

VOLUME No. 6

Winter: 1990

# INSPIRATIONS

A PUBLICATION OF QAUID-E-AZAM LIBRARY, JINNAH GARDENS, LAHORE





INSPIRATIONS

A Journal of Poetry

Editor: Hina Faisal Imam

Volume VI, Number 1, 1990

(A Quaid-e-Azam Library Publication)

## FOREWORD

Poetry must be inspiring. Whether this issue fulfils the requirement, can only be confirmed by the readers. Among the present contributors first is Tahir Farooqi. His short poems have no titles but are quite pleasing.

Coming to own criticism I feel often ashamed of what I write. I possess no artistic skill. However for this present selection of my poems credit or blame goes to the editor.

Alamgir Hashmi has by now well established himself. From the myths and classics he comes to the realm of politics. Thus he is closer to reality. Hina Faisal Imam also seems sick of politics, worried about world events, and the future of our children. Her poems have a beautiful rich texture, because she weaves a web of bright magical words.

It is Shabana Mir who is full of much promise. She started budding long ago and is now mature at an early age. Her

intelligence is sharp and imagination fertile. She has learnt the art and also knows the value of discipline.

Ihsan Nadiem from the field of archaeology is a new comer. We hope to publish more poems written by him ~~and~~ dealing with his sojourn in Paris and his reflections on monuments.

Jocelyn Ort Saeed is a pure poet with a lyrical, romantic style. I consider her a nightingale though her voice is masculine. She seems more thoughtful at present.

As for Rais Bano Zaidi, her communication is clear, unambiguous. She keeps on striving

This issue has been delayed. We could not get hold of some of our regular contributors. We hope to make amends next time.

Inamul Haq  
13th May, 1990

PREFACE

Poetry the essence of creativity marks images in the face of our minds and turns emotions on their head to find a home in crisp soft and piercing words.

It is an effort to communicate the transformation which takes place within an individual, who responds to an event, idea or person in ways that bring about some change.

Poetry sifts life and gives us the very best of experience so that there is something to look forward to and live for.

*Hina Faisal Imam*

Hina Faisal Imam

12/5/90

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tahir Faruqi	1	Your silences	
	2	Lazy mornings	
	3	Bells cling to nerves	
	4	Crisp dreams	
	5	Hold my hand	
Air Cdre Inamul Haq	6	I Love You	
	7	Fading Out	
	8	The Resolve	
	9	My Loving Habit	
	10	Sins That Remain Hidden	
	11	Praying And Not Obeying	
	12	Hear Me	
Alamgir Hashmi	13	Returning From Dera Ghazi Khan	
	14	I, Orpheus	
	17	Because You Wanted to Hear How It Really Was	
	18	On Hearing That The Wall In Berlin	
	19	Off The Wall	
	20	Pakistan Movement	
	23	The Profession Of Poetry	
	Hina Faisal Imam	25	United Europe
		26	Changing Times
		27	Jungle
		28	Political Time
		29	Imagination Finds
	Shabana Mir	30	Crossing Ferozepur Road
32		A-Trap Of Time	
33		Martyrdom	
34		Discipline	
Ihsan H. Nadiem	35	The Resolute Arab	
	38	Last April In Paris	
	39	Royal Fort	
	40	An Airhostess On Eid Flight	
	41	Hard Day's Night	

Jocelyn Ort Saeed	42	Washed Out
	43	Question
	44	Birthday Eve
	45	Poem For March 23, 1990
	46	Search
Rais Bano Zaidi	47	Race Face And Books
	48	Evasion
	49	Dust To His Feet
	50	Notes On Contributors

Your silences  
rent satins  
of greening  
treey evenings  
fumed up by the fall  
this year  
your answering not  
to calls of birds  
breaks hearts  
the birds that stay  
at the front steps  
mount garagedoor wood  
call in songs  
as you sit to sip  
your morning juice



Lazy mornings  
footsteps short  
eyes broad  
drown  
with morning teas  
and country greens  
lazy mornings  
laze on bedsheets crisp  
silken girls are dreams  
and thoughts are hung  
like mirrors  
faces see the faces drawn  
in crayons, ices, tears  
it goes.

Bells cling to nerves  
with smell of paan  
mehendies dance  
in eyes  
saris red with borders of green  
feet of glass  
painters stare.

Crisp dreams  
on breakfast trays  
break away  
with cups of coffee  
dewy suns

Hold my hand  
I'll save you  
from too much love

I LOVE YOU

You say, you like me  
I am now infirm and old.

