

Poetry Series

Subroto Chatterjee
- poems -

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Subroto Chatterjee()

Born a happy poet..Still am!

I firmly believe in the Latin saying 'Omnia bona bonis' (all things are good to the good) , and 'Omnia vincit amor' (love conquers all things) .

Poets are sensitive souls, and any opportunity to oppugn amongst themselves is fraught with emotional turmoil. In fact, many attempt to escape the daily humdrum of their jobs by expressing their angst (or joy as the case may be) through the lines of their poetry.

To me, (and I suspect with many of you as well) writing poems is more than an orra job. In fact, its a way and a medium where you would want the world to 'see' you...

Such is poetry - indefinable in many ways - and yet unifying people from different faiths, varying temperaments and cultures.

Arta longa vita brevis...

Cheers.

An Answer

[I wrote this poem in response to Robert Frost's 'A Question']

Who decides o'er life and death?
And who will tend to our woes?
It is flesh and blood and gasping breath.
Do I believe in God? God knows.

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04th April 2009
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

And All That's Nice

[I wrote this poem in response to Robert Frost's 'Fire and Ice']

I was told that the cause for our end
(In an inevitable cosmic amend)
Is fire and ice.
Now wouldn't that be nice?

What fertile dreams can some plot
And harvest wars, and set the rot
Some have died many a times
While some, maybe, or sometimes.

The curious means to our end
Can only make me pretend
That all's well when it's not
I remember now what I forgot.

That while some live their dreams
Some practice being Supreme
Is the cause to live the heaven on earth,
Your mantra and devilish mirth?

Does it matter if its fire and ice
Even if they do suffice?
But it matters how you've led your life
Though you may live once or twice.

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Subroto Chatterjee

Bitter Battle

The scorching sand is set to die
beneath the tree-shaded sky;
Experience life's dark and light,
and don't give up without a fight.

The moon that pulls the seas waxes and wanes in Heaven;
Our assumptions on her contrariness may be forgiven.
And the sun that burns the days, lights our ambitions at its hest;
Life's chosen ones are warmed and truly blest.

Alec does the work followed by many;
The admass pay more than a pretty penny;
The consumer's experience is the acme of the Brand;
You've just been had: welcome to the Promised Land!

All those who know the tribulations of the community,
Know the disease that affects its members' affinity:
Janus-faced politicians whose principles we uphold,
Are petty tyrants carved from a hellish mould.

The kal-yug of tomorrow is the ever-passing today;
After who or what the deluge, doesn't matter or it may-
The light that has many colors is bound by Nature's law,
Bargain hunters have wagered Earth's survival in this see-saw.

An inconvenient truth is a hill to climb,
For you to bolt past, posture, or be left behind;
Billions of particles left out in space,
Aye, do they spell doom for our race?

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Subroto Chatterjee

Chances Are

Should I write? I'm afraid I will,
I twirl my pen in a complex ride
As I sit on my window-sill,
to forget how my dreams have died.

Yippies and rock stuck in a groove;
Winning and losing come at a price;
It's now or never: make your move –
Champions rule at the roll of the dice.

When business is booming and nothing is wrong,
The laidback and failed will rue their day;
Where people are singing Mammon's song,
The desperate ones are keen to play.

Chances are you have a road to take;
Chances are you have a story to tell;
Chances are you will make or break;
Chances are you have a chance in hell.

If chance was a dance down the cobbled street;
I'd daresay we'd meet sometime and retreat
To heartfelt summer and face life's oncoming autumn;
Loneliness sits at sorrow's bottom.

I oft played dice in innocent games;
Where childish weapons hath no names;
The growing years have kept me learning:
I live for the moment as my chances are turning.

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Subroto Chatterjee

Cultured

Our democracy is of Olympian proportions,
Basking in glory under a thousand suns;
Painted faces and political distortions,
She has had a long run.

I talk of freedom and freedom galore;
Fundamental rights and constitutional duties,
Of fame and fortune, wealth and more,
Of foreign hands and misconceived treaties.

Of hunger and famine, and frolicking farmers,
And superb public distribution systems;
Democracy played with familiar drama,
By jokers and chokers in our political system.

Whether fiscal or monetary blessings
Deals the land that feeds the masses,
High rises and dilapidated dwellings;
Alfresco toilets and shauchalya passes.

Chaotic, quixotic, managing crisis;
Administered, ministered, ministers talking;
Wheeling-dealing, and breaking news analysis;
Of ingenuity, brazenness, fifteen minutes shocking.

Spinning yarns that shape our cultural stance,
Examples of deeds that surmount belief;
This country has had its romance,
With loving masters, and beauteous grief.

Poison ivy; dhatura; bring it on!
Serious facades that fill the belly,
Compromise; shed all; wear masks; or fawn;
Watch this all on Indian telly!

"A tree is known by its fruits, " tis said;
And so cultured are we, I say.
There's no truth better than being led,
to believe, we deserve to live another day.

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Subroto Chatterjee

Daft Dodger

I'm a Neanderthal man,
And this is my make-believe world,
I color people as well as I can;
My mental state lies unfurled.

