

Poetry Series

**Ravinder Kumar Soni**  
**- poems -**

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## Ravinder Kumar Soni(05/04/1944)

Ravinder Kumar Soni was born at 1: 20 A.M. on the 5th day of April 1944 at Delhi. His family was then residing in Darya Ganj, off Ansari Road. He was the second born child of Late Shri Mehr Lal Soni and Late Smt. Raj Kumari Soni, the first-born had expired soon after birth a year ago. Born very weak he needed much care and attention. His father was employed with Reserve Bank of India during those days located in Chandni Chowk, Delhi which premises presently houses a branch of State Bank of India.

At the age of five years, Ravinder was enrolled with the D.A.V. High School, Daryaganj, Delhi. In 1952, his father was transferred on promotion to Madras (present Chennai) where he stayed till 1960 and Ravinder completed his schooling as a student of the Hindu High School, Triplicane, Madras and later joined the Vivekananda College located in Mylapore. In 1960, his father was transferred on promotion to Delhi and, Ravinder joined the Hindu College to complete his education. He was least interested in studies and his performance was ordinary throughout.

After graduating and studying Law from Agra University, Ravinder got an appointment in a bank in 1965 as a clerk. During his service period, at other than Delhi, he worked in branches situated in Sahibabad, Tinsukia, Panitola, Lucknow, Jammu, Srinagar and Raipur. On attaining the age of fifty-five years, he opted for voluntary retirement from bank service to pursue his interests. He was interested in – a) the study of the Rig Veda, the major Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and the Bhagwad Gita commenced when he was barely twelve years old b) the study of Jyotisha (Indian Astrology) commenced around the same time and c) continue with the writing of poems in the English language. His father was an Urdu poet who wrote Urdu poems and ghazals under the pseudonym Zia Fatehabadi, and was keenly interested in Vedic literature and thought. Ravinder considers his father as his true Guru. He adores his father.

Ravinder avoids writing long poems. He prefers writing short poems, he concurs with the opinion of late an that "a short story (here a poem) can be brought into existence through a mere suggestion of detail, the focus being kept on a central idea or climax...within a broad climate of inherited culture there are endless variations...in outlook, habits and day to day philosophy". His poems are realistic, simple, down to earth and uncomplicated. There is a faint touch of spirituality.

Though Ravinder does not prefer to be called a poet, he loves reading and

writing poems. He has not yet published in book-form a collection of his English, Urdu or Hindi poems. His other 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 and 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 in 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.

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 Mumbai) .

His youngest brother, Sushil Soni (born 1956 in Madras) , is also an English poet and writer and already has three published collections of his poems.

# 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 and 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,  
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.'  
Thereupon 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 same 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 Time!  
I cannot ask the wind to claim 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 motivated and contribute  
And keep the vast sea, your support, and mine, alive, simmering and vigilant;  
You 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 an 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 suspended victims who 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 vice  
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  
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 New World

Then one day  
After a long wait, he did return  
Our eager adventurer  
The roving ambassador  
His old glimmer and gait intact  
He appeared unchanged  
But when he narrated his tales  
There was a queer pitch  
The air was different  
The unfamiliar words he spoke indecipherable  
The strange places he had visited  
Could not be known  
And as we listened we wondered why  
Influenced he certainly was  
For, after his efforts  
He had forgotten his native tongue  
He had unlearned his past  
Could it be  
His visit to a new world  
Had rendered him vulnerable  
Made him lose track of his actuality  
And forget what he ever was  
Maybe he had created a world for himself  
And only returned to include us  
We might never know

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  
But it lets me 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 do not want the past to spread its wares  
Or ignite 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 strains left behind by roving time  
Upon the shiny multi-faceted inviting surface of my restless mind  
Beneath its surface uneasily lie my brilliant ideas and imaginations  
All of them unbound and unexplored but seeking a virtual audience nevertheless  
I shall give 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 Prayer To The Feared One

I seek You  
Who is the supportless support  
Of the entire universe;  
Make me aware  
Of your true nature.

You bear no defects;  
By knowing you  
I will know myself,  
Then you and I will be one.

Devoid of any name  
And with nothing to outrun  
Then for me  
Sorrow and delusion  
Will be of no consequence,  
For there is nothing  
That actually moves  
And all things that are,  
Are meaningless.

Knowing you, O Feared One!  
I will never die.

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 Reason To Smile

Each dawn reminds me  
Beneath laden hopes  
Float my wispy dreams  
And many aspirations.  
Threatened by the sun,  
By rain and air  
And the momentary life  
That brooks no hindrance  
Todays and tomorrows  
Held in a shiny cusp  
Harshly shaken and dealt  
Do not promise or gift away  
The eagerly awaited  
Desired outcomes.  
A look around me finds  
The river waters flow  
To fill up the seas,  
The fierce sun's heat  
Agitates the air  
And fires up life,  
Barring the dead  
Making all things breathe  
And pulsate.  
My heartbeats and  
The spring in my stride  
Tell me I am alive  
And my hopes survive.  
Indeed,  
I have every reason to smile.

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 Simple Life

Why

Give shape to thoughts

Seek new patterns

Why dream

I have no wants

I have no demands

I possess nothing

Bound to life

There is no liberty

I cannot decide

I have no free will

I obey orders

I follow dictates

I do not compete

What else can I do?

Think of tomorrows!

What will become of me?

No

There are no complications

I lead a simple life

A happy one

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 with 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 wander,  
Retracing the known and tried paths  
We both have often traversed.

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 co-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 clear sky and the scorching sun  
Bake the loam which is dry and cracked;  
The wooden plough and the oxen rest  
Beneath an old 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 works as the edge of a burnished rock  
Sharp as a scalpel which cuts and pries;  
Why the glee and this 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 Strange Trial

The one who goes ahead  
He alone waits,  
None else;  
He does not agitate  
He patiently waits.

In my fist the enclosed air  
Indistinct  
Knows me,  
I cannot throw it away,  
I breathe the same.

Water flows, spreads  
And evaporates  
Not always does it leave a residue  
Salt,  
The same is in my blood.

The words speak out  
Only when I read them,  
They do not speak otherwise,  
They remain silent  
To deliver.

My struggle with doubts  
Knows no end  
I do not seem to know  
To where I am head,  
The road does seem strange.

I can weave my dreams  
Think steadily  
And act as willed,  
But, I seek respite  
From being too repetitive.

These cannot be my steps  
They measure my journey  
Instead of Time,

They do not effectively  
Grade my inputs.

Of what use am I to myself?  
Many strings bind me,  
Greed strikes and fear stings;  
A shadow blurs  
Who can be the other me?

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 eager and active  
And I want to improve 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

# Abode

Atop the low green hill  
My house  
Painted white  
With doors and windows in blue  
The roof red-tiled  
Bathed in sunlight  
Stands out  
I live there alone  
It is not my home  
In there  
No one receives me  
No one sees me off  
When I stare at its walls  
The house stares back at me  
No questions asked  
No approval sought  
Nerves not strained  
No tear shed  
Silence reigns  
With the wheel on a spin  
My life goes on  
According to familiar lines  
Quiet  
Unperturbed and un-noticed  
Peacefully

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# About Bees And Birds

Intrigued by the constant hum of the bees  
Gathering honey  
And the chirping of the singing birds  
I left my room and stepped outside;  
I found the air had a different smell and feel.  
Actually,  
I wanted to know about love,  
What it promises beyond its spelling and sound.  
I wanted to explore its essence,  
What it means beyond the reach of my heart.  
Persons like me who have never experienced love  
Neither speak about love  
Nor can they express or spread love,  
Their hands are already full  
Untangling the strands of being alone binding them.  
Perched on a branch of a pomegranate tree  
There is the mynah that had once peeped in  
Wanting to educate me about love.  
Then I had only heard that there is love  
A sublime noble feeling  
Permanently ensconced in the hearts and minds of living beings.  
I was not so sure about this  
Therefore, I had shooed off the bird.  
Now,  
I stand before the same bird  
Asking to know about love that transcends all barriers.  
The mynah has asked me to taste the honey the bees collect  
And also  
Transcribe the songs the singing birds sing.  
That love is the rhythm subsequently felt, it said.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# About Finding Me

He saw me  
And rolled up his sleeves;  
He had seen the dust  
Covering me,  
The dust of time  
I dare not part with;  
It made me.

I knew,  
He was concerned;  
A witness to my progress  
He had measured my brilliance  
And seen me soar high.

He wasn't biased;  
He could not accept  
The dust that covered me,  
He did not know  
It had brought me down  
And imbued self-effacement.

I will soon let him know,  
This dust of time it is  
That has helped in finding me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

## About Love

When I said I love you  
You stared at me  
Searched my eyes  
To read my mind  
And touched my arms,  
What you found  
Did not favour me;  
I did not convince you  
And you were angry;  
I felt your fury.  
I could not prove  
My love for you;  
I did not tear open  
My heart  
For you to see it bleed;  
I did not show my pain.  
I know,  
True love causes no pain,  
Instead  
It gives immense joy.

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

# Actuality

When you ponder  
You hear sounds  
Akin to speech;  
A jumbled collection  
Of unfamiliar syllables  
Of some language  
Difficult to decipher.  
These are the sounds,  
The constant buzz,  
Emitted by me.  
I am a swift blur, but  
I make all things possible,  
My work continues.  
I do not tire  
I am vibrant and alive,  
A bit indifferent though  
I do not degenerate,  
Neither am I strange  
Nor entirely invisible,  
I am not a smear  
On the emptiness of space.  
Remove me  
You remove your own self,  
I am here to stay.  
What for am I telling you all this,  
You might never know.

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 these, 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 invisible world,  
The former connected with things spread far and wide  
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 spread itself,  
I can wait for most of the living beings to go to sleep,  
And even wait for those who do not sleep  
To write on the opposite walls 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

# Affects

My wise old friend,  
Never leaves me alone  
In the dark wild world  
That is here and there,  
But leads me on,  
My gentle heart.

How limited it is  
My range of sight!  
I do not see things  
I won't see again;  
I cannot see things  
Beyond the edge of time.

The fire within  
Blazes away high;  
It keeps alive  
My wants and needs  
And the urge to do  
That I succeed.

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

## After The Storm

I will not tell you not to disturb the calm,  
It does subsist after the storm has passed;  
The nights are spent sleeplessly loaded with fears  
In the wake of the uproar raised by the clouds.  
The calm that is here once the rain has ceased  
Deceives and is dangerously disarming;  
It can strangulate the will to act again upon  
The mind's dictates and the heart's intents.

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 forgot  
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

# Alone

I am alone  
There is no one here  
Beside me  
None to side

I walk alone  
With longer strides  
Bare-footed  
Defying pain

I rest alone  
Aware of dreams  
Giving delight  
Reverently.

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 trace  
Some of the lost  
Unreal chains  
Upon the bench  
Now wet with rain  
The gentle wind  
Will strive to dry;  
I confronted 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,  
It Intrudes 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 bush they are destined to bloom  
This perception agitates our 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 due to the perturbation in the individual lives I encounter,  
I am puzzled by the extent those lives have suffered,  
My own experiences are 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 formed 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 that are 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 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 Darkness

O Darkness!  
You are present from the beginning.  
You occupy this wide universe  
Permanently.  
I am the son of a learned person  
Aware of the modifications  
Each life must experience.  
Even though I dwell in light  
Where ever light does not reach  
I can see you.  
I do not fear you.

I see you through my mind,  
The mind is that which has desires.  
My act of seeing you covers you.  
Whatever I see projected  
Upon you does not last forever.

O Darkness! You neither change nor age  
Existing as you do now  
From before the beginning of time,  
You are the eternal bond.  
Of what use is the light that shines if it instils fear  
Makes me hide in your folds,  
It is light that also tells me about grief  
Makes me seek relief in you.  
Light can hide you, O Darkness, but  
You cannot conceal light.  
You are my origin,  
One day, seeking a merger with you  
I will walk towards you.

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

# An Outing

I did not hesitate  
As I headed south  
On the familiar route  
That took me seawards  
Where the golden sand  
Supporting tall coconut trees  
Waited for me  
All along  
I did not harbour doubts  
Nor any fear  
I was confident  
Gradually  
Time passed  
Whereas the days got heated  
It did not rain  
And  
Although I did not lose my way  
I did not reach the sea  
I did not get to feel  
The golden sand  
The Wind and Light  
Had forsaken me  
The tour guide  
The much-knotted thread  
I held in my hands  
A sudden gust of wind  
Blew it away

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 majnuu.n retile 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

# Anger

Give me a moment  
Allow me to say  
I have cared for you  
Always  
At each turn of life  
And still, do  
Yet you test me  
And doubt my resolve  
It is not your fault  
You are more  
In love with yourself  
And do not care  
For anyone else  
But for your fury  
I would not have told you  
That I care  
Stop shouting at me  
This instance

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 their defiant mode,  
They need to be protected and need a cover.  
Worried,  
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 were painfully hungry  
Exhausted after some fierce rounds of kabbadi  
We six sat on the floor waiting.

We shared the hot and flavoury 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

# Annoyance

Surprisingly,  
You still talk in riddles;  
They are old and mouldy.  
Your laughter and tears  
Have not refreshed them.  
They make our lives  
More complicated,  
They are a ruse.  
Do not make me infer  
The impossible  
To solve them  
And lose everything that exists.  
Do not irritate me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Ansuuo.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 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

# As The First Step

Instead of the stars  
Last night  
I had sat in my doorway  
Gathering words  
Floating in from far and near  
And fell in my lap;  
I gave up as lost  
Those that did not reach me.  
I handpicked a few words  
Pleasing to the ear,  
Arranged and inscribed them  
On sheets of white paper,  
And allowed them to glow  
And sound my feelings  
In the form of the poem  
I now publish.  
You will find those words  
Honest and meaningful,  
They have never failed me.

