

# 50 POEMS FROM AUROVILLE



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## PREFACE

This is an anthology of 50 poems written in the last 50 years, as a gift and tribute to Auroville on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1968.

The poems are by Aurovilians, former Aurovilians and those involved with or who have been in some way touched by Auroville or The Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The selection includes poems previously published in various Auroville and private collections together with poems recently submitted in response to a request in *Auroville News and Notes*.

In his book, *Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness* Satprem, describing the Illumined Mind, remarks that it is interesting to note the number of poets of all languages – Chinese, Indian, English, etc. amongst Sri Aurobindo's disciples, as if poetry and art were the first practical results of his yoga. *"I have seen both in myself and others a sudden flowering of capacities in every kind of activity come by the opening of consciousness .... It is a question of the right silence in the mind and the right openness to the Word that is trying to express itself – for the Word is there ready formed in those inner planes where all artistic forms take birth, but it is the transmitting mind that must change and become a perfect channel and not an obstacle."*

Not all the poems in this anthology are the product of openness to higher planes of consciousness, or are even necessarily 'spiritual'. Some express a deep yearning for a life to be lived in oneness with the consciousness of the truth of things and the spirit. Some have been included because they convey vividly a sense of truth or honesty or strongly evoke a sense of connection with the place or scene we may have experienced, or tell us something about the Auroville experience. Or they simply have an appealing poetic quality.

My good friend and mentor Sonia Dyne has pointed out that so-called 'spiritual poetry' does not have to deal specifically with 'spiritual' themes: it can be a celebration of nature, an expression of religious belief, or simply a deeply felt outpouring of emotional response without any intellectual quality as in purely devotional poetry. The essential thing is recognition, overt or implied, of a hidden oneness uniting all human life with the life around us in Nature and the poet's response of wonder and awe or delight or gratitude.

I have made the selection on the basis of my own personal taste or sense of poetic quality and in doing so, in order to have just 50 of the best poems, I have unfortunately had to eliminate quite a few poems submitted to me for consideration, which were really very good. To those whose work has not been selected, I say sorry and thanks. To those whose work has been included, I also say thanks and express my deep gratitude to the light that is dawning in and for Auroville.

Vikas Vickers for AVI UK, with editorial assistance from Sonia Dyne. 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017

*Cover Photo: Fred Cebron for Auroville International <http://www.auroville-international.org>  
Aurovilians, AVI and guests form the Auroville symbol in the International Zone, February 2017*

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**Early One Morning**

The sun got up; so did I,  
slow and cosy, half in sleep.  
Stumbling out, I sat upon the step:  
receiving nothing from the night  
I expected nothing from the day.  
There was a tree in flower,  
A scratching dog,  
the sun was shining on the sea.  
But then, at half-past by the clock,  
the world turned over....flip!...  
and changed all that.  
And when it all had settled down,  
resplendently I saw:  
a tree in flower,  
a scratching dog,  
and the sun O shining on the sea.

## With Stump of Candle

2

What do I leave  
Behind me on this pilgrimage?  
Frail towers pitted as if by shot,  
pale faces at the windows  
Too drained by all the frightfulness  
For pleasure at the sudden quiet.  
For have I not ravished them?  
In more ways than one  
diminished them,  
and acquired their name?

What do I leave  
behind me on this pilgrimage?  
I leave no one still loving me.  
Neither do I take with me  
on this pilgrimage  
someone who loves me still.

It is the dark world  
I leave behind me on this pilgrimage...

Yet...He who meets me  
greet me not with scorn  
as I deserve, but with his grace.  
It is almost too much for me to bear.

## The Experiential Ploy

3

I in my apprentice-wisdom draped,  
have things to say about things,  
things that belie the conspiracy that goes on  
in search of the Reasonable Other.

I have things to say about the thingness of things  
and about the nothingness of nothing,  
and about the termination of things seen  
at the many-splendoured tumult of the lone.

For at the moment when blessed things  
take on all that has become so clearly cursed  
and profane things become at last redeemed  
the very nature of belief is gathered

with all things in, dispersed with all things wide.  
All in this new and holy stance  
old things lose the very thingness of old things,  
become things new, things clear,

things newly uttered; all things,  
otherwise opaque, brighten, are lifted up  
into being; all things turn innocent, experiential.  
Times change and thingness changes with it.

