The Broken Wing
Songs of Life and Death
The Broken Wing

"Why should a song-bird like you have a broken wing?"
G. K. Gokhalt

Question

The great dawn breaks, the mournful night is past,
From her deep age-long sleep she wakes at last!
Sweet and long-slumbering buds of gladness ope
Fresh lips to the returning winds of hope,
Our eager hearts renew their radiant flight
Towards the glory of renascent light,
Life’s and our land await their destined spring...
Song-bird why dost thou bear a broken wing?

Answer

Shall spring that wakes mine ancient land again
Call to my wild and suffering heart in vain?
Or Fate’s blind arrows still the pulsing note
Of my far-reaching, frail, unconquered throat?
Or a weak bleeding pinion daunt or tire
My flight to the high realms of my desire?
Behold! I rise to meet the destined spring
And scale the stars upon my broken wing!
The Gift of India

Is there aught you need that my hands withhold,
Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold?
Lo! I have flung to the East and West
Priceless treasures torn from my breast,
And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.

Gathered like pearls in their alien graves
Silent they sleep by the Persian waves,
Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,
They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,
They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance
On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders and France.

Can ye measure the grief of the tears I weep
Or compass the woe of the watch I keep?
Or the pride that thrills thro' my heart's despair,
And the hope that comforts the anguish of prayer?
And the far sad glorious vision I see
Of the torn red banners of Victory?

When the terror and tumult of hate shall cease
And life be refashioned on anvils of peace,
And your love shall offer memorial thanks
To the comrades who fought in your dauntless ranks,
And you honour the deeds of the deathless ones
Remember the blood of thy martyred sons!

August 1915
The Temple

PRIEST

Awake, it is Love's radiant hour of praise!
Bring new-blown leaves his temple to adorn,
Pomegranate-buds and ripe sirisha-sprays,
Wet sheaves of shining corn.

PILGRIM

O priest! only my broken lute I bring.
For Love's praise-offering!

PRIEST

Behold! the hour of sacrifice draws near.
Pile high the gleaming altar-stones of Love
With delicate burdens of slain woodland deer
And frail white mountain dove.
Pilgrim

O priest! only my wounded heart I bring
For Love’s blood-offering!

Priest

Lo! now it strikes Love’s solemn hour of prayer,
Kindle with fragrant boughs his blazing shrine,
Feed the sweet flame with spice and incense rare,
Curds of rose-pastured kine.

Pilgrim

O priest! only my stricken soul I bring
For Love’s burnt-offering!
Lakshmi, the Lotus-Born

Thou who didst rise like a pearl from the ocean,
Whose beauty surpasseth the splendour of morn!
Lo! We invoke thee with eager devotion,
Hearken, O Lotus-born!

Come! with sweet eyelids and fingers caressing,
With footsteps auspicious our thresholds adorn,
And grant us the showers and the sheaves of thy blessing,
Hearken, O Lotus-born!

Prosper our cradles and kindred and cattle,
And cherish our hearth-fires and coffers and corn,
O watch o'er our seasons of peace and of battle,
Hearken, O Lotus-born!
For our dear Land do we offer oblation,
O keep thou her glory unsullied, unshorn,
And guard the invincible hope of our nation,
Hearken, O Lotus-born!

*Lakshmi Puja Day, 1915*
The Victor

They brought their peacock-lutes of praise
And carven gems in jasper trays,
Rich stores of fragrant musk and myrrh,
And wreaths of scarlet nenuphar ... 
I had no offering that was meet,
And bowed my face upon his feet.

They brought him robes from regal looms,
Inwrought with pearl and silver blooms,
And sumptuous footcloths broider'd
With beetle-wings and gleaming thread ... 
I had no offering that was meet,
And spread my hands beneath his feet.

