

SUBHO TAGORE

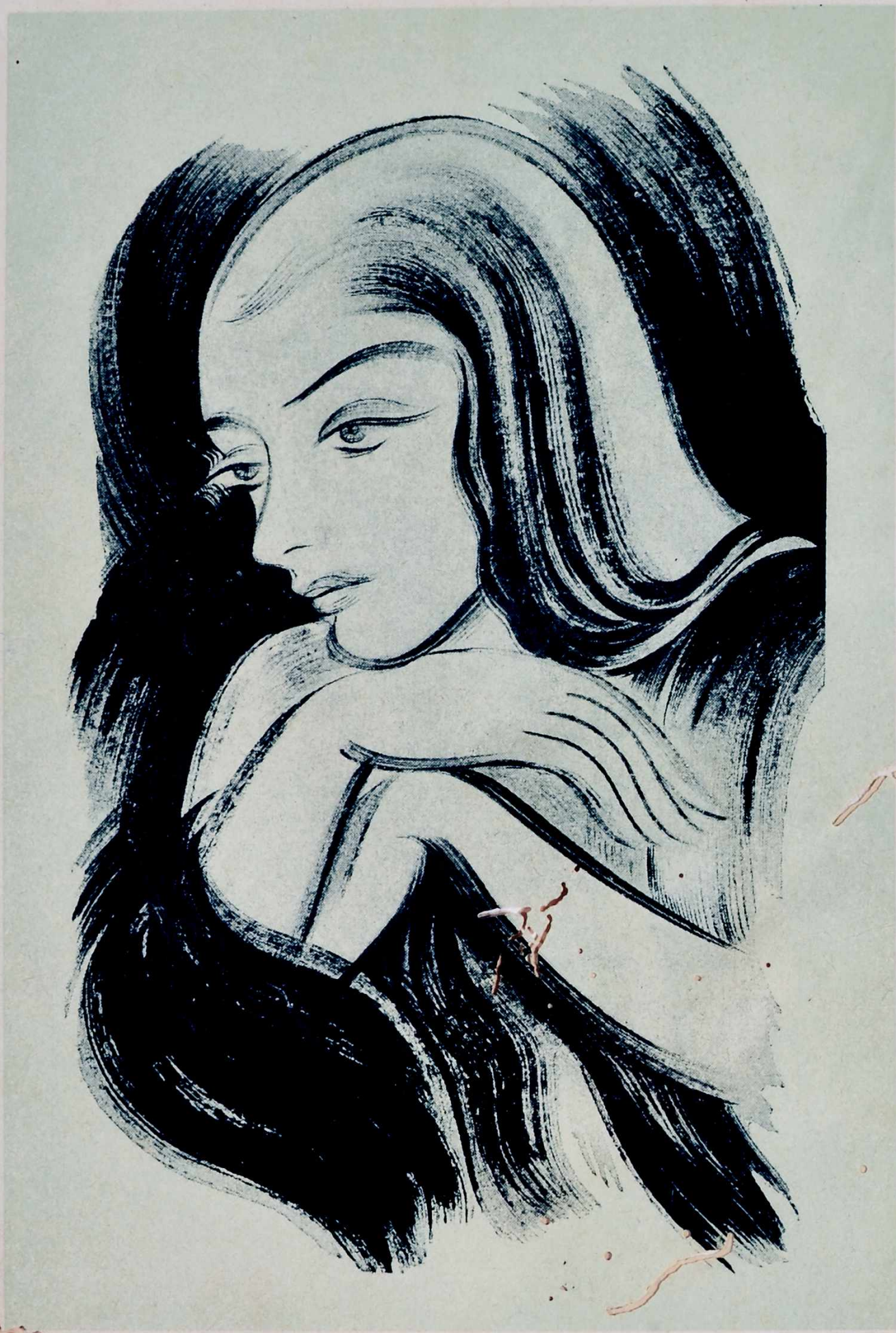
FLAMES OF PASSION

Flames of Passion



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K.K. Venugopal



FLAMES OF PASSION

LOVE POEMS IN PROSE & VERSE BY

SUBHO TAGORE

ILLUSTRATION BY

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There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all.—*Oscar Wilde.*

IN writing in a language not my own I get the same sensation in whispering love to a sweetheart who belongs to a foreign land.

Sometimes I feel that her language is inadequate for me to express all that I want to say to her.

Yet I know my verses ring true because they come from the inmost depths of my being. They speak the universal language of love, no matter whether it is spoken under the clear canopy of the glowing sun or through the mist of dusky twilight.

