

# Collected Poems

(1970-2012)

Ramesh Shrestha





# Collected Poems

(1970-2012)

Ramesh Shrestha



# Collected Poems

1970-2012

*by Ramesh Shrestha*

- Publisher : Bidh-Ya Books  
First edition : September 2016  
© Copyright : Author  
Cover painting : Shashi Kala Tiwari  
Cover photo : Mani Lama  
Cover design : Chiran Ghimire  
Layout design : Himal Shrestha, Chiran Ghimire  
Printer : Kanchan Printing Press, Bagbazar  
Price : Rs 200/-  
Distributor by : Himal Kitab Pvt. Ltd.  
521 Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 4422794  
info@himalbooks.com  
www.himalbooks.com

# Contents

## Introduction

Journey in Poetry – <i>Abhi Subedi</i>	vii
Vers Libre: RAP Revisited – <i>Peter J. Karthak</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xxi

## Kirtipur (1970-1974)

The Summer	3
Timeside Scarecrow	4
Storm and Mother	5
Rain in Kathmandu	6
Valediction	7
Nocturnal Colours	9
A Moon Poem	10
Air and Angels	11
Twilight Dreams	12
To My Twenty-Third year	13
Green-White	14
Evening Thoughts of Home	15
Lake State of Mind in Kathmandu	16
Oh, What Terrifying Winter Lies Ahead	17
The Walls of the Room are Cracked	18
Wakeful Kumbhakarna	20
“Thou Art the Dark Butterfly Thou Art the Green Parrot with Red Eyes”	21

## Here I Come America (1974-76)

A Maple Sunset	25
Hi America	26
The Salem Witch	29
The Spectrum of Sex-Appeal	30
He's a Sunshine Man	31
A Super Lousy Day Today	32
An Eternal Sunshine of Mind	33
Easter Sunday Morning East Lansing	34
Greg Tells Me	35
Loneliness is ...	36
Of Bonfires and Ashes	37
East Lansing	38
Another Sunset of Longings	39
Mississippi Moon	40
2nd Fall in Michigan	41
Getting Tired of Greyhound Buses	42
The City of Buffalo	43
New York Suburb	44
A Tribute to East Lansing Sunshine in May	45
Linguistics Karma	46
Memphis Satori	47
MSU Goodbye	48

## Kirtipur Again (1976- 80)

Rhythm of Nostalgia	53
A False Gift of Spring	54
I Suffer These Evening Hours	55
A Nightingale Sings Through	56
Srinagar Spring Sensations	57
Ethereal Sweet Things	59

Empty Post Box in Times of Love	60
He's An Outsider	61
To My 30th	62
Mind like a Cosmic Womb	63
Kirtipur Blues	65
In Love with T	67

### Thailand (1980- 2012)

Rama VI Blues	71
Brain Drain in Timbuktu	72
America Re-visited	73
Visiting Grasmere	74
Sunrise Cha-am	75
Rama is No Longer	76
February in the Village of Golden Lotuses	77
On My 53rd (An Unfinished Poem)	78
The Loneliness of a Mountain Climber	79
On Graying Hair	80
A Caricature	81
The King Taketh Over	82
Another Cha-am Sunrise	83
Philippe Cottenceau, Fly to the Moon	84
India Recollected in Tranquility	85
A Dasain Sky Today	87
Orpheus and Krishna's Jugalbandi	89
Memories of Dhulikhel Sunsets	90
Mother Passes Away	91
An Elegy for a Motherland	92
In Ville de Dieppe	97
Revisiting Bhojpur	98



## INTRODUCTION

### *Ramesh Shrestha's* **Journey in Poetry**

Ramesh Shrestha's poems compiled in this collection speak about his creative journey reflected in his English writing over a period of more than three decades. I must confess I cannot be objective while writing these few words about his poetry because I strongly empathise with his *karma*. We were trained in the selfsame Anglophile literary culture at Tribhuvan University, and both wrote poems in English. In 1977 Ramesh Shrestha, Peter Karthak and I published our output from 1968 onwards in a collection entitled *Manas*. I have mentioned this only by way of giving background to our beginning. The following lines from Ramesh's poem represent our shared sensibility and our Anglo-centric training very clearly:

The storm is howling once more  
It hides nothing, though  
My old house rocks in the sea of storm....  
The same wind was prophetic to PB Shelley  
The same storm provoked WB Yeats to pray for his  
daughter.

("Storm and Mother")

Ramesh carried that twilight linguistic zone with him to Michigan State University in America in 1975. He always chose a fluid kind of identity that was best expressed in poetry. Reading poems in this anthology arranged chronologically,

I could see that picture emerging, and asserted clearly albeit demurely, at different moments. But throughout his poetry Ramesh's ambivalence about time, space and the very phenomenon of belongingness is expressed effectively. As a graduate student in East Lansing in 'September 28, 1975' he dramatizes the uncertainty in his mind as a combination of shyness and boldness. As a receptive and humanistic poet he puts the following question to America:

What do you think about my long hair and jeans?  
I wonder what you think of the Bangladeshi journalist  
speaking your language  
helpless and oblivious of the famine back home?

The poet's interrogation of the use of English language by non-native speakers, that shyness and the new reality of the English language that was not yet defined by linguists like Braj B Kachru and others, becomes eloquent in the following lines:

Do you understand my English?  
Foreigners speak English, don't they?  
You wouldn't say they are murdering your language,  
would you?

That I too wrote similar poems when I was a university student in Britain is symptomatic of a certain ambivalence about English that we all shared then. Ramesh was conscious of being in the land of the American writers whose wild and anarchic personas and works he was already familiar with. This way of questioning the vast land of America had become the idiom of rebellion and identity formation during that time. Ramesh in an excellent poem "Hi America" asks the country, in

the style of Allen Ginsberg, questions about the whereabouts of Walt Whitman, and Jack Kerouac whose 'open road' freak avatar was resonating with his own sense of quest.

In a limited space I must mention a remarkable strength of the poems in this collection. In them one can see a moving and lyrical albeit tortuous journey undertaken by the poet. Spanning the period from his twenty-third year to his sixty-first year covered in these poems, Ramesh's journey in time and space sounds like an odyssey, a journey of a very sensitive, creative, humanistic and good human being educated yet not taking any stock of all that insofar as poetry writing is concerned. His poems speak about this journey in a very moving manner. Those of us who shared some of the experiences and understood the difficulties of choosing (we were quite influenced by Sartrian existentialism) empathise with the poems. But a poet's journey is his own discovery, his own quest from the moment when he with his 'twenty plus two years marched out of Ghantaghar bell tower' to the "sixty-one-year old man with memories frozen in his mind like glaciers" when he visits his native Bhojpur Bazaar in eastern Nepal that lies on the way to Mt. Makalu. The following lines are very moving:

You can't go home again, whether you are an angel,  
a man or a devil  
you just can't go home twice,  
you just can't step on the same bend,  
same hill twice

("Bhojpur Revisted")

You Can't Go Home Again is the title of Thomas Wolfe's 1940 novel. The protagonist of this work is George Webber,

an author who writes a book featuring the people of his hometown of Libya Hill. The locals become very angry with him for presenting a distorted picture of them. But the people in Ramesh's hometown, his friends and relatives do not exist anymore. That sounds like the end of a journey in a novel, but that is not the case here. Ramesh's life is very vibrant. He has built a small cottage on a moon-bleached hill in Dhulikhel, his old dream perch, where he returns for six months each year with a remarkable woman from Bangkok named Thananya. A session drinking *raksi* on the roof there is a thrilling recapitulation of the inspiring time that has always been captured in his poetry as long as I have known him.

We see Ramesh in different spaces at different times through his poetry--in Tribhuvan University English department, in his "Kirtipur Blues", where he 'gave boring lectures and read Japanese classics donated by Japan Foundation', in American maple groves and then in Bangkok where the poems show he has lived and written for 31 years. His experience of Bangkok is encapsulated in the following 'blues':

Rama VI Road buzzes without rest day and night.  
The 24-hour outdoor jazz of  
steel autos, tricycles and bikes without silencers.  
the screeching and un-strummed gas-guitars and pianos.

His poems representing his experience of Bangkok are subtle, mature and eloquent. Ramesh has a penchant for writing about his shifting experience shaped by the exilic state. In "The Loneliness of a Mountain Climber" his young 'unwilling fellow Thai Sherpas' bend over their 'ageing laptops' on 'their treacherous working table-ledge.' But in these corners 'there are no snow storms here.' This is one of the best poems in this

collection. The poet writes about the feelings of getting old in a very subtle way. He sees the 'guy in the mirror' and surely his 'hair is getting greyer'; and there is no hiding the fact that his 'face is looking kinda older'. The American expression 'kinda' carries the resonance of the understatement of the serious. The poet defines his job, as well as home, which is

...the warm cocoon, the home  
with everything but freedom.

("Rama VI Blues")

It is a familiar exilic theme as well as a common experience of everybody regarding home under certain conditions of belongingness. But Ramesh does not pitch a permanent tent in any one place whether that is a city, a fugitive hill or a native town. He is mobile in time and place. These poems bear testimony to that experience. I do not want to write about my own contact zones in the texture of these poems because of the limited space. We shared the same 'empty post box' 836, for example, 'in times of love' and turbulence. That brings back many shared moments of poetry, hopes and illusions.

To end this short review, I would like to repeat what I have been trying to convey in this introduction. Ramesh Shrestha's poems evoke a shared sense of English literary education as a medium, which the poet has successfully used as a vehicle of poetic cartography to draw the map of his own life, where we too can spot some shared landmarks. One example of the strength of a poetic journey is that it moves from life to more life, hope to love and from a sense of elision to one of fulfilment. Memories find credence in poems. I would like to end the introduction by quoting the following lines from "Memories of Dhulikhel Sunsets":

Many a sunset have I suffered  
from Dhulikhel Tundikhel  
From the autumn of 1969, to be precise.