They filled his courts with gifts of price,
With tiers of grain and towers of spice,
Tall jars of golden oil and wine,
And heads of camel and of kine
I had no offering that was meet,
And laid my life before his feet.
The Imam Bara

Of Lucknow

I

Out of the sombre shadows,
Over the sunlit grass,
Slow in a sad procession
The shadowy pageants pass
Mournful, majestic, and solemn,
Stricken and pale and dumb,
Crowned in their peerless anguish
The sacred martyrs come.
Hark, from the brooding silence
Breaks the wild cry of pain
Wrung from the heart of the ages

Ali! Hassan! Hussain!
II

Come from this tomb of shadows,
Come from this tragic shrine
That throbs with the deathless sorrow
Of a long-dead martyr line.
Love! let the living sunlight
Kindle your splendid eyes
Ablaze with the steadfast triumph
Of the spirit that never dies.
So may the hope of new ages
Comfort the mystic pain
That cries from the ancient silence

Ali! Hassan! Hussain!

The Imam Bara is a Chapel of Lamentation where Mussulmans of the Shi'ah Community celebrate the tragic martyrdom of Ali, Hassan, and Hussain during the mourning month of Moharram. A sort of passion-play takes place to the accompaniment of the refrain, Ali! Hassan! Hussain!
A Song from Shiraz

The singers of Shiraz are feasting afar
To greet the Nauraz with sarang and cithar. . . .
But what is their music that calleth to me,
From glimmering garden and glowing minar?

The stars shall be scattered like jewels of glass,
And Beauty be tossed like a shell in the sea,
Ere the lutes of their magical laughter surpass
The lutes of thy tears, O Mohamed Ali!

. . .

From the Mosque-towers of Shiraz ere daylight begin
My heart is disturbed by the loud muezzin,
But what is the voice of his warning to me,
That waketh the world to atonement of sin?
The stars shall be broken like mirrors of brass,
And Rapture be sunk like a stone in the sea,
Ere the carpet of prayer or of penance surpass
Thy carpet of dreams, O Mohamed Ali!

In the silence of Shiraz my soul shall await,
Untroubled, the wandering Angel of Fate. . . .
What terror or joy shall his hands hold for me,
Who bringeth the goblet of guerdon too late?

The stars shall be mown and uprooted like grass,
And Glory be flung like a weed in the sea,
Ere the goblet of doom or salvation surpass
Thy goblet of love, O Mohamed Ali!
Imperial Delhi

Imperial City! dowered with sovereign grace
To thy renaissant glory still there clings.
The splendid tragedy of ancient things,
The regal woes of many a vanquished race;
And memory’s tears are cold upon thy face
E’en while thy heart’s returning gladness rings
Loud on the sleep of thy forgotten kings,
Who in thine arms sought Life’s last resting-place.

Thy changing kings and kingdoms pass away
The gorgeous legends of a bygone day,
But thou dost still immutably remain
Unbroken symbol of proud histories,
Unageing priestess of old mysteries
Before whose shrine the spells of Death are vain.

1912
Memorial Verses
I. Ya Mahbub!*

Are these the streets that I used to know—
Was it yesterday or æons ago?
Where are the armies that used to wait—
The pilgrims of Love—at your palace gate?
The joyous pæans that thrilled the air
The pageants that shone thro’ your palace square?
And the minstrel music that used to ring
Thro’ your magic kingdom . . . when you were king?

O hands that succoured a people’s need
With the splendour of Haroun-al-Rasheed!

* "Ya Mahbub," which means O Beloved, was the device on the State banner of the late Nizam of Hyderabad, Msr Mahbub Ali Khan, the well-beloved of his people.
O heart that solaced a sad world's cry
With the sumptuous bounty of Hatim Tai!
Where are the days that were winged and clad
In the fabulous glamour of old Baghdad,
And the bird of glory that used to sing
In your magic kingdom . . . when you were king?

O king, in your kingdom there is no change.
'Tis only my soul that hath grown so strange,
So faint with sorrow it cannot hear
Aught save the chant at your rose-crowned bier.
My grieving bosom hath grown too cold
To clasp the beauty it treasured of old,
The grace of life and the gifts of spring,
And the dreams I cherished . . . when you were king!

