

UNPUBLISHED CLASSIC POETRY COLLECTION

By

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Language – English

(English poetry by poet Mr. Sushanta Das)

Place- Kolkata, Netaji Nagar, Kolkata-700092

Her Story

She's growing up in her husband's house.
With her two sons and a daughter,
The sixteen year old woman is growing up -
In her husband's house.

She wakes up at 4 with the rooster's crow:
She's fresh and ready for work at once;
The sixteen year old woman!
The Canning local of 4:40 comes to Taaldi at 4:52
The station is a 2 miles walk :
It's still a midnight to her husband and children ;
It's her daily routine to board the train,
And sit by the door.
Ratan da will get up at Betberia,
With puffed rice and cooked chickpeas ;
She quickly takes out one rupee and fifty paisa,
She is on the puffed rice and cooked chickpeas,
And raw chilli between the fingers -
While the train crosses Betberia;
Champahati-Kalikapur-Bidyadharpur-Sonarpur-Narendrapur...
It's still seven stations to Jadavpur.
The Jadavpur train of 6:10 is running twenty minutes late today ,
Then run run run...the first house is at Bijoygarh -
Jharna madam will be very angry today :
Every house work is delayed if the first one is late.
Sir will leave for office at eight after having the breakfast,
Madam needs the bed tea sharp at 7.
It takes from 8:30 to 11 to finish cooking,
Doing the dishes, cleaning the floor, dusting,
At the Golfgreen's mess of Debu da.
But the mess boys are really good -
The lunch is done here while returning;
If it can be managed to reach Bikramgarh by 12,
The job of washing the clothes at Bikramgarh pond is really nice -
Five rupees for one bucket of clothes,
Five to seven buckets are done in a couple of hours.

This daily washing is just to collect the money
For her husband's addictives-
Otherwise awaits her a round of physical abuse.
It takes 3pm to return
After eating rice, lentils and veggies at Debu Da's house,
Washing the dishes and utensils,
Washing the same for Jharna ma'am,
And then work at Kolkata ends with cleaning her floor;
Again run run run,
Canning local is at 5:20.
Jharna ma'am gives 700 rupees a month,
Debu da gives 800,
And 25-30 rupees a day for washing clothes.
The sixteen year old woman gets to relax
After reaching home and preparing the oven for cooking.
"The children have slept off without having the meal?
Maybe it has already crossed 9pm.
There, I can hear the bell of Fatik Da's cycle ringing -
He comes by train at 8:40pm.
He is again abusing being drunk -
What if he pukes today as well!
It took till 12 last night to clean his puke.
I'll go and sleep off-
It's a new day tomorrow."

Sometimes he gets sick,
Sometimes the children or the sixteen years old woman gets sick.
They get sick, she takes a day off.
Sometimes there's no cooking due to lack of money,
No money for his addictives, she gets beaten up,
Jharna ma'am threatens her to terminate.
The sixteen year old woman in her husband's house
Still lights a candle on her off day,
And scratches A-B-C-D on the black slate.
That sixteen year old woman is growing up -
Along with her children.

Ten Years Old Mother India

“Aasma, Aasma,
Come running dear I am hungry
Aasma, where are you?”
“Here, Abbajaan, I’, coming...”
Hanging two cans in both the hands
Came running , the ten years old Aasma.
She’s wearing a dirty tape frock,
Bare footed came running the ten years old Aasma.
Abbu, bhaijaan and grandfather work as masons,
After walking for two miles, little Aasma
Has brought soaked rice and smashed potatoes in the afternoon.
The four people sat down on the bricks.
A plate of soaked rice and smashed potatoes,
She did all the arrangements for abbajaan and grandfather,
Arranging everything, keeping the head on father’s lap,
Aasma relaxes a bit,
Abbu cuddles on her head and says,
“Aasma, now plate your food ...”
Arranging a plate of rice and smashed potato,
Aasma held her little brother’s hand
And sat face to face with him a bit far away.
Brother and sister from one plate -
“Bhaijaan, wash your hands before eating”
Aasma picks up a fistfull of rice from the water,
Bhaijaan finishes the rest of it in two three minutes
Aasma is with a sweet smile -
The bones can be counted in her thin physique
Wearing a torn tape frock-
The little Aasma drinks in a sip
The leftover water of the soaked rice from the can.
Abbajaan shouts to call,
“Aasma, Aasma, have you eaten dear?”
Ten years old Mother India comes running,
“I have eaten Abbajaan, why do you worry so much?”
The ten years old Mother India runs around this way and that way-
The ten years of Mother India runs like this in the whole country.

What will I write 8

What will I write, I'm thinking day and night.
I thought about it yesterday, the day before yesterday, and before that as well
What will I write?
Shall I write a poem about a poem?
Poem of Love?
A couple of lines about emotional, romantic love?
What will I write?

Or about the aunty of the morning market-
Who has sit with Egyptian Lotus, and other leafy vegetables
Getting up early at 3am, finishing the household chores,
Arranging soaked rice and sugar crystal for the kids,
Smearing diluted cow dung all over the house,
Then she starts walking-
Some miles across lies the marshland of Boral;
In that marsh, snakes and leeches are a part of everyday struggle
She plucks all the leafy vegetables,
And it becomes late when she reaches the market .
“A bunch of Egyptian Lotus costs a rupee, will you take son?”
-”Aunty please make it three bunches for two rupees”
I listen to this story kneeling down amidst this everyday boredom.
“It sums up to twenty rupees after the market closes at 1pm
Sometimes it even rises to thirty or forty
Then I'll go home with the leftover veggies-
Cooking for dinner is still left
Warm rice and veggies are there for dinner”
What will I write?

I'm thinking of writing about the old man's appeal in the morning.
He was asking for five rupees, to return home at howrah by bus-
I saw him getting many ridicules by the pedestrians
For asking money with this excuse everyday.
After marketing, i didn't have a penny left
I couldn't look at his helpless face;
What will I write?

In the early morning when I stood
With the shopping bag at Gaba's tea stall,
His lively memories came rushing over me.
Just some days ago with the tea cup in hand,
Or while making tea he used to talk
About how he has to get over such financial crisis,
He must survive for the sake of the little five year old girl-
And he hanged himself the next day!
He didn't tell me about his empty stomach for last few days,
Today the five years old little girl
Is standing holding her mother's hand in the tea stall:
What will I write?

