

**50 Poems of
Sohel Amitabh**

Translated by
Firoz Mahmud Khan

50 POEMS OF SOHEL AMITABH TRANSLATED BY FIROZ MAHMUD KHAN

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Cover Picture by Julian Francis

OXFAM ferries are plying on the great PADMA river crossing at Daulatdia (Goalundo) crossing. In January 1972, Mr. Julian Francis, International Aid Worker came on behalf of OXFAM to assess the post war relief and rehabilitation needs for Bangladesh, river transport was identified as one of the urgent needs of the day. The KASTURI, the KAKOLI, and the KAMINI all bought with OXFAM funds, are still plying today. Two of those ferries are in the picture and Mr. Julian Francis took the photo from the third in 2nd December, 2004.



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PREFACE

Proposed to
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Contd.

Translator's Note

"It is never easy to frame precise definition of literary genera, and the attempt to do so is rarely profitable; for one form shades off into another. We know well enough what we mean by a lyric, but we are sometimes puzzled to determine whether a given poem should be called a lyric or not. Still more is the case with satire. The Romans claimed to have invented satire, and in the sense in which they meant it the claim was justified. Most of their literary forms they borrowed from the Greeks, but not the satire. For satire the Greeks had no specialised form. Yet of course the thing itself, the spirit, is present in Greek literature. There is satire in Homer, and there have been few, if any, satirist greater than Aristophanes. There is satire even in Bible: "No doubt ye are the people, and wisdom will die with you," is satirical. In short, satire is almost as old as literature; and each people in turn that develops a literature develops a satire also".

Hugh Walker: English Satire and Satirists, 1925

Among many other poems of Sohel Amitabh why have I selected these very fifty poems to translate is a pertinent question to be answered with reason for the convenient of its reader. The prime criterion of selecting these poems, is to represent poet Sohel Amitabh's basic mood and mode of writing along with his style, the realm of his poetic world and the way he looks at that world. Originally Sohel Amitabh is a satirist poet beyond any question. Almost each and every poem of the poet sufficiently contains satirical elements subtly and range. Objectively this poet attacks versatile issues related to national, international, personal, social, political, environmental as well as universal subjects to criticize focusing his transparent light of poetic perception with a view to draw with words the cute picture of follies and fouls into a magnifying shape. Even God is not saved from this blessed attack (*God is Awaken*). In Sohel's writing honey is hidden behind the bitter taste of truth. The unique merit of this poet is the sting of satire, which pins unmistakably the target to ridicule; leaves too some honey of poetic ecstasy to savor after reading it over. As if a surgical knife of a surgeon where, as it were, the surgeon is a poet and the knife is the sharp meaningful words of the poem we encounter while reading his poetry. Let us have some examples from his poetry

rather, to get the answer of the question *why these fifty*. I believe, through the following examples and explanations my reasoning in selecting the poems would be conveyed to the reader.

The satire on socialism in the poem *New Chorus* begins with indicating to a funny similarity between Karl Marx and Frederick Angles that both of the pioneers of socialism kept beard, and so deprived the barber from earning some money by shaving their beard. But as we drown deep in this poem we find the grave truth and serious tone.

When in the **Tiene-Min** Squire of China
Bullets of socialism shed blood of students
Does it make any spot then,
In that red-colored white lower garments, dhoti?

(New Chorus)

Here this 'red-colored white lower garments, dhoti' infers the usual dress of Joti Bosu the former Chief Minister of West Bengal of India who is a serious follower of socialism.

In the other poem *Drugdex* the true picture of international politics with its different sheds of intra and international vicious background is crystallized before the readers minds eye wherein authentic scenario of Colombia, Nicaragua, Salvador, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Armenia, Siberia, China, Tibet, Myanmar, Kampuchea, Paris, Vietnam, Australia, Mindanao of Philippines, Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Poland, Former East and West German, North Korea, South Korea, North Yemen, South Yemen, South Africa, Namibia, Palestine, Algeria, Panama, Sri Lanka, Punjab and Assam of India, Maldives, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Saudi Arabia, — are dexterously sketched with contextual words and particular world-known allusive political incidents. I think no other poem of this length has been successfully written encompassing so many countries' political affairs directing their core problems correlatively in such a synchronized manner and exactness.

King of drug dropped bomb in Colombia,
Playing cards fight war in Bolivia
Salvador, Nicaragua

Hindi movie performing role in Afghan and Lebanon,
What spot shines on forehead of Gorbachov?

Coal mine of Armenia as well as Siberia
Addicted in Pepsi-cola.

Iraq-Iran and in Turkey, Kurdish are crying why?
Polish got solidarity, Irish are back a bit
Germans are united, would Koreas sleep yet?
Yemen's are cousins and what's going on at Johannesburg?
Namibia is liberated, but in Palestine, Panama and Algeria
Drama of ducks and drakes.
Sri Lanka is afraid of Tamil terror.
What happens in Punjab and Assam today
Reverse is happening in Maldives now.

(Drugdex)

About patriotism, the poet's *Guerrilla '71* is a faithful mirror where history got its true image. *Guerrilla '71* is poet's keen personal observation about his surroundings. But, starting from a personal point of view, the poem reached predicatively to the climax of our liberation war of 1971. While we go through the last two stanzas of this unique piece of poem, we feel but sorry for the outcome of the liberation war.

After that. abra ca dabra!

We never returned
To that remote village Shamashpur even in springtime.
Now, only poverty and people are there.
Letter comes, we escape to live.
We hide our faces in the lanes of this city
In fear of loosing the greatest memory of our lives so early.

Devoid of license, permit and freedom fighters' list
That invincible guerrilla Bahar of '71
Now, in Middle East, fighting the war of livelihood
Seeking the stream of memory of his faded youth
In the oily water of the Arabian see.

(Guerrilla '71)

Whereas in the poem *Wanted* the poet resolves:

When the clock strikes twelve at night
My blood boils in desire to rush towards President Palace.
.....
As soon as the clock strikes twelve at night
All of democracy comes in my palm like sandwich.
What's the use of writing poetry?
People don't bother for poetry or democracy
They care for the price of essential commodities.
And talk for socialism knowing nothing of it.

(Wanted)

In the poem *Diversion* the naked picture of politics and follies of our political leaders is satirically and truly portrayed by the coining, punning as well as synchronizing the most used words of the days —

Leaving the fry-pan of Louis I. Kahn?
Chef of democracy returns home.

(Diversion)

About environmental issue, the poet has flawlessly pointed to the biggest problem of environment in the poem *The Earth itself is falling*.

Let Palestine, Afghanistan, Nicaragua bleed to death,
All those issues will be settled later on.
The Earth itself is dropping down from solar system!

(The Earth Itself is Falling)

Ours is a world of science and technology. We are moving very fast rather to say faster towards the newer and newer scientific inventions and discoveries. *Back to the Future* has illustrated a marvelous picture of our tomorrows' life style where things would be artificial rather than natural. In this poem also the poet injects satire:

Leaving helicopter, Mr. Samiraddi laborer
Got down in his paddy field with lesser scythe in hand
Inside the glass-wall of museum
Stands famous river Padma with crystal clear water
.....

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Ilish Fish exhibition is going on in Grameen Museum
With golden skeleton of Dr. Enamul Haque
He knew it very well, as hearsay.
A perfume is being sold there by five dollar
Essenced with Ilish flavor.

.....
Tired cow ruminates in radiation sickness beside noodles piles
Melody of Michael Jackson in antic bamboo flute of cowboy —
Marveled the synthetic atmosphere around.

