

Poetry Series

Om Chawla
- poems -

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Om Chawla(12th August 1935)

A Dream.

In my sleep I heard you sing
Of your silent earnest longing
Reverberating through my dream
Summoning me to your embrace.
Leaving the body in vacuous state
Wading through the quiet of night
My soul in eager obeisance of wistful errand
Unseen, unfelt and unobserved
In a soundless whisper reached your door;
You did not hear the knock nor opened the door,
Oblivious of love's proximation
Restless in your bed you tossed;
While I, craving, in my form ethereal
Yearning to take you in fleshy fold
With warm and lusty assurgent desires,
To calm the fidgety wait of distress
And quench my thirst by a passionate kiss.
As I spread my arms, to enfold your lovely form,
Shaken out of dreaming slumber
In lonesome agony I found myself
In eternal wait of love's grace.
A dream unfulfilled....
Yes dream,
A dream.

Om Chawla

A Poor Man's Lot

There besides the trunk of a leafless tree
Lies a human figure in beastly nudity.
It's breathing yet; it's not dead
But no one bothers, for them it is dead
It's dusty day, it's scorching hot
And this misery is poor man's lot.

Om Chawla

A Prayer

I pray, not for I love You
Nor either for I owe You
But I pray O Almighty One
- if at all You exist-
To relieve this world of crooked ones
If you canst, O, change me so
That I might in the shape of fire
Spread and destroy them all;
That I might in the shape of thunder
Strike them instantaneous death:
Give me any shape in which
I might rid this world of evil ones:
Or else, give me the power
That I might, in the poor, confidence inspire
That they might break the chains
And dispense justice unto themselves.

I beseech Thee O Thou mighty one
Give me such power for I can't see
The women looted of their honour
Hunger causing suicides
Lust driving men to madness
Love being denied.

I pray Thee O Thou Creator
Of this miserable world:
Rise from thy slumber and rid us
Of thy vicergents as wicked they be:
If Thou canst, make me so powerful
That I might do thy job. [1955]

Om Chawla

A Wondrous Moment

In the predawn hazy hour
Languid blossoming of a flower
Like an infant from sleep awoken
Stretching in a languorous yawn
Petal by petal beauty unraveled
Rooted I stood savouring the sight
Song in motion, a visual delight
Resonant, though, a soundless melody
Low in decibel, yet hear could I.
A fleeting moment:
A wondrous moment.
Encompassing nature's eternal glory
Etched in memory's timeless frame
Memory a moments frozen frame
Transcending beyond time's refrain.
A fleeting moment:
A wondrous moment.

Om Chawla

A]a Ghazal - {in Urdu} And B]it's English Version.

In parron mein ab quwat -e- parwaz nahien
Lambiudanabinheindarkarnahien.

Tum kya inqalab laogey
Tumhein to zilat ka bhi ahsas nahien.

Zakham aur dard se gar darr lagta hai
Haath shamsher ki taraf tum badhao nahien.

Zakham tumhein bhi milenge aur tumhare apnon ko
Sehnahiensakteyto saruthaonahien.

Pasina ban kar lahoo tumharabaha to phool khila
Mahakuski partumharaakhtiyarnahein.

Sadieon se roondey kuchhlay gaye ho tum
Ay faqa kasho maut zindagi se badtar to nahien.

Jang mein kood padoo, fana ho jao
Warna nijat-e-gham tumhein milaygi nahien.

Youn ghisatt ghisatt kar kya marna
Ik baar hi lahoo bahe kyoum nahien.

Yeh uppri satah par jo gulistan khila sa lagta hai
Daffan is ke neechay insaniyat hai, hai ke nahien.

Main cheekhta chilata to hoon aye dost
kahien uss parwar ka banaya yeh chalan to nahien.

.....

-ENGLISH translation of the Ghazal.

{ I have tried to retain the GHAZAL FORMAT in ENGLISH version. I do not know
if I have been successful in my this attempt. }

Weakened are my wings, lacking strength to fly,
Nowbeyond my dare is longer flight.

What revolution and how would you bring it about,
You are not even conscious of your plight.

Extend not your hands to lift the sword,
If injury and hurt causes you fright.

Injuries you'll get and so will your dear ones,
Can't bear the hurt, then don't rise to fight.

You nurtured the orchard with blood and sweat,
To fruits of your labour you have no right.

This blooming orchard on the surface that you see,
Buried beneath it is humaneness, ain't it right?

For centuries you have been exploited and oppressed,
O famished fellows, death isn't crueller than perpetual blight.

Liberation from deprivation shall never be yours,
So rise in revolt, even perish in fight.

Why should not blood flow in one go?
Why this tortuous and lingering slight?
.....[demise?]

The cries of anguish, though I raise my friend,
May be the Creator has deigned such a plight

Om Chawla

Almighty-Anirrationalrationality

I often wonder,
how this Universe came to be?
Who is this Almighty?
Where did It exist?
How space came to be?

Limitless in cosmic terminology;
Did space exist in void, but how?
Space is primary for void to be.
Space in void, void sans space,
crazy it sounds to be.

Universe: A creation or a manifestation
of whom, from where and with what intention:
creation a desired emergence or an evolution;
a primal existence or simply an eruption
of energy, a happening might;
devoid of consciousness,
bereft of reasoning,
beyond rationality,
a riddle compounded with mystery of life.

From where comes the soul;
where does it go;
infuses life yet is not felt;
deserts the body inanimate:
unseen unperceived though:
so ends the life in every species.
Why so different are then species?

Of millions of species one is human,
endowed with smile and laughter
millions of species feeding on each other.

It's not fair, it's not just,
it's not Godly, it cannot be.
God Almighty, where is he!

God a human illusion,

to sustain our delusion,
devoid of justness
an omnipotent irrationality.
Still we need It,
Almighty we term It,
to ease our minds and to seek
solutions to our perplexities.
Solutions won't come somehow we know,
yet still in reverence our heads we bow
before God Almighty,
an irrational rationality;
else the world would mental asylum be.

Om Chawla

Am Part Of Thee

Before being I was part of THEE
I will be THEE when I cease to be,
What ails me then how my morrow shall be;
Shape it the way as THY wish be.

Om Chawla

An Aimless Race

Strange is the world stranger human ways
A sea of humanity in torrent of a race;
Where lame and healthy are all in chase:
Tottering or stumbling they all run
Whither and wherefor thinks no one
Run just run, else lag behind
Why are you ahead, why do I trail
Forging ahead is the only refrain
Perpetually jostling in this torrent of a race,
Strange is the world stranger human ways
Strange is the spectacle all around

Soaked in luxuries and abundant wealth
Greed spurring covetousness
Still you don't get peace and rest
Futile was the chase, unavailing the quest.
Strange is the world stranger human ways.
Strange is the spectacle all around.

Strutting and swaying in hollow pride
Unaware of what might happen next
When all that is held will be swept aside;
Futile were the efforts to pull down others
Vain were the designs to build this grandeur
In this concourse of millions of shoulders
Jostling others and pushing forward
So some fall by and are left behind.
In this unidirectional chase
Where every one is lonely
There is no friendly face;
Pause a little and reflect
What have I gained, where for I ran?
Purposeless was the chase, aimlessly I ran!
Strange is the world stranger human ways;
Strange is the spectacle all around.

Om Chawla

An Echo From The Bygone Past

An age has gone by
Since we first met;
Sound of your heart beats
Still rings in my head.
At this chilly age
In these chillier years;
Memories of the past
Are the cherished treasures.
Defiant was the youth;
Fanciful were the years.
Audacious youth had no fears.
Conventions it could tear asunder;
Yet you did not dare.
Choosing to defy your heart's desire
Sought solace in arms stranger.
Now when I see you in waning years;
Smugly content, no trace of despair.
Yet seeing you after many a years,
Violently throbbed my banished heart:
Sound of your heart beats I did hear,
Or was it an echo of the bygone past.

Om Chawla

An Infant's Smile

Peaceful repose of tranquility,
mirroring blissful divinity.
Heartwarming look of an innocent face
endearing charming bewitching grace;
serene and sacred temple like,
face of a sleeping infant child.
Twitch on the lips of sleeping child
dreaming infant's mystic smile.

Sometimes even while awake,
a focused stare in blank space,
smiles an infant in trance like gaze.

Two month old, what might it dream?
Recollection of cozy womb's confines!
Or could there be memories of past!
Mysterious might be the message cast
of some relation with pre-birth past!
Beyond recollection,
beyond comprehension,
mystery of an infant's smile.

Om Chawla

An Unwritten Song

I hold my pen to uncover the truth
O my countrymen, beware:
By unjustly claiming and self assuming
Inheritance to the halo of martyrdom
These neo-feudal lords, these usurpers of power
Have cheated us of fruits of our labour;
Cunning have been their lofty sermons
 yet we showed our utmost reverence,
Let's shed this admiration
 they don't deserve our obeisance.
Beware of them, O my countrymen
Beware of their wicked underbelly
Voraciously avaricious as that be.
Yes it is very late in my day
To try and sing such a song,
At an age when my epitaph need be written,
I hold this pen in shaking hands,
Somehow I feel my cry of anguish
Will reach you and shake you out of slumber
And stall their entry to power chambers
And when you awaken my song will have been sung.
That's the epitaph I would cherish
When I cease to be and ever after...

Om Chawla

Angela

One morning in the balcony of my opposite house,
Only the previous day which had been occupied,
A lady in flimsy pink 'kaftan' attired,
Paced leisurely from one end to the other,
Spring time's morning breeze she savored.
Occasionally strong gust of wind would blow,
When contours of her sculpted figure would show
And beneath the body hugging fluttering flimsy robe
Curves of her firm breast conspicuously showed.
Soon she became centre of every one's attention,
Every one cast an adoring look on the sly
She observed every one from the corner of her eye.
She savored the attention and felt prised
Poise she maintained and shunned pride.

Often a limousine would come to carry her
To a school of art where as a model would she pose.
Undressed and nude would she array shifting stances,
When emerging artists would draw her sketches;
Each interpreting her figure from a different angle.
Going beyond the figure some attempted to capture
The emotion behind the external veneer.
Only rarely would she look at some sketch
But when she chose to see that would invariably be the best.
She was endowed with an eye, keenly observant
The artists envied her discernment.
Conscious of her beauty and grace that she possessed
With her dignity no one dared to mess.
Soon after modelling assignment would she vanish
Informal loose talk she thus banished.

On the evening of the day she modelled
A glass full of wine would she take,
And sitting in the balcony in the midst of flowers
Sip the wine leisurely and spend hours,
Pensively reflecting on that day's sojourn,
Or may be on her life that had been wronged.
Hours would slip by before she realised
That it was already past midnight,

The time to wish good bye and good night.
Yes, good night to whom?to herself!
Good bye sweet heart! Angela, good night.
And tears would swell in her eyes.

Days weeks and months thus slipped by
No one ever knocked at her door,
Though everyone yearned to acquaint her
They desisted overawed by her demeanour

Unusual as it seemed, one morning
Angela did not appear in the balcony.
Three days passed yet the balcony remained deserted
Though behind the curtains life remained active.
On the fourth day a strange thing happened.
An envelop brought me tidings
Unsought for and unwarranted;
As the schools close for the summer vacations
A certain girl of the age of thirteen
Would come home from the hostel,
When she [Angela] may not be there;
It would kind of me to take her in my care
As she could not trust any other.
There were details besides
- of what to manage and why.
Bewildered I wondered: unknown and unacquainted
How such a trust could I have kindled.
Was it the look of my trusting eyes,
That transfused trust in unfamiliar eyes.

Sometime thereafter arrived a young bubbly girl
And as the door of that lady's flat did not open
She came running as though she was pre informed.
Soon a crowd gathered and broke open the door.
There on the bed lay Angela
-'The lady of the balcony'
As she had come to be known.
Attired in her flimsy pink 'kaftan' there she lay,
Tranquility writ large on her placid face,
Though it had turned bluish grey.