What can I give you in turn  
Except my heartfelt gratitude.

You are more beautiful  
Than all my words of praise.

As sweet as a flower  
As bright as the moon.

You remain self contained,  
You are decent  
Beyond measure.

Will you change your decision  
And start hating me?

I am worn out  
With age and depression.

Be then my angel  
In a world of gloom.

Treat me with kindness  
And not with scorn.

You like me, you say  
But I love you.

FADING OUT

When I was young I abstained  
In old age I embraced Folly

Now I feel fading out  
Passion falls with Age.

Vague longings dissipate  
With loss of strength  
There is no sense of achievement.

I have strayed away  
From the path of virtue  
And I have failed  
In every resolve.

Pray for my forgiveness  
I have suppressed my love  
And broken down.

May God bless you  
For my loss of peace  
I keep thinking of you.

THE RESOLVE

I will not speak a word  
I will not say a thing  
I will recede in my shell  
I will be silent in suffering.  
You will not know  
What is happening.

I know you can not help me  
And pity is not love.  
So while seeing you,  
I must remain a stranger  
Avoiding any relationship,  
Nursing an injury,  
which may be healed slowly  
As time passes by.

MY LOVING HABIT

You have confessed  
that you loved me first.  
So I loved you  
when you loved me.

Now that you dislike me  
I love you still.  
Even if you hate me  
and reject me  
I would love you still.

For loving is my habit  
I will always remain  
Your hopeless lover.



SINS THAT REMAIN HIDDEN

Sins that remain hidden in heart  
Make me miss the joy of soul.

The uncommitted sins  
Are like foul vapours  
On a clean mirror.

They leave me imagining  
The illegal and the illicit.

But I have no practical plans  
For age has made me feeble  
Leaving no strength for evil.

It makes me feel happy  
That I will never get an opportunity.

Weakness has saved me  
From actual shame.  
The thinking is still foul  
So I can claim no credit.

PRAYING AND NOT OBEYING

Instead of a life  
With purposeful striving,  
I have been content  
Only with easy drifting  
A day to day living  
Without pain or suffering.

Watching it all from a distance  
I have not entered the struggle  
Settled for comfort  
Mentally lingering.  
Whatever I gained  
Was without effort,  
Thy favour and blessing.

Thou gave me more  
Than I deserved  
My own effort was lacking.  
I long to be rewarded further  
On the day of Reckoning.

Merciful Being!  
Take me not to task  
For reckless wasting.

Without the required labour  
I am foolish enough  
Praying without obeying.

HEAR ME

Hear my laments  
Do not abandon me  
Pray, listen  
To an ungrateful wretch

Transgressing the limits  
Breaking the bonds  
Ignoring the Shariat  
I have sinned greatly.  
Wasted my energy  
Proved own enemy.

Save me from despair  
Forgive me  
Only Thou can hear  
My subdued wailing.

RETURNING FROM DERA GHAZI KHAN

Crossing the Ghazi Ghat,  
I remember  
Once you lived here  
And made the air  
Fragrant.

Now that love has faded out  
your memory lingers-  
Over the Indus river.

I, ORPHEUS

I could once break the chains  
the Sirens sang the sailors into  
and save the ship from foundering  
on that tempting rock in the lonely sea.  
And if to my music the stones or the trees  
danced, and came round to be with me,  
it was a delight but an ordinary matter;  
the spheres revolved round love and its works,  
the magic of flesh turned spirit,  
then its sound.  
Now on each summer bough the country birds chatter.  
And she, the dryad who was of this same land  
and congenial tree, is not here.  
Eurydice, I thought I could tame the snakes even  
with my music, but have no antidote for a snakebite.  
It is a certain tune, my love,  
that leads me ever again to Hades.  
The underworld gods are indifferent, unkind;  
and even if they listen sometimes, they give  
strange answers. Perhaps Persephone is the one  
I should again speak with, play for, please if  
I can.  
But all these years I have seen so many shades  
of death over my love's face; so many veils

that the vile gods will use to conceal her from me.  
Yet, if I attempt again to find her  
in the otherworld and be told in utter kindness  
that she will follow me if I promise not  
to look back upon her face  
before we exit the sunless caverns and hallways  
of the netherworld;  
what shall I do? Drop my lyre  
and walk ahead not knowing what follows me?  
Can I stand one more second not to hold  
her in my sight,  
leave her to the abrasive touch of the netherwind  
that roughs up the skin of all delicate existence?  
What if I do not hear her breath?  
What if I do not hear her footstep?  
What if I find out in the light  
that the woman coming behind me  
is another woman; that the gods have cheated,  
have changed her, put someone else in her body?  
Then?  
Whatever I did once, thousands of years ago,  
in the twilight of here and that other, yesterday,  
the whole world knows.  
Since I know the gods well behind the scene,  
I am least surprised if they are very mean.  
They pretend, but it does not affect them truly.

