

*ONCE AGAIN AND OTHER POEMS*

By C. L. Khatri

Once again weather is getting worked up  
drunk with the drink of pre-monsoon shower,  
the aroma of drenched earth's apron in summer,  
cuckoos' song from the green bower  
calling boys in the cuckoo's nest once again.

Once again baby leaves and rosy buds are sipping dew drops,  
from green leaves dripping yellow of amaltash.  
It's the rain-fest the dark sky celebrates,  
cloud bursts its swollen womb to quench her thirst  
lightning's lashes herald its dawn once again.

Yesterday the trees that shed their leaves,  
their bony brown branches and faded flowers  
are breathing life with sun-rise once again.  
Face washed with white clouds, hills are looking fresh.  
The cool wind is carrying your fragrance once again.

The thorn in my heart is taken out,  
the simmering wound is healed  
still a void is left aching!  
Once again I saw a Majnun sobbing for years  
on the sandy shore for his Laila.

The bird that got withered away day before  
is now chirping, fluttering once again.

***DEMONETISATION***

October was the cruelest month  
breeding flowers and ferns  
'mixing memory and desire'  
prompting bricks and bouquet  
stirring out dormant concealed crop.

Death-knell to fake fecundity, terror trade, black bull  
turning a cash-full house into a cashless house  
dead accounts into overflowing accounts  
like desert streets filled with flood water  
revealing new skeletons in the cupboard.

The spirals of smoke rising from homes,  
common men in queue, country shining in hue!  
Spring's miscarriage in autumn  
forced trees to shed their green leaves.  
Earth's chest is filled with bristling leaves.

Leaves will sprout new leaves or turn into foliage  
you cannot say. For you foresee what you have already seen.  
They would say—leafless tree, less-leaves tree  
or better coin a term—e-leaf tree, and e-market  
flowers and fruits in the dawn of the e-age.

***REBIRTH***

The drops of first shower of the season  
perched on her lips like dew drops on leaves  
hanging from her sharp pointed nose  
dripping from her short hairs in soft tumult  
fermenting in the flame of her body

making wine with water, flesh and blood.

A wine you can sip with your nose  
lips, eyes, ears or with erected pores.

How can a state ban this alcohol that moves  
through earth, water wind, sky, and fire?

Her eyes are half open  
frames, curves, swells are full open  
ogling from the transparent skin.  
Don't hold yourself, be lost.  
It's raining , effortlessly moulting a rebirth.

***EDI***

When words fail  
stones speak.  
When tears dry  
bullets bang.  
When silence operates  
violence prevails.  
When eyes do not meet eyes  
suspicion and fear thrive.  
Frozen handshake does not ignite  
fire of love and life.

Why are scarlet tears in the eyes of Himalayas?

Why is Jhelum's water red?

Gulmarg's ground turned grey granite?

Why is the cold wind howling today?

Heaven on the earth has turned nostalgic.

Deity of love still roams

in the forest of walnut

in the tulip garden

floats on the Dal lake.

Moon descends in the dead of night.

Look, she gestures you

from the sash of Shikara.

Love lies in the sobs of children

cries of men

fury of fair sex

monastic metrics

cylindrical wheels

rotating in a cycle.

Kids for Edi demand

white pigeons

to fly fearlessly

in the sky.

Amen! Amen!

### ***A PERFECT ALCHEMY***

Don't look for Erose

in emaciated spring.

Moisture evaporates in the sun

but age no bar for food

you are my daily dose.

I want to do with you  
what dew drops do with sea shell.  
I know I will shiver and sweat at the same time  
but I love to hold a warm pearl  
like a just born baby--  
A perfect alchemy.

### Bio

C.L.Khatri, a reputed, perceptive critic and editor of *Cyber Literature* and several anthologies of criticism, is a well known voice in Indian English poetry. He is a bilingual poet writing in English and Hindi. His four poetry collections in English are *Kargil* (2000), *Ripples in the Lake* (2006) and *Two-Minute Silence* (2014) and *For You to Decide* (2016). He was awarded Michael Madhusudan Academy Award for his poetry collection *Kargil* in 2002. His poems are widely published, anthologized and translated in different languages in India and abroad. Currently he is Professor, Dept. of English, T.P.S. College, Patna. Email. [drclkhatri@rediffmail.com](mailto:drclkhatri@rediffmail.com).

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