

My World as I see it



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America, the Beautiful

From sea to shining sea.
It looked so amazingly neat and clean
Especially California
Lawns manicured
Every house in a model home
With no dust in sight
Hedges are cut to perfection
And gardens full of flowers
With no dead leaves all over the place
Roads escorted with flowers on both sides
On in the middle divider

To persons from a village with dirt roads
From India, or other third world countries
It is amazing,
It is revealing not to see filth
And dust decorating every place
Like back at home.

I wondered
How America is kept
So neat and clean
So well manicured
Like a show room
Like things in a picture book

Then I found them
I saw them working
Toiling all over the place I went
From gardens to new houses
From rich men's mansion
To the elementary schools
From hospitals in Houston
To universities in California

They work and work
Haul trash
Plant flowers
Mow lawns
Put tiles on new houses
Men and women of color
Of a different food habit

Of a different accent
Of a different breed
Toiling under hot sun
and
In freezing winter
To send money home
So that a family can eat well.

These illegals
These sometimes despised
Often exploited
Make the America beautiful
Manicuring it day after day
From sea to shining sea.

BACK

Bare Expression

The little naked girl
Barefoot and full of dust
Was running around in the village
Without raising too much hue and cry.

As she grew older
As she differentiated
She got to cover herself
For dignity,
For decency
To conform and become
A civilized woman
And gives up
primal trends
natural outfits of
The women in Amazon rain forest
The native dress of the Polynesian girls
Before missionaries taught them
To dress in the civilized way
and cover up every thing except the face.

God's pinnacle of creation
Now can be seen only surreptitiously
In adults only magazines
Or in xxxx videos or movies
Or as an anthropologic curiosity
In National Geography magazine
Or in the form of artistic expression
On stones, marbles and lithographs
To adore expensive homes and museums
As pristine reproduction of God's art
Nude but not naked
Almost alive.

If she chooses the birthday suite
She is in big trouble
Unless
She is very much
In front of the pack
Like the women on Greek island beaches
Or in Riviera
Lying on Nice pebbles
Doing sun worship
Or she is the voluptuous sumptuous model

Getting paid heftily
To bare herself
For others to shoot her
To paint her
To transform her
From indecency to ageless beauty
From immoral to ultimate expression of
Human creativity.

BACK

Cluster bombing

You are wrong
If you think that
Only America and Israel
Use cluster bombs

They have been used
For thousands of years
And being used every day all over the world
But actually for creating things
Making sure that the future survives
The uncertainty of chance

Every year
Pine trees lash out cloud of spores
Sunflowers smear the bees with millions of pollens
Fish and turtles lay out thousands of eggs
Males flood the love passage with millions of sperms
And mushrooms go ballistic

Out of these millions
With the chance worse than once in a blue moon
The progeny strolls
To bear the burden of the selfish genes

After work
I open my mailbox
And get bombarded with solicitation and coupons
Lots of mails I did not ask for
Telling me
The more I buy
The more I save
And I am not alone
Every mail box is filled with them too
And lately
My email inbox with one GB space
The favorite arena for cluster bombing

BACK

Fall in love

There she was
The beauty without any thing to
Blemish her real shape
No lipsticks
No mascara
No clothes or handbags
Or fragrance to decorate her.

Only her,
Displaying her real shape,
Enchanting curves
Delicate slim features
With no guilt or complexity.
With no pretension
No pump or show
There she is
The grand display
Of the essence of nature's artwork
Everywhere
On the horizon
Across the forest and parks
In the fall of love.

BACK

Fusion and Confusion

Does it appear to you?
Just like it appears to me
That I am in the beginning
At the middle and
At the end of my journey
At the same time?

As the fall knocks at my door
As the days become shorter
and shorter
As the coldness
Chills my heart
A voice awakens me
Look
You have not started
Any thing yet.

There are so many things
I have to do
To realize me
In the work of others
In the color of the leaves
In the paranormal
Trajectory of the pollens
That swarms and sways
My imagination.

In the same breath
I inhale my middle age
My old age
My childhood
My youth
That forms the magic carpet
To lift me high and higher
Until I am in unison
With who I really am.

BACK

Grocery List

As if to welcome home the arrival of fall
Bees were in frenzy at Costco today
So much to gather
Meat, bread, cookies and vegetables
Packaged in various ways
For the body to sustain its ephemeral state
To decay and disappear like the autumn leaves
But never to come back to the same tree again.

A mysterious voracious tube
Will be filled with
Dead bodies of other beings
Or the body parts of entities
That cannot complain or cry
Processed in myriad ways
Fried, boiled, spiced and even rare
Only to be lysed and excreted at the other end.

My grocery
A signature of my culture
My signature of annihilation
Of lives of others to have my own
To recycle the carbon atoms
To sustain me
The machine to envision
The unreal in the real world.

BACK

Looking Around

I always look at people
And wonder what makes them do
What they do every day
Again and again.

I look at couples
Holding hands
Or walking few steps apart barely talking
And wonder how did they find each other
And how is their life together
Are they really soul mates?
How many times they make love
And how many times they fight
Making up by having children

I read about the gangsters
Who shot innocent bystander at random
Or the general who ordered to drop a nuclear bomb
To make a point
And worry about his mom and dad
And sweet heart and kids
How do they feel about the life?

