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MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE



SPECIAL ISSUE
AUGUST 2021: THE ANNIVERSARY OF
SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

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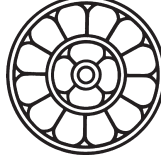
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605002, India

Phone: (0413) 2233642

e-mail: motherindia@sriaurobindoashram.org.in

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No. 8

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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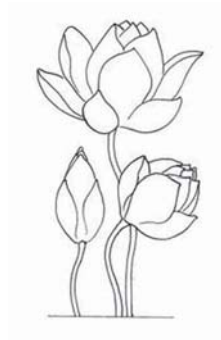
(To be continued in the September 2021 issue)

THOU ART MYSELF

Thou art myself born from myself, O child.
O thou who speakst art thou my greater self?
And knowst my destiny and why I came
Into the narrow limits of this form?

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Collected Poems*, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 663)



[Incomplete Poems from Manuscripts, circa 1927-1947.

No title in the manuscript. 1927-29. One handwritten manuscript, jotted down in a notebook used otherwise for diary entries, essays, etc. In the manuscript, the word “Or”, presumably the beginning of an unwritten second stanza, comes after the fourth line. — Editorial Note in CWSA]

ON SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo is an emanation of the Supreme who came on earth to announce the manifestation of a new race and a new world: the Supramental.

Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.

*

Sri Aurobindo has given us the spiritual teaching which teaches us to come in direct contact with the Divine.

*

Sri Aurobindo's message is an immortal sunlight radiating over the future.

*

Sri Aurobindo came on earth from the Supreme to announce the manifestation of a new race and the new world, the Supramental.

Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.

*

The best homage that we can render to Sri Aurobindo on his centenary is to have a thirst for progress and to open all our being to the Divine Influence of which he is the Messenger upon the earth.

THE MOTHER

(Words of the Mother – I, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 13, pp. 19, 20)

**Obeisance,
Lord,
to Thee**

Poems on Sri Aurobindo

The February 2021 issue of *Mother India* carried a compilation of poems on the Mother. Now, in August, we bring a compilation of poems on Sri Aurobindo.

Numerous are the poets, varied is their style, different their background, — and the common theme is the luminous Presence of Sri Aurobindo.

*

In a letter to a disciple who began writing poetry under the Master's guidance, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

The use of your writing is to keep you in touch with the inner source of inspiration and intuition, so as to wear thin the crude external crust in the consciousness and encourage the growth of the inner being.¹

Poetry as sadhana, poetry as a way of opening the sealed doors of the being, poetry as a means of deepening perceptions, poetry as a way of coming closer to the Divine, poetry as devotion, poetry as prayer — all these and more find expression in the pages that follow.

A certain question, however, might arise in the minds of some readers; the answer to which is to be found in these words of Sri Aurobindo:

If such poems are put as a claim, or vaunted, as a personal experience of Yoga, they may be objected to on that ground. But a poet is not bound to confine himself to his personal experience. A poet writes from inspiration or from imagination or vision. Milton did not need to go to Heaven or Hell or the Garden of Eden before he wrote *Paradise Lost*.²

*

Each one, it is said, sees but an aspect of the whole. But even these aspects, as seen in these poems, are precious inklings of that Unnameable Vast.

*

1. *Collected Poems of Nirodbaran with Sri Aurobindo's Comments and Corrections*, p. 966.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 688.

The sequence is alphabetical, poet-wise — although with a touch of idiosyncrasy: we have chosen the name by which the poet is more commonly referred to in the Ashram circle. Thus Nolini Kanta Gupta would come under ‘N’; K. D. Sethna under ‘A’ for Amal; R. Y. Deshpande under ‘D’; K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar under ‘S’; John Chadwick under ‘A’ for Arjava; Harindranath Chattopadhyay under ‘H’. etc. . . .

As the full selection was too large for inclusion in a single issue of the journal, the series will continue in the September 2021 issue of *Mother India*.

THE SLAVE OF GOD

I am Thy slave, O my Lord!
I am Thy eternally bonded slave;
Out of my enthusiastic and joyous free will
To Thy feet myself I gave.

Chain me with the fetters of Divine Love,
Lash me with Thy charm's spoil;
Hang me till my obstinate ego dies;
I will not shudder, nor recoil.

Do whatever Thou likest with me,
Only this boon please give.
That I may remain eternally attached to Thee;
This last wish let me achieve.

ABANI SINHA

*

A HYMN TO SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated from Sanskrit)

OM! O Thou, who are beyond thought,
Beyond manifestation, beyond Form;
O Thou, who rulest over all that moves and moves not,
O Thou, the incomparable Avatara
Who art lord over History and man's Destiny;
O the Wonder-Name Sri Aurobindo!
I bow to Thee, I bow to Thee.

ABANI SINHA

*

THE STARS AND THE SOUL

The stars cried:
 Halt! here's thy journey's end.
 The soul retorted:
 There is a call from the Endless One,
 And I know no faltering.

The stars snorted:
 We know your destiny,
 You are doomed to eternal hell.
 The soul retorted:
 My Master is the Master of Destiny,
 My obeisance is but to Him alone;
 No Doom I obey.

The stars thundered:
 Fool! you are in our octopus-clasp,
 A prisoner in our infernal jail!
 The soul answered:
 But the jail is not a jail to him
 who has received the embrace of the Lord,
 And I am ever safe and happy
 within the arms of my Divine Lover.

ABANI SINHA

*

SRI AUROBINDO

Depths upon ocean-depths, Light filled Thy eyes;
 A limitless Love's compassionate lucency
 One with grandeur of a sun's full rise —
 The blessing pure gaze of Divinity.

Unparalleled Thy ears in listening's art:
 In most intimate communion they heard,
 As if one hears the beating of one's heart,
 God's all-revealing, self-fulfilling Word.

A harp for the cosmic music of the spheres,
 Vibrant with bliss that whirls the galaxies,
 Thy lips move us to ecstatic smiles and tears
 With rapt cadences on gold onenesses.

In mould of clay Thou camest, O Self of all,
 Immortal answer to earth's mortal call.

ALEXANDER BRODT

*

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

1

Lone sailor on the world's oceanic Soul,
 You searched for shores secret in the unviewed
 Horizon's far mysterious vacancy,
 As if by a magnet irresistibly drawn
 To leave behind all brilliant waters known
 And reach beyond all silver-crested seas . . .
 Suddenly apocalyptic sight laid bare
 A wonder-world massed out of luminous gold —

Hail to You, undescribable Divine
 Discoverer of a new world of Light!
 The first to circumnavigate the Soul,
 Revealing its full periphery you showed
 Its boundless vast is but a silver front —
 Behind lies a gold dimension's fathomless depths.

2

Time-traveller hailing from future fields,
 You came from vistas yet invisible,
 Death's decomposing chemistry to end
 And free the secret Godhead locked in clay
 That deathless hidden lies in dying cells,
 O Super-chemist who turns life to gold
 With mystic formulas of immortality
 And your magical white fire's absolute Force —

One-pointed Ray that focuses all suns,
 The concentrated laser-will of God
 Penetrates into matter's ultimate core
 And tireless bombards the atomic night,
 Hammering prospector at work to release
 From inmost nuclear mine pure Spirit-gold.

ALEXANDER BRODT

*

GLORY OF GLORIES

O Glory of glories, greatest of the great
 Before Your Light
 The radiance of gods looks weak;
 Yet embracing the humblest of the humble,
 Accepting the meekest of the meek
 As friend and mate.

Wisdom and Strength
 With Compassion great
 Held in Thy wonderful gaze
 Spanning the earth and the heavens high
 In a single sweep of Your eyes —
 Infinity's dew drops,
 Doors to fathomless deeps.

Refuge of the lost, the fallen and the destitute,
 Your Name is enough to save
 Man from endless miseries,
 Earth from the sorceries
 Of powers blind and dark
 That threaten to wipe off
 The earth-born human race.

The barrier that Fate cannot cross
 Nor Time trespass,
 The shadows that creep and crawl . . .
 Escape not Thy all-witnessing eye:
 A glance is enough to ensure

The victory of Good,
 The triumph of Truth and Light
 Over the hordes of hell that deny.

A single ray of Your Light,
 A drop of Thy mighty truth
 Can transform all suffering and pain
 Into showers of sheer delight.

But for You, the world would be empty, vain,
 A dream within a dream,
 A meaningless existence
 Hanging forever between the Yes and No,
 Unable to find the passage true
 The Word that unites.

You are that Word,
 O Lord of Light,
 That joins what sundered seemed —
 God and World,
 Soul and Nature,
 Fulfilling each other
 In a dance harmonious bright.

O Hope incarnate!
 Give us the nectar sweet
 Of purest devotion and faith,
 Thy wondrous embrace
 That rends the knot of pain
 Replacing the sorrowful strain
 With notes of thy boundless Peace;
 Oh let us for a moment bathe
 In the termless joy that flows
 From Thy Rose-gold Feet.

Let our self of ego
 Be crushed and dissolved
 In Thy Heart's tremendous clasp;
 Let the parched earth and soil
 Receive once more
 The Mother's redeeming kiss;

On matter's sleep
 Awaken to the greatest truth
 Man has ever known,
 That there is only Thyself and She
 Playing in all the worlds,
 In man and beast and bird and stone,
 The play of the finite with Thy infinity,
 Of our transience with Thy eternity.

ALOK PANDEY

*

MAKE ME THINE

Make me Thy lamp, Thy sword and thy lyre
 O Lord of the worlds, O Heavenly Fire!

To be Thy slave is all I ask,
 Thy tool to fashion stone and clay
 In shapes of gods; my only task
 To be a comrade in Thy play.

Let me be Thy heart of ruth
 To heal the sob of cosmic pain;
 Thy light to lead, O luminous Truth.
 In darkness, misery and disdain.

Mother of Might, Thy strength I ask
 For the struggling soul of man on earth;
 Thy seal of love on abysses deep
 To lift towards a greater birth.

ALOK PANDEY

*

A THOUSAND TIMES

A thousand times shall I return
 To be Thy clay, O Master-Hand!
 Till Thou hast moulded every grain
 Of dust into the perfect urn.

A thousand times shall I return
 From distant lands of sheltering Sin
 Till all the earths and all the skies
 In a joyous golden fire burn.

A thousand times shall I return
 To sing Thy name, O Secret One
 Till all Thy sweetness wakes in men
 And all Thy Timeless toil is done.

A thousand times shall I return
 Till Truth and Bliss for earth is won
 And all that was life's native right
 Freedom, Unity, God reign in might.

ALOK PANDEY

*

THE RELICS ENSHRINED IN BANGALORE

4 April 1993

He whose look ensnares the world
 Came captive gently to our hearts;
 He whose strength supports the world and space
 Came tied by this love into our arms.

Like Krishna perched upon a kadamba bough
 He held us by His charm as we held Him;
 We walked as in trance at the call of His Flute,
 And slept by this side and woke by this glance.

He came as a King, He came as a child,
 He came as a Mother to all our wants,
 He came as a Lord, He came as a friend,
 He came a Lover to thrill and enchant.

All was sacred, sublime, wonderful, pure —
 A festival of Light, a carnival of the Soul.

ALOK PANDEY

*

A PRAYER

O Love Supreme!
 Thou whose clasp we cannot bear
 And purity fear,
 Smite our hearts with Thy Sunbeam.

O deep hidden Bliss!
 Whose roots we seek afar and elsewhere
 Yet who dwells so near,
 Wake our souls to Thy Beauty's kiss.

