



Anthony Lobo

EARLY POEMS

*My heart is like an old sitar
Whereon your fingers stray*




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Length 48:19 minutes
38 Tracks

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Anthony standing in the second row with his family, at the age of 16



1 *Aspiration*

*A little place to live and love
A present and an after
A place of sunshine and of rain
And gentle human laughter*

3 *Monsoon*

*I saw bubbled beauty burst in rain drop rows
No reck of reason why this loveliness lost
And slender tendrils, fumbling at the moss'd
Wall in myriad gropings – O Life it grows!
Always we see this death and birth and brood
Womb works at will and gathers all to point
Flashed fecund – time is still in joint,
Will breed, will spawn in reckless monsoon mood.
Life is meaning, death is meaning too.
Raindrops are moving midgets giving green to brown
Fresh livery, roguish laughter, clown
They dancing, sometimes motley, sometimes marching crew.
So springs it all – cow chews cool on cud
And river runs red-ochre with its mud.*

4 *Our love will be forgotten*

*Our love will be forgotten, it was known
To only you and me
Or me in you
A tenderness upon your lips bore love, bore me
As praise to God
And in the warmth of brooding breast
I woke to love
To silent sunrise, fresh, clear, clean
A healing benediction
Our love will be forgotten
It was born
As something sad
A sudden little gasp, a prayer, a sigh
Ah something sad!*



6 Golden Jubilee

When I look back on length of days,
I see your call,
As once with Paul,
The fountainhead, the parting of the ways.

And if sometimes I did not see,
Yet love was near,
It cast out fear,
And set my feet on truth's height to be free.

My days are not in yellowed leaf.
There is no sere.
Your sunlight clear
Has chased away the sadness and the grief.

There may be time before my close
But thanks are due,
Now, God to you.
I am content to rest in your repose.



7 Come curse those gossip lips

Come, curse those gossip lips that fume and lie
That you and I are matchéd odd in year
As though my love were measured by my thigh
And David's shank no Abisag can lure.
I pitted strength against my God and grew
Bold in my blush; was I not young with Him?
Or mocked his grey hairs and his senile woo?
And said thus is my will and thus my whim?
Make me your God I say, in worship bend
Yourself my creature and my goddess both
This paradox to carping reason lend
Or either fully love or fully loathe
Do you not see? How shall my oneness be?
Except through you the other half of me?

9 *The Woman in Adultery*

*You stood there in Jerusalem and taught.
They brought to you the halt, the blind, the lame.
And mockingly a woman, guilty, caught
Soiled in the stolen act of scarlet shame.
“Master”, they said, “what judgement would You give?
For Moses said that such a one must die.
Perhaps in mercy You would let her live?”
Their words were soft – You read the hidden lie.
And You were silent – You, the Father’s Word.
Impatiently they questioned You again.
“Let him with sinless soul”, so spoke the Lord,
“Cast the first stone” – the crowd began to wane.
The place grew empty but the woman stood
Uplifted by the glory of Your Good.*

10 *Damascus*

*On the road to Damascus
He rode with thunder deep into the night.
The flaming torches fanned by dash and wind
Flared forth the angry fire of his mind.
He was the Lord’s avenger and his sight
Searched sternly for Damascus; while the road
In all its length lent madness to his mood.
Prophetic zeal would scotch the viper’s brood.
He felt himself being driven, God his goad.
A flash! He fell, the darkness blinding him.
Or was it light? He knew not. All he knew.
Was sudden sweetness stabbing him like pain.
A wave of sorrow surged through life and limb
And forced his cry “what wilt Thou have me do?”
For he had seen the blood-drenched God’s Lamb slain!*



12 *The Prodigal Son*

*I left my father's house, my feet were fleet
To seek the summit of all joy the fair
Bewitching phantoms of a sensual sweet
With my hot hands hid deep in harlot's hair.
My lips pressed hungry on the lips of life:
"Whirl mad with music, wine and woman's arms.
What if tomorrow bring the moral strife?
Tonight I'm captive, worshipper of charms!"
Weary I watch, my soul among these swine
Knows its own horror. Even as they feed:
Their sensual grunts, a memory of mine,
Relentless tear illusion till I bleed.
The husk I fed on and my towering lust
Is crumbled, scattered, God, a little dust!*