Anokha Yeh Duniya Ka Mela

Anokha yeh duniya ka mela
Bhaagam bhaag ka hai yeh rela
Anokha yeh duniya ka mela.

Lulhe langdey taangon wale
Ghisat-te ludak-te bhagan laagey
Kahan kidhar koi na sochay
Bhagan ki is hoad mein jaisey
Ek hi laksh hai, ek hi mudda
Tuu kyuon aagey main kyuon peechhey
Yeh duniya bhaagam bhaag ka rela
Anokha yeh duniya ka mela.

Jo tu aagey bhi ho jaiye
Tub bhi gar tu chain na paiye
Sare sukh suvidhain sadhan
Hawas aur badahti jaiyen
Rahat tujh ko de na paien
Teri khoj se tujhe bhatkaien
Laksh hein rahon mein bhaga
Manzil apni kaise paiye;
Yeh duniya bhaagam bhaag ka rela,
Anokha yeh duniya ka mela.

Jidhar bhi dekhon ik naya nazara
Har koi bandar sa laagey
Har koi apni ainth pe akdey
Koi na jaaney kis pal kya ho
Kab sab chhotey koi na jaaney
Kahey itna yatan lagaye
Vyarth aadambar vyarth lalsa
Kahey apna chaien ganwaye.
Yeh duniya bhaagam bhaag ka rela
Anokha yeh duniya ka mela.

Ik pal jo tu thum ke sochay
Kya paiya main ne kyuon main bhaaga
Kya laksh tha mera main kit bhaaga
Kya meri manzil, ik sawal hai yeh bhi

Main ne is aur kyoun na socha
Bus ik bheed ke saath chala main
Disha hein jo chalti jaiye
-Laakhon kandhey aapas mein takrate
-Dhaketey ik dujay ko, yatan yeh
-Dooja girey, peechhay reh jaiye
-Laakhon ki iss bheed mein dekho
-Har koi kitna bai-bus aur akela
-TU BHI TANHA MAIN BHI AKELA.
-MAIN BHI TANHA TU BHI AKELA.
Yeh duniya bhaagam bhaag ka rela
Anokha yeh duniya ka mela.

Om Chawla

Before That Final Leap.

Having come this far
am so near the line
waiting to cross over.
Pensively looking back and reflecting
over what has been
or what might have been;
Suddenly the sound of your foot steps
wandering in loneliness
attracts me,
beacons me.
I wish to step back
to meet you
to see you
to feel the intensity of your emotions!
You, whom I have never seen or met;
What draws me to you I cannot tell.
Is it the image that I have created
Or is it the image your poems have transmitted;
Real or illusory
It fascinates me,
and kindles a desire
to be with you
even if for a moment
before that final leap
into oblivion, or eternity
or just ceasing to be.

Om Chawla

Be-Pardgi.....{chand Ashaar....(Urdu)

Na poochh husn-e-dilkash ka nazaara na poochh
Aankhein chundhia gaien main ne dekha hi kya tha.

Unke libass ki uryan nawazi ka zikr kya
Husn be-panaah aiyan tha, chhuppa hi kya tha.

Pardon mein na chhupta hai na chhupata hai maghroor-e-husn
Be-naqaabi ka taqaza kaisa parde mein hi kya tha.

Yeh to zabt-e ishq tha ke fitna nahien hua
Varna koi kya jaane, husn ka irada kya tha.

Om Chawla

Betrayal - Of Faith Or Of Nature

Holy river and holier places
Centers of pilgrimages
Of devout devotees through the ages

For years beyond count millions came
Trekking the treacherous terrains
Seeking blessings of God's incarnates
Praying for desires fulfillment
Seeking their sins atonement
Or mitigation of some ailment
They came trekking arduous climbs
To pay obeisance and seek blessings.

These hills that were once attired
With abundant greenery and seasonal flowers
Lie denuded and are so barren
Strewn with multitude of silvery network
Of metaled motorways and stony structures
Instead of fragrance of plants and flowers
Smell of smoke invades our senses
Is it greedy commercialization
Or simply the pressure of teeming millions?

Howsoever the mountains lie denuded
Brittle structures of stone and dust
Battered by pounding of millions of footsteps
Earth beneath the pathways crumbling
From beneath the structures crumpling

Then one night Nature decided
To halt this greedy demeaning of nature
A cloud burst open pouring water
A sea of water, dismembering the mountain
Tearing to smithereens
Flowing down the rocky slopes
Even faster than the water might flow
Sweeping swallowing and burying
All that came in its way while onward marching
Pilgrims, devotees and all the seekers

Could not escape the riotous fury
Of angry stream of stones and water
Thousands perished, swallowed or were buried
The vale turned into a mound of slush
Unmarked grave to the untraced hundreds.

Why and wherefore this unimagined tragedy
Betrayal of faith at the doorsteps
of holiest of shrines,
Or indiscriminate tinkering of nature
There is no answer.

Can shattered faith our lives sustain
For howsoever reason may govern us
It is hope and faith that sustains
In trying times.

Om Chawla

Beyond Thehorizon

Yonder in the West,
Just before it sets,
Sun lingers, as if to cast one last look
Over what it illumined through the day.
Soon the sun shall bury itself,
Deep down the horizon in the West,
As if to rest;
And rise again on the morrow
To illumine what it had illumined earlier-
And again and again and again.....

And when I look into the mirror,
And see how time has greyed over my head,
Deep in my minds eye
I find myself-
Time ravaged and a lonely soul-
Standing far in the horizon of my life
- where life and death meet-
Craving to cast one last look
On your beauteous figure:
At this moment a thought sweeps my mind,
Shall I also go down the horizon,
Just like sun,
To be born again and seek you
In my next life
And next and next and next..... [1973]

Om Chawla

Bindu. [a Poem In Hindi]

Ik roop naino se man mein uttra
Mano dooor kshitij par ik madham sa bindu ubhara
Dhire dhire meri aur badha
Bindu bana ik chand
Roop ne karvat li
Hua chand se pyar
Tab hua milan
Ik madhur milan
Ik sukhad milan
Mano do aatmain samaa gai hoon jismain
Tab samay ki dhara baha ley gai
Milan ke is sukh ko
Usi kshitij ki aur
Chand phir ik bindu bana
Sukhad milan ki dard bhari yaad
jaise dooor kshitij par ik madham sa bindu
Chand ik bindu
Bindu ik roop
Bindu ik yaad
Bindu ik dard
Bindu ik aas
Jeevan ki aas
Asha hi jeevan
Bindu kitna chota sa par kitna mahaan.

[1972]

Om Chawla

Birds Nest

Often have we seen a bird
flying far, again and again
collecting straws to weave a nest-
A shelter to lay eggs
a home- for its young ones to be.
As eggs are hatched
out come the young
chirping or crying, to be fed,
the bird flies again, and again
collecting grains
to feed the young
who cannot fly
It chews the grain but does not swallow
beak to beak it feeds young fellow
caressingly and lovingly
so all are fed properly.
Young get wings, by and by:
and coaxed by the mother bird;
attempt to fly.
Then suddenly one day
the young one flies far away
It knows not where: and
The nest gets barren once again.
Lonely...
The bird DOES NOT GRIEVE
OR DOES IT
We humans, we do not know.

Om Chawla

Contours Of Silence

What is silence? I sat brooding,
how this silence can silent be! ?
Silence without, crowds your mind
with many a shriller sounds.
Silence sans silence, when you find
You with yourself can then bind.
Silence that speaks in whispering tones
Is heard by the heart, when in tune.
Ideas then flood a poet and a thinker
A distressed heart, fortitude then discovers.
A lover's heart-beats with fantasies then rhyme;
without silence you yourself cannot be thine.

When a demure bride blushes on first night,
when a woman attains motherhood, first time's pride,
when an infant in mother's lap sucks at the breast,
oozes happiness silently from faces aglow
Or from their blushing downcast eyes,
you need to feel and listen its resonant melody
Hark and listen,
Thus speaks silence.

When ailing and infirm mother is abandoned,
blessings of grannies, when children are denied,
when lustful infatuations at the conjugation strike,
relations get stained and disillusioned
silently it curses the course of life,
you need to feel and listen the cry for just dispensation.
Hark and listen,
Thus speaks silence.

The misery of a farmer whose crop has failed,
gnawing pain of hungry, starved and unfed,
traumatised girl molested, raped and shied,
shrill are their cries beneath the apparent quiet,
you need only look into their dismayed eyes
to listen to their silent simmering disgust.
Hark and listen,
Thus speaks silence.

You need discern the silent noises,
of deprived and discontented masses,
sulking, deprived and exploited,
gathering storm beneath surface of silence
ignore the voices, at your peril,
whence Marie Antoinette's fate your's shall be.
Learn to listen the silent war cry.
Hark and listen,
Thus speaks silence.

Om Chawla

Creation

Why and wherefore of creation
has defied human comprehension.
Mystics and sages have speculated
Scientists have deliberated.
Unborn, Unoriginated and Unseeable
Existed ONE before all existence;
Breathing in the breathless space:
A void:
ONE's transcendent expansion
resulting in the Creation
All in One and One in all
So came cosmic Existence,
ONE's own desired manifestation.
A desire and a creation! !
Or was it the WORD
Big Bang or the Sound,
That created Existence out of non-existence,
A cosmic manifestation;
Having a beginning yet timeless;
Bound in space yet limitless;
A finite infinity:
A transitory illusion and yet a reality,
A creation beyond description

Om Chawla

Cry Of A Soul

In the dimly lit corridors of the hospital
lurked a malefic figure-
restless fidgety in the grip of passion.
Unmindful of the eerie environ
young nurse Aruna hastened to the quarters
to change into her uniform for the day
when suddenly from behind a shadowy corner
an evil force emerged and dragged her
to a lonely corner.

What passion it was, anger or lust,
who knows what,
that turned him into a beast.
Stifling her throat, lest she cry
he infringed her modesty.
With her senses numbed
she sank into oblivion.
Like a loath, she lies ever since
vegetative she has been since:
she- who chose
to nurse our wounds and soak our tears
with tender smile and hands of care.
Now like a loath there she lies.
She cannot stand or even stir
neither eat nor even drink,
speechlessly, in space she stares
it's all hollow, nothing is there.
' She is in coma' doctors announce.
' Alive, she is' judges pronounce.
But, let me ponder:
is she alive though not dead.
Benumbed, she is
her senses do not work.
But what of soul,
doesn't it suffer?
Wasn't it hurt when she was raped?
Doesn't it hurt even now,
as her colleagues
under the cloak of sympathy

daily transgress her privacy.
Hush hush talk all around
and looks of pity that abound,
mercilessly they hurt the soul.
'Human right' that we pride
is all sham
a matter of shame!
Soul in her body still resides
in agony it still does cry;
when will it all end?

Note: -This poem relates to the very unfortunate and agonising misery suffered by the hapless nurse, Aruna Shanbaug, victim of sexual assault who lapsed into state of 'coma' and remained in that tortuous condition for 42 long years. Initially Supreme Court denied Euthanasia in her case but subsequently permitted passive euthanasia.

Om Chawla

Cry Of A Soul.....[2]

A small room in the ward number four
A grave like home to the pulsating corpse:
For forty two years she lay there
With stifled shriek stuck in the throat.
Was it a cry of pain or of fear
Or for help to escape the savage assault.
Unuttered it froze in time's eternal grasp,
And now when the flesh has gone cold,
Would be buried mingled with the ultimate dust
In a state of smouldering dormancy.

