

Poetry Series

# **Shushan Artinian**

## **- poems -**

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# Shushan Artinian()

# A Masterpiece

Darkness falls, moonlight shines,  
Everybody's asleep except I.  
Excited by a hectic yet productive day,  
I cannot sleep not even after I pray.  
Creative juices are flowing,  
I sense a poem becoming  
A masterpiece that will someday be  
Published for everyone to see.  
Darkness falls, moonlight shines,  
Everyone's asleep and so am I.

Shushan Artinian

# A Word's Worth

I opened a dictionary and read some words:  
Fjord, Milord, Gnomonic, Abord;  
I wondered how many of them I know:  
Jowl, Dowl, Chorionic, Yowl;  
If you don't know some words, don't be forlorn:  
Althorn, Morne, Frigorific, Yborn;  
No one learns with a hopeless attitude:  
Pulchritude, Destitute, Plethoric, Acritude;  
Now open a dictionary and look those words up:  
Larrup, Shtup, Encephalic, Giddup;  
And use them every day in sentences meaningful:  
Bodeful, Nieveful, Lombardic, Direful;  
In the end, you will become a word wizard:  
Buzzard, Dizzard, Palladic, Vizzard.

Shushan Artinian

# Doggone Tired

I'm tired of trying to speak my mind,  
Instead getting yelled at and left behind.

I'm tired of eating the same meal over and over again,  
What about a delicious steak? Afraid that weight I might gain?

I'm tired of fetching everything you throw at me,  
Have you considered the fact that you might hurt me?

I'm tired of walking barefoot, summer or winter,  
Hot asphalt, wet ice; breaking my skin, making me whimper.

I'm tired of constantly being maltreated,  
So make me happy and give me a doggy treat.

Shushan Artinian

# I Am Only Human

I thought myself independent,  
Free, like a bird that soars.  
Alas, I am dependent, like a caged bird  
That is fed each day.

I thought myself invincible,  
Powerful, who can conquer the world.  
Alas, I amincible, as a victim  
Subdued by his perpetrator.

I thought myself ingenious,  
Clever enough to solve any challenge.  
Alas, I am an imbecile to think that  
I can solve anything, anytime.

I thought myself unafraid,  
Of failure, loneliness and death.  
Alas, I am terrified from just the thought  
Of failing, dying, even living.

I thought myself immortal,  
Able to cheat death and live eternally.  
Alas, I am mortal, fragile enough  
To snap into two like a rotted twig.

I am only human;  
A weak, dependent, foolish human,  
Put on earth, imprisoned in time,  
Tortured each day by a 'thing' called life.  
Common experiences of failure, abuse,  
Accident and fight draining my vitality.  
Merciless claws of fear, worry, sorrow  
And pain strangling the soul within me.

Shushan Artinian

# Imagine

Imagine a deaf conductor or a mute singer;  
Imagine a blind painter or a paralyzed swimmer.  
Imagine yourself a great pilot;  
Alas, you cannot be; you have myopia.  
Imagine yourself a wine-taster;  
Alas, you cannot be; you have ageusia.  
Imagine yourself a mother;  
Alas, you cannot be; you are a man.  
Imagine yourself a man;  
Alas, you cannot be; you are a woman.  
Reality limits you from being what you want to be,  
But who needs reality, when you can imagine all you want to be.

Shushan Artinian

# Love, Unrequited

Fearful of being rejected, mocked or scorned,  
Upon declaring her love to a man she adores,  
She lives in secrecy.

Tortured when ignored by the love of her life,  
The ignorant, the clueless of her undying love,  
She survives life.

An unrequited love inflicts her heart.

A love she holds on to; cannot grow out of.

She seems free, but is enslaved.

She seems sane, but has gone mad.

She is in love, yet feels miserable.

She has become a woman, yet remains a girl.

A rock on a river bed, she has become,  
That stays a lifetime, while currents pass.

Shushan Artinian



# No One

There is no one I can fully trust,  
Share my secrets with, confess my sins to,  
Except God.

There is no one I can talk to,  
Freely and with openness,  
Except God.

There is no one I fear, nothing:  
Not loneliness, nor death,  
Except God.

There is no one who really knows me,  
Not even I,  
Except Jesus.

There is no one who truly loves me,  
Enough to die for me,  
Except Jesus.

