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Sarita Dasgupta

# Outpourings...



Sarita Dasgupta

D Press 2023 Ellensburg



Cover photo of Wei Sawdong Falls is by the author.

Wei Sawdong Falls (literally “square-shaped pool” in the local Kashi language) is located in Sohra in the State of Meghalaya in northeast India.



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#### FOREWORD

These poems were composed over several years, through diverse circumstances and different experiences.

**Zephyr** is about that elusive something which I might call the saving grace in any situation. **A Relentless Winter** was written during the pandemic; **An Ode to the Seasoned Woman** was composed on Women’s Day of 2021; **Land of My Birth** is my tribute to Meghalaya - the state in India where I was born and where I went to school and college. **These Ancient Lands, Restoration, Misty Morning** and **By a Tranquil Lake** are tributes to Nature.

I lived in turbulent times in one corner of India for over two decades, witnessing tragedies in many lives. Young girls and boys - though mostly boys, were lured into dangerous situations with no way out. Only death liberated them. **A Mother’s Lament, Lost Boyhood** and **Don’t Go into the Darkness** are reflections of those times.

I was married to a remarkable man for thirty-three years and was devastated by his sudden and unexpected death in 2016. The poems **Grief** and **Courage** were composed after his death. **Reminders of You** is a tribute to him, which I have also turned into a song.

I met my present husband by chance in 2019. Friendship grew into love, and we were married in 2022. **Miracle, The Ocean and The Shore**, and **Anam Cara** are dedicated to this wonderful man.

**Love Songs** is a collection that tells the tale of a mature woman falling in love unexpectedly and joyously... and is loved in return.

It is rightly said that writing is cathartic, and poetry-writing is indeed balm for the soul.

*Sarita Dasgupta*

**Mixed Brew**

**Zephyr**

Like a zephyr cools you gently  
On a midsummer's day  
You don't see me, though you feel me  
In the subtlest of ways

I'm the gentle voice of reason  
In a heated argument  
I'm that hidden memory  
In an evocative scent

I'm that cool caressing touch  
On your flushed embarrassed cheek  
I'm that sympathetic smile  
On the worst day of your week

I'm the hand that helps you up  
When you fall or fail a test  
I'm the nudge that eggs you on  
To do your very best

I'm that murmured endearment  
That takes you by surprise  
I'm that look of adoration  
In your beloved's eyes

I'm that odd, erratic beat  
That your racing heart skips  
I'm the gentlest little kiss  
From your lover's loving lips

I'm the tone of understanding  
In the voice of a good friend  
I'm the gladness in the day  
That you hope will never end

I'm the unexpected magic  
In most ordinary things  
Like the blessed coolness carried  
On a zephyr's gentle wings

### **A Relentless Winter**

This winter has been long, hard,  
Relentless and bitter  
And spring still seems far away  
Shrouded by mists of uncertainty

The whole world is still reeling  
From the pandemic  
From deprivation of various kinds  
Jobs and incomes lost,  
Loved ones gone without  
A last goodbye...  
And, worst of all has been  
The lack of human contact

How cold has been this prolonged winter  
Without the warmth of human touch!  
Imprisoned on islands  
Of lonely solitude,  
We realize how crucial  
Is the touch of another human being

A friendly pat or tender caress,  
Hands clasped in greeting

Or lovingly entwined,  
The hug of a friend  
Or a lover's embrace  
An affectionate peck  
Or a passionate kiss  
These everyday things  
Once taken for granted,  
Are now longed-for luxuries  
Seemingly beyond our reach

Will things go back  
to 'normal' soon?  
I hope and pray so,  
But never again will I take  
Anything in my life,  
For granted  
Be it the most trivial of things  
Or the most profound

### **An Ode to the Seasoned Woman**

You look in the mirror  
And who do you see?  
A middle-aged woman  
"Gosh! That can't be me!"

But those wrinkles and lines  
Marking your face  
Are signs of a life  
Lived fully, with grace

Each line tells a story  
Each wrinkle a tale  
Of times you succeeded  
And times when you failed

But picked yourself up  
And pushed yourself on  
Holding fast to your courage,  
When it was all but gone

You battle the currents  
You deal with the waves  
And the men in your life  
Whether gallants or knaves

You fulfil all your roles:  
Those of daughter and wife,  
Sister, mother, colleague,  
Friend – all through your life

Your lines, shape, and grey hair  
Are badges you've earned  
Of the life that you've lived  
And the lessons you learned

So, on this Women's Day  
What I urge you to do,  
Is to hold your head high  
And be proud to be YOU!