'To be precise', Ramesh Shrestha has crystallised his poetic memory in this lovely place where sitting on the roof he drinks out of the blue but chilly moonlit night. When he gives a clarion call from this hill, all of us, his old friends, wake up and rummage through the vestiges of time that we once creatively and commonly shared. The poems in this anthology have had this effect on me 'to be precise'.

**Abhi Subedi**  
Mandikhatar, Kathmandu

## INTRODUCTION

### *Ramesh Shrestha's* **Vers Libre: RAP Revisited**

When I finished reading Ramesh Shrestha's 75 poems for his planned anthology and my preface to it, I realized that 54 of them are unpublished ones. The other 21 verses were included in 'Manas', the joint collection of juvenilia by Ramesh, Abhi Subedi and Peter J Karthak (RAP Publications, 1977, Rupayan Press, Kathmandu). It was the first and the last literary venture of the trio, and now the edition is out of print, too. More about it later.

I first saw Ramesh in the autumn of 1969. It was inside the classroom of the English Department of the University College of Tribhuvan University (TU) on the laps of the downslopes of Kirtipur. I don't know who spoke first. He was conspicuous for his height, freckles and a slightly crooked right elbow. He sat next to me while I was copying the week's class 'routine' from another stranger, who turned out to be Nirmal Man Tuladhar.

The 33 students in my maiden MA semester included Nobel Kishore Rai, Saket Bihari Thakur, Haribhakt Khoju, Trailokya Man Singh (my old classmate at North Point, Darjeeling), Sheila Roka (Desai) and many others. The group was shortly trimmed down to 11 students in a test purge, and thus our two-year Master's yatra began. We were the Group of 1969-'71.

Our MA years at TU is a story on its own, requiring a separate space. Except for the fact that Ramesh was often visited by another lanky man at the campus and its canteen. This turned out to be Abhi Subedi, who then taught at Patan Multiple College. When Ramesh and I graduated from TU with our Masters in English Literature, American Literature, Linguistics and Language Studies, it was Abhi who inducted both of us in his college.

At TU, my generation's Old World romance with Hellenic Helicon and Romanesque Rubicon was replaced by lexicons, called 'lexical items', in our Linguistics and Language Studies curricula. Additionally, phonemes, morphemes, registers, RP (Received Pronunciation), glottis, diphthongs, labial and dental and dento-labial intonations and other linguistic trappings – plosives and fricatives included – confused me. How Ramesh and Abhi would make their future academic careers in this new discipline is still beyond my comprehension, though I found Language Studies quite instrumental in my own formulation of Scientific/Engineering/Technical English syllabi for various overseer and engineering faculties at the Pulchowk Central Campus of the Institute of Engineering.

Meanwhile, it was our academic wont at TU to blend Tagalog and Esperanto, to cocktail Creole and Pidgin, and how best to addle linguistics and language studies to teaching techniques in Nepal in the new decennials, as well as reconciling the London underground urchin called Oliver Twist with the Mississippi boy rafter named Huckleberry Finn in the new literary schemes of creative appreciation in Nepal – all these latter learning through British and American literary traditions.

It was then, to find a way out of the postgraduate soak pit we had thrown ourselves in, and while I sang and played guitar for Ramesh, Nirmal, Sheila, Geeta Chand (KC) and Catherine Nayantara Subba (Bista), Ramesh one sunny morning emerged from his dorm with a poem, declaring:

I am a long naked slope of land  
God of Rain, shower upon me  
I want to be wet  
And feel mud on my body.

– The Summer

Dr. Allen Davies, the Welshman and Head of the Department of Linguistics at the Edinburgh University, was Head of the Department of English at the TU College. He promptly declared the poem ‘sensuous’, and this labeling also taught us to differentiate between sensuous, sensual, erotic and sexual. The two latter titillating ingredients are also suggested in the poem, no doubt about it. This was another process in language-learning then, in the late 1960s.

Retrospectively, the poem must and can also be taken on quite another, higher, plane: That it birthed a new awareness in Kathmandu, and this consciousness was one of a new possibility in literary expressions and delivery. English in native creative writing had now entered Nepal via TU and its rolling village greens. The appearance of RAP (Ramesh, Abhi & Peter) in 1977 would add some more steam to this phenomenon.

The RAP trio came from the rugged hills and dusty schools – I went to three schools in Darjeeling before I Matriculated from Turnbull High, the fourth and the final tour, of Darjeeling

town – of east Nepal and Darjeeling. Ramesh is a native Newar of Bhojpur (where Prithvi Narayan Shah held a victory ‘bhoj’ after one of his successful eastern campaigns of territorial expansion – so it goes!). Abhi is a Bahun from Tehrathum, my Limbu maternal nest in Nepal; and I, a Rong/Lepcha, claim my ancestral roots in Namsaling and Fikkal of Ilam before my forbear Karthaks migrated to Darjeeling in the 1830s.

At Patan College, the three of us taught English but wrote in Nepali. I had started a novel in Nepali (which received the Sajha Puraskar of BS 2034: 1974/75 AD), Ramesh worked on his critique of Nepali poets (*Nepali Kavitaka Prabriti*, a seminal work it is), and Abhi had made a name for himself in covering artistic events in Kathmandu as well as in literary criticism.

It soon turned out that we three were also writing poems in English, on the sly. We discovered this third mutuality one evening in Gopal Sahu’s ‘tharra pasal’ in Ason (near Nirmal’s house), and decided to publish them in a single volume. Ramesh submitted 21 of his verses, Abhi selected his 15, and I fished out 12. These 48 pieces were published in ‘Manas’, the title imagined by Ramesh, after the Man Sarovar of the Kailash Parbat. The jacket was joyously designed by Uttam Nepali, and Bal Mukund Dev Pandey of Rupayan Press oversaw the selection of paper and printing the anthology.

We read our poems at some gatherings, mostly graced by foreign envoys and white residents (now called expatriates), Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV, US) and Volunteers Services Overseas (VSO, UK) and their compatriot cognoscenti, most of them cultivated by Abhi and Ramesh and almost none by me.

I don't recall any Nepali taking interest in *Manas*. The anthology was totally forgotten throughout the 1980s – even by its poets.

I must note right here that my poems were copyedited by a Beatnik Bihari Brahmin Guru, called Madhusudan Thakur ('Call me *Professor* Thakur!').

I also must note that the Guruji and all the white foreign fans in Kathmandu came through the courtesy of Ramesh and Abhi. The two's predilection for Indian Gurus and western Goras was quite a revelation to me, quite early on. Having digested many British (Scot, Welsh, Irish, English, Cockney) tea planters, pastors and proselytizers in Darjeeling's post-British Raj years, along with the latter-day arrival in town of many American and Canadian missionaries from the beginning of the 1950s, I had enough of the white skin in the Darjeeling Hills, touted as the most favorite 'Hill Station' in India.

Perhaps, as Nepal was never colonized – a fact often lamentably remarked on by Kanak Mani Dixit and fellow freethinkers – Ramesh and Abhi sought out western and Indian soft colonizers for satiating their curiosities, and they still ferret out new foreign faces in Kathmandu – a cultish fetish appearing quite improvisational to me, for one. The two going crazy for foreigners, especially white-skinned ones, was due to their own country being turned into a wasteland and a gulag for centuries by Nepal's dynastic rulers, and Abhi and Ramesh sought out the exotic and unique in the strangeness of the others, an opportunity missed perforce by their predecessors in their own internally colonized decades in the erstwhile Kingdom of Nepal.

The two's frequent-flyer junkets in many countries have offered them impressions and experiences which are perhaps

fittingly poetic in nature. Hence, Abhi and Ramesh have continued writing poems, whereas I gave up poetry as long ago as in 1980.

'Manas' lay dormant for some 15 years before it was noticed, this time in the fresh airs of Nepal's new press freedom, a fruit of the Kathmandu Spring of 1990. The excavation was undertaken by our own fellow Nepali culture vultures and literary langurs, including some intellectual and investigative chautariyas at Martin Chautari, who indirectly proclaimed that Ramesh, Abhi and Peter were the first Nepali writers writing in English (NWWIE), after what Bala Krishna Sama and Laxmi Prasad Devkota had done their mite in the 1940s. This particular renaissance happened after a hiatus of some 30 years, according to their discovery.

It's now time to come to Ramesh's free-verse chansons and fugues; three longer poems are like cantos and librettos.

This section, however, will be brief, because the conclusion is left to the readers of these poems themselves to reach and then rest.

The poems are sectioned off in four movements: 1) Kirtipur (1970-'74), with 18 pieces; 2) Here I Come, America (1974-'76), which has 22 verses; 3) Kirtipur Again (1976-'80), with 12 opuses; and Thailand (1980-2011), with 23 compositions.

We started our writing in longhand; then Ramesh bought an old Olympia manual typewriter sometime in 1971, while at Bhimsenthan; in Bangkok, I used his Ingersoll electric and electronic keyboards. Then Kathmandu saw the mass arrival of the IBM Compatible, and the rest is history. From post

boxes and mailed letters to telegrams and landline telephony, the world switched over, in triple quick time, to fax, telex, and then the Internet and its many talons and hydras gripped us.

I mention all these meta-modern trappings because these virtual gadgets have no place in Ramesh's 75 poems, except some post offices, anticipated love letters in the mail, Greyhound routes, neon lights, and the like. Literally, his poetry is pure lyrics, pristine paeans, hymns, psalms and pastoral pavaues. Young readers of this anthology are taken back to the world we once lived in, and it is still possible to aspire to and achieve the possibilities in the new millennium, even if it is already 15 years old.

In conclusion, I copy Ramesh to say

As the summer came again to close it all, it's time to say  
goodbye.

– MSU Goodbye

Ø This essay is dedicated to the memories of Lindsay (Loo/Lou) Criper Friedman, who was Gertrude Stein to many Nepalis in Kathmandu. I met her in the winter of 1972 at Lazimpat, courtesy of Ramesh Shrestha. She passed away in 2015.

