

Four Poems by Aju Mukhopadhyay

The Past

History is jotting down of events and phenomena
a part of the past gone by but not the whole of it.

Past is vibrantly living in us
as every moment of our life goes into the past
but we live; an indivisible, undeniable entity.

All our thoughts and ideas in ether
all belongings
including cassettes, videos, C.D.s and memories
to be played and replayed,
are obtained from the repository of the past.

It is puzzling to say that something
or some entity has passed away
for nothing really passes away
but changes form and quality.

Past is like dust which has
a lugubrious tenacity of coming back

even when flown with water,
as if from eternity.

No dust that gathers in your surrounding
did adorn your grandmother's belongings
but strange that no dust can be identified
belonging to you or to your grandmother;
dust flows and gathers like time
coming in or passing out;
time is a dusty affair.

Past is like voiceless echo of the sound
present in our mind and sense
perceptible in its essence.

Present is a ghost of the past
for ever with us, guiding.

Mr. Harris and Srimati Nandarani
at the old age become conservatives
like their fathers or forefathers
which they were not at their early age.

Many Indians live their lives
exactly as their fathers

in business or in a grocer's shop
or simply as a talkative good-for-nothing;
a lady dies copying her mother
throughout her life.
Past is inseparable from the present
as present lives forever in the past.

Do I Walk or I Walk Me?

Suddenly I stopped
inspired by a questioning thought;
am I walking or I'm walking me?
Am I a becoming or a being?
The whole system called I or he or she
is a cosmic reality
yet a thirst aided by insight
welled up from inside;
can this really walk or stalk
unless propelled and guided
by the inner reality?

Is walking an act of mine
or of the self indwelling?
Stunned by the divide of I and me
I was inclined to embrace the reality
when someone accosted me
asking for something otiose
which compelled me to come back
to the diurnal fact
bewildered!

The Death of a Rose

When the rose was there
Fragrance wafted in the air
Bees were busy at sucking
Traders were going for plucking
Struck by wanton beauty
Rose-lovers stopped the robbery.
But it faded away soon

As if from morning to noon.
As it kissed the ground
Petal by petal, red-pinkish
Without a murmur or sound
Sweet-sodden, lovelorn, nostalgic
The wind became rusty and heavy
They thronged around the body
To silently mourn the crumbling
To wail from suppressed suffering.

Some humans spread more fragrance
After they cross the mortal space.

Time Whispers In My Ear

susurrus over the vast undulating grass
tumbling of water in the forest river at night
cackling of hilly meandering streams
flowing of molten lava down the ravine
spewing of ash;

volcanic eruption at unknown site
spread of forest fire with a strange beam
spreading rapidly with the wind,
desert storm changing the face of the sand dune
without notice;
rains and rains in the rain forest again
in the country sides and cities, rolling of water bodies;
seeds sprouting, trees growing and dying
again and again;
sibilation of nature's shifting phase;
nature is at work without rest in every nook and corner
in every pore and cell, near and far;
time whispers in my ear
that with nature it flows with all its belonging
to the events forthcoming
while consciousness keeps its progress in everything
constantly rolling towards the future;
time whispers in my ear
that past never sits in its forlorn chair
but leaves its essence for assimilation;

time whispers in my ear
that the ethos of the bygone ages, their zeitgeist
can never be recovered by any strategist;
the world may be seen in the grain of sand
but the flow of sand is constant;
infinity may be guessed in the palm of hand
but it cannot be gripped by any standard;
time whispers in my ear
that everything passes on for ever.