DURGA PUJA 2009
সর্বজনীন দুর্গাত্সব ১৪১৬

Bengalee Association of Greater Hartford
BAGH, Inc.
www.baghonline.org
Bombay Olive
Extends Durga Puja Greetings
To
All Patrons of BAGH, Inc.

Bombay Olive
Is Proud To Cater During
Durga Puja Celebration 2009

Brochure Editing, Layout, and Design:
Nitis Mukhopadhyay
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 2</td>
<td>Pratima Installation and Decoration</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, October 3</td>
<td>Morning Schedule</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pratima Sthapan, Shasthi, Saptami, Ashtami, and Navami Puja</td>
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<td>Pushpanjali</td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon Schedule</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prosad and Lunch</td>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
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<td><strong>Evening Schedule</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Abahani Sangeet</em>: Performed by Local Artists</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
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<td><em>Play</em>: Staged by a Local Group</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
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<td><strong>Featured Guest Vocalist:</strong></td>
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<td><em>Ms. Mayuri Ray</em></td>
<td>8:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, October 4</td>
<td>Morning Schedule</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
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<td>Puja, Bisorjan</td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon Schedule</strong></td>
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<td>Prasad and Lunch</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Variety Cultural Program</strong></td>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
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Welcome from the President

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Bengalee Association of Greater Hartford (BAGH, Inc.), it gives me great pleasure to welcome you and your friends and families to the 2009 Durga Puja Festival. We celebrate and worship the Supreme Goddess, Ma Durga, to purify our souls and remove all obstacles, pain and suffering inflicted in this world. We pray for Her guidance to reach more fulfilled and happier lives in all corners of this Greater Hartford community and beyond.

Our age-old tradition and sacred scriptures will inspire us in welcoming and serenading Ma Durga. Ultimately, the Durga Puja would evolve into a genuinely collective desire of all for peace and harmony for all creatures in this universe.

The prayers and festivities surrounding the Puja are intertwined with a definitive sense of pride in our heritage. Such heightened sense of community and friendship certainly include good food and great entertainment for both mind and spirit.

I hope that you will all find time to share cheer and camaraderie, renew friendship, and you will take this opportunity to make new friends. Welcome to the celebration. With heartfelt Puja greetings,

Saumitra Banerjee
President, BAGH, Inc.

Executive Committee

Saumitra Banerjee    President
Tapas Bandyopadhyay  Vice President
Arindam Dasgupta     General Secretary
Subhojit Maitra      Treasurer
Tirthankar Choudhuri Cultural Secretary
Ruma Basu            Member
Gopal Das            Member
Gautam Maulik        Member
Vivek Mukherjee      Member
Nitis Mukhopadhyay   Member
From Editor's Desk

This brochure includes nearly forty pages of literary work and artwork combined. It highlights the work of writers and artists from our local community and beyond. Some local children have contributed masterful pieces with remarkably expressive ideas. I am indebted to those who have graciously contributed their original work for everyone to enjoy. Thanks to all contributors.

A brochure such as this clearly depends on its sponsors and I thank them profusely. I also thank those who helped me, especially, Debanjan Bhattacharjee and Pradip Basu. Kudos to all!

I should add that BAGH, Inc., its members, members of its Executive Committee or I are not responsible in any shape or form for any opinion expressed (or implied) by an artist, author, sponsor, or advertiser.

Happy reading and have a great time. Wish everyone the happiest of this Durga Puja season. Make a new friend.

Enjoy, enjoy, and enjoy some more!

Nitis Mukhopadhyay
Member, Executive Committee
What Does Mahalaya Signify?

*Mahalaya* ushers in the aura of Durga Puja. The countdown for the Durga Puja begins much earlier, from the day of ‘Janmastami’. It is only from the day of *Mahalaya* that the preparations for the Durga Puja reaches the final stage. The midnight chants of various hymns of ‘Mahishasura Mardini’ reminds one of the beginning of Durga Puja.

*Mahalaya* is an auspicious occasion observed seven days before the Durga Puja, and heralds the advent of Durga, the goddess of supreme power. It is a kind of invocation or invitation to the mother goddess to descend on earth - “Jago Tumi Jago”. This is done through the chanting of mantras and singing devotional songs.

The day of *Mahalaya* is also the day of remembrance. On this day, people offer ‘Tarpan’ in memory of their deceased forefathers. The banks of River Ganga becomes a sea of humanity. Priests are seen busy performing ‘Tarpan’ for devotees in groups. The rituals start from early dawn and end during the midday. Devotees and worshipers buy clothes and sweets to offer to their forefathers. ‘Tarpan’ is to be performed in empty stomach. After offering ‘Tarpan’, people eat at the same place.
শারদীয়া দূর্গা পূজা

উমা বেস
মিডলটাউন, কানেটিকাট

শারদীয়া হল সমগ্র জগতের শুক্রবার, যখন দূর্গা মা সেক্ষেত্রে অবস্থিত থাকেন। শারদীয়া পূজার সময় মায়া মহাশয়ার সঙ্গে অন্তর্যামী আত্মার সহযোগিতা পাওয়া যায়। শারদীয়া পুজোর শেষে তার সূচনা করা হয়।

শারদীয়া পুজোর সময় মায়া মহাশয়ার মন্ত্রণায় হৃদয় ভাবতে হবে। পূজা প্রমাণে যেহেতু এটি মায়া মহাশয়ার সহযোগিতা পাওয়া যায়। শারদীয়া পুজোর শেষে তার সূচনা করা হয়।

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জন্ম ফেরিতে আপনাদের মুক্তি অসংখ্য তৃপ্তি গ্রহণ করে।

জীবনের পথে চিত্ত রাখুন তাঁর শুভেচ্ছা, জীবনের সুখের সাথে।

আমাদের রয়েছে বিভিন্ন পথ, কিন্তু সব পথে আপনার মধ্যে আছে সেই সুখ।

ভাক্ষণের শিক্ষার পথে আমরা যে পথ দিয়ে চলছি সে পথে আমরা যে সুখ পেও যে সুখ দিয়ে চল আপনার।

তাই, আপনার সাথে আমাদের মিল তৈরি করুন আমাদের জীবন জীবন পথে।

সবই একই পথে আমরা চলবো, সুখের পথে।

আপনার মধ্যে আমাদের সুখ পেও আমাদের জীবন জীবন পথে।

আমরা সবই একই পথে চলবো, সুখের পথে।

ফুলের সুন্দর আকাশ দেখতে দেখতে আমাদের সুখ পেই।
কাকতপুরের মঙ্গলা দেবীর দর্শনার্থে তীর্থ যাত্রা

মিনতি বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

টরটো, ক্যানাডা

১৯১৮ সালের কালীকালে হাজার দশক
গৃহে দেবী শিখাইয়া | শিখাইয়া ভাষায় করিয়া | শিখাইয়া ভাষায় করিয়া অনুবাদ করা হয়েছে।}

ব্যুত্তিকার কৃতি। পাঠকদের পক্ষে ধরিয়া দাও, তাদের ব্যবহারের জন্য।

কাখিতে করে এখনো প্রায় এই কালের সমস্ত প্রথম শিখাইয়া আনুবাদ করা যাবে। 

কর্মী অনুবাদ করা যাবে। 

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আমার জীবনের দিকে আসে একধরণের সমস্যা। কিছুদিনের পর আমি একটি সমস্যা সাধারণত প্রতিদিন পাড়া এলাকায় দেখি। এই সমস্যার নাম হলো অন্য একটি পক্ষের উত্তরস্রুতি। অনেক সময় এই সমস্যার প্রতিটি কারণেই আমি দুঃখিত হয়।