RIP, Dearest Linzi!

**Peter J. Karthak**

Kupondole, Patan, Kathmandu



# Preface

“On or about December 1910, human character changed,” wrote Virginia Woolf in her 1924 essay ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’.

In my own life that character change took place in 1970 when I started writing poems in English instead of Nepali, my mother tongue which had been the language of my poems for a decade or so. The language-change happened as part of growing up, when I became a student of English literature at Tribhuvan University College. It was a result of what Dr KP Malla describes so well in his essay, ‘The Lure of English’ (1968) as a lifelong search for excellence in English, as “an all-consuming consistent passion, and “a mild form of neurosis.” “The daemon of English” haunted us all.

It was the autumn of 1969 when we all met, the green dozen of Fifth Year MA “fellow seekers”, sometimes in the few classrooms but mostly on the sunny grassy lawns of TU Kirtipur campus. My truly brave-new-world-that-hath-such-wonderful-people-in-it moments. None of us had ever met before - everybody was a stranger, including Peter J. Karthak, one of the writers of Introduction for this collection (Abhi Subedi was already part of my Nepali poetry circle).

Every Friday we had some sort of a reading session. I recited my “I am a long naked slope of land” so nervously, trembling on my neurotic feet, that TMS (Trailokya Man Singh, RIP) had to take over the reading from me.

This was my inaugural as an English poet, the morning of my creation as a poet writing in English. Soon I stopped writing in Nepali altogether – for better or for worse.

My poetic muses changed from Devkota, Siddhicharan and Basu Shashi to Wordsworth, Keats and Shelly; to WB Yeats, TS Eliot and Dylan Thomas; even John Donne – and to more recent American beatnik poets and writers.

But real inspiration came from fellow- students and the bucolic location of the university itself, our boys and girls hostels, gorgeous twilights and full-moon nights at Kirtipur.

Hippysm was still rife in the early Seventies and naturally we sought and welcomed every opportunity to meet and interact with these young bohemians from the West. Christof Jastrzebski and Fiona Brown, who had left London with only 10 pounds in their pockets, were regular attendees at our college recitations. They, together with another British lecturer in India (who played Dr Faustus but whose name unfortunately I can't remember) had helped us with a production of Christopher Marlow's *Doctor Faustus* at the campus. Besides sharing cigarettes laced with marijuana, frequenting Freak Street for hash cake and pies and spending full moon on Swayambhu hill among Hare Rama Hare Krishna neophytes, I had asked Christof to initiate me into LSD. I was reading the Tibetan Book of the Dead as per his guidance to prepare myself for the psychedelic trip, but he and Fiona had to leave abruptly depriving me of my only opportunity for the experience.

Then it was inevitable that I met *the Man who Turned on the World* himself – Michael Hollingshead, the interplanetary editor of

*Flow* magazine, and his friend the poet Konstanty Glinka. We were excited to meet these western seekers, dharma bums, young poets and writers in the flesh. I was thrilled, too, that one of my poems was included in the magazine's inaugural and only issue dated "Dashain 2027 v.s. / October 1970." (For more on this period, see Mark Liechty "The Age of Hippies" *Studies in Nepali History and Society* Vol. 17 No. 2 Dec 2012).

Also inevitably, Madhusudan Thakur was next to enter the drama of my life. Madhu had dropped out (of teaching as a Colombo Plan professor of English in Nepal) and established Ashram Singhwada in Darbhanga, attracting a few ardent young disciples from Europe and Canada. One day I saw the guru I had heard so much about walking along New Road, introduced myself and invited him to a cup of tea at the New Road Coffee House. I showed him a handwritten poem "To My Third Year"; and walked "roughshod" into the morning was a result of his edit.

Madhu became a good friend, a spiritual comrade, and the guru I needed as a morose 23 year old man. I think he is responsible for my hearing a thousand footsteps of fellow pilgrims around me and my mind turning into a thousand petalled lotus – a mood that certainly was a bit of a break from the incessant suffering and dark days of my Nepali poems – although occasionally there is still the terror of living, of terrible winter lying ahead in these poems.

This anthology contains poems composed over four decades encompassing also the two years I spent in US as a Fulbright scholar chasing a degree in Linguistics but also looking for America at the university campus and on Greyhound coast-to-coast, journeying from Tampa in Florida to Utica, North

California in the West and to East Lansing, Michigan via Madison, Wisconsin.

Some of these poems were published in *Manas* (September 1977).

This collection also contains poems written in Thailand from 1980 to 2012.

I'm grateful to my childhood friend Dr Hari Shrestha for his inspiration and help in organising the printing of this book. Lindsay Friedman, I hope you are listening, thank you my dear for going over these poems every now and then until you suddenly, unexpectedly left us last year. Many thanks also to John Whelpton for helping with the Englishman's burden. And to Shashi Kala Tiwari for her cover picture and to Abhi Subedi and Peter Karthak, my intrepid fellow-travellers, for your sweet words.

Ramesh Shrestha

Kirtipur  
(1970-1974)



# The Summer

I am a long naked slope of land  
God of Rain, shower upon me  
I want to be wet  
and feel the mud on my body.

Cloud, wrap around me  
I want to sweat  
in this heavenly high.

Air, blow around me.  
Leaves, fall upon me  
cover my virginal body  
and make it blush once again.

In the first sunny morning of creation  
I trample the cool green green grass  
grown on the muddy slope of my body.

And I hear the music of youth  
surging through the lotus  
grown on the lake of the body.

The cosmos dances in the same old harmony!

In this morning of creation,  
God, keep showering upon me.

## Timeside Scarecrow

Through these boundless acres of land of time  
how long,  
Eyes shrunken with sleeplessness  
how far,  
My God!  
alone on a pair of discordant legs  
a pair of arms dangling out of tune  
beckoned only by a few obscure sounds  
shouting in the brain  
how far,  
how long like this,  
My God!  
in this infinite abyss,  
In this land of time sliding  
backwards and forwards!

# Storm and Mother

The storm is howling once more  
It hides nothing, though  
No magic no rituals  
It is not a symbolic storm.

The same wind was prophetic to PB Shelley  
the same storm provoked WB Yeats to pray for his daughter.  
But here there are a few eagles flying, clouds, trees.  
The bamboo trees are singing the sweetest songs of the year.  
The eagles stretch their shriveled feathers flapping  
against the clouds continually.

My old house rocks in the sea-like storm.  
My mind is full of anticipation for my mother  
who's nervous about the season.

Every year this revolving season is a menace to her.  
Spring wind threatens to shatter her bones as ancient as  
the bamboo and beams of the house.  
Nervously she walks to each window and doors, closes  
each bolt and shutter  
All the bolts and shutters of my own existence.  
I want to force open the doors and windows to let the  
haunted air of the house sweep away.  
I want to get out into the streets and vanish into the storm.

But here I can only hear the old house floating in the  
wind and the window shutters cracking against every  
sally of the wind.

## Rain in Kathmandu

Rain drops on the roof  
thuds without sound  
no water spurts over thresholds  
no leaves rustle  
an' no morning dew there is on the petal.

Rain drops  
without any sound of thunder  
without cloud hanging over the mountain-tops.

No mist creeps along the street  
nor is any window shut against the wind  
no frog is singing  
and there's no cataract forming in the street.

Here's dry rain  
in a sunless hole.

# Valediction

Let's go  
Let's arise and go now  
Let's go now you and I  
For we have nowhere to go.

But the time has come  
when we must run away from this dead land stinking  
of dead fish.

These marks I see on your forehead  
are the marks of complacency, ennui  
these deep furrowed wrinkles on your face are not the  
fertile soil where one can plant rice  
nor are they the rich forests of the south.  
We must get rid of the habit of substituting New Road  
for our inertia, dreams, nostalgia.  
We must escape the Third Eye of the hungry Shiva  
lying on the footpath  
preparing his hashish  
high on rubbersole fire.

We must escape from these grand heritage temples  
strewn with dry excrements of our own race.

I am no Jesus Christ  
I can't perform any miracle.

Who's coming to save us as our Saviour?  
Who's going to promise us our Redemption?

I am not a politician  
I cannot munch on clappings  
and throw empty promises at the hungry people.  
I am not a poet who can celebrate in glory  
the victorious saga of a fallen country.

I don't see any bird hovering over our head  
I don't see any thunder collecting over the Himalaya.  
We're a broken people in a broken country  
We're a people who have forgotten their language and  
are left with a few broken sentences.

Let us arise and go then  
for the road has suddenly come to an end.

# Nocturnal Colours

Outside me  
is  
all  
blue  
luminary  
still.

Inside me  
is  
all windows  
fire  
words.

## A Moon Poem

Under a full Kirtipur moon  
a choked voice can sing  
only of defeat and pain  
chant only of sins  
an agonized animal crawling on its wounded senses.  
Below the full moon  
here in the bonfire of the earth,  
amidst the relics of dead bones of fellow human beings  
my bones too will remain bleaching in the desert of  
ashes.  
I melt,  
I turn into ash eternally in this desert of flesh and bones  
Under the Full Kirtipur Moon  
howling of the bone, the flesh and the ashes.

## Air and Angels

In Kirtipur village  
evening paddyfield footpaths  
radiate the glows of a passing day and the sun.

Twilight dreams are born  
in hushed silence of two beating hearts.

The multi-coloured sundown vanishes into the metallic sky  
the darkening hills frown a gigantic cold presence.  
Fireflies fly by  
past the silence of the dark  
past the stillness of two hearts beating incessantly  
in the unfulfilled paddyfields  
of Kirtipur university village.

# Twilight Dreams

The twilight on tiptoe  
The cracked window  
whispering dreams diffuse on the wall.

Twilight dreams  
laden with faint colours  
of a parting light  
and a dying wind  
still calm quiet  
palpitate through every vein  
shaking me completely like a leaf.