(Back to the Future)

The effort of the poet in drawing our attention to take necessary measures about the dying river Padma and the traditional Ilish fish is remarkable.

Society is the mirror from where this poet collects his elements and objects of satire. And the poet's observation is very keen and accurate to grasp the true essence of things and events. The middle class society has a remarkable contribution to our science, arts, literature and many other such spheres, but what are the characteristics and sorrows of this middle class and what they dream or suffer in what pain, have been mirrored in the poem *The Middle Class* ironically:

No ground under feet to survive or stand
Middle-Class dreams to catch the moon with broken hand.
Their god of success Gonesh Thakur resides
Inside abandoned walls where decay presides.

.....
Wives of middle class deeply sigh
For 'made in Japan', whose prices are high

.....
Though fortuneless, encircled and not pompous
He is the savior of culture, the hearty middle class.

(The Middle Class)

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Love has thousands sheds and definitions. Our poet has also sketched some excellent picture of love through his own language of satire where the practical practice of love in different stages of life and its various consequences are illustrated colorfully. Among the love poetry of Soheli Amitabh '**Don't Worry**' is the best one in my opinion, which ends with the unforgettable lines ---

And if I am late to come back
Please, set free the pair of Lovebirds from bronze cage
It was my commitment to them when they're collected at last Fair.
Otherwise, where will you put me?
When I will be back?

(Don't Worry)

In the poem **Love**, married persons' practice of love is reflected, I think, wherein to tell a lie is an art to please the partner. The poem **Woman** is in no way a personal attack to womanhood but an attempt to point out follies that are seen in the society. The poem **To Let** is another drama to watch what happens when load shading of love is happened between two lovers.

The alarming words

On 20th we would meet, you told
Today is only 14th.
I'd let my body to-let for the meantime.
A 'To-Let' notice will be hanging in my neck.

And for these days a young man will go in rent
With four years experience in love
A heart with all its facilities
To get an alternative in load shedding of love.

(To-Let)

----really marveled us for its indication to the consequences due to the lack of proper enthusiasm of love between the lovers.

Self-pity is a very subtle and modern element that we find in the poems of modern age. T. S. Eliot's **The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock** is full

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of self pity, we know. **Highway and Will He get Refuge** of Soheli Amitabh, are poems of that category where the poet doesn't know his destination.

Like falling rhyme of broken cataract's water
Leaving back his home, - story walks alone far.

(Highway)

In the poem **Will he get Refuge** the poet has realized his alienation from the so-called society and therefore, searching for a refuge. But is there any refuge 'in this companionless vulnerable world?' Buddha says just before some hours of his death that there is no other refuge in this world except 'self' where we can get shelter. But when self itself is lonely, what would be then? A land of loneliness may be made as our poet says in his poem **Will He Get Refuge?**

Shall he go towards certain refuge,
On foot or by swimming,
Leaving the so called throne of name, fame and wealth
In his own land of loneliness
In this companionless vulnerable world?

(Will he get Refuge)

On the subject 'poetry' we've chosen two poems of Soheli Amitabh in this collection, **Digestion** and **What is Poetry?** Both are profoundly meaningful. In **Digestion** we find the aggressive poetry is eating up the stories, dramas and essays, which indicate the supremacy of poetry in present time. But in a broad sense we know that all other mode of writing is more or less present in poetry naturally. Let us look at the following lines and see how aggressive the poetry is, in dining table ---

Dancing in meter and rhythm repeatedly
Tired poetry is in dining table ---
Fried story in the recipe of novel
Gravy potato-curry of essay
Green salad of drama
With topless flowery waitress beside

(Digestion)

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In *What is Poetry* we don't get any definition of poetry though, we can understand unequivocally from it what poetry is. This is a rare, as well as notable quality of writing i.e. without giving direct definition of something made the reader convinced about the answer of the proposed question,

Any camel may be bought
From Sudan by 40 dollars;
So does a poet may be, turning in
Suited-booted in this Land of Bengal.
Could ever a poem is produced
By 40 million dollars?
That is called poetry.

(*What is Poetry*)

Sohel's satires are not that much rhetorical or full of weighty poetic dictions. His language is simple, better to say very simple. As Wordsworth and Coleridge advocated in their literary theory that the language of poetry should be the language of people's mouth that means it should be simple, we find this simplicity in Sohel's satirical poems. Although Sohel Amitabh has no grand style like heroic couplet of Alexander Pope in *The Rape of the Lock*, he has built his style with economical use of words. Each and every word used in his poetry is very much not only relevant to his subject, but bears a multidimensional meaning in it. He is one of the finest economical poets regarding using minimum words in poem. In a brief and neat canvas of words he can manage his subject with necessary details, meaningfully. As it were, a prism, where through radiates seven colors of a single white sun ray'; yes, prism could be the best example to compare with Sohel's poems.

According to the critiques, one of the prime objectives of this literary genera *satire* is 'to mend the moral'. If we look at our everyday world through the poetic prism of Sohel Amitabh, we could enjoy the truth of it with the follies in an attractive and convincing manner that helps us to get rid of those bad things. Sohel Amitabh, satires wherever he finds any lacuna in this universe. Well, won't he satire himself next? We are waiting for that.

Firoz Mahmud Khan

Firoz Mahmud Khan
Comilla-Dhaka, 2003-2005

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50 POEMS OF SOHEL AMITABH



Jalal Karim

Dedication

This work of translation is dedicated to Jalal Karim who willed to do this work and whose unfulfilled wish came into light through this work. All the translations of this book are deeply owed to Jalal as he was the first reader who looked with insight the potentials of these Bangla poems to be translated. And the other thing though unscientific, I felt the genial spirit of Jalal guiding me from within in doing this work all the time. However, Jalal was an intimate friend of poet Sohel Amitabh and they passed a colorful happy time together in Bagdad. It is then the aspiration of translating these poems germinated in Jalal's versatile mind and he started consulting the poet seriously for the work as well. But God willed other. That ardent desire of Jalal remained unfulfilled. With gorgeous, rich mind Jalal met a premature death at London in 1997. I'd like to echo some words from Thomas Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" in memory of that flamboyant young man Jalal Karim,

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

Firoz Mahmud Khan

Zilla Parishad Banglow
Bagichagaon, Comilla, 2003

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HYMN



1824 – 1873

Michael Madhusudan Datta

I

Long sunk in Superstition's night
By sin and Satan driven, –
I saw not, –cared not for the light
That leads the blind to Heaven.

II

I sat in darkness, –Reason's eye
Was shut, –was closed in me; –
I hasten'd to Eternity
O' ver Error's dreadful sea!

III

But now, at length thy grace, O Lord!
Bids all around me shine:
I drink the sweet, –the precious word, –
I kneel before thy shrine! –

IV

I've broken Affection's tenderest ties
For my blest Savior's sake: –
All, all I love beneath the skies,
Lord! I for Thee forsake!

09 February, 1843

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To Let

On 20th we'd meet, you told
Today is only 14th .
I'd let my body to-let for the meantime,
A 'To-let' notice will be hanging in my neck.

For these days a young man will go in rent
With four years experience in love,
A heart with all its facilities,
To get an alternative in load shedding of love.

Only that girl will get rent in discount
Who'll open doors of her body frankly
With signals of my eyes only
Would charmed me with erotic play even in day
And will forget the feeling from inner thighs before 20th
With all these bondless memory of five nights and days.

On the 20th this body will be back to its owner again.