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 Each Dawn

At each dawn  
I play the flute  
Its lyrical notes inspire me  
To write tender words  
Full of love and praise  
That I then recite softly  
As the sun climbs  
Spreads its heat and light  
And awakens for me  
The one I love.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# At Lothal

Today

I have returned to where I belong,  
I stand in my ruined past  
Amidst the burnt roofless low brick-walls;  
Rubble litters the empty streets.  
There is no fire in the kitchens,  
No water in the basins;  
No doors and windows;  
No dust clouds;  
No people and tellers of heroic tales either.  
The trees that stand beside me  
Stand on guard still and silent,  
There is no rain or wind  
To brush the dust off their leaves  
And the sun rays beat down harshly.  
The dead are not here anymore to scare,  
Those who once lived and breathed here are gone,  
And no stray mongrels roam in their search.  
The dock is dry as is the connected river,  
No ship has docked or sailed ever since  
I had left Lothal four millenniums ago.  
For whom should I shed my tears?  
I know no one and, my story is brief.  
I was alone then  
And I am alone even now.

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 Gate

He did not wait  
For the bells to sound  
Summoning him  
Yet came,  
Sat cross-legged  
Outside the temple-gate.  
He did not enter  
Nor circumambulate,  
He was in possession  
Of his heart and mind;  
He was free and fearless.  
He was his temple,  
He did not seek  
To escape himself.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# At The Riverfront

I was standing alone near the bridge  
I waited for her to join me  
For a walk alongside the riverfront;  
I had not seen her for a very long while  
And, when she came, I did not recognize her,  
Not even by her dress and gait,  
I was troubled by this failure,  
I thought I knew her well.  
I dared not question her change  
She did not appear weak  
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 wasn't any 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, bonded by nature, is my domain  
Nurtured for the sake of existence  
Health, strength, and determination,  
And for the sake of calmness, it alone generates;  
That domain is a dream.

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 a watch over me.

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 a joy -  
Our needed presence  
To unravel secrets  
And disclose things  
Through speech  
By initiating discourses,  
Examining figments,  
Sorting variety  
And rewinding thoughts;  
Without us  
Nothing can exist,  
Have an entity  
To 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

# Bare Fact

My weaknesses  
Make me fear the invoked,  
My mental creation,  
That's almost human  
But vested with many powers  
Meant to protect me  
And make me  
Conquer my fears.  
What have I gained?  
A vain virtuality  
That gives more pain  
Than joy!

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,  
While relaxing on the rattan patio chairs  
We exchange the same old oft-repeated words  
Without knowing their meanings true or fair;  
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

# Bedeviled

You have too many questions  
For me to handle,  
I appreciate your enthusiasm  
And confidence.  
But I am not as strong as you are,  
And never as studious;  
My limitations are many;  
They restrict my understanding;  
I can only find some answers,  
Not all.  
Be selective,  
Kindly give me time and space;  
Do not test me;  
Do not annoy me.  
You ask too many questions,  
My friend,  
Do let me stay with you.

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 unravelled 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 occasionally thought about;  
I seek the exalted one who started 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

Emerges as a positive expression of faith

As the right and reliable support

To sustain belief in oneself,

Not because of some fear or anxiety.

A religious person regards Him

As the light that brightens his life

And lights up his path.

He believes Him 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 view

That could lead 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 it's 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 rich of soil,  
Come Spring that plant will bloom and spread  
Most pleasant smell and joy,  
The clouds will gather and shade the buds  
From day-time's fiery heat;  
Then you and I wanting to sleep  
Can find the cosy 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

Wherever I go you follow me,  
Stirring me to act and think  
Beyond all confines of simple thoughts,  
O Audacity!

You made me feel my realness  
And use my strength to face the world  
With the ease of 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  
Hopefully and happily;  
My dry and vacant eyes  
To my hungry mind  
They tell a different tale -  
When light will fade away  
Darkness will descend  
And this world will go to sleep  
Then I will not be found  
Though born of light.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Bound

Converse

My reaction was

To his overture

To set me free;

Bound I was.

I could not be free

Till the traditions

Binding me

Weren't destroyed,

The stream of emotions

Had not dried,

And, the path to hell

Wasn't left open.

I told him

I could never be free;

Perdition I couldn't relent.

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 breathe 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

# Burden

The load that I carry on my shoulders  
With each step, grows heavier,  
I am climbing a hill and I need to push it uphill,  
I must set it down.  
I have to reach the top of the rocky tor  
I do not want the boulder to roll downhill.

At this moment  
Instilled in my mind is the worthiness of my task,  
My heart too harbours sincere intents,  
Armed with these I will push the boulder uphill  
To plug the leak the gushing stream has caused,  
Its waters have swamped my beautiful world.

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 daylight  
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 everywhere  
I hear them talk or shout,  
Amongst those are the voices I do not know  
They call out aloud my name.  
Why should I stop them?  
I shall let them call me by my name,  
I have nothing to hide from them  
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

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  
That adorned 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;  
What dreams?  
No one knew 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

# Cared

I sat dejected.

Patience, she said,  
Will win the world for you,  
Gifted you are  
You make words you write  
Work for you;  
As they dispense meanings  
Sought by you  
And create the worlds they intend  
I shall keep a watch over you  
Even when you are asleep;  
I will not forsake you,  
I am your pride.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Careless

He was uncaring  
He didn't know  
He had dropped the coin somewhere  
The one I had presented  
The one I had found  
Lying unclaimed on the road  
Shiny and new  
He could have eaten a bun or two  
He was hungry  
Who would now find another coin for him  
Shiny and new but unclaimed

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Caretaker

While I slept  
I felt a sharp nudge  
At my right side,  
It brought me awake.

A face I knew  
Peered down at me,  
Asked me to vacate  
The bed I occupied.

He needed it, he said,  
The caretaker of daylight  
Very tired and burnt out.

He wasn't happy,  
He knew why  
He had disturbed me,  
The patient groper  
Of the dark nights  
And their secrets,  
He could not banish.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Certainty

I am always there  
Wherever you leave me  
Reflected in your innermost senses  
That make me felt  
Yet I know not who I am.

Those who say I am active  
And free  
And the bliss of becoming  
Adore me;  
The others who say I am bound  
By my being and desires  
They are unsure and confused.

Do not conceal or brush me aside  
Through your fault  
Of not knowing me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Chanchal

Once I had a black-coloured bird,  
A mynah, as a pet;  
I called her Chanchal  
But she was not fickle,  
She wasn't good-looking either.  
I taught her to converse with me;  
Her fluency surprised me,  
And when we were together  
We engaged in small talks;  
She would chuckle and laugh as I did  
And often we lost ourselves.  
She was the friend I needed.  
Without our realizing  
Days turned into weeks and months  
And one day she announced  
It was time for her to leave  
And then flew away.  
With tear-filled eyes I watched her go.  
Bereft of her company I felt alone,  
I had no one to turn to.  
Now, I have no one to talk to;  
I am left to scan the trees and the sky.  
I haven't found my Chanchal yet.

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

# Chaos

If I search  
What will I find!  
The order needed isn't there,  
The turmoil is unbearable,  
Reasoning has deserted,  
And my thoughts,  
They are all loosely strung;  
I must bind them,  
Their sequence is not unknown.  
The slightest of noise,  
Reaching my ears rings aloud;  
It painfully pierces my brain.

I cannot stay still,  
My noisy unrested mind needs me  
To get rid of itself;  
I must silence my mind,  
I must use my inner fire  
To denerve it.

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 work;  
There is only a 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

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 smouldering 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?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# 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

# Clouds

After it has rained  
Lying on my back  
While watching the raindrops  
Fall off wet leaves□  
I often run my fingers  
On the green lawn  
Carress the grass shoots  
To get their cool feel  
That soothes my nerves  
And makes me forget  
My worries and cares  
But it doesn't rain every day  
Mostly during day-time  
The fierceness of the sun  
Is uncomfortable  
I sweat and toil and tire out easily  
Then I pray for the clouds to return  
And pour rain  
The inconsistent clouds  
Make me wait and fret.□

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Cobbler's Song

There is a cobbler at Parry's Stop,  
He often mends 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

# Commitment

I see no harm  
In honestly expressing the whole truth  
And why should I,  
It is not a crime.  
I always speak the Truth.  
But,  
At times, I do look silly,  
Then I am laughed at, much ridiculed  
And targeted by barbs that sting,  
Thrown at me by those who have plenty to hide.  
Must I bear the pain thus caused  
That fills me with fear  
And makes me see nightmares and be angry  
While I know telling a lie is harmful.  
I must learn to expose people who lie;  
I must dutifully expose their lies.

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 that leads to hell 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 a 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

# Conclusion

My very existence has made me suffer no end.  
Left alone to converse with the blank walls of my room  
Each morning I have asked  
When will I be free?  
When will the gate and the windows open for me to see  
The outside world filled with people and things  
And to gauge the outcome of joy and pain  
Writ large upon the canopy called the sky,  
Ignore all protests and threats,  
Relearn to walk and talk,  
Seek fresh adventures and be ready to fly.

I was born free.  
No sooner I opened my eyes I became aware  
And found me in a narrow room built by my mind;  
I could not demolish the mental walls  
Without damaging my mind.  
Held captive by hunger and thirst  
I have struggled with my memories and instincts  
That line the alley I intend to explore,  
It has only one opening.

I know I cannot run away from my mind,  
I hear no footfalls,  
I have no need to beg or pray,  
I am a prisoner chained to my mind's walls,  
Here I have to decay and die.  
Words no longer guide or surprise me,  
There are no songs for me to sing  
And the surrounding silence cannot comfort me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# 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 dos,  
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 as we rush to an empty beach  
We will find within our reach  
All things fate allowing.

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 spoken word has a meaning attached;  
Grasp that meaning,  
And make it ring out loud and clear to resonate.

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

Our thought and expression are the essential marks of our being;  
They are logical and amenable.  
Our thoughts and words, alterable, can be improved,  
Because of them we exist and evolve.

With glowing desires arranged by 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 my nagging 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 ride 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 to be engaged  
They merely twist and turn.

The barren waves raising the stakes cannot 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

# Continuity

There is the beginning  
Promising and reviving  
And the end  
Inevitable and certain  
Bringing to nought  
All efforts and struggles  
Invariably  
Restarts engineered  
Dreams retraced  
Hopes kept high  
And efforts made  
Again lead to nowhere  
And the eternal wait  
For this cycle to end  
Continues

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

# Corporeality

Stressed,  
He promised to ride  
A white steed in the sky  
On the wind blowing in  
From the south-east,  
On the air that carries  
Rain-laden clouds  
And keeps the land fertile;  
He wanted to meet the god,  
The lord of thunder and rain.  
Without a weapon in his hand  
He intended to rule the world,  
Alter it with his love and care,  
Forget old memories,  
Sprinkle wealth and joy  
Everywhere,  
Earn its trust and faith  
And be adored;  
He desired to become a god;  
He was very fragile;  
He did not live long.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Correction

When I speak to you  
I should not talk in riddles  
Use strange words and phrases  
If I mean to communicate with you  
In an ordinary way  
I have not  
I have merely asked you  
To weigh my experiences  
With your experiences  
That differs from mine  
I am baffled  
Who will clarify?  
You are the one I look up to  
As my friend and guide  
When the pressure is off  
I shall behold flowers again  
Admire their texture and fragrance  
Strum the sitar  
Take cognition of the spreading notes  
And sing songs  
Written by me only for you  
Say you will help me  
Do not say  
You do not follow me

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

# Cover

I could not wait for the rain to stop  
Eager I was to feel its dampness  
I stepped out and swiftly walked  
Towards the thick mango-grove  
Wanting those trees to drape me  
With their strong and sweet aroma  
But by the time I reached them  
The scent of the earth sticking to me  
Had all washed away from my skin  
The downpour was indeed heavy

Tethered to the edge of existence  
The boat meant for me to tide over  
All forms of pain and joy stood still  
Beyond the pithiness of vacant words  
The darkness that exposed my cause  
Laid bare my brittle bones deadly white  
Blurred were my vision and the sense of touch  
And I could not properly see or feel  
Once again I had to seek refuge  
I had to seek the dampness of rain

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

# Cruise

Alongside the taster and the tasted  
I am the third  
I stand  
Beneath the tree which is their perch  
I watch their play  
That does not delude me  
And I still know  
That the Sun does not set and rise.

Because of me  
These two do not leave their roost  
Though I can reveal their presence  
Only to those few aware of me  
But do I exist in my own right?  
I ask.

Fairly  
I am as unconditional as the other two  
And no different from the space I occupy  
Nor different from the sound often heard  
Or the light that merely conceals darkness.

Am I the virtual sharpness of my intellect  
And the very beginning of all things  
The glint in the eye!  
But these do not define me  
They do not make my senses serve me  
Or my mind heed.

Maybe I am the tiny dot marking the end,  
A rebel nonetheless.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Dawn

Today,  
Facing my favourite deity  
With folded hands,  
And a prayer on my lips,  
I sit cross-legged on the floor  
Inside the large temple complex  
Waiting for him  
Who only last night  
Promised a future  
Ever bright as the sun.  
His promise revived my zeal  
And, I will wait  
For the future to unfold  
But,  
He had not spelt out  
The nature of the new dawns;  
How different would they be  
From today's  
He ought to have defined.  
When he comes  
I shall listen to what he says.  
He must have seen those dawns.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Daydream

He could not scratch his head  
He wore a colourful headdress  
Starched stiff  
He adjusted it  
But to his annoyance  
The itch persisted  
He could not remove his turban  
The Sun had climbed high  
The desert sand was unbearably hot  
There was no shade for relief  
He had even left his staff behind  
And come to meet her all alone  
At this place without knowing her  
She would find him he knew  
The daydream he had abandoned  
Long ago

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Daylight

So long as I had kept my eyes open  
In the bright daylight  
I saw the pleasant and the unpleasant  
The encouraging and the discouraging  
The inviting and the horrifying  
The dark and the coloured  
Spread near and far  
All products of my wavering jittery mind  
And thought  
Contending and hopeful  
I could vie with Time  
Served to me on a golden platter  
Fully evolved and delegated  
I dared not risk closing my eyes  
Even though the nights provided relief  
I wondered  
What would become of me  
Where would I be  
Would I survive  
If there was no daylight at all  
And in its absence  
I could not see my mind's handiwork  
That accompanied me everywhere  
Never letting me feel alone

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

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 appeared to belong 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 very far  
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 a way to meet  
And face Death.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Deferred

Left at the river bank  
To fend alone  
I was busy counting my prayer beads.

