

## **The Paper Boat**

**By Aju Mukhopadhyay**

The paper boat  
I set adrift  
In my childhood  
On the flooded road  
Of a metropolis  
Has just arrived  
This rainy evening  
At my doorstep  
Under full sail  
Inviting me  
To set out on it  
For a nouvelle  
Adventure.

**Colours of the Sky**

Sun was yet to appear at dawn  
But its light orange scintillating ray  
Circled a portion of the sky: first foray  
Flying within it were the crows  
A picture framed in the shadowy lawn.  
After the daybreak grey changed to blue pure  
Blue became bright, clouds became white  
Big bright cotton white clouds were shaped  
White horses galloped in a race in the azure.  
At twilight sky was painted fresh  
Deep crimson fading orange pale yellow glowing red  
Different decors when Sun was drooping its head  
So much colour so much chase, many a different phase  
Created by superhuman artistic consciousness.

**The Tree**

Saguaro of Mexico grows an inch in ten years overall  
Deodar trees in Himalayas are 250 feet tall  
Some trees grow very fast, in few days couple of feet  
Red wood trees are taller up to 300 feet  
Tailpot palms bloom once in 50/60 years  
Producing 500 kilo seeds and 12 million flowers  
Bird-bucket orchids intoxicate bees with hormone  
Trapping them, compelling them to pollinate in other zone  
Bamboos flower once in 50, 60 or 100 years  
Blooming everywhere create pestilence, become riotous  
Then die all at once, as if suicide,  
Kurunji flowers once in 6, 12 or 18 years, making the hill side  
Radiant blue, extending to vast blue sky  
Rhododendrons make the forest aflame with crimson shy  
The Madagascar palm after flowering  
Gives all its body and soul, leaves offspring  
The seeds of date palm, Methusela of Masoda,  
Sprout even after 2000 years as per agenda  
Giant African Baobab with water pouches lives for 1000 years  
The oldest Spruce tree in Fullu hills, Sweden, live for 9550 years.  
Rangoon creepers from one corner to the other moves underground  
Plants were motile, now spreads otherwise sound,  
A moving creeper sensing hindrance on its path  
Easily changes track, follow another path  
When shaded, a tree extending branches run  
When crowded, they go up to meet the Sun

Trees know when a killer comes with axe  
When a friend comes they relax;  
All their fear and pain, happiness and sorrow  
Are recorded in the girth of their body, not hollow.

Besides flowers, roots, fruits, leaves, woods, seeds and shade  
They give juice, oil and bread, their bodies to insects when dead.  
Epitome of silence, patience and perseverance  
Trees are essential to others for their existence  
So receptive to human love and touch  
Trees are love and beauty incarnate without any grudge.

Wonderful are the tales of trees  
Beyond reason and science.  
Go green go green to remain ever green  
From the core of your heart to grin.

**The Profiles of Birds**

High growth and thick foliage  
in an enclosure opposite our garden  
invited the golden orioles to stay on;  
often they perch on a bo tree or an old banyan  
sometimes chasing the irritant house crows  
sometimes coming close to us for a short stay  
soon to fly away.

As the summer through rains was evaporating  
I found them often absenting;  
the idea that they might have migrated  
gave birth to a feeling of remorse  
for not snapping them during their course.

Bright golden-yellow with sharp black patches  
preening and pruning with beak  
gnawed at my heart, incited me to seek  
and catch them to keep in memory digital.

And then suddenly- peu peu peu-  
the call reverberated in the air;  
if not all, it must have reached a few.

Ready with camera held in two hands  
as I stood below the drum-stick tree  
they were spreading wings, preening and pruning

unafraid and free;  
seeing me close by, posing the instrument to catch  
they began love making, two of them dancing  
jovially, jumping from branch to branch;  
it seemed entirely unusual and rare  
for them to so behave with me so near.

I began clicking to catch and imprison the beauties  
forgetting that the Sun was at its youth-  
standing before me; a morning sooth  
like a real cul-de-sac.

