

Poetry Series

**Anuradha Bhattacharyya**  
**- poems -**

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## Anuradha Bhattacharyya(06-12-1975)

Dr. Anuradha Bhattacharyya is author of Chandigarh Sahitya Akademi Award winning novel One Word (2016) , which is a novel about the love of literature as an art. She is a prolific writer and poet of long standing, with poetry on topics ranging from life, love to death and immortality. Her first book of poems was published in 1998. Since then she has been widely anthologized. She has published several short stories. Songsopok, The Writers' Blog publishes ANURADHASPHERE, which is a monthly column of her stories. Her first novel The Road Taken, discusses many features of contemporary life neatly packed in the plot of a love story.

She has published two academic books, The Lacanian Author and Twentieth Century European Literature. Knots is her book of poems on the theme of friendship and Lofty - to fill up a cultural chasm is on the theme of love and responsibility.

Anuradha is the only daughter of Professor Tapan Kumar Bhattacharyya and Chitra Bhattacharyya. Chitra's father Professor Ashoke Kumar Bhattacharyya is a well known art historian, who served as the first Director of the Indian Museum till 1975 and published 37 books thereafter. He received the 2017 Padma Shri Award in the field of archeology. Anuradha's father was a professor of Engineering and a strict father. Anuradha is known for being rebellious and willful. Her stint with poetry has emerged from her repressed emotions. She graduated from Banasthali Vidyapith in 1996. It was a place she did not like to live in. She completed her Masters in English from Jadavpur University in 1998. There she lived for two years with her grandfather. Professor Ananda Lal was her tutor. It was during this term that her poetry came to light as professor P. Lal published her first book of poems.

She is a PhD from IIT Kharagpur, where she received her JRF from the year 2000 to 2003. After living in seven different cities since her birth, she settled in Chandigarh in 2006 with her government service as Assistant Professor of English in PG Government College, Sector-11, Chandigarh, INDIA. She lives with her husband Atul Singh and daughter Anusmita.

# Apple

Each apple  
When tasted  
Feels sweet  
When chewed  
Quite sour  
When swallowed  
Leaves a bitterness  
In the mouth.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Art

Too much sacrifice of life  
In walking a dog  
Painted on oil paper  
Degenerates unfinished  
In fifty five words.

Life takes ash faces  
Not as residues of consumption  
But as consummated  
Libidinal investment.

Poor sacred resistance  
Fails to recite the bygone  
In forgetful ears.

Deliberate negation,  
Renaming of a relation  
Do not deceive the  
Instinctual.

But it's too late  
Before the rebellion  
From inside  
Conspires to triumph.

And when it does  
It blows not only  
The monuments and dams,  
But the very life.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Audience

They clamour to partake in  
Delight of my encore.  
I exalt in their adulation.  
Every day I come here to display  
My talent for rendition  
Of the folklore heard  
Centuries before  
And will be heard  
For centuries to come.  
They crane their necks  
To welcome me;  
I disperse their patience  
With a handful of grub.  
It makes me feel  
The day has been earned  
By fair means;  
Then I can return  
To my humble dinner at home.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Baking Bread

Having sold his entire life  
Baking bread in a tavern  
With a shaky disoriented wife,  
My father had a plan.

He exhorted me out  
Of the dull, charcoaled shop  
To the prominent hub  
Of the world of books.

I, bespectacled  
Under the lamp,  
Enlightened my vision  
For a better profession ...

Thus far was all I could stamp  
On my credentials.  
The rest is beyond my reach,  
Beyond my father's dreams.

Disappointed,  
To the core of infancy,  
I, belligerent,  
Pedal back to the bakery.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Captive Without Bars

A piquant whistle  
Has shattered the panes.  
The window, perpetually open  
Confides secrets of the world  
Indiscriminately now.  
What bricks and stones  
Could not, did the whistle.

Poor frames, stultified  
Hang motionless.  
No more easy rejoicings  
Of shut-in content.

A captive without bars, now  
Invade hot tongues of secrets,  
Hot, over-ripe sauce:  
Scarlet, green and yellow;  
Poor fellow without panes  
Scare-crowed.

Hollering demi-abstracts  
Shuffle down the streets.  
Logos garb crabbed  
Physiognomies.  
Clamorous claims of  
Badges, stamps, certificates  
Of earned achievements  
Invade slumbering calm within.