বাস্তবে আমি অনেক সময় সেই সমস্যা সমাধানের চেষ্টা করি। যা অনেক সময় সমাধানের জন্য পালনের প্রয়োজন। কিন্তু সমস্যার সমাধান ছাড়া আরো অনেক সমস্যা ঘটে। এই সমস্যার সমাধান ছাড়া আরো অনেক সমস্যা ঘটে।

এখন আমি এই সমস্যার সমাধান ছাড়া আরো অনেক সমস্যা ঘটে। এই সমস্যার সমাধান ছাড়া আরো অনেক সমস্যা ঘটে।

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কীভাবে তারা কাজ করা যেতে পারে তা কল্যাণ আনন্দ আচার্য
নিয়ে তারা টাস্ক নিয়ে দেখতে আসেন। একটি চন্দ্র যেন আমাদের জীবনের সূর্যের মতো আলো দিয়ে দিয়ে নিয়ে দেখতে রাখে আমাদের জীবনের সূর্যের মতো।
- শেখ মাসুমিব্রাহ্মণ -

c‿uc
Visiting Madhya-Maheshwar:  
Lord Shiva’s Own Land

Deep Mukherjee  
University of Connecticut-Storrs

(Based on May’07 Travel by Deep Mukherjee & Saikat Maitra)

According to the Hindu mythology, the Himalayas is adobe of gods. In reality too, land of Garhwal-Kumaun host many of the holy shrines for devotee Hindus. According to the legends, the Pandavas after having won over the Kauravas in the Kurukshetra war, felt guilty of having killed their own relatives and sought penance with Lord Shiva’s blessings. Lord Shiva eluded them repeatedly and on being detected by them assumed the form of a bull. The second of Pandavas - Bhima tried to pick him up, but Shiva sank into the Earth and only the hump came in Bhima’s hand. That is the origin of Kedarnath. The other parts of Shiva's body, namely, the arms, the face, the navel and hair locks appeared at Tungnath, Rudranath, Madhyamaheshwar and Kalpeshwar. Pandavas worshipped Shiva at those five places and after seeing their determination the Lord was pleased and He freed them from their sin. These four sacred shrines along with Shri Kedarnathji are worshipped as “Panch Kedar”. With the passage of time, Kedarnath dham has become more popular to the common people and the rest has almost sunk in the oblivion. In general, Madhyamaheshwar temple opens in the first week of May. There are two seasons to undertake this pilgrimage trekking: May-June and September-October.

We reached Rishikesh early on a Saturday morning. From here, it took us 4.5 hours by a shared jeep to Rudraprayag (cost: Indian Rs.160/person). Thereafter, one can take either Guptakashi ➔ Nala ➔ Kalimath route or Ukhimath ➔ Uniana route to approach Madhyamaheshwar. Local buses/jeeps will take one to Ukhimath or Guptakashi. We had two hours on our hands to catch the next bus for Ukhimath/Makkal at 1 pm. So, we went for darshan of Koteshwar Mahadev, located on the right bank of Alakananda river (5 km). See Figure 1. The main temple is a river-made cave giving shelter to many naturally created lingams. The place and the atmosphere is very quiet and awe-inspiring. We reached Ukhimath, the winter-time resting place for Shri Kedarnathji and Madhyamaheshwarji around 3:30 pm. One will find Garhwal Mandal Vikash Nigam (GMVN) tourists’ rest house, many lodges, and Bharat Sevashram Sangha available for staying over in Ukhimath. The location of the GMVN bunglow and Sangha house is superior to thers, as they offer a mind-blowing view of Mandakini valley and Kedarnath range. But one should make reservations in advance, because being the major halt-station on way to Badrinath, Ukhimath experiences a rush of tourists in peak seasons. One can visit the temple during the evening walk. If one wants to proceed beyond Ukhimath on day 1 itself, shared jeep leaves from the bus stand for Uniana (cost: Indian Rs. 30/person). Some jeep drivers come from nearby villages such as Mansuna, Uniana, Ransi (Figure 2) and they return to their sweet homes at sunset, making their last trip to their villages. If you decide to stay over in Ukhimath in a much more comfortable accommodation, then one should be prepared to pay a little extra next morning! In hills, buses are infrequent and their schedule is too uncertain. So, to reach Uniana (the base for Madhyamaheshwar trekking) one may have to reserve a jeep (cost: Indian Rs. 500). We did not have prior information regarding this potential problem and hence when came to know about it, it was too late.

On Sunday, after having the breakfast, we started our journey to Uniana around 7:30 am in a reserved taxi. Our driver told us that it would take 60-70 minutes to reach Uniana – the last village up to which a motor car can travel. On the way, we crossed Mansuna, a big settlement. After acclivity, comes declivity. At Jugasu (5 km from Mansuna), we crossed the Madhyamaheshwar Ganga that we traced through the next 4 days. The surroundings near the Jugasu Bridge were such that it drew our attention. Treeless, scratched hilly slope, and big boulders lay in riverbed – all manifested by the Himalaya’s fierce side. In the later half of August 1998, severe rain lashed Garhwal, causing devastation. Mansuna village almost disappeared with a death-toll of 24 from landslide. Debris and boulders had fallen into the Madhymaheshwar Ganga, plugging its flow and causing the formation of an artificial lake. But the river is so powerful that in course of time, it eroded the pile of boulders to make its own way. The deadly beauty of
the spot really made me shiver. After 10-15 minutes of steep climb over mostly rocky terrain, we reached Uniana. We decided not to take a guide or porter and reach our destination that day itself. Later, we realized that we simply overestimated our skill-level. Within half a kilometer of plain walking from Uniana along the side of the mountain on a jeepable-road crossing a small bridge, one reaches the last white house of the village. The shorter path is the one to take while going downhill. It was nearly 9 am when we started our main journey. The road is quite rocky as uneven stone blocks are used to hold together this hilly trail.
Someone who is not physically very fit or new to climbing a mountain, should walk very slowly at the beginning in order to first acclimatize.

We picked up cane-branches lying by the side of the trail to use for the support. After 10-15 minutes of walking, turning a bend, we saw an ice-capped Himalayan range (locally known as dhaula khambir) – the mountain whose ice-melt water created Madhyamaheshwar Ganga. After nearly 1.5 hours of decent climb, we reached Ransi – the largest village (Figure 2) on this route. We decided to take a break here for 10 or 15 minutes. My heart filled with joy when we saw local children were greeting us with smiling faces. Their cordial uttering of “namastey” had a magical feel-good impact on my tired mind. While having some tasty tea (rich with cow’s milk) at local Choukhamba hotel, the shop owner encouraged that if we continued at this same pace, we could make it to the Madhyamaheshwar by 7 pm. Then we visited Rakeshwari temple inside the village. It is a simple structure, harmonizing easily with the daily village life, as the grain-drying in the courtyard testified. According to the legend, Lord Moon meditated here to get rid of curse with the help of Lord Shiva’s blessings. After leaving Ransi, another half a kilometer of level-walking brings one to a waterfall and a bridge. Crossing that, for the first time, Chaukhamba (one of the prominent mountain massifs in the Gangotri group of mountains) appeared in the horizon with awe-inspiring darshan. See Figure 4. The route goes gently downhill from here. We noticed that the forestation became more dense and wild than it was before. We have now entered the Kedarnath sanctuary (established in 1972, spread over 967 square km). This happens to be one of the world’s richest bio-reserves.