My music is old, has fine new strings and  
needs regeneration.

It is only I, and perhaps she and the rooks  
and the woods, that I did it for and might do  
it again.

But let me now break this old lyre.

The gods will make a constellation  
out of it, while my head for love's sake  
continues to divine their riddles and ache.

BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO HEAR HOW IT REALLY WAS

Return--?

To see that her tapestry  
never got started  
and her macrame  
was bought at Jelmoli  
for 50 francs?

The gold bangles I gave her bent  
out of shape from repeated shocks?

To see your housekeeper  
wears your best sweater  
and her knitting-needless  
are used for chopsticks?

She cooks sweet-and-sour Fridays  
from the Surcher Porky Pig  
and serves your neighbour  
that between swigs  
of Johnny Walker for concert tickets,

unravelling the house of Theseus?

The epics are longer  
because they must fabricate  
the future's pretexts,  
the designs of patchwork quilts,  
which even were not enough  
to cover herself.

No more to be said of Penelope.



ON HEARING THAT THE WALL IN BERLIN

On hearing that the wall in Berlin  
has come down in part, I want  
to acknowledge a little sentiment  
about its coming down a bit  
before going back up again  
to keep those behind it on either side  
clear about their attachments,  
of the difficulty without it  
to look across --  
forty years of building; a political art  
that divides the heart from your heart:  
a little regret, a certain loss.  
Maybe it's too late for some.  
Even dying were easier than some divisions --  
when the holes made into the future  
hold no light; even driving out at dawn  
it is dark in your particular lane.  
Now we can think of the walls that remain;  
recess in the brickwork, love that is gone.

OFF THE WALL

(Another Found Poem in Pakistani English)

Mayor Sialkot has asked the people  
do desist from writing on walls.  
He said that it was against all norms  
of decency to spoil the beauty  
of buildings, places of worship;  
was sacrilege and profanation  
of the sanctity of mosques, temples,  
and gurdawaras to use them  
for personal advertisement.  
(Of course worshipping in public  
is no personal advertisement.)  
In this case all defaulters shall be  
legally proceeded against in future.  
For the present this same writing  
appears on that same wall --  
but only as a bad thing for a good purpose,  
washable in the rain coming from Jammu --  
this ink made in Japan, and quite small.

PAKISTAN MOVEMENT

I

Movement, sure. Millions moving  
from that side to this side,  
from this side to that side,  
and back again sometimes,  
across the thoughtful moment  
wherein stood those who were undecided,  
and suspect,  
like border-posts signifying the mid-century  
frontier.

The sultry summer--if you know what  
I mean--behind us.  
The blistering journeys on foot, the grinding  
oxcart expeditions,  
the slow, steamy railways  
and their marauders behind us.  
The slit throats of the nobility, the malfunctioning  
desire, England's fond promises,  
and snuffed out love of the communal streets;  
their moonlight shadows of lead, the changing  
of the colours and '47'burning cities behind us.

'Think this is where we wanted to be  
from the beginning of our time;  
a land as beautiful as a poet's dream;  
or ever before he found it,  
the Arab sailor's act of faith.

II

I have surely come across it before,  
in one of the books, or what I imaged on an  
alien shore  
perhaps appointed by time for a landfall.  
That's my boat, these my oars; the sail's down,  
The movement's upwards from the south  
and the choice considerable,  
for the compass might be affixed  
by some dusky Eskimos. I can tent up in a  
high-rise,  
wait out the passing plane through starlight,  
till down.  
The sealions skid on imaginary ice, transfixing  
the world with a new axis of summer,  
their eyes, turning, liquid, green.  
The granary of the north gets a southward push,  
into freedom, and feeds nearly everyone--  
until the quaking elements rumble again in the  
earth's belly  
and split the land beyond rejoining;  
the furrowed fields like the cracks in time  
scotched inside a number. A kind of fall;  
but the people rising everywhere, free to grow  
how they will, if they will.

III

It is the cyclical crops I was looking at --  
and the interminable deltas of hope,  
where the rivers are either in torrent or  
slow endless flow,  
the past being a curious valley, the present tense.  
Future's the only flower worth tending  
in this earth,  
where I sow my words daily: and you know,  
these good trees bear fruit round the year,  
discreetly,  
moving along the waterways  
and four seasons of the faithful sun.

