

# Lifelong Search for Home

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*Collected English Poems of Ved Prakash Vatak*

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Edited by  
Kira Hall



# **Lifelong Search for Home**

## **Collected English Poems of Ved Prakash Vatuk**



***Silence is Not Golden***

(1969)



***Waiting for the Curtain To Fall***

(1978)



***Between Exile and Jail***

(1978)



***Poems of Unkinship***

(1981)



***Meeting Like Waves***

(1978)



***Thinking of You***

(1979)



***ikkatīs prem kavītāē / 31 Love Poems***

(2005)



## Original Volumes

Vatuk, Ved Prakash (1969). *Silence Is Not Golden*. Kanpur: All India Federation of Educational Associations.

Vatuk, Ved Prakash (1978). *Waiting for the Curtain To Fall*. Berkeley: Thorp Springs Press.

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# Contents

|                                                               |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Editor's Introduction .....                                   | ix    |
| Author's Note .....                                           | xxiii |
| Silence Is Not Golden .....                                   | 1     |
| Waiting for the Curtain To Fall .....                         | 69    |
| Between Exile and Jail .....                                  | 109   |
| Poems of Unkinship (excerpted) .....                          | 143   |
| Meeting Like Waves .....                                      | 253   |
| Thinking of You .....                                         | 281   |
| <i>ikkatis prem kavitaẽ</i> / 31 Love Poems (excerpted) ..... | 337   |
| About the Editor .....                                        | 365   |



# Editor's Introduction

## Between Unjust Worlds: The English Poems of Ved Prakash Vatuk

Kira Hall

Not all poets view poetry as a medium for political critique, but for Ved Prakash Vatuk — folklorist, linguist, essayist, and author of over thirty internationally recognized volumes of poetry in both Hindi and English — poetry is the ideal vehicle for speaking out against social injustice. The power of Vatuk's artistry lies in his ability to harness poetic form to convey the complexities of social inequality, whether arising from war, racial discrimination, labor relations, or even relational intimacy. As a citizen of the world who never felt fully at home in any one place, Vatuk found in poetry a foothold to express his increasing disillusionment with the political worlds of India and the United States as he moved between them. *Lifelong Search for Home* is the first anthology focused exclusively on the poems Vatuk has written in English, bringing together seven now out-of-print volumes of poetry published by Indian and US publishers between 1969 and 2005. The title of this anthology is meant to highlight the ambiguity of belonging that frames Vatuk's broader oeuvre and lurks behind each poem appearing in this collection.

Few Hindi poets share the recognition that Vatuk has received over the course of his life. These achievements are even more extraordinary given the depth of political critique found in his aesthetics. Described by Hindi literary critic and prolific author Indu Prakash Pandey (2020) as *sātnik ākroś kā jan-kavi* 'a people's poet of pure anger', Vatuk has never been afraid to take on controversial topics when social justice is at issue. This point is made abundantly clear by the writers, academics, and critics who have contributed

essays to the two major festschrifts so far devoted to his work (Dixit 2020; Hall 2009a). In 1997, the Uttar Pradesh government's Hindi Sansthan honored Vatuk as the first recipient of the highest award granted to overseas Hindi writers, the 'Pravasi Bharatiya Hindi Sahitya Bhushan Samman'. In 2004, the Hindi Sansthan again honored Vatuk with the 'Jaishankar Prasad Award' for his epic *bāhubali*, a poetic rewriting of a Jain scriptural narrative that portrays the crucial role played by ordinary citizens in preventing war.

Both awards reflect Vatuk's aura as a true people's poet, one unafraid to challenge forms of injustice that persevere across time and space. Readers aware of the longstanding precarity surrounding Hindu-Islamic relations in India may see the novelty in a Hindi poet receiving recognition from the American Federation of Muslims from India (AFMI) for promoting communal harmony, an honor granted to Vatuk in 1996 at the organization's all-America conference in Los Angeles. But Vatuk is a poet whose advocacy for social justice knows no borders, just like the human rights violations he writes about. His support of Hindi education in India has always been positioned against English imperialism, never succumbing to the nationalist, anti-Muslim ideology that motivates so much of the contemporary Hindutva movement. In fact, as a scholar of literature, Vatuk has been instrumental in bringing attention to India's linguistic and literary diversity. A founding member of the Panjabi Sahitya Sabha as well as the Bazm-e-Adab Literary Association of Urdu Literature, Vatuk's contributions in this regard include his writing of the first ever Panjabi textbook, his publication of two poetry books in the style of Urdu ghazals, his translations of the revolutionary Panjabi poet Pash (1950-1988), and his participation in dozens of Urdu poetry readings involving prominent poets from India and Pakistan. As Vatuk himself made clear when receiving AMFI's honor, he deplores bigotry of all kinds, whether coming from Hindus, Muslims, or Sikhs.

Vatuk's poetic activism has humble origins, emerging in his childhood in a village far removed from the whirl of life found in the closest neighboring city of Meerut. Born in 1932 into a volatile political climate fifteen years before India won its independence, Vatuk spent much of his childhood attending the functions of the early Arya Samaj with his father Krishna Lal (1886-1941) and older brother Sunder Lal (1906-1988), a freedom fighter who had been jailed three times in the fight for Indian independence before Vatuk



was even born. The youngest of 13 children, Vatuk found inspiration in the calls for social change that were embedded in the reform movement's bhajans (devotional songs), especially those supporting the inclusion of lower castes in worship and education. Vatuk's first poems were composed in the style of these bhajans. In the fifth grade, he renounced his caste name and adopted the penname 'Vatuk' — a name whose very derivation reflects his belief in the potential of 'small' voices to challenge structures of power. The name is taken from a passage he had come across in his school textbook, a couplet from the Tulsidas Ramayana describing the auspicious aftermath of a rainstorm:

दादुर धुनि चहुँ दिसा सुहाई ।  
बेद पढ़हिं जनु बटु समुदाई ।

dādur dhuni cahū disā suhāī ।  
VED paḍhahī janu VAṬU samudāī ।

From all sides the pleasant chirping of frogs,  
Like a community of children reciting the Vedas.

Foreshadowing the attention to textual detail that motivated his later work in academia as a linguist and folklorist (see Hall 2007a, 2007b), Vatuk extracted from this passage a penname representing the person he would become: not the elite student of Vedic-Brahmanical tradition, but the 'small student' ('vaṭu' plus the diminutive suffix '-k') of the everyday social and political world that surrounded him. In 1951 Vatuk earned his Prabakhar qualification in Hindi through Punjab University, and in 1952, after earning the Dhandevi Kapoor Medal for attaining highest marks in an examination taken by over 10,000 students, he received his BA degree from Agra University in the subjects of English, Hindi, Sanskrit, and Political Science. The same year, he independently acquired the Sahitya Ratna qualification from the Hindi Sahitya Samelan, earning the fourth position in the entire country, and in 1954 he received his MA degree from Agra University in Sanskrit. By the time he graduated, he had published so many essays in respected venues that he was exempted from the PhD — only the second such case in the history of Agra University. He has now published some 500 essays in over 100 different newspapers and

magazines, many of them focused on the social injustices he witnessed around him and the bravery of those who had the courage to disagree.

Vatuk's study of literature affirmed his belief in the power of the pen to confront social inequality. But it also ignited his fascination with the resistant language practices of ordinary folk, whether located in the work songs of sugarcane workers in Western Uttar Pradesh (Vatuk 1979a), the folk songs of East Indians in British Guiana (Vatuk 1963, 1964), or the protest songs of the diasporic Gadar Movement in early twentieth century California (Vatuk 1998, 2002a, 2006, 2022a, 2022b, 2023). His life as an intellectual nomad moving between the worlds of India, England, and the United States can be traced to research interests such as these, which led to associations with London University, Harvard University, University of Chicago, San Jose State University, University of Colorado Boulder, and University of California Berkeley. But the racism and xenophobia he witnessed in these locations erased any optimism he may have felt when he first boarded a ship to London in the mid-1950s. His vantage point as a scholar moving between worlds enabled him to see parallels across systems of social inequality — in the divisive rhetoric used by governments to secure their rule, in the use of violence as a political weapon, in the actions that normalize racism and casteism as features of everyday life. But his neither-nor positionality also gave him the courage to write about these inequities. Over the next decades, Vatuk became a protest poet in his own right (see Hall 2009b, 2009c, 2020 for further discussion), publishing over thirty volumes of poetry in both English and Hindi as he searched for a better, more just, home.

Vatuk's first book of Hindi poems was published in 1965 by a renowned publisher in Varanasi. Composed during his years in London and titled *trividha* (Three Streams), the collection is comprised of Hindi poetry in three different styles, with the last section featuring lyrics designed to be sung. The book includes his first attempt toward what would become many epics dealing with themes of social injustice: a poem of 256 lines titled *vaidehī kī agni parīkṣā* (Vaidehi's test by fire). The composition was inspired by a poem written by his older brother Ram Nivas Vidyarthi (1927-2013), a Vedic scholar known for his translation of the Samaveda, the Bhagavad Gita, and 11 Upanishads into Hindi poetry. It is this

brother who taught Vatuk how to write Hindi meters. His brother's poem, titled *vaidehi kā mahā prayāṇ* (Vaidehi's great departure), revisits the last moments of Sita's life as she underwent the test by fire ordered by Ram to prove her faithfulness. Vatuk's extension of this work, which he continued in his 2003 epic *uttar rāmkaṭhā* (The Later Life of Ram), offers a sympathetic reconsideration of the life of Ram as a prisoner of society. Why, his sons ask, would he rule over a people who remained silent when their mother, free of fault, was exiled to the forest? As with all of Vatuk's epics, the narrative raises questions about the brutality of war, its effects on the masses, and the codependency of imperialism and silence.

These same themes are found in Vatuk's first book of poems written in English, *Silence is Not Golden*, published in 1969. Vatuk never intended to write poems in English, but he felt compelled to do so after arriving in the United States in 1958 at the beginning of the civil rights era. He has always said that he writes poems when suffering, and what he saw around him during this period of US history gave him plenty of reasons to do so. In the 1960s, he published dozens of articles on American politics in Hindi venues such as *Hindustan*, *Navbharat Times*, and *Aaj Daily*, conveying to Indian readers the complexities of the civil rights movement, the free speech movement, the agricultural labor movement, the women's movement, and the anti-Vietnam war movement. *Silence is Not Golden* brought these perspectives into English poetry. Dedicated to his freedom fighting brother Sunder Lal 'who has always had the courage to speak out', the poems explore the reception of figures whose rebellious actions led to their own sorts of tests by fire, among them the Oakland Seven, whose small-scale protests against the Vietnam War led to imprisonment on conspiracy charges, and Leroy Eldridge Cleaver, an American writer and political activist whose conduct as an early leader in the Black Panther movement met with extreme controversy. In these poems, Vatuk often takes the voice of the American media that circulated around him — newspaper articles, legal judgments, words spoken by an acquaintance — as a means of exposing hypocrisy in the way of race relations. Many of the poems appearing in *Silence is Not Golden* had been previously published in the flagship magazine of the Peace and Freedom Party, a US political organization that grew out of the civil rights and anti-war movements. Vatuk was one of the cofounders of this organization in 1967, joining some 800 other delegates as the Party's only Indian member.

Vatuk published numerous books of poetry between 1975 and 1981, five of which were written in English and appear in this anthology. After the death of his mother Kripa Devi (1886-1971) in the early 1970s, he found in poetry an expressive medium for conveying the deeply emotional nature of his social critique. Beginning in 1972, Vatuk began to write poems 'like a mad man', as he describes it, completing at least one poem a day for the next several decades of his life, and often many more. *Waiting for the Curtain To Fall*, the second of Vatuk's English poetry books, was written during this period, its title conveying his growing sense of alienation from the theatre of social and political activity unfolding before him. A similar sense of alienation is seen in Vatuk's second collection of Hindi poetry *bandhan apne des parāyā* (Self-Chained in an Alien Land), also published in 1978, which again expresses the inner conflicts that come with living in an alien — and unjust — land.

Vatuk wrote the English poems appearing in *Between Exile and Jail* and *Poems of Unkinship* during the darkest chapter of his life. In 1975, India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency across the country, suspending civil and political rights for the next 21 months. On the first day of the Emergency, his beloved 70-year-old brother Sunder Lal was arrested along with 376 other activists and sent to solitary confinement in a Varanasi jail. While traveling between the United States and India to provide comfort to his brother and suffering family, Vatuk was forced to come to terms with the nature of his 'self-exiled life', as he came to call it. Published in 1978, *Between Exile and Jail* conveys the feelings of displacement that consumed him as he moved back and forth between two unjust worlds, a theme also central to the 1981 Hindi collection *lautnā ghar ke banvās mē* (Returning to Home Exile). Meanwhile, in the United States, his relationship with his wife was deteriorating without his knowledge, and after several months in India, he returned to find his home without her. *Poems of Unkinship*, reprinted here in excerpted form, was motivated by the bitter conclusion of this relationship. With a raw intensity that is often difficult to read, the poems appearing in this 1981 volume are like intimate diary entries, documenting the everyday emotional states arising from his wife's perceived betrayal. His Hindi collection *nilkanth ban na sakā* (Unable to Become Neelkanth), published the same year, also explores the agony brought about by failed intimacy, comparing relationships to the pain of drinking poison without the benefit of becoming Lord Shiva. Like much of Vatuk's work in

Hindi, the poems take their power from transposing historical religious texts to a modern context. This 1978 volume builds its aesthetics from the story in which Shiva consumed poison to save humanity from destruction, earning his name Neelkanth (Bluthroat).

Vatuk's international recognition as a poet gained its footing through the boldness of his political writings against the Emergency. At a time when Indian intellectuals both at home and abroad were afraid to speak out against the government, Vatuk did so openly, publishing essays in venues such as *India Abroad* and *San Francisco Examiner*. Literary critic Kamal Kishor Goenka, an expert on the Indian social fiction writer Premchand (1880-1936) as well as Hindi writers living and born outside of India, called Vatuk 'the sole Indian writer living abroad who dares to write and speak freely'. This boldness also surfaces in the literally thousands of Hindi poems Vatuk wrote during this period, some of which were published shortly after the Emergency's conclusion in two volumes dedicated to the topic: *kaidi bhai, bandi des* (Jailed Brother, Imprisoned Nation) and *āpāt śatak* (One Hundred Poems of the Emergency). The latter volume was hailed by scholar and journalist Ved Pratap Vaidik (2020) as 'a lion's roar of virility' — a comment underscoring not just the power of Vatuk's political poetry but also his bravery in bringing it to the public. In 1980 Vatuk published *ek būnd aur* (One More Drop) as his crowning accomplishment in this troubled, yet productive, period of his life. In the book's foreword, renowned Indian writer and revolutionary S. H. Vatsyayan 'Agyeya' (1911-1987) wrote that Vatuk 'had reached the height of full achievement as a poet, with his poems covering the joy and pain of a villager and a city sophisticated person everywhere'. It is rare for a poet to find this kind of universal appeal, but Vatuk's work succeeds by drawing deeply on his own experiences as a villager gone global. Writers and critics like Shri Narayan Chaturvedi (1985-1990), Ramkumar Verma (1905-1990), Harivansh Rai Bachchan (1907-2003), and Kanhiyalal Mishra Prabhakar (1906-1995) all praised the book publicly, with Prabhakar even comparing one of Vatuk's poems to the work of the celebrated Bengali poet and social reformer Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941).

The final three collections of poems reprinted in this anthology were motivated by love rather than strife. Vatuk's turn to love marks a new stage in his writing of English poetry, one that contrasts with his continued focus on social justice issues in his Hindi work. When

the Emergency was lifted and his brother was released from prison, Vatuk left his broken American home and moved to India to join his brother in working on the upcoming election. Eight months later he returned to California and began teaching Hindi at San Jose University, where a student helped him found the Berkeley-based Folklore Institute. The collections *Meeting Like Waves* (1978) and *Thinking of You* (1979) are inspired by that collaboration. Vatuk immersed himself in this editorial venture as he struggled to move forward from heartbreak, finding solace in a new form of intimacy. As a folklorist himself, Vatuk had two complementary aims in founding the Folklore Institute: first, to bring theories of folklore to Indian scholars, and second, to publish writings about India by scholars in the United States. Once again global in outlook, the venture was successful, leading to the publication of 16 books authored by leading anthropologists and folklorists in North America. The love poetry that he wrote during the Institute's early years, framed in sweetness and gratitude, can be read as a counter to the fierce anger expressed in *Poems of Unkinship*.

It would be 24 more years before Vatuk would publish a collection involving poems in English, this time in the bilingual volume *ikattis prem kavitaē / 31 Love Poems*. Still living between India and the United States, Vatuk released this collection in 2005 to celebrate the arrival in India of his son Jai with his friend Tiffany, who is named in the book's dedication. The expressions of love that fill its pages, many demonstrating a heightened awareness of death's approach, again suggest a very different Vatuk from the one whose reputation was forged in social and political critique. Yet what remains consistent in this work, as seen in the first poem that opens the collection, is Vatuk's belief in the importance of each small moment to the way human action is received by future generations.

Eternity always  
Filters down  
Through moments  
We become immortal  
We die eternally  
By not living  
Even one instance  
Let me live it  
With each and all  
Loves.

*Ikattis prem kavitaē / 31 Love Poems* remains Vatuk's only published collection involving English poetry since 1981, and even these poems appear to be translations of the original Hindi. But given the intimate interrelationship between Vatuk's work in English and his work in Hindi, as demonstrated throughout this introduction, this discussion would be incomplete without mention of the many prominent Hindi collections he published from the 1980s forward. In 1989, Vatuk released the collection *sahasrabāhu* (Person with a Hundred Arms) featuring 101 poems dedicated to his brother's memory on the first anniversary of his death. His two ghazal collections *bāhō mē līptī dūriyān* (Distances Wrapped in Arms) and *ādmī aī bhī samasyā hai* (Man Is a Problem Even Today), published in 1994 and 2009 respectively, explore social and political injustice through the theme of a broken, selfish relationship. The collection *anugūnj* (Echo), published in 1996, features devotional songs written as music compositions. Set to music and recited by classical singers such as the Berkeley-based Hindustani vocalist Rita Sahai, these songs are notable for their dedication to love and humanity rather than a specific god. His 2000 collection *itihās kī cikḥ* (The Cry of History) also experiments with form, this time utilizing blank verse, lyrics, gazals, four-line muktaks, and alternating meters to express the full range of political, social, cultural, and political feeling. Within its pages is found one of Vatuk's most famous works, a seven-stanza poem whose refrain *maī nahī mantā* (I do not accept) is widely known and recited by Indians at home and abroad for its condemnation of communal violence. The theme of interethnic conflict likewise informs his 2007 collection *mānvatā kā aranya rodan* (Humanity's Cry in the Wilderness), which includes poems on the tragedies of 9/11 and Kashmir as examples of the tragedy of the human condition more broadly.

Of all Vatuk's poetry contributions, however, his epics in Hindi have consistently received the most acclaim. His first epic *bāhubali* (Bahubali), mentioned at the outset of this introduction, features his most beloved character, the Jain hero Bahubali, son of the religion's founder, who renounced the throne after defeating his brother. Paralleling the themes that Vatuk embraces in his poetry, Bahubali fought against imperialism, power mongering, and expansionism while declaring that no one — neither human nor god — can provide salvation. In his second epic, *uttar rāmkaṭhā* (The Later Life of Ram), Vatuk turns to the Ramayana to describe the agony brought

about by Ram's attempts to satisfy his subjects but never succeeding, as with his decision to exile Sita to the forest. His third and longest epic, *abhisapta dvāpar* (Dvapar: The Cursed Age), written while still in the United States and published in 2007, revisits the characters in the Mahabharat to find them all cursed and wrapped in selfishness. Reviewers have described its 300-page narrative as gripping and enthralling to read. The accomplished poet and devout reader Basant Singh Bhurang (1919-2008), a freedom fighter who was jailed with Vatuk's brother, wrote that he read it through the entire night without once putting it down: 'I have not read such an epic in the last fifty years'.

In 2011, Vatuk gave up his home in the United States and went to live with his extended family in the city of Meerut. On his way out of the country, he donated to the archives at the University of California, Berkeley more than 30 volumes of his diaries and over 100 blank books filled with poems. While living in India for the next two years, Vatuk wrote his fourth and final epic, *aur ēsā maratī rahā* (And Jesus Kept Dying), published in 2013. With this publication, Vatuk's talent as a bilingual poet writing between two unjust worlds came full circle, turning the selfishness of Christian history into the subject of an epic written in Hindi. Composed of 27 well-researched chapters and described by Vatuk as the most difficult of the four to write, this capstone epic offers a powerful critique of the violent history of crimes conducted by empire in the name of Jesus — a figure whose teachings on social justice, in Vatuk's view, have been distorted and debased by political leaders across the centuries.

Now 91 years of age and still living in Meerut, Vatuk has written some 45,000 poems in Hindi and 4700 poems in English over the course of his lifetime. Any poet who has attempted to write in a language other than that of their youth knows how challenging it is to develop facility in the aesthetics of a second language. In the author's note that follows this introduction, Vatuk, in characteristic humility, suggests that 'even if one line or one poem is liked by one reader, I am satisfied'. Certainly, this anthology provides many lines and poems that will be liked by its readers. Vatuk offers a way of seeing the world that is often unexpected. His early English work turns the poetic lens onto the everyday injustices that persist precisely because they go unnoticed; his later work draws attention to the everyday intimacies that counter political and personal despair. But the anthology also contributes a perspective that goes far beyond



the likings of any one individual. Vatuk is a bilingual protest poet whose lifework depends on his contextualized experiences in both India and the United States. For English readers, the poetry republished in this anthology gives a glimpse into the mind and work of one of the most respected Hindi poets in contemporary India. For readers interested in Vatuk's Hindi poetry, the anthology is essential reading for understanding the sociopolitical critique that lies behind his broader oeuvre. Poetry and politics are not normally encountered together, but for Vatuk, a people's poet in search of belonging, they are inseparable.

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*Lifelong Search for Home*

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# Author's Note

*bāt boleḡī, ham nahī*

Let words speak, not me

When a dear admirer friend Arifa Avis, a young energetic novelist, editor, and publisher, decided to reprint my dozens of Hindi poetry books in a few volumes, a thought came to mind that my seven volumes of English poems could also be brought out in one single volume, as all these books are out of print. My dearest friend Professor Kira Hall, who edited and published my academic work in a single volume, agreed to do the job. She also asked me to write a few words about this collection.

I never plan to write a poem or poems at a given time or place. It is when I cannot control my emotions that a poem or poems burst out of my heart — any time, any place, even in a dream. The pain of these uncontrollable emotions can be related to my personal agony, to a national or international cry, or to bleeding humanity. It can be a cry of my beloved nation or any other country reeling under oppression, of humanity crying in the wilderness, that brings out a poem. Heart takes over mind.

Most of my English poems were written in the United States, which is natural, as the subject matter relates to the situation there. Whether they are good or bad, they represent my feelings honestly. And even if one line or one poem is liked by one reader, I am satisfied. When great poets remain silent on the agony of humanity, a little poet has to speak, like a candle in the darkness, where there is no sun or moon.

I am grateful to Arifa and Kira for their love and faith in me.

*Ved Prakash Vatuk*

Meerut

February 12, 2023

*Lifelong Search for Home*



**Silence Is Not Golden**



1969



MAY we be fearless of our friends,  
And even of those who are unfriendly to us,  
May we never fall in dread of whom we know  
And even of those whom we do not know;  
May we remain free from any apprehension by night and  
in the daytime,  
And may all the beings residing in various quarters be  
friendly to us.

— *Atharva Veda 19-18-6*

Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.

— *Motto on Thomas Jefferson's Seal*





With unbound respect and great devotion  
Dedicated to  
My brother  
**Sunder Lal Ji**  
Who  
has always had the courage to speak out.

## Author's Preface

Something happened to me in mid-September this year. I got sick. While I lay in bed, I felt lonely and restless. I griped. These gripings were shed on paper for the next two and a half weeks. That is how I “wrote” these “poems.” Since these poems are concerned with a lot of things you and I share and suffer from, here they are before you now — to like, to dislike, and to gripe along with. Sometimes the state of the world seems to be so hopeless. However, I bother you with these lines in the hope that there is still time to make this world better. After all, despite all the space exploration, this is the only planet we all have got.

Alan Charnow was the first regular victim of these gripings. He fulfilled the role of a captive audience so beautifully, while driving me to work, that he encouraged me to bring these poems out in printed form. If there is some doubt about the usefulness of my action in doing so, he has to share part of the blame. Part of the blame also goes to Lillian Lehman who was enthusiastic enough to type all of them with sharp eyes to catch unclear points. The rest of the fault lies with Phil Cranston, who was kind enough to go over some of them, and despite his not so good health, suggest many improvements. Needless to say, I am grateful to all of them.

— *Ved Prakash Vatuk*  
Berkeley  
October 20, 1968

# 1

Unlike the calm before the storm  
I write an epilogue  
Of a stormy love  
Fierce, burning, and unbound.  
Now that the storm is gone,  
All that remains are hot ashes.  
The love is burnt  
But desire burns.

# 2

Yes, friend, we do have a form of nationalism  
That we love and try to live —  
Eulogize the foreigners  
For whom we sweat our blood  
So they can tell us  
What is wrong with our nation  
And continue bitter condemnation  
Of our own kind  
Who toil in heat and cold  
To build our hopes and complete our dreams.  
So we can have a mind  
To despise and hate them.

— *For an Indian writer*

3

Like the mountain snow  
My heart scattered itself in love  
Fresh, virgin and naked.  
The world of skiers came  
Covered with clumsy clothes  
And heavy boots  
Sharp skis, tied in iron chains  
Barbed poles  
Trampling all over.  
When they went away  
There remained but a muddy slope  
Of life  
Slippery and hard.

4

Come!  
Lie next to me  
Naked.  
Let the silence talk  
About what remains unsaid.  
Let the heart-beats imprint  
The story not yet told.

5

My life — a half burnt cigarette  
Present — clouds of smoke  
Past — ashes of a dream dirtying the floor  
The remaining butt to be thrown out.

## 6

Love —  
Fulfilling one-self  
But emptying inside out  
Surrendering completely  
Only to win.<sup>2</sup>  
Stripping naked with nothing to hide  
Only to remain covered in mystery  
When 'I' becomes 'thou'  
And 'thou' is lost  
Leaving nothing but nothingness  
And from nothingness  
Springs a creation  
Unique and perfect.  
Losing oneself  
Only to be found  
Like a lost dream — sweetest and perfect —  
Everywhere and ever new.

## 7

"Truth is neither black nor white"  
What a consolation to know that  
And they keep reminding me  
Like a child who should be reminded  
Every morning what he has to do.  
Yes, truth is neither black nor white  
It is grey.  
Like early morning fog  
Over San Francisco Bay  
Covering both the sun and the ground.  
Truth is neither the sun nor the ground  
It is the fog.  
The truth is the water pollution  
Air pollution, and the smoke  
Which flies

*Lifelong Search for Home*

From the chimneys of oil companies  
The real free enterprise.....  
If you have nothing but sun and fresh air,  
We will export you some truth  
We believe in free trade, you know,  
And we have a surplus of all things  
Chemicals, mace, tear gas  
And if that is not enough  
We have big crafts to carry the bigger things.  
We will defoliate your thick jungles and fields alike  
And cover your grounds and skies with truth.  
It is our generosity, our humanitarian instinct  
That makes us send our finest blood  
Abroad  
To teach these pinkos, coolies  
Pale, red, yellow and brown  
Who can't realize the white man's burden  
— and thus can't understand reality —  
We have a monopoly on Gospel too,  
We will penetrate somehow into your skull  
Even if we have to break it,  
The larger the smoke  
The larger the confusion  
The closer the truth.  
And someday like the face  
Behind the halloween mask  
Maybe even we will realize the truth  
When we, like others,  
Will also become part of the largest greyish world  
And achieve Nirvana  
The truest of all.  
Along with all those whom we teach.

## 8

Halloween is coming  
I don't have to wear my face as a mask now  
I will have a mask to hide it  
And will become the real me behind it.  
Since the mask gives me the liberation  
Of being me  
I don't have to debate any more  
Should the world treat me with all that  
They have  
Or should I trick them  
Into annihilation!

## 9

When no one means us harm for us to hate  
And love our system cannot afford;  
When courage to fight is no more a virtue  
And manliness to cease fire we can't muster;  
Our plans to win get drowned in the ocean  
And our bloodied face is too precious to lose;  
We can't cross the barriers of cultures to communicate  
And to keep our mouths shut — we never learned;  
Then we are the natural diplomats  
To solve the problems of the world  
Which we create but cannot grasp.

## 10

My heart bleeds  
I shake and tremble  
To see the gradual martyrdom  
Of Peasants and poor  
From those torn lands  
Which wish us no harm  
But whom we give glory  
And sainthood —  
Like those upon whom we bestowed it before,  
After they were burnt alive  
Or nailed to the cross,  
That is the only Christian way we know.  
I have a plan  
Which would stop  
The cross from burning  
But if I revealed it to the world  
The world would die of boredom  
And wouldn't even have the benefit  
Of eternal sainthood.