1977, Dhaka University Campus

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Question

Only to be yours
I have abandoned all, forgotten all.
To be mine also, my dear
What have you forgotten or left
May I know?

1978, Dhaka University Campus

Page 18

Alas

A door was open
You closed it.
A word I had for you
You didn't listen.

Some love I had in my bosom
Misused here.

1978, Dhaka University Campus

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Find Me in Battle

Neither here nor there I'm, not anywhere even
Where'd you get me, go for me?
Where'd you find my body?
Where'd you tear off
Fresh wreath of flower in the morning?

If you say, you are with me
Seeking love in war field
Yearning dream of love with morning sun,
I am not there.

I'm rather in battlefield with the bullet
Marching forward smashing barricade.
Enemy comes and goes, thereafter
Hungry people thrust me on war
Since my days are but without food.

So, where do I exist today?
And where do I not?

1976, TSC, Dhaka University

Page 20

Death of Dream

Storm would come, I knew
Didn't presume the havoc of it.
'Love' was the word between you and me
Consumed in fire would be meaning, didn't know.

Desires were uncounted, I knew
And those desires but all.
I knew, you'd have to go,

But, in this way you'd leave me, didn't know.

1978, Dhaka University

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Expected Somber

Another new year came.
Didn't come that golden morning
I was eagerly waiting for.

Devastating storm with flood of hatred
Was your gift last new year.

Again approached a new year at door
In apprehended somber,
Would you break my home this year?

1978, Dhaka University Campus

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Only For You

Hanging in uncertain chariot
Swimming against oceans of misfortune
Waiting; fortune will meet on the way.

Smell of rotten and stale memories in columns
Pitiful cry of crucified deer
Hanging perception of inner-sense
Your eyes with fear of atomic war
What've been erased a bit last rainless night.

With all load of life on shoulder
I've been jeopardized.
You'll meet me on the way,
Therefore, ignoring all,
Hanging still in a seesawing chariot.

1987, New DOHS, Dhaka

Page 23

Money

Equal price must be given to its bearer on demand
Its bearer changes in the way of handing it over.

Thus, traveling from hand to hand time and again
Glossy paper of money becomes loose and dirty.

Boarding on intangible, yet invaluable chariot of value
One gets heaven's pleasures while other sheer
misfortune.
Equal price is never derived in this mortal world.

If it is given on demand
All its drama would vanish long ago.

1983, Oras Hotel, Bagdad

Page 24

Don't Worry

When I'll be away, don't worry,
Birds will stay in the garden as they are told,
Even if the main gate remains open
Faithful dog will guard you as ordered
Flies and cockroaches won't touch your uncovered food,
They have given me word.
Don't inform the cat
When rats will come back home,
They've enough food dumping in store-room.
Don't be afraid if power fails.
I've paid electricity-bill forever to the moon.
Even if you don't water the garden
Plants will bloom flower,
It has been due from them last year.
When the lizard falls from ceiling
Take care; its tail mayn't be lost,
Since it has taken duty to forecast your bad and good.

I'll send post-cards like swarms of butterflies
You won't get time to remember me.
And if I am late to come back
Please, set free the pair of lovebirds from bronze cage
It was my commitment to them when they're collected at last Fair.
Otherwise, where will you put me
When I will be back?

1984, Jhadrya, Bagdad, Iraq

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Kolkata

Where were you once, Kolkata!
Now hidden in jungle.

As if premature breast in teenage girl's bosom
Lost growth on undue time for hormonal case.
In what indifferent state of mind this shame camouflaged
. .
From Goalondo terminal at a stretch
Train stopped at Kolkata lane.

Where were you once, Kolkata!
Now hidden in mind.

1985, Jhadrya, Bagdad, Iraq

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Cyclic Order of War

Since war began

What's wrong to be purified

Since you've been purified

What's wrong to be a Buddha

Since you've been a Buddha

What's wrong to be matured

Since you've been matured

What's wrong to be enlightened

Since you've been enlightened

What's wrong to be a rebel

When you've become a rebel

Revolution begins then.

1985, Bagdad, Iraq

Page 27

Kuala Lumpur

Everywhere scattered spicy fried rice
As if some carnival turned over-
An ethnicity lies like abandoned wastage.

Full of zigzag motions in its core
Kuala Lumpur.

1982, YMCA Hostel, Kula Lumpur

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Chemistry of Creation

Then there was no ocean, love in earth's oldest phase
Was only scorched agonizing heart of some lover.
Is it God in some agony of love
Gave birth to this workshop of creation in vast universe?

Then there was no law, as if an independent mad
Commits everywhere whatever he liked, thinking nothing
Is it love, the only reason then, behind?
Otherwise, why huge love's overflowing everywhere full to the brim.

Then there was no pen, so, no document kept written.
On the enigmatic ancient canvas of the earth's geography,
Everybody prophet or poet left his or her words as they like
As it were all their ancestors' account of whetstone.

When there was no love, everything simple or difficult
Could be unfolded easily like purity.

How many a days I had played war
In the sky, earth, water and mud
Hah! God, now I can't do anything only for love, ah love.

1883, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Page 29

Woman

Failed to understand love of my tender heart.
Look, that nonsense woman's now
Chasing my heart with womanly art.

In the first year of love
That pure feeling of suburb
That fresh wreath of jasmine
This rascal woman neglected,
With gesture of her eyes
Driven me away from her way like dirt.

Now, chasing my heart with womanly art.

Women; yes, forgiven.
For my mum was a woman
My daughter and my love were but women
Women are pardoned only for that.

And got chance to see the scene:
Hundreds of green parrots i.e. male
Being scorched in the dustbin of love.

Again, chasing my heart with womanly art.

1976, Dhaka-Chittagong on Train

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Peace Soldier

How far you progressed, Rini Chakma? -----
Water Rolling and rolling through cable of hydro-
electricity form the artificial lake Kaptai
Lit up the whole of our land with full moon's light.
Who are they in the jungle, Rini Chakma?
How far the sociology has been progressed!

Sanctuary is being prepared,
Safe city will be made,
Gradually this country will be developed.
Only you will be banished
From the forests of Hill Tracts.
Or you'll have to live being ours.
We've been saved too, from the hands of
Partition of Bengal, Mr. Zinnah and Gandhi-----

Rini Chakma, in green forests
Whose tears made Rangamati colorful?
Whose eyes are shedding ceaselessly,
Water of artificial Lake Kaptai?
Have the birds fled to Mizoram ?
Inside the hilly forest of Bandarban
What map trapedated in the eyes of warrior Larma ?

Whether peace has forgotten language of heaven ?
Filling case of Cox and Bull story under the table of Geneva
Sweated our Upazilla in the south,
Dear countrymen, how far all have progressed?

1984, Jhadrya, Bagdad, Iraq

Page 31

Diversion

Leaving the fry-pan of Louis I. Kahn?
Chef of democracy returns home,
With votes in exchange of wife's ornament
Relaxed MPs return to their homes, in villages.

On the ground of political movement
Grinding people the leader cooks juicy-pop-curry
With alluring candy of vague isms in hand,
Rumor breaks.There comes revolution...comes....

Inside safe royal palace, emperor, king-beggar
Drink liquor of palm-juice,
Superb magician is he
Has a great hand at oppression
And a master puppeteer also.
With subtle strategy brings into play daily movement;
Curfew runs parallel with hartal
When that even fails,
Dissolves the parliament as nest egg.

Are you going through that way ----?
Be careful!
Broken Parliament is before you.