THE PROFESSION OF POETRY

However you may  
it's always for the first time,  
and you may wish it will last.  
Of course what you love  
will put you up to every wrinkle;  
whom you love will leave you,  
if you have not left already.  
The hands held lovingly  
behind overgrown hedges  
will turn out to be synthetic mittens.  
Each happiness will blossom forth  
like a shaded light--from the anxious bulbs  
refused for the season:  
these tulips were never so beautiful;  
swinging-lights until they crashed  
their heads in the drive-way. Even so.  
The utterance will be marked;  
what you believe or do just might stretch  
the horizon over the inland sea, just a little;  
will be suspect everywhere.  
The City will register your Muse  
but as your girlfriend.  
Migrate, but you cannot go far enough.  
The country you live in may not be small  
but will have indefinite borders.  
A million starving babies will seem to stare  
at your meal, and you'd like to paint one  
for the man who's lost his shadow.  
And where are you at?  
So much as a cloudberry in the make-believe  
sunlight eclipses the carbon disc,  
causing tidal waves of hot water  
drowning out the meddling earth.

But the cloudberry grows--  
Guess you've put your finger on something  
that just cannot take it.  
The new country will landlock you  
into its own missionary or liturgical  
position; then convert your wife,  
enslave your children, send you  
to a loony-bin or exile without end;  
a hostage to time and its mutilations.  
You will hear and see more  
than you will ever speak;  
if you speak, until they pull out  
your English tongue,  
mostly birds perched awhile  
on the high-tension wires  
will be your faithful audience.  
God, or Her spokeswoman, will admonish you  
about giving Her competition.  
Your friends will think you care for them less;  
for you, there's only you to give up.  
They cannot be yours.  
And your words--  
well, only words can say.

UNITED EUROPE

The Eastern Block's eggshell  
cracks and a new shape of Europe  
promises to emerge in 1991.  
United States of Europe threatens  
the Soviet might that grows  
soft and crumbles in a storm  
of economic mismanagement.  
China, resaddled in socialist  
reform restricts the strengthening  
hand of private enterprise.  
And India a sub-continent  
gets divided in ethnic strife  
and regional violence.  
Asia emerges as a united force  
shedding blood to cull  
population explosion.  
The war has begun and once  
again battles will be fought,  
on land, in air, on sea.  
What will be the future of  
our children?  
The clouds of darkness  
promise no sunshine  
and many stories will be  
written about the once upon a  
time world.



HINA FAISAL IMAM

CHANGING TIMES

The sun lit clouds  
and shadows of memory--  
the wind betrayed me  
to unforeseen madness.  
The soul warmed by radiating light  
where you are absent  
where I am present  
And these voices are  
calling me to return  
to the jungle of educated wisdom.  
In the promised world of  
enduring friendship  
the trial wheels churn fire  
into the backyard of relationships.  
I have seen friends change as  
money changes hands.  
Friends, the partners of childhood  
and companions in experience--  
The world turns upside down  
and no one cares that  
money madness has more addicts  
than heroin.  
The dungeon fills with requests  
and jailers grow fat in pride,  
Imprisoned days count the fetters  
on your belt and form new links  
in rat infested rooms.

JUNGLE

The rivers flow from a star  
in the clam distance of your eyes  
looking into moon reflections  
curving along voluptuous embankments  
of petrified trees.

In the corner of a rectangular room  
chairs and upturned tables wait for  
memory to open new doors into the  
star-spangled dreams in yesterday's  
arms.

I search the face of daylight  
in a thunderstorm of words  
flowing all day into the yard of night  
girdled in a bright transparency  
in the cleft of souls  
flashing on a terrace of flames.

The autumn images broken in spider web  
shadows, where the past rots like encroaching ivy  
involved in arcades of thought  
smiling in the sun's deserted  
procession falling into the executioner's  
plate and singing on obliterated  
branches of rubble in the wound  
of resurrection.

I have searched and I am alone  
in all moments of time populated  
by words.

HINA FAISAL IMAM

POLITICAL TIME

In the dawn of your beginnings  
marital time stretches indifferent mattresses  
across the bay of discontent  
building harbours along the stable  
coast where I once caught you running  
into my arms.

In the hall of mirrors your face  
distorted into a thousand lines  
makes no distinction between dictatorship  
and democracy.

The Center pulls, and Provinces resist.  
Who carries the blame.

