

Classic Poetry Series

Kedarnath Agarwal
- poems -

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Kedarnath Agarwal(1 April 1911 - 22 June 2000)

Kedarnath Agarwal (also spelled as Agrawal and Aggarwal) (Hindi: कदरनाथ अग्रवाल) was a Hindi language poet and littérateur.

 Biography

Kedarnath was born on April 1, 1911 to Hanuman Prasad Gupta and his wife Ghasiti Devi. He was born in the village of Kamasin in Banda district in the Bundelkhand region of the present-day Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. He acquired the B.A. and L.L.B. degrees, and became a practising advocate in Banda in 1938.

However, his first love was Hindi literature, and he contributed much to that field. He was a member of the Pragatisheel Lekhak Sangh, a body inspired by the leftist Progressive Writers' Movement. His writings have been translated into English, German, and Russian.

In recognition of these contributions, Kedarnath Agarwal was awarded the Soviet Land Nehru Prize in 1973. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1986. In 1995, Bundelkhand university conferred an honorary doctorate in literature () upon him. Other accolades included the Hindi Sansthan Uttar Pradesh Puraskar (1981); Tulsi Puraskar (1986); Mythili Sharan Gupta Puraskar (1990-91); and the Sahitya Vachaspati Manad Upaadhi (1990).

Agarwal was also involved in several educational and literary bodies. He served as president of the Arya Kanya Intermediate College for many years. He was associated with the Vinoba Bhave College located in Kamasin village, his birthplace. He also served for one year as president of the local Bar Association in Banda.

Agarwal was married to Parvati Devi. The couple were the parents of two daughters and a son. Agarwal died on June 22, 2000.

 The Kedar Samman

The "Kedar Shod Peeth" is a foundation dedicated to commemorating Kedarnath Agarwal's contributions to literature. Every year, it awards the "Kedar Samman" to one person who has made outstanding contributions to literature.

Along The River Ken

Along the river Ken
Crossing its legs
The stone sits quite silent.
The snake is waving
In the air all silent.
The water is licking
The stone all silent.
Greeting stunned the traveller
Watches all this - all silent.

Kedarnath Agarwal

Play Not Thy Flute

O Sailer : play not thy flute,
My mind sways,
My mind sways as sways
The aqueous sheet,
As instantly sways the ship on
Eddis tost.

O sailer : play not thy flute
My resolve breaks even as the
Straw breaks,
A breaks the straw nest
Time and again wrought.

O sailer : play not thy flute
My body swings so your body
Swings,
And lo: My body and your body
Together swing.

Kedarnath Agarwal

Strike The Hammer

Strike the hammer,
And with blows repeated
Bend the red hot iron
Into any and all forms desired.
Strike the hammer,
And with blows repeated
Forge not a few but a hundred
Mighty wonderous /giants of steel.
Strike the hammer,
And with blows repeated,
Only with your sweat and blood,
Break the bonds that restrain your liberty.
Strike the hammer,
And with blows repeated,
Be a living force in the world;
And in the accord and in grace
With the World remain.

Kedarnath Agarwal

The Inheritance

At the death of his father,
The son
Of a starving farmer has -
The debris of his house,
The broken cot and a few
Yards of land all barren,
A sole of a country made shoes.
A small broken goad to drive
The bullocks with,
A cracked scuttle, a smoking pipe
Constantly leaking.
A pair of tongs made of thin iron sheet,
And rivalling against the mound
Of gold
A swelling heap of rubbish before
His door,
The staggering debt of the money lender
That he can never pay off with his
All efforts -
All these he inherits from his father:
And leaving these he has white ants,
Ticks, months and bugs
To live with him in his dingy cell.
It's not all: he gets a hunger
Far more keen than that of
His father.
With a hollow stomach, he roams
About
Keeping his mouth spread open.
What Independence means for him?
Or how was the thing in a free
Country?
How is he concerned with all this?

Kedarnath Agarwal

When We Are No More

When we are no more,
The fields will still remain,
And the mustering thick on these
Fields.

The clouds will remain.
Giving life and quenching
The thirst,
And making the earth rich
And productive,
The leisurely floating tresses
Of the dark sable clouds
Will remain.

When we are no more
The sports, the merriment
And the women will remain;
And full of thrill and joy
And hovering over the red lotus
The drones will ever remain.
The bestowers of the surfeiting
Joy,
Lost in revelry,
And making the earth rich
And beautiful,
The red limbs
In the fluttering red drapery
Will remain.

Kedarnath Agarwal