of my mind
Fettered by wrong understandings,
Therefore, I am aware of heat and cold,
Pleasure and pain, action and non-action
That my habits forcibly compel.

I am affected by greed,
I desire things that are not mine
I possess nothing of note;
I am without hope and alone but know
There is no way of escape; I can never be free.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Whither Thence?

There is the embroidered cloak I wear to hide my miserable plight;
There is the intense fire that burns my entail rotting overnight;
There is the unattended constant twitch beneath my swollen eye
And there is the nagging turmoil I can't get rid of till the day I die.
'Whither thence? ' - I dare to ask.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Will You Believe Me?

If I say the Sun has set giving way for the murky night
To spread its tenuous wings, will you believe me?

If I say I am he, the bright one lost in time
Unable to find himself, will you believe me?

If I say in a muddy pool there is ample clear water
That can be seen separated, will you believe me?

If I say the abruptness of your pithy statement
Belies your confidence, will you believe me?

If I say there is no end to the tribulations unleashed
By deeds committed anon, will you believe me?

If I say after all requirements met one still finds oneself
At strange dusty crossroads, will you believe me?

If I say the far away lone voice that we often hear
Is ours resounded, will you believe me?

If I say the words I speak hold no meaning if they do not
Penetrate the mind, will you believe me?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Winsome Anger

Roused all of a sudden
From her deep sleep
She did not complain
But stood aside to verify
If that particular hour had come
When she was free to ignite
Those very emotions
That had been infamously inflamed
By the few evil pretenders
Armed with virtue and truth;
She was in no hurry,
She knew the firmness
Of her resolve
To destroy
And also oppose any rebuild.

I asked her -
'Aren't you associated
With unreasonableness? '

'I am, ' she said,
'I am anger,
The forerunner of hurt, discord, and bloodshed;
Unreasonableness feeds my fire.'

I simply stared at her face,
It was beautiful and enchanting,
I could trace no evil;
I looked at her eyes,
They were bright, calm and peaceful;
I did not sense fury or terror.
Believe me,
I could have forever held her in my arms.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Winter Dawn

In the long wait for a winter dawn
There is the silence, there is the mist
And there is the fog and the chill to contend with;
There is hardly any chirping of the birds
To announce its coming fair and bright;
As the wait prolongs
The mist slowly condenses to fall
To moisten the earth,
The fog hangs in the air longer
To obscure the glorious rising sun;
And the biting chill hurts the senses
And dulls the mind.
On many a morning, I have often fought the Delhi-chill
Hoping to view the winter dawn!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Winter Woe

The winter air is cold and sharp,
It nips my flesh and shakes my bones,
And sends a shiver down my spine;
With a constant pain that scours my joints.

My wrists and knees endure the load
They ache and sting where ever I go
They make me suffer far too long
And make me wish I never was born.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Wishful Thinking

I might soon be made to lead a new life
But, not in the manner, I do now,
The body readied for me to don
Will dictate the course of my next life;
Anxiety and worry aren't my true traits
Nor joy or elation of any personal kind,
I don't carry with me any sense of guilt
Nor any sense of achievement of the new find.
I do not want a human birth again
To contend with the same old pretexts
And the same old joys that are short-lived
And the same old dreams difficult to meet.
I would prefer to be born as a singing bird
Free to fly about without fear or care
There were no reasons to make tears flow
And no need to fret about coming days.
As a bird, my memory will be brief,
I will not have to evoke any ugly past
And my actions governed by instincts alone
They will reject all intents and arguments.
I will then see beauty near me and everywhere,
Colourful flowers in bloom will spray their scent,
Flitting like the humming-bird flower to flower
I will sing my songs in a lively way.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

With A Sense Of Relief

On those occasions when I hear myself speak
Aware suddenly I become of the sounds of battle
Raging without and within me, visible and invisible,
Expected and unexpected, aimed at rinsing away
All gathered dirt and accumulated pollutants.

On such occasions, I even dare to raise my gaze
And directly watch the sun radiate in all directions
Its creative and destructive powers all at once
Energizing the created to action by filling their minds
With thoughts and dreams fit to nurture and explore.

It is in those moments that I often recollect
The past deeds and misdeeds committed or shared
As is the rift between the outer world and passing Time
And the shaded inner world and the clouded mind
Promising outcomes that are impossible to list and record.

As a part of the big whole, I occupy a very small space
Restricted certainly is my role as a maker or breaker
Because the unplanned events destined are not my doing
I do not unceremoniously lend credence to the plight of man
Who in his haste filled with pride unties the ties repeatedly.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Without You

in your absence my love
a melancholy strain fills the air
and there is the old sadness revisited
and the quiet dripping of tears from swelling eyes
there is in the visible sky the welcome mark of death
I can hear its call asking me to die
is death the only remedy to cure the blues
wipe away our follies and vain desires I ask
if so do not make me say I loved you true
then my love for you it is that made you die
my love for you it is that makes me die
where will then be the music we often heard
where will be the fragrance of jasmine and rose
where will be the tenderness natural to us
and where will be the light in my eyes ever seeking you
you have left me alone my love
convinced that we cannot unite barred by the cruel world
the same cruel world which does not allow me to live
without you

