And your own people will consider you to be useless.
And the outside people will consider you queer.

Chandra. But we shall crown you, Dada, with a crown of new leaves.

We shall put a garland of jasmine round your neck.

And there will be no one else except ourselves who will know your true worth.

THE SONG OF THE FESTIVAL OF SPRING

[In which all the persons of the drama, not excepting Sruti-bhusan, unite on the main stage in the dance of Spring.]

Come and rejoice,
for April is awake.
Fling yourselves into the flood of being,
bursting the bondage of the past.

April is awake.
Life's shoreless sea
is heaving in the sun before you.
All the losses are lost,
and death is drowned in its waves.
Plunge into the deep without fear,
with the gladness of April in your heart.
THE FUGITIVE
AND OTHER POEMS
THE FUGITIVE, AND OTHER POEMS

I

DARKLY you sweep on, Eternal Fugitive, round whose bodiless rush stagnant space frets into eddying bubbles of light.

Is your heart lost to the Lover calling you across his immeasurable loneliness?

Is the aching urgency of your haste the sole reason why your tangled tresses break into stormy riot and pearls of fire roll along your path as from a broken necklace?

Your fleeting steps kiss the dust of this world into sweetness, sweeping aside all waste; the storm centred with your dancing limbs shakes the sacred shower of death over life and freshens her growth.

Should you in sudden weariness stop for a moment, the world would rumble into a heap, an encumbrance, barring its own progress, and even the least speck of dust would pierce the sky throughout its infinity with an unbearable pressure.

My thoughts are quickened by this rhythm of unseen feet round which the anklets of light are shaken.

They echo in the pulse of my heart, and through my blood surges the psalm of the ancient sea.

I hear the thundering flood tumbling my life from world to world and form to form, scattering my being in an endless spray of gifts, in sorrowings and songs.
The tide runs high, the wind blows, the boat dances like thine own desire, my heart!
Leave the hoard on the shore and sail over the unfathomed dark towards limitless light.

III

It was growing dark when I asked her, "What strange land have I come to?"
She only lowered her eyes, and the water gurgled in the throat of her jar, as she walked away.
The trees hang vaguely over the bank, and the land appears as though it already belonged to the past.
The water is dumb, the bamboos are darkly still, a wristlet tinkles against the water-jar from down the lane.

Row no more, but fasten the boat to this tree,—for I love the look of this land.
The evening star goes down behind the temple dome, and the pallor of the marble landing haunts the dark water.
Belated wayfarers sighed; for light from hidden windows is splintered into the darkness by intervening wayside trees and bushes. Still that wristlet tinkles against the water-jar, and retreating steps rustle from down the lane littered with leaves.
The night deepens, the palace towers loom spectre-like, and the town hums wearily.
Row no more, but fasten the boat to a tree.
Let me seek rest in this strange land, dimly lying under the stars, where darkness tingles with the tinkle of a wristlet knocking against a water-jar.
IV

O that I were stored with a secret, like unshed rain
in summer clouds—a secret, folded up in silence, that
I could wander away with.

O that I had some one to whisper to, where slow
waters lap under trees that doze in the sun.

The hush this evening seems to expect a footfall, and
you ask me for the cause of my tears.

I cannot give a reason why I weep, for that is a secret
still withheld from me.

VII

I am like the night to you, little flower.

I can only give you peace and a wakeful silence
hidden in the dark.

When in the morning you open your eyes, I shall
leave you to a world a-hum with bees, and songful with
birds.

My last gift to you will be a tear dropped into the
depth of your youth; it will make your smile all the
sweeter, and bemist your outlook on the pitiless mirth
of day.

IX

If I were living in the royal town of Ujjain, when
Kalidas was the King’s poet, I should know some Malwa
girl and fill my thoughts with the music of her name.
She would glance at me through the slanting shadow of
her eyelids, and allow her veil to catch in the jasmine as an excuse for lingering near me.

This very thing happened in some past whose track is lost under time's dead leaves.

The scholars fight to-day about dates that play hide-and-seek.

I do not break my heart dreaming over flown and vanished ages: but alas and alas again, that those Malwa girls have followed them!

To what heaven, I wonder, have they carried in their flower-baskets those days that tingled to the lyrics of the King's poet?

This morning, separation from those whom I was born too late to meet weighs on and saddens my heart.

Yet April carries the same flowers with which they decked their hair, and the same south breeze fluttered their veils as whispers over modern roses.

And, to tell the truth, joys are not lacking to this spring, though Kalidas sing no more; and I know, if he can watch me from the Poets' Paradise, he has reasons to be envious.

x

Be not concerned about her heart, my heart: leave it in the dark.

What if her beauty be of the figure and her smile merely of the face? Let me take without question the simple meaning of her glances and be happy.

I care not if it be a web of delusion that her arms wind about me, for the web itself is rich and rare, and the deceit can be smiled at and forgotten.

Be not concerned about her heart, my heart: be content if the music is true, though the words are not
to be believed; enjoy the grace that dances like a lily on the rippling, deceiving surface, whatever may lie beneath.

NEITHER mother nor daughter are you, nor bride, Urvashi. Woman you are, to ravish the soul of Paradise.

When weary-footed evening comes down to the folds whither the cattle have returned, you never trim the house-lamps nor walk to the bridal bed with a tremulous heart and a wavering smile on your lips, glad that the dark hours are so secret.

Like the dawn you are without veil, Urvashi, and without shame.

Who can imagine that aching overflow of splendour which created you!

You rose from the churned ocean on the first day of the first spring, with the cup of life in your right hand and poison in your left. The monster sea, lulled like an enchanted snake, laid down its thousand hoods at your feet.

Your unblemished radiance rose from the foam, white and naked as a jasmine.

Were you ever small, timid or in bud, Urvashi, O Youth everlasting?

Did you sleep, cradled in the deep blue night where the strange light of gems plays over coral, shells and moving creatures of dreamlike form, till day revealed your awful fullness of bloom?

1 The dancing-girl of Paradise who rose from the sea.
Adored are you of all men in all ages, Urvashi, O endless wonder!
The world throbs with youthful pain at the glance of your eyes, the ascetic lays the fruit of his austerities at your feet, the songs of poets hum and swarm round the perfume of your presence. Your feet, as in careless joy they flit on, wound even the heart of the hollow wind with the tinkle of golden bells.
When you dance before the gods, flinging orbits of novel rhythm into space, Urvashi, the earth shivers, leaf and grass, and autumn fields heave and sway; the sea surges into a frenzy of rhyming waves; the stars drop into the sky—beads from the chain that leaps till it breaks on your breast; and the blood dances in men's hearts with sudden turmoil.

You are the first break on the crest of heaven's slumber, Urvashi, you thrill the air with unrest. The world bathes your limbs in her tears; with colour of her heart's blood are your feet red; lightly you poise on the wave-tossed lotus of desire, Urvashi; you play forever in that limitless mind wherein labours God's tumultuous dream.

XII
You, like a rivulet swift and sinuous, laugh and dance, and your steps sing as you trip along.
I, like a bank rugged and steep, stand speechless and stock-still and darkly gaze at you.

I, like a big, foolish storm, of a sudden come rushing on and try to rend my being and scatter it parcelled in a whirl of passion.
‘You, like the lightning’s flash slender and keen, pierce the heart of the turbulent darkness, to disappear in a vivid streak of laughter.

\[\ldots\]

\textit{XIV}

I am glad you will not wait for me with that lingering pity in your look.

It is only the spell of the night and my farewell words, startled at their own tune of despair, which bring these tears to my eyes. But day will dawn, my eyes will dry and my heart; and there will be no time for weeping.

Who says it is hard to forget?

The mercy of death works at life’s core, bringing it respite from its own foolish persistence.

The stormy sea is lulled at last in its rocking cradle; the forest fire falls to sleep on its bed of ashes.

You and I shall part, and the cleavage will be hidden under living grass and flowers that laugh in the sun.

\[\ldots\]

\textit{XVI}

I forgot myself for a moment, and I came.

But raise your eyes, and let me know if there still linger some shadow of other days, like a pale cloud on the horizon that has been robbed of its rain.

For a moment bear with me if I forget myself.

The roses are still in bud; they do not yet know how we neglect to gather flowers this summer.
The morning star has the same palpitating hush; the early light is enmeshed in the branches that overlook your window, as in those other days.

That times are changed I forget for a little, and have come.

I forget if you ever shamed me by looking away when I bared my heart.

I only remember the words that stranded on the tremor of your lips; I remember in your dark eyes sweeping shadows of passion, like the wings of a home-seeking bird in the dusk.

I forget that you do not remember, and I come.

XVII

The rain fell fast. The river rushed and hissed. It licked up and swallowed the island, while I waited alone on the lessening bank with my sheaves of corn in a heap.

From the shadows of the opposite shore the boat crosses with a woman at the helm.

I cry to her, "Come to my island coiled round with hungry water, and take away my year's harvest."

She comes, and takes all that I have to the last grain; I ask her to take me.

But she says, "No"—the boat is laden with my gift and no room is left for me.

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XIX

On this side of the water there is no landing; the girls do not come here to fetch water; the land along its edge
is shaggy with stunted shrubs; a noisy flock of saliks dig
their nests in the steep bank under whose frown the
fisher-boats find no shelter.

You sit there on the unfrequented grass, and the
morning wears on. Tell me what you do on this bank
so dry that it is agape with cracks?

She looks in my face and says, "Nothing, nothing
whatsoever."

On this side of the river the bank is deserted, and no
cattle come to water. Only some stray goats from the
village browse the scanty grass all day, and the solitary
water-hawk watches from an uprooted peepal aslant over
the mud.

You sit there alone in the miserly shade of a shimool,
and the morning wears on.