# 11

It is only a child  
Who says, "I am sorry"  
And tries not to repeat a mistake.  
It is only a man  
Who cheats  
But if caught  
He can be brought to justice  
And stand corrected.  
It is only a leader  
Who when caught red-handed  
Denies his presence altogether  
And a million times his words resound,  
Are heard, printed and read all over  
Until the world begins to believe  
And nod in agreement  
That he is after all  
A real swell guy  
Truly fit to be the leader of the Free World.

## 12

I am burning here with fever  
Like a lone half-dead shrub  
On a deserted Mediterranean sand-isle  
Burning in a mid-day heat,  
For whom time seems to have stopped,  
Or like the hands of the watch  
On the wrist of a traveller flying westward  
For whom time's hands have been pushed back.  
There is no one to soothe  
No tender touch  
For when in misery  
One ought to be left alone  
Except if you can't bear it  
Put the wretched to rest  
Methods are not important  
Loneliness — is the sickness  
Of civilization  
When one can only talk  
Into a small box set in big boxes  
Where one lives.  
One does not seem to bear the human voice  
And yet, one can't stand the dead quiet of the boxes  
Even the closest —  
Especially the closest —  
Can never pour out  
His real self, his true emotions  
Emotions are the last thing  
The computers  
Or the Society (they tick  
Under the crushing wheels :  
Of law and order)  
Can understand.  
You have to be practical, boy,  
The head shrinker has to live too,  
You know.

If you want to talk —  
Especially of emotions and misery —  
Someone has to listen  
And if someone has to listen  
He ought to be paid  
For time is money  
Last thing to be wasted.  
Company does come —  
They will keep coming  
They will click their glasses  
Filled with their favorite drinks  
Standing cozily next to the dim fireplace —  
How romantic!  
And they will talk  
Of lofty things  
From here to eternity  
Intellectually and intelligently  
But don't bring real life  
Don't bring emotions into it. .  
Emotions are a drag —  
Plain bore.  
If one has to  
He should simply despise the poor  
And his suffering  
Especially if he is seven oceans away  
Thinking every minute of  
Creating new markets  
For future commodities.  
So burn, baby, burn  
And let the scorpion of civilization bite you  
But be calm, don't say a word  
Otherwise there are snakes  
To put you to rest  
Quietly forever.

## 13

I am an armchair historian  
And like the temperature  
Of this air-conditioned room  
I want history to be an exact science  
So don't ask me to get all upset  
About what is happening today  
In this world  
From the jungles of Asia  
To the stockyards of Chicago.  
I have to wait  
To research objectively  
And pass judgment  
Fifty years hence  
If humanity still exists  
And cares to listen.

## 14

My grandfather was a Republican  
So was my father  
And so am I.  
Don't ask me why  
Because questioning is unpatriotic  
And asking for a change  
Is nothing less than subversion.

## 15

A savage man, a primitive man  
A true believer of the faith,  
He killed a boy  
To satisfy his Goddess  
(Who loved the tender blood of unspoiled species)  
And shocked the whole civilized world  
Which hanged him for his heinous crime.  
A noble man  
A civilized man  
A modern man  
Sent millions of boys  
“Our finest young boys”  
To honor his imaginary goddess —  
Some — ism or — acy —  
And built a memorial monument to their death  
So pleased humanity  
Elected him  
Its leader.

## 16

The South killed his parents  
They were for the union.  
The North killed him  
He was from the South.  
Isn't that justice?

No one knows why  
The ocean was restless  
And angry  
Determined to destroy  
The wealth of nature  
And the creation of man.  
No one knows why  
The mighty ocean was angry...  
Storm, cyclone and hurricane  
Boats sank, ships sank  
Villages with their streets  
And man-made beauty  
All sunk in the flood  
Washed away to the sea  
To fill the sea  
Which always remained unsatiated.  
Trees, plants and flowers  
Human existence in sight  
All faded and crushed  
All swept away.  
And the ocean became calm  
The darkness of death ruled all over  
As if the ocean wanted to go to sleep —  
Pacified by the victory  
Or dead with repentance —  
No one knows.  
And then  
He saw  
A tiny, helpless “straw”  
Floating on his chest  
With joy of life  
As if to laugh at  
The might, the depth, the splendor,  
Making the blueness of the ocean  
Still bluer with shame.

## 18

Lying in a lowly ditch  
A little wretched straw hut  
Smiled one day  
And the palace nearby  
On the high ground  
Kissing the sky  
Was outraged.  
In an uncontrolled anger  
It roared,  
“How dare you!  
Right in front of me  
This uncouth behavior  
You of low breed!”  
And that roar  
Stunned the hut  
And silence fell on him  
Like death.  
But the quiet of helplessness  
Produced suffering  
And from that suffering  
Was born  
Collision of frustration.  
Two bamboo sticks  
Collided  
Sparks burst out  
Straws grabbed them like madness  
And turned into flames.  
The palace roared with laughter  
When a tiny spark  
Flew  
And defiantly sat on the roof of the palace,  
And lo and behold!  
There were ashes of the palace  
And there were ashes of the straw hut  
And they both mingled on the ground.

## 19

The child said, “Mommy,  
Isn’t that the bloody tyrant  
Against whom our President  
Sent my father to die  
To destroy his crummy little people?”  
“Hush” said the mother,  
“The President is speaking.”  
The child gazed at the TV screen  
Saw the smiling President  
And couldn’t believe his ears.  
“I welcome you, sir,  
The honorable leader of your fine people  
With whom we have no quarrel  
About land or money  
And with whom we want nothing  
But peaceful relations.  
I extend my friendly hand to you  
And wish you a happy stay.



## 20

If a tender motherly heart were transplanted  
Into the body of the occupant of the buildings  
That project and carry out war schemes  
Would the world shed some tears of joy  
Or the donor turn in her grave?

## 21

I make the laws  
And you obey them.  
I issue the orders  
You carry them out.  
Knowing your place  
Never once question  
That's all  
Law and order's about.

## 22

### CHICAGO CONVENTION '68 AND AN AMERICAN POET WORRYING ABOUT THE HUNGRY EAST

The sign on the stockyard  
Cried "pigs."  
Inside it  
They raised them  
Caring for them every minute  
Only to sacrifice to some delicate taste —  
As they were raising their children  
With great care and worry  
Only to feed them  
Like fodder to the mouths of guns  
So they could save the people  
Far away  
By bombing the houses  
In which they never lived  
And hated the thought of living.  
Inside the courtyard  
There were youths,  
Youths were unleashed and free,  
And like pigs when they are free  
They should be herded, controlled and slaughtered.  
While nearby surrounded by barbed wires  
Sunk in champagne bottles of victory  
They worried about the poor,  
The wretched, the miserable  
Who will see no clothes, no food, no shelter,  
Who will not go to school to rebel,  
They wanted to free them, to save them  
From someone, who might — just might — try to give them  
Food, clothing, shelter, and rebellion.  
Inside they sat  
Saving the world  
Inside they danced, they clapped with joy  
Because the war — their war — was declared legal, legitimate.

Killing was branded humanitarian  
Graveyards were adored as fields of peace  
The hero of peace jumped above  
While below the mace blinded the eyes of the young  
Who were raised with tender care  
With his drugstore around the corner  
Saving them from all danger  
Of new ideas.  
The streets flooded with blood  
Because they — the youths — made trouble  
Because they allowed their heads to be cracked  
Just like the pigs in the yard.  
They remained unarmed — the troublemakers —  
Just cried 'oink, oink'  
After their heads were split  
And their minds went blank.  
And the poets wrote  
About those far away  
Naked, bare, ugly, stupid  
Worms of the gutters.  
Loaded with fancy clothes  
They wrote about nakedness,  
Stuffed with food they did not need  
They wrote of hunger.  
In their refrigerated minds  
They kept the memories alive  
Filled with smoke and 'dirt'  
And they wrote  
Closing their eyes  
To what went on and on before them.  
Worried about a dream  
That someday those worms would swamp  
Their streets  
And would snatch away everything from them  
And would still remain hungry, filthy, and empty,  
The social scientists flew  
To those far away lands  
To find out  
Why progress was not made,  
Why farmers did not grow any food

*Lifelong Search for Home*

While they were bombed,  
Why people did not smile  
While their cities were destroyed  
In order to be saved.  
People were killed  
In order to be freed  
From some ghostly enemy.  
And the stockyard sign  
Which cried 'pigs'  
Now had arrows  
Pointing in every direction  
— Some child's stupid game, no doubt —  
Yes, pigs, here, there, everywhere  
Naked and clothed,  
Cared and not so cared for  
Fed and hungry  
Clean and dirty  
But all pigs in the end  
Meant for slaughter only.  
Kill, kill, and overkill  
To fill the skeleton pot of *Kali*.  
And the poet kept on writing  
Never lifting his eyes  
Even once  
Only the misery of his dreams  
And reality  
Which can only live  
Ten thousand miles away  
If not more.

## 23

We ignored him,  
We chided him,  
We hated him,  
We killed him.  
But his spirit — could we kill?  
Could we stop the wind which blew his words  
Far and near?  
Could we burn the cross where he is nailed?  
It sticks in our hearts  
And his blood shines on our hands  
Radiant  
But a reminder of an eternal shame.  
Guilt ridden, murderers as we are  
We are going to build him a temple,  
Two temples, millions of temples  
Where crosses will hang  
And we will worship his ghost.  
His voice will resound  
Arrested by the same mechanism which killed him  
And we will listen  
For our sins — we will worship  
While jailing his brothers,  
Violence will have its fill  
Blood will be shed  
Souls and bodies will be bound  
And like scores of messiahs  
Who fill our galleries  
We will worship him  
Whom we could not kill otherwise.

— *To the memory of the late Dr. Martin Luther King*

## 24

We hang our heads in shame  
When TV cameras glitter  
And humanity is too deeply shaken  
To notice much.  
So we can send more planes  
To bomb and kill.  
What more appropriate tribute can there be  
To honor a man of peace and love  
Than to wage war  
And create hatred  
Whose scars can never be erased!

— *On King's death*

## 25

Listen!  
O white brother of the highest peak of the mountain,  
A black, mean soul of the deep valley  
In the guise of a skeleton has come to speak to you.  
O you are advancing still  
On the snowy silvery surface decked with the golden rays of the  
Sun.  
I understand  
You are proud  
That your feet are untouched by dust  
That the dirt of blackness does not exist in your heart!  
But what kind of purity have you?  
If even the shadow of a corrupted one frightens you,  
And even the dream of dirt seems fearsome.  
And you have forgotten  
That you are high, that the mountain is high  
Only because I am low; the valley is low.

Well, wait! I am coming too.  
Maybe I will change  
By the touch of your virtue.  
What? No?  
Lest you may fall with me?  
Your virtue is unfortunate,  
Well, fear not. I will arrive there  
Even without your help,  
For I have to make the dust of my feet reach there.  
And when you will begin to fall because of your purity  
It will be my sin that will come forward to save you.  
And I will return to my awesome, deep, dark valley  
So that you may not see me  
And your virtue may proceed on, untouched and unafraid.  
Yet, still I must say one thing —  
If I failed to attain your heights  
If the valley fell short of the height of the mountain  
Then you, too, will be unable to touch my depths,  
The mountain, too, will fail to attain the depths of the valley.  
Then your soul and mine,  
The shadow of the mountain and the valley,  
Shall remain, for each other, an equal mystery  
Unsolved,  
Because evaluation of each direction  
And evaluation of each motion  
Is nothing  
But relativity!

## 26

I wonder how it feels  
To kill disarmed people  
Who never heard of us to hurt  
And then to complain about the smell of corpses  
And blood stained ground?  
I wonder how it feels to unskin the skinny  
And to strip the last cloth away from his back  
To be left on an island of riches  
Only to curse the ocean of poverty  
Where the ship of humanity is wrecked?  
I wonder how it feels to be fat  
And yet continue sucking the last drop of blood  
When the bones of a skeleton gaze on  
Only to be despised and hated?  
How does it feel to level mud huts to the dusty ground  
And build the palace on their ruins  
Only to cry about the dirt around?  
To be so clean  
That a speckle of dirt frightens us to death  
And yet reduce man to live in mud?  
How does it feel?  
Or does it?  
Or are we really not glad  
That our riches  
Our monopoly game  
Our glory, our fame  
Our culture, our theatres, poetry, our operas  
Our civilization  
Are built on that  
Which we abhor  
But don't want to end  
So that our riches, our fame  
May go on increasing  
And our merry-go-round life  
May continue to dance  
On the axis of deaths  
And we may keep on whining!



## 27

You have lost your way, boy,  
It is not your alley.  
Yes, you are free —  
(Freedom is never denied here)  
To stay in your ghetto  
And to love it  
As we are free to live, in beautiful sunny and green hills  
And love them.  
We don't want to visit your place  
Except for a little exploitation  
Now and then.  
And when you step out of your realm  
You forget to worship the white goddesses  
We created for you.  
The courts, the police, the White House.  
You became a terrorist.  
Who else  
Wants such subversive things  
As self-determination and self-control  
Freedom to make one's life  
And power for oppressed.  
We will do the same  
That we thought was fit for others  
Of your kind  
In far away lands.  
We will place some bombs in your homes  
And ship you to our jails  
To be well protected  
Until you regain your senses.  
We raped your women  
But that is an old tradition  
And you should be proud of our graciousness  
If your sister or mother was chosen.  
But if you ever look at our women,  
Even with admiring eyes,  
You are a rapist  
To be locked up forever,

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Your eyes taken inside out.  
We lynched your brothers  
That was merciful  
To save them from the life  
They never wanted to live.  
Ruling, and raping  
Lynching, and murder  
Are the few rights  
That we have.  
Obedience, and servitude  
Dutifully, and without questions  
Are the few duties  
That we gave you.  
If you don't even like that  
We have to declare  
You are a racist,  
Barred from society  
Never to corrupt others.  
Our police may kill  
At their will,  
It is just a little offering  
To the white goddess  
— For our protection and prosperity —  
And you should be grateful  
That you are chosen  
Resisting a goddess  
Is not only a crime  
But a sin as well  
For which you will be punished here  
And condemned after life.  
So remember the golden rule:  
We teach you again and again  
But you are dumb — and always forget,  
Resist not,  
Speak not,  
See not  
Hear not  
Any evil.

— *For Eldridge Cleaver*

## 28

You are just the victim  
Who has suffered all his life  
You have been there  
And have seen all the cruelties  
Your vision is blurred, and not to be trusted,  
You have never sat  
In a cozy room  
Air-conditioned to suit a cool head,  
On an armchair to study objectively  
How you  
And your brothers felt.  
That was my job.  
And I am now qualified  
After going over tons of papers  
To tell you  
How you *really* feel  
Don't question me  
I am a qualified expert  
On your problems  
And you are not.  
So you should be barred  
From speaking to young minds  
Who must be saved  
From your dangerous ideas  
And biased racism.

— *For Eldridge Cleaver*

29

Answer my questions,  
You are my informant  
I have loads of money to prove it,  
Which my government gave generously.  
When you have told me  
All about yourself  
I will dissect it,  
Put it in proper slots  
And analyze it  
And from then on  
I will be an expert  
And you will be my subject.  
I will tell the world  
And you too  
Who and what you are  
But never again  
Let you speak about it.  
You are not  
And cannot be objective.  
I am not  
And cannot be biased.  
If I don't find anything  
Good about you  
— After all you are just a subject —  
And treat you as a means of living  
That is just natural.  
And objectivity demands  
That I should never get involved  
With your problems  
If I do  
I will no longer be a social scientist.  
And then, who will study you?

— *For my Social Scientist friends*

## 30

I am a scientist.  
Science is my goddess  
The laboratory is my temple  
Computers are my icons  
The plans I drew are my *alpnas*  
Objectivity is my creed.  
Human voices are not my concern  
They distract me, like the devil,  
From finding my god,  
Abstraction.  
With human beings I would rather deal  
By numbers  
Punched on a card  
Using these punched holes.  
I care not  
How my abstraction is used.  
It is highly irrational  
And thus not scientific  
If I worry about such trivial matters.  
Morality is too subjective  
For me to even give a damn.  
So if they end humanity  
With my work  
That's incidental  
And not my fault.  
I live objectively.

## 31

Here —  
You want to be equal and live like brothers.  
Over there —  
They want to be just alive.  
These problems are grave,  
We know.  
That is why

*Lifelong Search for Home*

We have set up so many so many times  
So many committees and commissions.  
Look at these rooms  
They are all filled  
With their findings.  
You say it's an emergency — humanity stands on the mouth of a  
    volcano  
Wait!  
We are setting up another commission  
Right away  
Which will go through  
All these studies,  
Will recommend to us  
In a few years  
After careful, thoughtful pondering  
What ought to be done to save these lives — over there  
Or how to live like neighbors — here.  
We will submit that report  
To another sub-committee  
Of the department  
Who will recommend to us,  
And we will meet  
To decide  
Whether to accept the report  
Or reject it  
Or send it to a review board  
Or set up a new committee  
To find the findings of this committee.  
It is a hard job,  
You can see.  
So please be patient.  
Give us time.  
And in the meantime  
If you don't live  
You will not be alone, we are sure —  
There may be millions to give you company.  
We will pass some resolution  
To commend your sincerity and sacrifice  
For the cause of humanity.

## 32

One mid-night  
I was awakened by some noise  
I got up  
It was a cat  
Chased by a dog  
And frightened to death.  
I took her in  
Petted, comforted and gave her some milk  
And then I called for the dog  
To tell him: "You are a naughty child,  
Come and make up."  
The kitty meowed  
The dog licked her face  
They were friendly and happy.  
One Saturday night  
Playing some game  
And drinking  
I heard a voice —  
A frail human voice —  
"I am being chased!"  
I got mad  
At being interrupted  
(Trespassing and violating  
Property rights  
Is the unholyest act —  
I can't tolerate it and getting involved is more than I can take).  
I brought my gun  
And, in self-defence, shot through the window.  
I put the light on  
And on the porch  
I saw a little lady  
Wrapped in blood,  
Sleeping in peace.  
"Poor old soul,"  
I sighed  
And went to bed.

33

We are the flower children  
Who don't want to fade  
Or to extinguish those lamps of the earth  
Whom we can never light again  
Simply to please some sterile minds  
Who never understand  
What love is about  
And the language of cravings  
Of newly budding hearts  
Is foreign to *their* ears.  
We said, love, and don't make war.  
They said, Is that so?  
We have to put you  
In a correction institution  
Where you will learn  
To calm the dangerous overflow  
Of your stream of thoughts  
And learn some simple soothing emotion,  
Like every patriot on this earth,  
How to get killed without questioning once  
Or how to kill and have no feeling.

— *For the Oakland Seven*



## 34

I saw a widow at an early tender age,  
I saw a smiling orphan who was too small  
To know his life ended even before it began,  
I saw a budding flower in a new flowerbed  
Faded before it had a chance to blossom.  
All that one more —  
Just because a whimsical indecisive mind  
Said that it would be so  
To save his power,  
If not power — then his face.  
Graveyards wrote the eulogies,  
Headstones were offered,  
Before the stepping-stone to life was erected for those  
Who were too young to decide their fate  
And to die — or to know why.  
I said along with human waves  
And millions of mothers with tears in their eyes  
“Let’s stop this and sing of love,  
Of creation, of beauty, of life itself.”  
They cried conspiracy  
And put me behind bars.

— *For Dr. Benjamin Spock*

## 35

Arrested by the police  
Who had a monopoly on the law.  
They had the guns, they had the clubs,  
And the small minds which always select  
Their clients with care.  
Chained by the laws  
He had no say in making,  
His tradition had not created,  
He knew not how to escape their noose.  
Rarely he knew that  
Laws were not enacted for him —  
A poor, living creature at the bottom of the pail of society —  
He was made for those laws,  
Tried by a jury,  
To whom he was not a human  
But a cold statistic, without a life  
In flesh, who until yesterday  
Was cheaper than an animal —  
Millions like him were obtained  
Even free  
So waiting for the final judgement day  
He sits in a dark cell of the jail  
Which his people sweated slavishly to build  
But had no power  
Over who would be put there  
And for how long!

— *For Huey Newton*

## 36

You hate me when I merely say “kill”  
But the killing itself you never mind  
And relish enough to make it your job.  
You hate it when you hear someone say ‘f—k’  
But raping innocent, tender ‘chicks’  
Of all other races  
Of all foreign lands  
You have made your cherished tradition  
And never repented it.  
When you are calm  
You want to be rational.  
The gentleman in you takes over.  
You look at me or someone else  
As a mirror of hidden self  
And what you see there you don’t like.  
You hate me not, I dare say,  
You hate no one but yourself  
You can’t deceive when you look into my eyes  
You cannot hide your real self.  
There is no place you can return to hide  
The hate returns to you and burns you up.

## 37

Population explosion is a real threat  
And we worry about the whole human race,  
You know.  
To feed them, to clothe them, to educate them well  
To have a proper consumer stock  
Our luxuries to sell.  
If one has to learn a four letter word  
Let it not be love, then,  
Let it be kill.

38

One early dawn  
Standing in my kitchen  
I looked over the sink  
Through the stained, glass window  
A golden ray  
Kissed the height  
Of the Golden Gate Bridge  
Over the Bay.  
A little bird flew  
From her nest  
To a red rose  
And said "Love"  
A leaf of a tall tree  
Whispered to the next  
"How sweet you are!"  
I came to the bed  
Saw your angel face  
So relaxed,  
Your closed eyes  
And a sweet calm smile  
On your red little lips.  
My lips said, "Kiss."  
My heart said, "Love."  
And a voice within  
Whispered gently  
"How sweet you are!"

— *For Sylvia*

## 39

Walk slowly, dear friend,  
Humanity rests under your footsteps  
Here in endless peace  
To save the purity of the Christian race  
With the blessings of the Pope and other messiahs  
Six million Christs died here  
For the sins of past,  
Present, and future tyrants.  
Under these crosses covering the sky  
Kneel down and pray  
That you are given  
The strength to whisper  
To historians, politicians,  
Poets, philosophers, writers,  
Scientists and humanists,  
Religious leaders  
And just-so people  
That silence is not golden.  
Speak now, my friend,  
Before it is too late.  
Wait not for tomorrow  
For there may never be  
Another day.  
Before the sun sets this evening in the West  
Let's speak clearly and in a firm voice  
For the sun may never rise again.

— *For the Auschwitz Camp Victims*

They are the forgotten people  
The silent ones.  
It does not matter  
If their silence  
Gives the world a Hitler  
It is their silence  
Which bombs the churches  
And burns the crosses  
Kills Christs, Gandhis, Kennedys and Kings  
While their taxes —  
Even if they cheat by some millions here and there —  
Are at work  
Abroad  
Pruning the unfit  
And creating more jobs,  
They are the law-abiding  
It's their laws, after all  
Even if they buy them only once in a while  
Created with the consent  
Of their own lobby.  
It matters little  
If they don't bring justice  
To some.  
Justice is not their concern  
They got it their way long ago  
All they need now  
To protect it from those  
Who don't have it.  
They will need new laws for that  
With new orders for those  
Who, being crushed, oppressed, and tread upon,  
Still want to raise their heads.  
Send them back to the prison  
To the walls of the ghettos.

They are the forgotten people  
For we do forget  
They never lack funds  
For such amusement fire works  
As clubs, guns, chemicals, and mace  
Aircraft and missiles  
The boys have to have fun once in a while  
A few heads roll  
So what?  
Don't ask them  
To feed a spoonful of milk  
To a school child  
They are silent and meditating  
And don't disturb them then —  
When heads crack  
Widows multiply  
Orphans are buried by thousands  
Under the mushroom clouds  
They made in fun.  
So let us remind the forgotten people  
The clean, the silent, the tax-paying, the law-abiding  
And all —  
Your silence  
Watches the drama of Jerusalem  
But more Christs are nailed and burnt now  
Hour by hour  
Day by day.  
Come out, you silent ones  
And cry out  
Stop other Hitlers from reviewing your parades  
In the same century.  
There may be a time soon  
When no parades will be reviewed  
And you, along with all your victims,  
May really be forgotten  
For there will be no one to remember  
For you never spoke  
When there was still time.

— *For Richard N. Nixon's 'forgotten people'*

## 41

Who are the Nazi troopers of a tyrant?  
Those who say  
‘Stop the war’  
And risk their lives?  
Or those who spend people’s wealth  
Living in luxurious palaces  
Flying in special air-craft  
Drinking in the air  
Dining on hundred dollar plates  
Yet send the young boys  
To end their lives and those of others  
In the muddy fields far, far away  
And still have the nerve to say,  
‘We will never back out’  
Admitting that we have made mistakes  
In going there  
Even if this means  
The end of all that  
The human race has ever created?  
Does power make one that much blind  
That one forgets  
To see the dripping blood  
On his own hands  
And calls the victims  
Troopers of the tyrant?  
Or does it make one that much drunk  
That he really begins to think  
The words in the dictionary  
Can be purged of their meanings  
Like the officials  
Who lose the favour  
Of their masters?

— *For Hubert H. Humphrey*



## 42

We have the finest system  
That is why  
We always choose  
The lesser of two evils.  
After all, we cannot afford  
To choose both of them  
At the same time  
And having a nice guy  
On the run  
May injure our system  
By giving us a choice  
We hate to make  
For we always want  
To be in the middle of the road.

## 43

In the Republican convention  
Some black kids were dead  
But we don't mention that.  
We would rather bask  
In the Florida sun  
And get tanned.  
In the Democratic convention  
Scores of white skulls were cracked  
But why care!  
There are millions more  
Who are in the mainstream  
That is where our real system belongs  
Our both parties meet there  
And merge!

## 44

“I hate her  
Because she is so damned good and sweet  
And teaches us black oppressed  
To love those honkies  
And be non-violent!”

“I can kill her  
She and her beat, long-haired friends  
Teach these niggers  
To be uppity  
Forgetting their place  
In our grand old system!”

— *For Joan Baez*

## 45

After ages  
We met in the paddy fields  
Of Asian land  
“Friend” I cried  
“No, enemy” he echoed,  
Bang!  
He missed,  
Bang!  
He fell.  
It could be you next  
It could be here!

## 46

Wait a minute  
Let's look at both sides.  
He tried to show  
I tried to look.  
In the meantime  
The radio blasted  
Five hundred killed.  
On which side should they look?  
How will I make them see?  
How will he try?

## 47

Some say six thousand  
Some say eight  
It is just a number game that we play  
There is no danger to any principle  
Neither Communism  
Nor Democracy  
Neither Islam  
Nor Judaism  
Is in danger.  
And we won't intervene.  
It's only human beings —  
It's only children  
Only a few thousand a day  
Who are involved.  
We will sit and watch  
And let them kill each other  
Or die of hunger.  
We can help them  
By selling some arms  
Which we always do  
No matter which side you are on  
We are just and treat everyone as equal,

*Lifelong Search for Home*

When you survive — we hope you are the fittest few —  
Our markets and commodities  
We will extend to you  
Even on loan  
And easy terms.  
But don't ask us  
To intervene  
When nothing precious  
But only babies are involved  
Our powers are too big  
To be wasted like that  
On insignificant creatures  
Who are meant to die  
Long before they can grow.

— *For the Biafra children*

48

One more day  
Wasted hope  
Evaporated expectations  
Faded life, which was to be lived  
Not just to be tolerated,  
Like a nuisance  
Because it's there.  
Another foggy day  
No letter from anyone  
No reminder of affection  
No good news  
Personal or worldly.  
Moments just drag on  
As if humanity has reached an old age  
But death has not come yet.  
It drags on, it lingers on  
With no destination  
And no real purpose.

Every now and then  
There is a summit  
And like the doctors, surgeons,  
Neurologists, psychiatrists,  
Leaders — who have held the world by force  
And its fate in their own hands  
Tired and stale hands —  
Meet to diagnose  
What has gone wrong.  
Long hours of debate,  
Private consultations,  
Conventions and dramas  
And they come out.  
The world watches eagerly  
To hear its fate.  
“We should live in peace  
Like good neighbors  
But there are millions of  
Obstacles  
To be solved  
By the ministers  
And conferences  
On lower levels.  
We will direct them  
They will work hard  
And give their reports to us  
In a few years,  
And we may meet again.”  
So the days go by.  
I am getting old  
Humanity is getting old  
The hands holding my fate are getting old  
And nothing is in sight.  
Another day will come  
And pass  
And I will keep on complaining  
That is the least I can do.

49

Why do you want to be born  
O child?  
There was a day  
When life span was short  
But joy of birth knew no bound  
As if each time a new divine figure  
Incarnated.  
But now all I hear  
Is population explosion  
Unwelcome births  
Counted in statistics  
With utmost horror.  
Uncertainty of life, death, and being in limbo  
Pollution of every thing  
Unwinnable, undetermined, aimless wars  
Computerized education  
Mechanical divinity  
Leave no place for glory in life.  
You will be just another punched card number  
To get lost in the jungles of files  
Or to end in the jungles  
Of some alien land.  
Why do you want to be born  
And what can we promise you?  
Abstraction is more important  
Than men of bones and blood  
Wrapped in flesh.  
Why do you have to choose this time  
To blow your mind  
Or to be blown up bodily?  
No hope to live  
No hope to die  
In peace  
You can, of course,  
Be an eternal matter  
Of someone's research work

Is that any consolation  
To come to this planet?