Even when nothing moves  
and no thing changes place  
the parts stay incommensurate with the whole...  
O the air is pungent with my foolishness

as I strive to speak of what I only know.  
My knowledge is all empty, lost in words; only  
my foolishness recognizes what makes things things  
and nothing nothing.

1987

### **The Indian Shawl**

How blue! And deepening  
You flow, o dusk, seeping  
Through interstices  
Filling empty spaces.  
The rich scent of flowers  
Beginning to bloom  
At night, is still light  
The essence of mildness.  
You blur harsh outlines  
And blot out ugliness.  
O merciful, how soft  
Your touch when you meet pain.  
Now darkness falls like rain  
And the hands of shadow  
Throw over the shoulders  
Of even the poorest  
A shawl studded with stars.

### **For Anita**

The river of life  
Was flowing between us,  
From the other bank  
I saw him, half in light  
And half in shadow.  
An invisible bird  
Sang out, our reflections  
Met in the water,  
I loved the light in him  
And hated the shadow.

The river of time  
Is flowing at our feet,  
A sorrowful face  
Smiles out of the water.  
The sun and the moon  
Look on in wonder,  
The people and the earth  
Ask me - don't you know, Only God is all love,  
We are half in light  
And half in shadow.

**To Philippa**

(who died on 3<sup>rd</sup>. July, 1975)

My heart goes out in flame and dream  
To linger by your childbright soul,  
You were sunlight on a shimmering stream,  
The laughter of light on a crystal bowl;

You did not dance but flow and sweep  
Through windy shining wildfire days;  
Touching your truth I cease to weep,  
For your golden smile within me says,

“Behind each sorrow soars a silent joy,  
Each blind despair a secret splendour brings,  
Why do you mourn that crazy broken toy?  
I fly to God on singing, strong fresh wings.”

### **In Darkness**

When we search  
so many locks appear  
to which the keys seem lost.  
O mountain with no path  
The trails of footsteps, lost  
so far apart  
are yet all yearning  
for thy one translucent peak  
that soars invisibly  
above the night.  
We peer like blind men at the sky,  
waiting for the dawn  
holding the Sun  
prisoner in our hearts.

### **By the Samadhi**

Petals opening inside my head.  
all left behind, the desert  
where dew falls barren  
on the pastures of the dead.  
Corpuscles jostle in the veins like wine  
and I am confounded that  
this harmony should burst  
out of such muddy earth as mine.

### **Where is the Straight and Narrow Path?**

Passion is my master.  
The trees will not admit me  
To their silent company.  
The sun has sunk a ray  
Inside my flesh  
And trapped by bone and skin  
It roars in deep frustration  
Like some impotent volcano  
Yearning underneath its tons  
Of rock to turn again  
Into a living star and throw  
Its arms around the Sun.

## To Mick

7

Mick, some day you may read this and know  
what you did when you let the levers  
and clocks go to hell, when you chucked  
aside all the walls and spat in their hair  
and hated. You threw away all the skins  
around your blood and fire and looked  
with utter honesty out of the lies  
that made me know the madness of myself  
reflected in your eyes. I knew no one  
but me and for a moment's hurt I saw  
your beauty and your agony belonged  
to all of us, and none was showing it  
so truthfully.

And yet afraid to join  
your show because it threw too much of strain  
and battered at the real that we know  
we hid behind the concepts we had gathered  
from the shelves, because we saw before us  
stood a truth to which we had no key,  
and so we tried to understand  
and do what was good and right  
while you stood in the darkness  
howling for matches, but no one dared  
to go so far to find the light.

**That Tender Pulsing**

There is a tender pulsing in the heart of life  
A hidden meaning that escapes our mind,  
That hums and glows in great and littlest things but for which  
The tongue no words can find;  
Within us is an ageless spring  
That sends it forth in myriad ways.  
Behind it lies a power  
That emanates a thousand rays.  
All hidden mystic from our sight  
Which make our hearts take flight,

It chimes at root of rock and sea  
Of earth and sky, it sings in flower, fern and fire,  
Is working to transmute us all,  
And thus fulfil the world's desire.

