

## Poetry Series

# Sachin Ketkar

- poems -

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### **Sachin Ketkar (29 9 1972)**

Sachin Ketkar (1972) is a Maharashtrian bilingual writer, translator and critic. Apart from *Bhintishivaicya Khidkitun Dokavtana*, Abhidhanantar Prakashan, Mumbai, a collection of Marathi Poems,2004 and *A Dirge for the Dead Dog and other Incantations*, Sanbun Publishers, New Delhi, a collection of English Poems,2003, he has translated and edited 'Live Update: an Anthology of Recent Marathi Poetry', Poetrywala Publications, Mumbai, July 2005. He mostly translates fiction and poetry from Gujarati and Marathi into English. He has translated contemporary Gujarati short story writers like Nazir Mansuri and Mona Patrawala along with the Gujarati poets like Narsinh Mehta (15th century AD) into English. He also works as contributing editor for *New Quest*, a journal for participatory cultural inquiry, Mumbai. He holds a doctorate in translation studies and works as Reader in Dept. of English, The MS University of Baroda, Baroda.

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#### Works:

\**Bhintishivaicya Khidkitun Dokavtana*, Abhidhanantar Prakashan, Mumbai, a collection of Marathi Poems,2004

\**A Dirge for the Dead Dog and other Incantations: A collection of Poems in English* published from New Delhi, India

\* Translated and edited 'Live Update: an Anthology of Recent Marathi Poetry', Poetrywala Publications, Mumbai, July 2005

## English Poems From The Dirge for the Dead Dog and Other Incantations

ENGLISH POEMS OF SACHIN KETKAR

### 1) This summer too

This summer too  
When the thick solar winds go wild  
On the desert streets  
Houses blaze like tungsten  
In the bulb  
The dust storm sings  
The retina

Or when  
The radioactive stars crown  
Above the head as Gemini couple  
And the Bee Hive thirst for honey

My self  
Like a parched leaf  
Shall burn  
At the focal point  
Under the blinding glare  
Of existence

### 2) Inscapes from hostel

#### I)

in the empty corridors  
the locks  
hang  
like testicles  
of an old man

#### II)

sooty faces  
of the crumbling walls  
mosaiced  
with pink nudes  
watch the congestion

of a cigaretted room

III)

the damp smelly underwear  
almost cleaned  
hang like  
lifeless bats  
on a swinging wire

IV)

who knows  
you may even begin to like  
the vapors of urine  
near the fetid dirtied lavatory

### 3) CAMPUS POEMS

I)

In silence the faded pink domes  
Share loneliness  
With the evening gray and sad  
Darkening walls  
The dismal trees  
Long for someone from ages

II)

Everyone's left  
Classrooms brood  
Over their emptiness

Shrubs cling to the red bricks  
Like memories

Some solitary figure  
Is seen on the abandoned streets

III)

These old walls  
Will always stare blank  
At their dim reflections  
Within me

IV)

At night  
Silence sleeps in a corner  
Like a cast out street dog  
In a discarded night

IV)

Somewhere  
Sleepless boys  
Near a hostel tea-stall  
Chant songs  
To the night

V)

Silence is empty  
The old darkness  
Is back again

4) A LAMP

A halo of a lamp  
Disappears  
Voicelessly  
Into the timeless dark

We can no longer  
See our faces

I always hoped  
You'd feel the warmth  
And we'd  
Burn together  
As a flame

5) A FOOT-NOTE ON AN UNPUBLISHED POEM

i need no more  
those desert words  
those eroded rocks

for

corpses of meanings  
hardly haunt the dark gray ruins  
of these lines

smell

these pungent words  
the echoes of the extinguished  
flames

touch

these lines as you touch  
your pregnant wife on  
her unrevealed treasure

## 6) THE ISLE OF CALIBANS

Welcome once more  
To this isle of calibans  
Strangers with magic wands

Ariels  
You released once  
But left us calibans  
Chained behind

This is the hole where we live  
We of very ancient and fishlike smell

After you had left  
Ariels and the rest of hermaphrodites  
Whipped your language  
Into our hides

Descendents of Miranda cackle  
With imported lipsticks  
And imported smiles  
Under the canopies of Ray Ban  
Don't they have very Aryan wiles

See us from the Rajdhani  
As we shit near the tracks  
See us oozing  
From the imperial cracks

Welcome to our slums  
And gladly hawk your brilliant wares  
We've nothing to barter  
But these ancient famished stares

## 7) WATER An Incantation

thicker than hides flowing endlessly  
below the skins below the ground  
sweeter than purity surging ceaselessly  
in the dark sharper than the cruel rocks  
heedlessly flowing in the veins of the old granite  
more ancient than the minerals primordial than  
truths untruths or the sky the mother  
of forests darker than the roots of spirit  
mother of oceans surfs and spumes  
effervescence of dreams pregalactic plasma  
existing before time mother of suffering  
let the petrified skeletons riot with forests  
shock the deserts with dreams  
startle the dry dunes with savannas make blood  
fresh as your face drown the abyss with bottomless  
thirsts of vortices and the storms of relentless eddies  
let these barren ruins disappear in the crowd of wild roots  
with thick green leaves protect this small earth  
mother of time this sapling born in the dangerous  
timelessness of time

## 8) How to Write a Poem

to write a poem  
is a trick  
we all can learn

we simply have to let  
those black invisible fingers  
from Beyond  
take over our imperiled fortifications

for poetry is invasion  
from skies  
from the unlit bowels of the earth

as you turn syntax  
in your fingers it turns

the shadow puppet of our self  
between its fingertips

#### 9) A HYMN

wash us in splashing  
spray of shower  
dry us till we crackle  
scorch us with brilliance

make us ancient as stones  
bless us with eternity  
so that we trudge our corpses  
like painful lumps of pork

give us your hunchback  
so that we remain  
like question marks  
on the page of existence

oil our helmets  
so that we glisten on our bikes  
kill us indiscriminately  
on these careless roads

#### 10) History

Today in these shattered ruins  
We'll hear the pale dithyrambs  
Of the vanished bards  
Reverberate for the vampire bats  
Emaciated by history

Today in these scattered edicts  
We'll gaze at the silence  
Of the bleeding scripts which conceal  
Terrified eyes  
Mouths left agape

Today in these pillars of victory  
We'll touch the rock silence  
Of the devastated women  
Watching with ruined eyes the space  
Evacuated by history

Today in these empty spaces and ellipses  
We'll inject our own absences  
And silences to resurrect  
The tragic chorus  
Of history