## 50

“Another foggy rainy day.”  
I sat alone  
In a corner of my house  
Hiding my face with the morning paper  
Like a horror movie  
It brought all the scare stuff.  
TV blurred, gazed at me  
Like a genie  
Bringing pictures  
From hell.  
As the moments passed  
Loneliness became lonelier  
Gloom became gloomier  
And there seemed to be no end to this all.  
All dressed by now to go and teach  
The kids what life was all about —  
What a joke  
As if they did not know,  
Terrified by the draft  
They just stayed there and pretended to learn  
Knock knock,  
“Who is there?”  
Silence.  
Knock knock,  
I opened the door.  
It is a child —  
A little child —  
All dressed in mud  
Perfumed in greyish water  
Powdered by sweet smelling clay  
Ornated by a running nose and  
Big smile.

He jumped in my lap  
And with some loud words  
Gave me a tight hug  
And a big kiss.  
'The world was not so bad after all,'  
I thought, as I hurried to catch the bus  
Shouting like the Greek scientist,  
'I found it, I found it!'

## 51

I am a patriot.  
I attend all the rallies  
Sing the glory of my nation  
I am all for it.  
I am for motherhood,  
For flag,  
For police  
And young boys  
Whom we send  
To defend something  
My leaders tell me is important  
But I don't know — I am not an expert on that  
That is why I buy my son's release from duty  
And send him to a private school  
To make him a hundred percent patriot  
To save him all the flu  
Brought by the schools  
Where the masses go.  
When wars come  
I build factories  
And serve my nation  
By creating the best  
Modern equipment  
That science can provide.  
I make my children  
Managers  
And get exemptions



A small award for my services and love of my country  
I provide the police  
With all that they need  
To curb the traitors  
Who don't want to even go  
To fight.  
I don't even ask them to die for their country  
I only ask them to make someone else die for his country.  
But these cowards!  
They don't even a damn for their nation  
So as a member of their draft board  
I ship them all away  
Clear the streets  
And hooray for my nation!

## 52

"Good morning, sir,  
Isn't it a beautiful day?"  
"Lovely."  
I picked up my paper  
Another earthquake in Iran  
I shrugged  
Another six thousand children  
Died of starvation in Biafra  
I ate my breakfast and burped  
Highest number of casualties for this month  
In the Viet War.  
I got dressed  
Another scandal in Washington  
Oh, those people!  
Another shooting at students  
Protesting police brutalities  
Don't they have anything better to do.  
I am ready to go to work  
Can't find my brush to comb my hair  
I blow my top.

“The trouble with you is”  
He began  
As he plunged  
Into the cushions  
Of his sofa set  
Looking out the window,  
“That you are extravagant.  
You want to drink, dance  
Take girls out,  
In one word, you want  
To enjoy.”  
How unchristian!  
And how sweet of him  
Telling me that  
At a reduced price of  
A dollar a minute!  
“I’ll tell you what”  
He came out of some dream —  
Meditating Buddha broke his silence,  
Salvation was coming,  
And speaking in a tone  
Which combined  
Both that of a mother  
And a sunday school teacher,  
“We will solve this,  
You will just have to come  
Three times a week  
For one hour each time  
For only a dollar a minute.”  
“Of course, I will  
And then I will have no money  
Left to spend.  
Taxes, rent, and sickness  
Food, clothes, and other little tit bits  
Don’t count.

Bankamericard will take care of them  
Until I am cured.  
Give the money to him —  
It's only made of paper —  
To put safely  
In his deposit box  
To enjoy *his* life  
If not mine.”

— *For A. C.*

## 54

Nurtured by his own ivy league college  
Like the inherited grand old nanny  
On the *kamadhenu* milk of New Education  
Sixteen dollars per diem, and a fast jet flight  
Free like his fat salaries  
Brought him one day to a dusty Indian village  
On a great U.N. mission to pacify the goddess of hunger  
Worshipped by millions — old and young.  
The sun shone blazing, unlike the Harvard square  
Even his umbrella carried by a servant  
Could not stop his face from becoming red  
Like the monkeys' bottoms, who ran around.  
The hard hot wind blew killing him alive  
Like the arrow of cupid  
Which are fatal and yet don't let one die.  
How he envied all the young Kims around  
Riding naked on bare backs of black buffaloes  
With transistor radios which hung from their necks  
(But unlike his camera did not seem like a burden)  
Blaring some love songs in a squeaking voice.  
Throwing his camera and other civilized burdens, too,  
On the back of an already loaded servant  
He could barely make the outskirts of the village  
Where a tall wide tree spread its branches like wings  
Saving the mud house under it from the excess heat.

*Lifelong Search for Home*

He signed with relief, as the tree gave him shade  
And a cool breeze.  
Regaining his consciousness, he remembered that he came  
To teach the 'natives' to grow some food.  
He looked around and noticed some 'grass'  
Small, tiny, with some exotic smell  
And exclaimed in anger:  
"This tree hinders the growth of these 'vegetables'  
And must be cut down."  
The villagers thought the heat, like the education,  
Had gone to his head  
For this was a mango tree — the king of kings  
Of fruit trees —  
It gave the sweetest and nicest food that they enjoyed  
And pickles and chutneys  
Which even he relished  
Without knowing where they came from.  
They nodded quietly.  
The grand old tree smiled  
Like a detached seer — meditating for a thousand years  
Like the old Indian tradition which knew more ups and downs  
Than the scholar can count.  
"Thanks," his leaves murmured  
To this strange young saviour  
And gave another cooling breeze  
In gratitude.

## 55

“Change”

That's what he came for — ten thousand miles —  
After being involved in several projects  
At home and abroad  
All of which failed  
Giving him lots of experience  
In compounding his mistakes  
And trying again, as he was branded as an ‘expert’ now.  
Change, he came for  
But could not see  
That nothing was the same any more  
That people were no longer afraid of a ‘red’ face  
That the jeep that brought him  
Could not have brought him a few years ago  
Even on the dusty roads of which he invariably complained  
Because none of them existed.  
Not listening or looking, like a Japanese monkey,  
He spoke and spoke, nonetheless,  
As everyone listened — what else could they do? —  
And admired his sincere simple heart.  
They tried to do what he told them mainly to please him  
And thus though nothing was achieved in his two years’ stay  
He thought it was a great success — his report said so,  
Like other mistakes he compounded before  
His camera compounded many exotic films  
For home consumption, for a captive guest audience  
Or for meetings of old ladies’ clubs  
Who exclaimed at every scene merely ‘how cute’  
And kept knitting,  
But then the urge for change at the home front arose  
Like a contagious disease which is never cured.  
He began to try, but no one listened.  
He began to say that the people he wanted to change must be  
saved first  
From the futile war which no one won.  
But instead of receiving money like other brilliant projects  
He was awakened, bloodied by a prison guard.

## 56

You were the walking scripture on this earth  
You were the living soul of the nation  
When nothing but doom was in sight  
Nothing but the fetters of slavery chained us all  
Desperation and gloom, fear and helplessness,  
The darkness of destruction fell on unarmed millions  
Surrounding by air craft, guns and all the fire  
That the might of the mightiest empire could muster,  
You did not sit like members of your class  
In air conditioned rooms to build your life  
On the corpses of skeletons of your brethren  
Burning in hell  
You feared not and spoke out  
When speaking was treason and reward was death.  
You dared to speak when silence was golden  
For those who never wanted to rock the boat  
But enjoyed the ride while millions drowned.  
You did not curse the darkness but lit a candle  
Of dim hope in those hearts  
Who never knew what hope meant.  
‘The only thing to fear was the fear itself’  
You uttered not empty words, but you lived by them.  
A free soul cannot be jailed in four walls  
A slave soul cannot be free outside  
In the dungeon of slavery  
That the nation was.  
You gave lives to the dead long ago  
And they filled the jails  
Lord Krishna’s temple  
The birth place of the Killer of all tyrannies.  
You lived by scripture among the wretchedest and poorest  
And shook the empire.  
Owning nothing but a half-naked body  
You lived by what others said was divine but not pragmatic  
By love, by truth, by non-violence  
And walked alone in the fields of Noakhali  
When not even the army dared to march there.

You crossed the flooded rivers of death on a rotten raft  
With bare feet  
When Delhi was dancing and glittering in the joy  
Of blood-stained freedom, and the happiness  
Of a nation carved into two  
With an edge of the sharpest knife of hatred.  
In your frail and lonely voice was heard  
What scriptures really had to say  
And you alone stood by all that to the last.  
Scriptures did not fail you  
Because you did not make them the means of living  
But life itself.  
Those who made it their life job to shout of scriptures  
From pulpits and temples, mosques and churches  
Could not tolerate to love and live by the same.  
They killed you.  
We killed you, yes, the violence  
Took your life when it could not  
Stand the warmth of your unbound love  
But only to bring non-violence and sanity.  
For a moment it seemed you died not in vain  
But for us to live in peace and prosperity  
You died simply to show us all  
What life was all about.  
For a moment it looked like the light that was gone  
Was filling the universe  
With divine brilliance.  
And we made it our profession to make a scripture  
Out of you.  
Quoting every utterance you ever made  
We keep them reciting day in and out  
But, alas, we have forgotten you.  
Thus in death, we made you as immortal as a messiah  
But we forgot the human being named Gandhi  
Except when we need your name  
To secure our shaking seat in the chambers of power  
We would rather forget you ever existed  
And led us with a hope  
Which was never ours, and which we never deserved.

— *To the sacred memory of Bapu*

You are from India  
Boy, you really have problems there.  
I was there on a world-wide tour  
I saw it all with my own eyes  
Hunger, misery, sickness and dirt;  
Cows roaming in the streets.  
We stayed there a full three days  
In Ashoka, in the Jaipur lake palace  
And in the Taj.  
I talked at length with our cultural attache  
And another embassy guy  
Who had just talked to a Washington reporter  
Who flew on a Government mission for a day  
And interviewed an A.I.D. man  
In a far away place —  
I think it was the capitol of some state, *Poon-jab*.  
Of course we could never take chances  
So we ate only in the westernized restaurants  
And never travelled on dusty roads.  
We never drank water except in the American Embassy  
But we got sick anyway  
Even with all those pills and hundreds of  
Precautionary immunizations  
(Which made me ill for two months before we left)  
And all the instructions that the Pan-Am guide book gave.  
Everyone gets sick over there.  
You seem to have a terrible cough  
A real high fever, a killing back ache.  
It is just a flu  
A new Hong Kong bug.  
Take some aspirin, drink lots of coke  
And take a good rest.  
What are you looking at — the Life Magazine issue?  
It shows the pictures of hungry, sick  
Old, wretched, ragged torn down slums



Black people rioting  
Students protesting  
Dogs roaming in the streets freely.  
You would think we have the same problems here!  
It is a biased news media, don't you ever believe it.  
That's what you get when you have a free press.  
You have been here for only eight years.  
It's a complex society, a highly civilized nation  
And it takes a long time to understand  
Our ways of life.  
That will be ten dollars  
But don't worry  
My nurse will send you a bill.

58

“... a nuclear weapon is just another weapon in the arsenal.”

— *General Curtis LeMay*

Life is so very simple  
Until you psuedo-intellectuals,  
Scientists, anthros, pinko psychos,  
And all those new eggheadologists  
Turn it into a kind of goblin  
And bureaucrats take a clue from the bunch of you  
Make it for us just plain unlivable.  
Why, you create a phobia of such little toys  
As nuclear weapons  
What difference does it make  
If we make a man rest in peace  
By a little gun, or a little bigger fun-thing  
They just gave it a scary name like ‘big bomb’.  
It just makes our life more simple  
Our job more enjoyable.  
We have trouble parking here  
They have trouble herding people.  
Now, what is wrong if we take care of the people  
Who are too many anyway to live happily  
And pave those lands as an extension  
Of our parking lots.  
If you do the job with little toy guns  
It may take centuries  
But a little more help from our mini-nuclear stuff  
Can solve all the problems in a very short time.  
And theirs too — no people, no problem.  
This is such a simple proposition  
I don’t know  
Why you who wasted so many years  
And hard earned money of your parents —  
Men of my generation —  
Can’t understand that.

## 59

We are for peace without any reservations  
If they would only accept it on our terms.  
We are for freedom — we always have been —  
If they let us determine when they are fit for it.  
We are for dissent all the way  
But they have to obey the rules we have made for them.  
No one is more for free speech than we are  
If they speak nothing more harmful than a child  
And don't advocate to change the status quo.  
We are for peace, freedom, dissent, and free speech  
But, but, but, but, but, but .....  
If, if, if, if, if, if .....

60

I am just a living ghost  
My soul died long ago  
With unfulfilled desires  
Unsatiated cravings  
And broken dreams.  
I roam around  
On this ground  
To see if ever  
I can hit  
Satiation  
And peace  
To retire in the bosom of Brahman.  
But with every trial  
When the goal seems to be near  
My very self evaporates again  
Like the steam from the boiling water  
Of a tea kettle  
While my desire keeps on  
Burning like the remaining bonded water  
Not even fit for anyone to drink  
Since I can't even provide  
As little love as the essence of tea leaves  
Or a little pinch of sugar  
To any one.

## 61

Sitting on a green sofa  
Whose cushions cover the specks of dirt underneath —  
Like our massaged skin covers our sins to keep them shiny  
Through the dim stained window  
I saw the moon slipping by into an eclipse  
Like a heart of evaporated ambitions  
While the kitchen sink faucet  
Leaked like the leaks of top secret news from Washington,  
Drop by drop,  
And made a big impression  
On the marble sink bottom  
Just as the leakage during the news management  
When humanity's hope slips by  
And newsmen have to moonlight in the dark  
Leaving the world in an uncertain shadow to know what is going  
on.

It seemed for a minute that the earth was stuck  
And the moon would never come out again.  
My child screamed, "Why do they want to throw  
The moon out?"  
Darkness covered now the window, the sofa,  
There was no sin, no stain, no dirt to hide  
No news to reveal.  
Even the small cloud which looked bright in the dim moon light  
Shone now as a big dark monster to prove its power  
Like a dog in his den after being chased by a lion.  
The earth came in between and covered itself with darkness  
Just as I keep coming in my own way  
And seem to get stuck deeper and deeper  
While the silky moonlight of my dreams slips by  
Until it is one with the dark dark age, like managed news.  
Only some dripping — some leakage which is beyond our control  
Keeps coming as an unwelcome noise  
As if to tell our sleeping senses that we are still alive.  
The moon comes out again — carved like a sickle soothing and  
nectar-rays  
Shower the sweet calm beauty of life again

*Lifelong Search for Home*

As well as show the stain, the dirt, the impression in the sink  
All as gently as the advice of a young beautiful bride  
Softly spoken.  
But before the whole moon can come out  
Like small problems of life engulfed by big crises  
It is swollen by the red red dawn — covering the whole universe  
Proclaiming the little difference between the colors of hell and  
heaven.

— *For Sanjaya, Jai, and Clifford*

## 62

It takes two to make peace  
But it takes one to make war.  
Since I can make war better  
Why don't you make peace?  
That's the fair division of labour  
In which our economy trusts,  
Like we do in God.

## 63

Dressed in a business suit  
Armed with batteries of cameras and tape-recorders  
Drowned with dazzling TV lights  
He said in a voice so sure of itself  
That only a reporter can muster it,  
“Why did Gandhi fail?”  
Yes, why did Gandhi fail,  
I asked.  
Why did Jesus fail?  
Why did Buddha fail?  
Why did love fail, humanity fail, and in one word  
Why did God fail?  
I asked and asked and searched myself  
My heart, my soul, and my brain.  
I got the answer that I did not want to face.  
It kept coming to me like a bothersome beggar  
To whom you have been nice once by mistake  
And then who never lets you go.  
It chased me until I was tired and frightened  
Dropped in my bed  
Where mother sleep soothed me  
Until I was lost in her bosom.  
The answer came to me in the shape of a dream  
When I could be caught without many layers of masks  
Uncovered, naked, unashamed of myself  
Pure as a new born baby in his mother’s lap,  
Safe and rested.  
It whispered to me as gently as possible,  
He failed because you failed him.  
You failed Gandhi, Jesus and Buddha,  
You failed God.  
Love does not fail, nor does humanity  
It is we who fail to love  
And are too cowardly to even admit that.  
We want to put a red mark in someone else’s ledger  
To save ourselves from going bankrupt  
To purge us from all sins that would have been ours.

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Deluding ourselves in the logic of books  
Whose weight would easily make the load of a donkey  
We forget that even if all donkeys  
Carried books and books and nothing else  
Their logic cannot teach us how to love  
It comes from the heart that we seem to have lost.  
You failed each time when you remained silent  
When tyranny and injustice engulfed us all  
When Biafras were burning —  
Skies smelled of corpses of children,  
Vietnams perished,  
Congos were obliterated,  
And those who said 'no'  
Were maced and tried and thrown into jails.  
You remained satisfied  
By giving the world your shots of immunizations  
With a photographic description of the horror movies  
Waiting only to see  
If there were any further horror acts  
That cameras could catch for a late late movie show  
On your TV screen to refine its art.  
Ending always with the pride of your achievement  
Filled with a sly smile and a happy ending:  
"Dow Jones Averages went up seven points today,  
The Tigers were clobbered by Saint Louis  
And the weather will be lovely tomorrow for fishing."



## 64

He kissed the head which lay before him dead,  
But only blood kissed his lips in return —  
As if to paint vermilion the celebration of his victory.  
“Tell me friend that you are not really dead  
As you told me in that childhood game  
When we both played freely on my street  
The was game —  
You loved the visit to my nation  
I loved to hear your gory tales.  
‘Bang’ said I, ‘you are dead’.  
‘Bang’ you shouted back, ‘*no*, you are dead’  
And hours we argued who was really dead  
Until we met here today  
And played the real game  
In the deep deep swamp  
Lying in mud.  
‘Bang’ and you died,  
Why can’t you retort and argue with me  
That you are not really dead, it is I?  
But alas, you won’t, and the game will never end  
For you would lie in peace and I  
Will be dying every day of life  
Torturing myself in search of an answer —  
All alone — and all in vain —  
Who is really dead —  
You or I?

— *For Phillip Cranston who should have written this poem*





Waiting for the Curtain  
To Fall



1978

*Lifelong Search for Home*

MAY IT BE:

That the tomb of every ruler  
And prince and such  
Will be surrounded  
By parks, orchards and the like  
For poor to come  
Picnic and love  
Only in the death of the greats  
May little ones live.

★   ★   ★

Economics makes poor poetry  
(Poetry makes no economics)  
Geography is not a landscape  
And statistics is sure no love  
Yet, let me repeat  
What you always said  
We absorb five  
Yes five  
Guianas a month  
An Israel in two  
We inherit  
One Australia every year  
And every other decade  
We produce one America  
We live without panic  
While you produce  
As many millions forecasts of doom  
That we will fail  
We will not survive  
Even as long as  
It takes to raise  
Our lean finger above  
And yet  
With 200 million hungry-looking faces in your paper  
400 million empty hands  
We did not falter  
We failed, you said

As many times as  
Your mouth could muster  
While we kept singing  
Tunes you never heard  
Of love, of life  
Of adventure  
(Even if gone wrong)  
We the ancient, the orthodox  
Sang like juveniles  
And teenagers  
In your decayed century  
Economics failed  
Like your politics  
Not our poetry.

★ ★ ★

And from this war  
Not even a song.

★ ★ ★

I carry a century old  
Starvation on my face  
A ghetto walks with me  
Betrayed by its dream  
No matter where I am  
I carry a tortured India  
Like a shadow  
To be ignored  
Pitied  
Despised  
And forgotten.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Where are those  
Blue eyes, you said,  
Were nectar to you  
Where are those principles  
He could not live without  
And for whom  
He gave his life  
Like a last flickering glow  
Of a lamp  
The headlines of the day  
Are no more  
Than deadlines of tomorrow  
Not to be found  
Even in the historical index  
Of foot notes.

★ ★ ★

History is like a whore  
Living from prince to prince  
Moment to moment  
She has no lover  
And no faith  
Only a life.

★ ★ ★

She is sure no beauty  
But like an april grass  
Cut anew  
Her presence  
Is the sweetest  
Fragrance of life  
She kisses like a morning dew  
Always fresh  
And never enough.  
Oh, how much  
Can be said  
By a single stroke  
On a string  
Of the sitar  
How much history  
Was absorbed  
By the heart  
Before it broke.

★ ★ ★

No, you can not  
Dip in the same  
River twice  
But then  
Nor can the river  
Bathe the same  
You  
Once more.  
Every love is new  
Freshly born  
Like a moment.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like socks  
When you are away  
I sort out  
My thoughts  
And put away  
And then, I wait  
For you to come  
And find out  
If they match.

★ ★ ★

Like summer flies  
They came  
Foreigners  
Of various odors  
Places and creeds  
Boorish and civilized  
To persecute and plunder  
To subjugate and kill  
And then like a spring rain  
They went away  
To forget  
A song burst again  
Through the skies  
Life returned  
Like spring  
Blossomed  
We stayed.

★ ★ ★



Love is like a rug  
To be woven  
Thread by thread  
Moment by moment  
Afresh  
Changing design  
With time  
If fallen  
Even a rock  
Breaks into pieces.

★   ★   ★

Your love of the unborn  
Matches only  
My hatred  
Of the born.

★   ★   ★

Division of labor —  
Some seek and search  
And research  
The truth  
Such as the  
Sexual habits of wasps  
Ants and snails  
Others pay  
For that  
By hunger  
And sometimes  
By death.

★   ★   ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Love  
A little bird  
Of unknown breed  
Sings  
To the tall  
Redwood tree  
Each leaf swings  
Joy  
Spring returns  
with the morning breeze  
Nothing — not even love —  
Dies for ever.

★ ★ ★

In a civilized state of mind  
Dear Sir  
Violation of woman's body  
Is less important  
Than the violation  
Of her purse.

★ ★ ★

Like a chain smoker  
I puffed out my words  
For as many days and nights  
As we could afford  
To bear  
Together  
Now, that waves of time  
Have taken away  
In different directions  
I find myself  
With emptiness  
Nothing is really said  
But words.

★ ★ ★

I am  
Like a collect call  
Which is  
Always tapped  
But  
Never accepted.

★   ★   ★

‘All wars are useless to the dead’  
And forgotten by the living  
Wars, like art  
Are fought  
For the sake  
Of making more wars  
And more . . . . .

★   ★   ★

When I look at the  
Plank wall of my heart  
I think of all  
The pictures  
We could have painted together  
To hang there.

★   ★   ★

Separation  
Is the only creative thing  
They ever did  
Even in love.

★   ★   ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

We are  
The ghosts of our dreams  
Haunting the deserted ruins  
we call life.

★ ★ ★

Poetry  
Like a whore  
Inspires everyone  
But belongs  
To no one  
Exclusively.

★ ★ ★

With all her liberated spirit  
She never kissed  
Like a blossomed rose  
Her love  
Hanging like wet clothes  
Her lips  
Acting like tight pins  
closing in by the side.

★ ★ ★

Like a carpet  
Youth absorbs  
Every sin  
Like a spy  
Old age betrays.

★ ★ ★

They deal with,  
Hate, maim, kill  
Niggers, Honkies  
Jews, Goyim  
Reds, Browns  
How long has it been  
When man looked at  
Another man  
As man.

★ ★ ★

In five minutes commercials  
Two laxatives  
Three detergents  
Four dog foods  
And five anti-perspirants  
Only love is not advertised  
For sale  
Body is.

★ ★ ★

Every hour is the hour of crisis  
And the only solution  
We have been given  
Is the old belief  
'This, too, will pass'

★ ★ ★

For whom  
Does that blind girl  
Dress  
So beautifully.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

What is not for  
Parents, brothers, sisters  
And friends  
Is for computers  
And government  
To store, to restore  
And to reveal  
Indeed how private  
Our lives are  
Only from these  
Who ought to know.

★ ★ ★

Instead of attaining a cease fire  
He ceased being fiery  
War fell like night  
On the helpless  
Innocent  
Anew.

★ ★ ★

The last step  
Even the giant one  
Of the giant-most  
among men  
Always falls short  
Of the goal  
By one inch.

★ ★ ★

Historian  
More words  
Than action.

★   ★   ★

A clown from the earth  
Came to please  
The Moon  
And tumbled.

★   ★   ★

Just as in the beginning  
So in the end  
As in coming  
So in departing  
I await  
Something to happen  
Nothing did  
Nothing will  
Life remained  
An imagined vanishing line  
Between two points  
In the sky filled void.

★   ★   ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Father:  
In whose death  
We inherit  
Our future  
And begin to pay  
The bills of the past  
Your death  
Insures  
Our life  
Our present.  
Father  
Poor you  
You died  
For  
Our sins  
Live for you  
Now that you are dead  
And can not live  
Yourself.

★ ★ ★

Love  
First a dream  
Then a task  
The end comes  
Like a crumbling wall  
Not even sweet memories  
Fill the cracks.

★ ★ ★



Eighty four years of her life:  
A small bundle of rags  
A small bundle of memories  
Like her life  
No body wanted  
Yet, it haunts.

★   ★   ★

For a long time  
Poverty remained  
Faithfully ours  
Hidden in Purdah  
Like a lady  
Then she became  
A conversation piece  
Of those  
Who were not faithful  
To any one  
And now like a rapist  
Their cameras go  
To screw her  
And give a minute  
By minute report  
For those  
Who conspire with them.  
Every one hears the cry  
No one comes forward  
To save.

★   ★   ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

There are two kinds of people  
One never likes  
Masters and slaves  
And we are always playing  
One or the other.

★ ★ ★

Those who have nothing  
Are busy  
Laughing  
Giving and taking  
And struggling  
To survive  
Those who have every thing  
Are getting  
Paranoid  
And worried sick.

★ ★ ★

Give your beauty  
Your body  
To me  
Give your soul  
To the devil  
If you must.

★ ★ ★

And like the last line of poetry  
One more life went  
Unfinished  
A few dots  
And a question mark  
Rats of research  
Will soon begin  
To nibble  
At the torn corner of the page  
To find out  
Rights or wrongs  
One more slot will be filled  
With a meaningless number  
For no one  
To remember.

★ ★ ★

Life  
A one way door  
Enter at birth  
No exit  
Known.

★ ★ ★

Love  
A dew drop  
Renounced by the petal of a bud  
Fell  
And kissed  
My rejected tired hand  
Life has so many ways  
To return.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Fifteen minutes  
Seemed like an eternal sleep  
Life played hooky once more  
I dreamed that I lived  
And loved.

★   ★   ★

The perfect Speaker  
In the House  
Sits gracefully  
Silent  
And listens  
His words count.

★   ★   ★

One man's terrorism  
Is crime  
One nation's terrorism  
Is peace with honor  
Words too have preferences  
Like a call girl  
Money and power.

★   ★   ★

No one has inspired me  
For a long time  
To write  
Like the drops of rainy water  
Coming from a cracked roof  
Poems drip  
Like blood  
From a broken scab of a long inflicted wound  
No one is moved by them  
The world has always seen a better show  
Love like myths  
Is buried in the ruins of the past  
Sex has become  
No more than a pacifier  
Given to a beggar as alms  
To buy momentary peace  
And blessing  
Her fulfillment  
Is in listening and delivering  
Lectures on change  
While change under her nose  
Like the down hill river  
Remains unseen  
Old age recovers youth  
By dancing in the nude  
I am sitting in the dark  
On the last bench  
And view  
My death is coming  
Through them  
On the stage  
Slowly  
Only waiting  
For the curtain to fall.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Every morning  
In four different forecasts  
I see my future  
Every evening  
I find  
A bleak  
Dark past.

★ ★ ★

Day  
A ray of hope  
Turned gloom  
Between two  
Dark nights.

★ ★ ★

Uneasily they cursed  
Their parents  
And waited  
For the day  
It came  
And they lived  
Unhappily ever after  
In their home  
Cracked with guilt  
& shame.

★ ★ ★

Blindfolded  
You are led to a hole  
Life  
You spend your time  
To find  
An exit  
Blindfolded you are  
Taken away  
By death  
Other prisoners mourn.

★   ★   ★

Words  
Masks worn by men  
To Hide the truth  
Nature was kind to animals  
Words never betray them.

★   ★   ★

All their phantom jets  
Loaded with A-bombs  
Could not save  
A child  
Killed by a bare hand.

★   ★   ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

You can not climb Mount Everest  
You can not reach the moon  
You can not even conquer  
The first ladder  
Of the Society page  
But you can still clean  
The little corner of the room  
You housed yourself.

★ ★ ★

Killings themselves bring  
Not a single tear  
Or shudder  
In man  
It's only the side  
One takes  
In killing  
That brings  
Joy or grief.

★ ★ ★

Defeat painted its impression  
Even on the face  
Of the most tyrant  
When a baby's death  
Struck on his cheek  
In shape of a tear.

★ ★ ★



To Hitler  
One Aryan  
Was equal  
To thousands of Jews  
To Golda Meir  
One Jew  
Is equal  
To all the Palestinians  
History plays the same game  
Only the players change.

★ ★ ★

Even in the dark  
As if not wanting  
My looks to be caught  
Angry & frustrated —  
I gazed at a corner  
Of the roof  
On the other side.