Love-hatred, light and dark emotions,
Or the story of changing the society?
Or shall I write a poem about my poem,
In search of heartfelt sunshine,
Amidst this deep darkness!
What will I write, I think day and night.

THE POEM “WHAT WILL I WRITE?”

WHAT WILL I WRITE?

(Poet Mr. Sushanta Das)

What will I write of
I think
Through the day and all through the night
About nature, love, life....
What will I write about?

Or about the daily lives of ordinary people
The hustle of the nearby market
The struggling farmers journey
From the fields to the market
To eke out a livelihood
What will I write about?

Or about the old man
Standing next to the road near the market
Asking for money to get back home
Living through the taunts of the passerbys
Helpless with his lies
Trying to make a living
What will I write about?

Or should I write about the tea peddler
Who used to tell stories –
Struggling to make ends meet
And care for his wife and daughter
Finally giving up
At the end of a rope
Today his family stands next to the tea stall
Uncared, desolate, hungry.....
With an empty stare
What will I write about?

Love, hate, light, darkness.....
Or revolution?
Or about a dark corner of our lives
Searching for a ray of light

Should I write a poem about poems?
Day and night.....
I think.....
What will I write about?

First World Third World

It's your life, it's theirs as well.
You desire for Nike, or Adidas,
The favourite shoe is short by 1 unit-
So you are concerned?
See they made shoes
By flattening the plastic bottles and tying them with rope-
Keep them in your prayers.
It's your life, it's theirs as well.

You guys are not satisfied-
With locally branded mineral water
Isn't it?
It's either Kinley or Bisleri is must.
They drink the same water of canals-
With cats and dogs of the street.
They have infections in throat,
In the whole body.
It's your life, it's theirs as well.

Your kids are now bored with the soft toys at home?
They play with the skeleton and skulls
Of the jungle foxes and dogs.
Their childhood sighs on the graves-
It's your life, it's theirs as well.

Burger, pizza or fish and chips everyday,
Getting frustrated with it right?
They are four in number with average age of seven
They fight over a dried piece of bread for the whole day and night.
They fight on the open streets
At last they gobble whatever they can manage to pick up.
It's your life, it's theirs as well.

You change every year
Almirah, bed, pillows.
They lie with rocks under their head

Their bed is the footpath.
At maximum, they wash it with a mug of water
You change every year
Almirah, bed, pillows.
They don't even have any complaint to God
It's your life, it's theirs as well.

The house has become very old now
Thinking to change?
See the Negro kid is suffering in the garbage,
Awaiting in the hope-
If somebody gives him a plastic shade,
And in far reside the Hyna, Cheel, Vultures;
They count days everyday-
It's your life, it's theirs as well.

Dad and mum is too much caring
Can't tolerate anymore
Isn't it?
They never saw their parents in life-
HIV took them away long ago.
The bony brother
Swings on the lap of his sister-
Alas!
Swings their certain future,
To the last journey :
It's your life, it's theirs as well.
It's your life, it's theirs as well.

Pappa

Where did you get lost, Pappa?
Still now I can hear it loud and clear
“You are my sweet little daughter
I love you so much.”
Even now, in the morning,
I become the little Boni with white frock and blue skirt
Will you please tie my shoelace once again Pappa?
In the rainy days towards the school way
Your craziness to make me wear a raincoat-
I cannot forget it Pappa.
I have never been your obeying daughter;
Used to do the opposite of what you told me to.
You used to get very angry, but used to manage yourself
And look at my face.
Today nobody tells me anymore,
“Why didn’t you brush properly after getting up, Boni?”
Can you hear me? Give Boni some Complian
Dear, you must clean your hands and foot after returning from outside
Make it a habit.”
Nobody makes me cross the road
Holding my hands today, Pappa!
Nobody has ever understood me like you-
Still today I go to Central Park with Tatai in the evening.
He rides the swing, gets up on the slides,
And I move circling around the tree of Spanish Cherry,
Search around for your touch here and there;
Pappa you know?
I’ve kept your passport size photo
In my wallet.
I don’t have the courage to take it out-
Cannot look at your face:
Will you please come back once beside me?
Sit beside my leg a bit Pappa?
Call me like that once -
“Dear don’t bring back your tiffin
You will get sick.”

Tell me near the school gate -
“Boni don’t run, see you don’t get hurt at the chest,
Look in front and walk.”
Pappa you know I need to pop a sleeping pill every night
Today will you sing with that melody
Your sweet lullaby ?
“You’re my sunshine, my only sunshine.....!”
Pappa - pappa,
Where did you get lost, Pappa?
It’s dark all around-
Don’t you know I’m afraid of this darkness?
You used to shout during the power cut ,
“Dear, don’t move from where you are
I am coming”
It’s deep darkness all around today.
Pappa - Pappa ,
For once come back beside me
For once call me like that-
For once will you fix my hair ribbon?
For once the hair ribbon, the eye liner,
For once will you embrace me in your chest?
For once will you call me like that again?
For once I want to feel your touch,
For once I will sit beside your feet-
Pappa - Pappa!

Life

The power window of the black AC car
Slided down smoothly a bit,
The half eaten bottle of coke
Fell on the middle of the road,
At great speed, civilization mixed into the crowd of humans.
The story could have ended here,
Because the civilization covered with black glass
Has been ignoring the outer world like this only-
But still life thinks of something new,
Life paints something new:
A worn out family at a corner of the road,
The five year old boy , taking a risk of life
Ran off to cross the road and take the unfinished drink.
With the happy face of conquering the world,
Sits beside the curled up parents,
Opening the cap, feeds the coke
To the little sister on mother's lap,
Then himself starts drinking it at one go;
The mother now takes away the bottle,
Pours a sip on his father's mouth,
And finishes the rest herself in a moment.
The story that is born from the dropped ignorance,
From the black glass,
Life never ignored it-
With a thin brush stroke,
With the unfinished drink bottle lying on the street,
Life gives an ounce of oxygen
To a drowsed whole family :
This way it has to live hundred of lives-
From each ignorance ,
The flower of life blooms into several lives.

The Red Rose (Version 1)

Come brother, drop the gun,
And pick up the red rose.