Every day, I see people come to work
Convinced to be somewhere
By end of the day
Or by the end of their carrier
They work from 6 in the morning
To 10 in the night or more
24, 7

I wonder about their wives
Husbands or girl or boy friends
What happens to their love?
What makes their life livable?
Is it all but a momentum?.

I look at the sky and see
Universes after universes
Creation unlimited
Unfinished
Unrealized
And look at me back
And smile at the transient manifestation of molecules.
And feel sorry and adoration for myself and others.

Does my world buzzing with
The space probes, PAM pilots, icq
And coded messages
Make any sense to kids and moms
Tending cows in the out skirts of a village
Bare foot, hungry and with a sunken belly.

When I hear some one dropping a million dollar bomb
To test the best ways to kill other human beings
I think about the poor children
Who have nothing to eat but scraps
Collected from city dumps.

Are you sure?
We are all human beings
Creature of the same life force
Do you see us all being human
All being the children of some god
God made to human order
To lead us all to heaven on earth
Or to safeguard our prejudice
to feed our homophobia
and paranoia
we all segregated by fear and hate
hybernating in our own cocoon
called civilization.

BACK

I am looking for the meaning of me

Within the ever changing clouds
I am looking for a shape
an order
a pattern
a pre designed art
a meaning of the symbols.

In the forest of
swarming pollens
of the spring breeze
In the ocean floor
Infused with planktons
I am trying to decipher
the meaning of me.

In the cry of a new born baby
in the eyes of my mom
in the trembling lips of my lover
I am trying to define myself.

In the limit of my life
I am after the limitless
the timeless void,
Called creation.

BACK

The World of Sadness

I feel sad
When a song dies down
A flower droops
A fountain dries up
I feel as if there should be no end
To what is so nice
So elegant and so much
Close to our heart

I feel sad
When the chatting ends
When the duty
(what can I do?)
Takes me away from my love
To the chores
To be mundane man again
To clean and to organize
A man has to do
what a man has to do

I feel happy
When the stars
Populate the blue sky
With no cloud in it
But only blueness all around
Like thoughts about you
Pervading my heart
My mind
And my soul.

I feel sad
I feel happy
after all
I feel
the life
in all of me
from molecules to sweetheart
from morning to moonlit night
from my heart and mind
coalescing with yours
making us
smile and shed tear
at the same time
for a loooooooooooooooooong time.

BACK

The Dance of a Breeze

I slapped my self
And killed the bug feasting on my blood.
With that I stopped
The transmission of genes
The pleasure of making love
The pleasure and the pain of having kids
And the future.

With that I realized
How easy it is to take a life away
And how difficult
To give one

With the breath
stops
The drama of pain and pleasure
The search for food and friends
The desire to have and have more
The battle cry of the enemies
The hurrahs of the friends
And the silence
Once again
Rules inside and out.

What am I then?
The platform for
The dance of a breeze
Inside me?

BACK

I try to make sense out of it

The aftermath of
Hurricanes
Inside us
With outbursts as
Shouting
Shooting
Setting our lives
In fire

I try to understand
Why people do
What they do
Where does it all lead to
Or is it the moment
That controls all
With no past
Or future in mind?

Is the moment life then?
As I live days after days
The past being erased
Bit by bit
Only remnant kept
Selectively
To torture us later
In our quiet moments
When we maul on our past
And grieve

The body changes
Like in magic
From beautiful to ugly
To degraded and worth in trash

And I wonder
What we are waiting for
Why we suffer to die some day later?
I wonder the charm of living
What is it
Why is it
And what it is
After all?

In Search Of Divinity

I usually visit the shrines
To marvel at the art and devotees
But not to seek the stairways to heaven
Which I don't need
As it is here
All around and in me.

All around me
Often hidden, buried
In the mountains of debris
Like the full moon under the dark clouds
I love to discover
All the beautiful things
Those solemnly exquisite heavenly icons
Wherever I go
Whoever I meet
Whatever I do
Whatever I see

Like a mother tending her sick child
Her only child
I love to touch and preserve each moment
The delicate but transient fractal
With all the love in my heart
To live in the heaven
In my mortal life.

BACK

In the Land of Possibilities

Long long time ago
When Vietnam in America meant Vietnam
I landed in the cradle of possibilities

I came from a land
Where every thing was defined
Which hand to use for writing
Which hand to use to eat
And who is senior and
Who can have a future and who will be servant for ever.
Every thing decided by birth and Karma

Every thing was already defined
The pencil was brown
The chalk was white
The car was Ambassador
Dinner and lunch were rice and curry
And the newspaper was Samaj
And dance was Odissi.

Every thing in life was already defined
I go to school, then to college
Then get a safe government job,
Get married to one I don't know
And have kids immediately
Raise the kids and then retire

Now
I landed in the land of possibilities.
Where any thing was possible
With no particular sequence bracketing the life
I can have kids before marriage
No kid after marriage
I can go to school after retiring
And I can dive into myriads of possibilities
What to do in life to actualize

In the land of possibilities
The limit is my imagination
What to eat
What to do in life
Where to shop and what camera to buy
What to eat for lunch and dinner.
To whom to be friend with.

