The Harp of India

This is one of the most iconic poems of Derozio. In the first glance it might be just read as any other fourteen line poem, but the inclusion of the words 'Harp' and 'India' stimulate us to delve deeper into the contents of the poem. 'Harp' is a musical instrument mostly endemic to Ireland in the past two or three centuries, so how does it relate with a colonised country (in Derozio's time) like India? Also, the inclusion of the word 'India' as a seemingly separate independent unit in pre-independent era is indicative of much more than what is visible or apparently comprehensible. It also must be taken into account here that Derozio was of Indo-Portuguese origin, and the usage of 'India' in such a prominent manner can only indicate that not only did Derozio take India as his home country but was also concerned about the shackled state of India under the dominion of the British and along with it the hope that the music of India be restored and her dignity and glory be strung again.

In India, the 'Harp' was the first musical instrument played by the Tamil people around 200 BC, as documented by the Sangam Literature. Bearing this strain of thought we might also relate that Derozio has used 'Harp' as a means to portray the rich and varied culture and traditions that India possessed and which were now being supressed by the British raj. The poet seems to echo the reverberations likewise in the 3rd line â€― "Thy music once was sweet - who hears it now?", implying that the rule of the British was actually a foil to India's own native heritage and the rhythm and music of such a rich tradition has been subdued if not completely erased.

There can be other speculations as to why Derozio has used 'Harp' and not any other instrument in its place. Bengal itself had a very interesting 'harp' culture in its past. There are numerous instances of carved harps in the temple reliefs of Bengal dating back to before A.D. 500, but then the questions as to whether Derozio was privy about this or not. This is left to speculation itself.

'Harp' was one of the most important musical instruments of Derozio's country of origin. The Arpa Juan Lopez harp played an important role in Portugal from the 16th - 18th century. This harp was used in the churches for religious ceremonies and discourse related events. Since Derozio himself was partly of Portugese origin, can the 'harp' mean a projection of his origin?

This poem can be read as a Sonnet but it errs from the conventional sonnets with a rhyme skeme of 'a-b-a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-c-b-b' (we will come back to this later in the analysis) and the poem begins with a question â€― "Why hang'st thou lonely on yon withered bough?", but why does the poet begin with a question? During Derozio's times the British had completely colonised not only the physical being of the Indians but also the mental capabilities of the Indian natives were kept in shackles. This situation is adequately portrayed by Derozio in this opening line as questions were oft thought of but never expressed due to the fear of the Britishers. This single line portrays the psyche of a native Indian who has been both physically and mentally colonised by the Britishers and Derozio at the same time is questioning through the same confines of the same line as to the causes for such a mental colonization too.

www.literariness.org
In the question “Why hang'st thou lonely on yon withered bough?” - 'thou' can be interpreted in a dual version, if we relate it with the title of the poem it seems that 'thou' is being referred to a harp which is hanging from a shrivelled tree branch. This 'thou' can also be interpreted as a personification of the Indian natives who are being 'hang'st' by the British in 'withered' India.

The entire constitution of the poem is an evolutionary process from being listless and gloomy to a gradual forceful build-up of yanking the causes of gloom away and replacing it by fervour and optimism for making things better. The usage of the words 'lonely', 'withered', 'unstrung forever'; indicate a gloomy opening as the poet engages us to visualise an image of a neglected harp hanging on an almost dead tree branch. We are forced to consider and ponder the future of this listless harp â€“ Why is this harp left unstrung? Can this abandoned harp sing again?

We can almost feel a sense of opprobrium emanating from the poet as he visualizes this hang'st harp and it seems that the poet has hung his head in dismay and states â€“ "unstrung for ever, must thou there remain.” He continues through his reproachful broodings and conveys to us that this instrument was a harbinger of sweet melodies but, now that it is 'unstrung' the melodies are dormant; even the breeze soughs over it unable to wake the harp from its stupor. One can easily imagine a young lad of age twenty approximately staring up a gulmohar and seeing the rusted old unstrung harp on the upper boughs and longing for its music to echo in the meandering passages of the oreille. There is a sense of concern while at the next instance there is a strong sense of ire in the poet when he says "who hears it now". The poet in order to convey both these contrasting emotions in a justifiable manner has used a hyphen. The shift from concern to ire is through the hyphen.

In lines 5th â€“ 7th line there is a shift in setting of the poem and the poet has used imagery modifications and metaphor depictions and personification technique to emphasis the continuation of the thought that he wants to project. "Silence hath bound thee with her fatal chain;" The 'thee' in this line is obviously a continuation of the 'thou’ of the 1st line and it points to the same harp, but the point of interest here is the 'Silence' and 'her' words. 'Silence' is definitely a personification if we consider collaborating the meaning of 'her' in the same line. The poet has intended to show that 'Silence' is a female entity (due to the personal pronoun of 'her' being used) binding the harp to almost its death. It can also be stated that Derozio could easily have used the word 'Death' instead of using 'Silence' as the way he projects the harp in the previous lines seems that the Harp is dead but the usage of the 'silence' has changed the perspective that the harp is just not making its presence felt instead of completely being non-existent. The feelings of a small amount of stirring hope can be seen in Derozio through the mere utterance of this word. The death-like silence has neglected and muted the harp (6th line) and made it as useless as a "ruined monument" (7th line) in a desert. This imagery of the harp being in a similar state to ruins in a desert has three inferences regarding its past, present, and future states. Derozio seems to indicate that there was a loss of a glorious past ("ruins"), a miserable present, and an uncertain future.
From the 8th line onwards we find a shift in the focal point of the poem; it has now shifted from the 'unstrung' harp to the strummers and singers of the harp. There is also a shift in the poet's attitude as well. The poet seems conscious of a difference. For the harp, not for the ruin, however, there is a future as there is a strong possibility of the mute instrument's regaining its power once able hands touch its strings. And Derozio waits eagerly for the arrival of poets empowered to sing the song of India. Few readers will miss the poet's real purpose. The harp that he directs our attention to is the immediate and the particular but more important than the single "lonely" harp is the miserable state of India bent double under the burden of slavery. In the first seven lines of his sonnet, Derozio underscores his unhappiness and displeasure and he, in a way, rebukes all Indians who have accepted their lot meekly and forgotten the past glory of their motherland, but from the 8th line onwards there is complete note of optimism in d poem.

Derozio laments that the fact the in the desolate times of India, there is no significant poet to ignite the zeal and positivity to the native Indians. The poet shifts from the instrument to the strummers i.e. the great poets who once transfixed the listeners with their poetic brilliance. Their hands "more worthy far" than his own, says Derozio, modestly, had struck at the "harmonious chords" in the past and the harp had then produced notes powerful enough to both enliven listeners and confer on the poets a kind of immortality. Though in their graves, bodily, these masters remain alive through their art. In this context, of interest is Derozio's use of personification. Fame is seen showering honour on poets of the country and the wreaths placed have retained both their beauty and freshness as if in recognition and acknowledgement of their talent and the permanence of their poetry. But, in an India under British rule, there has been a sharp decline in the field of both art and culture.

In colonised India, there was great requirement to instil the confidence in the natives against the British rulers. The poets of the past were all departed but if their was any chance that the harp could again be restrung and the musical notes could again be played then Derozio himself wants to take up the onus for such a revival. Never once in this poem does he say that he is specially gifted for such a revival but nonetheless he wants to strike the strain again. There is almost a great urgency portrayed by the poet to ignite this revival and the poet seems impatient to release India from its bound form. This is shown from the use of the exclamation after the end line. Therefore we find a plethora of emotions and aspirations that the poet has portrayed through the medium of the words used and the case markings used. Just as the thoughts in our brains seem to jump to the next, Derozio has also carefully aligned to the same by overlapping two similar image settings having the same strain of gloomy thought â€“ firstly, the unstrung harp on a withered bough and secondly, the desert ruins.

