

Classic Poetry Series

Hemant Shesh
- poems -

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Hemant Shesh(28 December 1952 -)

Hemant Shesh (Hindi: हेमन्त शेष) was born on 28 December 1952 in Jaipur, Rajasthan) is an Indian Hindi writer, poet and civil servant.

 Biography

Shesh completed his post graduate education from the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur. He then joined the Rajasthan Administrative Service in 1977. He has worked as District collector and magistrate in Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan state, and is currently working as a Registrar for the Board of revenue in Ajmer, Rajasthan.

 Writings and Publications

He has published over twenty books including 13 of his own writings while the rest were ones he edited. and has been editor for Kala-Prayojan a quarterly literary magazine. Among his published work are eleven poetry collections. His poetry has also been translated into other languages, including non-Indian languages. Shesh has received many awards and honors.

 Awards and Honors

He was awarded the K. K. Birla Foundation's Bihari Puraskar, a national award for the year 2009 for his collection of poetry titled Jagah Jaisi Jagah.

A Poet Departs

And ultimately a poet unsung
Leaves the world silently
And shatters nothing, anywhere!

The world snoozes in slumber and wakes up with eternal ennui
Trudging on beaten paths planets and the Universes revolve!
Waves brim all seas
Flora breed on the plateaus...and thus the scenes grow old & older.

A mute scream like a lump
Plugs into throats
When sons aspiring to prosper
Leave our homes without bidding any one a good-bye and
Daughters falling in love, just fleet away
Thousands and thousands board trains to earn their daily bread
Buses carrying pilgrims collide and crash.

New born open their eyes in an unrelenting commotion
Ultimately the dead bodied are made to rest on the chilled floors

The scenes: soaked in ample of acid and affluence of salt
Strangulate inside the poet
Like a fish breathing last stranglers in the net unknown

Catalogs of thousands of strange sorrows
Threadbare flags of feeble hopes
Helplessness mirrored in millions of images
A fathomless expanse of violet pathos

Within his nerves flows a counterworld:
A wishful thinking
-Of finding a world full of love, set in order!

He was a speechless bird
A mute butterfly
A dumb honeybee
Away from his abode he is missing from a life that was

Once again

Staying far far from the clutches of corpse
The poet would once again feel
The secret tears of scenes peeled off
And
The world shall continue to nap
And wake up as ever before!

[Translated by the poet]

Hemant Shesh

Ashudhha - Saarang

1.

A colorful candle has just lit inside me
And the wax of words has started melting
Thus after many days-
Opened the window of poetry.....

2.

The knife of time cuts the apple of our world
We cheer in the nourishing gloom, approaching

Both are synonyms;
Health and disease, in front of this knife
In the world being pierced

3.

A house locked
Like a world, shut.
Behind the doors
The chatting of women
And their sobbing, too.

4.

The meanings of flowers shall change with age,
Neither then there shall be no repent nor a desire
That we pluck happiness from the stem
And instantly forget it all

5.

Ah.....your teeth that open up while you laugh show
Your attitude towards the world that you know how to laugh
But this much only.
Not this at all
That what is their role
When you just do not laugh but feel ashamed

6.

you are almightily in a dream
you are.
Provided really sleeping

7.

we ourselves could turn into a hill
while gazing at the hill.
But there are lot many lies in the poetry.

8.

tamed horses are just ordinary despite being fabulous.
As they are pets and carry over someone's burden.
Lifting burden and being fabulous are two different connotations.
The greatness has nothing to do with the second.

9-

you are frightened
while entering the room that the room was there
you are frightened too while you leave that the the room was there.
The fear is not the room
Nor the room is the fear
The fear is fear and the room is room
Whether you enter or exit.

10.

In the kitchen of life
Something is burning since long
And the nose of is inert in the cold of scarcities.

11.

People these days do not watch and appreciate
the colorful feathers of birds
Just pluck them
In order to sell coats on exorbitant prices

12.

The unarmed bird is singing on a branch of a tree
The shoe of that wounded soldier may be visible to her from there
Who shall commit suicide as soon as he recovers
Under this very tree
Before the next war.

13.

Just believe me; This is the demand of sociality

Please do not shave now

(One should not look smart and cheerful while accompanying a pyre)

14.

Brahma said in dream : Look only in Purans - shall you find chastity

But sorry-

There are numerous proof mistake in print these days.

15.

Just remember

While crying

That unless your cry doesn't reach appropriate ears

It would remain only an expression of fear

And

Not an appeal for help

16.

The tree is envy

The table has no worries

17.

The baby lisps and weeps

As some poets jabber under the fever of poetry

Weeping and writing poetry generally leave the same impression

If you want to become the father of the baby

Or the reader of a mediocre poetry

18.

Now the new mother is not feeling uncomfortable in the kitchen

Scarcity becomes life style after it becomes a habit.

19.

O God who shall give me a pardon of my wrongdoing?

You, or me, myself?

I never saluted you while passing with my beloved through the garden

You were conspicuous in your absence in the examination hall

Just before question paper was to be disbursed.

God in helplessness and the sweetheart in youth-

Both equal.

20.