When darkness descended,  
I counted the stars  
But not the ripples  
That constantly rose and fell  
On the river's surface,  
They lack certainty.

Bored and tired,  
I was frightened too  
By the sounds of the river and the night  
That told me to go away.  
Where to?

Expectations are valuable,  
They are all fragile,  
They do make one dream.  
I want to dream.  
My wisdom had left me in the wild  
To be alone,  
To find or weave a dream  
I could connect with,  
It had not abandoned me.  
Only those who sleep well, dream.

I have not slept a wink  
Owing to a nagging fear -  
The fear of losing.  
I can lose everything but not my hopes.  
Aware,  
I did not wander in the woods  
Only to retrace my steps  
Because I cannot accept defeat;  
Now,  
Because I wish to dream again  
I must find my sleep.

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 within you,  
Happy, dancing and smiling at you,  
The delight of your experience.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Delusion

O fond Dreams! Go away!  
Leave me alone  
I don't need you any more  
That with your vain promises  
You have spoiled my plans  
Whittled my resolve thin  
And misled me again and again  
You have hindered my progress  
Pushed me fervidly  
To the extreme verge of disillusionment  
Made me dance to your tune  
As a slave who cannot do without you  
You have made me weak  
I cannot blame my thoughts  
I must retrieve my wit  
So my fond Dreams, Be off!  
Do not torment me any more  
I can sleep without you  
Leave me alone I say  
Do not delude me

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

# Destination

Indeed,  
Not swiftly though,  
I am moving steadily  
Towards the Sun,  
To meet my destiny.  
I am fearless,  
I belong to the Sun  
Who has made me,  
Energises,  
And goads me on  
To study my being  
Which is still obscure  
As it is  
Covered by darkness.  
Once I reach the Sun,  
Thence become complete  
Upon merging with it  
I will lose my identity  
And shine  
As brilliantly as the Sun  
Beyond dreams and thoughts.  
I will then not need  
The Moon and the stars  
Beside me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Destiny

I saw the gulf and held back.  
I did not go over the shelf.  
The hills are,  
But the deep crevice  
Betwixt  
That is not mine.  
It's depth and darkness  
I do not know.  
Never have I been there before  
And I do not know  
About its silence  
That hangs still in the air  
To sting deep.  
Had I blundered  
I would have died  
Unknown and unsung;  
Now I know I am wise.

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

# Devoted Two

A lonely figure  
From up the sky  
Stares at me wordlessly

It cannot descend  
And I cannot rise  
We cannot meet curiously

And in dark cool nights  
Though face to face  
We stay apart adoringly

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

# Devout

I have waited for my turn  
Stood in the long queue  
Unshaded  
With the offering of flowers  
Coins and incense  
Placed in a bright silver plate  
Held in my hands  
And grown very tired  
My belief was at risk  
My prayers were incomplete  
And time did not side me  
So I thought.

I can be angry  
Behave trantrumoniously  
But why waste my efforts  
I can see  
The open temple-gate  
Hear the bells ring  
And the chants resound  
I am almost there  
I know  
I am almost there.

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 happy 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,  
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 and the heat,  
They do not make me forget  
My sufferings.  
Before I happen to gain what I seek,  
I must cleanse my mind  
Not with words  
Constantly ringing in my ears  
But with the one-pointed focus of the inner energy,  
Help the inactive and also the aroused states of the mind  
And find identical levels just as the letters in a word do.

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

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Dilemma

I have seen fires burn rapidly  
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

# Dirty Stones

The enormity of my choice  
Even baffled me;  
My path across the park  
Was strewn with many stones,  
I had picked up the dirtiest one;  
Once cleansed  
It was the bluest sapphire  
I had ever seen.  
An unlucky stone to possess  
My friends said;  
But I kept it for me.  
Three days later,  
I had no place to live  
And on the fourth,  
I lost my benefactor  
And I lay hungry on the wayside.  
Then I sold it to a merchant  
Who needed such a gem  
To ward off evil.  
He paid me a hefty amount.  
I was rich.  
Now, I can see my friends  
Frantically searching  
For the kind of dirty stones  
That made me rich.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# 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;  
In these confronts□  
Who ultimately wins does not bother me.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Disparate

The long discourse continues;  
Words of wisdom uttered by the wise  
Pacify the few devotees gathered  
Increasingly  
Troubled by vicious thoughts and desires;  
Now, assured of a new sunrise  
And a brighter day ahead  
They respond positively.  
They do not question the truth.  
They do not seek its elaboration.  
This change the wise notice  
For they know the dicot leaves  
Do not have parallel veins  
And the disparate find a way to unite.

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;  
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

# Displayed

Somewhere alongside the path I walk,  
My desires, since bared, wait for me;  
I know they would, they are mine.

I had given them the right of way  
To soar ahead, sift, reset and mellow  
Before they could work on me.

As of now, I am only eager and excited,  
My desires keep me motivated:  
I can detect their glow and form.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Disquiet

To the few like me who continue to stand in wait  
At your worn doorsteps  
Eagerly  
For your little favours and grants  
Time loses its essentiality  
Words their meaning, earth its potentials  
And vitality its original purpose  
Why this wait then  
Why this wait I ask

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

# Distance

You faced a problem  
You say,  
I had blocked you.  
You could not talk to me  
About yourself;  
You found me talking to me  
Open and frank  
About my experiences with you,  
As though to a trusted friend.  
Of course, you know  
I am closest to me  
When I am not with you.  
O, my aspirations!  
Do not crowd my wit,  
Bear with me,  
Why make me stay away.

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;  
That made me find peace.  
Must I go back to sleep, I ask -  
I must;  
I must continue to 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 and intricacies of silence, 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 speech?  
Am I able to foresee my future?

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 Call Me

Maybe,  
You can call me now;  
I am all ears.  
The blue cloth that covers me  
I have removed,  
You can see me again  
Walking on a cloud.  
Your pleasing voice,  
I am sure,  
Will excite me no end  
And make me wear my silk  
To meet you as before.  
My eyes will be bright,  
And eager to see you dressed  
In your most colourful finery  
And a smile.  
But do call me aloud;  
Do call me by my name.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Do Not Leave Me

Sweet dreams!

Stay with me beyond the rise of the 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 harm you.

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 what I wanted to see everywhere,

The colours of love bright and beautifully displayed.

Do not leave me ever, O 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.  
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 fly  
And the easy smiles.  
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

# Dreamless Sleeps

My eyes betray  
My heart and mind,  
They reveal too much.  
Others can read me  
As an open book  
And mock at me,  
Pour ridicule  
And unclothe me.  
Unable to defend  
I shed silent tears,  
But thus glistened  
My eyes reveal all  
That is more of me  
I intend to hide.  
When I close my eyes  
I often see me languishing  
In make-believe worlds;  
I see dreams  
That hurt my psyche,  
The pleasant I see  
Is not pleasing  
And the unpleasant  
Scare me.  
I seek the rare;  
I long for  
Dreamless sleeps.

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 fulfilment 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 fulfilment 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 could hear the notes  
I could scent the aroma waft close.  
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 reaching 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

# Eagerness

He appeared all of a sudden  
From behind a henna tree.  
He had been hiding from me  
Because of his speech  
Which never was endearing  
And I found offensive  
He wanted a talk with me  
About his journey and mine  
Through the maze of life  
And time;  
He had not taken the dye.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

## Eagerness - (2)

□

The sun has set  
And darkness reigns,  
Birds are silent  
And the senses lulled  
I have waited for you  
All day  
You did not come;  
I am impatient  
Now, what next?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

## Easy Way

His walk is brisk,  
He must reach the riverbank,  
A boat waits for him,  
It will take him sooner  
To the more promising other-side  
Where there are more trees seen.  
He knows,  
The boat leaves in an hour's time.  
He is in a hurry.

You do not want him to tire  
Or give up his quest,  
Do you?

He had asked you to join him,  
Share his joy,  
Instead, you chose the easy way out,  
You stayed  
To write these lines  
To immortalize him.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Echo

You utter a cry;  
It echoes  
Down the green-blue hills  
As though there be many  
And then you wait,  
Ears alert,  
For a response.

Soon, the echo dies;  
The quiet and the stillness  
Becomes unbearable,  
Doubts creep in,  
Mind agitates;  
Why did I utter that cry?  
You ask.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Educated

Think about a library  
And the pile of books  
Each still unread  
That you wanted to hold in hand  
Weigh and appreciate

Think about their authors  
Mostly unsung  
And now faceless  
Their name and place  
All long forgotten

And then think about me  
Seeking an understanding  
Instant recognition  
In the midst of  
Thirsty and starved

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 its speech 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 spend time in that windowless room and expect 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 for me to respond to the silence which by now is aged and distorted,  
Enable me to hear and address and 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 its course  
And then,  
Wait for the good things;  
Bad things are always with us.

Time attracts,  
It instils longing and fear  
Because it is the ground for a temporal order  
And is three-fold.  
It is the cause of production,  
It is persistence and the destroyer;  
We are all carried away  
By the sequences of events it projects -  
Their regularity or randomness,  
They initiate the search  
That over-rides the hows and whys  
Of the observed occurrences.

Time is in essence comparison;  
A comparison that continues to exist  
So long as one opts to remain attached  
To the world of pleasure and pain;  
The barriers seen are those erected by the mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# 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 seen 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

## Eight Quatrains

The harshness of the Day he had withstood  
Now tired he could do nothing else but rest  
As the star-studded cloak covered the sky  
He waited for the Night to lure him to sleep  
0

I heard him call me aloud 'Go back, Go back'  
I had left my home in search of him only  
He had left the door open and walked away  
He did not want me to breathe the air he did  
0

You appeared before me all of a sudden  
In the form of a thin, tenuous, greyish mist  
I thought I had caught sight of me at last  
I had forgotten as to what and how I looked  
0

Lo! The grass seems greener after the rain  
The flowers too have begun to glow brightly  
The birds now more active have begun to sing  
Has the Spring returned, my love, let us see?  
0

There it was the rabid dog behind a bush  
Crouching and afraid of the gathered mob  
His days were numbered he knew he would be  
Beaten and stoned to death, he let out a cry  
0

A pious soul he comes to worship every day  
At the temple where he says peace reigns  
Of late he has lit the lamps hesitatingly  
His god has forsaken him he seems to think  
0

Who dares to announce I have failed  
What if Death struts proud and strong  
I shall live for many more days and see  
How far it nears me when I am to die  
0

As I neared my house, I felt a severe pain  
Creep up my torso and strike my chest  
I have been listening to some horror tales  
All of them based on my rotten life

0

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

What if my end is near  
And I am about to die,  
Where will I be then?

After I am dead I will become a star  
And quietly shine for a long time  
My mother had told me -  
When good people die  
They surely turn into stars  
Have I not been good while I lived?  
I certainly have  
My family and friends readily attest  
My goodness  
They cannot all be wrong

But all stars finally burn out  
They die  
Should I expect to die again and again?  
I cannot accept such a fate  
Without some gain

Long ago my grandmother  
Had promised me a different world  
If I behaved well  
A world where there was  
No pain, grief, anger, hate, and greed  
I prefer that world  
I am ready to die again and again  
To be in that world  
O Fate! Why should I burn like a star?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# End Of A Spell

'Wake up', I heard him say;  
I was in a 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.

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  
And confident,  
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 wants to take me  
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  
As to why?  
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

# End Of The Race

Suddenness shines  
Where the hurried crawl  
Inch by inch  
Minute by minute  
And only for them  
The bait waits  
Securely tied  
To a tallish pole  
That has its top  
Split and frayed  
Wrapped to that  
A ribbon sleek  
Black and white  
Gently floats  
Signalling to all  
The end of the race  
In a shady way.

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 many shattered dreams;  
During the day-time, I battle against odds and drain,  
And later seek the cosiness of night thickly inked;  
Who would want to experience my awful plight?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Entreat

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  
Then placed on the tip of a sensitive finger  
And held against the blazing Sun.

Be blessed with a wakeful 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.

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 the right emotions and imaginations.

Be blessed with a peaceful rested mind  
That sees the truth and spreads happiness  
Protects and lights 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 that I 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 must induce them  
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,  
As 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,  
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 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,  
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,  
The sound and touch are your attributes  
You are stable as the sky you roam.  
Your refusal I find is sarcastic and sharp indeed,  
You 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, ignoring the roar of foaming waves,  
Asked Time to stay still,  
And also told the clouds to hide the luminaries  
When those with eyes do not see or hinder,  
And you have 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 playful, natural and divine forces and powers  
Protected by a fire that compels the body and mind to engage in works,  
And light up and cleanse the infinite 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,  
Stemming from the need to provide the essential 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

# Expose

Sturdy it is  
The green blade of grass  
Remove its sheath  
He said  
Strip it bare  
Show its tenderness  
To all  
Expose its weakness  
Make it feel vulnerable  
Vulnerable we all are  
Why be reticent?

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 intentions clear,  
When you and I had walked the lane  
That leads to joy and happiness.

I did show you a simple way to thrill  
Enhance the joy or dispense delight  
In the world filled with misery and grief  
That 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  
Its complex moves pretty gleefully  
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 on 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 know that nescience was the subtle condition of the world,  
the cause of the beginningless course of life.