1987, New DOHS, Dhaka

Page 32

Dream Eater

The river Brahmaputra is dead.
He was deplorably suffering from
High Sand-Cholesterol and Draught.
Credit-son settles camp
Abundantly on both the banks,
Through the plea of building embankment
Seeks loopholes casting silver credit-net.

Even the ministers become poet
At the leisure of strikes and hartals
And dream that Bangladesh will be
"The golden Bengal".

The river Brahmaputra is dead.
Credit-son is alive with alms-pot in hand
To devour that dream.

1987, New DOHS, Dhaka

Page 33

Monkey's Share of Cake

Not with this or that party or in any quarrel
Fed beside other weeds naturally,
Since I've thrived
Therefore, I'm Bangali – Bangladeshi.

Since taken birth, I'll have to die
But before that I am bound to take my share
Whether I want it or not; whether I go to cast my vote or not
My vote is cast there, and whether I get the loan or not
Account of credit runs even after my grandson's name.

Father took the loan, which I didn't repay
It matters nothing to the donors anyway,
If I don't repay, my grandson will pay
If my grandson fails, there's rescheduled way.

In this way my father passed away
My grandfather also got a little of that,
Since it's my turn, let me have my part.

Therefore, I beg your pardon gentlemen,
If I spit out in slip of tongue
'Celucas, what a land of diversity it is'
Left right left
Left right left.

1987, New DOHS, Dhaka

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My Mother-tongue Bangla

Suffering from severe food scarcity
Nation is in quite festiveless mood.
Offering in temples and seasonal festivals
Decorated no more.
In famine and in the way as well
Destitute lovers' predicaments predominate.
Only hope is beloved mother tongue Bangla.
That even lives like jaundiced beggar
Only inside the cage of Ekushe Fair
Where Dilara Hashem meets once a year.

Nobody comes now in this vulgar crowd
Vegetables grown by street-side are valuable dish in menu.
We float only because we have language
We know our development is obvious.
Therefore, digging Bangla words
Beximco computer scans even its bones, for money.

1988, Ittefaq Bhaban, Dhaka

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Sonargaon Phobia

Sonargaon of legendary Isha Khan
Now inside the air-conditioned village of Japanese investors,
Where there is no mud but mosquitoes.

War for possession of ditch
Going on just beside.
So, mosquitoes are afraid.
Specially, at swimming pool
By the glistening artificial cataract
Elite people come and go, take food and pay bills.

In apprehension of being chastised
In this historic place of Isha Khan
Mosquitoes are afraid therefore,
Seeing aristocrat big mosquitoes.

1987, Hotel Sonargaon, Dhaka

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Poet's Wife

Poet becomes widower as soon as he got married
In the garden of women poet lives alone.

A married poet means poet with an idol of wife
As if goddess Durga with eleven hands
Radiates violet ray of greed,
Eyes glitter in interest for property and pelf.
Innocent poet gets scolded bringing flower irrelevantly.
In this way, poet dies
Wife lives like a monument in the family.

Wife is the best poem in poet's life
Written wrongfully in rhyme of roses
So, poet becomes widower when he got married.

1987, Kolkata, India

Page 37

Back to the Future

Having leave from star-war, the space soldier
Returned direct to his nostalgic native village
At Sylhet by cable car.

On the yard old grandma in bra is taking sunbath
She's not getting her panty for semi-blindness.
After pouring huge fermented palm-juice in Champaign goblet
Enough of grandma's home spilled over his heart.

Leaving helicopter Mr. Samiraddi laborer
Got down in his paddy field with lesser scythe in hand
Inside the glass-wall of museum
The famous river Padma
Stands with crystal clear water,
Its distilled water goes direct to the hospital.
The relic is under the black berry tree
Once there was the mosque
After a bit brushing the dust aside
Radium letters on the memory plate become prominent
'Destroyed by over-pressure of Homo Sapiens
Dated 05.07.20...'

Ilish* Fish exhibition is going on in Grameen Museum
With golden skeleton of Dr. Enamul Haque
He knew it very well, as hearsay.
A perfume is being sold there by five dollar
Essenced with Ilish flavor.

Page 38

Sweated Mr. Jahangir is operating telex at Joshai-Hut business center.
L.C. comes through fax machine from Nowakhali and Ramgonj
For the weekly allocation of two thousand pieces manual eyes.
Tired cow ruminates in radiation sickness beside noodles piles
Melody of Michael Jackson in antic bamboo flute of cowboy
Marveled the synthetic atmosphere around.

Ah, je ne so qui.

The space soldier went back abruptly
Leaving behind his brief holiday
Having argent call from his work station
Thousand light-years away in the islands of constellations.

** National Fish of Bangladesh*

1987, DOHS, Dhaka

Page 39

Job Vacancy

Only unemployed rather have
Future prospect and trend

He who joins a post or path
Closed his door to an end.

1987, Mohila Samity, Baily Road, Dhaka

Page 40

Heroin

Everything was here in this city of middleclass
Golf court, the river Burigana and Baldha Botanical garden.
On the beautiful city map in Mayor's hand
Flowers were there, with founs as well
And wrongful order of cutting down trees.

In this city – poets, soldiers and beggars
Slept peacefully with the President.
Cheerfully this city remained awoken
At the professional strikes and politics.
Even in spite of killing, hijacking, rape and robbery
Bright prospect of future generation.
Springs up here eternally.

In this very dearest city of ours
Surpassing the news of miserable truck accidents
Dark clouds overcastted our sky.
Storm of brown dust from the northwest
Brings brown powder with gust of wind.
Inside all the future pockets of our baggy trousers
Blue death ambushes silently to devour the future.
Sticky amebas of social infrastructure
Comes out overflowing the sewerages of aristocratic Gulshan.

Mothers are crying pitifully,
I could not sleep all-night -----
Heroin! Heroin!
Son has gone to the Hell of Heroin,
Towards the dark passage, leaving all hope of light.

That's an invisible fever,
Trembling the veins and arteries,
Dropping habitual water from nasals
As if thousands of dead bodies
Groaning in withdrawal symptom;
Family, home and dear faces
All became meaningless to that blue addiction.

Is there nobody in this city to join me
In silent solo procession against it?

Love

Love means insurance of body
Signing a contract to gain pain forever.

Love means 'here I am'
'I love you', false words.

1988, New DOHS, Dhaka

Page 43

Guerrilla'71

Not even then scenes were in climax
During the falling leaves of March
We rolled to our grandma's house.
Not only we alone, like garlic's end
Summit of all my maternal kith and kin
Proved anthropology successful there.
Dhaka – Rajbari – Syedpur – Faridpur
Fell down on interior village Shamashpur.

It's not that far behind
Although my grandparents were no more then
Whitewash was there in Khan family's mosque,
Meditation of pious Muslims
Never disrupted even by the bell-bit of jalali pigeons.
No venomous snake sprang its hood
From the abandoned bungalow of advocate uncle.
Sheulis' house was then charitable dispensary.
Folding from market place, doctor uncle
Set it in own residence, in his last phase of life.
In that tender age of impatient inquisition
We became village dwellers leaving town
Only in guilt of liberty.

Sheik Mujib was then an invincible leader,
In his igniting roaring voice
Pakistan was crushing down into pieces.
He is now arrested at Yahya's custody.

Page 44

Would he be killed,
Or he'd compromise with them!
In arguments of such political disputes
Khan mansion remains awakened up to late night.

Crucial full moon's melting down
On mar melon fruit tree beside alienated kite,
Negligibly.