I become an amorous green  
the stillness  
the hill  
the horizon  
fancy that leaves lips tasting of bitter nightmares  
the twilight  
the wall  
the silhouette of the dead sun  
the dead hill  
the lifeless crow  
the fallen flight.

# To My Twenty-Third Year

Twenty plus two years  
marched out of Ghantagharbelltower  
and walked gently into the evening  
roughshod into the morning.

Through the hills  
and the towns  
into the clouds  
out in the sun.

Now hold on to time  
and walk gently into the timeless  
rough-shod into the spaceless.

Through the dreams  
and the greens  
into the midday winter pines  
and the midnight summer silences  
in the showers  
through the rivers  
of time.

Sweet time stop softly  
till I end this journey.

## Green-White

The white on its furry haunches  
jumps forth into the bush  
among smooth white pebbles.

All muscles, head-raised  
darts its twinkling red eyes at the meadow green  
all itchy sticky green.

The white takes a swift stride  
and plunges into the rumpled trembling green,  
slipping, jumping, falling.

And is lost in its own dance of fire and rain  
in its own green-white splendour.

## Evening Thoughts of Home

A shaft of evening breeze  
blows gently  
gently heralding the Fall.  
And at such moments I wish  
I were home  
in the mountains  
to shake and dance to the breeze  
like the leaves  
to the setting sun  
and to the rising stars.

## Lake State of Mind in Kathmandu

I am an offering  
like petals of marigold dedicated to the god.  
Like Keats' Grecian heifer  
all "silken flanks with garlands dressed."  
The zero hours have passed and now I wake up.  
The sleep has ceased to weigh heavy on the eyelids.  
I hear a thousand footsteps  
of fellow pilgrims all around me,  
so soothing, so comforting, so elating.  
My soul has freed itself  
from a thousand shackles it's chained to.  
My body feels as though it was under the spell of a  
sweet liberating magic.  
Holy purifying moonbeams are raining in sheets  
from this divine luminary.  
Kathmandu is awakened by the sweet flute tunes  
to become the primitive shimmering lake it once was.  
There is a sea breeze blowing all around.

## Oh, What Terrifying Winter Lies Ahead

The beclouded moonlight is on the netted window  
and a vase there is with newly changed flowers in it.  
The hounds of nights groan a choric melancholy  
shattering the moonlit windows and the flower vase.  
The cicadas drown the quietness of the night  
deafening the ears listening to the void.  
A pair of eyes half gazing through the dark,  
oh, what terrifying winter lies ahead.

# The Walls of the Room are Cracked

The walls of the room are cracked  
And the paint peeled off  
As is the floor eaten up by the vermins of night.

Yes, the night...  
when the feet rest  
the mind begins wandering  
into the night that grows into wilderness  
into the dark that grows into loneliness.

Those dirty feet have traveled  
more than the sunrays have  
or the multi-stranded mind has.

That pair of discordant legs walk against each other  
sweat and groan  
and there are bruises on the ankles.

The wilderness of night is a journey through dreams  
the wilderness of day through cracked images.

Her feet are mud-splattered  
The Youth Times and the Free World magazines hide  
the cracks of the walls.  
The studio photographs of her are poised against  
eternity,  
the smile and the melancholia lurch on her lips  
alternatively.

Birds of night flap on their wings of darkness  
against the black-rock breeze  
where there is no moonbeam to perch on.

The bird takes off circling round and round  
going up and up until the first rays of sun  
shine on feathers heavy with the morning dews.

## Wakeful Kumbhakarna

I hear no war  
nor Rama's arrows passing through.  
No drums  
No cymbals  
announcing war.

I see no war  
no incense  
no earthen lamps lighted  
no lighted candles  
no temples  
no worship  
no god.

I see no dreams streaming toward me  
rippling and curving down the road  
I see no vision slouching toward me  
reaping and raging along the road.

No fire no flames  
no lance nor the pike  
I do not see any bird hovering over our heads  
I do not see any thunder collecting over our hills.

# “Thou Art the Dark Butterfly Thou Art the Green Parrot with Red Eyes”

(The Upanishad – Svetasvatara)

The mind becomes a green field  
a long stretched hill of pine trees  
a river flows down the feet.

I am lost in this blue haze  
drinking in the calmness of the enveloping silence.

I pray and bless you  
that your heart may be a thousand-petalled lotus  
I pray and bless you  
that your sunrises may be a thousand-plumed songbirds  
I pray and bless you  
that your mind may be a thousand-petalled lotus  
I pray and bless you  
that your evenings are a thousand plumed songbirds.



Here I Come América  
(1974-1976)



## A Maple Sunset

The sun passes over  
behind the twilight maple trees  
like an autumn leaf falls off  
and flutters into the twilight.

# Hi, America !

America, mine eyes are dazzled  
by your and my fellow-exiles' beauty.

Black, shades of dark green and darker blue,  
like sunshine over the African woods  
reflect on your face;  
white faces, eyes green, blue and brown ocean,  
ripple on your face,

Now what do you think of me  
my gray/yellow color, America?  
America, I'm too slow and rambling too much,  
my skin too sensuous misses warm sunshine.  
But your roads and elevators  
your ways are much too fast.  
You must push and push and reach your destination,  
A destination measured by miles and megamiles of  
roads covered.  
Your appetite for gasoline matched only by your own  
appetite for Hamburgers, French Fries and Coca Cola.  
How come we no longer have time in common to  
dream together under the blue sky  
when the wind is blowing cool and gentle upon our  
shoulders?

America, are you scared of the foreign students walking  
in bands,  
getting lost too many times in the maze of your vast  
scale of things?  
How does it feel to see a street-smart, well-traveled,

handsome, healthy Ethiopian graduate student defiantly  
silhouetted against the burning bushes over your  
TV-sky of the dead and dying, famine and disease?

What do you think about my long hair and jeans?  
I wonder what you think of the Bangladeshi journalist  
speaking your language  
helpless and oblivious of the famine back home?

Do you understand my English?  
Foreigners speak English, don't they?  
You wouldn't say they are murdering your language,  
would you?  
Keep their morale high, though  
before the communication ceases and they begin to  
curse you in your own language.

I'm intrigued by your bountifulness, America.  
You even babysit them and teach their wives your  
language,  
give them Salvation Army jackets for a dollar  
and keep them warm for the winter.  
Pray, keep them in good health, feed them well  
and fatten their body and mind  
'cause God knows what'll happen to them when they  
get back home.

These foreign students have lost their high morals and  
perhaps also their identity;  
they enjoy your X-rated movies  
they could not watch back home;  
they also enjoy dating your girls who think they do so  
just to practice their English.

America, why do you have so many highways and  
freeways?  
who are these people driving on their lonely roads?  
who runs the roads?  
And the TVs?

America, where is Walt Whitman?  
Many a time I have wondered what would he think  
if he saw your open freeways and closed hearts.  
America, where is Jack Kerouac  
and the Open Road?  
I don't see them around here these days and sorely  
miss them all.

# The Salem Witch

A waning black moon mews in the firmament  
seagulls hide their feeble necks into the sands.  
A white cat shines forth in its silken coat.  
The elements give out an enveloping rainbow.  
The Golden Broom shoots into the darkness forming  
a milky way  
a woman's eyes dazzle and turn into a million stars of  
ecstasy  
The blue Atlantic suffers underneath in red flaming waves  
the mighty rocks turn into trembling pieces of sand.  
The sky is as black as the cat is black  
and the blue moon shines through the eyes of  
the black cat that is the sky, and the night is.  
The Atlantic wakes up burning blue on the fingertips  
of the woman.  
A magic spell is surely cast on the scene  
where leaves rustle to no breeze  
branches fall off to no wind  
where the dead rise and creep  
into the restless sleep of the living.

## The Spectrum of Sex-Appeal

Beachcombing in Galveston one early morning.  
The end is not silence.  
For it picks up the flotsam  
and lifts itself up as if to look across the sea of life.  
As though to begin anew  
Living the SPLENDOUR of life  
all over again.

## He's a Sunshine Man

He's a sunshine man  
every warm touch of sun enlivens his ruffled feathers.

He's a man lost in the fantasy of women, too  
shaking amorous every living moment  
full of longings every minute of his life  
burning in the fire  
of his own unfulfilled senses eternally.

## A Super Lousy Day Today

A super lousy day today.  
I heard the mad screams of my soul all day long.  
In a frenzy of destruction  
in a frenzy of loneliness  
amidst icy cold snow  
that fell all day long!

Oh, for a sun, a breeze and green grass  
where I can lie down  
and stare away the loneliness of life !

## An Eternal Sunshine of Mind

Don't suffer the eternal sunshine of the mind.

Don't suffer your romanticism so much do not suffer  
your dreams do not do not suffer the sunshine so much  
do not suffer the sunshine do not

do not suffer the music so much don't wake up with an  
eternal sound of music playing in your mind do not.

Do not suffer love so much too much suffer not the love  
Do not suffer in your heart do not.

do not suffer

the sunshine,

the dreams

the longings.

Let it fall from your shoulder- the sunshine

let the dreams drop off your benumbed eyes.

# Easter Sunday Morning

## East Lansing

It snows  
and then shines to the sun.

The last flakes of snow  
fall on to my eyes  
and shine on the ground  
to the sun  
as the sunshine draws a smile on my face.

The first breeze scatters the hanging cloud  
and the clogged winter leaves.  
Birds somersault on the branches,  
trees stretch out in their sleep  
squirrels' tails shimmer in the light.

Now spring is here  
and the winter left far behind.

# Greg Tells Me

Greg says to me,  
“Man, you should have come here five years ago.  
When everything was different.  
People were relaxed and free”.  
Then the trees here were full of riotous colors;  
it'd still be warm in the evening.  
There was sunshine most of the times.

I was looking for something in America. And Greg had instinctively seen something lost in my face. I was kind of disillusioned a little bit, but not yet certain about what was going on.

