

Father's Shirt

Wore Father's shirt
on this dhuleti fearing
soiling by sprayed colours.

And then I remembered his words:
'Son, keep this shirt spotless
even when it is darned.'

Daylong, people sprayed colours on it.
Yet the shirt felt truly clean
light like a cotton flower.

Then at evening I realized
that this shirt could
always be worn though not put on
and once worn
would never be taken off.

Like every morning
when I put on a fresh, pressed shirt
I kept feeling that
father's shirt was still present
on my flesh and bones!



They Do Not Become Footprints

So difficult it is
to remain still
or gust away like breeze.

Taking baby steps
we have stumbled to an unsteady gait.
Yet where on the path
are we?
Don't know.

Sometimes we wonder,
has there been at all a beginning
or has the end arrived
or we are still groping mid-way?
Can't make sense of anything.
Feet remain just feet
tired or cast of clay.

Opening or closing the window
feet stagger sometimes
endure with an armchair's support.
Yet the foundation
remains unstable.

So simple it is
to march hundreds of miles
holding a flag
and simple even to roam
like an ascetic;
standing erect on one leg
is a bit difficult.
But most arduous
is to pace steadily.

Feet get tired often
and one feels
their weight.
But the path within the path
inspires one again yet again
to walk on.
After much trudging though
the feet remain where they were.

So tough it is
to become steady
at the path's end.

Steps do not turn into way
nor the path
into translucent time.

Feet verily remain just feet
not turn into footprints.



Until This Moment

The bird calling on and on
awaiting the turning
of a drop of blood into a lotus
dried up into a twing.

From the first two-story mansion in Babylon
2500 years back
to New York's WTC towers
everything has been turning into rubble.

All the devices
from the wheel's discovery
to the modern robot appear
antiquated.

Though it took just 20000 years
from dark humans to turn fair
even after a billion years
everything is yet the same.

The fire springing from the friction
oh but two flints
has always remained luminous
overpowering.

From the Earth's birth
to this moment
the destructive dance of sparks
has kept forming new forms.

Blood's fire has worked
to change history again and again.
But fire has remained fire
has never become flower.

In the dry bush in flames
every drop of blood has struggled in vain
to turn into flower's fragrance
to this moment.



Why do I feel like

A trunk without branches
despite these arms?

Stretching out far and wide
in search of a live snake
these arms crashed into each other
ended up into sheer expanse of nails.

From the grip on grandpa's stick
to the one on the balance bar of bus
the fist gathered just the dead vacuum.

Anticipating that
these stretched scarecrow arms
would turn towards the sky
the whole farm was thrilled to sprout.

Every single particle of earth
clung to the farm
like arms.
every single furrow
a fortune line on palms.

Lines can measure
just the length of arms
not their roots.
Before I could figure this out

Arms struck roots
in white span
shot through with ink
began to see through newly-grown eyes
began to fly on newly-grown wings
beyond that grey sky.

Now
in every single cell of brain
arms stay up day and night
striking deeper and deeper roots.



The Dream of Immortal web

Even blazing torches
are ridden with
cobwebs now
and the fretful dark
under the furious flame
has fleshed out with age

Turning soft with soft earth
the kodiyaun has melted away
not a blade of grass
grows in vegetable beds.

Fed up with
the same old light
suicidal moths
keep an arms' length from flame.

Wandering in the dream of immortal web
they suck black juice of dark
taking it for light
flustered flametorch
has decided to go off

Every single vein of arm
and the whole expanse of nail
urge it to burn for
yet another night

The dazzling morning sun
reason with the torch
“Things always happen without rhyme or reason”

Thus
the industrious spider keeps weaving
the blaze of torch keeps diminishing
the moth fluttering afar
dashes in to save the torch

Eyes of the moth
wings of the moth
light of the most
illuminates the torch
again and again.



Dust

No matter how much do I clean it
my room gets swamped with dust.
it settles in thick layers
through chinks in cupboards,
over books and clothes
even over whirring fans.

In case I am out
it sprawls inside the locked house
watches over the touch left behind
blurs the face enclosed in frame.

Even in dreams
dust seems to fill the eyelids
as I strain to peer at the faded day
through flitting gaps between particles.

Wingless moments smothered under it
delight me like dazzling sunlight.
Dust is the cornucopia of earth



Father always insisted:
Dust off your shoes before entering the house.
But it seeps in hair throughout the day
at times, soaked in sweat
covertly changes your complexion.
Notwithstanding my deep concern,
the hanky remains soiled.

Dust is the footprint of time.



Dust tunes in with my steps
and preserves the past.
Evokes reminiscences of grandma's hands
merges with father's ashes and
gives me vibes of father since then.
Roams around defiant amorphous.
Even before birth and after
it waits quietly for something.
It's my deep unyielding root
closer to heart than flesh and blood.

With the gentle din of steps
time past and advances goes,
keeping me wide awake.

Dust is
my gateway to dust.



Even that's not true

Fallen leaves don't bring
an end to the tree
nor does anything end
if fallen leaves are set afire.

A subterranean world
hidden like invisible stars
takes form right in the smoke.
It's very much there
but not always,
or
it becomes a lone drum
hailing the time gushing away
in thickening night.

Still nothing stirs.
Every now and then
eerie bells ring in a ruined building.
A conch forsaken on seashore
blows incessant cries
that probable fall on deaf ears.
Still to say that
nothing really happens
would amount to a charade.



Even after realizing that
the treetop yearns for a glimpse
in the heart of its infinite hearts,
the sky remains utter sky
roots sheer roots,
still at times,
the tree turns into the sky, even roots.

Being prodigal with golden dream
it has lost its verdure
and everything is smothered by rotten earth.
No seed sprouts.
Thus I hanker for
a twinkle of time's eye
that never closes once it opens.
Despite everything
not a single window opens
not a slight creak is heard
moonlight doesn't seep through chinks.

I dust off apparels of present
with hundred odd hands of dark.
Not a single spark flashes.
No straggling lamp is espied
anywhere in pitch-dark night
Even that's not true.