A pin-drop silent forest (one only hears the roars of the Madhyamaheshwar Ganga and the noises of the crickets), a river flowing like a silver ribbon through a gorge wrapped in a green carpet will definitely charm you. A cascade (locals call it Bhimsi jhora) and a temporary wooden bridge are the lowest point in this route, after which a 2-km gentle climb through a pine forest took us to Gaundhar – the last village enroute. This picturesque village has few lodges and many travelers stay here overnight. Though we were tired, we decided to try hard to reach our destination that same day. We stopped for half an hour at a shop-cum-lodge to have khichdi for lunch. The shopkeeper suggested to us that if we felt that we could not make it to the end, then we should stop over at Khatara Khal chati run by Devender Singh of Ransi village – the last settlement with good overnight facilities. After 10 or 15 minutes of level walking, we reached the confluence of the Madhyamaheshwar Ganga and the Markendeya Ganga. Sounds from the gushing water of these streams flowing a few meters below were mind-blowing. With a tiny bit of climb after crossing Bantoli Bridge (over the confluence), we saw Vishwa lodge – a sophisticated resting place for tourists. After Bantoli, there is only Madhyamaheshwar hill to climb to reach the temple. The path went upward steadily and along with it came the fatigue. We became so slow that this 1.5 km trail to Khatara khal seemed never-ending at times. After a steep climb, when we reached the solitary mud hut at Khatara khal around 3 pm, that simple hut felt like the heaven. Devender Singh cordially provided us shelter. Soon after that, a large group of travelers arrived to have some tea and snacks. Unfortunately, they were too loud, discussing mundane stuffs and it might sound rude, but, after their departure we felt more at peace. The dusk came in with all its beauty. It was like a heavenly experience. Young Devender became very friendly with us and shared many local stories. He sat in front of us while we were eating roti-dal-sabji to make sure that we were feeling comfortable in his gareeb-khana. The bed on a charpai and pillow felt damp. On top of that, he warned about rats in his hut. But, we knew that his place was the last ‘best’ shelter we could get, after Vishwa lodge!

After having our breakfast - aloo-parantha and tea in Devender Singh’s hotel, we embarked upon our mission around 8 am on Monday morning. From Khatara, we maneuvered the steep and rocky climb of 2 km in 1.5 hours to reach Nana – another small settlement consisting of 4 or 5 huts. After Koon chati, the climb became very steep and the high altitude made us gasp for air as we struggled upwards through dense forest of Oak and Deodar towards Madhyamaheshwar. The natural beauty was dramatically wild with deep gorges and valleys, mountain sides flung upwards towards the skies, the forests (and various types of orchids during monsoon season). One should appreciate the other name of the destination – Motto-maheshwar (meaning Drunken Shiva). The exuberance at this spot suggests intoxicated joy. The uneven road is covered with a carpet made of dry leaves, so one has to be very careful here. At one point, we became frustrated as we could not see where the serpentine path was heading to nor could we gaze how much farther distance to trek. Finally, the path evened out and we reached an alpine meadow at the far end of which lay the unimposing Madhyamaheshwar Temple (Figure 3) surrounded by mountains. The solemn atmosphere around this 1500 years old (according to history, but if one believes in mythology the figure is 5000!!)
temple is awesome. Three or four mud huts converted into a ‘hotel’ provided accommodation along with a tourist lodge. The temple committee’s lodge (cost: Indian Rs. 150 per room) was a better option since it came with a bathroom. The sandhya-aarti began around 7 pm.

Next morning, we woke up early to visit Buda Madmaheshwar which we believed was in the top of the hill that we were climbing. It should not take more than 45 minutes to trek to the top of the ridge lying in the north-west side of the temple. On our way, we paid homage to Lord Vairabnath – the watchman of this holy land when this temple is closed (and Madmaheshwar-ji is worshipped from Ukhimath) in winter. Watching a sample of orchids that we could find in this area, it was easy to extrapolate the floral beauty of this valley when the entire slope would be covered with abundance of bloom in August. Reportedly, there are over 100 species of wild flowers that can be found here. After an ascent of some three fourths of a kilometer, the snow peaked caps of the majestic Chaukhamba (Figure 4) was suddenly visible. Further up, we were greeted by the beautiful sight of a lake lying in a flat lush green meadow on top of the hill. The view of the snow capped Chaukhamba (7130 meters) and adjacent Mandani or Sumeru (6350 meters) peaks and their reflections in the lake were simply mind-blowing. There was also a tiny but older shrine nearby with a black lingam called Buda Madmaheshwar.

In a nutshell, the experience was unforgettable, but one has to endure many hardships to carry out such strenuous trekking. Far away from the madness of a city life and the rat-race in career-tracks, our souls got the much needed break. But all on a sudden, an outburst of a quarrel between the local hotel-owners reminded us that we could not escape completely from earthly conflicts. They were arguing over who would provide breakfast to us! Though we understood that poverty had led them to do so, that incident raised a question in my mind: 5000 years ago Lord Shiva tried to escape from the sinful Pandavas to emerge here and that is why this picturesque and quiet place is glorified as the ‘land of Shiva’. Is He still here or has He taken the refuge somewhere else that is more serene far away from the daily grind of the so-called ‘civilized’ and ‘modern’ life-style?

**Travel tips:** Madhyamaheshwar (3120 meters) is not a popular tourist destination. One should not expect good hotels and quality food en-route. When we visited the place, electricity was not accessible. So, it is wise to carry candles and matchboxes on your own. One should also carry some urgent medications. The road became too cumbersome and steep after Gaundhar. In order to cover the rest (11 kilometers) of the trip, one has to climb 1320 meters. So, if one is not physically fit and experienced for trekking, one may not attempt this adventure in the Himalayas as a first-timer.
এক ঝাঁক কবিতা

ইন্দ্রীনাথ সেনগুপ্ত
টালিগঞ্জ, কোলকাতা

নদীর কলের খাদ নেন

ওপারে ইশ্বরের বাসন, কোন লামাসেনি;
কেমন সাংঘিলার এবং এক সত্য জীবন সত্যতা
থেকে মুখে নিজে অক্ষত zone.।
আলিম পর্যত্ন বন্ধ লজজগুলো পাকলাতী
এবং সেনের বিশালময় শুগ্ধ নদীর উৎস, 
মনেতেন মহাকাশের জটা।
অন্ধসাহচর এই মৃত্তিকার জাগতন্ত্র অলিসেনে
ভক্ষ পর্যন্ত বায়ুজাহাজ;
বাসনায় জাতী গান্ধার্য পরম্পূর্ণ।

বহনান্ত, প্রজা যশোমোহন নমস্ক্র মন মাতা
বহনান্ত শাস্তি, বহুতে বিশিষ্ট।
বেগবতী প্রাণিনী নদীর সাহ নেব ওভাণায়, 
মাতার স্পর্শ নেব উপকূলে।
এ দেশ তাঁর সুতরায় প্রাপ্তি,
ক্ষুদ্র বিকাশে অতিম মানুষ,
তিনি প্রবাহ লি- ফল জুয়া শয় প্রারম্ভিনী,
আন স্বীকৃতে করেন সত্যতার ক্রোধ-
আমার প্রধান জীবন তাহাকে,
সোহাগ নদীর কলের খাদ নেন।

ৃষীর ধ্যান

কৃত্রিম বনে বালিকা,
ছেলে নীল অজন;
আলুপাপড়ি কুলকারাজি স্পর্শ করেন
মৃত্তিকার সীমাও;
তখনই হয় এ শঙ্কে
প্রতিদিন আকাশ বলতাস মাতি;
প্রবল পয়ে হঠাৎ ধরিত হল শক্তিসূক্ষ্ম
বীঘ্রোত্তর আর্জেনে মত ছুটে এল 
জগলপ্রাণ আর আকাশ জুড়ে আলের 
কলম পুরোনায় বাড়ির ফটোলের মত।

মুখেতে উৎপাতিত শক্তিগঠি প্রাচীন
কৃহ বন্ধত, 
মুখেতে বিলীন নিচন্ত আলোকাসল, 
নীল অজন চূরনার শীতলকৃত 
খেলায় মা, জীবন বিকাশ ধরে 
পাশা খেলে প্রকৃতি বালিকা।

