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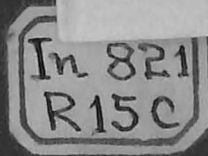


A WRITERS WORKSHOP REDBIRD BOOK

# **Christ & i: Dialogue** **by Som P. Ranchan**

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1911

# CHRIST AND I : DIALOGUE

-- Som P. Ranchan

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# Christ and I: Dialogue

SOM P. RANCHAN



*A Writers Workshop Publication* —



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## SOM P. RANCHAN

Som P. Ranchan (Sharma) is Professor and Head of the department of English of Himachal Pradesh University Simla. He was born at Lahore (1932), was educated in Panjab and got his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin, U.S.A. He has been Senior Professor of English at California State University, Fullerton for many years. Among his published works are *Splintered Mirror*, *Walt Whitman and the Great Adventure with Self, Me and Columbia*, *Shiva and the Moon Goddesses*. He is represented in P. Lal's anthology *Modern Indian Poetry in English*.





**CHRIST AND I :**  
**Dialogue**

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

2006

**ONE**

---

John, John  
I am suffering  
I have walked a long way  
Wash me in the waters of repentance

You're welcome, brother  
I am touched with your devotion  
Replied John the Baptist  
But before I undertake to give you forgiveness  
I must ask  
Have you levelled the mountains  
Have you filled the valleys  
And how is the way you've walked upon ?

2

John, John  
My mountains of inflation have been rising  
For decades  
My valleys cut deep into the foundations  
of the earth  
And each twist and turn of the road  
I've walked upon  
is crooked as hell

3

Sorry, brother  
Even if I could run on your body and head  
the waters of Ganges and Jordan  
I could not wash you clean

4

John, John  
I'm dying

5

Hold on, Sir  
There is one coming, a Nazarene  
Whose shoe-strings I'm not worthy to tie  
He is the son of God  
He alone has the power to heal  
    your wound  
He alone has the power to digest  
    your karmas  
His name is Jesus Christ

6

John, John  
How will I know who he is  
I see hundreds and hundreds you're  
    immersing in the waters

7

You will, brother  
When I hold him under water  
And when he surfaces  
The sky will flash with lightning  
    from end to end  
And a bird will dive from the flaming  
    heart of light  
And a voice reverberate with the sound  
    of a hundred thunders  
    to the end of time  
  
Fall at his feet, brother  
He and he alone can take on a case  
    such as yours

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

## **TWO**

---

Lord Jesus Christ

Forgive me for my multitudinous sins

for the arrogance and inflation

of my ego, and its other accruals

Judging and fault-finding

Which dried up my heart

And drove some that I loved dotty

2

Lord

With my ego I prevailed over thirty-two

antagonists

Till I came to the wrestler thirty-third

And the sight of you on the stage

made me nervous

3

Lord

I didn't want to wrestle and look

within

Forgive me for brooding on my hurts

and disappointments

For phantasies of self-pity and aggressions

Forgive me for being so locked into my own state

of suffering stale

I could not examine my own part

Lord

I was so self-willed

I would not appreciate others' difficulties

4

Lord

Forgive me for my cutting, murderous

analysis

Forgive me for turning the reins of the chariot  
 to my shadow  
 My driving it against a legion of demons  
 Who were in fact inside all the time  
 Projected on to others

5

Lord

I'm ready for the baptism of fire  
 Sacrificial funeral pyre  
 The wood is gathered, arranged faggot upon  
     faggot, nicely piled  
 Begin the work  
 Give it the torch

Let my shadow burn, purge, crackle  
 Let me transform  
 I'm ready for discipleship :  
 For responsibility  
 The game is up :  
 The game of money and success  
     sentiment and assertion  
     projection and exteriorization

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

### **THREE**

---

Lord

I've resisted thee in so many ways  
When you did miracles to heal  
I said to myself, "Why doesn't he teach?"  
When you taught in paradoxes and parables  
I said, "Why doesn't he speak clearly?"

But when I could listen and understand  
I wouldn't turn your teaching into deed

2

Lord,

I've been receiving mustard seeds from  
    you life after life  
And I don't have much of a tree to show off  
    in the backyard

And I'm a long way from being in the bakery  
    business

Unlike that woman of yours who took yeast  
    and hid it in three loaves till they  
        fermented and puffed for all to behold

AND PARTAKE

She went on to become the Mother of angels

3

And yes Lord that time in my dream that I'd  
    speeded your donkeys safely to a mountain-top  
        intended for them

But when you showed up to give me  
    a pastrami sandwich to express



( your gratitude and delight ? )  
Instead of eating it up  
I said, "I've not done anything."  
I wouldn't take the sandwich  
And made you sad

4

Lord  
I resist in so many ways  
I resist your people  
I resist your devotees  
    for their lack of intellect  
So that when you come into them  
    and they speak in charismatic tongues  
I resist and resist  
Not knowing whether you're speaking  
    or parts of themselves,  
    receded, ignored, disowned

Lord  
I want to be sure and not be had

5

My resistance takes so many forms  
It comes from the ego  
Comes from the intellect  
From plain fear  
It comes from sanskaras inculcated  
    in childhood

It comes from intestinal roots of me

6

Lord, empty my cup

Let it flow out with its impurities of  
dirt and dead flies, rust, moth's wings,  
and owl's nails  
And fill it with the shining, white liquid  
of Jordan  
With the waters from the flash flood  
issuing from your flowing locks

Lord, Lord, Lord,  
Hit me  
Burnish me into pure spirit  
With strikes of your lightning

Shivoham ! Shivoham ! Shivoham !

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

#### **FOUR**

---

Lord  
I'm the leprous gentile  
You cured ages and ages ago  
Who fell at your feet  
While the nine went their way

Lord  
The revolving cycles of time have brought me  
to thee  
I am leprous again  
Having forgotten to thank thee  
Becoming proud and inflated  
with my health, knowledge, coherence  
and wholeness

I grew in strength  
Forgot the sacrificial process

of surrendering the ego every day to your feet  
Forgot to remove the log from my eye  
Becoming overly concerned with the speck  
in that of the neighbour  
Forgot the ways of devotion  
becoming versed in abstruse knowledge  
and mythic lore

My body broke in welts and rashes  
In time the sores appeared  
The hair fell  
The rot manifested on the walls of my house  
The mould entered the core of the stones

Lord  
Too late now to scrape the walls, the floor  
Too late to remove the mortar  
It's a hopeless case  
The infection terminal

Lord  
You do not have to come to my  
house with the disciples and the crowds  
Just say the word  
as you once did in curing  
the centurion's slave

Jesus Sharanam Gacchami  
Buddham Sharanam Gacchami

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

## **FIVE**

---

Lord  
It has begun what you prophesied  
Brother against brother

Mother against daughter  
No kinship left  
Nations warring against nations  
Wars, pestilences, famines  
Seas rising in primal flood  
The stars all dead  
The moon blasted  
The sun burning lava

Lord  
My house is gone  
My servants departed  
Even the one you had healed  
Took off to the mountains

Here I am, the old centurion past eighty  
Unable to flee to safety  
In Jerusalem swallowed in fog which  
    came rolling from all sides  
A bag of bones  
My ribcage emaciated  
Spectral between dead and living  
My eyes longing to see you descend  
    in a cloud of light ushering anew  
        the world foretold  
Heart thirsting to see thee again  
Before I die

2

Lord  
I'm not worthy  
But say the word  
As you did once  
When I was young and strong  
And feared neither this world nor the next

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

**SIX**

---

Lord

Standing on a trail leading to  
the mountain-top  
You beckoned me with your hands and eyes  
And I standing in the midst of a multitude  
Intent on fun and frolic  
Ran, fascinated toward you

Reaching you, I realized  
That I had dropped my spectacles  
"Wait," said I  
And ran back to recover them  
Found them to be sure  
With the right lens cracked into a  
multitude of lines  
I guess it had been stepped upon

So much for intellectual knowledge I

2

Lord

I'm the one who in another life had said  
"Let me first go and bury my father"  
( And you'd said  
"Leave the dead to bury their own dead  
But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom  
of God."

And that's what I've been doing since  
Except that my spectacles come in the way  
in a weird fashion  
Sometimes enlarging the alphabet  
in certain places  
And missing many letters

The obvious magnified  
The fine print obscured

3

Lord  
I see crooked  
Wouldn't you with glasses  
One lens whole, the other cracked ?

Why don't you shatter the glass  
And show me the kingdom  
So I may fulfil thy command ?

4

Methought I heard the Lord speak  
You did not come to me  
Seeking to be healed, cured, initiated  
I summoned you from the crowd  
For reasons best known to me  
You do what I tell  
Without worrying about knowledge  
    faith, insight, ego, and its extinction

You're my eternal companion  
Screwed-up in your way  
    of looking at things  
        Subject to resistance  
        Confused from time to time  
        Given to a double vision  
        One from the left eye of love  
        The other from the right eye of  
            knowledge, tough and cracked

5

You're my agent for reaching many mired  
in the collectivity of tradition  
Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity

You do the work  
Love in my name  
Preach and heal  
Fight and feud  
Reject and resist

Do everything in my name

Let the dead bury their own dead

You'll see the kingdom of God  
As clearly as you see your hand  
When the time comes for you you to return  
to my abode in heaven

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

## **SEVEN**

---

Jesus

Many holy men withdrew their feet  
When I bent to touch them  
Many jerked their knees  
When I bent to touch them

Moved by waves of devotion

2

Do not judge, Jesus replied  
They must have their reasons

I tell you what, he went on  
You can touch my feet  
As much as you like  
Nestle your head on them to sleep  
Move your fingers through my toes

I do not mind at all  
You can touch my beard  
Play with my hair  
Wiggle my ears


You can put your hand through my side  
Even as St. Thomas did  
To convince himself  
That it was me

Handle me in any way like  
I'm not a pusillanimous touch-me-not  
Use me  
I'm ruined and risen

3

Touch me  
Mix me, blend me with others  
    of any sect and religion, caste and creed  
Bridge the schism between man and man  
Man and God  
John Doe and an Avatar  
Prophet and sneak

O devotee mine  
I give you myself  
Not sermons and doctrines  
Feast on my flesh  
Feed on me to your fill, satisfy.