For forty two years this small room
Reverberated with unuttered cries of a distressed soul
At transgression of her privacy
By her own erstwhile friends;
Who in the name of tending her
Would shame her even more
Than the savage brute who raped her.
Priding in the nobility of their cause,
And failing to realise the hurt that they caused,
Opposed they the plea for mercy before the court,
When a lady with angelic compassion at heart;
Perturbed at the perpetual agony of the suspended soul
That lay shackled in the arid cage;
Sought the merciful release of distressed soul.
Termination of agony judges refused
Though life in the corpse they could not infuse.

For forty two years the poor soul
Remained in a state of spiritless suspension
A helpless victim mute to the tortuous grind.
For forty two years no one heard her cries wild,
her tears in her stony eyes got dried.

Sham is the pretentious right to life
When life can't be lived and death is denied.
After forty two years of agonising suspension
Let peace be the right of released soul.
Pray that the cries have now ceased, let peace prevail.

Pray that the tormented soul now rests in peace
By herself in her new resting place.

Om Chawla

Dawn - An Enlivening Resurgence

Caught in the whirl of apprehensions
When sleep refused to cast its sway
Wandering aimlessly in the predawn night
I came to the sea side walkway.
Sitting on a rock lonely, facing the sea in low toil,
A huge dark curtain stood before me
Obliterating all existence beyond;
Yet rippling water and hissing breeze
Signified the existence far and deep.
Immersed in nature's nostalgic music
Apprehensive fears fled from me
Bestowing clearer thoughts and quiet of peace.
Suddenly the dark curtain started melting and vanished soon,
And from far across dark sea waters
Rose a canvas of changing colours,
From hazy blue to subdued crimson
To golden yellow to azure blue.
Soon the sun emerged in bright glare
And as its rays fell at a tangent
Producing a spectacle of undulating waves:
Now shimmering white, now golden yellow
And yet again in darker hue.
Flying swiftly at low height
Birds reveling in early morning breeze.
A sight so very refreshing
Dispelling the despondence of gloomy night.
Dawn- an endowed radiance;
Dawn- an enlivening resurgence

Om Chawla

Dawn Of Hope, Of Trust And Faith

New dawn awaits across the night,
A year in the meanwhile has slipped by.
For some a year of grief, travail and tribulation,
For others, of sweet and rapturous exhilaration.
Riding on the nimble waves of time,
The vanishing year of floundering gloom,
Or of resurgent mirth and laughter,
Will soon cross the horizon and be consigned.
Boisterous crescendo would soon arise,
Glittering illumination subjugating night
Would usher in dawn of hope and anticipation,
Even before the new dawn's sunrise.

Let us step forward to meet and embrace
The new dawn of man's yearnings and grace:
Repledging the customary resolutions
Unfulfilled pledges of the year gone by,
Hoping to redeem the pledges some day,
Whence want and sufferance will have no stay;
And establish a new trust-
Just, ethical and all pervasive truthfulness.

Let us step forward to meet and embrace
The new dawn of hope, of trust and faith.

Blessed it be for you and me
And for every living soul that be.

Om Chawla

Desire's Web- A Fallacious Dream.

One night I dreamt of a damsel,
with wild eyes and flowing hair,
with exuberant flesh so fair.
Looking at my youthful incarnate;
she glanced at me and winked and smiled;
to follow her she beckoned me with her eyes.
In a trance like daze she led me far.
At an idyllic place she bade me 'halt'.
With hasty steps she strode ahead
and vanished behind a cluster of lush green trees.

Anxious I grew as hours ticked by.
Impatience cajoled me to look for her.
Going past the cluster of lush green trees;
I found myself in a lovely vale.
There stood a lonely cottage with roof of hay;
bedecked by creepers of lovely flowers.
No sign of life other wise was there.
'Where else could she have disappeared'
so thinking the cottage I approached.
An old and shrivelled man at the door,
with questioning look he made me halt.
His inquisitive stare some questions asked.
Telling him what I saw, his help did I seek,
To find the damsel where might she be.

'Where for you want to know? ' he asked,
'What might your intention be? '

'I like her, I love her and happy would I be,
if she were my bride to be.'

'I have two daughters, and one is she'
so saying, into the cottage, he led me.
' Ah there they are Serenity and Desiree,
both side by side. Both are young
and with their mates they should be.
My days seem numbered as you can see.
I will be happy if either of them you chose to marry.

To give you a fair chance to make right choice
have this inherited mirror which will help
to see your future life with either as it might be.
So see it complete to make right choice.
See it complete, I say, lest you regret.'

As I looked into the mirror,
Serenity came across as a simple
calm and unexciting mate.
Leaving her tale in the middle
I switched to see how my life
with Desiree would be.
Exhilarating her company appeared to me
with lovely fairy like her kids
Avery, Covety, Envy, Greed and Jealousy
all in a cluster weaving a web around me.
Ere I could think and reflect
'Leave the mirror, let's marry' Desiree said.
So saying and holding my hand, out she led
and brought me back to this side of
the lush green trees.

Just then door bell rang
and half in reverie and half awake
I sprang out of my bed,
unsure what this dream meant to me.

Om Chawla

Do [two] Ghazalein [In Urdu]

-1-

Yeh zeest ke gham hain pyaloon mein na simtain ge
Oak se peete raho jab tak na dum nikley.
Ahsas toa hai tere dukh ka par aye dost main karoon kya
Duaien be-assar hain aur haath nahien kuchh mere.
Aaie jo laghzish-e-paa dikha na koi jo mujhe thaamey
Kahne ko toa rishton ka ik hajoom tha sang mere.
Musarat jo bhari jeevan mein ik bachhey ki killkari nein
Paaband kiya siyaad nein go laakh hum tadpe.
Vaisey toa parvar nein bahut kuchh hai diya lekin
Mayusi ka yeh aalam hai mayusi hai sang mere.

-

-2-

Miltay hain jo dukh ahsasaat se janmein hain
Kisi aur ko dukh de kar rahat ko na tum dhoondo.
Go har shakhs begaana hai dukhoon mein ghira hai
Baaiss kisi ke dukh ka tum toa nahien sochho.
Dard ki tashadad se go umad aiengey aansoo
Palkon ko bana baand iss sailab ko tum roko.
Zarorat hi aadhaar hai rishton ki pakad ka
Tum toa iss tashkeek se hatt kar zara jee lo.

-

Jhoot aur fareb panaptey hain naftrat ki bunyaadon par
Rishton ki imarat kabhi in par nahien khadi hoti.

-

[2012]

Om Chawla

Echo Of Adolescent Desires

Echo of adolescent desires
When heard in declining age
Demonstrates shameless indiscretion,
Uncovers depravity from within the cage.

Om Chawla

Ek Pahad Ki Dastaan- A Poem In Urdu

Hazaron barson se
Badalte yugon ko main
Yun hi dekh rha hun.
Ek yug thha jab meri dono taraf
Log ek hi tehzeeb mein dhaley thhay
Ek hi mazhab thha unka
Wahi devi devta thhay unke
Wahi pooja ka tareqa
Wahi mandir aur unmein goonjte shankh
Aur ghadiyalon ki dilkash awaaz
Subah saverey mujh se takrati
Aur ek sarsarahat si daud jaati mujh mein
Halaki main to pathhar hi thha.

Do hazar baras se bhi pahle
Yunan ka mahan youdha Sikander
Duniya ko fateh karne ka sapan liyay
Yahan se guzra
Porus ko usne haraya
Par mauryon se ghabraya
Aur loat gaya apne pashchhmi desh ko
Jidhar se thha woh ayaa.
Usi yug mein
Baodh dharam ki dhara,
Ahimsa ka sandesh liyay
Meri hi rah se hokar,
Phail gaie pashchim ki ghatti mein
Aur logaon ki nai chhetna
Vyakt hui Bamiyan ki murtieon mein,
Aur main, pathhron ka but, ek pahad
Apna sar uthhaiey dekhta rha
Sarahata rha.

Phir janma ik naya mazhab
Murti pooja ka virodhi
Ik aandhi ban kar umda,
Mere pashchim mein;
Aakramik taver apnaye
Murti pooja karne walon ko

Kafir usne thhehraya
Aur murti pooja rahit samaj ki khatir
Meri pashchmi ghatti mein
Nar-singhar hua Hinduon ka
Jiske chalte mera naam bhi bigda
Pariyatra Parvat ki bajaey,
Hinduon ko marne wala,
Hindu Kush main kehlaya:
Aur main
Pathhron ka ek pahad
Butt bana dekhta rha,
Sharam se apna sar bhi jhuka na saka.

Phir shuru hua silsila
Qatl-o-gharat ka
Jiske chalthey
Insaniyat sharminda hoti rahi
Nahien nahien
Insaniyat to mar hi gaie.
Raham ka naam-o-nishan mit gaya.
Meri dono taraf wadieon mein
Sar kat-te rahe
Cheekhien goonjti rahien
Lahoo behtey rahe,
Zameen surkh hoti rahi,
Main kuchh na kar saka
Main to pathhar hi thha
Phir bhi meri aankhien
Pighalti baraf se nam hoti rahien.
Qatl-o-gharat ka yeh mazhabi farman
Main na rok saka
Main to pathhar hi thha
Be-bas aur lachhar dekhta raha
Kis tarah daku aur looterey
Is jahalat bhari muheem se
judtey gaiyey
Muhazab insaan kat-te rahe
Unki beevieon ki azmat lut-ti rahi
Bahmien betiean aghwa hoti rahien;
Mandir fana hotey rahe
Devtaon ki sone chhandi ki murtien
Toot-ti rahien, lut-ti rahien

Par masjidon se aazaan uth-ti rahi
Hazaar barson tak
Ik tehzeeb dabti rahi
Zakhm-doz hoti rahi
Lahoo rista raha uske zakhmon se,
Aur main maon khada dekhta rha,
Ek pathhron ka anbaar
Main aur kar hi kya sakta thha
Aur mere ird gird
Dhad kati khopdiyon ke minare
Ik vahshiana samaj ka parcham baney
Ubhartey rahey, bikhartey rahey,
Aur mere aas paas
Sar katey dhad
Jinhein chhita bhi naseeb ho na saki
Galtey sadtey rahey
Par main be-bas khada
Kuchh bhi kar na saka
Main to pathhar thha.

Om Chawla

Emancipation

Life after life soul transmigrates
Carrying the burden of its karmic traits
The way we live our next life shapes.

Birth after birth again and again
Lives we spend in fighting pain
Rebirth is but transcendent pain.

Life though a splendid delight
Age and decay life's charm blight
All this is transient and fades in time.

Human sufferance has been universal
It stirred great minds through the ages
'Why' and 'wherefore' pondered sages.

They taught us piety and compassion
Greed and lust's abnegation
Control of anger, taming of passion.

But life is life, remains the same
Little delight and much of pain
Freedom from pain Man wants to attain.

Emancipation of soul is saintly refrain
Moksh is what Budha preached
Nirvana is what Jainis seek

Rebirth! ? ? ?
Why would I seek perennial pain.

Om Chawla

Fancy's Redemption

There lived an affable lonely man,
conjectural stories of his love-lorn past,
in hush hush manner commonly talked.
Admired for his wit of interspersing,
with appropriate couplets while conversing,
'Poet Uncle' with affection was he called.

Of late with his advancing age,
memories of his younger days,
from over the isle of his long past youth,
like fresh breeze often made forays;
and rekindled his fancies long subdued.
An age had slipped by since his youth,
and despite in waning years his mind,
a salvo of fanciful images unleashed,
from his memory's frozen frame,
where his love dwelt in her eternal youth;
unscathed by the ravages of time,
and shielded by his adoring mind.