নারী

নারী তুমি তো জান, প্রম ও স্পর্শের কাঙলাব আমি;
এবং মদনে কখনো ঘটে পিছলি সমাপতন অথবা সধ্যাপতন।
সত্যমেবঠাকে এমন নাটক যাই তো স্পর্শ করে অষ্টামিতে; 
জান কৃত্রিমে মিধে না হলেও মনের ভেতরে আলোচন আর 
অলীকতার ভেতর।

আস্তিত্বের পথিকৃতে আমার নির্ভর স্বাধীন বিভরন আমাকে আদর
ধার্মিক অথবা সন্ত্রাস পরিত্যাগ প্রদান করে, অথচ ভালভাবে সেসে 
জানি আমি নিজে কি।

মেয়ে আর প্রধান কাষ্ঠে যুক্ত কোথায় যে নারী তুমি কি তা জান।
বিভিন্ন বিভিন্ন নিয়ন্ত্রণ করে আলোচন তোল ধার ধার, আমার হাদোয়া খাঁড়া
কিন্তু জহিন লো সব লেখা আছে, মুখগুলো ও যতক পারি নির্নীত আমি;
কিন্তু নিজের সম সব কিছু কেঁদে নেয়-
বিনোনাতন জীবনের হারে যায়ে- ভালো ভালো কেনে যায়, চিন্তকৃত।

একটাই প্রস্ত আছে কোথায় কেমন আছে সত্য দিনের খয়ে লালিত 
অগ্নি বিনোনাতন মুখের মনি।

আমার জলমগ্নরাত্রের আড়ালে উঠি দেয়, 
কোজের ছায়া কি প্রেতিয়ের নারীরা ও-
এক শীতাকালির অনুভূতির মত আচ্ছাদ করে সহিষ্ণুনিগুপ্তে, 
হাতছালি নিয়ে মিলিয়ে যায় অনুরূপ ফণ্ডলজ্জার বিষ, 
বাতাসে ভেঙে থাকে সুস্পষ্ট তেলের সুবাস।
कई साल और रातों तुम मुझे नींद बिहीन रखा
काश मैं उपहार में कम से कम एक तुम को देता.
देखो हम गर्मी कि शामें राजमार्ग पर चला
और तुम्हें पाला अपने दिल के अंदर नरम आग.

सड़क, हवा और वृक्ष
में अभी भी हमें याद करे
और में उन से बात करते हैं.
हम सब तुम्हारे लिए इंतजार कर रहे हैं

अपने छोटे युवा चेहरे जो में इन सभी वर्षों
मन में पोषित किया है
उनके साथ आओ,
अपनी नाजुक युवा शरीर के साथ आओ
वोह मुलायम शर्मीली मुस्कान के साथ आओ
अपने दिल के अंदर कि मुलायम आग के साथ आओ.
में इतनी देर इंतजार किया!
आओ जिस तरह से में तुम्हें पसंद किया.
नहीं तो मत आना.
Remembering a Dear Friend: Personal Thoughts

Anjan Roy
South Windsor, Connecticut

I started my career in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. That was the first time I was down south and I must admit that it was one of the most memorable times of my life. I met a number of good friends, and this story is about one of them.

One morning as I went to my office, I was introduced to a 6 feet tall and lean pitch-black guy, who would hardly resemble a college student, but more like a construction worker. He was wearing an un-ironed shirt, an old pant and slippers. He was sitting shyly next to my cubicle. Upon asking him, he said that he was there to work on his project that he had to do in our company. “My name is Anto Benildes Raja – but you can call me Benny,” he said.

Later in the day, I was contacted by my Project Manager and he asked me to include Benny in my team. Apparently, his rank was 2nd in his university examination and he came highly recommended by his professors.

Benny was one of the hardest workers I have ever met in my life. We used to call him “The animal”. He could work tirelessly for hours without getting up from his seat. Only time he would get up would be during the lunch break, and at that time, he could eat a meal that is meant for 3 people. We used to laugh watching him eat.

Later, we became good friends. At work, I think I was probably the only person who knew about his whereabouts and with whom Benny would talk. Once he took me to his house on a weekend. He belonged to a very poor family. His father was a part time truck-driver and the only earning member. He had two younger brothers, both of them studying. Despite their poverty, his family was proud of Benny and wanted him to have a great career. To someone like me who was away from his family in a totally new environment, Benny was a real friend.

After Benny completed his project, our company offered him a job which he accepted. He was transferred to Chennai after he joined. We met a few times after that. In the meantime, I was planning to come to the United States. Even after coming to U.S., we were in touch. I learned later that Benny got married, he had a baby boy, and had gone to United Kingdom on an assignment.

Nearly a year and a half ago, I was talking with Benny online when he told me that they were expecting their second child. I congratulated him. He later said that he was planning to go back to India to have the baby delivered in his home town.

Life got busy and I almost forgot about this. Last week, I was talking with one of my friends online and he asked – “Hey, did you hear about Benny?” “No,” I said, “Why, what did that Animal do?” Then I got the shocking news.

On their way from Chennai to his home town, Benny and his family met with a fatal accident. Benny was killed on the spot. His pregnant wife and their 3 year old son were also in that ill-fated car. I did not have the courage to ask what had happened to them. We always say, whatever God does is meant for something good. I am not sure what “good” was hidden in this.

In the journey of life, there are many people that you and I continuously meet and forget, but Benny was someone close to my heart whom I will never forget.

I simply pray to God almighty to bestow upon him and his family some peace.
বাংলা কবিতা নব কলেবরে

Sanchaita Das
Middletown, Connecticut

Cheleta Meyta

chelat r meyetar namkoron kori
mita ar omita.
sei ekush ki ekshotti prothom alap er din.
hajar mombati r finfine roddur er sathe
probol progolbhotay.
cheletar hate chilo mithe kancha am.
ar meyetar hate ekkadokkar ghuti.
prothom bar lenden prothom khunsuti.
cheletar bikeler roddur chader chilekothay.
jomanno thakto deho ar agun.
meyetar majhrate jyotsnay bheja mone.
hriday ar soisob er onuranan.
esob kotha bole ki labh
esob golpo doinik chapa hoy.
prem kobita prem bhalobasa ekgheye
sob dogdoge gha e r moto.
tabu ei cheleta ar ei meyeta olpo kichu alada.
sopno bunechilo..soтопodi na..hoito ekushpodi..
othoba unoponchas..soir na..mon othoba manobikota?
thik jani na bunte bunte kotota
sotyi ar kotota mithye likhechilo?
cheleta meyetar ar pachta purus nari na hok.
bondhu hoechilo..kothao hriday e
ektare bejchilo iman bharabi,
eksahosi bhalobasay tader deho mon.
soisob er subhodristi hoechilo.

Kachpoka

bikeler rod ghare porte dekhlam.
ojutho akashchumbir niche..ek
kachpoka ami.
sir sire sorir ar ofuranto mon.
kokhono jeno kom poreche bastobik benche thakay.
rod mithe theke arektu kalche hoe elo.
godhulir alo lukate lukate dekkham.
sohosro jonaki ami..alor pichone kiser chotachuti.
muthir bhitor alo niye ami surjo ar chandrer moto
agun hoe puri..purte purte jokhon chita kome ase
bedona ar bhalobasar artite..kulungir oi
kunke tate dekh..ajo pore ache sorol chelebela.