Radio and TV kept on with the news of depression, inflation, layoffs and growing unemployment.

But the sun it was still shining; the squirrels would come out and play around you as much as you could hear Hare Rama Hare Krishna.

When the colorful leaves of the Fall  
began to fall off the trees  
and thousands of foreign students began slipping on  
their unaccustomed legs on the hardening snows,  
it began to dawn upon me –  
the America I was looking for didn't exist any more.

## Loneliness is ...

Loneliness is the pitch dark color you see  
when you close your eyes.

Loneliness is the pale phosphorescent streetlights you  
see first  
as you open your tired eyes at a Greyhound bus station.

Loneliness can turn into poetry  
or into a sleepless night  
without any dream of god or devil.

Loneliness is a pair of broad American female breasts  
abundant in the warm milk of human kindness.  
Loneliness is a pair of sunken Nepali female breasts  
reading the *Rising Nepal* daily.

Loneliness is the erotic dream of a woman.  
Loneliness is masturbation in front of the Holy Grail  
in an empty promised land of no deliverance.

Loneliness  
may just also be thinking about home,  
dreaming of hills,  
nightmares of falling down slippery hills to no bottom.

Loneliness is trembling  
without any prayer before the god,  
before the father, the legend, the myth  
and all their shameless realities.  
Loneliness can be all these worthless musings  
in a warm East Lansing afternoon.

## Of Bonfires and Ashes

Four bonfires in all directions.  
Naked,  
I lay dead amidst the hot flames.  
A woman lies beside me dead  
with her frozen lips touching mine cold.  
I hear and feel the monotonous consummation of fire.  
Next minute I get up still dead,  
see myself changing into the corpse next to me  
and the corpse changing into me.  
There is water all around now  
the fire all turned into ashes

## East Lansing

September 28, 1975.

East Lansing.

Owen Hall, Michigan State University.

This is no dateline.

No date.

No place.

No time.

It's nowhere.

Like

Tribuuvan University, Kirtipur

That was nowhere.

But I am now fully here

Like I was then completely there.

And now wondering

If wandering from there to here has not been great fun!

## Another Sunset of Longings

This sunset is just perfect  
a golden Godhuli Sundown of luminous dust  
rising from a thousand cow hooves trampling their  
weary way home.

Is this the golden soul of the sun god  
showing its last beauty of the day?  
Or is it the twilight dream of a woman,  
the eternal woman who lies across the horizon  
as a colourful concept of love, beauty?

The sunset is just perfect again today  
reflecting dust from a thousand cows returning home  
reflecting colours of a thousand longings and desires  
not finding home.

## Mississippi Moon

This moon over the Tallahassee Greyhound station  
Looks like a beaten old Spartan.

Like a beaten old Spartan  
This moon be-paled and benumbed  
looks like a weary bespectacled Nepali bus rider  
waiting for his long bus ride to Memphis.

This is an electric moon in an electronic sky  
A TEXACO MOON  
shining above the golden arches of McDonald's  
a fast piece of scenic beauty  
An ESSON MOON.

This is a space moon of the space age  
shining up above the sky so high  
like a salesman's prop in the sky.

## 2nd Fall in Michigan

If life were a river  
after it's the Fall here again  
dreams would all change colors.

If life were time  
It'd be the Fall season now  
and there would be leaves under the feet.

By the riverbed and timeside  
I'd then fall asleep  
on the autumnal leaves  
all fallen and colorful on the water.

# Getting Tired of Greyhound Buses

Seventy four hours in Greyhound from Utica,  
Northern California,  
to Chicago via Idaho Falls.  
I am getting tired and sleepless.  
Getting tired of the monotonous announcements for the  
next connections,  
still next and next connections whizzing past  
Utah Denver Chicago...

Getting tired of waiting for the pay toilets to open.  
Tired of bathroom graffiti offering coast to coast  
free accommodation and blow jobs

Getting tired of looking out the bus windows at stars  
and planets whose names I don't know.

Getting tired of this vast space  
growing vaster and vaster against time  
hanging sleepless looking out the window all day and  
night

Getting sick and tired of the road stretching ahead.  
Getting tired of the pimpish monotony  
of Greyhound announcements ringing coast to coast

# The City of Buffalo

Sticking on its tail  
the sign pointing to the Niagara Falls,  
the City of Buffalo  
3/10 miles east of the New York Tunkpike  
sits in a mire wallowing like a water buffalo

## New York Suburb

America grows small,  
The big and beautiful grows small  
like a lonely rose garden  
belonging to a dilettanti.

The Frostian walls,  
mended in steel.  
keep the aesthetes apart  
and make them good neighbors.

I wake up in this nameless NY suburb  
with no vision  
nor any dream

## A Tribute to East Lansing Sunshine in May

Sun comes out of a zero degree cavern of cold and dark  
where no sunrays penetrate.  
Sky turns blue inside this cave of cold and dark  
where no blueness penetrates.

Here it is a vast dome  
lit by no aromatic candles and jasmines  
but by the cold, glassy, naked phosphorescent lights.

However, since the sun has managed to be out a little  
anyway,  
Somehow there are drops of trickling sweat  
flowing under the armpits.  
I think that's the greatest happening of the season.

But the wind is blowing again flakes of snow  
and the sky is getting overcast.  
Soon my armpit sweats will dry in this below-zero  
degree dome of cold and dark  
where no sunray penetrates.

## Linguistics Karma

Doing linguistics has been my karma  
written on my forehead on the 6th day of my life by a  
prophet of the mountain,  
who seems to have clearly divined for me  
that my mountain spirit must ultimately be balanced  
by the spirit of the Michigan plains  
like, they say, any romantic ghost must certainly be  
balanced by a classical ghost in every human body.

The prophet of the Himalaya also thought that it  
should balance my East with the West,  
the tininess of Nepal with the vastness of America.  
He wanted to make sure I flew across the ocean to  
balance my mind land-locked on all sides.

It seems my prophet also decreed on the soft skin of my  
six-day-old forehead  
that my Muse of Helicon be replaced by the Muse of  
MIT,  
my Trinity of Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu by this trinity  
– a linguist, a mathematician and a political activist.

Right now I feel Michigan is as close or as far to earth  
as Linguistics is to my father Muse.

## Memphis Satori

Walking out of the Memphis Public Library  
Just having read Rinzai  
and some Haiku by Basho  
I feel grandly Zenned in.

I've no fear in my heart.

I no longer carry the images of Negro midnight crowds  
huddled in the Memphis greyhound bus station.  
I don't feel the need to avoid anybody's eyes.  
I don't feel like a foreign student right now.  
My tongue doesn't fumble for a native word.

Jesus Christ, Lord Krishna  
I feel today like I belong here in Memphis  
like I felt I belonged to Bhojpur  
Many many many years ago.

# MSU Goodbye

Behind all this BIG DEAL  
well-kempt moustache hanging tight  
on Rahim Karim's Arab face,  
little Japanese feet of Atsuko Shoji's expertly walking  
against each other,  
big black Liberian feet of Momulu Mosoquai slipping  
on the unaccustomed frozen snows,  
as the Summer came again to close it all,  
it's time to say goodbye.

I see behind all these, after two years here,  
the vision of Michigan State blinking up in the sky  
hanging tight and loose  
Four Point zero like two huge talismans  
we all tried to reach orgasmically.  
Four Point zero ladies dreaming of Four Point Os  
not reaching their orgasms no matter how hard they  
try.

We have all turned into Four Point zero worshippers in  
this big Four Point Zero temple.

“I was at least the one who expected, desired of you, to  
have a character;  
you should have it, and I wasn’t afraid of your having  
it more.”

I was at least the one who spent sleepless hours of night  
waiting  
and waiting to have a dialogue with you, MSU,  
and now at the end  
you have turned into mere bricks and stones.

Big buildings, bricks, stones do not speak.

Between classes,  
Wells Hall turns into a London tube station where  
people walk in a dream numbly groping at each other,  
sleepless eyes that have turned inwards  
and refuse to meet the eyes of the Arabian, the Japanese  
and the Liberian.

It’s a Four Point Zero rap  
In a Four Point Zero trap



Kírtipur Agáin  
(1976-1979)



## Rhythm of Nostalgia

When the morning fog  
swirling up the valley  
begins to lift up into the Kirtipur morning sky  
you can get off the bus  
actually touch the thin line of blue haze  
silverlining the fog  
and watch how the wet grass on the east side of the  
university hill sparkles the sun.

Thakur, the Champa Devi hill calls us again,  
Let's walk again to the hilltop on rubber slippers  
get lost in the river and paddy fields all through the full  
moon night.

In the sunny morning, as the fog lifts up the valley  
we can touch the thin line of blue haze  
and all wet with the golden dew drops on the east side  
of the hill  
we can sparkle like dew on the grass in the sun.

## A False Gift of Spring

A woman is born as a gift of spring  
to sweat with,  
to perspire together,  
to breathe in and out the sweet warm air of a new  
season.

But wait a bit longer  
such things take time, she says.  
But it won't take place again, he said.  
You're leaving tomorrow, she said  
That's precisely why we are here, he said.

Leave me alone please before I forget myself  
I owe my virginity to my future husband, she said.

## I Suffer These Evening Hours

I suffer these evening hours  
this deep blueness of sky,  
the deepest depth of the blue sky I suffer.  
I suffer the end of the galaxy  
I suffer the end of the open path to eternity I suffer  
I suffer the lonely bird that flew quietly toward the end  
of the horizon  
I suffer the deep valley groaning all around me,  
I suffer the deep valley of this dark cosmic aloneness  
swelling deep inside of me.

## A Nightingale Sings Through

In the quietest dawn  
a nightingale's spring song  
steals in,  
chirps in the ears,  
flows into senses all liquid  
enters sweet dreams  
until the sun's rays hit the pillow.  
Lo and behold, there's the bird atop the branch  
still singing to the dawn.