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Woh Noor Jo

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woh noor jo zulmat se judaa ho nahii.n saktaa
jalte hue sooraj mei.n kabhii kho nahii.n saktaa
khoyaa huaa huu.n apne khayalaat mei.n, mujhko
duniyaa ke nazaaro.n kaa fasoo.n kho nahii.n saktaa
aimaan kii taabeed karegaa koi kaafir
haq baat kahegaa woh yaqii.n ho nahii.n saktaa
patthar ko khudaa jaan ke hum pooj rahe hai.n
patthar to kabhii apnaa khudaa ho nahii.n saktaa
toofaan simaT jaate pighal jaate hai.n patthar
himmat ho jawwan apni to kyaa ho nahii.n saktaa
main gard hoon saharaae mohabbat kii, mujhe bhii
be waqt uDaa degii hawaa ho nahii.n saktaa
rahmat to usii bande pe hotii hae khudaa kii
ashko.n se jo daamaan e gunaah dho nahii.n saktaa

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Words

What is that which is found in the spoken words but not in the written words?
I have often asked.

What is that which is to be found in the written words but not in spoken words?
This too I have not refrained from inquiring as fearlessly.

In the spoken words commonly used
There is the emotional depth to be found awaiting a thoughtful probe
The spoken words are the very many varied sound-waves created
Which without displaying a mark linger till heard.
But, found between the written words there exist
Intriguing and empty silent spaces;
These blank spaces hide hard to detect meanings.
But then,
Does writing intentionally embed silence between and after the words
When it is noticed in certain forms of writing
There is the very narrow silent space between usually unattached characters
Or have no space at all and no punctuation marks either
And convey their meanings.

Speech and writing are two of the many voluntary efforts resorted to by man;
They are a pair of unconscious modes which when activated
Help us synthesize, systemize and categorize our thoughts,
Find a common purpose and realize that there is nothing in the world which is
not accidental.

The ordinary man does not think of himself in a cryptic manner,
He is also not averse to checks and controls.
Even though he has deliberately made words meaningful and expressive,
He can hear emitted sounds cannot make silence speak
Or grasp the true essence of the sounds that constitute speech.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Words That Do Not Exist

Even the deep dark space is not silent;
It hums a primordial note
That had begun with a loud bang very long ago.
I know I am mortal
But I cannot remain here for long
And not speak out my mind;
I shall not demand to be heard.
I shall neither speak about my joy and grief
Nor describe my intents and beliefs,
Or explain away my incomplete dreams and endeavours;
I shall not even speak about what I ever wanted to be
And what I truly am.
I shall describe to you the unspeakable;
While doing so
I shall use words that do not exist.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Writer's World

I have noticed that as a writer
I am all alone when I write,
Then, my thoughts become my companions;
Upon finding the proper words to inscribe,
I am not even aware of the pen that notes down those words;
Then, I live in a world far removed from the present
The world of the kind I alone am able to describe and appreciate,
Dress or mould, rouse or scold;
But hardly aware of the world I live in;
Then I lead a life of tears and laughter of my own making
A world that is exclusive and untouched,
And the return wherefrom is always painful and sad,
Like that of a painter who cannot separate from his easel and brush.
'Writing, at its best, is a lonely life',
Hemingway had said this in his Stockholm address;
It is true.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

Ye Tamaashaa Nahii.N Huaa Thaa Kabhi

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ye tamaashaa nahii.n huaa thaa kabhii
hai voh apanaa, jo duusaraa thaa kabhii
ab vahii jaantaa nahii.n mujh ko
jise apana mai.n jaantaa thaa kabhii
paas aa kar bhii kyuun hai pushmurdaah
duur rah kar jo ro rahaa thaa kabhii
waqt kaa her pher hai varnaa
jo puraanaa hai voh nayaa thaa kabhii
laghzhish e paa ne kar diyaa majbuur
mai.n sambhalktaa huaa chala a thaa kabhii
ghar ke dewaar o dar se hii puuchche.n
koun aa kar yahaa.n rahaa thaa kabhii

utar ayaa huu.n shor o shevan par
khaamashii se na kuchch banaa thaa kabhii
bhartaa huu.n dam yagaangii kaa tiraa
mujh se be gaanaa tuu huua thaa kabhii
sh'er kahane lagaa huu.n mai.n bhii Ravi
mujh se aisaa nahii.n huua thaa kabhii

Ravinder Kumar Soni

You Have Called Me A Pearl

You have called me a pearl,
Neither black nor white or grey,
I find it insulting.
You cannot forever draw
Fake curtains to hide me,
I am bound to be found out;
One day, an awakened one,
Will recognize and play with me,
Wipe away my scowl
And make me laugh and smile
In the very bright light that surrounds me
In a manner that's not subdued or incoherent.

Do not ask me to draw a line,
Thick or slender,
On the bare ground where I stand;
I have gained a preferment
By keeping my feet firmly grounded.
My finger is sore from pointing out
The faintest of dark spots
Appearing on the vast canvas called the Sky;
I cannot teach you all the time;
Do not tire me anymore;
Let me live, my friend,
Make peace with that which makes you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

You Left Me

You left me all of a sudden
You played harsh with me
I shall not complain
But tell me
Why did you leave behind
With me
Many proofs of your stay
Those fond memories of you
I cannot now bear
How can I live with them without you?
I am in those memories
Tell me
How can I live without me?

Ravinder Kumar Soni