

Poetry Series

**NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD**  
**- poems -**

Publication Date:  
2012

Publisher:  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

## NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD(1950)

I firmly believe in destiny. So when fate crossed my path at the early age of 24 and left me wheelchair bound I can say, hand on heart, that, that catastrophe turned my life right around - for the better.

Within 6 months of my disability

I was fortunate enough to discover

(Not everyone is shown the light)

That I was meant to become a writer

Good, bad - indifferent...?

Only time will tell

Had I been able-bodied

I may never have taken up pen and paper

Spent all day labouring over a computer

Never written a poem, play or short story

And, more important than that

I might never have been

Acquainted with the inner me

# 9/11

Smoke billowing out  
of the twin towers  
against a clear, blue sky  
I watch in bewilderment  
surrounded by absolute  
Pandemonium

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# A Born Cynic

If you're an optimist  
It's easy for you to hope

If you're a pessimist  
It's easy for you to despair

I'm a born cynic  
So, it's easy for me to doubt

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# A Breath Of Fresh Air

People must think it odd  
that you don't wish to know  
the sex of your baby  
until the day of its birth

In these days of expecting and demanding  
to know any and everything instantly  
i must say  
you bring with you a breath of fresh air

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# A Carefree And Uncluttered Existence

I `m not a sentimental person  
I hoard nothing

My criteria for chucking out things is  
If you can go through a whole year without some possession  
you may as well, dump it

I'm serious  
Give your old clothes to charity  
Perhaps sell your precious antiques on E-Bay  
Keep as little as possible  
and, you'll be surprised  
You don't need much more than the bare minimum  
to lead a carefree and uncluttered existence

Keep it paltry  
whatever you keep  
Apart from a smattering of clothes  
amass as few momentos as necessary  
Like, scant photographs  
Not, whole albums  
A negligible number of CDs  
Other knick knacks  
But, not old letters  
They'll only get shoved away at the back of some cupboard  
And, though you think, you'll reread them, one day  
that day will never come

Don't let your weary relatives  
get engulfed in your personal effects  
till long, long after your death!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# A Laugh A Minute

Pour out the champagne  
dish out the caviar

That could only mean one thing  
The Self-proclaimed Leaders  
of the so-called 'free world'  
are indulging themselves  
once again  
under the guise of attending  
another action-packed G8 Summit  
Replete with limousines  
sumptuous hotel suites  
and, photo-opportunities

In the course of a mere three days  
the Dearly Elected will attempt to solve  
a profusion of issues plaguing the planet i.e.

Climate change  
Aid to poor nations  
Handouts to Africa  
Chastising Iran for trying to go nuclear  
Free vaccines to prevent malaria  
etc. etc.

While a confusion of protesters from:  
Stop the war  
Prevent deforestation  
Provide free mosquito nets to vulnerable Nations  
And, more...  
demonstrate

Once sorted  
the Bigwigs up sticks  
and jet off to some other troubled spot  
deluding themselves into believing that  
If it hadn't been for their firm and decisive decisions at the G8  
the entire World

as we know it  
would have caved in!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# A No-Win Situation

(A WOMAN PARKS HER CAR OUTSIDE A BLOCK OF FLATS & BLOWS THE HORN/MEANWHILE, TWO CHILDREN UNDER 5 RUSH OUT OF THE BACK SEAT, SLAMMING THE DOORS BEHIND THEM.

FIVE YEAR OLD RORY SPORTS A BOXING GLOVE ON ONE HAND/TWO YEAR OLD ANGELA CLUTCHES A DOLL)

RORY: Bye, Mum. ANGELA: Bye, Mom.

CLARE: Take care, darlings.

(BOB APPEARS FROM AROUND THE CORNER/THE CHILDREN RUN TO HIM)

RORY: Daddy! Daddy! ANGELA: Daddy! Daddy! - Carry me.

BOB: (PICKS HER UP) Hullo darling. How's my baby.....?

ANGELA: Daddy.

BOB: (EMBRACES SON) Hullo, Rory?

RORY: You didn't take me to the football match on Saturday.

BOB: (OVERLAPPING) Oh....! I was busy. I'm sorry.

RORY: I waited and waited.

BOB: Next week-I promise.

RORY: O-Alright!

BOB: (SPOTS GLOVE) My! My! Nice glove. Grandpa, gave it?

RORY: No, Mum did.

BOB: Let's see if you can tackle me....

RORY: I know nothing. You have to teach me.

BOB: . (KISSES DAUGHTER & SETS HER DOWN) One moment, sweetie. I'm going to set you down on this bench-while I tackle him-okay...?

ANGELA: Okay.

BOB: Good, baby...Now, let's see.

RORY: (GET'S READY) You're a champ, Dad....

BOB: (LAUGHS) That was long ago.

RORY: Still-take it easy.

BOB: Come on. Don't worry. I'll never hurt you.

RORY: I know.

BOB: Good-boy...(PLAYFUL TACKLE) You'll learn fast.

RORY: Will I ever be as good as you?

BOB: Even better...! I'll teach you the ropes-if you're serious.

RORY: Ofcourse, I am... Everyday?

BOB: Err...I can't say. We'll have to ask Mum.

RORY: You ask her.

BOB: Why not you? She's still here.

RORY: She listens to you.

BOB: But, not to you?

RORY: You - more than me.

BOB: I see. Okay. Alright. I'll try.

RORY: Thanks, Dad

(BOB REACHES THE CAR/BOB & CLARE ARE AKWARD WITH EACH OTHER)

CLARE: I stayed to watch you interact with the kids.

BOB: I hope you approve?

CLARE: Don't be-you know, I do.

BOB: Thank you. And, thanks for bringing the children.

CLARE: That's okay. Just take good care of them.

BOB: That goes without saying.

CLARE: (STARTS CAR) I'll be back by six.

BOB: Clare - wait....! Children, go and play in the garden. I want to talk to Mummy.

(CHILDREN LEAVE)

CLARE: I'm in a hurry.

BOB: This'll only take a minute.

CLARE: What is it?

BOB: (AWKWARDLY) Soon after our divorce I was made redundant -

CLARE: Not that, again!

BOB: (GETTING HEATED) Look...! You can afford to be complacent

What do you care that I was out of work for eighteen months?

CLARE: But now - you've got a job.

BOB: But, it doesn't pay half as much as before.

CLARE: Shouldn't you have looked into that before accepting it?

BOB: It's easy for you to say. But, what choice did I have? I had to take it.

CLARE: Well...

BOB: I needed the work. Any work.

CLARE: So...?

BOB: Listen....

CLARE: Don't irk me. What are you trying to say?

BOB: (HESITATES) Clare - I-er...

CLARE: (STARTING CAR, AGAIN) I haven't got all day!

BOB: Can we-perhaps-between us-err-

CLARE: Yes-yes? I'm rushed?

BOB: Could we-perhaps come to some kind of arrangement-

CLARE: Like....?

BOB: -amicable-I hope -

CLARE: I think, I know what you're trying to say...Impossible!

BOB: (ASSERTING HIMSELF) It's only fair that you...

CLARE: NO!

BOB: ... accept a reduction ~~CLARE: NO!~~

BOB: - in my maintainance-

CLARE: NO! What we agreed on was agreed on, in Court.

BOB: But, my circumstances have changed since then.

CLARE: That makes no difference to me!

BOB: You were always unfeeling....

CLARE: Try taking me to Court-

BOB: You know, I can't.

CLARE: Why not?

BOB: The Lawyers have already fleeced me.

CLARE: Well then-

BOB: Each time I make an appointment-long or short-it costs me £170/-

CLARE: Same here.

BOB: I've already spent thousands. I can't afford anymore.

CLARE: I hate Lawyers, too. It's best not to deal with them.

BOB: That's why I thought it would be great if we could agree to -

CLARE: No! Absolutely not!

BOB: Please?

CLARE: No - and, that's final! !

BOB: I can barely afford the one-bedroom flat I share with Jill....

CLARE: Can't you?

BOB: ...whereas, you have a four bedroomed villa -

CLARE: You're always complaining.

BOB: Ofcourse, I'm always complaining!

CLARE: Look -

BOB: You have a luxurious swimming pool right outside your door.

CLARE: The children need it.

BOB: Whereas, I have to take them down to the Communal swimming pool because

I can't afford to do anything else with them..

CLARE: I've heard all this before.

BOB: Can I afford to take them to Disneyland, Florida as you did last year?

CLARE: You've had enough of my time. Now, kindly move aside.

BOB: (NOT MOVING) Please Clare - Jill and I want to start our lives, together.

CLARE: Then, who's stopping you?

BOB: She's fed up. She's threatened to leave me.

CLARE: (HARSHLY) If you want to reduce the childrens money - you'll have to face me in Court.

BOB: (DETERMINED) Very well, I will!

CLARE: If you do - I'll make the Judge reverse the Order that makes me let the children spend their Sundays with you!

BOB: He's unlikely to be influenced by anything you say.

CLARE: Oh no...? You live in a filthy District -

BOB: I can't afford -

CLARE: It's very corrupting for the children.

BOB: (REALISING) You wouldn't....?

CLARE: The place is teeming with hookers and drug addicts.

BOB: Please Clare, don't...

CLARE: Then, don't take me to Court. - simple as that!

(SHE ZOOMS OFF/A SOB ESCAPES HIM)

BOB: (MUTTERS AS HE GOES TO JOIN THE CHILDREN) I won't! I won't...! I'll always be in a no-win situation.

□

THE END

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# A Proper Thought

How can you stand there and tell me  
that you won't dine on stuff like lamb and turkey  
because you're a strict vegetarian

Just look at what you're wearing  
A sheepskin coat, a beaver hat - leather shoes-

Very smart  
But, forgive me -  
I want to laugh -

I suggest, you give this-this-whole vegetarian obsession of yours  
a proper thought

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# A Vintage Year

I'm aged forty  
And, therefore  
Consider myself  
Finally free

Yes  
Free to do  
Exactly as I please

I couldn't care much  
What I look like anymore  
Whereas I did before

Nor do I give what I wear  
Much of a thought  
All that's in the past

How I'm held in anyone's regard  
Doesn't bother me one jot

I'm no longer embarrassed  
Or self-conscious

I pity the young  
They still have to learn  
To become themselves  
Instead of their affected  
Alter egos

But I'm over that hurdle  
There aren't any  
Constraints on me

I'm finally-finally  
Totally free

As free  
As free  
As I'll ever be.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# A Walk Through Life

We made a commitment to one another  
That we'd walk through life together  
Every step of the way  
For ever and ever

Nice thought - that  
Only  
We'd forgotten  
No matter how hard we tried  
No human being  
Could ever hope to replicate  
Anothers footsteps

Yes!  
The painful realisation dawned  
That eventually  
Essentially  
Each and every one of us  
Is ultimately on his own

And MUST walk through life  
Absolutely and totally alone

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

## Accepted That -

Celebrating the Queen's Golden Jubilee has meant that Britain could shut itself down and indulge in four days of fun, oblivion and an almost total adoration of Queen Elizabeth the 2nd. Her long and eventful reign has been mostly dedicated to the Service of her Nation

Now, the UK's back only to join the Wider World in wringing it's hands over the atrocities being meted out by the Assad regime in Syria  
Carping on the sidelines while the EU tries to deal with the Euro  
Looking the other way as the USA patrols Pakistan's Borders with unmanned drones.....And, on and on

Accepted that, Britain is -now - only a 'part' player

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# An Open Letter To God

Dear God

Thank you for your invitation  
to join you in Heaven  
sometime in the future

But, before I accept  
I wish to query it

There's someone I know well  
He Idolizes you  
Honours  
And, worships you  
Almost all day and all night

Guessed, who?  
Yes-him!

But, he doesn't obey each and every tenet of yours  
Ofcourse, you're the one and only God - etc.  
But, I mean...  
He doesn't seem to believe in  
the one to do with his family and friends  
he's harsh and mean to - especially them  
Charity -for him - certainly doesn't begin with  
those close to him  
Whereas you say it should

He thinks this highhanded behaviour of his  
and his constant worship of You  
Will definitely  
get him into Heaven  
Will it...?

I'm worried  
You see  
I don't idolize you  
I don't honour  
worship or obey you  
And, yet I had hoped -

that being a somewhat  
decent and  
a rather reasonable person  
One day, I'd get a place in Heaven

But, if he's accepted as he is  
I decline

I decline  
absolutely  
the invitation  
to join your club

Yours sincerely,  
NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Ask Yourself

You don't know what you've lost till it's lost  
Then you can't try hard enough to find it  
You won't be satisfied until you've retrieved it  
If you do manage to pick up the peices in the end  
Ask yourself  
Was it really worth it?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Autumn Leaves

Autumn leaves are being swept away  
like memories  
never to return

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Being Realistic

Sometimes what you're looking for  
is right there in front of you

But, , only if you're realistic  
will you recognise it

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Being Smug

I exchanged the buzz of Wimbledon  
For the tranquil hamlet of Cherry Hinton  
I have no regrets  
Its made me forget  
The hustle and bustle of London

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Bitterness

Don't let bitterness rule your life  
Don't let it consume you  
Why waste your time  
On something  
You'll come to realize  
In years to come  
Was a complete waste of time

By then it'll be too late  
To realise your mistake

So beware  
Don't let your time on earth  
Be spent in regret  
Of a wasted life  
Consumed in bitterness

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Breathing Space

Its a well known fact that some people in long-term relationships  
require...a little breathing space...

Once our children had grown up and dispersed  
neither one of us panicked in our loneliness

Instead, we went through the empty rooms of our house  
and choose individual spaces  
in which to be content in

Its great,  
to have a space  
where one is free to  
do as one pleases  
Plus, free to overlook  
everyone elses short-comings  
.Including, ones own!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Caught Off Guard

The West is desperately trying to play catch-up  
after being caught off guard

It's attempting to hijack  
the Egyptians hard fought demand  
that their President, step down  
and, let democracy have the upper hand

First the mealy mouths in the US  
then the European Governments  
demanded nothing short of Full Democracy  
for the rebelling Nation

But now they realise they'd rather preserve the status quo

So, if it has its way  
instead of giving the people Full Democracy  
the Egyptians can expect  
more of what they had before  
wth just the deck chairs - rearranged!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Choose

Choose your attitude  
Take control of the way you think it best to live  
Deal with whatever circumstances you're faced with  
Forget about moaning  
or, railing against the Gods  
It'll prove to be self defeating

Then, just, get on with it!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Clay Feet

Despite your protests  
you were blown up  
out of all proportion  
and worshipped like a God

Now, people are shocked to find  
lurid revelations concerning your character  
plastered all over the Sunday papers

They have to accept that  
all you are  
afterall  
is what you said you are

A mere mortal  
Complete with clay feet!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Consider That!

You find it hurtful that you go unnoticed because you're reticent and not loud and gregarious.

But being somewhat reticent and retiring is often becoming.

People who are loquacious are usually looked on as being churlish.

Consider that!

I'm loudmouthed and I usually shoot off something irrelevant without thinking.

Often people open their mouths only to say something unimportant.

But, I have this friend whose brain - I can literally see turn in reflection - before she answers a question. People may not like her style. But all of us know that her views are really worth listening to.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Cut Your Losses

You can't ever win  
Your Ex is your Ex  
For a very good reason

So, cut your losses  
and, don't be taken in  
by that, standard: My  
wife doesn't understand  
me  
nor I her, lark!

Because, that's just what it is  
A lark!

And, I'm sure he's mourned:  
We rarely communicate  
We sleep in separate rooms  
We only suffer each other for  
the sake of the children

Sure!  
Where have we heard all that  
before?

Believe it, if you want to be deluded  
I constantly see him frolicking at our  
local swimming pool with his family  
They take regular holidays together  
The man is often seen in cinemas,  
restaurants...theatres arm-in-arm  
with his spouse

You may be satisfied with secret trysts  
that lead to candle lit dinners  
cooked solely by you  
Promises that he'll tell the wife about you two  
But, now is not the time  
You see - unfortunately....  
Blah! Blah! Blah!

He'll string you along  
about the merits of waiting until tomorrow  
I'm afraid, that day will never come  
Believe-you-me

Okay....you concede. What's another day....?  
Come to bed. Let me dispel your heartache and pain.

Your sheepish lover comes over to your bed  
Later - he says: Lets make plans for our future together.

Making plans is what I most like to hear, you utter  
in complete bliss

Dream on, I say.  
Dream on...!

This will carry on for years  
Him having the best of both worlds  
The only difference being:  
Slipping out of one bed  
and, sliding into another  
....No matter!

Whilst, like countless other women  
you revel in being hoodwinked.

xxx

PS. I'm glad you took my advice  
and, eventually threw him out

But, I know you're waiting  
Waiting

And, hoping your story will end differently  
from other women

As I said  
Dream on



# Daybreak

Shades of dawn flicker through a bleary sky  
A cock crows  
The clock ticks

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

**Dear Mrs. D**

(A Pakistani MP)

I heard your interview with the BBC

It's reporter was dismissive of your accusation that his radio station gave a very biased opinion of Pakistan while accepting every word said by the US as gospel.

Don't single out the BBC alone for chastisement. No Country in the West has a specific foreign policy of its own. It has a herd-like mentality instead, and sings from exactly the same hymn sheet as the US.

Now, if the US wishes to ignore the myriad sacrifices made by Pakistan in helping it fight its war in Afghanistan - don't expect many in the West to appreciate it either.

You were right to point out that: If anyone in Pakistan meets with the Taliban, he's immediately labelled a traitor by America, whereas if the US mingles with the Taliban- observers in the West refer to it as - detente.  
Quaint - (some think!)

Sorry - but, I don't see you being recalled by the BBC for another interview - only to air a diverse point of view from the Wests.... Do you?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Deception

I hail him as if  
I'm delighted to see a long lost friend  
but, I curse him under my breath

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Disconnect

2012 sees the UK in double dip recession  
And, all the economies of Europe in the doldrums

But, what are the Politicians and Press  
In Britain obsessed with?  
Phone-hacking  
Press intrusion  
Police corruption  
Petty accusations  
Finger pointing  
Who-knew-what-when?  
Etc.

And, most important  
Which of the Politicians was the chummiest with the Murdoch Press

While Libraries and other Social Amenities are being forced to shut down  
Due to-supposedly- a lack of money, a hugely expensive Public Inquiry -  
something the public has no interest, in - is underway purely to indulge the  
vanities of newspaper men, celebrities and an assortment of politicians wanting  
to score cheap political points.

So far this enquiry is a laugh-a-minute  
It's amazing how many people have had lapses of memory  
And, can't remember a thing

.  
So, what will the outcome be?  
An obvious reply  
A foregone conclusion: :  
"The Police, Politicians and Press were scandalously close  
but, lessons have been learnt! '

In other words'  
No head will roll unless ofcourse you're in a junior position  
Seniors can blithely 'take full responsibility' for any and everything  
Nothing will happen to them! !

In this harsh climate is it asking too much of Officials of diverse persuasions to  
pull together and work side by side for the good of the nation?

Apparently, it is.

While the rest of the Country is more interested in things like job and wealth creation, sorting out pensions, trying to retain houses, pay mortgages, etc.

The Ruling Classes fail to connect with the masses - as per usual!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Distinct Visions

Yes

We're looking at the same painting

But, you see one thing

I another

It's only natural,

We have different concepts

Divergent views

You have your ideas

I have mine

Which makes for a very interesting life

Don't you think...?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Distressing News

I watch the TV news in distress:  
The image of that scene  
haunts me  
relentlessly,  
ceaselessly

The Israelis have just bombed part of the Gaza strip  
An empty shell of a mosque totters below  
Exposing the faithful praying inside it

They are so completely absorbed in their faith in God  
that they don't notice a second Israel jet  
circling menacingly overhead  
or, that the streets around them have emptied in a hurry

God, what words of comfort do you have for them.... your faithful servants  
-They follow you so blindly  
No matter what ill befalls them....?

Are you listening?

Speak...!  
Speak up!  
I warrant you.....!

YOU  
Magnificent  
Beneficent  
and Merciful  
YOU! ? !

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Dog's Life

Trouble and strife  
It's a dog's life!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Don'T Ask

Don't ask me to meet you  
for old times sake

There's no such thing as  
Old time  
New time  
Only  
The passage of time

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Don'T Be Crass

Don't be crass or supercilious  
You may not have been given this  
high office because you're  
ultra talented

You could have been elevated simply  
because of your father's influence -  
Okay, okay - Please, don't take offence. I'm sorry.  
But, all lucrative jobs in this Country are suspect and therefore subject to  
scrutiny. Few jobs are handed out to people on the basis of  
luck...chance...influence - or just, one being in the right place at the right time.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Don'T Rush

Please, don't rush to judge and condemn him  
over some minor misdemeanour or other  
Soon forgotten

Look at his overall contribution towards Society  
before you attempt to destroy him

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Earth Summit - Doha 2012

Just a few hurried lines to say, 'wish you and the kids were here in sunny Doha (It's a real, Ha! Ha! Ha! -)

A true waste of time. The usual arguments. You chopped down more trees than me. The cows in the North belch more than the cows in the South & add to carbon emissions. Compensation is demanded. The North promises to pay. But, that will be the day. Everything is postponed till 2020. They have yet to implement promises made in 1980.

Worth relaxing here at the Company's expense/ Come. Bring the children. Let them enjoy the High Life, Luxurious meals. Wonderful beach...See you, take care, yours X

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Enough!

I'm not very keen on my new place  
Let's just say it provides a roof over my head

But, I must be realistic  
113 was my home for 32 years  
I have many fond memories of it  
Some not so fond-ofcourse

I was reluctant to leave it  
Yet, leave it-I did

Although I'll always miss it  
It came to the rescue just when  
I needed a nest egg  
(Thanks bricks!)

Now that our dalliance is over  
Forever  
I can only promise to remember you with nostalgia

Because time has moved on  
And so, thankfully, have I

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Fame

I've amassed many riches  
And the trappings of fame

But, I've also had to endure  
Many hardships along the way

So, there's just no chance  
None whatever of my ever changing  
My persona in any shape or form  
Or forgetting where I've come from  
Or who my friends are  
Or getting above my station

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# February The 14th

FEBRUARY THE 14TH

I know, on February the 14th.  
you'll be tempted to  
inundate her with flowers,  
chocolates and a card

but, wait  
hold it!  
Don't put her under any kind of pressure  
Give her some space to think

If you expect her to return to you  
perhaps, its not your constant presence she needs  
Its your absence

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Feelings

20 years ago  
When the children were small  
I couldn't wait for them to grow up  
and leave home

Now, I'm alone  
I feel  
Only emptiness inside

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Festive Season

Every year we grit our teeth and invite the family to dinner  
on Christmas Eve. Don't look so worried. Before  
you know it, the day will wizz by in front of your very eyes.

However, I hesitate to say this...But, I feel, it my duty to do so.  
You occasionally - very, very occasionally, put your foot  
in it...Now, don't glare at me like that - please! All I'm trying  
to say, is, I've noticed, you're- err-rather loquacious on  
occasion. Try to steer clear of long and detailed discussions  
Don't analyze or criticize those you consider your inferiors  
Talk about - say - something like -mutual acquaintances....the  
old days. That sort of thing...

No! I'm not trying to tell you what to do or say. Would I dare...?  
It's entirely up to you.

As for me - I hope to be on my very best behaviour. Thus, making  
sure that next year's reunion will be as full of good cheer as this,  
I hope, will be.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Finito!

Remember, that well worn, chestnut:  
'I'll always be there for you? '

Hmm-  
It's all too easy to say

But, we all know that  
in reality  
no one is there for anyone

When in need  
one can expect a brief look-in...If that!

But, reason should inform us that  
that's it  
Finito!

Once your sob story's out  
Who's interested?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Freedom

If you want freedom  
It'll come at a price  
You got to be able  
To cut the ice  
Or else - sorry - no dice!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Gauging The Truth

She was incredibly sweet  
And incredibly beautiful  
Or was she?

Her husband insisted, he knew different  
And as a consequence constantly looked elsewhere

Not knowing how to cope, she flew into a jealous rage  
Whenever she saw my husband, amongst other men  
Love their wives regardless of what they looked like

It was only then that I really gauged  
The true limit of the sweet and beautiful portrait she displayed

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Get Yourself A Life

Reality TV may be extremely popular  
But don't ask me to watch it  
No Sir...!  
I find it terribly dull

My own life is so full  
that I have no time  
to waste on other  
people's antics

What worries me though  
is that rather than the young  
going about their business  
they spend hour after hour  
sitting aimlessly in front of the telly

Might I suggest to them that  
rather than succumb to  
the promotional hype  
they refrain  
from watching so much TV  
and, go  
get themselves a life!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Glorious Morn!

It was on just this sort of day  
when the persistent rays of the sun  
poured out over each and every blade  
of grass in the vicinity  
When cotton wool clouds scudded past  
an otherwise pale blue sky  
and, made the gentle breeze  
rustling through the trees, murmur  
in appreciation as all the flowers  
danced in unison

that, I, then aged eight  
inadvertently left my parrots cage open  
And, was made to look on helplessly as the bird  
made a quick getaway and settled on the branch  
of a nearby tree

How I cried and cried  
and felt extremely bereft, then

But, now, each time I greet a glorious morn  
I think back to the perverse day  
my precious parrot - very sensibly - flew away  
to find its freedom

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# God

Look God:

I am but mortal

Let me preserve that all important 'snapshot' of mine

I beg of you

Keep it fresh in my mind

for always

Don't let it fade away

Please?

By the way

How come I think of you

only when I need you

not otherwise?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Handcuffs

I was shackled and in handcuffs  
Crying inconsolably over faithless, fickle you

Now, nine months later you return  
But, I've moved on  
To hell with you!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Harrowing Imagination

Having a vivid imagination  
Can be extremely harrowing

I've been exiled from my Country  
for having taken a stand against  
it's repressive regime

My husband works for it's Army  
and, would have been hung as a traitor  
had he tried to leave with me

So, every night I have to resort to  
phoning him up  
When I think he's free to talk to me

Once in a while there's no reply  
That's when my imagination runs riot

I picture him lying dead on the ground  
A bullet through his head  
while the mobile is found  
ringing incessantly  
beside him

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# He Thinks...

