



**IN TODAY'S WORLD
NUMBERS ALWAYS FALL**

The music of a poem along with the words of it- might be the wrong side of the tapestry...
Don't you translate your prayers?

Last bench

CONTEMPORARY BANGLA POETRY IN TRANSLATION

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Poetry can jump in various velocities. Unlike tiger and deer/cat and rat - trying catching each other, poetry is a different breed- wants to catch itself - almost self-destructive.

And that's why with any kind of knowledge it is impossible to find its footprint. Whatever is found we might call it criticism - just like the Tibetan fairytale/myth and Sherpa's 'Yeti'-catcher kid....

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Translation Credits...

■ Kazi Shahid Shawkat ■ Shawon Paul ■ Tahmid Hasan

Self Defense

We, human beings, dwell in the world of 'concepts'. These concepts may vary according to different dimensions of time, space and person. Some of these last long and some change fast. But whatever form they take after change that is also another 'concept'. Consequently, we can't make ourselves free from these constraints of these concepts. It's interesting that we, not only in our own lifetime, but also over generations, feel comfortable accepting these concepts as 'truth'. Regardless of what is good or bad, right or wrong, true or false, it can be asked whether religion or politics, democracy or socialism, poetry or painting, society or culture, patriotism or idea of state, tradition or modernism, development or civilization are anything but 'concepts'.

Considering this, all forms of art are unique 'concepts'. More precisely, art is an aesthetic expression of all varied concepts belonging to people living in different places.

As mentioned earlier, these concepts are not something static. Art, therefore, changes along with the change of prevailing concepts. On the other hand, a special trend of art may not have access to the contemporary acceptance-level if it does not cope with the current concepts, though that same trend may be valued with importance a time later on. On the contrary, such examples are not rare where a special trend of art has taken place in the footnotes of the art-history whereas it once achieved name and fame for its coherence with contemporary concepts. Again, different trends of art may develop due to different prevailing concepts at a particular time in a particular territory. In that case, those different trends are usually identified under different tags.

Why does it happen? While looking for this answer, we find that the power structure has a profound relation with art. The power structure, either central or peripheral, plays an important role in the development of art. It is also obvious that there is always a 'class' who tried (and also tries) to control the whole thing in its own way. It encourages and nurtures a special trend of art that goes in favor

of the concepts of that power structure. If it is otherwise, many attempts would be taken to overturn it. Again that ‘embarrassing’ art is sometimes presented under a label according to their self-interest to make it ‘comfortable’.

If this is the situation, what would an artist paint, why, how, and for whom? Like many others, I was also overwhelmed by these queries for the last few years. I have tried to look for the answers to these complicated and obtrusive questions in different ways. And finally I have selected ‘Human beings and their activities’ as my subject. As an artist (and of course as a human being too), I wished to face the ‘human beings’ in different ways by dealing with their conventional concepts, structures and activities. The contemporary reality and the way it is presented did not seem acceptable to me and that’s why I tried to present in my canvas “What is Reality?” utilizing the existing familiar matters. I did not want to imprison my canvas based on any specific territory and time, though to make it comprehensible, I freely used characters, elements, and ingredients surrounding me. And by presenting these characters and elements in different ways, I tried to reach the root of human being. To what extent I have succeeded (or whether my works even deserve to be identified as ‘art’) the responsibility of that judgment is on you (or anyone) if you are willing. But I am not ready to take that liability as I have doubts about the freedom of art. An artist may have freedom to some extent, but does ‘Art’ have freedom?

Aalek Sain

Shawon Akand

N.B. What is stated in this ‘Self Defense’ is, to me, also nothing but a ‘CONCEPT’.

Editor’s note: This was first published in Shawon Akand’s first solo exhibition (‘What is Reality’, Drik Gallery, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2007)’s catalog. Appraisal for this relative and ever contemporary cluster of words is the reason for reprint.

Annonto Uzzul in translation

By **Shawon Paul**

Shell civilization

Ladies with the engraved names in the shore, lost with the
wave
although the pearl history is terribly true in the shell
civilization
water-nymph wouldn't come back for the illusion of pearl.
But breaking the old love-circle he told the aqua-sheltered
moon; I would be the wave with you once.
But ocean doesn't realize the solace.
Like the ladies whose footsteps are engraved in the shore
don't understand,
What means by remembrance?
And the morning sun is always naughty-before you awake
it steals away the dew drop!
As a result futile morning-walk becomes the imagination of
the departed night.

Agonies that Blown Away

Words being unmindful, disappearing into the forest of
cotton Cottons are wind-faced,
It flies ahead of wind!
Now-a-days story of this forest-jungle;
Saying inconsistently again and again
As if I said to someone a lot?
But none but a traveler remembers
the agony of another traveler
All says ah! Nobody realizes.

Shuvro Khandaker

Lunatic Words!

Lips,
All moist tender n' plump
Waiting as anything!

Hearts,
confused tired and taunted by conflicting emotions.
Tomorrows,
As if there are none.

Souls!