**To my love unknown, whom,
my soul seeks everywhere**

Proem

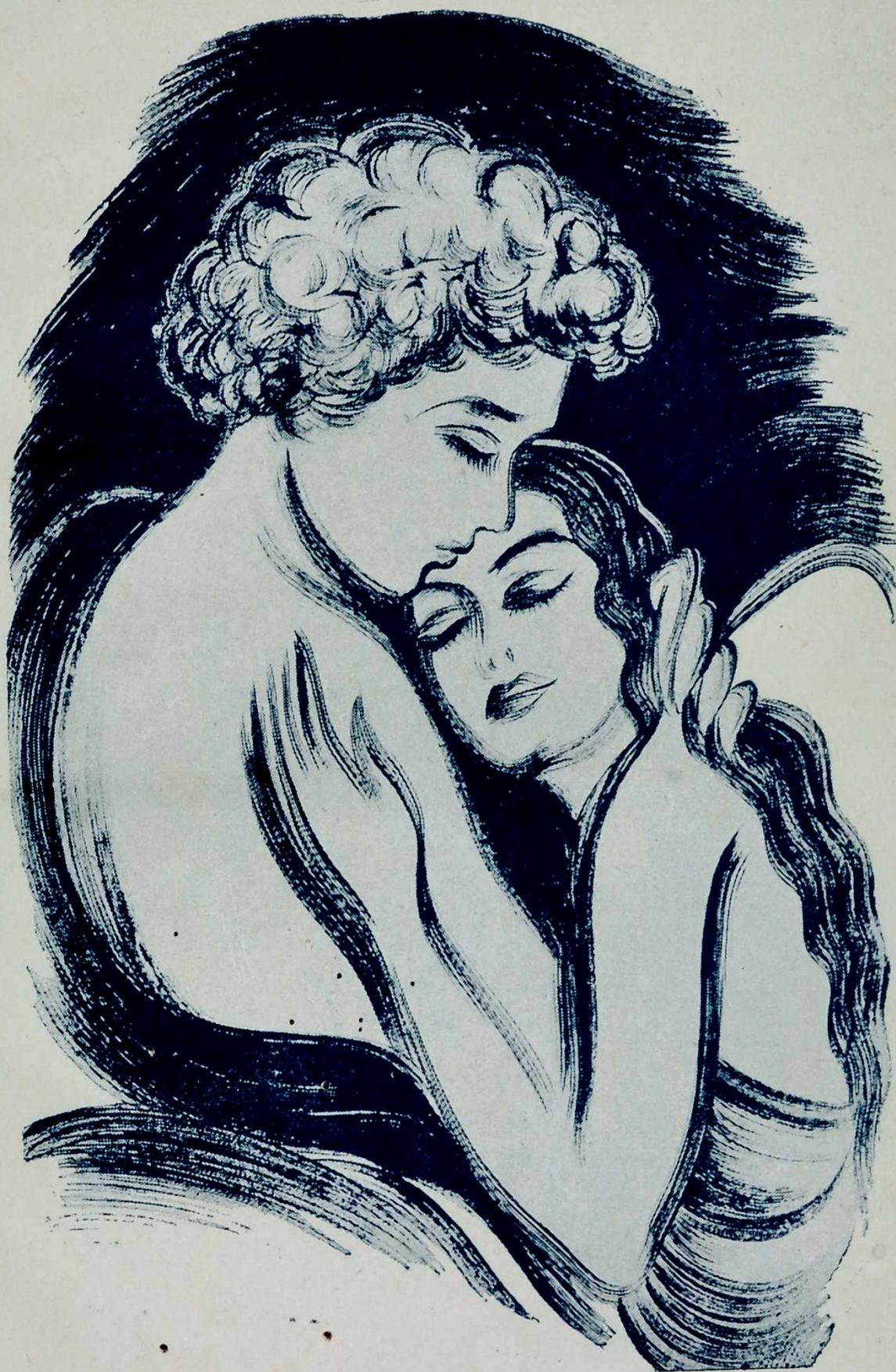
MY father's blood with mother's
leapt to mingle
And shot through all her flesh a
rhythmed tingle;
That selfsame rhythm, heaving like a
wave,
Thrilled my conceived self under the
cave
Of her dark womb, like to a *Vedic*
hymn
Through me, as yet without eye or
limb,
Skinless, lump of listening protoplasm;
O what a rhythm fraught with singing
spasm
Which palpitantly blends its every
sound
With the first rhythm of the universal
round:
I heard the ringing of that rhythm,
fresh
And magical, even through my
mother's flesh

Shivering in every fibre, through the
gloom
Purple-delicious of her heavy womb,
Yea, even within it, I could hear it
strike
Moment to moment, *Abhimanyu*-like.

And thus it was, I sat, unloosed from
death,
On life's half-blossomed bud, and
drew my breath,
And every time I drew it sucked in
That huge life-rhythm of sex, its
gaudy whirl and spin.

I, the deep-hidden poet, learned my
worth
Of song from sex, while yet my human
birth
Was in the making, in the mother's
womb;

O rhythm of mating! scarlet burgeon-
ing bloom
Of life and being! Initiated blood
Of me! O sanguine blossom of the
body's mud!



DO the clouds know what they
paint in the sky?

Do they care to hear what we see in
what they paint?