August 29, 1911
II. Gokhale *

Heroic Heart! lost hope of all our days!
Need'st thou the homage of our love or praise?
Lo! let the mournful millions round thy pyre
Kindle their souls with consecrated fire
Caught from the brave torch fallen from thy hand,
To succour and to serve our suffering land
And in a daily worship taught by thee
Upbuild the temple of her Unity.

* Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the great saint and soldier of our national righteousness. His life was a sacrament, and his death was a sacrifice in the cause of Indian unity.

February 19, 1915
In Salutation to my Father’s Spirit

Aghorenath Chattopadhyay

Farewell, farewell, O brave and tender Sage.
O mystic jester, golden-hearted Child!
Selfless, serene, untroubled, unbeguiled
By trivial snares of grief and greed or rage;
O splendid dreamer in a dreamless age
Whose deep alchemic vision reconciled
Time’s changing message with the undefiled
Calm wisdom of thy Vedic heritage!

Farewell great spirit, without rear or flaw,
Thy life was love and liberty thy law,
And Truth thy pure imperishable goal . . .
All hail to thee in thy transcendent flight
From hope to hope, from height to heav’nlier height,
Lost in the rapture of the Cosmic Soul.

January 28, 1915
The Flute-Player of Brindaban *

Why didst thou play thy matchless flute
    Neath the Kadamba tree,
And wound my idly dreaming heart
    With poignant melody,
So where thou goest I must go,
    My flute-player, with thee?

Still must I like a homeless bird
    Wander, forsaking all;
The earthly loves and worldly lures
    That held my life in thrall,
And follow, follow, answering
    Thy magical flute-call.

* Krishna, the Divine Flute-player of Brindaban,
who plays the tune of the Infinite that lures every
Hindu heart away from mortal cares and attachments.
To Indra’s golden-flowering groves
   Where streams immortal flow,
Or to sad Yama’s silent Courts
   Engulfed in lampless woe,
Where’er thy subtle flute I hear
   Belovèd I must go!

No peril of the deep or height
   Shall daunt my wingèd foot;
No fear of time-unconquered space,
   Or light untravelled route,
Impede my heart that pants to drain
   The nectar of thy flute!
Farewell

Farewell, O eager faces that surround me,
Claiming the tender service of my days,
Farewell, O joyous spirits that have bound me
With the love-sprinkled garlands of your praise!

O golden lamps of hope how shall I bring you
Life's kindling flame from a forsaken fire?
O glowing hearts of youth, how shall I sing you
Life's glorious message from a broken lyre?

To you what further homage shall I render,
Victorious City girdled by the sea,
Where breaks in surging tides of woe and splendour
The age-long tumult of Humanity?
Need you another tribute for a token
Who rest from me the pride of all my years?
Lo! I will leave you with farewell unspoken,
Shrine of dead dream! O temple of my tears!
The Challenge

Thou who dost quell in thy victorious tide
Death's ravaged secret and life's ruined pride,
Shall thy great deeps prevail, O conquering Sea,
O'er Love's relentless tides of memory?

Sweet Earth, though in thy lustrous bowl doth shine
The limpid flame of hope's perennial wine,
Thou art too narrow and too frail to bear
The harsh, wild vintage of my heart's despair.

O valiant skies, so eager to uphold
High laughing burdens of sidereal gold,
Swift would your brave brows perish to sustain
The radiant silence of my sleepless pain.
Wandering Beggars

From the threshold of the Dawn
On we wander, always on
Till the friendly light be gone

Y' Allah! Y' Allah!

We are free-born sons of Fate,
What care we for wealth or state
Or the glory of the great?

Y' Allah! Y' Allah!

Life may grant us or withhold
Roof or raiment, bread or gold,
But our hearts are gay and bold.

Y' Allah! Y' Allah!
Time is like a wind that blows,
The future is a folded rose,
Who shall pluck it no man knows.

Y' Allah! Y' Allah!

So we go a fearless band,
The staff of freedom in our hand
Wandering from land to land, ‘

Y' Allah! Y' Allah!