## 11) The Hunt

i have hunted for the black antelopes  
stags and musk deers  
in the remote corners of my dark continent  
forest people with nightmare trees  
bogs and silences of the devoured animals  
for i wanted to bring you  
luminescent deer skins sunlit eyes of the wild cats  
and my own head trophied and stuffed

with my primitive wooden spear  
i have fished for the fish fleshy and fat  
in ambiguous swamps coves and marshes  
as i wanted to bring you  
bittersweet blood of the freshwater fishes  
to moisten the deserts of your lips

i have hunted for the snow white polar bears and lazy seals  
in the wilderness of my ice age heart  
i wanted to bring you the silken furs  
to keep your milkwhite breasts warm with love

i wanted to hunt the dark shadows  
of the nameless predators prowling silently  
in the haunted tropical forests of your eyes  
and lay their dead skins and time worn bones  
at your feet

i have hunted for you  
in the labyrinthine streets of this haunted place  
for i wanted to bring you  
your ethereal reflection secretly concealed  
behind the long dark lashes

of my eyes

12) A NOTE

Please  
Don't stand  
In the window  
Caressing  
Those flowers

The deep violet  
The purple  
And the tender  
Milk white petals

Linger  
And disturb  
The gray silence  
Of the evening

13) TITHAL

Sea is nothing but  
Slabs layers of water  
Trying to overturn ride each other's backs  
Whimper near your feet  
Like a mongrel

Seashore is nothing

Here old men come to smoke their dull bruises  
Young couples to show they are romantic  
Boys come to ogle  
Girls to giggle

There is nothing in the sky

And sky is nothing

It is an inert

A dumb blanket

Staring down like

Centuries upon us

Sachin Ketkar

## MARATHI POEMS OF SACHIN KETKAR

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Translated by the Poet

1) Spam

Accompanying every attachment  
My doom virus  
Penetrates the very nucleus of cells-  
In an instant,  
It spawns forth millions of copies of itself.  
Inscribing its own illegible devastating script  
Into our genetic code.  
Spreading like cancer  
It annihilates our operating system

My Norton protected soul  
Proves toothless to retaliate  
Like some mutant fish  
Struggling on a hook

2

We are the digital crows of words  
With broken wings  
Pecking at the mlecha skins  
Of your holy cows

We are e-locusts  
We will spam ceaselessly  
Your scarecrow sensibilities  
From our thousands of IDs  
Let's see how many of our toxic messages  
You can delete.

3

I am a Postmodern Parikshit  
This virtual fruit stares at me  
Spammed by destiny

I know it contains a familiar worm  
I know that the worm will turn into Takshaka

I have obtained knowledge in my mother's womb  
That there are no exits to the virtual World Wide Labyrinth

Hence, I click on the icon of this fruit  
And wait for the ultimate sting

4

Digital Ghatotkach peddles  
His merchandise in my bedroom

Enlarge your Penis  
Viagra for less  
Loans at low interests  
Easy ways to loose weight  
Fuck Russian women  
Take your Jackpot of ten thousand Dollars  
Exchange your old soul for new  
The dead mailbox of my mind  
Stagnates like a public lavatory

In fact  
I do wish to enlarge my penis  
Cheap Viagra is also good for me  
I even want to find out  
The easy way to lose fat  
Russian women won't be a bad idea either  
I will also welcome the jackpot of ten thousand dollars  
How good it would be for me to have  
A new soul in place of the old  
So that I can play some sort of ghoul  
In a stupid horror serial  
However, I delet all these mails  
Before opening

How I love my empty virginal mailbox  
This is the moment of ultimate realization  
This is the moksha

5

In fact, we are thrown on this vulnerable blue planet  
By mistake

We do not know who  
Has sent us to whom

One fine day  
We will be taken for junk mail  
We will be deleted  
To prevent future infections

6

Actually  
I should not have downloaded your attachment  
The scan had found out

An unfamiliar malicious code  
Of destiny inside

Even so, I copied you  
On my hard disk

I love to open unknown emails  
The idiotic hope that there will be something for me  
In those mails  
Makes me open these messages against my will

7

I have already lost Troy  
Trojan horses have taken over my bastions

This is Hector's cadaver  
This is exhausted Ulysses

This is the gutted bedroom  
Of Paris and Helen

This is my burnt out memory  
These are the corrupt files

Written in undecipherable script  
This is my locked cursor

It is no use restarting now

8

I have posted my zipped eyes  
As attachments

Glance over them at least once  
Before deleting them

9

My firewall  
Is defunct  
My immune system is out of order

Anyone can hack me  
Anyone can read my secrets

I have become bare naked,  
Exposed to the world  
You will change my password tomorrow

Nothing will remain

What can be called my own

10

We will continuously send you  
The wooden horses of words  
For Helen  
The onslaught of millions of Raktavirya genetic codes  
From their bellies  
They will reduce  
Your system to ashes

11

I want to erase  
My fingerprints from the moon  
Tea-stains on the sun  
The lines on the hand from my joystick  
The unascertainable look  
In the eyes of a hunchback computer  
All the signs of my existence

Zippering and attaching  
To my last email  
I want to bombard thousands of unknown IDs  
With my viruses of the Unbeing, Inauspicious and the Ugly

Because in the loss of thousands of unknown people  
Lies my gain

2) The Tree of Total Eclipse  
(Godhra carnage and the subsequent riots in Gujarat)

Who knows how long we have to live  
Under the cyanide shade  
Of the sky-high banyan tree  
Of total eclipse  
We have grown in our yard

No one dares to unravel the mystery  
Of its source, spread and increase  
Because we ourselves have sustained it  
With the manure of smashed infant skulls  
We have never looked at it with the eyes  
Of the tattered weeping vulvas.  
Under it  
The dreadful stench of burning skin  
Spreads  
We, the typical orthodox onlookers,  
Flee, plugging our noses

We will never get to the root of it  
Because while digging for them  
We will find  
Deep within our own chest  
Its arsenic ariel-roots

3) I am a Cramped Vaman

I am a cramped Vaman  
In the bottle of mineral water  
The blue lid makes  
My breath  
Flurry all over  
Like a sparrow  
Trapped in a congested room

Sometimes I stand with my hand  
On the plastic transparent walls  
You with your ambiguous pink face of curiosity  
Envelop my entire world.  
Between us

Is the Bisleri wall  
Because on my world I see  
In the huge letters  
'Bisleri' written upside down.  
Standing with the tepid tasted water up to my waist  
I devotedly pray to the deceptiveness

But at times,  
I feel  
We all look at the world  
From our own bottles  
Because people look at me  
Just like they look  
At toiling tribal labourers  
From the air-conditioned windows of trains

Actually, I am not a genie in the bottle or the like.  
It is because of the curse of some sage  
I am passing my days as a test-tube baby  
In this transparent plastic womb.  
I know  
Even after I die  
My ghost will continue to survive in this bottle

Like an invisible bird in a cage

4) A Few Words for the Elephant I came across in the Street the other day

Overcome with compassion  
I compare your colossal wrinkled hulk  
With the fluid roundness  
Of your disconsolate eyes.

You may be chivalrous and sturdy  
Smash the huge castle doors filled with spikes  
With your head,  
But you are not crafty and depraved  
Or else why would you allow someone  
To savagely ride your royal back?