The world inside me shudders

At the chance of exploring and exposing
To the land of possibilities
To enjoy science, in art and in travel
Myriad chances
To be some one great in life
Or lose it all and be a homeless
In the land of possibilities.

BACK

Invocation of Zeus

More than thousand years ago
You were banished
From the heart of the people
No one could worship you,
No more invocation of the gods
The rulers of the harvest, wind,
sea, love and romance

Instead
People became the worshipper
Of the son of God
No idols but icons
No deity
No divinity
No mystic connection
To the power of the nature
That gives us life
That sustains us

Nature became an object
To study and use its power
But with no reverence
The magic of mythology is swept
Under the carpet of technology
And innovations overwhelms us
But no more invocations.

In the midst of all my stock options
In the midst of all my databases
Emptiness pinches me like a stomach ache
I want to connect some thing, some one
beyond the walls of my limitations.

BACK

Is any thing wrong with that?

A fresh red rose
With dear's eyes
And sand dune body
Basking on the sun
Under a coconut tree

Immersed in a dreamland
An inner world
A world with no right or wrong
But eternity
Inaction being the action
Has nothing
Wants nothing
But a sense to
Observe
Absorb
And preserve

Look at me
All psyched up
For fame and position
For richness outside
With no end in sight
Night becomes my day
Days roll over
one onto another

I work and work
To fill the open space between
My birth and death
But where is the end?
What is the end?
And how is my life
Better than hers?

BACK

Killing Field

Yaksha asked Yudhisthira
"What is amazing?"
Yudhisthira said
"Human beings see death every day, every where
But can never think
That will happen to them personally."

It is hard to imagine certain incidents in life
Like the death of our parents, siblings and children
And still harder
To imagine our own demise,
Even though that is a given.
Birth comes with the guarantee of a death.

Every morning
The world offers me in the form of news
Death and more death
Mud slides in Philippines,
Boat disasters in Indonesia
Mine disasters in China

In USA
about five people die in car accident per hour
Not to speak of how many died in Vietnam by bombing
Nor die now in Iraq, thanks to our tax dollar.

We killed
And still love to kill our kind
In the name of God
Or in the name of race or tribe or politics
In old west, Europe, India, Japan, Cambodia, Yugoslavia
And Burundi

Like a drop of water on a taro leaf
Life is so fragile
Nature's fury
In the form of earthquake, cyclone, tsunami, hurricane
Drought and flood
Added to the constant human effort
To kill more and more faster and more painfully
Transforms the world to the killing field

Does not read well. Have to modify later.

BACK

Imagination

Let the thoughts flow
And carve a reality of its own
Like a river
Flowing from the mountains
For the first time
In an unchattered
Unimagined territory
Arriving at the destination
In a zigzag way.
Change
being her only passage money
Believe in her,
Being my only weapon
I want to move on.

Did you ever see?
The river looking back
With desperate eyes,
What was left behind?
What was the hard time?
Hard soil
Rocky mountains
She goes on
Without feeling sorry for herself.

She moves on
Not as a tributary
But as the river itself
Having her own identity
Own existence
The travel being the goal itself
As when she reaches
At the end
There is nothing
But the end.

BACK

Eat and be Merry

There was a big feast
after my father' death
I think the largest, I have seen
Hundreds of people from the villages
Came to feast
Many I did not know.

We also had a feast after my marriage
But smaller in scale
Not like ones
Where people spend millions in foods.

Still smaller was the feast
When my daughter was born in US
Only close friends came with small gifts

Birth and death
Intervened by the ceremony of
Legalizing the process of procreation
Are the land marks of our existence
Each one celebrated
The coming into life
As well the good bye

Each time
It is a feast
As if the road to the heart
Is through our mouths

Of course, that is the fact
No wonder
My wife toils for hours, even days
Cutting
Cooking vegetables, fishes and chicken
And I clean dishes
Before invitees come for dinner
Usually at Indian standard time

They come
They eat and eat
Snacks, main meal and deserts
And praise her profusely
You are such a good cook
All her efforts
Disappear in few minutes

To be purged on the other side of the tube next day.

And I ask like a fool
Why are we so food centric?
She thinks I am a real nut
What kind of question is this?

We are not alone
Wherever I went in the world
People are celebrating life by eating
We eat and eat
Until we can not eat any more
And let others celebrate our departure
By eating.

BACK

Life after Death

We, the mere mortals
Wish for immortality
Even as the death embraces others
Without warning

We pray
We sneak into the secrets of nature
To get the elixir of life
We engage in debates about
Reincarnation
The causality of Karma
Soul, they say, never dies
But changes body
Like we change our clothes.

(I wonder about billions of other living beings
Do they have souls and reincarnate
After being eaten, cooked or alive?)

Beyond this wishes and scares
There are people who are immortal
From the time immemorial
Their names, their homeland
May be lost in time
May not be known to you and me
Not even included in the Encyclopedias
But they live beyond time
In what they did.