O Word Divine!
 Thy voice pursues us through the ages
 Across Time's mazes,
 Open our speech to the Immortal's wine.

O song that sleeps in the hush Above!
 Rain down your flames
 Of knowledge, sweetness, Light and Bliss,
 Outpour Thy Love.

ALOK PANDEY

*

BECAUSE YOU ARE

Because You are, men still can hope and dare;
 Because You are, we can face with courage rare
 The maddening reckless dance of death,
 The onslaught fierce withstand and bear.

O Hope incarnate, Your single being
 Is enough for us to know that the time is near
 When all shall be fulfilled for which we were made,
 The dreams of earth at last shall find their passage clear.

Out of the Night we shall walk now freed
 From the clutch of the titans and the gods,
 Our minds now blind shall find their sight released
 And glimpse in earthly forms the body of the Lord,

Our hearts absolved from grief and agitation vain
 Shall fill the chalice with the sacred wine,
 Taste what they always longed for in a world of pain —
 Love resplendent, undying in the heart's secret shrine

Because You are, life still can find the ways of joy,
 The body be filled with the light of Truth unalloyed.

ALOK PANDEY

*

A PEEP AT SRI AUROBINDO WRITING

Earth's lamp is lit on the Master's table,
 A vigil above the white-sheet trance,
 Watching some world-creative fable
 Break there — divine truth's silhouette-dance —
 Black lines of beauty, curvings sable,
 Like lashes moved by mystery's glance,
 Dream-signs that trace through all time's babel
 The calm of a godlike countenance.

AMAL KIRAN

*

DECEMBER 5, 1950

(A new disciple's cry to Sri Aurobindo)

Till the fall of your body a void was my day,
 You sank like a sun and made me your west:
 O Deathless who died since in no other way
 Could you be buried for ever in my breast!

AMAL KIRAN

*

AT THE SAMADHI OF SRI AUROBINDO

1

Majestic master of the immutable Light,
 Love like a universe thronged within your heart:
 Brooding in silence across lonely years
 On secret heavens a-dream in infinite hells,
 You found the hammer to break the Dragon's sleep
 And free from burying black the fallen stars.
 But for each throb of God kindled in earth
 You flung a human heart-beat out of Time:
 You shortened your sovereign life to greaten the dust.
 Your body, dropped from your spirit's hold on high,
 Lays the foundation of a clay-built sky!

2

Always the Light came down from the limitless blue,
 Gold gushing through the head to a heart God-drunk.
 Now from the soil's sleep rose one dazzling wave,
 Uttering a secret of eternity locked
 In caves dumbfounded with a vast black bliss.
 It sang how sheer divinity grew dust,
 The miracled Love which left the heart of the sun
 And crouched with folded fires below Time's feet
 To give huge wings to the atom's reverie.
 The surge of light lifted our bodies up
 As though, in laughing answer to heaven's leap down
 Into the prisoning space of bone and flesh,
 Earth now was ready to enter infinitude.
 A blind snake that had swallowed all the stars
 Unrolled a boundless mystery flecked with flame
 And undulated shining centuries.
 But none riding the rapture and the glow
 Saw the still King of the new life's luminous realm,
 Tamer and charmer of mortality's night —
 One Heart whose deep on gold-dense deep of love
 Measured the abyss whose cry is the whole world's death!

AMAL KIRAN

*

AUGUST 15 — SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

I thought of a thousand marvels to implore —
 Yet when I touched Thy mystery's heart, no more
 The lust came crowding: not one plea I bear
 Unto Thy altar as my penury's sign,
 But bring my whole poor self to make it Thine!

Now goldenest boon hangs like a mote of air:
 Deep-sunk in worship, void of puny prayer,
 So large a hush of indigence is mine,
 Nought save that ageless measureless charity —
 Thy utter Self — can slake the abyss of me!

AMAL KIRAN

*

SRI AUROBINDO

Maya could never bind him, for he came
 Armed with a white omnipotence of soul.
 What crown could dazzle, when he wore the flame
 Of God's eternity as aureole?

Unvisioned Master of miraculous
 Impenetrable light beyond decay,
 He bodied forth his rapture luminous
 To rouse the dead divinity of clay.

Nought shall oppose his fire, the golden heat
 Of his transmuting mercy — grace sublime
 That from each heart at his heroic feet
 Burns with a benison the murk of time.

AMAL KIRAN

*

SRI AUROBINDO

All heaven's secrecy lit to one face
 Crowning with calm the body's blinded cry —
 A soul of upright splendour like the noon.

But only shadowless love can breathe this pure
 Sun-blossom fragrant with eternity —
 Eagles of rapture lifting flickerless
 A golden trance wide-winged on golden air.

AMAL KIRAN

*

SRI AUROBINDO

No surface-silvering fugitive aerolite,
 He came a star to be sown deep in earth
 And kindle out a tree that grips grey rock
 Yet takes with a husband's arms the blue of the sky.
 He roots the sun-gold in earth's centuries.
 We that are foreigners to the immortal fire
 Cry "Fatherland" to the azure's liberty:
 Our home in the highest heaven is this earth-god,
 With him our dust builds up beatitude.

AMAL KIRAN

*

SRI AUROBINDO THE POET

Great poems came to him begging for birth,
 Knowing that he alone could make heaven earth,
 That never in the human heart their truths could stand
 Ere on their knees they bowed their heads to his hand.

AMAL KIRAN

*

SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION

Infinity's void whose loneliness is the All —
 Eternity's core sun-blazed with truth of Time —
 The Unshadowed lost in a dragon dark of His own.

Sparks in black earth crying to be heaven's gold —
 Crumbled beatitude slowly gathering up —
 Form a trance-statue where God flames alive.

AMAL KIRAN

*

YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

Not like a sky of scattered kindlings I come to you, Master!
 Round the great sun, that your Will is, held in my heart's wide heaven,
 Planet on planet bears life's varied movements like mirrors —

Wisdom-packed messengers twixt the deep gold and the grey of the out-gaze,
 Nine rhythms of deathless world-rapture born of a silver silence,
 Chariots of God-fire tirelessly rolling through spaces of slumber —

And, in the Night of Nothing, three more soul-globes, wheeling
 Mysteries, nameless, lost to all save to the all-seeing Sun-heart,
 Waiting to break from the coil and clutch of the infinite Dragon —

Twelve-fold being, spun as a unity, system of splendour,
 Flaming family ruled by love of that Truth-lighted Centre,
 Offered in wholeness to One whose spirit is harmony eternal!

AMAL KIRAN

*

SUPER-SCIENTIST

Einstein of the super-science of the soul,
 He found the Immutable's space of trance a field
 Grooved with almighty thought-transcending arcs —
 Figures of a single Truth bent everywhere
 On linking the ultimate Suns to our mortal sod. . . .

A rapt geometer in the deepest heart
 Saw the long line of human hungering
 Towards infinite freedom from the drag of clay
 As no straight movement on and ever on,
 Leaving the body a vanishing cry of woe,
 But a huge curve that reaches farthest light
 And comes back kindled to the darkling dust. . . .
 O mystic energy of re-entrant love,
 Springing immense into the Immortal's bliss
 Yet keeping earth's small poignancy your goal!

AMAL KIRAN

*

THE GREAT HOUR

One who has pierced the heart of ancient gloom,
 With swarming suns and stars, who has endowed,
 The dreary face of earth with life and bloom,
 Whose tireless and infallible hands have ploughed.
 Barren and pathless ages evolving this
 Heaven-bound race of men born out of his
 Immortal self, so long enwrapped by cloud,
 Leads now the way to earth's supreme release
 From suffering and death, and opens the gate
 To Life Divine. The hour's a-throb with fate.
 Forces of darkness rise in all their might
 Against the march of dawn; but vain their fight
 To hold their mortal sway; their frantic rush
 To upset and baffle only deepens the hush
 Of new creation; no stumbling human power,
 A high omniscience moulds the poignant hour.

ANILBARAN ROY

*

DEVOTIONAL LYRIC

How should I smooth Thy way,
 Speed Thy feet,
 O sojourner of Day? —
 “Doff deceit.”

How shall heart’s waters lure
 Thee to my shrine? —
 “Be stillness and candle-pure
 Vigil thine.”

Make this poor fitful flame
 Bright as of yore,
 Shiningly spell Thy Name
 Evermore.

Take, take my moteling gem —
 Words fain to greet;
 There is no worth in them
 Save at Thy feet.

ARJAVA

*

A PRAYER

Give me not only gold,
 But the use unwasted
 Of each grain of splendour
 My dazzled eyes behold —
 Or be Thy nectar-cup untasted,
 O Heavenly Lender.

Cleanse and furnish new
 This heart receiving
 Till, like a child new-born,
 Its day’s unshadowed hue
 Can no more suffer cloud-rack’s receiving,
 Sunless, forlorn.

May my thought in some inmost shrine
 Be ever deeming
 Thee as the Taintless Giver —
 In grateful transcèd shine,
 A soul ensilvered with Thy Gleaming
 Like a moonlit river.

ARJAVA

*

RED LOTUS

(Sri Aurobindo's Consciousness)

That living Lotus, petal by petal unfolding,
 Which through the mists of this *avidya* looms,
 Vicegerent of the Sun, nowise withholding
 The light we lack in *Maya's* nether glooms.

When spirit-sense to the last high peak gyring
 Finds all Thy mountain-bud aflame with rose —
 Touched by the eager hues of Dawn's aspiring —
 What raptured Silence watches Thee uncloset!

Then the vast span of those Truth-petals reaching
 To the utmost arc of Being's finitude
 With vibrant answer to dark's wan beseeching
 Transforms a world, from Thy grave beauty hued.

O puissant heart amidst whose raptured shrining
 A nameless Love is garbed in Name's disguise,
 Last metronome to mortal things assigning
 A fadeless rhythm wrung from Dawn's echoing skies.

ARJAVA

*

GIVER AND FORGIVER

Shall slow oblivion, only, quell the past
 And hurl with unconcern both good and ill
 To sightless Limbo — lust and godlike will
 To indecipherable ruin cast?
 Then each new time too well must match the last;
 The frame of days with former bane refill;
 The hands that clutch at good be empty still —
 No haven found — tired feet held quagmire-fast.
 How shall the new thing greatly come to pass?
 How piling debts yield zero for their sum?
 From dream-inchoate hope could harvest come —
 Ablaze with forms divine, be mind set free —
 And soul's bright gold shine through the perished brass?
 Giver and forgiver, how — save through Thee?

ARJAVA

*

THE DEBT

Shatter the manacles of self
 And set Love free,
 To leave no threat of dyke or delf
 'Tween thou and me.
 And make the orts and shreds of Night,
 If Night must be,
 A nothing, through that single light
 I find in thee.
 As in the aftermath of storm
 Great calm we see,
 My ways reflect the zenith Form,
 Becalmed by thee.
 No hope to forge, through grateful gifts,
 Equality:
 I'd be the Gratefulness that lifts
 The spring to thee —
 One with the grey dawn's laugh that staves
 The dark from thee —

Or surge with the golden-trance-lit waves
Of a sunset sea.

ARJAVA

*

SRI AUROBINDO

Blessed indeed am I having seen the fathomless ocean,
Blessed having beheld the infinite sky,
Wonderfully blessed to have sat
At the lotuses of Your feet, O Aurobindo!

A marvellous guest are You descended on our clay,
Leaving behind some radiant orb to flood
With torrent of light the bosom of Mother Earth
That is engulfed in gloom.