★ ★ ★

And one day  
Even to express  
Love without words  
Was not left for us  
They called it  
(In their peculiar custom)  
Establishing  
A relationship.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And after  
What seemed to be  
An age of agony  
I looked at my watch  
It was only  
Ten past the hell.

★ ★ ★

So we too  
Have become  
A big powers  
If we can't feed  
Our people  
At least we can  
Now  
Kill them  
Quickly and peacefully.

★ ★ ★

Our non-violence  
Could not lick them  
So we join them —  
The merchants of death —  
Most violently.

★ ★ ★

So we got a bomb  
And lost  
Humanity  
Or Humanity lost  
The last (self proclaimed)  
Apostle of peace  
Us.

★ ★ ★

And finally  
We too  
Were unmarked  
By our explosion  
Ghosts of our past  
Words  
Will always  
Haunt us now.

★   ★   ★

Twenty six years ago  
It seems to be such a  
Different world —  
I too marched  
In the dusty streets  
Of my ancient city  
Protesting loudly  
And clearly  
Against the new  
Western toy of death  
And now I am covered  
By the fall out  
Of our own  
Radiation dust.

★   ★   ★

Have you ever seen  
A lion's teeth  
Chewing one  
Peacefully.  
(India will use atomic power peacefully)

★   ★   ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Of course  
It's a device  
To bring peace  
Final.

★ ★ ★

Now it is their turn  
To protest  
Just as we did  
But of course  
We will smile  
Like a wise man  
Because what really counts  
Is the noise  
Not made by words  
But by  
An explosion.

★ ★ ★

From the peak point  
Of Mount Everest  
Will hang down now  
The Balance of terror  
Weep, humanity, weep  
There is no end now,  
But *the* end.

★ ★ ★

Science has given  
So much power  
To ignorant men  
Of unscientific brains.

★ ★ ★

Indeed their marriage  
Was a hit  
Their cat became  
A better party  
Conversation piece  
Than either one of them.

★ ★ ★

Death:  
And now  
A message  
From our gods.

★ ★ ★

Silence betrayed me again  
My secrets  
Which ran away  
From the boom of the day  
Came back in my dream  
Finding me so defenseless  
And alone.

★ ★ ★

Those who have no future  
Look for it  
In the astrological  
Forecasts.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And so it came  
The moment you waited for  
After the saw of the day  
Kept piercing through you  
Cutting by the teeth  
Of seconds, minutes and hour  
It came  
They came  
The crowd of darkness  
Fell  
Covering you  
With the thicker sheet  
Of loneliness  
What for the wait  
What for the un-wait  
Two sides of the same coin  
Of gradual death

★ ★ ★

What a long  
Boring, repetition play  
To prove  
That they too  
Can unsuccessfully  
Show their muscles  
To remove a crook  
From the seat of power  
And change him  
For another.

★ ★ ★

My life is  
Like a love letter  
From a jail bird  
Never to come out  
From his prison walls  
Even at best  
It can give nothing  
More than  
A pale smile.

★ ★ ★

Atom bomb:  
America's original sin  
India's nuclear blunder  
Humanity awaits  
For its  
Stillborn baby  
To come.

★ ★ ★

On the fall  
Of humanity  
We cheered  
Digging the grave  
Deep deep  
In the womb  
Of Mother earth  
And now the dust  
Of the fall out  
In the form of world's protest  
We cannot take.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Now the diplomacy has spoken  
Peace  
There is a rush  
To win the dubious reward  
Who is going to be  
The last to die  
On the battle field.

★ ★ ★

Congress has declared  
That poison gas  
To kill and maim  
Human beings  
Is harmful  
To dogs  
Even in the experimental stage.

★ ★ ★

(Even if  
Dying of 50,250 or 1000  
In a fire, quake  
Or a war  
Is news)  
Why is it then  
Any less newsworthy  
That almost  
Three billion people  
Continue to live  
Despite  
Disease  
Quake  
Hunger  
Hate  
And wars?

★ ★ ★



If Nixon is the  
Best politician  
That money could buy  
What would be worse.

★ ★ ★

My ancestors from the East  
Wanted to live their lives  
In me and through me  
My children from the West  
Wanted to lead  
Their own lives  
At my expense  
Between the two ends  
Of the seesaw  
I stand  
Like a nailed cross  
In the mud.

★ ★ ★

Now I have become  
Civilized  
My warm heart  
Is stored  
In a freezer  
For future use  
I am cold  
Closed  
And saved.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

History:  
Slogans of peace  
Painted on  
The uneven ground  
With human blood.

★ ★ ★

What can you say  
To them  
Who tell you  
That her most  
Alive vibrations  
Are her “Death Notebooks”.

★ ★ ★

Like orphans  
My poems  
Fell on the earth  
Unwanted  
And departed  
Unnoticed  
Like the life  
Of an orphan  
No body missed them  
No body but me  
Who lost himself  
Even before them  
Like an orphan's  
Lonely mother.

★ ★ ★

Much of the world  
(Desires, emotions, love & such)  
That we admire  
Is filled with nothingness  
Like the beautiful blue sky  
Devoid of clouds.

★ ★ ★

Another morning  
Night has filled  
The earth-plate  
With the breakfast of dew drops  
The rising sun  
Eats  
With billions of hands  
Soon will they be gone  
Like sweet dreams  
I yawn.

★ ★ ★

Man  
A proof reader  
Gone blind  
Correcting the mistakes  
In God's 'Book of Folly'.

★ ★ ★

Show me an army of people  
Who says  
'Ours is not a just struggle'  
And I will show you  
A rainbow of peace  
On the horizon of history.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Peace is a maiden  
Jealously loved  
By two lovers  
In a duel to win her  
They kill each other  
History collects their ashes  
Peace wanders away  
In search of a new hero.

★ ★ ★

Duty may end  
At the end of the day  
But love?  
It torments for ever.

★ ★ ★

He had a successful poetic career  
His 'Selected poems'  
Got two reviews  
And sold one copy.

★ ★ ★

Behind every broad smile  
There is a hidden tear.  
(Behind every victory gala  
there is a tiny fear  
Every beautiful life lives  
Because some one died  
For it, dear.)

★ ★ ★

Of all the blessings  
Language is the biggest cheat  
After love is long gone  
Dead and buried  
They kept making love  
(As if love can be remade)  
For decades  
It was called  
Faithfulness  
And when they both  
Went to those  
Whom they truly loved  
And who loved them deep  
They called them 'Cheat'.

★   ★   ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Geometrically they increase  
To oppose, to squeeze  
Me  
Two parents  
Four grand parents  
Eight great  
Sixteen great great  
And so on  
Into millions unknown  
Those who came  
And two children  
Four grand children  
Eight great  
Sixteen great great  
And so on  
Into millions unknown  
Who like to come  
I am a nail hanging  
A crossroad of history together  
I want to fall out  
And see  
Where it would fall  
For ever and ever  
Without me  
An uncounted, Forgotten  
Number.  
In an arithmetic  
Of those uncouth civilized  
Who shuffle numbers  
Just for fun.  
If I can be a self destroying saw  
I would cut at the point  
That I am.

★ ★ ★

And let the future  
Fall unborn  
Let the past  
Remain  
Unremembered  
For ever  
For never.

★ ★ ★

Their leaks, too,  
Like the nude spots  
Of a beauty  
Are not so much  
To tell the truth  
As to deepen  
The mysteries  
Of their lies.

★ ★ ★

Once they called me, too,  
The future  
Now I say to them  
I have seen the future  
And it's not there.

★ ★ ★

Like unwanted dandelions  
Dreams bloomed filling  
Life's field  
A single summer breeze  
They all blew away  
Petal by petal  
Into the lake of sorrow  
A bitter winter wind  
A knife-edged memory.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

In their childhood  
I visualized  
A budding future  
A spring of joy  
In their youth  
I saw  
A faded flower  
A winter of sorrow  
And vanishing hopes  
A past future  
Before the present  
Had even a chance  
To pack up and leave.

★ ★ ★

They could never make it  
Life was too hard for them  
We could never accept it  
It was so easy within our grasp  
Dreams have their own ways  
To fool every one  
And disappear.

★ ★ ★

And today  
They killed  
The very womb  
That produced  
Love and Piety  
The merchants of hate  
Never stop  
Like fire  
And like a forest  
Love never stops  
Growing.

★ ★ ★



In the very center  
Of God's home  
They came  
And killed  
The mother of godly love  
God saw  
And wept silently  
Devil laughed momentarily  
And walked away.

★ ★ ★

Every morning  
TV news throws  
Human blood  
In my breakfast bowl  
I vomit my frustrations  
Like a TB patient  
For the rest of the day  
Night brings death anew.  
I shudder  
To be born again.

★ ★ ★

Men playing God  
Create principles  
And die for them  
Ending everything  
They said they lived for.

★ ★ ★

*Lifelong Search for Home*

The depth of our relationship  
Can be judged today  
By the bigness of the sigh  
Of relief  
After the parting.

★ ★ ★

First came those  
Who fathered them  
And left without a name  
Then came those  
Who filmed them  
For fame  
As unknown to them  
As their fathers.

★ ★ ★

Even the cat  
Though unaware  
Of its meaning  
And power  
Wants *the* chair.

★ ★ ★



**Between Exile and Jail**  
Poems July '75 – June '76



1978

## Author's Preface

And there were those who, like my brother, were rotting in lonely cells for a dream of freedom and happiness for their fellow men.

And then there were those who were having the time of their life by giving lectures on kinship, dining and drinking, while preparing to stab their already injured kin.

This book is about both of them. Who drew me back to India and who dragged me away from it to betray.

They showed me the best and the worst of the human race at the same time.

I hope these days never return.

I, too,  
Am beginning to feel  
Like a man  
Without a nation  
A tree  
Without a root  
A house  
Without a foundation  
My dreams, too,  
Are like the sky  
Wide and empty  
Without the earth.

(From the *Ordeal*)

First a shock  
Then a murmur  
Then fear  
And after that  
A long long silence  
Slavery, too,  
Has  
Its own  
Vocabulary.

*June 1975*

And then she declared  
Truth shall not enter  
(Nor leave)  
This land  
And as for  
His non-violence  
Our *javans* have it  
Under firm control.

*July 22, 1975*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Roll back  
Dear madam  
Roll back the Time  
I want to see  
If these are  
The kind of things  
Your father  
Fought for.

*July 25, 1975*

She conceived herself  
As Joan of Arc  
But instead of being burned  
HERSELF  
On the cross  
She buried Mother India  
Alive  
While her gangsters  
Beat the drums  
In her praise.

*July 25, 1975*

Dictators  
They are killing  
My brothers  
With bullets  
They will kill  
My children  
With lies.

*July 31, 1975*

To each Christ  
One destiny  
From all directions  
Or none at all  
To each dictator  
One goal  
To all crimes  
Or none  
To each coward  
One silence  
From all lives  
Or none.

*August 2, 1975*

Freedom is a bloody dream  
Between  
Two long periods  
Of slavery.

*August 2, 1975*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Everything passed away like a dream  
A childhood  
A father whom death conceived  
Never to bear  
A love always to be proven  
By separations  
And torments  
Everything passed away  
Hunger, sickness and death  
Bangla Desh, Biafra and Vietnam  
A G.I., a wound  
A war  
Everything passed away  
Even the dream  
A forbidden fruit  
Nothing is to be seen  
All gone  
A life  
A freedom  
A land  
Everything passed away.

*August 3, 1975*

Now  
Nothing ever comes to mind  
Nothing  
Love, betrayal, nor hate  
Only a tortured face haunts me  
Everywhere I go  
India — my love, my enemy, my grave.

*August 3, 1975*



Every image merges into one  
With no difference left  
A flowerpot in your window  
Shaping as your face  
Above your hand  
On the sill  
Turmoil in my heart  
Beauty  
Truth  
Anguish  
All in me  
Nothing there  
Everything merges  
Into one  
And the same.

*August 4, 1975*

**All the laws that are fit to govern**

We are all equal  
Under the law  
Untouchable  
No law can touch me  
For my crime  
No law can release you  
From injustice  
We are all equally free  
To remain where we fit  
I on the throne  
And you in the thorns  
Of a walled prison.

*August 8, 1975*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

The ultimate liberty  
Is to be oneself  
Private  
Miserable  
Silent.

*August 13, 1975*

Rushing always  
Not to choose  
Between exile and jail  
Running and changing  
Faster and faster  
To catch up  
With the Joneses  
Dashing into exhaustion  
From nothing  
To nothingness  
Life  
A mould of dirt  
From dust to dust.

*August 16, 1975*

And for a life long love  
Nothing  
But sad sad memories  
Of things not done.

*August 17, 1975*

Like layers of onions  
We peeled off  
Our emotions  
Like onion eaters  
They left a smell.

*August 18, 1975*

Yes, they don't mean much  
It is all hollow  
Superficial  
Shallow and worthless  
Yet  
A letter from you  
A smile from the neighbor  
And a hello from a stranger  
Come like rays of sunshine  
During a storm  
Of hard hard rain  
I am lit up  
All over again.

*August 22, 1975*

Yes, I know  
All things stop  
At NOTHING  
Every thing ends  
In NOTHING  
But it is the road  
Which leads us  
From nothing  
To nothing  
That I want  
To cover  
With flowers and fragrance  
With shrubs and shade  
With beauty and bliss  
With freedom and truth  
And peaceful lack of fear  
Help me dear friend  
So the road will be safe  
For those  
Who follow us.

*August 22, 1975*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Once again  
They killed the dreamer  
And lit up the dream.

*August 23, 1975*

And every day  
A long wait  
News-filled pages  
Declaring again  
NOTHING happened.

*August 25, 1975*

And now  
All that  
The Eastern wind  
Ever brings  
Is slavery  
Riding on  
The silent waves  
Of frozen blood.

*August 31, 1975*

Words are so powerful  
To inflict deep wound  
To kill you back  
I never thought  
By uttering FREEDOM  
we would be SLAVES.

*August 31, 1975*

So many words to say nothing  
So many paths to reach nowhere  
So many lives to live not one  
So many events to conclude but nothing  
Man — a creature of his web  
Made to be enslaved  
And to fight to be free.

*September 7, 1975*

Stranger, when you come to Delhi  
Don't think our hearts  
Are liars like *those* posters  
Painted on the walls  
By *their* orders.

*September 12, 1975*

You —  
My jailed dream  
I —  
Your broken truth  
In separation  
we meet  
In meeting  
We separate  
We —  
Two sides of a coin  
Completing  
What never was completed  
Before  
A caged life  
A living death.

*September 12, 1975*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I talk the truth  
The truth is silent.

*September 12, 1975*

Give me your nothingness  
So I can fill you  
With life.

*September 12, 1975*

How near you are  
When you are not.

*September 12, 1975*

Memory —  
Our dreams met  
At a cross road again  
No one spoke.

*September 13, 1975*

Like the promises I made  
My eyes failed me  
When you left  
Tears fell  
Like the promises I made.

*September 13, 1975*

I didn't know  
Our laughter would last  
Only till  
The nightmare  
Of the dawn.

*September 13, 1975*

We bury our hopes  
Green  
So we can have  
A bumper crop  
Of night dreams  
Of dead realities.

*September 13, 1975*

A plant in the backyard  
No taller than a sitting man  
Living no longer  
Than half a year  
Gives flowers  
Beauty and fragrance  
Donates fruits  
And proves its utility  
Hundred times better  
Than six five year plans  
Producing lies  
And a tenure  
For a dictator.

*September 13, 1975*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

History is an unnatural event  
No natural event is ever a news  
Even death  
When it comes naturally  
Passes by  
Without any notice.

*January 30, 1976*

A black cat  
Sits in a window  
Watches the snow  
Fall  
I mourn for home.

*February 4, 1976*

Poetry is nothing  
But urinating  
In a closet  
With fear  
When one should be fighting  
Out there  
In the field.

*February 7, 1976*



We wanted a traditional slave to revolt  
We wanted those who are always oppressed  
To fight  
We wanted those to lead us to freedom  
Who got some comforts by licking others' feet  
We wanted every one to do  
What we wanted to be done  
But for ourselves  
We chose to wait  
For history to unfold  
So we can imprint it  
When and if it happened  
But like an exposed film  
It never did come out  
Only spoiled.

*February 8, 1976*

Words  
As if the record fell in love with the needle  
Broken and dull  
Went on listening to the hoarse voice  
The preacher and the preachings  
Became one  
Forgetting the preached.

*February 9, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

So many times  
Death has come  
So many times  
I have been  
Resurrected  
I died the day  
My father was  
Snatched away  
By the separation  
From his child —  
In jail  
(To be free  
To be jailed  
Again and again)  
I died the day  
Mother broke away  
In silence  
And I was killed  
By an unfaithful  
Foreign love  
Buried by an alien civilization  
I tried to brush  
The sand of memories  
Oppression and neglect  
I tried to breathe  
But the final death came  
When my children killed me  
To take the revenge  
Of their birth  
And I could not lift  
Even a finger  
In protest.

*February 21, 1976*

O the men from the West  
When you go over there  
Tell them  
That here  
People kill them  
Whom they claim  
To love.

*February 28, 1976*

What I wished  
I never got  
What I had  
I never wished  
(after a Bengali poem)

*March 6, 1976*

Love is like a peeled onion  
Smell  
And rot  
Rubbing against a scar  
Like salt  
Each relationship is a new trial  
To heal the old  
Each time we perfect  
Carving off old memories  
Imperfection deepens  
Like a hole in the ground  
We want to bury the past  
To relive.

*March 8, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

To talk of free speech  
In a bound structured language  
To speak of free living  
With chains of laws  
And constitutions  
And express unbound love  
Through inadequate sexuality  
How ignorant is  
The race of man!

*March 11, 1976*

And *the* only speech  
Which was free  
Was their propaganda.

*March 11, 1976*

And even that  
Was left for a widow  
From the old backward  
Culture of India  
To prove  
That women are  
Truly equal to men  
Because they too  
Can rape a nation  
They claim to love.

*March 17, 1976*

*Between Exile and Jail*

When death was more normal than life  
When corpses grew faster than the grass  
When bodies hanging on barbed wires  
Outnumbered leaves on trees  
When vomit, dung, cows' urine  
Was more plentiful than water  
When awakening brought worms of death  
And sleep was a never-ending nightmare  
To open one's eyes  
Was to see destruction  
How did humanity sing  
The song of survival  
And how did the tyrants die?

*March 20, 1976*

It's hard to believe  
That this country  
Is only twice as old  
As my grandfather  
And yet  
For it  
To reach the moon  
How many millions  
Of grandfathers' dreams  
Died  
All in silence.

*March 21, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Words  
They can always express  
The depth of anger, evil, and hate  
Love is a silent touch  
Of a finger's path  
Smooth  
And almost unknown.

*March 21, 1976*

And it is from the meaningless syllables  
We make words  
And it is only to the meaningful silence  
They all disintegrate  
Love, too,  
Is lived  
Through the meaningless breaths  
And moments  
Of eternal wait  
For the one  
That never seems to come  
Like the horizon  
It touches our earth  
Everywhere  
And nowhere.

*March 21, 1976*

Silence:  
A peace treaty  
Broken by  
The war of words.

*March 21, 1976*

Freedom is a broken bell  
Which no one rang  
Since the declaration  
Of Independence  
At mid-night  
Long ago.

*March 22, 1976*

In the dark cell night  
A million broken dreams  
In the dark dark forest  
Outside  
A thousand worms  
For every dream  
All hiding  
All silent.

*March 22, 1976*

Every night  
A dream  
Arms around you  
Every morning  
A nightmare  
Broken in a tear.

*March 22, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Outside  
There are slogans  
On every wall  
Inside  
A cell is carved  
With the dust  
Of shattered dreams  
A prisoner reads  
The blank fate  
Eyes go dim  
Night falls.

*March 22, 1976*

Each day we survive  
Each other's love  
Each day our love  
Survives our killing  
Each day.

*March 22, 1976*

And yet  
There is another cell  
Within the cell  
In the jail  
Our own self  
An empty shell  
Filled with fear.

*March 22, 1976*

And every day  
He sees the black dawn  
Swallowing the night  
Full of dreams.

*March 22, 1976*



They are accusing us again  
As if not those  
Who cut our hands  
But our dripping blood  
Was responsible  
For the bloody road.

*March 22, 1976*

You in your cell  
I in an alien  
Spider web  
Made with love  
How will we ever meet  
My brother  
How?

*March 22, 1976*

And yet  
Though separated by oceans  
And jungles of laws  
In our dreams  
We meet  
We meet.

*March 22, 1976*

At midnight  
A day dies  
A day is born  
But the dream goes on  
From one to the next  
From death to life  
Never dying  
Never born.

*March 22, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like a shriek  
Of a lonely bird  
Lost in a dark desert  
A poem comes  
Sometimes with a pang  
Of birth  
Sometimes like semen  
Wasted in a barren woman  
And sometimes  
Like puss  
From a wound  
Gone bad.

*March 22, 1976*

Dreams are there  
When dreamers are not  
Like the stars  
They shine  
Even from nothingness  
Forming  
A milky way  
Across the hearts  
Worlds apart.

*March 22, 1976*

Billions of stars  
There are  
In the sky  
And here I lie  
Alone  
I wonder if they too  
Are affected by  
My presence and mood  
The same way  
As I am  
By theirs.

*March 24, 1976*

Silence  
They have cursed  
The speech  
To be banished again  
Into exile.

*March 24, 1976*

History is a path  
From will be  
To has been  
History is a puzzle  
Is, was  
To if  
And could be.

*March 24, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Marriage is like politics  
After a few  
Nice opening remarks  
You jab your arrows  
To deepen the wound  
In the name of love.

*March 24, 1976*

Only a simpleton like Christ  
Could have said  
'Love thy neighbor'  
And be nailed for that  
To the cross  
If he had any brain  
He would displace his neighbor  
Exile him  
And then would agree  
To be graceful  
Enough to debate  
His rights in the U.N.  
And be big hearted  
To allow him  
To listen.

*March 26, 1976*

And as if we  
Did not have  
Enough to suffer  
He gave us speech.

*March 26, 1976*

Guilty is a six letter word  
Quietly hanging  
US  
For life.

*March 28, 1976*

Like the oppressors of the past  
You have closed the iron gates  
Behind my brother  
You have stilled the shout  
Freedom and justice  
You have maimed and killed  
The dreamers and the dreams  
But the voice will not be suppressed  
Like the fragrance of flowers  
Pressed between stones  
It will spread to every heart  
And from the grave  
It will rise  
In the darkest  
Of the dark nights.

*March 29, 1976*

My life  
A wall has been built  
In the middle  
Of the tunnel  
Leading from the past  
To the future.

*April 3, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And every front  
For liberation  
Begins with  
Taking prisoners.

*April 8, 1976*

Mind is the city dump  
Collecting memories  
From the past  
Heart recycles the pain.

*April 9, 1976*

I am a pall bearer  
Carrying a coffin  
Of my own  
Shrouded in the  
Forty five year old  
Tatters of life  
Is the corpse of 'I'  
What I was  
And would be  
I walk on the street  
In the darkness of the sun  
And no one  
Recognizes me anymore.

*April 12, 1976*

I wonder why  
They call the passing away  
Of another year  
A *birthday*!

*April 12, 1976*

America  
While giving me no life  
Seeks  
My death  
With DIGNITY.

*April 19, 1976*

And they fooled everybody  
Didn't they —  
The April fool children  
They were truly born.

*April 20, 1976*

But how can I  
Write  
The last death poem  
Without dying!!

*April 20, 1976*

And like the trees  
In the woods  
We kept on falling  
Without a protest  
They kept on emptying  
Glasses of joy  
No one heard  
No one noticed  
When a bright day turned  
Into a dark dark night  
No one spoke  
But silence.

*April 21, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And this too  
Like that  
And that  
And many things before  
Was a mask  
On our face.

*April 21, 1976*

We empty our hearts  
Bit by bit  
With the needle of hatred  
And then, like Easter eggs  
We decorate our relations  
With nice words.

*April 23, 1976*

Sometimes I too wish  
I could have woven myself  
A beautiful curtain of words  
To hide and relieve  
But no  
My poetry is like  
The silk of Murshidabad  
Seven layers I wrap around  
It still is  
Transparent  
I remain  
All exposed.

*April 23, 1976*



It is a horrible thought  
That each innocent looking  
Buddha in the crib  
Is a potential killer  
Two decades hence.

*April 23, 1976*

And through you  
I loved me.

*April 23, 1976*

And then after listening  
To the evening news  
For a decade and a half  
I realized the enemy  
They were talking about:  
ME!

*April 23, 1976*

Even to go  
To a play  
Has become  
An act  
For the  
Civilized ones!

*April 25, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

If all those  
Who commit sins  
Go to hell  
Who goes to heaven?

*April 25, 1976*

A nose can smell  
But cannot eat  
Or drink  
Ears can hear  
The hordes of death coming  
But cannot run  
Eyes can see  
But cannot speak  
And a poem  
Can be sweet  
Or a song can be bitter  
To arouse the passion  
But in order to win  
We have to raise our hands  
And give our life.

*April 26, 1976*

Like this new  
Pair of glasses  
Which enables me  
To see clearly  
Knowledge, too,  
Hurts.

*May 3, 1976*

*Between Exile and Jail*

The flowers  
That I bought  
To bring back  
A smile on your lips  
Lie  
Like a bouquet  
On the coffin  
Of our love.

*May 8, 1976*

Somehow  
They shall always survive  
Weeds in fields  
Insects in gutters  
And the people  
Who never knew  
What it is like  
To walk  
With their heads high!

*June 17, 1976*





Poems of Unkinship



1981

To all those  
who have been  
hurt and betrayed  
in the name of love

## Author's Preface

America is a nation always at war. It began with a war, it expanded itself by conquering others' territories. It always found new frontiers. It conquers space, nature, and everything else.

When its own frontiers were not enough, America went abroad and waged wars. It destroyed the cultures it never wanted to understand or respect in the name of saving them. In the name of democracy it established dictatorships.

America is a nation which proclaimed all men are created equal while keeping slaves.

America is there to win, to expand, to be successful. Success means power, and money. The fast buck.

America is a land of experts. But experts never get involved in their subjects, especially if they happen to be human. An entomologist may love ants, but I have yet to find an Anthropologist who truly loved the society he studied. And yet who overnight does not declare to be the all-knowing person about his people.

America is the land of salesmen. America is the nation of propaganda. Everything is for sale here, and every lie is to be proved right.

But there are no frontiers to conquer. After Vietnam, America turned introvert. And began to fight against itself. It destroyed the society and now the family — which was already limited to its minimum by cutting off the ties with the elder generation right after one's marriage — became its last frontier.

And it is bent upon destroying it. It is bent upon destroying the human.

All in the name of saving and freedom of course.

And finally, America is the land of 'love'. No one single word is used — misused — here as much as the word 'love' along with 'I'. The self centered egotistic 'love'? Yes they love everything including screwing the thing they 'love most'.

And every liberation movement began here for taking, grabbing, and holding tight. No one wants to really give away what they have and everyone wants to take from others.

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And that is the story of these poems. They are very personal, but they really are not. The more I discovered America after being thrown on the streets by those who claimed to 'love' me, the more I found the story to be universal. There are no innocent people to be saved. They are as guilty as butchers. So after long thought I decided to publish them. I hope they save some innocent lives in the future.



And what she called love  
Was just another word  
For killing.

*July 28, 1976*

And as for the sons:  
They collected  
Empty beer cans  
And left over girls.

*August 25, 1976*

The end, my dear  
Is always the same  
Those who claim to love  
Kill  
And those who are friends  
Gossip!

*August, 25, 1976*

How many deceitful roads  
Did the woman take  
Before she brought him  
From the nudity of the beach  
To the nudity of the bed  
To ruin!

*November 2, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Her children glued to the TV  
Looking into the hollow horizons  
Beyond the broken home  
Her parents living  
The lingering death of loneliness  
Her in-law rots in prison  
In search of freedom  
Her husband long buried  
His hopes and dreams  
Under her ambition  
And forgotten  
To a crowd of unknown  
An expert speaks  
Again  
About the thing she never had:  
Kinship!

*November 13, 1976*

Foundations of our cracked dreams  
Long forgotten  
She stands on the peak  
Of the pyramid  
Looks into the sky  
Shrieking  
I am great  
I am great!

*November 14, 1976*

Like a patched up  
Spare wheel  
Of another vehicle  
I drag along  
In case they need me  
Between two changes!

*November 17, 1976*

Yes, it will be me  
The killed  
And not you  
The murderer  
Who will take  
Death  
To those  
Who are  
My very own!

*November 17, 1976*

In this world  
Full of friends  
And family  
To whom  
Should I give thanks  
For loneliness  
And being alone!

*November 23, 1976*

A pyre burns  
Fuelled by the  
Wood of agonies  
The rain of memories  
Pour  
Everything wet  
I cremate myself  
Little by little  
Ashes too far  
A pyre burns!

*November 23, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And like death  
Her cold lips kissed me  
The final good bye  
Everything between us  
Came to an end  
Like the toilet paper  
A tear  
Dried up my pain  
Before being flushed  
Down the drain  
Of memories!

*November 23, 1976*

As my father wove  
A cot  
With thick bunches  
Of finest thin ropes  
I weave my life  
Filling holes  
With clouds of memories  
Everything leaks  
In pain!