You may be intelligent,  
You may even be the god of intelligence  
But you are not cunning or else why  
Would you allow yourself to be deceived  
By this saffron swindle?

You walk puffing  
Following the phoney mendicants  
Through our confused streets  
Like an old vessel, fanning the flies  
We think that we have made your amiable proud soul  
Into a mere impoverished device for the beggars.

The looker-ons and kids throng around you  
But I vaguely touch your legs that seem like pillars  
The rope-like tail, the back that resemble a wall,  
Or your trunk that feels more like a trunk of tree  
I am rapt trying to guess your true form.

5) Your Lips Strewn with Scorpions

Your lips  
Strewn with scorpions

The flocks of lustrous doves  
In your eyes

The disturbed honeyed ocean in the full moon  
In your breasts

The odour  
Of extinguished meteors in your breath

From millions of years  
I have felt that you were around

While passing  
Through the labyrinths of streets  
In my eyes  
Thronging with invisible crowds

Millions of times  
My nights have foundered  
And were injured  
In trying to see you

For innumerable times  
You have extricated and bloodied  
My transparent breath

But is not frequently said  
That lacerations are bound to the musical notes  
agonies to ironies

Hence, I have taken births  
Time after time  
given the wings of butterflies  
To innumerable callous words  
Over and over again

So many times have I cast them  
In the furnace of my life  
I have molten their iron souls

I have given them thousands of facets  
I have given the brilliant laughter of diamonds  
To their eyes

Therefore, listen to me  
Even if you invisible  
To the eyes of my touch

I will see you  
With millions of eyes of poetry  
Till the end of time

## 6) Alta Mira

Line drawings of naked fertility goddesses carved  
On the walls of a dirty train lavatory

An arrow points at the hole between the thighs  
Put your prick here goes the anonymous message

I take my cursor on the hole between the fleshy layers  
And click

There opens the dark cave of Alta Mira

The cave from which we have never come out  
I rub stone against stone  
Light a bonfire of dried leaves  
Illuminating  
The stories of hunting hairy mammoths carved on the walls  
The fertile women  
With huge breasts, broad thighs  
My story or my picture doesn't picture in these stories  
I only play the role of darkness  
In this never ending Darwinian arche-drama  
On the walls of clogged lavatory of my mind  
I click on the link for Alta Mira  
Only to read  
The tiresome communication  
Page not found action cancelled  
In the public lavatory  
There is a prehistoric rock inscription  
Sheela is a prostitute  
Carved by some primate  
in a college urinal  
The Onida Satan  
Has carved for us  
With a huge mammoth tusk  
An oedipal message  
Neighbour's envy  
Owner's pride

## 7) The Forts

Which never wake up  
Lie ruined shattered  
If you observe carefully,  
You will find in them  
Specters of lifeless powadas

A dawn

Delicate like the neck of Mastani  
Caresses the steely chest of Sahyadri  
Awakening the tiny skies  
In the invisible eyes of trodden rocks

Birds return to the sugarcane fields.

But these primal forts with putrefied teeth

Yellow like hoary tomes  
Still haven't slackened their lethal stranglehold

Words dressed in traditional nine-yard sari  
Become old and droop  
join the wari of decrepit faces.  
Intimacy of the earth that they have  
Today speaks the language of impulsive hatred.

Some hands reek of dead cattle  
Some, of slaughtered men.

These forts, these old guerillas  
Who will never awake  
Still stealthily wait to pounce  
Rapaciously upon the dawn  
Tender like the eyes of a loved one

Beware O mavles  
Of the ruthless jaws  
Of your own forts

## 8) Empty

My mind            in the afternoon

Is empty like an empty hanger hanging  
In an empty corner of an empty room.

In a window is an empty sky.

Some empty people hang  
On an empty hanger  
In the empty room of my mind.

one empty sky  
In the empty windows  
Of the empty minds  
Of the empty people.

If you take away the box  
From the empty box,  
What remains  
Is my mind.

The eyes of the emptiness, the skies of the emptiness, the mind of the emptiness  
My eyes, my skies, my mind

9) See the flaming wings of the tigers

See the flaming wings of the tigers  
Flying out of my castle.

See the eyes of words  
Hooded with the dusty wings of vultures  
Resting on the leafless branches.

See  
As my words spread their tiger wings  
find their way through  
The wet naked bodies sculpted in the wood

How  
The reflections of the sea's ancient lust  
Dancing in the mirror of the sky  
Play in their eyes

10) We are the lost children of waters...

We are the lost children of waters.  
We are the children of the earth, dark and sanguine.

We are the cattle exiled from the primitive forest.  
We are the half-eaten berries spilt from the mouth of death.

Our true colour is the colour of sparrow's wings  
The remains of sting in our hearts our only company.

We are the dew of transience on the babool shrubs.  
The insignificant taste of blood and darkness is our taste.

There are no echoes of our screams in these insensate valleys  
suddenly somewhere the shattered mirrors shake with laughter.

11) Surat

A city in the middle  
Of a huge ever-growing obese market.  
An involved net  
Of shortcuts and flyovers

That traps the babies of the sun.  
Here refuse piles up even on the sun.  
Even the sun's daughter is reduced  
To a mere gutter.  
In fact, it is the gaze here  
That's infected with leptospirosis.  
A sack of plague spreading rats  
Thrive in the voracious bellies.  
Here the line that separates  
The homes from the shops is pretty unclear  
You can't tell where a shop ends  
where a home begins or where a home ends  
And the shop begins.  
Here the statues of various leaders  
Point in various directions.  
But Surat doesn't go anywhere  
It merely sits  
Amid the deafening discordant concert of horns  
Clouds of toxic smoke  
With a garish red lipstick  
Waiting  
For one or two more customers  
Even after all the customers are over

## 12) I Snap the Stitches

I snap  
The stitches on the filthy wounds of language  
The wounds gape

My diabolical three headed poem  
Is born from some unheard cave  
Of the language

The shadows of her screams  
Dancing on the walls  
Are its meanings

Close to me I hear  
The hair-raising sounds  
On her iron breath  
In her broken eyes  
Are the dreams of the rotting sea  
She devourers the sweet innocent kids  
Of your sentimental lyrics

She comes and sleeps  
By your side  
Like cancer  
Drinks to the last drop  
The blood from your hairy breasts



The message that system resources meagre  
from its over heated tin heart.

A fagged out  
noon  
sleeps as if dead

in the dishevelled bed.  
From its open mouth dribbles out  
the saliva of death.

Its brain restarts ten times  
in an attempt to defrag.

An asthmatic evening  
drags around with elephantiasis feet  
in the city of yawns

behind the heavy eyelids

putting it's own mind in the pocket  
in a vibrating mode.