I used to glide, but now I hoyte
I watch greenhorns – the imbeciles!
I mince no words, I'm acock!
I have many acolytes.

I'm indestructible; I've passed extreme unction;
I've laid misery at many a door,
I dismiss people with no compunctions,
Watch this space for more!

I cook tales; I'm a kook also;
I create hungamas wherever I go.
I command from heights as only I can,
I puff with pride, I'm happy, I am.

I communicate with trademark terseness,
I view my world in its colored profusion;
My style is met by much adverseness,
I'm quite happy with my delusion!

The Neanderthal in me seeks more joy;
I revel in others' masochism;
All know that I'm not coy,
about my bent for hedonism!

I love watching people fly out of control;
I philosophize on their transparency;
And now the years have taken its toll
on my virile potency.

I rage, I thunder, I claim attention;
I am as right as right should be;
All opposing views to mine need divine intervention,
from who else? Why, from me!

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Subroto Chatterjee

Dawn

I wake up with a blushing Dawn;
Apollo's lover in the morn;
The morning sky is painted red;
As she lies recoiled in bed.
Oh, how she flees the brazen light!
She melts away without a fight!

She streaks the sky in glowing pink:
The early riser's pleasure drink;
She dresses in the sheerest voile,
While keeping passions on the boil.
And her daughters Day and Night,
Follow her with much delight;
Most earthly crimes happen when
The daughters are busy mooching men;
Dost thy daughters have no shame,
That they sully thy good name?

And thus I see her every day,
Like watching Nature's grandest play.
And sometimes when I'm fast asleep,
She nips my pillow with a sweep!

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Subroto Chatterjee

Death

Death is curt, death is cold,
Death is new, death is old.
Death is no summer, death is no fall;
It is for one, it is for all.

It is no low mist, nor a dark cloud,
Donne is mistaken: death is not proud.

Death is a player in the stage-
It is man's reason for his age.
Death is a cause, it is a reason;
It is Life's changing season.

Death is one moment too long;
Death is one reason beyond.

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Subroto Chatterjee

Eternal Bliss Of The Sapiient Mind

[What's happening in world business is going to happen all the time. Why not?
We are humans!]

Eternal Bliss of the Sapiient Mind

Ethics: Your time's done,
Commerce now plays in the sun.
Business is the Chosen One –
You're being taught for fun.....

Surely, Wisdom in all its glory,
Must have a contrary story:
Morality has proved to be desultory,
Good practices are h-i-s-t-o-ry!

When integrity goes for a toss,
Profit makes up for the loss;
Now this might appear pure dross,
But you've many a bridge to cross.

The 'seven have-its' of highly defective people,
Are effective habits made simple,
So you do mock at the evangelical,
And embrace Mammon's Principle.

Lakshmi's journey is the destination:
At what price education?
The invisible hand is the motivation;
What's left for salvation?

There's misfortune at the pyramid's top;
It trickles down and doesn't stop.
At the bottom it gets hot;
Greasy palms at a lot....

Now there's wonder all round:
The champion bidder is truly crowned;
Specious arguments now abound,
Hypotheses propped on shaky grounds.....

Don't be done in by the Reaper,
Be thy own conscience keeper;
Even if you might teeter,
Betwixt sophistry and truth-seeker.

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Subroto Chatterjee

Gone To Seed

“If you plant honesty, you’ll reap trust”
Aye, the seeds of doubt have been planted,
But such doubts are a must,
If wisdom’s to be granted.....

Seeds of valor, seeds of passion,
Seeds of equanimity;
Seeds that suit every fashion,
Of learning and acuity.

Leaders who sow such seeds of doubt,
Are welcome and accounted,
Than those who’d love to flaunt,
Are ones that are so vaunted.

Where honesty is a truthful story,
Tests one’s heart and mind;
Now enough’s been said of this allegory,
Dear readers: this truth you can find!

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10th July 2007
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

Haiku # 1 'kaiku Haiku'

All haiku writers

Please take note and don't do this:

Circumlocution

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Haiku # 2 'raining Passion'

Rains can be risky
What with this pouring passion
Can turn one frisky!

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Haiku # 3 'light Of Life'

I saw a vision
Of God painting a sliver
Of light that gave life.

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Halo Man

[This poem is dedicated to all those who continually strive to create their own halo of contrived humility and pedestals for themselves].

If you think you have a halo,
Kindly share your natural goodness,
Forgive those who are oh so shallow;
People will not grudge your kindness.

Chasing shadows in dark alleys,
Sheds no light on your fears;
You think blaming others for their follies-
Will make you look superior?

While you profess to learn and teach-
I'm left wondering what that might be:
Do you practice what you preach,
Or let your halo do the mystery?

The certainty of life gives no pain,
Your Peter's Principle should stand to gain;
After all, what's Parkinson's without work-
Than to observe those who shirk?

The reward's not just your beatific face;
Nor even the coup-de-grace-
God's people reside in peace;
So don't jump off the precipice!