Then came that fateful day,
when light in his eyes seemed to fade,
when his unquenched soul seemed ready to fly,
his silent call reached out to her.
As his eyes flickered, he fancied his feeble arms,
folding around his lady love.
He fancied curly hair dangling over his face
and when he tried to playfully curl her hair over again,
Time suddenly stilled and his arms,
slumped and dangled on his either side.
That mute and fanciful image of embrace,
of lonely soul's conjugation with soulmate,
took flight and submerged itself,
in vacuous space between being and non-being.

Om Chawla

Grieve Not When I Am Gone.

Grieve not when I am gone
Since that is the way life is prone;
A day, a month, a year or ten
Cast of time is beyond our ken.
Acutely conscious, why am I!
Impending event none can defy.
So grieve not when I am gone.

Brush of time with strokes steady
Will blur the memories gradually
Pain of parting will there be
Yet that will pass, know we all
This is just a parting,
Don't call it a loss:
And grieve not when I am gone.

This parting, a truth universal
Oftener discussed we in recent past,
While recounting our journey thus far,
Of pursuits deliberate and innocent follies,
Succeeding sometimes, sometimes failing;
Failures didn't deter us nor embitter.
Resetting our goals we pushed along
And so at this juncture of parting
Let not regret creep in at all.
So grieve not when I am gone.

This moment of parting
That seems lurking for some time past
Accord it due solemnity when it comes,
And pray,
That release of soul from human bondage
Be free from degrading pain;
respect the release of this harmless soul
And pray for its salvation
From pangs of birth and death.
Grieve not,
For all this is so ordained,
And grieve not when I am gone.

Om Chawla

Grieve Not, O Heart.

Grieve not, O heart, for life is not lost
Life- just like a day,
That dawns at the horizon in the East
And sets at the horizon in the West
Horizon- an ever receding illusion,
For Sun was there, before emergence
At the horizon, only we could not see
It will be there, after it sets
At the horizon, but we would not see
Grieve not O heart, for Self is not lost
It was there before its worldly birth
And will be there after this form ceases to be;
It's only parting at, the end of a journey.
Rejoice in memories of companionship,
Memories that this journey blessed
For every journey ends
for new one to begin
When there would new co travelers be;
Just like new lands are illumined,
Beyond the horizon, when here darkness be.
Grieve not O heart, cherish his memories,
And wish him well,
Loss of companionship, yes there is,
'cause embarked on new journey
Erstwhile companion is.
Grieve not O heart,
Bless him in peace
Bless him in peace.

Om Chawla

Horizon

Looking far into the distance,
Earth seemingly meets the sky
And forms a line we call horizon.
Earth and sky so very different in character
Look in yearning embrace;
Can different identities ever meet?
Is this an illusion or misplaced belief?
Horizon is in fact a limitation
Of our ability to look beyond this haze.

Late in the evening
As sun goes beyond our visions range
Drowning beyond the illusory horizon
And plunged in darkness we fret in gloom
Light it casts beyond the reach of vision;
'Horizon we know is an illusion;
And light transcends beyond this barrier
TO where our senses can't perceive.
Light can't perish and remains aglow
Reemerging to vanquish the darkness
And illumine the environ once again
.....again and again
Horizon a myth, lacks identity
Light transcending beyond this haze.

In the evening of his life
Frail in body, fickle in mind
Man sees in the distant horizon,
Where earth illusively seems to end,
Life embracing death. An illusion;
Finite seems to meet infinity;
And yet soul remains beyond perception
Death an illusion much like horizon,
Soul lives on beyond our vision
That life our senses cannot perceive.
Horizon- a limitation or an illusion;
Horizon- a symbol of hope or of transcendence.

I Am Reminded Of The Words Of The Bard

When earth shakes in the womb of the ocean'
Swelling water surges in furious tides,
Boats and ships are torn asunder,
Coast and cities are ravaged and destroyed,
I am reminded of the words of the bard,
'Like flies to wanton boys are we to gods
They kill us for their sport.'

When a group of fishermen after day's labour,
With a cache of fishes fruit of day long efforts,
Return in the evening and land is in sight,
Suddenly their boat capsizes and all is lost;
I am reminded of the words of the bard,
'Like flies to wanton boys are we to gods
They kill us for their sport.'

When bus full of pilgrims visiting a temple,
Chanting and singing Lord's praises,
After paying obeisance while returning,
Skid and fall into a gorge and perish;
I am reminded of the words of the bard,
'Like flies to wanton boys are we to gods
They kill us for their sport.'

When farmers after months of hard labour,
Succeed in raising crops of cereals,
A source of sustenance for millions,
Rains and floods destroy the harvest;
I am reminded of the words of the bard,
'Like flies to wanton boys are we to gods
They kill us for their sport.'

When a doctor treats an ailing child,
A mother's hope, purpose and pride,
Support in old age who would provide,
Recovers from ailment but in accident dies;
I am reminded of the words of the bard'
'Like flies to wanton boys are we to gods
They kill us for their sport.'

How very true are the words of the bard,
'Like flies to wanton boys are we to gods
They kill us for their sport.'

Om Chawla

I Want To Know

Seriously jocular is my fancy's flight
O wiseman tell me if it be right.

Proton and neutron in an atom bind,
Man and wife, life in union find,
What is this 'gay' life, did nature enshrine?
My ken is limited, you can divine;
I am a layman, I want to know,
O wiseman, tell me, if that be fine.

Energy is matter, matter energy;
All the cosmos it does shape,
There may be matter ethereal innate in space,
I am no scientist, I do not know,
What makes the Space? How does it grow?
O wiseman, tell me, I want to know.

Five elements, they say, do life make,
Earth, fire, water, wind and space,
May be there is another element,
Undetected all cosmos it pervades:
More elusive than 'Boson',
'Consciousness' it may be!
'Consciousness' an element!
Laughable it sounds to be;
I am no scientist, I do not know.
Crazy thoughts, I want to shed them,
Just ponder, for I want to know,
O wiseman, tell me, if you know.

Om Chawla

Ik Prem Pujaran. [a Poem In Hindi]

Ik prem pujaran
Liye vyakul man
Tadpti aatma
Aur dukhta tan
Nikli ghar se
Ik aas liye
Kuchh sahmi si
Kuchh ghabrati
Kabhi lajati aur kabhi todti
Vidroh se har bandhan
Aa pohanchhi jahan basti thhi chhah
Man to thha ik prem ka sagar
Tan mangta aalingan ka sukh
Par premi na samjha pujaran ka dukh
Shaied samjha bhi
Shaied apne hi dukh mein lein ho
Bhool gaya pujaran ke dukh ko.
Utaijit ho chhal pada pujaran ke sang
Kahan kidhar koi thhah na thhi
Itne bade sansar mein mano
Unke liye koi gah na thhi.
Aakhir saham ik kone mein baithe
Lage ik doje ko daikhne
Aankhein to ik duje se bolien
Aur bolien do aatmaien bhi
Par tan ka dukh ho gaya ahir.
Tab ik badal laga barasne
Pujaran ke matware naino se
Jise dekh hua vyakul woh
Aur laga kosne iss jeevan ko;
Iss sansar ko jis mein
Pyar to thha kam par thhey kitne bandhan
Tab sar uske kaandhe par rakh kar
Pujaran ne kiya sanket laot chhalne ko
Ik pagal goonga ho jaise
Na kuchh samjha na sooach saka woh
Aur chhal pada uske sang
Kahan kidhar koi kya jane.....[1972]

Indian Summer

O lovely lady from colder climes
You sing praises of summertime,
As it unshackles the chillier bind
Of preceeded freezing wintertime:
As sun's kind warmth rejuvenates life,
When flowers bloom and plants revive,
when chirping birds flutter and fly,
And humans bask in soothing sunshine,
After release from shackled chillier bind.

Here in my land of tropical clime,
Moderate is winter barring hilly confines.
Sun is harsh in summertime;
Banishing moisture from the air.
In the dry hot air non dare to venture;
Eyes can't stand sun's dazzling glare.
Stray cattle and dogs disappear,
Hiding beneath some shady cover;
In hollow trunks of leafy trees
Birds find shelter from scorching heat.
Leaves and plants scorch yellowish brown
While grass in the parks turn earthy brown.
Rare is the sight of a blooming flower
Hot blows the wind even after sunset hour.

Outside the village a group of farmers
Stares at farmlands, devoid of moisture,
Dry upper crust shattered into smithereens,
Parched land, streaked with crevices;
Distraught farmers with skewed eyes
Peer deep into the horizon of the eastern sky
Searching for monsoon clouds, that might
Rain and saturate the land to farmers respite,
And might subdue the dry hot summer wind
Yet relief there won't be as humidity sets in.
Dry or humid, summer is distressing
Such is the summer in my country's tropical clime.

Invocation To Death

Come O thou reliever from painful pains
And strike pestilent all vibrating things
Let not a life live;
No joy, no mirth, no laughter
No cheerful face there be seen.
O darkness descend and take the world in thy lap
O winds stop in thy lively course
O silence fall and let not any voice be heard
O save me from this bemoaning world.

Om Chawla

Jab Samay Ki Dhara Ruk Jayagi [poem In Hindi]

Jab samay ki dhara ruk jaayegi
Aur mitt kar ghul jaayega yeh tan,
Hava paani ya agan mein,
Ya raakh hi ban kar pada rahega
Kahein pathh par tere;
Mitt jaayega jab tan yeh mera
Aur jeevan ke uss paar
Bhatakti hogi aatma meri,
Tab kya hoga mann ka mere,
Kya yeh bhi mar jaayega?
Yeh koi tann toa nahin,
Aur na hi koi aakar hai isska,
Yeh jo vyaakul ho uthta hai,
Nainon ki maadakta se teri;
Tere hi sparsh ki khatir
Har pal
Har chhin
Hai sapne bunnta
Aur tadapta
Kya hoga iss mann ka priyay tab
Samay ki dhara ruk jayagi jab.

Om Chawla

Juxtaposed - Growing Years And Declining Age.

Toddling years of early life,
Laying hold of what it finds
Making sense of surroundings.
Uninitiated in guile and deception,
Trusty credulous without inhibition,
Comes the youthful impetuous phase;
Of infectious charm and winsome grace.
Defiant and in relentless pursuit
Of dreams utopian
Of tempestuous passions,
Of jealous possessions
Of love's sweet and lingering impression
A surge in life
An urge for life
Everlasting dream of buoyant life.

Hour after hour, day after day
Being withers in gradual decay,
Furrows emerging on an emotionless face,
Timorous, insipid and fragile,
Infirm hands, loose in grip
Leaning in support of walking stick,
Skewed eyes struggling in their gaze,
Vainly trying to look through haze.
Shrivelled wrap over dangling skeleton
Lonesome, deserted or abandoned
Struggling to be
Or a wait for ceasing to be.
Life a boon or a curse
Juxtaposed facets of human life.

Om Chawla

Kalpa, Mass Extinction And Resurrection

{In this poem I have tried to synthesize the modern day scientific findings with the narrative of a scripture.}

Hark the footsteps of impending destruction
By natural calamities or affliction
Or man made tools of annihilation
Headed are we to mass extinction.

- Five times we perished and resurrected
- In this interminable cycle
- Of creation, doom and resurrection
- Asserts the scientist, making prediction
- It would be sixth mass extinction.

Amazing are scripture's revelations
Measuring the immeasurable cosmic age
Each resurrected origin to doomed extinction
A cosmic day on Kalpa's time scale
Each extinction culminating a cosmic day
Whence all life ceases to be or vanishes
Resting in subsumed silent stillness
In a state of barren nothingness
Life writhes out of dormant non existence
Resurrecting itself and heralding
Dawn of a new cosmic day
A new sequence of fourteen manvantaras
A new Kalpa to lead unto next extinction.

- Creation to doom to resurrection
- An interminable cosmic days succession
- Defining the indefinable
- Infinity of cosmic age.