In the morning,
The dead body that was dropped on the pitch road
Through several newspapers,
The stain of his blood
Has taken a place in the drawing room of crores of citizens-

Behold,
His pair of babies , bare bodied
Is looking blank
At their mother and grandmother shattered on the ground-
Alas!
Their father's dead body lies in the first page of the newspaper,
And on the dust of the pitch road.
Come brother, drop the gun,
And pick up the red rose.
Before stabbing on another chest,
Please look at the face of his mother,
A helpless widowed mother-
Standing with the beggar's bag in the corner of the street.
Please stop it brother,
Drop the gun and pick up the red rose.

Even if you can't provide some chocolates or lollipops
To those fatherless kids,
Hand them a red rose,
And pick them on your lap;
Adore them and say,
"I love you, son, I love you very much"
It's one life only-
Come brother, let all of us live together.
Come brother, drop the gun,
And pick up the red rose.

Roses for Guns...(Version 2)

Come brothers
Let us drop our guns
and pick up roses instead...

In the morning...
The life you had taken in by the backyard
has traveled through news
and the mark of blood
has reached a billion households...

Look -
His two infant naked sons
With a vacant stare
looking at their mother and grandma
Their father's corpse in newspapers
and in their backyard...

Come brothers
Let us drop our guns
and pick up roses instead...

before you pick up a knife
to stab anyone else
look at their mother's face
look at her begging bowl
at the bend of the road
a powerless widow!

Stop brothers
Let us drop our guns
and pick up roses instead...

if you cannot give these children
Chocolate or sweets
At least hand over a Red rose
and pick them up in your arms
Touch their cheeks and tell them
"I love you, I love you so much"...

For this is life...
Come brothers
Let us drop our guns
and pick up roses instead...

Hunger

A fistful of rice, lentils and

A piece of fish.

I put it on one corner of the road,
Firstly, the dog-family ate it peacefully,

Then came the groups of cats

From here and there -

Now a group of crows is pulling

The tail of a cat.

In demand of entrance.

Hunger!

A fistful of rice, lentils and

A piece of fish.

Then came Indian myna, rats,

A sparrow flew off with a grain of rice

To her kids on a neem tree,

Fed them from mouth to mouth.

Hunger!

With a bone of fish in the mouth,

A crow is running around the carnish of the whole locality.

Again flying off with it-

In some safe place.

Hunger!

Just when I slapped a mosquito to death,

The nest of ants took the dead body in a rally

A special dish today!

Hunger, great hunger !

Give them Rice

They are very helpless-
Please give them a fistful of rice.
A fistful of rice from the leftover after your meal.
We have properties, we have house,
They do not have anything-
They are destitute.
We have jobs, business,
They have sighs.
They are very helpless-
Please give them a fistful of rice.
A fistful of rice from the leftover after your meal:
We have TV, fridge,
Have a meaning to live.
They have nothing, they are empty-
We have drawing, and dining too,
Life has given them only day and night.
We have clubs, entertainment,
Life has given them only hunger-
They are very helpless,
Please give them a fistful of rice.
A fistful of rice from
The leftover after your meal;
Give it on the corner of the road or on the terrace-
On the fence wall or the carnish,
Dogs, cats, rats, crows, sparrows, or ants,
I'm sure everyone's hunger will be satisfied.
So don't throw away food in the dustbin;
They are very helpless-
Please give them a fistful of rice.
A fistful of rice from the leftover after your meal:

The Festival of Leftovers

The fish bones, chewed parts of the fish,
The branchiae of fish etcetera-
The wastes after my dinner.
I dumped them in the corner of the road,
The street cat had it as she liked,
The crow flew away with a branchiae
In the faraway blue sky.
The flock of sparrows came giggling-
It was a festival with each grain of rice.
The black ant is crossing the road fast
With a long yellow grain of rice.
The Indian Myna and the crow are fighting
Regarding who will eat first!
Somebody's leftovers - a festival to so many!

What Shall I Write (1)?

What Shall I Write?
This evening is different-
Very fuzzy, like shadow,
The sky, river, leaves of the tree are swinging gently,
Somewhere far, the Tagore's tunes are playing softly-
The mesmerized mind is telling to write something more;

Or maybe I'll write something else today as well.
The month of May, 2020-
The working India, the poor India is walking during the lockdown-
Returning from workplace to home,
From Delhi to Bihar,
From Andhra to Assam,
From Lucknow they will walk till Midnapur.
They will walk for 1,500 kilometres!
The working India, the poor India is walking.
The mother with the child on the lap, the father with the son on the lap.
Thousands of people are walking-
After walking for the whole day, at night on the roadside
The whole family has slept off.
In the fifth day,
The child on the lap passed away-
What shall I write?

Finishing the last rites of the dead child,
The parents and the son are crying with a throbbing chest.
Still they didn't stop walking -
So many children,
Such thousands of mothers' bones,
Or the honor,
Has been devoured by the roadside eagles and vultures-
Did anybody keep a track?
Nobody kept a track;
What shall I write?

Twenty people were walking along the railway track-

They walk the whole day, at night they sleep off on the rail lines.
Everyday they get up and start walking.
One night, they got crushed off in sleep
By the labour special train-
None of the twenty woke up-
Not even with the intense light and horn of the suddenly arriving train.
I saw the tv news the next morning,
The dead bodies lying on the rail line,
And,
Here and there scattered the bread soaked in blood;
What shall I write?

On one side, the sky, fuzzy river,
The leaves are still swinging gently-
The rainy cool breeze is soothing the body.
On the other side,
Lying scattered the cut hands and heads
On the both sides of the rail line-
The heart is wailing so deep :
I'm thinking for the whole evening,
What shall I write ?

What shall I write (2)?

What shall I write ?
I'm thinking since the evening,
Sitting alone on the terrace, it's 8 at night -
The open sky in front-
Clouds like white cotton are floating by;
I'm sitting alone leaning on the neem tree .
I'm thinking of writing something about this pleasant evening:

Or shall I write
About the frustration of the young man
Who sells vegetables in the van rickshaw?
“Sir, you want veggies?”
“How much is the pointed gourd?”
“Sir, you pay according to your wish
I've lost four hundred rupees early in the morning
What else is left
It's a total loss”
He is going on speaking,
“I wanted to study more after graduating, but,
Father passed away, mother is paralysed on the bed-
Lot's of medicines are needed.
I lost money amidst these;
Pay whatever you wish uncle,
It's okay even if you don't “
What shall I write?