Floating five inches above the ground;
Or resting six feet beneath it,
However depressing it might sound,
Your halo might just be a myth!

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25th November 2006
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

Home They Brought The Country Dead

[This poem talks about a superpower country's military presence in another country for reasons best known to all!]

Home they brought the country dead,
Her people scattered in a mess,
The jingo fever that had spread,
Claimed lives where truth was less.

Read my lips: you're safe today;
In God we put our trust,
Our soldiers make us count each day,
For returning home, they must.

The patriot's heart burns with pride,
He knows his big brother role;
Methinks someone has lied-
These liars have a goal.

The plans are bold and dressing slick;
Surely nothing is amiss:
I doubt whether the truth will stick,
The truth was never his.

So home they brought the country dead,
The masses were in quiet desperation;
One question which most people dread,
Drew the most perspiration.

Whose war is it anyway? All ask.
The might shall protect the weak,
The Good Book has laid down the task,
But it was desecrated by a freak.

Do you do for Good, or what's good for you?
Do you stand a chance in hell?
Your victories is nothing new,
That's all you can tell.

The sweetest sounds are bells that tinkle,

In green meadows and our homes;
For starters, let peace sprinkle
In the hearts of these gnomes.

So home they brought the country dead
The people let the Powers play;
Fostered ideas that have spread,
Ensure gore and death each day.

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Subroto Chatterjee

House Of God

Gnarled fingers feeling and
Kneading the clay,
Sieving the sand,
And baking to pray.

Topping the dome
In slippery tiles,
Cut by these men,
And set out in style.

Hijacked by traders,
And looted since time,
Miracle performers who
Abetted this crime

Gods of these Houses,
Reclining in jest,
Have blood on their fingers,
And stone in their breasts.

Merchants of grammar
And agents of texts,
Reinventing old lies,
In holy pretexts.

Closing your palms and
Stifling your breath,
Do you shake hands,
That lead you to death?

How did this happen,
How did these men,
Venture so far,
Again, and again?

Now as you sit,
And hear of their cause,
All are the same,
And all because

Of me, you and the House of God.

Subroto Chatterjee

Hue Blues

Color me black, or color me white;
Color me yellow or brown.
To the racist with a song:
One's color is neither right nor wrong.

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24th April 2008
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

I Know I Don'T

All said and done, you've won,
Undone, well begun,
This game, this ploy, this fun:
This plight we hid from none

And if wishes are manners to speak;
The powers that you seek-
Indifferent to all, might and weak;
You've more to lose, and none to greet.

And the past has gone with the dead-
It is the present you dread;
Fostered ideas that have spread,
To which you have consummately wed.

And to know that help is always there-
In a transient paternal care;
Where one may doubt, but you may dare,
I've so much to bear.

And to know that He is here,
A blessed name, a fervent prayer,
With him you know fear,
Distance was meant to be near.

And to know the years to go-
Shall precede us evermore;
No future can be that slow:
No parting imminently so.

And to know a troubled mind-
A puzzled friend, another kind,
Peace and dark, bright and blind,
I've so much to grind.

And not to know is present bliss,
Trust and faith were never his,
It is no chance but a miss-
To know, to touch, to kiss.

And words are – but words, all spent,
Care you which way they went?
Word to word, silence sent,
Given back, you've so much to repent.

And to live, but to depart,
Away, away from the heart,
Too late.
So end and start.

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8th September 1982
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

In Earnest To Be Important

[This poem is about a vainglorious gentleman of my acquaintance. But he's entertaining all the same!]

He's more than a shadow of his former self:
His heart burns with fervor and commitment;
In the past he sang to me a tune of his pelf –
Alas, the song has changed since his advancement.

He's altruistic now; I scarcely believe him:
The institution is more important than man;
But lest I disbelieve his vim-
Let me praise him as I only can.

I praise his self-importance: he's knowledgeable;
I praise his skills at work: he's experienced;
I praise his humility: that's manageable;
I praise his actions: in that I was prescient.

His force can change his surroundings:
Whatever these surroundings may be;
Beware, an ill-wind blows with his tampering
This force: let commonsense relax in harmony.

His inspirations spring like wild flowers:
He spouts wisdom like a fountain in flow;
Alack, he does talk a lot of his prowess,
His heart is as white as the driven snow.

The seasons change as does his scruples;
But he maintains a steady demeanor;
His antics do cause temporal ripples,
Who cares if he's our conscience keeper?

Now he shines like a beacon truly;
His light blinds darkness to shame;
Poor man: he's surrounded by dullards, unruly,
He deserves better, he's fit for fame.

He works not for himself, but for others,
Others are bricks and mortars, institutions;
What hope does he give to his fellow-brothers?
It will depend on the cost of his restitution.

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Subroto Chatterjee

In Memory

[This elegy is in honor of a senior colleague on his first death anniversary]

Now tell me another story,
Quite new, but not hoary,
This gentle academic promontory:
I knew him in his glory.
The sum of moments we crossed
paths will never be lost.
Awakened we wonder what time to seize
God's opportunities – if you please;
A reminder that life is a blink away-
From the remains of another day.
Softly I tread, greatly I fear:
Loved are the ones who are so near.