Tell me, for whom do you wait?
She looks in my face and says, "No one, no one at
all!"
Mind began to say, "Not enough to contain—"
and then stopped.
"Contain what?" I asked.
Mind affected not to hear.
I suspected that Mind did not know, and with ceaseless work smothered the question.
His one refrain was, "I must have more."
"Why must you?"
"Because it is great."
"What is great?"
Mind remained silent. I pressed for an answer.
In contempt and anger, Mind said, "Why ask about things that are not? Take notice of those that are hugely before you,—the struggle and the fight, the army and armaments, the bricks and mortar, and labourers without number."
I thought, "Possibly Mind is wise."

Days passed. More wings were added to his palace—more lands to his domain.
The season of rains came to an end. The dark clouds became white and thin, and in the rain-washed sky the sunny hours hovered like butterflies over an unseen flower. I was bewildered and asked everybody I met, "What is that music in the breeze?"
A tramp walked the road whose dress was wild as his manner; he said, "Hark to the music of the Coming!"
I cannot tell why I was convinced, but the words broke from me, "We have not much longer to wait."
"It is close at hand," said the mad man.
I went to the office and boldly said to Mind, "Stop all work!"
Mind asked, "Have you any news?"
Mind shook his head and said, "There are neither banners nor pageantry!"

3

The night waned, the stars paled in the sky. Suddenly the touchstone of the morning light tinged everything with gold. A cry spread from mouth to mouth—
"Here is the herald!"
I bowed my head and asked, "Is he coming?"
The answer seemed to burst from all sides, "Yes."
Mind grew troubled and said, "The dome of my building is not yet finished, nothing is in order."
A voice came from the sky, "Pull down your building!"
"But why?" asked Mind.
"Because to-day is the day of the Coming, and your building is in the way."

4

The lofty building lies in the dust and all is scattered and broken.
Mind looked about. But what was there to see?
Only the morning star and the lily washed in dew.
And what else? A child running laughing from its mother's arms into the open light.
"Was it only for this that they said it was the day of the Coming?"
"Yes, this was why they said there was music in the air and light in the sky."
"And did they claim all the earth only for this?"
"Yes," came the answer. "Mind, you build walls to imprison yourself. Your servants toil to enslave themselves; but the whole earth and infinite space are for the child, for the New Life."

"What does that child bring you?"

"Hope for all the world and its joy."

Mind asked me, "Poet, do you understand?"

"I lay my work aside," I said, "for I must have time to understand."

II

I

ENDLESSLY varied art thou in the exuberant world, Lady of Manifold Magnificence. Thy path is strewn with lights, thy touch thrills into flowers; that trailing skirt of thine sweeps the whirl of a dance among the stars, and thy many-toned music is echoed from innumerable worlds through signs and colours.

Single and alone in the unfathomed stillness of the soul, art thou, Lady of Silence and Solitude, a vision thrilled with light, a lonely lotus blossoming on the stem of love.

III

I REMEMBER the day.

The heavy shower of rain is slackening into fitful pauses, renewed gusts of wind startle it from a first lull.

I take up my instrument. Idly I touch the strings, till, without my knowing, the music borrows the mad cadence of that storm.
I see her figure as she steals from her work, stops at my door, and retreats with hesitating steps. She comes again, stands outside leaning against the wall, then slowly enters the room and sits down. With head bent, she plies her needle in silence; but soon stops her work, and looks out of the window through the rain at the blurred line of trees.

Only this—one hour of a rainy noon filled with shadows and song and silence.

IV

While stepping into the carriage she turned her head and threw me a swift glance of farewell.

This was her last gift to me. But where can I keep it safe from the trampling hours?

Must evening sweep this gleam of anguish away, as it will the last flicker of fire from the sunset?

Ought it to be washed off by the rain, as treasured pollen is from heart-broken flowers?

Leave kingly glory and the wealth of the rich to death. But may not tears keep ever fresh the memory of a glance flung through a passionate moment?

"Give it to me to keep," said my song; "I never touch kings' glory or the wealth of the rich, but these small things are mine for ever."


VI

I was to go away; still she did not speak. But I felt, from a slight quiver, her yearning arms would say: "Ah, no, not yet."

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I have often heard her pleading hands vocal in a touch, though they knew not what they said.

I have known those arms to stammer when, had they not, they would have become youth's garland round my neck.

Their little gestures return to remembrance in the covert of still hours; like truants they playfully reveal things she had kept secret from me.

VII

My songs are like bees; they follow through the air some fragrant trace—some memory—of you, to hum around your shyness, eager for its hidden store.

When the freshness of dawn droops in the sun, when in the noon the air hangs low with heaviness and the forest is silent, my songs return home, their languid wings dusted with gold.

IX

I think I shall stop startled if ever we meet after our next birth, walking in the light of a far-away world.

I shall know those dark eyes then as morning stars, and yet feel that they have belonged to some unremembered evening sky of a former life.

I shall know that the magic of your face is not all its own, but has stolen the passionate light that was in my eyes at some immemorial meeting, and then gathered from my love a mystery that has now forgotten its origin.
X

Lay down your lute, my love, leave your arms free to embrace me.

Let your touch bring my overflowing heart to my Body's utmost brink.

Do not bend your neck and turn away your face, but offer up a kiss to me, which has been like some perfume long closed in a bud.

Do not smother this moment under vain words, but let our hearts quake in a rush of silence sweeping all thoughts to the shoreless delight.

XI

You have made me great with your love, though I am but one among the many, drifting in the common tide, rocking in the fluctuant favour of the world.

You have given me a seat where poets of all time bring their tribute, and lovers with deathless names greet one another across the ages.

Men hastily pass me in the market,—never noting how my body has grown precious with your caress, how I carry your kiss within, as the sun carries in its orb the fire of the divine touch and shines for ever.

XII

Like a child that frets and pushes away its toys, my heart to-day shakes its head at every phrase I suggest, and says, "No, not this."

Yet words, in the agony of their vagueness, haunt my mind, like vagrant clouds hovering over hills, waiting for some chance wind to relieve them of their rain.
But leave these vain efforts, my soul, for the stillness will ripen its own music in the dark.

My life to-day is like a cloister during some penance, where the spring is afraid to stir or to whisper.

This is not the time, my love, for you to pass the gate; at the mere thought of your anklet bells tinkling down the path, the garden echoes are ashamed.

Know that to-morrow's songs are in bud to-day, and should they see you walk by they would strain to breaking their immature hearts.

XIII

WHENCE do you bring this disquiet, my love?

Let my heart touch yours and kiss the pain out of your silence.

The night has thrown up from its depth this little hour, that love may build a new world within these shut doors, to be lighted by this solitary lamp.

We have for music but a single reed which our two pairs of lips must play on by turns—for crown, only one garland to bind my hair after I have put it on your forehead.

Tearing the veil from my breast I shall make our bed on the floor; and one kiss and one sleep of delight shall fill our small boundless world.

XIV

All that I had I gave to you, keeping but the barest veil of reserve.

It is so thin that you secretly smile at it and I feel ashamed.

The gust of the spring breeze sweeps it away un-
awares, and the flutter of my own heart moves it as the waves move their foam.

My love, do not grieve if I keep this flimsy mist of distance round me.

This frail reserve of mine is no mere woman's coy-ness, but a slender stem on which the flower of my self-surrender bends towards you with reticent grace.

xv

I have donned this new robe to-day because my body feels like singing.

It is not enough that I am given to my love once and for ever, but out of that I must fashion new gifts every day; and shall I not seem a fresh offering, dressed in a new robe?

My heart, like the evening sky, has its endless passion for colour, and therefore I change my veils, which have now the green of the cool young grass and now that of the winter rice.

To-day my robe is tinted with the rain-rimmed blue of the sky. It brings to my limbs the colour of the boundless, the colour of the oversea hills; and it carries in its folds the delight of summer clouds flying in the wind.

xvi

I thought I would write love's words in their own colour; but that lies deep in the heart, and tears are pale.

Would you know them, friend, if the words were colourless?

I thought I would sing love's words to their own tune, but that sounds only in my heart, and my eyes are silent.

Would you know them, friend, if there were no tune?
XVII

IN the night the song came to me; but you were not there.

It found the words for which I had been seeking all day. Yes, in the stillness a moment after dark they throbbed into music, even as the stars then began to pulse with light; but you were not there. My hope was to sing it to you in the morning; but, try as I might, though the music came, the words hung back, when you were beside me.

XVIII

THE night deepens and the dying flame flickers in the lamp.

I forgot to notice when the evening—like a village girl who has filled her pitcher at the river a last time for that day—closed the door on her cabin.

I was speaking to you, my love, with mind barely conscious of my voice—tell me, had it any meaning? Did it bring you any message from beyond life’s borders?

For now, since my voice has ceased, I feel the night throbbing with thoughts that gaze in awe at the abyss of their dumbness.

XIX

WHEN we two first met my heart rang out in music, "She who is eternally afar is beside you for ever."

That music is silent, because I have grown to believe that my love is only near, and have forgotten that she is also far, far away.

Music fills the infinite between two souls. This has been muffled by the mist of our daily habits.

422
On shy summer nights, when the breeze brings a vast murmur out of the silence, I sit up in my bed and mourn the great loss of her who is beside me. I ask myself, "When shall I have another chance to whisper to her words with the rhythm of eternity in them?"

Wake up, my song, from thy languor, rend this screen of the familiar, and fly to my beloved there, in the endless surprise of our first meeting!

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XXI

The father came back from the funeral rites.

His boy of seven stood at the window, with eyes wide open and a golden amulet hanging from his neck, full of thoughts too difficult for his age.

His father took him in his arms and the boy asked him, "Where is mother?"

"In heaven," answered his father, pointing to the sky.

At night the father groaned in slumber, weary with grief.