*November 23, 1976*

Every day comes  
Like a funeral day  
Of yesterday  
Every tomorrow awaits  
Like a shroud  
Of today  
Dreams scattered  
Like broken words  
How stale they look  
Like dead flies  
Those promises  
Of being  
Eternally mine!

*November 23, 1976*

Like these  
Falling rain drops  
On the other side  
Of my stained window  
I see my past  
But cannot touch  
Life stands  
Between you and me  
Transparent  
And apart  
We are there  
And we never are!

*November 23, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I wait for the tomorrow  
That never comes  
Only the net of 'today'  
Tightens and tightens  
Life squeezes itself  
Out of me  
Like water through the sieve  
To be free  
I remain  
A skeleton  
Of what I would be  
But never was!

*November 23, 1976*

Soon you, too,  
Will become  
A tale of the past  
'Once upon a time  
In a fairy land  
There lived a witch...'  
But alas  
There is no young prince  
Who can save us  
We are roasted  
In the frying pan  
Of Time  
Again and again!

*November 23, 1976*

Like a pale leaf  
In the autumn  
Like a ripened fruit  
In the season  
I fall  
I fall  
In search of my roots  
And mingle  
In the dust  
Of my ruins  
In a foreign land!

*November 24, 1976*

And death  
Kills  
Even  
Time!

*November 24, 1976*

And that finger  
Which always points at me  
To accuse and to abuse  
Will some day turn  
Toward her own heart  
When I am gone  
What will it find  
Whom will it blame  
Me  
Her heart  
Or itself?

*November 24, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like this empty bedroom  
Where ghosts of my love  
Still remain  
In the dark empty air  
My heart is filled  
With the vacuum  
Of your presence  
Emptiness fills  
The horizons of my dreams!

*November 24, 1976*

And perhaps  
It is in the end  
Empty space  
And meaningless sounds  
Like my heart  
That will create  
Some music again  
Life will sing  
Some blues of betrayal  
And songs of love!

*November 24, 1976*



Lying here  
Alone  
I think  
Of those women  
Who said  
They were mine  
But never were  
(And never shall be)  
For mine are  
Only the wounds  
Created by them  
To fill my loneliness  
And drained out heart!

*November 24, 1976*

The gift is  
What you receive  
You gave twenty years  
To a woman  
She gave you a finger  
You gave your hand  
To an old lady  
For five minutes  
She gave you all  
That she could muster  
Blessings collected  
In exchange for her life  
A day was reborn  
A day was relived  
The gift is  
What you receive.

*November 24, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I build the mountain of sorrows  
In the sky of loneliness  
My future is a flood  
Of wait  
My past — a graveyard  
Of broken dreams  
Life — a pyramid of buried promises  
A cracked up soul  
I need some glue of trust  
But find it nowhere  
I am a prisoner of myself  
Building new walls  
Of consciousness  
That I never was  
What I said  
I would be  
Someone imprinted  
A forged signature  
On my portrait  
When I was sold  
To Time  
I die in wait  
And wait to die!

*November 24, 1976*

As if to celebrate  
The wake of my dream  
They give parties  
To their friends  
I lie far away  
In solitary confinement  
And they call it a land of choices!

*November 25, 1976*

I saw  
Your flowers  
(Cut off from the root  
Decorating a vase  
Like myself  
Replanted in your culture)  
Fading with me  
As the day passed  
All alone  
I knew what they meant  
By the harmony  
Between man and nature!

*November 25, 1976*

I have all the worries  
That a parent has  
But I have no children  
I have all the sufferings  
Of a separated lover  
But no love  
I have bought so many houses  
But I have no home  
I adopted nations, humanities and all  
But I belong to no one  
Now I know  
How an outcaste  
A refugee  
A homeless  
Feels!

*November, 26, 1976*

Blessed are the fools  
At least they make  
Others laugh!

*November 28, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

You and I:  
Ghosts of our memories  
Camping in the wilderness  
Sleeping in their own  
Separate bags  
Always wondering  
What the other is doing  
Inside there!

*December 2, 1976*

History:  
A caravan of flies  
Tired  
Sleeps on a king's grave  
Dark night falls  
Like a curtain  
In a play!

*December 2, 1976*

First she cheated me  
With her love  
Now she cheats me  
With her laws!

*December 7, 1976*

Our words  
Are like enemy broadcasts  
They never talk  
They jam!

*December 7, 1976*

Your law too  
Is like a profession  
Of prostitution  
Whoever pays  
Wins the truth!

*December 7, 1976*

Love:  
For a long time  
She wove in secret  
A shroud  
To present me  
As a Christmas gift  
Along with the death  
Her betrayal brought!

*December 7, 1976*

Scholar:  
For a long time  
A she wolf  
Wore the hide  
Of his relationship  
And grazed  
His field  
Now she is shitting out  
Words  
And betrayal!

*December 7, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And after  
Everything is said and done  
Every storm come and gone  
Every relationship tested  
And wasted  
The fact is  
That it is your agony alone  
Expressed in a million ways  
That is yours  
Truly yours  
To live  
To suffer  
To enjoy and  
To die  
With You!

*December 8, 1976*

Here I lie  
With my private love affair  
With an ulcer  
Agonies filtering like the embraces  
Of a new lover  
Without pause  
My 'wife' —  
The last one of the enemy rank —  
Prepares for her last  
Intoxicated mad elephant attack  
The womb where I sowed the seed  
To produce four dreamland fruits  
Is throwing out  
The lava of hatred  
Every house  
Destroyed by its new builder  
Every dream shattered by its own dreamer  
Every child eaten by its own creator  
There is no peace on earth  
There is no good will in man  
For man  
The only Christmas spirit  
(That is to be bought and sold  
And absorbed with liquor)  
Is for Christ to grow  
And be crucified  
My cross is ready  
A solitary confinement  
And a private death  
In an unknown land  
For no cause at all  
Except that  
I must have been born  
To die  
And it could have been  
Anywhere  
Any time!

*December 15, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Fathers and husbands  
They can never make good pets  
Knowing that  
They discarded me  
And my place  
Is filled  
By mice and cats  
And dogs  
How affectionate now  
The house looks!

*December 16, 1976*

And what we thought  
Was the core  
Of our life, our love  
Turned out to be a worm  
Which ate the apple  
Of our dream tree  
Before it ever  
Ripened!

*December 16, 1976*

And it is  
Through others' deaths  
Our life returns  
Little by little  
We are freed more  
Breathing is lighter  
And we sense  
Something gone  
Something gained!

*December 17, 1976*



And now  
Not even a wait  
Death has finally dawned  
Radiant  
In the ocean  
Of a deep  
Deep silence!

*December 17, 1976*

She knows all  
About kinship  
She dissected all  
Those she called kin  
Like experimental frogs!

*December 17, 1976*

And like the final  
Onion peel  
She took off  
The last mask  
She was naked  
All gone  
Pretense  
Shame  
And 'reality'  
That we lived!

*December 17, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And like a thunderbolt  
Reality shone  
She was a cloud  
Of destruction  
Dark and thick  
All along!

*December 17, 1976*

While still pretending  
To make love  
She dismantled  
The walls  
Of our home  
We are all caught  
Naked  
Naked  
Without any shame!

*December 17, 1976*

Like the straw warrior  
All their laws  
Can't take a faint  
Fire  
Created by  
A tiny spark  
Of simple truth!

*December 18, 1976*

Love is like a tree  
We cut down  
To make a fire  
To keep warm  
Now its branches  
Are being used  
To build a pyre  
And to cremate  
Us — the living dead!

*December 18, 1976*

Such a grand show  
They judged  
They sentenced  
They crucified  
A man in absentia  
No one applauded!

*December 18, 1976*

And after they carved  
All over my body  
Permanent scars  
They wondered  
What others thought  
Of *their* image!

*December 18, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And like  
A midnight cry  
My poems break  
Out in the wilderness  
In far away lands  
Like the tall trees  
They fall  
In a dark forest  
No one listens  
No one knows  
If they make  
Any sound!

*December 18, 1976*

I remember you  
Like the country  
I left  
Long ago  
I never left!

*December 18, 1976*

Like a heavy boot  
Of an  
Insensitive tyrant  
Your law  
Smashed  
My ant-like love  
No cry  
No murmur  
And no appeal!

*December 18, 1976*

Never wear  
The knots of love  
So tight  
Sometimes  
They kill!

*December 18, 1976*

And like an angry skunk  
She ran  
Away from me  
And like its smell  
I am soaked  
With stinking  
Memories!

*December 18, 1976*

And why  
Only in her death  
I sing her song!

*December 18, 1976*

And then the judge declared:  
Pay your unfaithful wife now  
And die later!

*December 18, 1976*

And now  
I write of my love  
Shedding my agonies' ink  
On a dark night's cover  
Of nothingness!

*December 18, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like the last frozen flower  
I kiss  
The death  
Of my love!

*December 18, 1976*

Like a counterfeit coin  
I am thrown away  
I roll and roll  
And buy nothing!

*December 18, 1976*

And like an old  
Ragged woman  
I count my memories  
Like soiled coins  
Rubbing against  
My tired heart!

*December 18, 1976*

Love  
Like an unused chimney  
All soot  
And no warmth!

*December 18, 1976*

Divorce  
A frustrated woman  
Wrote a dirty graffiti  
With her shitty finger  
On the ruins  
Of her love!

*December 18, 1976*

If all I ever do  
Is wait  
For time to pass  
Why was it necessary  
For me  
To be  
A part  
In the plan  
Of this universe  
Surely  
Time would have passed  
Without my wait!

*December 18, 1976*

Like a man  
Suddenly caught in a storm  
I am soaked  
By memories  
I shiver  
And wait!

*December 18, 1976*

Memories wrapped around me  
Like tattered clothes  
They never save me  
From heat or cold  
Or rains of life  
They only give away secrets  
I am weak  
I am weak!

*December 18, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Don't, dear friend, don't  
Don't wake me up  
Nightmares are heaven  
When compared to  
The reality of  
My empty hell!

*December 18, 1976*

Like the red marks  
In your business books  
I count my loss  
In the hurts  
My heart has recorded  
Since we met  
Since we parted!

*December 18, 1976*



No one wanted to  
Listen to my tale  
My forefathers died  
Before I had the courage  
To open my mouth  
My brother was silenced  
Behind iron gates  
Relatives choked with depression  
My wife was intoxicated  
With limited power  
And canned knowledge  
My children busy  
In gathering  
Left over loves  
To recycle  
No one wanted to  
Listen to my tale  
And yet I told it  
As if to pave a path  
In the dark forest  
So some future traveler  
Does not say  
No one warned him  
About the dangers  
Of this jungle —  
Civilization

*December 21, 1976*

It is indeed  
A progress  
Of rational minds  
When dismantling a home  
Is called by  
The society  
An institution!

*December 23, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Yes, it is true  
That it is much easier  
To be a call girl  
Than to be a faithful woman  
(And maybe it is  
More fun too)  
But, then, I could have walked  
The streets of your cities  
Instead of building a home  
(With sweat and blood)  
For you to dismantle  
And destroy  
Yes it was a mistake  
To expect a dark night  
To burn  
And produce a sun  
To shine and to warm  
And that I expected you  
To show us a path  
Was too a mistake  
For you were only  
Fit  
To spread  
Darkness all over!

*December 23, 1976*

Like rubble  
Buried in foundations  
My dreams are  
Always there  
Beneath your palace  
Of fame  
Always broken  
And never  
To be seen!

*December 23, 1976*

How do you tell  
Your dear ones  
That woman they took to be  
A goddess of unity  
Between East and West  
A symbol of virtue  
Purity and love  
Turned out to be  
A mirage, a betrayal  
A common girl  
Walking the street  
How do you tell your kith and kin  
That the trust they placed  
In 'a heart of gold'  
Was merely a prelude  
To be stabbed again and again  
How do you tell any one at all  
That your sons are pimps  
Throwing their seeds  
In gutters of debased  
And fallen vaginas  
How do you tell  
That your final payment  
For this life  
Turned out to be  
A declaration  
Of bankruptcy  
And failure  
How do you announce  
Your own death  
At the hands of betraying ones  
Whom you accepted  
Against everyone's  
Advice  
And goodwill  
How?

*December 24, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Why do we try  
To win others so hard  
That in the end  
We simply fail  
Each other!

*December 24, 1976*

When your 'own love' dumps you  
Like a cowdung lump  
When your children avoid you  
Like a plague  
When your shadow runs away from you  
Like a skunk  
Tell me, what death  
Do you await?

*December 24, 1976*

Noon  
Christmas secrets  
All unwrapped  
Like ourselves  
Emptiness  
Another wait  
Another year!

*December 25, 1976*

With every bone aching  
With every nerve dissected  
Where will the peace on earth come from  
With mind so full of poisoned memories  
Where will the goodwill  
Toward man (or woman) originate  
With no fruits from the past  
With no hopes for the future  
And all christs crucified in advance  
How can I sing of life  
Stabbed again and again  
And again!

*December 25, 1976*

As if to negate  
The act of her grinding my heart  
She is distributing  
To everyone else  
The recipe using a portion of that  
Tender juicy meat  
And cooked in a smile  
How delicious the meal indeed is  
For everyone else  
But me: the dead!

*December 25, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

You tried to wreck the brain  
That fed your theories  
You ate the hand  
That caressed you with tender love  
You broke the legs  
That walked your paths  
To give you solace  
And needed company  
You maimed, you killed  
Every dream we created  
I thought all, yes all  
Is gone forever  
Suddenly a seed of love  
You sowed in your unknown desire  
Sprouted today  
On the grave of our love  
And I know now  
All is not gone  
In spite of you!

*December 25, 1976*

With all the glitter  
So much remains dark  
Inside  
With all the world  
Full of modern gadgets  
So much emptiness  
Vast horizons always to be lost  
Memorable dreams  
Ending in agonizing wake  
All love gone drop by drop  
Through the holes  
Of a sieve of empty desires  
So much ploughing, sowing and watering  
Reaping dry thorns  
Enmity sings songs  
Of love, peace and goodwill  
How hollow can  
A woman's heart be!

*December 25, 1976*

Every poem  
Is a poor translation  
Of inner sufferings  
And joys  
Experienced by  
Silence  
Language is a wrapper  
Mysteriously covering  
The truth  
Of nothingness  
Creation is  
A sweet myth  
An illusion  
A child lost  
In search of a path  
Returning home  
To nowhere!

*December 25, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Today  
Two of you  
United  
And gave me a present  
To glue a broken spirit  
Tomorrow sees  
You and me  
United in agony  
That none of you  
May even have  
A hand to shake  
Emptiness cries  
Inside me!

*December 25, 1976*

To everyone I give  
Material gifts  
From here and there  
To you I give  
The emptiness  
You created  
By draining my heart  
With the sharpest hate machine  
All in silence!

*December 25, 1976*

Divorce:  
And like everything else  
This too is a lie  
Like a leach  
You still suck my blood  
Memory lingers  
Like a ghost  
Never to leave!

*December 25, 1976*



And those  
Who claim to my be friends  
Still exchange  
Smiles  
Handshakes  
Music  
And presents  
With those  
Who are  
Bleeding me  
To death  
Suffering is indeed  
The most private  
Property!

*December 26, 1976*

No one to call me home  
No one to stop me here  
Like a bird  
Caught between electric wires  
I neither live  
Nor die  
Just flutter in pain!

*December 26, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Thunder in the sky  
Rains  
Radio, television, records  
In the room  
All meaningful sounds  
Senseless noises  
Drowned into silence  
When our hearts beat together  
Now the silence breaks  
That we are  
No longer one  
All is noise  
Sound and thunder  
Do you hear?

*December 26, 1976*

Now that  
The kin are dead  
Let's write  
A brilliant piece  
On 'the ritual  
Of massacre  
And burying kin'!

*December 26, 1976*

And those  
Who cut off our tongue  
Are now  
Afraid to talk!

*December 27, 1976*

While they talked of their hamsters, cats and dogs  
I kept thinking of my nephews and nieces  
Who died of starvation  
While they sang praises of Bach, Beethoven and such  
I wondered what it was that  
The last breaths of my mother mumbled  
While they counted the joys in celebration over my living death  
An old man's face haunted me  
From behind the closed iron gates  
While they counted successes  
In terms of how many chicks fell for them  
Or how many pimps laid their mother  
I counted our failures  
By the numbers jailed, maimed and killed  
By gentle looking dictators  
Indeed time has built us a different bridge  
Each step carrying me into darkness  
And them into a lofty unholy land  
We shall never never meet again  
Me and my wild oats!

*December 29, 1976*

Going to the bathroom  
I see  
Your politician  
Has shifted his position again  
He no longer looks  
Straight into my eyes  
But would try to stab me  
From the side  
(Like you?)!

*December 29, 1976*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Our mothers  
They talked worriedly  
About three point some survival  
Of kids out of ten born  
Before their husbands died  
An early death  
Our wives  
They talk gleefully  
Of three point eight  
Lovers they would have  
After a deadly love  
And divorce!

*December 29, 1976*

And those  
To whom we gave the strength  
Tried to swallow us  
Like vitamins  
To gain more power!

*December 31, 1976*

And like the unused language  
I learnt  
Soon  
I shall forget  
The complicated grammar  
Of your love!

*December 31, 1976*

And again  
The divine water fall  
Has washed  
The sins of the mountains  
How beautiful  
How spotless  
Do they look  
Like a child's heart  
All reborn.

*December 31, 1976*

Neatly you divided it all  
You were white, I was black  
You were true, angelic, faithful and all  
I was the incarnation of the devil himself  
You were light, intellect, heart and mind  
I was the darkness in your life  
History never seems to stop repeating  
Like the wars to save people  
For people, from people  
You, your justice, your country  
Produces again  
A lie  
Your hands bleed  
And you call it  
Lipstick of (a dead) love!

*January 2, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

The rains still tap  
On my window  
Reminding me of our past  
I sob  
No shower of love  
To strike against my heart  
Clouds bring only darkness  
Filled with lone sorrows  
And no rains!

*January 2, 1977*

I look at my past  
Like a horror movie  
Shown on the late late show  
I shudder, I tremble  
I wipe my tears  
And then feel sorry  
To be so upset  
Over what  
Was simply a movie  
On the screen  
And not  
The real me!

*January 2, 1977*

Like the tall redwood trees  
We stood  
Next to each other  
In pride  
Never touching  
Each other's heart!

*January 2, 1977*

And now  
Like the blood  
Of an unwanted  
Aborted child  
She wipes off  
The old old memories  
Of our love!

*January 2, 1977*

Like an address book  
Of someone else  
I am no use to anyone  
Just scattered names  
Sprinkled in wounds!

*January 4, 1977*

I always lived  
Looking at my horizons  
They never touched me  
They were just there  
Surrounding like failures  
Colours of rainbow!

*January 4, 1977*

Like the names  
Scribbled on the wall  
You are always there  
You never are!

*January 4, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Children:  
Unidentified seeds  
Sown in a mistaken land  
How they hurt now  
Like dry thorns  
In my throat!

*January 4, 1977*

Each visit is like  
A witness  
To the launching of ourselves  
Into inner space  
Returning to a distant land  
Alone  
Each going away  
Is like a journey  
To the cremation ground  
Burning a little more  
Of myself  
And leaving the ashes behind  
Uncollected  
And like the American way  
Of death  
All is to be paid  
In advance  
And yet so many installments  
Remaining  
Yes, we all love our dear ones  
After they are dead  
And gone  
And specially  
If they leave  
Something behind  
A small fortune  
To celebrate  
And forget  
Them!

*January 5, 1977*



And finally  
They wrote  
The declaration  
Of  
*Their* independence  
With blood —  
*Mine.*

*January 5, 1977*

Tonight I am alone again  
And lonely  
I feel guilty  
Why can I never be  
With myself!

*January 5, 1977*

I never knew  
That your fingers  
Were only exploring  
The geography of my body  
In order to hurt  
The tenderest spot  
And wave good bye!

*January 5, 1977*

Even for love  
One has to dream  
One has to cheat  
Steal and lie  
Even for love?!

*January 5, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

My language was crude  
Like a hardened penis  
My thoughts were tender  
Like a vagina  
Together we loved  
We loved, we did!

*January 5, 1977*

We are still united  
By our guilt  
By our shame  
By our wounds  
And by our failures  
To unite!

*January 5, 1977*

It's only a moth  
That can give life  
For a burning light  
Man already knows  
Love does not pay!

*January 5, 1977*

For whom does the blind girl dress so well  
For whom does the deaf one laugh so beautifully  
And for whom do I write these silly lines???

*January 5, 1977*

Like the autumn tree dropping its leaves  
I shake off my memories  
In order to be bare  
And grow some more  
Hurt is evergreen!

*January 6, 1977*

Love for them  
Is another exotic food  
They try  
In different ethnic restaurants  
They chew  
The praise  
They digest  
And have heartburn  
They groan  
And shit it out  
In the courts!

*January 6, 1977*

Do not spread  
The word  
That we are tied  
By any cord  
Before we are  
For even  
An untied thread  
Hurts  
Makes a mess  
When it breaks!

*January 6, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I made love to you  
Not as a substitute  
For words  
Nor as a bribe  
Nor to keep peace  
But because  
I wanted to transform  
My words to feelings  
And feelings to bliss  
And bliss to God  
Through you I merge  
With myself  
Into you  
And the universe!

*January 6, 1977*

Whenever I remember now  
My fingers treading  
The path of your body  
I have a queer feeling  
That someone else has  
Already been there  
And someone is  
Following the deep scars  
Made by the betrayal  
Of your lies!

*January 6, 1977*

Each night  
The sky  
Drops some stars  
And asks me about  
The number of holes  
A woman has made  
In my heart!

*January 6, 1977*

Now that you have emptied  
My heart  
Of its past  
I wonder  
What future  
Will walk through it!

*January 6, 1977*

I am afraid  
Someone will steal  
My memories  
My dreams  
The ruins of my heart  
I keep awake  
Sleepless  
In the dark!

*January 6, 1977*

Like bread  
I am eaten by you  
To fatten your ambition!

*January 6, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

The lamp went out again  
It was  
Jealous  
Of our love!

*January 6, 1977*

It is only after  
The flowers are cut  
That they can decorate  
The living rooms  
Of civilized people!

*January 6, 1977*

Leaf by leaf  
The tree is bare  
Memory by memory  
My heart dries!

*January 6, 1977*

Reality:  
Like your ugly tooth  
You pulled me out  
And threw in the gutter  
How shiny you are now  
Like your plastic tooth  
And courtly lies

*January 6, 1977*

They ask me how  
Is she going to live  
With her conscience  
What conscience?

*January 6, 1977*

How can I translate  
My agonies on paper  
With black ink  
Instead of  
Red blood?

*January 6, 1977*

I look at my children  
One by one  
Again and again  
And ask myself  
How can a seed grow  
To uproot the tree  
How can the walls  
Dig up the foundation  
And be gleeful  
That they are the night  
Produced by the dawn  
In the hope of getting  
A ray of hope  
When all is gone!

*January 6, 1977*

Poetry:  
Another star fell  
Leaving an empty  
Blue space  
In the sky!

*January 6, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Even for those  
Who live  
A rainbow life  
There is a faint line  
Of blues  
Quietly singing  
A sad sad tune!

*January 7, 1977*

There are lots  
Of thick black clouds  
And many hard rains  
Before a rainbow  
Is born  
In a grey sky

*January 7, 1977*

Over there  
Yes, I know  
They are fasting  
So their husband's deaths  
Never come  
Over here  
They are thinking  
How to make their husbands  
Fast unto death  
So a new flower can bloom  
In their lives  
Which they can offer  
On the graves of the dead  
In order to claim  
To have them loved!

*January 7, 1977*



'Love thy enemy'  
What else was I doing  
For two decades  
And look what happened  
Jesus Christ  
Just look!

*January 7, 1977*

Like onions  
Time machine  
Sliced our love  
And made us cry!

*January 7, 1977*

I went to the doctor  
Pregnant  
You are trapped  
I went to the lawyer  
To get unhooked  
You are doomed  
Doctors to shrinks  
To counsellors to lawyers  
And lovers in between  
Did she ever have time  
To really  
Care for me!

*January 8, 1977*

Hatred  
No less binding  
Than love  
Separations  
No less intimate  
Than unions  
Only they hurt more!

*January 8, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

It seems as if I  
Have suffered alone  
For millions of years  
It seems as if I  
Have not known you for centuries  
Snatched away from me  
In the name of love  
For you  
And you discarding me  
Like the shit done by Indian kids  
In the gutter  
Forgotten  
Nothing seems to have been left  
Between us  
And yet, it is your birthday  
And tradition says  
I should say something  
I — who was cut off like cancer  
As a Christmas gift to you —  
I — who for all practical purposes  
Has been declared dead  
Invalid and bounced —  
Except for the final rituals  
Of collecting money  
From my grave  
(Money still talks and lives  
Even for unfaithful wives)  
So I should say something  
And I do:  
If my silence is happiness to you  
May my tongue be cut off  
If my not seeing you is your pleasure  
May I go blind  
If my non-being is bliss to you  
May God give me death  
As a birthday gift to you  
For in all the agonies of mine  
I still pray  
Day and night

For the good of you  
Who were born  
To shame  
To hurt  
And to kill!  
(For Sanjaya and Sunita)

*January 8, 1977*

This too is the American way  
That they congratulate  
At the death  
Of a family  
As if death  
Is the only way  
For them to live!

*January 8, 1977*

Over there  
Wives commit 'satee'  
In the memory of their husbands  
Over here  
Wives kill  
And are paid for it  
By the system!

*January 9, 1977*

They say  
We are not  
Related  
Any more  
As if you can really  
Unplant the seed  
Of folly  
(Now producing evergreen hurt)

*January 9, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like new years' resolutions  
Made in a drunken state  
At midnight  
How quickly it's forgotten  
That we were supposed  
To live with and love  
Each other  
Until the death  
Does us part!

*January 9, 1977*

Not knowing the field  
Not familiar with the method  
I sowed my seeds  
And look, what I grew  
And see, what I reap  
All my life!

*January 9, 1977*

Cut off from the root  
Look how I faded  
In your hands  
You — who promised to make  
Me bloom forever  
And ever with love!

*January 9, 1977*

History is a lie  
Filled with briefs  
(Like those of lawyers)  
Of 'known facts'  
No one knows!

*January 9, 1977*

My life is a joke  
Punchline missing!

*January 9, 1977*

When someone talks  
About you  
My heart still jumps  
Like a dog  
Responding to a call  
With a given name!

*January 9, 1977*

I wonder  
How much  
Do they know  
Themselves  
Those who  
Claim to know  
Others?

*January 10, 1977*

'Thirty-one flavours'  
Which one are you on  
Now?

*January 10, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

The drudgery of life  
I sought retreat in sleep  
In a morning dream you appear  
Like an angel covered with sweetness  
I call you with my silent open arms  
You come  
Gentle and blushing  
As in our last days  
Embrace and kiss  
The nightmare ends  
And one more day of mine  
Is killed  
Without even trying!

*January 10, 1977*

So you still remember  
How to spell  
My name!

*January 10, 1977*

Like the continental divide  
There we were  
There we are  
Only a peak of agony  
In between!

*January 10, 1977*

Look ma  
No husband!

*January 11, 1977*

Now that your face  
Is permanently eclipsed  
I watch the moon go by  
In the darkness  
Of a sunny day!

*January 11, 1977*

Your memories  
I wear  
Like the bath robe  
You gave me  
As a Christmas gift  
Long ago  
Habitually!

*January 11, 1977*

We are wearing words  
Again  
Like masks  
To hide  
Our inaction!

*January 11, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Are your words  
Also confined  
To a solitary cell  
In this huge prison  
As I am  
That they too  
Cannot communicate  
Or are you a greedy  
Owner of them  
Want to leave them behind  
Like a hidden  
Buried treasure  
After we both are gone  
They sure are not  
Like a rain drop  
In a vast desert  
That you cannot waste  
Then why are you silent  
Why, dear daughter, why?  
(For Aruna)

*January 11, 1977*

In every poem  
Her betrayal  
My agony  
And your tears!

*January 11, 1977*

My poems are like a pinch  
My hand gives to my foot  
To see  
If it still is awake!

*January 11, 1977*



Like a frog  
We simply lived  
We never dissected  
Ourselves  
(We are not  
The scientists —  
Social or otherwise)  
What do we know  
About  
Being us?

*January 11, 1977*

Relations  
They are beautiful  
Like the long hair  
Of a pretty girl  
But they are impractical  
Always in the way  
Let's chop them  
Off!

*January 11, 1977*

How many calories of pain  
Will there be  
For the last supper  
How many nails of betrayal  
Before the cross is covered  
How many more deaths  
Before the final one?

*January 11, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Not being well versed  
In your laws  
I still dream  
About you  
And commit  
Adultery!

*January 11, 1977*

One more day  
One more step  
Toward death  
One more step  
Away from life  
Unlived!

*January 11, 1977*

Son:  
At noon a shadow is born  
Helpless  
Under your feet  
By evening  
It grows so tall  
You are eclipsed  
Night falls  
You both go  
Your own way  
Little you  
And your big shadow!