On my guts, liver, innards.  
On my bones  
On that which is contained within  
    the bones' hollow  
And drink my blood in cupfuls

I'm not different from thee  
The essence of the divine that was  
    on me is upon you also  
Be ye perfect  
Be ye steady  
Be ye whole  
Be ye all-round  
All-inclusive

Cook me in any way you want  
A la curry Indian style  
Chef Maloney

I'm with the Sufis  
As much as with the Vedantins  
I'm with the Christians  
As much as with the Jews  
I'm with the saint and the sinner

4

He went on and on  
That crazy cat  
I'd hit a nerve, I guess  
I felt whelmed  
And said, "Lord  
Just give me shelter at your feet"

Kring Christ Jesus Nathaya Namah

## **EIGHT**

---

I blasted out from a visionary dream  
At two in the morning  
And heard the ringing of the apartment bell

Weak and afraid, said I  
"Who is it ?"  
"It's me, Jesus Christ," the intruder replied

I opened the door and let him in  
A tall white man with eyes uncommonly  
    bright  
He had a shock of flowing hair falling  
    in ringlets  
A long, straight nose, clipped beard,  
    broad shoulders  
A lithe gait  
He held a book in hand clasped  
    with four seals at four sides  
"Peace, brother," said he laughingly  
And made straight for the sofa

And I sat down in the other corner  
As if it were the most natural thing

### **2**

Jesus, said I  
I have been suffering for several years now  
I have been physically and psychically sick  
I have horrible dreams  
I can neither go forward nor backward  
    slide  
I have tried mantras, different forms  
    of yoga

I have meditated on yantras  
 You who suffered like no one did  
 Yet you sit here, happy, smiling  
 Tell me a way out

3

The way out, Jesus replied, with a  
 twinkle in the eye, is the way in

Not to fight suffering, but to let it in  
 Till your flesh screams, eyes dilate  
 hair stands on end in horripilation

I'm sure, Jesus went on  
 Others will tell you differently  
 Meditate on life as an illusion  
 To vanish suffering in a trice  
 Aim at the void to live there  
 Like a tortoise curled  
 Wipe the fluxes of the mind  
 Till you repose in impressionless being  
 To cultivate a high, superconscious  
 samadhi state

4

Perhaps, there is something to be said  
 For these yogic dissolutions of pain

But your way is different  
 Cherish the wounds without resentment  
 and fear  
 By not accepting, embracing, transmuting  
 suffering  
 It is frittered and wasted

In any case while one is suffering  
trying to fudge, dodge, evade, elude  
creates a double\_bind

5

Ah, but Jesus  
I didn't create it  
It came my way

Nor did I  
When they came with their sputtering  
torches invading the hush of Gethsemane  
When they scourged and mocked me  
And made me carry the cross  
Crucified me on Golgotha

Are you saying I should endure  
what I'm going through ?

No, more than enduring, suffer it in  
the divine, even as I did

Suffering suffering without bitterness resentment in the  
knowledge that they know not what they do in the  
knowledge all shall be well without hysterics histrionics  
martyrdom using it to examine one's own part in it  
and eliminating the residues accruing from one's shadow  
demons contaminations and karmas and not projecting  
it out there on gods stars circumstances spouse son  
parents rulers

Only that suffering pure as gold  
Unflawed  
Only that suffering is the burnt offering  
The Lord accepts

Turning it into deliciousness  
 Into Ecstasy

Other types are sin, guilt, cereal offerings  
 Aimed at relief and manipulation

6

So there are many types of suffering  
 Jesus

Yes there is physical suffering  
 That all flesh is prone to  
 Even the ascetics who lead a very  
     controlled life in terms of food  
     and company and purity  
 Who aim at a state beyond the  
     body are not immune  
 I knew quite a few in my time  
 Who died of dysentery

Then there is psychological suffering  
 Enacted daily  
 Uncollected, unfronted,  
 Not transmuted  
 Through evasions of overwork, drink  
     argument, squalor, brawl

In the life of everybody there are loads and piles of  
 this garbage that some try to clear in encounter group  
 psychoanalysis couch through primal screams and it  
 cannot be cleared not really without intervention of the  
 divine without surrender then there is supernatural  
 suffering quick or lingering caused by flood drought  
 earthquake there is manmade suffering of dissension  
 wars holocausts while we should eliminate suffering at

all levels as much of it as possible there would always  
be dysenteries traumas earthquakes wars

Only the divine relationship can help us remove it  
And what cannot be removed  
will be transmuted

7

Jesus

I'm curious about the book in your lap

I know you are  
You like books  
I do

I'll gift it to you  
It's the book of books

It contains excerpts from all religions many philosophies  
alchemies It contains chants and mantras drawings and  
yantras jokes and graffiti a dash of pornography his-  
tories of saints obscure symbols It's a book that I've  
carried for centuries now It's a book of the Mother  
the Father is in it too but It's dedicated to her essen-  
tially and it has lots of blank pages and unfinished  
chapters

But Jesus, it's clasped on four sides

Yee, dear disciple  
You'll find a way to unclasp it

8

Goodbye, little one  
I've to go

I'm on my rounds tonight  
Sleep tight  
Remember the key to the Divine  
It's in sincere relationship  
Compassion, giving, self-control  
And love, love, love

And he got up, stood straight  
looked into my eyes  
For a split second I became his eyes  
looking into mine  
I noticed moisture in them  
I felt light, in the throat tight  
And as he walked to the door  
opened it, disappearing into the night  
I knew in the interstices of my being  
He had taken on my garbage  
That I'd gilded as suffering

9

Closing the door behind him  
I knew that something had happened  
to my innards  
To the right side of my chest  
To the left side of my brain  
I felt a pressure and a burning

Returning to my seat  
I lit a cigarette chanting

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

## NINE

---

On the thirty-third day of the forty days  
    in the desert  
The Devil appeared to Jesus when the latter  
    was tired and spent  
And the Devil said  
    “O great soul bent on God’s work  
Know me who once was close to God  
And was double-crossed by Him  
In favour of a man called Adam and  
    his stupid mate  
Forget figuring out his will  
And what he wants of you  
He doesn’t know himself what he desires”

2

“What can you give to me. Old Man ?”  
    Jesus queried  
And the Old Man replied  
    “I can give you the riches of the Earth  
Armies stretching from horizon to horizon  
With banners blazing aloft in the skies  
Palaces in every land, tapestries woven  
    of silver and gold, encrusted with  
    diamonds, hanging down from ceiling to floor  
  
I can give you many-windowed  
    Cathedrals, stained-glass panelling  
    of crushed jewels  
  
I can give you luxury and joy  
    undreamt of”



3

**"Thank you, Old Man  
My God awaits me in the road-side dust  
in the brown trails  
In the armies of the humble and the poor  
Despised by commanders and priests**

**In the women who love much  
In the men enthused with the divine  
Who dare become one  
Who transcend pomp and glory  
Virtue and Vice"**

4

**And Satan became exceeding wroth  
His face twisted, mouth  
leered, eyes spat cold contempt  
"You do not know what you're rejecting  
You do not know what lies in store  
You'll know want and hunger  
Here, take this stone and turn it into  
bread  
For if you cannot do it, you'll starve  
to death  
in days to come"**

5

**"So be it," Jesus replied  
"I will not tempt my Lord  
Doing something stupid like turning stone  
into bread  
Know ye not that man is soul, that his  
relationship with the body is accidental**

Besides he does not live by bread alone

In any case he can toil and produce bread  
I don't have to listen to you and alchemize  
stones into loaves

Mind you no disrespect to this stone which  
has more going for it than you  
Who lords over it with astral dominion"

6

"I spit on your stubbornness," Satan  
roared

"You really think you're God's son  
I dare you to roll down this cliff  
And see if God stretches out his arms  
to save you

Or his angels catch you in their  
cuddly, strong arms before you hit the  
solid rock down below"

7

"Old Man," Jesus quoth

"You're God's son, too

You've cut yourself off the tree  
You cannot make up your mind  
between Him and His world

You don't understand that this world  
is His, entirely His  
Not that He is in the world  
The world is He

When you realize this  
you'll quit these adolescent games

unbefitting your age which come  
 to you for not forgetting your  
 imaginary hurts of having been  
 deprived dominion over man

When you realize this  
 You'll quit dividing matter and mind  
 God and Man  
 You'll realize  
 Shivoham ! Shivoham !  
 You'll hear the river roar  
 Om Om Om  
 Bom Bom Bom

You may even, becoming curious  
 Walk toward it to see it  
 Som Som Som  
 You may even go for a  
 swim in it  
 Soham Soham Soham

You may even see the skies part  
 And the lightning flash  
 Shivoham  
 Even as it happened to me  
 When John the Baptist dunked me  
 and pulled me out"

8

"You talk too much for a man of your age"  
 Satan growled

9

"Begone, then

I've seven days more to go till the  
fortieth when I break my fast  
and transmute my prayers into  
actions according to his plan"

10

And Satan left, muttering murder

"Two years from now  
I'll visit thee," screamed the primeval  
denial  
And disappeared in the desert sand

Kind Christ Prabhatmane Jesus Namah

**TEN**

---

After the crowd had left  
their stones dropped from their hands  
Leaving Mary Magdalene  
at the feet of Jesus

Magdalene lifted her eyes into Jesus'  
face, liquid and grave  
And the Rabboni spoke  
"Mary, why do you rouse the wrath  
of the beast ?"