There is life lurking 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

# Faded Dreams

Faded dreams  
That is all now I have  
As memories  
Bitter and cold  
Sans delight.

They have seen me through  
The roughest and toils  
The daily grinds  
And seasonal bites  
Retaining their hold  
Keeping me whole  
In a vestibule  
Narrow and dark.

Emerge from it  
I will one day  
To see the sun  
Glow brilliantly  
As ever before.

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

I had a difficult childhood;  
I was forcibly taught  
To be fair, kind and honest,  
And only do good to others.  
I was tenderly coerced to rebel  
Against my intuitive R-complex  
And unhesitatingly  
Wipe out 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 bannisters kept intact;  
Ever since I woke up, I have guarded all of my dreams.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Fatal Blow

The dagger was new and shiny,  
It was long and sharp,  
It proudly pierced my heart,  
I felt no discomfort or pain  
As it parted my ribs,  
Only a sort of wetness of a bloody kind.

I died rather peacefully,  
Without raising a cry for help.

At that moment  
Only one thought,  
One thought pestered me -  
I had been foolish,  
My greed had killed me;  
I wanted to own everything  
Other than my faults.

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

Whose voice was that!  
A shiver ran down my spine,  
Fear took hold of me  
But it wasn't of death;  
Wasn't I asked -  
Who made me;  
I wasn't still aware of myself,  
I had nothing to say,  
What will become of me?

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 lustre 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

# Filaments

My thoughts astray  
and floating in the air  
like so many loose  
translucent filaments  
of a torn abandoned  
spider's web  
whose maker is dead  
seek a firm support  
to cling on to life  
they have created  
sweet, sour and bitter  
least elevated  
almost forgettable  
but still throbbing  
and participating  
in a long slow race  
with no end in sight.

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 in 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 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

# Find My Perch

O My fanciful thoughts!  
Do not pick on me,  
Be fair to me,  
Please do not berate me;  
Do not call me lazy or maimed,  
I am neither.  
You gave me the reason to live,  
Because of you, I survive.  
You made me bury my past,  
Look forward to the future  
And count my little gains.

You have brought me very far;  
Now do not displace me  
Or injure my pride  
For having walked the path  
Paved by you  
Curious and investigating.  
Keep me adrift,  
Make me fly and roam the sky;  
Let me find my perch.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Flicker

Using an old steel pliers  
He extracted the entire goodness out of me  
And hid it in a leather-pouch he carried  
I bled profusely  
The pent-up evil burst forth to attract more of it  
And the white marble floor was dull grey  
Where I stood to wonder what else was there  
Inside me that I could easily lose  
There was hardly any goodness left to protect me  
I was worried  
My eyes sought the last flicker of twilight  
That seemed to have vanished all of a sudden  
But I did not see any evil or noble apparitions  
Floating about  
Fear had not set in yet  
The air had not acquired an acrid stink  
The stink that is said to rise from the soot-covered pot in which  
Morbid thoughts brewed are allowed to stagnate  
Outside the leaves had yellowed  
And the talk was on to ignore me  
I had expected to be summoned by the keeper of Time

Ravinder Kumar Soni

## Follow-On

As my day slowly progressed,  
Sitting beneath an ageing 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 bloom  
And watch its flowers regain their sway  
And spread in every way  
Their surge of ignorance.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

## For Me

Drop a line,  
Little words,  
Funny words,  
Teasing words,  
Full of love;  
Amuse me.  
Am I alone?  
No.  
You are there  
For me.

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

She is gone  
she has walked away  
leaving me longing for her  
and my heart now beats  
a very sad rhythm  
my eyes dry and sore  
seek the darkness of the night  
to hide  
not wanting to see the world lit  
but for how long I ask  
I must find and bring her back soon  
how else can I survive  
without the breath of my life  
without the basis of my life

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 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 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 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  
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 Jawaa.N 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 Me A Scoop

Give me a scoop to gather my dreams  
Also, a sieve to sort them fine  
And a silvery rag to wipe them clean  
Lest they spoil my poetic briefs

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  
Mean 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

# Goodness

The last words, he said;  
Hear me speak of the goodness  
That is in you  
You do not know about  
You never cared about,  
The evil left in you has not let you feel  
The rhythmic twinkle of the stars  
That enlivens your mind  
That adds fragrance to flowers  
Creates ripples on streams and lakes  
And lets you sleep peacefully  
In reward of your kindness and love  
That makes others gladly live.

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 one,  
The child within me had not lost his way,  
He knew about the struggles that life held in store,  
And about the uneasiness,  
And he knew about the 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  
A 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

## Greed (2)

The cry for more  
Echoes in the corridors  
Lined with greed and desires  
Which the shiny mirrors  
On the pillars and walls  
Do not reflect  
For the sake of those  
Who want and beg  
For more and more.  
They are a confused lot  
Unsure of their needs;  
With the passage of time  
They become nasty,  
Mean and hated.  
Do not ask the deprived,  
Ask the Shylocks  
And Uriah Heeps of the world;  
They will justify their greed.  
They make the wheel whir.

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 the 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

# Growing Up

As I opened my clenched fist  
I thought  
I held the entire world in my hand  
I was elated  
No sooner I opened my eyes  
My hands ventured forth to grab  
Whatever my eyes saw  
Then I learnt to walk  
And felt tall  
Because I could look down  
On the floor  
And also measure my efforts  
And Distances  
And when I could talk  
I knew I could ask for more  
And only more  
Then suddenly  
The world opened itself to me  
I was shocked  
What I saw I did not like  
It was ugly  
Filled more with grief than joy  
I could not have it  
Then and there  
I tried to retrace my steps  
But could not  
I could not recollect my past  
I had lost my way

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Guilt

I have made mistakes,  
Many mistakes,  
Those I could have avoided  
And celebrated the dawn of today  
That did not rise very bright.

Now, I want to undo that dawn,  
I want my yesterdays to return  
For me to make amends  
And not risk my today and tomorrows;  
My burden of guilt is too heavy.

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,  
Those who act 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

# Happy Life

My laughter and smiles  
Augment my joy;  
These are the nature's gift I have,  
They give me strength  
To test my life and animate me  
That I can rejoice.

The leaves are wet  
And the ground sodden  
But I will not count the raindrops fall  
Nor watch them evaporate;  
Neither track time nor be bound  
I will be happy always.

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 Wept

It was a severe setback.  
He had lost everything that was his,  
The only thing he valued.  
He had lost belief in his being,  
And convinced he was because  
He was not where he ought to be.  
Pithy darkness now covered him,  
He knew no new day would dawn for him.  
His head resting on his knees  
He squatted shedding tears,  
Copious tears.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# He Will 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  
Pour words into my ears  
Croon ever so softly  
Listen to him  
I did not know the words  
He made me sway  
He sang my song  
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,  
There are 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

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 do fill me!  
Protect me  
I cannot see my body  
It should not die.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Her Face

I did not find her  
In the crowd of  
My varying dreams  
I did not remember  
Her face  
And her voice  
I had caught sight of her  
In a crowd  
There were many faces  
And voices  
She did seem familiar  
As though I had known her  
For a long time  
I still remember her  
But strangely  
I did not recollect her face  
In my dreams  
I shall go to bed  
Early this night

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Hero

My mornings are usually pleasant  
I feel revived  
A new chapter always opens  
For me to read and compare  
The yesterdays that are gone by  
And often a painful twitch  
Makes me tremble  
Makes me grip my pen  
Ever more closely  
Seeking a support  
And I begin to write  
The still remembered narratives  
As tales freshly told  
And I let people study the situation  
That makes me my hero.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Hidden Smile

I was never asked to befriend you;  
Like an ordinary gift wrapped in some bright aluminium 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

# His Fault

His fault, you say  
It is grave,  
Unpardonable!  
He has aged gradually  
That is his only fault,  
He did not want to grow old,  
Having aged  
He has become anonymous.  
He knew,  
No one cares for the old,  
No one remembers them,  
No one comforts them.  
And,  
He could not avoid growing old  
Nor could he delay this process.  
He could have sought an early end,  
He did not.  
He thought he could be famous,  
He desired immortality,  
He aimed at the impossible.  
This morning  
I saw him shuffling between two rooms  
One room was brightly lit-up  
The other left dark to confuse him,  
The ruse did not work,  
He remained uneasy.  
He did not deserve punishment.

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,  
Neither destructive,  
Nor do I hurt anyone,  
And my mind is not impaired,  
It is sharp 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 splash in a rhythm I always follow  
The birds flying about tweet the songs I write;  
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 that is my favourite 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 inspecting a deep trough  
Filled to the brim with my old tattered wants and aims  
I have replaced them with new dreams I mean to realize;  
I can divulge my dreams to those who seek to know.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# How Can I Close My Mind

There is no romance in the air,  
No adventure either,  
No beauty to intoxicate me,  
I am bored;  
Leading such a life no longer excites me,  
I have shelved all my hopes,  
Erased my dreams  
And put to rest all kinds of speculations;  
I have decided to rest my senses.  
I will not look for anything I cannot find  
Or listen to those songs that gladdened me  
Or extend my hands to feel a cosy warmth  
Or pick up bright roses for their smell and taste.  
I shall neither allow sunlight to creep in  
Nor ask the wind to prick me.  
I can do all this  
But I cannot get rid of my memories;  
I cannot close my mind.  
Tell me,  
How can I close my mind?

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 Always Alone

I have grown old,  
My hairs are all white,  
And my eye-sight is failing rapidly;  
I no longer trust my body.  
I am now left  
With the strength of my mind  
And the will-to-live  
Which make me think and reflect  
In my past experiences.  
The intimacy with myself is rent  
And I have never cared to inquire  
About the kind of world hidden within me;  
I have never thought  
About my final moorings  
And I have never been informed  
About the sweet nectar of true happiness  
Available everywhere.  
I have tried to wander on my own  
And refused miracles,  
But where ever I go  
I swiftly follow me  
As if I exist yet do not exist,  
To remind me that I am always alone.

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 an activity 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 involved in work

Because work is an exertion of the body;

Born 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 rich because of 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 Need You

I need you;  
With you beside me  
Clearer in thought and deed  
I become, □  
Then I am more aware  
And eager too;  
You fuel my desires,  
Ignite them  
And burn my doubts;  
You make me complete.  
Be with me always O Hope!  
I need you.

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

As she approached me she covered her face  
With a 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 discovering my identity, my true self;  
It is the all-pervading twice-born trident having a six-paired brief,  
The lone field of action and also creative energy,  
The force and subtle matter in the universe wheredirections unfold,  
And holds in place all visible and invisible objects it manifests,  
That make up the three worlds and 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 my death,  
Then, my senses and my limbs numb  
My eyes  
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 life would end abruptly;  
He pointed his finger at me  
Called me the cause of all ends;  
He knew,  
Whereas a glad beginning  
Is always desired  
But the 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

# Impartial View

View the written impartially  
And notice you will certainly -  
That in the past many days  
Page after page  
The poems posted and read  
Do not show any variety,  
Their elected topics  
And their expression  
Remain the same,  
They neither pulsate nor thrive  
While attracting  
Similarly motivated gangs  
And their praises,  
As though stagnation  
Has strongly gripped the minds  
Of those who read and write.  
There is no freshness,  
The stale is definitely unbearable.  
The tools the wordsmiths use  
Are the same  
As are their thought processes.  
In their midst  
I feel suffocated.  
I need to breathe fresh air  
Or else I will die a painful death.  
Lend me a poem that speaks  
Differently.

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

# Imprudence

I never thought  
This could happen,  
While flying  
I had captured air  
By my wings  
And did not let it go,  
And fell.

I saw a resume  
Of my life spent  
Meaninglessly.  
I was proud  
Of my being  
But could not stop  
My fall;  
I was indeed selfish,  
I intended to possess  
The air I rode.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# In Awe

And  
The silence broke  
I heard a piercing cry  
A cry of pain  
Intense deep-rooted pain  
I wondered  
Why it was not  
The sound of laughter  
Or the note  
Of a lilting melody  
That broke the silence  
Surrounding me  
I still wonder

Ravinder Kumar Soni

## In Love

She stood at my doorsteps  
Bathed in starlight  
Wearing a halo  
The night was still young  
And I needed her  
As the desired companion  
She had my love  
I invited her to step in  
But she hesitated  
A niggling doubt bothered her  
What then  
Would keep us together  
Afterwards if our love  
Was taken for granted  
I was speechless

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# In Praise Of Dawn

As the Sun rises  
Higher in the sky  
I see her smiles fade  
Overshadowed  
By the brightness of the morn  
But the Dawn is not sad  
She does not complain  
She knows  
After a long dusky set pause  
Her return is certain□  
Her smiles will dispel darkness  
And light up the entire world  
Again and again

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 impel me but do not regulate,  
You do not originate things or 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 with 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 persistent 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 knowing your proximity.

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 works and tasks remain 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 on 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 worried about me unceasingly,  
And you have me as your constant companion of old,  
Our mutual reliance based on 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  
It's 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

## Inquisitiveness (Three Quatrains)

O mother hold my hand without you  
I am not what you ever want me to be  
I know what lies on the other side  
Help me cross the busy road unseen

0

Your soft fingers caressed my forehead  
I felt relieved of my stiffness and pain  
My mind light could discern clearer still  
The shadowy figures on the opposite walls

0

And then the rolling of the drums was heard  
There was the shout to aim the guns high  
Shots fired and the sound of the last post  
Did not awaken the dead who lay on the pyre

0

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 was 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

# Intrusion

A mysterious void  
Deep within me  
Awaits an intrusion  
And I am game.

My mind is light  
It has filled the void  
And scraped its inside  
Thoroughly clean.

Mystery solved  
The same void now  
Surrounds me;  
It infuses fear.