*January 12, 1977*

'Oh you  
You are just like  
My parents'  
I felt so  
Complimented  
To be among  
Such  
Closest enemies!

*January 12, 1977*

Sleep  
Again  
Tonight  
I will rehearse  
Unsuccessfully  
An  
Incomplete death!

*January 12, 1977*

Long lasting are the things  
Without vibrations, life's feel  
Like stones, pillars  
And plastic plants  
Those which bloom  
Are bound to decay  
Fade  
And die  
Early  
Such as flowers  
And loving hearts!

*January 14, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

And like an unknown  
Current of water  
Flowing under the bridge  
Time flows  
Moment by moment  
Unnoticed  
I wait  
And wait  
God knows  
For what!

*January 14, 1977*

So what if  
God made this earth  
In a week  
We can destroy it  
Instantly!

*January 14, 1977*

As if to my coffin  
I return  
To this cold bed  
Every night  
Alone!

*January 14, 1977*

Silence is thunder  
Breaking  
My heart!

*January 15, 1977*

Waiting again  
How many times  
Do I have to repeat  
Myself  
Like a windmill  
Going nowhere!

*January 15, 1977*

Now that the 'real  
Thing' is gone  
Between you and me  
Bad memories will grow  
Like thistles  
In a dry field  
Abandoned!

*January 15, 1977*

There are  
Only two kinds of people  
Around  
Those we love  
And those we don't  
And boy  
Are they both  
Hard to live with!

*January 15, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Philosophy, religion  
Psychology and social  
Sciences  
Do not do much good  
To this life  
(Maybe they complicate  
More and solve nothing)  
Knowledge is a poor tool  
And technology a poor substitute  
The ocean of life  
Can only be filled  
With tears shed together  
Shared and mingled  
Like rivers of compassion  
Flowing to be one!

*January 15, 1977*

They did not know  
If they will be around  
When I die  
My children  
Have lit the flame  
In my pyre  
Of loving death  
NOW!

*January 16, 1977*

No dear Anne  
The first and the last  
Songs of man  
Will always be sung  
In silence!

*(For Anne Kilmer)*  
*January 16, 1977*

No child brings newspapers for me  
In the morning  
(I have none to bring)  
No one of them cooks  
Washes  
Changes my bed  
Walls and floors and windows  
All remain unnoticed  
Uncleaned by them  
No one edits my ideas  
And they thought  
I would be dead  
Here I am  
Still breathing  
Still knowing  
That I can wash my face  
(And miss you all  
Without missing)  
The only thing dead  
Is an idea  
That she was to me  
But never really was!

*January 16, 1977*

I wonder if  
They are sorry  
Knowing that  
I can breathe again  
Without the help  
Of a machine  
They called home!

*January 16, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Lovers  
For decades  
They lived together  
Only to indict each other  
With worse crimes  
Than any  
F.B.I. agent  
Ever could!

*January 16, 1977*

Yesterday my child  
You were with me  
I felt so fearful  
You would get hurt  
Even walking straight  
Today you are all alone  
Walking dark alleys  
And somehow I feel  
So secure!

*(For Sunita)*  
*January 16, 1977*

So you still know  
How to count  
And be counted  
Having subtracted  
Us from each other  
What does life  
Add up to!

*January 16, 1977*



Those  
Who have not lived through  
The eternity of hell  
Called night  
Remembering in agony  
Their 'enemies'  
What do they know  
About  
Love!

*January 17, 1977*

No one here  
Ever thinks  
To live life  
For anyone  
But self  
And they still claim  
They marry  
For Love!

*January 17, 1977*

I owe you an apology  
My dear uncle —  
Companion soul  
Of my late mother  
Your sister —  
My dear Om  
The brother who loved me  
More than any one else  
My dear sister Prem —  
Worthy of your name  
Proven again and again with 'love'  
And my dear friends  
Who told me in advance  
From village to London  
Who told me in advance  
That it wouldn't work

*Lifelong Search for Home*

You were right  
A she-donkey  
Can never become a cow  
And cross breeding between  
A horse and a donkey  
Produces  
Only a mule  
However, it was my sin  
Let me pay for it  
All alone  
I truly will be  
Grateful to you  
If you could restrain  
The temptation of  
Reminding me again and again  
Though in sorrow  
'We told you so'  
For may be like  
A fallen sinner  
Not worthy of you  
And last to the tribe  
Purity and all  
I may commit  
The same sin again!

*January 17, 1977*

Knowledge makes it all unreal  
Their eternal love  
Like the sky  
Like Time  
Like feelings  
Like soul  
All pervading  
Everlasting  
Seen through the eyes  
Of illusion  
Attachment  
And ignorance  
Blind  
But then  
A cat  
A hamster  
A lock of hair  
A habit  
Might come  
Thinly disguised  
Like a sharp sword  
And cut it all  
Reality itself  
Spreads bare  
Like the sun  
So clear  
And so unreal  
All liberated!

*January 18, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Even the euphoria  
Of making a good poem  
Lasts only as long  
As a cup of coffee  
For a second filling  
You need a nickel  
Not provided by  
The poem!

*January 18, 1977*

Marriage:  
Like the trains  
Coming to a station  
From opposite directions  
We called it 'union'  
They called it 'crossing'!

*January 18, 1977*

Life seems to be a  
Lengthy preface  
To an unwritten book  
Prelude to an  
Uncoming future  
We are all so busy  
From morning to night  
Preparing for what  
We would like to do  
(And is never done)  
When added all  
We are only the carriers  
Of useless burdens  
We are only the washers  
And cleaners  
(And many such things)  
For a guest  
Who never came  
A big subtraction  
Division  
Multiplied  
By zero!

*January 18, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Oh you the betraying women of America  
Great descendants of a whoring line  
Oh you the sadist lawyers  
Building your castles on other people's ruins  
Oh you the judges  
Aborting justice like illegitimate babies  
You the white racist 'scholars'  
Always fearful of your little knowledge  
And dark ignorance  
You the casket-makers  
Grave-diggers  
Merchandisers of death  
Mortuaries of humanity  
Why squeeze out of me  
Penny by penny  
Nickel by nickel  
Or dime by dime  
Why not put me  
In your juice machine  
And squeeze me for your breakfast  
Divide my blood  
My flesh  
My bones  
And drink it, lick it  
Suck on it  
Like hungry wild dogs  
May be each of you  
Will get a drop  
An atom  
A crumb  
Will that satiate you all  
You motherfucker hounds  
From the West!

*January 19, 1977*

America is still very young  
So it behaves like a brat  
Wants every toy  
(Institutions and all)  
Instantly  
Tries it  
If it does not work  
Breaks it  
'What's next'  
It asks Santa Claus  
Impatiently  
America is still very young  
A spoiled baby  
It wants to destroy  
Without any wait!

*January 19, 1977*

'I don't want  
To be responsible  
To you or for  
YOU'  
Just for your death  
And for your money!

*January 19, 1977*

What picture  
Should I paint  
Now  
That all  
My tools  
Are stolen  
By the subject!

*January 19, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

How gracefully  
How correctly  
How formal  
Do they dress  
For the dead  
How lovingly  
Do they drink  
For the wake  
It makes me feel  
So grateful  
For my murder  
I am watching!

*January 19, 1977*

Painted with the  
Uneven spill  
Blood makes  
The sun-set  
Of our  
Murdered love  
So beautiful  
Are your hands itching  
To paint  
Another picture  
You must be perfect  
After this practice  
Of nineteen years!

*January 19, 1977*



There comes a time to break all ties  
Powerful though they may be  
There comes a time to operate on emotions  
Rotting like a growing cancer  
In your brain  
There comes a time to say good bye  
To all whom you had loved  
And for whom you were ruined  
There comes a time to shake off all  
The wasted years  
Like a bad debt  
There comes a time when a cuckoo bird  
Gives a call to come home  
And you can't resist  
There comes a time you have to face  
Jails and beatings and deaths  
If need be  
And hold your head high  
There comes a time when the soul cries  
To be totally free  
And that time, dear heart, is now  
NOW  
It shall never return again  
If you do not go  
For narrow is the path  
And gates are to be closed again  
Even the voice of your soul  
Will be disappointed  
If you do not hear  
Its call now  
And it will give up on you  
Like *that* unfaithful wife  
Sorrow and mourn  
Is that all  
That shall remain  
Of your songs  
Of your blues.

*January 19, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Voices are many all around  
Praising, condemning,  
Pleading, ignoring  
Comforting, advising  
Expressing pity, sorrow and regrets  
Rubbing hands and biting lips  
Voices are many all around  
Shrieking, screaming, thundering  
And being numbed  
Frightened, shivering, agonizing  
But there is only one voice  
You have to listen to  
Your silent most inner voice  
Too many dreams died in embryo  
Too many truths have been aborted  
Too many visions are blurred  
Too many times you have killed yourself  
And for those who had limited time for you  
Who plotted behind your back  
For years and years  
Whom you dreamed as your dreams  
But who turned out to be nightmares  
Who remained silent when you were exiled  
Whose vision never left the neck of the girl next to them  
They saw your house burning  
And warmed their hands  
They saw a book of life being torn  
Page by page  
And lit their fire with them  
Friends like Brutus all set to stab  
And lie for the killer  
Everyone's feet tied to his limited world  
For them you can live no more  
And let them who want to walk with you  
Come forward  
And walk  
Into the fire  
And be burnt

Voices are many holding you to a ransom  
For relationships that are dead  
Don't listen to those  
Around your neck  
There have been too many nooses  
No more  
Voices are many increasing  
Noise filling the town with deafness  
Polluting  
Before yours is suffocated  
Listen to the one  
That never spoke  
And go!

*January 20, 1977*

One sun-set  
Millions of reflections  
One dream broken  
Millions of images  
Sprinkled in a blue  
Sky-heart  
And earth kept on moving  
Living  
As before  
For billions of years.

*January 20, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

A dissected heart  
Can never give  
A complete love  
A blood stained hand  
Can never paint a heaven  
A fragmented mind  
Can never promise  
To be clear  
Of those thorns  
Picking its pain  
Memories like fences  
Always may build  
Barriers  
Know that  
The Death Valley  
Has no secure path  
Only heat  
Know  
And come  
I am waiting!

*January 20, 1977*

Yes, it is foolish  
To leave this heaven  
For an uncertain hell  
But history  
Is made  
Often by fools!

*January 20, 1977*

So many soaps on TV  
Never knew  
There was  
So much dirt  
In America!

*January 20, 1977*

Just as for me  
In my cave  
In this valley  
So on the peak  
There must be  
A loneliness  
For you!

*January 20, 1977*

And they all return  
Like spiders  
To their webs  
Of private agony  
Glittering lights  
Grow dim  
One by one  
The earth takes in all  
Good or bad  
Like sons  
And wipes the tears  
In hiding!

*January 20, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

How short is the voyage  
Between cheers  
And tears!

*January 20, 1977*

Ambition —  
It may walk with you  
Today  
Holding your hand  
Tomorrow  
It may ride  
Like a shroud  
On your hearse!

*January 20, 1977*

Can a half man  
And a half woman  
Ever become  
One person  
Can broken dreams  
Add up to  
One life  
Can the laws of math  
Ever succeed  
In erasing  
All  
That hell wrote!

*January 20, 1977*

Memories:  
Petals of dried flowers  
Squeezed in between  
The pages of busy life  
Filled with nothingness!

*January 21, 1977*

Promises:  
Flowers on the grave  
Of our love  
All dried up  
No one comes  
To offer new ones  
All forgotten!

*January 21, 1977*

Sky is falling  
Nobody heard  
Sky is falling  
Nobody heard  
Sky fell  
There was no one there  
To hear!

*January 21, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

How many more pimps  
Of different varieties  
Is she going to experience  
Before she writes  
For her children  
'A guide to sex  
And money  
In your hand'!

*January 21, 1977*

Poetry is a thick cloud  
Made of burnt ocean  
Life  
Floating in a sky  
Heart full of blues  
Any more fire  
And it will pour  
In a hard rain  
Never stopping!

*January 21, 1977*

Now that  
You have killed me  
Gradually, patiently  
And with all the rituals  
How does the  
Kosher meat taste?

*January 21, 1977*



Our dreams were crushed  
Like flowers  
Under the heavy feet  
Of your drunken elephant ambitions  
Our life was scattered  
Like dandelions  
By the storms of betrayal  
Bit by bit  
Every year with you  
Was just another nail  
You nailed on the cross  
To crucify us  
And now you read our stories  
In your kinship seminars  
As if we were nothing  
But numbers  
Compiled and forgotten  
Long ago!

*January 22, 1977*

Emotions are green leaves  
They would yellow  
And would always fall  
Save the root  
For that is  
Where the  
LIFE is!

*January 22, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like the advertisement on TV  
American irregularity  
Has taken over my life  
No laxatives  
Sickness  
Loneliness  
Futile waits  
Racism  
Multiple betrayals  
And no peg to hang on to  
Nails are many  
But none to unite  
And each joint jerked  
Hurting  
Death at a slow speed  
In a no speed limit zone  
Awaiting the final outcome  
Every day a perfect  
Machine copy of the day before  
And yet irregular  
Poets are beggars  
Peddlers of their own merchandise  
So are the women and men  
Of all sizes and shapes  
Buyers are skeptical  
Money tight  
Everything in smoke  
Everything dying  
Stomach rebels.

*January 23, 1977*

It is not out of habit  
That blood pours  
On paper  
It is not out of habit  
That heart aches  
Wound wails  
It is because you keep giving  
Fuel to the fire  
That I burn  
Bleed  
And write these poems  
I have paid a heavy price  
For each word  
They may not mix properly  
To make a good show  
Or a good sale  
Like your body  
Or stolen ideas  
But they are real  
Every ruin does not make  
A nice palace to live in  
But once in a while  
A crazy person comes  
And digs  
Treasure is in his brain!

*January 23, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

'What is wrong'  
Asks my son  
In a real compassion  
'What's right'  
Asks my soul  
Bleeding!

*January 23, 1977*

How does it feel  
When your own son says  
That the painting made by the blood  
Of your chopped fingers  
On the dead canvas of your life  
Makes no sense  
But murder by his mother does!

*January 23, 1977*

Each time you are feasting  
On my flesh and blood  
Ghosts of my old men and women  
Roam over the table  
With questioning eyes!

*January 23, 1977*

It's a race between dogs  
Each after the blood of the other  
It's a race between hungry men  
Each ready to tear the other apart  
We are living in a butcher house  
Whatever the cloak they wear  
Whatever the mask  
Doctors, lawyers, judges  
Diplomats, scholars  
Governments or what not  
All are after us  
I wish you nothing  
And what does it matter  
If a person  
Mutilated by all over there singing  
(Including you)  
Wishes you to be all that  
Or not  
(You may be one)  
But all my agonies  
All my shattered dreams  
All my tears shed alone  
All my wounds  
Wish you one thing  
And only one  
Be human  
For that's one trade  
Missing in America!  
(For Sanjaya on his birthday)

*January 23, 1977*

Here in the land of rockets  
Breaking records in speed  
I crawl to my death  
Like a turtle!

*January 23, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Prices are great  
The reward is none  
Sufferings are millions  
Pleasures are nil  
Gradually I come to an end  
Of a dark dark tunnel  
Smelly, poisonous and full  
Of swamps and garbage  
And all left over  
From spent out culture  
I pause, I think, I ponder  
I rejoice for a moment  
If there is one step  
Someone took with me  
(Because tired feet soothed  
For a minute)  
The journey was not in vain  
If a tear was shed  
After a skyful of blues  
Lives are shared  
A line sung in unison  
Even if silent  
Is more meaningful  
Than a life of sermons  
If a finger trembled  
Touching my wounds  
Sacrifices succeeded  
When thunders of wars are over  
There will be more people  
Taking flowers to my grave of love  
Then there will be minstrels  
Singing for you  
And that, too, is no mean  
Achievement  
In an enemy land!

*January 23, 1977*

Life  
Quietly  
Patiently  
Weaves  
Moment by moment  
The most beautiful shroud  
For death  
Grows old and tired  
Gives up  
Without ever  
Completing!

*January 23, 1977*

Let he, who  
Never learnt a thing  
From us  
Speak  
For he alone  
Knows  
The truth!

*January 23, 1977*

Like the soul  
Stained by sin  
(But used to it)  
Repenting to be cleansed  
My heart swings  
Back and forth  
Between these two  
Unattainable shores!

*January 23, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

How many times  
Can one read  
Autobiography  
As a novel  
Blood stains  
As poetry  
And dying people  
As numbers?

*January 23, 1977*

Heart still aches  
Like a split head  
From the hangover  
Of a loving past!

*January 23, 1977*

Father  
Why did you die  
Speechless  
Without telling me  
That living death  
Is harder to bear  
Than a *dead* one  
It kills one  
Again and again  
You were survived  
By us  
But how does one survive  
One's own  
Recurring death  
Without dying  
Finally?

*January 23, 1977*



Today  
You are the prisoners  
Of laws and systems  
Which only knows  
How to separate  
Being brainwashed  
In the name of your own  
Good  
And their love for you  
But soon enough  
You will have wings  
Of your own  
And you shall fly  
Even to me  
But will I  
Recognize you  
THEN?  
(For Sunita and Jai)

*January 24, 1977*

We were  
Like two streams  
Floating from  
Different sources  
United into one  
Flowing for a long time  
Long miles  
Splitting into  
Two streams again  
Who can say  
We don't flow with  
Each other's water  
In the streams  
One claims  
To be our own!

*January 24, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Storm  
Straw by straw  
Flew away my nest  
My children  
Poking their beaks  
Into the eyes of  
My dead dreams  
Wife unskinning me  
To cover the hollow drum  
Of her ambition  
On my wake they are all  
Dancing, drinking  
And singing  
I die alone  
And with shame  
An exhibition will open  
To show their art  
Objectively painted  
Unemotionally hung  
On the walls of law  
Each lie is a frame  
Each curse a song  
Bird flies away  
Empty song  
In a blue sky  
I lived  
Died in vain!

*January 24, 1977*

Song is a moment  
The tune is the mood  
Once missed  
It can't be caught  
Like a bird  
Freed from the net  
And flown!

*January 24, 1977*

Darkness brought us together  
In moonlight we walked  
At dawn we separated  
We came to know each other  
Only too well!

*January 24, 1977*

Love is like a carving  
Made on a bench  
With sharp knives  
Remaining behind  
Long after  
We are gone  
The hurt is deeper  
Than a visible scar  
On the surface!

*January 24, 1977*

My English is as good  
As your pretence  
Of the adoption  
Of our culture!

*January 24, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

How agonizing it is  
Always to be *and* not to be  
To be always hated and loved  
To be cut off like a scab  
Because you are wanted  
You are like an operation  
To be performed on someone to live  
How agonizing it is to be always derailed  
In order to travel  
When life is a detour  
And death is not the goal  
How painful it is to be  
Always torn  
Between two shores of the same ocean  
And yet love floating  
How agonizing is the meeting  
With a constant wish  
To separate  
Being one's own friend  
And one's own enemy  
How difficult it is  
To be  
AND  
Not to be!

*January 26, 1977*

They call me backward  
Because I drink my sorrow  
Unmixed with liquor!

*January 26, 1977*

For twenty years  
A shadow of estrangement  
Grew between us  
Reaching the height  
Of a mountain  
At the peak  
We met  
And fell apart!

*January 26, 1977*

How quickly that  
All pervading  
Eternal  
Sky of our unity  
Fell  
Once the fragile  
Invisible thinnest thread  
Broke at the seam!

*January 26, 1977*

Even the best one  
Among those  
Has betrayed him once  
Whom she proclaimed  
To have loved  
Eternally!

*January 27, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

It was just another  
Repetition of words  
She rehearsed on others  
Whom she said  
'I love you'  
And sure enough  
Other rehearsals are  
Scheduled to follow  
For certainly  
You were not the end  
(Or the beginning)  
Of the act  
But the middle!

*January 27, 1977*

Loneliness is a crowd  
Silence a thunder  
Ideas exploding like population  
Words torn apart  
Like withering clouds  
Fields of desires all dried  
Nothing rains  
A heat wave of the past  
Still burning  
Living is only a prelude  
To death  
I die!

*January 27, 1977*

All said  
Nothing  
And nothing  
Said it all!

*January 27, 1977*

Like their houses  
They will open their hearts  
When they are all set  
For sale!

*January 28, 1977*

So many times  
They have all lied  
Your fingers to my body  
My face, my lips  
My eyes, my heart  
Your tongue to my ears  
Your pen to my eyes  
And your eyes to my dreams  
All my senses are numbed  
All your words a renunciation  
You come to tell me now  
Something or the other  
But tell me  
With what  
Should I listen!

*January 28, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

In all their eight  
Or seven decades  
My mother never learnt  
A word of English  
My sister-in-law never knew  
How to sign her name  
And not a single theory  
Of life-cycles  
That you write about  
Or live  
They never saw their names  
Printed in papers  
(Or called out in courts)  
And yet I thank for all  
Those non-recognitions  
Because they gave  
Faith to the living  
And prayers to the dead  
And not once temptations  
Made them bow  
And they could say  
In their simple vocabulary  
'No' to the power  
And live  
Together!

*January 28, 1977*

Again  
The sky is being filled  
With these vultures of law  
Another house is to be burnt  
Another corpse of love  
They are waiting  
For the feast!

*January 29, 1977*



So many things we desire  
A palace  
Things to fill the palace  
Vans to move things  
So many things we desire  
For our face, our nose  
Our hair, our body  
From hairpins to diamonds  
So many things we desire  
That we have no place  
For human beings  
In our heart!

*January 29, 1977*

Looking at a book of poems  
I feel  
Already  
Too many tears  
In my hands  
And no money!

*January 29, 1977*

Another mother dies  
Another brother in jail  
Another home in ruins  
Nothing glues us together more  
Than a red paint of sorrow  
Mixed with blood  
And tears!

*January 29, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

So many broken images  
Don't paint one picture  
Only confusion!

*January 29, 1977*

Love:  
We are trying to sew  
A torn river  
Again!

*January 29, 1977*

A long journey ends  
At a table  
Alone  
In a crowd!

*January 29, 1977*

A fly always eats  
Breakfast before me  
I am not alone!

*January 29, 1977*

Since you have left me  
Everyone has been  
Friendly to me  
Waitresses in restaurants  
Clerks in stores  
Tellers in banks  
People in streets  
Friends have become friendlier  
Full of more concern and more love  
Everyone has been friendly  
Ever since you left  
Except my stomach  
And my heart!

*January 29, 1977*

One more anger  
Produces no love  
One more shout  
Will produce no sense  
And one more law  
Will not quiet the heart  
One more force  
Will not create faith  
Life like ocean waves  
Will conquer all  
That suppresses!

*January 30, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Once I would rush  
At the sight of the news  
Of your anticipated arrival  
Now you have come  
And I sit here  
Not even waiting!

*January 30, 1977*

The nail we were to use  
To hang a picture  
We were to paint  
Together  
Is being used  
On the cross  
To nail our love!

*January 30, 1977*

Behind every successful woman  
There is a ruined man  
A broken marriage  
And neglected kids!

*January 30, 1977*

Among the multitudes of roses  
Of decorations, praises and worships  
A nail can always be found  
For the cross!

*(Remembering Gandhi Ji)*  
*January 30, 1977*

After all the answers  
Only the issues!

*January 30, 1977*

Be not so proud  
That in my surrender  
And defeat  
You have won  
All  
There are still  
Enemies  
Living with you  
In the shape of my children  
Reminding you of  
My seed  
My memory  
My blood!

*January 30, 1977*

Of all her white  
Spotless body  
There remains  
A blood mark  
Of my murder  
Victory is never  
Without a stain!

*January 30, 1977*

She killed our love  
And demanded all  
As taxes  
For burial!

*January 30, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Desire by the day  
Wait by the night  
Life went by  
Gradually!

*January 30, 1977*

And like gypsies  
They all go away  
Leaving my future  
Unread!

*January 30, 1977*

Life brings a new dawn  
For her  
As her eyes bring  
New radiance  
With each nail  
Driven into my heart!

*January 30, 1977*

Every time  
Our eyes meet  
I see  
Writing on the wall  
Changing!

*January 30, 1977*

And for this death  
Not even a condolence card  
From the so-called friends!

*January 30, 1977*

Shouting  
All to communicate nothing  
Tears of helplessness  
And a sorrowful kiss  
History told us again  
Nothing has changed!

*January 31, 1977*

We all have versions  
Not the tale!

*January 31, 1977*

In those careless  
Wild oats  
Of the day  
Are sown the seeds  
Of loneliness  
For tomorrow!

*February 5, 1977*

So many times  
They have said  
Good bye to me  
But on this final one  
Tears came  
From the eyes of one  
I felt so filled  
With the parting gift!

*February 6, 1977*

Yes, she is free now  
FREE  
For everyone  
But me!

*February 6, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Certainly  
We have made  
Lots of progress  
In one generation  
The wreckage of the dream  
Which broke my heart  
Is taken for granted  
By the youngest son  
Of mine  
Before his youth!

*February 6, 1977*

Inside my heart  
A mountain grows  
Every day  
Out of ruins  
I walk upon it  
Turning my loneliness  
Into a blissful solitude  
Inside my heart  
Flows a river  
(Of many streams)  
Of sorrow  
I bathe in it  
To forget  
All the betrayals  
Agonies  
Broken loves  
Like my sins I wash them off  
I dip once more  
My heart, my healer  
Ocean of love  
This too I name  
After you  
Oh faithless broth!

*February 6, 1977*



When we were poor  
And had nothing but love  
We made love  
In our ruins  
Now we had much more  
Than what you desired  
So you can make more of the same  
In the ruins of  
Our love  
At what point love  
Turns into a barter  
Into a commodity  
At what point does it  
Begin to sell  
And turns a woman like you  
Into a common street girl  
Covered in titles  
Prestige and words  
At what stage  
Does the drama end  
And reality begin?

*February 6, 1977*

Strange  
I wanted to be the youngest child  
Of my father  
Who would kill  
A monster  
And marry a princess  
I never knew  
The princess kills  
Before one ever meets  
A monster killer  
Of fairy tales!

*February 6, 1977*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

It is not so long ago  
Do you remember the night  
We parted for a while  
You insisted on making love  
In a room filled with people  
And now we part alone  
And you want other people  
To make love to you  
While I turn blind  
With the shame of it all!

*February 6, 1977*

Divorce  
A new  
Creative deodorant  
She washes  
Herself  
Inside out  
Virginity returns  
(Who is next?)

*February 6, 1977*

Finally  
After a detour  
Love  
Marriage  
Divorce  
I return  
To my goal  
The beginning  
Filled with emptiness  
And experienced  
In agonies  
Circle begins!

*February 11, 1977*



Meeting Like Waves



1978

For 'Pavitra' — the Purest love

# 1

Let us not meet  
Because we have to take  
Something from each other  
Because we have to fill  
The emptiness within us —  
Let one not die a gradual death  
Because the other knows  
No better way to live other than that  
Let us not become the balm for each other  
That our separation will renew our wounds  
Let us meet for this and only this reason  
That without knowing  
Two streams came  
From unknown directions  
And met  
Suddenly and without any effort  
And after the separation  
There is to be no analysis  
Of how much they gave  
Or took away from one another  
Whatever natural path there is  
In the stream  
We have to just flow  
Only IN THAT.

*May 12, 1978*

2

The love that was performed  
Like the Brahmin's pooja  
In the squares of palaces  
With rules and regulations  
The love that was contained like water  
Of a tank walled with stones  
The love that was fermented like bottled wine in time  
Is no love at all  
It may be an act, a play  
There is no love hidden  
In silken clothes  
In floral decorations  
Or in perfumes  
*That* love we have done  
Among the rocks  
Among the deserts  
Among the forests  
Among the thorns  
On the bridges being broken and built  
And, of course, having broken all the rules  
Among the lusty waves  
Of the ocean  
We mixed it again and again  
With the soul in our blood  
And drank and drank  
We have lived it, yes, we have.

*May 10, 1978*

3

Everything that is ours  
Will one day vanish  
Civilization  
Culture  
Palaces  
Creations  
And even we ourselves  
But love  
If not through ours  
Then through someone else's  
Happiness, sadness  
Will kindle, will burn d  
Will flourish, will come to life  
Again and again  
And even without wishing  
Will always be loved — !

*May 6, 1978*

4

This velvet grass  
My head placed in your lap  
As if a baby deer  
Having been lost  
Has returned home  
Fully reassured.

*May 4, 1978*

5

It very well may be  
That I am just another milestone  
To measure the road  
Of her never ending sex-journey  
Even the dim number that I am  
May not be recognized in the future  
It may be  
That our love too  
Is just one more meal of the path simply bought  
Which will be digested tomorrow and will go out  
Or, in her victory, I am just another unknown wound  
Which will heal itself without leaving any trace in history  
It may be that I am just another unseen point  
In her expanding horizon filled with vacuum  
But as for now  
It is on me that her eyes are fixed  
It is by me that she is creating  
A new epic of the Brahman  
And for the eternity of this moment  
It is no little satisfaction  
That I — even if it was for only a minute  
Stopped a sea in storm  
Like a drop  
And that I was able to own an earthquake  
Calming it down  
As for now  
Let me, too,  
Live this moment  
Of my eternity.