And Magdalene replied  
"I don't know, Rabboni  
My father died when I was young  
My mother denied me in so many ways  
And I married to get away

The man treated me badly

I ran away  
And took to whoring  
My way, Rabboni, of getting back  
at the world"

2

"But Mary, don't you see  
You almost got killed"

"Yes, Rabboni  
I wish I were dead  
I wish you hadn't come between  
Me and the stoning crowd  
I wish you weren't asking  
stupid senseless fool questions  
What is it to you if I want to degrade  
my body  
It's mine to keep or chuck  
Why don't you come to the point, Rabboni  
And take what you want  
Payment for giving help"

3

"Slow down, Mary  
In the first place you didn't want to be  
killed  
You came running to me  
In the second place you don't want to  
be what you are  
You're a pure woman, Mary  
You have too much feeling  
And sensation electric  
You're going about the wrong way  
expressing them"



**ELEVEN**

---

Jesus lay in his boat  
Sick, tired, flat on his back  
Dialoguing with God

Lord, I'm tired of being on the road,  
teaching, preaching, healing, fleeing  
telling them all, ye are gods seek the  
kingdom of heaven within

Reiterating, ye are not glowworms or  
fireflies, but veritable, blazing suns  
radiant moons, effulgent stars

Lord, the Pharisees keep prattling of  
virtue and sin, washing of hands  
rinsing their mouths, flaunting their  
rituals and garments

Fault-finding, finger-pointing to the  
healing I do, the miracles I perform

Lord  
The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers  
renew and praise the One God of love and  
action the midgets and the dwarfs somersault  
Shivoham ! Shivoham ! the crowds crash on waves  
of enthusiasm on ecstasy but the old guard  
remains unconvinced of your might and seeks my  
life on one pretext or another

Lord  
Deliver me unto them so thy will be done

2

The Lord replied  
Jesus, you're tired  
Rub your two hands together  
    like they're two stones  
Generate fire  
And hit the road again and again  
Teach  
The confrontation is on  
    for two years at least  
You, my son, must undergo work,  
    pain, hunger, fatigue

One day  
When you're on the Cross  
You will know you're none other than I  
That day I'll allow you to spit the body  
    out and join me in the light  
That was is and will be

Till then the word become flesh  
Must suffer in horror, compassion  
Lash out in anger

3

O.K. Lord, as you say  
And Jesus stood up  
And rowed back to the beach  
Where the disciples waited eagerly  
    with the thronging multitudes  
Oblivious of what was to come

Kring Christ Jesus Namah



**TWELVE**

---

Jesus

When they, the Roman soldiers hoisted  
    on your head the mock crown  
        of twigs plucked from a thorn bush  
Dressed you in a soldier's cloak  
Stuck a reed in your hand  
Blindfolding twirled you around  
And hailed you king  
Chanting mock salutations into your ears  
What went through your mind  
What went through your heart  
O Christ at this ignominy ?

2

Compassion for their ignorance  
The Lord replied  
I knew it was coming  
After the judgement and the scourging  
I had been through it many times  
In other lives  
In other incarnations

Though the experience is new each time

In vain, my son, is bitterness  
Degradation and humiliation is nothing new  
It comes to us all in varying ways  
To some early, to some late  
When we are mocked for what we are  
Our beliefs  
Our words twisted  
Our life snarled and thrown back  
In hideous travesty

That's the way of the collective  
That's the way it shall be  
And when that happens  
Grit your teeth and persevere  
Giving in neither to self-pity  
Nor hate for perpetrators

3

Rejoice instead  
Not martyr like  
But make perfect thy will  
Waiting in surrender and receptivity

For the plot to thicken  
For the mystery to unfold

Live the moment when it comes  
Looking neither forward nor backward  
For Hers is the Will, Hers the Wisdom  
Who plays with us all

Om Shuddha Shakti Mary Namah

### **THIRTEEN**

---

When Christ hung on the Cross  
Satan came friendly like  
He felt Jesus' suffering  
with a sentiment and  
passion sincere

Said he, "See Jesus, it wouldn't have  
happened, you up there dangling  
bleeding in the hands, arms  
head

It wouldn't have happened  
    The betrayal by a disciple  
    Denial three times by Peter  
    Scourgings by the soldiers  
    Screamings by the stupid crowd  
    'Crucify him !'

Three years spent in vain feuding  
    with the Pharisees, Sadducees to impart  
    them enlightenment and love

Three years spent in healing hundreds  
    of ungrateful wretches

Three years spent in changing the  
    ways of the sinners and publicans

Three years spent in loving women who  
    wailed and cried and stood by  
    witnessing helplessly the vice of  
    persecution screwing tighter and tighter

It wouldn't have happened  
    if you'd listened to me

2

You would have had the whole  
    wide world by the balls  
    had palaces, harems full of women  
    camels loaded with the riches of  
    Cathay, and pearls of India

You could have become the World Guru  
    if that was your line  
And had them licking your feet  
    eating from your hands  
    like so many dogs

3

But you wouldn't listen  
you, goddamn adolescent visionary  
wanting to change the world

You goddamn flamboyant histrionic  
actor tragic enacting  
the messiah routine

Don't you know my friend  
the messiahs, incarnations  
prophets, gurus, acharyas

Have come and gone  
nicking not a dent in the  
shield of ignorance

And here I am, the only one  
feeling sorry for you  
You and I could have had a swell time  
fucking, fornicating, becoming rich  
writing books and founding temples

Do you know that buying and selling  
in the temples you cleaned  
with the theatrical flourishing  
of whips  
has increased ?"

ii

"Thank you, friend  
I see your point  
I know your feeling for me  
I know you were sincere in offering

me the world  
I know if I had accepted your offer  
I could have turned stone  
into bread  
I know you and I could have fixed the world

2

What makes you think I rejected  
you  
I've carried you inside letting you  
Speak to my ego many many times

After our first meeting  
In the desert  
I thought of you when I was presented  
to the high priest  
I know you would have made a deal  
And come back later to toss his  
turban at his feet  
I thought of you before Pontius Pilate  
I felt sorry for myself even as you  
do now  
I knew he wanted to let me go  
I could have appealed to his  
reason and compassion  
Instead of keeping mum  
I thought of giving a speech to  
the crowds and pacifying them and  
changing their minds

I knew I could do it  
I wasn't quite new to the  
crowds  
As you well know

3

I thought of you  
    when I was carrying the cross  
        and stumbling on my feet  
But you forget, Old Man  
    I'd a job to do  
And I couldn't have done it any  
    other way  
And for the record  
    I didn't play no messiah routine  
Looking back from this position of  
    being aloft like Moses' rod  
Like your snake  
I don't feel sorry for myself  
    not the least bit  
It had to be this way

Adieu Old Man  
Next time when we meet  
    I'll take you into myself more  
But this time around it couldn't be  
    done  
The polarization remained  
Because the times were too disjointed  
    chthonic on your side  
    cynical on the other"

iii

The Old Man walked away  
    chewing on Jesus' offer  
He felt happy  
    because ever since his fall from  
        heaven  
He didn't feel comfortable with being  
    outside and alone

**FOURTEEN**

Lord

How did you do it  
Carried the cross daily  
without bitterness  
resentment

The believers asked  
"How come your disciples are not John's  
They eat, drink, mingle with the  
multitudes

The disciples backslided, competed  
One of them doubted  
The second one denied you three times  
The third went on to sell you  
For thirty pieces of silver"

2

Lord

How did you do it  
Carried the cross daily  
Without bitterness  
Resentment

The Pharisees plagued you  
Sadducees baited you with non-sequiturs

Lord

They judged you scourged you  
Rent your clothes  
Made you drag the cross to your own hanging  
And one of the thieves mocked you till the  
very end

3

Lord

How did you do it  
How could you drink and dance and laugh  
in the midst of suffering and mockery

Lord

I cannot stop  
The flow of brooding  
On simple hurts and disappointments  
Teach me, O Lord

4

And the Lord appeared tall and shining  
His brow broad and high  
Face long and triangular  
Chin pointed  
Eyes deep and loving

The Lord appeared with his hair flowing  
Parted in the middle  
His seamless robe blessing the earth  
And he laughed and replied  
"I did it  
through faith and love and hope and charity  
You do not have to give up your strengths  
I didn't take the nonsense from the Pharisees  
I didn't fiddle with the drivel of the Sadducees  
I didn't coddle and pamper the disciples  
I dared the collective steeped in  
stupidity, violence, and ignorance  
I taught and healed  
Lashed and moved



But I didn't block the suffering either  
 So you pick up your pallet and walk  
 In surrender to the divine

Sure it hurt," added the Lord  
 "But it's fun"

Carrying the Cross of teaching  
 Carrying it to the very end  
 Without bitterness  
 Resentment

## **FIFTEEN**

---

Lord  
 I know it is you yourself  
 I see your feet. I see your hands  
 I see the scars  
 "Handle me, I'm not a spark or a spirit  
 But flesh and blood incarnation"

I know, Lord  
 You're an Avatar  
 Intersection of Timeless with Time  
 I don't know how to handle thee  
 I don't know what to make of this urgent  
     intrusion of yours

"Welcome," said the Lord  
 "without diffidence"

2

I have fished into many books, many experiences  
 Cooked in many ways  
     following any number of alchemical recipes

**of East, West, North and South**

**"Gee whiz, you're a chef"  
Said the Lord**

**What would you like to have for dinner  
Fish soup, with cheese, bread crumbs  
Fried fish smothered in onions and mushrooms  
And a dash of Rhine Castle  
Fish baked on either side with tomato sauce  
and marinated for three days and nights  
in vinegar**

**"Having been on the road has whetted my appetite  
I'll eat it with relish for my disciples, devotees,  
women, children and humble folks  
Whatever you fix  
Spice it with the Eastern spices  
Throw in American accent  
to wake up its flavours"**

**3**

**Swell, Lord  
You're a guest after my heart.  
You remind me of others I've served  
I used to give Sandesh to Ramakrishna  
Goat meat to Kali  
Marijuana drink to Shiva  
Sweets to Krishna**

**I knew you liked fish  
And even though I grew up away  
from sea-coast, any rivers  
in sight  
I learned to raise them in the ponds**

of my heart

I'll broil one for you  
Just right to tickle your palate

## SIXTEEN

---

Mother Mary  
Who dwellest on the heights  
as a shepherdess tending her flocks  
Homage to thee, homage, homage I

2

Mother Mary  
Whose will is perfect  
Who moves in accord with God's will  
on glancing feet  
scattering diamonds  
Homage to thee, homage, homage I

3

Mother Mary  
Enhaloed with moon  
To whom the stars whisper and lean  
Homage to thee, homage, homage I

4

Mother Mary  
Who swellest, ripenest with God's seed  
As a pumpkin on a vine trailing  
on the ground  
O Thou gourd, cornucopia

O Thou rainbow, and bulge of the rain-cloud  
Homage to thee, homage, homage !