No, they just play in full freedom of
their bondless minds.

But when we gaze at them we see
wonderful shapes—sometimes beauti-
ful and sometimes terrifying and
sometimes only patterns of brilliant
colours with mysterious meanings of
their own.

Often in a mood of joy unknown I
too play likewise with my words and
colours. There come out mystic
figures in colours ever so grotesque,
or strange designs of such rhythmic
cadence, resembling the ripples of a
river.

○NE day I recklessly plunged myself into a deep abyss of pain; my trembling fingers touched a glittering gem.

It twinkled like a star on the altar of night.

I took it to the market place and showed it to a jeweller, who remarked thoughtfully: "It is not an ordinary jewel, but I know not its kind nor its value."

From there I returned slowly home . . . On the way I met the village poet whom I stopped to show the gem.

The poet looked at it for a moment and shouted in joy: "O, how fortunate you are!"

I asked him with eagerness in my heart: "Poet, do you know what it is?"

In astonished voice he said: "It is a tear-drop shed from the eyes of a woman."

I asked him anxiously if he knew its value.

He answered, nodding his head: "It is beyond all price, and its value nobody ever knew."

From that day I am wandering with this priceless gem of a tear with me, keeping it carefully in the casket of my life.

What a fortune I hold in my heart!

Awakening

AS I gaze in wonder upon this world, I look at you with the same wonder in my eyes, O woman!

I find the infinite of the universe in your finite grace; the eternity of the azure sky in the folds of your flowing mantle.

Dark clouds cast dim-dark shadows upon your dishevelled hair, and all the wonders of the world are stored in your heart.

Your grace, painted with the glorious passion of the Creator, shines like the Milky Way in my mind.

HAVE not you all seen the
tapestry of variegated hues,
richly embroidered, that hangs on
the walls of life? I have discovered
therein the outline of a face.

O woman, dreaming with half-shut
eyes, that face is yours.

The rosy languor born of the chalice
of wine on your shoulder, has made
your dreams airier.

They are overflowing in countless
shapes and colours from yon tapestry
on life's walls.



○ maiden, what austerities have brought that ascetic look into your face?

What god is the object of your contemplation, which has made the blue heavens come so near?

Have you been able to touch him, or has his shadow descended on you?

Could it be the Sun-god himself whom you adore, sunflower-like?

Out of the ancient past into the ears of to-day reaches the low, anguished moan of sun-worshipping *Karna*, yearning to be born again.

Is your virgin heart in travail with the burden of that sorrow, eager for new birth?

VERNAL madness descends on
the garden of mortal minds
from the glance, piercing through
your veil half-lifted like a screen.

The eagerness of new life that peeps
through budding flowers sprouts in
the nipples of your breasts; have
the bees lost themselves at their
beckoning?

Is that why there is such a riot of
colours in the sky?

The woodland is bowed down by
the pain of blossoming.

Yes, now I understand. Spring is
come.

MY love is like sandal-wood; rub
it on your beauty; its sweet
perfume will fill the air.

My kisses are passionate like wild
showers! Bathe yourself in them,
and be abandoned in sweet rapture.

My embraces are like flames with
which you shall kindle your heart's
passionate ardour.

IN the temple of the god of love, the
bells are ringing for midnight
rites.

The hundred-petalled lotus of desire
is blossoming out in your limbs. Is
that why you are so restless and go
up the temple-steps in such haste, all
dishevelled?

To what secret music are the anklets
on your tripping feet beating time?

Your body, eager to offer itself at
the shrine of love, is like a myriad-
stringed lyre on which waves of
melody are swelling up in passionate
yearning.

The Invisible god himself, with out-
stretched arms, is awaiting your
coming in silent expectation of your
worship.

The dumb night is intoxicated with
the joy of your approach



MY heart swells up, beholding the swaying rhythm of your beautiful body. It is radiant with the glow of rainbow rays.

Your lureful limbs, like lovely lilac blossoms, are restless in the rustling breeze.

For you, my lips shiver with passionate pain, my desires rush out as a stream in flood—the desire of kissing your rosy cheeks and to hold you in immortal embrace—while I lie lulled by love on your heaving breast till eternity.

Body's Rapture

TELL me what you will—it
matters not;

Fain would I go on listening;

Tell me not of decrepit self-control—
I tell you I am abandoned utterly!

Naked, the spring breeze has shed its
garb to-day;

The fire flame is a shameless libertine;

Monsoon floods the river, the banks
overflow,

Cataclysmic, terrific torrents sweep
away all bonds;

For, the fire of youth burns in all my
veins,

The world, a spring time forest, is
my kingdom

And I its despotic King!

It is the carnival of lamps, and light
is mating with light

Around the temple of woman's body,
upon this gala night,

Her youth, a flowering flame, is mixed
with blood that leaps like a tide,

In this hour she stands, a naked girl,
she has swept her garments aside.