The analogy of the workings a determined brain can be read from the mere reading of the poem (and not due to the established fact that the poem is a sonnet whose basic characteristics are raising the issue in the first part of the poem and presenting the solution in the second half). Derozio was responsible for the Young Bengal Movement which published journals to ignite the Bengal Renaissance. This movement established a band of free radical thinkers (known as Derozians). The Young Bengals were inspired and excited by the spirit of free thought and revolt against the existing social and religious structure of Hindu society. A www.literariness.org
number of Derozians were attracted to the Brahmo Samaj movement much later in life when they had lost their youthful fire and excitement. The poem completely iterates the ideals of this movement and likewise iterates the determination that Derozio sought to abolish the mental subjugation of the natives:

-- but if thy notes divine
May be by mortal wakened once again,
Harp of my country, let me strike the strain!

There are two parallel portrayals of the same thought projected in this poem as is quite evident through the lines. The first portrayal is of loss of culture and heritage of India under the British rule as a result of which the native Indians have lost their existence and surrendered both mentally and physically to their colonial masters and the need of a leader to reinstate the belief in the Indians, therefore we find political overtones. The second portrayal is of the loss of passionate and determined poets who could ignite the readers in action through their fiery words, therefore we find overtones of the lack of creativeness that has engulfed India in the era of suppression. Collectiveness of both these overtones converges and leads us to belief that the purpose of Derozio writing this poem was not merely for publication status; instead he was in search of greater and lofty conclusions.

The poem is in a sonnet form with the rhyme scheme of 'a-b-a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-c-b-b-b'. This rhyming scheme differs from both the Shakespearean sonnet form as well as the Petrarchan sonnet form. Dante's sonnet form and even the Occitan Sonnet and the Spenserian Sonnet forms bears little or no resemble to the rhyming scheme that Derozio has introduced in this sonnet. Another very striking feature that one can decipher in this poem is that he conventional sonnet divisions of octave and sestet (Petarchan Sonnets) or the couplet (Shakespearean Sonnet) is not been attuned to. Instead Derozio seems to have divided this poem into two parts of seven lines each. Though the intention of projecting the problem and then giving the solution in the second part is identical to that of a Petrarchan sonnet; the difference lies in the number of lines devoted to each. Therefore, is it culpable to suggest that this sonnet was has been founded and propounded by Derozio himself?

While Derozo's language is reminiscent of Byron and Moore, his ardent love for his country, his passion for social reform and his tender and courageous humanity, are inventively his own. Even on his death bed, he did not lose either his equanimity of his brave faith. Like Donne, Derozio faces the awful mystery of death challengingly, triumphantly: "But man's eternal energies can make An atmosphere around him, and so take Good out of evil, like the yellow bell That sucks from flowers malignant a sweet treasure tyrant fate! Thus shall I vanquish thee For out of suffering shall I gather pleasure."

The intensity of feeling expressed in The Harp Of India and the poet's firm conviction that his India will one day regain her past glory, leave readers in no doubt that there was nothing foreign about the poet Henry Louis Vivian Derozio except his name, over which, unfortunately, he had no control.

www.literariness.org
Harp of my country, let me strike the strain!

Life was loaned to Derozio for a short while by the almighty but that didn’t deter him from making sure that he stays in the hearts and minds of readers of literature for eternity. Derozio’s life itself can be transgressed in this poem. Ups and downs and many more situations he faced in his tender life but he was determined to counter them all.

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (18 April 1809 – 26 December 1831), poet, radical thinker, educator, social reformist, founder of the Young Bengal group, was born in India, Kolkata to Portuguese parents. Known to write brilliant sonnets, he was a renowned scholar in many disciplines including languages. He regarded himself as an Indian and this poem is a proof to that. Hounded both by the British and the Indian orthodox society, the young radical died young at the age of 22 due to cholera.

It is interesting to note that Derozio in spite of being a European sang for India and this poem in its lamentation gives us proof enough of his sincerity towards the country.

To India – My Native Land Summary And Analysis

Lamenting the loss of the glorious past of India which was full of riches, both spiritual and material, the poet narrates how the country has come to be tied down by the foreign powers. The poet determines to fetch such long lost memorable moments of Indian glory which have hitherto been hidden from the world’s eyes only to reinstate once more the glory of India. ‘In thy days of glory past’ refers to the bygone age of Indian supremacy as a civilization rich in all resources. This could refer to the period starting from the Harrapan age down to the great Mughal period. ‘Halo’ refers to the mythical ring of light that surrounds angels’ heads. It refers to the angelic quality of India. In ‘eagle pinion’ India has been compared with an eagle which has been chained by the British power. ‘Lowly dust’ refers to the pitiful condition of the country post its domination by Britain. ‘Minstrel’ refers to a singer. Here it could mean the national poets/historians who write poem histories of a country, often glorifying it. ‘Guerdon’ signifies reward of labour. Here the poet wants to receive the reward of ‘one kind wish’ of his beloved country for his labour to salvage some ‘wrecks sublime’ which means the patches of Indian glory stuck in time and forgotten history which is itself signified by the phrase ‘depths of time’.

The theme of the poem is pretty simple and straightforward. It deals with the frustration at the contemporary condition of the country which has been rendered weak and insulted at the hands of the foreign onslaught. It is a poignant lament. It a true cry from the heart. The poem

www.literariness.org
also seems to suggest the desire of the poet to bring out some long lost glorified past of the country.

The patriotic tone of the poem is but obvious. It’s sad but with a desire to do something in order to improve the condition. It is indeed a very simple sonnet with the clear cut divisions between the octet and sestet. The octet deals with the fallen condition of the native land as opposed to its erstwhile greatness. A contrast has been instituted between Derozio’s India and the India of the bygone age. In the sestet which concludes with a couplet a resurgence in emotion happens which spurs the poet to try to salvage a portion of the lost glory by digging into the past of the nation and bring back some glorious memento to show the world and its own people so that some amount of the past self respect is restored. As it happens with great poems or any piece of great literature that the best of styles lies in the stylelessness, the same comes true for this poem. The best of art conceals art. The poem does not yield anything to a sophisticated stylistic analysis. In its simplicity it makes one of the most potent style statements i.e. – ‘look in to thy heart and write’ (the poetic creed of Sir Philip Sydney as expressed in his poem, Loving in Truth.) The style is commensurate with the theme and execution of the poem. As mentioned already the sonnet is a heartfelt cry at the pitiable condition of India and thus allows no room for pretensions. In fact the poem being a sonnet aptly conveys the sharp and shrill response of pain in the poet’s heart.