Any decision he makes is picture perfect. Whereas, those around him don't know anything. So, on any given day he can be heard ranting and raving about - often - the most trivial of things.

After bellowing and blaring his views all over the place, he is guaranteed to tell his wife - usually the brunt of his angst - that she must do whatever she likes.

Being, wise, generous, and ever ready to compromise she back pedals just enough to keep him satisfied that he, and, only he is, indeed-perfectly right. And, nobody else, is!

I blame her, ofcourse  
fair and square  
I blame her  
for this sorry state of affairs

Had she kept him in his place  
from day one  
he wouldn't be misbehaving this way  
today!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# His Normally Placid Face

The moment I said, no - instead of, yes  
his normally placid face contorted in an instant  
into one of a tormented imp.

"You people are stupid fools! " he raged "I don't understand you."  
I smiled blandly  
thus, infuriating him, still further

He slammed out the door - leaving me to muse  
'Why the hell should you understand me?  
And, who are you, anyway?

I don't want to be understood by a twerp like you  
- especially, since I got a true glimpse of that normally placid face of yours! "

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# History Ties His Hands

While electioneering Barak Obama stayed clear of his middle name, Hussain. Now, he wants it emphasized during his inauguration, if only to let the Muslim world know that he is its friend - And, unlike his predecessor, is willing to - at least - 'listen'. Very commendable, of him-I'm sure. However, cosmetic changes are meaningless. He must engage with the Muslim Public, and not just their sycophantic Governments, in as constructive a manner as possible. But, even if he wanted to engage, will he be allowed to do so? History tells us that too many powerful lobbies are bound to collude to prevent him making decisions of his own. For instance, however well meaning the Carter and Clinton Administrations were in their day, a very powerful Jewish lobby scuppered their attempts to bring peace to the Middle East. I'm afraid, Obama's hands are tied for that very same reason.

Only if he gets a second term in Office, will he be free to make decisions of his own. Because, by then, he won't be constrained by the voting public or any powerful lobby with its entrenched position.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Hot Air In Copenhagen (2009)

They descended on Copenhagen in  
their droves from all over the Globe  
by private jet  
plane  
cruise ship  
stretch limousine  
some - admittedly - by more modest means  
But, all belching zillions of carbon emissions  
for a 2 week jamboree  
of arguing  
bickering  
wrangling  
in-fighting  
and grandstanding  
those hectoring, self-righteous, and often vainglorious  
diplomats, journalists, global warming hypocrites,  
activists. sceptics, outright deniers, ego-trippers etc. etc.

And, lest we forget, the hoards and hoards of prostitutes  
employed by an otherwise disorganised Host  
to service the needs of the idiosyncratic multitude

The chaotic co-ordinators hired a hall fit for a mere 15 thousand delegates  
Whereas 145 thousand denizens of varied description turned up  
Thus, the scene was set for rowdy powwows and fireworks  
Amongst which were protest marches galore  
mass walk-ins, mass walk-outs,  
stirring speeches  
blatant fudging  
and, dodging anything unpalatable  
or considered politically incorrect

The West and South were constantly at loggerheads  
about setting emission targets  
and monitory compensation  
considerable arm twisting and arm wrestling took place  
Corporations bent on protecting their own interests, attended  
as did hypocrites  
know-it-alls



charlatans et. al.

Certain Mediators promised to decrease carbon emissions  
only to hop back on a plane to their Home Countries  
in order to approve plans for the construction of, state of the art, airports  
whose planes promise to discharge even more carbon!

192 Countries were represented  
All with diverse agendas  
Minutes were taken  
countless trees felled for paper  
there were arguments  
propaganda  
uphill struggles  
downward trends  
finger pointing  
accusations  
vacuous spinning etc.

But, after all that  
The negotiators and hard workers  
were pushed aside as their Leaders  
looking all-important  
and knowledgeable  
breezed into Town at the last minute  
for the grand 'signing of resolutions' ceremony

Only one thing was missing  
there was no resolution  
no binding agreement  
only blinding photo opportunities  
'note' taking  
and promises to meet again in Mexico  
in a years time  
for another summit  
and further initiatives

Thats the way  
put off until tomorrow  
Something - apart from posturing  
you could start putting into practice today

Over the years, a constant accusation and suspicion has been:  
The West industrialized at a leisurely pace  
polluting rivers, land and atmosphere  
Now, it doesn't like the South progressing in leaps and bounds  
So it's devised a plan to blame China  
India  
Brazil etc  
for what it calls Climate change  
Its empty promises easily offer the South millions of dollars  
as compensation for desisting from denuding their lands  
only to just as easily, go back on its word and resist compensation

Contrary to belief  
I'm a believer in climate change  
but, it isn't as straightforward as people think it is

Take population explosion, for example  
It's very relevant  
But, few people give it much thought

nor do they consider the natural progress of nature  
one can't change it  
an earthquake here, a typhoon or snow blizzard there  
puts all targets, however well thought-out, off limits

Anyway, if summits on climate change are as urgent as we're told they are  
Where have the politicians been these last few decades?  
When rain forests were being chopped down at an alarming rate  
Or, farm land was being cleared for biofuel?  
I could name many, many other abuses  
But, you know them too

I predict that within a few years  
No amount of meetings and pledges will come to anything  
Money and compensation will be the bone of contention  
the West will loose some of its economic muscle  
the South will become ever more powerful

politics and grandstanding won't matter  
economics will  
Climate change will take a backseat  
As Nations compete with each other  
for fewer resources  
and, an unpredictable nature

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# How Many Of You?

When I can't sleep instead of counting sheep  
i count my friends: 1-2-3-  
3-2-1-  
And, I feel content and, very blessed  
and, fall asleep instantly  
because, even though my friends are few  
at least, I know, they're genuine

Some people delude themselves  
into thinking  
that they are very popular  
Others boast a host of friends

But, how confident are they that  
all or any of their friends are genuine?  
Could some or most of them be fair weather friends?

Try getting sick  
Out of pocket  
Or down on your luck  
and, see how many of your so-called friends  
stick by you

Those and other questions should keep many thinking  
and, loosing sleep and, counting sheep far into the night

As for me  
i can sleep easy  
because all my friends have been tried and tested  
and not a single one of them has been found wanting

How many of you can say the same thing  
with such confidence?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# How To Make An Absolute Killing

Everyone but everyone wants to own a property in London  
If theres a slight economic boom anywhere - in, say, India  
Then, Indians will want to buy a place over here  
Not in Paris. Not in the US  
Not in places like Amsterdam  
It's got to be London

People from every nook and cranny of the world  
Where ever Britain had it's colonies  
Are drawn like magnets to the 'Mother Country.'

I've lived in London for over 30 years  
The Property market is simply booming  
My palm is more than itching  
So, when I sell my house  
I hope and expect  
To make an absolute killing!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I Pray

I wish  
I could put my memories in a baloon  
And let them float away

Lord God  
I pray  
Let me not give the worst of them  
The time of day.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I Realize

People in the West have little or no time for their relatives. They claim it's because they lead very hectic lives. Everything, including family must be compartmentalized and attended to on holidays such as Christmas. As a consequence when their fleeting 'get-togethers' do take place they're occasionally under duress or are awkward and distant.

Life in the East is fairly relaxed and easy. We mingle with our kith and kin very happily. Often, on a daily basis. We think nothing of living in each others pockets or partaking in each others joys and sorrows. We love and respect all our relatives equally. Regardless of their status in Life.

I realize now, that in lieu of relatives, the West is littered with psychiatrists, , more than ready to fleece the gullible.

Fortunately, when in need, we, in the East rely on a retinue of relations, ever ready to give us their two cents worth over a steaming, invigorating cup.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I Regret

I lie in bed and think  
I wish I had become a teacher  
I've been thinking that  
for more than thirty years

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# I Resolve

I'm sitting in this plushy  
Though incredibly miserable  
Hotel room  
Feeling terribly low

It's raining outside  
It's been raining for ever  
There's simply no place to go

What do I do...?  
Nothing....!  
I'm new to this Country  
New to this Town  
I know no one  
And, I wish I didn't have to  
Hang around

I start missing home  
Something I thought  
I'd taken a break from -  
How wrong I was!

I reach for the phone  
Dial long distance  
And, hear the ring tone  
'Pick it up', I declare  
But, there's no one at the other end  
Of the line

And, that gets me thinking:  
How I wish  
I wish  
I was at home  
Right this very minute  
Yes  
There's no place like it  
There really isn't!

Strange therefore

When I'm home  
I don't appreciate it enough

I'm like most other people  
My large family irritates me  
It always seems to be under my feet!

How many times-I ask myself-have  
I yelled:  
Who messed up my news-paper?  
How often have I asked you to 'knock'  
before you enter my room?  
Must your Radio be quite so loud?  
Some of us are trying to work!  
Get out of the bathroom-quick! I need  
to use it - and-much, much more...  
Sound familiar?

Now that I'm away from home  
I resolve  
To mend my ways

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I Spy

Heading off to Calais  
on a dreary day  
to start a family holiday in Paris

Picture it:  
Parents. Sally, Amy and pets  
all crammed in with  
sandwiches, biscuits, drinks, titbits and luggage  
into a non-discript carriage

It starts to rain  
What a shame  
All of us are cooped in

The car comes to a standstill  
behind a very long line of vehicles  
Horns blow  
We feel low  
But, there's no respite

My husband checks his watch  
Drums his fingers on the dashboard  
Sighs and checks his watch again  
(He does this  
Once every minute)  
The pets are a menace  
the children are bored  
tempers fray  
We curse the delay

Nobody wants food  
But, we eat anyway  
For want of something  
better to do  
Now, what...?  
"The dog needs a walk, " says Amy  
"Are you crazy? " asks Sally  
It's pelting down-you silly-billy! "  
"Sally! " I warn. "That's no way to talk to your sister."

My husband checks his watch again  
"We'll be late -" he panics  
"If we miss the ferry, " I say philosophically, "we  
miss the ferry."  
The children squabble  
We adults grumble  
"What should we do to pass the time? "  
"We can't even play a board game in this confined space"  
"I know, " I cry  
"Let's play: I spy"  
Not exactly novel  
But, all too practical

We get busy with eyeing  
trains, rivers, trees, electric cables,  
haystacks, farms, smoke, horses, stables etc.  
In short, a beautiful rustic scene  
A scene I was to retain in my minds eye all my life

However  
my children took nothing of the beauty in  
All they promised to remember  
was the seemingly endless day  
when we couldn't stretch our legs  
and, were all confined to a caged up space  
and, seemed to be on top of one another

Years later they had forgotten everything  
the bad weather, the inconvenience  
and the charming surroundings  
all they recalled was our eventual destination  
and what absolute fun they had had with us,  
Their parents

How very kind of them thought I  
And, I decided instantly  
That I much preferred their memories to mine

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I Was

I was very fortunate  
to have had him in my life

But, now that he's gone  
I'm definitely not torn

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I Wish

People say I was with you  
I wish it were true  
But - unfortunately  
It isn't

I think of you  
Dream of you  
All the time  
Even though I know  
You never give me a thought  
I walk the streets endlessly  
Fruitlessly  
in your footsteps  
Knowing only too well  
Our paths will never cross  
Am I being unreasonable?  
Undoubtly!

Some other incredibly lucky person  
Has been gifted  
With your presence

But does she know of your true worth?  
Definitely not

Does she remotely appreciate you  
Somehow, I doubt that too  
Why...?  
Simply because she doesn't see you with my eyes

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# If

Dear God  
Thank you for your invitation

But, before I accept  
I wish to query it

There's someone I know well  
He Idolizes you  
Honours  
And, worships you  
Almost all day and all night

Guessed, who?  
Yes-him!

But, he doesn't obey each and every tenet of yours  
Ofcourse, you're the one and only God - etc.  
But, I mean...specifically  
the one to do with his family and friends  
he's harsh and mean to - especially them  
Charity -for him - certainly doesn't begin with those close to him  
Whereas you say, it should

He thinks this highhanded behaviour of his  
and his constant worship of You  
Will definitely  
get him into Heaven  
Will it...?

I'm worried  
You see  
I don't idolize you  
I don't honour  
worship or obey you  
And, yet I had hoped -  
that being a somewhat  
decent and  
a rather reasonable person

□

One day, I'd get a place in Heaven

But, if he's accepted  
as he is  
I decline

I decline  
absolutely  
the invitation  
to join your club

Yours sincerely,

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# If Only

You enriched my life  
in so many countless ways  
Ofcourse, I didn't realize it  
at the time  
In fact  
not until today  
When it was  
unfortunately  
far, far too late

News of your untimely death reached me  
only two days ago

Its full extent didn't hit me  
immediately  
But, once it did  
I can assure you it struck to the very quick

I accepted it stoically  
something I know, you'd have appreciated  
And thought of the many good times we'd shared together  
Times I'd either taken for granted  
or hadn't wholly appreciated, then  
Times I more than cherished and appreciated now

Now...!  
When those times have gone forever  
Now  
When they won't ever return

If only I had realized  
when you were alive  
what a gem of a person you were  
If only I had made an effort to see you more often  
taken you to the movies, theatre, shopping, dinner etc.  
If only we had spent more time together...  
that would have been more than enough for me  
If only I had made more of an effort  
If only...

If only...

If only

Amongst my many regrets is  
you'll never know  
how very much I loved  
and appreciated you

I'll always love  
and, appreciate you

But then, that's life  
One doesn't realise  
how precious some people are  
Until they're out of reach forever

My one consolation is  
the flame you lit within me  
will never ever be extinguished

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# If She Takes You Back

Congratulations

She hasn't signed the papers yet

So, there's nothing definite

You may still have a chance

Don't loose heart

But, take this advice

from someone concerned about your welfare

If she returns to you

please handle her with the greatest of care

Learn from the experience you had with your ex-girlfriend

All you two could do was snipe at each other

You were caustic and sarcastic

I was shocked, because it was so unlike you

Anyway, the reason for your sarcasm soon became apparent

Both of you were angry about things that had happened in the past

PLEASE DON'T METE OUT THE SAME TREATMENT

to your Beloved

if and when she returns

Talk about the present and the future ONLY

No insinuations

No, censure - please

Life's far too short for gripes

and, denunciations

You'll be tempted to talk about the past

Forget it. Its finished

Be nice to her

and, appreciate her for the person she is

She left because:

She didn't think she was particularly appreciated

Nor, was she made to feel special

For heavens sake

she happens to be the mother of your children

You should be eternally thankful

And, be grateful for this second chance

You believe in miracles

and the miracle might just - inshalla - happen!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I'M Going To Hang On In There

To Agents & Editors Everywhere  
Beware!

I'm going to hang on in there  
no matter what the consequences  
I've written 45 short stories and 15 plays  
and, I have no idea whether any of them  
will ever see the light of day  
Still, I'm going to hang on in there  
even if it costs me my life

My Dad once said  
"If you take your writing with you to your grave  
the World won't know what it's been missing."  
Being my father  
you feel  
"Well, he would say that, wouldn't he? "

But, I tend to agree with him  
my writing is quite reasonable  
especially when compared to other people

The other day, I read an anthology of poems  
and found it to be pretty mediocre  
I write better  
I'm glad to say

Perhaps, I'll die a pauper  
unrecognised in my day

Never mind  
History is littered with literary figures  
unknown in their lifetimes  
Mozart is buried in a pauper's grave  
Van Gogh sold one lone painting during his lifetime  
(The other year, 'The Sunflowers' was sold for \$20 million)  
The list is endless  
Sometimes one has to be dead 400 years  
before one is recognised

If anyone is to set an example  
it must be Bizet  
His opera, "Carmen, " was a complete disaster  
when it first opened  
He died three months later  
never knowing  
that his work was about to become  
the greatest opera of all time

Well  
okay  
i don't need to be recognised right away  
as long as I'm recognised some day

Remember that old adage  
"You have to be in the right place, at the right time"?  
Perhaps  
But, more important than that  
one has to have faith in oneself  
confidence  
and, a steely determination to hang on in there  
Regardless of what the critics  
or any one else has to say

Some people, it seems to me  
live solely to try and pour cold water  
over ones dreams!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I'M Intensely Happy

I' m intensely, intensely happy  
So intensely happy in fact  
That I fear  
I fear....

My happiness isn't destined to last

Am I a pessimist?  
I don't think so  
Then, how do I happen to know?

Because  
Consistency happens to be  
The pattern of my life  
And, unfortunately  
- in the end  
nothing has ever turned out right for me

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# I'M Not Alone

When I'm lonely or depressed  
When I worry about  
The ins and outs  
Of living life  
When I'm stressed  
And nothing seems to be  
Working out for me  
The thing that keeps me sane  
Is the sure knowledge that  
I'm not alone in this world

And, that my troubles are minuscule  
When compared with countless other people

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# I'M With You

You may not know where I am  
But, I assure you, I'm with you  
In every breath you take  
And, in every move you make

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Image

You are dead  
but, I sit here  
looking after your image  
The Grand daughter  
you never knew

And, she'll never know  
what an absolute gem you were

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Indefinitely

You've came on this summer morn  
Instead of rejoicing, I feel sad  
Because you'll be gone indefinitely by winter

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Indifferent

All through the winter  
The family feud raged on  
But the cherry blossoms bloomed indifferent

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Infernal Regret

GOD: Mr. Shabbir Ahmad.

SHABBIR: Yes, my Lord-God?

GOD: I've punished her.

SHABBIR: Who, God?

GOD: Your daughter.

SHABBIR{ What? Why?

GOD: Because she begged me to.

SHABBIR: You needn't have listened to her!

GOD: Don't look so upset. She begged and begged ME. Night and day - relentlessly-and so -single mindedly.. If only, you could have heard her pleas.

SHABBIR: And, you did what she wanted?

GOD: Ofcourse! How could I not have obliged.? When one genuinely repents -I'm so soft-hearted...I try my best to alleviate the plight of the hitherto -err-imprudent

SHABBIR: : What were her exact words to you?

GOD: I can't tell you, exactly -

SHABBIR: I meant -, briefly?

GOD: That she sorely regretted her selfish and self-centred behaviour towards you...

SHABBIR: Well...

GOD: Don't be so dismissive. You were always kind-gentle-considerate- and very, very protective towards her -....

SHABBIR: I hope, I was.

GOD: I know, you were.. I see everything.... whereas, all she did was take=demand-and be off-hand with you, in return.

SHABBIR: Please forgive her.

GOD: Now, that you're dead - she sees your true worth.

SHABBIR: God, please. I've never asked you for anything?

GOD: Now, that you're not around to spoil her - or, overlook her shortcomings - she finds the world an impossible place to live in.

SHABBIR: What did she beg of you?

GOD: She begged for regret to plague her, all her days.

SHABBIR: And, you obliged?

GOD: Not directly.

SHABBIR: Then?

GOD: I'm Benevolent. - you know, that.

SHABBIR: That's what I thought.

GOD: Instead, I asked my Right hand Man to assist me.

SHABBIR: Oh no! God, please...

GOD: Don't interrupt! I know, you don't want to hear ill of her, but, you will hear what you were trying to turn a blind eye to all the years that you' knew her...

SHABBIR: God, my daughter was no different towards her Father than other children were - and are - towards theirs.

GOD: I knew, you would take up for her.

SHABBIR: God - admit it. All children are offhand, selfish and self-centred when doling out treatment to a parent.

GOD: I accept, she's the norm

SHABBIR: Then, forgive her, God - please....?

GOD: Don't cry.

SHABBIR: She was the light of my life.

GOD: Arise. Don't prostrate yourself..... And, dry your eyes.

SHABBIR: Apart from you, I never worshipped anyone as I did her.

GOD: That; s true.

SHABBIR: During my lifetime I did everything you wanted. Barely drank - never womanized.

GOD: I'm no sure about that.

SHABBIR: Well-err-But, she was always my one serious Love..

GOD: Arise-arise...Okay. I'll forgive her.

SHABBIR: Thank you, my Lord.

GOD: Not because, she promises to mend her ways. I have no faith in her. But, because you fulfilled almost all - not all, mind...!

SHABBIR: No, Sire.

GOD: - of your duties towards me while you were on Earth.

SHABBIR: I know, my life wasn't blemish free - for that I feel truly sorry.

GOD: I forgave you long ago because your humble ways outweighed your shortcomings.

SHABBIR: Thank you, Sire.

GOD; None of my Subjects have been perfect - so far.

SHABBIR But, Sire....

GOD: What is it...? Why do you hesitate?

SHABBIR: I have a request.

GOD: Speak?

Shabbir: I need your assurances - that you'll look after my daughter while she's on Earth?

GOD: You have my assurances.. But, unrelenting guilt will follow her where ever she goes.

SHABBIR: What? No!

GOD: Sorry-but...

SHABBIR: I don't want her to suffer any guilt on my behalf.

GOD: Unfortunately, Regret, my Right-Hand Man, has inserted such a lethal dose of serum in her, that I'm afraid, ..

SHABB But- but - Surely you being God....

God: Listen -

SHABBIR: Can't you do anything?

God: Not ME. Nothing!

SHABBIR: I don't understand.

GOD: Regret is a Force unto Himself. That's why I never clash with him.

SHABBIR: But-but-

GOD: And, that's also why, I use him very sparingly. If Nayyar hadn't begged so heart renderingly I would never have asked him for his help.

SHABBIR: Then' there's nothing to be done.

GOD: Don't lbe dejected Son. You have come to relax in the shade. Be assured that both Regret and I will keep an eye on Nayyar for you.

SHABBIR: I don't want Regret to get anywhere near her.

GOD: He's like my shadow. He goes where ever I go.

SHABBIR: Where is he now?

GOD: Well -

SHABBIR: Not on Earth- hounding my daughter?

GOD: You're too excitable. Calm down!

SHABBIR: Oh God! I didn't know, Heaven could be so cruel.

(GOD STUDIED HIM PENSIVELY)

GOD: At times like these I feel so helpless.. I may rule over you Humans, but...

SHABBIR: So, what is he?

GOD; Unfortunately - an, Inhuman.

(SHABBIR IS RESIGNED)

Go relax in that glade - there...and, wait patiently for your beloved daughter to join you.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Inner Reserves

We don't think we have it within us  
Just as we don't think that disaster  
Will ever impinge on our lives  
But when faced with a challenge  
We delve into  
Our inner reserves  
And discover  
Hidden resources  
We had no idea we had

We may  
At first  
Take tentative  
Or faltering steps towards  
Those reserves

We may surprise ourselves  
And others along the way  
But somehow humankind  
Finds  
The strength to rise to the challenge  
And, meet it head on

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Irreversible Resolution

I wish I had picked up the phone  
and dialled to bid her, 'goodbye.'  
All I had to say was, something like:  
"I rang to say, goodbye...Have a  
pleasant journey...I hope you get  
home safely...etc..." How difficult  
would that have been? It would  
have taken up just a few minutes  
of my 'fancifully perceived' PRE-  
CIOUS time.

Since my irreversible resolution  
I've spent many moments mulling  
over that disastrous decision.

Then, I think - Hang on, a minute.  
One failed phonecall won't change  
the years of love and affection - the  
empathy and appreciation we have  
for each other. So, what am I getting  
all tangled about?

But, then again, I fret - Couldn't I  
have made THAT ONE effort - IT  
MATTERS MUCH TO ME THAT I  
DIDN'T - I really should have  
picked up the phone and dialled.

Had I done so  
I'd be a much happier person  
right this very minute!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# July 2009

July 2009 has been the worst month for British Casualties in Afghanistan so far, scream the UK newspapers

You might as well face it  
rethink your remit.

This war is unwinnable  
And, the reason for that is very simple  
You wouldn't accept Foreign boots on  
your own soil, would you?

You're dealing with the very proud Afghans  
They happen to  
have some unwelcome members  
of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban amongst them.  
But, you're essentially in their Country. Remember that! Why should they tolerate one set of Foreigner over the other? They've known no peace through the Centuries and definitely none since the Soviet invasion of the 1980s.

Then you entered the scene along with the  
Americans in 2001 with no clear cut vision  
co-ordination or direction. Later, NATO joined  
in - and, you hoped it would relieve you of  
some of your self-imposed burden.  
Unfortunately  
Hardly  
It didn't!

And, don't expect any loyalty from the Afghans -  
especially if their people are bombed and maimed  
indiscriminately all in the name of democracy, freedom  
and security  
Whose security, anyway?  
Not theirs!

And, without loyalty in a hostile Country what hope have  
you of achieving anything of any meaning?

The lessons of history haven't been learnt  
Afghanistan has always been made up of  
disparate groups and obscure tribal systems.  
No power-no matter how Mighty-has ever  
been able to dominate them. They are  
indomitable.

Instead of helping rebuild Afghanistans infrastructure  
Revitalize it's economy  
Give its people job security  
or, at least the hope of a better future  
the West invades it  
and tries to impose democracy  
on a Country that has far greater needs

After the failures of the Victorian era  
why charge into Afghanistan, again?  
To prevent terrorism spreading from that region  
on to the streets of Britain?  
To promote Human Rights?  
Destroy heroin?  
Protect women?  
Educate girls?  
What?  
The goal posts keep changing

Whatever the rationale  
Its been a dismal failure  
You're in one hell of a quagmire  
The govt. in Kabul is arrogant and corrupt  
Yet you support it!  
And, which 'reasonable' Taliban are you hoping to talk to?  
These half-baked ideas thought out by UK's Foreign Office  
just won't work  
The MOD can sit safely tucked up behind its desk  
and talk till its blue in the face  
...All, to no avail  
Meanwhile, mostly innocent Afghan civilians  
and young British men will meet their end

The MOD must accept that no foreigner can impose its values on another Country.