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24th February 2007
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

In The Glade

And I found each tree brooding;
Huddled together in the wood.
Then `neath the trees as I stood,
They loomed tall and foreboding.
Shimmering green and massive,
Rooted in time and impassive.

They talk to me, as I with them;
They are quiet and secretive;
Their fear of humans is intuitive;
And much (I fear) is contemn.
I close my eyes, they talk to me;
I talk to them; we agree.

They play with shadows drawn by light;
Some find them dark and inviting.
Their bark, like wit, is biting;
That heal the imagined slight.
Their tears are leaves that come again:
These giants that live and fen.

07th May 2009
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L' Allegro

Not all youth is sorrow and trouble;
Nor in old age is wisdom double.
Do you know the promise that holds one forever?
'tis to savor sweet youth, for old age can never.

Constant change is constant learning,
Even in times of stealth and cunning.
Unrequited love is lingering death:
Like an everlasting shallow breath.

If you can dream – if you just suppose -
Then who am I to oppose?
Fortune can be Janus-faced:
Once the victor and now disgraced.

The Just do not snatch the spoil:
But enjoy merriment in sweat and toil.
When God did play the dice,
Doubt was born in a trice.

Fate doth favor or dispenses
Of men of little consequences.
Love and Passion go hand in hand:
They make Pleasure easy to understand.

A hard fall in one's pride
Should be taken well in stride.
Ego creates the enemy:
It's not 'you' or 'us' – it's always 'me.'

To those who willingly misunderstood,
Perdition was never so good!
In your journey what you wish to find,
Is most often not defined.

Subroto Chatterjee

L'allegro - Ii

Reality, by far, is perception,
Dancing and duelling with deception.

The mind that's lonely lives apart
From seeking joy and a change of heart.

The happy man does travel light
Through the journey into the night.

Fame is giddy at times at best,
And nothing, were I to jest.

Hope is Faith's loving daughter,
Even were it to come to slaughter.

Time is not what it seems to many,
Yet touching all and dwells in any.

Human sins get sicker and bolder
They now start ever young than older.

The truly wicked do merrily share,
Their love of hate under lordly care.

Human brutality is an ancient game,
Over millenniums its still the same.

Blinded justice is blended well,
With seduction and a dash of hell.

The gates of heaven is always open
to those with integrity unbroken.

Faith is Hope's loving mother:
They breathe life into one another.

Madness feeds the shallow with power:
Loved by many, and predictably dour.

Hate and fear are a natural pair,
most commonly found in election blare.

Some humans are verily self-defeating:
With minds of sheep, forever bleating.

Dubious figures that are admired,
Trap the souls of the inspired.

God-given rights are not rights by God:
They're rights by men to be overlord.

They're gone to the room next,
Their play with death is the pretext.

A promise to be remembered is half-sincere:
It's priceless to think you'd be so near.

23 September 2016
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

Lost And Found

[This poem is dedicated to all those who have lost in love but found something (more) worthwhile in time....]

Dost thou think two souls are one?
Methinks you've just begun
To know that there's a friend
From the beginning to the end.

Dost thou think your love is true?
The sweetest drink turned bitter brew?
If thou hast seen the potion's dreg,
Then thou drinks from Lovelorn's keg.

Now time has passed, and its quite true,
That memories don't leave like people do.
There's time and space for your dream;
To replay every aching scene.

But does it tell how you fare?
Or is that now beyond your care?
You need to live and love again;
No complexity can be so plain.

27th April 2009
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Man In The Mirror

"Right, " I said, "I have the key,
To unlock all your melancholy."
"No, " he said, "Let it be;
That's now become a part of me."

"Well, " I said, "Let's try this way,
Tell me some, be as it may."
"Sure, " he said, "But I'd like
To know if I'd need a hike."

"Not at all, " I said, concerned,
"Your fears are just unearned."
"Then, " he said, "What's to unlock
If you're not the right doc? "

"What's that, " I said, quite tired;
"Were you not the one I hired? "
"You, " he said, "refer to some other entity;
With us, it's a case of mistaken identity! "

Now as I look into the mirror,
My Irish blood cries "Wirra! "
And see life of bliss and worry.
Life's short, but I'm in no hurry.

20th April 2009
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Subroto Chatterjee

Management Safari

When ideas make a rumble in the jungle,
Wounded icons take a tumble.
Then strategies work full throttle:
Making merry with old wine in new bottles!

Cases carefully and seamlessly constructed;
Common sense integrated and deconstructed;
Wisdom posted at inquiry's door:
Can students and teachers ask for more?

Goals that fix a moving target,
Goals that cover a mixed-bag market;
Goals that imbibe learning and placements;
Goals that don't forgive displacements.

While Fayol managed to discipline-
What Taylor nudged later to begin-
Drucker founded the modern brand;
Management seemed in safe hands.

The Gilbreths and Follet streamlined too;
And Bernard was one of the few-
With Prahalad and Handy to canter
In together with Porter and Kanter.