Now, we can look a little deeper into the text in order to find something which the casual chauvinistic attitude might hold back from our view. If we expose the lines of the poem specially the sestet to a deconstructive reading then we will find that the meaning of the text takes a very regressive view. This regressive view of the poem can form a parallel with the kind of dependence on glorification of history of India which was taken up by the Hindu nationalists like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai etc. These nationalists relied on the so called glory of India’s past to generate the much needed morale boost for the Indians who had lost their self respect under the humiliating rule of the English. In order to break free from the hegemony of the English the Indian nationalists turned to a ‘brave old world’ as a counter discourse to the hegemonic discourse of the English that portrayed us as effeminate and weak. Now if we take up the lines – “Well let me dive into the depths of time, /And bring from out the ages that have rolled/A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime.” we find that Derozio is also indulging in the rhetoric of regression to counter the hegemonic propaganda of the English. This while bringing back the confidence of the native people in their own culture and history has its own danger of making us stay in our glorified past and neglect both our present and future. Thus instead of looking ahead (the poet doesn’t do that in any line of the poem) he constantly harps back continuously to the lost past. Again more disturbing is the fact that Derozio claims that the ‘wrecks sublime’ which he will bring back from the past will no more be seen by the world. This signifies that India will never reach the glory once more. The poet seems to fix India in a stereotype of fallenness. Thus in his eulogy he actually presents a stagnating picture of the country he loves. The English have forever called us a country bound in its past. In fact many pro colonial writers and travelers have described India as a land of timelessness.

www.literariness.org
In the light of the preceding argument we find the images highly ambivalent. The halo talked about in the second line signifies the angelic appearance of the motherland. From a patriarchal chauvinistic approach we find the image quite in line with the then description of the motherland as an angel which is in contrast even with the fighter image of the country which the freedom fighters like Rani Lakshmibai portrayed and which the radical freedom fighters like Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad wanted to uphold. With the image of the deity with the halo is again a mythical image which reminds us of the discussion made above. Today we Indians would like to portray our country as a super power not with a halo on her head but with the weapons of economic, social and political change and upgradation. The image of the eagle being chained is also significant on two levels, first, that India has been compared with a bird of prey which has lost its strength and secondly, that the wild bird has been tamed by the ‘better’ civilization. In fact, Rudyard Kipling had mentioned that it was the burden of the white men to ‘civilize’ the third world countries (erstwhile colonies). As Benita Perry finds out that Edward Said has not mentioned the resistance that the colonies offered to the colonial onslaught in his book Orientalism, in the image of the grovelling eagle, the poet forgets to mention the constant struggle of the eagle to break free from the bounds. Derozio perhaps doesn’t appreciate the numerous poems, pamphlets and other literature that tries to awake the revolutionary consciousness of the Indian mass and thus the image of the minstrel, who has nothing to sing of India but only the laments of misery. The images of India as nothing but sublime wrecks and a land lost in the depths of time and a place where ages have rolled by are significant of the stereotypical image of India.

As pointed out earlier, the simplicity of the poem doesn’t allow for too much rhetorical ornamentation yet the personification of India, the apostrophe in the beginning of the poem, the vision of India as a deity, the interrogation in the fourth line, the alliteration in the 7th, the metaphors of history, time and glory have their own unique place in the poem. They embellish the content as well as adding to the formal shine of the lyric.

Thus we find that the poem though short in length just like the life of the poet is full of significances which still hold good in our contemporary world where India is still pinioned if not by foreign forces but with our internal squabbles of petty politics, religion, casteism and poverty.

GOODBYE PARTY FOR MISS PUSHPA T.S

Nissim Ezekiel (24 December 1924 – 9 January 2004) was an Indian Jewish poet. He was a foundational figure in postcolonial India's literary history, specifically for Indian writing in English. Ezekiel earned a master’s degree in English literature from Mumbai University and studied philosophy in London. He later became the head of Mithibai College’s Department of English and a visiting professor at the University of Leeds as well as the University of Chicago. His first anthology of poems, entitled *A Time to Change* was published in England in 1952 by an established publisher of poetry, Fortune Press. He made Indian-English prose simple for common people to understand and poked fun at the local vernacular in hopes of improving the quality of life of his compatriots through his works. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983 for his Poetry collection, “*Latter-Day Psalms*”. Ezekiel is www.literariness.org
universally recognized and appreciated as being one of the most notable and accomplished Indian English language poets of the 20th century, applauded for his subtle, restrained and well-crafted diction, dealing with common and mundane themes in a manner that manifests both cognitive profundity, as well as an unsentimental, realistic sensibility, that has been influential on the course of succeeding Indian English poetry. Ezekiel enriched and established Indian English language poetry through his modernist innovations and techniques, which enlarged Indian English literature, moving it beyond purely spiritual and orientalist themes, to include a wider range of concerns and interests, including mundane familial events, individual angst and skeptical societal introspection.

Summary:
*Goodbye Party For Miss Pushpa T.S* is a satirical poem by Nissim Ezekiel. It is in the form of dramatic monologue. Miss Pushpa is depicted as a pleasing personality. At the beginning of the work, the speaker explains that Miss Pushpa is going to a different country and states that she is a sweet person. He explains that the woman comes from a prominent family and gets sidetracked with his own memories. In the middle of the poem the author talked about her father and his job seemed as irrelevant and consists of lot of diversions from ideas. The tone of the poem is humorous though sarcastic is devoid. The speaker called her as sister and showed that she was in respectable position in office. From this poem we conclude that she was beautiful both internally and externally. There is a lack of clarity in this poem because of irrelevant details but the poem speaks about the Indian English with lucidity. After digressing, the speaker states that Miss Pushpa is a popular person who is kind and always willing to help others. At the end of the poem, the speaker asks the others at the party to give their own speeches about the party’s honoree. The poem is considered as a mild attack on Indian English Speakers. The poem might be simple one but it discusses a serious topic. The author reveals the mismatch between Indian thoughts and English culture. The poet uses Pidgin or Colloquial English as it fulfills the need for a special language in a bilingual situation and the poet could also reflect the idiolect features of English used by the speakers of different regional languages. The poem begins with present continuous tense instead of using simple present tense and thus the mocking of Indian Speakers begins, which can be seen throughout the poem. The poem also hints at dramatic irony if the reader infers that the speaker’s audience at the farewell party doesn’t know that his English is grammatically incorrect. The poet makes fun of the way in which semi-educated Indians speak or write the English language. He ridicules the errors in grammar, syntax and idioms which many Indians commit while speaking English. The poem is highly amusing and the poet mimics the Indian way of speaking English with so many faults. The poem is in free verse, typical of modern poetry. Poetry which is written without any rhyme and any traditional metrical pattern uses free verse. It has no regular recurring rhythm.

Nissim Ezekiel satirizes certain Indian customs, traditions and manners in the poem Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S. The poet laughs at speaker and his manners of speaking too. The speaker stands for every speaker in Indian context. He uses free and broken language to share the views and emotions. The use of language is faulty. The poet mocks at literal translation. For example “two three days”, is the literal translation of a vernacular expression. Here is...
another example of literal translation, “with men also and ladies also”, is an unacceptable collocation used in literal translation of a vernacular expression. Here is another way of unfolding parody is the way of not using indefinite articles. For example “very high family”, “renowned advocate”, here is the absence of the indefinite article “a”. The phrase should be like “a very high family”, “a renowned advocate”. Miss Pushpa is laughed at and laughs at all the people. “Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T. S.” is a social satire on speech which is delivered on an occasion when all praise the good natured, helpful and sacrificial attitude, and leadership qualities etc. of the person. It is facilitated on his or her shift to another post, retirement, and so on. In every society such speeches are culture-laden. He describes the internal as well as the external beauty of Miss Pushpa in “Babu Angrezi”. Nissim Ezekiel has not given a definite identity of the speaker. We do not know whether it is male of female speaker. Nissim Ezekiel by hiding the identity of the speaker renders the mistakes to every Indian in general.

To conclude the poem is a parody of an Indian speech. It is a satirical of the manners of Indian educated people. The whole poem is comic in nature. The speaker’s words make us laugh. The parody includes irony, vague speech, and literal translation, the use of present progressive tense and Babu English in the poem.

Paraphrase:

**Lines 1-7**
Friends,  
our dear sister  
is departing for foreign  
in two three days,  
and  
we are meeting today  
to wish her bon voyage.