It should think up a face-saving exit strategy

THEN, ACT UPON IT!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

PS

Ofcourse, as expected no prestigious Western media outlet published it  
All of them are too ashamed to admit that their Govts. indecisive and shortsighted policies are doomed to failure

Yet, it can't be denied that

Between July and November there's been a cataclysmic shift in the UK Govt's agenda. No more, ridiculous gung-ho boasts, like: 'We'll be in Afghanistan for the long haul, ' or, 'We'll stay there for thirty - maybe, forty years. We won't cut and run. No, Sir. Not, until the job is well and truly done.' Instead the desperate US and its allies are talking openly about exit strategies. The new UK army 'Field Manual' goes even further. It advises its officers to bribe the Taliban insurgents with bags of gold...especially those men with blood on their hands, and get them on 'our' side! (No kidding!)

America, Britain and NATO are prepared to try anything!

At the same time, they'll recruit and train an Afghan Army to take care of its own Country while a hotchpotch and illogical reason is worked out for the West to insist

that it has won the war decisively

and, therefore can now go home safely

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Life

She promised me  
this palmist  
that I would meet a tall, dark, and handsome stranger  
I wanted to believe  
So, I had no reason to disbelieve her

I entertained those hopes for years  
until an uneventful and tedious life took over

Now 40 years later  
I wonder  
Would my life have been any different  
had I met that tall, dark and handsome stranger?

Fantasy tells me, yes  
But reality tells me that my life  
would have been exactly what it was destined to be  
Uneventful and tedious

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Lightening

Lightening strikes suddenly  
A chill wind begins to blow  
I remember your harsh words

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Loitering With Intent

The other day, completely out of the blue I received a phone call from an old beau

He had walked out on me, a few years previously. And, although I was still annoyed with him - I felt curiously buoyed.

Because, despite his hectic itinerary, I still, obviously merited his attention

He proceeded to engage me in an hour long 'in-depth' discussion on the leading subject of the good old days. He missed them. He insisted. I, against my better judgment began to feel nostalgic, as well. And, that - even though he frequently conjured up such rosy pictures of our time together that I didn't feel. exactly matched my own conjectures

When we had exhausted every conceivable conversation

he began to falter. Then, he started to generalize about the weather.

Fortunately, my antenna caught the mood - And, I came swiftly down to earth as I became suspicious.

He wasn't leading me on to - anything - as my 'run-away' imagination was imagining. Far from it.

"Eventually, I said "Are you by any chance loitering? "

"Pardon? " "Don't you have a home to go to? ""Well..." he drawled, playing for time." "Don't keep your beautiful wife, waiting" I reminded. That's when he came out with it: "If I get home too early, I'll only have to help put the kids to bed.""And, you don't enjoy, it? " I inquired unnecessarily. "Ofcourse not! " he bellowed. "You, know me." "Do I? " I wondered, out loud. "Anyway, " he assured, "I'd rather talk to you." Being polite, I thanked him profusely, then, found some excuse to ring off.

Now, whenever I see his wife I hide a snigger when I remember her telling me - very earnestly - how absolutely perfect her husband was: So considerate; So charming; So caring; a real Angel; Always there when he was needed; And, ever so keen to lend a helping hand...My! My! That's who she refers to as her Knight in shining armour

Sound familiar?

For sure. Everyone, has just such a shirker in their midst - only, they don't know it.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# London 2012

When the time comes  
It will be historic  
enjoyable  
and, over in a flash

But, until then  
let everyone vent their angst  
frustration  
And, downright dissatisfaction  
with the forthcoming Olympics

First, and foremost  
Londoners: Get out of the way  
Or, go on holiday  
Otherwise, how on earth  
will we be able to cope with the additional volume of people  
stalking our roads - amenities - and, facilities in general?

Your refusal is categorical  
You say, you were heavily taxed  
so that the games could 'go ahead'  
and, you fully intend to stay in Town

Well...alright. Fine.

You expand on your plans:  
1. You decide to hike  
hotel and restaurant prices  
2. Charge exorbitant rates for snacks and knick-knacks  
And, 3. Generally beef up the fares for rail, train and taxi  
To compensate, the long suffering Londoner  
for being inconvenienced and trod under

Accepted. No contest. None, whatsoever.



# Looking Sanctimonious

Every human being makes mistakes at some time or other in their lives. No one is immune from it.

Just as, all political parties are the same. Ultra-hypocritical. They say one thing in public and quite another in private.

The only difference is that in UK's 2010 Election, Gordon Brown left his mike on and got caught out while the other Parties looked on sanctimoniously and revelled in his acute discomfort.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Me And Mine Alone!

I can only stand my own  
ranting and raving  
Nobody elses

And, if I hear other people  
rant and rave  
I positively clamber to say  
'Kindly, put a sock in it -  
God, damn it! '

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Midstream

You've walked into my life  
midstream  
Thank you

But don't ask me  
how much luggage  
i'm carrying

Its size  
colour  
or texture

Just be there  
for me

Like I'll always be there  
for you

I've walked into your life  
midstream  
I don't want to know  
how much luggage  
you're carrying

Not, it's size  
not its colour  
not it's texture

I just want us  
to be there  
for each other  
forever  
and ever



NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Missing

She misses something that exists  
or thinks exists  
and yet doesn't!

She doesn't realize  
that it bloomed and died  
very many moons ago  
without her realising it

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Modern Communication

Don't you find that  
Modern communications  
Whether it be something like  
Texting on a mobile  
Or talking into it  
Tackling a laptop  
Or Surfing the internet  
Is extremely time consuming  
Instead of time saving.....?

You might think not  
But, stop a minute  
And think again  
If you have the time to think - that is!

.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Mood

The lightening outside  
Combines with the storm clouds  
gathering within me  
To create a moody mixture

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Moving On

□

1.

After considerable deliberation

I e/mailed my estranged husband

and invited him round - anytime that was

convenient to him, to dinner.

We hadn't met in over a year

and, I was uncertain as to whether

or not, he'd answer.

We had separated in hostility - I'll admit

But, when I come to think of it- neither of

us were able to cope with what life suddenly

threw our way, at that particular time

Prior to that, our existence had been chugging along

on an even keel

I saw no cloud whatsoever that would mar our

horizons

Then life dealt us the most crushing blow of  
all.

But, let me start at the beginning

It was a Saturday morning. I was out shopping  
with my three year old daughter  
Tim had agreed to pick us up at 'Deal's'  
vast car park at twelve o'clock.

Nearer the time, I glanced at my watch,  
then looked for my little girl.

Anna...? Anna...? I spotted her behind the  
sweets counter

She was busy peering at jars of lollypop  
and what-not

Oh, there you are...

She gave me a startled look

Come darling...Mummy's finished

She came rather reluctantly. There was  
so much for her to see and explore in

that vast Superstore

Let's go and see if Daddy's waiting outside  
for us.

She took one last look at some trinkets  
Then tore her eyes away and nodded,  
timidly. Okay, she said

I got behind my jam-packed trolley  
She positioned herself beside me  
as she always did

Good girl, I appreciated and off we  
trundled out of that humid cavern and  
into the fresh air

As if on cue Tim rounded the corner  
and, tooted a cautionary blast from his  
car horn to alert a slow-moving shopper

Before I knew what was happening, Anna  
had left my side and darted off to greet him

Wait! I yelped, when I realised.

But, she was already in the path of

a reversing car.

Driver watch-out! I hollered

abandoning the trolley and charging

after her

That unpardonable Driver finally came to a

belated stop

What can I say...? I was forced to

witness in paralyzed horror as my

blood splattered baby, lay dying before

me

I unfastened my legs and ran to her

I cradled her in my arms

Anna! Anna!

Somebody help! Please help!

Tim -where are you?

Here, he gulped, breathing hard - Here!

He crouched down beside his daughter

Sweetheart-Anna-darling?

Tim! I called blindly

Stay calm, he uttered in a panic

□

2.

The immediate aftermath is a blur. I'm sorry -  
but it is.

Pandemonium. Me paralysed and beside myself

Accursed culprit Driver very shocked and

apologetic

Tim, incoherent with grief on cell phone when

summoning the ambulance

Anna's doll lying face down in the drain

Both of us crouching helplessly at our

baby's side babbling endearments to her

as we waited anxiously for the Ambulance

to arrive

Crowds in semi-circle

More crowds gathering

Expressions of remorse and regret in hushed  
tones

by everyone to no one in particular and to each  
other

Police arriving

.Explanations

Repetition of explanations when ambulance  
arrives

That fiendish Driver reruns his lament to any  
and everyone:

This Lady's little girl shot behind my car

Right out of my line of vision - I didn't see her

Tragic...! all agreed

Meanwhile, the paramedics tried and tried to  
revive her - but, my baby died in my arms

Tim and I were absolutely devastated

Is this a horrible dream? he asked of me  
whilst the spectators looked on in sympathy

Not really taking in the instructions of the

ambulance-men

we accompanied them in mute silence

as they rushed Annas body to the hospital

We hoped against hope for a miracle.

By this time I was inconsolable

Poor Tim kept watch over his daughter

Protectively

Uselessly

Admist the bedlam and confusion of Emergency

the Doctor only confirmed what we already knew.

I'm very sorry.

Can't you...? I tried.

I'm sorry, he repeated, shaking his head

Surely....Tim began - and couldn't carry on.

It's too late, sympathised the Doctor

His pager buzzed. He took it out of

his breast pocket. Please, excuse me...

he said. Then, wandered off.

A thoughtful Nurse steered us into a private cubicle



where we clutched and hugged and kissed our little girl

one last time

Later, Tim told me that the Nurse and he had to coax me to

give Anna up

I remember that vaguely

But, I'll always be eternally grateful that

I was given a chance to hold my sweet, sweet baby

one last time in my arms

And bid her a proper 'goodbye.'

It meant so very much to me

Once she had gone

Tim and I stared at each other

and, drank in the others misery,

shock, and disbelief

The light of our lives has been extinguished

Tim uttered, brokenly

I nodded, not trusting myself to speak

All we wanted at the time

was to fall into each others arms

and, comfort one another

Just then, a distraction caused me to look over  
his shoulder

and spot my distressed and distraught In- Laws  
vending their way towards us

Your Parents are here! I gulped, trying to quell my  
anguish

Where? he croaked, attempting to suppress his

This way. I grabbed hold of his arm. Come on. We joined  
them.

Their eyes were puffy and red rimmed - just as ours  
were.

Son, we came as soon as you called, Dad uttered.

We're so very sorry, rushed Mother

We fell into each others arms and commiserated  
all round

I can't recall anything much of what was said  
except that, Tim kept bemoaning the fact that he  
had blown his car horn, and, attracted his little  
Darlings attention. If I hadn't done that - my  
unthinking baby would still be with us

Meanwhile, I kept insisting

I should have been holding her hand in mine

My Mother-in-law being a deeply religious person

entertained a theory of her own

It was cast in stone: she pontificated and castigated

both son and daughter-in-law:

Neither of you should blame yourselves

It was God's will. If she was meant to live

no power on earth would have been able to

prevent it

Tim and I strongly disagreed

But, we were far too exhausted to argue

Instead, we appeared to be listening to her

drone on

while, most of the time, shut down and completely

consumed by our own desolation

the enormity of which was - only now beginning to hit us

in ever increasing bursts

Eventually, my Father-in-law cut her short

by saying: Mother-these two are too broken

to hear your lectures-for God's sake! There's a time  
and place for everything!

Yes. I'm sorry! apologised Mother claming up.

Father turned to us. Why not go home and rest?

But...worried Tim.

We'll take care of anything that needs to get done, here.

Go - There's nothing more you can do.

Yes-go., Mother, agreed hastily We'll talk further,  
in the morning

My tortured husband exchanged a look of relief  
with me

It had been a long - confusing... and, very crowded  
day

Yes-okay, he muttered

We kissed, Mother, dutifully

Bade Dad, `goodbye'

And beat a hasty retreat

□

We drove home in silence

our bodies racked with anguish

our souls lost and bereft

We felt badly cheated

and defeated

by God

and life, itself

By the time we got home, flowers, cards and toys

were already beginning to grace our doorstep

We overstepped them all and entered

the house

It's unusual quietness hit me like a body

blow

Thank God, the lull was soon shattered

by the persistent ring of the phone

Both, Tim and I ignored it

We were thoroughly drained

and, utterly, utterly exhausted

We didn't want to talk to anyone

Anna's toys were everywhere

on the ground, on the stairs

Tim, unconsciously stepped on her

rubber duck. It squeaked. We looked

sorrowfully at each other

then, burst into uncontrollable sobs and tears

Somehow we made it up the stairs

sank onto the bed

and clung to each other

for - perhaps - an hour

Then, Tim suddenly said

Before I unplug the phone - speak to your Parents

I started

as my thoughts turned to them

Both were now elderly and frail

neither of them kept very well

And, for them to have to live to hear me tell them....

No-impossible!

Tim! I delivered shrilly, I can't break their hearts. You tell  
them

Calm down, darling - calm down, said he, holding me, tight

They'll want to hear it from you

No, I cried, no.

Take a deep breath...I'm dialing the number for you - I'll hold  
your hand.

What do I say?

Just tell them straight...

It's ringing, I gulped. I hope, I don't break down

You won't! You won't! assured my husband

Hullo Mother...I-I-I...

I concentrated so hard on not breaking down or becoming  
hysterical

That, I'm afraid, I pelted out the bare facts rather too routinely

My poor parents

But, with that burden out of the way -

we cried and cried through the night amid fitful

bouts of sleep

The fast-paced events of the day hadn't left

either of us time to think

We had moved like zombies

and, done whatever was required of

us - mechanically

But, now that we were alone, and, able to let

our guard down we ran through the last family

movie of The three of us, together

as many times as we wished

And, gave full vent to our grief and anguish

□

4

My sympathetic sister came over the next morn

and, took over

Bless her

She answered the constantly ringing phone

She ushered in the neighbours

She saw them off

She answered the door



She saw to the cooking  
while we stayed cloistered upstairs  
completely switched off from everyone  
and, everything  
  
and, just, comforted each other

□

5.

Over coffee  
at a round table conference with Tim's parents  
the funeral was set for Saturday

Tim and I hadn't discussed anything  
I assumed whatever decisions were to  
be made would be made together  
So, imagine my terrible shock and distress  
when my husband announced: The funeral  
service for Anna must take place at All Saint's  
Church

What? I spat, almost spilling my coffee cup

Why ever not?

What do you mean-why ever not..? I objected

hotly

I mean...

I cut him short. Its associated with two of the

most joyous days of my life

I know, he nodded calmly. We got married

there-so?

Anna was baptised there, too, I reminded quietly.

Or, have you forgotten?

I haven't forgotten anything, he derided. How

could I forget...? But, my connection with

All Saints began during my Grandfather's time.

Every significant event in my life has been

recorded there. I want Anna to be buried

beside Granddad. He'll make sure, she stays

safe and sound.

I was speechless

I looked at my in-Laws for support

Son, ventured Mother. You really must give

this decision of yours another thought

Yes-ofcourse! supported Father. Besides, you  
must take Anne's opinions into account.

Anne will come round to my way of thinking!

huffed Tim with confidence, as he stalked  
out of the room.

Because, she's so very in love with you,  
muttered Father, rounding on me. Why,  
on earth do you give in so easily to whatever  
he wants?

Because...

Why don't you - for once in your life, put up  
more of a fight with him?

Dad, I...

Saturday is going to be the most stressful day of  
your life - if you object to the venue-insist on getting  
it changed - why must you suffer in silence?

Well...

Aren't I right, Mother?

Yes, change it. Why pile on more stress in your  
life? You have enough on your plate, as it is.

Mum-Dad, thanks.....I claimed. I'll get by. I'll be alright.

Listen...tried Father

I'll try to rein in my emotions, somehow, but...

Look...attempted Mother

...but, you're son's been terribly, terribly unhappy -

Only he?

I ignored Dad's question, and continued...and if

he derives comfort from his links to this particular

Church- I guess, I'll just have to give in to him.

Yet, again! grimaced Father.

That's very wonderful of you, darling, commented

Mother. But, you must consider...She suddenly fell  
silent.

Tim had walked in with a bouquet of flowers

I wonder, who they're from? he uttered, handing  
them over to me.

There's a note's hidden inside, said I, fishing  
it out, as everyone else looked on curiously.

Lady, down the road, I announced, pointing  
in the general direction.

Very nice of her, acknowledged Tim sliding

into the chair he had recently vacated.

Could I have another cup of tea? he asked,  
proffering his cup to me

Sure, darling, I uttered as I took it

Meanwhile, Mum picked up a list

Son, are you sure you've got these  
expenses right?

Instead of answering, he blurted

It's just not fair

What isn't? asked Mum

We should have enjoyed our daughter growing up...

Look...

...She should have been the one to bury us, insisted

Tim - Not the other way around

Yes, Son. But....

Sure, I know, snapped he. Don't challenge God's wishes!

Precisely, what I was going to say

Huh! He dismissed

In the words of the Anglican Priest - George Herbert....

I could do without sermons, right this minute! raged Tim,  
rising and leaving.

What did I say? questioned his Mum of us. Tell me what

I said...?

Just, dropp it, Mum! I requested, hoping to close the subject

But, Father wanted to provoke her

Whatever it was you were going to say, it would

have been - tacky or tactless!

Excuse me! she cried, in fury. Whatever you to say, is

perfect. But, when I speak, its considered, tacky or

tactless, she grouched as she stamped out of the room.

I cleared the table in near tears. Instead of the family

coming together at such a time, it was falling

apart.

□

6.

My own Parents arrived the day before the funeral

Jane went and picked them up from the station

They were the complete opposite of Tim's parents

Very strait-laced, reserved and quiet

Whatever their own grief

they were here to provide solace and comfort

And, Tim and I really appreciated it

They, truly were the epitome of compassion and relief

And, so, the dreaded day dawned

I went through the motions as though I

were living a dream, or, should I say, nightmare?

Tim, pale and quiet' stood beside me

at all times, and looked as though he

were sleep walking too

I couldn't help noticing, though

what a simply bright and sunny day it was

London, often had cloudy and sultry skies

It had rained on our wedding day

But, now, as I stepped out of the house

I could have done without the glare of

the sun

Bleak is how I felt

And, bleak, the day - should rightly have

been

Instead, the flowers were blooming

I glanced at the children across the street

They were laughing and joking

and, playing hop-scotch

Whereas, they should, at least have been subdued

and respectful

We got into my Father-in-laws car

Mum sat crying, uncontrollably, beside him

But, I sat dry eyed, behind

I had done with tears for the time being

Tim sat immobile beside me

clutching hold of my hand

I squeezed his tenderly. At least, I had him

my one and only consolation

My parents sat at the back

grief-stricken but dry eyed too

They were probably amazed and embarrassed

by my Mother-in-law's unsuppressed display



The vehicle fell into line behind the hearse  
and, we drove through the busy streets of  
London to my little girl's final destination  
(That thought was a real gut wrenching  
moment)

Was I unbound by the cars  
the cackle  
or, the melee of activity around me?

No..! .

Resigned

is what I was

resigned

Life has to go on

Fight it as much as one might

Unfortunately - there is no other choice

As I looked around me

All I can say is

humanity seemed extraordinarily happy

As though it were completely immune from death or  
grief

Soon, the beautiful little medieval Church  
complete with its cold grey stone  
hidden neath a mass of climbing roses  
came into view

How we drove up the gravel drive  
or disembarked  
I'll never know

But, bare snippets of that day will stay with  
me, forever

The same Deacon, the same Priest from  
happier days were on hand, to usher us in  
The Bier had already been placed close to the alter

We waited for our guests to take their  
places

Candles were lit amongst an overwhelming  
number of flowers

Lilies-mostly

Then, a requiem mass was said

Part of the Gospel read

Hymns chanted

Did I hear Psalm 23...? :

I will fear no evil.

For thou art with me. Thy rod and thy

staff, they comfort me....

The sprinkling of holy water

Incense

Absolution

Once outside

I nearly passed out at the sight of the newly

dug grave

Steady on! directed Tim gripping me firmly by

the waist

Jane and Mother were on hand to help prop me up

This time, the sermon was brief - thank God

I kept my eyes averted from the gaping grave,

the spade

the bier

etc.

All I remember was the Priest reading:

Grant this mercy, O Lord, we beseech Thee,

to Thy servant departed...

□

7.

Family and friends gathered in our house that evening for what I thought was going to be a quiet drink

Instead, my Father-in-law, who tends to be full of sentiment insisted on giving a lengthy speech about Annas all too short life

Tim objected. Dad-no!

But, his Dad was determined. Don't worry, Son

We're amongst friends. They're genuinely

interested in what I have to say about my

little Grand daughter

Poor Tim - He slunk away to the far end of the

sitting room

My parents looked none too happy, either

but, sat aside, politely - to suffer Dad, in silence

I too, determined not to listen

withdrew into the sanctuary of the kitchen

When it came to thinking of God - I thought little.

But, now I chided him.

God, why are you doing this to us? Haven't we

suffered enough?

I won't hear this, I swore

I'm determined not to hear any of it

My sister followed me and insisted on helping

out, without saying, listening to my Father-in-law

was much too distressing for her, too.

We busied ourselves unpacking extra glasses

Chilling wine - crushing ice

And, arranging tidbits to nibble at on plates

Jane and I returned to the sitting room bearing  
trays of wine

And, just in time to hear Dad say: She was a  
very bright little girl- as all of you know. She  
could recite the whole of Twinkle,  
twinkle, little star - unaided, mind you - long  
before she was two years old..

Everyone murmured appreciation

Look! Look! whispered someone....It's so  
heart-breaking. Poor Tim. He's crying

Along with the others I looked. There was  
Tim being comforted by his ex- girlfriend  
(my rival, who - i knew for a fact - still  
had designs on him!)

I gave Jane a despairing look and dived  
right back into the recesses of the kitchen

Who was I to him? I griped

Couldn't he have blubbered all over me

Instead of making a spectacle of himself

with that woman - of all women? !

And, did he have to make my grief - even  
more complete? !

Jane re-entered to say: Some of your friends  
are ready to leave

Okay-thanks! I said. Dried away my tears of rage  
and followed her out with false bravado

I think, I put on a reasonable show after that  
lapse

Well.... at least, until we saw everyone off

Then my plastered smile disappeared  
and my face crumbled in an instant

My mind was free to unleash thoughts of  
my precious  
my irreplaceable

Anna

□

8.

Jane had spent a week with us

But, now, she was leaving

Over breakfast, Tim and I thanked her

profusely for all her help and support

Not at all, she beamed

Without you running things - nothing would

have gone so smoothly, swore Tim.

Thanks, darling, I laughed, as I

agreed with him.

Is there anything else I could do for

you, two? insisted Jane. I've finished

my packing?

Nothing, said Tim

Nothing-thanks reiterated I.

Perhaps, she hesitated, I could pack away

Annas things -

What? spared Tim. His face growing dark in

an instant

I-err- mean, .continued Jane, nervously.



You'll do no such thing! thundered he, rising  
from the table.

I-didn't mean to hurt you-or-or

She isn't even cold in her grave, yet -

I didn't mean, my sister tried to repeat

- and, you want to get rid of every last

semblance of her?

I'm sure, she didn't mean that, dear. (But,

I was ignored.)

Ofcourse not! assured Jane. I thought...

You, thought you'd tell us what

was best for us!

Jane was shaking her head and in

near tears. No, I...

Tim! Please, darling, I pleaded as I rose to

comfort her. I'll put away her things, I whispered

as I embraced her.

I only offered, she explained, turning to Tim,

because I know how painful it'll be later - for you

and my sister.

He glared at her. When he spoke, his voice was

full of emotion. You'll never, ever, know, how  
painful it is-and, always will be

The force of that made me flinch

I didn't mean to upset you - she said quietly.

I'm sorry. She left for her room.

When she was out of earshot I

couldn't resist, Tim, how could you?

He gave me a wounded look. I suppose

you've never known frustration or unhappiness

in your entire life?

I almost fell back on my chair at that blow.

Don't be cruel to me Tim. You know, I can't take any

more, right now!

Sorry, he uttered, suddenly embracing me.

After a pause, I managed. We've both been

shot through, darling. Please, don't take it out

on her. What can she do?

He nodded, sighed heavily

rubbed the tears out of his eyes

and drifted away

How quickly mirth turns to sorrow

□

9.

From that day on, Tim virtually stopped speaking  
to everyone  
especially me

If he spoke at all it was a rare occassion. And, even  
then his response was usually a mono syllabic:  
Please or no.

Otherwise, If I announced: Dinner's ready. He'd  
nod, leave what he was doing and follow me into  
the kitchen where we'd partake in a silent meal

Come to think of it, in those very grim and dark  
days I didn't have much to say to him - or, to any  
body else, either

So, I mustn't be unfair to him. I was an equal culprit

When Tim suddenly took himself off - without consulting  
me - to sleep in the Guest room

it didn't matter much

We had grown so far apart

Gradually, if we met at all, it was purely by chance  
in - somewhere like, the kitchen, the staircase,  
the sitting room, the hall, garage or driveway

Otherwise it was either when our friends or my  
In-Laws visited.

No one saw the turmoil our lives were confronting.  
No one cottoned on to the fact that I - or, probably  
both of us were battling our way through prolonged  
bouts of searing depression (both in gaping view of  
one another. But both, too woefully inadequate, and  
too incapable of reaching out to the other.)

True, we were very careful to give the impression  
that - despite, everything - life had to go on.

It wasn't difficult for Tim to deceive his Mum and

Dad. They were our most frequent visitors

As soon as Tim heard their car on the drive

he'd clatter down the steps and greet them,

outdoors, with: Hullo! Hullo!

His Mum would disembark and kiss him: Hullo, son.

Nice of you to come all this way.

The traffic was horrendous Father invariably said....

Anyway, you look well.

So, do you two-Tim would return. Let's go indoors.

Where's Anne?

On her way, downstairs, Tim would say with confidence.

Within minutes, I'd go and join them

Hullo, Mother. Hullo, Father. Smiles allover.

Hullo. Hullo, dear. Kisses dispensed with.

Preliminaries over. Drinks and snacks offered.

we'd pass the time in convivial mode

When friends came over, I'd greet them amiably:

Justin-Susan, come in-come in.