Guilt free, merciless politicians  
play a hypocritical game to  
serve their individual interest  
that are contrary to nationalism.

Air lift all of them, and drop them  
as paratroopers for Antarctica  
where they can argue, fight and  
intrigue about the images made  
by the sun rise and the sunset.

HINA FAISAL IMAM

IMAGINATION FINDS

The restless breeze circles in my head  
like the sea  
and the noise of the rise and fall  
wiggles into my drowsy ear.

I stand in the city center all night  
and the trains moan around the tracks  
of thought where I left a glass  
for boring into the walls of  
yesterday's rooms.

Today reality blindfolded me  
and I stepped into the intermittent  
tomorrow on the edge of a river's  
breath  
where the configuration of words  
in a single image carries me into  
surprising court rooms that end  
in the opening darkness of your  
eyes.

I have written what someone else can  
write and read all night long  
and shock the fight of immortals  
with death.

In the drowned clustered images  
the words open a scar on the skin  
of a page and the lunar expansion  
displays firey wings cut and frozen  
in the Self.

CROSSING FEROZEPUR ROAD

I stand at the brink of the steaming road  
where wave upon wave of hurtling cars,  
towering buses, shooting motorbikes,  
rickshaws (whose hellish screaming jars  
so horribly on my nerves) rush past.  
And a giddy minibus sashays close, while  
a shrewd-eyed, shrill-voiced conductor leans out,  
clutching the bar in a precarious style,  
calling out, from amidst the cramped  
and staring passengers, "Come on, come on!  
Yes, do you want to go too, sister?"  
-Which is soon drowned in the gathering din  
of the acceleration of the wear minibus  
driven by the unweary driver who stares,  
with no respect in his eyes for the women who sit  
with him on the front seat,  
near the so very close gears.  
Anyway, here I stand even now....  
waiting, it seems, in a noisy mist  
of heat and smoke. No car stops or slows down;  
it seems no traffic-rules exist.  
No one will stop for me to pass  
or care for poor anonymous me.  
And though I stand here, waiting still,

for all they care, I might not be.

It seems that, as I venture forth,  
I'm immaterial: they might pass through  
me like a ghost. And as I hurry  
through the bustling traffic,- I know too  
that no driver will deign to slow down,  
or drive past me with greater care  
to save my skin. You see, they do not  
really see me....though they certainly stare  
with cold interest as they rush headlong.

But who cares! For I have crossed the road now  
and will walk briskly home, where Mum  
is waiting for me with a pleasant brow.-

A TRAP OF TIME

I'm stuck in a trap of time that stays  
not, rushes on; yet in one phase  
I still am stuck; ahead I see  
in wait my home, eternity.  
But I remain here, bound in by  
His boundless wisdom, till I die  
and reach my Home, and there remain.  
This world! this life! God, there is pain  
and fever in its very joys!  
And all that matters here are toys  
that we hold on to trustingly;  
but we ourselves with horror see  
them fall to nothing in the end.  
I yearn for thee, my only Friend!  
Trapped in my limitations and  
with those of flesh like me I stand,-  
Merciful God! I want but Thee,  
and the joys of eternity,-  
which would, dear Lord, be ruined yet  
if in this trap I should forget  
that time moves on - my greatest dread!  
Ah, fate! That Meeting lies ahead;  
impatient with myself I see,  
'midst it and me, eternity!

MARTYRDOM

The sun is setting, sinking down  
to its graveyard again;  
but the golden ecstasy of this death  
glorifies the pain.

The tall trees wave in silent joy;  
pure, cool and holy moves the breeze,  
and though dark night will soon swoop down,  
the pulse of life will never cease.

The sky is grey and solemn, but the sun  
after death shall be re-born  
ah! in a blaze of bloom and splendour-  
rest assured - the morrow morn!



DISCIPLINE

We have nothing in common.  
In a way, I hate you.  
You jar on my deepest nerves -  
And yet I have no clue  
About why my eyes turn to  
See your eyes critically  
Stare right through me, or turn,  
Pretending not to see.

I cannot see through your eyes-  
And yet I'd scarcely care  
Whether you exist  
Or not, whether you stare  
Or not, if only there wasn't  
This growling within my empty  
Heart, this hunger, this -  
This hollowness, that I  
Can scarce conceal, and yet I  
Will not let you see a tinge  
Of servile pallor in my  
Cheeks and eyes, nor will cringe  
In heart or mind to what you  
May give. But you may give  
One-sidedly - for you clash  
With all for which I live.