In a party to bid goodbye to a subordinate the poet persona addresses the colleagues and other subordinates as friends. He tells them that their dear sister, Miss Pushpa is leaving for a foreign country and they all wish her happy journey.

**Lines 8-14**
You are all knowing, friends,  
What sweetness is in Miss Pushpa.  
I don’t mean only external sweetness  
but internal sweetness.  
Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling  
even for no reason but simply because  
she is feeling.

In these lines the speaker reminds the friends of Miss Pushpa’s sweetness which is not external but internal also. He tells of Miss Pushpa’s god and amicable nature. She always

www.literariness.org
puts on a smiling face. It is obvious that Nissim Ezekiel is ridiculing the habitual use of the continuous tense even where it is ungrammatical and inappropriate.

**Lines 15-19**
Miss Pushpa is coming from very high family. Her father was renowned advocate in Bulsar or Surat, I am not remembering now which place.

The speaker continues his address at the Goodbye Party and tells the audience that Miss Pushpa belongs to rich family. Her father was a famous advocate in Bulsar and Surat but he does not remember the correct place.

**Lines 20-25**
Surat? Ah, yes, once only I stayed in Surat with family members of my uncle's very old friend—his wife was cooking nicely… that was long time ago.

In these lines the fun is made of the wayward mind of the speaker who forgets the occasion and starts talking about his days in Surat with the family of his uncle’s old friend. The speaker is informed by someone in audience that the place was Surat and he remembers and talks about his experience in Surat. The speaker’s digression to Miss Pushpa’s father, and hanging on it, the speaker’s connection to Surat and then to his/her uncle’s very old friend and his wife there— are typical of the unprepared, spontaneous speech, characteristic of many Indians who lack propriety in such grave formal functions.

**Lines 26-28**
Coming back to Miss Pushpa she is most popular lady with men also and ladies also.

After diversion from topic of his speech, the speaker goes back to Miss Pushpa. He says that she is very popular with both men and women. It is obvious in the lines that Nissim Ezekiel is ridiculing the amusing, ungrammatical speech of Indians and their sentimental, exaggerated way of speaking.

**Lines 29-34**
Whenever I asked her to do anything, she was saying, 'Just now only I will do it.' That is showing

www.literariness.org
good spirit. I am always appreciating the good spirit. Pushpa Miss is never saying no.

Praising his subordinate, Miss Pushpa, the speaker goes ahead and praises her good nature. She would never say no to the work assigned to her. This shows that she has a good spirit and her readiness to do any work. She is a willing worker. The unnecessary use of ‘just’ and ‘only’ exhibits the speaker's ignorance of the usage of English words, creating laughter and fun.

Lines 35-42
Whatever I or anybody is asking she is always saying yes, and today she is going to improve her prospect and we are wishing her bon voyage. Now I ask other speakers to speak and afterwards Miss Pushpa will do summing up.

In the concluding lines, the speaker says that she was always ready to help whenever asked by him or any other colleague. Today the speaker and the other colleagues have gathered to wish her happy journey as she is going abroad to improve her prospects. After this speech is over, the speaker asks other speakers to speak and says that Miss Pushpa will sum up, after the colleagues’ speech.

BACKGROUND, CASUALLY BY NISSIM EZEKIAL

In the poem ‘Background, Casually’ by Nissim Ezekial, look for themes of culture, identity, race, history, and above all the importance of a sense of belonging. Although the title is very off-hand, even throwaway in it’s style, it gives a lot away. A person’s background, or a country’s background, can never be passed over or ignored, if it forms an integral part of who they are. Their background affects their attitude to learning, their ability to carry out a job and their success or failure at relationships over a lifetime.

Nowadays the idea of belonging is becoming more muted and, some would say, is mellowing. Elders may shake their heads at the ability of their young to soak up new ways and cultures, others may seek to live in more closed communities where this is less likely. In a multi-cultural society, ethnic citizens who belong to minority communities come up against the difficulty of trying to belong to two cultures and challenges and conflicts may occur when a minority don't identify with the majority. Though coming from a minority race in India (the Jews), Nissim Ezekiel defends his right to be considered Indian too. Many young people growing up in blended cultures face the same problems - they may be one person at school or at work, and another in the home. The poet puts up with the humiliations and victimization.
from those belonging to other cultures, but is after all affected by this suffering and commits them to paper in the poem. He offers his dedication to the country where he lives but casually alludes to his concerns in the title 'Background, Casually.' The poem seems lightly written but, the implications are sobering and profound. Overall, one strong message a reader could take away from the poem is that it is up to the individual, not the society, to decide where he most belongs and feels most comfortable with.

SECTION 1

In the beginning, Eziekel uses the third person for himself. According to him, he was born low. Being a member of the alien community he could neither eat nor could sleep and thus became quite weak. Due to this feeling, he could not fly a kite. Even the top also failed to spin in his hands.

In the next stanza, the poet describes his childhood by using the first person. He was sent to a Roman Catholic School where he, according to him, was like a prey before wolves (referring to Hindus and Muslims).

He was often taunted by the Hindus and Muslims who accused him of the murder of Christ. They compare him to Judas who betrayed Christ. The same year he won Scripture prize depicting that he was quite good in his schooling. He was often beaten by a Muslim boy and hence terror reigned in his mind during that stage.

Not only Muslims but Hindu boys also repelled him away with their wrong accent and use of language. Being enraged he even thought of becoming violent and used his knife, though he did not mention where, how and why he used the knife. One night he heard prayers that made him believe that he is not morally so good (as he heard of Yoga and Zen). He thought if he could still become a Rabbi (a saint). Being curious he tried to find the answer but the deeper he went the more confused he was.

SECTION-2

In the second section, Eziekel talks about his adult-age experiences. His family desired to send him to England for higher studies but being financially poor they could not effort his expenses. However one of their friends paid for him and he was able to go to England. There he was alone and considered poverty, poetry, and philosophy his friends. Time passed and even after two years he was alone. A woman came and tried to motivate him and henceforth he tried to make his life a little bit better.

Later he recognized his failure which became an unbearable thought. After spending some years he desired to go back to India. However, he was too poor to do so. Hence he started working on a cargo ship that took French guns and mortar shells to India and China. He was finally able to go back to India on the same ship.

After coming back to India Eziekel tried to be happy and feel at home again. However, he was still an alien. His father often told him that all the Hindus are violent. Nissim and his family were often humiliated by their neighbors. Hence he prepared to endure the worst.

www.literariness.org
He married and even changed his job. Doing such things he acknowledged that he was a fool. He started writing poetry and knew well that he has ample to write. He explains how low their community was. His ancestors did the job of crushing seeds which were not a good job.

**Jewish Wedding In Bombay by Nissim Ezekiel**

Jewish Wedding In Bombay is one of the most interesting poems of Nissim in which the poet as a bride describes what it happened to when he went to marry as per the Jewish nomenclature and protocol, ritual and tradition. The poem though of an autobiographical note hinges on the anecdote and the art of narration. The confessional detail also needs to be taken into consideration. Though he calls it a Jewish wedding, but the pranks are almost those of ours.

The mother of the bride shed a tear or two, but was not really crying as it appeared to the poet, as he had been marking it at that time and came to notice it himself. It was a thing to do and so she did it enjoying the moment. The bride laughed when he sympathized and noticing it he asked her not to be silly. “Don’t be silly. It’s a prestige matter. What will they say if laugh you? Or laugh I?,” perhaps is the thing. Nissim Ezekiel should mark it that some mothers of the daughters weep and cry in such a way that it will melt the on-lookers. At that time what would he have done?