We were just passing, Susan would begin.

And, we thought we'd dropp in, on the off-

chance, Justin would end.

You're very welcome, I'd say, leading

them into the sitting room.

Where's Tim?

On his PC.

Then, perhaps.....Susan would hesitate..

I'll just call him, I'd say. Please excuse me,

I'd excuse, leaving the room, and calling up - Tim!

Yes?

Come downstairs, darling. We have guests.

Coming, he'd sally pleasantly.

I'd return to our guests and confirm. He's coming.

That's great.

Everyone left our house satisfied that although

Anna had left us, we still had each other

How very nice!

However, as soon as our guests were out of sight

the temperature changed. Tim and I went our separate

way - him, to his room - and me, to mine.

- ☐
- ☐

10.

The date to commemorate Anna's death  
anniversary was nearing

I waited on our driveway to collar Tim, as soon  
as he came home from work. There was so much  
to discuss with him.

The obligatory Thanksgiving ceremony. Invitations  
to friends.  
etc. etc.

But, before all that - there was another delicate  
matter to confront

(Pack away Anna's things and store them away  
in the attic.)

I dreaded Tim throwing a fit. I didn't like it either.

But, somebody had to do it. And, the longer we  
put it off...

I didn't see Tim's car arrive till it was almost

alongside me.

Anything wrong? asked a worried looking husband

No, nothing! I assured. I just wanted to have a few

words with you before you went upstairs.

Sure.

See you in the sitting room.

I went indoors and began to deliberate as I waited

What was I going to say?

Take a deep breath

and plunge right into it - I decided

Because there is absolutely no alternative

Why are you looking so worried? quizzed

Tim as soon as he came into the sitting room

Because, you're not going to like what I'm going

to say.

But, you're going to say it, anyway? said he, lightly, as

he went and sat down in his comfy chair.

Right-yes!

So, fire away, he invited. Don't mind me?

I hesitated. In a few weeks time, it'll be Annas

death anniversary.



Do you have to remind me? he shot, with  
annoyance.

I ploughed on. I want to pack away her things.

No! ! he interrupted, violently, and got to his feet.

We'll never move on- I tried to convince-as long as -

Move on to what? he questioned with venom.

Look -

What's the use? You're like a hollow piece of wood!

O-thank you, very much!

There's no way, whatever I can relate to you

Darling, I pleaded gently. I, so much want us to -

But, he rejected me completely

And, don't you dare blame Anna's `things', lying around,  
for your own shortcomings!

I had no intentions of doing that, I defended. I was  
only saying...

I visit her room every night, he explained, quietly.

I know

I don't want you to move a thing...

But...

I almost feel her presence there, he said sadly. She

gives me such peace...such peace-Believe me, she  
absolutely does.

I'm sure.

How come, you never go to her room?

I don't need to go to her room.

She's constantly inside my entire being.

I could have kicked myself for having said that.

Tim gave me a stricken look. He was silent  
a moment. Then, he struggled to say: She's  
constantly within me, too.

He left the room. I looked after him.

Then realised - we hadn't resolved anything

I hurried after him. Tim - I haven't finished.

He was already halfway up the stairs. He  
turned and gave me an irritated look.

Now, what?

I want to discuss Anna's death anniversary.

Why? His back was up. We're not marking the  
occasion.

Please, I cajoled. Just a small commemoration?

There's no need, he insisted.

Just the two of us -

No!

- and our parents?

At her graveside?

Yes.

I hate such occasions, he said, refusing.

Please? He shook his head, again. It'll be

very brief? My parents are coming here especially to -

He sighed. Do whatever you like.

But, count me out. He turned to resume his

flight up the steps. Then, stopped, and turned.

In fact, I find this whole setup stifling.

Meaning...?

This whole setup, he repeated, violently,

flinging his arms about- I find it absolutely

stifling!

It was obvious what he meant

but, I wanted it spelled out

You mean, you find me stifling?

Yes! He said, without hesitation.

Then, say that!

I'm going upstairs to pack. And, I'm leaving  
this house, tonight!

I nodded sadly. I had been expecting it.

He seemed intrigued. You're not even going to try  
to stop me?

I shook my head. What good would that do?

You'd only have started telling me again about  
how hollow and wooden I've become-

Well...

- things we both know to be true. Whats the point of  
harping on it...? Nothings going to change, overnight!

No, nothing, he agreed

And, by the way, I could say similar derogatory  
things about you.

That I've become hollow and wooden?

Yes

Then, say it? he goaded, coming down the steps, and  
gearing for a fight. Why, don't you?

Because, I prefer discussion and compromise-

Huh! Discussion and compromise - he derided.

Laugh, if you like - But, that's what I

believe in

We eyed each other seriously. I told you, unless  
you changed your attitude...Unless you were  
prepared to, 'think' about your immediate  
past- there would be no salvation for you....

And, no healing, either!

I nodded sadly as I squared up to him and,  
repeated: I told you, my memories are still far  
too raw to 'think anything through'

Look...

I'm not as, 'all together', as you are-I'm sorry.

I'm not, 'all together', either, he admitted. But,  
at least, I try.

I know, I don't try hard enough, I said, feeling  
sorry for myself.

By now he was close enough to touch me.

The question is, would he?

I waited, in hope

He hesitated, Oh! Whats the use? he uttered,  
shrugging wearily - as, he began to retrace  
his steps.

I wanted him to stay. But - he didn't stop - I  
request you not to leave. At least, stay, until the  
Commemoration takes place. You needn't  
attend it, I added with haste... Do what you  
like, after that...? Tim...? Tim....?

He finally turned to face me at the head of the  
stairs. Please! he said, patiently but firmly  
I'll commemorate my daughter's brief life,  
in my own way. Not with a graveside comm-  
emoration Not with anybody's commiserations  
Just quietly. In my own way. Is that clear?

You can't do this to your parents-or, mine?

Call me a coward! he suddenly harangued.

Go, tell them, when they ask.....Your Son is  
a coward.. Because, that's exactly what I am.

No, you're not!

An unmitigated coward! he insisted. Not, only am I going  
to let my Parents down, I'm going to let my wife and her  
Parents down, too!

So saying, he was gone.

□

11.

I had got into the habit of staring into space for hours

on end

chasing a litany of erstwhile

melancholy recollections

So, whenever the phone rang

It took me an age to resurface

and rejoin civilization

T'was on just such a day that I answered

an incessant ring

Hullo?

Darling - said Mother. I seem to have dragged you away

from something Important

No - I was just-err-reading,

Anything interesting?

I blinked. Actually, I was flicking through a

magazine.

I see., she read. And, how are you?

Fine, Mother

And, Tim?

How could I tell her, I hadn't seen him in a while?

He's fine, too, I cruised. I've just sent him out on an  
errand

Give him our fondest regards

I will - And, how are you and Father?

I'm fine. But, Father.. she hesitated

Yes? I worried

...Remember - Father and I were meant to condole with you  
two, on Sunday?

Yes, Mother?

Father strained his back, last night.

Oh, no! I sympathized.

He can't do very much for himself

Tch! Poor darling...

Obviously, I can't leave him, and -

No-no. Ofcourse not.

He's totally dependant on me.

Mother, you look after Father. Don't worry about



Tim and me. We're both determined, people - and  
we're totally, totally unsinkable

Bless you, darling...

Et. al

Anyway, the upshot of that conversation was  
further proof that

Since life as I knew it had prematurely ended  
I could expect no more cheer from it - ever!

And, in the end, there was no Service of  
Thanksgiving

no, commemoration

Just a simple visit to Anna's graveside

with my In-Laws

some flowers

prayers

reflection

That was all I could manage without Tim

My Father-in-law was furious with him:

He's always been like this -

Now, now, Herbert...

Don't think of defending him, her husband

interrupted. He's selfish - He only

thinks of himself. Not his wife. Not his parents.

No, Father, actually - I tried to defend...

There's no need for you to say anything,

either! First, his Mother spoilt him -

I didn't! She defended, stoutly. But, just

remember, he's also been through a

hell of a lot.

Yes, well...

Let's make some concessions towards

him.- for a change... Not just - recriminations!

Hmm, conceded Dad, thoughtfully.

Come on - we're going to see him right now.

Suits me, accepted Dad, unenthusiastically

Mother kissed me. Goodbye, Darling

Thanks for everything, Mum

Bye dear - said Dad, giving me a peck

on my cheek. Take care.

You too, Dad - I uttered. fondly. Bye.

Once they had gone I returned to my  
humdrum life□

□

12.

After much persuasion I had consented  
to visit my parents

I had wanted to visit them ages ago

But, thus far, certain memories -

memories I had absolutely no control

over

had prevented me

Tim used to love going there with me

And, after Anna birth - to my Parents

delight - we drove over regularly

Unfortunately, that came to an abrupt end

And, my elderly Parents had to come up to

London to commiserate with us.

We hadn't met in a long while and I really missed  
them

Besides, , I considered

If I don't reign in my thoughts - my feelings -  
and my emotions, now  
tackling them at a later date would be  
next to impossible

So, I got out my suitcase with determination  
placed it on the bed, and started packing  
While doing so I couldn't help opening my  
dressing table drawer  
removing a diamond encrusted trinket  
box  
that was safely ensconced in a corner

Lifting its lid  
picking up the precious treasure within  
removing its packaging  
and feasting my eyes on tt's contents

I gently lifted up the small triangular

Venus shell

that held my eyes so mesmerized

And, inspected its smooth and shiny

surface-and, its brownish irradiating rays

From the corner of my eye I could see

myself taking a video of my baby, holding

Tim's hand and taking faltering

steps towards me

All of us were laughing

Look, at me, baby, I called.

Good girl-

Oopps! sang Tim

Mama...

Not so close, baby - I said, hastily putting

away my video

Mama, she repeated stretching out her hand, to

present me with the shell

How beautiful, darling, I appreciated, as I studied

it.

She gurgled with delight

She spotted it in the sand, beamed Tim

I picked her up and kissed her

The picture faded

It took me a moment to reflect that

my reaction hadn't been one of near hysteria

I hoped, I was beginning to accept life as it

really was

And, not, what I fervently wanted it to be

I wanted everyone - especially my Parents

to see that I was coming to terms with my loss

I had to be positive and cheerful in their

presence - no matter what happened

I kissed the shell - rewrapped it carefully,

returned it to its box and put the box back

exactly where it had been before....

nestled beneath my slips and nighties

□

□

13.

I drove down the A30

Past suburbia

And, the out of the way Shopping Centre

Into a clear stretch of road

Green fields as far as the eye could see

Clumps of trees

Thick woodland

Turn right at the traffic island

And, here we are -

In the realm of Celtic culture

Wide rolling hills

Rugged cliffs

An endless expanse of clear blue sea

And, finally - my destination

Penzance

I wasn't born here

But, here's where I grew up

My parents adopted us - Jane and me -

rather late in life - When in their fifties

We love them dearly, ofcourse

They're the most wonderful human beings

I'll ever know

I stopped my car on the ridge, got out

and, admired my surrounds

There! I pointed before me, is, Mounts Bay

And, there - in the distance -

on a hill jutting out of the sea

is St. Michael's Mount

The panoramic views

Breathtaking - aren't they?

St. Michael's Church is where Tim and I first

met

My parents worked in the capacity of warders

there



and, I happened to be home on holiday  
from University

I smiled as I recalled our first meeting:

One morning, I unbolted the Chapel door  
in answer to a persistent knock on the knocker  
Yes?

I'm sorry to disturb you - but, isn't this place  
supposed to be open? asked an impatient  
Tourist.

I looked about me for help.. I don't know... Is it?

Look here! he said, indicating a sign  
board. It says here clearly - 10am to 5pm...

Yes, I see.

He displayed his watch. Its now 10.30

Then, I guess, I said, stepping aside,  
you had better come in

Thank you, he smiled, as he entered

Not only did I end up showing him the  
three famous alabaster panels behind the

Alter, but, I gave him a Personal tour of the entire place

He kept me talking for roughly three hours

Or did I keep him talking?

I honestly can't remember...

Anyway, he rang me up the next day

and -

I checked my wristwatch - Is that the time....?

.

Before I get carried away - I'll continue some

other time

.

I returned to my car, started it up

and hurried on, home.

□

14.

As I said, I was really looking forward to meeting

my Parents

Ever since Anna's death I had begun to feel more

and more, just how much it must mean to them to

see Jane and me

Really, I contemplated, I must come down here

more often

By the time my car trundled up the drive

my Parents had meandered outdoors to greet me

Hullo, darling, hailed Father

Hullo, I waved as I parked the car.

Mother glanced at her watch. You made it in good time

Not, much traffic, today, I noted, getting down

and embracing them in turn

Hullo, Mother

You've become so thin, she complained.

You always think that, I tried to brush off as I kissed

Father

She's right you know, he said gravely

I was determined to keep it light. But, you look well

Actually... he began, ready to give me a list of his

deteriorating health.

But, Mother had other ideas. First, come indoors,

she ushered. Father can tell you all about his

ailments over tea. She turned to Father and teased.

Your daughter will be most Interested, once she sits

down and relaxes.

Right! he agreed with a laugh; as. he, put his arm  
around me and walked me indoors. .

□

15.

I had put off informing my Parents about Tim's  
departure from the nest until practically  
the very last minute.

Why cause them extra worry and anxiety?

But, I expected his name to come up at some point.

My Parents were very fond of him.

Still, I dreaded it.

They choose mid-dinner to quizz me

How's Tim? questioned Father.

I have no idea, I admitted frankly. I haven't  
seen him, in-ah-over a year.

Over a year? he asked with a start.

Yes.

Hmmm, Father considered as he chewed his food

But, you have mutual friends, observed Mother. Surely,  
one of them mentioned him...? ...

No! I said, shaking my head vigorously. No one mentions  
him to me. He could be living with another woman -

No! exclaimed Mother.

But, I ploughed on...for all I know.

My Parents exchanged looks of distress

I instantly regretted having given them the  
impression that Tim was so shallow.

So I quickly added, Sorry. I didn't mean to slander  
him.....

The clock on the wall of the dining room chimed as my  
Parents waited for me to complete my sentence.

....I'm just hurt because-because he left me in the  
lurch when-I needed him to stand by me.....

Perhaps, reasoned Mother, he was trying to get over  
his own grief and couldn't help you.

Perhaps... Anyway, I completed lamely - I keep to myself. I  
hardly see any friends..

O Darling, disapproved Father

Sweetheart, I know, its difficult...began Mother, but, you  
really must try to face life...

I try. I'm trying, all the time, Ma. I argued. I swear, I am  
I'm sure, you are, accepted Mother.

I even got myself a job.

Really. I nodded. When?

A few months ago.

Doing?

Mainly-editing

Then, you don't expect Tim, back? asked Father,  
worriedly

Well...I shrugged....a year ago, I tried to persuade him that a period of  
reflection - on both sides - rather than an outright divorce -

(There was a sharp intake of breath from my Mother

I couldn't look at her)

-which would be difficult to reverse, if ever we wanted to  
get back, together...was what was called for. But, the longer he  
stays away...I doubt, he'll return.

If he does return, advised Father, please make concessions to him?

I nodded. If, is all I said.

I don't think, my kind Parents wanted to probe further.

At any rate, they changed the subject

Could you pass me the salt, please? asked Father

Sure, returned Mother, handing over the salt seller

While I choked back my own tears and chased a potato  
round my plate

□

□

16.

It was late before I returned to my sanctuary

I looked around it

How I loved this room

It held, O so many happy memories of my childhood

And, later, on

I considered thoughtfully

Some tender - some, poignant moments too

I began to unpack and fill up the already, cluttered  
drawers of my bureau

I deposited my toiletries in the bathroom

Then returned

Took out the family album

And settled down to leaf through it

Mother - Father - On their wedding day -

Family members-I think. I recognise some of them

My parents on holiday - oh no - this picture is fading  
away

That's Jane. She was a baby when we were adopted

That's me. I was about three

Oops!

Something fluttered out of the album and landed on the floor

I looked at it, and, nearly - froze

It was the most precious memento I will ever possess

I scooped it up and studied it

It was a deep pink bougainvillea flower

encased in its transparent sheath

I flipped over some pages of the album, feverishly

as I sought to match my flower with a certain picture

Here we are. As I poured over the images of us three

the scene rose before me:

:



Tim in casuals and trademark polo neck  
carrying Anna in her Princess dress  
whilst holding me - with this flower in my hair-  
close to him

It was taken inside the restaurant. All of us  
were laughing -

For almost the very last time

Another scene replaced it

The one preceding this:

The three of us were pottering around in my Parents  
garden

when Tim suddenly suggested: Lets go and eat out today?

Err-okay

We'll invite your parents as well.

Fine. Let me go and invite them...I'll fetch Anna a jersey too. Its  
getting rather chilly.

Don't be long

I won't. I went indoors.

When I returned Tim was showing Anna the bougainvillea tree

He broke a flower and asked her

Should we ask Mummy to wear this in her hair?

Anna was very enthusiastic.. Yes, Daddy

You give it to her, he said, proffering the flower.

She took it in her chubby hand. Looked at it. Mummy, she said,  
giving it to me.

Thank you, darling, I appreciated. I kissed her and kissed my  
Tim, too.

I don't know how long I sat and reminisced

But, a sudden knock on the door shook me out of my reverie

Mother entered. Darling - it's late.

I rose. I was just going to bed.

She took the album out of my hand and glanced through  
a few pages, absently.

She hesitated in such a way

I knew, she wanted to say something to me. I waited.

She suddenly said, Anne, I've been waiting for a chance  
to say this to you -

Yes, Mother?

She looked at me gravely. Darling - all Father and I pray  
for - if God hasn't granted it to you, already - that is - all  
we pray for is, that He grants you - plenty of - resilience

and fortitude.

Wasn't that a lovely thing to say? I was so moved. I wanted to burst into tears.

Instead, I kissed her. Don't worry about me, Mother. I'll be alright, I assured.

She hesitated. And, you're on the mend?

I smiled at her

I could fairly honestly, nod and say. I think so.

She embraced me. That's what I've longed to hear. Her eyes were wet. I'll say, goodnight, my sweetheart

Goodnight, Mother.

She shut the door, noiselessly, behind her.

And, I was left to brush aside a tear and consider the exact meaning of resilience and fortitude.

□

17.

We were at the breakfast table discussing whether a trip together to St. Michael's Mount was

feasible or not

If you don't want to walk, we could wait for high tide. Then, go  
by boat? I suggested.

My Father shook his head. I couldn't face that steep climb, later.

Oh, yes, I forgot.

We spent nearly thirty-five years, there, reminded Mother. We-  
neither of us want to go back there. Memories are enough..

But, you go ahead, encouraged Father.

Yes, agreed Mother. Don't let us stop you

□

18.

So I walked down the causeway with the Tourists

and made my way up to the top of the hill

I stopped to survey the place

Nothing had changed in the two years since I had last  
visited it

But, while I was growing up change kept coming and

going with regularity

If it wasn't the pub changing hands

It was something like a souvenir shop coming into  
existence

The one permanent fixture used to be my Mother's  
tea shop - My cousin took over where she left off

I scanned the place to see if she was in

Thank God, she wasn't

I was in no mood to see anyone

Alone with my thoughts is where I wanted to be

I entered the Castle, walked down its passage  
and entered the Map room

Hesitated

then, withdrew-and walked into the Chevy Chase

It was packed with tourists studying its plaster frieze  
portraying various hunting scenes

I took in, its stained-glass windows

But really, it's familiarity didn't charm me

And, I was soon out on the terrace

What had I come here, looking for...?

Whatever it was, I didn't find it

All I'm going home with

is a bitter sweet taste

They say

It's a grave mistake to go to old haunts-in search of...

I don't know what-exactly

One, only comes up against a blank wall...But, do

any of us, ever listen...?

I gave a hollow laugh

Because, we still search and search....but, rarely

do we find-anything

I looked down the craggy hill and, it's sub-tropical garden

My Father had been the head Gardner here once

Come to think of it, he wore many hats

He was the door keeper when required

The Postman

The alter boy

etc. etc.

I got lost in the Crowd returning to town  
And after saying goodbye to my parents  
drove back to London

□

19.

Months later  
on my return home after a most satisfying day at work  
I parked the car in front of the house  
Got out and took a good look at my environs  
I quite liked what I saw  
  
Hmmm, I considered. My life isn't as rudderless as I  
once, thought it was..  
It finally has direction  
  
I still feel as though my life has been wrenched out  
of my body  
I'll always feel torn to pieces  
  
I can't help it

But, I'm resigned

Yes, resigned

.....What else can I be?

I went up the steps and let myself in

Switched on the hall light

Deliberated

Sent the aforementioned email to Tim

While I awaited his reply

I marched up to Anna's room with resolve

I stood outside, hand on door and hesitated

Ofcourse, I had been there several times before

either, to dust or air the room

But, not to think

Never to think

If I thought at all, whilst there

I always made a concerted effort to think of something else

and, always made sure I left the place as it was on Anna's

last day -



But, this time I was determined to pack her  
things and store them away in the attic

After a moment, I plucked up the courage to turn the handle,  
switch on the light, and survey the room

A family picture was sitting on her bedside table  
waiting to greet me

I didn't flinch. But, I was keen for it not to let it effect me  
so I swiftly appraised another spot

Unfortunately, it happened to be the - now abandoned  
crib she used to sleep in, whilst in our room

I went over and touched it

My fingers lingered on her little quilt

and, I remembered:

One day, she cried and cried

I was carrying her and trying to calm her down

Tim was on the computer. What's she crying for? he asked  
in irritation

I don't know, I insisted as I patted her.

He moved over to the record player. I've got just the  
tonic for her, he announced

He looked for a particular record and put it on

I remember the scene so well

Anna-listening-then whimpering

Falling silent and finally sleeping to someone

singing:

You are so beautiful to me/You are so beautiful to me/

Can't you see/You're everything I hoped for/Everything

I need/You are so beautiful to me....

Tim took her out of my arms and returned her to her crib.

We tucked her in, then, stood back in one another's arms

full of admiration of her.

We embraced and kissed and thanked our lucky stars for

our beautiful, beautiful little miracle

The picture faded as I considered

Nevermore would I lull my baby to sleep

Nevermore would we watch Teletubbies together

Nevermore would I read to her

I think the tears rolling down my cheeks

alerted me to the fact that: going down memory

lane only meant intense grief and pain

I sat down abruptly on Anna's bed and reflected  
If I don't want the past to consume me, I must  
try to consume it!  
Yes, thats what I must do  
I dried my eyes as I rose  
Decided that tonight was not the night  
to put away Anna's things  
  
If they had waited this long  
another day or two wouldn't matter  
I turned off the light  
clicked the door shut  
and was halfway down the stairs  
when the doorbell rang  
  
I quick-stepped it to the porch light in the hall  
and switched it on  
Glanced at myself in the mirror  
then, opened the door  
Tim! I exclaimed in surprise  
Hullo! He returned giving me an uncertain smile

I just sent you an e-mail. I didn't expect -

An e-mail? he asked in surprise. When?

I glanced at my watch. About an hour ago.

He shook his head. I've just got in from Paris

I must have looked nonplussed, because he added,

I was just passing. I-err thought, I'd dropp in -

to see how you were...?

It didn't occur to me to move.

Ofcourse, if it's inconvenient - I'll err -

I remembered to step aside, Please, come in

He went ahead of me into the sitting room

And, as I followed, I chided the Heavens:

Did he have to come today?

Did he absolutely have to come today?

Couldn't he have come another day?

And, did I have to go into Anna's room, today-of all days?

Look at my face! It must be all botched up!

And, look at my hair!

Oh, well...!

What does it matter?

We can barely look directly at one another

When I entered the sitting room

He was standing awkwardly in the centre of it

I eyed him, somewhat, resentfully. Please, be seated

Thank you, he said, formally - and sat down

I sat down, primly - opposite

Now what? I wondered

You haven't been using our joint account?

I have, I promised. All the Standing Orders go out of  
there-as always.

But, you used to go shopping -

I nodded. To buy useless things-

Yes, but -

-according to you

Yes, but - you loved going on holiday...

Somehow those things hardly matter very much,  
anymore-do they...?

No-no, of course, not. They don't! he acknowledged

After a moment, I rose

because I wanted him to go

I hope, I answered your question, satisfactorily?

He rose too

Are you asking me to leave?

I looked at him full in the face

Tim, why did you really come...?

He suddenly flared up. I knew, you'd behave like this.

Like what? I asked calmly.

Make it absolutely impossible for me to approach you.

In what way, do I make it impossible? I asked infuriatingly.

He tried to stay calm - I'll give him that.

I know, you're still angry with this coward.... I let you down.

Instead of standing by you - I'm sorry. I can't apologise,  
enough.

Tim - drop it!

I can't! Because, I haven't been forgiven.

Tim, I said....!

What did you eventually do on Anna's death anniversary?

I winced and looked away. Then looked back and defied:

What good does it do to rake up the second most painful  
episode in my life - that can never be erased?

Tim bit his lip. He looked very shaken

Please Tim - Don't let me hurt you.

Anne...

And, I don't want to talk about Anna right now.

I've just come home from work - and, I'm rather tired.

I'm sorry, he apologised, and, made to leave. I'll leave you to...

Tim, I began, coming forward.

....I'll come some other time

I placed my hand on his arm and tried steering him back to his seat.... We could both do with a drink...Sit, down.

He hesitated

Please?

Thanks, he said, without looking at me - and, sat down

You must be very tired, yourself, I said, opening the drinks cabinet

Yes, I am. I've been working hard, all week

I poured two bourbons and gave him, his.

Thanks. Did you say, you sent me an e-mail?

Yes, I replied, re-seating myself before him.

What did it say?

I invited you to dinner-at your convenience

Dinner, huh? he commented vaguely. And, you also  
said, you had just come back from work?

Yes.

I didn't know you worked.

\I must keep myself busy.

Yes, of course! But, what exactly, do you do?

Edit books.

Interesting?

Very.

After a silence. Tim managed, I keep busy too. I don't see any  
of our old friends. Do you?

Very seldom.