13 *Mary Magdalen*

*O Love you came through burning sunlight bright.
Ah God of mine, but You were young and fair.
Your gentleness allowed my heart to dare
My soul was freed from terrors of the night.
I ran to meet you, I in scarlet dressed
Love's colour, heart's flame, beauty, perfume pressed
Into its fragrant folds. Oh! It seemed best
To kiss those feet with warmth of tears caressed.
"Come follow Me" you said; `You looked at me.
O dreadful black doom-bloom of Calvary!
Where was the scent, the strength of Bethany?
You hung transfixed upon a tall crossed tree
And I was weeping at the awful place
While all my hair was loosed about my face.*

15 *On Origen's Exhortation to Martyrdom*

Weaned from the breast, on meat of manhood fed.
Learn now the Lord of tribulation well
For all the stripes are only words that spell
The worth of love, aye, though the martyr's bed
The cross, the sword, the long-drawn racking bed
Are now your portion. Know this earthly hell
Has heat to help love's germinating cell
To spring to height when other seeds lie dead.
Stern burning words, fulfilled in flaming fate!
What wonder then that weaklings such as we
Should snatch strong courage still to face the hate
That swirls around us a satanic sea.
Our souls like lonely sentinels will wait.
In patient trust – God gives the victory.



16 *To St. Theresa of the Child Jesus*

(she was noted for her lovely smile)

We are not quite so near in time and place
I never saw your face.
But still you smile so sweetly down on me
From your eternity.
The fragrance of the little way you trod
Allures me on to God.

I do not know when I began your way.
Was it perchance that day
When groping through a soul-engulfing mist
I felt myself dismissed
Abandoned, lost, alone, a little child
Theresa and you smiled?



18 The Dark Night

I grapple in the dark, I grip, I fall
God of this darkness must You press me down
This fool, this dog, this loveless lumpish clown?
I am no Jonas why this whale-gut maul
This belly-soft-slime-slitter? I'm no Paul
No lonely Francis daring deep-sea drown
Nor Origen – I shrink from martyr's crown.
Sweet wine I'm not but bitter wormwood, gall,
Clod-earth not soft clay – I am only me
What would You have with mediocrity?
Great souls I know are born in agony
But this stern stripping? What's left? Not I! See!
A shell of emptiness! God all You need
Your breath of grace makes music through this reed!

(St. Francis Xavier,
whose relics are preserved in Goa, India)

19 Renouncement

Take from me all, yes, all! why leave a crumb
To taste and tantalize? No, nothing so!
Strike, axe-smash all these baubles with a blow
These skeins that twist and tangle. I'll succumb
To all your beauty. I'll have only You.
I have only You.
This blood gash, this heart, fleshed house of sin,
Sick pouts knows all things part.
Wayward, it wandered, wavered till You drew
It light yet suction-strong; and finger-sure
Stabbed deep with sword; or was it scalpel's wound?
Swift surgeon, feel this warm, this sweet blood bound
In dancing veins and know this pulse-beat pure!



20 *I wait for evening*

*I wait for evening, darkness, night
When I can wander free
Freed from this curse of me
I love, I do not see
The streaming street, the lurid neon light.*

*I watch with wonder in my heart
I wait for You to come
Beyond the hurried hum
Where lips of love are dumb
I wait – each footfall makes me start.*

*Oh! Do not pass me by, I pray
My love is Yours I swear
And other loves I share
I sacrifice, I tear
Trample and stamp into the clay!*

*I see but not with eyes of mine
And whisper words, God, sweet.
I run, I run to meet
And bending kiss your feet
You lift! I know your clasp divine.*

*Break, burn me for I will learn love.
Or must I part in pain
From You my sweetest gain?
Your are my God remain
And everything You hate remove.*