5

Mother Mary

The Source of blessedness to all and sundry  
To rock, animal, plant  
Guide of the saints  
Guru of gurus  
Inspiration and example  
To seekers all

Homage to thee, homage, homage !

6

Mother Mary

Ever-pure virgin wrapped in mantle blue  
Hands folded, upraised in prayer  
Homage to thee, homage, homage !

7

Mother Mary

Who suffered for Lord Jesus Christ  
Through the Night of the Romans and Pharisees  
Who suffered the agony in Gethsemane  
Scourgings and mockery  
The pain of the staggering steps  
of her son  
Homage to thee, homage, homage !

8

Mother Mary

Light of the light

Untellable light  
 Diamond radiance  
 Flood of Beauty  
 Homage to thee, homage, homage !

9

Mother Mary  
 Source, Fountain of all manner  
     of glory and realization  
 Homage to thee, homage, homage !

Im Im Mary Namah

## **SEVENTEEN**

---

Mother Mary  
 O Blessed girl who roamed on the  
     mountains  
 Tending her yaks and lambs  
 Communing with the Ineffable God  
 Who spoke to you through changing  
 Seasons, the rise and decline of sun,  
 Valleys and grass your flocks grazed  
 Till one day, late at  
     midnight  
 The Moon spoke with an unbearable  
     resonance  
 "Mary, Mary, I've chosen thee for the  
     birth of my son, Jesus Christ  
 In times before you've given birth to  
     others like him"

2

"O Moon God," Mary replied  
 "I thank thee from the bottom of my heart"

But what should I do by way of  
preparations ?”

“Nothing, my girl  
Continue doing what you have always done  
Tending the yaks and the lambs  
Communing with valley, dales and brook and  
misty mountain-top  
Walk in the ways of righteousness  
In time you’ll grow fat and hot  
as a pumpkin on a vine  
In time you’ll deliver this child divine  
And be known in the three worlds  
and beyond  
As the Mother of God

3

“How should I raise this child  
What will he do, my Lord ?”

“With love, Mary  
Leave the rest to me

Your job be the Ever-Virgin loyal  
to him through Night of Time  
In which Time and timeless will co-mingle  
In which the old perish in flaming  
conflagration  
And the new arise in dazzling radiance  
And when that comes to pass  
You’ll be known as the Great Effulgence

In course of time you’ll become  
Mother, the Giver of blessedness  
O Mary, Mary

Through you Nature will be transformed  
 and elevated  
 Through you the spirit descend and become  
 Man for all to worship and relate  
 Through you matter ascend and dance  
 burst into flaming spurts  
 candelabra of tongues"

4

"O Moon God  
 I'm whelmed and scared  
 With the awesome vision  
 Help me with the steps"

"O. K. Mary  
 I give you the names in this process  
 Shailputri mountain daughter  
 Since you dwell in the heights of consciousness  
 While others chose to stay  
 down in the plains where it's secure and safe

Second, Brahmacharini since you move in accord with  
 God's will  
 Perfect thy will  
 For you're an example to all striving  
 seeking, aspiring sons on the  
 God-path

Third, Chandraghanta : the Bell of the Moon  
 that you are listening to now  
 Lord God chose me, the Moon from  
 another sky to tell you of  
 your mission

Mary, Mary, in the life of every  
 seeker, soul, God speaks through his

agents, Sun, Moon, Fire-god, Sea-god, Wind-god  
god of creativity, god of heaven

They're named variously as Surya,  
Chandrama, Agni, Varuna, Vayu,  
Kubera, Indra

They're named variously as Gabriel,  
Michael, Israel, Israfel, as archangels  
angels, as archetypes

And when they speak in vision  
dream, through an event omega-like  
in their life, through a passage in  
a poem, story, raga, scripture

That soul better listen  
Even as you're listening

Though from now on with the coming  
of Christ you'll speak to souls  
directly

From now on you shall be the Mother  
of saints, apostles, gurus, angels, archetypes

Fourth : Kushmanda, my Pumpkin Lady  
who ripens with the divine seed with  
the heat of ardour

Mary, once the soul, psyche is impregnated  
with the divine, it must rejoice and  
bring it forth immaculately

Fifth : Skandamata, because you're the  
Mother of God

Sixth : Katayani, Ever-pure Virgin  
the soul must exclusively devote  
to the divine vision  
which has actualized



It's necessary Mary because this actualized vision this  
 divine child will go through the night of Time to its  
 consummation to Christ-Consciousness from the thick-  
 ets of time the Pharisees Sadducees voices cracked from  
 drink and brawl and demothed religiosity will attack  
 son at times it will seem that instead of light and joy and  
 your fulfilment there is pain suffering disorientation

This phase of your life with the incarnation  
 Jesus Christ will be known as  
 Kalaratri, Night of Time"

5

"O Lord Moon,  
 O angel of soft radiance  
 How will I go through this phase ?"

"It's going to be rough, Mary  
 But you will

You'll go on to become  
 Mother of Radiance  
 Your Light will spread from  
 heaven to earth, earth to heaven  
 North, South, East, West  
 in all the ten directions

You'll spread and envelop and go on  
 To become the Queen of Heaven  
 You'll be known as Siddhidhatri

And they who shape their will  
 in accord with yours will have  
 all realizations in the palm of  
 their hands

And we, Mary, become your children  
Aye, Mary, even God will come and  
    sit at your feet  
Thenceforth will begin a new worship  
Worship of God as Mother  
God as Incarnation"

6

"O Lord Moon  
That's too much"

"Not really  
    you see God is tired of  
        having covenants, having them  
        broken, resorting to punishing  
        folks till they repent and  
        renewing his contracts with multiple  
        qualifications and clauses

He really wants a new way, New Jerusalem  
To which all nations, all races are  
    Invited in the name of love and devotion

I'll chant thee, Mary  
Thy mystic name  
    Shailputri  
        Brahmacharini  
            Chandraghanta  
                Kushmanda  
                    Skandamata  
                        Katayani  
                            Mahagauri  
                                Siddhidhatri"

Im Im Mary Namah

**EIGHTEEN** 

---

Lord Jesus Christ  
Whose resolve is fixed  
Who is implacable  
Who accepts only burnt offerings  
Homage to thee, homage, homage !

2

Lord Jesus Christ  
Whose mind wavers not  
Whose heart is aflame  
Who accepts those only  
Whose strength is in being least  
Homage to thee, homage, homage !

3

Mother Mary  
Who accepts sin, guilt, cereal offerings  
Who in her infinite mercy  
    will turn none away  
Homage to thee, homage, homage !

**NIGHTEEN** 

---

You are in the Father  
The Father in you  
And you say you're in the devotee  
Who believeth in Thee

So Father, Thee, and I are one  
    yet the everlasting life that you promise  
        has eluded me all these years

My consciousness whelms  
like the roaring sea  
The sun goes out  
The Moon dies  
The Stars flee

Intercede for me, Lord  
At the hour of this death  
I cannot last till the year 2000

And Now  
At this very moment  
LORD

## **TWENTY**

---

Saint Peter appeared in my dream  
Tall and stately  
With a bald pate  
And a flowing beard  
And spoke with a resonant, booming voice

"Peter, Peter," I replied  
"There are strains in my spiritual search  
I've had two initiations  
Read many books  
Scriptures I mean  
Strained my neck  
And the back of my head  
I've made some progress since I started  
But I'm somehow stuck"

2

"That's surprising," answered the saint  
"You're close to the Mother  
Have been for a long time"

"That's true, Peter," added I  
"But I've been late in coming  
To Jesus Christ"

"Well, well," the saint replied,  
Clearing his throat  
"I see your problem  
Ego inflation and ego insecurity  
Two being the same  
Opposite ends of the seesawing scale  
Shadows assailing from many sides  
Rank confusion  
What the heck ?  
I'll give you the initiation of the Holy Spirit  
To purge you of impurities  
To burn your defects  
To digest your karmas  
To get you going

After all, I poured it in the past on a  
whole multitude who had had only  
John the Baptist initiation

Water is great  
But it is long and slow  
It gets you to refinement in the flesh only  
I'll breathe on you the fire of Christ my Lord  
In fact, he bids me do so  
even as he did long ago  
When I wouldn't eat the scaly creatures  
fallen from the sky"

3

"Thank you, Peter  
I hope I prove worthy"

*Christ and I : Dialogue*

"Be ye perfect," concluded the saint  
and departed  
Leaving me with fire in the spine  
Racing from chakra to chakra