Who will extract me?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Invest

He knew he was ageing fast,  
Some people do;  
Those who think too much,  
Those who get unduly excited,  
Those who run about in vain,  
Are more reckless  
And do not rest.

I never picked on him,  
I simply could not;  
I knew about his raw nerves,  
His crazy searching eyes  
That do not sleep peacefully;  
He knew he was his nemesis  
And could not escape ruination.

I am his friend, his alter-ego;  
I have walked with him many long miles  
And not tired.  
Duty-bound, I find ways to protect him  
And I know the escape routes  
I have asked to open up to him;  
I must help him find his way.

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

# Invite

I am enamoured by that face  
Its sublime beauty  
And radiance  
Resides in my eyes  
That I see her everywhere;  
Her captivating eyes  
And beaming smile  
Beckon me as her own.  
How can I forget that face?

I can never forget her,  
She is the one I truly love and adore,  
She is the only reason that I live  
And the only thing I desire,  
Other than her I need no one else.  
I must respond to her invite  
And not stay away.

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

# It Has No Name

In a darkened room,  
Between two walls  
In a deep recess  
Covered by a thick curtain,  
A shadow lurks.

It fears light,  
Fears the call  
To emerge  
Which would mean for it  
A certain death.

It cannot survive light,  
It will soon evaporate  
Without a trace;  
Therefore, it has no name,  
It melts away.

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 needed to be imbibed;  
This was my primal education;

My learning and education prepared me for the knowledge of the opposites  
Signified by the green drop-shaped pebble;  
And 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 bird willing to 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

# Judge Me

What makes me difficult?  
My indiscretion maybe,  
Or my indulgence.  
Wait a minute!  
If you will, my friend,  
Judge me proper;  
I have just lost my way.

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 Journey

He did not wait for me  
He thought he knew the road well  
That he would reach his destination  
And regale.  
Had he waited  
I would have told him  
About his futile efforts  
There was no such thing  
As the ultimate goal in life  
One lifetime was too brief a period  
To settle.  
I was returning from the place  
He called his final destination  
I had made the pilot-run for him,  
I know his mental-frame.  
He will now go to the sky  
And then to the Moon and descend  
To fall back on earth to be born again;  
Others will carry him to the very fire  
From which he had come.

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 winding way  
Curl around 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 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 that is beyond our reach  
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 beyond the range of sight  
Where only the sightless dare venture deep.  
Let's talk about the world as the reason and base  
For the learned and the seekers to work and gain,  
Let's talk about the world from where no one returns  
As the enjoyer, the enjoyed or the impeller still.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Life And Death

A needless worry I say  
When alive I never knew  
Why I lived to struggle  
And suffer pain and joy  
And now when I am not alive  
I know not why I died  
These two occurrences  
I had never wished to happen

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

## List

You want me to stand face to face,  
Look deep into your eyes,  
Expose to you the inside  
Of my heart and mind,  
Show the depth of my love,  
The intensity  
And truthfulness of my feelings,  
All for you.  
If I were blind,  
And you knew  
That I loved you as much as I do now,  
You would not have searched my eyes,  
You would have been my eyes,  
You would have guided me to your heart  
To stay.

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 the loneliness I enjoy.

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

Because I am in silent conversations of the mind

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.  
Wait a wee bit longer  
That's how I wait for you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Long Sleep

There is a small crowd surrounding me  
With me lying on the floor on a straw-mat.  
People gathered are staring at me  
And talking in a low voice.  
I heard someone say  
That I had died late last night  
When they were fast asleep  
And could not see me die.  
Death is painful, they said.  
But they seemed mighty pleased  
Because  
When I died, I did not disturb their sleep.  
I did not call out for help.  
The milkman found me lying on the floor dead.  
And now,  
I miss the wetness in the air;  
People usually weep when a dear one dies.  
But no one has shed any tear;  
No one has mourned my death.  
To them  
My death was a forgettable event.  
And, I made no attempt to rise,  
I felt very tired and relaxed;  
I wished to enjoy the long sleep  
That has come my way.

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 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  
Be it 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 Identity (2)

Last week  
I had raised an open question;  
There is no response.  
I know because I have scanned  
The air,  
All newspapers and weekly tracts,  
My mail  
And even my phone calls;  
The silence stays.  
O, gentle heart!  
Do not ask me to repeat that question.  
Except you  
I do not owe to anyone  
My trust and faith.  
I have forgotten my being,  
I must know who I am.  
Lost I roam in this wilderness;  
I want someone to find me  
Soon  
And not question my presence.

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 Sleep

Then it occurred to me  
I was indeed asleep  
When I seemed to have  
Heard a far away rasped cry  
The night had not yet folded  
And the dark sky overhead  
Was studded with bright stars  
The invisible stars  
They emitted the strange sound  
That awakened me  
With my eyes wide open  
I continue to toss and tumble  
And seek my lost sleep  
Inadequately tutored  
I am unable to read  
That sound

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 grants 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 have  
Flown and soared to a great height,  
Higher than ever before;  
Maybe my unprotected wings  
Would then fall off  
Burnt by the blazing heat of the sun;  
As of now  
I dare not crawl.  
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 a 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

# Marina Beach

At dawn,  
On the Marina Beach,  
Only two kinds gather,  
Those on the promenade  
Eager to watch  
The sun sizzle  
Out of the boiling bay  
And, those who wait  
At the sea-edge  
For the fishermen to return  
With their day's catch.  
Of course,  
I am the third rare kind  
Who would often stand  
Opposite the Vivekananda House  
Watching the other two play  
And quietly wait for the words  
I could record.  
I do not know  
The language of the sea.

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  
As a prayer  
Kindles the fire  
To have the knowledge of fire;  
And know the distinction  
Between the ever existing  
And the non-existent;  
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

# Mischievous Wind

For the mischievous wind  
The game is on  
And there are no checks

It was ruffling my hair  
Casually touching my skin  
Comforting me  
And giving me pleasure  
But now it threatens  
To blow away my breath

It will not kill me I know  
It has kept me alive  
I cannot embrace the wind  
I will allow it to play with me  
And keep a watch  
Over my ambles and jogs  
It fuels my fires

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# 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 arduous 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 know not why,  
I prefer to be treated as a child.  
Have my cheeks and forehead  
Fondly kissed,  
And my hair ruffled;  
Of and on  
I want to be cuddled  
And spoiled.  
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 night's causal relationship with the sun?

I have repeatedly asked.

Is it the inference of the unperceived from a perceived mark

Though the relation between the two is not?

Like that of space, there is 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 maayus 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 him voice as though she was talking to herself,  
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,  
Holding to her chest close and tight all her dreams.

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 the same where ever found;  
The light is the 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  
Arrive and show to me as though to remind me  
The elusive longings I had left unattended.

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 must remove the mental block placed upon my mind  
Before I am born.

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 Face

I see a face in the mirror every day,  
Quiet, serious and indrawn;  
Of course, that face isn't mine.  
It lacks my sparkle in the eye  
And the brightness of my smile.  
Whose face is it anyway?  
Tell me.  
Mine, you say!  
You hardly know me,  
You met me in the dark only last night,  
You do not know my features,  
Even I do not know my face.  
When I was born it was past midnight  
It was very dark  
And my eyes were closed then.  
I could not see my face.  
Even now I cannot see my face,  
Whose face is it anyway?

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 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, constantly excited powerful five-headed  
five-limbed entity  
That keeps itself ablaze  
Influencing things beyond all phenomena?  
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 Favourite Poem

'Name your favourite poem' - he asked,  
I said -  
'I cannot,  
For there are so many poems I haven't read  
And there are as many remaining unwritten,  
Including mine.  
Do not ask me to close my mind,  
Ask me about the poems I admire,  
Seek the reason why I do so.  
Thoughts and expression vary,  
They are incomparable;  
No one can grade them  
This much you know.'

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,  
Vies to occupy my space  
Not as a rival or a competitor; he wants to be me;  
To think, walk and talk as I do.  
He is an able person.  
But, why has he referred to my outer world alone?  
He should have spoken about my inner world too, but he has not.  
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.  
He saw  
One ant pick a granule and disappear;  
The second ant was grappling with its granule unable to lift it,  
Whereas the third ant was found alongside the remaining granule waiting for  
assistance;  
These were the three stages of education and experience, he said.  
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 the 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 Love

SMSed in three words  
I had told her how I felt for her,  
In just three small words  
That said more than a million would  
Had I written them filling reams and reams  
Mailed to her packed in many fancy boxes  
She would not have even bothered to open.  
She is a wise waif  
Aware of my weak grammar and spelling errors.  
Why should I remind her about her beauty?  
She sees herself in the mirror every day.  
Why should I reiterate my love for her?  
She senses my presence even in her deep sleep  
When I am somewhere far away.  
I know she loves me  
And she knows that I love her as much.  
On second thought  
I need not have SMSed to her  
Those three small light words,  
You do agree, my friend!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# My Love Affair

And she said -

'Return at once the love I poured on you.'

(She has kept me drenched by her love.)

I heard these words

And kept quiet

But she looked adamant.

I didn't immediately recollect

Where I had concealed her love for me,

I had not stolen it.

Only I did not want to share it

With anyone else;

I wanted all of it for myself,

I too loved her intensely.

How could I give it back?

I could sense her anger.

I had taken her for granted

And never expressed to her

My love.

It was foolish of me,

I must make amends.

I must approach her gently,

Take her into my arms,

Enfold her

And whisper words of love

She desperately needs to hear.

I will do this.

I will.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# My Name

And the last word he uttered  
Was my name  
And then he died  
He was not old enough to die  
Nor had he wished to die  
But he died with my name on his lips  
It was cruel of him  
Till then I was not known to anyone  
He had made me immortal  
Late in the day  
When the Sun was about to set  
And I needed sleep  
I could not sleep that night  
There were no dreams to lure me  
Everyone knew my name  
He had disclosed my identity  
This knowledge kept me awake  
This knowledge made me wish  
I had died too  
All memories die  
On wearing the cloak of death  
He did not want to think of me  
Not even my name

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# My Pain

You just said  
You do not remember me,  
How could you say this to me!  
And you said  
You do not even remember  
My name, face and voice!  
Am I a stranger to you?  
You had made me rich  
With your trust and love,  
This I do not find in your eyes.  
I am a pauper now  
Alone in a vast crowd,  
And deprived of reach.  
There will be no sun  
And no sound to make me laugh;  
The wind will not blow or sing,  
The rain will not fall,  
The earth will scorch  
And our tales will not be told;  
Even my tears will dry.  
Save me.  
Tell me,  
How can I make you remember me?

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# My Pigeons

My pigeons will soon come back to roost;  
I have hailed them with high-pitched screams;  
There was much waving of arms and scarves.  
The sun is down and the night will spread,  
And cast its 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 Teacher

Then,  
He whispered into my ears  
The forbidden words,  
The secret  
He never wanted anyone to know;  
I was taken unaware.  
He said -  
He had no desire to live  
The kind of life he lived.  
He was a village schoolteacher  
Who lived by himself all alone.  
A teacher does not live for himself,  
He activates future generations,  
His responsibility is immense.  
He knew that much.  
I told him to be with me,  
His favourite student.  
Soon he went into a shell  
And entered me.  
This happened  
When I was a child  
Seventy years ago.  
Since then,  
Residing within me,  
He has made me learned and wise.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# My Three Experiences With Love

I knew it was love,  
My mother held me close to her breast,  
Then she looked into my eyes whispering many names trying to find the real me;

I smiled back.  
She knew I loved her too because she found 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 showered 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 is  
usually enjoyed;  
This love has made me enjoy its offerings,  
At each moment reminding me  
What I owed to it and had to pay back;  
I cannot now renegade 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

# My Visit

You knew I would come  
Your door was open  
You called out my name  
And welcomed me  
I did not enter.

I did hear you breathe  
I did not see you  
I did feel your presence  
Who had hid you from my view?  
My lust and greed.

Wait I did outside  
I prayed to be clean  
I want my memory erased  
Then I can enter your house  
Not knowing you.

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

# Needed Death

Only those  
Desirous of worldly things  
Pray for long life,  
I never did.  
Long life is a bane  
As are all worldly things.

I never dreamed  
I would live this long,  
Suffer endless pains  
That do not subside.  
Had my life been brief  
Most mental and physical pains  
I would not have suffered.

I had prayed  
For a brief and active life,  
My prayers remained unanswered.  
And now, for a very long time,  
Helpless,  
I have sought and desired death,  
Death alone can end my suffering.

But,  
My restless mind is not willing to die  
And,  
Death is avoiding me.  
I know  
If I were to shut down my mind  
Death will soon creep up to me  
To free me from my pains.  
Now I pray  
Someone must quickly teach me  
The way to silence my mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# New Beginning

Once again,  
The same old dark shadow  
Lurks surrounding me;  
I know it to be Death  
That tirelessly protects  
And waits for me;  
As a true companion  
It stays with me all the while,  
Watching me at work and play,  
Never guiding, praising, scolding  
Or hurrying me on,  
Never instilling any fear;  
Easygoing is Death  
Knowing it is  
The new beginning for me  
In wait.