Till we meet the Night that brings
Both to beggars and to kings
The end of all their journeyings

Y' Allah! Y' Allah!
The Lotus

O mystic Lotus, sacred and sublime,
In myriad-petalled grace inviolate,
Supreme o'er transient storms of tragic Fate,
Deep-rooted in the waters of all Time,
What legions loosed from many a far-off clime
Of wild-bee hordes with lips insatiate,
And hungry winds with wings of hope or hate,
Have thronged and pressed round thy miraculous prime
To devastate thy loveliness, to drain
The midmost rapture of thy glorious heart . . .
But who could win thy secret, who attain
Thine ageless beauty born of Brahma's breath,
Or pluck thine immortality, who art
Coeval with the Lords of Life and Death?
The Prayer of Islam

We praise Thee, O Compassionate!
Master of Life and Time and Fate,
Lord of the labouring winds and seas,
   *Ya Hameed! Ya Hafeez!*

Thou art the Radiance of our ways,
Thou art the Pardon of our days,
Whose name is known from star to star,
   *Ya Ghani! Ya Ghaffar!*

Thou art the Goal for which we long,
Thou art our Silence and our Song,
Life of the sunbeam and the seed—
   *Ya Wabab! Ya Wahed!*
Thou dost transmute from hour to hour
Our mortal weakness into power,
Our bondage into liberty,
    *Ya Quadeer! Ya Quavi!

We are the shadows of Thy Light,
We are the secrets of Thy might,
The_vision of thy primal dream,
    *Ya Rahman! Ya Raheem!*

Id-us-Zoha, 1915

* These are some of the Ninety-nine Beautiful Arabic Names of God as used by followers of Islam.
Bells

Anklet-bells

Anklet-bells! frail anklet-bells!
That hold Love's ancient mystery.
As hide the lips of limpid shells
Faint tones of the remembered sea,
You murmur of enchanted rites,
Of sobbing breath and broken speech,
Sweet anguish of rose-scented nights
And wild mouths calling each to each
Or mute with yearning ecstasy.

Cattle-bells

Cattle-bells! soft cattle-bells!
What gracious memories you bring
Of drowsy fields and dreaming wells,
And weary labour's folded wing,
Of frugal mirth round festal fires,
Brief trysts that youth and beauty keep.
Of flowering roofs and fragrant byres
White heifers gathered in for sleep,
Old songs the wandering women sing.

\[ \text{Temple-bells} \]

\text{Temple-bells! deep temple-bells!}
Whose urgent voices wreck the sky!
In your importunate music dwells
Man's sad and immemorial cry
That cleaves the dawn with wings of praise,
That cleaves the dark with wings of prayer,
Craves pity for our mortal ways,
Seeks solace for our life's despair,
And peace for suffering hearts that die!
The Garden Vigil

In the deep silence of the garden-bowers
Only the stealthy zephyr glides and goes,
Rifling the secret of *sirisha* flowers,
And to the new-born hours
Bequeathes the subtle anguish of the rose.

Pain-weary and dream-worn I lie awake,
Counting like beads the blazing stars o'erhead;
Round me the wind-stirred champak branches shake
Blossoms that fall and break
In perfumed rain across my lonely bed.

Long ere the sun's first far-off beacons shine,
Or her prophetic clarions call afar,
The gorgeous planets wither and decline,—
Save in its eastern shrine,
Unquenched, unchallenged, the proud morning star.
O glorious light of hope beyond all reach!
O lovely symbol and sweet sign of him
Whose voice I yearn to hear in tender speech
To comfort me or teach,
Before whose gaze thy golden fires grow dim!

I care not what brave splendours bloom or die
So thou dost burn in thine appointed place,
Supreme in the still dawn-uncoloured sky,
And daily grant that I
May in thy flame adore his hidden face.
Invincible

O Fate, betwixt the grinding-stones of Pain,
Tho' you have crushed my life like broken grain,
Lo! I will leaven it with my tears and knead
The bread of Hope to comfort and to feed
The myriad hearts for whom no harvests blow
Save bitter herbs of woe.