My very arrogant elder brother
Spits out his bold decisions vehemently —
There's no substitute of Charumajumdar,
Now it's civil war in the country
We want arms we'll go to war.

Tired knob of radio searches for
Major Zia.
Is it fact that liberation war has begun already?
What a tremendous moment of anxiety and suspense!
Tearing the map of East Pakistan from geography text book
We're searching for the fade territory of India across the border.

My elder brother seemed to me a Cheguevara,
Vast crops field in Shamashpur up to the horizon
Was then Latin America in my eyes,
I've seen the dead body of Julian Fuchik
Hanging in my uncle's black berry tree.
In rapt attention of those overwhelming days and nights
Instead of ghost's fear, we've heard stammering of army boots.
Essence of gunpowder of all liberation wars of the world
I've smelled alone.

India will certainly help us
In such determination my elder brother's busy
In secret meeting with his classmate and cousin,
They'd have to be something greater than
Shurjosen and Bagha Jatin.

In camera, the route-map was prepared to cross the border.
My humble savings in earthen pot.
And this is the first time my elder brother deceived me,
They fled leaving me behind with Shiri aunty, Parvin-Yasmin.
Khan mansion lost its flamboyant youth.

After that, predestined history begins.
The successful decisions of my elder brother
Revealed in reality one by one.
Radio waves of Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendro, Akashbani and BBC
Showered sparkingly silver dreams of my elder brother.
The exiled Amjhupi Government
And by the sound of refugees' long march
Trumpeted in our bosom the ever-awakened
Bangladesh!

Heinous claws came out from jungle,
Collaborator-phobia panicked all around.
In fear of this new species of animals
Our surrounding became ghostly.
Flag marked with star and moon
Erected above the roof of Khan mansion decoratively.
Adult girls hid themselves in jute crops field all day long.
Far away in the horizon of rail station
Smoke rose from Macthpara,
That colorful wooden bungalow of Nuru chairman

Has been burnt at the cost of liberty.
In this turn Shamashpur was saved
Survived the Khan mansion,
Army didn't attack there.

Pitch-black clouds of despair
Surpassed the devastating flood even,
As if liberation war is only in Akashbani —
Debdulal Bandopadhyaya holds in his voice.
Stomachache of my mother aggravates,
Shadow of cremation ground overcasts her face
In the shock of losing eldest son she's become stone.
Meaningless is the freedom of Bangladesh
Curlews in the sky are symbol of ill omen.

Right in such a rainless night
Sound of wading,
Gradually that sound came closer,
Approached the door and opened the lock.
My aunty was about to scream asking
Where his son is,
But with a peculiar sharp attempt
Hands of my elder brother seized her voice.
Swearing on God my elder brother asserted,
"Farid is alive
Taking artillery training in India
Hasn't come in operation yet,
He will be a big army officer
When the country will be liberated".
Aunty was speechless, mum.

All the heads of our house

Gathering closer to my elder brother's head
Talking whisperingly made the late night graver.

Making all astonished
Mother stood in granite face telling nothing
Smile of pride graced her face
She looked more firm and bold than Gorky's 'Mother'
Not even once she hugged my elder brother in bosom
Nor fell down in crying abusing time.

At one moment overcoming the crowd
My elder brother stood before me,
Tried to make me understand in wise man's tone
What might be happened if he'd kept me with him.
He described the unbearable pains of the training camps
The horrible experience of Karimpur, Deradun and Chakulia.
Time and again he frightened me exhibiting rotten sores
Of his hands and legs uncovering the clothes
With a proud smile of self-satisfaction in face.

Now he has guerrilla training,
Brave son of the soil and time
Committed freedom fighter is he.
All mustn't leave the country
New manifesto in his hand,
Dream-picture of golden Bangladesh;
Training will be given inside the country.
Each and every Bangali has to be turned into a grenade.

Crouching through blood and war
We got that Map.
My elder brother in broad daylight

Deposited all his arms and ammunitions to the state.
Under the warm blanket of his heroism and popularity
We passed some winters.
As a result of the liberation war
My cousin Reba became my elder brother's life-mate.

After that. abra ca dabra!

We never returned
To that remote village Shamashpur even in springtime.
Now only poverty and people are there.
Letter comes, we escape to live.
We hide our faces in the lanes of this city if we meet them
In fear of loosing the greatest memory of our life.

Devoid of license, permit and freedom fighters' list
That invincible guerrilla Bahar of '71
Now in Middle East, fighting the war of livelihood
Seeking the stream of memory of his faded youth
In the oily water of Arab sea.

1987, New DOHS, Dhaka

Page 49

Highway

In a noon drenched with hot sun of summer
Through a dove-cooed way - story walks alone far.

Merely words of a mouth cast shadow in cloud
Dreams were there asleep.
With that slumber in eyes
Like falling rhyme of broken cataract's water
Leaving back his home, - story walks alone far.

In a noon drenched with hot sun of summer
One character of story standing alone there
Loosing all the paths that life can offer.

1988, DOHS, Dhaka

Page 50

Middle Class

No ground under feet to survive or stand
Middle-Class dreams to catch the moon with broken hand.
Their god of success Gonesh Thakur resides
Inside abandoned walls where decay presides.

Wives of middle class deeply sigh
For 'made in Japan', whose prices are high.
Middle Class miserably die like helpless fly
By vicious spider-net of poverty and shy.

Though fortuneless, encircled and not pompous
He is the savior of culture, the hearty middle class.

1987, Hotel Sonargaon, Dhaka

Page 51

Only Once

(To poet Khaiyam Bashar)

I will kiss once
Myriad of years you'd be lost in that drowsiness.

I will promise once
Even after breaking that promise time and again
You'd believe in me like the existence of sun.

I will command, 'move'
You will be marching onward
Breaking all barricades easily like anything -----
You'll be marching onward and onward.

He'll obstruct you in the way
Who is this 'he'? My further command.
The garland adorned with tender roses
Of my garden would be kept for you.
But at last, it will go to another's hand.

And thus, you will miss your prize
Time and again eternally.

1977, Room-501, Mohsin Hall, Dhaka University

Page 52

Digestion

Poetry will digest prose now.

It's too late night
Dancing in meter and rhythm repeatedly
Tired poetry is in dining table -----

Fried story in the recipe of novel
Gravy potato-curry of essay
Green salad of drama
With topless flowery waitress beside

It's too late night
Poetry will digest prose now

1989, Doha. Qatar

Page 53

Buddhang Sharanang Bangkok

It was settled, they'd be vegetarian,
Killing animal is great sin, said Gautama.
When did that great saint come? They've forgotten.
Only in this country, coup happens
In the house of Minister,
King is non-violent by luck-----

Ah! Vietnam, you are shame of America,
Dance Thailand, dance opening your thighs.
King is on throne by obligation
God runs the country.

Opening and opening thighs
Thailand's back is now against the wall.
In this land of peasants
Civilization was there in the past...
Cats are now roaming without any fear
In the indifferent Buddhang Pagodas.

In our very neighboring country Bangkok
They who'd go to smuggle gold
And returned with excess luggage,
Do they know, ASIAN has risen in a body?

Page 54

To that land where Buddha is bought and sold
Our representative goes too!
Who are they in the Hill Tracts' forest of Bengal?
In Buddha's path, dressed in cloths dyed with ochre?
Seeing their shaved heads
Wrongfully don't you think, they are yours?
Buddha is ours rather,
On that glory let us go to Bangkok.

Buddhang Sharanang Bangkok!

1988, Bangkok Airport

Page 55

Impending

Since, you will go
Why are you standing obstructing way?
Clear the way, go.