Hammer and Champy, Peter and Waterman:
Offered balms to corporations and also-rans.
And as practices branched in numerous lands,
The jungle predators bared their fangs.

Corporate battles won by joint ventures;
These are management's new adventures.
Whether hunting for bulls or courting the bears,
Wisdom and folly come down in pairs.

Pathfinders of old and inventors of new,
Have a job to cut and hew;
To sharpen the brain and soften the heart,
It is not for nothing that management's an art!

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21st December 2006
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

Mania In Academia

Rumors like tumors don't have humor;
Like news just stews in its own juice;
Every line that you swallow like wine-
Makes you wise, in your eyes, or is it otherwise?

As you tower, with the power, the knowledge shower
Pours like a dream, enhancing your self-esteem;
Rewards are prone to breaking sticks and bones-
So even alone, romance the tomes.

Let me tell, that as you dwell, in the slippery well,
For those who fell, there's hope in hell.
Hopes paid, your life's made, or both fade.
Or in vain, you're a pain, to others' gain;
Contemplate: your ego inflates, or deflates.

Now you know it all, but what may befall
Even to those, who carefully chose,
The love of giving, and the art of living;
You confess: you're stressed, highly distressed.

You may borrow, others' sorrows:
You may learn to do the right turn;
Your mind guides your life, but your strife
Is only yours, which you may choose to cure.

My friends, be prudent as the eternal student,
Just as we learn to begin to unlearn,
For every brick, let your conscience prick,
Don't forestall, like a brick in the wall.

There's meaning in this mania, lovely academia!
I'm the choice-less teacher, voluntary preacher;
And my flock has weathered the shock
Of learning from me, don't you see?

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16th March 2007

Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

No Man Is An Island

No man is an island,
No more than he can be;
Above the water lies the land,
Not all is lost at sea.

The waves that crash the rocky shores
Ebb and flow for the morrows;
So seize hope with all the force,
And may happiness drown your sorrows.

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12th August 1984
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

One Day In The Life Of Ivan Gesticulatovich

[This poem welcomes comments from readers on its form, style, rhyme, meter, imagery, and anything else which human imagination (and otherwise) permits. As a background, the not-so-faint-hearted readers are recommended to read poems of master poets such as Alexander Pope ("An Essay on Criticism"), Carl Sandburg ("Bath"), Allen Ginsberg ("Sphincter", "Please Master", "Hospital Window", and "Death & Fame"), and Anne Sexton ("Again And Again And Again", "Love Letter Written in a Burning Building"). There is no attempt made here for the imitation-is-the-best-form-of-flattery drill (!). The message here is simple. Exactly].

One Day in The Life of Ivan Gesticulatovich

Ivan Gesticulatovich was bored. He wanted some entertainment.

He directed the road traffic at Moscow's Stalinskaya Square across Dzerzinski Street.

He raised his right palm in front of his face, and studied his fingers intently.

He looked at his little finger. My pinkie! Little it was, but a big help in school.

He mused how he used to wave it proudly at the teacher in class, and escape from the classroom. He wanted to empty his bladder or the rubbish he was taught.

Next, Ivan Gesticulatovich looked at his ring finger. Aah, the quiet one.

It didn't seem to do much. But it was of some help, anyways - to hold things, and such like. It held up things for him as well. Like the ring he wore. It meant a marriage, responsibilities, and coming back home from work at six everyday. No hanky-panky. Ya, ya, ya....

The middle finger! Every time he looked at it, he felt like screaming: "I got the power!" He had heard that in the USA and in some countries in Europe, people expressed their power. With just one finger! Ivan Gesticulatovich felt liberated. Now here, he thought, was where freedom lay.

Ivan Gesticulatovich stared at his index finger. He was in awe of it. He had dreamt many times that he was a conductor at an orchestra, waving his index finger in an arc of graceful proportion, vividly capturing the subtleties and nuances of Tchaikovsky, Handel, Grieg, Bach, and Schubert. Unfortunately, in reality, Ivan Gesticulatovich had his superior's index finger waving in front of his face (at work) and his wife's (at home). He sighed sadly. What an unused finger! But the middle and index finger forked together signified human victory, how wonderful! But, turn the hand the other way around, and it again spelt trouble. He blamed Churchill for inventing it.

Ivan Gesticulatovich was fond of his thumb. It stamped of an universal symbol. He had heard that in some countries, the thumb was still used progressively as a means of indicating illiteracy. Funnily, in other countries, it indicated a sign of "good for you, " or "all the best, " "cheers, " etc.

Overall, Ivan Gesticulatovich praised the use of the combination of his index finger and thumb. He could hold a pen and write. Ooh la la! True freedom at last! He could do anything. He could minutely dissect feelings, images, feel cool and hot breaths on his cheek, and here and there, create waiflike, fairy-like creatures, manifest truly unbelievable sights and emotions, fire, heat, saliva, gossamers, silvery dews, pain, unending love, pouting lips, heaving bosoms, flirty eyes, drowning eyes, limpid pools, anguished souls, rape, burning, politicians, trees, stems, roses, plants, vegetations, moon, destiny, haiku, lass, svelte, moonlight, darkness, lament, ethereal.....and do all this while working, day in, day out. In spite of this seemingly insurmountable exercise, he became a poet.