Om Chawla

Keep Away From My Brimming Bowl

Keep away from my brimming bowl
Mixed with tears it is burning hot
Beware else you will burn your fingers.
Take a sip at your own peril
for the agony and pain soaked tears
will then run wildly in your veins.
With stirred emotions and regained compassion
you would feel the hurt of human pain;
and discern the difference
between depraved rulers and deprived masses:
humanity denuded of all humaneness
millions driven to destitution;
Cries and sighs you will start hearing,
disturbing sights you will be witnessing.
Beware my friend, beware therefore,
Keep away from my brimming bowl,
mixed with tears it is burning hot.
Keep away from my brimming bowl:
beware else you will burn your fingers:
away away from my brimming bowl.

Om Chawla

Khushi Se Paon {kataa (A Quatrain) In Urdu}

Khushi se paon ladkhada hi gaiey

Naamjabunkizubaanneliya

'Sanbhal ke' jab woh cheekh uthien

Ikraazafsanabanhigaya.

Om Chawla

Kuchh Bhi To Nahein Hai Naam Mein Mere. [a Poem In Hindi]

Kuchh bhi to nahien hai naam mein mere
Na koi arth hai na mahatav hi
Samay ke raigistan mein jaisey
Tum ne ik naam likha tha
Jo mit sa gaya hai
Waqt ki aandhi se.
Ab jab teri nai duniya mein
Naiye saathi sang hain tere
Kya rakha hai beeti yaadon mein
Bharte rahein aanso in aankhon mein
Rait par likha hua ik shabd tha mein
Jo mit sa gaya hoon.
Lekin jab bhi naiye sab saathi
Sang chhod tujhe peddit kar dein
Naam tum lena mera priye tab
Aur moorat kar ke yaad tum meri
Kehna thha ik sachha shaksh bhi
Jiske pyaar ne jeevan mein thhey
Aashaon ke phool bikhere
Jise waqt nigal gaya hai
Aur jo yaadon ke aakash mein
Ik tara ban kar chamak raha hai
Chhahey uska koi naam nahien hai.....[1992]

Om Chawla

Laboon Ki Khamoshi {kataa (A Quatrain)} In Urdu

Laboon ki khamoshi kya karti

Dhadkan-edilnenaghmasunahidiya,

Barhanagi tamannaaien chhupnasakien

Chanchal nigahi ne unki, raaz afshan kar hi diya

Om Chawla

Let Me Be Me [a Search For Solitude]

It's mid of night
Dark and still all around
Something hurts within
I know not why does it hound;
No forebodings of any gloom
No fear of impending doom
Yet still my heart is distressed
Yet still my mind is ill at ease.

Out in the open, dark and windless
The vast expanse so still and soundless
Under the inverted sea of darkness
Covered with a spread of shinning beads
I search for elusive solitude.

Yes there are no disturbing sounds
Though within the depths of deep dark sky
May be buried the sounds
Of stars exploding
Of meteors crashing
And many an earth like civilizations:
These sounds, as may be
can't infringe surrounding tranquility
Then why the rumblings within my mind
Impede the silent stillness
And deny me solitude.

Quiet my mind, quieten down,
Usher within me a silent dawn.
The world will be
The world that is
Banish these distressing thoughts.
Let me bathe in the sea of solitude,
Let me bathe in the peace that be,
Let me listen to the saner voice
Let me with myself be.

Let me be me.

Let Us Live, My Lady, When We Are Young

Tomorrow I may die young lady,
And reduced to dust may be lost in dust:
Therefore let us live when we are young
And taste of life what it offers us:
The morrow may offer nothing to us,
It is the present that matters most
When you are young and budding like a rose.

 Tomorrow this beautiful figure may fade

 Time my lady shall not wait

 And meanwhile youth shall pass.

Let us live, my lady, when we are young;
When my heart aches at missing your sight;
When with warmth I can clasp you in my arms;
When you are rich in your figure
When your touch sends ripples through my body
When your kiss makes life worth living,
Let us live, my lady, when we are young.

Om Chawla

Life- A Journey In Pain

Birth is pain.

Death is pain.

Every pleasure is steeped in pain.

Joy contains seeds of pain.

Proximity germinates attraction:

Arouses passion.

We taste life's pulsations;

Love's manifestation!

Or fulfillment?

Joyous is the moment:

A blissful moment:

We can't cling on

It's a fleeting moment

It vanishes, leaves no mark.

Why dost pleasure soon depart?

Pain it is that leaves a scar.

All the yearnings

All the longings

Can't be limited

Can't be fulfilled

Cause agony and pain.

Life a journey of pain

Or a journey in pain.

Om Chawla

Love- - Nature's Ordain {a Ballet Dance}

Blossoming out of a folded posture
Slowly rising in a languid motion
On tiptoes rose a beauteous figure
Charming elegant a ballet dancer.
Standing tall and stretching upwards
Turning and twirling in motions of grace
In a swan like swim across the stage.
A visual song in limpid grace
Reverberating in cosmic space.

In descent like float comes the beau
Beckons the belle in amorous hue
Coyly moving in hesitant grace
Immerses herself in love's embrace.
A moment of flagrant exultance:
A moment of fulfilling endearance:
A transient moment, defying transience
Etched in memory
Frozen in eternity
Love- an emotion ordained by nature;
Love -an emotion universal.

Om Chawla

March On Comrades, March On

Yonder in the East, our comrades are shouting,
Yonder in the East, our comrades are fighting,
Yonder in the East, our fate they are carving,
 March on comrades, march on.

From the East, slogan is echoing,
Scrap automation, allow us due living,
It is bare minimum, is it much asking?
 March on comrades, march on.

Make haste comrades, lest we be late,
The fight may be over and seal our fate,
Spurn the enemy with due hate,
 March on comrades, march on.

The posterity will curse us if we linger,
Firmly in unison let us march thither,
Smother all those who our progress hinder,
 March on comrades, march on.

Let us herald The New Era in,
Whence no one shall trade in empty sermons,
When khadi capped traders shall be banished,
When doing and not talking shall be the criterion,
 March on comrades, march on.

What if we perish in the process,
We shall have lived with a purpose,
We shall have met an honoured death,
Our goal so humble, our cause is just;
 March on comrades, march on.

Om Chawla

Maya

Beauty charm elegance grace
Like water in the desert dissipate
All is transient all do fade.
Flimsy passions do they raise.
Inflamed desires do pleasure crave.
Gratifying is the moment of capitulation:
Satiety vanishes with the transient moment:
Consummation fails to saturate;
Instead desires it accentuates;
Thirst for pleasure it aggravates.

With millions that you might amass;
Means of comfort you might have;
More you seek, more you have;
Still satiation remains beyond your grasp.
Defunct and barren is urges fulfilment:
Brittle and momentary is sensual enjoyment:
On sands of time it leaves no imprint.

Lofty heights might be an achievement;
Delusive is the sense of attainment;
Thirsty soul remains unquenched.
Illusion of reality crumbles in final hour,
Life that emerged from non-being
Wades through the web of illusions to its unbeing.
All is Maya and is left behind.
Life a transience:
A journey through web of illusions;
MAYA AN ENTICING WEB OF ILLUSIONS.

Om Chawla

Mera Aakaar- [a Poem In Punjabi]

Main main vich, main tain vich
Main hi andar, main hi bahr
Main hoan vich, main na hoan vich
Main hi rachna, main rachnakar.
Bahar kahan tu dhundey mujhko
Main hi tu, zara kar vichar

Jal bhi main, main hi agni,
Main dharti, main hi akash.
Yeh sab aakaar hain mere
Phir bhi main niraakaar.

Krodh bhi main, krodhi bhi main
Aman chain mera vistaar.
Main hi sugandh, durgandh bhi main
Gandh hien mera aakaar.
Band kar aankhein dekh zara tu
Tu bhi main, tu mera aakaar.

Main hi Radha, Udhav bhi main hi
Main hi Brahm, bharam bhi main hi;
Har thaien labhda phirein par vaikh na pavein
Shunyahaimeraaakaar.
Akheian band kar aap nu vaikhein
Tan hi tu samjhein mera aakaar.

Om Chawla

Musings

Learning enhances breadth of vision
Compassion adds humane dimension
Feelings impel you for action.

Vanity with wisdom if resides
Not by others, it self derides
It does no good to one's pride.

'Am wiser than you' is an addiction
It's just a myth and a fiction
May be a sign of dereliction!

Hanker not for what is beyond your reach
Coveting what is of others does no one preach
Control your desires is what wise men teach.

Hedonistic pursuit satiates for a while
Pleasure is transient, it self stultifies
It ends in boredom, happiness it can't provide.

Your share of pleasure if more than mine
Diligently for comforts you deign design
What lies in future is in the ken divine.

Hatred if with hatred paid
It never ends, ill will it generates
Enmity it perpetuates.

Hatred and ill will are depravity of mind
Solace from it you never can find
Forgiveness is a trait sublime.

Om Chawla

My Mind- A Vortex.

Emerging from undetermined vortex
Sea waves rush towards its shore:
Relentlessly chasing one another
Never catching up, perishing at coast.

My mind, much like the sea,
Calmer at surface, turmoil beneath:
Deep within its depths unfathomed,
A vortex of unexplained unease.
Churning out series of thoughts,
Like the babble of an infant;
Unrelated, incoherent thoughts.
One after the other they come swarming
In hot pursuit as if striving
 for unified identity.
Ere I grasp import of a thought
The one following sweeps it aside,
Perishing like other preceding thoughts.
My mind full to the brim
And yet a vacuum
Full of vanquished thoughts.

Om Chawla

Non-Violence, Gandhi And His Flipside.

People may call Gandhi 'father of nation'
Am dismayed, I won't call him so.

Gandhi unique in his experimentation
Gave fight for freedom a new direction
Of non-violent response to brutal aggression.
Imbued with intrinsic trait, non-violence
People followed him as their redeemer
Great indeed, in this, was Mohandas Gandhi.
A trait demeaning howsoever
Desquamates his glorified hallow.
People may call him 'father of nation'
I feel the shame, I won't call him so.

Obsessed and boastful of truthfulness
Proclaiming to experiment with celibacy,
Disrobed he would abed young lassie;
Self control ostensible demonstration.
Even if avoiding conjugation;
It still amounts to lascivious gratification:
Hypocrisy is obvious in this action.
Celibacy a matter of individual observance
Ill conceived is demonstrable performance.
A volley of questions it does throw up:
Whence he acquired the licence to do so?
What if his disrobed sleeping partner
Failed in controlling her desire?
How would he have responded?
Emotionally mauled would be the young lassie.
Many an agitating questions are raised.

A coterie of sycophants, howsoever
Mahatma they called him, proclaimed him saint.
Even they foisted him as 'father of nation'
What a shame?
Degrading womanhood to a medium
Detestable was his autocratic action.
Truthfulness is no cloak for impropriety,
Licentious behaviour it can't sanctify.

People may call him 'father of nation'
I feel the shame I won't call him so.

Om Chawla

O Friend

O friend, tickle the strings of thy voluptuous lyre
And rend all air with musical sound-
Such sound, that I might drown
All my misery, my universe and my love
Yes, this love that can't be mine
That gold will buy love matters not,
A fair foul fancy, if love were aught.

O friend play - dispel misery in the air,
Revive agonies, set my heart on fire
Play o play upon thy lyre,
that I may have extremity of despair. [1960]

Om Chawla

O Lord

Behold O Lord, behold this scene,
A woman selling her body away,
Dancing to the rhythm of coins
She must warm thy domestic curs:
She has a belly she must fill,
Thou deny her bread;
She was born and so must live,
Thou deny her death.

Immoral! Yes she is
But thou drivest her to this;
For thy worthy sons
Out of morality must not step;
And she must live a fiendish life,
For the poor soul is so cursed to breathe. [1955]

Om Chawla

Ode To An Indian Classical Dancer

O thou fair nymph of art, dance
Dance that world may dance with you.