One pulsating darkness  
blossoms all of a sudden  
on my leafless naked fingers

like some wild black bitter fruit

and an exhausted poem  
drops into my tired brain

like an idiotic SMS  
from an unfamiliar sender

## 15) WHILE NAILING THE COFFIN

One by one  
I drive nails  
Into your cold flesh  
One exactly  
Between your breasts

Another slightly on the upper side  
The third a little on upside  
The next one in your pupil  
On your lips  
One exactly  
Between your eyes

Because you are my coffin

You are truly my home  
It is in your breathe I seek  
The vanished Faith of Abraham

I crucify you  
Wholly keeping with the true Indian Culture  
I set you on fire  
My warm tears  
In your ashes slowly cooling down  
Become Frankenstein phoenix

Let me commit johar  
In your pyre  
Jammed within walls

Or let me be a black bitter fruit and grow  
On the apple tree growing on your unknown tomb

#### 16) FRUIT SALAD

My head placed in a red canvas bag  
Like a sliced watermelon  
On the luggage plank of a train coach  
With my pieces of my fingers  
Like pieces of ginger

In the banana peel  
Is a carrot  
Slightly peeled

#### 17) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOSQUITO NET

In fact, this is a net to trap humans.  
Humans drift towards it  
In an attempt to save their skins from mosquitoes  
Are trammelled  
In its maniac probing.

Mosquitoes make an ariel survey  
like our leaders  
Find out the way to our blood.  
When I stretch out in the net  
From my mouth grows  
A lush green bonsai banyan.

Tube-light filters through the sieve  
A ceiling-fan air  
It silently breathes  
I sleep  
In the shade of the bonsai banyan.

My etheric body  
Tries to get out from  
The sieve of mosquito net

In the darkness of night  
Arrives the impish mutant spider  
Who weaves this World Wide Web

But my subtle digital body  
Has already escaped  
After being filtered  
By the sieve of mosquito net.

#### 18) A HYMN TO BE CHANTED AT THE TIME OF REBIRTH

With the mysterious laser power saw of my breath  
I want to hack  
The dire black totally eclipsed banyan  
As its seismic cyanide aerial roots  
Have gone deep  
Into the every speck  
Of my salvation-seeking soil.  
In that open space  
I want to sow  
The ejaculated sperms of the sun  
The radioactive egg  
Of the chicken-eating moon  
I want to take harvest  
Of apoems  
Aimless  
But having golden wombs.

Then I will have the luscious red fruits  
Of the intense desire of bats  
To be absorbed in the sun,

Of the taste of flesh,  
Of the Eucharist lust  
To booze blood,  
Of the desire to pluck  
The white mushrooms of Time  
Grown on the damp rotten wood  
Of my lungs,  
Of the blanched dreams  
Of turning into the bleached cranes  
Flying away from these wilds.

I want to transmigrate  
To my own body.  
I want to draw cryptic good swastikas  
On every iota  
Of the world's body  
On every moment  
Of the every world  
On my body.

I want to kill  
The old mahut  
Who rides the diaphanous backs  
Of the vanished rivers  
Since he prods  
With his desiccated goad  
Concealed in his loin cloth  
The blue thousand-petalled-lotus  
Of the disappeared rivers  
blows out  
The orphic eyes  
Of the invisible rivers.

I want to wipe off  
The tales of the non-self  
Of the graveyard night  
Scribbled in Chinese  
On my Yorick skull.

I have resolved  
I, by all odds, don't want to become  
The headless aghori  
Wandering dressed in night  
With a beautiful useless trident in his hand  
In whose hands  
There is an inventory of unsolved queries  
Written on his owns skull.

I surely don't want to become  
An aghori baobab tree  
Vulturing near the naked corpse  
Of the paddy field

Which sits up with raised ears  
At the slightest noise.  
The salivating cadaver of grainfield  
Drooling with its pink tongue.

Hence I want to perform  
The ravenous austerities  
To appease the occult sun  
Concealed deep inside the womb of earth  
The occult earth  
Concealed deep inside  
The womb of the sun.

After cremating  
The carcass of God  
In the laser crematory  
Of my breath  
I want to worship  
The active godhead  
Of the famished cosmos  
I want to fly away  
Turning into a bunch of perfumed aureate butterflies  
When the silken winds blow.

19) The window without a wall

I await you  
Near a window without a wall

I feel  
You will come in nonchalantly  
From the back door

Of my house without walls

I become a word without language  
And wait  
At the edge of utterance.  
In front of me lies the mute embrace

Of a diaphanous valley.

From this wall with no windows  
I view the earthy wings of autumn

From the wall with windows  
I see a desolated path lost in mists.

I become simply a sigh

And wait near

The window without the wall.

20) SHARK

In the bitter fleshy water of mirror, flow my shark fingers  
From the vegetations dark as hair, under the pool of my eyes, below the rocks of my thoughts  
They drift away feeding on the minuscule fishes.  
I hatch the sorrows of crooked white eggs in the brown nest of my eyes.  
The earthy wings of its spent dried hunger soar upwards in the virtual space of the body.  
Carrying the empires of deserts on its back,  
Its reflection swims in the symbolic mirror of my mind.  
The slack footprints of sphinx can be seen in its skies.

I am aghast seeing the round ravenous brutal eyes of my fingers  
Their herds of vulnerable carnivorous lusts  
Flow trough my bitter green blood  
From the sweet rivers on your palms towards the virtual islands of your self.

O lord who would trammel them, see the real blood on their noses  
Not the reflection of blood, but the real blood on my harpoon.  
Pity these flesh-eating mute beasts.  
Let their teeth dig deep into the bitter flesh of the watery mirror  
Let their ungenerous belly be full with the shoal of reflected fishes.

.

21) Auranga

Like a girl going out for a casual stroll  
You come loitering  
Outside the outskirts of our village  
Then you go away  
Without looking anywhere  
With your sweet peaceful eyes

I dream of a host of sweet-water fish  
Wandering among the vegetations and creepers  
At your bottom  
Of your calm sanctum

From the shores  
I cast with my poor hands

The rags of my net  
On your quiet surface  
With a hope of catching you

## 22) THE FROG

This yellowish green fat frog  
Lives in the hole he has made in my eyes

He jumps up on my forehead  
As soon as it rains  
After completing his sleep of some million aeons

He sings bloating his throat like a balloon  
His hoarse cacophonous love songs  
For females

Listen carefully

From the other side  
Of the stagnant pond  
Comes a reply

## 23) Maternity homes, hospitals, hotels, shops, temples (For the Station Road, Navasari)

Maternity homes hospitals hotels shops temples  
A police station below a peepal tree schools banks  
Faafda, Jalebis, tea coffee snacks on hand driven carts  
Tuitions smoke traffic whores mental hospitals.  
As if the whole world is attending the funeral of this road.

An exhausted morning carrying the burdensome schoolbag  
Of the entire day waits for an auto rickshaw to take it to the school  
Youth teem out from a decrepit creaky bus  
Gather drifting like leaves in a river towards college  
Taking it to be their shore. The bald white vegetarian renunciation  
Seeks the lost end of this road with bare feet.