I caught, alas, the shadows of the birds,  
profiles surrounded by twisting branches and dark leaves,  
colourless facades.

Though in my heart I have kept their images and song  
the idea to imprison them was perhaps wrong.

I strongly feel that all this has been  
with the intervention of a presence unseen  
for things evanescent in any sense  
are to be realized only in essence.

**Structural Violence**

Ten proud faces beamed  
in the slave media:  
World's richest chairmen of companies-  
all worth several billion \$  
arranged in descending order.  
The same media on the same day  
while the Sun shines to make hay,  
published stories  
of the bizarre mud cookies  
doing the rounds among the poor kiddies  
and others, desperate to stave off hunger in Haiti:  
'when my mother does not cook any thing',  
says a poor sibling,  
'I eat them 3 times a day.'  
Rickety, they die in hundreds  
as in Africa, exploited for years, degraded.

In a computerized world  
with a technological hype and commercial fair  
with explicit understanding among the players  
to exclusively exploit the market share,  
to speculate in the share market;  
degrading the earth, water and sky  
enjoying the resources everywhere  
the successful ones are always victorious.

Is it not a structural violence  
against the naïve, innocent children of the earth?  
Shall we offer hurrah to the rich for their mirth?  
Beg on behalf of the poor for their munificence?  
Does the whole structure not require  
overhauling or demolition with fire  
to rebuild a new structure for all?

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### **Bio-note**

Aju Mukhopadhyay, settled in Pondicherry, is a bilingual award winning poet, author and critic, writes fictions and essays too. He has authored 30 books and received several poetry awards from India and USA besides other honours. He has published two volumes of short stories some of which have been chosen for noted anthologies. He has contributed essays on literary and environmental subjects in more than 50 scholarly books. He is a member of the Research Board of Advisors of the American Biographical Institute and registered in the Who's Who of Sahitya Akademi, India. He is Vice President of the Guild of Indian English Writers, Editors and Critics. A member of many national literary and environmental institutions, he is also published as writer on animals, wildlife, Nature and Environment.

He has so far published seven books of poems in English besides two in Bangla. One more book of poems is ready for publication. Eight books contain critique on his poetry among others besides such critiques on his poetry and fiction scattered in several magazines. His poems may be broadly categorised in three groups: On Nature, poems with spiritual overtone and feelings and poems on social, political subjects, some of which may be categorised as rants. He is very subjective in his subtle feelings and expressions. He is known as one of the noted writers of Haiku and such genres of poetry from India. Such works by him has been published in many international magazines and ezines. His haiku has been specially chosen by some editors and awarded ranks on merits. Quite a few of his poems of the Japanese variety have been published in international anthologies and collections. He has his poems published in 16 anthologies which



include two recent publications one of which is an Indo-Australian anthology of poems by three poets each from Indian and Australia, titled *Poetic Conventions*. He edited some literary magazines in Bangla and is placed in the Editorial Board and Advisory Board of some literary journals for Indian English writing. As Guest Editor he edited <http://twenty20journal.com>, an American Ezine for its Indian Edition; Summer Issue No. 3, 2011.

Besides the awards many of his poetic works have been acclaimed and honoured like one of his poems remaining at the top of the list of poems in [www.asianamericanpoetry.com](http://www.asianamericanpoetry.com) from December 2007 for about three months and inclusion of his poem in the list of top ten recent poems by [www.Poetsindia.com](http://www.Poetsindia.com). Lucidity Poetry Journal from Sugar Land, USA has awarded him **Certificate of Merit** for his poem, “Structural Violence” in June 2011. The American Biographical Institute offered him the American Order of Merit.

Following are the books of poems published by him in English. *The Witness Tree, In Celebration of Nature, The Paper Boat, Insect’s Nest and Other Poems, Aju Mukhopadhyay’s Poems on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Short Verse Vast Universe and Short Verse Delight*. The last two are books of Haiku and Tanka with some essays on the subject of Japanese short verses.