

The Stairs

By Kiriti Sengupta

I

When I say Death, what do you think of? A brooding presence, baritone voice, smoky darkness? Death, the King, perhaps the most austere one.

So choosy he is, about picking souls for his kingdom. God, Wisdom and Death, see how close-knit they are!

II

Grandma always overdoes it. Well into her nineties, she must take a bath at four in the morning. And then a couple of hours in prayer, so irritating! My morning sleep goes haywire.

Moreover, today's *Ekadashi*, a religious fortnightly. The mammal glands of the cows are dry, oil-free and heavy with pain.

Since my college days, my dinner ends around one at night. Mother keeps awake, awaits me, without taking her food. Says she, 'Why don't you cut down these hang-outs'?

Rules, such mess of rules cause my headache. God arrives at the wee hours of morn whilst the alarm is set at nine for mine.

III

All these are dated ideas and beliefs. Don't you know that millions of men have their food on the floor? Wealth and Stars, they are unbridgeable, you know. I wonder whether the families have read scriptures...

Since my birth, I've well-afforded taking a square meal at the dining table. These days I sit on the floor, thanks to those *Yoga* channels. The sitting postures are not so easy, so what? Lying supine is enough.

God Himself keeps standing... What's the point of practicing postures?

IV

The *Vedas* don't know. So what, it's enough if YOU know. Slippers, no. Books, television channels, mellow fruits that fall off — no.

The eyes, in the creases of the forehead, ache!

No wonder, poetry, or thrill – no spell of magic.

You, the flute-bearer—steeped in melody.

#

It's seething, searing

Sin...

#

Ah

It's not the Ganges, nor Shiva

But snake...

V

Tearing your roots, long and deep, is not so easy. You've to take much care, great care, gradually.

Soil that stick—

If only could be removed, at once...

#

No warrior—not the charioteer,

Work and efficiency, touched in pensive pleasure...

#

You're watching trees—they too

Are looking at houses

The burning train...

VI

That's what you call a seamless promotional campaign.

No gimmick—it's *Patanjal* in shining glory

Each chip seems like a Yogic thread...

'An idea can change your life'

VII

To have a look at the 'I' is troublesome— a crack on the mirror shatters the dream.

No lens or glass, only drooping eyes

A single contact, and it's done

These eyes see, trust me—

'I'

No mirth, no sadness—

What a wonderful world is this 'I'...

Translated into English by Shishir Kumar Roy from the original Bengali
written by Kiriti Sengupta. Edited by Kiriti Sengupta.

Y-gene

My friends were aware of the wish I nurtured,
if I had a daughter,
I would name her *Srividya!* No,
I was not influenced by any actor.
There are a lot of disputes, prevailing over
the sibling rivalry of the sisters
in every corner of Bengal.
I thought, my daughter would grow up to say
'Hey! You were all so wrong.'
Our prayer room hosted a dazzling crystal *Sri Yantra*
on the holy altar.

My wife's desires were too girly
She wished to drape her daughter
in frilled dresses to look gorgeous
She also had good plans to find her daughter
the best possible groom, so that my wife could live hassle-free!
Prior to her labour, my mother-in-law
keenly observed my wife's navel and opined,
'Come on, it's a boy!'
It was a boy of course,
a cute little thing of two and a half kilos.
To take care of the borderline weight
special supplements were arranged.
My wife looked bright in pride, and
so were her eyes.
We thanked and worshiped the *Narayana*
right after the Holy Bath.

My son is now at school,
it's a co-education, convent.
After his school he returns home and tells his mother,
'Girls were all sitting on the left.'

Translated into English by Rituparna Sarkar from the original Bengali
written by Kiriti Sengupta. Edited by Kiriti Sengupta.

Brief bio of Kiriti Sengupta:

A professionally qualified Dental Surgeon (B.D.S) from the University of North Bengal, India. Has a number of international poetry publications, e.g. in Taj Mahal Review www.tajmahalreview.com , Kriya Online www.kriya.in . Kiriti's poems have recently been included in the poetry book 'Heaven Above – Poetry Below' (ISBN: 9781927682562) by Brian Wrixon from Canada. He has authored the following books so far:

1. 'Byakul Shabdo Kichu' (Bengali poetry book), published by Parampara Publishers, Calcutta.(ISBN: 9789380869636)
2. 'Aay Na' (Bengali nonfiction based on free articles), published by Dhansere Prakashan, Calcutta.(ISBN: 9788192642208)
3. 'The Unheard I' (English nonfiction based on poetry), published by Dhansere Prakashan, Calcutta. (ISBN: 9788192642222) The book is being re-published in the U.S. by Inner Child Press, Ltd.
4. 'Twist of Fate', a co-author of this international charity anthology published by Stephen L Wilson in collaboration with Navigator Books, U.S.A. (ISBN: 9780989002684)
5. 'The Reciting Pens' to be published very soon by Inner Child Press, Limited (U.S.A.). (ISBN:978-0615861869) [<http://www.innerchildpress.com/kiriti-sengupta.php>]