Her brothers had a shoe of his with them, stolen or hidden by them and for that he paid money to get them back. The game delighted all the children of the neighbours who never stopped staring at him, though felt himself like a reluctant groom of the day. “Don’t mind, don’t mind, it happens in”, should he not add on.

Nissim as a bridegroom never demanded for any dowry nor had been in support of it. A modern man he never liked to take from the father of the bride. A good boy indeed. When the father of the girl asked about the jewellery to be given to him, he said, “I don’t know.” It made him laugh.

There were brass bands out the synagogue. One or two chanting processions followed it thereafter with the people in skull caps and hats and shawls. The grape juice was given to the husband and the wife from the same glass.

The glass was broken and the congregation scattered with a clapping as per the Mosaic Law. Well, that is all about the function, the ceremony on the midway. There was nothing as solemn or beautiful to strike. Everything but was ordinary and interesting. The people including himself had not been sure of their belief which held they, but were participating in the function.

The most orthodox was the taking cheap beef which they ate and some took to pork as the Sabbath was for betting, swearing and drinking.
His father liberal and good never liked those orthodox people drawing their lines in their own way which suited him not. His mother was quite progressive to be clutched along.

After the clapping, the bride and the bridegroom went to the studio of Lobo and Fernandes, world class specialists in making wedding portraits. Lying on the floor-mattress of the wife’s apartment kitchen they kept gossiping. They went on saying let us be doing this or that, darling.

Years before she had said that she felt disappointed. Where had he been for so many years? Where had she been is she had to come to? But when quarreled they for the first time, she said it to him to return the virginity he stained, but hearing it he felt amused and perplexed as what to say, but said cutely, curtly? He responded had he known after reading one of the books instructing so, he would have definitely. The lovers’ hush is it in this poem; love’s secret gossips. All those who love will only be able to say about. Into the lovers’ paradise Nissm and his counterpart seem to be partaking of the gossip. The jingling wedding bells of the poem enthrall the readers. Wedding costume, decoration, photography, strange guests, relatives, bands, rituals, prayers, good wishes, occasional gala and gaiety add to the beauty of the poem.

There is something as that of Strange Fits of Passion and Lost Love in Jewish Wedding In Bombay. A lover’s words only a lover can take to as love is a matter of the heart. But apart from love and love-making, he uses and applies in fun, humour, joke, caricature and irony.

Though we call him a faded romantic, he is very interesting and charming indeed and can amuse to the core which a romantic too cannot do so easily. Nissim is an expert in love-making, as he knows the art and craft of pleasing and winning over.

Jewish Wedding In Bombay is a poem of love and marriage. Outwardly he appears to be faded, but from his inward within he is a very amusing fellow. He dwells in the lovers’ paradise and sings of love marriage, birthday parties, late night dances and park meets. The other poem titled Marriage too is just like it. Jewish Wedding In Bombay as a bridal song is remarkable. None ahs depicted in such a way the pleasure and joy of marriage. Andrew Marvell’s To His Coy Mistress and John Donne’s The Sun Rising can be quoted in this context.

Nissim’s Jewish Wedding In Bombay is famous for the whispers of love and love-making, pairing of the couple, meeting of the hearts, playing of the bands and music, dancing of the parties, smiling of the bride and the bridegroom, taking of juice from the same tumbler and doing of prayers to scatter around. The beauty of the synagogue as the attic of the poem foreshadows it in adding to Maharashtrian Indianness and liberal perspective held in.

**HUNGER BY JAYANTA MAHAPATRA**

Hunger by Jayanta Mahapatra is one of the darkest, dreadful, and daring poems I have read in recent times. Originally published in 1976 as the part of the poem collection, *A Rain of Rites*, Hunger established Mahapatra as one of the superstar poets in the Indian English literature.

www.literariness.org
world. The poem explores the themes of the sex trade, poverty, and emotional vacuum. In Mahapatra's own word, "In "Hunger" I was writing from experience." But, he never commented, whether the protagonist was he, himself, or somebody else.

The twenty-one line poem or rather say twenty-one line story has three characters: the narrator, the old fisherman, and his young daughter. Moreover, like a good short story, Mahapatra does not spend many words, and introduce the themes straight away: "It was hard to believe the flesh was heavy on my back./ The fisherman said: Will you have her, carelessly."

The fisherman is ready to let the narrator have sex with his fifteen-year-old daughter in exchange of few rupees. Though the real tragedy does not lie in the transaction but in the casual acceptance of the transaction. How easily, the fisherman said: "My daughter, she's just turned fifteen…/Feel her." and how unaffectedly, "She opened her wormy legs wide."

Whereas, the narrator deprived of the emotional support, i.e., love, and womanly warmth, despite his aversion, have sex with the young girl. But it is then he "felt the hunger there,/ the other one, the fish slithering, turning inside."

Hunger talks about the three types of hunger and how they feed on each other. The first hunger is of food, the second is of sex, and the third is of emotions. The fisherman and his girl were poor and in order to kill their hunger of food, father sold his daughter to satiate the hunger of the narrator (society).

On another hand, the narrator was deprived of emotional support, so he stooped down to buy the flesh (or warmth) of a young girl. But in the end, he realized the hunger of young girl is much greater than the hunger of his. But, in the real world, nobody thinks in that way, and they lust after the flesh of the young girl. They (and might the narrator, himself) come back to feed on the hunger of the girl.

The poem is an unapologetic commentary on our society, i.e., how a girl of fifteen, who should be given a safe environment to live, is used for satiate the hunger of so-called moralistic, heartfelt, civilized society.

GRANDFATHER – A POEM BY JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

“The yellowed diary’s notes whisper in vernacular. 
They sound the forgotten posture, 
the cramped cry that forces me to hear that voice."

Jayanta Mahapatra’s poem is a touching work, a poem almost autobiographical in nature as it deals with the delicate topic of religious conversion. Her grandfather’s diary is a sort of memoir that recounts how he turned his back to his religion and his ancestors due to the primitive motivation of hunger. Hunger was the compelling force that during Orissa’s famine of 1866 caused this man to give up and embrace Christianity.

www.literariness.org
“How old were you? Hunted you turned coward and ran, the real animal in you plunging through your bone. You left your family behind, the buried things, the precious clod that praised the quality of a god.”

It is unsettling to say the least that a man is forced into conversion due to hunger. There is a certain inhumanity in it and you wonder how can religion be so dross and materialistic to count the number of convertees with promises of food rather than seeing people crying for food in their bellies? The tongue of the diary is in vernacular and through language the diary conveys the cry of a man who was forced into doing something that must have caused him extreme pain and self-reproach.

“The cracked fallow earth, ate into the laughter of your flesh.

For you it was the hardest question of all. Dead, empty tress stood by the dragging river, past your weakened body, flailing against your sleep.”

When one looks at the tile of the poem there is an expectation raised that perhaps it is some sentimental song of love for someone passed by. Instead, the song is of one who has died long ago and the poet is deciphering things long past but yet terribly relevant. What one can clearly see is the politics of the world that does not care for the cries of people. The imagery of the poem is what makes it as moving as it is: Did you hear the young tamarind leaves rustle/ in the cold mean nights of your belly?

“The imperishable that swung your broken body, turned it inside out? What did faith matter? What Hindu world so ancient and true for you to hold? Uneasily you dreamed toward the centre of your web.”

What does religion or faith matter in the end if the body itself is unable to get even basic necessities? In fact, what is religion indeed? It seems to have been transformed into a mere worship of God leaving aside the fact that people are starving and falling on the wayside. There is a certain inhumanity that can be seen throughout the poem. Her grandfather does manage to save his life through conversion but his heart is forever burdened by the deed he has done when it is he himself who is the victim. Neither his own religion nor the one he adopts is able to do the basic thing any religion should i.e. provide comfort.

