

## Four Poems by Aju Mukhopadhyay

### The Past

History is jotting down of events and phenomena  
a part of the past gone by but not the whole of it.

Past is vibrantly living in us  
as every moment of our life goes into the past  
but we live; an indivisible, undeniable entity.

All our thoughts and ideas in ether  
all belongings  
including cassettes, videos, C.D.s and memories  
to be played and replayed,  
are obtained from the repository of the past.

It is puzzling to say that something  
or some entity has passed away  
for nothing really passes away  
but changes form and quality.

Past is like dust which has  
a lugubrious tenacity of coming back

even when flown with water,  
as if from eternity.

No dust that gathers in your surrounding  
did adorn your grandmother's belongings  
but strange that no dust can be identified  
belonging to you or to your grandmother;  
dust flows and gathers like time  
coming in or passing out;  
time is a dusty affair.

Past is like voiceless echo of the sound  
present in our mind and sense  
perceptible in its essence.

Present is a ghost of the past  
for ever with us, guiding.

Mr. Harris and Srimati Nandarani  
at the old age become conservatives  
like their fathers or forefathers  
which they were not at their early age.

Many Indians live their lives  
exactly as their fathers

in business or in a grocer's shop  
or simply as a talkative good-for-nothing;  
a lady dies copying her mother  
throughout her life.  
Past is inseparable from the present  
as present lives forever in the past.

### **Do I Walk or I Walk Me?**

Suddenly I stopped  
inspired by a questioning thought;  
am I walking or I'm walking me?  
Am I a becoming or a being?  
The whole system called I or he or she  
is a cosmic reality  
yet a thirst aided by insight  
welled up from inside;  
can this really walk or stalk  
unless propelled and guided  
by the inner reality?

Is walking an act of mine  
or of the self indwelling?  
Stunned by the divide of I and me  
I was inclined to embrace the reality  
when someone accosted me  
asking for something otiose  
which compelled me to come back  
to the diurnal fact  
bewildered!

### **The Death of a Rose**

When the rose was there  
Fragrance wafted in the air  
Bees were busy at sucking  
Traders were going for plucking  
Struck by wanton beauty  
Rose-lovers stopped the robbery.  
But it faded away soon

As if from morning to noon.  
As it kissed the ground  
Petal by petal, red-pinkish  
Without a murmur or sound  
Sweet-sodden, lovelorn, nostalgic  
The wind became rusty and heavy  
They thronged around the body  
To silently mourn the crumbling  
To wail from suppressed suffering.

Some humans spread more fragrance  
After they cross the mortal space.

### **Time Whispers In My Ear**

susurrus over the vast undulating grass  
tumbling of water in the forest river at night  
cackling of hilly meandering streams  
flowing of molten lava down the ravine  
spewing of ash;

volcanic eruption at unknown site  
spread of forest fire with a strange beam  
spreading rapidly with the wind,  
desert storm changing the face of the sand dune  
without notice;  
rains and rains in the rain forest again  
in the country sides and cities, rolling of water bodies;  
seeds sprouting, trees growing and dying  
again and again;  
sibilation of nature's shifting phase;  
nature is at work without rest in every nook and corner  
in every pore and cell, near and far;  
time whispers in my ear  
that with nature it flows with all its belonging  
to the events forthcoming  
while consciousness keeps its progress in everything  
constantly rolling towards the future;  
time whispers in my ear  
that past never sits in its forlorn chair  
but leaves its essence for assimilation;

time whispers in my ear  
that the ethos of the bygone ages, their zeitgeist  
can never be recovered by any strategist;  
the world may be seen in the grain of sand  
but the flow of sand is constant;  
infinity may be guessed in the palm of hand  
but it cannot be gripped by any standard;  
time whispers in my ear  
that everything passes on for ever.