### **Land of my Birth**

The wooded hills  
The splashing streams

The waterfalls  
This land of dreams  
Of living roots  
Are bridges made  
To honor kings  
Were tall stones laid

Of freedom fighters  
Brave and bold  
Are epic poems  
And stories told

Past traditions  
Held so dear  
Exist along with  
The Present here

Diverse folk  
Live side by side;  
With mutual respect  
They all abide

Land of my birth  
My special place  
Meghalaya  
Domain of grace



## **Misty Morning**

It's dawn, and Nature's beauty  
Is obscured by misty haze;  
Till gentle fingers of the sun  
Reveal it to one's gaze.

The rays of light move gently on  
Then linger where they stop  
Making diamonds on a spider's web  
Out of humble dew drops

The forest is awakening  
The smell of pine wafts high  
A hundred little creatures  
Go scurrying busily by

Just a stone's throw away  
The sun's rays touch the town  
The people begin to waken  
And soon start the morning sounds

Town and forest, side by side:  
It's been so through the years  
The sun shines equally on both  
But not for long, one fears.

Tall trees fall, streams dry up  
The town progresses on  
Will the forest and its creatures  
See another misty morn?

## **Restoration**

The green expanse

The gurgling creek

Soothe the burdens

Of the week

The stoic mountains

Have stood for years,

They teach me how fleeting

Are my fears

The gentle breeze

That ruffles the grass

Softly whispers,

“This, too, shall pass!”

I go back home,

My heart replete

My soul replenished

My being, complete!

## **These Ancient Lands**

Generations trod  
These ancient lands  
They lived and loved,  
Worked with their hands –  
Shaping spears  
To hunt for food,  
Or growing grains  
To feed their brood.

These trees stood tall  
Through many moons  
This creek flowed on  
Cleansed countless wounds  
How many stories  
They could tell!  
Of joys, and trials,  
Of survival!

But transitory  
Are human lives...  
It's these ancient lands  
That will survive!  
For what are we  
In the scheme of things?  
But inconsequential  
Mortal beings?

**By a Tranquil Lake**

Surrounded by black cotton trees and willows

Beside a tranquil lake

Reflections of the trees on the gently rippling water

Ducks glide lazily by

Beside a tranquil lake

Dragonflies hover with gold-mesh glinting wings

Ducks glide lazily by

Chirping, cheeping whistling birds gently rend the serene silence

Dragonflies hover with gold-mesh glinting wings

Fish break the surface to breathe momentarily

Chirping, cheeping whistling birds gently rend the serene silence

As we write in dappled sunlight, caressed by a gentle breeze

Fish break the surface to breathe momentarily

Reflections of the trees on the gently rippling water

As we write in dappled sunlight, caressed by a gentle breeze

Surrounded by black cotton trees and willows

## Lost Souls

### **Lost Boyhood**

Boys carrying guns instead of books  
Their heads filled with confused thoughts  
Their hearts filled with mistrust  
Their souls a barren wasteland  
Their boyhood forgotten,  
Ground into the dust of lost dreams...

Do they remember...  
Splashing each other in the river  
Amidst laughter and shouts of joy  
Sitting on the branches of a tree  
And relishing its juicy fruit  
Looking into the distance  
And building dreams of the future  
  
Mimicking the swagger of a superstar  
Singing and dancing to the latest hit song  
Playing pranks on each other  
And soccer in the fields  
Flying kites in the wind  
And letting their imagination soar...

Where have those days gone?  
The eyes that held a sparkle  
Now stare unseeing  
Mirroring the blankness of the mind  
The numbness of the heart  
The darkness of the soul

Boys no longer; nor adults yet  
But in a zone of their own

Beyond recognized boundaries.  
So, they go on, obeying orders blindly  
Killing without thought or mercy  
Surviving the best they can  
In a violent and vile world  
Till one day, already deadened,  
They die.