22 *Will you treat me so*

*What? Will you treat me so, pour all this grace
This love on me, dog's dung, on me poor mock
O manhood? Lift me, Me, to love's embrace
And open doors on which I dared not knock?
For I am sense, sense to the soul of me!
How could I grasp You, I who only grope
In things of sense? Sensual was all my plea
But you were bold, burst bounds, bewildered hope
In gasp of gladness at the feel of You.
Sense silenced in Your dark of deep delight
I dread the horror of my nothingness.
But more so you, all Might, all Love, all True
Paled into panic, struggle I for flight!
Supine I lie all agony yet bliss.*

23 *Come charm me not*

*Come charm me not, I will not play allured
By something sweet; mock not my manhood, no,
I am no child for breast; a man not blurred
By size of strength. Come, seeds of warriors sow.
I will once wrestle, knee with knee, soul bent on soul.
Hard hurl and sweat and know the pitch of heat
As black battalions ram rush their goal
Feet shod for victory, death, but not retreat.
Now it is night with bed-warm sullen sleep
Only I wake and fight, flog, stagger, strain
Bulge muscle 'gainst my foe or flung to deep
Rise panting, heart-bold, each breath gasp the wane
Of wanting; fight is fill, not being trod
But life, but love, then foe is friend, my God.*



24 Give me then suffering to know

“To those who love Him, He gives much suffering,
to those who love Him less, He gives less suffering.”
(St. Theresa of the Child Jesus)

Give me then, suffering to know
The burning heat of my heart's glow
And all the agony of love.
Oh! Let my spirit soar above
Freed from all things that bind below.

It's You I seek, God, let me find,
My love is like the panting hind
That seeks cool waters running wild
My heart is as a lonely child
Who sits before a window, blind.

Oh lift the veil and let me see!
Break now my bonds, let me be free.
My heart longs for You hungrily
Ah! Touch me, love me, come to me
Yea, though it means a Calvary!

26 My heart is like an old sitar

My heart is like an old sitar
Whereon your fingers stray
The strings, alas, are worn, they mar
The melody you play.

My eyes are blind, they do not see
The brilliance of Your light
They keep on groping aimlessly
Denied is them delight.

My thoughts droop spent like summer trees
Before the monsoon falls
My ears are straining in the breeze
Did someone say “He calls” ?

I'm poor, I dare not hope and yet
I feel your hand, it's cool
On burning brow, my eyes are wet
Forgive this straying fool.



27 *You draw me*

*You draw me and I draw back full afraid
I burn with love and burn in agony.
And though these feeble fingers would have stayed
The sight, the sound, the death embrace, I see
Myself resistless, swept away and made
A drop within a surge, a sucking sea
A yawning gulf whose depths in horror fade
Into a fathomless infinity
You cast to hell, you draw to deep delight
You poise me in the pain of nothingness
My breast against the bars of being; in height
I know the depth, me nothing, nay, still less!
And you the All, as breast, as hammer blow,
As sweet retreat, as fierce volcanic glow!*



28 *Ultimate Things*

*I have been intimate with ultimate things
I have drunk at the source of the sunken springs
I have seen God.
Eyes have not seen
Nor ears have heard
How then was I lured?
I have known sin
Balled up and cursed within
Whoring and worse and gin.
Childhood and youth and age
Prison and fetter and cage
Tired inarticulate rage.
Now at the ultimate gate,
Threshold of love or of hate
Eternal, in trembling I wait.*



30 Würzburger Bahnhof

*As I said, "Ursula" must I say "God"?
Name you? Draw close? Become your intimate?
Your jealous lover? Worship out of wit
Like country yokel with bucolic plod?
But I could touch her breast and see her smile
And hear her talk and breathe her secret scent
Within the comfort of her heart, no guile,
No hide and seek, no whistling breeze to vent
My fury on. My anchor strikes not rock,
My light, no answering light, no shadow even.
And all my voiceless anguish comes to mock
My hell with poignant promises of heaven.
My senses stumble, hunched and housed in flesh
And all my soul can feel is bar and mesh.*

31 Should we surrender

*Should we surrender to the great
Movements of nature and of fate
And listening to the call of some high soul
Enroll
Our compassed world and small
Within the larger orbit of a whole?
Forget my life
In the impassioned strife
For a better world
For a flag unfurled
For a country's name
To blot out unknown shame?
My love I feel
Within this grandeur there must be a place
Where I can seal
Sometimes your face
Even with kisses base.
Where I can be
Just me!*