The wild sweet corners of her eyes
with collyrium are rimmed,

Each curve of her naked flesh is a
sword, she is so wondrous-limbed.

What miracled lotuses gleam from
her breast, the lusty gods to
appease,

And she is waiting to offer herself,
her all to the deities.

I am the male, my passionate body of
power, in every curve and line,

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Is throbbing to offer itself at the body
of woman, Love's authentic
shrine.

The splendour of my arrival thrills
the dark around with colour
and hush,

Behold, the body of woman with
lust is changed to a glittering
blush.

At the portals of that body I pause and
worship, the terrible Goddess
whose price

Is the body's rapture reached to its
height in a mad self-sacrifice.

The night is full of romance, star-
tingles wake through the body of
dust,

And the offerings are ready at last for
The *Rati's* temple of lust.

WHEN was woman
Ever human

A poison grape
She took shape

Curve and line,
From its foaming wine.

When I gaze into her eyes
Pain's music cries

Within my breast
And wakes unrest;

Her form doth seem
Builded of dream.

The body's cup
Brimmeth up

With venom breath
The wine of death;

Let it hurt, let it sting
Sweetness fills such poisoning.

To tell you truth
Under her youth,
A fount of blaze
Leaps and sprays
Fires and flashes
Burning my life to ashes;
And yet, in spite of this,
I drain it kiss by kiss,
To the bitter lees,
Without a stop,
Encircled by eternal life I squeeze
And draw its essence to the final
drop.

YOUR body's unlit fireworks of a
sudden

Caught fire and rose
To mingled ebb-tides of sidereal
glows;

Is that the reason why about the arc
Of your sweet mouth spark flickered
unto spark

And is that why upon your breast the
wide
Snake-hood of beauty heaved
unsatisfied

Up-leaped the foaming flood of wild
desire
When you caught fire?

But tell me, do you understand,
Beloved!

How this same mesh
Of subtle fire tangled your delicate
flesh?

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How such a ravening flame could
ever start
Delicious and destructive in your
heart?

Say! do you understand from where
it came,
That ravening flame?

Listen then the warm clasp of my arms
Round your frame
Sets the lotus bed on your breast in a
flame

Spreading round your body these
tongues of fire.
Send through your coursing blood
my desire.

The fire that dances in your leaping
blood and your surging soul
From my clasp you stole.

WOMAN is a wine cup,
and love is like wine,
in which like a bubble
my life shall burst
and mingle for ever.

BUBBLES arise from the wine-cup
of your body; as they reach me,
they burst forth into kisses.

In the swaying curves of your limbs,
lightning flashes out, setting my eyes
a-dazzle.

In the slime of our passion, the lotus
of lust blossoms out.

Oh, what an eddying current of desire
flows ceaselessly between you and me!

YOUR lips are pomegranates, your
body is a creeping vine, its
movements are a sinuous flame.

On your breasts particles of desire
have transformed themselves into
black currants, in your eyes is the
poison remaining over after the gods
churned the sea.

Images cannot exhaust you; in your
young body I see imprisoned an
ocean of wine that has flowed down
from the heavens; it is again the cruel
stones against which my eager heart
is dashing in anguished passion.

VĀRUNI is in your lips, the juice
of *soma* is over all your limbs, it
is as if you had just emerged from a
fountain of wine.

In your eyes is all the languor of
poppy-flowers.

I sold out my heart to them long
before I came into this earth.

If you are not appeased yet and want
to have more of me, then paint on
my brow the royal mark of utter
penury.

I KNOW your body is like sweet-
toned *Veenā*.

The moment I touch its strings with
my fingers, the vibrations of your
beauty thrill me with a tremor of joy;
and my heart becomes tumultous!

I stretch my eager hands to hold you
in my bosom with fervent passion
which surges through all my limbs.



I HAVE been caught in the silken
noose of your locks.

I cannot unwind its knots, try as I
might it is tightened more and more
round my heart.

Death is in the coils of your tresses, as
I try to escape from it, your cheeks
burn me down.

There is death for me all over you.

I AM the thirsty bee at the hive of
your body; I have lost myself in
the vernal forest of your youth.

All my life has been a mad whirl
round that form of yours made up
of palpitating particles of passion, the
source of all desire.

I know not, my love, when the honey
of your youth will dry up; only this
I know when that fateful time comes,
my being will exhaust itself and meet
its annihilation.

YOU have made me captive in the
dark prison of your beauty.

Is it your desire that I should waste
away, thus imprisoned?

Your charm encircles me like the
four walls of a cell.

Your embrace is like the touch of
death itself.

The spell of your eyes seems to draw
me nearer and nearer to my end.

I don't know to what unknown states
of being it will lead me.

As I look at you, your body seems to
be an illusion.

Even beyond this life, the mirage of
your grace will beckon my spirit on
by its lure.

[DRAIN the cup of pain as I kiss
your lips, and I become intoxicated
more by far than a man drunk.