A lamp dimly burned near the bedroom door, and a lizard chased moths on the wall.

The boy woke up from sleep, felt with his hands the emptiness in the bed, and stole out to the open terrace.

The boy raised his eyes to the sky and long gazed in silence. His bewildered mind sent abroad into the night the question, "Where is heaven?"
No answer came: and the stars seemed like the burning tears of that ignorant darkness.

XXII

She went away when the night was about to wane.

My mind tried to console me by saying, "All is vanity."

I felt angry and said, "That unopened letter with her name on it, and this palm-leaf fan bordered with red silk by her own hands, are they not real?"

The day passed, and my friend came and said to me, "Whatever is good is true, and can never perish."

"How do you know?" I asked impatiently; "was not this body good which is now lost to the world?"

As a fretful child hurrying its own mother, I tried to wreck all the shelters that ever I had, in and about me, and cried, "This world is treacherous."

Suddenly I felt a voice saying—"Ungrateful!"

I looked out of the window, and a reproach seemed to come from the star-sprinkled night,—"You pour out into the void of my absence your faith in the truth that I came!"

XXIII

The river is grey and the air dazed with blown sand.

On a morning of dark disquiet, when the birds are mute and their nests shake in the gust, I sit alone and ask myself, "Where is she?"

The days have flown wherein we sat too near each other; we laughed and jested, and the awe of love's majesty found no words at our meetings.

424
I made myself small, and she trifled away every
moment with pelting talk.

To-day I wish in vain that she were by me, in the
gloom of the coming storm, to sit in the soul's solitude.

**xxiv**

The name she called me by, like a flourishing jasmine,
covered the whole seventeen years of our love. With its
sound mingled the quiver of the light through the
leaves, the scent of the grass in the rainy night, and the
sad silence of the last hour of many an idle day.

Not the work of God alone was he who answered to
that name; she created him again for herself during those
seventeen swift years.

Other years were to follow, but their vagrant days, no
longer gathered within the fold of that name uttered in
her voice, stray and are scattered.

They ask me, "Who should fold us?"

I find no answer and sit silent, and they cry to me
while dispersing, "We seek a shepherdess!"

Whom should they seek?

That they do not know. And like derelict evening
clouds they drift in the trackless dark, and are lost and
forgotten.

**xxv**

I feel that your brief days of love have not been left
behind in those scanty years of your life.

I seek to know in what place, away from the slow-
thieving dust, you keep them now. I find in my solitude
some song of your evening that died, yet left a deathless
echo; and the sighs of your unsatisfied hours I find
nestled in the warm quiet of the autumn noon.
Your desires come from the hive of the past to haunt my heart, and I sit still to listen to their wings.

... 

XXVII

I was walking along a path overgrown with grass, when suddenly I heard from some one behind, "See if you know me?"

I turned round and looked at her and said, "I cannot remember your name."

She said, "I am that first great Sorrow whom you met when you were young."

Her eyes looked like a morning whose dew is still in the air.

I stood silent for some time till I said, "Have you lost all the great burden of your tears?"

She smiled and said nothing. I felt that her tears had had time to learn the language of smiles.

"Once you said," she whispered, "that you would cherish your grief for ever."

I blushed and said, "Yes, but years have passed and I forget."

Then I took her hand in mine and said, "But you have changed."

"What was sorrow once has now become peace," she said.

XXVIII

Our life sails on the uncrossed sea whose waves chase each other in an eternal hide-and-seek.

It is the restless sea of change, feeding its foaming 426
flocks to lose them over and over again, beating its hands against the calm of the sky.

Love, in the centre of this circling war-dance of light and dark, yours is that green island, where the sun kisses the shy forest shade and silence is wooed by birds’ singing.

xxx

A painter was selling pictures at the fair; followed by servants, there passed the son of a Minister who in youth had cheated this painter’s father so that he had died of a broken heart.

The boy lingered before the pictures and chose one for himself. The painter flung a cloth over it and said he would not sell it.

After this the boy pined heart-sick till his father came and offered a large price. But the painter kept the picture unsold on his shop wall and grimly sat before it, saying to himself, “This is my revenge.”

The sole form this painter’s worship took was to trace an image of his god every morning.

And now he felt these pictures grow daily more different from those he used to paint.

This troubled him, and he sought in vain for an explanation till one day he started up from work in horror; the eyes of the god he had just drawn were those of the Minister, and so were the lips.

He tore up the picture, crying, “My revenge has returned on my head!”
THE General came before the silent and angry King and saluting him said: "The village is punished, the men are stricken to dust, and the women cower in their unlit homes afraid to weep aloud."

The High Priest stood up and blessed the King and cried: "God's mercy is ever upon you."

The Clown, when he heard this, burst out laughing and startled the Court. "The King's frown darkened."
"The honour of the throne," said the Minister, "is upheld by the King's prowess and the blessing of Almighty God."

Louder laughed the Clown, and the King growled,—"Unseemly mirth!"
"God has showered many blessings upon your head," said the Clown; "the one he bestowed on me was the gift of laughter."
"This gift will cost you your life," said the King, gripping his sword with his right hand.
Yet the Clown stood up and laughed till he laughed no more.
A shadow of dread fell upon the Court, for they heard that laughter echoing in the depth of God's silence.

FIERCELY they rend in pieces the carpet woven during ages of prayer for the welcome of the world's best hope.
The great preparations of love lie a heap of shreds, and there is nothing on the ruined altar to remind the mad crowd that their god was to have come. In a fury

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of passion they seem to have burnt their future to cinders, and with it the season of their bloom.

The air is harsh with the cry, "Victory to the Brute!" The children look haggard and aged; they whisper to one another that time revolves but never advances, that we are goaded to run but have nothing to reach, that creation is like a blind man's groping.

I said to myself, "Cease thy singing. Song is for one who is to come, the struggle without an end is for things that are."

The road, that ever lies along like some one with ear to the ground listening for footsteps, to-day gleans no hint of coming guest, nothing of the house at its far end.

My lute said, "Trample me in the dust."

I looked at the dust by the roadside. There was a tiny flower among thorns. And I cried, "The world's hope is not dead!"

The sky stooped over the horizon to whisper to the earth, and a hush of expectation filled the air. I saw the palm leaves clapping their hands to the beat of inaudible music, and the moon exchanged glances with the glistening silence of the lake.

The road said to me, "Fear nothing!" and my lute said, "Lend me thy songs!"

III

I

COME, Spring, reckless lover of the earth, make the forest's heart pant for utterance!

Come in gusts of disquiet where flowers break open and jostle the new leaves!
Burst, like a rebellion of light, through the night's vigil, through the lake's dark dumbness, through the dungeon under the dust, proclaiming freedom to the shackled seeds!

Like the laughter of lightning, like the shout of a storm, break into the midst of the noisy town; free stifled word and unconscious effort, reinforce our flagging fight, and conquer death!

II

I have looked on this picture in many a month of March when the mustard is in bloom—this lazy line of the water and the grey of the sand beyond, the rough path along the river-bank carrying the comradeship of the field into the heart of the village.

I have tried to capture in rhyme the idle whistle of the wind, the beat of the oar-strokes from a passing boat.

I have wondered in my mind how simply it stands before me, this great world: with what fond and familiar ease it fills my heart, this encounter with the Eternal Stranger.

III

The ferry-boat plies between the two villages facing each other across the narrow stream.

The water is neither wide nor deep—a mere break in the path that enhances the small adventures of daily life, like a break in the words of a song across which the tune gleefully streams.

While the towers of wealth rise high and crash to ruin, these villages talk to each other across the garru-
lus stream, and the ferry-boat plies between them, age
after age, from seed-time to harvest.

v

In Baby's world, the trees shake their leaves at him,
murmuring verses in an ancient tongue that dates from
before the age of meaning, and the moon feigns to be
of his own age—the solitary baby of night.

In the world of the old, flowers dutifully blush at the
make-believe of faery legends, and broken dolls confess
that they are made of clay.

vii

How often, great Earth, have I felt my being yearn to
flow over you, sharing in the happiness of each green
blade that raises its signal banner in answer to the
beckoning blue of the sky!

I feel as if I had belonged to you ages before I was
born. That is why, in the days when the autumn light
shimmers on the mellowing ears of rice, I seem to
remember a past when my mind was everywhere, and
even to hear voices as of playfellows echoing from the
remote and deeply veiled past.

When, in the evening, the cattle return to their folds,
raising dust from the meadow paths, as the moon rises
higher than the smoke ascending from the village huts,
I feel sad as for some great separation that happened in
the first morning of existence.
The clouds thicken till the morning light seems like a bedraggled fringe to the rainy night.
A little girl stands at her window, still as a rainbow at the gate of a broken-down storm.
She is my neighbour, and has come upon the earth like some god’s rebellious laughter. Her mother in anger calls her incorrigible; her father smiles and calls her mad.
She is like a runaway waterfall leaping over boulders, like the topmost bamboo twig rustling in the restless wind.

She stands at her window looking out into the sky.
Her sister comes to say, “Mother calls you.” She shakes her head.
Her little brother with his toy boat comes and tries to pull her off to play; she snatches her hand from his. The boy persists and she gives him a slap on the back.

The first great voice was the voice of wind and water in the beginning of earth’s creation.
That ancient cry of nature—her dumb call to unborn life—has reached this child’s heart and leads it out alone beyond the fence of our times: so there she stands, possessed by eternity!

The kingfisher sits still on the prow of an empty boat, while in the shallow margin of the stream a buffalo lies tranquilly blissful, its eyes half closed to savour the luxury of cool mud.
Undismayed by the barking of the village cur, the cow browses on the bank, followed by a hopping group of saliks hunting moths.