Tho' in the flame of sorrow you have thrust
My flowering soul and trod it into dust,
Behold, it doth reblossom like a grove
To shelter under quickening boughs of Love
The myriad souls for whom no gardens bloom
Save bitter buds of doom.
The Pearl

How long shall it suffice
   Merely to hoard in thine unequalled rays
The bright sequestered colours of the sun,
O pearl above all price,
   And beautiful beyond all need of praise,
World-coveted but yet possessed of none,
Content in thy proud self-dominion?

Shall not some ultimate
   And unknown hour deliver thee, and attest
Life's urgent and inviolable claim
To bind and consecrate
   Thy glory on some pure and bridal breast,
Or set thee to enhance with flawless flame
A new-born nation's coronal of fame?
Or wilt thou self-denied
    Forgo such sweet and sacramental ties
As weld Love's delicate bonds of ecstasy,
And in a barren pride
    Of cold, unfruitful freedom that belies
The inmost secret of fine liberty
Return unblest into the primal sea?
Three Sorrows

How shall I honour thee, O sacred grief?
Fain would my love transmute
My suffering into music and my heart
Into a deathless lute!

How shall I cherish thee, O precious pain?
Fain would my trembling hand
Fashion and forge of thee a deathless sword
To serve my stricken land!

And thou, sweet sorrow, terrible and dear,
Most bitter and divine?
O I will carve thee with deep agony
Into a deathless shrine!
Kali the Mother

*All Voices.*  
O TERRIBLE and tender and divine!  
O mystic mother of all sacrifice,  
We deck the sombre altars of thy shrine  
With sacred basil leaves and saffron rice;  
All gifts of life and death we bring to thee,  
*Uma Haimavati!*

*Maidens:*  
We bring thee buds and berries from the wood!

*Brides:*  
We bring the rapture of our bridal prayer!

*Mothers:*  
And we the sweet travail of motherhood!
Widows: And we the bitter vigils of despair!

All Voices: All gladness and all grief we bring to thee,

Ambika! Parvati!

Artisans: We bring the lowly tribute of our toil!

Peasants: We bring our new-born goats and budded wheat!

Victors: And we the swords and symbols of our spoil!

Vanquished: And we the shame and sorrow of defeat!

All Voices: All triumph and all tears we bring to thee,

Girija! Shambhavi!

Scholars: We bring the secrets of our ancient arts.

Priests: We bring the treasures of our ageless creeds.

Poets: And we the subtle music of our hearts.
Patriots:  And we the sleepless worship of our deeds.

All Voices:  All glory and all grace we bring to thee, Kali! Maheshwari!*

* These are some of the many names Eternal Mother of Hindu worship.
Awake ! *

To Mohamed Ali Jinnah

Waken, O mother! thy children implore thee,
Who kneel in thy presence to serve and adore thee!
The night is aflush with a dream of the morrow,
Why still dost thou sleep in thy bondage of sorrow?
Awaken and sever the woes that enthral us,
And hallow our hands for the triumphs that call us!

Are we not thine, O Belov'd, to inherit
The manifold pride and power of thy spirit?
Ne'er shall we fail thee, forsake thee or falter,
Whose hearts are thy home and thy shield and thine altar.
Lo! we would thrill the high stars with thy story,
And set thee again in the forefront of glory.

* Recited at the Indian National Congress, 1915.
Hindus: Mother! the flowers or our worship have crowned thee!

Parsees: Mother! the flame or our hope shall surround thee!

Mussulmans: Mother! the sword of our love shall defend thee!

Christians: Mother! the song of our faith shall attend thee!

All Creeds: Shall not our dauntless devotion avail thee?

Hearken! O queen and O goddess, we hail thee!
The Flowering Year

"A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread."

Shelley
The Call of Spring

Children, my children, the spring wakes anew,
And calls through the dawn and the daytime
For flower-like and fleet-footed maidens like you,
To share in the joy of its playtime.