I am hopelessly inebriated; I am sunk
deep in the wine of anguish.

Forgive me, my friend, all that I have
said in my drunken state.

All the sorrow that ever was on sky
and earth, in heaven and hell, I have
made mine, my heart is full to the
brim to-day with it.

Its froth is flowing over and trans-
forming itself into an ecstasy I have
never known.

My feet have stepped beyond this life,
touching the brink of the abysm of
death, and I have forgotten all fear
in my sublime intoxication.

YOUR beauty is like a sharp-edged
sword.

Is your desire not appeased that,
drunk with the glory of it, you pierce
my heart again and again with the
thrusts of your glance?

Why this cruel play?

Why do you thus fill the cup of my
youth to the brim and dash it to
pieces when your thirst is satisfied?

The palace of love you build with
walls of cards and unbuild it again
to satisfy a moment's whim.

Against the dark sky of my love-laden
heart, you come like lightning-bursts
and burn my being.

O my angry goddess, does not your
breast tremble as you remember how
the rain clouds quench the flames of

the proud beauty of summer, making
the earth a picture of tender green?

Let not women, drunk with the
power of her charm, forget that
Urvashi herself came down from
heaven and flung herself at the feet
of mortal man with all the humble
devotion of a love-lorn heart.

BEAUTY my goddess! You are enthroned in the shrine of woman's body and your altar is the altar of youth.

The lamp of human heart burns the flame of passion day and night; and the flaming worship is fragrant with the wine of love; where the essence of my life, like perfumed incense, burns before your feet, through the eternal stillness of my depthless devotion unto you.

THROUGH eternity this heart like
a blue vesture drapes your body
where it effaces itself and craves to live
till death in that unfathomable beauty.

Fain would my heart sink into the
ineffable bliss of clinging in folds to
the warmth of your passionate breasts,
like lotuses in bloom in the restless
waters of youth.

Dim sky with darkening July clouds
dripping slowly sends tremors to your
yearning soul. My desire twining
round yor slender waist like a slow
creeper, encircling it in a hundred
folds,

I shall imprison you in my breast and
all night with sleepless eyes I would
feel you in me,

Every cell, every pore yearning and
crying for that union.



And then like the wind-driven drooping petals of a broken wreath the fading moon-beams of an ebbing night shall lie in a hundred fragments on the bed as your sweet, young body lies there with hair dishevelled.

At that moment none else shall come but I.

But suddenly the naughty wind of the south tears me away from your bosom and makes my heart forlorn.

O, what a marvel are your swelling breasts laden with the honey of youth, the nipples sucking nectar like two thirsty bees.

The first light of dawn peeping through the window bars shall whisper music into your ears and kiss your lotus eyes.

You will awake from your dreams like a woman at creation's dawn; the flame-like beauty of your undraped body brought, as it were, from the shore of oblivion, shall kindle in my heart the incense of desire.

My heart like a blue scarf would
envelop your entrancing limbs;
a-tremor with the thrill of young
timid love.

You shall hold me tight to your breast
with your soft, sinuous arms and then
in a bubbling frenzy of passion you
shall lie in a soft shiver of joy, lost to
your body-sense, your mind filled to
overflowing with the sense of my
engulfing touch and Time will swell
with pride to chronicle this moment
supreme.

You shall throughout the ages thus
clasp me tight in the tremulous,
speechless trance of ecstasy at the
threshold of eternity.

Sweet Sorrow

THE heady wine of woman's body
has made me drunk. I know
fatal poison is mixed with it, yet I
drain it to its dregs.

Let it quickly bring my end.

Let the boat of my life run aground
and be dashed to pieces with the
burden of all my hopes and fears.

Your body's bowl is brimming over
with venomous bubbles.

I quaff that liquor and slowly my
eyes close in death.

AS your body was moulded, both
ambrosia and poison, alas, rose
to the surface.

It is only in your sweet smiling lips
that there is nectar; all the rest of
you pains the lover.

The bright one, who came like *Indra*,
robbed you of your smile, while my
thirsty lips only drink the liquid gall
of woman's tears.

The deep sadness of your eyes with
the shadow of death in them, have
enchanted me.

I have made your heart captive by
sucking up the venom of pain.

In every atom of your body is the light
of the unfathomable; out of it leaps
up the flame of anguish.

On my brow is the melancholy
victory-mark of eternal separation.



[N sweet Spring, she came like a
bulbul to my bosom and sang,
sitting in a bower of roses—red roses
of my blossoming love.

Petals of my life opened slowly at
her coming and spread for her a
carpet of flowers.

My youthful limbs, like emerald
leaves, whispered and rustled in joy.

Alas! she came with Spring and with
Spring she fled away.

MY young body, sacred as flowers
offered to the gods, I offered to
you, my woman.

You pressed me to your bosom; you
kept me enchained in your long,
loose hair, dark and dishevelled like
the spreading clouds of July.