I sit in the tamarind grove, where the cries of dumb life congregate—the cattle’s lowing, the sparrows’ chatter, the shrill scream of a kite overhead, the crickets’ chirp, and the splash of a fish in the water.

I peep into the primeval nursery of life, where the mother Earth thrills at the first living clutch near her breast.

xi

At the sleepy village the noon was still like a sunny midnight when my holidays came to their end.

My little girl of four had followed me all the morning from room to room, watching my preparations in grave silence, till, wearied, she sat by the door-post strangely quiet, murmuring to herself, “Father must not go!”

This was the meal-hour, when sleep daily overcame her, but her mother had forgotten her and the child was too unhappy to complain.

At last, when I stretched out my arms to her to say farewell, she never moved, but sadly looking at me said, “Father, you must not go!”

And it amused me to tears to think how this little child dared to fight the giant world of necessity with no other resource than those few words, “Father, you must not go!”

xii

Take your holiday, my boy; there are the blue sky and the bare field, the barn and the ruined temple under the ancient tamarind.

My holiday must be taken through yours, finding
light in the dance of your eyes, music in your noisy shouts.

To you autumn brings the true holiday freedom: to me it brings the impossibility of work; for lo! you burst into my room.

Yes, my holiday is an endless freedom for love to disturb me.

XIII

In the evening my little daughter heard a call from her companions below the window.

She timidly went down the dark stairs holding a lamp in her hand, shielding it behind her veil.

I was sitting on my terrace in the star-lit night of March, when at a sudden cry I ran to see.

Her lamp had gone out in the dark spiral staircase. I asked, "Child, why did you cry?"

From below she answered in distress, "Father, I have lost myself!"

When I came back to the terrace under the star-lit night of March, I looked at the sky, and it seemed that a child was walking there treasuring many lamps behind her veils.

If their light went out, she would suddenly stop and a cry would sound from sky to sky, "Father, I have lost myself!"

XIV

The evening stood bewildered among street-lamps, its gold tarnished by the city dust.

A woman, gaudily decked and painted, leant over the rail of her balcony, a living fire waiting for its moths.
Suddenly an eddy was formed in the road round a street-boy crushed under the wheels of a carriage, and the woman on the balcony fell to the floor screaming in agony, stricken with the grief of the great white-robed Mother who sits in the world’s inner shrine.

xv

I remember the scene on the barren heath—a girl sat alone on the grass before the gipsy camp, braiding her hair in the afternoon shade.

Her little dog jumped and barked at her busy hands, as though her employment had no importance.

In vain did she rebuke it, calling it “a pest,” saying she was tired of its perpetual silliness.

She struck it on the nose with her reproving forefinger, which only seemed to delight it the more.

She looked menacingly grave for a few moments, to warn it of impending doom; and then, letting her hair fall, quickly snatched it up in her arms, laughed, and pressed it to her heart.

... ... ... ...

xvii

If the ragged villager, trudging home from the market, could suddenly be lifted to the crest of a distant age, men would stop in their work and shout and run to him in delight.

For they would no longer whittle down the man into the peasant, but find him full of the mystery and spirit of his age.

Even his poverty and pain would grow great, released
from the shallow insult of the present, and the paltry things in his basket would acquire pathetic dignity.

XVIII

WITH the morning he came out to walk a road shaded by a file of deodars, that coiled the hill round like importunate love.

He held the first letter from his newly wedded wife in their village home, begging him to come to her, and come soon.

The touch of an absent hand haunted him as he walked, and the air seemed to take up the cry of the letter: “Love, my love, my sky is brimming with tears!”

He asked himself in wonder, “How do I deserve this?”

The sun suddenly appeared over the rim of the blue hills, and four girls from a foreign shore came with swift strides, talking loud and followed by a barking dog.

The two elder turned away to conceal their amusement at something strange in his insignificance, and the younger ones pushed each other, laughed aloud, and ran off in exuberant mirth.

He stopped and his head sank. Then he suddenly felt his letter, opened and read it again.

XIX

THE day came for the image from the temple to be drawn round the holy town in its chariot.

The Queen said to the King, “Let us go and attend the festival.”

Only one man out of the whole household did not join in the pilgrimage. His work was to collect stalks of spear-grass to make brooms for the King’s house.
The chief of the servants said in pity to him, "You may come with us."
He bowed his head, saying, "It cannot be."

The man dwelt by the road along which the King’s followers had to pass. And when the Minister’s elephant reached this spot, he called to him and said, "Come with us and see the God ride in his chariot!"
"I dare not seek God after the King’s fashion," said the man.
"How should you ever have such luck again as to see the God in his chariot?" asked the Minister.
"When God himself comes to my door," answered the man.

The Minister laughed loud and said, "Fool! ‘When God comes to your door!’ yet a King must travel to see him!"
"Who except God visits the poor?" said the man.

xx

Days were drawing out as the winter ended, and, in the sun, my dog played in his wild way with the pet deer.

The crowd going to the market gathered by the fence, and laughed to see the love of these playmates struggle with languages so dissimilar.

The spring was in the air, and the young leaves fluttered like flames. A gleam danced in the deer’s dark eyes when she started, bent her neck at the movement of her own shadow, or raised her ears to listen to some whisper in the wind.

The message comes floating with the errant breeze,
with the rustle and glimmer abroad in the April sky. It sings of the first ache of youth in the world, when the first flower broke from the bud, and love went forth seeking that which it knew not, leaving all it had known.

And one afternoon, when among the amlik trees the shadow grew grave and sweet with the furtive caress of light, the deer set off to run like a meteor in love with death.

It grew dark, and lamps were lighted in the house; the stars came out and night was upon the fields, but the deer never came back.

My dog ran up to me whining, questioning me with his piteous eyes which seemed to say, "I do not understand!"

But who does ever understand?

xxi

Our Lane is tortuous, as if, ages ago, she started in quest of her goal, vacillated right and left, and remained bewildered for ever.

Above in the air, between her buildings, hangs like a ribbon a strip torn out of space: she calls it her sister of the blue town.

She sees the sun only for a few moments at midday, and asks herself in wise doubt, "Is it real?"

In June rain sometimes shades her band of daylight as with pencil hatchings. The path grows slippery with mud, and umbrellas collide. Sudden jets of water from spouts overhead splash on her startled pavement. In her dismay, she takes it for the jest of an unmannerly scheme of creation.

The spring breeze, gone astray in her coil of contor-
tions, stumbles like a drunken vagabond against angle and corner, filling the dusty air with scraps of paper and rag. "What fury of foolishness! Are the Gods gone mad?" she exclaims in indignation.

But the daily refuse from the houses on both sides—scales of fish mixed with ashes, vegetable peelings, rotten fruit, and dead rats—never rouses her to question, "Why should these things be?"

She accepts every stone of her paving. But from between their chinks sometimes a blade of grass peeps up. That baffles her. How can solid facts permit such intrusion?

On a morning when at the touch of autumn light her houses wake up into beauty from their foul dreams, she whispers to herself, "There is a limitless wonder somewhere beyond these buildings."

But the hours pass on; the households are astir; the maid strolls back from the market, swinging her right arm and with the left clasping the basket of provisions to her side; the air grows thick with the smell and smoke of kitchens. It again becomes clear to our Lane that the real and normal consist solely of herself, her houses, and their muck-heaps.

XXII

The house, lingering on after its wealth has vanished, stands by the wayside like a madman with a patched rag over his back.

Day after day scars it with spiteful scratches, and rainy months leave their fantastic signatures on its bared bricks.

In a deserted upper room one of a pair of doors has
fallen from rusty hinges; and the other, widowed, bangs day and night to the fitful gusts.

One night the sound of women wailing came from that house. They mourned the death of the last son of the family, a boy of eighteen, who earned his living by playing the part of the heroine in a travelling theatre.

A few days more and the house became silent, and all the doors were locked.

Only on the north side in the upper room that desolate door would neither drop off to its rest nor be shut, but swung to and fro in the wind like a self-torturing soul.

After a time children’s voices echo once more through that house. Over the balcony-rail women’s clothes are hung in the sun, a bird whistles from a covered cage, and a boy plays with his kite on the terrace.

A tenant has come to occupy a few rooms. He earns little and has many children. The tired mother beats them and they roll on the floor and shriek.

A maid-servant of forty drudges through the day, quarrels with her mistress, threatens to, but never leaves.

Every day some small repairs are done. Paper is pasted in place of missing panes; gaps in the railings are made good with split bamboo; an empty box keeps the boltless gate shut; old stains vaguely show through new whitewash on the walls.

The magnificence of wealth had found a fitting memorial in gaunt desolation; but, lacking sufficient means, they try to hide this with dubious devices, and its dignity is outraged.
They have overlooked the deserted room on the north side. And its forlorn door still bangs in the wind, like Despair beating her breast.

XXIII

In the depths of the forest the ascetic practised penance with fast-closed eyes; he intended to deserve Paradise. But the girl who gathered twigs brought him fruits in her skirt, and water from the stream in cups made of leaves.

The days went on, and his penance grew harsher till the fruits remained untasted, the water untouched: and the girl who gathered twigs was sad.

The Lord of Paradise heard that a man had dared to aspire to be as the Gods. Time after time he had fought the Titans, who were his peers, and kept them out of his kingdom; yet he feared a man whose power was that of suffering.

But he knew the ways of mortals, and he planned a temptation to decoy this creature of dust away from his adventure.

A breath from Paradise kissed the limbs of the girl, who gathered twigs, and her youth ached with a sudden rapture of beauty, and her thoughts hummed like the bees of a rifled hive.

The time came when the ascetic should leave the forest for a mountain cave, to complete the rigour of his penance.

When he opened his eyes in order to start on this journey, the girl appeared to him like a verse familiar, yet forgotten, and which an added melody made
strange. The ascetic rose from his seat and told her that it was time he left the forest.