Editor’s Note: These days, numerous readers communicate ideas expressed in Bengali by composing them phonetically and using English alphabets. I strongly believe that this style of communication is here to stay. Hence, I feel proud to embrace this new concept in presenting two Bengali poems from Sanchaita (http://sanchaita.blogspot.com/). Readers will surely get a flavor of the poetry.
লিখিও, উহা ফিরত চাহো কিনা
সুভাষ রায়
স্পন্তর, কানোটকার

টুকলু আমার গা শিশির শীতের দুপুর, কমলারুর নরম খোসা - টুকলু আমার গোড়া নিমের শুকনো পাতায় কুটেরমুটির কাঠেড়ালি, হেলেবেলার ছড়ার ছির রঙিন মলাট, হাইমাটম, দুপুর ভারি - বেজায় খুশির মজল্লালি।

যুমাগজী গান শোনার মধ্যায় পাড়ি-অচেনা কোন ইস্টিশনে মাসি পিসির বাড়ি;
এবার বুঝি একলা সফর, অচি দেশে পাড়ি?
হারিয়ে যাবার জন্মােতে ফেলে ছাড়াছড়ি।

বুকের মধ্যে নুপুর বাজায় শাদা বাঘের দুপুর, সাজায় ছুটির দিনের চলতি ছবি - শামলাতারে কফিহোড়, সলোনেলায় কফালপির অমিলাইডুস। শহর জুড়ে নীলাপতকার বৃষ্টি এনে বুমুমুখে আঠ বুমুমুকে আঠ জগায় বুকের মধ্যে খুন হলে যারা রাত্রিগুলোর সেনার মাছি। এমনি করেই বেঁচে আছি।

ছেলেবেলার পেড়ে বাড়ির বাগান জুড়ে শালিখুঁড় কেলা তো যাবে কেথায় উড়ে।
চলেই গেঁছে - আজ সে কথা কেমন করে জানাই।
এখন বাজে বিদায় বাঘার বিসমিলার সানাই।

যেখাতপো করিন্ত্যে বৃহস্পতির বেজায় আকাশ; নতুন পাকি গান শোনারে। এবার গোলাপ চাইলো না আর চুলে তোমার পরিদেশে দিতে; বাঘে বিকুল অচন তেমার ভাবিয়ে দিতে। বঁড়ের দোলায় নৌকা এবার ভাসিরে দেবো। এবার শুধু দু হাত ভরে বিদায় নেবো।

টুকলু, এবার বিদায়।
এবার শুধুই বিদায়।।
Four Sketches
Souvik Roy
Maastricht University, Netherlands

A Baby

A Girl

Swami Suparnananda Maharaj
Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Residential College
Narendrapur

A Smile
Wings

Saparja Nag*
Cheshire, Connecticut

Wings
slowly descending
onto blackness.
Into nothing.
Can’t see anything
below you.
Hard to think
hard to breathe.
Mind goes
blank.
Can’t hear
anything.
Except loud
screaming.
Crashing.
All around.
Suddenly.
It’s quiet.

* Saparja is 14 and she is a ninth Grader at Cheshire High School, Connecticut

Spring Breeze

Mitali Bandyopadhyay*
Farmington, Connecticut

In my yard the air rests
Spread out on a chair
Waiting and watching
To discover what’s there.

Everything is silent, peaceful
There are no people around
There’s beauty in my yard
From the azure sky to the hard ground.

The trees are dancing
The swings are swinging
Everybody’s happy with
The changes summer’s bringing.

Everyone is quiet
Everything is fine
There is nothing in the world
Quite as divine.

In my yard the air rests
Spread out in a chair
Waiting and watching
To discover more there.

*Mitali is 11 and she is a sixth Grader at West Woods Upper Elementary School, Farmington, Connecticut
ঘুম আয়
(সদ্য প্রয়াত প্রিয়জনের সুখিতে)

নীতিশ মুখোপাধ্যায়
প্ল্যাটনেরী কানেটিকার

একদিন এই ধরিত্রীরে মা বলে থেকেছি
সেও আগলেছে পিতৃ-মাতৃস্মৃতির শিতলের মাতৃস্মৃতি
আড়ালে রেখেছে সহস্র শকুনের গ্রীবা
আর অজ্ঞ মানুষের থাকা।

হয়ত বা কোনোদিন বহু দূরদেশে
পরম যতনে মা দূর করে দেছে মোর
ফ্রাঙ্ক শূগালের মানুষের নাগালের ওপরে।

মানুষের অরণ্যে তবুও কখনও ঘুম আসে
তখনই শূগালেরা মানুষেরা ঘিরে ফেলে
যুদ্ধেরে রক্ষণ ধরিত্রী ফিরিয়ে আনে ঘরে
ক্ষিপ্ত মাতৃক্ষীপে পরমনির্ভয়ে পুনঃ
জেনেছি নিঃস্বার্থ ভালোবাসা বলে কারে।

আজ সদ্যা আসে সীরে
পথহরা-নক্ষত্রের আলোর নিশানা রেখে
কেন চলেছি পিতৃ-মাতৃস্মৃতি অসহায়?
চলেছি কিসের অবলম্বনে মৃতের মিছিলে?
শবদাহ গৃহভাগ নিজেকে বয়ে চলেছি নিজেই
হারাতে বসেছি কেন্দ্র অসীমের অন্তরালে?

ভাই-বোন যারা ছিল সব তারা
ছেড়ে চলে গেছে একে একে
আবছা মনে আসে আমি বসে রহ
জানিনা আমার কিসের এত দোষ
মোর অভিমান কেন তুষ্ণ-কমদাম? না-বলা কথা আজও সুর খুঁজে ফেরে
কল্প আমি চলেছি একা শান্তির পারাবারে
মা, শুধু একবার বলো আমি একা কেন?
কথার সময় যে ফুরোলো
গীর্জার বড়তে টাং টাং,
নটে গাছটিও যে মুরলো -
মা, সময় খেশ, মুখ ফুটে কিছু বলো।

রুঝিরা শুধু কেবলই নিয়েছি প্রতিদিন
তবুও তোমার করুণার সব শেষ দান
তাই এক কণা পাই যেন আজ শেষ দিন।

রাত্রি নামে ধীরে আজ আমি প্রশান্ত
নিম্নলিখিত দেখি শকুনের জন্য আর অন্য ওহার হিমেল আবার নখ-দন্ত
গুলি শূগালের মানুষের উস্মুস চারিধার।

আমার বুলির খেলা সাঙ্গ করি আজ
পথের সাথীরা ডাক দিয়েছে যাই
রইল পরে যা যেখানে অস্পৃশ্য কাজ
মা, এক নতুন কবির আশা তাই -
কাল সে গাইবে তোমার জয়গান
সবার তবে রইল পরে মোর ভালোবাসা
সেই ত’ আমার শেষ সমান
তোমার আকাশ আবারও ভরবে আন্দোল
এক নতুন কবির তান।

ভাসলো তরী উজান বয়ে
আমিই আমার নায়ের নেয়ে
হয়ত তখন একটি প্রদীপ জেলে
ঠাঁচ তুমি রইলে নীলর আকাশপানে চেয়ে-
তখন সাজিয়ে দিতে হাত কঁপেনা যেন
tুমিই আমার কাজলাদিদিট হয়ে
চুম এঁকে কপালে মোর
কাজলের একখানা টিপ দিয়ে।

কানে কানে এই শেষবার শুধু বলো-
“সক্ষু হল মাগো, এইবার তুই মুমো।”

৭ই সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০০৯
আছি এক হয়ে
নীলোপল সার্ব্যাল
কলামিয়া, মিসোরি

অভিল থেকে অসীমে আছি
আমি আর তুমি
আছি এক হয়ে।
আছি কালের এপারে ওপারে
আকাশ ছুঁয়ে বাতাস ছুঁয়ে
যুগ থেকে অন্য যুগে
আছি এক হয়ে।

