

The Nightingale of Reason

By Ritwik Chaudhury

A full moon,
There is a shrillness to the light,
Magical instrumentations are at play, carving the night out of nothing.

Enter the poet, full at his divine loss,
With him are three soul searchers, mellow, blending with the atmosphere, their artistry evoking
Things in the dark forest,
There is a also one dog, to keep evil at bay,
It is a secret meeting with an ordinary bum.

The poet: thou whispered something in my dream, I believe the words were I am God's star.
They are both dressed in rags, to keep attention away.

The bum: Am I? I only know words to be false. I am not some star, I am not knowing, I am simply
man dressed in rags who has no wisdom in dressing badly. Say what you will about me, it makes
no difference. I have been through Hell that your religion talks about: I have seen the Devil, but I
didn't flee. Merely swore, merely recalled God. Who am I? I am a man dressed badly.

The poet: We all are. Which brings me to the question of your truth. These are armed men.

The bum: I am not afraid, I am a human being, still.

The moon is hidden, only stars remain.

The poet: Sit down, you have come from Jerusalem! That's dangerous. (To first soul) Lock him
up.

He is taken into a dungeon near the river, and locked in a separate cell, used to keep petty
thieves,

There he meets and befriends two thieves, trusting them blindly, who both later partake in the
elaborate crucifixion the following day,

The bum goes with laughter to his death, understanding the questions raised to him, and raising
a few questions himself, like what right of divinity do the people possess?

But as soon as he questioned the king all the women present started laughing, some at him,
others to themselves not expressing their emotions,

The men, however, were quiet,

A few days passed and His body started rotting, which was on display until then was disposed of
promptly after a little show of splendour,

Centuries have passed, and the bum has been venerated as a religious symbol, regarded divine,
and even glorified as a hero in paintings and literature.

The present day, scriptures exist depicting His stories, contradictory or converging, even
perfectly,

A woman, seventeen years of age living in a lavish corporate apartment in south Bombay somewhere, Mary Pinto,
Her boyfriend, Jeevan Singh, a simple Hindu boy who she met in college where both study literature.

Mary: (monologue) Stark woven martyr graves of soldiers learning the cries of Reason, blue in number, in tertiary dark corners. The usual family drama, the same old noisy melodrama. What's better than the sound of fury! O beautiful angering texts imbibing some sense of creaturing, green in colour. Black black moisture! Wind wind bleeds – am I a sinner? Enter a boy, shirtless. His love for the ageing beauty of Mary is beyond what he can comprehend. His soul is silenced though, for she cannot love him except as in a dream, a fantastic dream composed and materializing like truth. He speaks, she listens, quietly, as if trying to communicate something. Bare stage with very little props, all stage activities.

The boy: I dreamt,
 You are a assassin,
 I followed your voice here,
 And committed crimes on the way.

Enter Jeevan, dressed casually. His eyes have that spark of scientific thinking, his voice carries confidence shattering in the moonless night.

God! The moon is blazing... my eyes are watery... arse, get away.
Boy looks at him still unsure of his feelings.
Get away I said. You smell of wet dirt and sweat.
Boy looks at him still unsure of himself.
Your eyes, your mouth, remind me of myself, long before I met this slut. SLUT.
Boy still unsure what to think.
The game is over there (Points to the sea.) During that dark wise moon. My eyes are a cold and wet grave.
The child pales, then laughs, perhaps he feels for his schoolbag which is absent, then frightens himself. Then sits on a prop, a colourful usable box.
I waited all evening, you were nothing, perhaps you were somewhere beyond my intelligence, but certainly you existed, like the fleshy word called human life, that course conceived of. You look frightened. (Looks at himself, sees nothing.)
Christ was as stubborn as you, darling.
We are in love, after all?
We are in lust. (Looks at the boy, who turns to the audience in the direction opposite the sea.)
I have lost, darling, that's the truth, generations later. But today, we are kings, for we govern everything.
We love everything.
We hate everything.

We feel things.
We will die sooner than everyone.
When all reasons fade, what remains?
Rule by architecture.
The best one to govern.
And beauty bare.
Knowledge! When did I lose you, I cannot reckon. You were my sweetest pleasure.
One loses knowledge through sin, when one is converted.
What do you truly want, Mary?
The boy (speaking for her): Knowledge. Not because it's pleasurable. You're a perv to some.
One becomes a perv, one is born handsome.
(To boy) Is there a God? (Silence.)
The boy: You cannot marry her.
I know.
Why not?
I'm in love with knowledge, I think that's the word. I mean, I don't know anymore how to shape
life with words, although I never gave much value to words (but now I do).
Mary: Why?
Jeevan: Because I want knowledge.
She laughs in his face.
There is a certain depth to things, for example, boredom, no one knows though.
We don't want freedom,
we want the feeling
love,
coitus angry drinks and thunder
wheeling night
like a distant land's poem
never read,
never written,
only thought,
in the head,
conceptually, thunder,
Great and wonder,
I am
Beckett,
Dostoevsky,
Shakespeare,
Artaud,
none other!