*May 2, 1978*



6

It is as if this is what I waited for  
Having received the offerings  
The indication of your  
Incomplete  
Dissected  
Impermanent  
Love  
The alter place of my fiery heart has become peaceful  
Having been touched by you like the river  
A whole stormy sea of desire has become calm  
As if this boiling life only needed  
A sprinkle of warm water-drops from you  
That suddenly, having come to the surface  
All its burning has stopped.

*May 2, 1978*

7

Sometimes  
There comes such a moment  
That the whole life is lived  
IN THAT  
And sometimes  
The whole life is spent  
Searching for  
THAT MOMENT.

*May 8, 1978*

8

If we meet  
Let us meet like waves  
When we separate  
Let us separate like waves  
That we will remain many in one  
And one in many  
And never there shall be  
With ourselves  
Or with others  
(And how will one differentiate that?)  
Any complaints.

*May 1, 1978*

9

No, it is not that  
That whole fireland of hatred is behind me  
Nor that there will never be a new hunger of desire in you  
Or that you will not be tempted to have new experiments  
Or that the stream of your heart will not long for any new flow  
It is not that having found a clear, simple path  
The chariot of future motions has been stopped  
Nor has the path of the forest ended  
No, nothing in this city of illusions seems to have changed  
And yet, I don't know why  
My heart, having seen in your flickering eyes  
A pure fluid stopped  
Suddenly has become calm  
And each fleeting thought deep within me  
Has become reassured.

*May 2, 1978*

## 10

When we were lost on the path of that thick forest  
How close the destination seemed  
How transparent was each face  
In that free, open fall  
How deeply we belonged to each other  
Standing next to those unknown trees  
How vast was the lap of mother earth  
And how liberal we were with love  
Now again, we are stuck in the tunnel of the city  
Now again, we are divided from each other  
Afraid, like snakes we have entered our own holes  
Again, our lives are like slipping ropes  
And again, we are covered  
By the suffocating mass  
Of our own poisonous breaths.

*May 15, 1978*

## 11

Kiss:  
Do you remember when  
I sprinkled on your cheeks  
The redness of the dawn  
And you awakened in my eyes  
A whole dream-world?

*June 3, 1978*

## 12

Memory:  
A whole garden  
Full of rosy life  
Is left behind  
But the caravan of the heart  
Is still so filled  
With its fragrance.

*June 3, 1978*

## 13

Where does this search end  
Collecting love  
Piece by piece  
Like dry broken leaves  
To warm the hearth of life  
So quickly everything turns to ashes  
And nothing much is warmed  
But surely we were not born  
To love each other like aliens  
To burn our huts  
And remain cold  
Surely there must have been  
Something more to life  
Than memories  
Of the things that  
Could have been done  
But where does this search end?

*April 26, 1978*

## 14

You drew closer  
And pressed me  
With a cold hand's warmth  
I am beginning to read  
A distance again  
(Coming between  
You and me).

*April, 21, 1978*

## 15

Like these weeds in the lawn  
My thoughts grow  
I need you  
To mow them  
And turn my life  
Into an orchard  
Of heavenly bliss  
And earthly beauty.

*April 27, 1978*

## 16

Use me not  
Like a bridge  
To go across  
To other frontiers  
Of experiments  
Use me as a stream  
To flow with  
To merge into  
To be one —  
An unbound ocean  
Of love  
That we all are  
In the end.

*April 27, 1978*

## 17

With some we walk parallel  
Like railroad tracks  
All life  
And always remain  
Far and  
Separate  
With some we meet  
One moment  
Like a river  
And a stream  
And are at once  
One  
And the same.

*April 27, 1978*

## 18

Freeze my love  
And keep it in your heart  
So we can have a feast  
When I return.

*April 27, 1978*

## 19

To merge in time  
Is to renounce TIME  
To be with you  
Is to deny — 'I'  
We only are  
When we are not.

*April 29, 1978*

## 20

No east, no west  
At a point on this earth  
Somewhere, where  
Directions meet and disappear  
Under the horizon  
Full of stars  
Close to all and equally far  
We meet to undo ourselves  
And become the universe.

*April 29, 1978*

## 21

Tall is the palm tree  
Standing high in a desert  
But it gives shade to no one  
Vast is the roof of the sky  
But it gives no shelter to anyone  
And all your saintly vanity  
May be truly so great  
Beyond the reach of the palm  
Tree and the horizon  
But what solace is this  
To a person  
Who wants love  
Even if momentarily  
Poured out as lust.

*April 29, 1978*



## 22

All the debates of who we were  
All the questions of what I was  
Or am or will be  
All the arguments of our rights  
Owning, possessing, or telling  
Our worth  
Forgotten  
The sky was our only witness  
The earth, our only bed  
The ocean, our best friend  
Do you still remember  
The sandy beach  
Or weedy fields  
Where we lost ourselves  
Like nameless children  
In an unknown land  
And found  
The universe?  
Love is like  
Being dead  
And reborn.

*April 30, 1978*

## 23

We don't meet  
Until the darkness of night  
What am I doing  
Awake  
Hours before  
The dawn!

*April 29, 1978*

24

How small love looked  
In the beginning  
Like the source of a river  
And now, stream after stream  
Flows  
And the agony of the ocean  
Is never full.

*April 22, 1978*

25

A nice day  
Let someone else write a love poem  
Can I love?

*April 30, 1978*

26

Love  
Sparks  
Burns  
Cools  
Evaporates  
And  
    lives!

*May 1, 1978*

## 27

So many sunsets have made my face wrinkled  
So many moon-rises have burnt my heart  
So many rainy seasons have sung my songs of separations  
So many springs have laughed at my ruins  
And yet, I waited  
Like an unknown buried treasure  
Was it for you that I went  
Through the teeth of Time's saw  
Moment by moment chopped with rituals  
Maybe it was  
Because surely even all my agonies  
Trials and regrets  
Have left enough love for  
You and me  
But  
Will you come???

*May 2, 1978*

## 28

Frosty ground of my heart is melting  
As the bitter winter of hatred ends  
Life tree blossoms again  
With fresh leaves and buds  
Of hopes  
Soon the love-bird shall return  
And sing a song  
Long forgotten.

*May 4, 1978*

29

Can you really sleep  
When I am awake  
Can you truly weave  
A garment of dreams  
While I hear  
A roar of time  
Tearing the curtain  
Of the future apart  
How shall we ever unite  
In separation  
And yet, the earth is held  
Always  
By two opposite poles.

*May 4, 1978*

30

I am an ocean  
Blue with agonies  
Deep with sorrows  
Unrestrained streams  
And rivers of love  
Still floating  
Toward me  
Never changing the  
Level.

*May 7, 1978*

## 31

Like honey and milk  
Mixed to the last drop  
Let our lives be  
That with each sip  
We do not  
    differentiate  
But taste the sweetness  
Of us  
TOGETHER.

*May 2, 1978*

## 32

Yes, this, too  
May be a flickering, passing phase  
This, too, may die prematurely  
I will celebrate its death, too  
(Drinking the liquor of sorrow  
With a feast of memories)  
All this, too, may come  
But let me for the moment  
Celebrate  
The birth  
With the freest joy  
And unrestrained folly.

*May 2, 1978*

33

Having had you  
My heart is  
So calm  
Like the ocean  
After the storm.

*May 7, 1978*

34

Even more than meeting  
I like the way  
You say  
‘good bye’.

*May 8, 1978*

35

Practicing self-nihilation since my childhood  
I give away myself  
Reducing again and again  
To a zero  
But there is always someone  
Who stands like a digit  
Before that  
And multiplies life  
Infinitely.

*May 13, 1978*

## 36

Let them get all the books  
And screw themselves on every page  
In a new posture  
And let them collect all the junk devices  
And overkill in their mechanic self-love  
Let me reach you  
In a simple  
Primitive  
Natural way  
Give you all  
And be filled  
For there is only one way for a river  
To meet the ocean  
Even in love.

*May 11, 1978*

## 37

The language I write in  
A poem for you  
You don't understand  
The speech that thinks  
My thoughts  
My language does not know  
And then there is something  
Beyond my language  
Wordless speech  
And beyond thoughts  
Let us be there  
And submerge  
So no one will ever need  
To proclaim  
Our love!

*May 11, 1978*

38

How sweet  
How beautiful  
Each falling  
In love  
Must be  
Like this  
Mountain fall.

*May 14, 1978*

39

When does the viewer become a view  
A doer an act  
A subject an object  
When does the eater become the eaten  
A lover a beloved  
It is only at that stage  
We will talk about our love  
When you and I  
Cannot talk anymore  
About me and you  
Until then, let the streams wander around  
And search their paths  
For there can be no 'self'  
After the union  
THAT you seek.

*May 13, 1978*



40

Like other things  
We routinely do  
In the morning  
Love, too, is  
A daily ritual.

*May 16, 1978*

41

Love is not poetry  
Read  
Love is poetry  
Lived.

*May 17, 1978*

42

Like the innocent childish ducks  
My heart plays  
In the ocean of your love  
Waiting always  
For the new waves to come  
I run, I dive  
I sink, I survive  
Like ducks  
Like hearts  
I am there  
One with you  
And many.

*May 18, 1978*

43

Let us not be the seekers  
Let us not be the sought after  
Let us be the found.

*May 18, 1978*

44

My heart  
A vast unknown  
Dark sky  
Your love  
A moon  
Together they make  
Each other shine  
And meaningful.

*May 18, 1978*

45

When the fields are dry  
And the ocean sad  
When the sky is grey with storms  
And the hearts heavy  
When the leaves are pale  
And the trees naked  
I hope we still can sing together  
Even in sorrow  
Love is a song, a music  
Sung in harmony  
Even if the strings are loose  
And melodies broken.

*May 19, 1978*

## 46

So much will always remain unsaid  
Our speech so choked up with emotions  
Our silence so much interrupted by words  
— Full of so many meaningless syllables —  
Our meetings so shortened by worldly deeds  
— All so futile in the end —  
Our love so little expressed  
For the lack of courage  
Why have we trapped ourselves  
With so many artificial universes  
— All in the end leaving us blank —  
That we can never adequately say —  
'I love you'.

*May 27, 1978*

## 47

Rains of sorrow  
Clouds of doubts  
The sky of my heart  
Is grey again  
With feelings so uncertain  
A rainbow of your love  
Shines in  
So many colors  
I live again  
I live again  
And again.

*June 2, 1978*

The ocean, the heart  
Remains unchanged  
And yet, yesterday  
It was giving me poison  
(Bitter and burning)  
And today I drink  
Drop by drop  
The nectar of sweetness  
(Cool and soothing)  
Filtered through memories  
Because the person  
Who churns  
Is suddenly changed  
Awakening a goddess  
Inside me.

*June 3, 1978*

## 49

There are loves like heavy stones on one's head  
It sinks him  
There are loves like a noose around the neck  
It chokes one to death  
And then some loves turn into betrayal  
Always to be thorns in the throat  
And demands to absorb you  
Like deserts absorb the clouds  
So many shades of love I have seen  
In the rainbow of life  
But yours was a soothing breeze  
Sailing my ship  
In the ocean of calmness  
Always clearing the path ahead  
Always backing from behind  
And always like a ship-bird  
Flying over me

*June 8, 1978*

## 50

Clouds shall always be there  
But so shall be our wings  
And our power to fly through them  
And to float on the plane  
Where all visions are clear  
And the horizon of our dreams  
Knows no limits  
Only the will  
To be beyond  
What we know.

*June 9, 1978*

## 51

Do you remember  
When a whole universe  
Incarnated itself  
On my lips  
Through the touch of a finger tip of yours?  
Do you remember  
When Time stopped forever  
In your eyes?  
Do you remember  
When a whole epic  
Spoke through an interrupted syllable?  
THAT is what surrounds me now  
THAT is what calls me now  
And THAT is what is making the pen pour ink on the paper  
In order to make an incomplete copy  
Of that total painting.  
Do you remember that moment  
When we lived *the* life  
Of the three worlds and the three times  
And in one drop  
We drank the whole nectar sea of pleasure  
Of eternal bliss  
MY salvation now searches for  
That hidden 'I' 'YOU' AND 'WE'  
When we gathered the whole scattered desert  
(of emotions)  
And sewed it into one atom!!!

*June 3, 1978*



Thinking of You



1979

For  
Kathleen,  
whose selfless devotion  
sustained me during  
the darkest days of my life,  
with gratitude and love,  
April 13–14, 1979



*Thinking Of You*

Among the millions of roses of kisses  
So many thorns of memories  
I am drowned in fragrance  
And yet I bleed.

*April 26, 1978*

How desperate the race becomes  
In love  
To catch the one  
Who is not even running.

*April 29, 1978*

I wish you were  
Like the river Ganges  
So we all could have  
Dived in you  
To purify ourselves  
And attain  
Eternal bliss.

*April 29, 1978*

Loving is like dying  
Each time anew  
For surely love without dying  
Cannot be  
Love kills  
To resurrect.

*May 1, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Separation always  
Binds us  
With the  
Thread of agony.

*May 2, 1978*

Knowing fully well  
That we shall not meet again  
Why do I keep awake  
All night  
Day dreaming.

*May 4, 1978*

Poetry is having  
A morning conversation  
With you  
In earnest  
                    and love!

*May 14, 1978*

Storm is over  
Love is again  
Ocean blue  
                    deep.

*May 16, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

Silence dries up the ocean of words  
Separation spreads love across the seas  
The unsaid covers the vacuum left behind  
We always shall live for  
And by the things that are not there  
You, your love and all that  
We were supposed to have done  
Memories of the past and sweet dreams of the future  
In the end we are near  
By being far  
And one  
By being the other.

*June 8, 1978*

Once more  
A thin blade of grass  
Shot out from a stone  
I feel  
My love for you  
Is being born  
All anew!

*August 11, 1978*

I have put my heart out again  
To defrost  
Emotions like spices all being mixed  
Preparing a feast  
For your arrival.

*August 16, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Absorb me like  
The ocean absorbs the waves  
And storm  
And becomes calm  
Absorb me like  
The forest absorbs the wind  
And turns it into a soothing breeze  
Absorb me like  
The earth absorbs angry  
Clouds and floods  
For it is in you  
That my dreams and agonies  
Vibrations and storms  
Get fulfilment  
And it is in you  
That I find  
Myself  
As one and many!

*August 25, 1978*

Like the image of  
The Reclining Buddha in a Thai Temple  
You sleep  
Tranquil  
Like a devotee (waiting in line)  
I worship  
Silent!

*August 25, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

The golden ray falls on your face  
And becomes more radiant  
It needs you to reflect what it is  
The rose having been placed in your arms  
Becomes a reality  
And stars through your eyes  
Are seen like dreams  
Nature was and will be always there  
But it is you and me  
Who make it what it is  
Beautiful.

*August 25, 1978*

Early morning  
I caress your sleeping face  
Gently  
So as not to disturb  
Your sweet dreams  
A smile shines across your lips  
Like a desired lightening  
In a dark sky  
I see a whole universe  
Created  
    all anew!

*August 25, 1978*

I compete  
With the morning ray  
To kiss your cheeks  
And make a dawn rise  
On your face.

*August 25, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Absorb me  
Like I have absorbed  
These billions of ocean waves  
In my eyes  
Bear me  
Like I have  
Tolerated the various moods  
Of the sea  
Remain with me  
Like sweet memories  
Of the thick forest  
And unlimited sky  
For with you  
I have become  
The universe  
— Expanded yet one —

*August 24, 1978*

Even a hundred songs of sorrow  
Cannot replace  
The loss of the face  
Whose cheeks you kissed  
So tenderly!

*August 30, 1978*

Like a frustrated wasp  
Hitting against a glass window  
I am seeing a dream  
Beyond my reach!

*August 30, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

Like a sweet dream  
It dies  
Like a full moon  
It fades  
Our love  
At the dawn  
Of the real world!

*August 30, 1978*

Like the sunset  
The end of love too  
Is as beautiful as  
The beginning  
Only the darkness  
Replaces the light  
After the radiance  
Not the dawn and sunlight!

*August 30, 1978*

So real seemed the dream  
So close looked the heaven  
And in this dark night  
A curtain of doubts  
Will the dawn ever come  
Will we really ever meet?

*August 30, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like the ground  
After the hard rain  
My heart fumes  
Steams of sorrow  
After a shower  
Of your love.

*August 30, 1978*

I am still touching my fingers  
That caressed your face  
To feel the love  
And its song!

*August 30, 1978*

And again I sing a song of "love"  
In this foreign land  
Where no one understands  
The words or the tune  
And where it is considered insane  
To sing anything  
But a polite lie.

*September 4, 1978*

It was like a rose garden  
No matter how much I cursed  
Those thorns  
When I entered it  
Life again gave such a fragrance  
I was intoxicated  
Meeting you is like  
Falling in love  
All over again  
Forgetting the tortures of the past.

*September 5, 1978*



*Thinking Of You*

Meet me  
Like a new dew drop  
Kissing a new leaf  
For there shall be  
No other moment  
To repeat  
*This* love!

*September 5 1978*

Like the bhil woman  
In the Ramayana  
I taste my feelings  
Before I give you  
The sweet ones  
I hope you don't mind  
Offerings of  
The left over half!

*September 5, 1978*

Love is a self creating cycle  
After the first pebble drop  
Each circle  
Bigger than the last!

*September 5, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

There is a blue clear sky  
But where are the eyes  
I compare its beauty and depth with  
There are roses all blossomed in the garden  
But where are the smiles  
That made them meaningful  
Nature is at its best  
In harmony with all that lives  
But where are you  
To make me immerse into it  
For an eternal bliss!

*September 8, 1978*

Each moment  
Is an eternal wait  
When I come to meet you  
Each moment  
Is an exciting life's experience  
An anticipation of divine pleasure  
Truly in loving you  
I die and live  
At the same time!

*September 8, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

The heart absorbed as many emotions  
As the drops in the ocean  
Silence roared like waves  
And our eyes looked at the horizon  
But our dreams reached beyond that  
Love is a very strange thing  
It makes our limited body an infinite soul  
And when we forget ourselves  
By absorbing each other  
We create a universe  
Containing many worlds  
Here and beyond.

*September 11, 1978*

Sometimes in your sad eyes  
I read the obituary  
Of our love  
And I say to myself  
“Well, nothing becomes immortal  
Without dying  
(At least) once!”

*September 12, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I hope we know the geography of our bodies well  
The heights, the depths  
The flows, the falls  
The greeneries and the valleys  
The mountains and the curves  
And all the unmarked points  
I hope we discover each day  
An island of love  
— Hidden and unknown —  
But never to hurt  
Only to make that what's lovely lovelier  
The truth to make truer  
And blissful to be more divine  
I hope each moment of ours  
Floats like a small stream  
Into a big stream  
And finally  
We create  
A large ocean  
Of love  
All complete by itself.

*September 12, 1978*

Hurry not  
Let each moment fall gently  
Like a dew drop at night  
Let it shine with the others  
Until the sun of realities comes into our horizon  
(And reaches the peak)  
Let our love create a silent beauty  
(Without ever worrying about its eternity)  
Because in the end for sure  
All will be absorbed  
By nothingness.

*September 12, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

Let's part like the sun  
So our love is as beautiful  
At the end  
Like dusk  
As it was  
In the beginning  
Like dawn!

*September 12, 1978*

The ocean roared with joy through the waves  
World around  
The sky was so endlessly vast and clear  
The sun shone as brightly as it ever could  
Then why did we cover ourselves up  
To express our love  
So meekly  
All in silence!

*September 12, 1978*

This much is all I ever want  
That in the end  
We can be next to each other  
On a deserted long wild beach  
On a grandfather's blanket  
(Still protecting like his soul)  
And your fingertip  
Touches my lips  
Lightly and gently  
To say good bye  
But everything changes constantly here  
So maybe even this much  
May seem  
Beyond our reach  
I *shall* understand.

*September 12, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I use your love  
(Like you use  
your grandfather's blanket)  
For security  
That even  
When life is tattered  
And long periods of time  
And space separate us  
I can still breathe  
A sigh of relief  
Remembering  
How close we were once  
Shielding each other  
From the whole world!

*September 12, 1978*

Some day  
There just may *not* be  
Time  
Event to wait.

*September 13, 1978*

Do we always have to prove  
Our love  
By being  
          separate?

*September 13, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

When promises break like a lump  
    of soft clay under an elephant's foot  
When words fail us like the rain  
    that never came  
When the last step between us  
    becomes an unconquerable space  
    wide as the horizon  
When everything is absorbed  
    and seems like all-consuming darkness  
Our tears — though oceans apart  
    like the beginnings of two rivulets —  
We'll still meet  
And proclaim  
Our unity and love!

*September 15, 1978*

The sea was there  
I could not drink it  
The mountain was there  
I could not climb it  
I was always so near  
And remained so far  
But always being drowned  
Always being pressed  
Agony of silence  
Always writing  
The epic of love.

*September 15, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

It's true  
When bitter winter will come  
And time and space will be counted  
In terms of our separation  
And frozen memories  
Eclipse covering both the sun and our love  
Only the thorns will be brave enough  
To penetrate little by little in our hearts  
When the future looks cloudy like the sky  
It's true  
That all that may come to pass  
Will your name still give warmth  
To my blue lips  
And remind me of a lonely pond  
Where we paddled our short journey together  
And fed the ducks who greeted us with joy  
When we both are living in our dark little shells  
Will we still shed tears to write a poem of love  
And say yes  
There is, as there was,  
In spite of all  
Enough love in this world  
For me and you  
To survive!

*September 16, 1978*



*Thinking Of You*

We shall meet again  
In the day  
To shed our tears  
Alone  
At night!

*September 18, 1978*

Oh, how far gone  
They already seem  
My morning poems  
Of gloom and realities  
How strange I have  
Already become to them  
Having swum across  
Another love of yours  
I feel so resurrected  
That I have covered myself  
With the sweetest dreams  
Even before I go to bed  
And my lips whisper  
Goodnight to you —  
My dear —  
Who is not here  
But of course is!

*September 18, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Yes, I have built  
An army of arguments against you  
Yes, I have prepared  
The lengthiest brief  
In my favor  
Accusations, doubts  
Historical facts  
Social norms  
All crept crawling  
Like worms

all over my heart

And yet  
When I faced you  
All it took  
Was a smile  
And a touch  
Gentle as a feather  
Tender as a lotus  
Armies vanished. Castles destroyed  
I accept defeat  
With pleasure  
And a whisper from your lips  
Declaring your victory  
“I love you  
My love”.

*September 19, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

Like a friendly maiden  
The moon kept shining  
Through the stained window  
Filtering its countless eyes  
Through the leaves of the porch tree  
Like a spy it looked at us  
Through the leaks  
But we churned its beauty  
Into nectar  
Its maze into a new painting  
Its soothingness into a bath  
In a pleasure pond  
And we mixed our hearts  
Our minds, our bodies  
And made  
A new kind of love!

*September 19, 1978*

The moon is hidden  
Behind the clouds  
I remember your face  
Covered with shyness!

*September 19, 1978*

I know it will bring me  
No more soberness to walk  
Or the clear direction of the goal  
Yet, like a habitual drunkard  
I go again  
On the path  
Leading to your door!

*September 21, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

The food is still good  
But eating without you  
— Alone —  
Is like a feast of wake  
In a cremation ground!

*September 23, 1978*

I wanted to meet one of those  
Who has renounced the fear of flying  
I found a mountain of hidden fears in their hearts  
Their zipless love became zipped at the crucial moment  
All the daring words of giving up hang-ups  
Just remained words  
Challenging to dare  
I met them with open arms  
And open mind  
But found them narrowing me  
To squeeze my freedom between two fingers  
And choking my speech  
My sky is being zeroed in  
And I am looking for an escape  
To be primitive again!

*September 23, 1978*

What future  
Can that love have  
When you kiss  
Only to say  
    ‘Good-bye’,

*September 27, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

I am like a standby passenger  
Waiting to be accommodated  
When and if a seat is available  
Love is like collecting memories  
To warm your cold blue agonies in the future  
Journey is suffering alone in search of a path  
And momentary co-travelers  
No moon, no sunshine  
Only your own dark shadow  
Working as a light  
I still walk  
God knows why  
And to where!

*September 27, 1978*

Telegrams, letters  
Little reminders  
To make you remember  
Will that be enough mortar  
To build a Taj of your love  
Thank God, at least you will be  
Spared the tourists  
To admire  
And to scribble their black names  
In hope of being remembered!

*September 27, 1978*

Let our love not be  
Perfume in a bottle  
To imprison and to truncate  
Let it be an opening  
Of the cork  
So its fragrance  
Can fill the world!

*September 27, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Even in a shell  
A pearl can be born  
Even in a cell  
Freedom is conceived  
The question is:  
Do we dare?

*September 27, 1978*

And sometimes  
There is no one  
Even to say  
    'Good-bye'

*September 30, 1978*

Wait is all there is  
My work waiting for my life to shape up  
I wait for you  
And you for some mysterious moment  
That moment waits  
For someone else's mood  
And when the time comes  
We all depart  
Alone  
Wait ends!

*October 1, 1978*

Loving you is like  
Lying under a plum tree  
With my mouth open  
Hoping the fruit will fall  
Before it is too ripe  
To be tasted!

*October 1, 1978*

Like a cup from the potter's wheel  
You cut me off  
When obligations knead you  
Like that lump of clay  
And yet the thread becomes  
More binding with each cut  
And our non-relation  
Glues us together with one more hurt  
How many times we broke up a branch  
Which was not there  
Only to grow an orchard of emotions  
A flower fades away  
Before it reaches  
From your hand to mine  
Only to shine like a rose  
Our darkest hours are only a prelude to a new dawn  
Mornings never meet evenings  
And yet they seem to be the best mirror of each other  
As love is  
We are cutting ourselves little by little  
Like the pieces of a picture puzzle  
And then picking up patiently  
We try to fit each piece  
Will we ever complete it  
In our lifetime  
Hope waits on the crossroad of life  
Dreams awaken  
Asking questions  
Once more!

*October 1, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

We regressed once more to our childhood  
And played our primitive games  
In the most mechanized world  
Lake reflected our purest mood  
Sky showed its brightest face  
Our hearts danced like little ducks  
And the forest played hide and seek  
It was so divine  
To be so unrelated  
And so united  
We created the universe of one brotherhood  
We never tried  
But heaven descended on earth in the purest form  
Suddenly a breeze came  
Bringing your memory  
I pass my dreams on to you!

*October 1, 1978*

A fly is an uninvited guest  
But does she know it?  
A traveler without a permit  
But does she care?  
On any occasion —  
Death or life —  
She serves herself  
Without a ritual  
She flies free  
In or out of a plane  
And makes love to whomever she chooses  
While we debate about life  
A fly lives.

*October 3, 1978*



*Thinking Of You*

Like the evening shadows  
Our love grew  
Sadness covers it all  
Like the dark night.

*October 3, 1978*

So many times I have flown the friendly skies of United  
Crossing thick forests  
Deep valleys  
Winding rivers  
Shining cities  
The American way  
So many times I have treaded the paths  
Uneven and unknown  
And so many times I felt  
Left out and non-absorbed  
So much of me is made by the land of others  
So much of the land is created with my unwanted blood  
Mysteries always multiplying  
Unfolding tangled paths within me  
Frightened, I withdraw  
In my own shelter  
Lost and unknown  
Even to myself  
And then you come  
Like a broken dream repasted  
And I try to fly again  
In an untapped ground  
I live  
As I dive in your private world.

*October 9, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like this Texas land  
Your heart  
So vast  
Like this Texas land  
Your heart  
So empty  
So void!

*October 9, 1978*

How beautiful are the falling golden leaves  
How sensual is the moon of autumn months  
As if they all are there to greet something new  
Something fresh  
Why am I so afraid of the end  
Why does sadness return to my face  
Seeing a tree going yellow?

*October 10, 1978*

Did the river know  
Where it was going to fall  
When it started  
Or did it also go like I  
On winding roads  
Just hoping!

*October 10, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

Like a river  
I am always leaving home  
To meet you  
Like a river  
I am always on the way  
Like a river  
I am always falling into you  
Like a river  
I am always there  
Where I am not!

*October 10, 1978*

It's with a pen you gave me  
I write a poem  
It's with a reminder you sent me  
I keep track of pages in the book  
It's your thought that keeps me awake  
But you are always so far away  
Do you really want  
Only to live  
                  through memories?

*October 11, 1978*

Soon  
Full autumn moon  
Will be shining in the sky  
Devotees will gather on the banks of holy rivers  
Lovers at the Taj  
And we will be alone  
Mourning our love  
That was to be!

*October 11, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Yes, we all lead our own lives  
You are always fast asleep  
In your home  
I am always awake  
In a nomad's camp  
Carrying your memory  
From tent to tent  
And road to road!

*October 11, 1978*

I knew from the beginning  
That short meetings will end  
In a long separation  
Yet, like a habitual drunkard  
I walked once more  
In the trap of love!

*October 11, 1978*

At dawn  
I saw a lonely star  
In the sky  
Ready to sink  
In the light  
(Like my dream)  
I felt a queer  
Sense of brotherhood!

*October 11, 1978*

The morning ray  
And fallen leaf  
Both golden  
But what a difference  
Like you in your home  
And I  
    in a nowhere land.