I went out in the locality wearing a mask
For an important work.
That aunt is begging with a polybag in hand,
“Boy, please give me two bucks?”
“Aunty, how many times shall I give you?
You ask everyday!”
“What shall I do son? I get hungry everyday waking up ;
My grandsons shout in the burning hunger
My son also gives slangs
While lying drunk by the door

Tell me what shall I do, son?
Please give me two bucks?"
Trust me I didn't have my wallet then.
What shall I write ?

On that afternoon for having lunch
While I sat at the dining table,
The calling bell rang-
I went to the balcony and saw
It's Pintu, the incense stick seller.
He has lost his mother, his father also left-
His one hand has been paralysed since birth.
"Brother, nobody has bought a stick from me
I'm roaming around from the morning
What else will happen?
Even if you buy from me, it won't give me today's meal"
What shall I write?

The starry sky is in front of me,
Cotton clouds are floating by,
Shall I write about the smiling full moon
Or about the burnt bread?
I'm thinking for the whole evening,
What shall I write ?

What shall I write (3)?

What shall I write?
Amidst the deep darkness around,
I was enjoying
The song of rain outside,
Sleeping peacefully inside the mosquito net,
I'm thinking now to write about the rain
Drizzling on the arum leaves,
Pitter patter raindrops on the shade of tin;

Or shall I write,
About Manu from Netaji Nagar Bus stand-
We knew him by "wheel crazy".
A torn half pant, without buttons,
Without zipper,
Tied around the waist with a rope-
Bare body.
Setting a wheel on a log,
Drives the wheel on the road for the whole day.
Ran off getting a five hundred rupee note on the road...
"Hey, did you leave the five hundred rupee note on the road?"
Brother, I think you left a five hundred rupee note on the road..."
Finding the right person,
Returning the money,
He proceeds peacefully driving the wheel.
Right after two minutes, he is calling a pedestrian madam,
"Hey madam, will you give me ten bucks?
Please give, I've not eaten since morning!"
The madam bypassed him fast, covering her face.
What shall I write?

I'm thinking of writing about our house maid.
She's get out early for work
In Spite of the lockdown for Corona,
The female police asked her,
"Why have you got out ?"
"What shall I do Madam?"

It's all for the empty stomach, the family can't survive."
The stick marks behind her hand, on her foot.
"What shall I do, master?
I'll die either in Corona, or in hunger,
Or due to the police baton!"

What shall I write?
Swapan da has lost his job.
He's started selling potatoes and eggs.
As I tried to bypass, he called me,
"What brother ? you don't want anything?
If you all don't buy, who else will, tell me?
"Wait I'm coming", I replied and fled the scene,
Somehow.

What shall I write?
It is raining profusely outside,
Pitter patter on the arum leaves,
It's raining on the lemon tree, shade of tin, banana leaves.
In every lanes and communities of India,
The poor cry profusely.
It's still raining pitter patter outside;
Sleeping alone in the deep darkness, I'm thinking,
What shall I write?

What will i write 4

What will I write ?

It's dark now-

I'm sitting on the terrace wearing a half pant,
Sipping on the piping hot tea with some puffed rice ;

I finished the puffed rice

To write something.

A puzzled equation is going on
In the neighbour's television set;

Blue neon light on the streets -

So much is left to write.

My pen is speaking at the pace of a storm
I'm thinking of writing so many more things...

Or shall I write about the girl

Who comes to sweep in the morning?

She hovers around the locality

At 6 in the morning ;

Pushing along the garbage van made of tin

With ease, playing the whistle ,

Sweeping one side of the street.

She picks up the garbage with the shovel.

On the other side, garbage from all the houses

Are being dumped into the van -

Rotten veggies, last night's stale food,

Used napkins, used pads of kids,

Empty liquor bottles - everything is being dumped

From every house .

The garbage is overflowing the van ,

The girl is pushing them inside with the shovel.

She said, "Brother let me empty this van to the vat half kilometres away

And I'll come back "

What will I write?

It's 11am now.

The mask of the girl has come down to the throat .

Her messy body is drenched in wet.

"Brother, my husband died due to alcohol
We're the contractual labours of the Corporation,
No work, no pay."

Once I saw in the afternoon ,
She has sat on one side of the road
Stretching her legs, keeping the van in one side,
She's having chickpeas and puffed rice-
What will write?

"You know if I cross a gate playing the whistle,
People start shouting-
Sometimes they even abuse
Can't they walk two steps to dump the waste?
They throw the black plastics from 1st floor,
They carry sick people's stool pads inside .
Our life is thus smeared in waste Brother:"
What will I write?

I am wandering on the terrace now ,
Eating tea and puffed rice.
I'm thinking of writing the improvement of the middle class colony,
The dazzling street neon light...
Regarding these,
Or regarding the immense darkness of the lives
Of girls who stand on the soil of reality
What will I write?
A mountain of thoughts inside my head:

What will I write 5

What will I write?

I am thinking sitting in the balcony,
I'm thinking of writing about this strange morning -
It's lazy, soothing everywhere,
A dash of happiness all around
So many colorful dragonflies flying around-
Birds are chirping in their languages.

Or will I write about the old lady,
Who came near my house last afternoon?
Some fishes on a van rickshaw-
Rohu, Pomfret, Sardines, Asian seabass,
She's shouting from down there,
"Sir, you need some fish?
None of my fishes got sold
I've been walking since four hours "
The old lady and her son -
There's no mask on their face,
No rice in their stomach, nor any mark of ink:
Who'll teach them about masks?
The old woman started crying loudly,
"Sir where are you all
Nobody bought my fish
The kids at home are crying in hunger!"
What will I write?

I came running in the balcony
The fishes are in bad condition I think.
"Aunt, how much a kilo?"
"You give whatever you think is fit!"
"What do you mean?"
Anyway I bought two kinds of fish half-heartedly;
She doesn't understand any calculation.
The old woman says, "You calculate and pay Sir!"

What will I write?