In the sacral chakra the fire burnt  
My gross sexual vibrations  
In the stomach burnt my fears and  
neurasthenic pains  
In the heart searing and cutting  
a channel  
Untying the knots  
So that I fell on my knees  
Crying again and again  
at my failure to have felt the suffering  
of others  
Crying again and again  
For having brooded for years  
on my own hurts and disappointments

Not connecting with the Godly sorrow

Crying again and again at my cop-outs  
on family, friends  
Using rationalizations  
Predicating relationships on worldly gains  
expectations, on reactions, striking  
validations, praise, ego messages  
on superficial or flamboyant  
anima satisfactions

In the throat the fire stayed  
for months  
Cleansing, burning the constrictions  
the gunk and goeyness  
So I began to express

the truth as my Lord Shiva would express  
incantatory spiced with the venom  
of quick anger and occasional malediction

Then it leapt into the brain  
And that's where it is  
Burning a network of tunnels  
Creating a honeycomb for the Lord  
to fill with nectar  
Where there was earlier abstraction,  
concepts, void, and emptiness

Kring Christ Jesus Namah

Be ye Shiva  
Be ye perfect  
That's now the mantra that whirls  
on its own  
Winging me down to the feet of Christ

Kring Christ Jesus Namah



Books by: Feroz Ahmed-ud-din Bina Agarwal G K Adiga V K Agnihotri Meena Alexander Agha Shahid Ali Roshen Alkazi Anirvan Thomas Ansell Robert Antoine Upendranath Ashk Harry Aveling Nasima Aziz V Balasubrahmanyam Bibhuti Bhushan Banerjee Juliette Banerjee Lawrence Bantleman Richard Bartholomew Anjana Basu Arindam Basu Romen Basu Samuel Beckett Meena Belliappa M R Bhagavan Subramania Bharati M P Bhaskaran Jagadisvara Bhattacharya Lokenath Bhattacharya Manju Bhattacharya Pradip Bhattacharya Ruskin Bond Roger Bowers David Buck Catullus Narendranath Chakravarty Prithvindrath Chakravarti Debjani Chatterjee Pranab Chatterjee Pravas Jivan Chaudhury Sukanta Chaudhuri Aitmatov Chingiz Kabir Choudhury Saros Cowasjee Asif Currimbhoy Carmine Dandrea Micheel Chacko Daniels K N Daruwalla Deb Kumar Das Darin Das Jibananda Das Kamala Das Mary Ann Dasgupta Samir Dasgupta Somesh Dasgupta Subhoranjan Dasgupta Amaresh Datta Ira Datta Rajlukshmee Debee Henry Derozio G V Desani Gauri Deshpande Shashi Deshpande Maitreyi Devi Shree Devi Shyamasee Devi Bishnu Dey Leela Dharmaraj T K Doraiswamy Deepak Dubey Toru Dutt David Eberhart Mary Erulkar Salvador Espriu Nissim Ezekiel Brooks Frederick (Frederic Brooks)



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## WRITERS WORKSHOP CALCUTTA INDIA

In 1980 Writers Workshop completes twenty-two years of uninterrupted existence devoted to the cause of Indian Writing in English, in the belief that only imaginative writing of quality by Indians will enable the English language to play a significant role in India's cultural ethos. This belief gives impetus to the important long-term mission of the Workshop, pursued quietly and continuously, without recourse to any political means, to convince the elected representatives of the people of India that English is one of the Indian languages and, as such, deserves to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution with the other recognised languages of India. Therefore, its publishing focuses on English creative and transcreative work by Indians, or such work by foreigners as deals with, or is inspired by or has relevance for Indian life and culture. This up-to-date new checklist of its publications from 1958 to 1979 reflects the increasingly supple and varied use of modern English as a creative medium by Indians.

The Workshop believes serious creative writing deserves attractive printing and binding. In its early years it pioneered slim elegantly-produced paper-backed poetry editions, which are now collector's items. It switched to handloom-bound hardbacks when its fiction and belles-lettres titles increased. WW hardbacks are now restricted to limited — often autographed — expensive editions only. In 1970 it introduced a new concept in publishing — flexibacks. These are fastidiously hand-sewn limp-cloth sarl-bound gold-embossed flexible editions offering hardback durability and "book-feel" at popular paperback prices. From 1976 all WW books are issued encased in removable clear-vinyl protective dust-jackets. Instead of glossily hiding mediocre mass-produced binding — the common 20th-century practice — the Workshop reveals the beauty of the hand-binder's art by using only a slim title-flap on both hardbacks and flexibacks. All Writers Workshop books have a uniform size — demy 8vo [8½ × 5½ in.] — with the exception of Blackbird comics, which are 11 × 9 in. The Workshop won the 1st Prize in the National Printing & Binding Awards (1970) of the Government of India; the volume cited on the plaque was William Hull's *Visions of Handy Hopper* (Book 2). Subsequently it won an award for Jai Nimbkar's *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories*. New Workshop ventures are the Sunbird Literary Cassettes and LPs and the Gurubird textbooks series.

Visitors to the Workshop's Sunday morning sessions have included Mulk Raj Anand, W. Norman Brown, Pearl Buck, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Paul Engle, Allen Ginsberg, Gunter Grass, Geoffrey Hill, William Hull, Christopher Isherwood, Donald Keane, James Laughlin, C. C. Mehta, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Santha Rama Rau and Keran Singh.

Writers Workshop books are published by P. Lal from 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045 (Phone 46-8325). A full set of WW titles is available for reference for the benefit of Calcutta residents in the Reading Room of the South India Club, 70B Hindustan Park, Calcutta 700029. Prices in this Checklist will apply from January 1979; they are subject to change without any previous notice.

# Poetry : *Redbirds* WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN ENGLISH



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- Ahmed-ud-Din, F. *This Handful of Dust* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1974
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- R. H. Morrison (ed) *One Hundred Russian Poems* (H Rs 50 F Rs 25) 1978  
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- Das, Jibanananda *Banalata Sen* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1962  
Bengali/tr. by Chidananda Dasgupta & others
- Dasgupta, Pranabendu *This Life* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1979  
Bengali/tr. by Pranabendu & Mary Ann Dasgupta
- Dey, Bishnu *Selected Poems* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1972  
Bengali/selected & tr. by Samir Dasgupta and others
- Debee, Rajlukshmee *The Owl & Other Poems* (H Rs 40 F Rs 10) 1972  
Bengali/tr. by Rajlukshmee Debee and others
- \* Ghalib, Mirza *Twenty-Five Verse* (H Rs 25 F Rs 10) 1971  
Urdu/tr. and annotated by C. M. Naim
- Ghalib, Mirza *Lighter Verses* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1972  
Urdu/tr. by C. M. Naim
- \* Ghalib, Mirza *Love Poems* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1971  
Urdu/tr. by P. Lal
- \* Govindagraj *Poems* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1968  
Gujarati/tr. by Suniti Namjoshi & Sarojini Namjoshi
- Islam, Kabirul *Poems* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1979  
Bengali/tr. by Ketaki Kushari Dyson
- Jap-ji: *Volume 1* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) *Volume 2* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10)  
Panjabi/tr. by P. Lal 1966/1969
- Jotwani, Motilal (ed.) *Modern Sindhi Poetry* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1979  
Sindhi/tr. by Motilal Jotwani



Jacket-flap design by Paritosh Sen for Bengali Poems on Calcutta

STEW MUCH!

ODOUR IN THE COURT

Titles of some poems in Sukumar Ray's Nonsense Rhymes

- Karandikar, Vinda *Trimurti : Three Major Poems* (H Rs 25 F Rs 10) 1979  
Marathi/tr. by Vinda Karandikar (with A. K. Ramanujan)
- Karandikar, Vinda *A Matter of Moods* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1979  
Marathi/tr. by Vinda Karandikar (with A. K. Ramanujan)
- \* Mahapatra, Sitakant *Quiet Violence* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1970  
Oriya/tr. by Sitakant Mahapatra
- \* Mahapatra, Sitakant *The Other Silence* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1973  
Oriya/tr. by Sitakant Mahapatra
- Mahapatra, Sitakant *The Jester* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1979  
Oriya/translated by various hands
- Maitreyi Devi *Aditya Marichi*/bilingual edition/1972  
Bengali/tr. by Shyamasree Devi/for private distribution only
- Mirabai *The Devotional Songs of Mirabai* (H Rs 60 F Rs 15) 1973  
Rajasthani/tr. and introduced by Shreeprakash Kurl
- Nammalvar *Tiruviruttam : Love Divine* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1979  
Tamil/tr. and introduced by Prema Nandakumar
- Pampatti *Dance, Snake ! Dance !* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1976  
Tamil/tr. and annotated by David Buck
- \* Ray, Sibnarayan *Autumnal Equinox* (H Rs 30 F Rs 10) 1973  
Bengali/tr. by Sibnarayan Ray and others
- Ray, Sukumar *Nonsense Rhymes* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1970  
Bengali/*Abol Tabol*/transcreated by Satyajit Ray
- Roy, Ram Mohan *The Complete Songs* (H Rs 40 F Rs 10) 1973  
Bengali/*Brahma-Sangit* tr. and introduced by Nikhiles Guha
- \* Roy, Tarapada *Where to, Tarapada-babu ?* (H Rs 30 F Rs 10)  
Bengali/tr. by Shyamasree Devi & P. Lal
- Sen, Samar *The Complete Poems* (H Rs 35 F Rs 20) 1970  
Bengali/tr. and introduced by Pritish Nandy