Some time later, as he stood at his now familiar position at the crossroad, Ivan Gesticulatovich could hear a commotion. It was coming from a building across the street, which housed the Joyceginssandburgian Society of Poets. The noise was about his poems. Evidently, after having read them, many poets had fainted due to rage or ecstasy – he did not know which one - or both - as yet. But he got noticed all the same.

Ivan Gesticulatovich is today Russia's leading 'Finger' poet. He was truly fingered!

03rd April 2009

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Subroto Chatterjee

Subroto Chatterjee

Poetic Peroration

[I wrote this poem in response to a friend's angst in his workplace]

There's a whole lotta noise going on,
about work and its innate import;
Consider now where you wish to belong,
Or do you have more to report?

There's a common cry from every heart,
about the pain of stupidity and overload;
Capture innovation on your part-
and change from external to internal mode.

A path is familiar with experience;
Don't go for the overkill:
Now rejoice in your penitence;
Make your own life a thrill!

And where 'easier said than done'
is already done to death...
keep track of all you've won -
with every single breath'

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12th November 2008
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

Qualiticians

Bright minds that delight the senses,
Suffer little from ill-consequences;
No boundary can hold a greedy mind:
Modern cretins are one of a kind.

As to being better than the best,
You can put your mind to rest:
A man's got to know his limitations,
Lest he exceeds his expectations!

Muddy images and spotless reputations
Behold the power of our creations!
Oily smiles and slippery deals,
Gandhi topi and mid-day meals.

If I were to read the brilliant man's head,
Here's something of what he would have said:
"I enjoy summer every winter day;
I enjoy peace in every which way."

"I enjoy crooked deals under blue skies;
I enjoy living with my little, big, lies;
I change my friends with every season;
I change my stance for any reason.
I change the laws to suit my dreams;
I need to change to become supreme."

At most he's devious; at least, bright,
He's also a creature of the night;
This avid scene stealer,
Is a bull-shitter and wheeler-dealer.

Now that he's got our money,
I really find it funny-
To see his alternating moods,
I'm moved, and unmoved;

Then he tells you why white is right:
"It's cultured to reflect the light –

To blind the masses and lull the senses, "
(While He works, and he dispenses!)

Now don't make light of this rite:
You just haven't got it right-
Most of us are led to dread,
The canard (about him) that has spread.

To this I wish to add:
"The future's waiting to be had-
A strange summer day in winter, at two:
I scarcely believed it to be true,
Cars flew all day and night;
I remember it was such a sight!
Now, it shouldn't matter what I said;
What I said was already read! "

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12th December 2007
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

Recipe Me

A thousand years of prose and verse,
A thousand more to settle down;
Diced and served mixed metaphors;
With metonymy and adnoun.

Catch the lovely imagery,
These stanzas are isochronous;
Let loose thy savagery;
Free verse from resulting succuss.

Attune meter and the rhyme,
Laugh off the hyperbole;
Move your hand and head in time;
Eat my words; swallow me whole.

Caress these couplet with thine eyes;
Follow the words that run-on line;
The enjambement is the prize;
Then revel in thy condign.

Dance with words in Petrarchan style;
Dress them in the right octave;
Mixed with rhythm and some guile,
Tercet I doth twice enslave.

Served with humor and litotes;
The elegy, lyric and epic.
Cavort around them as you please;
Though they may be monostich.

My poetry is quite concrete;
'Tis marinated in prosody.
Even if they're offbeat,
Recipe me for any malady!

08th May 2009
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Setting

[This poem is a gentle self-introspection for those consumed with pomposity and self-importance].

There's war in the air,
And the ball is in your court;
Your intentions are threadbare,
Kindly take note.

And while still water runs deep,
The water is fast and churning;
While you drowned in your sleep,
You missed a lot of learning.

You have a craving for invention
In diabolical schemes of our setting;
Power-plays call for intervention,
You don't know what you're getting.

The filibusterer sets the tone
For the clique of old-timers;
Stupidity oft shines alone,
Like knowledge from a primer.

Those who claim to lead
Shall profess the laws of equity,
Most leaders fail to read
The language of accountability.

Tales of self-importance abound;
Of tempers thrown in for good measure;
Your intentions are now run aground,
Is paining others your only pleasure?

There's no future in the past,
I know what's there in the end:
The fleeting present does not last,
Let humility be your friend.

Your brief encounters with people,

May leave marks faint and dark:
Some impressions create a ripple,
While others ignite a spark.

Take care, be nice, and empathize;
Watch out, be sure, and communicate;
All mind and no heart cannot sympathize;
How would you want others to reciprocate?

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22nd February 2007
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

Someone's There

[I wrote this poem in response to W. H. Auden's 'Are You There? ']

Some choices we make are shown
To be blunders of our own.
But love has its prying side;
It deceives more than it can hide.