An old passion,
burns then wilts,

Mary: Quiet now!
Boy: I can see Heroes and Whores.
Burns then wilts.
What of rhythm, that déjà vu feeling,
and what of Great Dramas?
How can dust be great?
How can love be great?
Photographs.
Burn then wilt.
Emotions are all that exist
in social sciences.

Schizophrenia is an industry,
and industry is feeling,
rise, rise,
stand up,
(to boy) khada ho.

If you don't fall in love with me,
I shall turn into a lover one day!
If you don't hate me,
I shall turn into a lover one day!
(cringes) If only you loved me.

The day breaks. We can hear the sound of the seas, but we are blind to feeling.
Mark Zuckerberg was my friend in school!
She laughs.
I was in Indonesia in one of the best schools in the world, but it's impossible to say those words
in public space,
Ah, your clothes are lovely,
You appear to me rich, darling.
They saw it coming,
that's why they let me in,
they wanted me to feel rich,
they wanted you to be rich,
that's ridiculously untrue,
you mean it's not logical?
I mean on principles of poetry, of divine inspiration, calculated by psychiatry, things of love, true
love baby,
I mean death is nothing,
can I call you Lucy?
Sex is really nothing,

on principle, like a god for the mind,
party dopamine,
in the head,
Ha,
Ha,
poetry is not pussy,
poetry is not vagina,
poetry is virgin,
childlike,
on principle,
and love?
love sells,
and money?
money pays the bills,
then why you? On what principle?
I was born with...
(Silence.)
She laughs.
And puts her arms around him, they dance. Boy fell asleep.

Enter an Artist, characterless and sober, as if summoned. Things begin to shake.
I have wept real tears!
The sky, look at its calm. Does it weep?
Look at the birds,
stoic in flight,
like ribbons in the sky,
cancer bands,
self esteem – a hidden diamond.

Punks! You're no lovers. I have loved, and been loved.
I am a fan.
That's true.
Corrupted society, you're nothing but another Raskolnikov. I knew him, he spoke a different language, but had a similar view of the world. You are a small person, grow the fuck up, both of you. As for me, I have loved, and been loved.

There was a Marksman,
and the divine
lost their king,

we swore murder,
we swore revenge,

and the dead,
were born again,

we tried our best,
and the music
could not be fathomed
from what was sung,

we swore murder,
we swore revenge,
but in the end
the light became
golden
my son,

we locked our hands together,
we prayed,
then we cried,
but all music fades,
as do all lives,

night became novel,
like the books we learnt,
or the songs we sung,
and Fyodor, my friend,
drank with us one day,

Was there might?
Was there sin?
Was there fear?
Or anything to win?
Or something to chase instead
in this mannequin
called Sin?

And what song shall we play?
What Heroes shall bring?
Let me know, God,
be my father instead,

I didn't become victorious,
nor did I learn anything from him,

nor could I hear the orchestra,
just a woman,
loss,
childless,
yet proud,
perhaps this is the way
things shall be today,

I prayed for you,
dear one,
who died one day,
shot himself in the head,
after having committed a sin,
or so they say,

and let me too be you,
let me in my friend,
I lost my heart to a woman,
perhaps this is the way,

I lost twenty-five years in service,
I wielded magic wands in His service,
I lost twenty-five years within,
then broke my vow to Him,
will I be remembered, he asked,
so I took a deep breath,
and said no with pathos to him,

Fyodor, God is malicious and wild,
like a forest animal,
when all shall be lost,
there goes the king,

Fyodor dear,
you are respected
so you laugh in my face,
yet I think
your grave shall remain
in her heart
till she passes away,

Things are forsaken,

all is moving,
I am feeling,
our meeting has come to an end,

when you think of me
my friend, remember
the king we see in dreams,
shall lead the candle one day.