- \* *Some Kannada Poems : A Selection* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1974  
Kannada/tr. by A. K. Ramanujan & M. G. Krishnamurthi
- Servagna The Offsprings of Servagna* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) 1975  
Kannada/tr. by G. S. Sharat Chandra
- Singhi, B. M. *Echoes of Eternity* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1978  
(Note by Rabindranath Tagore ; Preface by S. K. Chatterji)  
Hindi/tr. by Savita Saigal
- Some Post-Independence Bengali Poems* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1961  
Bengali/selected & tr. by Pradeep Banerjee
- Staying is Nowhere : A Selection* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1975  
Kondh & Paraja Folk Songs/tr. by Sitakant Mahapatra
- \* Tagore, Rabindranath *Tagore's Last Poems* (H Rs 12 F Rs 10) 1972  
Bengali/*Shesh-Lekha* tr. by Shyamasree Devi & P. Lal
- Tagore, Rabindranath *A Bunch of Tagore Poems* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1966  
Bengali/tr. by Monika Varma
- The Empty Distance Carries . . . Tribal Poems* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1972  
Munda & Oraon/tr. and introduced by Sitakant Mahapatra
- \* Tilak, Balagangadhara *The Song of the Cosmos* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1975  
Telugu/tr. and introduced by S. S. Prabhakar
- \* Varma, Shrikant *Otherwise & Other Poems* (H Rs 40 F Rs 10) 1972  
Hindi/tr. by Vishnu Khare & others
- Vimal, G. P. *No Sooner & Other Poems* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1979  
Hindi/transcreated by Rattan Chouhan and others



Self-portrait

*Rabindranath Tagore*

## LAST POEMS

Transcreated from  
the Bengali *Shesh-Lekha*  
by Shyamasree Devi  
& P. Lal

A Writers Workshop Saffronbird book

## Rabindranath Tagore THE COURT DANCER

Transcreated by Shyamasree Devi

Sketch by Paritosh Sen



A Writers Workshop Bluebird Book

अभीषां मण्डलाभोगः स्तनानामेव शोभते / येषामुद्येत्य सोत्कम्पा राजानोऽपि करप्रदाः ॥

इन्तु माम् जगत्सर्वमविवेकि कुचद्वयम् ।

प्राप्तश्रवणयोरुपोर्न मुक्तं जन्मरक्षणम् ॥

तन्वङ्गिनां स्तौरी दृष्ट्वा शिरं कम्पयते ध्रुवा ।

तयोस्तस्मिन्मन्त्रं दृष्ट्वा मुष्पाटयन्निव ॥

नपुंसकमिति ज्ञात्वा तां प्रति प्रहितं मनः / रमते तत्र तत्रैव इतां वाणिजिना वयम् ॥



प्रायः स्तनतटीभूमिः प्रकामफलदायिनी ।  
यस्याग्रे करं दत्त्वा योज्यते नखलाङ्गुलम्  
तत्र तन्वि स्तनवितौ कुर्वते विग्रहं गुरुम् ।  
अन्योन्यमण्डुनाङ्गुलौ नष्टसंधौ नृपाविव ॥

**Poetry :** *Saffronbirds*

TRANSCREATED FROM CLASSICAL INDIAN LANGUAGES



- Antoine, Robert (tr.) *Kalidasa's "Dynasty of Raghu"* (HRs60FRs20) 1972  
Sanskrit / A complete sloka-by-sloka version
- \* Das, Deb Kumar (tr.) *A Discourse on the Self* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1970  
Sanskrit / From Sankaracharya
- Das, Deb Kumar (tr.) *On Exploring Reality* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1976  
Sanskrit / The Jabala and Paingala Upanisads
- \* Das, Deb Kumar (tr.) *The Isa & Kena Upanisads* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1971  
Sanskrit / sloka-by sloka version with commentary
- \* *Fifteen Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1963  
Tamil / tr. by A. K. Ramanujan
- Lal, P. (tr.) *Vikrama and Urvashi* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1980  
Sanskrit / transcreation of Kalidasa's play
- Lal, P. (tr.) *Sanskrit Love Lyrics* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1966  
Sanskrit / From the *Subhasita-ratna-kosa* / 2nd ed.
- Lal, P. (tr.) *The Golden Womb of the Sun* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1965  
Vedic Sanskrit / From the Rg-Veda's 10th Mandala / 2nd ed.
- \* Lal, P. (tr.) *The Bhagavad Gita* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) / 4th ed. 1965  
Sanskrit / A new version in modern idiom [LP available, see p. 9]
- \* Lal, P. (tr.) *The Isa Upanisad* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1968  
Sanskrit / with Text, Interpretation & Commentary / 2nd ed.
- Lal, P. (tr.) *Some Sanskrit Poems* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1967  
Sanskrit / From the *Subasita-ratna-kosa*

# THE MAHABHARATA OF VYASA

A sloka by sloka transcreation by P. Lal from the Sanskrit of Vyasa  
Published monthly / 132 Fascicules ready till October 1979 / Rs 15 each

# ॥ The Aryakta Upaniṣad ॥

Translated  
from the Sanskrit  
by P. Lal \*

Title-page calligraphy by P. Lal

- Lal, P. (tr.) *The Aavyakta Upaniṣad* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1969  
Sanskrit / The little-known text carefully Englished
- Lal, P. (tr.) *The Mahanarayana Upaniṣad* (H Rs 35 F Rs 20) 1971  
Sanskrit / The Nehru Fellowship Project
- Lal, P. (tr.) *The Brhadaranayaka Upaniṣad* (H Rs 60 F Rs 20) 1974  
Sanskrit / The Nehru Fellowship Project
- Lal, P. (tr.) *The Farce of the Drunk Monk* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1968  
Sanskrit / Mahendravarmā's 7th century one-act play / 2nd ed.
- Lal, P. (tr.) *The Mahabharata of Vyasa* (each vol. Rs 15) 1968 Continuing  
Sanskrit / 132 monthly vols. published till October 1979
- Lal, P. (tr.) *The Dhammapada* (Rs 30) / 4th ed. 1967  
Pali / Published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux (Distr. by WW)
- Lal, P. (tr.) *Great Sanskrit Plays in Modern Translation* (Rs 40) / 4th ed. 1969  
Sanskrit / Published by New Directions (Distr. by WW)
- Mukhopadhyay, S.K. & L. Ray *Way of Enlightenment* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) 1979  
Tibetan & Sanskrit / the full text of the *Bodhicharyavatara*
- Varma, Monika (tr.) *Jayadeva's Gita Govinda* (H Rs 30 F Rs 20) 1968  
Sanskrit / An interpretative transcreation / 2nd ed.

महाकवि जयदेव *The Gita Govinda*

**Fiction : Greenbirds**  
 WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN ENGLISH



- Banerjee, Juliette *The Boyfriend & Other Stories* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1978
- \* Basu, Arindam *Picaro Or Me* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) novel 1972
- Basu, Romen *A Gift of Love* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) novel 1974
- \* Basu, Romen *The Tamarind Tree* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) novel 1975
- Bhattacharya, Manju *Stories* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1979
- \* Chatterjee, M. *At the Homeopath's* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories 1973
- \* Cowasjee, S. *Stories & Sketches* (H Rs 35 F Rs 15) illustr. Mario 1970
- \* Daniels, M. *Anything Out of Place is Dirt* (H Rs 25 F Rs 20) novel 1971
- \* Daniels, M. *That Damn Romantic Fool* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) novel 1972
- Deshpande, Shashi *The Legacy* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories 1978
- Deshpande, Shashi *The Miracle* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories 1978
- Deshpande, S. *It Was the Nightingale* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories 1976
- \* Doraiswamy, T. K. *Words for the Wind* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) novel 1973
- \* Dubey, Deepak *Stories for Ramu* (H Rs 30 F Rs 10) 1975
- Hejmadi, Padma *Coigns of Vantage* (H Rs 60 F Rs 20) stories 1972
- Jyoti, Jafa *Nurjahan* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) novel 1978
- \* Katrak, K. D. & Usha *Five Little Sermons* (H Rs 25 F Rs 10) stories 1971
- \* Khanolkar, N. *Dwasuparna* (2 vols., each H Rs 40 F Rs 15) novel 1975
- Melwani, Murli Das *Stories of a Salesman* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1967
- Melwani, Murli Das *Odds on the Target* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) novel 1979
- Melwani, Murli Das *Night of the Teesta* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories 1979
- \* Narasimhan, Raji *The Marriage of Bela* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories 1978
- Narasimhan, Raji *The Heart of Standing* (H Rs 50 F Rs 15) novel 1979
- Nimbkar, Jai *The Lotus Leaves* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories 1971
- Noronha, Leslie de *Stories* (H Rs 30 F Rs 20) 1936
- Noronha, L. de *Mango & Tamarind Tree* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) novel 1970
- Ratan, Jai *The Angry Goddess* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) stories 1960
- \* Ray, Ami *Apocalypse* (H Rs 30 Rs 15) novelette 1975
- Sen, Gautam *Stories* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1979
- Sinha, K. N. *Wait Without Hope* (H Rs 30 Rs 15) novel 1962
- Sio, Kewlian *A Small World* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) stories 1960
- Sio, K. *Dragons* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) illustr. by Srimati Lal/stories 1978
- Sio, Kewlian *What a View* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) novel 1979
- \* Smith, Lee *Amedeo Amedei* (H Rs 40 F Rs 10) novelette 1973
- \* Suraiya, Jug *The Interview* (H Rs 30 F Rs 20) stories 1971
- \* Thomas, Vernon *Suddenly It's Christmas* (H Rs 30 F 15) stories 1976