In thy grace is mirrored the grace
Of thy nation's heritage;
In thy gait is depicted the majesty
of thy God's incarnates;
In thy grimaces are revealed
The wrath of gods, the misery of thine own folk;
In thy curves are betrayed the curves
Of thy nations sculptural art.

Art hath taught thou to blend-
What time hath failed to destroy-
In thy grace gait and grimace
The invocations to the Gods
Of thy miserable countrymen.

Miserable countrymen? I begin to doubt
May be, may not be so
But invocations all the same
To appease the wrathful lords.

Hath time no meaning for art?
It hath, else why shouldn't a dancer dance
Of invocations only.
Time hath changed and so hath art
Changed its modus operandi.
Even so art exploreth
Inmost recesses of human heart
These have been same
since years and years and years ago
Time hath no influence there.

O thou timeless priceless creature, dance
Dance that world may dance with you.....[1960]

Om Chawla

On Line Poet's Friendship

Today again I kept searching,
today again the poet is not 'on line'.
Unique, vivid and incisive
is his poetry as most opine.
A poet from distant land though
his thoughts, his feelings seem to echo
thoughts of mine.
Similar were the thoughts of many
similar impress of emotions they found.
Transcending beyond man made barriers
of religion, land, language and culture
A poet belongs to all mankind.

I thought of making friends with him;
but what kind of friendship would that be!
A few exchanges of appreciative comfort
or may be an honest opinion irksome,
which may or maynot be resented.
Is that all that friendship means:
left me hesitant, such thoughts indeed.

Now that a long time has passed
I crave to know, how and where is he.
Recalling and reading his poems
of him there are no means to know!

Om Chawla

Parde Mein Baat. {kataa(A Quatrain) In Urdu

Parde mein baat reh na saki

Go be-rukhi ka jama tha pehn liya,

Do qadam jo dar ki taraf badhe

Be-saakhtaa usne pukar liya.

Om Chawla

Pariyatra Parvat To Hindu Kush- Tale Of Hindu Genocide.

Pariyatra Parvat or Hindu Kush range
Like an arm of Himalayan chain,
Stretching towards Arabian sea,
With vast plains on its east and west,
And lovely vales in its lap:
An edifice tall, dumb and mute,
A helpless witness through the ages,
To degeneration of simple folk to savagery.

In the millennium before Christ
Vedic Hindu and Budhist faiths
Free from the scourge of religious hate
Pervaded the terrains on its either side
When recitation of sacred hymns
With chime of bells and honk of shells
reverberated far and wide;
But half a millennium after Christ
A new faith was born on its western side
From beyond the tinkle of temple bells
And chants of hymns and honk of shells
Rose the blare of this faith:
'Kafir' it branded followers of ancient faith,
Urging its faithfuls to spread its message,
Punishing those defying acceptance,
Silencing the chants of sacred hymns,
banishing resonant temple bells,
Fanatic savagery swept the western terrain,
Thousands and thousands were then slain.
Struck by the terror some embraced this faith
Some fleeing, in terror, farther west escaped:
Where homeless wanderers life they led.
Its then that the name of this mountain
From Pariyatra Parvat to Hindu- Kush became;
Yes Hindu- Kush
Murderer of Hindus, so it means.

Came the second millennium after Christ

When brigands of plunderers and robbers
Flocked and embraced this faith,
Arson and murder as it sanctified.
Through the millennium time and again
These marauders raided eastern terrain
Looting and murdering innocents
Raping and abducting women folk,
Destroying temples, constructing mosques in their stead
Trampling statues of gods at mosques footsteps,
Invariably expressing great glee and pride,
Often did they raise towers of skulls;
Small kids in brick walls were strewn alive,
Scalps being shaved off and men fried alive;
No preacher of this faith did ever denounce
this savagery, nor any 'Fatwa' was ever decreed:
And me thought compassion was the bedrock
- - - - - of any faith.
How very wrong, woefully wrong am I

You say terror has no creed,
But facts of history state otherwise.
My land, birth place of most tolerant creeds,
Victim of perpetual and brutal genocide,
Savagery of this faith does testify.

Om Chawla

Pavement Dwellers

Stepping out of a tavern in tipsy state
Past midnight, half conscious and half in daze,
Struggling to find some space
He staggered along the pavement by the road;
Finally finding some stretch to lie
He slinked between the two who already lay
And nudging them further for more space
Among those homeless dwellers there he lay.

Struggling to cover with rags of gaping holes
Pulling it over the face when legs would expose,
Often street light's glare won't let them doze,
Shrunk in a huddle then dormience they find.

A hard concrete pavement is their restful place,
Burning hot in summer, chillier on cold wintry nights
And when it rains there is no place to hide.

Sniffing for food mongrels often sneak around
Among the half fed pavement dwellers it is hardly ever found.

A hiding place for petty criminals on the run
Or a shelter for some forsaken and deprived one.

Strange is the world of pavement dwellers at night,
Where all the ribaldry is indulged beneath the open sky.

What is this life in society so civilized?
Meaningless is right to equality, absurd human rights
When a doyen of civilized world in inebriated state
Comes flying on his four wheeler unmindful of poors' fate
And liberates some souls from this miserable plight
Some space in the pavement gets vacated for a while
A multitude is eternally in wait
It will soon be occupied there won't be empty space.

Om Chawla

Peeda {pain} -A Poem In Hindi.

Jab phool koi bhi khilta hai
Tehni ko peeda hoti hai
Tab mehak phool ko milti hai.
Dharti kay garbh mein jab
Beej koi ankurit hota hai
peeda usko bhi hoti hai
Tab ja kar pauda ugta hai.
Maan jab bacha janti hai
Peeda atyant woh sehti hai
Khushi be-ant woh pati hai.
Kai bar iss soch mein doobmain jata hoon
Har khushi se pahle peeda kyuon?
Kya peeda hi khushi ki janani hai?
Kya peeda se rahat ko khushi hum kehtey hain?
Kya khushi ka apna astitav nahien?
Woh cheekh peeda ki, jo hum sun na pattey hain,
Ya woh peeda jo cheekh kar hamien daraati hai, ;
Suni unsuni har cheekh peeda ki
Brahmand mein samma kar jab,
Sarv vyappi ban jaati hai,
Har shakhs har prani aur har pauda
Iss peeda ko har saans grehan tab karta hai
Jeevan mein sama kar yeh peeda
Unt tak saath nibhati hai
Jeevan se mukti dilati hai,
Tab peeda bhi lupt ho jati hai
Jeevan ka unt to mrityu hai
Ya peeda se mukti hi unt hai jeevan ka.

Atam bodh ka mujhe gyan nahien,
Par mann mein prashan yeh uthta hai
Kya peeda bhare jeevan se mukti pa kar
Atma bhi anand lok ko pati hai.
Aur Peeda se mukt ho jaati hai.

Om Chawla

Qyamat Ka Din- -[a Poem In Urdu}

Suntey thhay b-roz-e qyamat
Sab honge khuda ke muqabil
Aur hoga insaf sab ke gunahon ka
Magar aaj b-roz-e qyamat
Na tum ho
Na khuda
Aur na hi uska insaf
Han magar aaj b-roz-e qyamat
Meri veeran duniya ke har khandar se
Ubhar khadi hoiyee hai ik ik yaad
Tumhari hi yaad
Jaise keh चाहति ho insaf
Apne gunahon ka
Mujh se
Han mujhi se
Main jo ki yaadon ka khuda hoon

[1961]

Om Chawla

Rebirth

As is wont with all beings,
I foresee
a dark cloud descend on me,
to free this soul
from the bondage of being;
to be born again,
in some form, somewhere.
I pray O Lord; and be kind
to release this soul from the bind,
of birth and death and birth again.
If rebirth be thy command,
let this soul meander
through the cosmos;
amazing and awesome as it is;
and settle on some such planet,
where deceit is not practiced
and envy is banished;
where minds communicate in trust
and intentions are not doubted;
where love and not lust pervades
and truth subsists all around..
I have faith O Lord,
Thou have carved such a niche
in thy cosmos.
Is it heaven! Isn't it so. [2012]

Om Chawla

Ruthiya Yaar Main Kyuon Manavan

Ruthiya yaar main kyuon manavan
Yaar o kada ruth jo javey
Man kahey mera main vi ruth javan.

Ruthda ay ruthey odi marzi
Man mere te odi nahin chaldi.

Man vich vasda ay har pal sochaan
Pichhay oday kyuon paie daoran.

Yaar hoya man jis yaar vasaya
Vasay jo man vich yaar o mera.

Man mere da o ik qaidi
Hoar koi onu vaikh na sakdi.

Ruthay yaar nu kyuon paie tarsan
Pichhay oday kyuon paie daoran
Jad main chahvan onu vaikhan.

Ruthya yaar main kyuon manavan
Yaar o kada ruth jo javey
Man kahey mera main vi ruth javan.

Mitti di murat nal yaari jad laie,
Murat nu main yaar samjhan paie.
Ander da yaar pachhan na paie,
Yaar o mera oday ander vi vasda
Mat jadon ay mainu ayie,
Mitt gaie khoj tadap vi ghat gaie.

Band kar akhan yaar nu vaikhan,
Ruthna vi chahvan ruth na pawan,
Har pal paie main onu niharan.

Ruthiya yaar main kyuon manavan,
Yaar o kada ruth jo javey,
Man kahey mera main vi ruth javan.

Sawan Aaya [a Poem In Hindi]

Baadal aaye aur hain barse
Loag kahte hain sawan aaya.
Dharti thi tapti
Aag thi barasti
Jalta tha har ek badan bhi
Iss sawan ki phuhaar ne
Kitni rahat di in sab ko
Haan priyey yeh sawan aaya.
Iss pal priyey Tum jo hotien
Hotien jo tum
Hota aalingan
Bheegta tann mann
Lagti ik agan
Tum jal apsra si lagtien
Aur main tumhein bahoon mein layta,
Priyey kitna anand tab hota
Sawan mein tera sangg jab hota.
Par priyey tum kya jaano
Iss sawan mein
Dooor desh mein
Thaka haara main ik rahi
Tere milan ki aas mein
Saans hoon layta
Aankhien hain tarasti
Aankhien hain barasti
Haan priyey yeh sawan aaya. [1973]

Om Chawla

Shanty Dwellers

Behind the temple near railway track
A cluster of shanties with dwellers overpacked:
Ill clad, in tatters they shiver in winter
Famished faces, victims of hunger
Fighting the chill, ever in quarrelsome humour,
Around the leaping flames of fire
Sit in a huddle for long hours;
Awaiting dissolution of gloomy dark night
When chill might vanish in sunshine bright.

In the morning, after dutiful homage to the deity
On her son's success, an elderly lady,
In grateful celebration, to distribute charity
Approached the shanties with food aplenty.
Loitering children mobbed her instantly
Food soon vanished, consumed rapidly;
Many soliciting hands remained empty,
Some stood away watching wistfully,
Some sulked in anger staring scornfully.
Millions and millions have suffered through ages;
Vain were the preachings of sharing and charity.
Sharing among equals is a sign of comradeship;
Distribution in compassion is nothing but charity;
Inflating givers' ego, priding in magnanimity;
Convicting the receiver to a degraded stratum.
Its time to look and act beyond compassion
To abolish this system of social stratum,
So none needs charitable dispensation.