Diminishing returns -  
Physical prowess:  
Throat, fists, feet,  
In respective departments  
Signalize settled signifiers.  
Dogs begin to howl  
The frames hang mute.

A captive without bars;  
Choices clamour chaotic

Provisions, pick or refuse -  
Peaks or rebukes.

Entered and fumigated  
Roaring monsters exhale  
Venomous fumes;  
Where cats pawed scratchless,  
Now chase rats, play  
Chain, chain, I spy you games.  
Creepers extend  
Clutching fingers;  
Warbling puddles  
Of precipitated  
Aphrodisiac steam  
Peep and splash in.

Metal rusts, wood rots,  
Brick crumbles, glass breaks,  
A weak thread knotted  
Through and through,  
Perplexed, strained,  
Quivers and bursts.

Barbed wires answer not  
The barrier required.  
Nor do netted nylon,  
Nor leather curtains.  
The rat chase has multiplied  
To reptiles and predators.

Swarms of lies, come  
Wolfing jaws gaping  
At ephemeral joy  
Inside, now exposed  
By defenseless frames -  
Woesome inevitable days.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Discourse

The index of the point of a spear  
In parabola directs action.  
Touching ground leaves no clear  
Statement of its course in air.  
A sleek quick motion whizzing  
Through thick and thin disappears.  
Light rootless objects get stirred,  
Bewildered breathless reactionaries.  
Discourse is self ironic, tracing  
Darting spears, in-construable spirits.  
Somewhere down the line in history  
We too have been caught mid-air and hauled.

Date: Knots 2012

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Ecstasy

Sometimes in my dreams  
I suffocate myself  
In the pressure of  
Your clasp, and then  
Lie limp, as if  
You have picked me up.  
In my dreams do I  
Sometimes scream, sometimes cry,  
And then wet my pillow  
A while.  
This wakes me up  
Every morning at five.

Sometimes when alone  
I close my eyes,  
I look in the mirror of my lid,  
You stand there gazing  
Down at me, for I'm small –  
Four years ago I dared not look up,  
But now I have no colour  
Rising to my cheeks,  
Only the lips burn for something,  
You know.  
This keeps me still  
For a long long time.

Sometimes I put soft music  
To my ear,  
And put off the lights,  
Then I can be in space,  
Where everything disappears  
And you appear like a  
Shining star which  
I want to hold;  
Like I used to when  
I was a little girl.  
And I open up like a flower  
To receive you.

Sometimes I lie on the grass,  
And let the sun  
Wet me;  
It seems very close nearby,  
As if you have touched me.  
A thrill runs down my spine.  
And I throw up my hands  
To touch you;  
I forget where I am,  
I forget the truth,  
I forget the sun,  
I think it's only you.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Give Me A Rose

I shall give you a surprise  
One day, my love...

When the sky is not downcast  
And the fields aren't swaying in fright,  
When my search for the best  
Prize in the world is over  
And the way ahead is clear,  
I shall have a glimpse of the finest  
And the purest of affections,  
When the long sought treasure  
Of the jealous dragon is retrieved  
And the fiercest beast in man  
Is slashed to death,  
I shall find the heart in me  
To collect my dues  
And claim my latitudes,  
When all is painted in bright hues  
And my returns are pleasurable,  
Then, my dear, then I shall,  
And never forget me until then,  
I shall present you the perfect surprise.

What if the blue sky never appears  
And the fields fear the incessant storm?  
What if the prize of the day is won  
By another  
And the foggy days trouble us,  
Where shapeless and imperfect nature pursues,  
While the beast safeguards the dragon's snare?  
Would you scale the toughest peaks  
And be granted your dues,  
Figuring what makes a perfect picture  
Exactly?  
Then, failing all the promises, then  
What will surprise you?  
What will you do?

When the grey sky groans

And the rough ways torment  
I shall carry on with the only thing  
That gives peace  
And perseverance  
And I shall take the brush in my own hands  
To challenge the colour of ruin,  
Restoring the loss of a dream  
With perfect love.

Then,  
Not forgetting me for a single moment,  
Strengthening your heart  
With my love's strength,  
Capturing your dreams,  
You travel as distant as you wish,  
While I wait holding the perfect treasure  
Right here,  
With a gift more nearer  
More comforting than any other,  
A token of the purest affection  
One could gather;  
I ask you now  
Not to wait for another day  
But celebrate the present hour  
And give me a rose.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Hounds

What hounds are these  
That sniff at me;  
Am I in decay?