No brain has wrought it that has sought.  
No hand takes it apart.  
No instrument avails  
For it is whole or it is naught.  
It winks at you a moment  
Only to depart.  
It is both bold and very shy,  
As indeterminate as the sky.  
Nothing can bind it.  
Not even life itself  
But the thing behind it.  
And were it not  
We would all fall to pieces.  
The world would rot  
For it is this  
The secret bliss  
That upholds the universes.

1973

### **Homage to Sri Aurobindo**

Perhaps my thought was a deeper seeing  
When the mind fell still and the inner being  
Seemed to hear his voice from the silent page  
Speak softly of the coming age.

My heart attuned, my body heard  
From the Lord of Life the mantric Word  
Of life transformed, earth by His kiss  
Re-wed to beauty, man to bliss.

A sweetness descending from realms above  
Borne earthward on the wings of love  
Envelopes our lives and, immortal, brings  
The Godhead's touch to mortal things.

Slowly the golden light draws near  
And the children of the dawn appear.

*2003*

**In the Silence of a Moontide**

In the silence of a moon tide  
That streaks the midnight sea  
There dwells a deep fulfilment  
That calls alluringly;  
With whispers lent unspoken  
To touch the witness Soul,  
A fullness deep unbroken  
That hints a Mystic whole.  
And the waves they break in rhythm  
Upon the sandy shore,  
Each one at last effacing  
The one that went before.  
And the heart it knows one answer  
To all that is no more.  
In the silence of that moontide  
The waves break to adore.

*1985*

**Autumn Twilight**

A season now draws to its end  
The unforeseen approaches,  
A guardian goddess comes to lend  
What body to our voices?  
The autumn now across the sky  
Is stained a blood-deep red,  
The wind it whispers in the trees  
The leaves fall to earth's bed.  
The twilight whispers in the wind  
A mood that seems to say,  
That all our loves have come to weep,  
But none have come to stay.  
And all our lives at last have come  
And gathered to her breast,  
All lives at last have come  
At last have come to rest.

*2000*

## **Graveyard**

The District Educational Officer's office  
is shut for the night. His watchman  
hunkers outside in a piece of twilight,  
contemplating the intensity  
of the cool of the day,  
while the country of papers inside  
slowly disappears into the dark walls.

Amid the worn valleys of those stacks,  
faded scratchings of hot afternoons  
beneath the keening hum of fans,  
move tentatively the rats, the roaches,  
shrews, scorpions, spiders, lizards,  
and who knows what other creatures  
that prey upon the crumbling world  
of names who lie buried there,  
forgotten by all except those of the night  
who gnaw at their hidden bones.

*1984*

## Dry Season Shower

12

As usual the street was full  
of shrouded bodies this morning  
as I stepped from the early bus  
into the steaming streets  
and steered my way  
between the mounds of white cloth.

They came to life slowly,  
struggling from under their damp sheets,  
dazed by the puddles, staring  
as if they had wakened in another land.

One of them lay still  
glaring up at the gray clouds  
with swollen fixed eyes.  
He was unshaved, his clenched body  
rigid on the damp cement  
as from a fit.

I stopped

and waited with others turned then  
from the lip of sleep,  
waited for him to wake and rise  
with us to a new world of rain  
and shake off the gathering flies.

He will lie next on a wooden bench,  
swathed in fresh flowers  
to stifle the inevitable stench,  
with coins to cover those eyes.  
The drumbeats will begin to drain  
the women of their wails,  
the sun  
soon dry this morning's brief rain.

## **The News**

13

And when his oldest son said  
that new brother had died,  
Rajagopal's hand  
strayed automatically  
to his forehead  
to unwrap his white cloth,  
and it fell limply  
into his hand  
like two months' worth of life  
he hardly knew was there.

## **Village wedding**

Tonight again the shrill assault  
of crackling speakers above a village hut:  
film music shrieks across the fields  
routing the soft whisper of the night.

Beneath a new-built *pandal*,  
A bridal arch of banana trees,  
the men patiently await tomorrow's feast,  
adjusting crisp white clothes  
in the harsh glare of imported city lights,

while the women gather inside  
to prepare the anxious bride  
for an end to her quiet nights,

and outside the electric sexual howl  
slams into the trembling darkness.