"But why rob me of my chance to serve you?" she asked with tears in her eyes.

He sat down again, thought for long, and remained on where he was.

That night remorse kept the girl awake. She began to dread her power and hate her triumph, yet her mind tossed on the waves of turbulent delight.

In the morning she came and saluted the ascetic and asked his blessing, saying she must leave him.

He gazed on her face in silence, then said, "Go, and may your wish be fulfilled."

For years he sat alone till his penance was complete.

The Lord of the Immortals came down to tell him that he had won Paradise.

"I no longer need it," said he.

The God asked him what greater reward he desired.

"I want the girl who gathers twigs."

XXIV

They said that Kabir, the weaver, was favoured of God, and the crowd flocked round him for medicine and miracles. But he was troubled; his low birth had hither-to endowed him with a most precious obscurity to sweeten with songs and with the presence of his God. He prayed that it might be restored.

Envious of the repute of this outcast, the priests leagued themselves with a harlot to disgrace him. Kabir came to the market to sell cloths from his loom; when the woman grasped his hand, blaming him for being faithless, and followed him to his house, saying she
would not be forsaken, Kabir said to himself, "God answers prayers in his own way."

Soon the woman felt a shiver of fear and fell on her knees and cried, "Save me from my sin!" To which he said, "Open your life to God's light!"

Kabir worked at his loom and sang, and his songs washed the stains from that woman's heart, and by way of return found a home in her sweet voice.

One day the King, in a fit of caprice, sent a message to Kabir to come and sing before him. The weaver shook his head: but the messenger dared not leave his door till his master's errand was fulfilled.

The King and his courtiers started at the sight of Kabir when he entered the hall. For he was not alone, the woman followed him. Some smiled, some frowned, and the King's face darkened at the beggar's pride and shamelessness.

Kabir came back to his house disgraced, the woman fell at his feet crying, "Why accept such dishonour for my sake, master? Suffer me to go back to my infamy!"

Kabir said, "I dare not turn my God away when he comes branded with insult."

. . . . . . .

XXVI

THE man had no useful work, only vagaries of various kinds.

Therefore it surprised him to find himself in Paradise after a life spent perfecting trifles.

Now the guide had taken him by mistake to the
wrong Paradise—one meant only for good, busy souls.

In this Paradise, our man saunters along the road only to obstruct the rush of business.

He stands aside from the path and is warned that he tramples on sown seed. Pushed, he starts up: hustled, he moves on.

A very busy girl comes to fetch water from the well. Her feet run on the pavement like rapid fingers over harp-strings. Hastily she ties a negligent knot with her hair, and loose locks on her forehead pry into the dark of her eyes.

The man says to her, “Would you lend me your pitcher?”

“My pitcher?” she asks, “to draw water?”

“No, to paint patterns on.”

“I have no time to waste,” the girl retorts in contempt.

Now a busy soul has no chance against one who is supremely idle.

Every day she meets him at the well, and every day he repeats the same request, till at last she yields.

Our man paints the pitcher with curious colours in a mysterious maze of lines.

The girl takes it up, turns it round and asks, “What does it mean?”

“It has no meaning,” he answers.

The girl carries the pitcher home. She holds it up in different lights and tries to con its mystery.

At night she leaves her bed, lights a lamp, and gazes at it from all points of view.
This is the first time she has met with something without meaning.

On the next day the man is again near the well. The girl asks, "What do you want?"
"To do more work for you."
"What work?" she enquires.
"Allow me to weave coloured strands into a ribbon to bind your hair."
"Is there any need?" she asks.
"None whatever," he allows.
The ribbon is made, and thenceforward she spends a great deal of time over her hair.
The even stretch of well-employed time in that Paradise begins to show irregular rents.
The elders are troubled; they meet in council.
The guide confesses his blunder, saying that he has brought the wrong man to the wrong place.
The wrong man is called. His turban, flaming with colour, shows plainly how great that blunder has been.
The chief of the elders says, "You must go back to the earth."
The man heaves a sigh of relief: "I am ready."
The girl with the ribbon round her hair chimes in: "I also!"
For the first time the chief of the elders is faced with a situation which has no sense in it.

XXVII

It is said that in the forest, near the meeting of river and lake, certain fairies live in disguise who are only recognized as fairies after they have flown away.

A Prince went to this forest, and when he came
where river met lake he saw a village girl sitting on the bank ruffling the water to make the lilies dance.

He asked her in a whisper, "Tell me, what fairy art thou?"

The girl laughed at the question and the hillsides echoed her mirth.

The Prince thought she was the laughing fairy of the waterfall.

News reached the King that the Prince had married a fairy: he sent horses and men and brought them to his house.

The Queen saw the bride and turned her face away in disgust, the Prince’s sister flushed red with annoyance, and the maids asked if that was how fairies dressed.

The Prince whispered, "Hush! my fairy has come to our house in disguise."

On the day of the yearly festival the Queen said to her son, "Ask your bride not to shame us before our kinsfolk who are coming to see the fairy."

And the Prince said to his bride, "For my love’s sake show thy true self to my people."

Long she sat silent, then nodded her promise while tears ran down her cheeks.

The full moon shone, the Prince, dressed in a wedding robe, entered his bride’s room.

No one was there, nothing but a streak of moonlight from the window aslant the bed.

The kinsfolk crowded in with the King and the Queen, the Prince’s sister stood by the door.

All asked, "Where is the fairy bride?"
The Prince answered, "She has vanished for ever to make herself known to you."

\[ \text{XXIX} \]

When like a flaming scimitar the hill stream has been sheathed in gloom by the evening, suddenly a flock of birds passes overhead, their loud-laughing wings hurling their flight like an arrow among stars.

It startles a passion for speed in the heart of all motionless things; the hills seem to feel in their bosom the anguish of storm-clouds, and trees long to break their rooted shackles.

For me the flight of these birds has rent a veil of stillness, and reveals an immense flutter in this deep silence.

I see these hills and forests fly across time to the unknown, and darkness thrill into fire as the stars wing by.

I feel in my own being the rush of the sea-crossing bird, cleaving a way beyond the limits of life and death, While the migrant world cries with a myriad voice, "Not here, but somewhere else, in the bosom of the Far-away."

\[ \text{XXX} \]

The crowd listens in wonder to Kashi, the young singer, whose voice, like a sword in feats of skill, dances amidst hopeless tangles, cuts them to pieces, and exults.

Among the hearers sits old Rajah Pratap in weary endurance. For his own life had been nourished and encircled by Barajlal's songs, like a happy land which a river laces with beauty. His rainy evenings and the still hours of autumn days spoke to his heart through Baraj-
lal’s voice, and his festive nights trimmed their lamps and tinkled their bells to those songs.

When Kashi stopped for rest, Pratap smilingly winked at Barajlal and spoke to him in a whisper, “Master, now let us hear music and not this new-fangled singing, which mimics frisky kittens hunting paralysed mice.”

The old singer with his spotlessly white turban made a deep bow to the assembly and took his seat. His thin fingers struck the strings of his instrument, his eyes closed, and in timid hesitation his song began. The hall was large, his voice feeble, and Pratap shouted “Bravo!” with ostentation, but whispered in his ear, “Just a little louder, friend!”

The crowd was restless; some yawned, some dozed, some complained of the heat. The air of the hall hummed with many-toned inattention, and the song, like a frail boat, tossed upon it in vain till it sank under the hubbub.

Suddenly the old man, stricken at heart, forgot a passage, and his voice groped in agony, like a blind man at a fair for his lost leader. He tried to fill the gap with any strain that came. But the gap still yawned: and the tortured notes refused to serve the need, suddenly changed their tune, and broke into a sob. The master laid his head on his instrument, and in place of his forgotten music there broke from him the first cry of life that a child brings into the world.

Pratap touched him gently on his shoulder, and said, “Come away, our meeting is elsewhere. I know, my
friend, that truth is widowed without love, and beauty
dwells not with the many, nor in the moment."

XXXI

In the youth of the world, Himalaya, you sprang from
the rent breast of the earth, and hurled your burning
challenges to the sun, hill after hill. Then came the
mellow time when you said to yourself, "No more, no
further!" and your fiery heart, that raged for the free-
dom of clouds, found its limits, and stood still to salute
the limitless. After this check on your passion, beauty
was free to play upon your breast, and trust surrounded
you with the joy of flowers and birds.

You sit in your solitude like a great reader, on whose
lap lies open some ancient book with its countless pages
of stone. What story is written there, I wonder?—is it
the eternal wedding of the divine ascetic, Shiva, with
Bhavani, the divine love?—the drama of the Terrible
wooing the power of the Frail?

XXXIII

My eyes feel the deep peace of this sky, and there stirs
through me what a tree feels when it holds out its
leaves like cups to be filled with sunshine.

A thought rises in my mind, like the warm breath
from grass in the sun; it mingles with the gurgle of
lapping water and the sigh of weary wind in village
lanes,—the thought that I have lived along with the
whole life of this world and have given to it my own
love and sorrows.

449
GIVE me the supreme courage of love, this is my prayer—
the courage to speak, to do, to suffer at thy will, to
leave all things or be left alone. Strengthen me on
errands of danger, honour me with pain, and help me
climb to that difficult mood which sacrifices daily to
thee.

Give me the supreme confidence of love, this is my
prayer—the confidence that belongs to life in death, to
victory in defeat, to the power hidden in frailest beauty,
to that dignity in pain which accepts hurt but disdains
to return it.

THIS EVIL DAY

AGE after age, hast Thou, O Lord, sent Thy messengers
into this pitiless world, who have left their word:
"Forgive all. Love all. Cleanse your hearts from the
blood-red stains of hatred."