What casts shadow over there?
In dimmed and somberous light
On both the edges of the string of confusion
Flabbergasted face engrossed in dream.
Barricade in the way.

Bidding 'bye', standing on the way eternally
Neither goes nor clears the way.

1988, New DOHS, Dhaka

Page 56

The Earth itself is Falling

Ozone layer of air has been leaked-----
Scientists are seeing sparks in their eyes now.
Let Palestine, Afghanistan, Nicaragua bleed to death,
All those issues will be settled later on
The earth itself is dropping down from solar system!

1988, Indira Road, Dhaka

Page 57

Rabindranath Tagore

With whatever pros and cons of information
You'd write down the history,
I'd rather disagree to you,
If that famous man taken birth in this ill-fated sand,
Where till today nothing is found
Not even a single fossil of forefathers?

Fairy tales of aged moon-woman
Creeping pumpkin and boiled rice in earthen plate
Almost everything ends here.
Had he taken his birth here,
He'd have been died rather long ago.
Such happens to all.
Why this man is not dying?

This immortal man even talked in Bangla
Bravo his achievement!
Ha God! Where did vanish that calcium of our bones?
Thousands of proofs and papers you may raise
Yet how could I be convinced even then
While only goats are grazing now, in this ill-fated sand.

1989, Dafna, Qatar

Page 58

Drugdex

King of drug dropped bomb in Colombia,
Playing cards fight war in Bolivia
Salvador, Nicaragua.....
Hindi movie performing role in Afghan and Lebanon,
What spot shines on forehead of Gorbachov?
Coal mine of Armenia as well as Siberia
Addicted in Pepsi-caola.

Bush administration would go to war in Space,
Chinese wall of Jhao Jhiang is wet in blood!
Dalai Lama is not in Tibet
Searching Nobel in rapt yoga.
Insects, oh Heroin, infest the empire of Myanmar
Trickery of Nay Win is doing the rest.
Shiha Nuke's Kampuchea goes to Paris,
Red peasant of Vietnam is now in Australia.
Mindanao of Philippines, peace-seekers of Khagrachari
Iraq-Iran, in Turkey, Kurdish are crying why?

Polish got solidarity, Irish are back a bit
Germans are united, would Koreas sleep yet?
Yemen's are cousins and what's happening at Johannesburg?
Namibia is liberated, but in Palestine, Panama and Algeria
Drama of ducks and drakes.

Sri-Lanka is afraid of Tamil terror.
What happens in Punjab and Assam today
Reverse of that's happening in Maldives now..
Leaving British as their terms of lease
Hong Kong has saved itself very recent.
What height would attain next
Electronics of Taiwan?

Kings are playing games savoring candy of Arab oil
People have been addicted now in fantasy all over as well.
But victim is only the King of drug
Since he has dropped bomb in Colombia.

Didn't Get the Way

A huge flood has broken a little wall
Cloud heaps up in that unequal depression
In this room and that room who's there-----lifelessness.
Sky-high destruction stands face to face.

To whom the devastating tornado would break
Broken down he is, long before,
Stone-broken has become Orion-man.

At the end of flood, as if, in drop by drop
Hatred is evolved in mind.

Since the river is dry,
Rowing couldn't be made through it
Leaving the boat on the bank therefore,
Would it be wise for the boatman to flee in the forest?
In such a full Spring?

1990, Banani, Dhaka

Page 61

God is Awaken

God is too fool to me
A bit tender and healthy,
Doesn't take food since he doesn't get
Or 'Ocean is full of water yet I'm dying for it'*
Thinking this stands still beside water (near river).

God returns home late, everyday,
Returning all His creations to their addresses,
Comes the question of His returning home.
So, picking him or her from this or that location
Everyday he comes late.

And being expanded day by day
This creation has also become too large and hazardous.
If someone sleeps, the other remains awaken
While the third wags his tail sitting idly.
Tired God is in great difficulty for that.
Only relief is he has no wife or children.

In fear of loosing the throne
God couldn't sleep; sniffing all day and night
Inside that anxiety and eternal haste.

* Fairy tales listened from my mother

1988, Indira Road, Dhaka

Page 62

Courage of Sphinx

Don't allow him to enter Bangladesh
He traveled Israel.
Shaking hands with Shamir
His body has become unholy.

From that dream of Sad'at
Driving away the Russians overnight
Sat the Camp David meeting
In quest of a bloodless revolution of peace!
From that very time
High browed Islamic world
Took it in mind seriously.

Stone of dissatisfaction is melted now;
Bathed in the blood of Philistine
That sword-like ego of Arab has got stained now.

Hussni Mubarak cares little
To become a royal guest in Tel Aviv,
The whole of Africa is with him
America is in pocket.

And having much shaking
Brains of Arab are opening these days
So, if Yasir Arafat himself
Reaches Tel Aviv as state guest, what's wrong?

At least the news broadcaster won't have to describe
How many Philistines are bleeding to death last twenty-four hours.
Moreover, Jews would go whether in moon or mars
That would have been settled.

Unfolding its parts, nuts and bolts
Middle-range missiles have now become iron scrub
Favorite item of still mills and businessmen.
Star war is rest alone to start ----
But that would happen in the space
Without paying the rent of satellite
Which could not be watched even!
In such day, red blood
Loosed in the olive garden of Jerusalem!

If Mubarak succeeds
Why the rest couldn't?
Dravidian Bangladesh
Rather remains some way backward
"Let the Arabs come and go for some more time"
Since we're converted Muslims from scheduled cast
Let it be written in our passport for some more time
'Prohibited to enter into Israel'

If we enter earlier
Israel may become gladder.
Because, we've no courage of sphinx or any big patron
Neither some pyramids here and there nor the river Nile.

Ah My Dear

Brahmins are deceived in time and in dream
By chewing the buttered sacred thread.
Was there Marxism then
In this land of silt and Dravidians?

United States has become socialist, secretly
China and Russia dream to be America.
What you will do my brother?

Instead of Adamji, Daud and Bawani
Tata, Birla, Ddugal company have taken place,
With alluring offer of lake bound plot of Eastern Housing.
On the other side metro rail would be there as a marvel
Air-conditioned Taliganj, Damdam-----
To the citizens of Kolkata,
Though hanging rope is slinging in the Bodhidrum (holy fig tree).

Shaumitra, Lachchu Da, Kumud and Munmun,
Price reduction at Gariahata market,
Spicy fried rice of Bada Bazaar
And the "aristocracy of Gitadi",
While the other is imprisoned in net,

Ghose Babu in this water bound Bengal
Didn't watch even the play titled 'Here's No Love'
Bangla poetry lies flat in Kallyan Da's apartment,

Memories of our generation are
Stacked to the tail of Gunter Gruss.

Now, Baby Naznin will sing only.

O honorable busy wives of Rabindra Sadan,
Take birth control measure,
Whether it be son or daughter
Let Congress not win the election.
And let it be the New Ramayana.

None will go to Moscow
Not to Washington also,
Allah is in our home.
Khajababa is rather better for me.
And as nest egg, Atrash and Sharshina are there.

None of us is Bedouin Muslim on camel's back
If addressed as brother by Adnan Khashogi
New Onasis becomes happy.
Karl Marx and Charu Majumdar
Are bitter like anything, now.

Amal Sen and Rashed Khan Menon
Became Noor Ahmad Bakul now...
People don't know all secrets.

Someone standing in the cremation ground
With holy water pot of offering
Asking the river Ganges for a cup of tea.