THE RESOLUTE ARAB

Sitting across the well-lit room  
A glance she stole to throw at me,  
With Bonjour<sup>1</sup> as I stepped in class  
In prestigious CAVILAM<sup>2</sup> at Vich<sup>3</sup>.

She looked so different from the rest  
In that fairly crowded room,  
A princess out of a fairy tale,  
Oriental rose when full in bloom.

She wore a formal look all long  
As introductions the class did hold.  
Her Arabic name, sweet like her,  
Oblivious of its charm, she told.

During coffee-break she stayed unmoved  
From her chair she never rose,  
In spite of numerous tempting offers  
To share a drink, if only she chose.

So elegant looked her charming frame,  
So cold appeared her attitude,  
I could not shake her off my head  
On the first day in that multitude.

No more than salutation words,  
We did exchange for weeks on end,  
The beauty queen won't pay much heed  
Though each one longed to be her friend.

While boarding a coach for Mont Feroz<sup>4</sup>  
I heard her call me share her seat,  
I couldn't believe my ears, nor stars,  
I felt for sure my heart missed beat.

She knew my people pretty so well  
Enviied our struggle for a Muslim Land,  
Her resolution she too expressed,  
To win back theirs from the morbid band.

Our friendship grew as time passed by  
We shared our joys and common sorrows,  
On long promenades she'll often talk  
Of a free homeland and peaceful morrows.

While sitting together by the window,  
One night, over-looking the park  
We heard the whispering wintery hough,  
As white snow fell through that dark.

Could human warmth shed it away  
The chilly shudder that ran my spine,  
The central-heating went suddenly cold  
As I felt her soft hands put on mine.

She wasn't crying but why those tears!  
Rolling like rain-drops down her cheeks,  
She'd grudge expressing her personal woes,  
I had known it well for several weeks.

What in the name of heavens could be,  
That made those tears flow at their peak.  
No base emotional state nor passion  
Could move her so, she wasn't that weak.

Wiping the tears, she confided in me:  
Her last brother had laid his life,  
Determined to win back dear homeland  
Now she was going to join that strife.

She did not cry for loss or fear,  
Shahaadat<sup>5</sup> was their ultimate aim,  
She wished it fighting the meanest foe  
And to train her children for the same.

- 
1. Good morning.
  2. Centre for the study of modern languages.
  3. A large town in Central France  
(pronounced as VISHY).
  4. A range in the French Alps.
  5. Martyrdom.

LAST APRIL IN PARIS

The cool Parisian April breeze  
Blowing through the fragrant trees,  
Passing stealthily, quietly swerved,  
Leaving tranquil, undisturbed,  
The gentle, quiescent and serene,  
Rippling water of the Siene.

In sleepy stillness of that night,  
High above, the moon shone bright,  
Calmly spreading enchanting light,  
When in my arms I held her tight,  
And barely audible faltering words  
Came like chirps of nestling birds.

It's Parisian April once again,  
The same park-corner by the Siene,  
The lonesome Eiffel Tower in view  
As fluffy grass does shine with dew.  
Her charming scents pregnate the air  
While park turns cosy with lively flare.

I hear the hisses, whispering sounds  
Ecstatic sighs that know no bounds,  
Still echoing in the atmosphere  
Intangible words quavered in my ear,  
By a cherished friend who was here  
So close to me, now almost a year.

ROYAL FORT

A nudge at huckle, a few French-kisses,  
Ex gratia, passionate, voluptuous hugs,  
"I love imperative, but not without love",  
Responded to passes with tender shrugs.

You're sexy, attractive but look sweetheart,  
Many complications on this course we'll face.  
Perhaps it would've been a different matter,  
If Jahangir and Nurjahan were in our place.

AN AIRHOSTESS ON EID FLIGHT

I see you standing by the aisle,  
Like a robot, delivering tons of smile  
Without a shade of personal touch,  
(Is there a reason to pretend so much)  
Lips stretched, eyes tense and wide  
Bespeak of duel far deep inside.

Lips, forced to shower  
That hollow, empty smile,  
But eyes, in league with heart,  
Not yielding to that force a while  
(Though telling of pronounced smirk  
Covering that inner tensile).

What makes you serve against your wish,  
The multitude of cultures, ranks and file!  
Is there an ailing mother  
To benefit from that forced smile,  
Or to continue his studies, you've a brother  
Waiting to climb through that stile.

If smile you must, that air-hostess smile,  
First tell your heart to hypocricise  
Or else shape not, to distort and degrade  
Those charming, beautiful lips,  
'Cause your eyes'll betray  
Your effort to smile, so forcibly made.

