

Shaheed Quadri

An Embarrassing Conversation

Translated by: Sarwar Morshed

*You pined for hearing some unwhispered honeyed words
and soon, oblivious of space and time, we were cocooned
into an unusual conversation – We circumnavigated a
series of ethereal realms, ultimately anchoring at an
embarrassing thought-landscape -*

You: My prince, pour some novel sweet-nothing into my ears.

Me: Clusters of darkness, like a pack of black-masked bandits, are trying to hound the rabbit-white, trembling moon.

You: It doesn't make any sense!

Yet another bout of unpronounced disclosure came out murmuringly:

Haven't you heard that a kingfisher is lying dead on the other bank of the river after it was accorded a fatal reception by a trinity of fishes?

Your eye-balls with their quick gyrations told it all:

It's against the natural law and hence implausible.

A bit loudly, I continued the soft-soaping:

Honey, believe me,

The wilderness with all its intractability

Is encroaching our beloved cities.

With a depressive smile, you argued:

The fact is just the reverse -

The killer hands of men have strangled the floral season of the land.

This encounter transformed my infatuation into mild fury:

Do you have any idea about what has happened to our rivers?

Rejected by the sea, as if tsunami-driven, they are coming back to our villages and cities like the

irresistible waves of Tartar bandits!

Disdainfully, you responded:

None should pollute their auditory organs with these ominous words.

Me at the tether, threw the ultimate bait:

Look! There the top-predators, the majestic tigers

are running helter-skelter for refuge being chased by the fawns!

With a melancholy-inducing smile, you:

Will the world be ever blessed by the celestial landing of this brand of golden days?

About the Poet

Shaheed Quaderi is one of the prominent poets of post-1947 Bangla poetry, who brought a new angle to the Bangladeshi literary scene by introducing urbanism and a sense of modernity. His poetry is infused with patriotism, cosmopolitanism and universalism.

His notable poems include "Uttoradhikar", "Tomake Obhibadon Priyotoma", "Kothao Kono Krondon Nei" and "Amar Chumbongulo Poucchey Dao".

Quaderi received the Ekushey Padak, the highest national award of Bangladesh, in the category of Language and Literature in 2011. He was earlier awarded the Bangla Academy Award in 1973. Quaderi died at the age of 74 in the US in 2016.

About the Translator

Sarwar Morshed has been working as an Associate Professor at the Department of English, Chittagong University, Bangladesh. Mr. Morshed, a Ph.D. scholar, has to his credit a second masters on ELT from the UK. Apart from research and academic writing, he is also interested in creative writing. His works both in English and the vernacular include *Depoeticized Rhapsody*, *In the Castle of My Mind* (Reviewed in *Asiatic*), *Figuratively Speaking*, *Rendezvous with Words* and *Husam Uddiner Election Khela* (A collection of belles lettres penned in Bangla).

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