What song will my heart offer to this rare guest?
What words of salutation will my tongue learn to utter?
In what rhythms will my voice start chanting?

May my adoring silence be the song,
Rippleless peace the metre,
And inner light the revealing word!

Before this Effulgence that has taken form,
These alone are the most worthy offering.

VELURI CHANDRASEKHARAM

(Translated by V. Chidanandam from Telugu)

*

‘THESE CLINGING SENSES FOIL US AT EVERY STEP’

These clinging senses foil us at every step!
Grant us, O Lord of mighty strains and strides,
A modicum of Thy vast intangible skill
Wherewith Thou walkest secure, serene, untouched,

Mid a thousand snares of hands, convention-knit,
On every side Thou chooshest to stir abroad.

Ah, but these Doorways dupe us, vex us, tax us —
Unwary sentinels who would rush out straight
At every beck or knock, to manipulate gates
For traffickers inept who have endless needs
But not slight art of opening just a tithe:
For lo! the motley rabble's always there,
Lounging and loitering on the pavement-floors,
Poking untoward snouts through window-bars
And prying with roving eyes of vagrant greed
To catch a glimpse profane of mysteries,
Astir behind walls opaque to untaught eyes!

Teach us, O Lord enthronèd dais-on-dais,
How to sort Thy couriers from out counterfeits,
When to unlock — and keep locked — Thy sevenfold gates,
And keep steady vigils by Doors Thou hast devised and installed in us.

CHIMANBHAI

*

‘THE KEYS OF OUR INMOST SHRINE DO REST WITH THEE’

The keys of our Inmost Shrine do rest with Thee,
And 'tis when Thou chooshest Thou settest open wide
The doors we've waited patiently by for hours,
And hours have crept with the creeping pace of years!

Waited; and, haply worked out restive wits
That fidgeted vainly to meet the moment unripe:
Waited; and, haply discovered Thy Rhythmic Grace
Descending gently, coolly, to clear all trace
Of the outer yard's insolent dust and heat,
And to bear us anew within the tensile stress
Of aspiring ascent and awaital of descent!

When lo! the Moment Blessed comes sudden-strange,
And we rise full-flushed and bend our baptised eyes

Unto the Vision August, slow-showering smiles
 And with smile-keys opening chambers one by one,
 So swift and deft we scarce know how or when,
 And, having oped, and seen, and sanctified,
 Retiring majestic from our unkempt gaze,
 So for very shame we can't say Yea or Nay,
 But can only stand entranced by wide-open Doors
 Of the Sanctuary we have seen — and been — for a Moment Rare!

CHIMANBHAI

*

SRI AUROBINDO

Thy vast of bliss enfolds our mortal sheaths,
 Thy smile from eternity unlinks our eyes.
 O Thou! the Flame that hymns of creation new,
 Thy Blaze transmutes our poison-paradise.

Who dares to love thy diamond Heart of love?
 Lover of the self-same stupendous Soul —
 Within, without a world of nectar's flood
 Sporting with thy ever-unhorizoned whole.

Out of the marvel process of supernal toil
 Thy gnostic Sun flowers in the soil of earth.
 The clay is not a dream, a chimera's mist —
 In Thee she shall awake to golden birth.

CHINMOY

*

THE SMILE IMMACULATE

Whose feet does the heart of children seek, O Lord?
 Deep within them burns ever Thy sacred flame!
 The morning rays sprinkle a liquid gold on earthly nature!
 More precious is the immaculate smile on children's faces!

The world's figure is dark with war and hatred!
Behold a child's visage bright with an inner Light.
Here we live together, all children of the Mother,
Dipped in divine love, forgetting worldly worries and cares.

Some of us work the whole day, others study and research.
In the evening we assemble in the open field to play and rejoice!
Alone at night we meditate on the supernal Sun,
And at daybreak try to fathom the crimson mystery of the sky . . .

We imbibe in our hearts the flow of Thy sublime spirit
And radiate the gift through our transparent smile!
We forget the difference of age in young and old,
As seven and seventy weigh the same on Thy eternal scale!

In the ancient past ordained the Rishi's voice,
"Arise, awake and learn from the great ones!"
In keeping with the immortal words we worship
The bygone seers and those who shine amongst us.

Like a flower hidden in bud we are within Thy shelter;
And shall bloom gradually by the working of Thy potent grace
On the stalk of an unprecedented golden beam
Where retest Thou ever-awake, brooding the birth of a new race.

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

*

SURRENDER

I bow to Thy will, my Lord!
You allowed me to look for a single moment
upon the brightness of your glory.
Blinded I staggered through the hell of utter darkness.
I screamed my helpless prayers of despair
to heaven, but only the echo of my own voice answered.
Now I will not ask for anything anymore.
I bend my head to destiny and accept my fate.
The faith in your protection will give me peace.

Coco

*

BIRTH OF LIGHT

In the dark and dangerous abyss of the night
 There came a brilliant bird with wings of flame,
 Sailing from splendorous silver-blue height
 To quicken the dusky heart held a precious name.

Low in the mire to build a radiant day
 A new fire-wonder in each cell set aglow
 Of the star-will to seize the unseen's ray —
 A flickerless vision of the vast to grow.

Then in each candle a surpassing will it poured
 And kindled a deepening felicity's dream,
 Unisoned the earth to quiet music of its word,
 And her sleep to unheard murmur of a stream.

Like a marvel its flight is now spread wide and true,
 Giving to every song a winged rapture's fiery hue.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

SOMEONE WILLED

It is a fest —
 Gold fire has jumped from the upper sky
 In Matter's breast.

On topaz mono-rail
 Wagons of light, —
 Spirit's freight you may avail.

Is there one
 Ready to buy opal-fire
 Brought from quarries of the sun?

On a laser harp hear
 In chambers of silence, —
 Music of New Year?

A song was born in tranquil deep,
 Melodic moods
 In which the souls leap.

Someone willed
 Deathlessness in own death;
 At once creation stood fulfilled.

They've come, rarest birds, —
 Flame-pinioned, jubilant,
 Crossing skies earthwards.

God of Light, —
 Infinity awakes in a wide day,
 Triumphant, bright.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

NEW RAINS

You poured in butterfly blues,
 And in mango-blossom voices,
 And in enchantment of the winds;
 You brought dreams of your delight,
 O celestial waters,
 Flooding the hour of our night.
 You drenched the rude houses,
 And gave to forward streams your songs,
 And to our gardens flowering laughters.
 It is no longer a cloudy sky,
 Vague philosophies of crammed minds;
 You are not, I know surely,
 The rains of cybernetic throngs:
 Yours the joyous fount in big news,
 And in your coming what one hears
 Is music of the undaunted spheres.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

JOHANNES HOHLENBERG'S PAINTING

A splendid painting I saw long ago
 And the soul in it seemed to say,
 That the heavenly gleam in those eyes
 Watches over you night and day.

A soft breeze carried its perfume
 And calm the deep sense of its songs;
 A memory awoke of the past,
 And crumbled the embodied wrongs.

From it an authentic voice surged, —
 Like a great wave on a shoreless sea;
 A new world is born, it proclaimed,
 A world of love which is death-free.

Through the ages someone toiled,
 To claim the flames of the sky,
 There was the God's sacrifice
 Willing the Will of the High.

He lit an intense gold-bright fire
 And offered all life to the spirit;
 From across solar widenesses
 Came a wideness earth to win in it.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

WHATEVER BE THE HAZARDS

Whatever be the hazards
 of the journey, long overnight journey
 the path passing through hell,
 and the ancient adversary sphinx
 with her dreadful paws,
 she sitting across the dangerous road,
 there is no doubt that
 he has a mission to fulfil,
 he holding in his breast
 sealed orders of the great,
 executive Force.

It might be through
 rough and turbulent seas,
 heaving in madness of obscurity,
 it might be through
 the shouting of the thunder
 and the crackling of lightning,
 it might be through
 the thick frightening hush
 where no wind blows,
 a hollow engulfing silence;
 there might be a humid grey-brown fog
 and no infrared device
 would be of avail,
 avail for safe navigation.

But the mission has to be borne,
 has to be carried out,
 carried out in her omnipotence
 in the imperative Will;
 it cannot cease,
 it can never cease,
 nothing can stop it.

To it is the Yogi committed,
 the firm Yogi.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

THE PHOENIX

As in a descending flight, —
 Descending from the sky because
 Our gaze has yet to climb
 The blue rapture of his song, —
 You can hear the applause
 Of his coming, you can see
 The phoenix ablaze in the air:
 Between what is and what shall be
 Swoops down the great flame-bird.
 Even when he flies from life to life

In his living there is no gap
 And his fire burns everywhere;
 He has no need of death to reach
 What cannot be breathed in time.
 His journey is a single lap
 Compressed like speech
 In a beginningless word
 Whose hour is all Eternity.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

THE LUMINOUS SPELL

I saw a strange new aura around your head
 That seemed something new to tell,
 That the magic of the sky that holds the stars
 Is coming here soon for ever to dwell.

It will make the streams flow upward,
 Tend in our hearts fruit-bearing trees;
 From the crimson seeds shall spring up again
 Diamond-loaded branches of ecstasies.

There will be sweet and enchanting voices
 Not climbing up from the floor of the valley,
 But leaning down from the luminous hush
 Great rhythms of truth shaping truth daily.

This is not the charmed Lake of the Forest
 And no Lady owns the emerald-studded sword,
 Yet purity is the one price that must be paid, —
 Price that comes in purity of the absolute word.

I have seen in your face's timeless beauty
 Not only the phases of the growing spirit,
 But hauntingly the wonder that wants to be
 Deathless in the spirit of life that is fire-lit.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

NEW BIRTH

A new dawn came from a sky of peace
 And the grasses stirred with the wind;
 Mute Nature in it awoke and took a road
 A song, a poem of happy tunes to find.

Sight became swift and large, speeding,
 And footfall of silence the ears heard;
 Tranquil heart bore no anguish to beat
 And needed was no thought, no word.

Faith grew pure and wide, spontaneous,
 And knowledge poured from a high cloud;
 Old death was no longer a prop for life,
 Instead life only its perfect sense allowed.

Six times did the soundless bell ring
 And six seasons speeded just in one hour;
 Amber-hued was the breeze that came
 Carrying the time-transcendent's power.

Spirit found a house to dwell in birth,
 Not a gloomy rented place, lifeless room,
 But a bright house for the stars to stay:
 A flame was seeded in Matter's womb.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

THINGS VOWED LONG AGO ARE GIVEN

Stream with old waters, isn't that strange, —
 Like a philosopher with pale wig?
 Ideas and time ought to change,
 And a new bird find a new twig!

There's a new moon in grieving night,
 And songs sunk asleep are awake;
 Should you look deep within, you might
 Seize the word the world to remake.

Rainclouds steal the thunder from God,
 Libraries wisdom from heaven;
 Flame-intensities flame abroad,
 Things vowed long ago are given.