THE LOST CHILDREN OF AMERICA

Mahapatra presents the union of dirty politics and prostitution in the opening stanza of the poem entitled, ‘The Lost Children of America’. He puts corrupt politicians and whores side by side. He presents a contrast between their trades. He presents the irony between hunger of
belly which leads women to degrade herself such a trivial level and the power hunger of the politician who sells the whole nation in his lust. As written by Madhusudan Prasad, “By equating ‘whores’ with ‘corrupt politicians’ and by making them use common place for their respective trades, Mahapatra renders both the images ironically eloquent.

In this poem he talks how women are being raped, in front of those stony eyes of god by Priest’s way ward son. And victim is victimized again by those who are supposed to protect her and fight beside her for justice.

He describes about hunger and poverty of woman. He describe eyes those recognize her humiliation and hunger, when she was trying to dry herself in her only wet sari after her bath and nameless solitude. Thousands of such women wonder over the streets in this land and many times becomes victim of calamities.

**SMALL-SCALE REFLECTIONS ON A GREAT HOUSE**

*Small-scale Reflections on a Great House* is a poem of A K Ramanujan, frequently found in poetry anthologies. It may not be so daunting to an Indian reader but may present difficulties to others. Family matters a lot to the Indians and nuclear families are rapidly replacing joint families, but the latter is neither unusual nor unheard of. Though the poet had emigrated to America, (He was Professor of South Indian Languages in the University of Chicago), he seems to have always carried within him remembrances, often ironic, of his rootedness in his family, which happens to be an orthodox Hindu brahmin family. “Obituary” is another well-known poem of AKR, which, as an elegy, carries in equal measure, fondness for a deceased father and a wry recollection of his temper.

“Small-scale” begins by marking a peculiar feature of the great house which seems to retain things which come to it. These things become progressively more complicated: lame cows which nobody claims seek their doorsteps, only to be given names and later made pregnant in broad daylight with the help of bulls and which the girls of the family are forbidden from seeing but which they manage to see through the holes in the windows. Books borrowed from libraries don’t get returned, the greasy sweets that the neighbours send in plates and bowls are eaten but the plates are not sent back. The servants who come for work stay, the gramophone records borrowed are not returned and the inherited diseases like epilepsies also stay in the family. Sons-in-law who stay with their fathers-in-law are looked down, but they don’t seem to mind it. They too stay back forgetting their own mothers, to teach arithmetic to nieces. Daughters-in-law of course stay, but they have to honour the age-old customs of orthodox families, like fasting and performing rituals at the appropriate time of the calendar, which changes according to the monsoon. A banana tree in the backyard is a must in these families, one reason being their leaves become plates for a customary, vegetarian meal.

If things coming into the House choose to remain there, the men and material going out of the family invariably return, in one way or the other. Like the raw cotton shipped to “invisible Manchesters” return as processed cotton or muslin, things always come back. Letters posted come back with redirections marked in red ink in Tiruvalla or Sialkot because the addressee can’t be traced. Ideas too return just as children born to prodigal sons return with vague
family resemblance seen in the shape or colour of the eye. When Alexander the Great came to conquer India, he had taken chunks of Indian knowledge with him, and Greek philosophers like Plotinus used it as if it is their own. One of AKR’s uncles used to tell this and the poet uses it to comment on his own family affairs. A song that the beggar picked up (“a prostitute song”) gets repeated by the voiceless cook who sang it all the time. The daughters of the family who get married return as widows to their parental home because they are married to “short-lived idiots.” The sons who left long time back do not themselves return but have their children sent back. These kids help the elders in bringing betel nuts or recite Sanskrit slokas to approving old men. These old men regale the children with stories of their father’s childhood. Sometimes they carry out errands like bringing Ganga water in “brass pots” to offer to the dying, a ritual performed in many a brahmin family. Men of the family sometimes opt to become soldiers and the poet recalls the arrival of a relation killed in 1943 in the Sahara, half-gnawed by desert foxes. On another occasion, a nephew’s body arrives in a military truck, killed in a border skirmish on “a perfectly Chatty afternoon.”

**LOVE POEM FOR A WIFE**

A.K. Ramanujan’s poem is a love poem that isn’t from the traditional school for he does not plainly declare his love for his wife. Instead his means are all the more subtle as he through his love for her picks up quaint little images and weaves it within his search for what she was before she married him. He deals with her past life in Kerala and maternal home and ends the poem with a union of the two sexes where they are both part of one being.

The poem begins in an informal style where the reader comes to learn of a quarrel that has lasted for days but the treatment is so light that one is reassured that it is merely a lover’s tiff and nothing more serious. His wife has Syrian blood in her veins and so we are aware subtly of the fact that their marriage is the intermingling of two religions and cultures. The lady is pouting like a difficult child while the poet moves on further to describe the scenery of Kerala and her home there that made her the woman that she is.

The imagery is rural with rubber plants, print dresses and a white clad grandmother filling memory lane. Her home is a colourful place that has replaced the native home she has lost in Aden when her ancestors were forced out by the Arabs and had to take refuge in Kerala. Thus, the land they live in is borrowed land but to him it is all the more dear for she has lived there.

He then shifts to a more intimate level where he speaks of a dream he once had where they both were one-faced there was no union of two as they both formed one being. His own past life, his own individuality, his own face and hers did not exist as his face was hers and hers was his.

As he watches her in her sleep he sees happiness lying there on her serene brow. She is content to be a part of him and loose her identity in his thus, making him think of the nature of the gods that are made up of both the male and the female. He can no longer be happy as just a man or a half being. To be together is to be complete and whole.

www.literariness.org
In the morning’s realism he is aware that though they may share a wholeness yet he is also himself but as he watches her sleep he feels that she has been blessed by her past even as she has been blessed by his love as tender as that of a grandmother for her children. He also feels a slight possessiveness for her and is conscious that he is jealous of anyone loving her though his love may be unselfish in all other ways.

THE DANCE OF THE EUNUCHS

Kamala Suraiya Das also known as Madhavikutty, is India’s ‘Poet Laureate’. The “Dance of the Eunuchs” is included in the collection *Summer in Calcutta* (1965). The poem is an eloquent expression of the barrenness of Kamala Das’s love-life and emblematic of the spiritual aridity of her being. The poetess utilizes the symbolism of the eunuchs who are the very emblem of sterility. The dance of the eunuchs far from being an aesthetic extravaganza is rather a spectacle that is looked down upon.

The poetess begins by exclaiming that: “It was hot, so hot, before the eunuchs came.”

Climate change is not a matter of concern for them, as they are always subjected to cold air and frigid responses. The anklets just jingle and jingle without any rhythm to it. They are indeed a spectacle with their ‘flashing eyes’ beneath the fiery gulmohar. The gulmohar is a beautiful tree that is juxtaposed against something deemed unpleasant.

To dance, wide skirts going round and round, cymbals

Richly clashing, and anklets jingling, jingling

They were green tattoos on their face. They have to carve tattoos on their face, as the face of the eunuchs will be the only place that will be explored, that too, by disinterested eyes. Some were dark and some were fair. It is not mentioned whether they are good-looking or not, as they are not by default. The songs were harsh due to their coarse voices; a and the songs were melancholic. They sing of ‘lovers dying’ and ‘unborn children’. Where, both lovers and children are remote possibilities for them. While some beat their drums, some beat their ‘sorry breasts’. The breast are ‘sorry’ either because they are very small or because they out of place according to gender. They wail and ‘writhe’ in vacant ecstasy. The elation is vacant reflecting the vacuum in their life and the hollowness of their existence.