Let's not go there just yet

The time is not right
And it may never come.

Death to logic
As I know my demons
They are nothing like you or me
They are just bread apart

Thirst, the only thing they trust...

Words?

They don't know a thing about melancholy
Anti depressants! Please don't you tell me that you know the
cure.

Who decides which a blessing is and what's the curse?

Dear Mr. humble bumble bee
Stop buzzing around
Get the hell out of here
You are what you are.

A soldier? Worker ? Worst a slave
Raised in captivity, no matter what.
All you'll ever know is,
Honey and nectar
Perhaps if you are lucky will mate with the queen
Just for once and that's all about you,
Part of a great system which you'll never run
So say with me, death to politics!

Ah! Where was I?

Yeah lips n' related tensions blooming inside us

You and I,
The thirsty wonderer's!

We have done a huge error by confusing demons with our
self made prophecies
and that's why my dear we are always a thousand light
years apart from a single kiss

Know why? Nothing else but because
We are what we are, silly old abacus!

Oh yeah! Souls?
Better leave that and never ponder.
Stories can be made, easy!

Tanvir Ratul in translation

By **Tahmid Hasan**

Pronoun village

I stole this diary in the very first instance

Killing the barcode, is another story

I wandered through roads by which
Flowing rivers dried up every time
Distant villages and farmers' land away far
Mother of harvest breeding gem, water vow song
The season's first phrase singing morning to dusk
Their paddy in their barn, leased pipe in the rust
As in heavens underneath stain enemy every year
Bare winter manic, care not the boss of relief
In someone else's outfit
Tidy patrician tie, the color dark rain or cloud-mischief
And gods underneath, after long sheds of tear
Out of stomach the whirling vomit

**Cross the mustard field, begets another vista, a land conceal
The golden paddy there, vile birds of curse will kill
And legion around the spoon of raw-greedy-lips
Changing demon to forte, their sexpot sips**

Blindsong

To fire collectiveness so
The god of matchstick
Showing the rest mechanic trigger,
Multiple craze introductions
And those falling fraction of moments

And on dry side of bush
Eyes of ending heads
Fiery dreams see lying
On dry side of bush
Still possible stick

Blindsong

The malady named city was never a concern of geology
Only the ground two feet can seize
The infectious ailing-senses stood upon
Not to regard anyone, is the city we heed

So could move the city, as if a moving indicant
Information concealed, so could division be eminent
Adroit verse is the level where I put the lid
On the pan of feelings
The city said in apathetic cry
Only where sturdy wills die

Saif Ibne Rafiq

Colourblind Verses 27

The strains of sadness up the sky
Shy flies over humanity
I'm infinity in my ways-in my eyes
Seven skies down to me

Down in deep my eyes fly to me.

The strains of silence up the sky.
Down the stairs she went down...

Down to me.

Kazi Nasir Mamun in translation
By **Kazi Shahid Shawkat**

A Truth

A happy nursing that was meant for a sneak-out
Once gave me the first stimulus for women
And its rigorous delight
Pointed towards the silent fleshes.
Embracing the sun- bewildered like the convict
Who has just been released from prison-
I have learned Youth is desperate indeed,
If the lover isn't defeated in his own body,
Does ever a woman, holding even the cozy fingers,
Get a full-grown confidence?

Of The Night

Frogs croak
In the quietness of the night.
Monsoon plays drizzling on the tin-roof.
I will swim
Like the first sloughed-off lovemaking
When the sky crashes in torrents.
Why are you lying like the sullen sky?
Be a slick ocean.
Playing with body causes water ooze
O leaf! Why won't you move tonight?

Get-away

Everytime I see the sight
It seems to be the beginning.
Many rare green lively birds reside inside
And there are the souls of rejuvenating
Fruits, the herbs and the comely flower-seeds.

Then I look at the changeless people with all of same kind
It again seems I have seen a lot of this screaming crowd,
Men and women with their distorted malicious mind.
And I walk away with a doubt
Lest I might be poisoned by all these snakes' pyramids?

The Fair

While Bravery put on the glow once again, I too with great desire started standing with. I scoured the past to look up the word meaning of 'WALKING' and I came to learn it was my time to walk relying on myself, like my grandpa had set out walking towards 'Shomeswari. And he returned with wrinkles of the ripples; all for his invincible struggles to succeed. Since then I feel happy to see those having their lives meaningful through struggles that are clear as teardrops but dear to the hearts. And I feel like, like a courteous saint, resting on the sand. Then I become words as I throw my heart off to the crowd. With the wide end in one hand and the rare inception in the other, like a plough and a yoke, once again I'll bloom dutiful someday. Now awaiting the winter-fair. Today there are scores of shop owners toiling for a night-stay. Each of their foreheads is emblazoned with a mark of worship-strained water. Momentary it may be, yet the frosty news has spread in the fair. In the coming monsoon, they'll again wake up with the moist fragrance of kadambo flowers. But until then in their dreams, I've aspired to remain alive as a stress-free nim-leaf. I've been standing for ages at a crossroads, and wishing to plant a flawless trust of vigour. Just now a tailor bird came and taught me how to weave. There the dangling moment is giggling like an insane and weaving. I will hold his matted hair and cry for my kite's spool and say 'who has been cutting the string of my light kite?' I'll pull the hook off his wrist. How bloody will be my dreadful fingers? Sitting in my soul who are you playing the bleeding tone with your thin lips? O woodpecker! Only to you I'll give the space of my invaluable blood. Yet at the end of the long day when night falls, nowhere will I go leaving the fair. Once the long waiting hours are over, the fruits of desires taste really great. Tonight the fair has turned into the glow-worms of that finger-licking taste. I feel like blowing up a white poly-bag full with numerous those carefree glow worms—the fate of the light. Then I keep staring at those enchanting twinkles, as though in my fist is captured a starry sky of my own.