Blood has trickled  
Like perspiration  
And left me smelly.

A death-like grip  
Of inevitability  
Has woken me.

The ghosts of my fathers  
Haunt me,  
I can not escape.

They encircle me -  
A castrated carcass  
In a sweat.

A pounding heart  
Now no more  
Can say.

O I know their call -  
The forgotten familiar  
Call for war.

Transpired fumes  
Have gathered up  
In mushroom clouds.

These clouds are formed  
Of deceit  
Saturated.

They'll fall;  
Time has come  
For retribution.

Father who sowed  
Venom in my egg  
Is dead.

My poor flesh  
Barely born  
Must pay.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Incognito

There is no vision, only blinding light.  
It is not after all  
A mechanical matter  
Of cognitive development;  
Not the change of a squeal  
To a deep drawl;  
Not the celebration  
Of one's eighteenth birthday;  
Not the switching on of a lamp ...

Passive fingers catch what light  
Drops now and then –  
Then the window is shut.  
The sun spreads its wings wide,  
And the window opens –  
The earth receives the sun,  
The grove the breeze,  
The ocean the flood.

It's not one of those diurnal courses  
Counting which we grow ...  
The pigeon flew by the spell,  
Spun crazy fancies, weaved  
Dreams of hilarity and tears,  
As by the magic wand.  
Fell.

Now the magician has gone.  
There is no vision, only blinding light.

In the room there's scope  
For shuffles and reshuffles of furniture,  
Entries and departure –  
There's space for every one.

The moment of perfection  
Has passed,  
For action dramatic too  
Should have its share;

Only the sight of blood nauseates;  
Truth and beauty are different,  
So is heroism –  
Why kill?

Perhaps it's a game.  
Sport is on the chart, shoot.  
More blood will be cooked,  
It's the hit and try method,  
Not a splash of water on the fire of youth.  
There's heat in the veins,  
Balls too:  
One will surely hit the spot.

Let there be blinding light,  
Let perfection be passed,  
Let the window open wide,  
Let the cooing pigeons fly.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Lure Of Discovery

These alluring castles  
Hurry you to quick sand.  
Not only is there no fountain,  
But disaster.  
Die we must  
For lack of adventure  
As much as mischance -  
Death is not a big deal  
No, neither a shame,  
But not to venture into discovery  
Is a back pain,  
Like lying in bed too long after rest.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Money Magic

It's been something on my mind  
Ever since I learned to count  
One two three.  
It's been the way I collected  
Leaves from the bush  
Free of cost but plenty.  
It's been the bits of toffee wrappers  
That increased in my stock  
Like currency.  
Since I learned early on  
How much power lies  
In having money.

If I see talent in a guy  
With a capacity for growth  
And industry,  
I thrust my open palm forward  
To join in and dedicate  
In charity.  
But sometimes kind words are inane  
Unless they come  
With money ...  
It's like learning backward count,  
If I part with it, how much will remain and  
How much I need.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Once

A dismal figure,  
Despairing heart  
Leaning on a pole  
Of tattered memories.

A picture of quiet  
Cool foggy meadow  
Isolate the lone night  
For recompense.

Morning came  
The brother of a stranger  
Stopped on his way,  
Said hello ...

The eyes once closed  
Who can move him  
Now who can blend  
The final picture?

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Paradox

A sudden storm burst  
The equanimity of  
The dazzling white  
Moistening the arid brown flesh.  
In a frenzy  
The high sun  
Shriveled up  
The wet curvatures of sturdy bones;  
In quick strokes  
Subtly painting a rainbow.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Pulse

Let go of that slimy tongue  
That slithered over my wound  
And made me numb  
Towards the ever present.

It's like asking me  
What's life for, fingering  
A sore spot, bloodying  
An already gory identity.

Let go of that cold hand  
Which cotton gloved  
Gave me an impression  
Of cherished moments.

You handled a delicate balance  
So insensitively!  
I told you it's none of your  
Little girl's play.

You who has barged in  
I said get out  
This is not the right place  
To dwell in!

Clawing at my heart  
In this scorching summer of love  
you touch a broken sapling  
All the more brokenly.

And let go all of a sudden  
With such vehemence  
As if  
It was I who made things worse!

No matter what  
You are not  
What I wanted;  
I said get out!