Gold bleeding God,
it's getting dark now,
a woman naked in the street,
I want to clothe her,
but she is giving me the looks,
as if I was pathetic,
there a shiny cab has come to take her,
looks like Gold,
whereas I am only human,
shall I take her?
Attempt to touch her,
instead of offering her a jacket?
What's the difference my God?
What's God to do with my losing mind?
What's hindsight to do with it?
Tell me Fyodor,
what would you do?
What would you do son?
the old lady said,
and God whispers in your head
pleasure, pleasure, pleasure heart,
there is greatness to thee,
tell me Fyodor,
what parable is there to know?
What must a good man (are you good?),
in such a situation do?
There is no one to love,
there is only beauty,
and a good man shall do,
what his heart pleases him to be,
so stole away the devil with the parable,
with no one beside him that evening,
and made for the stairs,

into home,
and wept nostalgically,
living, as it were,
still in God's grace,
it was so hot that he took off his clothes,
what immortal hand or eye he thought, or something else,
beside him were magazines,
what is greatness he thought?
What isn't?
He looked to pray,
but a mirror before him,
and look, look,
no he thought,
and fell to the ground,
weeping, leaving the floor wet,
she was the one to him,
and lit a cigarette,
the lights went off,
in the light,
came a feeling,
he loved me too, our king,
and mark my words, for words are Masters of the spirit,
so the rumours go,
but before he could get at them, clasp them,
he heard his mother call out to him,
baby you look pale, come home today,
it was his thumb she clasped,
wearing his jacket, but only that,
like a fire to the dead,
to save his soul she said,
he began to shake,
so the parable goes,
all I know is he tried, but shook,
they left the city clad in his clothes,
warmer than usual,
where he found some peace,
and questioned himself often,
he felt his heart in his mouth,
everytime she said something to him,
she said she didn't feel the same,
but how could he tell?
Then one day, when night fell,

he found himself at war,
clad in his warm clothes,
and his girlfriend (they were in love)
dropped him to the station,
goodbye she said,
twice,
and whispered in his ear,
something like a kiss,
fuck off, she said,
so he followed her,
for he loved her,
so the rumours say, let me add,
of a man's deed,
he felt for himself, but nothing remains, he thought,
he felt for himself,
but found nothing again,
so he followed himself,
and wished to die alone,
but then he thought,
it's speculated,
if I were to die it's fine by me,
but if I were to lose her,
what truth would there be?
So he followed her as witness,
she looked beautiful he thought,
like all other days,
and then no creation of his,
could kill a love like this,
only me he thought,
and no other,
he said to her finally,
let me be with you please,
there is nothing here,
all her love spoke to him all he heard,
and what is this speech and feeling,
I cannot know,
if you hold my hand today,
perhaps you will never know,
everyone knows something you don't know,
and I would never hold your hand,
and if you come with me today,

And I am descending the stairs,
No, I shall not forget, merely forgive, as I am going,
this melodrama this farce and
all this supposition,
you are one,
and you were, son,
all you learnt
was wrong,
so this is your chance
to be born,
live like no other,
don't descend with fear,
we have seen
truly things
are all
and you are
assassin,
so shall you die like one?
Are you here or away,
you are nowhere today,
the wooden
door opens
and you are blind
and all you learnt is tied
to love, my love, my kisses,
as you have forgotten,
there is nothing here,
your heart has fled
they shall nod at everything you say,
and recall nothing
and a texture embracing
all you have seen
Gold cross
touch it when
your heart commences
you will find me as
you progress
slowly, quietly, without much effort,
and without any sound,
except your heart beating
to early songs,
that still exist somewhere,

assassin is the word
a prompt poetry
like belief,
have you any?
Can you sing?
Inferior is our heart,
and you have no shame,
all Hell is here,
all music plays,
all are watching
you today
you are not the same
you are a feeling of belonging,
and God is belonging
that Christ knew,
then He took him away,
to be close to Him,
and everyone watched
with wonder,
as he walked away,
these are the words he said
this is where Jerusalem stood
that day,
a prayer to carry with you,
you know how to murder yourself
or another,
in Absalom
there grows
a tree
and spirits reside
there shall be a time He said
when the spirits come to life
and all poetry resides
in you and me,
there shall be a winner,
and loss shall not be Jesus,
who will forsake thee,
when time takes you away
there shall be no winner,
who shall not laugh
at the treasures he collected
through labour's grace,

what shall your mind seek
when He seeks the golden one
Absalom's tree resides
and death shall not lie
when She seeks your spirit tonight,
what immortal hand or eye,
you touched or saw,
let your mind be
and give your soul to me,
Absalom is wise,
wiser than any,
but thoughts they rise
an evil eye,
no there is nothing for me,
not a man, nor a woman,
as I open
the door of my soul,
they are all Good humiliation
and no one can see
that murder could only be
what truth in flight, what truth in war?
What hollow tree of Absalom,
stands before my soul,
I could only wonder,
I believe,
there is a pleasure to this,
but a broken heart
cannot be healed
except by a truth asleep
for now,
I don't see,
I cannot hear,
I can only feel,
my devil inside,
waiting for me,
like a father to a child,
to guide me,
and I suppose
I could never know,
was not meant to know,
only enjoy myself,
there the king smiles at me larger than life,