এক হয়ে আছি তোরের আলো
পাথির গানে
ফুলে ফলে ঘাসে পাতায়;
আছি রাতের কালে চাঁদের আলো
তারাদের আশেপাশে;
আছি গ্রাহে নক্ষত্রে নীহারিকায়
ঘাসাপথের অজানায অজানায।

এক হয়ে আছি যখানে ভেস থাকে স্বপ্নরা
তাদের লাল নীল হাসি নিয়ে
তাদের নীরব ঝর্ণালায়
আলো ঠোঁটেল শুনচমকে।

এক হয়ে আছি যখানে রঙ-বেরঙের অনুভূতি
স্বপ্নময়ে অবুঝ হয়ে ফুটে থাকে
হাতমানিয় বিদে ডাকে অগলকে।

আছি পদের বুকে
কথার মাধ্যে ছন্দে ছদ্দে,
আছি সূরের দোলায়
নীরবতার আলেচ-কালেচ।
আহি সুখের দিনে রঙের নেশায়
পিউরে ওঠা ভালালাগায়,
আহি বেদনায় হাহাকারে
হতাশ মনের শুকাতায়;
মনের ষেতে যেখানে ভেসে বেড়ায়
ইচ্ছা অনিচ্ছার নৌকোপলো
জ্যাঙ্কা রাতের পিঁড়া আলোর
স্বপ্নের মাঝে,
সেইখানে আমি আর তুমি
আহি এক হয়ে।
সপ্তসাগর তলে পাটালগুরে
আকাশের প্রাণে তুমিকে
আহি এক হয়ে।

এক যুগে থেকে আর এক যুগে,
তুমি হও কবিতা
আমি হই কবি,
তুমি হও সৃষ্টি
আমার হদয় কুঁড়ে,
মিশে যাও আমার তীব্রনে,
জুঁয়ে জুঁয়ে যাও
আমার আকাশ আমার রাতাস.
আমার অস্তির ইচ্ছাপথি হয়ে
উড়ে যাও গভীরতায়।

এক যুগে থেকে আর এক যুগে
তুমি হও নারী
আমি হই গুরুক্ষ;
কোন যুগে তুমি চাও আনন্দময় বন্ধন,
কোন যুগে আমি চাই দুঃখময় মুক্তি।

বহ যুগ ধরে শুধু
আমি আর তুমি
বেঁয়ে চলেছি সৃষ্টিতরলী,
কন্ধন্ত অশান্ত জলধীর্গতকে
বস্তুলিঙ্গদ-ঘরকলের তরসমারে, কন্ধন্ত অগান শান্ত নিদ্র পুকর রাত্রিজলের মুক্ত-ভাসা খেলার ছল।

কন্ধন্ত তুমি আসা সুখের ডালি হয়ে মনের ঘর-রাহির সুখসাম্রাজ্যে ভাসে অপূর্ব রঙে আগে হরণবন্তরাজি, মনে হয় অবশেষে বেন আমি তুমি হৃদয়ী ভোরি।

কন্ধন্ত তুমি আসা যক্ষপ্রশিদ্ধে
ঘর নিদ্রার অফ্রানার বিদীর্ণ করে হিয়া উপাদির গত মেলায় সে নির্মাণে, সব অভিমুখ ধর্ষস করে তবে দিতে চাও ধরা।

কন্ধন্ত তুমি বেধের গহনে মৃত্যুজলনী সাজে আঁকুড়া করে আমার চেখনা বিচিত্র প্রেমরাজ সন্তানহেন আত্ম নারী আনন্দগীতে জগে, মৃত্যুর কোলে জয়েছি আমি ভর বাল আর ভর নাই!

নিঃশব্দের পুকুর বেশা আছে শান্ততের হেল সময়ের চেলে থেমে গেছে মেশা আছে শধু বিষ্ণু। আলোর সীমানা আঁধার পেরিয়ে হয়ে গেছে একাকার সেইখানে আমি আর তুমি আছি এক হয়ে নিশচ।।
Jilly Andrews ran into her room, weeping after overhearing a heated argument between her parents. She thought over all the issues they fought over realizing that they were fighting not about her but because of her.

Dimming the lights, she sat down with a cheery book that would hopefully wipe away all of her tears onto her bed. It wasn’t quite long before she was swept away into sleep ….

But unlike her usual dreams, where she would appear into an, this time she condensed onto the heavens above, yes, the abode of the Greek Gods. Not very far from her, stood a gate, massive with rods of gold. “Whoa,” Jilly whispered as she entered through by giving the gate a heavy push, with one big hearty smile.

Everywhere around her, she looked and saw people running around with either loads of packages or bags full of shopping gods. Looks like they’re busy around here, but for what? thought Jilly. Then suddenly people began stopping to edge into take a look at her. “Is it her?” they began questioning in voices you could barely hear. Then suddenly, a big man stepped out of the crowd and turned her topsy-turvy, facedown, and carried her off to the big golden palace.

“Hey, what the heck do you guys think you’re doing with me?” she yelled at the top of her lungs, while they carried her off, without paying head to anything that she said.

Once they brought her over, to the golden floor in front of Gods, she was greeted with a big smile from them. “Well, hello, little earthling. I hope you liked the accommodating ride to the palace,” Zeus, said as the giant dropped her onto the floor, with Jilly holding her back in pain. “Yeah, sure,” she muttered silently.

“You have been brought here to give you something very important, at least to you and us,” Athena claimed, as Jilly tried at moving a bit forward toward them. “We have been noticing the fights among your parents, and have tried at making life easier for you since you are a god child, with roots to me.

“We would like to give you something that you should value. If you keep this at hand at ALL times, then all the havoc in your house will deteriorate. “But why me?” Jilly cried. “That’s because dear child, that you have royal blood from us; your father’s side has roots from Hermes, and me; your mother’s side contains blood from Apollo and Demeter. I don’t think anyone would like to see troubles in your future that early. You may not want to hear the possible future of your parent’s fate.

“But am not I dreaming right now? I wouldn’t see that thing when I wake up, will I?” Jilly asked with a questioning look on her face. “You will dear, because this dream isn’t like others, since we have called your presence among us.”

“But anyways dear, let me explain what this object is. This is a goblet with holy water from the Styx. It is enchanted to never run out, even if you put it in the scorching heat of the sun. You shall have to conceal this very intently, for many an earthling, would like to put their dirty hands on a treasure like this. You must pass this on to future generations, so trouble doesn’t befall on them like your parent’s might.”

“How can I ever thank you enough!” Jilly exclaimed with joy. “There’s no need for that dear. If we don’t tend to our descendants, then who will?”

“Now we are going to get you back on your cozy bed and you will wake up to a new morning,” blessed Athena. Hearing that, Jilly felt a very sudden urge to fall asleep, and fell into the hands of the giant.

As Jill awoke, she found herself all comfortable, without a single ache in the back. She peered onto her desk to find a small goblet with dark liquid. “So that’s what they were talking about”, whispered still with the sleep in her eyes. She stood up to find the house peaceful and quiet. For the first time in many years, Jilly tried venturing into her parent’s room. She found them holding each other with a smile on their faces. She went into a quick run and jumped onto her parent’s bed. “Oh, sweetie, aren’t we so glad to have you.”