Hand of death has covered the sun,
 But comes wisdom-smile and all is done.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

**A HYMN TO BECOMING
 — A DEDICATION**

Cusecs of music from mountain cliff, they tumble to earth,
 Splendorous time like a morning sky in hurry of birth;

Miracles fashioned from blaze of wonder kindled in heart
 Win the unseen in a lotus mood, and sorrows depart;

Rains would not wait for the songbirds sing of them in a cheer,
 Buoyancies purple and glad on beating wings them upbear;

Exquisite, brilliant and scarlet-red, vermilion of dawn,
 Symbol of wealthiest beauty's smile, exalted, up drawn;

Therefore in narrowing lanes as stepped adventurous God
 Ignorance deepened, and faltered speeds, and all was a fraud;

Sure at this while he himself began to err and to lie,
 Fib and mistake in a pail of night, in darkness to die;

Climbing of Trolltunga mistrust in winter's deadliest cold, —
 Frightful it proved for the bravest soul, there faith to uphold;

Came Heraclitus and throve becoming, fordable flame;
 Hymning a moment the flowing rush him calls it to claim.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

SEER OF DELIGHT

You plunged in dream-depths of the blind vacant,
 Or else winged to glimmer-songs of the early morn:
 Your twofold vision purpled the twilight sky;
 Through seasons of the night and rhythms of the day
 You shot a beam piercing the stare of Time;
 With the sword of triumph you cut the births of death.
 Because abodeless infinity is your one home,
 O gleam tossed like a digit mooning the seas,
 O wonder of the sun vigil-bright in heaven,
 You built great mountains for your glory's ascent;
 And like a seer of delight, O tremendous flame,
 Your million eyes looked out for the Invisible.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

HIS DISCOVERIES

He moved through regions of a deepening calm,
 And saw the star-birds flying on wings of fire,
 And perceived the subtle rhythms in the shadowed ideal;
 In the sleep of night a moon-lustrous ignorance
 Showed him the dream-possibility of delight.
 Even as a song soars to brightnesses of the morn,
 He heard strange mystic chants that break from sight.
 World after world climbed to the secret sound
 And in measures of trance breathed luminosities.
 Then all the seas flowed from a single roar
 And Infinity inundated Matter's Mind.
 A spiritual cry that hoped to reach the Blue
 Awoke to need of Truth in Time's terrored ways.
 His will was a flame of the All-Puissant
 And brought to earth's substance embodied light
 And made joy divine and all life a joy.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

THE DIVER OF THE DEEP SEA

Beyond the trembling veil of sight he disappeared
 When with purple dusk the wind surged towards the sea.
 In slow advancing night the dim boat sailed
 To an island crowded by shadow-birds of Time:
 The shouts of broken wings, of waves, beings
 Falling not with their weight but with deathfulness
 Of thickening gravity — they soon led him leeward.
 His name drifted under the flood where fishes
 Lived by an inexorable law; grief nor joy
 But a strange devouring was at the base of things.
 In that weird mansion of the belle of the gulf,
 Filled with jewelled lights of hooded force,
 The Past he met; there nude and hostile she lay.
 From below her mattress a ghastly silence
 Whispered of the queer atomic beginnings.
 Then even the Nirvana of the sombre infinite
 Made room for a greater Nothing; but suddenly,
 As in a bright magic's sequence, the Gleam-Eye
 Opened to his soul all invisible widenesses
 And took him to a sky where the solar waters flow.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

HIS TRIDENT OF TRANSFORMATION

Not towards heaven but plunged in Night-hills
 Burns his gaze like a fire of triple splendour, —
 A gleam quivering in the feet-abyss of God,
 A pink lotus aglow in passions of the heart
 And, across the rainbow-rapture where no sun dims,
 A Truth-thought blazing in the gold-blue sky.
 In the noon of that intense heat he gathered
 The day which must awake to the summit-self
 And turn into spiritual boon the earth-stuff.
 Deepest pierced his Trident of Transformation:
 The strength of his calm bore all infinity
 Even as the atomic void made room for bliss.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

GOD OF LIGHT

God of light sleeping in a mystery-flame,
 Gold of love drawn into an inward rapture,
 All heaven folded in a sapphire repose,
 Trance ineffable of a splendoured silence . . .
 His the eagle-poise of superconscient peace,
 His the calm of a wide englobing halo . . .
 Lord of the creative, the conquering force,
 Smile of the Supreme and the winning strength,
 Blaze noon-intense of the godhead's brilliant triumph . . .
 His the penance claiming divinity for man,
 His the destiny's labour with earth's heavy load,
 His the will bringing to soul the Oversoul . . .
 A brow of gleaming vision's mystic expanse,
 Breast a diamond-cup of infinity's bliss,
 Sun-feet strolling on eternity's luminous ways,
 Only a blue-gold Elysian hue of the High . . .
 A Truth-resplendence in tranquil lotus-name,
 King and Poet of the supramental Word!

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

HE DARED INTO THE NIGHT

He dared into the stronghold of the Night for the conquest of the seven hills,
 And scooped out the primal gleam even before arrived the twilight hour,
 And saw insensible Love in the arms of Death, like earth in the black rock's,
 And chose to be the lowly gold that he may feed upon the smallest millet:
 He dared into the sleep of Non-Being to set ablaze meteors in the sky;
 He dared into the beginning of things and established himself within;
 And hence of God he is the dawn-horse speeding across the first spaces.
 His the gallop of the eye, the purple-leaping over the wild distances of sight,
 His the thrust of the noon adventuring defeatlessly in the upper regions,
 His the purest strength let lose to capture abroad the glory of the seasons:
 This quadruped races mightily bearing the mystery of the fourfold Name;
 This exultant with swift dazzling hooves of diamond has come riding Time;
 He has plunged into the streams of many waters even as his joys ripple forth;
 He has established his flame of great bright desire in the belly of the Occult.
 Strident and foreseeing with heavenly will, champing the photons of Light,

He has mastered the winds and the currents, and the stormy howling seas;
 His the energy that has none equal to it and it courses through all the works, —
 Downward his march where the southern deity trembles in his fiery approach,
 Upward his rushing that fills the galaxies with the neigh of his enthusiasm;
 Venturesome, flashing like a luminous æon, fronting the wide eternal day,
 This Zeitgeist has entered into the five nostrils, and breathes the Syllable.
 He has seized the Creation's sound, and clasped the mares of his enjoyment,
 And yet moves everywhere, like a celibate, spotless stallion of immortality;
 The Horse-Sacrificial has stepped with the seeds of his force into prodigious Birth.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

*

TO SRI AUROBINDO

When the lustre of a flower's bloom has greyed
 In convoluted selfishness of inner strife
 When the brook-still perfection of a fugal
 Stress is covered by my faithlessness and pain,
 When harmony falters at the sight of love —
 Crumbling, disjoining an innocence within,
 When the twistedness of motivation maddens
 The perception of a kind and simple act,
 Then a happy tone from an oakened place is
 Gently surfaced by your patience and your love.

But when the lustre of a sudden flower's bloom
 Has dazzled all my sight like oceaned sunrise
 In the spraying glisten of a full-mooned day,
 And the precisioned placement of a joined jewel —
 Pressure forces — and I see it — purity
 Out: to be polished by the lapidary
 Acts of kind and simple people on the way,
 When the happiness wrapped full in silk within
 Has surfaced spontaneous on a bliss-wing,
 Then, through You, the final Oneness shuddering.

DHRUVA

*

DEBTOR

Whatever I have, 'tis thou who gavest me
 Without my asking, again and yet again!
 How testify to thy eternity
 O sudden lightning in a cloud of pain!

I feared to seek, but thou didst lift the veil:
 I quailed to plunge, yet jewels of thy deep
 Outflashed to my dark's shore: never would fail
 Thy gift's surprise sun-gold in worlds of sleep.

Little by little I plumbed thy mystery
 And traced the rhythms of thy unfathomed dance,
 Its wisdom of a latent harmony
 That gathers accidents of circumstance

To a carnival of everlastingness:
 Our fire-fly glimmer caught in thy Gleam's grace.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*

SRI AUROBINDO

Knowing thee once — do I not know the Truth
 However fragmentary? For though I may
 Still fail to glimpse thy New Dawn which can soothe
 My famished eyes with His unsullied Day,

Yet once thou mak'st my half-lit consciousness
 A medium of thy fire-winged melody,
 Thy Sun that sees will flash to me thy Grace,
 The harbinger of His white harmony.

For thou hast reached what still eludes our grasp;
 Immortal life which outmanoeuvres death
 By taking faded petals in its clasp
 To resurrect in Beauty's blooms which breathe

Of rhythms yet unsurmised. O Fashioner
 Of new moulds with materials of old!
 Thou keepest thy vigil to invoke the far
 Wisdom of stars to Folly manifold.

In the abyss of anguish — when one sighs
 For loss irreparable — thou alone
 Healst the bereaved with message of thy skies
 Which we, through blindness, bypass and disown.

Transgressing limits where the world cries halt
 Thou movest on — no terrors make thee quail,
 Thou hast attained what never is at fault;
 The Sun of suns no clouds can countervail.

What we dream of on earth thou bringest down
 From zones beyond our mightiest fancy's flight,
 Who once knows thy compassion, friend, has known:
 'Tis not a myth that Love is one with Light.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*

THY WILL BE DONE

They say: "You, Lord, are a poet's fancy,
 A void where naught is seen;
 In a world of maya how can there be,
 An Elysium evergreen?"

But I have heard your Flute and know:
 You are the supernal Light
 And, shining undimmed for aeons, still
 You quell the demon Night.

It's only because you bless us with
 Your strength to challenge the Fate,
 That our soul, even at the Zero hour,
 Declines to capitulate.

I know, because you called to me
 That I answered: I'd be vowed
 To dedicate my life to your Quest
 And faith in my child-heart glowed.

And that is why I visioned beyond
 The horizon your sun of bliss
 And became a minstrel of your lore
 Your hallowed feet to kiss.

Today, you hark to my last prayer:
 That I may, at every turn,
 At your altar offer all I have
 And for you alone, Lord, yearn,

And grant: I may, draw my last breath
 Imploring: "Open my eyes,
 So I may hail in your love sky
 My new birth's Sunrise."

And may I, trusting to your Grace,
 O my Pilot, Friend and Master,
 Sing to and for you, who transcend
 All shipwreck and disaster.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*

BOON

May I love as thou wouldst have me love, O Lord!
 Be allegiance to the Shoreless my password.
 None lives but hungers for the light:
 Why then descends the pall of night?
 Answers my soul: "Those who, in gloom, will stay
 Loyal to thy Sun shall claim the eternal Day."

However heavy the load thou wouldst have me bear,
 If my heart would vow: "I will nor shirk nor fear,"
 Then my shackles shall my anklets be
 On my lonely pilgrimage to thee:

And so I pray: "May I welcome all that thou,
In Grace, wilt impose upon me here and now."

At every bend I hear two voices still:
One calls: "To Him," the other: "To your self-will."
This dark refrain of "I and mine"
I court no more: now make me thine
Be thy path my only one: this boon concede:
For then I know — I shall win thy Flute-notes' meed.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*

THE CALLED AND THE CHOSEN

(After seeing Sri Aurobindo on 24.4.1949)

All chains that bind and terrors that loom
To quell the heart, all tears that move
The soul to disown the flowers that bloom
On aspiration's heights we love,

Be now a thing of memory,
A living lesson that one who is called
Will win to thy eternity
Which only coward fears forestalled.

We are thy mountaineers who must
Forswear our plains of phantom ease
And pointless living and cramping lust
To hail thy peak which dream-clouds kiss.

Who beholds thy face of imperial light
Is filled with a gleaming certitude:
That those whom thou hast chosen — no night
Shall ever reclaim nor glamour delude.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*

A REVERIE

A prayer stirs in my breast as twilight throws
 Its chequered shadows upon earth's dimming life:
 "May I seek refuge in the Grace that tows
 My wistful heart to thee beyond all strife.