*October 11, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

My joy of meeting you  
Is like the fragrance of fresh flowers  
Placed on the grave  
Of a sad, silent soul  
Because I fear  
That soon  
We will be separated  
Forever!

*October 11, 1978*

Taking advantage of your absence  
This autumn moon  
Came to my bed  
Through the window  
Like a thief  
And put around me  
Her million hands  
I cried for you  
O my sweet moon  
When will this eclipse be over!

*October 12, 1978*

The stamp you used to send me a letter  
Said "love"  
And now that you took it away  
(Without my knowledge)  
I feel  
As if I'm missing  
A major part of myself  
A vacuum returned!

*October 13, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

The envelope without your stamp called "love"  
Lay there  
Like a dead body  
Without a heart  
You again own more than you gave  
Your "love" & me!

*October 13, 1978*

Separated by cowardice  
United by loneliness  
You lie there  
Sick  
I mourn here  
Alone  
And we call it love!

*October 15, 1978*

A feather  
— Found floating in a lake —  
Of an unknown bird  
Can it brush away  
My wounds  
Can it ever speak to me  
The language I want to hear  
Of an absent love!

*October 15, 1978*

I never knew  
It takes an eternity  
For a moment of waiting  
To pass.

*October 16, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

We have signed our names  
On a card  
Together  
I hope our hearts are always  
At least as close  
As our names  
On this card!

*October 19, 1978*

It is not true  
That dreams don't come true any more  
The truth is  
That we don't remember how to dream!

*October 21, 1978*

Having crossed the seven seas  
Now I know  
How long the last step is  
That it will drown many times the seven seas  
And we shall remain  
Still the farthest!

*October 22, 1978*

Tired of waiting and reading  
About all those heroes  
Who were tired of waiting  
And reading  
Love is still the last priority in this world  
After ruined homes  
Broken dreams  
And kin left behind  
Shadows still count more than substance  
I am a fool  
If I still dream!

*October 22, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Like a poem  
I watch my love happen  
One step leading to the next  
The end  
Without an end  
Like a poem!

*October 22, 1978*

Yes, she had  
A million things to do  
But to tell me  
That she loves me  
Was not  
One of them!

*October 22, 1978*

A surprise phone call  
An unexpected kiss  
A sudden tender touch  
A silent look  
An unscheduled letter  
A tear full of warmth and sorrow  
Oh, there are so many ways to say  
"I love you".

*October 23, 1978*



*Thinking Of You*

Like the fragrance of those flowers  
Just plucked  
Like the breeze just passed by  
Like the memory of a rainbow in the sky  
Just vanished  
Like the smell of new rains just ended  
Your kisses left my lips  
Full of divinity  
Full of beauty  
And full of new life  
For an age to come!

*October 23, 1978*

Even though my fingers  
Tread the same path  
On your body  
They always discover  
New trails for love  
To follow!

*October 23, 1978*

Like the beautiful sun  
I look at you departing  
The sky of my heart  
Remains beautiful  
With evening radiance  
Parting too can be as living  
As meeting  
Nights of dreams in between  
Bringing some hope!

*October 23, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Rains of love  
Producing  
The rainbow of life!

*October 23, 1978*

I want to be one with you  
Let me have  
My portion of sufferings  
That separation brings  
And my share of joy  
That memories are  
I want to be one with you  
Even when love  
Kills us together  
And brings new tales  
I want to be one with you  
Like the colors  
Of the evening sky  
Touch me like  
The horizon of my earth.

*October 23, 1978*

Let us make love  
Today  
As if  
There shall be  
No tomorrow!

*October 23, 1978*

I wish there could be  
An arm  
Instead of a pillow  
To sleep on  
At night.

*October 23, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

Like the evening shadow  
You withdraw  
After you have shown me  
The tallest dream.

*October 23, 1978*

I am waiting for you  
Like one waits for a new babe to come  
For when you come  
A new love shall be born  
Again  
Like a big mango tree  
From an old seed  
Dead  
    Some time ago!

*October 23, 1978*

Our seats reclined like the Buddha in a Thai temple  
We lay cozily like innocent children in mother's lap  
We looked at the stars and read our future —  
A shining present  
We said nothing  
The night said nothing  
The city — so dark like a loving woman — said nothing  
The silence said it all  
Love is a moment  
Absorbing eternity  
    of togetherness.

*October 24, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

No hope  
That we shall ever be united  
No fear  
That we shall ever be separated  
Our love touches our lives  
Like the horizon touching this earth  
Always in sight  
And never reached!

*October 24, 1978*

We shall always be one with each other  
Sharing the sorrow  
The guilt  
The regret  
About the life  
That could have been ours  
We shall always die in unison  
Moment by moment  
Drinking the poison  
Drop by drop  
From the same ocean  
Of agony  
Love never rewards the cowards  
Anything but  
The bitter harvest of memories  
Of the fruit  
That was to be!

*October 24, 1978*

We meet at crossroads  
And public places  
And yet our love  
Remains so private  
Like the unknown star  
Waiting to be named!

*October 24, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

I am always writing  
An obituary of love  
But it is always dated  
Before the last word  
I start again!

*October 24, 1978*

Everyone sleeps  
Like a deserted road's lamp-post  
Like a lonely candle  
On some forgotten grave  
I burn  
All night  
In solitude!

*October 24, 1978*

I don't mind  
That you are  
In the state  
Of dreamless  
Sound sleep  
Like a goddess  
I don't mind  
That I am awake  
Like a devotee  
My agony is  
That the gates of the temple are closed  
And I no longer see  
The deity  
To love  
and worship!

*October 24, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Your eyes are deep like a lake  
But they are deeper when they meet mine  
Your hands are soft like lotus  
But they are softer when held by me  
So beautiful is the body, the gait, the voice  
But it is divine when I love you  
Together we create a heaven on earth  
Together we incarnate the universe  
The beauty  
The song  
And the power!

*October 24, 1978*

Being in you is like  
Conquering a new frontier  
Being in you is like  
Becoming a baby again  
Safely wrapped around  
By protective arms  
Being part of you  
Makes me so proud  
And so humble!

*October 24, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

So many green dreams have been buried  
To fertilize this one  
I am like an empty space  
Desired to be filled  
Like Time I fight against  
All that hangs in space  
I want a small point  
Where I can be rooted again  
Meeting you makes me hopelessly happy  
Seeing you go away fills me with sadness of expectations  
Who said life can be either this or that  
It is both  
Heaven and hell  
And love is intoxication  
I walk  
But no directions!

*October 25, 1978*

Sometimes  
To survive our love  
(& for our love to survive us)  
We will let  
Each other  
go!

*October 25, 1978*

Each day is an anniversary  
Of our love  
Each day we live an age  
An epoch  
Or even a life!

*October 29, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Your phone call wakes me up  
Early in the dawn  
Who said there were no roosters  
In the civilized world  
To remind us  
Of the golden day  
To come  
I shall live it fully  
For you.

*October 29, 1978*

Like a frightened bird  
We drop our present  
Fearful of a future not to be  
We wipe out our past  
With doubts and all  
Each moment weaves a garment of love  
We want to put it away  
In a memory box  
For a cold lonely day  
If life is so short  
Why don't we live  
And not freeze it before  
The death of our love!

*October 29, 1978*



*Thinking Of You*

Morning stars are my witness  
That I have excited myself so many times  
In your memory  
Morning birds are my companions  
That I have sung so many songs  
To proclaim our love  
Together with roosters  
I have awoken people  
Because I was one with you  
So many ways I communicated  
My thoughts to nature  
And yet all knew  
But you  
Why did not in the end  
Hear my call  
And did not come!!

*October 30, 1978*

To love is to let go  
I freed you from the prison of my narrowness  
I freed myself from the fear of loss  
We both meet now  
In the extended horizon  
Like the sky and earth  
Like the air and water  
Like waves and breeze  
I let you go  
We let us go  
We are bound  
More than ever  
We love  
Not in bondage  
But in freedom!

*October 30, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I have gone beyond liking your clothes  
I have gone beyond loving your face  
I have gone beyond liking to touch your smooth body  
I have gone beyond loving you  
When you call me darling  
I have gone beyond a relationship narrowed by words  
I have gone beyond “my-ness” in you  
I have gone beyond you and I  
Today I am with you and beyond you  
It seems I am learning the first step in love  
But whom do I thank?

*October 30, 1978*

Suddenly I looked at the empty edge of the pillow  
Suddenly I realize the bigness of this bed  
Suddenly I feel the room is too vast for one  
Suddenly I miss you  
Is that, too, love?

*October 30, 1978*

Today I lost my moon  
Darkness all around  
Let me light the lamps  
Of memories  
And make my love land shine!

*October 30, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

I have no well planned speech to tell you of my love  
I have no ritual to announce my belonging to you  
I have no set ways to show my feelings  
Like the mountain fall I simply fall in you  
Like the river I simply unite  
Words like waves simply spring  
When you are with me  
I no longer am  
If you want to call it "love"  
That's fine  
For I sure no longer know  
What I am doing!

*October 30, 1978*

Truly I must have loved you  
Because in your loss  
I gained you  
And the world!

*October 30, 1978*

I am waiting  
For the moment  
When I no longer  
Will have to wait!

*November 1, 1978*

There are times  
When you light a lamp  
And the whole universe  
Is cursed  
With darkness!

*November 4, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Today you are  
Too tired  
                    to see me  
Tomorrow  
You will be  
Tired  
And will wish  
If only  
                    you could have!

*November 6, 1978*

I am thinking of you  
As a dream  
You created  
I am thinking of you  
As a dream  
You broke!

*November 7, 1978*

Like a prince  
In a fairytale  
I came  
When you called me  
(To rescue?)  
Only to find  
You secure in your fort  
And I in danger!

*November 7, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

A train goes by  
To your home  
I am not on it.

*November 7, 1978*

The bed is  
Always a lonelier place  
After you have  
Come and gone!

*November 7, 1978*

Searching for the abnormal psyche of man  
You held my hand publicly  
Under your garment  
Our fingers wrought  
The most beautiful  
Underground love-world.

*November 7, 1978*

They told me  
Love will kill you  
Taking you to hell  
I never believed them  
They told me  
Love will bring you  
An eternal bliss  
I said, how untrue  
But knowing you  
I am swinging now  
Between eternal bliss of the day  
And the hell of the night  
I live an eternity  
And I die forever!

*November 8, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Parting shall always come  
If death does us part  
Will you love me any less now  
If you knew that  
Why then are we not loving more  
When we know  
Soon we shall not be together  
Even if by choice!

*November 8, 1978*

Filled with life, reassurance and hope  
Your coming is like a resurrection  
Your departure brings crucifixion to love  
A gloomy night descends  
On our faith  
And I feel  
I have already taken  
My last supper  
And we may never meet again!

*November 11, 1978*

With each hour  
That we remained away  
We swore  
"It cannot be  
We just cannot bear this pain"  
And then, suddenly it was  
The moment we were face to face  
We were intoxicated with joy  
As if we never parted  
And never would!

*November 11, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

It's only  
A few moments ago  
That we parted  
Yet it seems  
As if I was exiled  
Ages ago  
I already miss you so!

*November 11, 1978*

My room stayed so neat today  
The bed is so well made  
I feel so sad that  
There is no mess  
To remind me  
Of your presence!

*November 11, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

I have waited for you in so many places  
Railway stations, bus stops, parking lots  
Fast food stores, shops and street corners  
I have loved you in so many spots  
On the top of tallest buildings  
In forests, under waterfalls  
Bridges, parks, tunnels, playgrounds  
In the sky while we flew  
Across the land  
Or at home  
Motels and inns  
Together we shared life in so many ways  
Learning  
Eating  
Playing  
Swimming  
And what not  
It seems we have filled  
With so much of our love  
This land of yours  
And yet  
I feel empty so many times  
Why do you continuously choose  
To withdraw  
And to come!

*November, 14 1978*



*Thinking Of You*

Like a shadow  
You are always there  
On a sunny day  
Like a shadow  
You have always withdrawn  
Into the darkness  
Of our lives  
Like a shadow  
You belonged to me  
And you didn't!

*November 14, 1978*

Parting always  
Brings me close to death  
With its peace missing!

*November 17, 1978*

She said, this has to be  
We have to live together  
And together we lived  
Seven oceans apart  
Agonies uniting us  
Forever!

*November 18, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

There was only the present  
Without any past or future  
We slept in each other's arms  
Momentarily  
We saw the heaven  
Painting our past  
Living our future  
We are grateful.

*November 18, 1978*

Today I saw  
A glimpse of a bud-like smile  
Even in the saddest eyes  
I suppose I am drunk  
With love all over!

*November 18, 1978*

Even though those promises  
Fell like autumn leaves  
Our love still stands  
Like a winter tree  
Waiting for the spring to come  
And blossom again!

*November 18, 1978*

Even in the thickest galaxy  
Filled with billions of stars  
Each planet has to travel  
Alone  
In an empty space  
Lucky  
That we at least met!

*November 18, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

So many ways we traveled together  
On oceans, on ground and in the sky  
In boats, in trains, in planes  
And on foot  
So many highways, byways  
And skyways  
We covered hand in hand  
So many times we have mapped  
The geography of our bodies  
Lying in each other's arms  
We sang the song of love  
With one voice again and again  
We thought this will never end  
And yet we knew all along  
That the last step  
We shall walk alone  
And the last note  
Will be our incomplete blues  
Sung in different worlds  
And by lonely voices!

*November 18, 1978*

Our meetings are like  
The pills we take  
To calm our fever down  
Everyday  
But you can never be  
Overdosed!

*November 21, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

Walking on a beautiful beach  
Decked with golden rays  
Of the setting sun  
Did you miss a hand  
A caress  
Or an arm  
Around you?

*November 21, 1978*

Why wish me a long life  
Full of wasted years  
Like a stack of hay  
Why not give me  
A momentary breeze  
Of your presence  
So I can swing with joy  
Like a short-lived flower  
In the orchard of this world!

*November 21, 1978*

A smile of love  
Let it shake my heart  
Like lightening in the sky  
Filling with brightness  
And joy  
Even if  
Momentarily  
Let me be taken over!

*November 21, 1978*

*Thinking Of You*

Like an untimely  
Western winter storm  
Your love came  
And left my heartland  
Devastated!

*November 21, 1978*

The night was lonely without you  
(It always is)  
But the morning after the rain  
Left the mountains, the city  
So beautifully clear  
Freshly washed  
And the sun began ornamenting them  
With golden jewels  
And I felt so one with nature  
Life sang songs along with birds  
Full of love and faith  
Trees nodded!

*November 24, 1978*

Silently we sit  
In our places  
You writing your reports  
And I our poems  
Our presence fills the room  
Our hearts  
Our dreams  
We feel each other  
Without a touch  
Of a hand or a sound  
Or even a view  
If this is not the life  
Of our dream  
What is  
We are fulfilled!

*November 27, 1978*

*Lifelong Search for Home*

When the train passes by your home  
But I am not on it  
When the ocean sings a song with the joy of waves  
And we are not together to dance  
When birds chirp and trees nod  
But we are far away to hear  
When spring gives a call  
And lovers swamp in orchards  
Flowers bloom and leaves are tender  
When a lonely path is treaded by a pair in love  
And your eyes get dim  
Do not ever shed a tear  
We may need them for the unfortunate ones  
Who never even knew love  
As we experienced it  
And I will count my blessings  
Along with the stars  
Sending with each one of them  
My love and kisses for you  
And prayers for those  
Who need them  
I will spend my life  
With eternal joy  
If you promise a smile  
On your golden lips  
When a memory of mine  
Runs through your mind  
Like lightening on a cloudy day!

*December 1, 1978*



*ikkatīs prem kavitāē*

31 Love Poems



2005

For Tiffany  
Who is entering  
The 31st year  
Of her life  
With deepest love



# 1

Eternity always  
Filters down  
Through moments  
We become immortal  
By living each moment  
We die eternally  
By not living  
Even one instant  
Let me live it  
With each and all  
Loves.

# 2

In that little three arched door  
Of the falling house in the village  
(where I was born)  
You had pictures taken  
I felt as if  
Through you  
The history of my  
Forgotten love  
Came alive!

### 3

I see you all around me  
In the living room, courtyard and bed room  
On the roof and on the ground  
In *poojas*, celebrations and festivals  
In places of pilgrimages, in silken Delhi  
In five star hotels  
And in the little village mud house  
I feel you every where  
Singing, swinging and dancing  
Attracting with seductive eyes  
Bathing in holy waters and smoking *bidis*  
Worshipping in your philosophical posture  
Touching feet of the elders  
Washing mine with complete devotion  
I observe you wrapping India around you  
In the form of a *Sari*  
And depicting the west  
With your mini-skirt  
I dream of you pouring absolute love  
In the shadow of the Taj Mahal  
Totally giving your eternal undemanding love  
In so many shades  
Touching, caressing, hugging, kissing  
O you, the unique, selfless love of mine  
You filled me like filling  
The whole ocean in a little vase  
Drowned me in the vast sea of love  
Churning my life like a lake  
You gave the sea of nectar  
In a time-capsule  
Why?

So I can bear now  
The whole desert  
Of a lonely life  
Living by the memories  
Of that cloud  
Which came like a hurricane  
And rained itself  
(In the monsoon of love)

One day when  
My pen will take rest  
And words will fall silent  
Disappearing into the vacuum  
One day when  
My feet will take their last step  
And will become immobile  
With or without reaching their goal  
One day when  
There will remain  
No sorrows, no regrets  
No joy, no depression  
No enmity, no adversity  
Not even love or union  
One day when  
All questions and answers  
All disputes and arguments  
Will become mute  
All beyond words and meanings  
One day when  
The ocean of my life  
Will be reduced to a drop  
When the totality of life  
Will be contained in one moment  
Absorbing all my love  
I will give you happily  
That drop of nectar  
So that when  
I am gone  
You can live my  
Eternal memory  
O my love, who is beyond me.

## 5

All things are uncertain  
 Who knows what will happen tomorrow  
 And where  
 When, today, all homes have become  
 Wild fires of hatred and jealousy  
 When leaders of the world  
 Have become incarnations  
 Of the demon *Bhasmasur*  
 Ready to destroy all  
 Having received the favor  
 From the Lord *Shiva* of science  
 Who knows, when and where  
 The stage will change  
 Along with scenes and situations  
 It may be that tomorrow  
 I may not be able to say  
 What I want to say today  
 With my heart all cleansed  
 Containing in it all my golden dreams  
 All the best wishes of the universe  
 All my imaginations and prayers  
 That to you I give  
 My love  
 Of all times and places contained in this  
 One moment  
 One atom  
 Accept this  
 As the eternity of  
 Our relations.

6

In your deep  
Penetrating, pensive  
Seductive eyes  
I found a more  
Beautiful monument of love  
Than the splendid Taj Mahal  
Built by an emperor  
For his dead wife  
Killing so many dreams  
Of poor destitute millions  
You brought the divine  
Beauty and love  
Alive  
For all who are  
Fortunate to see.

7

Dark dense night  
All fast asleep  
I dream  
Like Lord *Krishna* of the *Gita*  
You appear before me  
In thousands of divine forms  
I do not want  
This night to end.

8

Your love was  
Like a divine feast  
Served on the holiest celebration  
Now, I have to fast  
For a long time  
To attain that  
Purest moment  
Again.

9

In order to turn  
A poisonous sea  
Of sorrow and depression  
Into an ocean of nectar  
All that is needed  
Is a loving word from you  
And a smile  
Sweet and pure  
Filled with affection  
I have come again  
To life.

## 10

My heart has become  
A camera  
It captured hundreds of  
Images of yours  
In so many poses  
Whenever I feel  
I go through them  
Like a movie  
To be united  
To rejoice  
To cry you are in the end  
What my heart is.

## 11

In real life  
We may never meet  
In our dreams  
We will never separate.



## 12

My blood relatives;  
Their thirst cannot be quenched  
Even after they drink all my blood  
With each sip it may increase  
But you, who are in no way  
Related to me, come  
For that very reason  
Like a cloud of *svati*  
To satisfy the thirst  
Of my *chatak*-heart  
And I give myself to you  
Totally without  
Any hesitation or reservation  
Oh my love, who does not belong to me,  
Pray that  
All our life  
We remain like that  
Totally absorbed (into each other)  
And totally free.

## 13

Like the Vedic seers  
I offer again and again  
Oblations of love for you  
In the sacrificial fire of relations  
And declare each time  
Idanna mama  
(This, too, is  
Not for me.)

## 14

People would say  
It's all madness  
Derangement of mind  
Let it be so  
People would say  
Your love for me, if any  
Is momentary  
(They say that  
Even about my life)  
It would wither away tomorrow  
Let that be so  
People would say  
There is no future  
Of this relationship  
(It does not even have a name!)  
That like a shadow  
You have come into my life  
And will go away  
Let that be the truth  
But as of now  
At least for this one moment  
We are completely drowned  
In the holiest memories  
Of each other  
Let this, indeed at least this,  
Be lived to the fullest  
Let this moment be  
My whole life  
Life-sustaining nectar  
Let me drink it  
To my satisfaction.

## 15

'Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder'  
 They say  
 Saint poet, Tulsi, too, has declared  
 'God's image is  
 What one feels.'  
 It may be that all  
 The qualities, that I see in you  
 Have been imposed on you  
 By myself  
 It may be, that it is I  
 Who has crafted the idol  
 Of beauty and love in you  
 And it is my thoughts and vision  
 That fill me with vibrations  
 From head to toe  
 Even the words that I use to worship you  
 Are all mine  
 May be, you are only my imagination  
 My dream  
 All things are possible  
 But nothing is changed by that  
 Neither the devotion, nor the devotee  
 Nor the heart so immersed in bliss  
 Nor the soul unified with *Brahman*  
 The truth is only this  
 That you are none of the labelled relations  
 You are just love  
 Formless  
 Where in the end there is neither I nor you  
 And even if that is an illusion of mine  
 Then let it be  
 Let the enjoyer, the enjoyed, the enjoyment  
 All be united and one — inseparable  
 Let me enjoy myself  
 Through you — my divine love.

## 16

On the steps of  
The holiest Ganges of Haridwar  
Gushing so fast  
You washed my feet  
I felt as if  
It were not my feet  
You were cleansing  
But my heart (and soul)  
From all sins  
Completely  
So you could fill it  
With purest ocean  
Of nectar of love.

## 17

From a tiny invisible point  
It spread like the vast emptiness  
The sky of your memories  
Has become endless  
My heart is a lonely plane  
Flying in it  
After you are gone  
Your existence has taken  
A form of boundless ocean  
Where the ship of my mind  
Floats without seeing the land  
My existence is my soul  
All united with the *Brahman*  
Of your relationship  
Oh my love, who is beyond me  
I will not limit that relationship  
By giving it a name  
Let it remain  
Unnamed.

## 18

All around me  
A dense forest of memories  
Is grown  
Sitting in its midst  
Far from the world  
I am offering my prayers  
To the lord of love.

## 19

The renowned Hindi poet  
Bachchan said to his beloved  
That days somehow  
Please every one's heart  
He is frightened of nights  
That bring loneliness  
But I say  
I am terrified by  
The crowds of days  
They make me so lonely  
But nights are filled  
With dreams  
In them my heart  
Finds you near itself  
In whatever form  
It wants.

## 20

From all directions  
From unknown origins  
Rivers flow continuously  
All different paths  
All falling in one ocean  
Submerging and  
Becoming one  
In the same way  
I feel  
All the streams  
Of my love of the past  
Have been absorbed  
Reaching you  
You are  
The boundless ocean  
Of our love.

## 21

You are not related to me in any way  
You are neither a wife, nor a beloved  
Nor a blood relative by birth  
There is no give and take between us  
No exchange of any kind  
Even then, there is something  
Which makes us  
Mutually acceptable  
It seems that  
At the last crossroad of this life  
You came  
Like a fresh morning freeze  
Bringing a new air  
Of freedom  
Giving me a new  
Definition of love  
For the first time  
That even when completely unbound  
We have gone  
Deepest in our hearts  
Set so deeply  
That we need not think  
By what name to call  
Our relationship  
Oh my love, who is beyond being mine.



## 22

No, I don't demand  
A whole dense forest of love  
Totally for myself  
To me, it is sufficient  
If you give me just  
A seed of stainless moment  
So I can sow it  
In the field of my heart  
And fertilize it  
With my lofty feelings  
Watering with holy streams of memories  
I will let it grow  
Into a flourishing green orchard  
And then  
Present it to you.

## 23

I have removed all weeds  
And thorny shrubs  
Of complaints and grudges  
My heart's land is now  
All clean and smooth  
In the soft clay of emotions  
I have sowed  
The unique seed  
Of your momentary love  
Tomorrow in it  
There will flourish  
A sandalwood forest  
So full of sweet fragrance  
My world  
Will become  
Orchard of gods  
Filled with  
Sweet smell.

## 24

So little we need  
To live in happiness  
Two simple meals a day  
A jug of water  
Two yards of land to sleep  
A piece of cloth  
Two yards long  
To cover our body  
And a simple smile  
From you  
So little we need  
To live in happiness  
But even then  
So many roadblocks  
So many obstacles.

## 25

What is heaven?  
To be in your company  
Even for a moment  
What is hell?  
To carry on the burden  
Of that relationship  
Which makes me realize  
That you are not around  
And thus  
Deepening  
My loneliness.

## 26

In this suffocating atmosphere  
Buried in a crowd  
Whenever I feel  
That I am  
All alone, absolutely so lonely  
There comes a thunder  
From some corner  
Of my heart  
Like lightning  
Out of a blue sky  
A memory of yours  
Makes me realize  
That you are  
Walking with me  
At every step  
I am not alone  
Not at all.

## 27

Indeed I had said  
Love is like a lean stream of river  
Which in the end becomes a sea  
But you gave me  
In the very first instant  
The whole sea of love  
(Now I fear it may dry)  
Indeed I had said  
Love is like a subtle point  
In which the universe is submerged  
In the end  
But you settled in my eyes  
With the very first glance  
The whole galaxy  
(Beyond that is only the final end)  
My liberation resides  
In that  
(gift of yours.)

## 28

On this day of Deepavali the festival of lights  
The whole city is illuminated  
I, too, have lit  
The lamp of my memories  
Deep inside me  
Your holy image  
Has been shrined  
In the temple of my heart  
Immersed fully in itself  
My heart sings  
Songs of prayers  
The universe of my soul  
Has become worthy of being  
Worshiped in all its molecules  
Has the light of my love  
Reached you, also?

## 29

All my life I desired  
All my life I tried  
All my life I lived a dream  
That my heart become  
A temple of unbound love  
Unique, unblemished  
That I sweep its every corner  
With pure feelings  
All my life I searched for  
Have crafted  
Have ornated  
A divine idol  
Which can give  
Eternal  
Selfless  
Sinless love  
But as yet  
The temple is not complete  
Each idol of the dream is shattered  
But my search  
Cannot stop  
Will my temple ever be built fully  
Will the idol be shrined ever  
Do you have an answer  
To my question?

30

There is no relationship between us  
But, then again, what relationship  
Is there that  
Does not bind us  
Our hearts are like two drops  
In which unnamed ocean  
Of inseparable love  
Is fully dissolved  
We are drowned  
Our existence is nothing  
But then  
We are everything.

31

One day this storm will stop  
This tide, this hurricane of heart  
Will become calm  
And freeze  
But even then, love  
Will set  
In its deepened bottom  
Uniting with it dissolving completely  
Becoming inseparable.



## AND IN THE END

Whatever one desires  
However much  
It shall give  
And it shall lose nothing  
My heart is  
An ocean of love.

Sometimes  
There comes a moment  
In which  
The whole life is lived  
And sometimes  
The whole life is spent  
In search  
Of that moment.



## About the Editor

**Kira Hall** is Distinguished Professor of Linguistics and Anthropology at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her interdisciplinary approach to the study of language in social life is reflected by the academic positions she has held since receiving her PhD in Linguistics in 1995 from the University of California, Berkeley, which include appointments at Rutgers University (English), Yale University (Anthropology), and Stanford University (Linguistics). Hall's work as a linguistic anthropologist and sociolinguist exposes the complex ways in which language is formative to sociocultural understandings of gender and sexuality, whether located in institutions such as media and government or in the interactional practices of everyday life. Much of her work focuses on uses of Hindi and English by groups in northern India associated with gender and sexual difference. Her previous books on the works of Indian poet, essayist, linguist, and folklorist Ved Prakash Vatuk include *Studies in Inequality and Social Justice: Essays in Honor of Ved Prakash Vatuk* (Archana, 2009) and *Essays in Indian Folk Traditions: Collected Writings of Ved Prakash Vatuk* (Archana, 2007).

## About the Editorial Assistant

**Emma Bornheimer** is a PhD student in the Culture, Language, and Social Practice program at University of Colorado Boulder. Her research centers on the discursive community construction of identity in digital spaces. After earning an MA in Linguistics in 2022 from the University of Toronto, she joined the Department of Linguistics at CU Boulder to study how neurodiversity and queer activism play into the ways that self-diagnosed autists use the affordances of digital communication to construct their identity for audiences online. With an interdisciplinary background in the areas of psychology, communication disorders, Deaf studies, ASL, autism studies, and queer theory, Bornheimer seeks to engage in research that has positive social impacts for the communities implicated within these areas of study.