I asked the son of the old woman-
“You don’t know the price, you don’t know calculation,
How will you understand if you made a profit or a loss?”
“Sir my mother used to work at people’s house,
I used to pull a van rickshaw.
For two months, there’s no work due to Corona
So if we earn anything by selling fish, our stomachs will be saved”.
The old woman has started to cut the fish on the road.
“Aunt, you don’t have to cut them, we’ll do it”
Sir, you’ve looked on to us,
And I Won't do this much? What are you saying?"
Tell me, what will I write?

White morning, cranes flying away in the far-away blue,
I wish to write a lot about the nature
Or shall I write-
This survival without education and food
The intense crying of the old mothers?
The whole day I keep thinking,
What will I write?

What will I write 6

1st June 2020.

I completed 50 years!

Still now my mother makes sweet rice for me on this day;

She sits arranging all the sweets for me,

Till the evening, every year

Till I return home.

Even in this lockdown ,

Mother's love never rests :

I'm thinking of writing many things -

Mother's love, protectiveness ,

So many stories, memories of school life -

Or shall I write

About some more mothers, fathers and sons-

My daughter is a school teacher .

She gives online classes to fifth standards

Via google meet;

The little Surabhita and five more are taking class.

“Shuravit, how are you? How are your studies going?”

“Ma’am I’m good, I’m doing really fine.”

“How are your parents Surabhita?”

“Ma’am, my father lost his job, he stays at home,

So he is sad.”

“Why is he sad?”

“Ma’am my father has no money,

My mother weeps in her room, they quarrel

That’s why my father is sad.”

What will I write?

“Have you had lunch Surabhita?”

“Yes ma’am I had”

“What did you eat?”

“Ma’am, rice and lentils”

“And with what?”

“Nothing else ma’am, don’t worry ma’am

I ate good, I am fine”
Shuravit reads in class five
I was listening to this standing by the side of the door with awe.
What will I write?

“Ma’am I am Manirul, shall I speak?”
“Yes tell me Manirul”
“Ma’am my father also used to work as a security guard in Kolkata
The trains are closed, so he can’t go to work.”
He was saying without a pause,
“I also ate soaked rice,
My mother gave me with dried chillies, salt,
And raw onions.
I ate so good, it was very tasty .
Grandparents, my parents and I ate together
It was a great pleasure Ma’am-
You know ma’am, my mother also just cries.
She is very foolish:
I am also doing fine ma’am.”
What will I write?

Here, one mother is 70 years old,
She walks limping.
In the early morning she made all the deserts
Specially for her son:
Shall I write about my mother’s sacrifice?
Or about the tears of some other mother?
Shall I write about her struggle
Of providing her son some rice and lentils?
What will I write?
I think about it every day..

What will I write 7

It's 1 am at night now-
Everybody in the house is in deep sleep switching off the lights,
I'm lying on the floor,
Scribbling on the pages in the dark.
God knows what I want to write:
It's a strange black night
Present in the Earth with deep dark future,
Shall I write about
How many millions of boys and girls are unemployed?
Or shall I write about the life of my house maid?
Her name is Rakhi.
Her duty hours are 8am to 4pm everyday .
She comes to Tollygunge from the distant Laxmikantapur
Everyday.
She rides the bicycle for 30minutes to the station,
She rests her cycle in the station
And boards the train at 5:20am;
She gets down at Baghajatin at 7am.
Then she walks for 40minutes to my home-
All these for eight thousand rupees a month.
It's a terrible toil of sixteen hours including the journey;
What will I write?

I told her, "Rakhi, you work so hard everyday
You stay here instead of doing the journey."
"Brother, my parents got me married at the age of fourteen,
After ten years, my husband drove me out of the house.
I live at my maternal house with my son.
There's nobody to look after my old parents."
The woman leaves at 4pm everyday and Reaches home at 9pm in the same way
Hanging like a monkey in the crowded train.
"Brother, I cook at 3am and leave my house,
Again when I return home and cook,
Then people can eat."
And I'm thinking, she even cooks at my place
For eight hours.

What will I write?

Rakhi couldn't come for this lockdown for a month.

Then one fine day,

She came to my house cycling for 3hours.

She works the whole day like crazy-

No dash of tiredness, she's always with a smile..

She goes home once a month for three days

Cycling for three hours!

What will I write?

Here I'm searching the pen paper in the deep dark

For the sake of writing something,

On the other side there's deep darkness,

In face of the millions of unemployed Indians,

On another side, the housemaid

Gets up from the bed in the deep darkness,

Takes up the responsibility

Of her son and old parents' future everyday -

Extremely heavy a future:

What will I write?

Here it's a deadly deep black night.

What will I write 9

In the morning, by the side of this neem tree,
I like to keep sitting on the terrace quietly ,
The open sky is in front of me,
The strange colors of the space is the game of time-
The sparrow doesn't know how to stay quiet;
It is constantly chirping sitting the branch of the neem tree:
The crow sitting on the dish antennae,
Is constantly rubbing its beak by the edge of the dish.
I'm thinking of writing so many more things
That happens around me-
Life is painting a canvas with the happiness of living.

Or shall I write
About the fish seller of today?
He is hovering around the localities with a big basket on his head.
He is screaming, "Bengal Carp, Pufferfish,
The barramundi, anybody wants?"
I am standing on one corner of the terrace,
I told him to put down the basket on the road.
One Bengal Carp, a big Pufferfish and a Barramundi,
It's two thirty rupees on average for all the fish in the basket.
The price per kilo is set,
One weight, 1kg,
Another is 500gm,
Then, putting the cutter iron, it's wood, the basket
On one side of the weighing machine,
The fish seller is weighing the fish.
After a lot of struggle and strategies,
All the fishes weighed up to 5kg900gm,
Which costs thirteen hundred and fifty seven rupees.
"Brother I left home at 4am,
The trains are closed due to lockdown.
It took me two hundred rupees and changing five autoes
To reach Garia junction at 7am,
Since then I am hovering around the localities after buying fish,
Now it's 12 noon."
What will I write?

When I asked about how much profit he made, he said,
“Excluding the journey fare and tiffin cost,
If I have two hundred rupees, it’s enough!
It will take sunset to reach home
I don’t know when will I eat then
Some soaked rice and onions!”
“Brother please round it to fourteen hundred please,
Or else what will I have with me after so much of hard work?”
It’s just a two hundred rupees profit
After working so hard for fourteen hours amidst this pandemic!
What will I write?