### **A Mother's Lament**

For nine months  
I nourished him in my womb  
This longed-for child  
This gift of God

After years of hoping  
Losing hope, then praying  
At all the places of worship  
Believed to be 'alive' with  
The presence of God

At last, the happy day  
Beyond joy, beyond relief  
This perfect child...  
Oh, how we adored him!

Nothing was too much for him  
No sacrifice too great  
Willing slaves to his every whim  
His father and I

But slowly, he changed

Became secretive, sly  
His friends were strangers  
Serious, grim

He was sixteen when he left  
Without a word, without 'goodbye'

Breaking our hearts  
Leaving us bereft

The months passed  
Without a word  
We carried on  
Numbly, beyond hurt

And then, the shock  
His body  
Left at our doorstep  
By unknown hands

That longed-for child  
That gift of God  
Taken away violently  
At barely eighteen

His father died  
Soon after  
Grief-stricken  
No will to live  
I carry on  
With a heart of stone  
Wondering  
"Why was he born?"

I have no words.  
Since that day  
They call me 'mad' ...  
Perhaps... who's to say?



## **Don't Go into the Darkness**

Don't go into the darkness

Child of the light

Don't go into the nightmare

That lurks in the night

Climb your tall trees

Weave your own dreams

Watch your kite soar

Go fishing in streams

Play your merry games

And remain carefree

Let childhood's wonder

Touch whatever you see

Revel in your childhood

For as long as you can

There is no hurry

To become a man

Some may spin stories

Of the pleasures of vice

Try to lure you towards

Drink, drugs and dice

But think of your parents

Who went through such strife

And made sacrifices

To give you a good life

Enjoy your childhood

And when you **do** become a man

Try and be the very best

**YOU**, that you can

So, don't go into the darkness

Child of the light

Don't go into the nightmare

That lurks in the night

### **Lost Love**

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### **Courage**

Courage is not the absence of fear

But the ability to face it squarely

Courage is not always flamboyant

Like diving off cliffs

It is sometimes quiet

Like facing the loss of a loved one

And going on, one breath at a time

It is putting grief and fear aside

To focus on what has to be done.

It is finding that tiny bit of strength to carry on

Every time you think you've exhausted it.

It is opening your heart to love again

Even though it quails at the fear of loss

## **Grief**

Grief is a lonely road  
That you stumble along  
Finding your own path  
Whether right or wrong  
There are no signposts  
To show you the way  
If someone guides you  
You can't hear what they say  
Your own voice is screaming  
So loud in your head  
"It just can't be true!  
He CANNOT be dead!"

Grief is a landscape  
Dim, grey and stark  
The sun never shines  
It's perpetually dark  
No colors of flowers  
No blue of the sky  
No hues of a rainbow  
Can brighten your eye  
The flames of the pyre  
Are all you can see  
As they turn him to ashes  
And he ceases to be  
The man that you loved  
For most of your life  
The man who so eagerly

Made you his wife

Old habits die hard

That's so very true

The urge to share everything

Never leaves you

You instinctively press

His number to call

But he's not just away,

He's not **there** at all!

The touch of his hand

So tender and warm

His absolute love...

Forever gone!

You grow used to his absence

As the years pass by

You go on with your life –

Or, at least, you try

Though Grief is beside you

Wherever you go

There is a lesson

That now you know:

Life is a blessing

That one must prize

Living it to the fullest

Till the day one dies

### **Reminders of You**

The glimpse of a profile

The turn of a head

The sound of a laugh

A familiar word said

The shape of a hand

The scent of cologne

That familiar walk

A voice, a tone

My yearning heart

Skips a beat or two

At these random, bitter-sweet

Reminders of you

A book that you read

Your favorite song

Bring you back for a moment

But then you are gone

The presents you gave me

The letters you wrote

A toothbrush you used

That watchstrap you broke

I've kept them all

Other treasured things too

All beloved though bittersweet

Reminders of you

**Love Found**

## **Miracle**

Never forget

Who you are...