O'er hill-side and valley, through garden and grove,
Such exquisite anthems are ringing
Where rapturous bulbul and maina and dove
Their carols of welcome are singing.

I know where the ivory lilies unfold
In brooklets half-hidden in sedges,
And the air is aglow with the blossoming gold
Of thickets and hollows and hedges.
I know where the dragon-flies glimmer and glide,
And the plumes of wild peacocks are gleaming,
Where the fox and the squirrel and timid fawn hide
And the hawk and the heron lie dreaming.

The earth is ashine like a humming-bird’s wing,
And the sky like a kingfisher’s feather,
O come, let us go and play with the spring
Like glad-hearted children together.
The Coming of Spring

O Spring! I cannot run to greet
   Your coming as I did of old,
   Clad in a shining veil of gold,
With champa-buds and blowing wheat
And silver anklets on my feet.

Let others tread the flowering ways
   And pluck new leaves to bind their brows,
   And swing beneath the quickening boughs
A bloom with scented spikes and sprays
Of coral and of chrysoprase.

But ir against this sheltering wall
   I lean to rest and lag behind,
   Think not my love untrue, unkind,
Or heedless of the luring call
To your enchanting festival.
O Sweet! I am not false to you—
Only my weary heart of late
Has fallen from its high estate
Of laughter and has lost the clue
To all the vernal joy it knew.

There was a song I used to sing—
But now I seek in vain, in vain
For the old lilting glad refrain—
I have forgotten everything—
Forgive me, O my comrade Spring!

_Vasant Panchami Day, 1916_
The Magic of Spring

I buried my heart so deep, so deep,
Under a secret hill of pain,
And said, "O broken pitiful thing
Even the magic spring
Shall ne'er awake thee to life again,
Tho' March woods glimmer with opal rain
And passionate koels sing."

The kimshuks burst into dazzling flower,
The seemuls burgeoned in crimson pride,
- The palm-groves shone with the oriole's wing,
The koels began to sing,
And soft clouds broke in a twinkling tide . . .
My heart leapt up in its grave and cried,
"Is it the spring, the spring?"
Summer Woods

O I am tired of painted roofs and soft and silken floors,
And long for wind-blown canopies of crimson gulmohurs!

O I am tired of strife and song and festivals and fame,
And long to fly where cassia-woods are breaking into flame.

Love, come with me where koels call from flowering glade and glen,
Far from the toil and weariness, the praise and prayers of men.
O let us fling all care away, and lie alone and dream 'Neath tangled boughs of tamarind and molsari and neem!

And bind our brows with jasmine sprays and play on carven flutes,
To wake the slumbering serpent-kings among the banyan roots,

And roam at fall of eventide along the river's brink,
And bathe in water-lily pools where golden panthers drink!

You and I together, Love, in the deep blossoming woods
Engird with low-voiced silences and gleaming solitudes,

Companions of the lustrous dawn, gay comrades of the night,
Like Krishna and like Radhika, encompassed with delight.
June Sunset

Here shall my heart find its haven of calm,
By rush-fringed rivers and rain-fed streams
That glimmer thro' meadows of lily and palm.
Here shall my soul find its true repose
Under a sunset sky of dreams
Diaphanous, amber and rose.
The air is aglow with the glint and whirl
Of swift wild wings in their homeward flight,
Sapphire, emerald, topaz, and pearl,
Afloat in the evening light.

A brown quail cries from the tamarisk bushes,
A bulbul calls from the cassia-plume,
And thro' the wet earth the gentian pushes
Her spikes of silvery bloom.
Where'er the foot of the bright shower passes
Fragrant and fresh delights unfold!
The wild fawns feed on the scented grasses,
Wild bees on the cactus-gold.