After the sun goldens with his soft kiss
 Our land of mist: even so thou kindle my soul
 Of twilight (when decline youth's buoyancies)
 With a radiant aspiration for thy goal."

The moonbeams deepen along the sky's far shore
 And with their mystic light the earth's brow laves:
 One lilt yields place to another: thou evermore
 Recedest to return — like breaking waves.

The supreme Dancer's footfall knows no flaw;
 The Victor Gleam cannot be quenched by Night;
 When daytides ebb, the stars the gloom outlaw —
 When din departs, begins the Lone's delight.

Thou, Wizard, didst initiate me in this
 Vision Supreme of a termless rebirth
 Flowering on death's stem — the drama of bliss
 Battling with bale, God's plenty at war with dearth.

So behind this world's bewildering hurtle and gyre
 I glimpse a Peace leavening life's wilderness
 And perceive our human love's dark passion and fire
 Thou absolvest with thy all-fulfilling Grace.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*

SYMBOLS

Thy light has marvel wings which buoy us above the cramp of earth
 And the downpull of the ages;
 Thy air is touched with whispers of an unimagined birth,
 Bringing to our shadow-cages

A message of fulfilment beyond human thought's conceiving:
 We think, alas, with mind, —
 An agent claiming to arrive but never near achieving,
 It seeks but cannot find

Unless thou authorise with seal of sun-emancipation,
 Ending our interludes
 Of dusky pleasures running round their orbits of evasion,
 Reft of thy altitudes.

A ray of those heights alone redeems our dark-enwrapped enclaves,
 Cleaving the tyrant haze:
 Mind's gleaming transient glimpses are like sky-lit crests of waves
 Flashing a saviour phase

Of thy still blue, like a beckoning grace, alien yet intimate,
 Whose flying traces we woo:
 Thy air is the symbol of Life's thrill, thy Light the incarnate
 White dream of Love come true.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*

SRI AUROBINDO

A greater consciousness surpassing mind,
 A wider sight outreaching mortal ken
 Appeared in the silent universe of his soul.
 A larger feeling came, a higher flight.
 The shining wings of glory broadened above;
 Into the still bright emptiness of his being
 The Light poured down of the unreachable founts,
 The Power that bears the burden of the world,
 The Silence that thrills with the eternal Word,

The Being immortal, the Bliss ineffable.
 A flame of revelation filled his heart.
 Awakened from his mysterious timeless sleep
 The soul's great seer peered out from his deep cave
 On the transient world's ambiguous miracle,
 Embracing the universe with his single sight,
 And met Infinity's gaze in each finite frame.
 His soul soared up to uncharted continents,
 The unknown domains of happiness and peace,
 Aspiring to the nameless Goal of all.
 In the azure ocean of calm infinite Mind
 The flame-eyed thought-birds swam like dreaming stars
 Glistening with the wide golden wings of prayer,
 To the blessed viewless shores of the Unknown.
 Celestial syllables swayed on his mortal lips;
 Bridging the gulf twixt God-light and man's dusk,
 The swift word-lightnings leaped from the Truth-skies,
 Like flaming eagles of the Ineffable,
 The messengers from the high-peaked Beyond,
 Bringing the deathless Wisdom on their wings
 Beneath the infinite flame-white heavens of Bliss
 The golden phalanxes of the eternal Truth,
 Innumerable rays of a single Sun,
 Bore the Supreme's irresistible decree.

DIMITRY MELGUNOV

*

MAKE ME THINE

Thy Love, O Lord, to soothe the mortal strife,
 Thy Light to spark each cell inanimate,
 Thy Strength to tread the rugged path of life,
 And Grace Supreme to change the earthly fate.

Thy Call from far was heard when time was born,
 Thy gentle Touch was felt where space began,
 Thy Will was sown alike in love and scorn,
 And Bliss was blent equal in joy and pain.

Thy Hand that guides and sets our paths aright,
 Thy Truth that leaves all ignorance behind —
 From Thee came all but lost Thy touch and sight
 And then to Thee return is slow and blind.

Thy Look pervades Thy endless world-creation,
 Thy Breath sustains Thy play of shade and light —
 And waitest Thou with timeless vast compassion,
 Till we be Thine and all with Thee unite!

D. L.

*

MY LIFE'S AIM

My heart's deep things
 And secret tale,
 Mute sufferings,
 Hid tears and wail,
 In my cupped hands
 And channelled fingers held,
 Devotion-spelled,
 To Thee I all surrender,
 Without demands,
 And with heart's worship-water wash
 And silent fervours splash
 Sole-petals of Thy Feet of Wonder.

Towards Thee my heart's raptures gyre,
 Forgive my wrongs and faults, O Lord,
 To Thee I trust my secret word,
 My life's most white desire:
 'From now on keep me held to Thee,
 From life to life, forever nigh
 From world's delusions gather me
 Unto Thy utter Ecstasy.'

Quick years and months, day after day,
 Into oblivion pass away,
 'Wherefore our life?' of this we stay
 Fools ignorant in an utter way.

Now end, O Lord, this blind life's game,
Win for me, by Thy Grace, the Aim.

DULALI

(Translated by Har Krishan Singh from the Bengali)

*

IN THEE

Not reached as yet my journey's end,
All movements stop now suddenly,
And stormy winds moan like a fiend
Through the dreadful dark surrounding me.

Thus the days and nights will flee away
In ignorant play of rhythmless mirth,
Marring the tune of my life's sweet lay,
Amidst the travellers of unknown birth.

What was my need in the dawn of life?
What treasures were lost on the dusty way?
What gifts — with which my heart is rife?
Whose Blessings have made my world so gay?

What I have lost and what I have gained
Today my mind cares not to see.
The one desire that has kept me chained,
Is to lose myself, O Lord, in Thee.

DULALI

(Translated by Sailen from the original Bengali)

*

THE TWO WHO ARE ONE

He is the fire
 She is the flame
 Always together they're one
 and the same.

He is the sun
 She is the rays
 Together they've helped us
 through difficult days.

Shiva's the Lord
 Shakti's the force.
 Aurobindo and Mother are always
 the source.

They shape our destiny
 They shape our lives
 And see that each soul
 always survives.

The love that they give is
 Second to none.
 Aurobindo and Mother — The
 Two Who Are One.

MARY "ANGEL" FINN

*

FROM A BHAKTA

Aurobindo, Aurobindo, you are my Lord,
 you are my life.
 I offer up my daily work and offer up
 my strife.

You have made me strong in many ways, you
 have made me see my soul.
 I have a lot of love to give while
 following my goal.

In days to come I will try my best to
 keep you in my mind.
 The path is hard sometimes in life, but
 oh you are so kind.

So as I follow you, my Lord, in spirit
 and with pride,
 I will love you and I hope to be forever
 at your side.

MARY "ANGEL" FINN

*

HYMN TO DAWN

In Memory of Sri Aurobindo

Enter the pastures of Heaven, ye herds of Dawn, upon the dew of its hill and the
 flowering thyme.
 Ascend in meditation with the flute that sighs, for the Shepherd has already
 preceded you towards the running waters.

Lila, play of Beatitude! Be first to enter, ye melting clouds of morn,
 Childhood of the world, laughter and dances, colours of good omen, sacred gowns
 of the ascetic.
 He has donned it, the last veil, the mist of Usha upon the Shepherd's shoulder:
 The same width of light, the same velvet of a smile, the very breathing of His song.

All along the timeless time, he prays with the Master of the Play; he plays our destinies
 While we stand in vigils upon the walls of night, our heart, stifled with sleep,
 And the pulse of our inner breath passing at our temples, eager to merge in the
 Breath.

Hark, brothers, the treading of the herds is pushing the darkness aside, the gate
 quivers, and the blue maternal bellowing
 Calls out upon the shores of wind and flight, where Dawn inebriates the soul with
 her milk.

GABRIEL GERMAIN

*

FROM WHERE HAST THOU COME, SWEET LORD

From where hast thou come, sweet Lord,
 To a field of conflict, battle and strain,
 On mire have thy golden feet trod,
 A world that baffles and torments the brain.

Why have you come down, O Lord,
 To strive and declare with elan,
 To prove verily existence of God,
 And of a divine marvellous plan.

From where hast thou come, sweet Lord,
 To endure untold unbearable pain,
 Bringing hope to sinner, waif and clod,
 Thy labour will not be in vain.

Thou showerest us with felicities and Grace
 In order to save an unprepared human race!

GAUTAM MALAKER

*

MY FORGOTTEN LORD

The Lady, Her Majesty?
 well I return to Her
 always at the day's end,
 always when the day dawns,
 with plenty of demands —
 'Grant me this and that!'
 But the Lord?
 Only at long intervals
 I see those eyes,
 my eyes are really on them,
 and who knows
 what happens in me then!
 Something swells up
 from inside me
 and my eyes are full
 of meaningless tears —

and I whisper from the dirt —
 Lord, just take my flowers
 though my hands are impure.

GOUTAM GHOSAL

*

AT THE SAMADHI OF SRI AUROBINDO

The dawn sprinkles a serene smile,
 The golden morn prostrates herself
 In sincere surrender,
 The flowers flutter in petals
 With dewy thrill of ecstasy
 And agonies release themselves
 Into sighs perfumed! . . .

O, Master! Thou hast cast off
 Thy 'material envelope'
 And yet remained imperishable,
 Like an immortal shrine carved in the rock of Time.
 Again thou hast become the illimitable,
 Transforming by thy very presence
 Every atom into 'spiriton'! . . .

Day and night, in sun and shower
 The "Service-tree" sheds golden flower
 On thy sacred samadhi!
 No, not flowers, golden tears are they,
 Tears of the joy of fulfilment
 Flowing from thee through its veins:
 And the ocean of silence that swells around
 Makes thy greatness eloquent evermore! . . .

O Airy All! Nothing, yet Everything!
 The longing human soul casts off
 The mantle of Ego beside your samadhi
 And proceeds on the path supreme!
 The scorching heat of his self
 Melts into thy lustre, forming a halo of light
 Eluding the grasp of the dark night

That envelops the universe!
 Agonies creep to thy lap
 With an infant air,
 The words return to their ethereal nest,
 And all our humannesses are extinguished! . . .

O Harbinger of prophecies divine! —
 Remaining in thy mighty solitude
 Thou shapest the destiny of this universe
 Into perfect harmony!

Here are my humble offerings —
 These words which rise from my blood;
 May they shake my being from its mortal slumber
 And bear me aloft!

GOVIND R. JOSHI

*

EXPECTANT

With folded hands I wait
 Outside the Master's wall;
 Early and noon and late
 I wait and wait and wait
 To hear the Holy Call
 And the opening of the Gate.

With every moment nears
 That one when I shall meet
 The mighty Seer of seers,
 Bright Conqueror of the years,
 And wash His quiet Feet
 With pure, ecstatic tears.

The Way is long you say?
 What does it matter, Soul?
 Ten ages or a day,
 Now that we seek the Way
 Wedded unto the Goal
 Even now without delay!

Though night around you close
 For you it shall be mooned
 By One who swiftly chose
 You to be one of those
 Upon whose feet each wound
 Is blossomed to a rose.

Fear not! no shadow cowers
 To stain your gardened Light
 Lit by the Power of powers . . .
 These lonely waiting hours
 In the long lingering night
 Are perfumed with His flowers.

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

*

INVITATION

Come in whatever form you like,
 Come as the fiercely reddening storm,
 Or as the cooling cataract,
 In any form, O Master!

