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Writing Sample

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Includes "r/e/c/y/c/l/i/n/g," "HOMEWARD," "To the conscience-keepers," "Anatomy," and "He Who Was Gone Thus."

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Thachom Poyil

POEMS

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

Beware them
who come asking for old shoes.

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

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

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

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all would be unpublished till date.

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

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

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

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

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

Beware them
who come asking for old shoes.

*

HOMeward

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

turned over
on the belly
squirmed breathless

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

got up
stood wobbling
toddled on

reached into crabs' holes
tickled the fingerlings

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

saw me
recognised me
laughing aloud
embraced me

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

*

To the conscience-keepers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Friends,

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

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

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

Dear friends,

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

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

*

Anatomy

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

the eyes
 two spy satellites
 sleepless among the clouds

the limbs
 desert paths
 leading nowhere

the heart
 a harbour
 that has faded from the maps

the word
 a prison
 more ancient than history

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

silent and still
the smoke
of unconditional burnout

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

* the final cataclysmal dance of the Lord Shiva.

*

He Who Was Gone Thus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Beyond dark years

II

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

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

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

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

* prakrit-one of the ancient languages in India.

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

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

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More of Thachom Poyil's work is at www.yetibooks.com