He got up abruptly. Its late....

I rose too.

...I have a lot to do, tomorrow.

So, do I.

He hesitated. Before I go - unless you've made a bonfire of  
my clothes...

I haven't! I smiled with him, for the first time, in a long time.



...I want to check out a suit...?

Sure. Your clothes are still hanging in the guestroom.

I returned the bottle to the cabinet as soon as he left

I scooped up the glasses.

Things have to be spic and span for me as quickly as possible

I can't stand unwashed cutlery and crockery lying around  
after having any kind of fare.

Sorry, I can't help being finicky. I'm like that....

Impossible to live with....According to Tim!

I entered the kitchen

and, put the glasses in the sink

I looked in the fridge

without really knowing what I was looking for

I spotted this half drunk bottle of wine

Took it out and sat it down on the kitchen table

I'm too tense. I must loosen up, I told myself getting a  
glass out of the cupboard

I sat down with the intention of polishing  
the bottle off

Tim entered the kitchen carrying a suit

I looked at him

Nothing's changed, upstairs.

No.

But, you were threatening to pack up Annas things

and store them away in the attic?

I know, but....

I thought of an explanation as I toyed with the bottle

of wine.

....I must be a coward like you.- I tried several times -

I couldn't!

He put his hand over mine. I was genuinely startled. I

wasn't expecting it.

He smiled into my eyes and said: Why don't we

two-cowards both, get back together and fight our cowardice?

I looked at him searchingly

After so much misery - was I really being offered a fresh start?

Please darling, he cajoled, we're in this together - We'll

always be in it, together....forever and ever?

We can rekindle the light - can't we...?

After a moment, I rose and embraced him.

THE END

□

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Mrs T. & Me



Love her or loathe her  
no one who know's about her  
or, of her achievements  
can ever forget  
Britain's one and only woman Prime Minister  
The most distinguished  
Baroness Margaret Hilda Thatcher

She was born Margaret Hilda Roberts, on - Oct.13th.1925  
to Mr, and Mrs. Roberts - proud owners of two Grocery stores in Grantham,  
Lincolnshire

My own abiding introduction to her  
was on the day  
I landed in London  
to study Business Management in 'Oct.1970

At that time she happened to be  
The Secretary of State for Education and Science  
in Edward Heath's 1970 Tory Government.

As my taxi closed in on my Hotel,  
we passed a crowded demonstration  
gathering in Hyde P\ark - a two minute walk  
from my destination

As I unpacked my suitcase  
in my Hotel room in Marble Arch  
I was serenaded by the vociferous refrains of:  
"Thatcher, Thatcher - Milk snatcher! "

Someone told me briefly who Mrs. Thatcher was  
and how her decision to end free school milk  
for the over seven's, had led to this present agitation.

(I read later that she had relented and therefore pre-school and primary school  
children were getting their free milk as per usual.)

☐

Over the coming months and years I followed her progress with mild interest.  
And, it wasn't until 1975 when Mrs. Thatcher stood against Edward Heath for the  
Conservative Party Leadership, that my interest in her grew.

In the 1979 General Election she ousted the incumbent Labour Prime Minister,  
Mr. James Callaghan with a 43 Seat Parliamentary Majority and became Europe's  
first female head of Government.

It wasn't long after that  
that I became  
one of her most ardent admirers.

☐

None of you are remotely interested  
in the Author of this write-up  
Very rightly so  
All I am. Is an entity unto myself

But, I feel that  
on this Occasion  
I really must  
insist you cast an eye over my Credentials

I was born in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1950  
and, didn't arrive in London until 1970

On a brief visit to Pakistan in 1974  
a botched operation to remove a brain tumour  
left me semi-paralysed and wheelchair-bound

My zest for life may have dipped momentarily  
but, once it had adjusted itself to a different lifestyle  
I quickly realized - to my intense relief, that  
this zest for life - in no way - had been taken away from me

And although, henceforth  
I led a quiet, stay-at-home life in Wimbledon  
I had complete access to various media outlets:  
like the Guardian and The Sunday Times

radio stations like LBC & BBC Radio4  
Plus, a range of TV stations

So. you must agree that I was  
armed with a newfound ability to gauge  
the Nation's temperature  
and, enjoy a ringside seat  
to a slice of 'very eventful'  
History unfolding before me

4

Someone asked me to try summing up Mrs. T's  
three terms in Office as clearly and succinctly as I could

It's quite impossible, I dismissed  
But, then I thought - let me give it a try:

She tackled the Unions  
Navigated Britain out of a recession  
Stood no nonsense from the European Union  
Helped The British Falkland Islands defend itself  
against Argentina's invasion  
Confronted the Soviet Union  
amongst a great many other things

She served as Great Britain's  
Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990  
The longest serving PM, last Century

The above, is only the briefest of brief  
Historical Record

She deserves more - much, much, more  
Don't you think....?

So, should we get back to the beginning...?

5

As I mentioned, earlier  
Mrs. T. was born Margaret Hilda Roberts on Oct.13th.1925. in Grantham,

Lincolnshire, where her father, Alfred Roberts - a well respected Community Leader and Conservative Party Member - owned and ran two grocery stores.

She lived above the larger of the 2 stores with her Parents and her older sister, Muriel.

The two girls attended the local Grammar School

Besides which, their father instilled into them two very strong beliefs of his:

1. His lifelong Conservative Party principles  
and, 2. The strict Methodist traditions he believed in.

In her last year in school,  
Margaret applied for a scholarship  
to study chemistry at Somerville College, Oxford.  
She was accepted  
And, was there from 1943 to 1947

While there, In 1946, she became the President of the Oxford University  
Conservative Association

Later, she graduated with a Chemistry Bachelor of Science degree.

Immediately, Margaret moved to Colchester in Essex  
to work as a research chemist..

She joined the local Conservative Association  
and, gradually got to know a wide variety of people  
on whom she made a very strong impression.

A friend of her's suggested she apply to join the Conservative Association of  
Dartford, as they were looking for suitable  
Candidates to represent them.

She applied  
Impressed everyone  
And was selected in 1951  
as Dartford's Conservative representative

She met Denis Thatcher, a rich, divorced businessmen

soon after  
but, prior commitments meant that  
Margaret had to move to Dartford

Whilst there, she supported herself by working as a Researcher  
and, although she worked hard to advance her political career  
the 1951 and '52 Elections were lost to her

Denis and she married in 1951  
and, she began to study for the bar  
where she specialized in taxation

She qualified as a barrister in 1953  
Her twins, Carol and Mark were born later that year

It wasn't till 1956 that she resumed her political career  
However, she was defeated again in the Orpington by-election

After that she began to look around for a safe seat  
She found one in Finchley - a Borough of London

From 1958 she began to represent the  
Conservatives living in the area.

She was elected MP after the 1959 General Election  
and promoted to the Front Bench in Harold Macmillan's Govt.  
as Parliamentary Undersecretary at The Ministry of Pensions and National  
Insurance

After the 1964 Election the Tories found themselves out of Office  
She became the spokeswoman for Housing and Land  
It was there that she promoted her Party's Policy of  
selling off Council homes to its Tenants

Next, she was promoted to the Shadow Treasury in 1966  
By 1967, she had become the Shadow Cabinet's fuel spokesman

Before the 1970 General Election she became the Shadow transport spokesman  
Later, she went on to - Education.

This is where I come in  
Remember, my awareness of Mrs. Thatcher



came into existence only in 1970

True, my reason for buying newsprint at the time  
was solely to do with the fact that  
a war was being fought out in my Home Country - Pakistan

A section of it wanted to break away  
and form an Independent State, called, Bangladesh

Remember the concerts for Bangladesh  
organized in New York by George Harrison  
and Ravi Shanker to raise awareness of  
the atrocities taking place in East Pakistan?

The glaring headlines writ large in British newspapers  
of the time, said it al:

Pakistan's name was mud  
But, glancing at the British section of the newspaper  
so was Mrs. Thatcher's

The end of '71 saw two major upsets - (for me)  
One, Mrs. T's job approval rating plummeted  
as she snatched milk

And, two, East Pakistan - with India's help - triumphantly emerged as  
Independent Bangladesh

6

The spotlight shifted away from the Sub-Continent  
and, confined itself solely to scrutinizing  
in detail - the policies of the Heath Government

In 1973 it took the UK successfully  
into the European Economic Union

However, it had failed to control the troubles in Northern Ireland  
And, it had disastrously failed in it's attempts to curb the growing power of the  
Unions

Two damaging Miners strikes led to 'the three-day working week' - (in order to

save electricity)

I remember taking a friend shopping down Oxford Street. She bought two outfits from Selfridges in virtual darkness!

The Government went to the Nation  
to ask it for a mandate to curb the excesses of the Unions  
But, all it was rewarded with was a hung Parliament

The Tories failed to get the support of the Liberals, so the Heath Govt. had to allow Labour under Harold Wilson to replace it. Later that year Wilson went to the electorate in hopes of securing a large mandate....He did manage to win more seats but not that many.

I recall that whenever there was an important vote in the House of Commons, the Labour Whips had to make sure that all it's Mp's were present to vote with the Govt. (No matter that a Patient had to be transported to Parliament by ambulance, cut short a honeymoon in Honolulu - or whatever -)

Although, Heath lost two General Elections in a year  
(February '74 and October '74)  
he intended to stay on as Party Leader  
and, fight a third Election- whenever that was

However, his former  
Secretary of Education and Science, Margaret Thatcher  
had other ideas  
and, challenged him

She had already been in several Govt. Departments  
and, had a great deal of experience  
No one else was as experienced  
So she, easily won the Leadership election against him

Heath took his defeat very badly  
He refused to serve in the Shadow Cabinet  
and, went to the back benches  
only to snap and criticize Mrs. T. throughout her years in Office

During the above drama, I went briefly to Pakistan - and, that's where my very own drama unfolded.  
Aged just 24

I found myself saddled with a brain tumour

An immediate operation was the only option

Ofcourse, it was botched up!

The electricity, which often fails in my Country  
choose the very moment I was on the operating table - to go off

The Hospital's generator was hastily switched on  
but, by then my brain had been starved of oxygen  
and the left side of my body had become paralysed

I was kept partially sedated for long periods  
One day it was Monday, the next Saturday  
One day, everyone was wishing me a happy New Year  
the next, it was the 15th of January.

I don't remember when I realized that I had become semi-paralysed. Perhaps, it crept up on me gradually - because, no one had the courage to say anything to me. Maybe it was better that way. Allow me to feel around for myself - look at different possibilities.

On hindsight, I'm very glad that no Doctor shared his doom and gloom about my future with me.

Anyway  
finding myself on my own  
is how I developed this very positive personality  
I wouldn't change it for anything  
But, back then, the silence of those around me was deafening.

I was forced to turn into myself for strength...  
Was it a good thing...?  
Positively!  
It turned out to be the making of me.

I was probably devastated by my condition for a bit  
But, at the same time I was positive  
that my illness wasn't going to be permanent.

Armed with that self-assessment  
I was flown to Germany for some corrective treatment.

Did it help?  
Unfortunately-no!

My father was told that the World famous  
Wolfson Rehabilitation Centre located in  
Britain was my best hope for a reasonable future

So, England  
back I returned

My Father bought me a house in Wimbledon  
and, I settled down to my rehabilitation

Luckily for me  
within two days the Wolfson Centre  
made me virtually independent

I couldn't walk  
I didn't know then, that I would never walk again  
and, that, I'd be forever wheelchair bound

But, at the time - my optimism knew no bounds

Being virtually independent was the key  
to my good humour and zest for life

I could get from my chair to my bed by sliding on a board  
I could grip a handle and hop on my good leg across to the toilet□

Make myself some coffee  
What else did I need...?

Oh yes...  
I couldn't write anymore  
so, therefore  
a typewriter was a pre-requisite  
in order to write letters etc.

I knew, I was going to shift from Business Studies  
to writing something  
...But, what....?

While I was wondering  
me and my TV switched our attention to  
none other than - British Politics

☐

Almost the first thing that was brought to my attention was  
that Mr. Heath had been defeated  
in a January 1975 Leadership election  
and, replaced by Mrs. Thatcher

(When Heath first learnt of his defeat  
apparently, he was stunned into saying:  
'It feels like a dream.')

I found it very intriguing that  
Mrs. Thatcher was the new Conservative Party Leader

But, apart from her getting elocution lessons in order to lower  
and smoothen out her Lincolnshire accent  
She made - according to me - only two notable speeches at the time:

One in 1976 - at the Kensington Town Hall  
in which she attacked the Soviet Union, robustly:

'The Russians are bent on World dominance, and, they are rapidly acquiring the  
means to become the most powerful imperial Nation the World has ever  
seen.....'

After that, 'the Red Star' newspaper  
belonging to the Soviet Defence Ministry  
dubbed her: 'The Iron Lady'

The name stuck  
She loved it  
So did we  
It suited her to a 'T'

(Years later, (2007) when a bronze statue in her honour  
was unveiled in her presence at the Houses of Parliament -  
opposite Winston Churchill's - TV cameras captured her

stating: 'I would have preferred iron-but, bronze  
will do...It won't rust.')

And. the other notable speech  
was made in 1978 regarding: 'Immigration.'  
In which, she claimed:  
'People here, were beginning to feel 'swamped' by  
the influx of immigrants..... '

You can imagine, what a storm that sentence  
and. others like it. caused

By '78-'79 - there were a series of damaging strikes  
notoriously dubbed: 'The Winter of Discontent'

Thanks to the unruly Unions  
the entire Country came to a virtual standstill

The garbage collectors -  
the grave diggers etc.  
went on strike, too -  
It was a God-awful time!

During the Elections  
the Tories put up the memorable poster:  
'Labour isn't working'

Even without that damaging poster  
Labour would have been swept out of Office

Until then, Britain had been known as:  
'The sick man of Europe'  
thanks to the strength of the Unions  
who knew how to manipulate a Labour Govt.  
And, hence  
hold the Country to ransom

Little did the Unions know  
that Mrs. Thatcher was waiting with impatience  
to 'comprehensively clip, ' their wings

Mrs. T. won the 1979 General Election with a 44 seat majority.

Outside, No.10 Downing Street, she memorably quoted Saint Francis: 'Where there is discord, may we bring harmony....'

Despite those words  
the next few years certainly saw more discord than harmony

Almost immediately, Mrs. Thatcher began trying to renegotiate Britians' Annual Budget contributions to the EEC.

In her bid to raise money  
she sold, what was considered to be - some of the UK's  
finest 'Family Silver'  
i.e. British Gas, Rolls Royce, British Airways, etc.

Luckily for her  
The North Sea oil tap had been turned on in '75  
And, people weren't that hard up.....  
Not, like they are today  
(I'm writing this retrospective in the year 2012)

The following claim will be hotly contested  
till the end of time: 'Some of her policies:  
helped increase the North/South Divide  
and made - the rich-richer and, the poor-poorer.'

Perhaps...

Anyway, let me tell you what her philosophy was  
Lower taxes and less government  
More freedom for consumers and business  
A reduction in social expenditure

Sounds simple... doesn't it...?  
but, it was more than complicated

She oversaw cutbacks at Home  
Inflation came down  
But, unemployment went up

Her Chancellor, Sir Geoffery Howe  
announced further cutbacks  
Naturally, all opinion polls swore that Mrs. T.  
was the worst British Prime Minister in history

However, Mrs. T. took no notice of polls  
unlike the Prime Ministers of today  
She just pressed on with her convictions

In a sense, many of her policies  
went hand in hand with those of the US President, Ronald Reagan

But, whereas he was popular with the American Public  
She didn't seem to endear herself to many of Uk's citizens

Both believed in the free market  
Some of today's banking crisis  
Is being traced back to them

Still, Ronald Regan and, Mrs. Thatcher  
dominated the World stage of the 1980's  
Both played a big part in the collapse of the Soviet Union  
How big a part is debatable? !

Since Mrs. Thatcher had few friends  
she found herself frequently standing alone at meetings

I've already mentioned the EEC  
now - a few words about The Commonwealth

At meetings, everyone was for sanctions against South Africa  
and it's Apartheid policies

Although Mrs. Thatcher insisted she hated Apartheid  
she refused to join in the sanctions

Yes, she cut a lonely figure  
In most places  
bar, America

Fortunately for her  
a critical moment in history



turned her abysmal standing, around

the defining moment of her Premiership  
came with The Falklands War

(The Falklands being a group of Islands off the coast of Argentina.  
Since 1764 they had been alternatively owned by France and Spain.  
Then, disputed over by Britain and Spain and finally Britain and Argentina.)

The Military Junta in Argentina suddenly invaded the Islands in April 1982  
In response, The Iron Lady dispatched a Military force to  
defend the territory  
Something the Argentineans thought she would never do

After a fierce fight Argentina was forced into  
surrender in June '82

(But, Britain has to stay ever vigilant  
the Islands and their surrounds are rich in offshore oil and fish  
So despite Argentina signing a Treaty which promised  
not to invade the Islands again  
it is constantly claiming sovereignty over the Territory.)

The 1982 victory'  
The Labour Party's disunity  
And the recovery of the UK economy  
Happily conspired to assist Mrs. T.  
and she romped home in the 1983 General Elections - with a whopping 144 seat  
majority

☐

All through her Premiership she never missed an opportunity to criticize The  
Russians  
Even though she admitted  
she could do 'business with'  
its reformist Leader Mikhail Gorbachev

Regan was just as belligerent

Although a NATO-led decision was made in early 1981  
(Before his Term in Office began)

to house American Cruise Missiles on Greenham Common - England  
he didn't reverse the decision when he entered Office in late '81

But, some of the British public  
wished to rid their soil of cruise missiles

The UK Government's consent  
triggered off mass protests and sit-ins  
It took a decade before 'successful evictions' came into force

But, the brave women who had set up Camp there  
were the clear winners  
America was forced to take it's Missiles home by 1989/90

Foreign Policy aside  
Mrs. T's second-term was  
noted for her 'action' against the Country's Unions

She was determined to curb their powers  
They undermined Parliament  
and, stifled the economy

Ted Heath had tried but failed to dominate them.  
But, Mrs. T. was determined not to be the first to blink

So, before confronting the Union of Coal miners  
she hired strongman, Ian MacGregor  
Then, stock-piled large supplies of fuel  
and, equipped the Police with riot gear

Then, she announced that she was  
shutting down 20% of the coal mines  
And, waited expectantly for the Miners to go on strike

They did - under Arthur Scargill -

The strike went on for over a year ('84-'85)  
It cost the economy over a billion pounds  
The clashes between Govt., Miners and Police turned violent  
But, Mrs. T. conceded nothing

In fact, she succeeded in closing many more Mines than were originally intended

Financially wrecked Miners drifted back to work

Yes, thanks to her steely determination  
the stranglehold over the Country  
the Mine workers and other Unions  
had once enjoyed was either snuffed out  
or, left severely weakened

She continued to privatize loss making Companies  
and, sold-off Council houses to their Tenants  
Both were popular though controversial moves

In Oct. '84 I flew off to Amsterdam with my father  
to check out Holland's reputed: 'Disabled friendly' credentials

Shortly after entering my hotel room  
I tuned into BBC1 to see what was  
happening at the Conservative Party Conference  
taking place in Brighton -

Two minutes later  
I watched in horror  
as an IRA bomb intended for her  
almost brought the huge hotel she  
was staying in, crashing down

5 people died  
But, she emerged calm and unscathed

She insisted the Conference go ahead as planned  
Gave a rousing speech  
and, enhanced her standing throughout the Country

As for the IRA and the other dissident groups of Northern Ireland  
they've had longstanding grievances against Britain  
going back centuries

During Mrs. T's tenure  
the violence in Belfast got worse  
And, no progress was made

Hunger strikes were staged by the IRA  
The British Government made a few concessions  
But, ofcourse-they were never anywhere near enough!



In June '87 Mrs Thatcher won a record Third General election  
She was the first Prime Minister in 160 years to do so

On the steps of No.10 she said: 'It is wonderful to be entrusted  
with the government of this great Country, once again...'

But, a central policy  
written into the Tory Party manifesto  
which replaced the Household rates with a Community charge  
was widely disparaged by the Public  
and, it dealt her Government a fatal blow

Things went swiftly downhill after that  
and, her Premiership wasn't allowed to last out it's full term

In essence the Community charge was this:  
in future a householder would be taxed according to the number of people living  
under the same roof rather than the size of one's property. In other words, a  
couple living in a small bed-sit would be charged more than the millionaire living  
alone - down the road.

Ofcourse this led a normally patient and tolerant society  
to revolt and riot  
Mrs. Thatcher's standing plummeted  
- never to recover, again

Even her most ardent of supporters  
(of which-I am one)  
Saw the flaw immediately

But, she didn't  
or, worse still - wouldn't...!

The Country went berserk  
But, she simply refused to budge

Her final downfall came soon after

On hindsight  
history has proved her right  
But, back then....

The sheer brutality in which she was dismissed  
was stunning, as well as. heartbreaking

Mrs. T. had originally voted with Heath's Government to join the EEC  
Because, dealing with E\urope would be good for Uk's industry

But, her enthusiasm eroded as the EEC began to intrude further and further into  
the British way of life

The very last straw for her came at a Rome Summit in late 1990  
when the UK was invited to join a Common European Currency - the Euro

All Europeans agreed to it in principle  
She didn't...!

As she famously confirmed in her: ' No! No! No! ' explanation to the House of  
Commons  
Britain would become subservient to the EEC  
If she had signed the treaty

Like many, I agreed with her wholeheartedly  
Not so - many in her Party

They wanted closer ties with Europe  
Not the gulf she was creating

Her normally stringent and combative style didn't help improve matters  
In fact, many felt, she had become very shrill, dictatorial  
and, absolutely incapable of listening to any of her colleagues.

(Although the following famous quote is from a Tory Conference Speech given in  
1981, it might as well have been made years later...When the Press had  
suggested she do an economic policy U-turn -  
she Majestically replied: 'You turn if you want to. The Lady's not for turning.')

Labour zoomed ahead of her and panicked  
the discontented Tories  
They simply had to find another Leader  
before they lost their seats at the next Election

The, 'No! No! No! ' speech as regards the EEC  
triggered off the events that led to her swift  
and brutal downfall

First, her Pro-Euro Deputy PM, Sir Geoffrey Howe resigned  
in an angst-filled speech because she had refused to give a  
date to join the European Currency.

Next, Michael Heseltine, who used to be a Cabinet Minister, but had resigned  
years earlier

back-stabbed her by challenging her for the Leadership of the Conservative Party  
And finally - most humiliatingly - she didn't win decisively against him in the first  
ballot

She was persuaded by friends  
not to stand in a second ballot

Instead, she put a candidate of her own choice in place  
to challenge, 'The Back stabber'

She agreed to refrain from standing in a second ballot  
Choose John Major to replace herself  
And resigned

(John Major went on to beat Hurd and THAT other Challenger  
and followed Mrs. T. into Downing Street.)

(Mrs. T. foresaw just the scenario that is being played out in Greece and other  
European Countries

She wanted a strong Sterling  
able to stand on its own  
Beholden to no one but the British Taxpayer

Such disparate groups as:  
The CBI  
The Unions

Richard Branson  
et al.  
held the opposite view  
|and couldn't wait to join  
the Europeans

Now that Mrs. Thatcher's been proved right  
And most other people wrong  
Where are they now...?  
Politicians from every Party:  
Tony Blair  
Peter Mandelson  
Michael Heseltine  
Kenneth Clarke  
Paddy Ashdown  
...You name them  
Where...?

Gone to ground  
....that's where  
Ha! Ha!

As for Mrs. Thatcher - elevated!  
William Hague - similarly, so

In conclusion:

Mrs. Thatcher  
changed Britain forever  
for the better

She inherited an ailing economy  
Turned it around  
Put the 'Great' back into Britain  
and achieved  
too many things to mention in this record

As she bade Downing Street a tearful farewell  
after 11 years and 209 days in Office  
I recalled a quote from her 1973 TV interview, in which she said:  
'I don't think there will be a woman Prime Minister in my lifetime.'

All that's left for me to say is  
Well done Mrs. Thatcher  
There will never, ever be anyone  
to match your stature.

Since you left the scene  
my newspapers, radio and TV screen  
have been awash with Pygmies  
posing as Important Politicians!  
None of them can hold a candle to you  
NONE!

THE END

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# My Character

I regret what I said  
the moment that I said it  
Had I waited and thought about it  
it would have been great  
Wouldn't it?

I feel bad  
and real sad  
I'd gladly take it back  
if I could  
But, there's no point  
in regretting it  
Because unfortunately  
words once spoken can't be unspoken

I could swear to myself  
that henceforth I'd think  
before saying anything

But, that would mean  
that I wasn't being  
true to the real me  
And, I would rather  
briefly get myself  
Into hot water  
than change  
my character one iota

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# My Kismet

I sincerely believe that  
Whatever happens in life  
Happens for a good reason  
Though one is unlikely to  
Appreciate it at the time

Because of my disability  
My kismet has driven me  
To many wondrous places

Places I would only have  
Envisioned in my dreams  
Had I been able-bodied

I might have thought of  
Becoming a painter  
An accountant  
Or anything  
Other than a contented writer

Yes, I believe in kismet  
Its the sole guiding force in all our lives

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# My Marriage

When I was young  
Every Son  
And his Mum  
Had their eyes on me

And the reason for this?  
Was simply because  
I was stunningly  
Good looking

My parents got worried  
They didn't want Cupid to strike me  
Quite so early  
They wanted me to study  
So, I did  
What they wanted

Then as the years flew by  
And, no guy caught my eye  
During my twenties  
My parents panicked  
And demanded  
I marry somebody  
Not just, anybody  
But somebody  
Suitably suitable

However I hesitated  
I didn't know what I wanted  
Actually I did know  
But it seemed  
Like an impossible dream  
So - I didn't want to know  
What I wanted

But once I reached  
The ripe old age of thirty  
My Mother got more than just tetchy  
"That's it! ' she harangued oneday

'Enough is enough."  
And ordered me to marry  
Immediately  
"But, there's no groom, " wailed I  
"Don't worry about that! " she replied. "I know,  
just, the man for you."  
"Who? " I rued.  
"You leave that to me! " she said positively.  
I looked at her suspiciously  
Because, throughout our lives  
Although we'd tried and tried  
We'd never seen eye to eye on any thing  
"Ever since your childhood, " she swore,  
" you've adored your father, "  
"True" I agreed.  
"So I promise you, " she continued, " - without further ado,  
I'm going to  
Fix you up with a ditto version of him.."  
"Will you? ' I asked uncertainly  
(I couldn't imagine anybody in the whole wide world  
being remotely like Daddy)  
"Ofcourse, I will! " she replied confidently.