Adorable are they, ever to be remembered; yet from
the outer door have I turned them away to-day—this
evil day—with unmeaning salutation.

Have I not seen secret malignance strike down the
helpless under the cover of hypocritical night?

Have I not heard the silenced voice of Justice weeping
in solitude at might's defiant outrages?

Have I not seen in what agony reckless youth,
running mad, has vainly shattered its life against insensitve rocks?

Choked is my voice, mute are my songs to-day, and
darkly my world lies imprisoned in a dismal dream; and
I ask Thee, O Lord, in tears: "Hast Thou Thyself for-
given, hast even Thou loved those who are poisoning Thy ait, and blotting out Thy light?"

BORO-BUDUR

The sun shone on a far-away morning, while the forest murmured its hymn of praise to light; and the hills, veiled in vapour, dimly glimmered like earth’s dream in purple.

The King sat alone in the coconut grove, his eyes drowned in a vision, his heart exultant with the rapturous hope of spreading the chant of adoration along the unending path of time:

"Let Buddha be my refuge."

His words found utterance in a deathless speech of delight, in an ecstasy of forms.

The island took it upon her heart; her hill raised it to the sky.

Age after age, the morning sun daily illumined its great meaning.

While the harvest was sown and reaped in the near-by fields by the stream, and life, with its chequered light, made pictured shadows on its epochs of changing screen, the prayer, once uttered in the quiet green of an ancient morning, ever rose in the midst of the hide-and-seek of tumultuous time:

"Let Buddha be my refuge."

The King, at the end of his days, is merged in the

1 Boro-budur is the great Buddhist Stupa built on a hill-top in the island of Java.
shadow of a nameless night among the unremembered, leaving his salutation in an imperishable rhythm of stone which ever cries:

"Let Buddha be my refuge."

Generations of pilgrims came on the quest of an immortal voice for their worship; and this sculptured hymn, in a grand symphony of gestures, took up their lowly names and uttered for them:

"Let Buddha be my refuge."

The spirit of those words has been muffled in mist in this mocking age of unbelief, and the curious crowds gather here to gloat in the gluttony of an irreverent sight.

Man to-day has no peace,—his heart arid with pride. He clamours for an ever-increasing speed in a fury of chase for objects that ceaselessly run, but never reach a meaning.

And now is the time when he must come groping at last to the sacred silence, which stands still in the midst of surging centuries of noise, till he feels assured that in an immeasurable love dwells the final meaning of Freedom, whose prayer is:

"Let Buddha be my refuge."

FULFILMENT

The overflowing bounty of thy grace comes down from the heaven to seek my soul only, wherein it can contain itself.

The light that is rained from the sun and stars is fulfilled when it reaches my life.
The colour is like sleep that clings to the flower which waits for the touch of my mind to be awakened.

The love that tunes the strings of existence breaks out in music when my heart is won.

THE SON OF MAN

FROM His eternal seat Christ comes down to this earth, where, ages ago, in the bitter cup of death He poured his deathless life for those who came to the call and those who remained away.

He looks about Him, and sees the weapons of evil that wounded His own age.

The arrogant spikes and spears, the slim, sly knives, the scimitar in diplomatic sheath, crooked and cruel, are hissing and raining sparks as they are sharpened on monster wheels.

But the most fearful of them all, at the hands of the slaughterers, are those on which has been engraved His own name, that are fashioned from the texts of His own words fused in the fire of hatred and hammered by hypocritical greed.

He presses His hand upon His heart; He feels that the age-long moment of His death has not yet ended, that new nails, turned out in countless numbers by those who are learned in cunning craftsmanship, pierce Him in every joint.

They had hurt Him once, standing at the shadow of their temple; they are born anew in crowds.

From before their sacred altar they shout to the soldiers, “Strike!”
And the Son of Man in agony cries, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

RAIDAS, THE SWEEPER

RAIDAS, the sweeper, sat still, lost in the solitude of his soul, and some songs born of his silent vision found their way to the Rani’s heart,—the Rani Jhali of Chitore.

Tears flowed from her eyes, her thoughts wandered away from her daily duties, till she met Raidas who guided her to God’s presence.

The old Brahmin priest of the King’s house rebuked her for her desecration of sacred law by offering homage as a disciple to an outcaste.

"Brahmin," the Rani answered, "while you were busy tying your purse-strings of custom ever tighter, love’s gold slipped unnoticed to the earth, and my Master in his divine humility has picked it up from the dust.

"Revel in your pride of the unmeaning knots without number, harden your miserly heart, but I, a beggar woman, am glad to receive love’s wealth, the gift of the lowly dust, from my Master, the sweeper."

FREEDOM

FREEDOM from fear is the freedom I claim for you, my Motherland!—fear, the phantom demon, shaped by your own distorted dreams;

Freedom from the burden of ages, bending your head, breaking your back, blinding your eyes to the beckoning call of the future;
Freedom from shackles of slumber wherewith you fasten yourself to night's stillness, mistrusting the star that speaks of truth's adventurous path;

Freedom from the anarchy of a destiny, whose sails are weakly yielded to blind uncertain winds, and the helm to a hand ever rigid and cold as Death;

Freedom from the insult of dwelling in a puppet's world, where movements are started through brainless wires, repeated through mindless habits; where figures wait with patient obedience for a master of show to be stirred into a moment's mimicry of life.

THE NEW YEAR

LIKE fruit, shaken free by an impatient wind from the veils of its mother flower,
thou comest, New Year, whirling in a frantic dance amid the stampede of the wind-lashed clouds and infuriate showers,
while trampled by thy turbulence are scattered away the faded and the frail in an eddying agony of death.

Thou art no dreamer afloat on a languorous breeze, lingering among the hesitant whisper and hum of an uncertain season.

Thine is a majestic march, O terrible Stranger, thundering forth an ominous incantation, driving the days on to the perils of a pathless dark,
where thou carriest a dumb signal in thy banner, a decree of destiny undeciphered.

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KRISHNAKALI

I call her my Krishna flower
though they call her dark in the village.
I remember a cloud-laden day
and a glance from her eyes,
her veil trailing down at her feet,
her braided hair loose on her back.
Ah, you call her dark; let that be,
er her black gazelle eyes I have seen.

Her cows were lowing in the meadow,
when the fading light grew grey.
With hurried steps she came out
from her hut near the bamboo grove.
She raised her quick eyes to the sky,
where the clouds were heavy with rain.
Ah, you call her dark! let that be,
er her black gazelle eyes I have seen.

The East wind in fitful gusts
ruffled the young shoots of rice.
I stood at the boundary hedge
with none else in the lonely land.
If she espied me in secret or not
She only knows and know I.
Ah, you call her dark! let that be,
er her black gazelle eyes I have seen.

She is the surprise of cloud
in the burning heart of May,
a tender shadow on the forest
in the stillness of sunset hour,
a mystery of dumb delight
in the rain-loud night of June.
Ah, you call her dark! let that be,
her black gazelle eyes I have seen.

I call her my Krishna flower,
let all others say what they like.
In the rice-field of Maina village
I felt the first glance of her eyes.
She had not a veil on her face,
not a moment of leisure for shyness.
Ah, you call her dark! let that be,
her black gazelle eyes I have seen.

W. W. PEARSON

Thy nature is to forget thyself;
but we remember thee.
Thou shinest in self-concealment
revealed by our love.

Thou lendest light from thine own soul
to those that are obscure.
Thou seekest neither love nor fame;
Love discovers thee.

SANTINIKETAN SONG

She is our own, the darling of our hearts, Santiniketan.
Our dreams are rocked in her arms.
Her face is a fresh wonder of love every time we see her,
for she is our own, the darling of our hearts.
In the shadows of her trees we meet,
in the freedom of her open sky.
Her mornings come and her evenings
bringing down heaven's kisses,
making us feel anew that she is our own, the darling
of our hearts.

The stillness of her shades is stirred by the woodland
whisper;
her amlaki groves are aquiver with the rapture of
leaves.
She dwells in us and around us, however far we may
wander.
She weaves our hearts in a song, making us one in music,
tuning our strings of love with her own fingers;
and we ever remember that she is our own,
the darling of our hearts.
SACRIFICE
AND OTHER PLAYS
SANYASI, OR THE ASCETIC

"Lead us from the unreal to the real."
SANYASI, OR THE ASCETIC

I

_Sanyasi, outside the cave_

The division of days and nights is not for me, nor that of months and years. For me, the stream of time has stopped, on whose waves dances the world, like straws and twigs. In this dark cave I am alone, merged in myself,—and the eternal night is still, like a mountain lake afraid of its own depth. Water oozes and drips from the cracks, and in the pools float the ancient frogs. I sit chanting the incantation of nothingness. The world’s limits recede, line after line. —The stars, like sparks of fire, flown from the anvil of time, are extinct; and that joy is mine which comes to the God Shiva, when, after æons of dream, he wakes up to find himself alone in the heart of the infinite annihilation. I am free, I am the great solitary One. When I was thy slave, O Nature, thou didst set my heart against itself, and madest it carry the fierce war of suicide through its world. Desires, that have no other ends but to feed upon themselves and all that comes to their mouths, lashed me into fury. I ran about, madly chasing my shadow. Thou drovest me with thy lightning lashes of pleasure into the void of satiety. And the hungers, who are thy decoys, ever led me into the endless famine, where food turned into dust, and drink into vapour.

Till, when my world was spotted with tears and ashes, I took my oath that I would have revenge upon thee,
interminable Appearance, mistress of endless disguises. I took shelter in the darkness,—the castle of the Infinite,—and fought the deceitful light, day after day, till it lost all its weapons and lay powerless at my feet. Now, when I am free of fear and desires, when the mist has vanished, and my reason shines pure and bright, let me go out into the kingdom of lies, and sit upon its heart, untouched and unmoved.