# Srinagar Spring Sensations

If I could just lie down here  
in this transition of youth and age  
and quietly pass from one to the other with ease.

If I could  
creep back  
to the nuptial nights of my begetters,  
crouch back  
and hear the hearts throb.

If I could take up now  
the beauty and the decay  
and quietly pass  
from one to the other  
with ease.

If I could  
Be  
this green-skinned spring  
and these colourful floral sensations.  
Steal in somehow  
into the heart beats of eternity  
and the virginal throbs of the womb.

If only could I move from here  
to the heart and the spirit  
past spent hangovers  
and future cares.

If only I could get up there  
and do it  
tease the high mountains  
and converse with eternity.

Be there  
inside  
conceived  
without an image  
without a word  
without a time.

If I could lie down here  
and quietly pass  
from youth to age  
from death  
to immortality.

There's something here that's not elsewhere  
there's something here in these red valleys  
and blue conical mountain tops  
that's not there inside of me.

How can I work it out  
this transition of youth and age  
and quietly pass from one to the other?

If I could get back  
and swim again in the warm womb  
firmly anchored to the mother.  
If I could only stop  
the images of mind  
just live perpetual moments  
and stop them from ticking away.

## Ethereal Sweet Things

Ethereal sweet things  
alas, were nothing more than sweetness enough  
all that nicety  
given and ungiven  
decided and undecided.

Where do they belong really?  
What country? What clime?  
Where will they come  
and where will they go?

Like a dreamful of evenings in the farthest Himalayas  
so real and yet so unreal  
so real that you can see them  
and yet all that glow and color,  
all that sweetness decided and undecided  
disappear like a mirage  
when you look for them again.

## Empty Post Box in Times of Love

The empty Post Box No. 836 peers right back into the  
very heart of love  
love measured in rivers of ink and mountains of papers  
words get stale  
and the silent post box doesn't speak.

Loneliness is a long distance love.

Trying to sing of all these sweet lyrics  
of separation and missing  
Ten thousand miles away in cold paper and ink.

An empty post box looks right back  
at the nervous eyes  
bleeds you slowly like a cancerous wound.  
Grey days of loneliness  
silence becomes the shadow of death  
How would one know how love grows?  
You flip through empty songs like a shadow!

## He's An Outsider

He's an outsider  
who has reached beyond outside,  
riding oxcarts and jumbo jet planes.

He's a nowhere man  
who has reached nowhere  
and beyond nowhere,  
walking barefoot in the Himalayan foothills  
and in leather boots on London footpaths.

He's a timeless man  
who has gone beyond timelessness  
on lonely walking sticks and fast cars.

He's a spaceless man  
who has turned in and turned out  
and reached beyond turning in and turning out.

## To My 30th

With you  
I was timeless  
Without you  
I'm irrevocably 30  
suddenly

## Mind Like a Cosmic Womb

This mind like a cosmic womb  
breeds words and images  
then upon the flesh it falls  
to arrange and re-arrange them  
and to live and re-live them.

And the burden is upon the living mortal  
to live them and re-live these words and images  
to create and recreate them  
see them grow and multiply  
carry them around in dreams and nightmares  
clinging on to them  
in despair  
in hope in love or in hate  
in longing or in fulfillment.

This woman in everyman's mind  
the woman the mind creates and destroys  
lives thru and suffers  
begets images of love and longing  
of despair, beauty and ugliness.

And she travels with you as your own shadow  
up and down and sideways  
she looks straight into your eyes  
while dreaming or wide awake.

So many images  
of men and women  
places and times  
beauty and ugliness.

The mind like god  
begets words and images  
and upon the mortal flesh it falls  
to nourish, nurture and suffer them.

# Kirtipur Blues

All these many many years  
I've played straight  
followed their rules,  
never went awhoring  
ne'er went after anyone's virgin daughters.

Gave boring lectures  
dry as hell  
and researched on adult literacy in Nepal,  
read all the Japanese classics in English translations  
donated to the university library  
by the Japan Foundation.

I've been lost in Kirtipur mainly  
turning up to their doors every morning  
clean and well-shaven.

I didn't endanger anybody's security  
took all or most of my life quietly  
and with a bit of, humour.  
I never got too much excited over boredom,  
listened every morning to Radio Nepal  
to folksongs of raw emotions  
and nature  
heard every 7 am news of national construction  
and reconstruction  
after one hour of devotional songs for soul,  
another hour of patriotic songs for spirit.

Lived all these years eating rice and curry  
every morning,  
curry and rice every evening  
didn't even feel gastro-deficient thinking of seafood.

So many years  
I've played straight  
followed their rules  
never went chasing after their virgin daughters.  
All my years misspent  
giving dry lectures on dry Kirtipur afternoons  
on John Dryden, John Donne  
Ramesh undone!!

## In Love with T

All the winter and the spring  
I fed on your letters  
they kept me alive  
they were my bread and wine  
my flesh and blood  
they filled in my moments of emptiness  
brightened my dark chilly hours with warmth and  
sunshine.

Passionately  
I wait for you  
the ancient arrow going deeper and deeper.

In my arms  
you are born and reborn.

I create and recreate you  
in all shapes and hues of a woman  
I have always seen and dreamt of.

You're born and reborn in the sweetest words  
ever uttered by human tongue  
verses ever written  
songs ever sung  
in longing and fulfillment.

I dreamt of you  
in a Keatsian dream  
and woke up to find you  
the beauty and the truth.

I carve you  
in flesh and spirit  
chiseled in sculptured triumphs of body and soul.

Thailand  
(1980-2012)



## Rama VI Blues

Rama VI Road buzzes without rest day and night.  
The 24-hour outdoor jazz of  
steel autos, tricycles and bikes without silencers.  
Of the screeching and unstrummed gas-guitars  
and pianos.

The monsoon fully charged with lightning  
poured down upon the large broad palm leaves this  
year.

Insecurity is the price of freedom.

Home is where you have a teaching job  
and you don't have to go the Immigration Department.  
You're home free  
when you can speak and understand their language  
and you know every part of town.  
Oh, the warm cocoon, the home  
with everything but freedom.

# Brain Drain in Timbuktu

In mindless Timbuktu  
(Or is it in mystical Kathmandu?)  
brains like open drains lie  
stinking  
to the highest heavens and the lowest hell.

The godless gutter  
is tightly shut  
choking in its own gaseous filth.

It is a haunted country  
hunting down on its own progeny.  
These brain-drains are the suicidal man-holes  
of a vast inland dump vegetating on its own waste.

Kathmandu is a godless gutter tightly shut in  
by the rusted doors of a haunted castle.

In that country  
brains wait to be drained out  
by the rains carrying in their wake  
the garbage trucks from the UN, Malaysia, Gulf  
and from forty other countries of Ali Baba coming in  
from all directions.

# America Re-visited

Skies rise higher and higher.

Your rainbow-escalators touch the roof of the moon  
where nude angels await you in vast nectar-tubs.

Keep on truckin' America  
until the wide freeways open up to the golden gates of  
heaven.

Don't give up your good work on glass, steel and  
concrete.

Some day your buildings will touch the heavens' roof  
and open up to a solar beach for a lunar suntan  
for your elephantine thighs and potbellies.

Godspeed America!  
Give me a lift to that Golden Gate  
at a transgalaxial speed.

# Visiting Grasmere

An epistle to William Wordsworth

Here there are dales, hills and daffodils  
with a moon rising above.  
And here there also is someone  
who has finally arrived at your doorsteps,  
who's worshipped your pursuit of them  
dales, hills and daffodils  
all life long.

Pray come, talk to him, save him now  
for he finds no tranquility here  
nor a faculty for powerful spontaneous feelings.

## Sunrise Cha-am

Today marks the beginning of a new day,  
a new march toward a new millennium.

The Sun River is long,  
rippling pathways  
changing hues from gold to yellow,  
the shining path to the sun,  
to the morning of the Sun God –  
to the morning of the earth and earthlings.

The Sun River is narrow, long, glimmering on the  
water.

Yellow and golden is the dawn and the Sun River  
stretching all the way from here to eternity.  
Silvery is the river, liquid metal  
chiseled by the twin gods of sun and sea  
in their hot and cold furnaces  
and portioned kindly out to the mortals this morning

# Rama is no longer

Rama is no more.

Like an ineffectual bird  
clipped of wings  
she fell  
and fell  
with not a thud  
not a whimper.

She was the third bird to fall,  
one after another.

My little sister fell  
on a quiet, unmarked afternoon  
at an uncelebrated time  
in an unsung village  
sudden and simple.

Three gone!

Wings clipped  
we fall one by one  
in an unsung  
uncelebrated  
time and place,  
all very silently.

## February in the Village of Golden Lotuses

When the autumn leaves have fallen and been swept  
away  
ushering verdant spring through the boughs and the  
leaves  
when green parrots from paradise  
descend on the greenest bamboo groves  
freshened after the west wind in the furthest Himalaya  
I see nightingales  
grey-feathered glory chasing the spring  
courting, dancing the spring dance  
like a god  
that is as green as the leaves of spring are green  
as green as the parrots are green  
as green as the bamboo groves are green  
in the Himalaya  
as sweet as nightingales are singing in Bang Bua Thong,  
the Village of Golden Lotuses.

## On My 53rd (An Unfinished Poem)

I remember, I remember  
when the world was young  
and the birthday celebration was in the air.  
When the morning sun  
rose brightest on a boiled egg  
fried with a touch of turmeric  
served with rakshi rice wine  
freshly brewed by the mother.

I remember, I remember  
when mother was young  
and all the teachers were, too –  
you didn't worry about all that then  
but now you think they were all young then.

When you asked your class teacher  
for a half-day leave on your birthday  
and you ran home breathless  
past the jungle-men infested forest!

# The Loneliness of a Mountain Climber

I'm morphing into a Sherpa  
slowly climbing the Himalaya  
here in Bangkok.