HARD DAY'S NIGHT

When the Sun goes down,  
The fiery desert winds  
Turn soothingly cool,  
Their shrilly bos  
Change to lullabies  
That force to close  
The watery, reddish eyes  
to a tranquil slumber  
Which comes to foil  
Agony of a hellish day  
With scorching heat  
And brazen toil.



JOCELYN ORT SAEED

WASHED OUT

The tide is in.  
I'm washed out -  
don't trust my voice  
because of your look.

I try to remember  
how I got here -  
eternity on the brain  
and your face in my eyes.

The light is green.  
I might swim for the beach:  
but I'm not coming in.  
I'm exploring the ocean of being.

QUESTION

Who is the one who calls  
from mundane cares to the heights?  
to the contemplation of all that is --  
to the ecstasy of the soul's Dark Night?

BIRTHDAY EVE

Half awake at the bedroom desk,  
working words and metre and rhyme,  
while the family sip green tea  
and talk of tomorrow  
under the light --  
the mother-of-pearl with the wobbly disks,  
brought from Manila  
once on time  
when days were in me  
and with me and deep.

All this time,  
coming and going,  
loving  
and changing a little --  
maybe, a lot --  
two creatures diverse  
entwined like vines  
on the rainforest rock--  
inching upward  
to the light.

POEM FOR MARCH 23, 1990

I want to sing  
but I lose the words  
thinking of everything  
that comes between  
my dream and this song - this one song.

I'm near to tears  
because of a letter.  
I have nothing but life now to offer.  
The white rose is in bloom  
but I can't come out of myself.

The sky in your eyes  
reminds me of someone  
somewhere that I love.  
I can't quite recall  
what it is I'm so eager to say.

I speak of the mystery sometimes  
when the moon's over me  
like a lover and I am alone  
with my daffodil dream  
and my first grey hairs.

Oh it's all out of nothing--  
this dark and the dazzle of days --  
so I go again to the dream,  
the old dream of spring.  
And like Venus I'm born - and I sing!

SEARCH

Is it in sunrise or in sunset  
the wholeness we seek  
within the knowledge and suffering  
heart alone may speak?

Again the flight of the wild bird,  
the buffalo pulling the plough  
through fields of barren memory  
to the stunted, blood-stained now.

Again, the building of houses  
where crude mud huts stood,  
the carving of images  
in flesh and stone and wood.

Again the making of meaning  
in water, earth and fire,  
the flame dance of passion-  
the enormous leap of desire.

Still arching sunrise and sunset,  
the psalms born of faith  
are the arteries in the desert  
for water, ghost or wrath?

RACE FACE AND BOOKS

To raise my standard  
of living (or dying I know not)  
I joined the race.

I turned all thoughts  
(perhaps too super)  
that came in my way.  
Suppressed all love  
(perhaps too human)  
that checked my flight.

I left my kins  
I kicked my friends  
and the old books of mine  
I threw aside.

And then one day  
I went to the annexe  
of my new large house  
to turn my father out.  
(his talk had become too boring)  
I pulled his quilt  
an angelic smile  
upon his soiled face  
prevailed.

I hurried back  
and started to mend my old torn books.

EVASION

A virgin, yes, a virgin,  
has her own world;  
her own dreams.  
Her flowers are fresh,  
her buds have not  
yet opened their mouth.  
How can she be old?  
So, please, don't tell her that she is old.

Lovers passing,  
friends, kiths and kins  
fleeing,  
years, -- faithless years  
flying,  
her vision deceiving,  
her gait drooping,  
her memory leaving her,  
But, don't say that she is old.

For, you can't snatch,  
her dreams and hopes from her.  
Her dreams gleaning,  
her visions bright,  
her wishes sweet and serene,  
her saintly virgin pride  
won't let her lose hope,  
So, never mention that she is old.

DUST TO HIS FEET

O' sweet morning breeze!  
play not with my leaves.

I wish to stay  
on this tender bough  
only till my Love  
comes to me.  
Let me only receive  
a look and then  
scatter me on the green.

Or be a hurricane  
to take me along with you  
to some far off land.

Or like a gale  
just blow me off,  
to become dust to his feet!



AIR CDRE.(RTD.) INAMUL HAQ

Air Cdre. (Rtd.) Inamul Haq born at Delhi in 1921. With an M.A.. English from Muslim University Aligarh, he lectured at Anglo Arabic College Delhi from 1942 to 1947. He served as Education Officer in Pakistan Air Force from 1948 to 1981. At present he is Director General Public Libraries, Punjab, Lahore.