We lie tense with open eyes  
and share their ancient dread  
of the demons that lie in wait  
just beyond the marriage bed.

Banyan tree *Amma* at the open door  
fixes me with scaly eye  
demanding her weekly due.  
What use are you old village lady  
but to call down a curse?  
Why do we give you food?

What is it anyway, *Amma*,  
that brings us together?  
You squatting on the doorstep,  
nailed there never to rise,  
and I in my wicker chair  
trapped by your baleful eyes.

Was it like this in the early days  
when you lived alone by the banyan tree?  
You had a power, they said, and strange sons;  
you were the owl-eyed guardian  
of the temple of the city of dawn.  
Then your eldest boy committed suicide.

Now you carry those memories  
with a body bent in pain  
groaning outside my door for rupees.  
I listen to your creaky dirge,  
staring at your old boniness,  
wondering at this bizarre siege.

But then my own grandmother  
was worse than you, *Amma*.  
She held us so fiercely  
in her matriarchal debt,  
harping, wrangling, complaining all day—  
we silenced her with a TV set.

We are the Auroville neo-colonials,  
the latest wistful white folks  
to sip tea under the tropical sun  
and think that we are different  
from the chaps who ruled Rangoon,  
until you, old *Amma* come along.

Then from the club veranda  
I seem to faintly hear  
the sly boasts of British ghosts  
sniggering over their gin and beer  
about the way to handle the natives  
when they come a bit too near,

when like a sudden squall  
comes the carrier of skulls,  
comes *Kali* the glutton of worlds  
calling out of old *Amma*  
for some kind of fit response  
before her terrible, sacred face.

I stare stupidly at the fiery eyes,  
for I do not know the words  
to speak to that fatal presence  
smouldering under her wrinkled skin.  
I close my book, lose the place,  
And rise up to fetch her rice.

*\*Amma means mother in Tamil and is also a form of address for any woman.*

**In the City of Lost...**

City of Lost, streets of bodies  
Rain of acids, wind of hopes,  
Look at me, give me a glance!  
I'm child of narrow filthy lane,  
Don't see my torn cloths, cracked skin and barefoot  
Don't measure with class, I'm just soul.  
Your small touch can shape me – ignore and destroy me.  
I'm future of lost.  
Stop and give me a glance, chasers of light!

Look at me ...I'm old lady, whom you see daily  
In corner of street, selling tea.  
This wrinkle not sign of age, condition not poverty  
It's blindness and greed.  
I used to be past hoping good future.  
Your touch still can shape me - ignore and destroy me,  
O chasers of light!  
Every small drop of rain brought dancing inside me,  
I followed a breeze and became like her,  
Now plastic around me, I'm dying daily.  
Look at me - your touch still can shape me,  
Ignore and destroy me, O chasers of light!

Give me a glance in the streets of bodies  
In the City of Lost, O chasers of Light....

**And Think Only of This**

Someday, someday  
I will take my eldest son,  
before he has begun to  
lisp worn-out nursery rhymes  
or think his way through numbers,  
by his pudgy little hand,

And together, we will walk back  
to the farthest corner  
of the vegetable-garden patch,

And there, as we kneel  
amongst rows of rooted potatoes,  
I will scoop out  
and pour a moist handful of soil  
into his tiny cupped palms,

Rejoicing  
in the clutched dampness of freshly-broken earth

and the truth of things that cannot be told.

*1994*

**Observations in Auroville**

Seven babblers move through the scrub  
Pecking the dead leaves with modest attention,  
Butterflies like brilliant abstract miniatures  
Float through the silent tree-space,  
The lizard, the drongo, the mongoose  
And the small chipmunk  
That runs with intermittent  
But graceful sure-footedness  
Among all these innumerable perfections  
Of foliage and flower, fruit and seed-pod -  
All, all are your bodies of temporal delight.  
And I? Perhaps the eighth babbler,  
Watching you, turning over some words.

## **The Meeting Place**

19

This what time has led to -  
A courtyard of sunflowers, zinnias,  
And a queue of silent people  
Moving past a petal-covered tomb.  
Dawns, noons, sunsets,  
Days, months, lives.