Not reaching  
partly reaching  
the top  
which is ahead  
and may not even be there.

There are no snowstorms here  
just ageing laptops on the table  
young unwilling fellow Thai Sherpas  
ready to dump their burden down the hills  
and fall asleep  
on their treacherous working table-ledge anytime.

## On Graying Hair

It's not me  
not me  
but the guy in the mirror  
whose hair is getting grayer  
and whose face is looking kinda older.

It's not me, not me  
but the fella in front of me  
in the mirror  
who's the greatest enemy.  
Shame on him!  
he it is that's losing hair  
and getting older and older  
than me.

## A Caricature

His head is stooped to the left  
because he is a leftist.

His right arm is short  
because he is a rightist.

His left arm swings twice as fast as his right does  
to balance his walk

His left foot points farther to the left  
and his right foot farther to the right  
he walks not straight  
because he is  
neither  
a leftist,  
a rightist  
or  
a centrist.

# The King Taketh Over

King Gyanendra has taken over his country again.

Is he a King or a Fool  
To put his head under the Khukuri-guillotin?  
He probably thinks he is the Vishnu Avatar  
our Rama of peace and prosperity?

Or is he Cowboy George Bush in Diamond Crown  
trying to shoot the Mujahedeen Maoists  
out of Bhojpur skies?

And his son?  
How about his son,  
do I have to reckon with him, too?  
sing his glory, too?

I see the Seven Horsemen of the Apocalypse  
slouching toward the high steel walls surrounding his  
palace.  
Whose uneasy head is going to roll?

In Kathmandu today  
no telephones ring, faxes have gone quiet  
worldwide webs, smses and e-mails  
all have gone to the king.

Nepal has gone today to the king, to his prince,  
and to all his clowns.

## Another Cha-am Sunrise

The sun that rose quietly  
made a pathway of golden ripples to walk on,  
to slither, to slouch,  
widening the milky golden way on the sea  
toward the Golden Beach Condominium Bethlehem  
rippling gold, yellow and silver  
like a thousand gold petals growing,  
glowing on the blue waters  
like little paper boats set on sail by an infant sun.

The sunriver is a million silvery ripples  
sunlit fireworks streaming to the shores  
shoals of silver sailboats,  
Cha-am's charmed magical casements  
lapping, opening to the shore  
sunrays raining,  
sunlight raining  
and rippling  
like a thousand little silver sails

Two small birds from heaven  
are hovering over the sails aiming to pick up  
sun rays from the waves and become immortal

# Philippe Cottenceau, Fly to the Moon

Philippe Cottenceau, my dear friend  
fare thee well.

Free of the body,  
thy free soul is now free to fly  
into the deep azure Provençal sky  
above the village of Relliannee,  
high,  
effortlessly,  
naturally,  
like your  
ephemeral  
light,  
magical,  
rice-paper-and-bamboo kites  
matured in high-octane, high-ether realm of the Sun  
and Wind.

Philippe, my soul-mate  
I hope your soul is freely flying  
high above the Relliannee-Forcalquier evening skies  
caught in the heavenly tapestry of colours  
angels paint each dusk  
with their magic wand.

# India Recollected in Tranquility

I'm going to India to look for a lost Sadhuni,  
the one who turned sixty, wore a white sari, white  
kurta, white sandals  
and just took off on foot from my village of Bhojpur to  
Ashram Krishnawada in Mathura two thousand miles  
away.

Where do you come from, Sir?  
Where do you belong to?  
What country is it that bears the sweet love of yourself?

I'm an Indian born in Nepal  
and now living in Thailand  
I'm telling you, sir.

Buy this Taj Mahal for 500 rupees  
you won't get it this cheap anywhere in this town.

Don't even say No, I don't want it.  
Don't acknowledge.  
Don't show any sign that you heard anything.  
Or that they exist.  
The idea is not to let your eyes meet theirs.  
Just pretend you don't see, you don't hear.  
You aren't even here.  
All this is Maya - the Taj Mahal, these pestering vendors.

Sir, Sir It's my personal guarantee to you  
Ok, take it for 50 rupees

Don't you understand the meaning of "no?"  
Yes I do. Then why do you keep on pestering?

Ok, take it for five rupees  
99% discount, sir

The idea is to look beyond these touts  
the idea is to pretend you don't hear them  
who descend upon you in thousands like locusts.

To see or not to see - the sewer  
that flows on your way to Taj Mahal  
the diseased who dress up their wounds and descend  
upon you,  
to find or not to find the Sadhuni  
that left Bhojpur so many years ago,  
is the question.

# A Dasain Sky Today

The sky today is as blue as the bluest skies over  
Bhojpur Bazar  
freshly born in wet morning dewdrops on the lotus  
flowers.

Bright morning sun is coming to our Ghampeti  
Sunyard,  
chilly autumn air is blowing on the Hospital Danda  
hilltop.

The sky above here in Bang Bua Thong Village of a  
Hundred Lotuses  
is as blue as the sky in Bhojpur.  
A heron in white feathers flying up and up in the blue  
is as heartwarming as the white paper kites flying  
above the Hospital Hill  
up and up  
round and round  
like a kite  
sky dancer  
all paper-and-bamboo glory  
tied to the white thread  
freshly wet with rice-paste and powdered glass,  
going up and up  
straight up,  
resplendent in the azure autumnal blue  
stretching all the way to the heaven.  
I feel Dasain today in this Village of a Hundred Lotuses

The same sky bluest of the blue  
freshly born this morning  
in the Provençal villages and hills of Southern France  
in Manosquebazar and Lurexhilldanda,  
hatching, slowly coming out fresh this morning  
So blue  
from the cosmic womb, celestial dance  
of the Astral wind blowing high above the Alps  
chilling autumnal air high above the Himalaya  
and warm sun -  
the same spirit that came to warm our cold bodies at  
Ghampeti.

The sky above outside my windows is blue  
And I long for the blue skies  
stretching today all the way  
from the Village of a Thousand Lotuses  
to Bhojpurbazar in the Himalaya  
to the Provençal skies of the Alps.

# Orpheus and Krishna Jugalbanti

Dear Orpheus and Krishna  
keep on playing, please.

Orpheus with your lute  
make the mountaintops that freeze  
bow down low when you do sing.

Krishna with your flute  
make the Himalayan peaks that freeze  
bow down low to the breeze  
And  
make them spring with joy one by one,  
jump to the heavens each one.

Oh the lute and the flute  
lo and behold  
there is a lasting spring of sun and showers  
everywhere atop lichens and mosses,  
over snow white granite hills.

Dear olden Orpheus, golden Krishna  
Pray keep on playing.

## Memories of Dhulikhel Sunsets

Many a sunset have I suffered  
from Dhulikhel Tundikhel  
From the autumn of 1969, to be precise,  
When Khoju paid for our youthful trips from Kirtipur  
In one of those ancient rickety Sajha buses.

He went home to rejoin his wife  
leaving me forlorn in the Tundikhel  
to watch the sunset.

The sunset colors playing  
the Ode to Joy  
on the Himalayan dusk peaks so far away  
angels lighting twilight sunrays  
cascading in vermilion over peak after peak  
painting them in silver grey  
before fading away in nocturnal white.

Suffering the memories  
of Dhulikhel Godhuli cow-dust twilights  
rising on the silken dust  
from a thousand cowhooves returning their weary way  
home.

So much and so long have I suffered the Dhulikhel  
sunset of my mind!!

## Mother Passes Away

Mother passed away  
At 4 AM yesterday.  
When the Polar Star was shining bright  
Lighting the whole village  
And the surrounding hills.

She had been lying in the cold ICU bed for the last four days.

She went out to clean the house yard  
Waking up the last roosters  
She saw the bright Polar star for the last time  
And the early dawn breaking through the dark  
Shyamshila hills to the East.

She decided it was time to go.

# An Elegy for a Motherland

Somewhere a dog is wailing  
wailing away the loneliness of the whole village.

Somewhere a king is moaning in his nightmares  
still chasing after the ancient family crown  
he lost for ever.

In these closely knit, pot-holed streets of Kathmandu  
stray dogs can feel a monarch's loneliness  
and an Army General can enter a dog's desolate soul.

So closely built are the unpainted houses,  
so similar the unfinished desert houses  
the citizens can fall asleep all at the same time  
and dream the same dreams, the same nightmares.

They can see what their next door neighbors are dreaming  
they can even hear them thinking in their dreams  
so close do the citizens of the city live together.

Watching the same TV serials,  
reading the same news, listening to the same speeches,  
so similar have their minds become,  
they can hear in their half reveries who their neighbors  
are cursing  
as they wake up from their half reveries.  
The citizens and the denizens of the night bark, wail,  
moan in their own  
and their neighbor's sleep throughout the dark night  
without streets lights.

They hear in their dreams their leaders making speeches like in a neverending nightmare they want to wake from but can't.

“In hydro-resources, our motherland is blessed as the richest country in the world. We possess one tenth of the world's total hydro-capacity—shouts loudly the Minister of Water Resources in his long inebriated night made still longer in the 18 hours lightless days and nights of “loadshedding.”

In these tyre-burning streets the fight for Loktantra democracy has proved so successful that disparate parties come together to sing of New Nepal in ten different “national” languages until they are so completely tone deaf they can't hear one another when they wake up.

Their Nepali Sheer (Head) is so proud and erect that it has grown higher than their own tallest Sagarmatha whose head touches the sky.

In their living nightmare so full of self-congratulations they write national anthems full of the blood of their dead heroes, this vast nation ever moving forward, victory, victory to Nepal.

Republican politicians of the new democracy brag about sea changes they have brought to their land-locked country without a sea.

They talk of their historical responsibility to write a  
new Constitution  
and have gone on and on about it jibberishly everyday  
for nearly six years  
as if in a long sequence of recurring sleepless dreams.