Who know from where does this road begin

Where does it end. The traveller of eighty four crore vaginas  
This road returns and ends repeatedly  
From where it had started.

If you happen to dig up its grave after thousands of years  
Then this very ashen tar corpse  
Will stare blankly at you with steadfast eyes.

#### 24) PAPER

Paper roads  
Paper houses  
Paper men  
Paper vehicles  
On the paper trees  
Are fruits of paper kites.

Who has left behind  
On this paper world  
The illegible message  
In an unknown script

Tomorrow with the passing of time  
This paper will turn yellow  
White ants will reduce it to a sieve  
Then, even if you merely touch it

I t  
I t w  
I  
Ll b r  
E a

#### 25) SUMMER: A MOSAIC

The ball hit hard and high by a cricketer  
Becomes a myna and flies away

Saliva of a panting dog  
Turns into thousands of diamonds

Thousands of sweatblind faces  
Writhe in the rotting hell of trains

Clothes hanging in the balconies of the apartments  
Like the thoughts from middle class minds

The summer prowls around smelling  
Like a sexed tomcat.

But from the sieve of a dried peepal fly away  
The flocks of white doves.

## 26) One Dozen Definitions of Poetry

Poetry means the grass growing on one's pupils  
The Mendicants hanging upside down in the caves of ears  
Love messages carved on the walls of the nose  
Black basil plant growing on the tongue

Poetry means the spine of thoughts struck in the throat  
The confusion in the mind of deafdumbblind heart  
Diamonds struck inside the guts  
Ice piled up inside the chilled stomach

Poetry means reflections of a withered droopy penis  
Manuscripts hidden inside the hollow of thighbone  
Rivers flowing out from between the first finger and the thumb  
Poetry is man's belatedly grown tail  
On which he sits after winding it up  
In the court of demons

## 27) Excerpts from Jarasandha's Blog

(i)

When Bhima seized me by my legs  
In his merciless iron clutches  
I thought he was going to dispatch me  
He ripped me in half instead  
From head to toe  
Like Dante did to the Prophet  
In his Inferno.  
He simply tore me in two.

It was on the advice  
Of that Dark Charlatan  
That Bhima flung my two halves  
In opposite directions  
So that they would never ever  
Be one again.

He is the one responsible  
For my demerger

The Pandavas' sala  
That Ranchod

(ii)

The two halves of my being  
The two halves that would never unite  
Are still very much alive  
Pulsating with life  
Because someone daily reminds me  
That I am already dead

(iii)

I am lying just like that  
In the Hell's cheap hospital  
The left half of my body  
On my right  
The right side of my body  
On my left  
The left side on my right side  
The right on my left  
My left ball on my right side  
The right ball on my left  
The left half of my brain  
On my right  
The right half of my brain  
On my left

This is the reason why  
Perhaps  
I speak the language of the Right  
With those on the Left  
the language of the Left  
With those on the Right

My left right language  
Come together from opposite directions  
Uttering the interminable throbbing dialect  
Of suffering

Some people prefer  
To call it poetry or something

(iv)

Bhima tossed away  
One half of my soul  
Into the fields

The other tumbled  
Into a cyber café

Eliot's ghost haunts  
One part of my being  
The other one intones  
The Anubhavamruta

(v)

I don't have one undivided tongue  
I have two half tongues instead

My Gujarati tongue craves  
The touch of Marathi  
My Marathi tongue pines  
For Gujarati

(vi)

I order for desi liquor  
In English wine shop  
in the desi shop  
It's the English liquor that I order

(vii)

In fact  
Ardhanarishwar  
And Narsihma are my forefathers  
But they are imaginary  
I am real

(viii)

Look, this is my map

One half of my body is saffron  
The other is green  
Both facing away from each other

There is a historical white strip  
Of the Partition  
Which cements my both parts

There is also a sham  
Of a heart  
With twenty-four spokes  
Defunct  
But very much alive

(ix)

In fact, I wanted to go to heavens  
In flesh  
One half of my body  
Did actually manage to go there  
But the other half  
Missed the flight

(x)

Frequently  
The halved organs from one half of my body  
Arrange a limited overs cricket match  
With the organs of the other half

Obviously  
My soul plays the umpire

Look, here is an appeal  
For run out  
I signal  
For the third umpire

(xi)

Only in you  
Is this Jarasandha  
Complete

So take me deep down  
Forever  
Once and for all end  
My two separate lives  
My two separate deaths

1) My Experiments with Potion of Death

I observe  
Peering into the stainless steel glass  
A floating eye of a myna

Within is the tasteless, odourless, colourless  
The sky of death

I gaze into the glass  
To stare at my own reflection

28) Harry Potter's Mislaid Love Letter

In mid air  
Have I scribbled  
In an enigmatic transparent script  
This invisible love letter for you

Only you know its mystery  
It will remain here  
For ages to come

Only the reader  
Who has something of you  
In the soul  
Can decipher  
This sibylline language

Death has left this mark  
On my forehead  
Commingled a mysterious satanic force  
With my blood

It will take your memories  
Beyond the Red sea of Death

Every time the latent witch in you  
Awakens to my call

She will find before her eyes  
This misplaced letter  
I wrote to you

## 29) The Vampire Tree of Grief

The vampire tree of grief  
Rides your assailable breasts

The eyeless white termite of time  
Eats at your depleted lungs

Yet you did not cower under it  
But flowed rampantly  
your current  
Dragged away  
This half dead horse with it

On an unknown shore  
I find my naked body  
That has grown stranger to me  
Swamped completely  
In your boisterous spume

30) Some Preliminary Lessons in Cheirology

(i)

Walking alone and aimless  
On the deserted streets  
Of the lines on my palm  
I watch  
The automatic shoes on my feet  
Taking me along with them

(ii)

My fifty thousand male fingers  
Rise erect  
But a bit late

Like a submerged river  
My ambiguous line of destiny  
Runs over  
The mount of Apollo  
Over the geographical map  
Of your body

(iii)

I walk all alone  
Over the blue desert palm of the sky  
On the trail of the line of head  
Over the mount of eclipsed moon  
  
There I gather the hollow skulls of words  
And blow them like conch shells

(iv)

In the train that goes  
Over the tracks of the lines of my palm  
A night with pitch black eyes  
Stares at me  
With wide open eyes  
From the window

When she closes her eyes  
I caress her  
Wet eyelids

Then I take her palm in mine  
And tell her fortune

31) Hair fall and Photocopies

You will come across  
The secret black and white codes  
Of my being  
Lying anywhere

In the bedroom, or the kitchen or in the lavatory  
In the classroom, in the train compartment  
Between the keys of a keyboard  
On the mouse-pad  
In the staffroom, in the caves on the moon  
In the snake hole  
In our house, in their house  
In his house, in her house  
In my home, in your home  
In the gaps between the words  
Among the pages of a book  
That makes you scratch your head  
Anywhere just anywhere

