

SIMPLE DITTIES OR NOTHING AT ALL

*My need is such I pretend too much
I'm lonely but no one can tell.*

Platters

Should anyone tell?

If you sit tight doing absolutely nothing,
I mean really nothing,
not even noticing you are doing nothing,
which means
that you should not even be aware that there is some thing to be
done,
if you had only noticed that there is very little work required to
separate an active mind from a dead mind,
to be aware that there is a sun and a moon
and little grasshoppers,
all very active and transcending,
not even aware of the folds in your blue jeans pressing against
your bottom resting on an uneven chair,
if you can do that,
with your mouth wide open and staring blankly,
then you are watching television.

It is a bit of a let down for you to know that isn't it?

No!?

Then you will survive
doing nothing in a spectacular way
with lots of style about nothing.

Why am I writing this article?

No reason.

Lots of no-reasons about reason-less nothings.

On the other hand, it is possible that you may have noticed me doing
nothing.

Then it is quite likely
you will not survive.

Not the way we do.

Where the men have lost their bones
You should not have noticed me doing nothing.
You should not have
not noticed me
not doing nothing.

You may have noticed your blue jeans
for that is the nothing that is something.
But,
the folds of your blue jeans pressing into the bone of your bottoms?!

There is no style in those thoughts.
Leave it for the blue-collared workers
and the white-collared workers
or any worker who gets collared.

They only work for a living.
They do not style a living.

Chamatkaar!
Jaadugiri!
It's sheer MAGIC!

We all crave for that isn't it?
At least we all crave to tell somebody we care to impress
"That was magic *yaar*."

Like the time you go trekking through the Annapurna pass during
your short holiday making sure to see that you don't hire a Coolie to
the top of the pass,
that you are carrying your own things,
and you don't see anything on the way to the top,
except when you stop to rest
to take photographs
of the *Chamatkaari* that you would love to show to your friends,
the *chamatkaari* both in the view as such
and your photographic skills as well;
and you are fighting all the time with your companion
who is as tired as your are

and know why you find a thrill in climbing up –
because you come down to rave about it all;
not only that –
your companion knows that you have to climb up fast
to show the world
that not only are you a *kavi*,
a Milton because he was blind,
but also a Tensing or a Hillary
combined with a David Lean and Satyajit Ray.

The companion you love to love loving you,
even if you cannot find the time nor the mind
to give her a child
because there is so much to do –
"I am not having a baby till I trek in Easter Islands" –
you love her because
she is more than what you thought she was,
a real jewel
and a *Durga*
and a *Chitrangada*;
all rolled into one
and you are only waiting for those names to become the style.

Gosh!
You stop.
Am I doing something wrong?

Should I have been like my *desi* grandparents
who gave me so much!

No way!
This is evolution man! This is what evolution
and Darwin
and progressiveness (or progress)
technology,
beating tradition,
instant coffee is all about.

instead of roots

*Oh please; say to me I hope you'll understand
And please, say to me I wanna hold your hand
I wanna hold your hand*

That's another of my problems.
Every now and then I have to have my mother around.
Though she's very smart and dies her hair the very best way
with just enough white at the right places,
and sits in the circulating library for intellectuals in
her little restaurant for health addicts and friends,
and her collection of old 78 rpm records
to be played on her His Master's Voice's
(complete with a live smooth-haired Fox Terrier)
mechanical gramophone.

I have a His Master's Voice for which I wait
just like the dog on the label.

"I sacrificed other children that I could have had because of you,
dahling".

She got me the fox terrier for company,
but took it away to the restaurant,
when she found that it goes well with the gramophone.

"You are too old to pay any attention to the dog, dahling.
The poor dear!

"I'll look after him in the restaurant."

She gave me a horse.

She also gives me my companions now and then who ride my horse.

And my Ferrari.

And one of my father's private aeroplane.

My mother chooses only the best of the aspiring ones for me.

"I am sure you will like her, dear.

Do you know that she, my mother, could have become a broker"...

or a jockey,

or a nun

or something that would just make her abnormal.

But then, she would have the style!

That's what is important.

"You would love her when she wears her ethnic dresses".

*"She's got style and she knows it.
You can tell by the way she walks."*

One of mother's favourite songs of old blue eyes, whoever that is.
It's not father.
He gave up long ago.
He only brings in his daily million
selling nothing.

*Who wants to be a millionaire?
I don't
And I don't
Cause all I want is you.*

The point is, they say, "What's wrong with nothing?
You have only one life, dammit!
Enjoy it!
And stop cribbing.
If you don't like your money give it away.
Or they will take it away."
They never say
"We will take it away".

Only my father says "Beta,
You do what you enjoy.
I do what I do because I am now reduced to enjoying
what others would enjoy me not doing."

It was father who taught me to talk in circles so that one gets the full
flavour.

I must always call him as Father
because it is this that gives him the full flavour.
Just as beta does for me.

