

Classic Poetry Series

Hemant Divate
- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Hemant Divate(1967 -)

Hemant Divate is a reputed Marathi poet, translator and publisher based in Mumbai.

Biography

Hemant Divate is an avant-garde poet, a reputed editor, publisher and translator.

His two poetry collections in Marathi have been path-breaking – Chautishiparyantchya Kavita and Thambtach Yet Nahi. Renowned poet and translator Dilip Chitre has translated the first collection to English, titled Virus Alert. His poems have been translated to German, Urdu, French, Gujarati, Bengali, Hindi and Malayalam. He has won several prestigious awards including the Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award, Kolkata.

Hemant’s publishing house- Abhidhanantar & Poetrywala has published more than 30 collections of poetry in Marathi and English.

He was the founder editor of a Marathi little magazine Abhidha and then Abhidhanantar for nearly 15 years. Abhidhanantar has been credited to give a fantastic platform to new poets and has enriched the post-nineties Marathi literary scene with amazing fresh talent and great poetry.

Hemant has also translated a few selected poems of Australian poet – Les Murray to Marathi which has been published by Katha-Delhi. He regularly translates poems from English to Marathi.

His third collection in Marathi, translations of his post globalisation poems in English viz.10 POGO poems (translated by Sarabjeet Garcha) are slated to be released this year.

He works and lives in Mumbai.

A Depressingly Monotonous Landscape

i

How did the landscape in my mind
flow into my daughter's mind?

Right now in front of me is an expanse of
buildings, shopping malls, highways, factories and traffic
and if I tell her to sketch a landscape
she draws sunsets
a flowing river, trees, fields, shrines
draws birds which look like scrawled numbers*
in my tiny, overcast skies

From the seamless forest of this city
are never seen
the sunset beyond the house in my mind
the river, trees, paths, temples, birds, footways
How did these
stream into her mind?

ii

When she understands
the picture of my childhood
which has flowed away
and the answer
to 'Why does she draw exactly like this?'
then will all the paintings by everyone in this world
have melted away? Or will they have remained
trapped in just their quiet?

iii

She gets nightmares, so do I
of headless people carrying
the corpses of orphaned villages
into the cemeteries of cities
or ferrying frightful landscapes of the city
to superimpose them on the erased villages

The same, the very same landscape
encloses within itself
all the headless people
All, all cities have the same name
the same streets, same buildings, same shopping malls
all transfixed in the same predefined places
like a regiment ready for a march
Moving about paths of
the same name same colours
the same smells same forms
the same faces as though clones of themselves
and at the same deceptive crossroads
she reaches the same statues
No matter where she flees
the same statues confront her again and again
and she arrives at the same landscapes
of the same cities
with no signs or landmarks to guide her
In the same places
she sees the same people
speaking the same language
and with the same shapes
same gestures
standing in queues of the same length
in the very same manner
going to the same stations
driving the same vehicles
at the same speed
in the same direction
at the same time
passing by the same trees
of the same height
of the same kind
separated in the same way
by the same dividers
on the same road
The same people
are shredded
in the same way
by the same bombs
and lie scattered the same way
petrified the same way

broken the same way
In the same monotonous manner
on any channel on any TV
flash the same misery-multiplying pictures
monotonous
monotonal
monototal
totally monotonous
depressingly monotonous
totally depressing
dip dip depressing
She dips and collapses
sees my same terrified, depressed face
the moment she let goes
her tight grip on my hand in the crowd
and just like me
she too flows away into
the gigantic, self-destructive flood
of headless people
I dream the very dream she is dreaming
at the same time
I too see her alarmed, depressed face
and shudder
I forget to carry village to city and city to village
and reach here
reach where?

[Translated from the original Marathi by Sarabjeet Garcha]

Hemant Divate

Boats

What lines are these
That are written without words on the mind
That, read with a tilt of the head,
Keep flowering in your eyes
Jasmines of lines
And my mind
Like paper-boats released on water
Gets stuck here and there
How many such boats you and I
Made
That never continued to float
Then what kind of a boat of possibilities is this one
That lies anchored till this day?