Next morning when you came to
bathe in the *Ganges*, I slipped away
slowly from your unbraided hair and
was left alone, unheeded, on the stony
steps of the lonely river.

From there I saw, kissing your
heaving heart a new garland of fresh
flowers hung around your soft, swan-
like neck.

[N the vast dusky sky of my desolate
heart she was a lonesome star of
lustrous light.

Ah Love! thou brought to the dreary
desert of my life showers of joy, and
a new vision of hope.

Drunk with that wine of illusion, I
was led to a dreamland.

It seemed as if all the buds of my
unfulfilled desires had burst forth in
blossoms at the magic touch of your
love

But alas! the *Veenā* vibrated for the
last time and the flash of light flickered
out for ever.

○! for once let the touch-stone of
your passionate coral lips touch
my life, rusted to iron, and change it
to gold—a gold of delicate designs.

This heavy hammering hand in the
past has crushed many an innocent
heart and many a peaceful nest!

Now my heart, fainting, lamenting in
repentance craves: O Beauty! come
to my dark cave like a moon on an
April midnight scattering its swoon-
ing radiance on the dream-dark sky.



THE tune of a vanishing melody
of love still reverberates in my
sad heart like a dove's doleful cooing
heard faintly from her far-away nest
in the lull of a lonely noon.

The vision of sorrows and sadnesses
in the past comes slowly, bringing
pain which tingles in all my veins.

The crystal cup of my life overflows
with the foaming agony of its tune;

The streaming eyes darken in despair.

Tears well out in torrents as from a
rushing spring down my pale, pain-
strained cheeks.

○H comrade of a million ages!

Your tears that fell on the barren field of my heart have made it, from season to season, fruitful through failures and fulfilments.

The sod of my heart has become green with the harvest of sorrow and of success.

Every grain and seed sprouts from that soil nourished by your tears and there your glory lives for ever.

DAMSEL divine! fill your decanter
of life with the blood of pain
from the deepest wound of my heart.

And that's all I can offer you at this
time of departure.

The starless night grows dark and
dreary; and my pilgrimage is to the
land I know not yet.

Now bid me farewell, O Life of my
life! and keep this pain as a token of
my love.

MARCH on, march on, march on,
my heart with your cruel
footsteps.

No matter if all my hopes of love be
crushed by your merciless trampling;
if my life be a barren desert of sand—a
desert of all my ruined hopes and
broken fragments of my love for you
yet I won't regret nor complain.

I will treasure all sorrows in my bosom
as a memory of your footprints on my
heart.

MY cup is overflown with the
honey of tears, and I am drunk
with the aroma of agony.

My *Shāki* is sweet like the sorrow of
separation, with whom I began the
journey of love.

My rose is beautiful, but full of
thorns,

Which I pressed to my bosom and
kept it in the the flower vase of my
soul.

AH, where are you, my beloved?
The moaning melody from the
mandoline of my mind haunts the
hush of night; and I keep vigil, long-
ing for you, my love!

Now the fading moonbeam bends
over the eastern sky and the Pole Star
looks pale; the swaying bamboos sigh
sadly, the twilight breeze wildly
blows.

Oh how cruel you are! Still you deny
me and forsake me to solitude, to
dusty dreams, and sad sighs of
despair.



AH, lifeless stone! I love you more than a woman—a woman of delicate heart, but harder than the hardest steel.

Traitors they are! their smiles are shining knives, their beauty a thunder-bolt.

It is better to love you, O immovable stone! than to love a woman and then rue.

MY darling! If you give not your
love, why do you sway my heart
in vain?

Your music maddens me as the scent
of flowers maddens the bees.

Where thy boundless beauty flows
like a shoreless river, my life, as a
stemless petal of a lily, will start its
aimless voyage upon that river's wild
current.

○ BLESSED beauty! O my sweet-heart! fill your mind with the madness of pain, and dance in a frolic of frenzy; to make my farewell festival luminous with shining tears, which will light my journey like a thousand stars on the sky.

WOMAN, are you a mirage of my mind or a baseless image of my dream? I know not.

Many a night alone on the lonely way, pursuing your shadow, many a day following your phantom as in a dream, the prime of my youth has faded like a primrose.

Oh woman! my woman! but to-day, when the sun is bright and shining in the sultry noon, I am tired of seeking you, sitting here on a mossy stone with slumber in my eyes.

Abruptly, my dream has broken like a bubble, and I see your fleeting vision has melted, vanished like will-o'-the-wisp.

Only the string of my poems which I gave you in my dreams as a necklace of pearls, lies scattered on the hard ground.



Then suddenly came the echo of a voice:

“Oh fool! do not forget—A woman is like the mist of the Milky Way, a dream in moonlight, which vanishes before the morning sun.”

DON'T you remember me, Jane,
really, don't you remember me?

Now as you read my poems with your
red lips moving, flaming ruby red, and
your honeyed accents as if in a lullaby,
I am led to a dim unknown shore of
some distant past.