In the cold dark night  
Of filthy romance  
My pulse rises in outrage,  
That I chastised my butt for nothing.

This feathered pillow  
That cushioned your head  
Sometime ago  
Now reeks of blood

That you spilled from my pulse  
Confessing deceit,  
Disarmed, disbanded,  
Strewn as splinters,  
Unlike what all I had to offer.

That being of blood  
Hollowed out many times  
Cries out get out  
You are not what I wanted!

I shall not conceive in you  
The princess, I had set out to win,  
Nor shall I think  
Of Cinderella in distress,  
If ever again  
I set my eyes upon your face,  
However harsh your facts may be;  
I shall only know it's pretense,  
A frigid armour under your dress.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Slave

Consciousness stumbles  
Willy nilly on the knots;  
A junk of new combinations  
Pile on stacks;  
An image betrays  
My solitude;  
I start pulling apart  
Light into its constituents.

I am ground into  
The machinery;  
Passion pleads absence;  
Each moth strikes  
The wall and falls;  
I read pages  
Of possible meanings,  
None appear right.

Spirit is rude;  
Each bug is a mess  
Between thumb and index;  
There is no end.  
Farcical strength  
After all;  
My most hated object:  
That mock slave.

Possessive love  
Is angry with me;  
Those framed certificates  
Laugh in irony;  
Each larva grows  
And flies away;  
The last to fly  
Is growing death.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Stain

As long as you keep  
Imprisoned in conceit  
There's no holding hands;  
Pleasure not for me  
Where it stinks  
Of old Narcissus.

If you said it was your desire  
And not your yielding  
To an inferior's wish;  
If it were not your reversing  
Your lust into mine  
For self-deceit;  
If your pure blood  
Worshiped chaste union  
Of two equal spirits,  
Then, oh, surely it were bliss  
In entwined sleep.

My violent heart-beats  
Fret me too much:  
Things are amiss  
Between you and me  
As yet.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# The Bag

She collects  
Her favourite things  
In her bag.  
Sometimes  
She takes them out,  
Lines them in order  
And counts.  
Then she  
Tumbles them back  
Into her bag.  
Like her,  
In my heart  
I fail to sort out  
My affections.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Three Years I Grew

Three years I grew  
In rain and sunshine  
Limiting my frolics  
For a better tomorrow.

Three years I grew  
Submerged in tutorials,  
Preparing my way  
For a smoother course.

Three years I grew  
In the threat of being  
Left behind, trekking,  
With no foothold.

But three years hence  
With nothing to claim  
And nothing compelling,  
I merely measure the crossroads.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Trust

A sapling waiting to be watered,  
Brightening in sunshine,  
Drooping under rain,  
Is trust.  
Sometimes the gift of a favour  
Is expected to be returned  
Only to renew the bond  
Of trust.  
Only on a return  
A bigger gift is issued  
Acknowledging expansion of the  
Horizon of trust.  
The water evaporates over a while.  
So do  
The clouds like severe sunshine  
Gather,  
Thunders clap about your ears  
Until another dawn is near.  
The rains trample the sapling  
Dwindling the delicate thing  
To dirt.  
It needs manure,  
Another kind of nurturing  
This time.  
A little secret is divulged  
Under the upturned earth  
Buried  
To be preserved  
For the sapling to grow  
Fresh leaves, blossom forth  
And face the sun.  
If the secret is preserved,  
It gains trust.  
It does what it should do –  
Nurtures the sapling  
Bestowing  
What strength it needs  
To support a flower.  
A pest scurries up the stem,

Clambers above the tip  
And plunders the sap  
That nourishes it.  
We need to kill that pest  
To be able to let  
The delicate thing flower forth.  
The conquest of sickening  
Disturbances, prying  
Ungentle obscenities  
In a relationship,  
Bolsters trust.  
If you and I can tend a potted plant  
Ever more dutifully,  
Where can be the snag, the slip  
In growing trust?

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

# Ugly Duckling

In the fields that I cross  
And the mountains that I view,  
There is always a loneliness of heart.  
I have gone beyond the limits of my  
Brown feathers by birth  
That you had decried;  
I have touched the golden delight  
Of my white wings.  
One day I hope to conquer the fear  
That my home is lost forever.  
And I hope your warmth  
Will return to me.  
That day I will not be a swan, brothers;  
I will love to be the ugly duckling.

Anuradha Bhattacharyya