II

_Sanyasi, by the roadside_

How small is this earth and confined, watched and followed by the persistent horizons! The trees, houses, and crowd of things are pressing upon my eyes. The light, like a cage, has shut out the dark eternity; and the hours hop and cry within its barriers, like prisoned birds. But why are these noisy men rushing on, and for what purpose? They seem always afraid of missing something,—the something that never comes to their hands.

(The crowd passes

(Enter a Village Elder and Two Women)

_First Woman._ O my, O my! You do make me laugh.

_Second Woman._ But who says you are old?

_Village Elder._ There are fools who judge men by their outside.

_First Woman._ How sad! We have been watching your outside from our infancy. It is just the same all through these years.

_Village Elder._ Like the morning sun.

_First Woman._ Yes, like the morning sun in its shining baldness.
Village Elder. Ladies, you are over-critical in your taste. You notice things that are unessential.

Second Woman. Leave off your chatter, Ananga. Let us hasten home, or my man will be angry.

First Woman. Good-bye, sir. Please judge us from our outside; we won’t mind that.

Village Elder. Because you have no inside to speak of. [They go

(Enter Three Villagers)

First Villager. Insult me? the scoundrel! He shall regret it.

Second Villager. He must be taught a thorough lesson.

First Villager. A lesson that will follow him to his grave.

Third Villager. Yes, brother, set your heart upon it. Never give him quarter.

Second Villager. He has grown too big.

First Villager. Big enough to burst at last.

Third Villager. The ants, when they begin to grow wings, perish.

Second Villager. But have you got a plan?

First Villager. Not one, but hundreds. I will drive my ploughshare over his household.—I will give him a donkey-ride through the town, with his cheeks painted white and black. I will make the world too hot for him, and— [They go

(Enter Two Students)

First Student. I am sure Professor Madhab won in the debate.

Second Student. No, it was Professor Janardan.

First Student. Professor Madhab maintained his point to the last. He said that the subtle is the outcome of the gross.
Second Student. But Professor Janardan conclusively proved that the subtle is the origin of the gross.

First Student. Impossible.

Second Student. It is as clear as the daylight.

First Student. Seeds come from the tree.

Second Student. The tree comes from the seed.

First Student. Sanyasi, which of these is true? Which is the original, the subtle or the gross?

Sanyasi. Neither.

Second Student. Neither. Well, that sounds satisfactory.

Sanyasi. The origin is the end, and the end is the origin. It is a circle.—The distinction between the subtle and gross is in your ignorance.

First Student. Well, it sounds very simple—and I think this was what my master meant.

Second Student. Certainly this agrees more with what my master teaches.

[They go out]

Sanyasi. These birds are word-peckers. When they pick up some wriggling nonsense, which can fill their mouth, they are happy.

(Enter Two Flower-Girls, singing)

Song

The weary hours pass by.
The flowers that blossom in the light
Fade and drop in the shadow.
I thought I would weave a garland
In the cool of the morning for my love.
But the morning wears on,
The flowers are not gathered,
And my love is lost.

A Wayfarer. Why such regret, my darlings? When the
garlands are ready, the necks will not be wanting.

First Flower-Girl. Nor the halter.

Second Flower-Girl. You are bold. Why do you come so close?

Wayfarer. You quarrel for nothing, my girl. I am far enough from you to allow an elephant to pass between us.

Second Flower-Girl. Indeed! Am I such a fright? I wouldn’t have eaten you, if you had come.

[They go out laughing

(Comes an old Beggar)

Beggar. Kind sirs, have pity on me. May God prosper you! Give me one handful from your plenty.

(Enters a Soldier)

Soldier. Move away. Don’t you see the Minister’s son is coming?

[Sanyasi. It is midday. The sun is growing strong. The sky looks like an overturned burning copper bowl. The earth breathes hot sighs, and the whirling sands dance by. What sights of man have I seen! Can I ever again shrink back into the smallness of these creatures, and become one of them? No, I am free. I have not this obstacle, this world round me. I live in a pure desolation.

(Enter the girl Vasanti and a Woman)

Woman. Girl, you are Raghu’s daughter, aren’t you? You should keep away from this road. Don’t you know it goes to the temple?

Vasanti. I am on the farthest side, Lady.

Woman. But I thought my cloth-end touched you. I am taking my offerings to the goddess,—I hope they are not polluted.

Vasanti. I assure you, your cloth did not touch me.
(The Woman goes.) I am Vasanti, Raghu's daughter. May I come to you, father?

Sanyasi. Why not, child?

Vasanti. I am a pollution, as they call me.

Sanyasi. But they are all that,—a pollution. They roll, in the dust of existence. Only he is pure who has washed away the world from his mind. But what have you done, daughter?

Vasanti. My father, who is dead, had defied their laws and their gods. He would not perform their rites.

Sanyasi. Why do you stand away from me?

Vasanti. Will you touch me?

Sanyasi. Yes, because nothing can touch me truly. I am ever away in the endless. You can sit here, if you wish.

Vasanti (breaking into a sob). Never tell me to leave you, when once you have taken me near you.

Sanyasi. Wipe away your tears, child. I am a Sanyasi. I have neither hatred nor attachment in my heart.—I never claim you as mine; therefore I can never discard you. You are to me as this blue sky is,—you are,—yet you are not.

Vasanti. Father, I am deserted by gods and men alike.

Sanyasi. So am I. I have deserted both gods and men.

Vasanti. You have no mother?

Sanyasi. No.

Vasanti. Nor father?

Sanyasi. No.

Vasanti. Nor any friend?

Sanyasi. No.

Vasanti. Then I shall be with you.—You won't leave me?
Sanyasi. I have done with leaving. You can stay near me, yet never coming near me.

Vasanti. I do not understand you, father. Tell me, is there no shelter for me in the whole world?

Sanyasi. Shelter? Don’t you know this world is a bottomless chasm? The swarm of creatures, coming out from the hole of nothingness, seeks for shelter, and enters into the gaping mouth of this emptiness, and is lost. These are the ghosts of lies around you, who hold their market of illusions,—and the foods which they sell are shadows. They only deceive your hunger, but do not satisfy. Come away from here, child, come away.

Vasanti. But, father, they seem so happy in this world. Can we not watch them from the roadside?

Sanyasi. Alas, they do not understand. They cannot see that this world is death spread out to eternity.—It dies every moment, yet never comes to the end.—And we, the creatures of this world, live by feeding upon death.

Vasanti. Father, you frighten me.

(Enters a Traveller)

Traveller. Can I get a shelter near this place?

Sanyasi. Shelter there is nowhere, my son, but in the depth of one’s self.—Seek that; hold to it fast, if you would be saved.

Traveller. But I am tired, and want shelter.

Vasanti. My hut is not far from here. Will you come?

Traveller. But who are you?

Vasanti. Must you know me? I am Raghu’s daughter.

Traveller. God bless you, child, but I cannot stay.

[ Goes

(Men come bearing somebody on a bed)

First Bearer. He is still asleep.

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Second Bearer. How heavy the rascal is!
A Traveller (outside their group). Whom do you carry?
Third Bearer. Bindé, the weaver, was sleeping as one dead, and we have taken him away.
Second Bearer. But I am tired, brothers. Let us give him a shake, and waken him up.
Bindé (wakes up). Ee, a, u——
Third Bearer. What’s that noise?
Bindé. I say. Who are you? Where am I being carried?
(They put down the bed from their shoulders)
Third Bearer. Can’t you keep quiet, like all decent dead people?
Second Bearer. The cheek of him! He must talk, even though he is dead.
Third Bearer. It would be more proper of you, if you kept still.
Bindé. I am sorry to disappoint you, gentlemen; you have made a mistake.—I was not dead, but fast asleep.
Second Bearer. I admire this fellow’s impudence. Not only must he die, but argue.
Third Bearer. He won’t confess the truth. Let us go, and finish the rites of the dead.
Bindé. I swear by your beard, my brother, I am as alive as any of you. [They take him away, laughing
Sanyasi. The girl has fallen asleep, with her arm beneath her little head; I think I must leave her now, and go. But, coward, must you run away,—run away from this tiny thing? These are Nature’s spiders’ webs, they have danger merely for moths, and not for a Sanyasi like me.
Vasanti (awaking with a start). Have you left me, Master?—Have you gone away?
Sanyasi. Why should I go away from you? What fear have I? Afraid of a shadow?

Vasanti. Do you hear the noise in the road?
Sanyasi. But stillness is in my soul.

(Enters a young Woman, followed by Men)

Woman. Go now. Leave me. Don’t talk to me of love.
First Man. Why, what has been my crime?
Woman. You men have hearts of stone.
First Man. Incredible. If our hearts were of stone, how could Cupid’s darts make damage there?
Other Man. Bravo! Well said!
Second Man. Now, what is your answer to that, my dear?
Woman. Answer! You think you have said something very fine,—don’t you? It is perfect rubbish.
First Man. I leave it to your judgment, gentlemen. What I said was this, that if our hearts be of stone, how can——

Third Man. Yes, yes, it has no answer at all.
First Man. Let me explain it to you. She said we men have hearts of stone, didn’t she? Well, I said, in answer, if our hearts were truly of stone, how could Cupid’s darts damage them? You understand?
Second Man. Brother, I have been selling molasses in the town for the last twenty-four years,—do you think I cannot understand what you say?

Sanyasi. What are you doing, my child?

Vasanti. I am looking at your broad palm, father. My hand is a little bird that finds its nest here. Your palm is great, like the great earth which holds all. These lines are the rivers, and these are hills.

[They go out]

Sanyasi. Your touch is soft, my daughter, like the touch of sleep. It seems to me this touch has something
of the great darkness, which touches one’s soul with the wand of the eternal.—But, child, you are the moth of the daylight. You have your birds and flowers and fields—what can you find in me, who have my centre in the One and my circumference nowhere?