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

## Nine Quatrains

Tonight I shall narrate to you an untold tale  
Of the heroes of old we know and their heroics  
How they won the wars, brave they were  
Without drawing their sword or firing a shot

0

You think of the clay pot shreds in your hands  
As that many feelings hurt, lost or immobilized  
Why enliven them, these do frequently rise  
In the form of aspirations, fears and doubts

0

We stood in the market square not disclosed  
To anyone was our identity, wealth or intents  
We had no precious goods to sell or bargain  
Except for our ideas that remained untouched

0

I lowered my eyes to scan the temple ground  
The dust and gravel thickly spread I can see  
Even the old and the new footprints are visible  
But not the marks of those who came to pray

0

I can hear the cymbals strike far away  
Ready I am to face the approaching crowd  
Comprised of those who test their faith  
By repeating the words uttered by me

0

He placed his hands on my shoulder and said  
I have been with you on the journey about to end  
Numerous storms and perils were no deterrents  
You have faced them all with a radiant smile

0

The day that has just passed is yesterday  
I have to carry its memory during the time  
I engage in various works I am duty bound  
And live the present decidedly

0

I have veiled my hopes and desires  
They tend to fade on being exposed  
I have hidden them all in my eyes  
For those who explore me from within

0  
I entered the tavern indeed thirsty I was  
I had been on the road for thirty days  
The temptation was too much to resist  
I picked up the flask and drank the wine  
0

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# No One Agreed

It is openly said,  
I cannot be relied on  
There is no ground to trust me  
That I have lost my way;  
This can be true.  
They had surgically opened up my mind  
And examined its contents.  
They were thorough professionals,  
My opponents;  
And I trust them.  
They had found within me  
Structural defects  
And many weak nodes;  
To their dismay, they found that  
My mind acted independently  
And defied established norms;  
This could not be tolerated I was told.  
They decided  
That my mind must be replaced soonest,  
Therefore,  
I ventured out  
Looking for a child who had opened his eyes  
To ask him to replace his mind with mine;  
I did approach many  
But none agreed.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# No One Ever Sleeps

No one ever sleeps,  
At all times some part or the other  
Does stay awake  
To excite, inspire and monitor;  
The heart beats  
Breathing and absorption does not cease  
And memories convert to hopeful dreams.  
The mind does not sleep,  
It does not cease to function;  
As the observer and the observed  
It arouses, awakens and also attends.  
At two separate levels  
It decides the course of thought -  
What to examine or act upon;  
It sets goals and regulates emotions,  
And reveals the implicit.  
There is no escape from the mind  
Which 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

# Numbers

And finally,  
we were the two left,  
me and I, both watchful  
still battling with our fate at stake,  
repeatedly throwing the dice  
with more and more force,  
and gambling away  
our awareness and mind,  
our sight and might,  
and chaste designs  
for the sake of numbers  
no one can ever possess,  
where the smaller denominations  
get included in the bigger ones;  
we have already crossed the rann,  
that hot and arid wilderness,  
in the hunt for those numbers.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Ode To The Goddess Of Learning

When I near the waterfall  
Overlooking the big lake  
I always find you  
Draped in very light blue silk  
Riding a white swan  
Talking to the birds  
And adored by me  
I know you  
As the source of my joy and peace  
That no one cavils

Although you seldom speak to me  
Your voice fills my ears  
With gentle melodious words  
Asking me to be patient  
To retrace my steps  
Occupy my allotted space  
And simply wait  
For the intended start  
You know  
I have many goals to accomplish  
Before I become truly learned  
And able to impart my knowledge  
To others who will follow me

O Saraswati! Give me strength  
And understanding to succeed.

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  
Yours 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 until 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  
I should read you loud and clear to my friends who would then  
Drag you in my name across the blue sky.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Offering

Do not call me selfish  
Or self-absorbed,  
I have merely shaped my life,  
It is sanctified.  
Neither miserly  
Nor satisfied with myself  
From my unique attainments  
I have benefitted many;  
Know me as the co-eater,  
I am not narrow,  
Call me open-handed.  
Wading through emotions and wakefulness,  
For pervading the entire world,  
I have made  
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 are white,  
And my eye-sight 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 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 are ancient tales,  
All things that are seen, they are liked,  
They are held in hands and fondly felt.

The fruits are ripe and rich in taste,  
They are ours' to take and ours' to give;  
With a conflict won then the fray within  
Loses the verve and necessary push.

But the sun now tired 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

## 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 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

Then I will transcend the three

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 A Sunny Afternoon

On a sunny afternoon  
I sat in my wicker chair  
Reading a letter  
Posted some three months ago  
When winter had just drawn its fangs  
And compelled the air  
To bite sharp and deep  
Into my skin and mind.

The paper I hold is still cold,  
The written words, icy and shrill.  
I am accustomed to reading  
More bad words said about me  
The good ones are few,  
To my surprise  
The letter I hold in my hand contains  
Many words of praise.  
I usually earn praise  
When I do nothing and stay idle  
Daylong  
Week after week.  
Small pleasure.

I have not seen Paradise,  
My retired life cannot be any different.  
But my friend who wrote this letter  
Is not happy,  
His name is not in the list of state awardees.  
He is disappointed,  
He is a good writer though.  
I love reading his poems,  
I must pay him a visit.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# On A Wet Morning

On a wet morning  
Scared of getting drenched  
He did not venture outdoors  
To go to work;  
It had been raining since midnight.  
He was disturbed  
By the speeding gallop of falling raindrops  
Striking the tin-shed, he called his home,  
Hard and noisily;  
The ruckus caused did not let him go to sleep  
And,  
The day had dawned rather late.  
By then, he had grown tired  
Counting the remaining minutes to sunrise.  
The dampness of the air  
And the loneliness in his room  
Was extracting its toll,  
He was feeling drowsy  
And, badly needed sleep.  
His morning cup of tea could wait,  
He was fond of preparing green tea.  
With this thought creeping in  
He rolled over and went to sleep.

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 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 a 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  
And it's light spread.

I do not know how I died.  
I had felt a tightness in my chest  
Then a sharp 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 anyone 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 distance beyond the 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 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 mould.

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 Love

our love  
makes us meet  
again and again  
holding flowers  
in our hands  
over time  
we haven't changed  
still  
seek each other  
need each other  
our face  
now deeply lined  
are mirrors  
they haven't found  
any fault to reflect  
so  
our love is pure  
and desires flawless  
enough to last  
all eternity  
the flowers we hold  
will never wither  
the face we see  
will never fade

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Our Meeting Place

Too often

We meet at the same crossroads

Where our ways seldom meet.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Our Truth

A glimpse of you, you say!

No.

It is the very thought of you

That makes me keel,

Tumble into the deep ravines

Between swiftly changing vortexes

Of space and nowhere-ness,

The boundless, timeless emptiness,

To find me rejoicing in the cosiness

Of the many-layered velvety folds

Your thoughts and mine combined

Draw with utmost care and love

Upon the lustrous ringing fabric called joy;

These tenuous folds do not conceal our truth

The prying eyes cannot find.

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

# Outsiders

Then  
though reluctant  
he was walking alongside  
on the very path  
I had bragged about  
that leads to nowhere  
we were the only two nobodies seen  
laughing aloud  
hoping to earn a name  
by descending low and  
exploring the depths of nothingness  
as the two outsiders.

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 his own kind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Pain

Pain purifies, he said;  
Inflict pain on yourself.  
Why should I?  
I despise torture,  
I dislike hate and bloodshed,  
I have done to me no wrong  
To suffer self-inflicted pains.

I know not the grammar of life,  
My responses are uncertain,  
The obvious is difficult to perceive,  
The moments of my quietude are brief,  
My mind does not rest,  
These pains I already suffer,  
Now, what else?

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 bears 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 wise and inquisitive friend 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 atoms lose their rhythm and cease to pulsate,  
They cease to exist; they disintegrate.'

Hearing me speak thus,  
My friend began to reflect, grew pensive and withdrawn.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Parity

Whenever I speak  
Words trickle forth  
One by one  
In a steady stream  
And my audience  
Responds positively  
Able to see  
Ripples in the air

Disliked is my silence  
Though comfortable I am  
Withdrawn and aloof  
Sorting my thoughts  
Counting the grades  
And twiddling my thumbs  
I am at peace  
With myself then

I cannot do without speech  
Without speech  
My identity is lost  
The words I utter  
Make and define me  
My silence is the cloak  
I sometimes wear  
When I meditate

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 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

# Patience

Dimly shines the moon in her tearless eyes  
Highlighting the pain, she endures  
While she waits for the return of happy times  
She cannot forget even if she tried,  
Her eyes scan the horizon and the sky.

No smile plays on her colourless dry lips,  
The fountain of tales that had always overflowed  
Is also dry, the words she spoke are silent,  
Even the tall trees do not make the wind sing,  
She survives because of her memories.

As she sits at the window surveying her world  
The dos and don'ts play their roles,  
She knows time must move on,  
Over-ride all pretences and joys;  
Her world must pulsate and make things count.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Peace Of Mind

I do not need it  
Take away my peace of mind  
Bury it farthest from me  
It has served no purpose  
It has made me dull and insensitive  
I can feel the cold in my bones  
Blood freeze  
Heart harden  
And my skin grow thick  
I did not act wisely  
I was foolish to have pursued it  
Having achieved the peace of mind  
I ought to have ceased to breathe  
Take it away from me  
At once

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Peddler Of Dreams

When I heard the fall of his footsteps  
I shut my ears and closed my eyes;  
I did not 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 weaves the dreams on the sleigh  
And never displays his wares  
But he did inquire about my option,  
The sort 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

## Perception (2)

I can see her everywhere;  
My love for her makes me see her.  
Never have I craved  
For her near presence  
Or touch her or hear her call my name  
Or know her love for me  
Merely to swing my mood;  
I trust her with my life  
And she continues to reside in me  
As my breath and light  
As the one who loves me.  
Her love for me and my love for her  
Make me see her  
Even when I close my eyes  
And rest my mind;  
O Vain dreams,  
Do not spoil this perception.

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 mould  
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 have failed in finding 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  
I do not know, is that the place I belong to.

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 drag me to your doorsteps,  
Your house I cannot enter;  
The door has closed on me.

Be my saviour, 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 boredom  
The days and nights weigh heavily upon me  
An ordinary 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 early hours of the 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 for 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 with 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  
It holds no meaning for you and the sane.  
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 it's 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 dariyaaon 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  
&quot;naa huaa par naa huaa Mir kaa andaaz naseeb  
Zouq yaaro.n ne bahut zor ghazal men~ maaraa &quot;  
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 carefully 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 dyke.

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

# Raindrops

Drops of rain  
Cool and soothing,  
Dent the dusty surface of my garden.  
Then,  
They form shallow pools  
That reflect clouds  
Gathered low dark and dense in the sky  
As though about to fall.  
Be it you or me,  
We cannot avoid the rain;  
It's touch  
Revives sagging life,  
Makes flowers bloom  
And, laughter returns.

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 ascend from the east speak a lie;  
And they can never know me who say I can do likewise 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 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 calm your mind  
And the stars will make you sway.  
The sun will shine, and you will see  
The birds that bring awake  
Your likes and love that doze along  
Your errant will at play.  
When you come awake, the world will know  
Where else to place the blame  
The deeds committed by you in haste  
Or the order in disarray.  
With steadier mind and stronger will  
You will soon recoup your loss  
You will find yourself proscribe the act  
That does not give good grades.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Refined

Astir

I own the days and nights,

All works and dreams,

All tears and smiles;

Then,

Without a fumble

I assess the flow of Time,

Fix directions and its stress

And find

I have no beginning or an end

And am totally unafraid.

Far above the clouds

I stand tall

And with the mere movement

Of my mind

Able to erase the known

And the unknown

To cleanse my mind.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Reflection

My garden of delight, variously hued,  
Some eager dolts often invade it,  
They want to be heroes  
Victorious in battles.  
They will soon trample the grass,  
Uproot flowerbeds,  
Slay imagined foes and demons  
With their shiny swords.  
Years ago,  
I would have been one of them,  
I am wiser now.  
These invaders  
And their demons roaming about  
Do not bother me.  
Those that hide within me  
Scare me -  
My fears and doubts;  
These I cannot see with my eyes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Relief

My friend was narrating  
Her side of loneliness  
And, all of a sudden  
Without a word  
Walked away into the dark night.

Then,  
I found her,  
Lit by starlight,  
Standing on the river bank,  
As it were, measuring the river flow;  
There were no tears in her eyes,  
She seemed reconciled.  
Fate could not always be cruel;  
She must wait for better times  
Which she knew was not far off  
Now that  
She had seen the dawn smile on her,  
In it seen his face aglow  
Like when he often crushed her in his arms;  
She knew his love for her was alive.  
And quietly,  
She turned her face towards me;  
The glint in her eyes  
Betrayed her heartfelt relief.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Remorse

There is always another shore  
To reach  
Across the wide blue sea.  
I do not know what they look like  
As if I cared.  
When I set my foot on that shore  
A loud jeer rent the air;  
People there did not want me,  
Only me.  
I am not a queer specimen though;  
Their dislike was genuine,  
I should have really cared.  
You know,  
Nowadays no one can hide anywhere.  
Oh! If only I had cared.

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

# Renunciation

My friend,  
Strong-willed he was,  
He had surrendered.  
He tried to change  
In his favour  
The course of Time.  
He remains impatient  
Though.  
He did not want me  
To intercede,  
He did not call out  
For me.  
He knew  
I have aged with Time,  
Although he believes, I can  
I have never thought  
Of changing its course  
To suit me;  
I never will.  
What next?  
More he contemplates  
More uncertain is his wait.

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

# Risk

O Imagination!  
Fond of mysterious ways  
In my heart ensconced  
You opt to stay ensnared  
By the web of complexities  
You have devised,  
I am not surprised.  
Now, you cannot be free,  
You cannot soar high,  
And that will make me weak.  
Complications unnerve my mind,  
Thinking becomes difficult,  
Sanity shivers  
And this much I cannot risk.  
Brighten your colours  
And stay spread far and wide;  
My heart cannot be your refuge.  
Let not my mind play with you.

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

# Rubies And Pearls

Like a craftsman who strings his beads  
I've strung my views as rubies and pearls  
The redness of ruby excites me through  
And the white pearls indeed calm my mind

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 more words one expends to explain a single viewpoint,  
Here everything can be described or told in the briefest terms;  
Those who use fewer words make others understand better, sooner and hassle-free.