Obviously I know  
Where this road leads  
But don't forget  
That in my every hair  
Is my DNA

Or whatever

After thousands of years  
In some rocks

A scientist will discover  
My fossilized hair

he can generate  
Yet more photocopies of me

32) Staring out of the Window during the Geography Class

You may chance upon  
A geographical map of Maharashtra  
Embedded  
In my left pupil

This is the yellow Deccan Plateau  
This the rocky Sahyadri  
This is the Tapti valley  
This is the Konkan, this the Vidarbha  
And the Marathwada

In my right pupil  
Is the map of Gujarat

This is Saurashtra, this is the Rann of Kutch  
This is the Narmada, this is the forest of Dangs

look here

This is me

33) In her Kitchen Trash Can

Your pelvic bone  
Recently rinsed  
In her kitchen thrash can

Wrapped in the pages of poetry  
Used condoms  
At whose tips  
Has accumulated

The liquefied encephala  
Of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan

Yesterday's chappatis  
Half eaten by ants  
The left over moong usal  
Whiskers of Salvador Dali  
Dilip Chitre's socialist cigar

Gram dough  
Mixed with RDX  
A rubber heart  
Made from a motorcycle tube

An empty canister  
Of Asthma inhaler  
A wisp of tangled hair  
Darkened banana peel  
And  
A copy of the Origin of Species  
Stained with dal  
Because of being read

While eating

34) A Poem of Green Hands

On my bare naked hands  
The icy green blood  
From the carnage of multitudinous  
Innocuous mute trees

Whenever I lacerate the white backs  
Of a blank sheet of paper  
With my sharp pen nib  
I calligraph heartless lines  
Of tongueless poems  
On the cemeteries of voided spaces  
Vacated by annihilating  
Thousands of forests

Unsuspectingly  
My hands become part of the cabal  
To denude this planet  
I too become a partner  
In this crime

But my lush green hands  
Covered with the bleeding screams  
Of the helpless trees  
Know quite well  
The yellow sorrow  
Of a leaf nipped off  
The crimson excruciating pain  
Of a petal being crushed  
Wet sting of a branch being broken  
Earthy agony  
Of being uprooted

Precisely these things  
Flow out on the white corpses  
Of paper  
In form of chlorophyll  
Of poetry

35) Third Degree Torture for my Old Poems

One fine day I decided  
To inflict third degree torture  
On my old poems

I took the words

With unshaved stubbles and filthy rags  
In my custody  
On remand  
And mercilessly flogged them

I made them lie  
On the slabs of ice  
On their dirty buttocks  
I scribbled with blue and black bruises  
Wicked lines  
Of new poems

I stripped them  
Of their mouldy hides  
To gaze at their bleeding dark souls  
To soak them in saline

After thrusting  
The terrible Tiger Balm  
Into their anus  
I captured their screams  
Flying in various directions  
With my precise cages

I might let them go  
On payroll  
Only to finish them off  
In an encounter

### 36) Self Reliance

Means freedom.  
I am my own charkha  
My own yarn  
My own khadi

Resolving not to beg  
To meet my daily hunger  
I decide to take  
My own present  
My future  
My past  
In my own hands

I hold the proof  
Of my animal self  
In the palm of my hand  
And decide to detonate  
The flimsy hypocrisy  
Of civilization

Very early in mornings  
I open my palms  
As I open my fatigued eyes  
Clutch at my awakened soul  
And heave

### 37) James Bond Announces Retirement

I simply want to stretch out lazily  
On the voluptuous blue beach of Hawaii  
And quietly sip  
Martini of my renunciation  
Or Vodka

Apart from the sea or the sky  
I don't want anything mirrored  
In my tourist sunglasses

I don't want to do anything now.

Age has arced  
The women I slept with  
Like a bow  
My friends evaporated into this incomprehensible world  
My one-time enemies  
Have transformed  
Into potbellied asthmatic old men  
Their malice deliquesced into their arthritic knees

Once I used to give away my friends  
To my enemies  
My enemies to my friends  
These days however  
I can't tell friends from foes  
The CIA from the KGB  
FBI from the Al Qaeda  
MI-5 from ISI  
Friendship from betrayal  
Perhaps I have grown old

I have already returned  
My licence-to-kill to the Queen  
I have already given up  
The folly of picking up women  
I have discontinued  
These makeshift remedies  
For desolation  
Today I am not sure  
Whether those I killed  
Were really terrorists

Or fuckwits like me

I have sold off my rusted Berretta  
I am dreadfully weary of blood  
These days I can't tell  
Whether this damned blood  
Is that of a villain  
Or my own  
Or tomato ketchup from Hollywood

Yes, probably I have grown old

That's why I want to submerge  
Tepid memories of the Cold War  
In this liquor  
Whose fragrance is the honeyed breath  
Of aroused young women

I no longer intend to hound spies  
Or women or myself  
At breakneck speed

I just want to recline  
On the beaches of Hawaii  
Watching quivering smooth buttocks  
Of bikini clad women  
I only want to sip peacefully  
My detached martini  
Whose flavour is like that of death

38) Rock Doves

Rock doves fly away  
From the skeletal cage  
From the cage of horizons  
Only for moment  
We have in our hands  
The light on the stereotyped faces of the apartments  
The light of the tower of Babylon  
The morning, the noon and the evening  
Toying with the expressionless faces  
Of the cars, vehicles and the traffic  
Only for a moment

Nothing in the world belongs to us  
So completely

When we will wing  
Like grey pigeons  
From the skeleton cages

Disappear  
In the velvet-textured void

Will then at least something  
Be truly ours?  
Something at least?

39) Through the Deceased Window I look

Through the deceased window I look  
At the world white as hospital  
With my hairy pupils

We see them at war  
With their shadows  
These Leprous butterflies  
With glaucoma in their eyes  
Perch  
On the flowers of this mortal world

Even water with its filthy cracked fingers  
Savagely scratches  
Its own diseased transparent back  
What we mistook for honey  
Has actually turned out to be venom  
That's the thing  
That flows through or veins

40) Moist is the Heart

Moist is the heart  
Of the red rusted rock

There she came  
The black female scorpion  
With the same moisture within her

And vanished  
After laying thousand white eggs  
On my back

41) In the Blue Flower Vase

One fine day  
In a blue flower vase  
I planted  
A hand  
White as milk

Seven were the fingers  
That grew on the hand

Even the cactus blossoms forth  
Then why not this hand

Yield at least  
A tiny yellow flower

Instead  
What burst forth

Was a huge sunflower  
Cunning and crafty

#### 42) The Baobab Thriving On My Eyes

The baobab thriving on my eyes  
Clutches my brown pupils  
In their roots

One day  
I will definitely bring down  
The corpse of the moon  
Hanging from its leafless branches

It will torment me I know  
With a million questions  
Some with the wings of doves  
Some, of vultures

Will I have answers ready for them?  
Or will my head  
Burst into thousand bits?