Hemant Divate

Butterflies

Ambling by in the garden of the complex
I casually remarked to a friend,
Can't see those small
deep yellow butterflies these days
He cursorily said,
That brand has been discontinued.

[Translated by Sarabjeet]

Hemant Divate

Greetings

Like cigarette
Ash we
Get d-e-t-a-c-h-e-d
From ourselves
Our awareness
Suffocates
In the ash-tray
Now we feel unsure
Living e-m-p-t-y
Between dream and reality
That's why
There's a greeting in my mind
But I won't
Send it to you

Hemant Divate

Shopping At The Mega-Mall

Supermicro thoughts
Pass through my mind
As I shop at the mega-mall.

For instance,
I am the Whisper sanitary napkin
Lying on the first rack
And living very close to a young girl
I absorb her juices.

Or I am a Huggies nappy pad on the second rack
And I am accumulating the excreta as I snuggle
Some infant
Who I look after tenderly
For five to six hours.

Or I am a high-priced toilet soap
Camay, Yardley or Lux International
And I am smothered by the folds
Of a really fat woman's thighs
To where I have slid

Or I am a fork and spoon
Which a forty-year-old Maharashtrian uses
To hog Maggie noodles

Or I am the TV
And an entire family is sitting in front of me
Looking at me, eating, surfing my channels
Or they have switched me off
And have left me alone in this room

Or I am a foot wipe
Which costs twelve bucks
Given free with a purchase
Of upholstery
Very good-looking
Yet my master coming out of the bathroom
Is wiping his wet feet on me

Or I am a broom
With which folks
Casually clean their floor
Or dust away cobwebs.
While using me
My mistress drops me
And dreams of a vacuum cleaner.
She spits on me
Even if I touch her husband's body
By mistake.

Or I am a Kit-Kat chocolate bar
And people are merrily munching me
And chomping me

Or I am a crumpled wrapper
Of Vita Marie biscuits
And I am waiting for some kind-hearted chap
To pick me up.

Or I am a dark yellow price tag
With 20% off written in jet black on its despairing label
Reading it these days
Doesn't lift up your spirits at all.

[Translated from the original Marathi by Sarabjeet Garcha]

Hemant Divate

The Fragrance Your Body Would Give

I'm remembering
The fragrance of 'Pond's Dream flower' your body would give
And your e-mails
I'm remembering
Our intimacy
In the cacophony at Marine Drive
How we would go on talking without tiring
Can't recall any subjects we talked about though
Then sometimes
We would share a cigarette

I who had never seen the inside of a disco
Haven't yet visited one
Postponing my visit so far

Later you gave up smoking
Gave up drinking as well
And we gave up
The intimacy at Marine Drive

We continued to cling to each other
within four walls
Now as though we were caught in a wheel
We have no time to talk to each other
We sit reading the newspaper
Sometimes we have tea together
And if we ever talk
It's about our child and our home
Or else about when we would return home
Making a phone call in the afternoon we ask
Each other
'How are you? '
And nowadays, instead of the fragrance of 'Pond's Dream flower'
At night your body gives
The desired-undesired odour of tired sweat

Hemant Divate

When I Check Email

When I check email
my wife watches 'Koi Apnaasaa'
my son plays Jigazo
Father watches ETV on the telly in the living room
Mother squints through the peephole in the door
to see who comes out of or goes into the lift

When I read the newspaper
my wife talks on the mobile
my son stares at the TV watching Cartoon Network
Father, his neck thrust into a bucket,
inhales steam
Mother, standing by the kitchen window,
awaits the maid

When I am not home
my son calls me up and asks,
"Dad, what are you doing? Do come home."
My wife sends me an SMS: "I miss u."
I get to know about the quarrel between Mother and Father
when I return home
and about the garrulous maid's
having quit.

[Translated by Sarabjeet]

Hemant Divate