I startle as I walk on that shore, for
it seems I know your voice. I have
heard it many a day, many a night,
heard it in my dreams mixed up with
the sad fragrance of *Ketaki* blossom
on some rain-wet night.

O how could I make you feel Jane,
what infinite sorrows of separation
like floods have broken desperately
against the walls of my bosom all
these days and nights; what voiceless
anguish has echoed in my ribs.

To Jane as you read my poems through the mists of forgetfulness of million years, comes back my memory shining like the glorious morning light.

Don't you remember, O Jane, that glorious morning of golden extravagance, that crystal clear lake where innumerable were those half blossomed lotuses and where on a petal of a full blown lotus our twin spirits trembled like two drops of dew in that luminous light of paradise.

Our languorous eyes were heavy with the Aurora reflected from the Pole, the vernal breeze was restless, and blessed were our souls beyond the reach of the past, out of the grip of the present, with no thought of the future.

That fateful day when the King of the gods himself was strolling along the corridor of heaven with His queen, all on a sudden that lotus in full bloom caught His eyes on which we lay quivering in bliss.

O then, suddenly came the end of our joy together.

He came down to the water side and plucked that lotus and went up to present it and please His consort divine.

I fell from it like a dew drop, rolling down the cheek of vast empty space for countless years winding through the fiery path of revolving nebulæ, eluding the attraction of the cosy nest of the Milky Way; then in a twilight unnoticed I dropped on to this earth. I never knew what had happened to you, whether you were in that heaven still, or had slipped and dropped on this earth like me.

I groped in the dark forgetfulness and suffered the pangs of separation. My lone soul moaned in despair.

To-day we meet again in the dusty path of this earth.

I am a stranger to your eyes, but not you to mine.

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I saw in your face the reflection of that same Aurora of a million years, in your voice I heard the murmur of the vernal breeze of heaven.

The curls of your golden locks look just as they did when they were touched by the warmth of those ethereal sun rays.

I can realise now that you had also whirled through space for ages and ages and reached this earth at last.

In those divine mornings we were so near to each other. Our bodies bathed and swam in the same celestial light, in our eyes glowed the same dream, but to-day between us lies the gulf of thousands of miles.

When the darkness of night descends on my world down the steps of the star-studded sky, then morning breaks in your land.

My skin is copper-coloured, sun-baked like the desert sands, while on your body is the glittering mirage of powdered gold.

I am a son of the East, the land of the white lotus, the land of calm and peace.

You flourish in California, where a myriad poppies burst forth in exuberant red and purple, where life is moving restless and fast.

By the blessing of the gods you have forgotten the past stepping across the present each moment into some new and unknown future, while I am standing at the shore of the present sending my silent salutation to those days long past, when like two drops of dew our lives glistened on a petal of the same flower.



Epilogue

MORE ancient than history is
youth!
More putrid than the moralists'
code
In some museum, like pre-historic
curios
The women stand in a line.
Love, as of the Methuselah days, has
turned to slime,
Covering our noses and turning our
faces we pass.
We cry for something new! New?
What is new?
Under our feet lies the stale old earth.

WOMAN—Woman—Woman
The same monotonous she!
Everywhere—in prose, rhyme and
song
I hear her loudly praised!
Have they aught but sex?—I wonder
To stretch a point, a drunken fool,
perhaps,
Might on them a lot of nonsense rave
Clown-like, men vie with each other
As round and round them they do the
dance.
What else but sex these women have?
So much ado for this? It passeth
understanding.
Why didn't I go mad? I wonder;
I ponder—alas! I too cannot escape;
These women had me gasping for life.
Their sex! How I philosophised
Plato-wise;



None, none has yet escaped the lure
of sex.

For all my hypocritical cant,

In my heart hides the thirst for sex,—

Ascetic, yet I cannot forget the wine
cup,

I have no desire, without women, to
live in a hermitage!

WEARY am I of drinking; how it
palls
My brain is brimful of wild caprices;
Brandy no longer inebriates, no punch
has gin,
Disgusted at last I've chucked it all.
Wish someone had drugged me with
morphia,
I'd go home and lay me down—then
dream:
Peacefully asleep, corpse-like, in my
mother's arms,
As the tired sun sinks into the even-
ing sea.
There is no peace in life—no peace
anywhere—
Pain has built its nest in my heart;
Dope my senses with cocaine—
Let life become inert like a stone.

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"I LOVE you," I said to her at
eventide;

When she was gone I thought it over
and smiled.

She believed; and in delirious delight
She gave herself to me in rapturous
embrace—

Trembling with piteous pleading,
Truth said:

"She loves, she loves, she loves."

Even now in my heart its echo sighs,
Leaving behind the breath of a long-
past hour;

To hold her close and kiss her face
My eyes deceived, and lied they loved.
On her hand I dropped a tear-drop,
Lit in her heart, *Diwali* lights of
bridal night;

More naive than the primitive child,

I a marauding robber took her all!
I deceived, hoodwinked and robbed
her—

Not by words alone, with all my wiles,
With heart, soul, and body; no
wonder

They all turn away their faces from
me.