#### 43) The Things You need to Know in Order to Float

The eyes barf  
Darkness and sulphuric acid  
Relentlessly

Wrenching out my guts with it  
My soul flows away  
Like a dead foetus

From an overlooked corner  
Behind the burned-out fuming eyes  
I stare at the vacuity  
Of my own eye sockets

The whole world has drained away  
I transubstantiate into the untouchable dark absence  
The shackles of space-time come off  
Turning into a mere amorphous throbbing

I begin to float

44) From an Abridged Travelogue of a Tortoise

From eons  
I have fostered this insatiable concupiscence  
For unhurriedness  
Concealing my self with my self  
Becoming a rock among rocks  
I have traversed  
This interminable bouldery terrain steadily

In quest of a nameless waterhole of darkness

Shielding my soft fleshy abdomen  
With my back  
Covering the fortified back  
With my vulnerable belly  
I have transcended  
This moment and eternity

Over the ruthless sharp facets  
Of the rocks  
In search of that embrace  
Of some primitive pool

45) All This Fuss about Skin

1)

To tell you the truth  
I am infuriated  
By all this fuss  
About this wench, this skin

In the beginning  
How she beckons us  
With all her half open  
Moist mirage lips

Only to meddle  
Between you and me

2)

Not for nothing  
They call her  
The biggest organ  
Of our body

The bitch keeps  
The maximum supply of the blood  
For herself

As if that's not enough  
She maintains the exact record  
Of every passing year

3)

The thing that we call Man  
After all is nothing but the skin  
Because what we see  
With the skin called our eye  
Is nothing but skin  
What they call clothes  
Is nothing but artificial skin  
That we use  
When we fall short of the natural one

4)

On always suspects  
The thing that we call the World or whatever  
Is anything but the loose wrinkled hide  
Of the old man called the God

After He gives up his ghost  
We will graze his hide  
make pretty purses  
And handbags  
For our women

5)

Skin me  
Make chappals

From my leather  
Trample me  
Underfoot

Because from now onwards  
I am going to wear my body  
Inside out like a shirt

So that now you can observe  
The skeleton turned out  
The dangling intestines  
The spleen, the kidneys  
The stomach, the liver  
And most importantly  
Concealed just behind my lungs  
The boring exhausted  
Booster pump

46) A Mess of a Self Portrait

Two defunct clocks  
In my eye sockets  
One shows its fourteen past ten  
While its ten past fourteen by the other

I will look at the eye  
On my wrist and tell  
How much time is left

In my mouth, the clean white  
Indian style commode  
You will come across  
The picture of the entire cosmos

My ears are the keyholes  
In which my wife  
Has forgotten her keys

Outside, on the branches of my dusty tamarind tree  
Have grown thousands of empty windows  
Without frames  
Which contain the thousands  
Of my invisible portraits

I know I have made a mess  
Of my painting of the room too

In the place of the ceiling fan  
You will find my head

In the place of my head

A whirring ceiling fan

If it's getting too hot  
Just turn up the speed  
Of the head on the ceiling

47) The Eyes Flying Away from my Sockets

The eyelids of my mind  
Are dry like your vagina  
Covered only  
The sediments of white brackish minerals

Your frozen heart  
Lifeless like my organ

Let me offer you worship  
Of my chopped off hands  
Let me place them  
At your feet

Let me sing  
The old obstinate no-moon night,  
Buried within my chest  
And a gradually rotting moon  
For once  
let the eyes fly away  
From my sockets  
Into your skies

48) One Mardekaresque Night Punctured with Lights

An impotent skinny Maruti  
Ogles in a Mardekaresque night  
At the lewd hardcore sites  
Of her sandy dreams  
The filthy five MB clips

In the broad daylight  
A lecherous fully aroused Sumo  
Mounts on the back of the scrawny Maruti  
The scenes of laughing tyres  
The mechanical thrusts  
Shot from impossible angles  
One's invisible organ  
Inside the other's silencer

Suddenly from nowhere

I dropp in and chuck a stone powerfully  
At the obscene cars  
They scamper away screaming  
Into the by lanes  
With their organs trapped

This wakes up the car  
With a jolt  
Profusely sweating  
In the night punctured with lights  
Panting heavily  
But  
Her gears haven't changed  
One bit.

#### Notes

Aghori: A tantrik Sadhu supposed to be practicing the infamous left-handed way of tantra or black magic including ritual eating of dead human flesh.

Anubhavamruta: One of the finest compositions of Dnyaneshwara, the fourteenth century poet saint of Maharashtra

Ardhanarishwar: An androgynous form of Lord Shiva in which his better half Parvati, is literally the other half of his body

Bhima: One of the Pandavas, see Pandavas

Dal: is a preparation of pulses, which have been stripped of their outer hulls and split, as well as a thick, spicy stew prepared there from, a mainstay of Indian and Pakistani cuisine

Desi: Literally, indigenous, here applied for locally brewed liquor.

Fafda: typical Gujarati snacks, a fried yellow strip of flour

Ghatotkacha: The son of Bhima and the demon Hidimba, famed to have announced a scheme of exchanging the new goods for the old in the magical `market' for Kauravas.

Jalebi: a common Indian spiral sweet dish, usually eaten with fafdas in Gujarat

Jarasandha: The king of Magadha in the Mahabharata. He was born in two separate halves to separate mothers. The witch named Jara joined him. He was blessed with magical powers of joining again after being cut in two. However, on Krishna's suggestion, Bhima tore apart Jarasandha in two pieces lengthwise and threw away the pieces in opposite directions.

Mahut: An elephant trainer, or rider

Mastani: a courtesan loved by Bajirao the powerful prime minister of Maharashtra

Mavles: the warriors of Shivaji the great warrior of Maharashtra who laid the foundation to Marathi Empire in 17th century.

Moong Usal: Moong is the seed of Vigna radiata which is native to India. Usal is prepared with whole green gram with some spices.

Narsiha, Narsimha: An avatar of Vishnu with head of the lion and body of man.

Onida: A brand of electronic goods in India whose one of the advertising slogan is `Neighbour's Envy and Owner's pride' and a rather good looking Satan as their model.

Pandavas: The sons of the King Pandu in the Mahabharata. The epic deals with war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas over succession of Hastinapura

Parikshit: Successor to the throne of Hastinapura. He was cursed to die of snakebite and he was killed by the snake king Takshaka

Powadas: Medieval heroic songs Marathi

Ranchod: A name of Lord Krishna, literally meaning `one who ran away from the

battlefield’.