I love my image in the lake:
I'm Narcissus' reincarnate.
Some elders think love's a fake;
I think love needs a break.

All lovers have wishes galore;
That numb the cynics even more
The otherness that lovers share
Takes loneliness in its care.

There are many views which I hold;
And stories still untold;
Some are best left alone,
And some we may call our own.

23rd April 2009
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Subroto Chatterjee

Superman

He stood on the window ledge, ready to fly;
Leaving behind a note to explain
Why he had to die:
He felt the impending pain.

The note said how life treated him,
And how he treated life;
But I could hear from the din
How well he fought his strife.

No man of steel flew past by
In a cape of red and blue;
Do you know the reason why,
And what came to his rescue?

Oh, the relief that a life was spared,
Will gladden all our hearts;
But wait till the story's bared,
Before the drumbeat starts.

The turnaround that happened now,
Is prayed for by many;
A voice called to say how
His life was as good as any.

Just as there's a cause for the season,
Spring, summer, winter, and fall;
Our man saw through the reason,
Enough to take a call.

And now from the window ledge,
He jumped back in to his room;
Thru the window, trees and hedge,
He thanked his escape from doom.

Now to those who cross the path
What our man did without a fuss:
Don't self-destruct, but take heart,
Tis reason good enough!

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07th April 2009
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

Tales Of Fancy

Let Fancy take you in her care
And trade off logic if you dare
She's carries with whom she wants:
foolish youth and loving taunts. (1)

Tell the world how Fancy dreams
She lulls the senses as she seems-
An illusion to the furtive mind
That's lost in love and left behind. (2)

Tell me what your Fancy loves
Cuddled up like cooing doves,
Eating, sleeping, passion play,
Free of tension night and day. (3)

But what of Fancy that cements
and robs us of adverse comments?
Of breathless joy under the tree
In fleeting moods and Fancy-free! (4)

When Fancy chooses whom to love
Then Cupid's arrow from above
Can strike a sight to the blind:
Such love is not hard to find. (5)

And when that love turns to hate
All pearls of wisdom that comes late
Is wasted on a bitter heart
Embracing Fancy is an art! (6)

24 September 2016
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

Tanka # 1: 'Blame Game'

Each day you pray hard
Each day you must work harder
Is it a façade?
Or is it misplaced ardor?
Don't blame this on your teacher

10th May 2009
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Subroto Chatterjee

The Road

There are many roads I've traveled less,
And many deeds to confess.
But there's a road I'd like to try,
Even though I know not why.

If the road ends in a fork,
Take your chances; go for broke.
Does it matter where it ends?
You might say 'It depends'.

Some roads go round and round,
And some that go underground.
There are some that lose their way,
While others loop, swerve, and sway.

If the road leads you nowhere,
You've learnt something somewhere.
For the road that was taken,
Tells us what you have forsaken.

If the road is like a knot,
Bless yourself with what you've got.
Your actions will reveal the code:
Can you carve your own road?

Roads that lead to destinations,
Begin with much contemplation.
Now I know the road to take,
It's the one without a break.

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03rd April 2009
Mumbai

Subroto Chatterjee

The Secret

Thy happiness floats high in summer;
And sadness bites in winter;
Though you were a latecomer,
Your heart didn't splinter.

You've learnt the secret to the senses,
With eyes that light a storm;
Not oblivious to romances,
Now silence is your norm.

Your mentor needs no answer
He's found it in your smile;
Life's a lovely dancer,
Just match it with your guile.

No secrets where there's trust,
But feelings take a blow,
When reality is a must,
Some things you ought to know.

Thy burden is thy lightness,
Of being eternally good.
Thy laughter melts the darkness,
Just as well they should.

The years shall pass in good measure
And with it a memory,
Catch a moment at your pleasure,
'tis not peremptory.

Some secrets are unsaid
While others shared and sold;
For every action to which you wed
Make it pure as gold.

Now follow him to the mountain
This trail shall not go cold;
Meet him at the fountain

Of youth that's strong and bold.

Subroto Chatterjee

14th August 2010

Subroto Chatterjee

To A Poet

Send out the word
The Poet is rising
If thou has not overheard,
Tis poetry's new uprising!

Each silver of thy mane
Shows a hoary journey;
A life of fun and game,
Sporting drama and irony.

There's a message in thy mail,
Straight from one's heart;
Ere the mind may fail,
And its meaning falls apart.

The pain of love's labor,
Is borne by those who know,
And the Poet does you favor
With happiness in tow.

Now send out the word again,
The Poet has arisen!
None shall go back in vain,
Earth's love thou shall imprison!

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To Keats

And thou art Nature's gift and sentinel,
Watching her in keen earnestness,
And thou art Pastoral's original
Pathfinder of lofty exactness.
Thy words reveal the sylvan beauty
With whom you briefly flirted;
You thought it was your divine duty
That all the gods concerted.
So spirits of flora and fauna were captured:
Leaving thy acolytes thoroughly enraptured!