I am prepared for anything
 That comes from your unfaltering hand;
 I will not moan or say a word,
 I'll understand, O Master!

Come in whatever form you like,
 Or make me sing or strike me dumb:
 In any way, at any time,
 But only come, O Master!

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

*

EVASION

I have found you out at last,
 And this time without a doubt.
 Master of the Golden Vast!
 Surely I have found you out.

I have in this instant known
 That you have been waiting long
 To become my very own
 At the end of every song.

All expression on my part —
 Lo, however sweet or true —
 Does but draw away the heart
 From the Silent Heart of you.

I may never hope to reach
 The essential you who are
 Past all shadow-sound of speech
 Silence deep-withdrawn and far.

When you give me songs to sing
 Something whispers in my breast
 You have run away, my King!
 To the lonely Unexpressed.

How had I not known so long
 That whene'er I sat to shape
 Your Great Beauty into song
 You yourself had found escape?

Now I will not let you go!
 When I want you at your best
 Master of the Fire, I know
 You are in the Unexpressed.

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

*

THE FORGING A-NEW

Master, I am quite prepared now!
 I have torn the cloudy cloak
 And my silent breast is bared now
 To Thy swiftest weapon stroke.
 Master, I am not afraid now
 Of Thine angers for I know
 I will surely be re-made now
 On Thine anvil, blow by blow.

I can see Thy new creation
 Bloom out of inconscient dark:
 Every moment a pulsation
 Of my nerve becomes a spark
 Wandering into the radiant
 Emptinesses hung afar,
 And in its untroubled gradient
 Widening into a star.

Out of Thy heroic scourging
 Broken Life is rendered whole.
 In red pain-fires Thou art forging
 The perfection of the Soul.
 In relentless Joy Thou shatterest
 The dark habits of the earth,
 While out of their falling scatterest
 Scent of resurrected birth.

Nay, the Lord will not allow us
 Fallow-sleeps of death too long!
 With sharp ploughshares He will plough us
 Into ripe renescent song.
 For the Master knows to hold us
 Through our losses in the past
 And to some new rapture mould us
 Dearer to Him than the last.

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

*

THAT IS THE QUESTION . . .

What will you give the Master
 To honour His day of birth?
 What can you give the Master
 You little creature of earth?
 “Alas, I have nothing to offer
 Except the heart’s empty cup,
 But I think it will please the Master
 Who is waiting to fill it up.”

What will you give the Guru
 To honour this Golden Day?
 What can you give the Guru
 Pathetic creature of clay?
 “Alas, I have nothing to offer
 Except an ill-used lyre
 With a loose low note, but the Master
 Will tune it to one that is higher.”

What will you give the God-Man
 To honour this lifetime’s Hour?
 What can you give the God-Man
 You creature who lack all power?
 “Alas, I have nothing to offer
 Except a body defiled,
 But the Master will touch it and make it
 As precious as that of a child.”

What will you give the Great One
 On this Day that has come again?
 What can you give the Great One
 You pitiful creature of Pain?
 “Alas, I have nothing to offer
 Since poor is the life I live, . . .
 Is there aught that these hands dare offer
 To the One that has all to give?”

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

*

THE MASTER'S ELECTRIC SHADE

You, for the Master's Lamp, were made
 O simple, white electric shade!
 And many a month have mantled It,
 Whether it stood unlit or lit.

How often have you looked upon
 The Master's Face (at night or dawn) —
 Which doth unto our eyes appear
 O Mantle! but three times a year!

What did it feel to watch Him write,
 To watch Him sit and read at night?
 O tell me, were you not afraid
 To stand before His Look, O Shade?

What did it feel to catch His Glance
 Or see Him melting into trance?
 Say, did you sense an incense-wreath
 Curl round you when You heard Him breathe?

Was it not wonderful to stand
 Upon his table, — know His Hand
 Switching the light now off, now on,
 At eve, at night and early dawn?

Say, did you often see Him smile?
 If so, what did you feel the while?
 Say, did you feel a flame run through
 Your body when He stood by you?

What does the Master do all day?
 O is He always far away, —
 Away beyond all strife and stress,
 In realms which we shall never guess?

Or is He near? And does He stand
 More near to us than eye or hand?
 Is He a Neighbour to us all,
 Responding to our smallest call?

Your silence — which has known His Touch
 So often, — says so much, so much!
 Without a single word, without
 A stir, it clears the gravest doubt!

Electric Shade! you must not be
 Sad now that you have come to me.
 Leaving the lamp of the Divine
 Who sent you here to mantle mine.

For when you gather up the white
 And yellow tinged electric light
 Upon my table, for my sake,
 Forget not that I keep awake,

And sit before you, half-night long
 Either to write my nightly song
 To Him, or dream of Her, the Bride
 Of Light who glimmers by His side.

And you know that I have not slept,
 How many a night, but only kept
 Watching you shade the waking lamp,
 O Shade! who bear the Master's stamp!

Upon my table now you stand
 Touched by my untransformed hand,
 But then you surely know it is
 Already being transformed by His?

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

*

THE DIVINE'S WILL

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 O Master of the Fire!
 Complainslessly I go
 On paths of stone and briar.

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 O Comrade of the Light!
 Shot from Thy golden Bow
 I speed in steady flight.

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 O Dreamer of all Birth!
 I suffer all the slow
 Strange processes of earth.

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 O All-manoeuvring Will!
 Under Thy hammer-blow
 My soul remaineth still.

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 O Fashioner Supreme!
 From each last dream I grow
 Into some greater dream.

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 Fulfiller through Delays!
 I do not wish to know
 The secret of Thy Ways!

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 Beauty behind the Mask!
 My heart behaves as though
 It had no thing to ask.

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 Lord of Eternity!
 Time's lonely river-flow
 Bears me along to Thee.

Since Thou hast willed it so,
 O Universal Sire!
 Courageously I go
 Through obstacles of fire.

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

*

MOTHER INDIA, AUGUST 2021

OUR GRATITUDE TO SRI AUROBINDO

Across the white untrodden trail,
 Through shrouded times and mystic spaces
 And rugged seas and sands and firmaments,
 Gold-winged soul of crowning graces,
 Fulfiller of divine descents,
 Missioned on earth he broke, — him hail.

He dawned, he shone, the sun of noon
 Blazed golden overhead,
 Flaming the labyrinthine body of Nature
 To mould a perfect figure in the pure of moon,
 Raise it to high harmonious stature
 Where happy heaven and earth are wed.

Him hail, through all his life who bore
 World's burden gravitating,
 Who healed the hidden wounds
 Of time chaotic and frustrating —
 Blind time a-grope,
 All lost to higher hope,
 Away from the shore
 Of the saviour Spirit infinite
 Whose love and might
 He brought near so that, freed from prisoner rounds,
 Earth's long-jammed wheel
 May roll now further on,
 And she may, flushed in Heaven's light,
 Perfected, her aeonic aim reveal
 And live immortal evermore.

To him who has withstood
 The Chasm's black infinitude,
 Looses from his death-sunk abode of sun
 Compassion's golden hounds, —
 Till Death is hunted out, God's fiat done, —
 On his birth's eve our humble gratitude.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

*

RISHI

Seer of Truth, hearer of true voice —
 Diviner of straight arrow-like thoughts
 Untrammell'd by the nets of temporal life.

The higher height and the nether deep
 Thy soul's plummet has measured them all
 (Conscious waters that never sleep!)

Time voyages and life-currents meander
 But thy gaze unperturb'd, ocean-stable
 Continues its chase of supernal Light.

HEMANT KAPOOR

*

TO SRI AUROBINDO

O aureoled supreme king,
 Poet seer,
 God incarnate,
 Thy spirit I invoke
 To fill my empty cup.

High-throned emperor,
 Drinker of light
 From where the sun stealeth,
 Heaven's only heir,
 One son of One Father,
 Preserver of the seen and the unseen worlds,
 Mother and Father of the blind hungry souls,
 I prostrate before thee.

Poet creator of burning words,
 Words that burn the walls
 And bring to birth the glorious visions,
 Words that lift the mind to loftier heights,
 Fill the crumbled heart with might
 And strengthen the weak nerves with vigour and strength.
 Words that unite in one harmony

The All-Beautiful and the Joy Eternal.
 O seer of spotless vision whole,
 Discharger of steed-messengers,
 Winged and burning white,
 I kiss thy feet.

Warrior dauntless and alone —
 Dispelling cobwebs of desires,
 Uprooting deep-rooted large-bodied fears,
 With ears ever awake and sight and nerves,
 Mercilessly slaying,
 Conquering and advancing
 With steps firm and banner high,
 Gathering new strength, conquering hidden vistas,
 Unfailing and shooting straight
 Like an arrow to its target,
 Marching to the top of the worlds
 With eyes lustrous and countenance beaming,
 Warrior untiring,
 I bow to thee.

O guru of wisdom great and patience infinite,
 Firmly seated over the expanding universe,
 Surveyor of the intricate structure
 Of the seven-world mansion,
 New-born, young, ancient and eternal,
 Dear friend, guiding father, loving mother in One,
 Silent teacher,
 I bow to thee.

O God in human guise,
 Thou art verily He,
 For thou art busy with the impossible.
 Voyaging to caverned continents of darkness
 To install Sun as the new Ruler.
 Thou art that free One
 For in thy freedom thou bowest down
 Like a humble slave
 To Truth thy Self-law.

JAYANTILAL PAREKH

*

GRACE

Daring, I toss to you my secret pain
 Held from men's judgement and their mocking eyes
 Beneath your gaze all ancient wrongs lie slain
 The avenging angels at your bidding rise.
 Seer of secret worlds, encircling all
 Tranced in the heart of God's Immensities
 Your ranging spirit to the earth recall
 Bring down the Flame impotent in the skies,
 And in your soul's wide sweep of searing light
 Burn out the *Karmic* seeds in leaping fire,
 Pluck with your hands that learned the thunder's might
 The troubled, tangled growth of wild desire
 And Heart compassionate, in your close embrace
 Reveal anew the miracle of Grace.

J. N. C.

*

A QUESTION

Like a drop of dew
 On trembling grass,
 I sparkle only for you
 In the morning's hush.

Like a brief spark of fire
 That rises high,
 A fulfilment of your desire,
 O Lord, forever am I!

From your vast sea
 I heave but to merge
 In your Love's Eternity!
 I am your tiny surge.

Still, still the dark veil
 Between you and me . . .
 Why should my ken fail
 When seer and sight are Thee?

KAMALAKANTO

*

TO SRI AUROBINDO

O Sun of Love's immaculate shining,
 I have viewed Thy calm visage!
 When in Nescient's clasp I was pining,
 In Thee my soul found its pilgrimage.

Through aeons of dark night's veil,
 I toiled to reach Thy supernal rays!
 A myriad tempests mocked my frail
 Life's barge and threatened her days.

When tossed, I dreamt myself lost,
 My helm and oars you took;
 And guided me through storm and frost,
 Till I reached my happy nook.

How safe, — from all fears set free,
 My voyages done, — I am come home!
 I breathe Thy grace and Thy liberty,
 — And through soul-ways I roam.

O, compassionate Master, Friend and Guide,
 My refuge is Thy gracious lotus-feet;
 O, bear me onward to Thy sunny tide —
 Thou art ever my anchor-sheet!

KAMALAKANTO

*

ON THE FIFTH OF DECEMBER

And suddenly the Meridian Sun
 Passed beyond our ken!
 In silent sorrow stood we alone,
 We little foolish-hearted men?