my words weak,
having lost in labour all this while,
what did she say?
I raise my hand,
and shot at him,
but no bullet
hit me yet,
I could reason with him tonight,
to let me go,
but this was all coming,
all I did was learn,
all I did was smile,
or cried,
or shook my hands in goodbye,
but something gripped my heart and said
Truth resides there,
all my life I have lived there
without love, though I do love,
a man in my chamber,
like I said, no man or woman,
can know God he says,
but his smile has
all that knowledge
that I choose to let go,
My name is Nachayev,
we have got to be forgotten,
and give up our lives,
you look like a girl in your sleep,
pleasure is nothing to love,
only a Max
having lost everything
I
not you or me,
Where? Who? When?
These are queries or questions?
No, these are like information,
there is a nightingale of reason
I see in my sleep,
she sings in Absalom,
and in summer in
God's tree,
there love shall be found,

somewhere away,
we are all God's children, I say,
but now you shall die,
and go to heaven,
and become a monkey who knows no conscience,
no sorrow,
no belief except I,
the nightingale of reason,
where in another country,
I am there,
there a man
shall teach you
its meaning, goodbye, that time's choir play at all times
Who am I?
I never wanted glory,
I wanted to be loved,
I wanted to live,
but God or Allah whatever he may be
never lived inside of me,
what's all this noise,
suffering is prize, I know,
yet there is something lost,
something I wished to be,
that's not me,
but descending as I was,
didn't suffer as much as I,
in another country, tonight, all this
booze before me,
shall I drink,
I think that's the word
(I feel it's not)
is gaining,
descending staircase,
why does no one ever call out to stop me?
Why is no song playing?
I know the answer,
there a gang of four by the bar welcomes,
there they speak to me,
offer me a drink that I never enjoy,
his name is Bauer,
her's is Mary,
she looks something like my heart and me,

and the music is so loud,
there is a drink with everyone in Germany!
The poetry is over there!
Over there!
And Bauer winks at her,
somewhere between Heaven and Hell,
does beauty die, she says, and who are you to prove to me
that you're not guilty like I,
I am tired I said,
you are here forever I thought,
somewhere between Heaven and us,
do all egos
look who's here,
I cried,
I heard her say the word goodbye
and stole away,
and never came back again,
and lost myself to sound,
who am I never knew,
in another's opinion,
I got my truth inside,
and never fear, I heard myself say,
for fear, as saints say,
is the price of all that's here,
don't sleep tonight,
she said,
and still I am here,
but they don't know who I was,
only who I shall become,
my past is with me, but
all is a joke,
that I never understood,
and one morning I woke up to find,
they take me away,
and Bauer was there,
and Mary, smiling peacefully,
and before they took me away
I screamed
the words of God:
those who break these chains
shall know me today,
those who sleep

shall lose their sleep forever,
no, I am not insane, my friends, I proclaimed,
it's only a song you are playing,
and I have heard all my life,
but this afternoon I say,
I am no Hero, I am a spirit,
and all spirits are free,
and all light that Faustus
forsake
was a poetry
if only God was a clown desiring
beauty,
I'd live his own
partake
in the crowd where you pray
in song,
that's not a God I know,
where you learn how
to pray,
that's where I learnt today,
there is no music to clown's sorrow,
that's what my suffering how
much ever in peace let me be
as God gave me freedom
then took it from me,
I remember Mary,
and thousands of others,
but all conceals
their truth away from me,
I didn't commit crimes
merely sins I had known
and wrote, but never,
did my love for you die,
I never committed crimes, merely sin,
and those were good,
and I loved with all my heart,
and died one day too,
but you never knew me,
the people never do,
my voice dances like fire but one day it will be still,
and there I
am buried,

and love, no love shall need me,
to be free
or good,
or just, just to fight,
and love will need me too,
where ghosts all my life could be,
and I!

Well, Satan says to me,
that I too will love see,
and she will be my own,
in this Absalom for me,
But I am alone,
and live debauched,
but one day You shall know,
that I too loved my fate,
and then in Absalom where
Golden Apples fall,
there,
heresy, in silence says:
all you know is false,
but there is a God,
whose love for us is Great,
to his kingdom come,
in Absalom we wait.