Were thin in limbs and dry; like half-burnt logs from

Funeral pyres, a drought and a rottenness

Were in each of them

Far from being shapely, their limbs were gaunt devoid of life like half-burnt logs from the funeral pyre, that is at once a symbol of the death of death. Not only were they overcome with drought, they were also rotten, as if in a state of decomposition. A thing tends to decompose due to lack of utility. They have no utility value, no function to perform in society, hence they rot. Crows as though foreboding some natural disaster stood still and kids

www.literariness.org
watched ‘wide-eyed’ in shock, and not in awe. The eunuchs are termed ‘poor creatures’ in condescension. Their dance far from being rhythmic, is like going into convulsions, an inexplicable hysteria that scares the spectator.

The sky crackled and the thunder came. In T.S. Eliot’s “The Wasteland” what the thunder stood for was hope. Rain is generally a symbol of fertility. The first rain always has the fresh smell of mud emanating from it. Here, however it stinks of dust, and urine of lizards and mice. Thus the poem ends without any ray of hope.

THE STONE AGE

The poem, The Stone Age, by Kamala Das has been taken from the collection of poems called The Old Playhouse and Other Poems (1973). The poem shows the relevance of extra-marital relationship in a ruined marital life. It reveals the pathos of the female speaker who is deprived of her individuality and freedom by her lustful husband and dehumanized her beyond limits. She loses all her identity as a female in this life of suffocation and utter neglect.

Title of the Poem: The Stone Age

The title of the poem, The Stone Age, is very suggestive and appropriate. It shows that the life of exclusive lust that ultimately leads to lifelessness. It kills individuality and sense of freedom. A lustful person does not think beyond the satisfaction of his carnal desires. The female person in the poem feels like a “bird o stone, /a granite dove”, having lost all her identity and freedom. She is absentmindedly fondled like a toy to create the illusion of love only. She seeks alternative sources of love to overcome her frustration in marital relationship. Finally she realizes that she has totally failed in her quest for finding true love in life.

What is The Stone Age About?

The poem, The Stone Age, is about the loss of a female’s individuality. Here the speaker, who is a female persona, addresses her husband in a satirical manner. The lady speaker is shown very critical of her husband’s repulsive physical appearances and calls him an ‘old fat spider’ who has built ‘walls of bewilderment’ around her. She charges him for turning her into ‘a bird stone’, ‘/a granite dove’. He has built around her a shabby drawing-room and absentmindedly stokes her face while reading. He often disturbs her early morning sleep and directs a finger into her dreaming eye. While day-dreaming, she finds her husband an unwanted intruder into the privacy of her mind, haunted by strong men. They vanish like ‘white suns in the swell of my Dravidian blood’.

After her husband’s departure, she would leave the house in a battered car along the blue sea. She would climb the ‘forty noisy steps to knock at another’s door’, closely observed by the neighbours while she appeared and disappeared like rain, in search of love. She was asked questions like what he observes in her, why he is called a lion or libertine, the flavour of his mouth and why his ‘hand sway like a hooded snake before it clasps my pubis’. She is further
asked why he felled like a tree on her breasts and slept on them. Finally, she is asked why life was short and love shorter still, and what bliss was and its price.

*The Stone Age Analysis*

Fond husband, ancient settler in the mind,
(…)
Secretly flow the drains beneath sacred cities.

The speaker in *The Stone Age* by Kamala Das, which can be read in full here, blames her husband for ruining her life by his unappeasable lust. She ironically calls him an old fat spider and reveals his physical incompatibility with her. The speaker criticizes her husband for turning her into a bird of stone which looks like lifeless granite love. She is deprived of her freedom and identity and is caged in a shabby drawing room. She criticizes him for feigning love while he is totally lost in reading. She is disturbed by her husband’s loud talk or by sticking “a finger into my dreaming eyes” at dawn.

This extract from the poem exposes the futility of ruined and forced marriages. It also shows the limitations of the life of lust in which there is no space for emotional or spiritual fulfilment. The speaker is totally dehumanized and feels like a caged granite dove having no life of lust in which there is no space for emotional or spiritual dove having no life of her own. She suffers from a sense of alienation and hopelessness and is left with no ray of hope in life.

When you leave, I drive my blue battered car
(…)
And go like rain.

In this extract, the speaker is quite fed up with her husband’s show of love. She fails to sleep due to the loud talk of her husband at dawn. He absentmindedly strikes her face while reading in the dirty drawing room. She feels suffocated in this life of confinement.

The speaker drives her highly dented blue car along the bus sea after the departure of her husband. She knocks at another’s house after ascending forty noisy steps in search of love. She appears and disappears like rain and her neighbours keep a constant watch over her through the peepholes of the doors of their houses.

It is a classic case of ruined marital as well extra-marital relationships. It shows how neglected and enslaved the woman speaker is forced to go in for extra-marital relationship for acceptance and freedom. She wilfully violates the moral code to take revenge on her callous and egotistical husband.

Ask me, everybody, ask me
(…)
Shorter still, ask me what is bliss and what its price….

www.literariness.org
In this extract of the poem, the speaker asks questions like what he observes in her, why he is called a lion or libertine, the flavour of his mouth and why his ‘hand sway like a hooded snake before it clasps my pubis’. She further asks why he felled like a tree on her breasts and slept on them. Finally, she asks why life was short and love shorter still, and what bliss was and its price.

Kamala Das here exposes the futility of a ruined marital relationship. The poem shows that the life of exclusive lust ultimately leads to lifelessness. It kills individuality and sense of freedom of its victim. A lustful person does not think beyond his sexual gratification and pays fig for the emotional and spiritual needs of his partner in love. The female persona loses all her identity as a woman and is reduced to the level of a granite dove only. She seeks alternative sources of love to fill in the emotional gap created by her selfish and self-centred husband.

**LETTER TO MY MOTHER**

Arvind Krishna Mehrotra while introducing the section on Moraes’s poems in his anthology of modern Indian poetry observes how, “Moraes’ burden…is dispossession,” (1992: 89). This dispossession, which pervades almost all of Moraes’s writings, had its roots in a traumatic childhood that distanced him both from his mother and his ‘motherland’. Born in Mumbai in an upper class, thoroughly anglicised family of Goan Christian, Moraes lost his mother as a caring presence early in his childhood when she gradually became insane and started having violent fits, during one of which she attacked him with a knife. The sense of fear and estrangement associated with his mother had the effect of alienating him from his native land. India throughout Moraes’s life remained the country of his mother which he loathed as much as he dreaded her. This connection between his mother, frightful in her insanity, and his discomfort with India repeatedly surfaces in Moraes’ writings and is most notably expressed in a poem titled “Letter to my Mother”. In it, Moraes juxtaposes her nightmarish presence in his life with the country that had started appearing to him from his very adolescence to be “locked in its dream” (1968: 108), sucking all its inhabitants “back to the dream’s womb” (1968: 108).

Your eyes are not mine.  
When I last looked in them  
I saw my whole country,  
A defeated dream  
[...]  
Your dream is desolate.  
It calls me every day  
But I cannot enter it.  
You know I will not return.  
Forgive me my trespasses.

Lines from this poem appears as an epigraph to one of the chapters in his autobiography *My Son’s Father* and is quoted again in his second prose autobiography *Never at Home*, which begins with his apprehensions about returning to India in 1980s, after a prolonged absence: www.literariness.org
I was afraid of it [India] for many reasons, one of which was that my mother was still alive in it. The grotesque insane figure that had dominated my childhood had ridden my nightmares for years. To come back to India and to have, at least occasionally, to confront the reality was a terrifying prospect. (1994: 1)

However, despite this desire to escape from the “nightmare” that enclosed his mother and his native country, his writings also depict repeated attempts at reconciling himself with his alienated motherland and to come back to it again and again in cyclical journeys of exile and return.