They live in the caves in France, India, and China and beyond
They live in the light bulbs and satellites
In the temples, churches and mosques
In libraries, museums and dance halls
In computers, ipods and mobile phones
They live for ever
By letting me talk to my mom
Thousands of miles away

Beyond fame and fortune
Beyond the satisfaction of recognition
Beyond this frail imperfect body
Live these unknown giants
For ever and ever
For making our lives
Better and better

Living in Heaven

I wake up to the melodies of the world
To the soft music on the air
To the giggles of a small girl
To the songs of the cuckoos
To the soft sound of the sitar and violin

I wake up to the magic of the sights
To amaze at the daring display on the eastern sky
To see me in my lover's eyes
To sip the vibrant color of the murals and frescos
To marvel at the tulips with so much to show
To feel the loftiness of each word in a poem

I wake up to the magic of the smell
Of the evening roses, of primroses
Of the hot spicy dishes
To her enticing aroma near by
To the scented fresh air of the burning incense

I wake up to the magic of her touch
To the warmth of the monsoon rain drops
To the closeness of the melting snow flakes on me
To the snuggle of my baby girl
To the kiss of the spring breeze

Alas
Great men and birds are known
Only after they are gone.

BACK

Lost in the Jungle of Living

Working, doing what things
People do every day
Every year
Until they can't do any more
I asked myself
What am I doing any way?
What am I after
What gives me
The core of life?

Then I remembered you
The sweetness of being
With one, you love
Being able to say
I love you
Being able to share
A smile
A touch
A breath
A tenderness of being wanted
And wanting to give it all
To dissolve in the moment
Without
Being worried about the future
Or resenting the past
Just becoming
The chocolate
That melts in your mouth.

BACK

Me and my World

As I was driving,
I heard this from the radio
and as I was thinking of this
so many other things
Also crept into my mind
Like
Which came first?
A person dancing to a music
Or the beats of a drum to guide her steps
How did the beats come to the mind of the musician
So on and so forth.
I am always suprised by simple things.

Then I was looking at me
At my world
My tiny world
Consisting of me and my laptop
With a connection to the inner world
And the outer
Expanding and helping me
To get what I want
Instantly, most of the time
If I know how to ask the right question.

I become the world I want to be in
But with no intention of changing any one
But enriching me
Questioning my believes
Discarding what I don't need
Relishing the days left for me to
Work and comprehend what I am doing.

BACK

My Grandmother

Hello grandma
You lie there
Under the layers of earth
and history speaks
in your bare bones

Do you remember the good old days
When you had grand kids
All over you
On your shoulder
On your lap
On your legs
And surrounding you
With budging eyes
And open mouth
Listening to ghost stories.

Your digits
Used to be covered with wrinkled skin
Brushing away dust from my forehead
They touched my forehead
When I knelt and touched your feet
To bless me to excel in school

Your short tiny legs
Barely padded with aged flesh
was the sleeping bag for me
to lie down after the school
and hear the stories of long gone days

The skull
That looks so scary today
was beaming with smile
at my successes at school
or looking at me
with a million to one smile
when I come home
to curl up beside you
night after night
to share the warmth
of your heart and mind.

Where did you go
leaving behind your cage
that slowly becomes a part of the mother earth?

BACK

My Mom and Molecules

My mom

Never thought of molecules or mitochondria
Mostly stuck with her kids, cows and cats
While I look into the mouse brain with the computer
To find the genes that mess up our moods

Then in the evening I look at the moon
The lonely moon behind a dead tree branch
With amorous frogs pleading for love
And dream of Brundaban
Where Radha is dancing for the eternity
To the tune of the flute player.

The sweet and soft evening breeze
Caresses my face
Like my unknown lover's touch
Memories stroll into me
About my mom,
My grandma
The conch's sound of the evening
Welcoming the night actors
Fireflies and frogs

Here

I think of the life flowing underground
Stuffed with myriads of cross-talks, pathways, signals
Synthesis and apoptosis
To make us breath, smile and weep in silence
And crave for some one who is not there to start with

There I see the mighty mitochondria
The miserable maniac mouse
My long gone loving grandma
My far away getting old mom,
The wonderer me
And my lovely daughter Manisha
As tiny pallbearers of time
As the components of the conveyor belt for the selfish genes
Living and loving and losing to find again
The moments of our lives.

BACK

Mystical Reality

The weather was cloudy and cold
Not real like in southern California
Sunny and dried to the bone.
But a reality after all.

Laying on the bed
Clutching to the over sized pillows
I was thinking about it all
What is happening outside?
What is happening inside me?
And if there is an universal law
Like that of Einstein's to combine it all
And make sense out of
The reality of being alive
The search for the salvation
The quest for some one to love
Or is it all a grandiose hoax
Called maya.

People are excited
Even animated
Doing what they do
While to others it might sound dumb
Even crazy
From jumping up and down
While watching sports on TV
To Bungee jumping
To go wild after finding
An interaction between two molecules.

Some people get excited
To talk dirt about others
"Did you know .?"
While others worry about the one eyed frog
That is becoming extinct
Traders yell and buy shares
Moms cook, clean and
Never think of microeconomics or atoms

Some where all these activities
Join secretly to make the labyrinth
To transform us into kids to
To sit on merry-go-around
On and on for ever.