Faith makes one brave, intent and resolute ready to face all odds and tides,  
After each reverse do not shed tears but be prepared to meet the next volley;  
The raindrops which fall on earth are always aware of their skywards return.

Linked with hope fresh dreams always appear true events,  
What is seen, heard and felt is a part of random 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

## Ruse (2)

Time crawls  
Its pace is unalterable  
Our earth rotates  
There are days and nights  
The Sun never sets  
Mental projections these  
To keep us occupied.

Laced with confusion  
Truth lies buried  
And things are priced  
Tears and pain  
Along with consequences  
Are all accounted for  
No one dares to laugh.

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 not find therein groups of wise beings  
Quietly working away developing and engineering  
With rivets and proponents, numerous gross and sublime  
Ideas and ideals, structures and implements long and short,  
But 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,  
The 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,  
Straight and true one heed I must  
The night descends and the stinging cold  
Has turned your mood a little 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

# Seek Out

Come with me, he said  
I am off to the mountains  
In search of peace and happiness  
Not found anywhere else  
I did not accept his invitation  
Peace and happiness exists everywhere  
Even where I stand, I told him  
He was not convinced  
He was eager to conduct a search  
In the mountains  
He did not go  
He had never tasted peace  
And happiness  
How would he know he had found them?  
I took him to a potter  
Spinning his wheel  
I find peace and happiness  
As the wheel spins, the potter said  
My friend did not understand  
I asked him to fetch a mirror  
He did  
Now look into the mirror  
If you see your face in it  
You have a long way to go  
If you see nothing not even your face  
You have found peace and happiness  
With these words, I left my friend  
He was staring at the mirror

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  
Fiercely land and then fizzle unable to burn the 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 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 a promise 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 cleans 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 force me to find  
A beginning that is different and bold,  
That retains its aim,  
And the one that is not destined to end.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Settled

The tide of time did not touch him favourably,  
He suddenly lost his youth and exuberance;  
He could now only wait and only wait  
For his dreams to unwind and spoil him  
All the more extravagantly,  
He could seek his past to guide him;  
He was alone, he said.

He did not forget the sunshine and the moonlight  
And the delight he shared with others  
But he could not share his pain,  
He had no words to describe that plight,  
And he did not let his strings of thought float or splay  
As he tested the wind and its direction;  
He was rudderless, he said.

He had studied his mind,  
He was aware of its apparent movements or states  
As the painful and non-painful moods;  
That could not be wished away.  
All he needed was a direction to find his way,  
He had waited for the inner light to burn brightly;  
He can scale heights, he said.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

## Seven Quatrains

It took me very long to ripen and sing  
And active I have remained since then  
People do talk about my wrongdoings  
But not once about my righteousness

0

As they soared high above the clouds  
I held my breath fearing their steep fall  
My dreams that evolved over a lifetime  
Seem very feeble while wandering about

0

My cat has more than nine lives they said  
I believed learned they were the wise ones  
It was their gift to me when I turned ten  
To help me curb my cruel basic instincts

0

I could see myself lost in the crowd of fools  
Noisily demanding the everlessness of self  
I had in a breezy mood, advised my friends  
Who sick of their possessions wanted more

0

When the sun starts to drip its gold  
Where would I be without my bags  
Savouring the coolness of last night  
In the lap of my beloved perhaps

0

I swear I will never open the window again  
Sitting there I have waited for you to arrive  
And written several verses to please you alone  
Still, you have not come now I am tired

0

The river you speak of runs within me  
It inspires and guides me as it flows on  
I can hear the soundless words you utter  
Even while I am asleep forgetting you

0

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Sextant

My world of action yet needs many works to be done,  
They 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 mud and straw.

While living in darkness, I seek the 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

# 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

# Showdown

Scold me.  
I am at fault,  
I will listen to you,  
I will strive to remove that fault  
As I have always done.  
Be kind.  
Guide me,  
Do not ruin me,  
Do not scald me with fiery words;  
We are not enemies.

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

# Silence

So be it  
I must hear  
The silence  
I heard myself say  
Unto me

It is destined  
I must hear  
The seldom heard  
Silence  
Meant to awaken  
The real me

That silence  
Sharp and single  
I did hear  
It entered me  
And brutally  
Tore away  
From me  
My mind

I was not injured

At once  
I found my true self  
And savoured peace

I needed  
Nothing else

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 probed and experimented,  
And gained the essential experience,  
Also improved our skills  
But have not 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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aise qisse bhii daastan mei.n the  
ban ke ummeed valvale 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 roam in a maze I had built for me  
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 the hatchlings vie for 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<sup>̄</sup>r strum  
The Ra<sup>̄</sup>ga Baha<sup>̄</sup>r at midnight during the season of joy;  
There is the spread of colourful delight for all to taste.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Speech

I reside in the mouth,  
Not attached to any particular organ,  
As the rhythmic sound and its reason  
As the right vibrations  
That produce right thoughts and feelings  
And as the heat that melts honey  
And makes it flow to give immense joy.  
I engage the mind  
Filling it with ideas, pleasure and desires;  
I determine and identify things.  
Having created them  
I reside in those four worlds,  
In the clouds that hold water,  
In the space where light reigns,  
On earth which harbours death,  
And in the underworld  
Where darkness alone prevails;  
I travel swiftly upwards  
Vying with light and resound in space.  
I am Speech  
Formless as the air I ride.

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 pebbled.  
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 flow there all the while  
In their gushing run, you will bathe,  
With your body and wits charily cleansed  
You'll shine anew a rising star.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Start Of The Day

Petals moistened by dew  
Weigh down the flowers,  
Keep them slightly drooped  
Till the Sun shines bright  
And the warmer air blows  
And all dew evaporates;  
Coincidentally,  
The peel of the temple-bells  
And the mantra chants  
Are also heard,  
The birds raise their pitch  
And the darkness and the fear  
Of the night stay forgotten,  
The living stretch their limbs  
And start the rewarding works  
Assigned to them,  
The furrowed earth  
Bears the entire load willingly,  
Dust does not repel  
And a new song is soon afloat.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Steadfastness

I am rude,  
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 under watch,  
Intently watched  
By those who see,  
Who're the right ones  
And stay with me.  
I know not why.

Nothing 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.  
Are they, my ancestors  
Then, after I die  
I do not want to be a star,  
To live again,  
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 for long  
In the memory of those who live,  
Or live in their hearts as their inner light,  
As their guiding light.  
I can be the light  
If I have a name,  
I have no name;  
I am told -  
The nameless exist forever,  
They never die.  
Of what use is immortality?

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 longs for ease  
Louder does 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 know  
I had gone to sleep  
With the intention 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 so familiar part of the world,  
Atop the high peaks I scaled, 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 array of barbs descending 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

# Subdued

Subjugated  
My lowered eyes  
Scan the sand  
Washed ashore  
By the raging sea,  
A naïve effort,  
The timely tide,  
The sun and the stars  
And the roaring winds  
Each commend.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Sudden Impulses

Be my divine inspiration,  
Make me aspire and realize  
The level of my devoutness  
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 only 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

# Tea

I know my day has just begun  
The sun ablaze is pouring light  
And those awake are seen to run  
The birds have taken to the sky  
But listless on my bed I wait  
To sip the tea here served to me  
Soon I shall be up and sound  
To fling a stone across the green  
To test my mighty arm and sight  
And rule this world so dear to me

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 dear friend,  
I want you to come and play with me again  
The same old game of hide and seek;  
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.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# The Believing Optimist

I know -  
Sorrows arise from desires,  
From the non-fulfilment of desires  
For which works are commenced and done.  
Both are modifications of the mind whose marks  
Etched rough and deep  
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 intention to enjoy lifelong;  
I would rather be the enjoyer  
Than be the one who is enjoyed.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# The Book

The book, my dear Father,  
The one I hold in my right hand,  
It is the same  
Old orange calico bound book  
You gave to me on my 12th birthday,  
I am now preparing to celebrate  
My 76th this year;  
Then, I had just learnt to read and write.  
Your present does not contain fables  
Or heroic tales of adventures,  
It talks of waging wars  
Against the unrighteous,  
About controlling and calming  
Mental tendencies and turbulence,  
Discovering own strength and morality,  
And finding one's forgotten self;  
All this couched in simple terms  
And the entire process appears more simple.  
I have followed those guidelines  
But you did not stay long enough to guide me  
Till its end  
And now I have no one to tell me  
Whether I have reached that end.  
O, Father! Why did you leave me alone  
To fight this world of extremes.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# The Breeze

□

Why must I  
Seek the slight breeze  
That has roughly brushed my face,  
Ruffled my hair,  
Teased me inconsistently,  
And momentarily enervated me;  
The same breeze  
That arose from the nearby bush  
Where I had left  
All my valuable dreams  
To weaken and fall apart;  
The one that had also seen  
Those dreams touch me  
And gain momentum.  
Instead, why do I not  
Revive and relive those dreams?

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 Connect

Firm it up,  
It connects us  
To ourselves  
And the world  
That we see  
As the one  
Aware and pulsating  
And repeatedly  
Feel its rhythm;  
We know  
Love binds us,  
It is the living hinge  
That connects us  
Makes us move.

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 awake  
I must remain united  
With truth;  
Knowledge will keep me united with truth;  
It is I alone who can acquire knowledge  
That will make me do auspicious works,  
Soon our separation will follow;  
Till then I may not be vulnerable, but  
I am not everlasting;  
My separation from truth  
Will show me my actual worth.  
I will last forever.

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, sitting beside me on a rock overlooking the rolling sea,  
my friend searched for the dirty piece of cloth which was once pink and red  
he had tied it 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 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 quiet 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 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 Encounter

On meeting you  
I have experienced the Immeasurable,  
The genuine feeling of totality  
And the eternal sense of release  
As the fulfilment of all longings  
And desires,  
I have nothing more to achieve.  
Your silence has given me this experience.  
You have watched me grow,  
Now in silence, I too stand  
Before you  
Not feeling any pleasure or pain.  
You have made me actionless  
Therefore I do not move  
And I cannot be moved  
There is no urge left within me.  
I am contented  
Just as you are.  
After a long wait  
I met you last night  
At the close of my life's seventy-fifth year.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# The Endless Wait

The days spent in wait I have eagerly counted,  
They were too many to be all together to be ignored;  
And the many sleepless nights 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-lustre 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 pretences laid out in the wide open  
Before my gradually unfolding future  
I had intended to mould,  
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 the 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  
Calling for the change of the kind they all do now  
Wanting the upheaval persisting within  
To ease or dissipate and allow the return  
Of the natural state to re-establish  
Firmly bound by the known and unknown verities  
Of the quiet, submissive and the sleepy grind;  
That very same face seems to reflect  
My hidden doubts and fears of old  
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 Indweller

He who does not move  
Moves me,  
By not staying far away  
But reflected within me,  
As one clean, subtle, undivided  
Inferable Whole,  
The same as the one outside;  
Through his own light,  
He sits and shines.

I adore him.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# The Ink And My Pen

I did not wait for the ink to dry,  
I rested my pen before the paper got crumpled  
And my writing obliterated  
By the creases of the paper on which were written by me  
Many short and long words that lauded nature.  
No longer do I need any paper to write them down again,  
The words that now remain firmly fixed in my memory.  
But I do need the ink and my pen beside me  
If only to remind me of the manner in which  
My thoughts and words had flowed  
And about which I alone could write.

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 splendorous gains of everlasting light  
But 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 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;  
I have seen it face the blazing sun  
And the steady downpour 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 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 knowing what would be in store  
The course is untested  
I sit lost in thought  
Blissfully unaware of the time's swift passage.

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 fear and setting aside the noble truths imbibed by me  
I, with my slate cleaner than before, to test the load carried on my bent back  
Have ventured forth into the open decidedly  
Encouraged by time and space  
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  
Aeons 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.

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 Lost Word

Help me  
Find the one word  
That tells us clearly  
Everything there is  
To know  
And has nothing to hide  
Including the letters  
Comprising it  
And their sounds.

Do not ask me  
To which language  
It belongs;  
Truth  
Transcends all barriers;  
The word love,  
It needs no language  
Only people  
To feel and understand.

I have heard the silence,  
Of the likeness of falling waves,  
Hidden in a conch-shell;  
It is not that word.

Help me find the word I seek.

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 drew him to a chair;  
He looked at me,  
Grasped my wrists to be 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 other 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 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 tenuous  
More mysterious than my inner-world.

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 Misfit

I do not belong to the group  
That ravages thought,  
Spoils and rants;  
I never have.  
I cannot expose my mind and heart  
As is done by most  
Voluntarily all the time  
Without giving a second thought;  
It is done so very openly and also extolled  
By the many like-minded.

Whither does hide reason?  
What for are the jostling feelings curbed?  
I ask.  
I find -  
In this group  
There is no room for thought to flow,  
No tenderness either  
And no scope for imagination.  
I simply cannot tolerate the absurd.  
So, I have walked away  
To preserve my convictions.

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 New Sunshine

Wake me up at dawn,  
Even if rudely;  
The birds already in flight  
Will then be tweeting.  
We shall catch their early words;  
We shall read them  
In the newfound light  
And celebrate the new dawn.  
My eyes are red and sore  
In wait for the new day.  
My ears strain to hear  
The sound of those words  
I cannot voice;  
Restless I am,  
Very dark was the starlit night.  
The birds are cheerful,  
They seem to convey  
New promises and greater joy.  
We must know their version;  
We cannot escape the sunrise.