Om Chawla

Shunyata- An Epilogue

Ever since Ms. Valerie Dohren, whose poetic genius I love and respect, while commenting on my poem 'Creation', observed '....idea of something arising out of nothing is incomprehensible to us...'. I had been wanting to explain the genesis of my thought. She is very right when she says, ' Creation is something we will never understand, ' yet still human mind inquisitive as it is, has been trying to resolve this mystery. There is a saying in our part of the world, which means, 'In the beginning there was word [-om or ahem or...-] meaning perhaps sound an expression of energy. I think modern scientific theory of 'BIG BANG' bursting forth of energy is in a way a similar proposition. It's another matter that there is no explanation as to where it existed, how it came about, whence came the space and a host of other questions. Before it's emergence or manifestation in Big Bang it lay in a state of dormancy, in non-existence or as we call it 'Shunyata'. It is this emergence from non-existence to existence that takes the shape of Creation. I believe it is the same what Ms Anita Sehgal means when in her poem Shoonya

she says: -

Bindu, the point, where life in the womb begins,
where all sounds dissolve
and silence melts

Shoonya, the point, where non creation became creation,

Again it is the same when Ms. Valerie Dohren in her poem 'Becoming- A Story [part 1- Ovulation/conception]says: -

'I knew nothing of my true beginning.....my origin was set beyond this universe, in the wider cosmos which embraces all of creation.....'

If creation were not manifestation or emergence or bursting forth of energy from dormancy of non-existence, it would mean existence of a conscious creator an omnipotent God existing in breathless non space.....

The mystery of the origin of Universe has been and shall always remain beyond resolution, even so human mind, inquisitive as it is, shall always remain in hunt for an answer. It is this inquisitiveness which prompted Dr. Paul Brunton, a British thinker, to spend major part of his life living with yogis, mystics and holy men in India, Tibet and the surrounding countries of the region to understand Oriental concepts. He came up with his own concept of Mentalism / World mind.

The truth of origin of Universe is beyond human reach and is un-knowable. We can only try to understand what our thinkers think. The concept of Shunya [also spelt as shoonya] is one such proposition and I have tried to interpret the same with whatever little understanding I have gained. I thought of sharing the same with fellow poets and hence this effort- -'Shunyata- Completeness in Nothingness'

Om Chawla

Shunyata- -Completeness In Nothingness

Hush hush voices
murmuring noises
A hall full of audience
filled with air of expectation
As the lights gradually fade out
All the sounds die down
and submerge in silence
in nothingness - shunyata.
From the illumined dais
rises the sound of musical note
stirring the frozen melody
from silent dormancy in shunyata.
A web of melody is woven slowly
by rendering of intricate notes gradually
in rhythmic tempo
and in rising crescendo
transporting the audience
to a different universe
of sensual fulfillment.
Then a pause,
a stillness of completeness
from which again flows
series of melodious notes
meandering to a soothing close
culminating in completeness of shunyata.
Spell bound audience stand and applaud
this spell of journey of melody
from shunyata to shunyata
of completeness in nothingness
A moment to cherish, to relive and remember.
Is our life any different
emerging from shunya - a state of not being
and submerging in shunya - a state of ceasing to be.
Is that the way of everything in universe
Or is that what universe is?

- - - - -

P.S.

I have written this poem in memory of my brother, Pandit Amar Nath, disciple of

shri and Ustad Amir Khan, a great musician in his own right. He used to advise his disciples to 'shunya ho kar gao' [meaning: sing after reaching the state of shunya eteness] This concept of shunya is explained by his daughter and disciple Ms Bindu Chawla as: -

'The concept of zero, otherwise referred to as nothingness, emptiness or the void, is shunya, a state of everythingness, fullness or wholeness and a condition of mind our gurus asked us to reach before the singing of any raga, before its unconditional manifestation could begin.

Shunya in the ancient texts is known as pujiyam or 'worthy of being prayed to' In Buddhism it is the phenomenological term for the experience of absolute reality. Shunya is also another word for equilibrium, the state of equipoise, a state of 'yuja' or union, the end and beginning of all cycles of existence. And that is why in classical music it is symbolised by 'sa' the first swara or note, the root note where all notes rest, lying in dormancy.'

Glossary:

shunya in everyday usage means...zero or nothing

shunyata ''' '' 'nothingness.

Swar' musical note.

Om Chawla

Soul's Worldly Sojourn

This world is full of imperfections;
even more of contradictions.
Here pain and pleasure both reside;
contempt and pity walk side by side.
Hatred is the nature of some;
loving gestures of some resound.
There are some who nurture jealousy;
some with compassion abound.
We rue the end of joyous moment;
sadness do we soon lament.
In love we seek life after life;
in agony we seek end of strife.
Drought and floods are common affliction;
'quakes tsunamis causing devastation.
This world is lovely and bountiful;
nay, it's harsh and tyrannical.
By human apathy, greed or lust
pain and suffering is human lot.
Humane if humans were to be,
lesser would sufferance be.
This imperfect world is perfect
for soul's sojourn and purification
for next life's karmic determination
or for ultimate salvation.

Om Chawla

Speak O Withered Leaves, Speak.

Cover her eyes, her stony looks,
She is dead;
And ring the bell for she is dead
Where one age ends the other begins
-the long dark distracted night.

How could she die, a fairy and so young
O want what more misery can thou wring
Two crusts of bread and a form erased.

O withered leaves wert thou a rose?
Could beauty be more beautiful
I can't say my fancy fails.
How could I describe thee
Which part were more beautiful
Speak o speak utter but few words
But no; thou would'st not speak
And I hear no more thy sweet voice.
O breathless breast thou would'st heave no more,
But once did heave more beautifully
Than stormy waves of a surging sea
On a moonlit night.

O wild affections whither art thou fled?
Aren't these the eyes that charmed me once
Quiver o lips quiver a little,
That I may see that a life yet lives:
Utter but few words even though in dread
Of this society; but dread not thou
-no more- this society.

But where is life?
Thou blush not in the presence of thy love;
Thine eyes have no more arrows in their sheath;
Thou breathe not and there are springs no more;
Adieu love! Adieu o phantom of love
For I go crazy, I must go.

But tarry for I must see

Art thou really dead or stone deceiveth me
O senses work- Touch!
So cold and hard is bosom! Is it marble!
May be stone deceiveth me! But no
No art can create thy form, O love
And mine eyes are not deceived in thy form.

Ere I leave I give thou this pledge:
That I shall have revenge
I shall shake heavens and destroy this earth
Yes! this earth
Where beasts who live, value their lust
Above humane emotions.

Adieu love! look not so coldly
For I see my end. Adieu! Adieu![1960]

Om Chawla

Supreme Being

Within me do I dwell and also dwell in you,
I dwell in everything and I dwell outside too,
I dwell in Being and without being I am too,
I am the creation and I am creator too,
Wherefore do you search me, reflect for I am you.

I am water, fire am I
I am earth and sky.
All these are my manifestations
Though unmanifest remain I.
I am fury, I am wrathful,
my articulation though is tranquility.
I am aroma, I am fragrance,
Though beyond smell am I.
Close your eyes and look within,
Manifest in you am I.

I am lover I am lover's errand,)*
I am Creator and myth am I.)*)*
Every where you have searched me
Abode shunya is of me.
It's only when you search within,
Can you ever find Me.

*Initially I had composed the following two lines: -

- I am Radha, I am Udhav
- I am Brahma and myth am I

I have changed these because the reference to characters in Hindu scriptures may not be understood by many.

Om Chawla

That Joyous Night

That night is approaching once again,
after traversing a year long journey
That night of sparkling lights
that night of gaiety and gay abandon,
that night precursing a new dawn:
signalling end to a year's strife
ushering renewed zest for life.
Sometimes I wonder what's there
To rejoice and to celebrate?
End of a year's sufferings and struggles!
Or is it the hope of a better dawn! ?

This night of sparkling lights
horizon to horizon glittering lights,
This night of a few throbbing hours
Of a new dawn, it is harbinger
In its glory let us bask
Disturbing questions let us not ask,
Some of its sheen let us capture
To assuage the hurt in near future
For the miseries and the tyrannies
will not vanish overnight;
The world will not be transformed
by the glitter of this festive night.
Yet let us welcome this joyous night
and partake in festivity with gay delight.

That night of gaiety is here once again
to bid adieu to the old and usher in new.

Om Chawla

That Traumatic Year [1947]- Recollection And Reflection

{Part 1 of the poem is a narrative of my experience at Lahore where I lived before migrating to Delhi on partition of the country in 1947. I was not even 12 Years of age then. Part 2 of the poem is a reflection on the historical past}

1

Dark it was that moonless night
On the rooftop, as a child
As I lay that summer night
Dazzled by the flames of fire
I jumped up, in grip of fear
Burning houses, burning humans
Shrieks and wails growing louder
Louder still was gun fire
What followed was sheer frenzy
For three days and four nights
We witnessed the worst of savagery
Half realizing the gravity
Looking at one another in perplexity
We would not know, what happens next
Fear in the day and awe at night
Humans being burnt alive
Shrieks and cries rending the sky
There were flames all around
Burning houses we would count
No escape from fiery hell
No fire tenders, no medical help
Curfew bound deserted streets
Patrolled by colluding fanatics.
On fourth day curfew was lifted
We fled the city in search of safety.
On the way were scenes of horror
Sights that made us shudder;
Severed heads, mutilated bodies
Abandoned, stinking non cremated
Lucky in crossing partition line
A sigh of relief on survivance
Rendered homeless cause of annoyance
Much though I wish I cannot forget

Traumatic was the year when yet under twelve.

2.

Years later when I studied history
Realized that had been the fate of my country.
These marauders came from North-West
Under Ghor, Ghazni, Nadir, Abdali
These monotheist fanatics
Looted wealth, molested women
Butchered men for days no end
Temples they plundered and desecrated
Repeatedly these perfidious bigots
Mauled my land of multi-faith tolerance
Continuously they still hound us
Humanized, when will they be.
Polytheist beliefs govern us
Bigotry does not attract us.
I fear some day our tolerance may fail
Violence it might then entail
Sufferer would then humanity be
Sadly including our progeny.

Om Chawla

The Haunted Place.

- -[For almost a millennium Hindu genocide continued to be perpetrated throughout the length and breadth of India so that the narrative of the following poem could be true of any city, town or village in India.]

Not far from the village
A stretch of uneven forsaken land, infested
with wild foliage and fruitless bushes,
by the locals shunned as a place haunted;
where shrieks and cries were felt though never heard,
where non existent prying eyes constantly stared,
where fear gripped before venturing that way,
some fainted and swooned on mere essay;
suddenly sprang to life one day.
Leading a group of helping hands, when Ali
armed with shovels hoes and trolleys,
descended on that stretch of ghostly land;
mapped, measured and with markings invested,
and foisted a signboard demarcating,
site for archaeological digging.

Just as the sun set, Ali and his men,
oblivious to the stare of prying eyes,
retreated to their camps for the night.
Lying in the bed, sleep awaiting
Ali felt an invisible force's beacon
whence driven by the irresistible urge,
again was he led to the site of excavation.
A horde of invisible phantom figures,
surrounded him, pleading and beseeching
of which he remained oblivious.
Transfixed, he stood there, for some time:
shaking off the trance like grip whereafter
he realized in wonderment that he had come to the site,
how, why and where for his reasoning defied.
Instantly he scrambled back to his camp,
and soon fell asleep and lapsed into an eerie dream,
wherein a shriveled old woman asked him:
' Now that you have come my great...great grandson

free us from this ghostly bondage, provide us with salvation.'

'Who be you and what do you want? '

'Oh my dear son, several generations have passed,
when muslim invaders this village pillaged.
They killed men, raped and murdered women.
They dumped the corpses beneath this ground.
Young girls of the village they abducted,
forcibly married and to your religion converted.
Being of my daughter's lineage you have duty,
in accord with our faith, perform our last rites,
and thus from ghostly bondage liberate us my child.'

