

Poetry Series

**Masud Khan**  
**- poems -**

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# Masud Khan(29th May 1959)

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Country Visited: - England, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg,  
China, Malaysia, India & Singapore.

# A Lost Spaceship

A spaceship –  
Forgetful and reckless –in nature and form –

Missing all the trodden and untrodden paths of the sky,  
Those important assignments, forgotten without trace,  
It grows in unknown realms of space,  
Drifting weightlessly away  
Alone – for days –  
Directionless, like a stray girl.

Now, after such a long time  
It seems pretty pointless  
to try and return.

But it may come back someday,  
Lacking information or purpose –  
Blabbering, maybe, a nonsense verse or two –  
A loser, goner, redundant.

The sudden appearance  
Of the unmanned spaceship  
Will surely embarrass  
The scientists on earth

As parents are somewhat taken aback  
When a long lost daughter unexpectedly returns  
Grown up, and a bit wild...

Masud Khan

# A Tale Of A Lone Grave

A lone grave burning in the scorching mid-day sun.  
"22 Paush 1382" the epitaph reads.  
Some monk builds an monastery deep into the earth  
With radiant blood and sharp intellect.

The ignoramus explores the realm of the dead for relics.  
Arched abode, arched quest, arched plain—  
Caressing the tombstone, a calendar's ashes blow away.  
Stupid man, those constructions are results of wrong engineering.

White and grey—compositions in white and white.  
A man divided into disproportionate pieces—  
Caressing the tombstone, a calendar's ashes blow away.  
A man transformed into a stony compound.

Translated by Subrata Augustine Gomes, Poet, Writer

Masud Khan

# Magic

Like when a piece of iron falls in love with a piece of wood  
Causing the iron to float on water,  
Or like when the magic of love casts a spell  
Making stone float on liquid,  
For ages, in nation after nation,  
People contrive to float stones,  
For diverse reasons and occasions,  
Letting love and desire take diverse forms in manifold texts and discourses.....

Translated by Fakrul Alam, Writer, Editor, Professor of English, University of Dhaka.

Masud Khan

# Mankind

Where do I hold this image?  
When for the first time in that acrid mid-day  
A listless burglar sat  
With a half-rotten apple in hand  
Under the ashwattha\* tree;  
And behind him, a snake unfolding its hood.

\* A large Indian tree.

Translated by Subrata Augustine Gomes, Poet, Writer

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# My Mother

In the dusty afternoon,  
Far away, near the horizon,  
There, under the open sky is lain  
My mother.

Of interlocking waves and smells of grass and Dettol her bed is made.  
A tube in her nose—oxygen—saline in the arm—catheter—  
Ah! how she is getting entangled  
In reeds and weeds of plastic and polythene!

Centering her bed, there prevails  
A huge sphere of hazy, pseudo-real atmosphere.

It seems, after a long time, dusk is wafting down on earth again.  
And a few birds and bugs  
With their brisk spontaneity,  
Amateurish musical sense,  
And obscure mourning rites  
Are hesitantly seeking refuge in that plastic hedge,  
Under the shade of ancient matriarchy  
That has sprouted along the horizon line.

Masud Khan

# Rain-1

It's raining abroad now, in countries close by or far away.  
Occasionally a cold wind from some other land blows this way  
This summer evening brings with it sadness and beauty  
Blowing this way from some distant land!

A cold, cold wind keeps blowing  
Slowly stirring desire, fomenting longing  
For alien rituals on such an evening.

In the distance, in a riverbank ruled by beauty  
In another land, wonderfully wet in the rain,  
Lightning flashes time and again  
Stirring desire for one's lover steadily  
Inevitably, on such an evening!

Towards my homeland  
The cold wind keeps blowing  
O my alien lover  
Where could you be staying?

□

Translated by Fakrul Alam, Writer, Translator. Professor of English, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Masud Khan

## Rain-2

Its raining  
Over distant lands  
Over Brahma's world,  
Over Rangpur and Bogra's vast expanse  
In alluvial plains,  
The rain veils Burma's evening fields  
And keeps streaming down.

And below these lightning flashes,  
At the rain-formed night's third quarter  
Radiant races  
Spring up at home or abroad  
Like hyperactive frogs leaping  
Into the unknown.

Provoked by thunder and lightning's violent outbursts  
Allured by their promises,  
In the thick veil  
And swirling stream,  
In the darkness of the wet wind,  
In the eastern expanse,  
Underneath the sky  
In vast and empty fields  
Under the vast spread-out arum fields of the east.  
Incredibly, unformed new nations emerge  
Innumerable unsteady chaotic nations,  
Restless, perturbed, incapable of standing up,  
Lending themselves to grotesque maps,  
Forming unstable, quivering, permeable boundaries  
Governed by ill-defined laws and impotent ombudsmen  
And armies marching past unimpressively,  
They spring for no good reason  
And seem destined to be doomed.

The night draws to a close. The rain too appears spent.  
When day's first light breaks out,  
Those nations that would thrive and grow  
And glow with innumerable rituals and fast-spreading religions  
Feel their bodies disintegrating

And disappearing  
Under the vast spread-out arum fields of the east.

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Rangpur, Bogra: Names of two district-towns of northern part of Bangladesh.

Translated by Fakrul Alam, Writer, Translator. Professor of English, University of Dhaka.

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