BACK

Pandemic Infection

She is thin
Thinner than the legs of a heron
He is fat
Fatter than the Happy Buddha,
Her eyes hidden under coke bottle spectacles
His hair on his head could be counted
With fingers on one hand.
Her hair is hidden from the view in public
Tucked under the black head cover
For private viewing only

He has a beard
A garden, not attended for ages
She has a limp
A twisted foot due to birth defect
He is on a wheel chair
After loss of both legs
In a mission ill defined.

She can barely speak
Thanks to a stroke on one side
He can barely put food in his mouth
Thanks to Parkinson's.

She is in penitentiary
Thanks to a crack habit
He is on a watch list
For terrorism
Thanks to a mix up in names

Both are infected
By the same bug
That honors no barriers
Of ocean, mountains, language, customs, cult
Or creed, carrier even age
The symptoms are generic
Lots of smile, tears,
Heart ache, trembling voices
Waiting and cuddling and waiting again
The incurable disease
That makes life worth living.

BACK

Parallel Universes

As I walked
Universes passed along me
Cars on autobahn zipped with a speed of 150 km per hour
Besides the chickens strolling on the dirt road besides the cow pasture
People in 747 jumbo jet cruising at an altitude of 40 000 feet
Waved at the teenager bride in a bullock cart
With preying eyes
The bare breasted women in Nice doing sun worship
Glanced at the widows in Varanasi praying
In knee deep water.

As the naked kids played
The soccer ball made out of newspaper
On the dirt and muddy field
The space probe to the Jupiter and beyond
Sent photos to JPL lab with dazzling color

From the safe height beyond the radar detection
The B2 bomber dropped the cluster bombs
On bare feet naked kids collecting cassava roots.

As the automated machine
Read the brain waves
And as the expression of thousands of genes got
Computed in few seconds
The time sat for eternity in the shade of a mango tree
With the boy with a stick tending his goats.

As the night fell
The crickets took over the world around my home
Never knowing the rushing sound
Coming from the speeding cars on nearby freeway
People rushing to nowhere
In parallel universes.

BACK

Picture Imperfect

The past passed so fast
The days got hidden by the dust of living
Memory modified, edited or deleted
To adapt to what we want to be

Some things we swear
Didn't happen
Wish they didn't
But they did.
The photos are the minutes of the past
The moments of pleasure
And
The moments that did not pan out
The way we wanted to.

There I see
The babies born, crawl, cry and kiss
The girl can't wait to be a woman
The boy in the sand hole in the beach
The birth, the death,
The growing up and growing old
And going to grave so suddenly

I want so much to hug that small girl
And run after the tiny toddler
But they are only in pictures now
Even though they are here
In a different form
At the telophase of growing up

What about me?
In the late afternoon
I am still a wonderer
A wanderer
Combing for the essence of being alive
In books, in smiles and in tears
Watching people and me
As we suffer to love
And love to suffer
Like butterflies
Stung with the thorns of the roses.

BACK

Purba Purusha

When I was a small boy
I used to touch the feet of my grandma
Before going to take a test
She used to give me
Ashirbada
'ajamar hoi thaa
Don't die and don't be born

I am not sure
She understood what she was asking for
The eternity of the body
Which she did not have
Neither you nor I
Nor the tiny bacterium

Still we wish
And never hesitate to behave
As if we will never perish
We live for the eternity

I don't know why
After you were gone
I feel like my packing time has come
But what ever I see
I can't pack it any way
My possessions, my fame and recognition
All dissolve like a shadow in a dark night
Only I will have the memories
Of you, my grandma and the kids
I leave behind
And become one of you
The purba purushas
(the ancestors)

BACK

Scary Thoughts

I would like to fill up my moments
With something to do
Watch TV or read something
Or go to parties
To talk about things
That I can not solve any way
We just talk and talk
Eat and eat
And laugh and laugh
Having a good time after all.

It is scary to think about
Time without those
The moment of silence
When I have to face myself
One on one
And confront the question
What am I doing any way
For the last so many decades?

It is nice to be aloof
From myself
Pursuing something
Easy to do
Needing no discipline
Or sacrifice of desire
Just following the protocols
Of living as I am supposed

In the midst of this good life
Something pokes me from behind
Where will these all end
When I go away for ever?

BACK

Seeing the Impossible

In the ripples of the ocean
Where the full moon signs
I see the ever lasting hope of me

In the trees of the winter's dark days
I see the blossoms filling up the empty space
Like my hope in the midst of vast despair

In the epitaphs
I see the dad coming home
To kiss the baby and hug the mom
And smiles spilling over the horizon

In the fallen petals
In the morning of a gloomy day
I see the cupid's arrow
Smearred with kisses

In the old dusty
airline boarding pass
I read my happiest days
And the nights
Filled with miracles of love

BACK

Sisyphus's Dream

Every one chided me
Don't sit there
Do something
And I did

As a student
I was busy
As a worker
I am really busy
Exhausted when I come home
To eat and do more work
And then sleep
With the thought
Tomorrow I have so much to do.