WRITERS WORKSHOP Indian Creative Writing in English

Striking Experimental Fiction by Young Writers

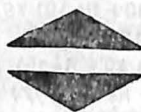
# Fiction : *Greenbirds*

TRANSCREATED FROM OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES



- \* Ashk, Upendranath *Sorrow of the Snows* (H Rs 25 F Rs 15) 1971  
Hindi/transcreated by Jai Ratan/novel
- Banerjee, Bibhuti Bhushan *Pather Panchali* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1973  
Bengali/tr. by Monika Varma/Vol. 1 "Trumpet Call"
- Banerjee, Bibhuti Bhushan *Pather Panchali* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1973  
Bengali/tr. by Monika Varma/Vol. 2 "Call of the Road"
- Banerjee, Bibhuti Bhushan *Pather Panchali* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1973  
Bengali/tr. by Monika Varma/Vol. 3 "Akrur's Call"
- \* *Contemporary Hindi Short Stories : A Selection* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1962  
Hindi/selected and transcreated by Jai Ratan/2nd Ed.
- Devi, Sita & Santa Devi *The Garden Creeper* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1979  
Bengali/tr. jointly by the authoresses/stories
- Devi, Sita & Santa Devi *Tales of Bengal* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1979  
Bengali/stories tr. by the authoresses
- Jain, Sunita *A Woman is Dead* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) stories 1979  
Hindi/tr. by the authoress/some written originally in English
- Kumar, Ram *Stories* (H Rs 25 F Rs 15) 1970  
Hindi/selected and transcreated by Jai Ratan
- \* Kumar, Sharat *The Storm & Other Stories* (H Rs 25 F Rs 15) 1976  
Hindi/selected and translated by the author
- Maitreyi Devi *It Does Not Die* (H Rs 60 F Rs 35) 1976  
Bengali/autobiographical romance tr. by Maitreyi Devi
- \* *Modern Urdu Stories : An Anthology* (H Rs 30 F Rs 20) 1975  
Urdu/selected and transcreated by A. I. Mirza
- Nagarjun *The Holy Man from Jamaniya* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1977  
Hindi/transcreated by Munda, Staneslow & Johnson/novel
- Premchand *The Shroud* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1979  
Hindi/transcreated by Jai Ratan/stories
- Sahni, Bhisham *The Boss Came to Dinner* (H Rs 50 F Rs 15) 1972  
Hindi/stories selected & transcreated mostly by Jai Ratan
- Sahni, Bhisham *Tamas (Darkness)* (H Rs 80 F Rs 40) novel 1979  
Hindi/transcreated by Jai Ratan/novel
- \* Vaid, Krishna Baldev *Silence & Other Stories* (H Rs 50 F Rs 15) 1972  
Hindi/translated mostly by Krishna Baldev Vaid
- Vaid, Krishna Baldev *Bimal in Bog* Vol. 1 (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1972  
Hindi transcreated by Krishna Baldev Vaid/novel
- Vaid, Krishna Baldev *Bimal in Bog* Vol. 2 (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1972  
Hindi/transcreated by Krishna Baldev Vaid/novel
- \* Varma, Nirmal *The Hill Station* (H Rs 50 F Rs 10) 1973  
Hindi/transcreated mostly by Jai Ratan/stories
- Varma, Shrikant *A Winter Evening* (H Rs 50 F Rs 10) 1973  
Hindi/transcreated by Jai Ratan/stories
- Vimal, G. P. *Here and There & Other Stories* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1978  
Hindi/transcreated by various hands





The Workshop Logo 1958/62/67/77

The Workshop Bookbirds 1965/70/77



Bluebird / drama



HOLY BIRDIE

Sketch  
David McCutcheon

McCutcheon's tongue-in-cheek take-off on the WW Birdbook Logo — from a letter in *The Epistles of David-Kaka to Plalm'n* (see "Reference", p. 23)



*The Sunbird Logo  
Cassettes and LPs*

[see pages 25-28 for full details]



**Drama : Bluebirds**

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN ENGLISH



- \* Aziz, Nasima *No Metaphor, Remember* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1976
- Bantleman, Lawrence *Beyond Life* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1979
- \* Bantleman, Lawrence *The Award* (H Rs 25 F Rs 10) 1972
- Currimbhoy, Asif *The Hungry Ones* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) 1979
- Currimbhoy, Asif *Inquilab* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1971
- Currimbhoy, Asif *Goa* (H Rs 20 F Rs 15) 1972
- Currimbhoy, Asif *The Refugee* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1971
- Currimbhoy, Asif *An Experiment with Truth* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1972
- Currimbhoy, Asif *The Miracle Seed* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1973
- Currimbhoy, Asif *"Om Mane Pad na Hum I"* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) 1972
- Currimbhoy, Asif *The Dissident M. L. A.* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1974
- Currimbhoy, Asif *This Alien . . . Native Land* (H Rs 40 F Rs 10) 1974
- Currimbhoy, Asif *The Mandarin Strobe* (H Rs 50 F Rs 15) 1979
- Currimbhoy, Asif *Turkman Gate* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) 1979
- Desani, G. V. *Hali* (H Rs 20 F Rs 8) 1967
- \* Devi, Shree *The Purple-Braided People* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1970
- Ezekiel, Nissim *Three Plays* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1969
- \* Hiro, Dilip *To Anchor a Cloud* (H Rs 60 F Rs 15) 1972
- Hiro, Dilip *Two One-Act Plays* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1978
- \* Kenvin, Roger *Krishnalight* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) / multi-media play 1976
- \* Melwani, Murli Das *Deep Roots* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1970
- Mukhopadhyay, Durgadas *Jayadeva* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1979
- Brooks, F. *The Sweet White Witch* / based on Hilda Lewis' novel  
*The Witch & the Priest* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1979
- Brooks, F. *Brandy For Boz : Charles Dickens* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25) 1979
- Brooks, F. *Down Under in Sydney* (H Rs 50 F Rs 25) play based on  
D. H. Lawrence's novel *Kangaroo* / 1979
- Brooks, F. *The Dark Dark Lady* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) play based on D. H.  
Lawrence's novel *A Plumed Serpent* / 1979

APPLY APPLY NO REPLY and A CLEAN BREAK

TWO ONE-ACT PLAYS  
by Dilip Hiro

- \* Nagarwalia, Arati *The Bait* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1969
- Nandy, Pritish *Rites for a Plebeian Statue* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1969
- Raman, S. *Karna* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) verse play / 1979
- Scholberg, Henry *Lakshmi & the Captain* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1979
- Scholberg, Henry *Calcutta 1851* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1976
- Scholberg, Henry *Saroja* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1978
- \* Vasudev, P. S. *The Sunflower* (H Rs 50 F Rs 10) 1971
- \* Vasudev, P. S. *Lord Ravana of Lanka* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1974

## Screenplays : *Silverbirds*

FILMSCRIPTS & SCENARIOS



- Cowasjee, Saros *The Last of the Maharajas* (H Rs 50 F Rs 25) 1979  
(based on Mulk Raj Anand's *Private Life of an Indian Prince*)
- Ray, Satyajit *The Chess Players* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1980  
(based on Premchand's *Shatranj Ke Khilari*)
- Sharma, Mukul *Incorporeal Personal Agency* (H Rs 30 F Rs 15) 1979  
(based on Agatha Christie's story *The Last Séance*)

## Forthcoming Books

FOR PUBLICATION IN LATE 1979 & 1980



- Dasgupta, Mary Ann *The Best of "Modern Review" 1* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25)
- Devi, Shyamasree *The Best of "Modern Review" 2* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25)
- Devi, Sita *Reminiscences of Tagore* (tr. S. Devi) (H Rs 60 F Rs 25)
- Lal, P. (ed.) *The Best of "Quest" 2* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25)
- Lal, P. (ed.) *The Best of "Indian Review"* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25)
- Lall, Samuel (ed.) *The Best of "Hindustan Review"* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25)
- Lal, P. *Views and Reviews* (H Rs 40 F Rs 15) book reviews
- Lal, P. (ed.) *Reciter's Indo-English Prose & Poetry* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25)
- McCutchion, David *Posthumous Essays* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20)
- Melwani, Mona *Virginia Green & the Band Boys* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) stories
- Morrison, R. H. (tr.) *Ancient Chinese Odes* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) Feb. 1979
- Nag, Kalidas *The Discovery of Asia* (in 5 volumes)
- Vol. 1 : *New Asia* (H Rs 50 F Rs 30)
- Vol. 2 : *Middle East* (H Rs 50 F Rs 30)
- Vol. 3 : *Pacific World* (H Rs 50 F Rs 30)
- Vol. 4 : *Art & Archaeology Abroad* (H Rs 50 F Rs 30)
- Vol. 5 : *South-East Asia* (H Rs 50 F Rs 30)
- Nag, Kalidas *Tolstoy and Gandhi* (H Rs 40 F Rs 24)
- Ratan, Jai (ed.) *The Best of "Quest"* (H Rs 60 F Rs 25) anthology
- Stilz, Gerhard (ed.) *Early Anglo-Indian Stories* (H Rs 80 F Rs 40)
- Suraiya, Jug *A Muster of Peacocks* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) stories

## Drama

TRANSCREATED FROM OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES



- Bharatendu Satya *Harischandra* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1980  
Hindi / tr. & introduced by Madan Gopal
- Bhattacharya, Jagdisvara *The Ocean of Laughter* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1976  
Sanskrit / 14th c. one-act farce tr. by R. Munda & D. N. Nelson
- \* Joshi, Shiv Kumar *He Never Slept So Long* (H Rs 50 F Rs 10) 1972  
Gujarati / transcreated by Shiv Kumar Joshi
- Mahendrarvarman *The Farce of the Drunk Monk* (H Rs 10 F Rs 10) 1968  
Sanskrit / 7th c. one-act farce transcreated by P. Lal / 2nd ed.
- Sehgal, Lalit *The Verdict* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1970  
Hindi / transcreated by Suresh Kohli
- Symons, Arthur *The Toy Cart* (H Rs 50 F Rs 20) 1979  
Sanskrit / Adapted from Sudraka's play
- Tagore, Rabindranath *The Court Dancer* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) / 2nd ed. 1961  
Bengali / *Natir Puja* tr. by Shyamasree Devi
- Tagore, Rabindranath *Shyama*  
Bengali / Included in P. K. Saha's *Blue Magic* (see "Poetry")
- Thakur, Asaita *Vanio & Zanda Zulan* (H Rs 20 F Rs 10) 1971  
Gujarati / transcreated and introduced by Farley Richmond