Ignoring that dream's old woman's plaint,
and watched by a host of curious villagers
and a multitude of invisible phantom figures,
Ali and his men set about digging the ground
cautiously they proceeded lest they damage any 'find'.
In seven days of excavations nothing was found;
contrarily frequent mishaps caused labour depletion.
Just as they planned abandoning excavations
Ali and his men came upon a heap of skeletons.
Soon the word of discovery spread through the village
whence village head and priest came running.
Then ensued frenetic discussion wherein Ali shared
what the old woman had told him in the dream.
Superstitious fears soon gripped them; whence
village priest persuaded Ali to perform
last rites for the peace of distressed souls.
A memorial in honour of murdered innocents
was there raised with following inscription:
'Here lie buried the remains of thousands of innocents
murdered brutally by Muslim zealots.'

Distressed souls now do not haunt the site,
probably in heaven they have found respite.

Om Chawla

The Interregnum

{This narrative is about the interregnum between clinical death and Revival of a clinically dead. Long time back I had read a book titled 'Life after Life' which is a study of sorts of experiences of persons who actually revived after being clinically dead.}

Pronounced dead by the doctor
awaiting removal he lay on the stretcher
'Hours have elapsed; is there no one from the family? '
was the doctors query.
'Remove the body to the mortuary'
he said tersely.

Late, very late came the family'
'Save the victim' they pleaded tearfully.
'We have done our best, ' responded doctor,
'Its God's wish; its all over.'

Suddenly a groan emanated
from beneath the white sheet covering.
Something stirred on the trolley.
Again was heard the groaning sound,
And silence fell all around
Bewildered doctor spurred into action,
'Its impossible' thought the doctor
'Could the dead have come alive? '

A few days later, as the victim stabilized
A team of doctors questioned queried and pried
for the details, the victim obliged,
'Driving on the highway at some speed
and hit by a speedier vehicle from behind,
my car crashed into the roadside tree'
Recollecting something, he then mumbled
'It was some tunnel, a long dark tunnel
through which I passed, probably escaped.'
'What? what? what? What did you say?
Which long dark tunnel? And what escape? '
Asked the doctor staring fixedly.

After a pause he replied hesitatingly,
'I don't know, but.... yes,
Yes it was a tunnel,
A sort of a tunnel, yes it was.'
'Alright, alright. What happened next? '

'I lay crushed between steering and seat,
with arms dangling and a crowd around me;
a young man called the ambulance
and tugged at the seat, releasing me;
feeling my pulse, the nurse then cried
'Hurry up, he is sinking, aside aside.'
The doctor then inquired,
'Where were you, how could you see? '
'I don't know, ' he replied quizzically,
'perhaps I was there somewhat above perhaps.'
'You said you escaped through some tunnel,
did you reenter the same? '
'N-no, oh no,
May be, but I don't know.'
So saying silent he fell.

'What does it mean, ' a doctor then observed,
'Does it mean soul came out of the body,
It hovered around! and saw! and heard!
But with brain dead how could he see,
Coming out and reentering the body
Body specific soul would have to be!
How very crazy it sounds to be.'

Om Chawla

Then And Now -A Stone Breaker

When first I saw thee breaking stones
My heart was filled with praise
And delight on a rose like face.

What heaving bosom and how did it nurse
The hopes of life and desires of youth
And how joyfully didst thou talk
Of life everlasting.

But now I am pained to see thee;
Is it thou same young lady?
So changed in so short a time!
These sunken eyes, these hollow looks
Are these the same that pierced my heart?

O stony stare, where is life?
Whither is hope fled?

These withered cheeks, these pale lips
No more betray the colour of a rose;

And this bosom which once did nurse
The hopes of life; the joys of youth:
To this bosom now clings a child,
A life! Oh no no no
It's misery nursing death.

Om Chawla

Thoughts On The New Year's Eve

Another year is coming to an end,
exchange of seasonal greetings will there be.
Best of wishes and noble resolves
will be showered and proclaimed affluently:
genuine, sincere with best of intent!
Were last year's wishes any different?
Last year also we wished
happiness and peace for all mankind.
Last year also we pledged
eradication of poverty and exploitation.
Last year also we vowed
to shower kindness and compassion.
And this we have done year after year.
We all had a little bit of budha
and christ in our hearts,
even before Budha and Christ were born.
In every generation we had their reincarnates.
Yet human lot has been same.
Should we buck this hackneyed trend! ?
What else can our wishes be! ?
We can't revamp the society,
so deeply ingrained are the disparities.
It needs demolition
and reconstruction.
Till that happens or made to happen,
even while we follow the tradition,
let us wish and pray for the courage
and wisdom to the suffering lot:
so imbued with belief in self
they might dispense justice unto themselves.
Then and then probably
shall there ever New Dawn be.

Best of Best Wishes
for the New Year
to all.

Om Chawla

To A Disheartened Youth

Fret not at darkness it will pass,
Darkness is but a shadow of obstructed light,
Beyond darkness surely there is light,
It's proof enough that there is light.

It has no identity of its own,
It resides behind light's glow;
Fret not in the shadow of obstructed light
For when you wade through the shadow
With determined steps
With resolute conviction
Darkness is bound to yield:
You will be embraced by the buoyant glow,
An embrace of warmth and youthful passion;
Reigniting the spirits, enthusing vivacity;
Fret not at shadow, it will pass.

Darkness is but a shadow of obstructed light,
Beyond darkness surely there is light.

Om Chawla

Ultimate Truth

Wherefore do thou pride in figure
decay and perish is universal
all the forms whatever their nature
self destruct in course of time.
Don't you think you are different
though pleasingly attired
and lovingly balmd
with aides acquired.
Keep in mind
and just ponder:
each face is modeled on a skull
all men are naked beneath their clothes
and towards destruction bound
is the ultimate truth profound.

Om Chawla

Umar-E-Daraaz

[a Poem In Urdu]

Umar daraaz huie toa kya hasil
Be-bassi, lachaargi, mohtaji
Umar-e-daraaz;
Ik taveel raat jiski saher nahien
Jo kisi unt ki mohtaaj hai bas
Aur woh unt bhi uske bas mein nahien
Umar-e-daraaz ki yehi dastaan hai bas.

Umar-e-daraaz mein
Apno nein dieay jo dukh
Woh toa seh bhi lein
Peeda apno ke dukh ki
Sahi nahi jaati,
Woh jinhain itney naazon se paala
Unki takleef toa dekhi nahi jaati;
Laakh chhah kar bhi
Kuchh na kar paane par
Ahsas-e-be-bassi aur badh jaata hai
Umar daraaz huie toa bas yehi hai hassil
Be-bassi, lachaargi, mohtaji. [2012]

Om Chawla

Un Thaki Thaki Si Aankhon Se{kataa (A Quatrain) In Urdu>

Un thaki thaki si aankhon se khushak aanso kyon chhalakte hain

Un dabe dabe suroon mein bhi tanhaaiyan kyon sisakti hain,

Kis baat ka dar hai zamane se kis baat ki parda dari hai

Band darwaazon ke ander se bhi aahein to goonja karti hain.

Om Chawla

Unn Ruke Ruke Se Aansoon Ki Kasam..... [a Poem In Urdu}

Unn ruke ruke se aansoon ki kasam jo galley ko rond dete hain
Mere humdum mere dost hain woh aansoo tere bhi aur mere bhi
Peeda ke woh badal jo tere seenay mein umadte hain
Unhein ki bijlian kadkti hain seenay mein tere bhi aur mere bhi
Tumhein yeh bharm keh main teri peeda samajh nahien sakta
Mujhe yakeen keh main teri har chubhan mehsoos karta hoon
Itne lambay zindgi ke safar mein aay mere humdum mere dost
Teri har sard aah ki tapash ko mehsoos kiya hai main ne
Aur teri aankhon mein aaye har unn aansoon ko,
Jo khushi kay thhay yaa thhay gham kay,
Apni zindagi se azeez samjha hai main ne
Aur aaj bhi yehi ek dua hai meri
Keh woh din na aaye keh teri aankhon se
Udassi ke aansoo rawan ho paien,
Chahey khushi shabnam bankar,
Kanwal ke phool par padi oos ki tareh,
Teri aankhon mein samaati rahe, chhalkti rahe.
Bas yehi dua hai meri aay mere humdum mere dost.

Om Chawla

Us Barkha Ki Baat Alag Thi-[A Poem In Hindi]

Ab kay baras bhi purvaiya chali hai
Ab kay baras bhi baadal umdey hain
Ab kay baras bhi boondein barsi hain
- - - Par us barkha ki baat alag thi.

Ab kay baras purvaiya se
Badan main sirhan nahein hoti hai
Ab kay baras boondaniya barsein to
Man mein agan nahein lagti hai
Ab kay baras man ki tadpan se
Badal to hain uthtey aankh nahein tapki hai,
Yeh barkha kitni sooni hai
- - - -Us barkha ki baat alag thi.

Man ko barkha ab bhi bhati hai
Par tub yovan thha
Tan man ki ichha mein jeeta thha
Par samay kay aagey yeh dhalta tan
Budhi se hai har cheeze parakhta,
Ab yovan ki ichha mein
Ik chhalawa lagta hai
Yeh barkha kitni sooni lagti hai
- - - - Us barkha ki baat alag thi.

Yovan jo beeta ichhaien badlien,
Aur badal gaya unka arth bhi,
Man nahein ab budhi hai karti,
Ichhaon ka aanklan bhi.
Ichhaon ka maya jaal woh,
Palak jhapaktey lupt hua jo,
Ab makkad jaal sa lagta hai;
Reh jaati hai bas ik yaad si,
Jo reh reh kar peeda hai deti,
Phir bhi yaadein beetay lamhon ki,
Apni meethas na khoti hain
Woh barkha ik beeta swapan hai lagti,
- - - - Us barkha ki baat alag thi.

We Welcomed The New Year

This year also we welcomed the new year
with boisterous cheering and illumination,
with clinking of wine filled glasses
while swaying and dancing with our partners;
sweeping aside our agonies and fears
in flowing stream of intoxicating liquor
rejoicing in this make believe gaiety
even if this delusion lasted but few hours.
We soaked in the false elation of transient moment.
Some amongst us sought sensual pleasure
oftener indulging with hired female partner,
exploiting the needs of her struggle for survival,
for treatment of her ailing family member,
or for fighting her young ones starvation;
squeezing gratification from her aching limbs;
but did that moments sensation
transcend beyond the dying moment.
Utterly delusive was the search for pleasure.

Billions were spent on illumination,
round the globe by all nations.
Sparkling crackers in the skies
sought to brighten even the heavens.
Yet dark and dim were avenues of millions,
starved and half naked they lay in dingy dungeons.
When will their homes be illumined?
When full meals will fill their bellies?
When will they be able to cover their shameful nudity?
When will we welcome New Era instead?
Shall we Or can we.... Ever.....

Om Chawla

Woh Sawan Tha, Yeh Bhadon Hai. [Poem In Hindi]

Woh sawan tha jo beet gaya
Tab paydon par jhuley jholti thi
Allhad masst jawani
Ik pal barasta tha paani
Dujey pal dhoop nikalti thi
Ik pal hum mil kar hanstey thay
Dujey pal virha mein jaltey thay
Woh sawan tha jo beet gaya.

Yeh bhadon hai

Iss ki vyatha main kis se kahoon

Na tum ho priyey

Na koi humdum

Ab jab bhi barkha hoti hai

Toa bas barkha hi hoti hai

Umeed ab tere aane ki

Iss pal kabhi sehlati nahien

Be- bass yeh jeevan lagta hai

Vyarth yeh duniya lagti hai

Yeh bhadon hai

Iss ki vyatha main kis se kahon

Yaadon ke athah samunder main

Jab lehren hilorey layti hain

Aakash main badal garajte jab

Mann par bijli si girti hai

Aur pass nahien tum hoti jab

Nainon se paani barasta hai

Ab jab bhi barkha hoti hai

Toa bas barkha hi hoti hai.

[1973]

Om Chawla