There is no one to live for,  
In this evil and corrupt world,  
Except for Jesus.

Shushan Artinian

# Official Existence

'Join each other and group yourselves,  
But for Heaven's sake do not name yourselves;  
Do anything and everything: cultural political and social,  
But be sure to remain strictly unofficial'.  
How can one be without a name or identity?  
Can he unofficially exist in a well-known city?  
Identity denied, existence denied;  
Leaders can no longer upon be relied.  
So let us join together and defend our identity,  
Because our very existence depends on it.

Shushan Artinian

# Philipp-Lankan Stutter

Talk to me in English, please,  
For I understand it well and speak it with ease.

Still, many expect little of me, being a Lebanese Armenian,  
Yet, I'm surely better at it than many an American;

Up until I bump into a Romanian or a Sri Lankan,  
Whose English pronunciation is worse than an Indian's.

I suddenly forget my lifelong knowledge of the language,  
And utter ridiculously, 'Me go now'.

Strange! Why did I stutter in Philipp-Lankan?  
To this mystery, is there any explanation?

Perhaps, fearing that I might be totally misunderstood,  
I mimicked the speaker, as a talking parrot would.

Shushan Artinian

# The Chauvinistic Pig

Hours go by and we're still  
Chatting and laughing better than anyone;  
He dictates his daily 'adventures',  
Possibly exaggerating the funny bits, so as to make me laugh.  
Days go by and the chats get monotonous,  
Dragging with them his reputation so 'famous'.  
He has no choice other than to disappear for a while;  
To save his reputation and gain time to compile  
Fresh new anecdotes for next time.  
Maybe he has a fixed schedule;  
November is for Rosemary; December for Julie.  
I was his January, so he crossed me off and moved on to February.  
Who knows. The important thing is that his disappearing act continues for about  
a year,  
Until one day he shows up out of the blue,  
With a lame line saying, "OMG, A Blast from the Past".  
He expects me to slide smoothly in our previous chat mode;  
Instead there is no response and I sign out.  
I click on block and delete him for good.  
My life, ever since, has been very good!

Shushan Artinian

# The Mind Killer

I held her hand and gave her a smile;  
Alas, she's far off, many a mile.  
She thinks I'm a friendly neighbor,  
When in fact I'm her loyal grand-daughter.  
'What's my name? ' I asked her,  
'Darling' was her unsure answer.  
'What is your name? ' was my second question,  
Her silence increased the tension.  
She did not remember her own name,  
Nor the place from where she came.  
Yet, when asked who was her sworn enemy  
She would look me in the eye and say 'Turkey'.  
Being a survivor of the Armenian Genocide,  
She had never forgotten the brutal homicides.  
Alzheimer's had wiped off most of her memory,  
But had failed to obliterate the Turkish atrocity.

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# The Mysterious Corpse

A frozen glance,  
A stiff body, hence  
A corpse lies on the ground  
That has, two days posthumous, been found.  
The Police think it's a homicide;  
Reporters assume it's a suicide.  
In his right hand is a knife,  
Perhaps the murderer is his wife.  
In his left hand is a bat made of wood,  
Perhaps the cause was his depressed mood.  
Autopsy shows traces of psychoactive drugs,  
Which prove both sides were right.  
Both homicide and suicide were the causes of death,  
Because multiple personality disorder governed his health.

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# Three Wars And A Genocide

Her image flashes before my eyes,  
As I watch out the window, seated in our car.  
Her face so innocent, covered with a beautiful smile.  
No one could guess that she was a survivor of three wars and a genocide.  
I try to remember the good old days,  
When we used to talk or play backgammon.  
Suddenly I am attacked by horrific flashbacks,  
The sight of her lying in bed defenseless against death  
Breathing deeply and staring out blank as if trying to ward off death.  
The nasogastric tube stuck through her nostrils down her throat  
Was the only means that nourished her existence.  
A survivor of three wars and a genocide.  
Her bright blue eyes were now lifeless and cold,  
As became her body, when her heart ceased to throb.  
Her soul had left her body and her breathing had stopped.  
My mother realizing this had begun to weep.  
Tears wept, for a great survivor had finally let go of life.  
A life that was witness to three wars and the Armenian Genocide.

- Three wars: World Wars I and II, and the Lebanese Civil War.

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