## TRANSCREATED FROM RUSSIAN

- Aitmatov, Chingiz *The Ascent of Fujiyama* (H Rs 60 F Rs 26) 1979  
Russian / transcreated by Kalpana Sahni




A SEVENTH-CENTURY ONE-ACT SANSKRIT PLAY  
BY KING MAHENDRAVARMAN

# Literary Criticism : Greybirds ON INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH



- Belliappa, Meena *The Fiction of Anita Desai* (H Rs 15 F Rs 10) 1971  
 Belliappa, M. *English Fiction by Indian Women* (H Rs 60 F Rs 40) 1979  
 Belliappa, M. & R. Tarañath *The Poetry of N. Ezekiel* (HRs12FRs10) 1966  
 Chatterjee, D. *Forster's A Passage to India* (H Rs 40 F Rs 20) 1979  
 Chaudhuri, Sukanta *Bantleman's "Kanchanjanga"* (H Rs15 F Rs 10) 1969  
 Cowasjee, S. *Author to Critic: Letters of M.R. Anand* (HRs60FRs20) 1973  
 Harrex, S. C. *The Fire & the Offering :*  
     *The English-Language Novel of India 1935-1970*  
     Vol. 1 : Anand, Singh, Rajan, & others (H Rs 60 F Rs 40) 1977  
     Vol. 2 : Narayan, Raja Rao, G. V. Desani (H Rs 60 F Rs 40) 1978  
 Hemenway, Stephen *The Novel of India*  
     Vol. 1 : The Anglo-Indian Novel (H Rs 60 F Rs 30) 1975  
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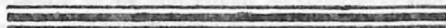




The Sunbird Logo

*Writers Workshop  
Sunbird LP Records  
& Literary Cassettes*

A full description & a checklist  
of the Literary Cassettes & LPs  
issued by Writers Workshop in  
1976-79 are given on pages 25-28.



Correction

Page 24 third Sunbird title :

For "classes 1-10" "classes 9-10"







# The Voice of the Sunbird

## WRITERS WORKSHOP LITERARY CASSETTES



Early in 1976 P. Lal read his complete transcreation of the *Bhagavad Gita* on two long-playing stereo records (total running time: 100 minutes); the album was produced by Urmila Devi Kanoria at considerable expense in the Dum Dum studios of the Gramophone Company of India. That pioneer venture arose from a conviction that a sufficient body of quality English creative writing by Indians

was at last available to justify the issue of LPs and cassettes of authors reading their own and others' work. The only problem was of finding a studio in Calcutta equipped with modern electronic apparatus sophisticated enough for the uncompromising fineness demanded. The first fifteen cassettes were read by P. Lal and recorded in the Audio-Visual Departments of Berea College, Kentucky, and Albion College, Michigan, during February-May 1977. Now, first-rate professional recording facilities have been offered to Writers Workshop by Chitra-Bani, the social communications centre in central Calcutta sponsored by the Jesuit fathers and directed by Rev. Gaston Roberge, S.J. Here, in a sound-proof air-conditioned studio, Electret Sony microphones capture the speaker's voice on four track Scotch spool tape on a Swiss-make Revox recording machine; after editing, transfer is made on a high-quality cassette capable of attaining clean, lucid highs with minimal hiss. The results have a startlingly life-like fidelity, clarity, purity, richness, and excellent "ambience". For the first time in India, sensitive interpretations of their own work by poets and fiction-writers are popularly available, on impeccable stereophonic recording with a Dolby "B" noise-reduction system, bringing an entirely new dimension to listening pleasure and literary appreciation. Writers Workshop has made every effort to make fastidious use of contemporary sound technology in order to reproduce faithfully the magic of the creative human voice. No distracting gimmickry — such as "interpretative" musical background, faddish sound effects, or over-dramatised declamatory reading — is allowed to interfere with the modulations of the speaker's delivery. Initially, the Workshop will restrict its recordings to poetry and prose which have appeared in book form under its different Birdbook logos. Each cassette comes in a distinctive and characteristic handloom-cloth-covered, gold-embossed Writers Workshop slipcase. The Workshop will, in course of time, make available to serious scholars of Indian Writing in English a library of superbly recorded material on cassette, in the hope that intelligent study of such material will modify the disproportionately heavy stress laid by teachers on print culture and so enable a healthier critical climate to flourish in the expanding Academe of Indo-Anglia.



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A major long-term Writers Workshop plan was to make the epic of Vyasa, the *Mahabharata*, available on Sunbird cassettes. In November 1977 P. Lal completed nine years' work on his sloka-by-sloka transcreation of the *Mahabharata* with the publication of Volume 108 (one hard-bound fascicule has appeared each month since November 1968). Volume 109 begins the Bhishma-Parva. As an oral epic, the *Mahabharata* is ideally suited to reading, chant, and recitation. The first five Parvas (WW Volumes 1-108), containing about 32,000 slokas, are now available in English transcreation on 70 cassettes — Adi (9,000 slokas), Sabha (3,000), Vana (18,000), Virata (3,000) Udyoga (8,000). They are read by P. Lal. Slokas significant for poetic beauty or memorable meaning are read in Sanskrit, followed by their English versions. For the first time in English, the encyclopaedic epic sweep of Indian culture comes sharply alive in all its narrative speed, dramatic intensity, soaring imagination, philosophical speculation, pragmatic advice, and moral inspiration: Artha, Dharma, Kama, and Moksa are presented as originally conceived by the Mahakavi, via the sympathetic interpreting medium of the storyteller's voice. A total of 200 cassettes, each of 90-minutes' duration, will cover the entire 100,000 slokas of Vyasa's magnificent tale. The price for the first 70 cassettes (beautifully boxed in handloom) is Rs. 6000, postage and handling extra. Advance orders are accepted for *Mahabharata* Cassette No. 71 onwards (beginning with the Bhishma-Parva); subscription: Rs 1000 for 12 cassettes, postage extra.

## ॐ The Mahābhārata

TRANSCREATED BY P. LAL

P. Lal's sloka-by-sloka transcreation of the *Mahabharata* was begun in November 1968. It appears in hardbound monthly fascicules averaging 64 pages each. One hundred and thirty two volumes have been published till November 1979, and work is progressing exactly on schedule. The project is expected to be completed by November 1990. The price in India is Rs 180 for 12 volumes. A limited number of complete sets is available. A signed and numbered specially priced collector's edition of 100 copies is also available. For *Mahabharata* Sunbird cassettes see page 28.

## The Miscellany Edited by P. Lal

*The Miscellany* is a bimonthly literary book magazine. Subscription [Rs 30] is for six issues, post free. It is not a house journal though it gives prominence to Workshop writers. Ninety six issues have appeared till 1979, and the policy has been to encourage creative writing in English in India. As a rule *The Miscellany* gives preference to experimental work by young and unpublished writers, its two chief criteria for selection being "high imaginative awareness and mature technique." Literary contributions will be returned only if sufficient postage is enclosed. *The Miscellany* does not carry advertising. Back numbers are available; also full sets, leather or cloth bound. Price-list sent on request.



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Creative Writing

# Writers Workshop

## Indian Creative Writing in English:

Writers Workshop was founded in 1958. It consists of a group of writers who agree in principle that English has proved its ability, as a language, to play a creative role in Indian literature through original writing and transcreation. Its task is that of defining and substantiating that role by discussion and diffusion of creative writing and transcreation from India and other countries. It publishes only such work by foreigners as deals with, or is inspired by, or has relevance for Indian life and culture.

Discussions are held on Sunday morning at 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045, India, and diffusion done through a series of books issued under the different Birdbook logos of Writers Workshop. A complete descriptive checklist of more than 600 publications can be had on request, along with a list of Sunbird literary Cassettes.

The Workshop is non-profit and non-political: it consists of writers sympathetic to the ideals and principles embodied in creative writing; is concerned with practice not theorising, pful criticism not iconoclasm.



Sunbird



The Writers Workshop Logo



Gurubird

The Workshop publishes a bimonthly journal, *THE MISCELLANY*, devoted to creative writing. It is not a house journal though it introduces work by writers in advance of its WW book publication. As a rule, *THE MISCELLANY* gives preference to experimental work by young and unpublished writers, its two chief criteria for selection being high imaginative awareness and mature technique. Established writers appear in its pages if their contributions meet those standards. The Workshop does not accept advertising in *THE MISCELLANY*.

Membership of Writers Workshop requires the support of two members and approval by majority on committee. Members are authors with published work to their credit. Associate membership requires agreement with the aims & objects of WW, active interest in creative writing, and a willingness to lend practical assistance to Workshop activities. Subscription to *THE MISCELLANY* automatically confers associate membership. Please write to the Secretary, P Lal, at the Writers Workshop address: 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045; Telephone 46-8325. Subscriptions and literary contributions should be sent to the same address.

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*To celebrate 20 years of WW activity, a book club scheme (available only in India) was started in January 1979 to enable serious readers to acquire a library of Indian Writing in English at dramatically low prices. The enrolment fee to the Bookbird Bookclub is Rs 5; a member is entitled to a 60% discount on all WW titles marked with an asterisk (\*) in this checklist, on condition that twenty separate titles are ordered at one time. There is no limit to the number of copies of each title ordered. Registered postage and packing are extra.*



Writers Workshop  
Calcutta