In my dream
I am working too
Stumbling on my ways
Due to mishaps and limitations
Working and working whole night
To wake up exhausted
And start my day again
I am on a treadmill
Twenty four, seven

Then I read
"Don't just do it
Sit there"
That was strange to me
But some thing different
So I did
I sat there closing my eyes
Watching my breath
Calming my nerves

But my mind was the autopilot
On a whirl wind trip
Ruminating my past
Inspecting my fears and desires
Entangled in the web of confusion
I was lost in my self
I never knew
'Just not to do something
And sit there '
Could be so hard to do.

BACK

Spring Cleaning

In my childhood
I learnt to do daily chores
In the morning
To brush, to go to toilet
And take a bath to clean my body
Every week I clean my clothes I use
And so often I clean my bed sheets

We dust and vacuum our house once a week
And go through my mails every day
To clean up the unwanted snail mails
Messages in Outlook and in mobile phone
On a regular basis
I get rid of old files from laptop too
and update the software bundles

So quickly,
My desk becomes a mess
So I clean it regularly and file documents
And once in spring
We have a garage sale
To get rid of what we don't want
But we did or thought we did
Once upon a time.

I always forget
To clean something else
My mind
That has accumulated
Stuff for generations
From my childhood believes
To traumas, nightmares
To what my parents said to be true
To what my society taught me to be right
To what my old books said to be state of the art.

With time every thing has changed
But I never bothered to look at my mind
To wake it up from siesta
To question
The validity of my believes and thoughts
To update them
Or to delete the obsoletes.

My mind
Remains a storehouse of fossils
An old banyan tree trunk
Of all I wanted to survive in the past
But may be hurting me now
Still
I do not dare to remove them
And confront my own inadequacy.

BACK

Sweet Surrender

We prostrate to the sweet surrender
Like the grass blades to a snow storm
Like a floating leaf on a stream
Like my father in his grave
Like the devotee in complete unison with the supreme

We surrender to the moment
Along with our clothes
We rid of all the worries of uncertainty of the future
All the past mishaps
All the would have been nice scenarios
And all the why me syndromes

We become the fragrance of the flowers in the wind
Not the salmons
We become bamboos in a hurricane
Not the pine trees
We surrender to our selves
To be alive
Live
Not to struggle for our existence.

BACK

Temporarily in Phase

Like a Tibetan prayer wheel
Every thing repeats
Twenty four seven
From my heart beat
To the musical overtures
Moon's wean and wax
The glorious sunset follows
The picturesque sunrise
The winter roles into the spring
That jumps quickly into the lap of the summer
Which hibernates in the den of the winter again
Every thing repeats
From cell cycle to earth's serenade around the sun
As if the world is running on a treadmill on a spot.

On the other hand
Only the change is the signature of permanence
Gone are the days of the manual type writers
The slide rules
The black and white TVs
And fountain pens
Every body is looking at the LCD screen
And typing away Incessantly.
Instead of tuning the monstrous radio
I listen to the music online
Calling India does not consume a day
Or cost an arm and a leg
I don't even need a phone
To call some one overseas.
My tiny tender baby daughter
My ever sleepy baby boy
Are all grown up and on their own now
The thunderous voice of my father
Is silenced for ever
My baby sisters' kids have babies
Youth of my mom and even mine
Can only be seen in photos.
The eternal rhythm
Of birth and death
Of heartbreaks and ecstasy
Of gaining and losing it all
Of soprano and silence continues
Ignoring the job that time does on all of us.

BACK

The Absolute Gifts

They come as absolute
With no possession
Wrathless
Sinless
Ageless
Toothless
cloth less
Priceless
To conquer our hearts
And change our life for ever.

With their first cry
They ignite smile on our faces
And wipe out all our troubles
Joining hearts
Bridging families
And gluing relations
And
We look at them
And wonder
How did we live without them?
So long?

BACK

The Bipolar Oak Leaf

The big oak tree in front of my house
Is losing leaves
Like a past thirty men
Slowly but surely
With every kiss of a breeze
A leaf dives in a spiral motion
And dissolves into its units again
Carbon, nitrogen and hydrogen.

On one side
There is the stark reality of
Decay and demise
Remembering the misery of
Days courting the rain
Thunderstorm and parasites
The epitaph says
Life is full of sorrow
And ends in sadness too

In the brisk touch of the morning sun
Or of the ending rays of the day
The same leaves on their way to the grave
Smile and dance with the glee of a newly sprouted
Monarch butterfly
Like they have done all their lives

Celebration of a life
Celebration of the end of a journey
With the final words
It was not that bad after all

BACK

The Creatures in the Basement

My wife is upset with me again
She never wanted to see those creatures
Down there, crawling
We better call the pest control
She said
And kill them all,
Once for all.

For me
A different story
A vision of every life's right to survive
In any form and shape
Who am I to destroy?
One's for the sake of mine?

Instead of disgust and fear
I am fascinated
By the beautiful shape of their bodies
By the hundreds of legs one uses to walk so quickly
While the other one can jump 100 times of its own length
And calls for its mate desperately
With a voice so shrilled.

With not much to eat
Nothing to drink
No friend or lover to give company
Each leads a life of a hermit.
How can I kill them?