People do not want to carry wallets in their pockets these days.
It is not merely a co-incidence but
A comment on the present times

21.

The pendulum of morning news is oscillating on the front page
Set your wristwatch and feel happy: 8.15 AM exactly like yesterday
Despite so many ill happening

22.

Butterflies have no teeth
Absence of something is essential for beauty

23.

Passing of time:
Raga jaijaiwanti on Ramnayan's sarangi
gradually fading out...

24.

It is the munificence of trees
that vultures are waiting on their branches, for a corpse
But still they are green.

Not for the trees, but for the jubilation of vultures
These times are conducive.

25.

The incidents are often remembered.
The rooms are changed.
Wrinkles of cloths that shrink in a dream.
Sympathies entangled in the memory.
I smell the aroma of 'baghar' in the kitchen every morning
Hear my daughter's cry,
No. The world today is certainly,
certainly different than yesterday it was.

26.

I have to travel.
Arrange my luggage in order.
Buy a valid ticket and then board the right train.
I have to take care of my suitcase hiding it from thieves and reveres.

Descend at the right platform.
Reasonable fare is to be given to the Riksha-Puller.
Reach at the right destination.
Remember that the address is safe and in my which pocket?

And this is also to be remembered
that what is really required to remember everything.

27.

I too can beat my childhood-teacher
With the same cruelty

Ah ! the poetry provides fantastic opportunities.

Hemant Shesh

Diagnosis

Where are the race-course gone?
The man tethered in the stable is crying hoarse.

You shall keep him in check
This time, not by lashes,
But by reins,
(Might does not succeed every time every where
you have learnt it)

Where are the horses gone ?
The man tethered in the stable has started neighing now, tamely,
Say
What are you going to do for him this time ?

[Translated by Kalanath Shastry]

Hemant Shesh

Empty Boats In Yamuna

How many were there - The boats: empty, abandoned and waiting,
Where did the travelers go who were to ride them on their return
An afternoon was passing through our bodies like a train and there were
A few swifts with colors of sunset glittering in their eyes

There was Glue bursting out of the trunks of trees
Forlorn nests on the branches
There were lonesome, shriveled lanes,
A few tattered houses drowned in ennui
melting was a river under their foundation
Since the time immemorial

After their past birth these stairs of Ghat were reborn
as boats in 1987 AD

They habituated in waiting at the banks
For years together they are in meditation: lonely and empty
waiting for the pilgrims
We do not know what they shall become
After the exoneration from the curse and leaving the passengers
Back to the Ghat!

Hemant Shesh

Forgetfulness

We shall forget the names of many of our classmates.
The faces of relatives.
We will forget those Railway platforms
Where we once descended during our journeys.
We will forget the smell of arboreal world we experienced in the jungles
We will forget the feel of the
We dipped our hands in.

Perhaps we will forget many more things
And this too that we have forgotten everything.

Yet
We will have many things to remember.
But, surely very little, which we can't forget for ever.

We have more to forget in our lives-either a memory of its smell
And preserve
Only our remembrances which we have forgotten

[Translated by A. Rajaram and the poet]

Hemant Shesh

On Not Remaining, As Before

I do not know you Apoorva
But know you since many many years,
Where the words untold are concealed within the words uttered,
This mute conversation begins

Just now
A tiny flame has flared within us
Unknown is its color, unparallel.
Rest every thing else is quite the same-
City, roads, Wind, Sunshine, Daytime.

Your arrival like a cool shadow in my scorching desert loneliness
And your returning back; silently

After you have left
I am not the same as I was,

And
probably within you
I too may have left
My equally vociferous portion?

Hemant Shesh

Post Script

Everyday the things are recorded to have gone away.
Barges of moments reach banks and return answered.
Someone somebody ascends the stairs unknown tethered the finger of terror
Everybody the things are recorded to have gone away
Only the leaves and trunks turn pale
The landscapes change color.

The morbid tales are throne up retting shelves of experience.
Doleful stories of life are discarded down from the high opening
That has lost its color.

Like dry and discarded sheaths dates shrink into tropical comers.
And then the boats sink into sands of frivolous shores.
Bewildered insecure eyes in baffled hurry
Shuffle the pages of an old almanac.

Everywhere Every day the things are recorded to have gone away.

[Translated by Kalanath Shastry]

Hemant Shesh

Salutations To Sun

Certainly

That broken bridge shall somebody repaired.

We shall remember the lost spring.

Where is everything?

What is the future of things in the darkness?

You shall see,

You shall see the curtains of mystery rise

The rains of clarity shall wash away

the dust of time settled on things.

You shall see,

You shall see the mist dissolve

and once again the pilgrim will start descending

in the stream of this holy river

for the salutation to the Sun-god.

[Translated by Kalanath Shastry]

Hemant Shesh

Self-Contained

Our present
Playing with the fingers of uncertainty
Weaves the yarn of miseries.

All alone lies in the boat of time the paddle of darkness.

Reluctant are rains and clouds
And the loneliness lies on the table.
Bright curtains of seasons fall in the sorrowful air,

We stand speechless; Mum
Dangling the badges of questions on our chests.