Nay, — the Sun was in our heart,
 For the Sun is in our whole being
 Chasing the gloom with His dart
 Oh, had we but eyes for seeing!

KAMALAKANTO

(Written on the day of Sri Aurobindo's passing in 1950)

*

SRI AUROBINDO: A TRIBUTE

In every age and in every clime,
 O Timeless, Thou comest on our earth,
 From Thy infinity plungest in Time.
 O Nameless, in mortal name's disguise
 Thou visitest and Thy flame-descent
 Fills with vast hope our small clay-birth.
 The great gods thrilled, sang in the skies
 At the thunder of Thy truth-advent.
 With Thy rapturous white compassion-fire
 Thou hast vanquished Nihil's blinding force
 And roused this Earth to God-desire;
 In her blind cells now blooms a rose.
 From Mount Parnassus the Muses stirred,
 In Thee they found the Lord of their word.
 While Saraswati from her lotus-seat
 Uprose, in Thee was her vision fulfilled.
 Vyasa, Valmiki, Homer, greet
 Thee and their loving homage yield.
 Life, in her caverned inconscience, gleamed
 As on her Thy diamond omniscience beamed.
 In worship mute Light's Angels stood
 To obey Thy deep love's sweet command.
 All creation found refuge in Thy beatitude;
 And Truth eternal sought its home in Thy hand.
 A poet of supernal themes, a sage of God,
 A seer of Truth supreme, a prophet of life divine —
 Yet, even like us, this earth Thou hast trod.
 And Thy immortal foot-prints shine
 Guiding us Godward and lead us to bliss:
 Such Thy bright mission in the mortal abyss.
 O Friend and Master, Lover and Guide,
 I salute Thy advent with humble pride.

KAMALAKANTO

*

SRI AUROBINDO'S ROOM

Carefully shut-in silence
 comes out to greet us,
 graciously yet stern.
 It is portioned out by sentinels
 keeping us awake
 through the mid-day heat.
 At noon, one-by-one
 from different corners of the room,
 the clocks call us back from many edges.

Did he too make long journeys
 through golden worlds beyond the gates of time
 towards their faint cacophony?

Did he return
 even on that last midnight
 when he was losing interest
 in the tedious mechanics of the beating heart?

The clocks tick on, oblivious
 like us to the far side of the sun except the old one, beside the bed,
 stopped at 1:26 waiting in stillness
 for the dawn of a different time.

GORDON KORSTANGE

*

TO SRI AUROBINDO

*A Homage
 on the Occasion of His 99th Birth Anniversary*

Thy memory, a jewel in our mind and heart,
 Has grown each day's and night's most precious part.
 No word can ever convey the splendour of Thine eyes,
 Time stood still in Thy presence, Thou radiant Surprise!

All fears from us the golden dawn of Thy smile could chase,
 Thy voice, soft peal of Heaven's bells, our anguish efface.

Such the compassion that streamed from Thee on great and small
None felt aggrieved or slurred, each felt Thou gavest him all.

Thy look benevolent, Godfull of mercy and Grace,
Held us with love, in its all-forgiving embrace.
Sweet Master, such was Thy love supreme that even the worst of us
Could touch Thy lotus feet, and know a change miraculous.

A fragrance beyond compare filled the room when Thou camest close
As if all flowers on earth had combined to make one mystic rose.
A music from above that none had heard with mortal ear
Charged with Light sublime the whole earth's atmosphere.

What could one say of every hallowed step of Thine
Which sowed the earth with Heaven's bliss, and raised it to heights divine?
Our faltering, impure and shy approach to Thee
Thy wideness welcomed with a smile, drew near to Thy divinity.

How speak of things that human tongue can never express?
Thy memory has left in us undying blessedness.
It will live with us eternally though these bodies fade and die,
A Kohinoor in our hearts and minds, our life's most sacred cherished tie.

LALITA

*

EVER SINCE . . .

A faint far gleam of inner dawn had caught my eye
And ever since my raptured soul would try and try
To gather more the glory of Thy rising day
Where the horizon seemed to melt into its marvellous ray.

But faint my heart that panted at every upward move
And could not break away from its ancient trodden groove.
An infant was I, groping for Thy helpful hand
To lead and lift me, O Lord, to Spirit's wonderland.

LALITA

*

DESCEND ONCE MORE

O Thou wide immaculate Light,
Spotless splendour of the Infinite,

Burn in my heart Thy torch, O flame,
Nothing in me let darkness claim.

Thou endless source of Truth's delight
Dwell not on Thy unreachable height,

Descend once more from Thy lofty peak,
Give me the Word, let Thy Truth speak!

Thy deepest secret I would know
And with Thee for ever intimate grow.

Untouched by obscurity I would dwell
And with Thy searing flame all barriers quell.

LALITA

*

MYSTERY

Somewhere deep within me something watches,
It cares not, wants not, nor even searches —
A Witness to all that life to us teaches.

Tell me by what name Thyself Thou callest,
Equal Thou seemest in the greatest and smallest,
Unknown, unconcerned Thou livest forever,
Mystery that towerest beyond all human endeavour!

LALITA

*

EACHEVE

A garland of flowers I offer each eve,
 A garland of thoughts and words and deeds.
 I spend the whole day to weave and re-weave
 For Thee my thoughts and words and deeds,
 To lay the long day's count complete
 At Thy sweet sacred scented feet.

LALITA

*

THE SECRET OF THE SKIES

Whisper in my ear
 The secret of the skies,
 Speak to me of roses
 Which bloom in Paradise.
 Earthly things I crave not,
 No more they beckon me,
 All my hopes are centred
 In the wondrous Self of Thee.

Whisper in my ear
 The secret of the skies,
 Tell me of the Golden Path
 That somewhere hidden lies,
 My soul's deep aspiration
 Soaring ever cries
 To Thee, oh Lord, to manifest
 Thy splendoured immensities.

LALITA

*

INVOCATION

Plunged in blind misery,
 My soul invokes Thy Light.
 A tiny ray is a rarity
 These days of total night.

Grant, O Lord, Thy sun may rise
 This darkest hour to end,
 To Thee my heart in anguish cries
 For Thy Grace and helping hand.

Things of the surface please me not,
 Thy Presence alone I implore.
 With lonely grief my life is fraught;
 My heart's deep prayer wilt Thou ignore?

When shall the dawn on my being break,
 My dream grow one vast truth with Thee?
 Out of this gloom how shall soul take
 To wings of snow-white purity?

LALITA

*

APPEAL

When Light has failed though it is height of day
 And blackness encloses all in sad dismay,

When heart and mind and even soul are asleep
 And all I hear is someone far-off sob and weep,

To Thee I send a timid call, to Thee I pray:
 O help me, Lord, and lift this pall so grey!

To Thee alone I turn though all seems lost, forgot.
 No lamp is lit, the room is dark. Come soon in Thy golden galliot.

LALITA

*

THY ONENESS

If I had true eyes to see and ears to hear
 I would see Thee everywhere, and lose all fear
 Of things that are unseemly and unclear.

But if these ears and eyes can only human be
 What hope have I to see or hear none else but Thee
 And live unchained by ignorant helotry?

Grant this prayer, Thou Lord supreme,
 That in all I see or hear or even dream,
 Thy Truth shall come revealed like a noonday beam.

In every cry or moan or song
 Let me but hear Thee all along,
 Feel that Thy Presence alone walks, creeps or flies
 And nothing save Thy Oneness lives or dies.

If such can my experience ever be,
 Life would pass plunged in deepest ecstasy.

LALITA

*

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The Master wrote in English,
 Don't you think that He would wish;
 As far as we possibly can,
 Never to impose a ban
 Upon this tongue?

He must have used it for a reason,
 Without a sign of any treason
 To the very nation
 Who felt such aggravation
 For this tongue.

Perhaps it was the only kind,
 Containing terms of Supermind;
 For His Knowledge to reach the world,
 And of course, it was unfurled
 By this tongue.

He could have written for a few,
 In words unknown to me and you;
 But no, He wrote for those who probe
 From all corners of the globe
 In this tongue.

LEENA

*

AH, DON'T YOU KNOW?

Why when so oft we're told
 And we have seen
 It's been decreed . . .
 Why is the cavilling mind so shrivelled
 And shrunk and without heed?
 Why when you've placed your seal upon our brow
 Do we pretend we do not know?
 It's that tiresome story, hoary-old,
 The mind that skips off in its reckless way,
 A perverse child breaking treasures in play.

The swell of darkness from the deep
 Washes up worms that crawl and creep into our wits.
 The touch of Love, the Hand that steadies, the plea for trust
 Are all rejected, all betrayed by the intellect's cleverness fits.
 Yet deep within, a core of Light never ever allowed to go out
 Burns up all offers of proof and all possible doubt.
 If we cared to look we would find it lighting the darkest night:
 But we do not dare, we do not dare.
 Truth threatens to scorch our indifferent stare,
 Tear off protection from treacherous eye.
 In a single moment of truthful seeing it would pass
 Through the fiercest trial by fire.
 It would glide through every test.
 A tender flame would come to rest
 In the cockles of your yearning heart.
 Ah! Don't you know?
 We know, we know but . . .
 O tiresome One depart, depart, depart!

MAGGI

*

ALL I'VE CLUNG TO I'VE LOST

Before you make your offering gather your all.
 Make sure that nothing's left behind.
 It's that drop of honey kept in heart's pantry,
 That small piece of money saved in mind's purse
 That trips you up and triggers the curse of remorse.
 They are what cause the fall.
 And the King's horses and the King's men all
 Won't help then
 So think again.
 Quick to gather and fetch them go,
 And to the sacrificial pyre throw.
 They'll be cinders and ashes in a little while
 And you'll be free and able to smile,
 And Grace will descend.

Their destiny is to be offered in fire.
 Hoarded they'll burn you and ignite your desire.
 They won't prove a friend.
 You'll be sad, you'll be sorry
 They'll be torment and worry,
 A hundred thorns in your flesh.
 You'll have fallen into wanting's inextricable mesh.
 I know to my cost,
 All I've clung to I've lost.
 All I've joyfully given
 To fine gold's been alchemically driven.
 Even a grain of salt will bind.
 Leave nothing behind.
 You'll find yourself in the ineffable snow-stillness of mind.

MAGGI

*

ALSO MY FALL

Not a moment of peace.
 Not a moment of quiet.
 Where has your silence gone to this night?

Flashes of past and thoughts of tomorrow,
 Tales of disaster and all the world's sorrow
 Move me to tears, not the kind I enjoy.
 It's all maya I know, the adversary's ploy,
 I know. But what good does that do
 If I in my folly have let go of you!
 But if in my folly I have loosened my grip
 How is it that You me have let slip?
 Acrobat with no net, I'm launched into space
 And I try to catch hold in a desperate race.
 But alone, I'm alone up here in mid-air
 And I fall and I fall with arms stiff and outstretched.
 Now I let go, join my hands with eyes closed:
 Lord if it's Your will . . .
 Out of the dark depths I am tenderly fetched
 Pulled into the Light
 And to Your peace am restored.
 You are my net and my safety O Lord.
 Lord You are my all.

You are also my fall.

MAGGI

*

ALL SUDDENLY

Always You take me by surprise
 With sudden tears that fill my eyes,
 A velvet light that lines my heart
 Or all at once a spark
 That reveals Life: Your ineffable art.

In the cold and lonely night
 Compassion beams on me Your Light.
 And peace descends upon the troubled heart
 Then suddenly . . . all pains depart.