After hearing I’ll give fourteen hundred rupees,
He is muttering, “May Allah bless you”,
And sat on the road to cut the fishes.
Now a couple of cats came diving in,
I told him to throw at them the excluded extra parts,
And they are behaving like crazy
With these leftover cut portions of the fishes.
The street cats, dogs, crows,
And even the giant ants.
This fish seller,
He is cutting 6kgs of fish and still praying to Lord Almighty for me.
The glass of my specs are turning foggy.
What will I write?

Life is still painting a canvas on its own -
In the distance, the falcons are disappearing in the sky amidst the clouds
Again they are appearing
Will I write more?
Or shall I write about this poor man’s lifestyle?
The poor rickshaw pullers, fish sellers, vegetable sellers
The street animals are with burning hunger
What will I write, I’m thinking
And tears are rolling down off my eyes.

What will I write 10

What will I write?
I spent across fifty springs of life-
Night after day,
And day after night.
Breakfast, lunch, dinner,
They never changed.
My heart is still searching for beauty amidst this invariably.
I want to write on this
For some more time.

Or shall I write
About the pain of some of the cats and dogs of my locality,
Their food has decreased since the lockdown started
They have become thin,
I used to give them food on the street outside my house
After my meal,
Mixing the leftover rice and fish,
After some days some people of the locality objected ,
“You give them food and they come to eat,
Then they piss and excrete at that place only, everyday.
Stop this, you go to the ground if you want to feed them”
What will I write?

In the first place, I didn't believe in it.
Then I actually saw them doing the same
Almost everyday.
They either piss or excrete on that spot!
I stopped giving them food.
Even today afternoon and night I saw
The dogs are shouting sitting on the road,
The cats come running on me
As and when they see me.
The marks of hunger are prominent on their physique -
What will I write?

Lately, I am giving them some sweet balls

In a bit of a distant place.
They lick, eat and tears
Roll down their faces !
What will I write?

Life goes on,
Night after day,
And day after night.
Shall I feel this beautiful Earth?
Search the beauties amongst the ugliness?
Or shall I stare at the faces of
These hungry helpless animals?
Will I write the pathetic list of their miseries?
What will I write?I am thinking about more.

What will I write 13

What will I write?
I've been thinking for a long time.
It's midnight, I'm half-lying on the bed.
Mountains of gibberish imaginations
Are overflowing my brain.
I'm thinking of writing about the college life,
Chit chats of the canteen?
Or about my mother?
Nowadays mum doesn't smile at all
Doesn't even talk much
She's touching seventy
Takes sixteen to seventeen medicines a day-
That morning in the drawing room,
I sat beside mum,
"How are you mother?"
"Listen, let me tell you something...
So many things happen in our life,
Can't God do something like
Everybody will be as they are
No birth, no death!
It would've been great then, wouldn't it?"
I stared at mum's face
For a long time.
What will I write?

I'm thinking of writing about
The parents of my neighbour Dilip brother.
Both of them used to stay on the first floor.
Waking up early at 4 in the morning,
Uncle used to have a bath in cold water.
And with that his breaths used to be audible enough-
"What to do son, we don't have a geyser
I need to start cooking at 6am;
Your aunt has become very weak!"
They didn't have a geyser.
What will I write?

Aunty used to summon me whenever she saw me,
To take her to the doctor.
Their younger son was an established engineer.
He died due to road accident all of a sudden,
“Will you take me to a doctor, son?
Nobody takes me !”
I couldn't respond to her
While going to the office. .
Today none of them exist.
Succumbed by a busy lifestyle,
I couldn't stand beside an octogenarian lady.
What will I write?

While thinking, the night flows into dawn,
Sweet chirping of a couple of night birds,
I'm stuck on the bed
Amidst life and death.
College life, canteen, childhood, old parents,
Happiness, miseries - all are mixed up-
They hit me deep inside;
What will I write?
I have been thinking for the whole night.

What will I write 15

What will I write?
The evening has set in today,
It's drizzling outside-
I'm alone in the attic
Having tea and puffed rice and thinking,
What will I write?

I'm thinking of writing about
The son of brother Gopal .
In the junction of four roads,
He runs almost a broken shop of cigarettes and betel leaves,
From the morning he keeps on smoking in chain-
And coughs ;
I told him few days ago,
"You cough so much,
Still you smoke so much the whole day?
This way you will die very soon!"
He answered,
"I died inside when my father passed away
Nobody enters my shop.
My wife and kids shout on me
For money.
It's better to die than bearing this tension!"
Today also I saw while going,
He is staring at the road blankly
With the foggy specs and cigarette in his mouth.
What will I write?

In the junction of Narkelbagan,
The person sitting in the gate of the public toilet,
Is handicapped with a leg.
Beside is kept a scratch somehow fixed with ropes.
He takes two rupees from people
While they leave the washroom.
He was saying another person standing beside him,
"I work for twelve hours everyday
There's no day off.
I earn two hundred rupees a day.
No work, no pay.
Trying to raise up two daughters
Make them study,
If I don't come to work,

I'll die in hunger with them.
I try very hard to survive
In two hundred rupees for two people."
What will I write?

Will I write about nature now?
The drizzling rain outside on the tin shade,
I'm spending a carefree life-
Having tea and puffed rice,
So many people out there,
Die in stress of survival,
They die due to cardiac arrest-
They die due to cerebral attack-
Will I write about them?
With every sip of tea I'm thinking
What will I write?

Flowers

Please don't pluck the flower.
There's nothing called flower to worship,
God doesn't accept
God's gift to God's feet.
The man who is lonely with extreme depression,
Take him down a tree of Night Jasmine filled with flowers,
You'll find him quiet, at peace.
The man who's diagnosed with a hard incurable disease,
A garden of flowers,
Will ease his pain.
Please don't pluck flowers.
The people who stays hungry for a half of the day
Who sob in lonely darkness out of hunger,
Their tears of hunger will be wiped off
By a bunch of chrysanthemum and roses-
Bloomed on the side of the road.
God lets the flowers bloom,
To smear cure on their pain;
So friends, don't pluck the flowers.

