

Thachom Poyil

POEMS

r/e/c/y/c/l/i/n/g

Beware them  
who come asking for old shoes.

Wearing them one by one  
from the bigger to the smaller  
they will walk along the path you walked once,  
like crossing a lake stepping over lotus-leaves,  
turning into a gnome in each step.

Memories, like water weeds  
won't loop around their legs  
as around yours,  
nor will forgetfulness, like whirls  
will drown them as they did you.  
Straight, they will reach your demolished house.

Rummaging in the refuses,  
they will pick out washed-out plates  
and emptied bottles,  
and eat and drink from them-  
all would be unopened till then.

They will reach down the books  
read long back and stacked in the garret,  
and open them-  
all would be unpublished till date.

They will carry the broken chairs  
dumped in the backyard,  
and sit down on them-  
all would turn warehouse-new.

They will take the tattered shirts  
kept in the wardrobe for beggars and refugees,  
and put on them-  
all would smell fresh cotton.

The clocks stilled in the closed-rooms  
at various times will strike:

one, two, three, four.....

Past the embryos of shoes  
that lie either in the corridors  
or under the staircases,  
their thorny legs  
will fall on your pulsating  
head.

Beware them  
who come asking for old shoes.

\*

## HOMeward

Water  
lay supine  
in the river  
and laughed  
showing the tender gum

turned over  
on the belly  
squirmed breathless

tried to stand up  
holding onto stone fencing  
fell back  
hitting the head

got up  
stood wobbling  
toddled on

reached into crabs' holes  
tickled the fingerlings

ran among the mangroves  
and boulders  
climbed the temple-ghat  
and prayerfully rounded the banyan tree

saw me  
recognised me  
laughing aloud  
embraced me

holding my hands gently  
led me  
along the paths  
where foot prints never din in  
without even picking the underthings  
kept on a tree branch  
bare as a new born  
homeward.

\*

To the conscience-keepers

Dear friends, there are certain things you need know to maintain safe and sound for long the consciences you keep. Be it your own or other's, the conscience cannot be preserved in salt ice or in spirit like tender mangoes mackerel or an unidentified dead body. It's an appliance like a fridge washing machine piano computer car or a cell phone; never overuse it or leave it unused forever. However, it is not a sexual organ like the eye nose mouth urethra or the anus; to yield to other's fancies and to gratify them are not its uses.

Friends, where do you keep your conscience? Is it near the easy-chair so that you can easily reach out to it? In the corridor or in the dinning hall in such a position that those sitting in the drawing room should unflinching see it? Or are you hiding it somewhere inside, and making the sound trrr....rrrrttt....rrrrttt....rrrr...tttt always? If you are talented in mechanism, I know you are, you might be keeping it either on the verandah or the front yard, doing something on it now and again, taking it apart and assembling, assembling and taking it apart.

Wherever it might be, never keep such a complex instrument in your bed-room bank-locker or underneath the earth. The terrible heat that is generated as you slip into sleep forgetfulness or death will damage your consciousness' cooling-system. You may forget where you had kept it and dig where you hadn't.

Which model is your conscience? Is it pre-1947? Then,

there would be a tube with the diameter of the ashoka chakra\* for conveying to the chamber of dementia the experiences that the time-wheel grinds into malt. In the new models, it'd be cross-shaped equipment that works automatically as the sun rain whip or a bayonet falls on, and converts the experiences into electro-magnetic waves. Let it be any model, it must be connected to the earth properly, particularly in the lightning-prone areas.

In the most up-to-date models, there would be devices to resist this by passing the reactions directly to a martyr's tomb-like box without connecting the five senses to the conscience's motor. But the sparks of opposite charges come closer are likely to heat up into the heart and break out into an explosion. Be careful! Reactions amassing for long might also cause radiation. This was the reason say the recent studies for the high incidence of cancer among writers in the erstwhile Soviet Union. This is being overcome after the glasnost by using blood-full veins tightened in heartrending pain for the earth wire, instead of 4 m.m copper wires.

The capitalist countries where dangerous responses put in iron boxes are often dumped in seas don't have this menace. The Hollywood movie, the black box is the story of an African fisherman who brought to shore such a box which accidentally caught in his net.

Friends,

Keep away the conscience while you pray love examine files. Or else, all that you say do write would become public the same moment. Likewise, never take the conscience when you visit the department head union leader judge admiral the head of the state or a patient in intensive care unit. You'll be arrested for keeping lethal weapons in hand or attempted murder. Also, don't forget to switch off the conscience when you travel along the border area or a curfew-clamped street. The enemies will easily identify you.

Do animals trees plants have conscience? Will there be a time when conscience can be transplanted like heart brain kidney? Exposed to sun rain fog, would conscience rust like the old Ford car? Can another person use one's conscience after one's death? How

many consciences can one keep at the same time? Does  
 conscience have to swear upon holy books before  
 admitting trials? At which wretched moment of history  
 conscience turns into a mute witness?

Dear friends,

Questions are many. And much more are answers. But as  
 the children of the Satan and the God are playing on  
 the remote of our conscience, we hear nothing; see  
 nothing; but this jarring sound and these infinite  
 grains. That's all. The end

\* Ashoka Chakra--Symbol of justice and truth. The  
 official emblem of the Government of India, which is  
 taken on from the Pillar known in the name of the  
 Emperor Ashoka, a Buddhist follower.

\*

Anatomy

the head  
 an aerodrome always kept open  
 for any aircraft to land

the eyes  
 two spy satellites  
 sleepless among the clouds

the limbs  
 desert paths  
 leading nowhere

the heart  
 a harbour  
 that has faded from the maps

the word  
 a prison  
 more ancient than history

in the swamps of flesh  
 banks hospitals hotels  
 slums where riots break  
 night after night  
 dream's broadcast stations

silent and still  
the smoke  
of unconditional burnout

in the dark  
in the blood and semen-stained  
crematorium  
the thandava\* of  
an underworld city.

\* the final cataclysmal dance of the Lord Shiva.

\*

He Who Was Gone Thus

in the archaeological museum  
during an interlude when there were no visitors

the yet-to-be-identified human statue  
returned to its past.

>From a corridor of dead clocks  
a door opened to times hidden.

In the dark alleys  
the lampposts of exhausted light  
bloomed once again.

>From the memories of the soil  
resurrected cities.  
The ships anchored in water-oblivion  
set sail.

Those missing  
reappeared as paths on land  
and canals in the sea.

>From both sides of the road  
the vanquished and the abandoned  
before the waves drowned them  
were crying:  
only this far to go  
only this far.....

Beyond dark years



## II

All the visitors have left  
the lamps have gone out one by one  
the gods emperors  
prophets and poets  
all have vanished.

In the dark  
when orphaned once again  
the female statuette-body broken  
                  in a battle or an earth quake  
queries a beheaded male statue:

which way  
and which state of nirvana\*  
oh Lord,  
this posture  
as stone and mud.

\* He who was gone thus -an inversion of the Buddhist term thadagata which means 'he was one who had come thus', i.e. the Buddha himself.

\* prakrit-one of the ancient languages in India.

\* koels- a sweet singing bird that is a clever imitator of other birds' sound

\* nirvana-the final union of the individual spirit with the universal spirit.

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