This is what time has led to -  
A path that goes to a staircase  
And men and women of different countries  
Leaving their sandals at its foot.  
Dawns, noons, sunsets,  
Days, months, lives.

This is what time has led to -  
A gallery behind mahogany shutters,  
A picture of a man's head, life size.  
They pass it and mark its gaze.  
Dawns, noons, sunsets,  
Days, months, lives.

This is what time has led to -  
A chair set before a gold-patterned cloth  
And a still, frail woman  
Who smiles and has the eyes of God.  
Dawns, noons, sunsets,  
Days, months, lives.

This is what time has led to -  
See each figure before her  
Is not what he thought, felt or looked like  
But an inner immortal come through  
Dawns, noons, sunsets,  
Days, months, lives.

## **The Yogi**

20

Speleologists and mountaineers  
Overcome their secret fears,  
Match their muscles against the rocks  
Test their nerves and risk their necks.  
Some aspire and some descend;  
Up or down they seek their end  
Adventuring with all their will.  
How brave a man, though, who sits still  
Wholly intent on sounding, for his part,  
The cavernous deep system of the human heart.

## **Heraclitus and Matrimandir**

The silence is not the same silence twice  
The one who enters is not the same person twice  
Nor the one who leaves.  
Perhaps there will be no miracle  
Perhaps no discovery or awakening,  
Only the biggest crystal ball  
In a sun-illuminated chamber  
With twelve tall pillars  
And the pressure of a white stillness.

Dust of this land, so thin a skin  
Eroded and blown by water and air  
I revere you.  
Residue of life, residue of death,  
Fragments of fibre, stalk and fruit.  
Grit of rock, glint of mineral.  
I tumble you in my hand,  
So rich a sediment,  
Product of millennia  
How I would terrace and hold you  
With root and crop and moisture,  
Ploughing you in contours of the hill.  
Binding you to the rich valley floor;  
I would convert you to the fig  
And the little grey olive  
And encourage you to bear corn.  
But now I trickle you through my fingers

And find fragments of flint,  
Slivers of bone, squared tesserae  
And pieces of pot  
That open dimensions of history  
(how thin a layer of dirt  
Is left by one century!)  
And I remember that one of the meanings  
Of the name Adam  
Is dust.

**Will You Take This Little Bit I Have....**

Will you take this little bit I have  
It's not much... but it's mine.  
What is more precious than what we are  
The gift of our selves is better by far  
Than rings and things that money can buy.

I sigh, when I see, the agony  
Of those who reach for a star.  
Give what you are, what you are.  
What you are is better by far.  
Than rings and things that money can buy.

Will you take this little bit I have  
It's not much...but it's mine....It's yours.

## Gravity

Wind-blown seeds  
circle  
in soft cushioned currents  
to earth  
while hammer blows  
pound  
this crude  
and heavy  
human ore  
to birth.

Our first breath is a cry  
as we breach this world  
ripped through sheaths that coat and shield us  
as we plunge  
through atmospheres of fire  
gripped by  
gravity and  
grave.

We land upon a lost shore  
gasping,  
thrust through waves of darkness burning bright,  
beached by breakers in seaworthy bodies  
that now must find their footing and their breath—  
brine-slick bodies that do not yet belong to us  
as we reach back in anguish for that truer gravity  
which held us  
and which we now must find again  
here in our birth and forgetting  
where all things  
fall.

Doomed we are by a destiny  
whose downward pull  
draws us through the dense and unbearable weight  
of our lives to that unyielding door  
where life unburdens  
and enters its chrysalis of death.

Ma, we moan with that last thread of breath  
sealing the cocoon;

Ma, we cry with that first as we begin again,  
unraveling the tomb,  
one gravity defying another.  
Doomed we are by a destiny we call upon ourselves.