BACK

The Dance of Disintegration

A dead baby deer on the road
Never knew what hit it.
Reminds me the teenager bride
Dead by choice
Or in the absence of it

Looking at the decay of these two
Beautiful designs of the nature
I wondered
Was it all a waste?
Is the dance of disintegration
Mocking at the our lives
Even though we ignore it.

The softness of the skin
The perfectly designed eyes
The elegant gait
The tender loving heart
For the lover and the kids
All ceased to manifest
Like a soap bubble

Then
Who am I ?
Why am I
Searching for eternity
In my mere existence?

BACK

The Final Glow of Life

The leaves fly away from the tree
like restless teenagers eager to leave home.
They are flying all over the place, in the wind,
like small kites.

It is a celebration,
a celebration of death and demise
but still very beautiful.
It is like self-realization of human beings
before they leave this earth.
The real color is revealed finally.

Again likes the old people,
being supple, toothless and hairless like babies,
the leaves look very tender and soft
even though as a close look it is not so.

I wonder about many things.
What happens to the gene content of the leaves?
What happens to the protoplasts and
the intricate network of veins that sustained the leaves and
made all the food synthesized?
It is back to the elements now.
Degraded to nitrogen, carbon and hydrogen,
to be recycled to serve as the nutrients in the soil.

This is the first time;
I am looking at the changes in color.
I am seeing the vast arena with colors
as if some one painted it.
I guess it is the nirvana that people seek,
the final glow of life.

BACK

Memoir of an Arid Trip

In the heart of Phoenix
Embraced by the desert sun and wind
I relax, inside a Burger King
Taco bell or Wendy's
With French Fries, Burrito or a burger
Sipping a big coke with lots of ice
Meet the girl of my dream
with a big smile and every thing else
Welcome, my friend, she said
You are the best
And showers me with smooches
Instantly we know each other forever
Like desert knows the sun

Then we drive to Las Vegas
For a drive in wedding
To the sounds of the champagne bubbles
We taste the nectars of paradise
All over again

I am in my heaven
Until I am stung with the cactus thorn
While sipping nectar from the cactus flower

At the first sight of the tiny drop of blood
I pack up my gear and move
On my four wheel drive
Through the terrains of nude hills
Joshua trees, thrown away coke bottles and big Mac containers
I search for the elusive one
My bosom buddy
My soul mate
All over again
For my heart's instant gratification.

BACK

The Phoenix of the Moonless Night

Ice crystals form all around
A sense of winter on a summer night
A sense of being left alone
In the middle of the journey
On desert echoing with sandstorms
I am lost
With no passage in sight.

What happened to you?
My lovely passionflower
What happens to us?
The poor creatures
Chasing mirages called love and touch
We have sprinkles
But never a monsoon
Satiation
Never clings to us
Disappears like water
On Death Valley

I want so much
The ice to melt
To lift me from my sunken feelings
Of being alone all over again
Tears, please endow me
Once again.
With your embrace
Let my all sorrow
Melt away
Ice crystals from all around me

My lovely passionflower
Stranded on the path of life
You are not alone
All of us, the seekers of paradise
The seekers of visions beyond our reach
We encircle the globe
Hand in hand
Embracing
Sharing
Our hope and desperation
We, the phoenix of the moonless nights

BACK

The Quest of a lifetime

As the night falls
In the lap of myriad stars
As the crickets think they own the world
I think of you, me
The street urchins
The sea urchins
The orangutans
And the stinky bugs
The jasmines and poison ivies

I think of the wonders
In the life of ours
In the life of brines shrimps
About our sojourns in this world
Where did we come and
Where will we go
And what are we doing here any way?

You know what.
It is scary to think about it
In stead of placing blames
Collecting fames
Enjoying hearsays
Eating and doing things
To be lost
In the vortex of life.

Still, I think every time
I look at the stars
Feel the breeze
Whispering me softly
Touching me like my long lost lover
That is it!
The answer after all.

BACK

The Right Way to Live

From the jaws of death
I emerge, the frail old man
To become the playhouse
Of diseases and discomfort
To retire into the life of
Endless leisure and solitude
To enter the hectic days in the rat race
Office politics, spousal conflicts
And the insanity of
Dealing with teenager kids
To fall prey
To the magic of love
Wet kisses and warm bear hugs
To bear the days of home works,
Tests, parties and making it out
To enter the pre-teenager days
Of roller skates, baggy pants
Cartoons and plays and more plays
To enjoy the birth days, red balloons
To experience
For the first time on the bicycle
Learning to talk for the first time
To the faltering steps of
Learning to walk for the first time
To enjoy the first smile
And the first look at the world
To greet the world with the first cry
To return to the sojourn to the womb
With no worries, no tests,
No problem but serene solitude
To experience the glories of union
Of a man and woman
To reach the nirvana
In la petit mort.

BACK

The River of Life

I began as a small stream
in a paddy field
in palm and banana groves

I grew up
fed by the monsoon storms
mangoes
pineapple
jackfruit
rice
and curry

I moved
made my way through
dust
noise
drains
snakes
temples
mosquitoes and
beggars and artists
atman,
corruption
yoga and meditation

to see the golden gate
to the land of opportunity
to the land of mosaics of cultures
to the land of science and technology
to be somebody
(I do not know what)

Now I am a grand gemische
of Ganges
mississippi
Yang-tse
Amazon
and Danube

Inside me
as the time flows
emotions swim like salmons
while

my shore
is landmarked by
high speed computers
genes
molecules
hollywood gimmicks
guns and commercials
and el pollo loco
quiero taco bell?