_Vasanti._ I do not want anything else. Your love is enough for me.

_Sanyasi._ The girl imagines I love her,—foolish heart. She is happy in that thought. Let her nourish it. For they have been brought up in illusions, and they must have illusions to console them.

_Vasanti._ Father, this creeper trailing on the grass, seeking some tree to twine itself round, is my creeper. I have tended it and watered it from the time when it had pushed up only two little leaves into the air, like an infant’s cry. This creeper is me,—it has grown by the roadside, it can be so easily crushed. Do you see these beautiful little flowers, pale blue with white spots in their hearts?—these white spots are their dreams. Let me gently brush your forehead with these flowers. To me, things that are beautiful are the keys to all that I have not seen and not known.

_Sanyasi._ No, no, the beautiful is mere phantasy. To him who knows, the dust and the flower are the same.—But what languor is this that is creeping into my blood and drawing before my eyes a thin mist-veil of all the rainbow colours? Is it Nature herself weaving her dreams round me, clouding my senses? (Suddenly he tears the creeper, and rises up.) No more of this; for this is death. What game of yours is this with me, little girl? I am a Sanyasi, I have cut all my knots, I am free.—No, no, not those tears. I cannot bear them.—But where was hidden in my heart this snake, this anger, that hissed
out of its dark with its fang? No, they are not dead,—they outlive starvation. These hell-creatures slatter their skeletons and dance in my heart, when their mistress, the great witch, plays upon her magic flute.—Weep not, child, come to me. You seem to me like a cry of a lost world, like the song of a wandering star. You bring to my mind something which is infinitely more than this Nature,—more than the sun and stars. It is as great as the darkness. I understand it not. I have never known it, therefore I fear it. I must leave you.—Go back whence you came,—the messenger of the unknown.

Vasanti. Leave me not, father,—I have none else but you.

Sanyasi. I must go, I thought that I had known,—but I do not know. Yet I must know. I leave you, to know who you are.

Vasanti. Father, if you leave me, I shall die.

Sanyasi. Let go my hand. Do not touch me. I must be free.—

[He runs away

III

The Sanyasi is seen, sitting upon a boulder in a mountain path.
A shepherd boy passes by, singing.

SONG

Do not turn away your face, my love,
The spring has bared open its breast.

The flowers breathe their secrets in the dark.
The rustle of the forest leaves comes across the sky
Like the sobs of the night.

Come, love, show me your face.
Sanyasi. The gold of the evening is melting in the heart of the blue sea. The forest, on the hillside, is drinking the last cup of the daylight. On the left, the village huts are seen through the trees with their evening lamps lighted, like a veiled mother watching by her sleeping children. Nature, thou art my slave. Thou hast spread thy many-coloured carpet in the great hall where I sit alone, like a king, and watch thee dance with thy starry necklace twinkling on thy breast.

(Shpherd girls pass by, singing)

Song of the Shepherd Girls

The music comes from across the dark river and calls me.
I was in the house and happy.
But the flute sounded in the still air of night,
And a pain pierced my heart.
Oh, tell me the way who know it,—
Tell me the way to him.
I will go to him with my one little flower,
And leave it at his feet,
And tell him that his music is one with my love.

Sanyasi. I think such an evening had come to me only once before in all my births. Then its cup overbrimmed with love and music, and I sat with some one, the memory of whose face is in that setting star of the evening.—But where is my little girl, with her dark sad eyes, big with tears? Is she there, sitting outside her hut, watching that same star through the immense loneliness of the evening? But the star must set, the evening close her eyes in the night, and tears must cease and sobs be stilled in sleep. No, I will not go back. Let the world-dreams take their own shape. Let me not trouble
its course and create new phantasies. I will see, and
think, and know.

(Enters a ragged Girl)

Girl. Are you there, father?

Sanyasi. Come, child, sit by me. I wish I could own
that call of yours. Some one did call me father, once,
and the voice was somewhat like yours. The father
answers now,—but where is that call?

Girl. Who are you?

Sanyasi. I am a Sanyasi. Tell me, child, what is your
father?

Girl. He gathers sticks from the forest.

Sanyasi. And you have a mother?

Girl. No. She died when I was young.

Sanyasi. Do you love your father?

Girl. I love him more than anything else in the
world. I have no one else but him.

Sanyasi. I understand you. Give me your little hand,—
let me hold it in my palm,—in this big palm of
mine.

Girl. Sanyasi, do you read palms? Can you read in
my palm all that I am and shall be?

Sanyasi. I think I can read, but dimly know its
meaning. One day I shall know it.

Girl. Now I must go to meet my father.

Sanyasi. Where?

Girl. Where the road goes into the forest. He will
miss me, if he does not find me there.

Sanyasi. Bring your head near to me, child. Let me
give you my kiss of blessing before you go.

[Girl goes

(A Mother enters, with two children)

Mother. How stout and chubby Misri’s children are!
They are something to look at. But the more I feed you, the more you seem to grow thin every day.

First Girl. But why do you always blame us for that, mother? Can we help it?

Mother. Didn’t I tell you to take plenty of rest? But you must always be running about.

Second Girl. But, mother, we run about on your errands.

Mother. How dare you answer me like that?

Sanyasi. Where are you going, daughter?

Mother. My salutation, father. We are going home.

Sanyasi. How many are you?

Mother. My mother-in-law, and my husband and two other children, besides these.

Sanyasi. How do you spend your days?

Mother. I hardly know how my days pass. My man goes to the field, and I have my house to look after. Then, in the evening, I sit to spin with my elder girls. (To the girls.) Go and salute the Sanyasi. Bless them, father.

[They go]

(Enter Two Men)

First Man. Friend, go back from here. Do not come any farther.

Second Man. Yes, I know. Friends meet in this earth by chance, and the chance carries us on together some portion of the way, and then comes the moment when we must part.

Second Friend. Let us carry away with us the hope that we part to meet again.

First Friend. Our meetings and partings belong to all the movements of the world. Stars do not take special notice of us.

Second Friend. Let us salute those stars which did
throw us together. If for a moment, still it has been much.

First Friend. Look back for a minute before you go. Can you see that faint glimmer of the water in the dark, and those casuarina trees on the sandy bank? Our village is all one heap of dark shadows. You can only see the lights. Can you guess which of those lights are ours?

Second Friend. Yes, I think I can.

First Friend. That light is the last farewell look of our past days upon their parting guest. A little farther on, and there will remain one blot of darkness.

[They go away

Sanyasi. The night grows dark and desolate. It sits like a woman forsaken,—those stars are her tears turned into fire. O my child, the sorrow of your little heart has filled, for ever, all the nights of my life with its sadness. Your dear caressing hand has left its touch in this night air,—I feel it on my forehead,—it is damp with your tears. My darling, your sobs that pursued me, when I fled away, have clung to my heart. I shall carry them to my death.

IV

Sanyasi, in the village path

Let my vows of Sanyasi go. I break my staff and my alms-bowl. This stately ship, this world, which is crossing the sea of time,—let it take me up again, let me join once more the pilgrims. Oh, the fool, who wanted to seek safety in swimming alone, and gave up the light of the sun and stars, to pick his way with his glow-worm's lamp! The bird flies in the sky, not to fly
away into the emptiness, but to come back again to this great earth.—I am free. I am free from the bodiless chain of the Nay. I am free among things and forms and purpose. The finite is the true infinite, and love knows its truth. My girl, you are the spirit of all that is,—I can never leave you.

(Enters a Village Elder)

*Sanyasi.* Do you know, brother, where Raghu’s daughter is?

*Elder.* She has left her village, and we are glad.

*Sanyasi.* Where has she gone?

*Elder.* Do you ask where? It is all one to her where she goes. [Goes out

*Sanyasi.* My darling has gone to seek a somewhere in the emptiness of nowhere. She must find me.

(A crowd of Villagers enter)

*First Man.* So our King’s son is going to be married to-night.

*Second Man.* Can you tell me, when is the wedding hour?

*Third Man.* The wedding hour is only for the bridegroom and the bride. What have we got to do with it?

*A Woman.* But won’t they give us cakes for the happy day?

*First Man.* Cakes? You are silly. My uncle lives in the town—I have heard from him that we shall have curds and parched rice.

*Second Man.* Grand!

*Fourth Man.* But we shall have a great deal more water than curds. You may be sure of that.

*First Man.* Moti, you are a dull fellow. Water in the curds at a prince’s wedding!

*Fourth Man.* But we are not princes ourselves,
Panchu. For us, poor people, the curds have the trick of turning into water most parts.

First Man. Look there. That son of the charcoalburner is still busy with his work. We mustn't allow that.

Second Man. We shall burn him into charcoal, if he does not come out.

Sanyasi. Do you know, any of you, where is Raghu's daughter?

The Woman. She has gone away.

Sanyasi. Where?

Woman. That we don't know.

First Man. But we are sure that she is not the bride for our prince.

[They laugh and go out

(Enters a Woman, with a child)

Woman. My obeisance to you, father. Let my child touch your feet with his head. He is sick. Bless him, father.

Sanyasi. But, daughter, I am no longer a Sanyasi. Do not mock me with your salutation.

Woman. Then who are you? What are you doing?

Sanyasi. I am seeking.

Woman. Seeking whom?

Sanyasi. Seeking my lost world back.—Do you know Raghu's daughter? Where is she?

Woman. Raghu's daughter? She is dead.

Sanyasi. No, she cannot be dead. No! No!

Woman. But what is her death to you, Sanyasi?

Sanyasi. Not only to me; it would be death to all.

Woman. I do not understand you.

Sanyasi. She can never be dead.