An ox-cart stumbles upon the rocks,
And a wistful music pursues the breeze
From a shepherd’s pipe as he gathers his flocks
Under the pipal-trees.
And a young Banjara driving her cattle
Lifts up her voice as she glitters by
In an ancient ballad of love and battle
Set to the beat of a mystic tune,
And the faint stars gleam in the eastern sky
To herald a rising moon.
The Time of Roses

Love, it is the time of roses!
In bright fields and garden closes
How they burgeon and unfold!
How they sweep o'er tombs and towers
In voluptuous crimson showers
And untramelled tides of gold!

How they lure wild bees to capture
All the rich mellifluous rapture
Of their magical perfume.
And to passing winds surrender
All their frail and dazzling splendour
Rivalling your turban-plume!

How they cleave the air adorning
The high rivers of the morning
In a blithe, bejewelled fleet!
How they deck the moonlit grasses
In thick rainbow-tinted masses
Like a fair queen's bridal sheet!

Hide me in a shrine of roses,
Drown me in a wine of roses
Drawn from every fragrant grove!
Bind me on a pyre of roses,
Burn me in a fire of roses,
Crown me with the rose of Love!
The Peacock Lute
Songs for Music

'Iram's soft lute, with sorrow in its strings''

Omar Khayyam
Silver Tears

Many tributes Life hath brought me,
Delicate and touched with splendour . . .
Of all gracious gifts and tender
She hath given no gift diviner
Than your silver tears of Sorrow
For my wild heart's suffering.

Many evils Time hath wrought me,
Happiness and health hath broken . . .
Of all joy or grief for token
He hath left no gift diviner
Than your silver tears of Sorrow,
For my wild heart's suffering.
Caprice

You held a wild-flower in your finger-tips,
Idly you pressed it to indifferent lips,
Idly you tore its crimson leaves apart . . .
Alas! it was my heart.

You held a wine-cup in your finger-tips,
Lightly you raised it to indifferent lips,
Lightly you drank and flung away the bowl
Alas! it was my soul.
Destiny

It chanced on the noon of an April day
A dragon-fly passed in its sunward play
And furled his flight for a passing hour
To drain the life of a passion-flower. . . .
Who cares if a ruined blossom die,
O bright blue wandering dragon-fly?

Love came, with his ivory flute,
His pleading eye, and his wingèd foot:
"I am weary," he murmured; "O let me rest
In the sheltering joy of your fragrant breast."
At dawn he fled and he left no token. . . .
Who cares if a woman's heart be broken?
Ashoka Blossom

If a lovely maiden's foot
Treads on the Ashoka root,
Its glad branches sway and swell,—
So our eastern legends tell,—
Into gleaming flower,
Vivid clusters golden-red
To adorn her brow or bed
Or her marriage bower.

If your glowing foot be prest
O'er the secrets of my breast,
Love, my dreaming head would wake,
And its joyous fancies break
Into lyric bloom
To enchant the passing world
With melodious leaves unfurled
And their wild perfume.
Atonement

Deep in a lonely garden on the hill,
    Lulled by the low sea-tides,
A shadow set in shadows, soft and still,
    A wandering spirit glides,
Smiting its pallid palms and making moan
O let my Love atone!

Deep in a lonely garden on the hill
    Among the fallen leaves.
A shadow lost in shadows, vague and chill,
    A wandering spirit grieves,
Beating its pallid breast and making moan
O let my Death atone!
Longing

ROUND the sadness of my days
Breaks a melody of praise
Like a shining storm of petals,
Like a lustrous rain of pearls,
From the lutes of eager minstrels,
From the lips of glowing girls.

Round the sadness of my nights
Breaks a carnival of lights...
But amid the gleaming pageant
Of life's gay and dancing crowd
Glides my cold heart like a spectre
In a rose-encircled shroud.

Love, beyond these lonely years
Lies there still a shrine of tears,
A dim sanctuary of sorrow
Where my grieving heart may rest,
And on some deep tide of slumber
Reach the comfort of your breast?
Welcome

**Welcome, O fiery Pain!**
My heart unseared, unstricken,
Drinks deep thy fervid rain,
My spirit-seeds to quicken.

Welcome, O tranquil Death!
Thou hast no ills to grieve me,
Who cam’st with Freedom’s breath
From sorrow to retrieve me.

