

AN EPISTLE TO POEM

By Vivekanand Jha

Dear poem!

What do I state? Where do I begin from?

Trial and strife trails me like a slash
since the day you made your way in my life.

Truth's a bit, not easy to conceive
and convince. While I remain drowned
configuring you a form and figure,
decking you with a cloak
of rhyme, rhythm and metre.

But my wife and so-called friends
nursing a grudge against me,
I overhear them murmuring
of sudden change in my chemistry.

They notice in me
a sudden surge of arrogance
as safe distance now I prefer
where once, an active participant.

I feel affronted when I find you
stranded in uproar and tumult,
someone playing a spiteful joke
with your chastity, doing prose
and calling you poetry.

Your company me never thought
in the jerks and jolts of an odyssey.
I know I alone am not your fan
already adorned by many a man.

This, an age of fabrication,
of machine. Trusting someone
is like the sunrise from the west
and the sun-set in the east.

I don't know for how long
this love is to last. I gave up
brooding, bemoaning the future
as I want to live an age in a moment.

My wife calls it a mere flirt,
as fleeting as the heaving of a sigh,
boding peril of the love-lorn,
warning me, my dropping down
around her and pooling at her feet:
One morning to mourn.

TOLERANCE

No one to help in scaling the ladder

but many to dislodge its rungs,
waiting in obsession
for its feet to slither on the ground
splashed with the grease of envy.

Unmindful of these vampires
nourished on the blood of brutality
my father - innocuous and euphemistic -
sermonizes only verse of tolerance,
adepts in the chemistry of words
and teaches me how to be a catalyst.

He hardly knows the geometry of words
like a satire, pun, irony, oblique, etc
but what he knows
potent enough outfoxing all
and his counsel me follow
like a suffocating man gasping for air:

“Give up the life tinged with tussle,
draw a line, parallel and longer,
by the one your rival draws.
Thus culminates the road to rivalry
delivered by the womb of jealousy.”

BRUISED LAND

This land of ominous geography,

calamities cuddle in its lap
drenched in disease and destitution.
It dies its left-over death
amid flip-flop of deluge and drought.

Habitats break into fleeting ocean,
the destiny of the people floating
over the surging current of water
as if they were exposed to
to venomous sting of cobra.

Everyone on board of the same boat
the stream underneath is pointed enough
to peg a hole in the hull and keel.

Thatched roof - the only cloak of privacy,
animals – only livelihood for the peasants,
are swept away as if
they were a bobbing boat of paper.

They come as usual
with a script of concocted speech
to assess the damage and crisis
and assure: we are looking to work it out
on permanent basis. But nothing happens
after they return to their cocoon,
breathing a sigh in the bonnet of bun.

Talking big is their dogma;
chanting through flowery, glib tongue
and adoring the public on the altar
of betrayal their worship.
Whoring people with pre-poll-pledges
All they do in the realm of charlatanism.

SCAPEGOAT

Ceremonious knives lastly dropped
on disinterested and innocent animals
much like their falling on cakes
as men dipped in delusion, swear
to sacrifice them on the altar
betokening fulfilment of their dream:

Their demands stretching wide
like a canopy of the sky,
ranging without any beginning and ends.
Sometimes they leave to His discretion
Sometimes they go on to demand:

“How should I beseech?” They muse,
“Omniscient and omnipresent You are,

You know what is hidden
in the inner core of my heart.

But You have to listen, look after all,
lest You forget me by mistake
so I swear to sacrifice a goat
in Your pious premise
upon fulfilment of my wishes and desires.

Today exam-result has come out,
my friend stands first in the class.
Now he has to translate the promise into action:
Champagne, roasted chicken and mutton
would be served and spoilt in celebration.

It's marriage of another friend of mine,
Things are set to meet and greet;
club, restaurant and bar booked,
one night fish and the next day meat.

These are only a small roster of atrocities
Wherever or whenever music of celebration
transmits and whispers into animals' ears,
they get heavily loaded with doubt and fear:
Only God knows whose turn next;
and who would watch and mourn.

TOXIN-TIPPED WORDS

Our politicians, merchants
of vibrant, electoral democracy
are cultivating a novel poll weapon
of toxin-tipped words,
flooding the lexis with new entrants
of vices and venoms.

It's not the first time; new thing,
only medium of discourse has changed.
We can understand their disquiet,
sudden harmonic imbalances and fear.
The festival of fleece near,
They rehearse to chant the satanic verse
seeking salvation for selves
spitting befooling words.

The new gutter dialogue,
carries limitless sewage,
stinking a rotten egg-like smell,
words leaving their tongues
as aimless as the boat
without oars and rudder.

A pompous journey on a felonious fling,
through the sewers of language,
setting the course of the nation to capsize

into the water woes of hazy politics.

Bio:

Dr Vivekanand Jha is a translator, editor and award winning poet.. He is the author of 5 books of poetry. He has also authored one critical book on the poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra and edited nine critical anthologies on Indian English Writing. His works have been published in more than 100 magazines round the world. Moreover his poems have been published in more than 25 poetry anthologies. He has more than 25 research and critical articles published in various national and international anthologies and referred journals. Recently he has edited a poetry anthology, *The Dance of the Peacock*, featuring 151 Indian English poets and published by Hidden Brook Press, Canada. He is son of noted professor, poet and award winning translator Dr. Raja Nand Jha (Crowned with Sahitya Akademi Award, New Delhi). He is the Chief Editor of two literary journals, *VerbalArt & Phenomenal Literature*.