The elected Constituent Assemblymen making and not  
making the Constitution,  
the whole country talking and rumormongering,  
some speechifying, other holding conferences and  
workshops,  
going through this neverending Kafkaesque nightmare  
of peace building,  
constitution writing  
and more blah blah blah.

Are we in our sleep  
or is it our natural waking state of mind  
I know not  
but we make Naya Nepal  
and go on making New Nepal every day and night  
ad nauseum.

We go on talking in a drunken stupor of national unity,  
new revolution  
and other la la la:

“Let this country live for ever”, says our First President  
with tears welling in his eyes, repeating as if  
in a dream  
what one of our loathed Kings decades ago had said,  
quickly adding  
“even after I die.”

Oh, so many platitudes,  
such audacity for meaningless words and convictions  
we have heard and seen  
as if we have never awoken from decades of sleep and  
nightmare:

Develop this holy motherland  
Let's make Nepal,

Somewhere the armies of the night are clashing  
throughout the whole doggone night  
the mountains and the plains are resounding with the  
cries of thousands of young teenage boys and girls  
killed, disappeared.  
The night is deep, dark and soulless.

Throughout the night the dogs are crying  
crying away the terrible pain of the generals and  
commanders  
in their nightmares  
being chased by the thousands disappeared  
and by their living parents and relatives still looking  
for them.

Somewhere a king is dreaming of having entered the  
body of a rhino and ritually bathing in blood like his  
ancestors did  
and consummating himself in the nightmarish long  
night of his lost diamond and feather crown.

Somewhere someone is waking up  
uneasy in the middle of the night  
to find that he has lost his country

that he has lost his language  
and that he's lost his identity.  
That he has lost the ability to dream his neighbors'  
dream  
that he has gone deaf and dead  
and can't even hear the dogs of the nights  
wailing the loneliness of my Motherland.

## In Ville de Dieppe

In Ville de Dieppe  
deep silence is etched in the deep sea  
on the dark pebbled shores.  
Deep quiet has soaked into the ancient bricks  
on the midnight cobble stone streets.  
The loud seagulls are dreaming of their soundless  
flights and songs  
the lone church is quiet  
as is the lone chateau atop white sheer cliffs  
bathing in an early morning sunshine  
after the kite flyers,  
magicians in paper, nylon, polythene, bamboo, carbon,  
colour, wind, ether, are gone.  
In the town of Dieppe  
deep silence is etched in the deep sea  
on the dark pebbled shores  
deep quiet has soaked into the ancient bricks

# Revisiting Bhojpur

Many who once lived have passed away.  
Disappeared just like that  
Here in this hilltop hometown of memories.

I am haunted by all those who have gone, departed.

My mind is working overtime.

I've walked these hills  
so long and so far.

Father gone.  
Mother departed.  
Two elder brothers  
One younger sister  
All gone!!

There are more faces  
that I remember that have departed  
Than the new faces I can recognize.  
Bhojpur has become the country of the dead.

Our very first Mantri, Cabinet Minister,  
making this whole district proud  
Narad Muni Thulung, who would be a centenarian  
if still alive  
is long gone  
he's no longer shouting in the middle of the street in  
front of his house  
shouting at young things like us in pukka English

“ You loafers, thugs why don't you stay home  
and read books.”

Gone is his wife, Mantrini,  
who gave birth to her sons in the jungle while cutting  
fire wood.

And gone are all her sons –  
Kirtan,  
his younger brothers Robin and Subash -  
Subash the same age as me.

This is all an unhealthy proposition to come home,  
to memories of those who are no longer here.

This is no country for a sixty-one-year old man  
with memories frozen in his mind like glaciers on  
Mount Makalu.  
There is no coming home with memories of time that is  
no more.

The wide golden childhood streets  
as wide as a football field,  
live as mustard, cornfields  
have shrunken into narrow dusty lanes  
lined with impoverished shop houses  
selling cheap goods from China, India and Thailand.

The house where I was born, spent my childhood, early  
teenage  
has got smaller and smaller as has the whole village.

Now the home is even shorter and narrower,  
my head bangs everywhere I go until the bald head  
begins to hurt.

The house was dark then  
with kerosene-oil lamps and lanterns lighting our  
ancient textbook pages  
the village was dark then and is still dark now  
even if the electric lights have replaced my childhood  
kerosene lights and lanterns.

This is no country for an old man with memories of  
young days.

Bhojpur was young then, very young as young as I was  
younger then.

Bhojpur is getting old now, very old as I old as I am  
older now.

This is a new Bhojpur, a young town on the go  
with dusty roads, electricity, private schools, colleges,  
government offices, connected, connecting to the world  
with wireless network, ISD, SSD telephony  
on the road to changes, prosperity, consumerism.

Bhojpur has changed from a young, innocent, ignorant  
time and place  
as I have from innocence to experience of some sort.

Bhojpur, you and I have both changed  
we were both older then  
but have become younger now than then  
when Peace Corps volunteer Jonathan Ochi used to  
sing on his guitar  
in the misty, foggy, evenings in Tundikhel.  
That was the winter of 1968 I think.

But the hills are greener with trees now than they were then  
the lone main street sometimes buzzes with the siren of  
a lone hospital ambulance crawling down the street  
slightly faster than the lone horse-ambulance trotting  
up and down the hills where no roads exist.

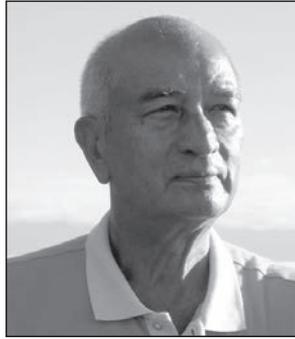
Bidyodaya High where we all went schooling  
has turned into just images frozen in mind like a glacier.  
The high school is also gone.  
The sun-drenched school yards where we went out to  
study when classrooms became too cold in winter  
months,  
so big so wide have disappeared like our childhood  
heroes –  
Headmaster Rudra Pradhan, Class Teacher Krishna Lal  
Sir and many others Teachers.  
They have all vanished remaining still frozen in my  
mind as just memories.

The dusty classrooms which we cleaned every Friday  
flinging more dust covering brittle ladders upstairs as  
wide as the open highway reaching seven heavens of  
our ambitions.

Where are the thatched roofs which used to fly away  
like feathers every windy month of March?  
Where is the forest where a jungle woman lived with  
her children on a tree-top  
that we ran past each afternoon  
after class?

Forty years is a long time.  
An age has passed.  
Bidyodaya High has entered a new age  
as indeed I have.

But now my mind is laden with half a century of frozen  
memories,  
frozen moments  
like icebergs on mighty Makalu Mountain.  
You can't go home again, whether you are an angel, a  
man or a devil  
you just can't go home twice,  
you just can't step on the same bend,  
same hill twice.



**Ramesh Shrestha** was born in Bhojpur Bazaar, Nepal on April 28, 1950. He wrote and recited poems during his Bidyodaya High School days. After finishing his SLC in 1965, he spent two more years in Bhojpur teaching at the same school and doing his Intermediate of Arts as one of the first batch of students of newly opened Bhojpur College.

In 1967, he came to Kathmandu for his BA when he also joined the capital's vibrant literary scene publishing his poetry and essays in local magazines. He joined Tribhuvan University for his Master's in English in 1969 when he started writing in English.

He then joined Patan Campus as an Assistant Lecturer of English in 1972. In 1974 he was awarded a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship to spend two years studying Linguistics at Michigan State University, East Lansing.

He then joined his alma mater as a lecturer in the English Department at Tribhuvan University's Kirtipur Campus, also working as a Researcher at the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies.

In 1979 he spent four months as a Professional Associate at the Centre for Cultural and Technical Interchange between East and West (or East-West Center), Honolulu.

Nineteen Eighty brought him to Thailand where he has been ever since, teaching at Thammasat and Dhurakij Bundit universities and working in such diverse fields as journalism, marketing, media and advertising. He founded The Advertising Book, Thailand Advertising, Marketing, Media Guide ([www.thaiadvertising.com](http://www.thaiadvertising.com)) in 1984 and remains its editor.

In Thailand he has been active member of the Nepali community, founding the Thai-Nepal Chamber of Commerce and the Non-Resident Nepalis Association (NRN) Thailand.

Ramesh Shrestha is married to Thananya. They divide their time between Nepal and Thailand.

### Literary Publications

- *Trends in Nepalese Poetry* (in Nepali), Kathmandu, Sajha Prakashan, 1979.
- *Manas* (a collection of poems in English), Co-authors Abhi Subedi and Peter J. Karthak, 1977.
- *Bhojpur-Kantipur-Kirtipur (Ramesh Shrestha's Journey in Poetry)* (in Nepali), Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandar (2015).

### Research and other Publications

- *Adult Literacy in Nepal* (1977); *Use and Misuse of Social Science Research in Nepal* (1979); *Language Policy of Nepal* (1979); *Diglossomania in Nepali English* (1979); and a number of journalistic reports covering advertising, media, marketing and metal industries (1980- 2010).



'Revisiting Bhojpur' is one of my favourites: very poignant, and I also have similar feelings when I go back to my home town in Cornwall.

– Michael Hutt

• • •

'Ramesh catches in his poems the moments in his life when he is most alive as a kingfisher; I have always enjoyed his poems with nostalgic feelings.'

– SB Thakur

• • •

Ramesh Shrestha's poems map out a unique life but in so doing they also offer vistas onto a broader landscape shared by Nepali artists and intellectuals of his generation. This was perhaps the first generation equipped with the linguistic tools to engage the Western world on its own terms and to bring that world into focus from an engaged and critical Nepali point of view. Here are the poignant traces of that rich and critical and transformative encounter.

– Mark Liechty

• • •

Ramesh's poems reflect a multitude of diverse feelings and moments from throughout his life. The phenomenal impressions that he gathered through his own perception and idealism possess a splendid charm and stimulate the reader to search for the deeper meaning of his spontaneous thoughts and emotions.

– Hari Shrestha