Open, O vast unknown,
Thy sealed mysterious portal!
I go to seek mine own,
Vision of Love immortal.
The Festival of Memory

Doth rapture hold a feast,
Doth sorrow keep a fast
For Love's dear memory
Whose sweetness shall outlast
The changing winds of Time,
Secret and unsurpassed?

Shall I array my heart
In Love's vermeil attire?
O shall I fling my life
Like incense in Love's fire?
Weep unto sorrow's lute?
Dance unto rapture's lyre?

What know the world's triune
Of gifts so strange as this
Twin-nurtured boon of Love,
Deep agony and bliss,
Fulfilment and farewell
Concentred in a kiss?

No worship dost thou need,
O miracle divine!
Silence and song and tears
Delight and dreams are thine,
Who mak’st my burning soul
Thy sacrament and shrine.
The Temple
A Pilgrimage of Love

"My passion shall burn as the flame of Salvation,
The flower of my love shall become the ripe fruit of Devotion"

Rabindranath Tagore
I. The Gate of Delight

1. The Offering

Were beauty mine, Beloved, I would bring it
Like a rare blossom to Love's glowing shrine;
Were dear youth mine, Beloved, I would fling it
Like a rich pearl into Love's lustrous wine.

Were greatness mine, Beloved, I would offer
Such radiant gifts of glory and of fame;
Like camphor and like curds to pour and proffer
Before Love's bright and sacrificial flame.

But I have naught save my heart's deathless passion
That craves no recompense divinely sweet,
Content to wait in proud and lowly fashion,
And kiss the shadow of Love's passing feet.
2. The Feast

Bring no fragrant sandal-paste,
Let me gather, Love, instead
The entranced and flowering dust
You have honoured with your tread
For mine eyelids and mine head.

Bring no scented lotus-wreath
Moon-awakened, dew-caressed;
Love, thro' memory's age-long dream
Sweeter shall my wild heart rest
With your foot-prints on my breast.

Bring no pearls from ravished seas,
Gems from rifled hemispheres;
Grant me, Love, in priceless boon
All the sorrow of your years,
All the secret of your tears.
3. Ecstasy

Let spring illume the western hills with blossoming brands of fire,
And wake with rods of budded flame the valleys of the south—
But I have plucked you, O miraculous Flower of my desire,
And crushed between my lips the burning petals of your mouth!

Let spring unbind upon the breeze tresses of rich perfume
To lure the purple honey-bees to their enchanted death—
But sweeter madness drives my soul to swift and sweeter doom
For I have drunk the deep, delicious nectar of your breath!
Let spring unlock the melodies of fountain and of flood,
And teach the wingèd wind of man to mock the wild bird’s art,
But wilder music thrilled me when the rivers of your blood
Swept o’er the flood-gates of my life to drown my waiting heart!
4. The Lute-Song

Why need you a burnished mirror of gold,
O bright and imperious face?
Mine eyes be the shadowless wells of desire
For the sun of your glory and grace!

Why need you the praises of ivory lutes,
O proud and illustrious name?
My voice be the journeying lute of delight
For the song of your valour and fame!

Why need you pavilions and pillows of silk,
Soft foot-cloths of azure, O Sweet?
My heart be your tent and your pillow of rest,
And a place of repose for your feet!
Why need you sad penance or pardon or prayer
For life's passion and folly and fears?
My soul be your living atonement, O Love,
In the flame of immutable years!
5. If You Call Me

If you call me I will come
Swifter, O my Love,
Than a trembling forest deer
Or a panting dove,
Swifter than a snake that flies
To the charmer’s thrall . . .
If you call me I will come
Fearless what befall.

If you call me, I will come
Swifter than desire,
Swifter than the lightning’s feet
Shod with plumes of fire.
Life’s dark tides may roll between,
Or Death’s deep chasms divide—
If you call me I will come
Fearless what betide.