These trajectories of exile and homecoming began when as a sixteen year old he left for England to study for his undergraduate degree in Jesus College, Oxford in 1955. For him this was a journey from dream to concrete reality. In India he had led an isolated and lonely existence partly because of his mother’s insanity but also because English was his only language and he didn’t speak the local vernacular. Thus, he had grown up creating a secluded world of imagination for himself out of his readings of British literature, especially poetry. For him “poets were my people” (1968: 100) and “England […] was where the poets were” (1968: 100). Hence when he reached London it was for him like emerging into a thoroughly familiar world:

**TRIBUTE TO PAPA**

*TRIBUTE TO PAPA* is published in 1970 and this poem is a mixture of daughter's defiance of and admiration for her father. In this poem, the poet shows that the daughter's behavior to her father is not only of appreciating or praising it can be about a discussed thing also as an administration of a father is very commonly found in Indian families. Most of the daughter loves more father than the mother because of they a taste to the opposite sexuality.

This poem shows a mixture of thoughts there are two opposites thought in shows in this poem, the daughter decided that she will not give her father cause to end his life in despair and at her disgraceful behavior. In this poem, the tone of the poem just shows a rebel daughter because he makes a rebel towards her father. Her father is a traditional father we can say he was a good man he was a very simple man he don't believe in cheat he doesn't believe in anything which is against law so he cannot get a success a grand success and now the daughter wants money and wants the status and want anything which is not given by her father. She said that the goodness is worthless the society needs to own only money we can earn the honor we can earn the fame with the money so there is a life without money it just like a life without the soul. The daughter is a rebel in this poem her law and respect for him will ensure that she does not in jail in despair at her disgraceful behavior. Allow and respect for him although she does not like her father but although she gave respect to him she gave love to him and will ensure it and she is sure her father that she will not do anything she will know or she will not take a step indulge in despair at her disgraceful behavior her father got the same she donned she will not do any type of that work.

**TRIBUTE TO PAPA**

www.literariness.org
Ironic, and considerably layered in texture, "Tribute to Papa" by Mamata Kalia explores the complex relationship between parent and child, but equally intense in the poem is the critical sense with which the speaker looks at the various ways in which expectation and stereotyping determine the shaping of social perceptions. The interrogative mode is used to great effect in the poem to highlight the ambiguities that exist is social discourse and the hypocrisies that condition understanding in modern Indian society. The subject of the poem concerns the way womanhood is seen and approached both within the domestic space and the world outside. It is also interesting to see how the mother figure is kept under erasure in the poem, and whether the mother is really absent from the household or her voice and expectation does not matter in the way the father's does, the fact that only one parent is addressed shows how the gender question is mired in complexities.

The poem begins with a series of questions: all the lines in the first stanza are presented in the form of queries. The word "care" is chosen to highlight lack of regard for the views of the speaker's father, that, in effect, what we have here is a man whose ideology, attention to detail regarding hygiene and health, and cultured bearing are shown to be of diminished value in a changed society. The first two lines of the poem use the word "care" to negate the clean priorities of the speaker's father: each word preceded by the word clean is loaded with double meaning. The father is said to be a man of "clean thoughts, clean words, clean teeth" and then such attention to cleanliness is presented as being irrelevant in the social environment where the daughter has to conduct herself. At one level, there is a contrast between what the father considers important and necessary and what the world now sees, and quite clearly there is a difference in how perceptions have changed over time. Father's way of looking at things, his priorities, and his points of view seem to have been superseded by another kind of paradigm that he cannot quite understand or accommodate. At another level, however, there is the indication that he has not been able to adapt himself to the changing circumstances, and that is why he now has to confront this transformation that affecting life and society. The speaker says that father is an "angel" but asks at the same time, is such an individual in demand? She suggests that the angelic attribute of her father has become obsolete because people prefer to follow other principles in life. The nature of the first stanza draws attention to the changed priorities in society, it also highlights how values have undergone rapid transformation in the context of contemporary culture. The choice of words, the focus on the interrogative mode, and the devaluation of positive terms compels the reader to look at the issues the stanza raises with a critical eye. What has changed so much in society, so much that forms of cleanliness are now no longer wanted? More than giving us an idea of the father and his position on matters of social importance, these lines also point towards the world and provide a perspective on the state of things as they exist in a changed cultural environment. The second stanza extends the same perspective to examine the idea of "success": she says that her father is "unsuccessful" because he could not make things materially as comfortable as others did. This insistence on material gratification shows that success is measured in terms of how much one possesses or can acquire in life. And to be able to indulge in unfair practice to enhance one's wealth is considered to be the sign of courage. The speaker points out that her father lacked the daring to "smuggle"-which is ordinarily a negative act, but here it is situated
as an indicator of bravery and it is something for which she is unable to proclaim to the world how proud she is of her father. In the following stanza, the idealism of Papa is questioned, for instead of "doing" what others are indulging in, he takes recourse to prayers and spends time in the temple. The reference to prayers is significant, use it is something which involves contemplation, and while an idealist would be expected to followed the path of values, that is what those pursuing the materialistic route would consider "useless."

The speaker refers to her father's expectation of her, as he wants her emulate the path of a heroic figure like Rani Lakshmibai, who fought for her principles and did not compromise, but such a view regarding achievement in life is no longer considered important. She says that such idealism cannot take an individual very far, for the very idea of "sacredness" that he holds so dear is fast losing its charm for the current generation. She says that she is even considering "disowning" him, for she finds it difficult to acknowledge him as his father because she cannot identify with what he cherishes and values. Just a clerk, that is how she perceives her father, thereby being judgemental when it comes to assessing his importance as an individual and situating his worth only in terms of his professional assignment.

As the poem comes to the close, she points out that there is a "clash" between her and her father, as they both have very different priorities. A man who values tradition and is idealistic by nature, he is not one to welcome a pre-marital sexual indulgence, and that is where the speaker, as a daughter, questions her father. She says that she has the right over her body, and will not follow the principles with which her father conducted himself in life. As a father, he does not actually intervene in her life, and as the speaker points out, he is "too shy" to ask her is she is having an affair. Of the many vital issues that the poem raises, the one of generational change in perspective and worldview is perhaps the most striking. While the idea of an unwed mother is unthinkable to her father, and may even push him to take his own life, she has no qualms about it. She is aware how sensitive he is as a person and as the poem ends, she says that she would take precautions so that his name is not sullied for any action of hers. The ironic tone with which the subject of the poem is presented cuts both ways. It points to the growing incidence of materialism and freedom, a diminishing of traditional values in the name of a more liberal outlook and the persistence of a culture of acquisition. The father-daughter relation also shows strains that affect them both. While as a daughter she is conscious of what she wants, she is also aware that the values he considers necessary are no longer important for the current generation. In a way, then, the tribute to her father is paid for his ability to hold on to a way of life that is hardly in vogue. The world has moved ahead, and though there is a "clash" as she points out, how far is the new approach to life the suitable alternative to the one epitomized by her father, that issue remains open at the end of the poem. When she says that she'll be "careful," it suggests that there is an element of her father's idealism in her as well, for she respects his honour and does not want him to be affected by her actions. In spite of the fact that she is liberal-minded, she is always conscious of what her father stood for, and that is why the representation of both the worldviews makes the poem so poignant and relevant in terms of the subject and its treatment.