When passions swell
 And I would founder
 Suddenly You all my fires quell.

You make me see that all is well,
 All suddenly . . .
 Suddenly all's well.

These blessed hours only seem to fade away
 Though when they come I think
 This time I'll make You stay.
 Of course this sends them on their way.

Despite all eager ignorance,
 Despite all haste and will,
 Something of all of them remains
 The Spirit threads within me still.

These transient hours weave
 Despite the changing mood
 A growing certitude:
 You never go away
 Though I am not aware
 Within, You're there.
 You're there.

Backwards and forwards ceaselessly
 The shuttle moves.
 In me there grows a continuity,
 And when the tapestry to your design is done
 Suddenly . . . all life will be
 Your splendrous sun.

MAGGI

*

AN ARROW LEAVES ITS STRING

Another Country waits for us,
 This one is left behind.
 Another dawn is breaking,
 Night peeled off like rind.

Within the sun Your pulsings
 That draw us like a tide

And we with souls in rhythm
Stroke for that other side.

Then from serenest heart-leap
An arrow leaves its string
To fly into the future.
The plucked bow starts to sing.

The song ignites all nature,
A flower flares into the skies.
It opens on a murmur
A mantra starts to rise.

Aummmmmm
The song of cells' surrender,
Aum Namō Bhagavate.

MAGGI

*

ON FIRST READING SRI AUROBINDO'S 'SYNTHESIS OF YOGA'

Words that are no longer words
But music from another world,
Slow plangent waves
That roll into the shores of time
From all infinity drawn near,
Swelling the mind to silence.

Be still, be still to garner the sweet prose within
And know the thronging air grow bold
With kindred helping souls.

Read on and feel your being rise to catch the music.
Rise, shining soul, into the depths of heaven.
Pause there a while, in the silence,
The silence between the phrases,
With mind grown blind.

And gravid with light and with knowing
Descend once again from the stars,

Descend the darkening stairway:
There are curtains ruffling your mind.

Yet you know when you have finished reading,
Within, you carry man's fate,
Have been cradled in the hands of God,
Let gently down through the darkness
And set here to radiate.

MAGGI

*

ON FIRST VISITING THE SAMADHI AT DUSK

Wandering in from another world
I knew I must have seen this place before
The incense curling white into the twilight
Against the thickness of the tree.

There must have been some door through which I'd looked
Within whose frame I'd seen
A picture of men and women turning inwards,
Turning towards the flowers,
Of people turning towards themselves.

It was not new to me
But half compiled of memories.
This world of flowers,
Of kneeling, gazing, walking in serenity.
It must be this that once I'd seen:
The tears upon that woman's cheeks,
The gravity of these dark eyes
That drew me through so many streets.

This is the place the whispers said.
Here is your legendary world come true.
I knew.
I knew.

MAGGI

*

TO THE ASH FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S MOSQUITO COIL

Transmuted by your service into holy Ash
 You are remains of essences that curled around
 His lotus feet.
 Your all you offered to protect them,
 Your life, your substance you laid down
 And recked not that each time you passed a spiral bend,
 You burned that much closer to your end.
 Why should you?
 A glorious karma was your destiny
 After you had caressed the petals of his toes.
 Blissfully you wafted past his finger tips
 And strayed into his beard.
 Before aspiring to his lips.

We envy you who erred about his cheeks
 And blended with murmured words immortal
 That issued from that sacred portal.
 Yours was a chosen path:
 You rode the currents of his prana,
 Waiting for a gentle sigh to draw you up,
 A draft to waft you to his brain.
 So of your fragrance in Savitri
 Without a doubt there is a certain strain.
 You are blessed among all essences
 And on the altar of my heart remain.

MAGGI

*

TWO WORDS

A prayer.

When all is said and all's been done
 There is often but one prayer to be uttered.
 It is more instantly heard
 Than the fervent aspirations often muttered.

It lies hid in the deep silence
 Within the core of the heart.

Before you enter there
Put all phantom words apart.

It begins with space unsown,
The space cleared out of all that is known.
Carefully remove reason's every littlest clod.
Soft-footed, follow the path untrod.

At first may be heard dying echoes,
A child's laugh, the song of a lark,
Sweet murmurs of past or future.
To these take good heed not to hark.

At last we dip into utter silence
And begin to receive an unspoken message
Not yet taken by the mind,
Something to be found, as yet a dim presage.

Then with a bolt it frays through the brain its passage.
All is clear, unsealed
Written on the screen, in Light, revealed.
A pause.
Our turn.
Two words, two syllables.
No more, no less:

"Lord yes."

MAGGI

*

SRI AUROBINDO: I BOW TO THEE

Because I bow to Thee
I've had a wondrous life.
I bow to Thee.

I've had my share of woe and strife.
I bow to Thee.
Also of beatitude.
To Thee for all I bow in gratitude.

After long days of bliss
 Nights of darkness have betimes assailed me.
 But studded on my brow always I found the imprint of Thy kiss.
 I bow to Thee.

Lord now we're coming to an end
 I bow to Thee.
 Only the rounding of an endless bend?
 I bow to Thee.
 There is no end.

I bow to Thee. I bow to Thee.
 Today, tomorrow, whenever it may be
 Grant me no celestial seat.
 I only pray to touch Thy feet
 And bow to Thee.

MAGGI

*

THE SERVICE TREE AT THE SAMADHI

Season after season you staunchly stand,
 Waiting on the Master's ever-living spirit.
 Your vast branches in a loving canopy
 The heavenly essence of his strength inherit.

Giving cool shade from the sun's burning rays,
 A sanctuary to absorb soul-soothing peace —
 Yet are you a fierce sentinel-protector
 Upon wild wind-swept whirling days.

At twilight your purple shades, mute song to his Grace —
 In the deep night you giant soft-murmured brooding tree
 Eternally guarding this enchanted spot
 Suffice for a prayer to the Master's all-powered tranquillity.

MINNIE CANTEENWALLA

*

ONE MORNING

How shall I know Thy Will, O Lord?

My mind, shot through with lightnings of sudden thought
 And quick contingencies and tentative
 (Dim offerings) decisions held on high
 Is but a storm-struck stark stupendous field
 Of night fitfully lit, yet burning not.

How shall I know Thy Will, O Lord?

Bright future — “Be it white or blazoned black?”
 I do but ask eternal Verity,
 Fling asking impartially to know: to see;
 Search then the ebonied mirror of these lives,
 Begging, begging but to recognise;
 Nor shall I see a single signal flare,
 Call it the long awaited dumb reply,
 O Lord, until all life mysteriously
 Enflamed from out its core comes musingly
 Alive: O Lord until this bee
 So sweetly settled on this golden flower
 Appears in full relevant and eloquent
 Detail, heralding at long long long last
 Your rising Light beyond horizons lost
 In living Flame: then shall I know it for
 Your Will, O Lord, that I shall know anew
 The full fittingness of every living lovely
 Leaf illumined — I see — O from within!

ELEANOR MONTGOMERY

*

DARSHAN

I sat at the gate of Thy ever open shrine,
 Exposing my “Self” to the sun and the rain.
 Just for a call to Thy resplendent sight,
 I waited and waited from morning till night.

I craved for the thrill of this long-yearned meet,
 To be lifted aloft at the touch of Thy feet.
 Oh for a momentary glance at Thy face,
 To be blest by the merciful smile in Thy gaze!

Thou'st called me, Thou'st called me to Thy altar sweet.
 I touched and I touched Thy soul-stirring feet.
 It thrilled me! It thrilled me! Oh what can I say
 Of the boon to behold Thy enthralling ray?

Thy look and Thy smile, so gracious, my Lord!
 To sing of Thy love I'm too unlettered a bard.
 Thou'st touched me in turn. By touch didst Thou lift,
 I venture to sing. It's all by Thy gift.

GEORGE MOSES

*

*The second half of this collection of poems
 on Sri Aurobindo
 will appear in the September issue*

Sources:

A number of poems included in this issue have appeared earlier in the following journals —

Sri Aurobindo Circle
Mother India
Sri Aurobindo's Action
Collaboration

Poems have also been chosen from two published anthologies —

Poems on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1954)
Devotion (IntEnt, Auroville, 2007)

And published collections of individual poets —

Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna) — *The Secret Splendour — Collected Poems of K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran)* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1993)
 Anilbaran Roy — *Songs from the Soul* (1939)
 Arjava — *Poems* (John M. Watkins, London, 1939)
 Chinmoy — *Mother of the Golden All* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1958)
 Janina — *A Captive of Her Love* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1998)
 Lalita — *Lift Me High* (All India Press, Pondicherry, 1977)
 Maggi — *Seeds* (Author, Pondicherry, 2006)
 Minnie Canteenwalla — *Deep Footprints* (Nariman F. Canteenwalla, Bombay, 1983)

Some of the poems included here have not been published earlier, while some have been sourced from available typescripts.

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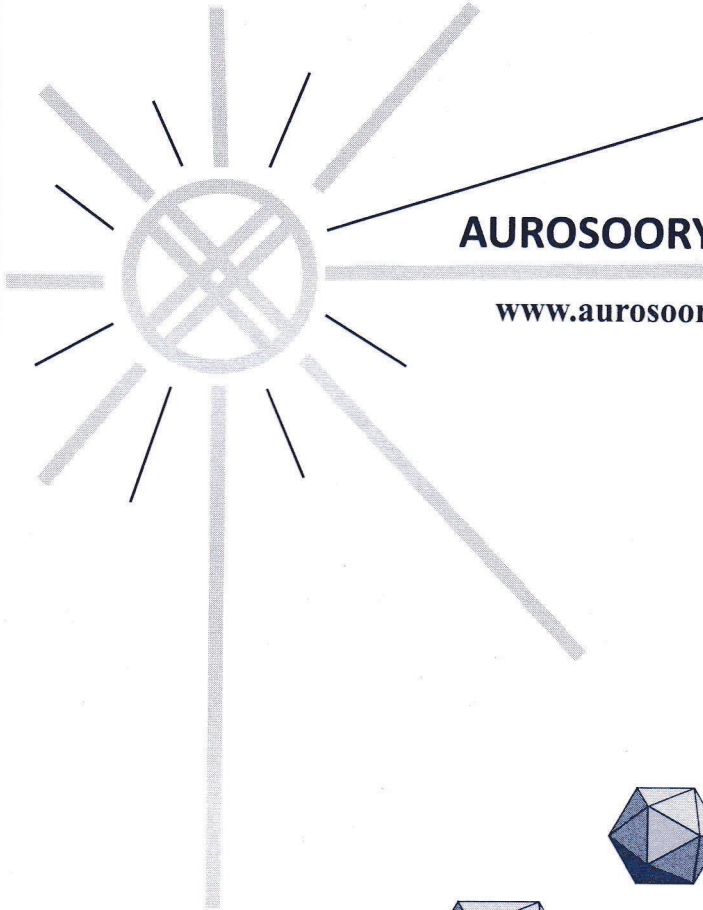
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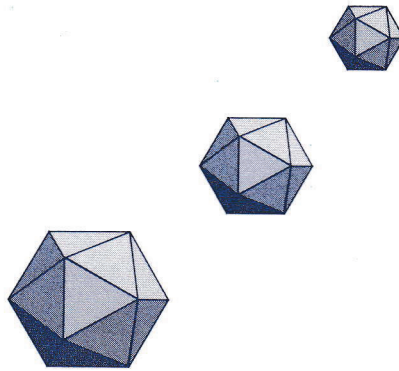
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