While you Stood Tip-Toe upon a hill,
And watched Nature's gentle doings,
These were times when all stood still
And watched poesy brewing.
My mind now sees the cozy glen
'neath the trees and with a book
The pages turn I know not when
Lost in lilies and the brook.
And ere Fancy takes me to her heart,
Sorrow leaves me as I depart.

12th May 2009
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Subroto Chatterjee

To Marilyn

"I said I wanted to be left alone.
I didn't say I was lonely."
She had nothing to atone;
She was Hollywood's only.

She was a vision and a treat
To countless moviegoers;
She gave what she couldn't give herself.
Died in 1962.
At thirty-six.

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08th April 2009
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

To Poets (And About Them)

On passing by a crowded lane,
I greet people and their dreams;
Lest some call us poets vain,
Suspend all blasphemes.

Those who crave an immortal place,
Are welcome to share the fire;
Now that you've joined the race,
Scorch not what others desire.

What do poets do?
Foremost, they make you think.
All this effort which they knew,
Surely didn't come in a blink.

The poet's message will travel
Longer than I hope they do;
Poets love to unravel
What many won't undo.

They are masters of words,
Bewitchers of senses
Soothing balms of the soul
Protectors of Order,
Soothsayers of Old.

They are Wordsmiths, Diviners,
Mentors, and Friend,
Blessing the Lost
With their Omnipresence.

Beckoning now like the distant thunder,
With dazzling bolts of lyrical rhymes,
Awakening the thoughts to plunder
The sweetness of enraptured times.

Now the poet will move the unmoved,
And speak like the tongue of the mind;
They'll ensure their efforts be proved:

That they speak for humankind.

Subroto Chatterjee

Travails With My Aunt

[This poem describes an acquaintance of mine, an elderly lady, pompous, self-opinionated, but interesting, when in full flow!].

My aunt holds court,
Nay: she deigns to pontificate.
Aye, she moves people and sallies forth.
Oh, she doesn't talk, she excoriates.

Hapless mortals reined in by decree
Greenhorns smarting in her dismissive glare;
Intellectual freedom is no longer free;
Under my aunt's maternal care.

Tis said that those who practise, do;
And those who don't, teach.
God knows what my aunt does too,
Does she practise, or does she preach?

One thing I'd say in her case:
She scatters pollens of wisdom;
To those victims who'd love to race,
Would surely run for freedom!

My aunt dispenses great names with ease;
Indeed, she is great, is she not?
While others might think as they please,
She's all that we've got.

Her opinions on the hoi-polloi seldom waver;
She's always at pain to explain her stand;
While the situation may seem graver,
Her models are colorful and grand.

So I tell my aunt: Be humble and be kind,
For it never hurts to be nice;
I'm sure your subjects wouldn't mind,
If you do partake in this advice!

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10th April 2007
Mumbai.

Subroto Chatterjee

Truth Unbound

I've been told that truth has advantages;
But certain untruths share the same sentiment;
As the battle amongst humankind rages,
Congratulate your own presentiment.

Wallow in the wrongs of your country fellows;
Trade your soul in mock exchange;
Risk your neck until you mellow;
Yet you'll not feel that strange.

Many things contrive to drive one crazy;
And many opportunities that slip away;
The mist of reason is rather hazy-
Truth waits for another day.

When truth's unbound, life's a song;
Though it's sung in different voices;
The antagonists will feel that's wrong:
Freedom begets numerous choices.

The fate of many were chronicled in history;
That's history - inspiration of good and bad;
Lies have crumbled nations built on mystery:
These common untruths have remained a fad.

The perception of deception awaits explanation:
The brokers of truth have wagered our existence;
While justice awaits eternal damnation,
Truth surfaces with amazing persistence.

If truth is reality, so are lies;
Like pain is painful reality.
Like many with unheard cries
Died with truth's ideality.

Nothing's unsound with truth unbound.

Subroto Chatterjee

'Twas Not A Rose

'Twas not a rose,
Though it had thorns.
Was it a pose?
Was it a con?

'Twas not a plant
But an implant
But 'twas not a rose
But pretty, pretty, prose.

'Twas what it did,
In a clever, clever bid,
It nefariously slid,
In whatever was hid.

'Twas a cunning plan,
Which went hand in hand;
'Twas a sharp tongue, and a sharper mind.
'Twas both that gave meaning to humankind.

09th April 2009
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Subroto Chatterjee

Vanity Is Thy Name

Does thy beauty past compare
Is suspended on a single hair?
When such beauty is on the wane,
Then Vanity is thy name!

Does your knowledge pour like rain,
And crack the limits of thy brain?
Is that knowledge all inane?
Then Vanity is thy name!

Does your power make others feel,
That you are the Real Deal?
Does it drive people insane?
Then Vanity is thy name!

Does your fame reach far and wide?
Does it smack of pomp and pride?
Dost thou take it as a game?
Then Vanity is thy name!

Does your name speak a lot,
Does it say what you're not?
And dost thou have no shame?
Then Vanity is thy name!

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