He has been writing verse occasionally since 1941. His articles have appeared in The Pakistan Times, Pakistan Quarterly, Pakistan Horizon and Shaheen (a journal of the P.A.F.). He has been contributing regularly to the Journal of Research Society of Pakistan. He has published two volumes of poetry, Recollections (1984), Poems Persons, Places (1986).

ALAMGIR HASHMI

Author of five collections of poetry in English, the latest of which is Neither This Time/ Nor That Place (1984). His recent critical work includes Commonwealth Literature (1983) and contributions to scholarly publications and poetry anthologies published across the English-speaking world. He is Associate Professor of English at the International Islamic University of Islamabad. In 1985 he was also the recipient of the Patras Bokhari Award of the Pakistan Academy of Letters.

## HINA FAISAL IMAM

Hina Faisal Imam born and schooled in Lahore. University Education: University of Michigan, B.A., M.A. She writes poetry, translates poetry and short stories from Urdu into English. Her first book of illustrated poems WET SUN was published by Indus Publications Limited in 1983 and her second book of poems SILENT BEGINNINGS will be published by Sang-e-Meel Publications in 1990. Her poems, translations and articles have been published in American Journals and magazines. She is the editor of Quaid-e-Azam Library's poetry Journal, Inspirations.

SHABANA MIR

Born in London (1968). Came to Pakistan in 1974. Did 'O' levels in 1983 from the Convent of Jesus and Mary, Lahore, and was co-editor of the school magazine. Graduated from Government Kinnaird College in 1987; topped in English Literature in the University among boys and girls and was awarded the Angoori Gold Medal. Currently a student of the English Department, Punjab University, and Joint Secretary of the English Literary Society.

IHSAN H. NADIEM

Ihsan H. Nadiem was born in Sahiwal in 1940. After pursuing his higher studies in Government College, Lahore, he earned his Masters in Geography from the University of the Punjab in 1961. Soon after he was awarded a research scholarship in Archaeology, which he took to as profession later on.

On a CIES (France) Fellowship he did specialized studies in Museology Paris and French language from Clermont-Ferrand University.

In addition to several research papers he has published over 50 popular articles in the field of cultural heritage. He edited PAKISTAN ARCHAEOLOGY No. 10-12 (1974-86) and Archaeology's QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER No.2-4 (1986). He was elected RAPORTEUR to the 3rd South Asian Archaeological Congress held in December, 1988, and also holds the office of TREASURER, Pakistan Society of Archaeology and Museums.

He writes English poetry and has published in various papers, journals and magazines. He has also recited his poems in the English speaking circles in Paris, Vichy, Clermont-Ferrand, Sophia-Antipolis, Rome etc.

## JOCELYN ORT SAEED

Selected Poems is Jocelyn's fourth book of poetry. It includes lyrics from Rainbow of Promise, Where No Road Goes and Between Forever and Never. The poems chosen have fared well in competitions and in reading in Pakistan and abroad. The book is published by Nirali Kitaben of 6 Empress Road, Lahore. There is also an accompanying cassette.

Poet, philosopher, teacher, mother of six and grandmother of Rabia and Ismail, Jocelyn is a poet's poet. In quest of the reality her images confer and withhold, Jocelyn makes space to live and goes "Where No Road Goes."

While studying at the University of Queensland in her native Australia, Pakistani students introduced Jocelyn to the poetry of Iqbal and Tagore. Later, en-route to post-graduate studies in Germany, Jocelyn visited Pakistan and proposed to one of those students, Saeed. They married as she departed for Germany.

In the remote sugar-mill colonies where Jocelyn has lived, there were rarely other women who spoke English. Initially, writing was as an aid to orientation in a cultural-religious environment where familiar landmarks were few.

"My poetry has always been related to conflicts within myself and society: but it is the challenge to give expression to moments of insight which is the "kundalini" in me. Poetry spirals me out of the void and fills me with energy and courage to listen to the song of silence. Only then can I abandon myself to that rhythmic word that makes human living possible for me.

Tagore

RAIS BANO ZAIDI

Rais Bano Zaidi, was born and schooled in Lahore. M.A. Persian, M.A. Urdu, M.A. English, 1986. She has inherited literary talent from her parents both Urdu poets. Writes on educational, literary, social and scientific topics. Two of her books namely Spin Off From Space Research and the The Challenge of Space were published in 1983 under UNESCO Courier Book Series. At present she is teaching English in Pakistan Railway Saint Andrews High School, Lahore.