Bireswarananda Memorial Home, Baruipur

Sarat passed away-
I saw in the media channels,
Sarat passed away,
The boy passed away due to malnutrition in the Baruipur home.
The seventeen year old boy didn't get food for many days-
The ones surviving, will die :
They are handicapped, can't talk clearly.
They haven't eaten fish, eggs, never seen meat .
A bowl of puffed rice in the morning,
Lunch with rice and very thin lentils soup,
Dinner with starvation.
Many have bent arms and legs,
Some have wounds in their whole body.
Their eyelashes are occupied by worms-
They sleep on the cold floor
Beside cats and dogs;
I saw in the TV -
The boy was having a guava eaten by a crow
"I usually have stomach pain, I haven't eaten for many days
If I don't eat this, I'll die
The Super slaps us if we ask for food
He beats us with a rod."
Succumbed to malnutrition, most of their bones are very much countable.
Only 24 rupees is catered for forty boys each day!
Still they are alive,
They are still alive even after not being able to eat till this day.
But surely they will die someday-
Any fine day:
So many boys like them
In utter winter,
Born like this and dies .
They die out of hunger,
They die out of cold,

In this dense forest of crowd,
Who cares for whom?
In this dense forest of crowd ,
Who really gets to care?
Alas!

Life is theirs too

Life belongs to me, and to them as well!
I stay in a high storied building, they in slums.
I have a present address,
And a permanent address as well.
They have a peaceful shelter with a seal of forceful occupation-
The edge of Dumdum rail line,
Or beside the Bagjola canal:
Life belongs to me, and to them as well!
I eat bread-cutlet,
A bit of salad and fruit juice,
Life has given them only pain.
They are soaked with sweat, working here and there-
Life belongs to me, and to them as well!
I write poems,
They make paper bags tearing the pages of poems.
I scribble on the pages in search of peace,
They tear the pages with utmost happiness,
And make paper bags, sell them.
They eat onions and soaked rice by selling them.
Life belongs to me, and to them as well!
In fear of life, nowadays,
I hide my face from the life-
They, in search of life
Are always leaning towards life.
Life belongs to me, and to them as well!

Natural

I was watching the lovely story standing at the Garia station.
The old lady must be in her eighties,
Four and a half or five years old a granddaughter-
The old lady from the pile of garbage by the side of the rail line,
Is finding plastic tea cups.
The granddaughter is putting them in the bag.
I don't know what will they do with the cups-
After collecting these cups for the whole day.
Earning five or ten rupees from them is also very hard;
But still, relentlessly they are stirring the wastes.
How unimaginable poverty has embraced them tightly!
Grandma is kneeling down and stirring the garbage to find out cups,
The five year old toddler has risen up on grandma's back-
Grandma is frequently swinging her on her back,
And searching cups in the garbage.
God knows what story is she murmuring -
Maybe the story of flying horses,
Colorful birds,
The little child has slept off embracing the neck long time ago:
The nature has overflown her love for them.
To whom the Almighty doesn't provide rice and bread,
Measures the cloth to cover shame,
He gives them peace of mind enormously-
Pours all the love for them-
They would've lost all hope if they didn't get that much:
Rising on grandma's back, hugging her neck,
Listening to the story of flying horses,
The child sleeps off;
Leaning downwards, grandma searches for the plastic cups
From the piles of garbage.
By her side, with smiling faces,
The white, red and blue forest flowers
Have bloomed in the bushes -
They are submerged in the intense touch of love.

Miles to go

Still many miles to go-
Still couldn't reach the soil;
Still couldn't kneel down to those mothers,
Whose oven has still not been lit up for cooking.
Still couldn't reach those school kids,
Whose day starts with the hope of a midday meal.
I've heard that many still live in that village -
They walk many miles to fetch drinking water.
Probably have seen people in the train
With their puffed rice, chilli, satisfied heart,
And their discussions,
That the darkness in their mother's eyes is still not removed -
Though it's yet to twilight,
I heard that mother's cataracts
Have still not been removed :

Still many miles to go.
Those brick ovens along the rail line,
Cooked rice and two half-rotten potatoes,
I couldn't taste them yet -
Sitting on the footpath being one of them.
Haven't slept in their hut,
Spreading a mat on the floor.
Haven't still understood
The boatman's anxiety,
For the news in the broken radio at 1am.
Maybe today also he won't be going to the mid-sea -
"Maybe today also my little darling won't sleep for burning hunger
Tomorrow again it's a Sunday, there won't be any midday meal."
Still haven't seen the face of the little darling -
Haven't seen removing the napkin from the nose,
That there also resides,
A man like me.
Haven't sat beside the girl,
Who collects food from dustbin,
Haven't asked her about her pain and distress :

So I know, even after crossing forty,
Many miles are still to go -
Many miles are still left to go.

Return gift to dad??

Is the pain for fathers only?
My day starts with an early morning breakfast
Freshly made sandwich or some tasty toast
My day starts with some playful moments
With my beloved daughter
Is the pain for my father only?

My air conditioned car is ready at sharp ten
I'm well dressed with a tie
Heading towards the car with my daughter
I'll drop her school and proceed to my college
I have a full on corporate schedule
Is negligence for my father only?

I want to win over the clock
All those greetings all over the day
My employees running behind me whole day long
I enjoy them a lot

It's 2 pm
I didn't notice when my father arrived
May have skipped his breakfast
But how does it matter to me?
Probably father's pressure today reached 200 by 100
But how does that matter to me?
He might have forgotten to take his medicine
Due to the work pressure
But I'm not quite bothered
I saw him having ginger slices
In the middle of the meeting
Maybe he was very hungry
But how does that matter to me?

Father finished the whole pack of cigarette
He bought in the morning
It seems he's tensed

An old man keeps working the whole day silently
At the corner of the college
To maintain the corporate status of his son
Forget it! How does it matter to me?

My day starts by dropping my beloved daughter
To her school
This is my daily routine
My very much favourite and affectionate routine
But today I'm not well
I am having chest pain and legs are also badly aching
Still I boarded the car with my daughter
My very much favourite and affectionate routine
My daughter stays very quiet inside the car
She doesn't talk to me at all
She's playing video games in her mobile
The car is almost there
I whispered,
"Dear, I'm having chest pain
I'm feeling very sick"
Without taking off her eyes from the phone,
She replied,
" Let it be father,
How does that matter to me!"