So very foolishly I agreed to  
What amounted to  
An arranged marriage

When I set eyes on mine Groom  
I nearly swooned  
I certainly didn't see him as my Mother did  
He definitely wasn't a patch on my Father  
I should have objected  
There and then  
For I was marrying him  
Not my Mother!

What I saw at first sight  
Was definitely  
No delight

Someone dumb  
Extremely ungainly

And very plump

However Mother found him splendid  
She didn't much care  
That I didn't much care for my intended  
Anyway, she thought, I was just being  
My usual self - difficult!  
Besides, she was a woman in a hurry  
She had no intentions of letting me tarry  
I simply had to marry - pronto!

I hate to admit it  
But she won the day  
(She always did!)  
So, the date was set and, we were wed  
Then before I could catch my breath  
In other words  
Strictly nine months later  
Out popped our baby daughter  
My Parents were so pleased  
Not exactly so my husband or me  
For by then we were right on course  
For a quickie divorce  
But, it took so long  
Everything that needed to go wrong  
went wrong  
And somewhere along the way  
Admist the bitter accusations  
And the harsh recriminations  
My husband and I  
Fell madly in love with each other

He wasn't dumb  
He was quite loquacious  
When I got to know him  
Nor was he ungainly  
How mistaken could I have been?  
And, did I say he was plump?  
How could I have been such a chump?

Now, I'm glad to say  
My jaded vision of him is no more  
And, we're busy  
Living happily ever after  
With each other  
And our adorable baby daughter

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# My Nephew

O!

How I wish I thought like my nephew  
He doesn't wish to listen to the news  
He intends to ignore the din around him  
And, concentrate instead on things like  
His burgeoning career, his kith and kin  
And doing more-or-less his own thing

Which may not be a bad thing, ofcourse  
But, what has got him so turned off  
Is the calibre of todays World Leaders  
Taciturn, unprincipled and underhand  
Is just a snip of what he thinks of them

In some ways I share his total disgust  
at the egotistical, selfish and unjust  
behaviour of some of our mediocre  
Politicians. They're not much more  
than priggish, self-serving, deceptive  
self-centred, manipulative cowards

But, still - like other people I happen  
to be stubbornly addicted to the news

So, while we waste our time worrying  
about issues like: the lowering of the  
American Governments morality. The  
State of Democracy in various Countries  
The refusal of certain Christian Govern-  
ments to engage with The Muslim World  
Terrorism in our time. The illegal war in  
Iraq. How to stop Iran acquiring Nuclear  
lweapons. Israel's collective punishment  
of the Palestinians because a few of their  
millitants kidnapped an Israeli soldier etc.  
etc.

Rafi is so very lucky. He's blissfully  
preoccupied living his own life

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# My Prerogative

So, I've changed my mind  
What of it....?

It's my prerogative  
There's no need to make a song and dance about it

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# My Undying Regret

His recovery was slow but steady. After three months of almost being shot to pieces - at last - I was able to go home and partially rid myself of the disquiet I had felt.

As soon as the hospital rang - I splashed some water on my face. Changed. Grabbed the keys. Rushed out the door. Jumped in the car and tore round to say goodbye.

But, he had already gone.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Needlessly

Whether it be  
In Iraq  
Or  
Afghanistan  
to name, but - two theatres of war

Many good men have died needlessly

Why?

Whether it was on false assumptions  
like getting rid of non existent weapons of mass destruction in Iraq  
or rushing into Afghanisxtan without a preplanned strategy of dealing with the  
Country

Ye Gods  
Save us from meddlesome Politicians  
and, know it all - stay far away at home - Generals

Spare these men where ever they may have come from  
All are beloved to someone

Be he, Father, brother, husband - some other relation  
or, nearly an acquaintance.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Nerdish Politicians

The ordinary British citizen is far better informed than the average UK politician.

For instance, Politicians have promised that British troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the middle of 2014. Until then, young English soldiers must endanger their lives fighting the Taliban and al-Qaida so that the streets of Britain can be kept safe from Terrorists.

One TV viewer texted his local station: 'Does that mean, the Army knows in advance that it will have positively beaten the enemy by that very date? '

No It's just a simple timetable to be observed before the British elections.

As the widow of a young British soldier sadly pointed: 'Our politicians have been unthinkingly repeating the same old senseless mantra over the years....'Our troops are keeping Britain free of terrorists. But, how many British troops have died on the streets of London? None! Whereas they're dying in their droves in Afghanistan.... I say, bring our men back home, at once! '

Here! Hear!

But, there's one radio listener I really must mention. He asked: 'If the terrorists are supposed to be in Pakistan, why are our troops in Afghanistan and, not there? ' The presenter spluttered. So, the radio listener answered the question himself. 'Because, not only is Pakistan a Sovereign Nation, but, more than that, it has nuclear weapons - So, beware! No one dare attack it.! '

Here! Here, once again - Well said.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Nostalgia

I finally visited my childhood home after an absence of 35 years  
I fully expected to feel nostalgic

But, what I discovered was  
my perceptions had altered considerably  
during the intervening years

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Not In My Backyard

You complain that all down the Centuries you've suffered severe persecution by not only those in the West but those the World over.

After the Holocaust suffered during World War 11 at the hands of Hitler's Germany, you tried fleeing to what you thought were friendly Countries in the West.

However those so-called friendly Countries put the barriers up and applied a strict quota system. Countries like, France, Britain, Cuba - Canada - America. Yes, even the US. began to feel that it had reached saturation point and refused further Jewish refugees - It even fired a warning shot from Florida to prevent the ship St. Louis entering it's port.

A permanent solution to the wave upon wave of refugees simply had to be found.

Decades back, in a meeting of Zionists, in Switzerland, 1897, the Jewish Society had decided to build a permanent home for themselves in The Promised Land - according to Biblical times - (present day, Israel.) That Land wasn't an ordinary open space. People lived there.

Still, Britain who held the Mandate of Palestine was persuaded by Europe and the US to let a 'stream' of Jews in. She gave in very reluctantly. That opened the 'flood gates.'

Jews: Once you were a full Continent away, your Western friends were very vociferous in their assurances of their constant and undying love for you. Huh...! With friends like these.....!

Yes, it is the Promised Land. You have every right to settle there. But, it is Arab Land too. Remember that! . You must be prepared to share it with them. The Two States solution won't do.

Has your persecution over the Centuries taught you no humility or compassion at all?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Now

When we were together  
trapped under the one roof  
boxed into a single space  
consuming the same air  
we were constantly at each others throats

Now, he lives a mile down the road  
and, we're no longer at daggers drawn

And, I can tell you with confidence  
he's now my confidant and my best friend

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# On Hindsight

No one believes: in that well worn saying  
It'll be all right on the night

Mention the five rings  
or that the Olympics are coming to London  
this much is absolutely certain  
considerable panic and loads of hand wringing

Predictions of unfinished venues  
Spiraling costs  
Log jam  
Gridlock  
Pandemonium  
Watch out  
Ticket touts about  
Journalists whipping up panic  
over the threat of terrorists

Fiddlesticks!  
99% of the Olympics  
went off without a hitch

Sceptical killjoys had reminded:  
'We're in the midst of a severe financial crisis  
We can't afford this...! '  
Still others had grumbled:  
'60 State of the Art hospitals could have been built  
instead of all this extravagance.....'  
And, doom-sayers swore:  
'London has unpredictable weather  
creaking infrastructure  
How will it cope?  
Think! '

From nay  
to cynical complaints of bloated commercialism  
To yea  
and, finally to - complete addiction



The moment the torch arrived from Greece  
the mood of the Country changed completely  
Through gale force winds and poring rain  
people came out in their droves  
to catch a glimpse  
and, to celebrate a fleeting moment

The famed British rain  
stayed away - in the main  
and, London basked in the sun

Opening ceremony  
Magnificent  
Closing ceremony  
An absolute triumph  
Olympic park  
Hats off  
People of all races  
Came together to celebrate  
Where else do you find such unity?  
No place else - unfortunately

Buy me tickets to some event  
Any event  
I want to tell my relatives  
' I was there! '

Success at swimming, rowing, shooting  
and much, much more  
Sent us Brits zooming up the medals board  
Thanks in part to lottery funding  
arranged by John Major's govt.

From twenty-one to fifteen  
within the blink of an eye  
we were at no.5  
No! No.4  
Now,3  
Tee hee  
Thanks - Team GB

Olympic fever - complete!

A combination of dedicated athletes  
Enthusiastic volunteers  
Meticulous logistical planning  
Panoramic views on our TV screens  
Ensured a very successful Olympics

Congratulations London  
The games were great

And. the way you represented  
a slice of Britain's rich heritage  
It's well-known tolerance  
it's diverse multiculturalism -  
you definitely did the Nation proud.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# On My Mind

If something is on my mind  
I tend to see it everywhere  
In every conceivable place  
No matter what I do  
No matter where I go

Rising in the morning  
Bathing  
Dressing  
Downing a glass of juice  
Running for the train  
Etc.

Unless I deal with it  
I'm not going to forget it

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# On The Fence!

Where is God sitting?  
(If he does exist)  
Unfortunately  
In his usual place  
On the fence

While Lebenon on account of  
Hezbollah - is being  
Blasted to smithereens  
And the Palestinians are  
Being punished for  
Democratically electing  
 Hamas

God and the rest of the World  
Are sitting on the fence!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# One Day

I've had this crush on you all my life  
Everyone thinks you very ordinary  
I don't!  
You mean everything to me

At one stage there was serious talk  
of our marrying one another  
I felt rather flattered that you'd chosen to spend your life with me  
rather than with any of the many other girls in your life  
Then-suddenly. Inexplicably. It all fizzled out...Completely

I heard later that  
apparently my parents weren't rich enough to provide the large  
dowry you required to maintain your lavish lifestyle

Well - be that as it may

You married your match soon after  
I trust, she and her dowry have kept you very happy

I however didn't take my rejection lightly  
It took me all too long to recover

When I eventually did marry  
it was -happily for genuine love  
Pure and simple!

My husband insisted on  
waiving aside any talk of a dowry -  
unless it was solely for ME -

So, for the moment  
you and I live completely diverse lives  
You live lavishly in your palatial home atop a hill  
and I live modestly below with my precious family.

But one day-some day  
when riches and lofty heights  
status and decorum

will mean nothing to either of us  
we'll finally meet on equal terms

under the same turf  
Perhaps miles apart  
But, definitely sharing the same earth

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Operation: Enduring Freedom - Or, Ten Years On!

They thought  
(Mainly the US and the Brits)  
That it would be a snip  
,

to nip into Afghanistan  
Capture Osama Bin Laden  
Then, nip out again'

Whola!  
Barely a pistol fired  
What could be simpler?

Good strategy?  
Yes  
Except...

Now, ten years later  
The US, NATO and their allies  
Are bogged down  
In an unwinnable war  
Which has lasted longer  
Than Americas involvement in Vietnam

Death, misery,  
Injury and hardship abound  
And, the West now accepts

It rushed into Afghanistan  
With too simplistic a view  
And little or no knowledge of its  
history, culture or geography  
For instance  
They had no idea  
That the tribes they intended to subjugate  
along the Borders of Afghanistan  
were related to those living inside  
Pakistan  
They could not enter the territory  
of a Sovereign Country

Consequently  
Kabul and Washington  
conveniently blame Pakistan  
for ALL their shortcomings

The hard fact is this  
The ordinary Afghani  
Hadn't a clue what 9/11/ was

When they suddenly saw  
Foreign boots on their soil  
They saw red

They went out and joined  
Either al-Qaeda, The Taliban.  
Or a variety of insurgents

Ever since then - foreign troops  
Have found it next to impossible  
To tell, who is who

As a result  
Many innocents have died  
Several militants have crossed the border  
Into Pakistan  
And, just as many insurgents have crossed over  
Into Afghanistan

And, what made matters worse  
The US and its Allies lost the plot  
Rushed off to war in Iraq in 2003  
Leaving some hated local Warlords  
in charge

By the time they returned to Afghanistan  
They had lost their place  
And had to start all over again

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Osama Bin Laden Is Dead

So what?

His philosophy has spawned  
so many diverse heads  
And, quickly spread to all sorts of places

That, there's absolutely no chance of containing it!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Our Prince

18 month old Jaan looks on askance when our tenant on returning from his office, hurries to his room without so much as a backward glance.

Now, Jaan is used to notice. Plenty of it. So, he stares curiously after him, half expecting the repentant man to return and do a quick handstand.

I explain to Jaan that he oughtn't to expect total devotion from any and everyone - And, that only a select few of his overzealous blood relatives were eager and willing to be enslaved by him.

He need only step into his Grandparents residence to see who I'm alluding to:

Those who drop important chores and run to him as soon as his mother carries him in through the door; and, those who vie with each other to attract his attention. After a few moments of this the boy takes off in total confusion to get lost amongst his many toys. However, he's hardly amongst them for more than a second before his devoted fans have caught up with him.

His grandmother's voice rings out, 'Coo-ee, Jaan...! Coo-ee! '

Jaan gives her a toothy grin.

'Look at him...! Look! Look! '

All of us do.

'That front tooth. Its new. Isn't it cute? '

All of us agree enthusiastically.

His Great-Grandma who hadn't noticed his teeth, says 'Lets see? Lets see? '

But, Jaan turns away stubbornly.

His Grand Father tries to humour him

His Aunt begins to sing, 'twinkle, twinkle, little star! "

The mite has had enough

He glare's at her

The crush has been all too much

He rushes past her to his Mama

"That's it! " she announces as she scoops him up. 'I'm taking him away.'

'What? ' the devoted exclaim in dismay.

"There are too many of you -" Jaan's Mama explains "... pulling him in too many directions. It's confusing." She turns to her son. 'C'mon. Lets gather your things.'

His knick-knacks are gathered together by his disappointed kin.

'Ta! Ta! , Jaan.' they repeat brokenly as he leaves

He waves, 'ta, ta, ' enthusiastically, relieved to get some breathing space.

As Jaans car disappears down the driveway his relatives return to their mundane chores dreaming of the day when he will visit them again.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Pause For Thought

Most boys  
want to follow in their fathers footsteps  
when they grow up

But, not Amin  
He was determined not to  
make the kind of mistakes  
his father consistently did  
all through his childhood

The Boy had been witness to  
his fathers incapacity to hold his drink  
Yet his Elder persisted in drinking copiously  
Not caring about the sorrow and hardship  
he was causing around him

Now  
when the Father looks on 30 year old Amin  
appreciating life  
working hard  
and enjoying his family  
he pauses to think  
and to regret  
that he allowed his own youth to hurtle by  
without thinking

....If only  
he had resisted the temptation to drink  
If only  
he thinks  
if only

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# People Assume

People assume  
that as a writer  
i spend hour after hour  
on my own  
with my typewriter  
And therefore  
I must be  
incredibly lonely

On the contrary  
no matter where I go  
i carry the characters I create  
around and about with me  
And, when I get bored  
with humanity  
as I invariably do  
i'm always assured by the fact that  
my Cast of characters are ever ready  
to reassure and keep me company

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# People Often Ask

People often ask of me:

'What does it take to  
write a good poem? '

'Inspiration', I avow,  
without hesitation

It stands to reason  
If one has a bright idea  
Write it down at once  
But, if one has to 'mull'  
over it - forget it  
It wasn't worth it  
in the first place

And, never start with the thought that  
'I'm absolutely brilliant!  
I write wonderful phrases  
I could handle this in one sec..."

You might believe so  
But,  
don't be so sure

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Perfect In Every Sense

Picture this guy  
He was consoling me  
because I was so upset  
over the death of his sister

He assured me that  
his sister was much better off six feet under  
because, her husband had treated her  
and the rest of his family so badly  
He had never had a good word to say to any of them  
He had a bad temper etc. etc.

I looked at him askance  
He treated his family equally badly  
He never had a good word to say to any of them  
He had a fowl temper etc. etc.  
So, by that criteria  
shouldn't he have taken a running jump - long ago?

Not so  
He wouldn't have agreed with that theory  
He never held a mirror up to himself

and was therefore  
wholly confident that he  
was perfect in every sense!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Perfection

At eighteen, one expects perfection in a spouse  
But, by age of thirty people have come down to earth  
and accepted that there is no such thing as perfection  
Everyone has their shortcomings

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Peseverance

If you want to succeed at anything  
in Life  
you've got to strive  
Stay focused  
and, be extremely dedicated

Then  
one day  
someday  
success  
will surely come your way

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Precious

My precious grandchildren came to visit me for three weeks  
And my uneventful life was transformed in an instant into an abundance of  
laughter and happiness

The days flew by, barely registering with me.  
So, naturally when they left their visit felt rather brief and fleeting.

Now, all I have to hold on to are the very many happy memories they left  
behind.....

along with an assortment of toys -

and the resumption of a life of solitude and silence

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Pre-Conceptions

And...?

I have feelings too

Do you have as 'positive.' an outlook as I have?  
I don't know... I'm occasionally pretty 'negative'.

Are you?

Yes. Like the average man. I'm not a Superhuman-like you

I once thought I was Super human. But, now...  
Now...?

Not anymore

No?

You 're visibly disabled. I'm able-bodied, but...  
But...?

I realize, I have many hidden disabilities-too many  
to mention.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Putting Words In My Mouth!

I say this with the utmost irritation  
You're constantly saying  
If I were you - I'd have said this - done that - etc...

Wrong!  
Had you been me  
you'd have done and said precisely what I said or did!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Quaint

Isn't it heartening that the tiny Kingdom of Qatar wants to stay engaged with the entire World. Its keen to agree with the US. Hobnob with Israel. Allow the Taliban to open an Office on its Territory.. And, on and on -  
Its only too willing to TOLERATE World opinion - so long as the search lights stay off it  
And, as for debate at home - its simply not allowed.  
Not allowed - you ask? .  
Being an autocratic regime - you understand - it must reigns Supreme.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Random Thoughts

1. There's no tomorrow  
Despite wot anyone says  
So live, live, live,  
For TODAY.
2. Stand your ground  
Don't let no one  
Monkey you around
3. I could lie to her  
to save her from the hurt  
But, that wouldn't change the basic facts
4. If you can't stand a confrontation  
don't get into a wrestle  
in the first place
5. He's vain and conceited  
Hence the real truth  
will forever evade him

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Reaching Out

Wouldn't it be great  
to be able to communicate with those close to you - adequately?

Words of comfort  
where appropriate - encouragement - sympathy - endearment - regret - support  
etc.- go a long way.

A simple, 'good luck! ' or brief touch of the hand can really buck one up.

So, why are we sometimes thoughtless or reticent when called upon to make the  
smallest of gestures to say you understand and are entwined with your loved one  
- at least - in Spirit?

None of us would be human if we had the 'presence of mind' - all the time!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Sanctuary

Within the confines of  
my room  
In the comfort of my bed  
Enveloped in a quilt

I listen with fascination  
as The BBC World Service  
transports me to distant  
wars and conflicts  
or peoples individual  
pain and varied experiences

Then, before drifting off to sleep  
I never fail to thank my lucky stars  
that a Country like Britain has  
afforded me sanctuary

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Saying Much Too Much

i swore I wouldn't  
But, . to order to  
unburden myself  
I did!

Storm into his flat  
Told him off  
Possibly demeaned myself  
by saying much too much

Walked off  
Feli a lot - lot worse!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Search Within

Search within yourself for answers  
Don't cast your eyes about

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Sitting Target

&lt;/&gt;

I'm no rich Banker

I can't threaten to leave the Country

Unless I'm paid a large sum of money

I'm no 'Non-dom', either

I can't evade UK's punishing tax system

And, I'm certainly not any part of Middle England

I can ferret away precisely NOTHING

Then again, I'm not a big Company like GE

who can afford to pay wily accountants

Or influential Amazon and Google who are able

to store their dosh in off-skore Islands

All I am is a poor UK Citizen

Without any means of jetting out of the Country

Each time the heat is turned on me

Successive UK Governments are petrified of

increasing the taxes of the rich

just in case, they leave these shores  
in order to thrive in lucrative regions  
far away from their Nation's jurisdiction

Since you can't get hold of the big fish  
Try the small fry  
We're exactly where you'd expect us to be

You can - and, do - take full advantage of me  
You tax me to the hilt  
I'm your typical Sitting target  
Poor, hard working and, honest

You need people like me very badly  
Fortunately, there are many of us, around

So, don't worry  
All of us are Loyal  
Dependable  
And, very, very Taxable!



# Slave

I've desired and desired you ever since I don't know when. I felt surprised and privileged when you allowed me to quench my thirst over and over again.

So, why am I not satisfied?

Could it be that I've been a 'slave to my desires' for so long that I no longer know what I want?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Smoldering

Don't try to console me  
with words like:  
"It gets better with time"  
Believe me  
it doesn't!  
It only get's worse

Or, that:  
"Pain eventually dulls"  
I wish that were so  
But, unfortunately  
- no!

All one can expect in the future is  
  
the slow burning recognition that  
an acceptance and endurance of Life  
is all there is

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Soar

How things work out in this life  
is a complete mystry to me  
I mean, the man literally soared  
He shot to the very top

And remained in that position  
defying all the odds  
No one could tear him down  
Not even a determined Opposition

In him lay all our hopes and dreams  
of a better future all round  
So naturally, we rallied to him

And then - just as surprisingly  
and, inexplicably  
his star suddenly waned  
Then plummeted

And when it plummeted  
it sure did plummet

Where does he go?  
How does he cope?

He had been plucked out of the wilderness  
He hadn't expected to step out into the limelight  
Unfortunately, just as he was starting to  
savour his newfound fame  
he found that he had been  
unceremoniously thrust into the wilderness, once again

Someone else had overtaken him  
And was, now, enjoying the adulation  
that was fully 'due' to him

Unfortunately, he was left dealing with  
a thoughtless and fickle Nation



Was he bitter...?  
His adrelin had pumped ceaselessly  
New possibilities had momentarily  
stared him in the face

Then, they had just as soon been snatched away

Yes,  
i'd say he was bitter  
And, sad to say  
a very, very sore loser

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Somebody Similar

Whatever I say about my sloppy cleaner  
will sound very familiar  
to all those who've had to suffer  
somebody similar

Before she arrives  
I have to tidy up the place  
just in case she misplaces any of my personal effects  
Then again, I have to clear up, after her  
because, although I leave explicit instructions  
she doesn't seem to follow many of them

She skives off with her dosh  
before I return from work

True, she hoovers  
And, throws out the rubbish  
But, my grouse is that  
all she does is scratch the surface

She doesn't notice the cobwebs  
I have to clear them away myself  
She doesn't keep nooks and crannies clear  
unless they're specifically pointed out to her  
The dust lies unruffled on my picture frames  
and, there the dust will remain  
until the next time she shows her face

But, that doesn't mean she's going to do  
what she's employed to  
She'd much rather tune my radio to her liking  
than concentrate on anything so menial as dusting

So, you may well ask  
why I put up with my cleaner

I don't exactly know  
except that very possibly  
she lightens my load

partially

If not completely!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Sorry

Sorry  
i can't help you  
'cos  
like you  
i too  
am a stranger here  
trying to  
muddle my way through  
this puzzling world

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Speculation

I've often wondered  
how things would have turned out  
had my response been different  
that night

But, what point is there  
in endless speculation  
Things are  
as they are

And, they can't  
and won't be  
any different!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Statement

Stand your ground  
Don't let no one  
monkey you around

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Stats

Stats are just that. Very unreliable.  
Especially if they're on the internet  
Anyone can read whatever they wish into them

Someone said to me - the other day: Check the stats on your poetry page. They look terrific.!

I wasn't excited. I had checked them roughly two years ago, and out of perhaps a billion computers in use around the hemisphere was attracting an average of two people a day...Very disheartening - to say the least!

Anyway, I looked up my stats out of curiosity. My site was receiving 79 strikes a day. Great - despite the fact that by now at least a trillion computers were operating around the globe.

One can check to see the length of time spent on a site. According to what I saw people had lingered on my site for hours.

Naturally, I was delighted. But when I thought about it, visitors could have left my page and wandered off to 'read a newspaper on a new window' - or started up a new search engine in order to skype a friend - send an urgent text, e-mail, or have a lengthy video conference.

On the other hand, upon getting on to my site, the usual distractions could have taken over. The sound of letters falling to the floor, a newspaper being shoved into the letterbox; the doorbell ringing; a milkman. demanding to be paid. Any amount of things.

I conclude that computer stats are terribly deceptive...and, no one can prove any different.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Suddenly

Suddenly,  
it's summer

We've barely got to grips with it  
before all of a sudden  
it's autumn once again

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# The Art Of Winning

You always seem to win  
(In your eyes, at least)

But, you better watch it  
I'm biding my time  
There may very well be  
A next time!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Carefree One-Parent Family

He looks much happier minus his wife in the picture

The kids look carefree too

Don't bother to say c-h-e-e-s-e

Click..! Click..! Click..!

What a happy one parent family they make

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Chink Of Light

You worry  
She's gone home to think  
She's asked for space  
and, a chance to breathe  
But, its been five weeks

Don't panic  
My friend  
Let her have as long as it takes  
At least she meets and greets you  
when you go round to visit the kids  
That means, the door isn't completely shut

Its far easier to shut a door  
than to keep it open  
It's clear  
She's kept the door  
of communication with you,  
open  
So, take heart

I'm serious!