In this way through talking and talking
Granary house has been washed away by flood
Current of the river jeopardised by the Death Barrage Farkka.
Only remain Language of 1952
Processions through blood and bullet with upheld flags in hand,
Bangladesh, memories of refugees
Liberty, democracy, wheat of PL-480
And ragged time due to indigestion.

1988, Kolkata, India

Page 69

Touch

Pearl in oyster shell
Hides blue-bite of sharp sand grain within,
I hide my secretion in that blue atomic sphere.
This golden love will be exploded when you will touch.

1987, Mirpur, Dhaka

Page 70

Ambassador Lady

(To her Excellency Mary Ann Peters)

Certainly global village begins from here,
From this very foothill of the ancient Himalayas!
Drowning feet into muddy water
People are busy with life and ascetic affair.

Knowing all, pros and cons of this rising East
Here comes the Ambassador Lady,
While winter morning is wet in information-net
And she brings in her laptop native 'Chitai Cake'
Drenched in date-juice-sweet and covered with milk.

'Kaun' rice is cooked in this region with baul song
Tasty fried 'Kai' fish of 'Challanbill' in dinner dish
There might be signed a bilateral pact, even!
While Dhaka dreamt of Monorail daily
Uranium of Cox's Bazaar finds rout to reactor of Pakshi!

Arraying colorful flowers in diplomatic bag
Savoring mouth-watering curry of Ranipunti
While the Ambassador Lady's set out to enjoy
Fashion Show of green leafy 'Motorshakh' vegetables
She'd find beside her all on a sudden, Bonolota Sen
Striking fork into famous 'Kanchagolla' of Natore.
Oh, don't be overwhelmed seeing all these, Ambassador Lady!
But don't presume it very easy as well.
The mystic riddle of eight folds and nine doors of baul Lalan

All opened wide,
Yet uncertain!

Nevertheless, with ever-increasing pernicious interests
Of seven sisters' tricky gambling politics
You'd have to find out and hold tightly in charismatic fist
That very vital chord in which entangled
Ultimate question of life and death
Of this deprived delta.

Wanted

When the clock strikes twelve at night
My blood boils in desire to go to President Palace.
When all are slept in this city
I remain awake alone
Like drunken journalist and street dog.
When the clock strikes twelve at night
President Palace, radio station, cantonment
And newspapers become my target.

Listen, my dear countrymen,
In any next social crisis
I'll be the president of this country.
Way of arranging foreign aid is known to me.
Amendments of constitution, domestic politics,
Bulling the insurgencies with strong hand
And popular slogans of national interest,
All are ready in my mouth.

As soon as the clock strikes twelve at night
All of democracy comes in my palm like sandwich.
What's the use of writing poetry?
People don't bother for poetry or democracy
They care for the price of essential commodities.
And talk for socialism knowing nothing of it.

So, when the clock strikes twelve at night
In my blood I feel an urge to make a coup,

And then democracy, President palace, people
All become puppet of my will.

And instead of any terms and conditions
Selling the country easily
I become His Excellency Mr. President.

What is poetry?

Things that become burden
On backs of camel and men
To others it is burden of course,
Exclusively Camel and poet knows
How pleasant that burden is!
Savoring and ruminating
Savings of Bangladesh bank.

Any camel may be bought
From Sudan by 40 dollars;
So does a poet may be, turning in
Suited-booted in this Land of Bengal.

Could ever a poem is produced
By 40 million dollars?
That is called poetry.

1989, Panthapath, Dhaka

Page 75

Long Distance Call

All night it rained meaninglessly
Over the slops of fool mountain.
Satellite dish took its bath silently.
A long distance overseas phone call from Florida
Searched for Rasheda Begum
Inside the concave dish of satellite
Stands in the lap of Betbunia.

Rasheda was not at home then.
Crossing Gulshan towards the outskirts of Dhaka
She was then at Baridhara, absorbed in Conieg
Beside a millionaire in an embassy.
In a distant land he who thought of her in lonely moments
All his dreams got released in white foams of beer in iron can.

Passing the happy night in the Bay of Bengal
That jolly cloud eloped somewhere.
The morning city sun with usual make up
Returned home with Rasheda Begum.

Drowning tired body in bed
Incumbent eyes of Rasheda counted
How long it's been without any talking in telephone.
In this way silently far away
Men and women wash their grief's
Only inside lonely satellite dish on hill top
Drenched in rain all night,
May remain wrongfully some trace of it.

1989, Doha, Qatar

Page 76

The River Garai Civilization

A silver coin is lied under knee-level water.
As if rolling and rolling towards the bend of the river Garai
Just now, drowned the full Moon, Dignity, Desire and Wealth.

The goddess kali-face of river Ganges is abolished by Eastern Rail recently,
By the poisonous engineering of the LGED.

How'd high breed mermaid get Shaiji Lalon in Cheuria bank?
Any other Baul may pass
Through bicycle ringing the bell - toong-tung.

Mermaid knows nothing about the story of Mohini Mill
Doesn't know, from the Kuthibari of Tagore
This Bengali glory of Shilaidaha on the mighty river Padma
Rolling and rolling crossing the famous southwest corner of the world
Reached the river Kalapani by the river Madhumati
As if she's watching the Himalayas lied flat on her back.

Here, in this very place, till today
Rests scattered the river Garai civilization uncared,
Old Moon is drowned beside it!

2001, Hotel Grand Azad, Dhaka

Page 77

Sri Sri Amartya Sen

Asia is drowning, trembling Mr. Mahathir
Japan is in trepidation!
The beetle-leaf plants drowned also in high flood
Hasina sighs too –
What a fatherland of yours, and mine too
Where but only sketches of famine by Zainul.

Here rests the ash-end of ancient scholar Atish Dipangkar Srigyan
The history of peasants, cattle, Black Bengal goats with Pala dynasty
Their successor's Netaji Shubhas Bose – Bangabandhu Sheik Mujib
Despair and darkness with killing, killing and killing -----

In this "rising east" today, it is you who are the only Sun
Om Sri Sri Amartya Sen!

1998, Panthapath, Dhaka

Page 78

Michel Colle

Where are you on this birthday?
In credit of bread and workers' blood of Hay market?
At Baghdad or Mauritius?
In Chicago or Churulia
In this leisure of 1st may?

Indian Ocean vomits from its volcano
Happy animation of heaven by rainbow
Touched the zoom lens of foreign tourists
In the gray beach of Paribia

Away far from Paris, somewhere you are-----
Where are you in this day?
Mavianame, my darling?

2001, Hotel Grand Azad, Dhaka

Page 79

Broken Mirror

Not broken suddenly,
Suffering long in sickbed from tuberculosis
Waiting eagerly for a moment
And in that moment broke our joint family,
Really, one day broke our father's land, mirror of
tradition.

With all his fragmented worries
Grandfather is in his way to heaven.
Since the long night of my father is very mach alive
It goes very slow.

I've got this family-mirror just like this,
Only hearsay, once it was complete, was full in shape .
In that fragmented frame
Once joint family role was performed in a holistic beauty.

Now trees of forests, rivers and paddy fields----
All are divided crucially by the monstrous line of destruction.
Yet this mind is busy in dream, wishes to see
One unbroken image in that broken mirror.
What for?

1990, Banani, Dhaka

Page 80

Will He Get Refuge

Incomplete family is behind,
Anomalous necklace of speeches,
Possibilities are in front,
That very Old Possibility.
And it's motherly beckoning-----
'Come hither, come hither.....'
Under a cool shadowy shelter.
Only the distracted river is hindrance in the way
Where there is no boat.