*Not me as decimal dot
Within some saviour's plot
For all mankind.
O to be blind
To their nobility!
To do my thing
As conscience and as king
And sometimes in my soul to know
That I can stand against the flow!*



32 Blessed are the meek

*Blessed are the meek
You did not say the weak
For the weak there would be forgiveness
For the meek the land
For the haughty the sand
The desert sand, the thirsty endless sand*



34 *Dreadful dark*

*In moments of that dreadful dark and deep
I thought perhaps that all my love had dried
Feeble it flickered, struggled on and died
A little sand, a mouldy ash-strewn heap.
Straining these empty arms into the empty night
O God I stood. Was all the fighting done?
Or had the lonely agony begun?
I wandered weary wastes bereft of light.
But no! I struggled on unto the death
Birth rather in your Death, two Deaths one birth!
And on the giddy summit drawing breath
I paused and look! around me spread the earth
Fresh, warm in worship, sunlit, dew-drop-wet
Your glory came into my heart and mirth!*

35 *Lord of death*

*Sometimes I fear to say you are the Lord of Death
Not knowing when you will strike, if you will kill.
I have seen young bodies crushed
And flowers in first bud of early promise dead
While dried breasts live.
You are the Lord of Death.
Should I concede You this power
Am I not Lord of my life?
Lord of Creation you are the Lord of Death
But not my death, no, not mine.
You can kill others, stop life at a blow
But my life is mine, I master my death
And yet deep in my heart I fear
You are the Lord of Death
My death.
Love come and take this fear from my heart*



36 *I follow evil*

*I follow evil, evil
Good I know.
We met with eyes
In fierce embrace not thighs.
We could not talk –
Oh, could I take your hand!
We'd walk and walk
We were not dumb
How could I say
'Trinken wir eine Tasse Tee'
To your 'Tum', 'Hum'?
Babble and Babel and bleat
Slitter of hurrying feet
Bombay and Berlin meet?
In the breath of God in AUM!*

*Where sin abounded
Soiled and sullied me
Savaged me and grounded
God's eternity
Your grace!
Glory to you o Lord!*

*Between the birth and the death
And the Thou
Before the Why and the How
The 'Aum' of the breath
And the Visit
In the flame and
The fire of the Spirit*

*I follow evil, evil
Without the will.
Within the sin
In the redemption.
Between the cross and the crucifixion
Is the Body –
Body of death and shoddy
Pimpled, pocked, patched and bloody
Body of God! This is My Blood
Opening the flood
Flow upon flow of grace
Brace against embrace!*



38 *If I must speak*

If I must speak, it is because You are Silence

If I must search, it is because You are Everywhere



Anthony Lobo

Born on 19. September 1933 in Santa Cruz, Mumbai/Bombay, India. At the age of 5 shifted to Pune. Finished school, high school, college in Pune. Began studies for the priesthood in the Diocesan Seminary in Parel, Mumbai in 1953 and was shifted to Pune, Papal Seminary in 1955. Obtained BA in Philosophy & Licenciante in Philosophy in the Pontifical Athenaeum Pune, in 1957. Was sent for theology to St. Georgen, Frankfurt a. M., Germany in 1957.

Was ordained priest in Eichstätt, Bavaria in 1961 and returned to India in 1962. Served in various capacities in the diocese of Pune, such as chaplain to the Young Christian Workers Movement, parish priest, principal of Ornellas High school and vicar general. Was involved in several social projects, such as street children and shelters for women.

After retirement, at the age of 69 married Marina Alvisi, a German-Italian lady, in Pune. Thereafter both settled in Berlin/Germany in 2002.

Besides academic studies the practise of yoga with the yogamaster BKS Iyengar was a decisive influence. Anthony still teaches yoga with his wife Marina in Europe, something he has been doing and practising for over fifty years.

An MA and M Phil in English helped him on his way to becoming a poet. The poems are an expression of his life.