*Basudha is 12 and she is a seventh Grader in Ellington Middle School
কবিতা

জয়ন্ত নাগ
চেসার, কানোটিকট

অনুভূতি

তোমার নিঃস্পর্শ করতের ঈষৎ ওমের মধ্যে কপাল রেখে
অনুভূত করলাম
পৃথিবীতে এখনো অসন্তান যুগ আছে।

তোমার অলংকরণ চোখে চোখ রেখে বুঝলাম
পৃথিবীতে এখনো পবিত্র দুর্ধর্ষ আছে
যা মানুষকে মহত্ত কোন ভূমিকা নিয়ে যায়।

তোমার হাতের মধ্যে হাত রেখে জানলাম
কি করে প্রকৃতির প্রলভ স্পর্শ
সমস্ত কষ্ট জল করে দেয় এক নিশিকে।

তোমার নাথ নিঃস্পর্শ নিঃস্পর্শ হয়ে
জীবনে প্রথম
সৌদর্য সত্ত্বারের অনুভূতি পেলাম।

তোমার ভালোবাসার পরম প্রাণন ভাসতে ভাসতে উপলব্ধি করলাম
কেন তীব্রই অঠায়ন নয়
ও থুথু অত্যন্ত করে নিতে হয়।

জানতে ইচ্ছে করে

জানতে ইচ্ছে করে
মানুষ মৃত্যুর খুব ভাবে চলে এলে
কি মনে হয় তার সব থেকে বেশী করে।

সেই করে চলে যাওয়া বাবা-মার কথা?
আত্যন্ত-আত্যন্ত কথা?
প্রিয় ছোট বুঝি কথা?
নাকি শুধুই নিঃক্রিয় কথা?
অথবা কিছুই মনে হয় না তার।

সত্যত যুগলত মনস্তির কোথে কোথে
তখন ছোট আধুনিক অনুভূতি খেলা করে,
তারপর এক সময় শুনো মিলিয়ে যায় চিরতরে।

মানব মনের এই অস্তিত্ব মূহূর্তের কথা
কোনদিনও সত্যত জ্ঞানা যাবে না তিনি তিনি করে,
এ নিয়ে অনেক দশন ও জ্ঞানকথার অনুভূতি
আরও হবে
কিছু নির্ণিত সত্য আমাদের অধ্যায় থেকে যাবে সত্যত।

তবুও জানতে ইচ্ছে করে
মানুষ মৃত্যুর খুব ভাবে চলে এলে
কি মনে হয় তার সব থেকে বেশী করে।
The Knowledge Not Spoken Of

Aparna Das
Somerville, Massachusetts

Blood and Bones
(Detail)

Date: September 2008
Dimensions: 4’ X 3.5’
Medium: Acrylic, Collage

I am in trance,
Perched astride a broad stretch of Kailash
Perhaps doing penance

My hair coiled and matted
A sanyasi in the making
When my godhead began speaking
Through me she spoke in first

Aamar mon bhuliye diye
tumi aamaake tomar bondhur mauton baniye badhiye diyecho

I now translate

The mythology that is not spoken of relates
your godhead is a chameleon

The intrigue that is not spoken of relates
your godhead and my godhead had a one-night stand
in a seedy part of town
bated desperate hurried
and your godhead might have been Genghis Khan at the time

I apologize
Error in translation

The intrigue that is not spoken of relates
your godhead and my godhead coupled amorously
one jasmine-scented night
on steamy river banks
and your godhead was indeed Genghis Khan at the time

Your godhead had an inexplicable attraction to my godhead
curious in that your godhead was as drawn to
as repulsed by my godhead
as ocean and moon

The mythology that is not spoken of relates
your godhead is a germaphobe
I suspect you knew this as a child
When you first heard rumors of your godhead

In any case
the passionate nature of their encounter
would have rivaled a clash of titans

as they were churning cream into butter
their heat built to such astonishing levels
as to begin clarifying that butter into ghee

One drop
heavy with promise
fell from the sky

at that exact moment
I looked up
My mouth open in wonder
And a soft warm oily
Kiss of ambrosia
landed on my tongue

Unhappily I did not reach enlightenment

And unfortunately
for both our godheads
in the realms where our godheads were presently occupied
your godhead’s obsession with hygiene got in the way

as my godhead’s hot fetid mouth opened for him
your godhead watched
entranced and horrified
still, though reluctantly, he slipped out his tongue

gagging
he succumbed to such shock he nearly flatlined

in this darkness he struggled
cajoling his numb mind when his dead muscles had quit
he knew he had to believe that he had not kissed my godhead
you see to acknowledge that would mean
he was as filthy as her hot mouth
he wouldn’t be able to live without cracking up further?

being the mind-reader she was
my godhead was displeased

she had not even gotten to that warm melty feeling
so abruptly he had fallen from her

as hard and frozen
as a petrified tree
and more urgently still
that moment when that drop of nirvana touched my tongue
my godhead felt a tug
deep in her womb

and now
struggling in pitch
he was denying responsibility in their pregnancy

Though your godhead eventually brought himself back
he could not escape my godhead
nor did he wish to

he remained with her by her side
for all the days her belly grew
fetching her this and that and whatever was her desire
and he did so attentively
as he did for the melons he tended in his garden

finally it was time
my godhead was ripe with stretch-marks
and as she went into labor
at the local hospital
your godhead stood waiting
just outside the door jamb of the delivery room
to distract himself from her anguished cries
he began talking to the voices in his head
he calmed them by singing a lull-a-bye

their baby screamed it’s first hello to the world
when Eve bit the apple
when Krishna first played his sweet flute
to a married woman
my godhead had just bitten through the umbilical cord
releasing her baby to the world

livid she turned her jaundiced bloodshot eyes
over to where your fidgety godhead was now sitting Indian-style
rubbing his head frantically
still murmuring his story

the poisoned snake had just withdrawn to nestle
in the roots of the life-giving tree
when my godhead had had enough

fuming she flung the afterbirth
hotly flushed out
the bloody pulps struck your godhead on his face

he bolted to his feet
in violent revulsion
stamped a blinding hole into the universe

his story stopped forever

the earthy sickly sweet scent of blood
turned his stomach
shaking
he stumbled backwards

losing footing
he fell into the hole he had stamped earlier
and found his nose and belly
pressed against a spongy warm egg
with hard-boiled consistency
smelling familiarly of freshly hatched chicks

on his lips he felt the pulse in that egg
beating on his heart like a gong

something impending
grew within him
pushing at his throat

so tremendous the pressure
he drew in a yoga breath for the ages
and out it gushed in a flood
washing over his baby and the mother

as suddenly
quietness and surety filled him

that lull a bye he had earlier released to the world
that it was incomplete hardly mattered anymore
in the face of this awesome fierceness that took hold of him
he no longer needed his stories

he understood now
the mother would always know
a breath before each one he drew
and this knowledge my godhead planted in my ear

it is as a shell floating
in the tumultuous sea of women’s blood
chanced upon by the light of blue moons
oft kept mired in fear
and acted upon so rarely
as to appear divine to humankind

A Portrait of Netaji by Indramouli Saha
The artist hails from Kolkata, India
A Collage: Recent and Not-So-Recent Durga Puja Festivals and Picnic of BAGH
A Selected Sample of Alpanas:
Glimpse of a Rare Art-Form

Ruma Tarafdar Basu
Willington, Connecticut

Butterflies

Diwas

Circle

Duck
“Great Mother” by Aparna Das
Dated September 2009, Dimensions: 11" X 8.5", Medium: Pen and Ink
The artist hails from Somerville, Massachusetts

A Portrait of Helen Keller by Kumarjit Saha
The artist hails from Hooghly Mohsin College, Chinsurah, India
In a musical program consisting of Rabindrasangeet prepared for a predominantly mixed audience, it is a good idea to provide some English translations of the set of selected songs before their rendition. That aspect in itself may not sound too special to the readers. After all it is considered routine when someone normally explains the storyline of a bandish in English prose before a performer proceeds to sing a piece of Bhajan or Thumri in Hindi.