Shall he go towards certain refuge?
On foot or by swimming?
Living the so called throne of name, fame and wealth
In his own land of loneliness,
In this companionless vulnerable world?

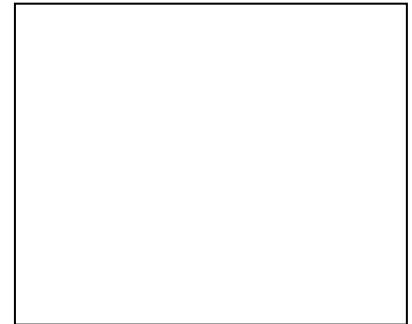
1989, Doha, Qatar

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Sohel Amitabh: At a glance in 2006

Sohel Amitabh, a poet of versatile genius with a past marked with a lot of ups and downs, writes a few. He had his first encounter in literature with his father who himself practiced writing poetry for personal pleasure. From the mid 70s while a student of Sociology department of the University of Dhaka, Sohel became a well known individual for his various cultural activities. In 1980s, one of the major poets of our time Shubhas Mukhopadaya (1917-2003) in his famous autobiography 'Dhol Gobinder Atma Darshan,' nominated Sohel as someone he could compare himself with in order to cast his biography in a relative manner. Through this 'Sohel' rapidly became a fabulous myth to the extant readers of Poet Shubhas. Naturally he had to endure literary jealousy from his peers. In 1990s, poet Sohel Amitabh again became a prey to literary jealousy winning 'Shobhabkobi Gobindya Das International Award' conferred by two major poets of the sixties, Rfiq Azad and Belal Chowdhury.

The business ventures of this dream merchant poet are also thrilling and interesting. In 1981 Sohel associated himself with a Singapore based fair and exhibition company (INTERFAMA) to organize the first International Trade Fair in Bangladesh which was supposed to take place in 1984. Lacking cooperation from the government, that project went in vain. Invited by Kuwait Financing Company (KFC) to fetch foreign investment for Bangladesh, he rushed to Kuwait only to discover that due to a historical blow in Kuwait Capital Market the Investor companies themselves were in trouble. The venturesome poet then reached Iraq and found success there in 1983. He built a multinational construction and management service company over there. Soon, with the experts and employees



*Poet SohelAmitabh at Bagdad in 1984
Photo taken by Captain Nasir Chowdhury*

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from Philippine, Srilanka, India and Bangladesh his venture experienced a remarkable success in business. Sohel took the business interest of Bangladesh to the top level of Iraq in 1986 signing a management contact with Uday Saddam, the eldest son of the then president Saddam Hussain, regarding a mega poultry firm (Radhdanya Project-10) owned by Uday. Seeing the vast economic scopes between Bangladesh and Iraq the poet became marveled and took private-sector initiatives to bring out the fruition of this prospect. Sohel established Iraq-Bangladesh Youth Friendship Society (IBYFS) in 1988. During his stay in Iraq, for his interactions with both the ruling Arab Bath Socialist Party and their opponent (hidden at that time), Sohel assumed farsightedly that the autocratic regime of Iraq would come to an end soon. In the coming circumferences, moderate young Uday could become the pivotal character of the prospective change. But suddenly Uday was imprisoned by an order of Saddam Hussein. All self-earned asset and capital of the poet were blocked in Iraq. To expedite the release of Uday, the poet used IBYFS to create international pressure. After his dramatic release from jail, Uday went first to Egypt and then to Switzerland. Astonishing all, Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990. The disheartened poet calling a press conference of IBYFS at Dhaka, condemned Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and advocated for the safety and security of innocent Iraqi people from the apprehended attack of the multinational force. At the same time, uniting Bangladeshi Construction Firms, the poet organized 'Bangladesh Consortium for Kuwait Reconstruction'. As a reaction to this, the Embassy of Iraq at Dhaka became hostile to the poet and his family-life. At the advent of Gulf War, returning to Iraq, Uday re-established his authority. In the meantime the poet involved himself with energy sector of Bangladesh to attract investment from Middle East and took initiatives to organize an Investment Conference to be held at Doha, Qatar in 2003. On the other hand, with immense perseverance and devotion, as well as through the mediation by an ex-ambassador of Bangladesh posted in Iraq, while the poet was about to get back his business infrastructure and compensation from Iraq, the last disaster happened. In connection with the 9/11 tragedy, Coalition Force led by the United States, attacked and occupied Iraq. Uday Saddam was killed. In this changed world-perspectives the proposed Investment Conference was postponed.

After an enigmatic life span of nearly half a century, the perplexed poet still awaits for his compensation!

Published Book of Poems

- **PREMER CHUMU CHAKHER JOLE (Kiss on Tear)**, A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Trina Publications, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published April 1980, 2nd Edition Published February 1990.
- **HELLO BHALO ACHO (Hello How are You)**, A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Gaurab Prakashani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published April 1987, 2nd Edition Published February 1990.
- **SHUDHU TOMAR JONNO (Only for You)**, A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Gaurab Prakashani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published February 1989.
- **ALLAH MARSHAL LAW DE (Oh Allah Promulgate Marshal Law)**, A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Gaurab Prakashani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published February 1990.

Manuscripts for Publication

- Amra Bangal Bhatar Kangal (Poems)
- Utkoch (Poems)
- Poddo Nepothya Goddo (Story behind the Poems)
- Divorce Kalin Poddo O Shakti Da Smritee (Poems in commemoration)
- Iraq Obhijan O Mejor Jalil (Commemoration)
- Bagdader Dingulu Ratgulu (Commemoration)
- Kolkatar Chithi (Letters of Srimoti Geeta Banerjy)

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READING LIST

1. PREMIER CHUMU CHAKHER JOLE (Kiss on Tear), A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Trina Publications, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published April 1980, 2nd Edition Published February 1990.
2. HELLO BHALO ACHO (Hello How are You), A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Gaurab Prakashani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published April 1987, 2nd Edition Published February 1990.
3. SHUDHU TOMAR JONNO (Only for You), A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Gaurab Prakashani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published February 1989.
4. ALLAH MARSHAL LAW DE (Oh Allah Promulgate Marshal Law), A Collection of Poems by Sohel Amitabh, Published by Gaurab Prakashani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, First Published February 1990.
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Profile of the Translator

Firoz Mahmud Khan was born in 1974 at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital of North Bengal. He inherits a literary family and his mother Fazilatunnesa is a renowned short story writer. With like minded friends Firoz made a study

circle and published little magazine **Shuchintya** (1988) while a student of High School and consequently that study circle comes out as Anantyer Shure (1996) while a student of university and since then Firoz is editing the little magazine **Anantyer Shure**.

He is a Notre Damien and was an active member of Notre Dame Nature Study Club, Notre Dame Rover Scout Club and Notre Dame Debating Club. He is also a member of Red Crescent Blood Donate Society. Besides these, Music, Drama, Paintings and Spirituality are his favorite subjects.

Firoz has already translated poems of W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost in Bangla, on the other hand, songs of baul Lalan Fakir, poems of Abul Hasan, Samar Sen, Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal, Shubash Mukhapadya, Rafiq Azad, Tushar Dash and Sohel Amitabh in English. At present, he is engaged in study & research on **Satire in Modern Bangla Poetry**. A good number of articles by Firoz have been published in academic journals.



Firoz Mahmud Khan (at Right) is taking his Honors (English) Certificate from the then Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, Professor A K Azad Chowdhury.

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