



Translations

March of Hindi Poetry, Post-Independence

Anup Singh Beniwal*

1

Nagarjun

Power

The shriek of skeletons stood in attention surprised
as the great gun of power appeared in the sky
Everyone is spitting insult at the Nazi-pride
That has blunted the gun of mighty dispensation
The deafness increased tenfold; Vinoba went mute
thanks to him, and the mighty gun of power
truth itself was hurt; *ahimsa* went haywire
and the canon of power indiscriminately began to fire
A nightingale began to sing on a burnt tree-rump
nothing could be done by the great gun.

2

Kedarnath Aggarwal

A Sad Day

This sad day
a retired peon
a lost gambler
stands mute like an untamed donkey

The sun weeps like a child
separated from its mother

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Sunshine lies grieving
like an abandoned wife

Legs amputated;
the wind stretched
on a trolley
slowly rolls
towards hospital,
wailing!

Standing on one leg,
bearing the weight of their bodies
tall, ancient trees with hair flowing,
are in deep meditation in the forest.

3

Naresh Mehta

Immortalize

Come, let's immortalize this lake

Not by touch
Not by sitting on its bank
Looking in its mirror together
Let's give ourselves

to its water –
which is Time!!

4

Dharamveer Bharti

Broken Wheel

I am
a broken wheel of the chariot
don't scrape me.
Who knows when

in this complex maze
challenging the mighty armies of deceit
an audacious Abhimanyu is trapped.

Who knows when
knowing well their own untruth
the mighty heroes
might want to crush
an unarmed and lonely voice
with their divine weapons!

Then I
the broken wheel of the chariot
will help defy
the divine-deadly armaments
in their possession!

I am
a broken wheel of the chariot
don't scrape me
who knows, when
the collective march of history
turns suddenly into falsity
the truth may seek
shelter behind the broken wheel.

5

Sarveshwardayal Saxena

Shelter

My whole life
I kept looking for a place
to shelter my head,

and in the end
I could not find a better place
than the hollow of my palms.

6

Kunwar Narayan

Tunisian Well

There is a well in Tunisia
It's water, they say,
has a subterranean connect
with the holy well
in Mecca.
But I have also heard
that there is a subterranean connect
among all the wells
of this earth.

7

Raghubir Sahay

Ramdas

Wide street and narrow lanes
Daytime, with clouds dense
Ramdas was very sad that day
His time was closing on him
He was informed that he would be killed.

He slowly walked forth alone
had thought of taking someone along
decided otherwise, though everyone was on the road
everyone was silent, everyone unarmed
everyone knew for sure that he would be killed.

He stood in the middle of the road
with hands folded on his belly
people arrived with measured steps
looking at him in fear, intently
and gazed at one who was to be killed certainly.

A killer appeared from the street
and on arrival called his name
struck the knife with resolute hands
a fountain of blood ensued
hadn't he informed that he would be killed?

8

Shrikant Verma

Intervention

No one sneezes
for the fear
that it might disturb
the peace of Magadha,
if Magadha has to be sustained, then
the peace in Magadha has to be maintained
If Magadha is, peace is.
No one shouts
for the fear
that might interrupt Magadha's affairs,
there has to be a system in Magadha.
If not in Magadha, then where?
What will people say?
Why bother at all?
At present Magadha is just a cant
not a place worth living in.
But nobody questions
for they fear
lest questioning should become a convention
in Magadha.
Once started,
such intervention doesn't end anywhere.
O! inhabitants of Magadha
however hard you try to evade intervention
it is impossible to escape intervention –
When no one intervenes
a corpse passing by through the city does
by questioning –

Why does a human being die?

9

Dushyant Kumar

Dharma

An intense, sudden pain
engulfed the heart
I gulped it down,
A small happiness
flickered on the lips
I spread it around,
I felt happy and thought –
Dharma inheres in making small deeds great.

10

Dhoomil

Bread and the Parliament

One person rolls the bread
one person eats the bread
there is a third person too
he neither rolls nor eats the bread
he only plays with the bread
I ask –
Who is this third person?
On this my country's Parliament is silent.

11

Naresh Saxena

Crossing

In crossing the bridge
bridge is crossed
not the river
The river cannot be crossed without stepping into it

Without stepping into the river
the significance of the bridge cannot be grasped
In walking across the bridge
without stepping into the river
the bridge is not crossed
only iron and scrape are traversed

nothing can be crossed
without stepping into the river
neither the bridge
nor the river.

12

Ashok Vajpayee

The Eternal Dream

The tree is a body
arising from the earth, in an unbreakable bond
the flower survives as a flower till it is a part
of a tree
and the leaves remain leaves till they are on the tree
Till the time you support this body wholeheartedly
Only till then
its soul bonds with you permanently
The soul dreams of the body eternally.

13

Leeladhar Mandloi

Fire

On my table
Words collide with words

A spark is ignited
and spreads through the poem
like wildfire

No fire, No poem.

14

Devi Prasad Mishra

Unconventional Prayer

Indra, leave and let it rain
Marut, leave and let the breeze blow
Brihaspati, vanish, and let the mind work
Aditi, go, and let there be births
Rudra, get lost, so we may get angry
Goddesses and Gods,
whatever we demand
is not in the form of a prayer!

15

Anamika

Mere Emptiness

People are drifting apart -
(Each from everyone) -
they are drifting apart
and this damn surrounding space
is merely expanding!
I will not translation this space as emptiness
but as an astronomical expanse
for I have launched a flying saucer in it!
Thankyou time
for my watch has stopped
Thanks you window
for a pregnant sparrow
sits just behind its bars!
I thank everything
wherever it does rest
for at present all of these are within me
and my bits and pieces are in all of them.
My empty home plays the harmonium
in silence!

A lots of work is packed
in this empty time-space
I am yet to translate
the worn out discarded clothes
in the language of water
and after that
I will translate the used unclean plates
as white flower-petals
and then standing still for a while I would think
how I may translate
the foam filled sync into some musical note?
The fact of matter is that I want to translate
the whole household in another language
but where will I find such a language
except in that language
in which the children speak?
The whole evening will drift by
In this thought and I will only end up translating
this evening merely in this way -
that I will get up
and slide open all the curtains!
The splinters of fading light
will fill up all the space
and I will never translate that
as an astronomical space
but as just as an expanse -
a mere emptiness!