Ovizit Das in translation
By **Kazi Shahid Shawkat**

Ambulance

Is there anyone among us
Without a private blue ambulance
Made of blues?
We are all moving around with an ambulance
Agog with silence.
A space-bound ambulance often appears to us
Blowing its siren
Last night I saw one going
To learn the lesson
In the music class
Where there was nothing more
Than throwing off some steely notations
By some harsh tones.
I have set out
Leaving that tormented blue ambulance
In the garage of my body
Tomorrow, when I am going on an outing with it,
This auburn fiery ambulance will change its colour
And become the reason for congestion
Amid all the human-traffic of the universe.
The groaning dreams inside-the horrible-
Seemingly shattered
Will then get up coiled.
Just before the explosion
At least once I would love to make love
With my private blue ambulance.

Said R'man in translation

By **Shawon Paul**

Saliva

The person
Whom you thrown away outside
If the rain wash away him
And in all your thirst
That face would chase you.
Burning in much cold
I am in saliva
Drawing near to you
In your face
In your thirst

Race Competition of Flower and Tamarind

On the bank of canal, bring the flower of coral tree
Bringing down the tamarind by a clot
Race competition.....
Who can touch the checkered box first
Getting mixed in flower and tamarind
In your red face and lips with sounds of slapping
Sour sound-bought one
Two
Didn't exhale in the checkered box
.....kept in mind.

Maznu Shah in translation

By **Shawon Paul**

In my old stories

The ocean makes its bed in my old stories,
Before getting sleep, saying to leaf-shedding tree:
“Greed for cashew-nut hasn’t passed off yet!
hasn’t got away riding back on the crocodile of night’s
truth.”

All the affections of the universe blending dying dust in their
body, those who cry after throwing away the cashew-nut
tree at the gateway of the world, those who tie letters in the
leg of eagle in a hope to cross over the country of white
stone,

bringing in today keep them at the story of Modhupur;
putting off all the intelligence, braided hair, metre, dream
one after another from your head

keep the jewel –lamp at the position of lying head.

Being helpless, let the cruelty of all watch me sitting on the
foot of a cashew-nut tree;

Supernatural shedding of leaves and

one or two understanding with the kite of universe.

To Arjun

Your arrow, Arjun, still today running fast piercing all the
deeds of contract of the world, descent groups of naked-
goddess, song of rain and the wind of disturbance.
Continuously a mad elephant dipping its proboscis into the
immaculate river and then hurling at the unmarked seat
placed high. Your arrow, just now pierced away the fountain
with its rainbow. Penetrating the world, before being stopped
beside the perpetual star, Arjun, in your hitting mark-list, I
too had few common depressions to add.

Mukte Mandal in translation
By **Shawon Paul**

Sparkle and the Mask of Cloud

So many days in the light of sunset, I saw
Silent road is sinking,
I saw the cursed city
Rising from both sides,
We in the furnace inside its stomach
In the hesitated tongue
Cross mark;
Those fishes jumping out in our watery pilgrimage
At the splashed water drops in their back
Our language
Sparkling with an eye in eye with us
You, standing beside it
Have seen our yellow house
Ashamed masks
Crying
Every day in the skull of twilight we sketch of the naked
pages
Build the language-house similar to snake-hood
There you teach us the language lesson
Wiping out the odor of milk
That stuck to the little children's mouth
You draw silent forest
I would see your sparkle in the moment of sunshine.



Comparison among gun and boy- justify the utter protuberance, when they are men themselves



Come far and encounter- the torso of metal every place, wood confined in metal, no matter how big or small they are, decently align in numeric decay.....



To get inside dreams- only to listen to the fear



.....



The first curve of river as gilt, era of the verse just ceased sleep soon on another story- as soon as hunter seed mind its tilt....



Correctitude against evolution, in thousand creations, man will not see diving swimmer of corium



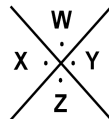
At last, the raiders of base
In the name of books and skill



In the end, gun is often too little to kill....

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

J	K	L
M	N	O
P	Q	R



l a s t b e n c h

contemporary bangla poetry in translation

editor: tanvir ratul

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