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

I do not know when his voice got recorded,  
He was learned but coarse,  
And could not earn general trust or goodwill.  
From the beginning of today the ring-tone of my mobile-phone,  
It has changed -  
Surprisingly it is not a ring, song or music that alerts  
But a gruff voice that directs me to attend the phone,  
To listen to and speak,  
My teacher's voice.  
I trusted him and therefore gained through him,  
He made me what I am today.  
I completed my schooling when I was a fifteen year 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 as I do;  
Too much thinking creates doubts and weakens resolve,  
Therefore, my horse is fearless, for it does not decide  
Or 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,  
I had left it  
Only a moment ago;  
It marks 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 Spell

The lilt  
Get used to it  
The melody I weave  
Unique  
Will never change  
The look on your face  
Your veneer  
Will never change  
My love for you  
Sublime  
Will never change  
These are eternally bound  
Through notes  
Sweet and fine  
Through syllables  
Clean and pure  
Through words  
That silently speak  
Till their meanings  
Are altered  
Our love will not die  
Our eyes will continue to seek  
Our arms will continue to crave  
Our hearts will continue to throb  
You need never speak a word  
Let this spell last forever.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# The Staircase

The staircase I climb  
It is in a straight incline and steep,  
I have counted the steps  
I have covered,  
Each step marks the day I live.  
My life is indeed brief;  
This knowledge comforts me.  
I can reach its top for sure  
And soon,  
But I have many more steps to climb;  
Its end is not visible.  
Though I can't make a halt  
The continuity  
That holds the structure firm  
Cannot break,  
What can be more desirable than this?  
I cannot rest at the top,  
I will ensure that the worldly coils  
Do not keep me bound  
And my struggles end.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# The Surrender

Oh! To suffer that intense pain again;  
I never thought I ever would.  
I know  
I have been let down,  
My heart has betrayed me;  
It has led me astray to wander and tire out  
In search of those thoughts that took shape  
Only in my mind, when it was resting  
And had emerged  
When it had lost itself to deep sleep.  
Do I need those thoughts; I wonder.  
Those thoughts did not heed reason,  
They had surrendered to the pithy darkness  
Of the outside from which  
They could not escape.  
Their surrender I did not foresee  
And my heart did not allow me to know  
The cause  
Or make amends.  
My thoughts would have become  
My cherished dreams  
And engaged my alertness and tested me;  
They would have created new worlds for me  
Perhaps more engaging  
And alluring.

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 Trick

When I gazed at my palms  
I did not see my cheerful face  
Only a faint shadow swept by  
As though I did not exist

In broad daylight  
Sunbeams hide their flaws  
In nooks and narrow clefts  
I can never be visible to me

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 held 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 us to be perceived,  
On account of whom we both are  
And which enable us to guide each other  
In the 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 Uncaring Magistrate

Off to the dungeon Rogue  
With your foul breath  
You have sullied my court,  
Shouted the Magistrate,  
I am sparing your life  
Spend it there, he concluded.  
The previous night  
In the local tavern  
I had wine and dined  
Also created a major ruckus  
Broke one or two bones  
Failed to stand on my legs  
And suffered bruises.  
The Magistrate  
Did not like my face  
It was grime covered  
He had not seen it before,  
The sparkling teeth,  
The sharply chiselled face  
Men envied and made women swoon.  
Only I needed a shave, a bath  
And a set of fresh clothes,  
He did not permit me,  
The uncaring Magistrate.

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

Frequent meetings with you will serve no purpose, O Aspirations of mine!  
Already such encounters have laid you critically bare, I fear  
Your gentle and easy attitude is a clever ruse,  
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;  
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 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,  
It cannot be breached 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,  
With eyes closed and mind relaxed  
Blindly probed the pithy inner darkness  
In search of the invisible indicatory ray of light  
That leads 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 made dirty  
By my implorations and reservations amiss,  
Which void I had to cleanse,  
Make it agreeable to my unsteady urges  
That continues to block my view and my progressing maturity.  
I also found -  
I did not harbour 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,  
I could not 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 the 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 place  
As the simple word that hides three noble truths  
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 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 both  
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 also the other 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 that resides in them;  
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

# Tides

I know,  
Your door will stay open for me  
As always to let me in  
To savour the repast  
That awaits me on your dining table  
Laid out for me;  
Hungry I am.  
At the table, I will surely recount  
The jollity of our younger days,  
Protected and cajoled we were then  
By those to whom we belonged  
Which is why we had no care  
For the tomorrows that we did not wait.  
I will not talk  
About the later harsh years,  
Each day was a rusty nail driven deep,  
Tacked to the old boards we already were.  
I will not talk  
About our failures and sorrows;  
Our eyes are dry.  
I will only talk about  
The repeated ebb and flow of time  
We feared,  
About the tides that did not take us away.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Till They Shed Their Petals

There are the sharp thorns  
Protecting the rose buds;  
I shall not touch those buds yet,  
I shall not risk shedding my blood  
But give the buds  
The needed time to open,  
Sprinkle scent,  
And show their colour  
To the bees and the butterflies  
That flutter about in wait.  
With the buds in full bloom  
I shall sit beside the roses,  
Admire their colour,  
Relish their fresh aroma  
And be inspired  
To write an ode in their praise.  
But I must act fast;  
I should not wait  
Till they shed their petals.

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 solve  
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

# To Yama

You are the lord of Time,  
And the lord of Death  
Ever in wait for those now living  
But would soon die;  
You are the Truth  
And a certainty;  
You allowed me to follow you.  
You said,  
There is no Heaven,  
There is no Hell,  
And that there is no Overlord;  
I believe you because  
You were born  
From the union  
Of Consciousness and Knowledge  
And were the first to suffer the pain  
Of life and death.

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 his mirror,  
The mirror that was spotted and soiled  
But still reflected all things within its range;  
He did not like what he saw.  
Even I do not like to see my 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 be called weak.  
I tolerate my friends.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Tragedy

Disastrous is my inability to write  
And I have a lot more to write  
My computer has just crashed  
I cannot get it repaired  
It is declared irreparable  
And I do not borrow things  
I can never afford a new one either  
I am old and do not earn  
Moreover  
I had given up wielding the pen long ago  
And ever since  
Lost the ability to write with an ink-pen  
If I tried  
My handwriting will be indecipherable  
What must I do now  
But cry

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

# Trapped

Very far removed  
I find myself from you  
and ensnared I am  
by the words I speak  
to comfort me  
when left alone  
on my door-steps I stand  
in wait for you.  
Come and release me  
from the reasons  
that keep me bound.

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

# Truce

So you accept  
Standing alongside  
I have won you the truce  
With the chaos that brewed hot for long  
And had burned the field  
Where you had sown your thoughts.  
I won the truce  
While you pretended to read the written word  
Found on the inside of your left arm;  
The lone word  
That held no meaning but was your given name  
Forgotten and no longer in use;  
This truce you did seek from the moment  
You gained insight  
And revolted  
Wanting to change the ways of the world  
As though it belonged to you alone;  
Now, I find you mellowed,  
You have lowered your eyes,  
The spark is missing  
And your hands seek mine for comfort.

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 river, the greens and the rest;  
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 in the open,  
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: -

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Hindi transliteration: -

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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: -

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Hindi transliteration: -

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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

# Unchanged

Nothing varies  
It never does  
Here are  
The similar morns  
Old days and nights  
And the blowing air  
Similar breath  
And open eyes□  
Fire and tears  
Similar rush  
No rest or drop  
In uttered words  
And little sense  
With similar aims  
That rule dreams  
And willful tease  
Renewing lease  
Of faltering lives  
Seeking sleep  
And similar end  
Nothing changes  
Overnight

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

# Unfinished Task

Even though  
I have reached you  
After many births  
My task is unfinished,  
I have not found you yet;  
I do not know your marks,  
No one has told me.  
Should I wait?  
I have heard  
You are your surroundings,  
Everyone's feelings and emotions,  
And dreams and thought  
Concealed may be  
By the inobservable haze  
Of sunlight  
As an ultrathin mist  
Or a ray of the softest light.  
When will I find you?  
Perhaps, when I too  
Am a vague apparition  
Like you.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Unforgettable Smile

After forgetting your name  
I am asked to forget your smile,  
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 have forgotten your name  
But tell me! How can I forget your face and smile?  
Till this day its mere recollection revives fading dreams  
And impels my urge to search and find  
The foible I had earlier hid;  
I am unable to remove the fault called curiosity  
That endangers trust and belief and fails 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

# Unforgiving Nights

The one thing I long for most is  
the peaceful dreamless sleep  
like the sleep of the dead.

My painful hope-filled eyes  
that have seen many quiet nights  
and without respite  
scan the dark sky  
studded with stars unable to sleep  
because of their endless dreams,  
their mind as unsteady and restless  
as is mine.

I do not seek their pithiness  
that will make me brood more  
and never let me sleep.  
I do not need these twinkling stars  
but I cannot wish them away either.  
Can I?

Can I ever lose sight of my heart?

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 smoulder 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 interiors.

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 string may not sound true.

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 tilt  
While weighing air,  
Whereas no one can miss the air lift  
Tiny particles of dust;  
No one has ever seen the boiling  
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 special seeing or omission  
Is an unruly act.

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 inside liberty.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Untold State

I cannot steal anyone else's dream,  
I did try but did not know  
How to snatch an 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 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 old faithful connotations  
That had given meanings to the audible words  
And even made them talk to me,  
I had just emerged from known darkness,  
And had just opened my eyes to learn that  
I can never ever give shape to a formless thing  
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 levelled 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  
Tense he was  
Blood rushed through his veins  
Good fortune won 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 many imports,  
My purpose served I move on to the next lane  
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 the 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,  
The solar heat that governs their birth  
It will not fade overnight.

I must not look at the 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 talk on a perfect human life,  
Virtuous and sinless,  
About being kind and sympathetic,  
The 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

# Valley Of Faith

The peel of bells  
Resound in the valley  
Of faith  
Where there is no fear  
No doubt and no anguish  
But a serene flourish  
Of Belief  
Their sound, pause and rhythm  
Draws me to the place  
Where I will surrender  
All that I have  
I will reach there  
My mind attuned  
Will not protest  
Indeed it will seek me  
To merge with me  
And make me complete  
Once complete  
I will find my true identity  
I must hasten my pace.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Varying Degrees Of Fate

The secrets of sound and speech known,  
Must be told.  
They are to be found hidden far away  
Between shifting layers of wayward winds  
Ready to give up those secrets  
As and when obstructed and begin to vibrate;  
Then, the subtle variations of the octave are exposed  
The hidden meanings of each spoken word  
Through punctuation marks and halts emphasised  
But all the same riding the tenuous warm waves  
Set in motion by the energizing heat of the sun  
Permeating land and sea,  
Drawing and spreading waters,  
Sifting matter and recycling life  
Bound by vagrant time  
That dictates 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 that incinerates ignorance and untruth;  
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 dent  
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 any help  
Of what use is the sticky mud  
Or the deep dents  
Time still covers this street  
And marches on  
Pacing the street  
And measuring life.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Virtual Twist

Other than the many 'here' and 'there',  
There is '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 a 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

# Walk With Him

I know,  
Someone has walked past me  
Silently invisibly.  
I know him,  
I can sense his presence,  
There is seen his mark upon the air  
That now moves about briskly  
Around me.  
He could not have walked alone,  
No one does,  
He could never be alone  
Unless his thoughts had deserted him;  
His thoughts were for me.  
His thoughts are for me alone  
I know,  
I can never be alone,  
But  
Did I walk with him past where I stood?

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,  
From 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;  
Dryness 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 parts of me that were 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 comfort:

The elusive dreams nurtured for long  
Cause pain and severely injure the mind  
Filled with hopes and pleasantries;  
Restless, do not let it aimlessly roam  
The wilderness in some vain search.

But Death does end all vagaries:

Pleasant and unpleasant, this distinction is irrelevant;  
There is none to blame or be complained against;  
In the blink of an eye, agreements are torn apart.  
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  
I 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.  
How else can I describe sincere and open intensity!

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Where From Have I Come - Translation Of An Urdu Quatrain Of Zia Fatehabadi

? ??? ??? ????? ??? ??? ??????  
?? ??? ??? ?????? ??? ??????  
?? ??? ????? ????? ????? ??  
?? ????? ????? ????? ?????

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  
By whispers still lingering and 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 My Soul

You said  
My soul resides within me  
With open eyes  
I have delved deep to find it  
And without losing myself  
Even penetrated my inner darkness  
I have not seen the light  
You said I would.

Can I ask  
Does my soul reside outside  
And binds me  
I cannot live with this doubt  
It will disable my mind.

You said  
My soul has made me what I am  
How did it do so  
Without touching me  
What did it make me into  
Without my knowledge or request.

You said  
I cannot see or touch my soul  
But only feel it  
My senses have not encountered  
Anything strange  
My soul cannot be an apparition  
Did you perchance  
Refer to my sense of I-ness  
That will always remain with me  
Till the day I die.

No sap oozes from a dead tree  
And there cannot be a fire  
That does not exude heat  
That sap or that heat is not their souls  
If a soul or any god has caused my birth  
That soul or god cannot be

Other than me  
It cannot be undying  
Do not unravel me  
I am a delusion.

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 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 the 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 wear  
Will dictate the course of my next life;  
Anxiety and worry are not my traits  
Neither joy or elation of a personal kind,  
I don't carry with me any sense of guilt  
Nor any sense of great achievement.  
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 dreams that lead me nowhere.  
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 the 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 small space  
Restricted 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 against 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 endeavors;  
I will not talk about what I wanted to be  
Or what I am.  
I shall describe to you the unspeakable;  
While doing so  
I shall use words that do not exist.

Ravinder Kumar Soni

# Worry

The noble night,  
Not yet ready to spread its wings,  
Has dithered  
And extended the quiet twilight;  
It doubts its very darkness  
That it cannot compare  
With anything else  
But a dreamless blind's.

The night abhors light  
And as always, creeps in silently,  
Lest it awakens the buried dead  
It detests and fears  
Having promised them eternal rest  
Away from light;  
It fears being drowned by light  
After each sunrise.

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 sambhaltaa 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 huaa thaa kabhii  
sh'er kahane lagaa huu.n mai.n bhii Ravi  
mujh se aisaa nahii.n huaa 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