But, generally speaking, in the case of Rabindrasangeet, there is rarely a substantial storyline of any kind. Moreover, even if there is one in a handful of Tagore songs, a storyline is truly an insignificant part of the whole experience that is to be normally derived from the totality of a Rabindrasangeet. The individual words, their total structure, the poetic fervor, the tune, the rhythm, the style of singing, the mood, the musicians, and other aspects — all come alive together in a remarkable unison under Tagore’s magical touch. In Tagore’s writings of all kinds, the presence of poetry is paramount.

Ultimately, a listener is supposed to experience a new height of an artistic creation of what is called Rabindrasangeet that amounts to something significantly more sublime than a simple lyric, its message, its music, or a particular rāgā its musical notes are based on. Indeed, very early in Tagore’s career, he used to write down the name of the basic rāgā on top of each of his own musical compositions. When he matured, he abandoned this childish practice calling it a hindrance to music appreciation. But, without poetry, anything Tagorean is rendered practically lifeless.

Hence, a curious listener may rightfully want to know the inner “meaning” in a particular piece of Rabindrasangeet. Tagore himself translated some of his poetry, musical lyrics, and other selected literary work into English. Other literary giants from all over the world have translated some of Tagore’s work into English and other foreign languages.

This painstaking effort continues in many institutions of higher learning. However, many translations are not readily available to a lay person like myself when I need them the most, particularly when I frantically look for a quick reference material prior to set up a musical program.

It has been my personal experience that a particular verse of interest that is chosen for a recital is often not readily accessible in English! My urge to translate some of the literary works of Tagore originated from such dire necessity of my being able to share quickly an approximate poetic sentiment expressed in Tagore’s verses with the audience who may not be fluent in Bengali.

Personally, however, I dislike a word for word translation of a mundane storyline. Indeed, the focus should not be entirely on a story line even if there is any. The primary focus should rather be on creating some poetry in English as a kind of vehicle to carry an original piece written in Bengali. The readers should not misunderstand me. My translations are not supposed to be substitutes of Tagore’s original Bengali verses. In fact, Tagore’s own translations or anyone else’s translations are not real substitutes of Tagore’s original Bengali verses either. They just cannot be! It is that simple.

Knowing fully well that an English translation will never replace an original piece in Bengali, I attempt to come up with some simple poetry in English from an original Bengali piece of Tagore, if possible. With all my own parameters of limitations in place, I am still tempted to share two examples below.
If anyone discovers a glimpse of poetry in them at all that will be my icing on the cake to take home. Happy reading.

**Pujā: Verse No. 337, p. 140**
(Mahāvisvē mahākāshē mahākālo mājhē)

On this eternally endless universe,
Man wanders alone and puzzled.
My Lord, the unique creator:
   you solemnly exist in divine grace, yet
   utterly quietly lonesome in your infinite mystic.
In this never ending time and space,
   you, my Lord, nurture my sole,
   hold a candle under the lighted sky,
   as I look up to you for guidance.
All hustles give way as true peace descends.
Man accepts your uniqueness,
   ’midst you, the fearless and lonely seek refuge.

**Swadēsh: Verse No. 44, p. 266**
(Bidhir bādhān kāṭbē tumī émon shaktimān)

You defy our fate, you appear so strong -
But, are you really!
Our upkeep is in your hands, you take such pride-
But, isn’t that pretense!
All along you have been in the driver’s seat,
   us merely following you around
   from behind and down under -
But how can you carry that burden around,
   ’midst our formidable resistance,
   you just don’t have the strength.
Engulf us with your rules and doctrine, but remember:
   Even the weak and pale devours the urge to live.
   it doesn’t really matter how big or tall you are.
   God is after all on our side.
You can’t expect to haunt us for too long,
   by weakening the bond amongst us.
Soon after the baggage feels unbearable,
   the boat you seemingly navigate will go under.
It was a warm, spring afternoon and Rani and her sister Rebecca were walking around at the park complaining about the heat. “It’s never been so hot in the spring,” Rebecca whined. “At least not as long as we’ve been alive.” “Let’s go to the Los Angeles Metro Museum. They have air conditioning inside,” Rani suggested. “Good idea!” So the two girls sprinted off to the historical museum which was only a couple of blocks from the park.

“It’s so nice and cold in here,” Rani murmured as she walked inside. The two sisters walked around the entrance debating on where to go first. Finally they decided to go to the gem and precious stone section. Rani and Rebecca slowly walked to the gem stone exhibit and looked for their birthstones. “Look at that beautiful diamond necklace!” Rani exclaimed. Not getting any response, Rani turned towards her sister and found her observing a man. The man was dressed in a black pullover and pants. The peculiar thing was that he was wearing dark sunglasses and a baseball cap. “Doesn’t that man look suspicious?” asked Rebecca. “He looks kind of strange but I don’t know if that is suspicious,” replied Rani.

Suddenly they heard a thud and the sound of people gasping from the other side of the room. Rani and Rebecca turned towards the commotion and saw a crowd gathering around a corner and other people in the room walking towards them. As the two sisters joined the crowd, they saw a lady lying on the floor. A couple of ladies were kneeling on the floor, trying to see what was wrong. Museum guards came rushing to see what happened. Slowly the woman opened her eyes. “Should I call an ambulance?” a young man asked. “No, no, I’ll be fine,” the woman fumbled. Everybody suggested that she get medical help but she refused all offers.

“Well, I’m feeling a lot better now,” she said as she sat up. “In fact I’m meeting my husband a few blocks down and he is a doctor. Oh my, I’m getting late. Thank you all for your concern. I will be fine, really,” said the lady as she made her way towards the exit. “That’s strange. The lady practically ran away for a person who just fainted,” Rebecca remarked as she watched her leave. Rebecca turned to Rani and said “Come on, let’s go follow her!” Rani was about to protest but Rebecca grabbed Rani by the arm and pulled her out the entrance.

The two girls hadn’t gone fifty feet from the entrance of the museum when somebody hurriedly brushed past them. “Look where you’re going!” Rani exclaimed as she looked at the rude pedestrian. Surprise! It was the mysterious man from the museum. However the man paid no attention to the sisters and kept walking rapidly till he caught up with the lady. The two sisters looked at each other. “Wow! The mystery deepens,” remarked Rebecca. Rani groaned. The two sisters walked behind the couple, careful to stay out of sight. They walked for three blocks. Then the couple turned into an alley. As the sisters reached the alley they saw no sign of the couple but a green Honda sedan was leaving. Rebecca snatched a pen from her sister’s pocket and wrote the car’s license plate number on her hand. The number was: LAW-429. “Well?” Rani asked. “I don’t know what but something strange is going on,” Rebecca answered. “You’re just being a paranoid. I think you’re reading too many Nancy Drew mysteries. Let’s just go home,” urged Rani. That evening the two girls were watching the news. Suddenly the newscaster announced that there had been a theft at the metro museum. After the museum had closed that day, the
museum employees discovered that a diamond necklace was replaced by a fake one sometime during the day. An unusual event also happened in the same room in the afternoon when a lady fainted but later recovered and left on her own. The police thought the fainting lady had someone to do with the theft and said whoever had any useful information about the incident would get a $1000 reward from the museum and should contact police on their Crime Hotline.

Rebecca jumped up, turned off the TV set, and shouted; “We know the license plate of the get away car. Let’s call!” “What are you silly girls talking about?” their father asked. The two sisters could barely speak through their excitement. But finally managed to explain the events of the afternoon to their parents. “We must call the police at once,” said their mother. Within half an hour two police detectives arrived at their home. They were very grateful to get a very important clue and were confident that with this information they can locate the car and arrest the thieves. They also recommended the sisters for the award.

It was almost midnight when the family was finally ready to go to bed. Just when she was about to turn in Rebecca teased her sister, “Looks like I’m not so paranoid after all!”

* Oisharya (Moon) Dasgupta is a 5th Grader in Aiken Elementary School, West Hartford, Connecticut
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