Hidden in each muttered mantric cry  
we weave our way blindly back to Her,  
hurtling through space like lead-grained pearls  
strung on gossamer threads of an unseen Grace,  
free-falling in fear despite Her sure embrace  
toward some future body's  
secret serpent base.  
At speeds of absolute stillness we strike  
that utter Ground,  
irresistibly drawn by the coiled note of a flute  
whose magnetic Sound  
silences our terror,  
luring this raw resistant human ore,  
fusing it into its fiery Being's core,  
melting the ego's shadow-mold,  
filling all bodies  
with a deathless gold  
that wells up  
from some conscious  
centerpoint of Soul.  
A Gravity of Grace springing  
from a Mother's fathomless heart,  
each fall now bringing us closer  
as it once pulled us apart.  
We are seized by the sweetness  
of some inmost psychic pole  
where all gravities resolve  
in the passionate clasp of the Whole.  
Ma, we sing now as we rise,  
our earth a joyous transparent sun  
surrounded from within by Her Gravity of One  
in which there is no longer below or above  
but only the all-compelling light  
and all-attracting force of Love.

*March 12, 1995*

**Deep Places**

I'm in no mood for mountains ...  
Too near down-pressing sky,  
Too barren, bright, unmysteried they lie!  
So, climbing to a bald white peak  
I stopped – knee-deep in grass and flowers.  
Better by far the lower forests,  
Where water gurgles out of sight,  
And calling, chuckling, birds unseen  
Flit from green to deeper green;  
There suddenly a single bloom  
Strikes to the heart's enchanted depths  
With its clear bell-note of deep blue.  
Or let me swim, far from all shallows,  
In the still waters where the kraken sleeps,  
Where whales slide singing through the shadowy deeps;  
There let me dive and drown  
All littleness and all fatigue.  
But best of all, in deep embracing interstellar spaces  
Beyond the sky-lid, free of every limit,  
To float forever marvelling  
Through endless symphonies of stars!

*1984*

Smoothly contoured,  
Cool and heavy in my hand,  
Its glassy skin pocked and pitted,  
This stone speaks  
Of rolling and grinding in distant torrents.  
One scarred and bumpy surface tells  
That once it was torn rough and raw away  
From the side of its mother-mountain;  
And these encircling veins  
Remind how long before  
This substance seethed and folded over,  
Was kneaded like dough,  
Baked in the earth's furnace,  
Pressed out to cool and petrify.  
Long before that perhaps  
Atoms now packed dense inside this lump  
Flared out – a cloud in the solar wind.  
Long it lay, oblivious;  
But now another force,  
More resistless than all these  
Has carried it far  
From that river-carved mountain  
To lie here:  
Cool and heavy to a human hand,  
Questioned by a human gaze,  
Remembering ....

Useless all day ...  
A head full of poems  
Doesn't make for practicality.  
The pull of the dark tide  
Calling me under  
To coral gardens and pearl-beds  
Loosens my grip  
My fingers flutter and lose hold.  
Plans and duties fade  
And the forms that anchor us to the surface...  
Leaving beds unmade  
Dishes unwashed  
Important messages unanswered and  
Urgent letters unwritten,  
I dip again and again  
In the dark flood  
And come up dripping  
Disoriented  
Clutching some bright or curious fragment  
Some morsel of frozen music.  
Turning it over and over,  
Tasting its strange saltiness,  
I end up  
Sprinkling stars in the soup.

## **How to go Through ?**

28

Sucking the sky  
gulping in earth, devouring trees,  
soaking up the play of sunlight and shadow  
I drink back life, nourished by this beauty.  
But how to go through ?  
This eye-defying blue  
that is our sky,  
This sun we cannot look upon,  
nor bear too long his rays  
Are only shadows of That Light...  
These perfect trees  
who dance for joy  
in rhythms delicate and grave  
Are only sketches, faint indications,  
of the Beauty His creative vision gave;  
And all these forms, though beautiful,  
Do not reveal, but hide, His face.  
Draw back, my soul,  
From thought, from sense,  
And know thyself entire  
In His embrace.

*August 2, 1975*

## **Evening Illumination**

Grey upon grey the troubled cloud-race  
Racked through with flickers of impending storm  
Breaks open to reveal a sudden space  
Intensely blue ... and one calm star.

Steady behind these veils of shifting form,  
Smiling, insistent, serene and far,  
Unwavering it calls me to behold  
All Heaven opening beyond that speck of gold!

*September 10, 1984*

**With the Weight of Decades**

With the weight of decades  
today has come down  
in the clarity of moonlight  
over common gardens  
and neighbors who dream;  
whose curtains move shadow  
blots of windblown leaves  
swaying in the late night.