You are

A miracle

In yourself

And in my life

Undreamed of

Unsought

A miracle

Placed by the Universe

In my path

And in my heart

And I accept

That miracle

Unquestioningly,

Humbly

And gratefully

And will cherish you

Always

## **The Ocean and The Shore**

You are the ocean  
Wrestling  
With your own currents  
Tired of the ceaseless  
Ebb and flow  
Of your thoughts  
The constant churning  
Of your emotions  
Seeking a shore  
To gather you in  
And hold you still  
Within its tender curve  
To let you rest  
Your weary self  
In that safe haven  
And nurture you  
Till you are healed  
And whole again  
  
Let me be  
That peaceful shore  
That holds you  
With tenderness  
Nurtures, comforts  
And heals you  
And loves you... evermore

**Anam Cara**



We met by chance  
In another country  
Far from both of ours  
Just before the world shut down

To be at the same place  
At the same time  
And cross paths  
Was that not Destiny?

Through those dark, difficult days  
You brought me light and comfort  
For me that time  
Will always bear your imprint

Now we have embraced  
Our destiny  
And come together  
With the ease  
Of kindred spirits  
Of Anam Cara

Two threads woven together  
To form one fabric  
Of rich texture  
And vibrant hues

To be handled with reverence  
And cherished forever

## Love Songs

### **She - I**

She looked into the mirror –  
The familiar face looked back at her;  
The expression was calm  
No frown clouded her brow.  
Her eyes did not reflect  
The thumping of her heart,  
The turmoil in her soul,  
The shift in her axis;  
Complacent, she had believed  
That nothing could shatter  
Her equilibrium

Now she stood, shaken to the core,  
By a feeling, not new,  
But thought  
Never to be felt again  
Hidden, like a snapshot  
In an album;  
To be taken out in secret  
And marveled at  
In solitude

### **She -II**

Her life ran on parallel lines  
On two different planes;  
Sometimes, the two lines met  
But never intruded  
Or overlapped;  
One line went on, serene...  
Marked by everyday things

Familiar and very dear;  
The other, sweetly exultant  
Filled with unexpected delight  
Ephemeral, perhaps,  
Disappearing into the mists  
Of the future  
But, for now –  
Sheer bliss!

### **She - III**

She gazed into the mirror again  
Taking stock...  
She saw the grey in her hair  
The lines on her face...  
All the signs of aging  
But also  
The wisdom on her brow  
The tranquility in her eyes;  
The years had taught their lessons –  
Gratitude for blessings,  
Acceptance of whatever  
Life brought her way,  
The ability to appreciate  
The little things in life;  
Youth has its own beauty  
But so has age –  
Calmness, Serenity  
A special tenderness  
And understanding  
Towards human failings  
Neither judging, nor afraid  
Of being judged;  
A confidence born of  
Experience and self-knowledge  
Perhaps that's what he saw

And loved?

**From Her to Him - I**

Like a shadow  
You slipped into  
My mind  
And hovered  
On the fringes,  
Waiting to be  
Recognized  
Then, firmly,  
You moved in,  
Filling every fold  
Every crevice  
Till all else fled  
And only you  
Remained  
Now, you fill  
My horizon  
I can't see  
Beyond you

**From Her to Him - II**

In the far recesses of my mind  
There is a Treasure Chest  
In which memories  
Of special days in my life  
Lie like priceless gems  
To be taken out and worn  
Like a talisman  
Against sadness and pain  
And, in a secret compartment

Of that same Chest  
Rest the memories  
Of our encounters  
Each a rare and precious jewel  
Ensnared in its bed  
Of soft velvet  
Taken out in secret  
And touched caressingly  
With the gentle fingers  
Of my mind  
One day, perhaps  
They will form  
A glittering tiara  
To be worn proudly  
On my head  
But now, they lie hidden  
In their secret place;  
Known only by you  
Seen only by me

### **From Her to Him – III**

I'd like to be  
The breeze that caresses  
The nape of your neck  
On a hot summer's day;  
The soft drizzle that cools  
Your upturned face;  
The gentle rays  
Of the morning sun  
Warming you on  
A chill winter's day;  
The duvet that fits snugly  
Around your body  
Comforting you

On a cold, cold night

I'd like to be

The smile that plays

Around your lips;

The light of happiness

That sparkles

In your eyes;

The blood that pounds

Through your veins

To every part of your body

I'd like to be

Every breath you take

Affirming your life;

Every element

Of your heart, mind and soul;

I'd like to be

Part of you always

Not possessing or possessed

Just there,

A constant presence

Loving and beloved

I'd like to be

Me...in You