I didn't care, but now I reflect:
Even my tears are false!



CAME the rains in an unceasing
shower.

Young was the season but it sounded
like the clatter of doom:

This ceaseless continuous patter.

In the grey dawn had I stepped out of
my digs.

My morning cup of tea, untouched,
on the table, has by now a thick crust
of swimming cream,

Or, may be, my thirsty cat has lapped
it up,

And licked it back to its newly gleam;

Drops of rain hit me like pointed
arrows,

And then drip down my rain-coat in
abject defeat—

The young season spends itself in
endless patter.

Down a quiet street deserted by the
shower

I trudge with squelching shoes towards
the road of light and glamour, in quest
of love,

Where tower huge mansions.

On such a day in ages past have swains
discovered their nymphs,

From the balcony the princess has
beckoned to the wayfarer,

The prince has picked up into his
chariot a passing stealer of his heart.

Many are the instances of such
triumphs of love.

Love, divine spark, love so rare,

When it comes down to earth wafted
by the eastern wind

Men have spread the carpet of poetry
beneath its tread.

Surrendering my head to the weltering
weight of these rain-drops

I march, for I must find that love,
however rare.

Stretched before me the rain-washed
asphalt road

Sleek like a bath-wet *Santāl* girl.

A *hās-unā-hanā* bush showed before a
wicket gate glistening heavy with per-
fume.

But no hand beckoned to me from a
balcony.

Rain-drops struck their head in vain,
against barred window-panes,

A car whizzed past in a trail of scatter-
ing slush.

Flashed forth the image of a foreign
girl, a rakish hat on her head,
And on the hat a single plume:

I closed my eyes picturing in fancy her
youthful frame,

Her full breasts pear-shaped, her lips
more scarlet than sunset glow,

Her made-up eyes suggesting the still-
ness and depth of women of remote
ages.

But the car never stopped and no
coloured kerchief waved consent

Anent a love-adventure, poor silly
dear!

Through many a winding lane and
broad thoroughfare I trudged,
Until I reached an outpost of par-
venu splendour,
Where new houses stood enjoying a
rain-bath—

Doors shut, windows barred, blinds
down.

On and on, with the sheer abandon of
despair I marched
Heavy-footed, my sandals a shapeless
lump of leather,

On and on I dragged my numbed feet;
On the narrow street blinked the
blear-eyed lamps, helpless against the
gathering shadows,

The pavements were flooded with
water waist-deep, and choked were
the gutters with garbage.

Through this messy slush I waded my
way

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For the day of love had come.
And love, divine love
Had descended to the earth charioted
by the clouds,
And this love, mayhap, I shall find.
The water-logged tramcars doze like
pythons,
And I brush my way through derelict
rickshaws
Still on my quest of love.

A slight pause marks the onrush of
the sweltering showers,
It thins down to a delightful drizzle,
Like the caress of a shower-bath in a
sumptuous *hāmām*.

For a moment I had paused on the
pavement,

When a girl standing at the corner of
a lane beckoned to me.

Unheeding, although she was a
corker, I replied, "No time have I
Miss, I must have love."

Following her imploring call I
entered the dark alley,

Past the upturned dustbin, and the
dirty spout of muddy water,
Through the broken nozzle of the
rain-pipe.

I stopped at her threshold. I said,
“I am bound on a love-quest:
“Anything? Make it snappy. Time
is short.”

Crazy with wonder she lipped back,
“Love?

“My dove, come and have it.”
So into her mirror-armoured room I
came.

A divan with many cushions
sprawled,

The walls studded with coloured
prints of national leaders and cinema
stars.

She rushed into the room like an
avalanche,

Bolted the door, and unrobed herself
in frenzied haste,

Until in the chaste nudity of her flesh
she stood.



My nerves tingled with a sensation
unknown,
And I was held in a trance as I gazed
at her.

The nipples of her breasts were like
luscious grapes,

And on her breast shone a pendent
of gold like a meteor shooting off
from a blazing star,

The folds on her middle were like
ribbed sea-sands.

She pointed with her hands to that
body of hers

And wanted to help me find my
dream.

In this stream my soul could lave.
Brave adventurer, here was the end
of my quest.

Love, divine love, love so rare
Was I to find it in her flesh?

Was she crazy! and yet I searched,
My sweat washing her every pore.

Out of the door I stepped out, musing
on what I had found,

Behind me rushed the mercenary
priestess of love
And cut short my eloquent speech,
Wrenched off my golden sleeve-links,
And dashed back to her dark alley of
love.

The rain had ceased, and tramcars
resumed their clangour,
Rickshaws jingled, a taxi whizzed
past,
Sounding its claxon,
In honest Saxon I ask my soul
“Is there love?”