Now, just don't go and loose it  
Don't behave like the clodhopper you sometimes are

When you encounter her  
Don't go on and on like a broken record  
Demanding she return home - or anything like that  
That's the sure way to turn her off

Just, step back  
Take it easy  
Try to play your cards right  
Give her the space and time she needs  
And, above all, let her breathe

Don't crowd her  
It may take years

But, have patience  
and, inshalla, one day - maybe, not right away  
but, one day  
you'll win

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Conundrun

The real irony of the situation as the world exists in the year 2007, is this:

Certain influential  
politicians in the West  
are obsessed with the deeds of  
one  
Osama Bin Laden

He who had at one time  
been hailed a 'Hero'  
by the Americans  
for helping  
them oust the Russians from Afghanistan

Let me tell you that  
the West began to heap  
innumerable weapons on him and his colleagues  
in the 1980s  
without knowing anything  
about him or any of them  
Or, even bothering to question their ideology

(I guess  
so long as they appeared to be  
on the correct side  
then, that was alright!)

Similarly, the US, Britain and their Allies  
piled Saddam Hussain high  
with Chemical Weapons  
to use against the Iranians  
during the Iran/Iraq war

And, those very same Allies conveniently looked the other way  
when Saddam Hussain turned those very same chemical weapons  
on the innocent Iraqi Citizens of his Country

But, once Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussain  
refused to do America's bidding

the US accused them of becomming deranged villans

Yes! The US changed it's tune  
and demanded the world join hands with it  
in order to eliminate  
the two cretains it had itself created

Many of the poorer Nations were caught up in a dilemma  
Should they kow-tow to America or not...?

The nations closest to Afghanistan  
...like Pakistan  
were given no choice  
They were threatened into joining  
'The war on terror'

This open-ended war  
has been going on since Dec.2001

Meanwhile  
Britain, Italy and other minor Countries  
have joined America in it's illegal war-without-end in Iraq

(You can see very clearly that  
America and the West  
refuse to acknowledge their own part in  
creating the two Monsters they did)

Nor do they care about  
the misery they're spreading  
through their inhumane actions

Few Governments dare criticize  
America's warped foreign policy  
It's recklessness  
and, it's almost total unaccountability

The upshot of the two endless wars has been that:  
terrorism has spread all over the globe  
rather than been contained  
as was the original intention

And instead of facing weapons of mass destruction in Iraq  
America's coalition is facing violent and ruthless Iraqi and foreign insurgents

.....

THERE SEEMS TO BE  
NO WAY OUT

IS IT ANY WONDER  
THE WORLD 'S IN  
THE MESS THAT IT'S IN? !

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Country

Ha! Ha!

Please don't make us laugh

The Country that started an illegal war in Iraq

The Country that carried out extraordinary rendition flights

The Country that despite repeated objections from Pakistan  
carries out drone attacks along it's Sovereign territory

The Country that opened a controversial prison in Guantanamo

...and, on and on...

Is actually lecturing Scotland

on how, by letting the alleged Lockerbie bomber free

it has made a mockery of the rule of law!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# The Denial

It seems to me that there's a lot of hypocrisy in this world today.

Take Christmas, for instance. We should all be celebrating it - whether we be Jew, Muslim, Catholic or Cristian. All these religions have so much in common.

Jesus and Mary may be interpreted in different ways in each religion - the Koran, the Scriptures and the Torah. But, both are prominent in each and every Holy Book.

It's the Western Governments that like to depict Muslims as complete aliens.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Dinosaur

Decrepit  
Inept  
Corrupt

V. bureaucratic  
Thoroughly problematic  
Who am I referring to?  
None other than the EU

There was a time when Europeans vied with each other  
to join this inward - looking  
naval gazing  
undemocratic  
Club

Now thanks to the Clique  
and, its outmoded policies

suddenly everyone is beginning to feel queasy  
and wants out  
Greece is positively greasy  
and, the air in adjacent Countries smells pretty rancid as well

While Europe wastes money trying desperately to cling on to the Euro  
Emerging markets prosper and look on complacently at the EUs folly!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Drone

I'm a pretty laid back kind of guy  
I lead a good life  
I earn well  
I have no cares in this world  
no complaints

I love chilling out  
relaxing with the family  
reading a good book  
viewing TV  
Getting my teeth round a good steak  
Chilled bottle of wine  
Picture it?  
Great!

I watch the garden grow  
Fix the wheelbarrow  
You know  
that sort of thing

Everyone greets me  
People are so friendly

No one knows what I do for a living  
I'm so used to it  
I can do it without even thinking

Don't worry about me  
I work at a safe distance  
I'm 1000 miles  
or so away from my target  
I pilot unmanned planes  
and, depend on artificial Intelligence  
My mission is to zap terrorists  
destination right or wrong

So don't fret  
It really is no sweat

The other day, I was asked to  
get rid of some al-Qaeda operatives  
lurking across Afghanistans border  
I did  
I struck down some Pakistanis as well  
O, what the hell!

You say I'm looking a little pale  
Perhaps, all I need is a little sun and sea  
Should we vacation in - err - say, Italy?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Embrace

They embraced each other enthusiastically  
after an interval of over thirty years

Time and experience had taken their toll on these two fading beauties.  
And, their erstwhile rivalries had long been swept aside

No more the occasional flashing glance  
No more the curling lip in disdain  
or any need to grab the attention of men

Petty youth had disappeared  
to be replaced by an inner tranquility and serenity

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Essential Difference

People in the North are always in a hurry  
While those in the South like to take things easy

The North must have everything done right away  
Whereas, folk in the South will very happily put off until tomorrow  
What it can easily do today

But the essential difference between them is  
Some in the North are heavily dependant on  
extremely costly Psychiatrists

Fortunately, everyone in the South can boast of - literally -  
an army of aunts - uncles - cousins - and, friends  
All vying with each other to offer free advice and assistance  
Whether called for or not!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Exemplar

Though he had suffered much  
at the hands of his opponents  
upon his release  
Nelson Mandela  
displayed a distinct lack of bitterness  
and, a refusal to take revenge

Very rightly  
soon  
his Leadership qualities  
his generosity of Spirit  
his compassion  
his selflessness  
and his very forgiving ways  
became his trait

If more of us followed his example  
wouldn't this World be a far better place?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Fear

For months after your death I spent hours sitting on our bed and resisted the temptation to open your cupboard, fearing that if I did so, some more of your precious aroma would disappear - and', hence, symbolically my memories too would inexplicably blur and fade away.

I needn't have worried.

I admit - I tried to blot you out, initially. But, I'm glad, you proved to be resilient. Because with the passage of time not only are you clearer to me - but dearer, in every respect.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# The Flawed Icon

To some he was iconic  
To others bizarre  
But, all accepted that he was deeply, deeply flawed

Yet, in the same train of thought people ask  
where were you when Kennedy was assassinated  
when Martin Luther King was shot dead  
when man landed on the moon  
when Elvis died

And, now  
when Michael Jackson was pronounced dead?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Fleeting Moment

Every moment I spend with you is precious  
So I don't want this moment to pass  
I want it to last and last

If that's improbable  
Just not possible  
Then at least  
Capture it  
Bottle it  
Can it  
Freeze it  
Preserve it  
Click it  
Frame it  
Gift wrap it  
I want to savour it  
Later on  
Forever and ever

It's my sole preserve  
My only reserve  
M-I-N-E  
For all time  
Nobody else's  
Don't try to understand it  
You can't  
You'll only spoil it  
The moment belongs to me  
And me alone!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Howler

Whenever Englands overpaid, over praised,  
and overrated footballers are called upon  
to play for Queen and Country, you can bet, they'll let their fans down-  
substantially

The many TV armchair pundits  
are in-part, to blame for an English fans heightened  
expectations

Before the game begins these smart-alecks of the box  
heap endless praise  
on the Home Team  
and make pronouncements such as  
"Normally, I never make predictions - But, somehow,  
this time, I'm quietly confident that, the English will excel themselves -"  
whilst slaging off the opposition  
as a bunch of somewhat, "unseasoned aspirants! "

When the match actually takes place  
England usually gives what it's most familiar with:  
a rather mediocre performance

The opposition goes home elated  
While the armchair pundits refuse to admit that  
their judgement was wrong, in any way, shape or form, or that they ought to  
moderate  
their crass stance in future  
Only the average English fan is left to go home feeling deflated

But, what of it?  
The next time, football fans switch on their Tellys  
The pundits will be ever ready to raise their hopes of an eminent crushing defeat  
While the lack-lustre English Team will be close behind to dampen any chance  
of a decisive victory

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Journey

It's the way one journey's through life  
not the end that matters

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Locusts

We don't want arrogant invaders from afar marauding and occupying our Countries under the guise of ridding our territories of terrorists.

These Locusts - only think of plonking democracy and good governance onto those Nations fortunate enough to hold assets rather than nuclear or biological weapons.

Their intention is to give the impression, that their motives are wholly above board. So, alongside, getting rid of terrorists, they construct a certain amount of schools, hospitals, roads etc. Then, corruption and pillage of millions of dollars, set aside for construction, is proved to be embezzled by the intruder. Next, they cause friction between the Nations Citizens, then, kill Innocent civilians - albeit - accidentally - they claim, while targeting the 'enemy'. These mistakes are referred to as, 'collateral damage'.

And while chaos reigns the mineral collectors and geologists of the mineral starved Western gate-crasher will be hard at work searching the entire area for quick bucks.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Minimum Criteria For Going To War

The MAIN criteria should be  
the Country being invaded  
must be devoid of nuclear weapons  
Or else - no go

NEXT: Can we win?  
Plus, on a shoestring budget  
and, with the minimum of our soldiers lives lost?

The THIRD - ofcourse is:  
What's in it for us?  
Oil? Gems. Other minerals?

AND FINALLY: In these tough times  
keep in mind  
Does the Country you invade contain  
vast agricultural lands  
Rivers flowing with plenty of clear water, etc.

Homegrown insurgents  
or predatory neighbouring Countries  
can be a menace - MIND

If this minimum criteria can't be met  
I suggest, you call it quits

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Mix

The lightening outside  
Combines with the storm clouds  
gathering within me  
To create a certain atmosphere

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Never Ending Story

The old familiar compound consisted of eight flats. And, as I entered it - who do you think I encountered - an old familiar face. "Hullo, Abbas, " I hailed merrily as I stepped out of my limo. "Long time no see, " returned he with a certain solemnity. He was in the process of getting into his car, but he strode over and exchanged warm greetings with me.

"I hear, your daughter's getting married, soon? " he enquired "That's right! " I replied. "That's why I've been preoccupied." "My! My! how time flies. When I first saw her she was two years old." "Well - Now she's twenty-two" I uttered, happily I handed him one of the two invitation cards in my hands. "Personally delivered-so you, my friend, had better come."

"With pleasure, " accepted he. We exchanged more banter. Then parted. And, I made my way to my intended target Which was: Noori! The love of my life. I had to keep her existence a secret because not only did I have a wife and children, but, I had a certain position to maintain as a well respected member of society. I rang the bell and waited.

"Ansar! " she exclaimed in surprise as she opened the door. " What..? " "I know, I owe you an apology, " I said hastily. "I- I was too tied up to come, earlier." She led me inside saying, "What good would my crying or complaining do? " She was resigned. We exchanged bleak smiles before we rushed into each others arms and nestled therein.

Yes, there was no use, her complaining. I had to stick to my commitments and our lives together came second It had always been that way. She accepted it in silence. No complaints. No questions. Only a quiet resignation. "I was afraid, you'd send me packing, " I uttered in relief

"In the 26 years we've known each other, how I've wanted to-send you packing-many times, " she bared. "But, did I? " "No, " I appreciated. "I don't deserve an Angel like you." I was saying it for the umpteenth time. I meant it. "You don't, " she accepted. " But, you have



me, for life! " "How fortunate, I am, " mused I. Enough!

I had come on business. I thrust the card at her. She looked at it in amazement. "What's this? "she asked. "An invitation-what else? " "You're inviting me - ME! " "Yes, you! " "To your daughter's wedding? " "Why not? " I demanded. "She's been practically brought up by you." "I know-but-but-but....." She was speechless

"But, what? " I asked unreasonably. " She expects you to accept.....In fact, her Mother and I would be pleased, too...? " "Speaking for the wife? " quizzed Noori. I shook my head."No! " I swore. "Both of us." "Sure, your wife would be pleased? " she asked, suspiciously. "Very, " I insisted. She was silent and pensive for a moment

Then, she sat herself down by me and read part of the card out loud. "Mr. and Mrs. Ansar request the pleasure of your company..." "Will you come? " I interrupted. She eyed me. "So that your wife has a chance to gloat? " asked she looking intently at me. I was taken aback. I thought, I had heard wrong "Gloat? " She nodded. " What on earth are you...? "

Her eyes flashed. "As if you didn't know! " "Well..... yes, okay...I. But, why use that particular word.....? " I questioned. "I'll spell it out for you, " she promised. "Do..? " "Your wife has now got you exactly where she wants you! " "Where? " "By her side." "Not so! " I argued. "It is so, " she threw forcefully. "And, well you know it...! "

I groped. "Your children have grown up to do their parents proud...If that isn't a gloating matter-what is? " "Rakhee, " (my wife) , "has such a sweet disposition...." I began. "Nevertheless..." "No...! She's incapable of - what you call - err-err..." "Gloating, " she helped. I glared and continued. "She's incapable of gloating. Full stop! " insisted I. "Oh yes? " she queried forcefully.

Before I could reply she called a truce, as was her usual way of walking away from arguments. I began to think about how we had first met. It was I, a junior

executive who had seduced his secretary in his Office all those years back. And, what had I-a happily married man given her in return? Very little

-apart from a wasted and solitary life. My own, hitherto serene existence became full of deceit and guilt. Ofcourse the upshot of all this was: My wife's earnestwhile tranquility was destroyed completely and Noori's plans for a fulfilling future were stifled forever by egoistic and selfish me.

I began to ply between the two loves in my life. Not very satisfactory-I know-but....Never once did Noori chide me about my two-faced ways. Rakhee did. But, not often enough. She was very conscious that in Indian society, it was better to have a husband-however absent he was.....than have no husband at all. Besides, the children needed their Father

So, it became necessary for me to be about. And, as a consequence, unfortunately, sometimes Noori and I met only occasionally....With the passage of time those around Noori grew older, fatter and greyer but she always managed to maintain her charisma and allure. I have absolutely no idea how she did it.

What I mean is, this, after I had trampled all over her and she had been left today devoid of husband and family-and all alone.....And yet, she seemed the most carefree out of all of us. I brought her out of her reverie. "Noori..? " "Huh..? " "What were you thinking about, just now? " "Er-errr...Nothing-really."

"Something...? " I insisted. "Well..." she hesitated. I waited. "Just that, I'd have loved to have had a daughter with you." I was more than startled. "I so wanted your child, too. But-but..you refused."

"Only because, " she defended, "in our days, it was very different. People didn't flaunt their

affairs as openly as they do today." "You're right, " I regretted. "It would never have done to have had a child out of wedlock, with you." "Now, anything is acceptable, " uttered she.

"Still, " I sighed. "How I regret -" "Shhh...! " she hushed. "I have my regrets, too..... But, what would be the use in regretting, anything...Hmmm...? All we have is the present and the future. Let's make the most of it? " "You're right, " I sighed. "Lets."

□

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

When I got home Rakhee quizzed: "What did she say when she got the card? " "Just, "Thank you." "Will she come? " questioned she with some irritation. "So that you can gloat..? " "Gloat-gloat about what? " retorted she."All these years, I never had much of a husband in you....and, now, " she sobbed, " I'm about to loose a daughter, too.....! "

THE END

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Open Secret

Oh, for heaven's sake  
Will you kindly get a grip

And,  
desist from acting like kids  
That is  
only  
if you can

Everyone knows that Libya had nothing whatsoever to do with the Lockerbie bombing. It was politically expedient at the time to pin the crime on it rather than on a host of other probable suspects...Iran - for instance  
So, not only did they convict the wrong man  
They convicted the wrong Country  
And, the odd thing is  
The West in all its entirety  
Was in on the conspiracy  
Simply because America pointed  
an accusatory finger at Libya

And, that was it  
That was all that was needed  
to convict an innocent man

Don't delve too deep  
Just pronounce the man  
and his Country guilty  
as charged

Lock him up. Throw away the key....  
Let him rot

Or, so America hoped

Halfway through his sentence the alleged criminal was pardoned on compassionate grounds. So, Americas upset? Live with it. The special relationship is broken? Did it ever exist? If it did, is it that fragile? Good on the PM if - along the way - he did a lucrative oil and gas deal for the benefit of his Country.

Apart from any other consideration can you imagine the uproar there'd have been if the man had died here while being treated on British tax payers money?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Optimist

I'm armed with an education  
I'm bubbling with enthusiasm  
My glass is full  
The only problem is  
I just haven't managed to  
get it to my lips - yet!

But, theres always tomorrow

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Peoples Permission

Thank you  
Thank you

We're sorry  
We can't be there

But, you, please  
represent us

Go for it  
Don't let them know  
What hit 'em

Go!  
Really, sock it to them  
You have the peoples permission

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Photograph Says It All

&lt;/&gt;

She never looked this lovely in her youth  
Her eyes were somber then  
And, her expression somewhat hesitant

But, now aged 60  
Her communication radiates serenity  
Her eyes positively sparkle  
And, that smile -  
it says it all

Yes, it spells  
her unmistakable  
contentment with life

□

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# The Picture On The Sideboard

My sister had a very fine figure  
She wasted many minutes counting  
calories before she ate anything  
beyond a limited meal. And, by that  
I mean, she didn't have second helpings,  
no matter, how good the cooking. And,  
definitely nothing like, cakes or, puddings

She kept a check on my food intake, too.  
Force of habit, I guess. I can't think of  
anything else - because, I was fairly slim.

Sadly, she died some time ago; Her picture  
takes pride of place on the dining room  
sideboard

I'm always aware of her presence. It makes  
me feel good. But, if ever, I over indulge  
myself, I can't help giving her an apologetic  
look - before - I plunge in!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Prim And Proper Man

Having drunk a lot  
The prim and proper man  
Suddenly began to talk in vivid detail  
About matters personal to him

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Question

Is my glass half empty  
Or, is it half full...?

Either way  
I don't mind  
Its okay

Don't hanker after  
The half that's empty  
At the expense of  
The half that's full

Accept the half that's full  
Could that be the present....?  
If so, be grateful

Forget the half that's empty  
Is that the past...?  
If so, it wasn't meant to last

You may feel  
That a glass half full  
Means a life unfulfilled

Just face the truth  
And don't let time  
Precious time  
Pass you by  
While you ponder  
On the matter

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Reunion

Believe you me when I say  
this is it!  
I'm madly in love  
And, love is definitely here to stay

I've never felt like this before  
I'll never feel like this again  
It's a one-off  
It really is

Cynics would claim  
i feel this way  
because my love and I met  
whilst on holiday  
in sunny Spain

where everyone knows  
there's too much sun  
too much sand  
and, far too many cocktails  
leading to heady nights  
- amongst other things!

The standard advice for the besotted is  
Come back to the real world  
Return to the daily grind  
Your head will clear  
And, soon you'll find  
your new found love disappear  
in double quick time

What complete and utter tosh!  
I've been in love before  
So, I can confirm that  
three days  
and, three nights of total bliss  
were enough to convince me  
that this was the real thing

When the holiday ended  
the two of us couldn't bear to part  
with each other  
But, somehow we did  
With promises to meet  
three months later  
on a return date  
(I couldn't wait)

We choose the neutral territory  
of London for our tryst

Would we live up to each others expectations  
after all these months of separation  
...we wondered?

Then, chided ourselves  
Ofcourse, we would!

As expected  
on our assignation  
we hesitated  
but, only for a second  
then we fell into each others arms  
- where we very rightly belonged!

We celebrated our reunion  
by wining and dining  
confirming  
And, reconfirming  
Our resolve to marry each other  
and only each other  
come what may

We laughed out loud at the crowd of people  
who had doubted our undying love for each other  
"We'll show them! " we swore  
"First thing in the morning  
we're going to buy ourselves, engagement rings."

When the phone rang the next day  
I grunted: "Hullo? " into the receiver

before I looked at the time  
and realised, it was way past noon  
That's when I came down to earth  
'Where are you? " queried a familiar voice  
from my office

"Oh, no! " I groaned, remembering  
"You missed the ten a.m. meeting? " he reproached  
"O no! " I repeated, not knowing what else to say  
'But, I covered for you."  
"Thanks, Mate, " I acknowledged. "I really appreciate it."  
There was a pause  
"What's the matter? " he asked  
"Nothing. Why...? "  
"You said, your diary was full...? "  
"It is."  
'But, you were in bed just now? "  
"I'm ringing off, " I hastened."I'm on my way to the office."

I put down the receiver  
and contemplated my love  
sleeping blissfully in my bed  
She suddenly took on the features of an interloper

Sadly  
this wasn't the Costa Brava  
where one idle moment followed another  
I had responsibilities here  
office to attend  
appointments to keep  
other commitments  
to maintain

As I got dressed I recognised  
our time had come and gone  
Only I had put off recognising it  
until practically the very last minute

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Sobering Thought

My Grandfather's residence was called 'Journey's End.' Spending time in it was a constant thrill to me. It was situated atop a hill and hidden away from view by a forest of trees. It had a hundred and two spectacular rooms overlooking a breath taking clear blue sea

I was aged thirteen when Grandfather died and from that day on my Father never spoke to his fell out very openly over property and things I couldn't fathom. Uncle was given the bulk of the Estate and we weren't any longer welcome to visit it.

What angered Father was the fact that he had worked very hard to see that all the Family's Estate stayed intact. But in the end the real sting was that most of it was left to his sibling, while all he got was the Hunting Lodge at the far end of the Property.

'I'm only following the letter of the Law,' excused my Uncle. 'The older son inherits the bulk of the Estate,' said he. 'But, you can make some concessions-at your discretion,' argued Abba. But, Uncle had no hesitation in categorically refusing.

'Doesn't matter,' consoled my Mother. 'Just count your blessings...He'll never have the wealth that you have. And, what Abba had was four strapping lads, whilst all my Uncle could rely on was wine, women and song...how very droll! !

We weren't well off, but according to Ma's criteria-we were rich - beyond measure. My father had to work very hard but we had each other to lean on...'and that, in the end,' Ma said, 'was all that mattered.' Meanwhile, Uncle enjoyed life.

Though he knew we had no money. He never offered us any. Not that my Father would have accepted anything from him. Abba was far too dignified for that-and he had his pride. Only, I wasn't averse to lurking around my beloved ancestral home

This - despite the fact that I had been forbidden from doing so by my Father. My Uncle saw me on several occasions but he never acknowledged my presence or invited me into his home.

Sad, but true. It was as though we were strangers to each other.

Yes, Uncle was rolling in the green stuff.. Each month, he gave lavish parties to which he invited the cream of society. The loud sound of music and chatter emanated from his place at all hours. He loved women. I hear, there was quite a wide variety of them.

But, none of them stayed long - so said his servants, anyway! Two years at the most. Often, far less. But while times were good the music played on regardless of the fact that any shine there was to his life, was no guideline to his popularity

"Nothing lasts forever," said my Mother. "Sooner or later, he's

going to wake up and find that he's lived a wasted life." My Abba agreed. "He'll soon see that while some of us have been making an honest day's living he was busy doing - other things."

Gradually the lights didn't burn that bright late into the night at Uncles, anymore. The music faded and died away, too. But, whatever happened to his many friends-women-acquaintances? All seemed to have faded away. The place had fallen very quiet

Many years later, I drove down to the Hunting Lodge for one of my frequent reunions with my Parents. My brothers and their families were also there. All of us were in a confined space. But, we didn't care. The more the merrier - we would always say.

Amidst this cheerful atmosphere arrived the figure of my Uncle. Imagine, just how startled we were. He was a lonely old man, now. But, my Parents refused to see him...Although, he had come to make his peace with them. I was left to entertain him.

I didn't really mind. I had begun to feel sorry for contrast between my father and his brother's present situations couldn't have been starker. Uncle was witness to the fact that whereas Abba's life was enveloped in warmth and love. His wasn't.

When Uncle died - I know not why he left his Estate to me. It could have been because I was the only member of my family who had been kind to him when last we'd met. I'll never know.



Anyway, whatever it was, I couldn't believe my good fortune.

When taking over "Journey's End," my family and I decided to walk up its hill. As we did so a van hurtled down towards us and nearly ran over my son. Had I not pushed him aside, then no amount of money would have been able to console me.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Stellar Moment

There was so much I had to say  
So, why did I hesitate?  
I'll never know....  
Oh well. it's just one of those things  
Meanwhile, she moved on to other matters

...Now that stellar moment is lost forever  
'Nevermind', you assert. 'You can say it another time.'

I think about it.  
In another time. Out of place. Out of context..  
It wouldn't sound the same... Would it?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Stranger

I shook the hand of this stranger  
Who had only days before been my Lover  
We were about to separate  
He to go one way, I another

We hesitated a moment  
Tried to think  
Failed  
Smiled briefly  
Then walked away

Our footsteps faltered  
Yet again  
We looked back at one another  
With longing  
Or, was it, foreboding?

Waved  
Turned our backs on each other  
And resolutely  
Went our separate way

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Test

## THE TEST

a.

I thought I knew my husband  
We'd been married for over ten years  
Our tastes were very similar  
That's what had originally drawn us together

We shared in everything  
Everything  
If he enjoyed a certain food I genuinely loved it too  
He had this passion for travel  
I shared in that enthusiasm  
Movies, sports, books et. al.  
Our passion for them was mutual

So on our tenth wedding anniversary  
Very unsuspectingly  
I looked forward to a blissful lifetime together  
Similar in every respect to the preceding ten years

But fate intervened soon after  
When our four year old daughter died of pneumonia

It was only then that our intense love for each other  
underwent a severe test  
Would we pass  
Or, would we fail....?  
Only time would tell

b.

