

Translation

Gitanjali (1-10) by Rabindranath Tagore*

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1

(Amare tumi ashesh korecho)

Making me inexhaustible
Gives you pleasure;
Exhausting me fully,
You fill me till I am born anew
Taking the little flute that I am,
You cross hills and river banks,
Evoking endless tunes from me!
Who could I tell all this to?

In your everlasting caress
My heart loses sight of limits
And in immense bursts of joy
Song lyrics rise in me.

You give me what I can take
With my hands, night and day,
Years pass but there is no end
To what I receive from you!

2

(Tuni Jokhon Gaito Bolo)

When you ask me to sing
My heart swells with pride
As I look intently at you
My eyes moisten with tears
All that is hard and bitter in me
Melts into heavenly music
All my prayers and thoughts
Take wings like merry birds.

You are content with my songs
I know they please you.
They admit me to your company
The One I can't reach through thought
Accepts me through my songs!
My songs make me forget myself
And let me call my Lord my friend.

3

(Tumi Kemon Kore Gaan Koro)

O wise one, how do you sing so well?
I listen in amazement, completely enthralled!
Your melodies light up the world
And waft across heavens,
Melting stones, driving everything in the way,
Carrying along with them heavenly music.

Though the tunes keep eluding my voice
I feel like singing in that superb vein
What I would like to say get stuck
And my soul cries out, defeated!
What trap have you ensnared me into?
Your music has me fully in its thrall!

4

(Amar Shokol Ange)

Your touch makes all of me
Feel holy, O Life-giver;
Night and day, I keep you in view
And try to stay pure.
O Truth giver, I try to remind myself,
In everything that I do,
That your presence in my mind
Should guide all my thoughts,
And keep all untruths away.

Because you are in my heart
I can curb all evil and deceit

And check everything hateful—
Because you are rooted in me
My love will bloom and stay pure
Knowing you is my strength
I'll strive to reveal you in my work.

5

(Tumi Ektu Kebol Boshte)

Just let me sit near you awhile
And indulge me a little
Any work I have left over
I'll finish later
If I can't see you
My heart won't rest
And I'll drift
In a boundless ocean

Spring murmurs eagerly
At my window this day,
The lazy bee buzzes on
Circling the garden lawn
This is a day for reposing
By myself, of keeping
You always in my view
All I'd like to do this day
Is dedicate my life to you
Singing in quiet repose.

6

(Chinno Kore Lou He More)

Pluck me this moment
And delay no longer
Let me not lie in the dust forlorn
Let me be part of
The garland you'll put on
My fate, I keep hoping,
Is to be picked by you alone!
Extract me, pluck me out,

Remove me from all doubt!

Who knows when day will end?
Who knows when night will fall?
Who knows when the time to pray,
And call upon you, may slip away?
Take me, whatever colors I gather,
Choose me, whatever scent I put on,
Make me part of your prayer offerings
Let me serve you any way I can,
Extract me, pluck me out,
Remove me from all doubt!

7

(Amaar E Gaan)

For you this song has shed
All decoration
For you it has given up
All pretension
Ornaments would block the way
And mar our communion!
They would muffle your words
In needless sounds!

Before you I have no cause
To be vain about my art
O master poet, at your feet I give up
All pride in my craft!
Let me dedicate my life
And make a flute that is plain
Let me fill its stops
With tunes all my own.

8

(Rajar Moto Beshe)

The child you dress up like a king
And deck in jewelry,
Weighed down by what he has on,

Loses all pleasure in play
Lest what he wears tears or smudges
Lest what he has on is soiled or stained
He stays away from all company.
The child you dress up like a king
And deck in jewelry
Feels completely fettered!

Why dress your child so, O Mother?
Why deck him in jewelry?
Open the door and let him play,
In sunshine or rain, freely!
The child you dress up like a king
And deck in jewelry,
Will never be part of the world's festivals
And will never listen in
To the music forever steaming
From the heart of the universe!

9

(Aar Amare Ami)

I'll no longer bear on my shoulder
The burden that was me!
I'll no longer keep myself poor,
Staying indoors endlessly!
Leaving the load I've been carrying
At His feet, I'll go out of the door.
I'll no longer be what I was
And keep talking needlessly
I'll no longer bear on my shoulder
The burden that was me!
He will fulfill my desires,
And then part, snuffing his lamp,
In the twinkling of an eye!
I'll not profane Him by refusing
What He gives with His own hands
I'll no longer be happy with what rings
Without the music of His love
I'll no longer bear on my shoulder
The burden that is me!

10

(*Jethai Thake*)

The steps of your feet sound
Even where the lowliest and poor abound
You have time for all, high or low,
Towards all your love flows.
But when I try to pay my tributes to you
Something holds them back
They fail to reach you where you can be found—
Where the lowliest and poor abound.

Pride can never be part of the places you visit
Where indigent and wretched people abound
You have time for all, high or low
Towards all your love flows
Though you are with the lonely and forsaken
My soul fails to reach out to them
It fails to reach you where you can be found—
Where the lowliest and poor abound.

Note

* The poems follow the numbering of the English *Gitanjali*.

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