Every moment
I renew myself
with fresh water of ideas
sometimes a lot
sometimes face the drought

My outside
is like hills in Calif in summer
dry and barren
withering the storm of aging
while the interior
is as innocent as a new born baby
looking forward to life
with wide open eyes.

I am a silent spring
a fountain of life
I know where I came from
but where I am going
and why?
I don't know.

BACK

The Show goes on

The crumpled petals
Take their last breath
In the evening of demise

The old deceased woman
A collection of bones
Awaits for the cremation

The dear's remnant stinks
After the satiated tiger sleeps

Death and decadence rule
The dark corridor of living

In the crack of the concrete highway
Two leaves of a tiny plant smile
The passionate rose buds
Wait patiently to spray their aroma
On unsuspecting bees and butterflies
With iridescent colored wings.
The tiny baby girl blossoms
Becomes the dancing peacock at the sight of the rain cloud
The gait of the newly born deer
Erases the trauma of an untimely death.

The show goes on
Even though
We
Mere objects for the decoration of the universe
The plants
The animals
The flowers
The jewelries
Paintings and sculptures
The soap bubbles in dazzling colors and shapes
Lose it all and return to oblivion.

BACK

The Wealth of Emptiness

Like the circle of zero
The ecstasy of having nothing
Surrounds me
Permeates me
Overwhelms me

I see no needs
For all I had
Struggled to have
Against my wishes
To be a façade of being
Defined by her, by him
And then
Some even I don't know

As all the possessions vanished
Like the winter breath
I saw no needs
In preoccupation
With collection of accolades
Accumulation of prizes
Of positions
Or domination
But in the dissolution
Of myself
In the serenity of emptiness

BACK

Good bye Winter

The winter is saying goodbye to the spring
Like the ladies after an Oriya party
The buds are waiting and waiting
Like the husbands with engine running

I was still there
In a heavy jacket
With cold fingers snapping pictures
Collecting moments like a miser squirrel
The beauties, displayed so flagrantly
As bare as it could be
Flaunting their luscious curves
The trees stand there
Like apsaras in Konark

Like a swarm of butter flies
Like a bunch of giggling teenager girls.
The flowers of all colors
Peek through all the possible
And impossible places
Like the youth touching me and you
And all the creatures.

I was there
In chilly 'spring' morning
Thinking of you,
The flowers of the Eden
Ephemeral, but sweet hearts
One day like magnolia petals
We will stud the soil

But why do we worry?
We live all our moments
Like cherry blossoms of the spring
Like maple leaves of the fall
We decorate the earth
Again and again.

BACK

Be Children again

Then we became children again
Running and giggling
Touching and rolling on the meadow
Smelling the fresh rain drops
On glass blades.

Slowly the familiar things
Became magical
Mystical
And unfamiliar
I looked at them
I looked at you
With lots of curiosity
As if I have not seen
Them or you before

The creation
And degeneration
All stuffed with delight
Love and care
Rules
And principles
Shown in colors
And shapes
And gait and smile
I lost myself in this thought
Until you shook me up
And said,
Hey, wake up
Let us run and run
And play hides and seek
And off we went
In search of ourselves.

BACK

Valentine's Curse

In the early hours of the day
When the sun is still in REM sleep
I, the commuter for life
Think about
St Valentine's letter
The demise of kamadev
The ecstasy and agony of trysts
Flares and fall outs of poppy love
Love loss languish of married life
And life after the heart ache.

I also think of
Sun and sunflower
Moon and water lily
The dark exterior of a lamp
Trying desperately
To write a love letter
To the flame upstairs

I think of the evening in my village
The transient flame of an oil lamp
Protected by the sari of my mom.
The essence of the night jasmine
The smell of memories
The urge of the wishes unleashed
Only to be restrained by my palm pilot
And still dare to break the dry coconut
To offer at the feet of Valenine.

The theme is love and how it is dangerous (St. Valentine, who was executed after his letter to the Prison warden's daughter was revealed), sweet (coconut water) and pure (essence of a jasmine flower) painful, transitory (poppy flower) and beyond form (atanu, kamadev made formless by Shiva). It is delicate and unstable needing constant protection (like a flame in an evening oil deepa). It is formless as form has no bearing on the intensity of relationship. It is the water (mandakini) inside a tough coconut, residing in every one and sometimes is not recognized by the person close and intended (like the dark exterior of a lamp, deepa). Then there is the regimented living process (commuter on train before the sunrise), which is regulated by the duty bound mundane living (palm pilot). Marriage starting with or without love fills the life with ecstasy, which predates the empty existence after the loss of a dream, if it happens. Still people (with an exterior which is tough and misleading) have desire to seek out to give all they have (coconut water) in order to sacrifice themselves by jumping into the fire like insects emerging after the summer rain (jhadi poka)

BACK