Infinite appearances  
flood awareness; now dyed  
as moonlit visions  
but felt as reassurance:  
the lawn, a chair, night birds,  
laundry in the cool breeze  
and the muted whisper  
of a sleepless neighbor.

Waxing full I make do  
with only thoughts that count,  
were tested over time  
and honed into precision  
for this lucid lapse in living;  
this lunar truth to things  
with familiar undertones  
of human destiny.

A wandering awareness  
fueled by a willful heart  
and common words; mind  
is traveling the timeless path  
of lips that learned to phrase  
the harmless teenage lie,  
to later hold with women  
in their silent fashions.

But in this night, this life  
of light reduced to shades,  
my coinciding thoughts  
flow without emotion.  
Feelings and their bargains  
merge in the silver gloss  
over the countless things  
at one in the present.

*2010*

**Summer Rain (Grace)**

With the wind and the summer rain  
Withering away my greying thoughts,  
Let the fresh buds of aspiration  
Blossom forth on these knurly knots

Let hands tired from kneading the earth  
Not rest content to count the wealth  
Squirreled away in building dearth,  
In this city that blankets itself in stealth.

The birds chirp madly the morning ritual,  
Fragrance permeates the open skies.  
Bees & butterflies paint the summer visual,  
Scene that is hidden to traveling eyes.

Ebb & flow is but nature of life,  
Devoid of Grace, there's little but strife.

*in Auroville, June 1, 2016*



Drawing of Aurodam May 1981

Vikas (Alan Vickers)

### Home

O longed-for home, O distant, dazzling height,  
 So far-off, dreamed-of, deeply sought;  
 A crowning citadel atop the glaciated valleys of the Night.  
 The twisted tracks that lead to aspiration's peaks  
 Beset the traveller with slip and fall  
 And labour long, unending, as of Time,  
 Or drop their dire and shadow-dense disguise  
 Revealing straight and sunlit ways to tread.  
 But where is home when all is plod and plod?  
 When can the climber rest, his labour done?  
 Where is the summit-home, the promised throne?  
 Where is the bliss-brimmed rock that heaven made of clay,  
 The light-hewn city, sanctuary at end of weary day?  
 Where is the breeze whose shining air I breathed in sleep?  
 The coursing sun-winds shooting through my tissue's deep?

Each summit was a golden prison for my soul.  
 There is no final pause; to climb – the only goal.

Sad heart, there is no sanctuary on Earth,  
No earthly arms to comfort you  
If once you choose to tread the path  
And seek the crown of being.  
What lover can with constancy be there  
When all must rise and fall upon the tearful stage  
And man must live the drama of his joy and pain?  
And all the sweetness, all the hope, the trust  
From one kind heart will vanish like a dream  
That fades and throws you into life's unpitying fire.  
Your prayer, sad heart, was uttered in a space of light.  
So now, sad heart, the work begins, along the roads of Night,  
Inside the caves of loneliness, where sorrow lurks  
To press sweet pain upon your chest.  
No turning back, sad heart, nor running, nor respite;  
Into the fire leap, with tears and all  
Rush onwards to the light.

And now, calm heart, be still and see;  
I was the road, the Night; I came to you as sorrow.  
Mine were the arms that vanished; I was the stage, the flame.  
Who failed you? Crushed you? Me!  
Rejoice, my heart, my fire sets you free.

Stone-solid, eternity seems to slumber  
Bearing on its stage the mutable seasons  
Arrayed in ever-changing moods of form  
Filling the spirit-packed air with transient fragrances  
And bursts of dew-fresh colour, soon to fade.  
Souls, like flowers, come and go,  
Begging the silent Presence to part the sacred curtain.  
Deep communion, pleadings, burdens of tears and bliss,  
Solemn dialogues; The White Force offers solace, strength,  
Shatters the illusion of its dumbness,  
Urges, gently, sleeping matter to become.

Prayers rise like incense borne by breezes.  
Pink roses flood the mind and heart  
With moments,  
Still rememberings, frozen moments.  
Time dies.  
Deep whiteness plunges into red dancing dust;  
Orange visions, golden flickerings, pale blue oceans  
Float like music from a flute.

Blackbird caws and brings some other here and now,  
Conscious walking into streets of old familiar faces.  
Hold me still, Oh sweet soft whiteness...