"I am still the best in my game, beta.
You just see the amount of thinking I do scheming my millions.

That Nobel prize you value so much would have been easy for me."

Now where did this Nobel prize thing get in?
Its nothing. Its only that
one day I thought that okay I am rich. And lonely. And spoilt.
And there is nothing I really want.
And everybody is nice to me
and saying nice things to me.

So how do I go and prove myself?

When you are rich they think you really know".

Its my friend (or a movie or a song)
who told me that its bad to start at the top
because there's only one way to go
and that is down.

*I reached the top
And I gotta stop
And that's whats bothering me*

Starting at the bottom is as bad as starting at the top, isn't it?
I mean if you think you are at the top and that is a bad thing to think
then it is equally bad to think
that you are the bottom and you have to go to the top.

So don't be at the top.
Either you don't be aware that you are at the top
so that you also won't be aware you are going down.
Or,
you start at the bottom.

"Humility is endless" you know what I mean.

*At least Eliot-ji knew
Do not let me hear
Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,*

*Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.
The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.*

You know why it is bad?
Because you want people below you to know you are at the top.
For this very simple good old reason!

There is no subtlety about it.

You just want some body to know that you know that they know
that you are at the top
because you are better than them.

And how do you show
you are better than them?

*I can do anything better than you
No you can't.
Yes I can.
No you can't.
Yes I can.*

So what do you do if you don't want to be at the top.
Nothing.
Be an actor.
Play a role.
Hamlet, or Dhananjay or Duryodhana or Ganesha
if you are happy
and non-controversial.
Or,
leave for posterity your noble thoughts.

But how do you wait for posterity.
Reincarnation?
But supposing I don't believe in that.
I mean what do I care what the reincarnated persons think about me
even if I am reincarnated and know that I am reincarnated.
I don't think that reincarnated persons should know
that others are also reincarnated.

It would spoil the whole purpose.

And supposing there is no reincarnation?

Then what?

Get your name in a book.

That's as good or as bad as reincarnation.

Get a Nobel prize.

That's what I told my father.

If one is really good

one should get a Nobel prize.

They don't give really lousy guys the Nobel prize!

My father said "Or make a million a day,
no matter how you do it beta you have to be damn smart".

Even if I have to be a con guy or a hoodlum.

"Especially if you are a con guy or hoodlum".

Starting from near zero a day.

He forgot to tell me that.

So where do I come in?

or get out?

or why should I presume?

Find a wheel and it goes round round round

With a splendid sound as it goes

Along the ground ground ground

Till it brings you to the one you love.

You know what?

Its not money that one really wants if one is young.

You want to belong.

It is the image.

The symbiosis between the dream and the reality.

There were bells on a hill

But I never heard them ringing

No I never heard them at all

Till there was you.

Where are you?
Who are you?
If you are you.

There should be a *taal*,
a beat, a rhythm, in life,
a *raaga* arising

out of an accustomedness

that makes the day begin
and the candle light flicker
when the wasp stings.
The falling leaf,
the trampled marigold
set in cow-dung in its sandalwood-incensed ambience.

Use the morning sun's glow for your prayer
and the oil lamp's soot to *kaajal* your eyes,
the turmeric paste to wash your face,
the urad daal powder for your body
and the *sheeka-podi* for the shampoo.

The fresh mustard oil for mashed potatoes
and steaming hand-pound rice
with gur
on a freshly washed banana leaf.

Where have all the young girl's gone?

It is not as if the times have changed.

It is just that we experience so much more.

Its not as if we have become smarter in coming to conclusions
but that
we have been seeing the stereotype
so so often

we jump to conclusions
without knowing that we are doing so.

This is what they require for mass hypnotism.

Its like this.

Imagine that there is this popular song,
I mean very popular,
like this
"choli ka peechay keya hai" song
that all these young people sing for several reasons.

You have the background music going
"book, book, book, book".
Try singing this "book, book, book, book" once
in any collection of young people
and you will find somebody saying "choli ka peechey keya hai"
either as a song or
as part of a sentence.
Like "Stooooopide yaar, this choli ka peechey stuff"
or
"you know when this anju and manju went to see choli ka peechey"
or
"damn strange! How come both of us thought of choli ke peechey?"

You don't come to a conclusion;
you are taught to jump to conclusions
by this mind-warp of mass-communications.

So what the hell!
Why should I perform to get a Nobel prize
judged by people who jump to conclusions.

Manipulated by simple ditties that mean nothing at all.

Isn't it strange?
I mean after all this jabbering around
I should find the power of simple ditties
for the mind warping game

by
people who jump to conclusive conclusions
for
people who jump to precluded conclusions.

*As though I am Sir Oracle!
and when I open my lips let no dog bark.*

*Once there were green leaves kissed by the sun
Once there were valleys where rivers used to run
Once there were blue skies with white clouds above*

Simple ditties
giving you the impression
that things are nice
and that the sentiments are in proper places.