Initially, we clung to each other in disbelief  
Then, overnight - he turned away from me  
And, I from him

He wanted peace and quiet

To grieve alone  
Whereas I needed to be with company  
-mainly friends  
Or constantly doing something

We grew apart  
And, neither of us could see  
how we could ever recover what we believed we had

He irritated me  
He was always morose  
Likewise, I infuriated him  
I was too pre-occupied with life

It got to such a stage  
That we could do little else than enrage each other

Divorce began to look like  
The saviour, we both needed  
In order to get on with the rest of our lives

However, constant talk of divorce saddened me  
I suddenly realised that the husband  
who was supposed to go through life with me  
would soon be out of the picture, forever

That really made me sit up and think  
I had to change my priorities  
I would always grieve for my daughter-sure  
But, my beloved husband mattered  
He mattered a hell of a lot

I had already realized - now accepted  
That we couldn't share absolutely everything together  
He needed his pace and time to recover. I needed mine.

Our attitude towards our loss  
had not only been divergent  
it had been fraught with disquiet and disruption

I wanted an immediate end to this state of affairs  
Imagine how our suffering would double if we lost each other, as well?

That was the catalyst.

No way, I promised myself. We'll work it out - somehow.

But, we'll stick together.

I can't

I won't lose him

When I told him that

He was surprised

that it had taken me so long to realise

something he had concluded a long while back

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

So, lucky for us

We managed to fight our way back to

some semblance of happiness

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Uncommitted

(End of Term Report)

She had always had Life served up to her on a silver platter. So, when she married the man of her choice - she expected no hitch, no hiccup whatever - only, happy ever after.

Alas. Life isn't like that.

When husband and wife stumbled at the very first hurdle, she didn't bother to discover what had gone wrong and how it could be put right. I thought, she was made of sterner stuff, and would stay the course. She did not.

Concluding report: A total lack of commitment. As though, marriage is something frivolous.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# The Unmentionable

The world is moving on  
And, democracy is marching along  
In tandem with it

Or, is it...?

Not in Pakistan  
It isn't

We take one tentative step forward  
Then two decisive steps back!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# The Visit

On certain visits  
people wish to be  
somewhere other than  
where they presently are  
Could it be that they're there  
out of something akin to  
formality?  
Duty?  
Necessity?

If  
something like all three  
why didn't they go  
directly to where they  
actually wanted to go?

Instead of  
chopping and changing course  
and, forcing themselves to go  
where they didn't want?

Is it because  
they wish to feel good within themselves?

And, are they so very certain  
that the real reason for their visit  
Is their secret  
And, theirs alone?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Think!

Slow down  
Spend some time  
looking around you

Think!  
Before you attempt to  
strike out the past  
with undue haste

It may be that things of today  
i.e.  
Modern Architecture  
Modern technology etc.  
suit you better

But the stuff of yester year  
wasn't all that bad,  
either -  
Was it?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Those Stars

You know,  
those stars of stage and screen  
The ones we've been dying to meet?

Perhaps  
'tis better if we kept our distance  
and admired them from afar  
Cos' up close  
they're unlikely to be  
worth putting up  
on a pedestal  
for all the world to see

Call me a cynic  
if you feel like it  
but the law of gravity insists  
that, anyone once worshipped  
Is someday going to be  
considered inadequate

In other words  
stars are born one day  
only to be torn down the next

So, whether meteoric rise or otherwise  
all stars have this in common with each other

First it's meander and rise  
then it's smoulder or nosedive

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Thr Back Of The Year 2005

The year 2005  
is over  
Thank God

It will only be  
remembered for  
the death and destruction  
it wrought

The boxing day Tsunami of 2004  
was a precursor of  
what the World was in for

Apart from typhoons, tornados  
landslides, floods etc. etc.  
all around the world -  
There was hurricane Katrina  
followed by the devastating earthquake in South Asia  
to contend with

No  
there was absolutely  
no beating  
the Might of Mother Nature  
that year!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Together Apart

We stood side by side on the courtroom steps  
and, breathed a huge sigh of relief  
The punishing year of untold grief  
was finally over

We had got our decree absolute  
And I was resolute in my determination  
that my life was going to change dramatically  
for the better

I had made a brief mistake  
I had admitted it  
very publicly  
But all that was now firmly behind me  
and my life was going to be rectified

Today was the first day of the rest of my life  
Instead of a Mrs. I was finally back to being a Ms.  
It felt great

My ex and I shook hands politely  
wished each other well  
then I went my way and he went his

At first my new lifestyle  
took some adjusting to  
But, what I appreciated the most  
was being on my own  
and completely free

Free of the endless bickering and fighting□  
Free of the misery and doubt  
Free of solicitors and caretakers  
Free of busybodies  
Free of -  
In short  
Everybody

Life moved on

and, one fine day  
I acquired a new partner

I'm glad to say  
We're very happy together

So did he  
my ex - I mean  
acquire a new partner

He seems extremely happy too  
I was genuinely relieved  
that things were finally looking up  
for both him and me

I met him briefly at a party the other night  
We were polite to each other  
and even exchanged a few niceties

When he was leaving  
I looked after him  
With an unfamiliar twinge  
And wondered  
not for the first time  
What life would have been like  
had we stayed together...?

I'll never know -□  
now  
will I....?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Tongue-Tied

When first we met  
I found you really dashing  
Absolutely smashing  
But, I was too tongue-tied to speak to you

Now I have so much to say  
But, unfortunately  
You won't give me the time of day

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Tranquil Hamlet

I exchanged the buzz of Wimbledon  
For the tranquil hamlet, Cherry Hinton  
I have no regrets  
Its made me forget  
The hustle and bustle of London

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# Turn Back The Clock

None of us has the chance  
to turn back the clock  
but, with the benefit of hindsight  
would I have done things differently...?

Yes, Sir -  
Certainly  
I would have

Without a doubt  
I would have!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

## Two Faced

I'm most definitely two faced  
So, when I said, "Lets keep in touch" -  
I obviously didn't mean it

Under protest, I might just dropp her  
an impersonal line at Christmas  
I'll sound warm and tender  
You can be sure of that  
But, I will in no way mean it!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Unaware

She misses something that exists  
Or thinks exists  
And yet doesn't!

She doesn't realize  
That it bloomed and died  
Very many moons ago

Without her ever realising

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Unfinished Bisuness

We used to enjoy our regular rendezvous  
at a Pub on Wimbledon Common

That was, ofcourse  
before I scurried off to Cherry Hinton

The night before I left  
I went back one last time  
to reflect  
reminisce  
regret  
and, bid farewell to it

I ordered two glasses of Jack Daniels  
One for supposedly you  
the other for solitary, me  
Then, I sat myself down at a corner table

I picked up your drink  
"Cheers...! " acknowledged I  
Before downing it

Then, I began to think...  
We were a pair  
weren't we?

You told me so  
why did I disagree  
And, so vehemently  
Why?  
I don't understand it

Now, you're no longer interested  
I see you at work every day  
I can't stand it!  
That's why I'm going away  
rather than stay and witness  
You talk to every other woman  
in the Office

but, me

Why am I always doing this?  
Running away from life  
Rather than staying to confront  
any unpleasantness,  
any controversy  
to do with me

When I'm on my own I think big  
I promise myself  
I'll do this  
I'll say that  
But, once faced with the challenge  
I always stand back  
And, leave unfinished business  
Unfinished!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Unfortunately

Once we get our dreams  
do we really want them  
that's the question...?

Unfortunately  
the question  
can only be answered  
when we get our dreams

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Unfortunately, For Her

Unfortunately, for her, the UK is America's closest ally. So, it's not surprising that her standing in the World has diminished considerably.

For, even before Sept. 11th, 2001, USA's lack of integrity was becoming legendary. And, after America's invasion of Iraq under the pretext of eliminating weapons of mass destruction as opposed to: Regime change and exploiting Iraq for its vast oil reserves, UK's sense of honesty, decency and fair play have very rightly been called into question by most Countries.

And, sadly - very, very sadly for it, has been found profoundly wanting.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Unspoken

Our thoughtful friends  
Invited me to dinner  
On New Year's Eve  
In order to....  
cheer me up  
I guess

Very dear of them  
Nevertheless

And, despite the fact  
That I always used to say  
I don't party on just the one day  
each and every day is a celebration  
when you're with me  
I went to their party  
.....against my better judgement

Everyone made merry  
Except for me -  
Oh, don't worry  
I smiled  
And smiled  
A very wide, wide smile  
No one knew just how blue I was  
Your presence was felt  
Your absence too  
By everyone in the room  
Although your name was conspicuously unspoken

Perhaps it's better that way  
Munch a peanut  
Talk about the weather  
Anything -  
Have a drink  
Oblivion

Our relationship was good  
while it lasted



Very good

But, all too soon  
it had run its course  
And,  
unfortunately for us  
We had to part

I looked up at the fireworks  
in the night sky with polite interest  
and watched the sparks fly  
I even mingled with the gathering  
Unthinking  
Later, I went home  
Alone

What's a New Year's eve, anyway?  
Only a new day without you  
No more birthday celebrations  
No more wedding anniversaries  
One New Year's eve blends into another  
Without one feeling or caring

So does the air  
The vast sky  
The empty spaces  
The empty places

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Utopia

Imran Khan breezed into London Town last summer  
(Circa 2011)  
swearing to anyone who would listen  
that he was destined to become  
Pakistan's next PM

Modesty and he being virtual strangers  
he assessed that a tsunami had swept over his Country  
And, after 16 years in the wilderness  
the public were propelling him and his Party into pole position  
to win the next election

Perhaps

But, on the strength of that so-called tsunami i  
a deluge of stalwarts of other well established Parties  
- well averse to changing sides on the strength of a whim  
rushed over to join him

None of these Mp's can be accused of being as squeaky clean as He claims He is  
Some, in spite of being rich Landlords have never paid their taxes  
Others are only Mp's courtesy of nepotism - etc.  
But, their vote banks are desperately needed  
so the Head of Tahreek-e-Insaaf's eyes are firmly averted to their past  
misdemeanours

Nobody really knows what his policies are  
Except that he intends to end endemic and rampant corruption within 90 days  
Apologize to hard done by Baluchistan  
And, right the decades of wrongs done to the NWFP  
All very commendable  
All very achievable  
with the mere wave of a wand

While he's achieving wonders  
what happen's to all the discredited politicians he's been gathering?  
He swears, they'll sit on the back benches till they learn the error of their ways  
Can a leopard really change its spots after over 60 years of ruling the roost?  
I SUSPECT not!

Soon, they'll be clamouring for their erstwhile chauffeur driven limousines  
Demanding to bestride VIP Lounges at Pakistan'i airports  
Or, attempting to justify the right to elect a relative to an Mp's lucrative Office -  
etc.

As for Imran's true followers  
Those who've stuck by him through thick and thin  
What of them, you may ask?

They don't like the look of the constantly diminishing goal posts

The other day they decided to confront Imran,  
with 'this ones' dodgy tax dealings  
and, 'that ones' questionable history  
He dismissed it all by saying, suavely  
'Save your questions for another day. We must take a lunch break.'

Well spoken  
Just like a seasoned politician

Imran Khan will get far  
Inshalla

The masses are disillusioned with the rampant corruption  
and sheer incompetence of Parties like the PPP and PML-N  
who think they have the God given right to  
take it in turns to rule/Misrule  
the Nation  
Or Lord it over the Pakistanis

My fellow Countrymen  
please don't vote for useless Politicians such as these  
They've been tried and tested  
And, retried and retested countless times  
And found to be thoroughly wanting

Give Imran Khan a chance  
He couldn't do any worse  
than any of them  
Even if he tried

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Vindicated

London's most prestigious, newspaper - (according to it)  
accepted my predictions about Barack Obama's Term in Office  
entitled: 'History ties his hands.'

But it watered down it's contents so considerably  
'due to a lack of space' it told me  
that I knew, 'space' had nothing to do with it

SPACE - my foot!

It had everything to do with 'getting carried away with the Occasion  
just like the citizens of the United States were VERY happily doing

After 8 years of divisiveness under George Walker Bush  
Obama, I hear, was destined to become America's Saviour  
Close the racial divide existent within his Country  
Create jobs  
turn a sluggish economy around  
blah-blah-blah  
and etc.

In short, he could do no wrong  
Expectations of him were so impossibly high  
That I actually began to feel sorry for the Guy

But, then - wait a minute  
Who shouted: 'Yes we can', the loudest?  
He did!

When he swore: 'I'm going to Washington to change its old ways, '  
everyone applauded.  
When he promised. I'll bring back the 'out-sourced' jobs to America  
Etc.  
People believed what they wanted to hear.  
When he swore he'd follow Roosevelt and put the US back to work  
People believed him  
He was positive he'd get his way with the Israelis  
(He couldn't get them to budge an inch!)

And my warning that, 'History ties his hands' or my

suggestions to the Americans that Hilary Clinton  
would make a better President, fell on deaf ears.

'Yes, we can! ' was his mantra  
'No, you can't, Mr. Obama', was mine  
He's extremely good on rhetoric  
Empty rhetoric won him the Nobel Peace Prize when his term in office had hardly  
begun - for promising to reach out to Muslims, amongst other things  
But, talk is cheap -  
oratory and bombast are fine  
So long as the Democrat doesn't have to lock horns  
with an intransigent Republican Party.

Thanks to both Parties  
There has been virtual paralysis on Capitol Hill

Anyway the Democrats don't know what Obama stands for  
He doesn't know what he stands for, either

From Day 1 of his Presidency nothing seemed to go right for him  
He promised to get rid of the Prison in Guantanamo Bay within a year  
That was 4 years ago  
And, who ever told an enemy well in advance that the  
Americans were leaving Afghanistan in 2014?  
Chuckle. Chuckle.  
Obama did!  
Naturally, the Taliban are relaxing in the shade  
Waiting to get their way - when the Foreign troops go away

To be fair to Obama  
Although he he hasn't been able to do anything about  
Jobs, growth or the economy, etc.  
He'll always be remembered for introducing 'Medicare'  
I hope selfish interests don't wreck his health bill  
He'll also be remembered for the increase in out-of-control, answerable to no  
one,  
Drone attacks on Nations like Pakistan and Yemen

The only reason he'll get another term in Office  
Is because he has a lack-lustre Opposition

So America get ready for 4 more years of his

Punishing medicine.

He's looking forward to a second Term.

But, does he know what he's all about?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Wearing My Heart On My Sleeve

Oh, foolish-foolish `me!

I wore my heart on my sleeve

And made the mistake of telling this attractive, quiet mouse of a man

That I loved him dearly and, wanted to marry him

All I succeeded in doing, however

Was seeing his real personality creep up on me

The change was subtle and very, very gradual

No more an attractive, quiet mouse of a man, he!

He began to strut around the place

Bossing and chiding me so

Roaring unnecessarily

And, generally behaving as though he was God's gift to me

And, there I'd been imagining

I'll breeze through life

Gently bullying, quietly cajoling

But, above all else

Mothering an attractive, quiet, mouse of a `yes-man'

So

Now

I've decided

I've seen a mouse

I've also seen a louse

I can do very well

without a spouse!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# What A Happy One-Parent Family They Make

He looks much happier minus his wife in the picture  
The kids look carefree too  
Don't bother to say c-h-e-e-s-e  
Click..! Click..! Click..!

What a happy one parent family they make

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# What Was I Supposed To Think?

I stand - or, is it, hide within the sanctuary of the kitchen and deliberate. I had come 60 miles out of Town, to console my recently bereaved father, who had - very naturally - been absolutely shattered over the untimely death of my beloved Mother, .after 30 years of truly happy and

enviable wedded bliss....only to find that the incoherent and distraught man of a month earlier had vanished and been replaced by the verbose and gregarious Father, of old...complete with his new Lady love...our erstwhile neighbour and my Mum's best girlhood friend. The friend's husband had died a year earlier.

So, did that make it alright...? Both were now free of all restraints. Neither looked as though either was grieving too much. Or, was that my initial bitter assessment? They were grieving at their own pace and in their own way - I guess.. But, all I saw at the time was

how they revelled in each other's company - And, to my utter amazement, she had obviously moved in with him.

Both sensed my discomfort and mute grief at not only my Mother's

passing, but, my inability to comprehend the present quick, turn of events. Both went out of their way to assure me that their nuptials were not about to take place, immediately.. No. They were a whole year away.

I made some vague excuse and fled the room.

After some thought, I came to the conclusion that:

I loved my Father. Besides, there was nothing whatever I could do. I had no option but to stand back and be a silent spectator. I mustn't put any obstacle in his way. If this is what he wants, I must set my own reservations aside and support him.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# What?

I saw you yesterday  
don't look so surprised  
I know, in order to avoid me  
you live in another County

For a long time after we broke up  
I never saw a thing  
save you  
In fact  
you were in my every thought  
my every deed

Then suddenly  
Or - do I mean gradually?  
I'm not sure, which  
things feel so hazy  
you were lost to me  
completely

And now when I look at you  
standing here before me  
I rack my brains  
Trying to think  
what the hell did I ever see in him  
What?

All those tears I shed  
and all those times I wished I was dead  
I must have looked like a right old twerp  
in the eyes of my friends  
O God!  
Falling apart because of this jerk!

.  
What, for God's sake did I see in him  
please tell me  
WHAT? ? ! !

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# What's The Point?

□

What's the point of bringing up the past  
Where exactly will it get us?  
And, what good will thrashing out days gone by do, anyway?  
It won't change the facts  
We both know  
that in this rapidly changing world  
they're the only things that will remain  
unchanging and static  
Because, they happen to be exactly what they happen to be

We'll just go round and round in circles  
Perhaps, get ourselves into a tangle  
and, end up hurting each other  
by getting our words and thoughts  
very, very knotted and twisted

Even if we do talk  
in a civilized manner  
Yes, we can be civilized  
- or, so I'd like to think  
what exactly will it achieve?

Can we retrieve anything?  
Anything at all?

No, my friend  
I think not

Let's be frank

NOTHING  
Not one single thing

Both of us have changed  
irrevocably  
And unfortunately  
neither of us can ever be  
what either of us once was

More to the point  
neither of us can ever mean  
the same to each other  
as once we meant

So, I suggest  
let's try to forget

Our past should remain the past  
with one distinction from the norm:  
It should be remembered and savoured  
like some invaluable treasure  
Which it is

Our minds will inevitably dwell  
perhaps, constantly, at first  
on our shared history  
So, let our memories be as pleasant  
as they, I vouch, deserve to be

"That's impossible! " you object  
"Absolutely unfeasible!  
How can anyone be expected to forget so quickly?  
So casually  
Especially since no one meant more to one another than you and me? "

"Everything's possible, " I reply  
"We'll retain pleasant memories of times well spent together

If either of us tries to revive an affair  
which we both know, is well and truly over  
all we'll be left with is burnt fingers  
bruised egos  
and a very, very bitter after taste

Is that what you want?  
Pushing it to the very limit  
Is it? "

You hesitate  
as you let my words sink in

I carry on

□

"Put it out of your mind  
immediately

Just think:

This is the right time to end it  
AND LEAVE IT AT THAT."

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Who Knows?

The moment I entered her office, the Doctor said: "The good news is - your Cancer hasn't spread. It's small and localised.'

I was skeptical. "Is it? "

"Aren't you, even a bit satisfied...? "

"Well...." I replied, thoughtfully: "For today - I'm almost okay....but who knows what tomorrow will bring? "

She shook her head and sighed. "You're a born pessimist."

"Wrong! " I refuted. "Just call me a good old-fashioned pragmatist."

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Why Do I Bother To Speak?

I know, no one listens to me  
No one!  
So, why on earth do I bother to speak?  
and, not just, speak softly  
but, speak loud and clear

The trouble is that people  
from all walks of life  
ask me for my advice

If I hesitate  
they're sure to say:  
Give us your opinion?  
Say something?  
Anything!  
Even if it's only a mere suggestion  
P-L-E-A-S-E?

What can I do?  
I have to oblige  
I really must  
Especially when I can see  
what I deem to be  
the obvious solution

But, I still hesitate  
because - as in this case  
I'm invariably  
listened to intently  
heads nod sagely  
as though in complete agreement with me

People behave as though they think  
none but me can possibly be  
the true exponent of wisdom

Then, they go off and do precisely  
as they please



I.e. the diametrical opposite of  
my suggestion!

So, why do I bother to speak?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Without Real Meaning

We keep going  
round and round  
in circles  
Never quite saying  
what we really  
intend to say  
Or what we've been  
meaning to say  
to each other  
for ages and ages

You know:  
Having that frank discussion  
Making that bold decision  
to let it all hang out  
Wash our dirty linen  
Expose our gut feelings  
Admit to our mutual dislike  
Of each other  
Or, at least our partial distrust

We resist saying what we actually mean  
Perhaps, it's because we lack the courage  
to speak the truth in the first place

Whatever it is  
Instead  
we're like the majority of humanity:  
Who'll easily swallow its pride  
Say one thing,  
but mean another  
Shake hands, smile. be hypocritical  
And, not say  
what it is  
it actually means to say

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Wrestling Thoughts

In the dead of night  
the troubled  
wrestle with  
larger than life  
problems  
ask stressful questions of themselves  
face jarring home truths  
and seek uncomfortable answers  
as well

But, come the morning  
Night thoughts become minuscule  
And usually recede into the back of the mind  
While one tackles  
The dawning of a new day  
The bleary-eyed struggle out of bed  
Bathing  
Getting dressed  
Wondering whether there's any milk in the fridge  
Enough petrol in the tank  
Checking the days schedules -  
Hurrying to work, etc. etc...  
Getting so absorbed with the  
preoccupations of the day  
that there isn't quality time to think

Then, before you know it  
the day is almost at an end

And, within hours  
the night is due to recycle itself again

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Writing Poetry

Writing poetry is a bit like painting  
In both cases  
One is given a large canvas  
But is required to compress a subject  
Into a confined space

The interpretation  
Of each result  
Depends entirely on  
The construction of words - in one case  
And the combination of colours - in the other  
□

Yes, one can colour in  
One's life  
In anyway one chooses  
There's no such thing  
As pre-destination  
So the choice is broadly yours

Do you want your life to be dull and grey  
Or would you RATHER pass IT in glorious technicolour  
Which?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Yesterday

I received a sheaf of offers through the post recently. All bearing a hefty price, ofcourse:

Fill next year's diary with your poems and present them to your loved ones, said one.

Take digital pictures and display them in a beautiful album, said another.

Put your poems down along side every forthcoming calendar month.

Alternatively, write down your favourite recipes and present them to your family and friends.

I have a PC. Everyone I know, has one. Plus, we have all kinds of gadgets and digital displays.

When one can install a free web-site within a few clicks of a mouse - show off one's handiwork to the rest of the world, display photo albums to all and sundry, store, a multiplicity of calendars in cyberspace -what need have I for the afore mentioned obsolete items?

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow

Agreed I loved you intensely until yesterday  
But, yesterday was yesterday

Then, you hadn't been unfaithful to me  
Or - at least, I hadn't heard about it

But, today's another day  
And, there's absolutely no turning back  
No accusations  
No retribution  
Only sadness and distress  
I've packed my bags  
That's it!  
I'm leaving you

With an absolute resolve  
to move on

I won't be crazy enough to  
repeat the mistake  
of letting anyone else  
into my life  
So, there's just no chance  
of me getting my fingers burnt  
by anyone  
ever again!

I'm going to be totally and utterly  
miserably  
Independent

However on reflection  
After seething and fermenting  
in my new surroundings  
i begin to consider this:

O,  
how I wish..

I wish, I could  
shut away all the moments I spent with you  
in the back of some cupboard -or, an old suitcase  
and, forget I ever knew you  
or, heard of your existence

But, what good would that do?  
Your memory will still stay with me  
night and day  
And, no one - and, nothing  
can ever take that away

So darling -  
no matter what the distance  
I'm stuck to you  
and, you're stuck to me  
like glue

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# You

The night is starry  
A shooting star streaks across the sky  
My thoughts turn to you

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD



# You Ask Me

You ask me whether  
I still find solace in God  
despite all the misery, trauma and helplessness  
I suffer  
and, see around me

I pause to think  
my friend  
I pause  
I falter

I respect God  
I respect his will  
I have nothing against him  
but, I have nothing further to say to him

Those most precious to me  
have left this world forever  
and, some others I care for  
are about to follow, too

There's no hope  
There's nothing  
My world has become totally  
and irrevocably  
dark and empty

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# You'll Indulge Yourself

As long as we live, breathe.  
and take part in life  
its guaranteed that we'll either  
post a letter, send an e/mail  
bother about appointments  
check the time  
keep an eye on the date  
consider the weather .

When keeping an important doctors appointment  
Facing a crucial interview  
Waiting for some considerable result  
Don't panic about it days in advance

Just remember  
So long as night follows day  
And the seasons change with regularity  
The earth is guaranteed to be spinning on its axis

And before you know it  
that important doctor's appointment, crucial interview,  
or, considerable result  
will have come and gone  
leaving you wondering what your anxiety was all about?

But, rather than learn from experience  
you'll indulge yourself  
and, feel better when you're free to get worked up over  
the next lot of urgent matters to contend with

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Your Loss Is Your Gain

Nothing is forever - Remember that! Any relationship you form - is very temporary. Full stop.

How I admire those who know instinctively when to walk away.  
If we are to relinquish the past we must cut ties with it completely. Only then can we move on. Agreed?

Initially, you'll love yourself so much that you'll allow grief to overwhelm you  
Then, gradually - you'll stop feeling quite so sorry for yourself - and, you'll begin to accept your loss.  
It may look easier on paper than it really is. But, if you genuinely want to let go - you will.

That loss is eventually your gain - and, very liberating.  
By focusing on one person your horizons may have become narrow and limited

Get a grip  
Forget any thought of hindsight or regret  
And get on with your life.

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Your Path

Your path was chosen for you  
Long before you were born

So don't try to change it  
That would be pointless

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD

# Your Views

If your views were narrow  
During your journey through life  
You lost a lot  
But if they were broad  
You most certainly did not!

NAYYAR SHABBIR AHMAD