The Aunt's House

Jyotsna's mother, our aunt
Used to live opposite to our house.
A fenced house with tin shade in 700sq ft of land,
Crowded in one room, stay
Six sons, two daughters and aunty herself.
Uncle passed away long ago
I was a toddler then-
Counted were the days in a year
When they could cook and eat.
Even if they cooked once in the day,
The other half of the day was spent in hunger-
How hard aunty used to work
To feed and clothe her eight children somehow!
Someday it was the lack of coal that they couldn't cook,
Some other day it was the lack of rice.
On some other day again, in spite of having coal and rice,
They don't have anything to eat with.
Only some rice, salt, chillies and raw onions-
This was their meal after staying hungry for two days;
Still they ate till they were full.
If sometimes they had a very good menu,
It consisted of Rice-Lentils-Smashed potatoes.
As I grew up,
Gradually all of them got married and separated from their mother-
Eight children started having their own family,
All of them left aunty.
Aunty was badly struck by poverty.
She didn't have food, mostly fasted,
But her family was filled with the presence of her children
Today aunty is alone-
Slender physique ,
In malnutrition, the bones of her body can be well counted:
None of the eight children had the time yet,
None of them had the leisure to visit their mother.
Later, aunty was diagnosed with abdominal disease.

After prolonged illness, aunty passed away in Bangur hospital-

The house is now lying there like a skeleton.

The sons nowadays visit sometimes;

The second one came and went away with the tin shade,

The youngest has taken away the fences,

I saw the eldest one pulling off the bamboo poles.

The whole house is absent today-

The remains of aunt's house,

Is standing undressed like the whole family:

Shame!

The man was crossing the road,
Near the Netaji Nagar bus stand ,
With the support of his two hands, pulling along his body-
The man was crossing the road
Wearing a dark black shirt with numerous holes and a half pant,
Gangrene has eaten up his two foot;
Hasn't cut his hair beard since at least ten years:
My elder brother was with me,
Looking at him, he said, " it's better to die than be in so much pain,"
I don't support this statement,
But trust it's not possible to explain with words
The picture of his misery.
Whatever i write,
I can't even write 1 percent of his pain.
No person within 20 feet around him
Can move ahead a bit.
So much foul a smell and wounds are there in his body,
Even after accepting everything, there lies a question -
Is the man out of the society?
In front of everyone, in broad daylight,
Being like a rotten molten dead body
In a total treatmentless condition,
That helpless person , supporting on his hands
Was crossing the road without any expression-
Me too standing in a safe distance,
Was watching the man with immense attention, maybe
Was searching for another character for a poem
Can the job be done just by writing?
Only blaming the society?
Am I too out of the society?
Could I not have done anything for the man?
Maybe this is only called societal degradation
Shame!

Give us a Bread

I saw the man in the light of the setting twilight,
Hammering on the wooden fence stick-
One stroke, two strokes, strokes one after another,
The crazy middle-aged man was repeatedly
Looking at the red-yellow sun at the west sky-
The evening was setting in by the side of the bypass in a stormy speed,
Deep darkness is more darkened inside his heart.
Today also he wouldn't be able to finish all his works:
With the sound of the contractor, the crying heart
Seems to reach the throat and again get lost.

“Sir, I've not yet finished, please give me a hundred bucks
I'll buy wheat, sir I need to buy vegetables,
Eight stomachs are waiting at home,
Please give me a hundred rupees today”.
It's not twilight anymore, dark new moon
Has smeared clouds of darkness on the sky of Bypass,
Bearing the tired body towards home,
Feels like one familiar dead body at the door.
“It was a sin for my children to be born on my land”
Shame, disgrace and fear in his indistinct voice,
“Is there not a single bread in my luck?”
The person wakes up before the sun rises
Leaves home in a rush,
He runs and crosses familiar lanes and streets.
Far, very far wants to go the mind and body-
Where the voices of the sons and daughters
Won't reach for sure.

Waking up, they will start shouting,
“Father, father,
Give us a bread father”.

When Shall the Hunger End?

They still come to me
With their empty stomach,
And dejected gaze filled with
Unseen tears :
My sisters are still forced to unpleasant business ;
Forced by the burning hunger.
And I still live in the dreams of a full meal day.
So those gatherings make me ask,
When shall the hunger end?
All I get are fake promises,
Heavy words-
They shower over my restless heart.
And those empty, distraught eyes
Keep me asking,
"How long shall we starve?"

The Heart

When this heart
Flies off through the window with the gusty wind,
And escapes away,
Mixes with those crowd of lads;
In the knee length mudwater
And searches for the small fishes,

When this heart
Wears on the waist
A checkered towel blue and red,
Sets a trap in the paddy firm
And waits,
Gets inside the chest length water
Wrapping up the cloth
As a village girl -
Removes the water hyacinth with bamboo log,

When this heart
Watches the train boggies with awe,
Closely along the side of the paddy field,
Runs real fast,
And crosses the fields, ponds and forests
And
Runs behind the torn kites-
When this heart
Craves for a can of soaked rice and onions
In the leisure of busy afternoons,
Then,
This heart
Draws a hut, its doors and windows
In the sketch book -
Then
This heart

Runs out of the window,
And takes a pause behind the gusty wind,
And gets mad
In the pages of the sketch book.

Give me Back

You can be a rebel, O City,
But I want my solitude back.
You be the witness of thousands of those rallies,
Or arouse the roaring cheers
From the cafes of gatherings :
That's fine
I need my solitude back.

You can be rough like a stone-
I need my emotions back.
If you can't soothe the sweat of your well-dressed people,
And embrace them with a cool breeze,
That's really fine
Just give me my emotions back :

O City, you can be biased to any specificity-
I need my neutrality back.
The rich may worship you
And the poor may curse -
There's no harm ;
I just need my introspection back.

You can be a princess, my City,
I just want the blue sky back:
You can dress up with the placards and banners of advertisements,
Or be an angel of beauty -
I just need the blue sky back.

O City, you may be an artist's canvas -
I'm really not bothered :
But let my child inhale fresh air
And feel the pure raw sunlight.

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