Grey men in grey suits  
Postured and polite, discussing the efficiency  
Of chemicals that deal death to moss.

Masks. I have one too, sitting at my desk  
In the smoke-filled office, pretending to estimate  
The quantities of asbestos and plasterboard  
For your cheap ugly factories  
That gobble up the green land  
Where children laughed and played,  
Trying to find words that can tell  
Something about tears I dare not show,  
Knowing that there has to be another way  
Yet helpless to know how or what,  
Whilst you worry about your profit and productivity  
And I about not dying.

1981

**2 Haikus**

30 Apr 2014 / 03:53 pm

Golden lid. I slid  
below to where *I me mine*  
screams, now separate.

30 Apr 2014 / 04:04 pm

She dreamed. Her dream touched  
our hearts so hard it hurt. Now  
there are just nightmares.

Always, when I looked at a tree  
There was an I who saw and the tree which was seen.  
As a child, the tree was for climbing, to swing from,  
A place to shoot crows or pick peaches.  
God was in Heaven  
Or He didn't exist at all  
And yet when I cried from my very depths  
He was always there to hear and answer me.

In spring sometimes there was an effervescence  
Flowers bursting from the tree like champagne bubbles from my heart.  
The urge to be and the desperate need for light  
After all the barren cold of winter's gloom.

And now sometimes the tree, the ground, the brick walls and tarmac streets  
And I  
Are one single coagulation of fluid stardust  
Moving through these momentary forms in a dance of time  
To be unravelled and re-formed  
In the relentless onward thrust  
Of matter's search for a being that can know itself  
In every tiny atom, all at once,  
For no particular reason than the bliss of being.

*20/03/2010*

## **Transfer 2**

Here is the deep ground  
the level land  
where the heart burns  
like a crater at dawn  
through the quiet ache of the hours.

Here our visions change  
in fire and sweetness  
and the digital deeds  
that fidget with our dreams  
are sieved to clear flame.

We awake to the young oriole  
among the gold spring leaves and purple orchids  
where the fine boundaries of light  
fray open at the edges  
as our hearts lift slowly to transparence.

*1993*

## **Fire**

Cast these dreams  
Into the fire  
Watch them burn –  
Then rise, not toward resurrection  
But such perfection death cannot touch.

**I am an Active, Living Dynamo**

I am an Active, Living Dynamo  
If you truly make One step towards me,  
I will leap Nine steps to grab you,  
Stir you up,  
Churn you thoroughly,  
Spin you around,  
Swirl you upside down,  
Draw you to yourself,  
Strip you from all past,  
And leave you NAKED.

*24th February 2017*

**Thousands of Kingdoms**

Thousands of kingdoms

Within my body,

Thousands of ages

Within my living cells –

Am I a tiny bubble

Captured in a TAMIL casket?

### **Return**

Perfection of stone is not for us,  
nor the parabolic sigh  
of swallows.  
We are smudgier, awkward-limbed,  
stumbling homewards  
through the long, long grass.

### **Hinge**

The green smiling trap of the known.  
At midday it casts no shadow.  
But at night...

... the hinge lies broken:  
Eternity pours through.

### **Beyond**

To step beyond  
is to leave all behind:  
lovers, friends,  
the understanding of a world  
which, after all, offers its rewards.

This is a different path.  
Quickly traversing the public square  
it plunges into anonymity,  
the trackless approach  
to the lost kingdom of the Self.

Perhaps, after all, they're the wise ones,  
perfectly-shaped to surf  
the random waves,  
knowing nothing so well as the inside of their bowl,  
or the quick touch on a bullock's flank.

As for those who, somehow, believe that,  
pixel by pixel,  
a new world is arriving  
there's the long, slow search of the horizon

as the wind swings round to winter.

**It's the Body, Stupid**

It's the body, stupid,  
that keeps stumbling against us.  
All that heavy blood  
hammering at the heart,  
numbing nerves,  
flooding out the distant cry of morning.

No wonder the artists air-brushed it  
or took it for the all-in-all.

Yet what if blood, bone,  
aren't brutish anchors  
but doorways to a distant dance?

The one that trembles atoms into flesh  
and fronts the great, grey surge of night.