The rain of constraints is stuck around the windows and
Shrinking sunshine over the frigid firmament breaks the stints of magnanimity.

Over the shoulder cascades a stream of light.
Ah..... Down the steps of intimacies
I kiss you

The hunter of time has set out
For the blue woods of the sky
Lest he hunts the Sun Fishes of age filp about.
The first kiss of love nibbles at the lips.

Dated stand in the wild storm like fallen leaves sand prop.
We sob for you in every season
My own perishing awareness
Come
Let us hang it in the poetry
Once again.....

[Translated by Jayant Goswamy]

Hemant Shesh

The Declining Minar

Our home was a sagging Minar
Where aspirations lived like cloths, worn,
The weathers wavering often visited it
As our bodies were just spaces to rest?
For years together the flowers would never know
The art of blooming
Weeping could be set off, any moment, anytime
Sometimes the Dal tasted bitterly salty
But hardly anyone would go on a long journey!

Letters dropped by relatives often came
The ritual of STD lessened their frequency
We bid farewell in youth, to some of our friends, who demised
Some dearly loved ones never turned up again once gone.
Wives and children bought expensive stuff only in the Ads
And looked contented.
Anarchy and Scarcities became natural, just as breathing!

Our home was ours
And we were not the inhabitants of an unknown planet- aliens,
We had full poise and pride about it
Like anyone has, or one ought to have!

Earlier this Minar used to quaver a bit
We were unconscious a little, then almost infatuated considered it as distinctive

But out of the blue it trembled
And now even with a slightest blow of wind
This could collapse off, to the earth.

But, you must ponder it over too-
If so happens some fateful day,
Responsible for it shall be, who?

Hemant Shesh

The Pretty Woman

You would repent
That you could not kiss her.

Her being utterly beautiful is the first condition for an imaginary kiss.

You are worried that kissing her is not that simple.

Between a kiss and your agony
There exists-
A beautiful woman
Unconcerned to both:
Your despair, and her own majestic chastity!

Hemant Shesh

The Scream

he world is narrow
And a silence clings around the trees.
What the future shall be like
No one knows.....

Where shall I lay my hands with which I would like to write poetry?
How that child shall recognize her mother in pitch darkness?

We shall stand sober and decorated in a celebration of
White collared guys

But who,
Who shall suppress a scream that would blow out
from the deepest core of some one's heart
against the entirely false decorum.....
and shall cross all limits of timid composer.

Hemant Shesh

The Sixth Sense

At the same time this train passes every day.

I remember the dreams I had seen once.
Those cruelties, Those affections,
Those examinations I had passed
Unfold like windows
Opening in the wind.

I return to the past years hopping over the platform of age
And find myself before a ticket-window.

Nobody knows of the unknown journey and the destinations unknown
Everything unwritten and complete -fades into the noises.
A blurred fog slithers down the shoulders,
Past beneath the elbows, like a newspaper that has been read.
A long wait stuck to the chin.

'Gather the luggage, We're home.....'
Which always begins in a dream.

At the same time this train passed every day.

[Translated by Jayant Goswamy]

Hemant Shesh

The Very Same Dream Everyday

We see the same dream every day
That flower are blooming silently
And the spring is descending from the firmament just like dew-drops.
In its utmost sacredness - the fragrance of March is creeping in the foliage
Making us remember those boats -
Fluttering the waves of a river.

Innumerable colors dissolve in the eyes
And we cross over roads, Ghats and grass-lands.

We find the trees loaded with fruits.
The honey combs on their branches are enlarging day-by-day.
Cheerful women returning home after shopping.
The jungles filled with sun and granaries with corn.
All the roads of the city, ending of magnificent Dancing Hall.

Passing through the scenes one-by-one
We look at them; How charming the world
But even in the dream we pretty well know that the dream is going on.
And that dreams alone can't make the world pleasant and worth living

Friends what have you to say about dreams?

[Translated by the poet]

Hemant Shesh

Untitled

Now there is no use feeding milk to your own sleeves.
Snakes have appeared just at a hand shaking distance.
I had said to those aged men
Who had strong belief
In herbal toothpaste and country liquor.
But all of them had forgotten their incantations of sorcery and witch hunting,
Were involved in the hunt of sensational yoga-postures
And there were afloat in the air-
The forecasts of their doom:

And just then
I had seen the Lords of the city
All with old honorifics
In the morning attire ruffled
Caught by Encephalitis.
They were donating their wristwatches:
All baffled and hamstrung.

And I knew that they had all won
Prizes for their exceptional health and punctuality the other day.

[Translated by Kalanath Shastry]

Hemant Shesh

What Should Poets Do, With A Word Like 'Love'.....?

The word called 'love' has been reduced to a very low profile,
And it will continue to be so, The bollywood calls it 'pyaar'.

Our cheap novelists have further degenerated it,
With the result
even lovers these days, avoid being called 'lovers',

But look at the fun-
We often have to use this word
And that too, with all earnest sincerity

And then, we are not bothered about
But with its ironical synonym; at peculiar junctures
Looking just like lovers
Frightening with 'pyaar' and
Remaining poets from inside.....

Hemant Shesh