Raktavirya: The demon famed for regenerating from every single dropp of his spilled blood. Killed by Goddess Durga

Sala: Brother in Law, a wife’s brother

Takshaka: see Parikshit

Vaman: The Dwarf, an avatar of Vishnu in form of Dwarf

Wari Procession going to pilgrimage to Pandharpur, a holy place

Sachin Ketkar

## NEW ENGLISH POEMS OF SACHIN KETKAR

NEW POEMS  
SACHIN KETKAR

### I) My Simple Congenital Thirst

Pale fingers exfoliate like hair  
On the edge of my amnesiac skin  
Reaching out  
To the dried carcass of the sky.

My simple congenital thirst  
Branches out  
Of my pores  
Shedding eyeless brown leaves  
On the famine  
Of my earth's black mouth.

The parched sky peels off  
Like a cheap blue paint  
The decrepit arteries of the dehydrated soil  
Crumble  
Like the ruined drainages  
Of extinct civilizations.

My stultified heart a palm  
Whose fingers have come off  
Can still hold nothingness  
Like Shiva's translucent semen  
Can still keep count  
Of my deaths with its mute thumb.

I have planted  
The stillborn fetuses  
Of my eyes  
Near the ancient roots of peepal  
The male rocky hands  
of the last earthquake  
Will awaken  
Their disfigured faces

They can still startle you  
By sprouting from unlikely places.

### II) Traces I will Leave Behind

Every breath that leave my body  
Is an encrypted confidential message

Only death can unscramble.  
It is useless to hack it.  
Death is the only ultimate interpretation.  
There no text remains.

Paper boats leave  
The abandoned dock of my being  
Sailing soundlessly  
On the invisible rivers  
Of my ancient breath.

Traces I will leave behind  
Are crumbs fallen inadvertently  
From the absent minded mouth  
Of death.  
Let harmless sparrows peck  
At the grains of my words.

I will not leak the secret  
Once I am gone.

### III) Stranded

On a murky corrupted afternoon  
As the harsh rains hurt  
The sparrow wings of time  
Hiding in the tired wet boughs of an unknown tree  
Or in the gloomy unmanned windows  
With its intolerable soaked translucency  
I m stranded  
In a small grocery shop, without an umbrella  
Unable to go to my dank dark house  
Or return to the dark edge of memory  
Where I came from  
I wish the rain would stop breathing  
I wish its heart would die a brain death  
I hear it flogging mercilessly  
With its silver black whip  
I have a reverie of a black-and-blue world  
Running for cover

I hear the disquieting reminiscence  
Of an alluring voice dripping wet  
From a distant branch calling out to me  
I at times wish it would rain on me someday  
Leave me stranded  
Between the betweens of the world  
I at times see in my trance  
My ancient sarcophagus  
In your eyes

I dream of my stranded tomb  
Between the moist love  
Of your tender breasts  
I see my parched fingers thirst  
To touch your mad eyelashes  
Soaked to the skin  
In the heavy sterile rains  
Of my tropical rain forest desire.  
Stranded in the terrible blank space  
between  
the agonized craving for silken darkness beyond oblivion  
and the anguished craving for ripe secrets of your mouth  
I stand helplessly waiting for rains  
to flood my gutters and streets

13 June 2003

#### IV) My Mouth is an Old Useless Tunnel

My mouth is an old useless tunnel  
In which the abandoned corroded railway tracks go in  
But don't come out.  
You are the light at the end  
Of my mouth.

My face is brittle like a mummy's  
When I try to take it off like a tedious mask  
It falls into thousand pieces  
On the floor.

Let me remove my hands from my elbows  
And offer them to you in a dish full of oranges  
And grapes.

I want to make a garland of my ten heads  
Interwoven with sliced watermelons and pumpkins  
For your neck.

Allow me to take out  
The funeral procession of my brown eyes  
And bury them  
On your nipples.  
I will wait for marigolds  
To burst forth on their graves.

#### V) Wait for Me

Like dried teak leaves

My eyes have come off

Bored crows people  
The forsaken branches  
Of my leafless fingers.

The sun has dropped his smooth round skull somewhere  
On my treeless grounds.

I am waiting to grow into a great babul tree  
In this wasteland  
Where no sun grows on the trees.

My eyes gather near your feet  
Blown by the barrenness of the winds.

Crows look at you  
As if you are unwanted stranger.

Somewhere a monkey stares at you  
And you do not know.

In the crowded thorny shrubs in my lungs  
Hangs a no moon night  
For  
In the shifting sands of life  
I have buried all my twelve moons.

My thousand eyes  
Dry like leaves gathered around your feet  
Blaze like the intestines of a deadpan earth.

The bored crows  
Fly away into the soul  
Of white inert sky.

The smooth round skull  
Of the sun crumbles into dust.  
I am waiting to die

Like this huge leafless baobab  
On which the monkeys wait  
For the fruit and a leaf.

Dust gathers on the tired tamarind tree  
That has forgotten its own taste.

Dust gathers on the brown soil of my eyes.  
Dust gathers on the round abandoned skulls of the sun.

Monkeys look emptily at the shadows  
Of the crows which are no longer there.

Gather the ashes of my eyes in your palms.  
Weep the tears blue as the earth  
On the silence of my pyre.

Remember me as monkeys  
Remember the fruits  
When they are hungry  
As the crows remember their mates  
In summer. Remember me  
As the leafless baobab  
Flourishing on the tombs  
Of the inhumed moon  
Remember the rich green felicity of their leaves.  
Wait for me where no one waits for anyone any longer.

#### VI) A Line of a Poem

Is hardly ever the shortest distance  
Between two spaced points.  
It is actually a misfortune of a sentence  
To become a line of a poem.

Usually, it is doomed to incompleteness  
Disintegrate into fragments  
That make no picture if put together again.

As your name means a line of a poem  
I gather the fragments  
Of the meanings of your name  
In my faceless palms  
To see how my line of Fate  
Merges into your line of Destiny.

The small white butterflies  
Of your scintillating laughter  
Punctuate  
The lines on the palms of my poems  
Perching  
on my unwritten commas  
And full stops  
Which are usually  
Commencements of a new sentence.

I can only respire  
My line of a poem  
In my effort to escape  
The rocky prison house of prose.  
In front of my eyes  
I see the sentences crumble  
Into the fragments

Of irredeemable distances  
The stoic sparrows  
Peck at the common crumbs  
Altercating over the words  
In their insatiate beaks.

Thursday, July 22,2004

VII) One Half of Jarasandha's Unfinished Soliloquy

He sliced me neatly  
Into two unclean halves  
From the scrotum  
To the skull  
I am bifurcated  
Like bacterium  
In the biology text book  
Each part alive  
Each leg kicking  
Each testicle alive  
With bisected sperms  
Each part dead  
Half of my earthworm soul dead  
My left-brain  
Separated  
From my right  
My Hindu body  
Cleaved  
From my Muslim remains  
My capitalist flesh  
Amputated  
From my proletariat bulk  
I am half hearted now  
My scream  
Forks  
Into two bleeding parts  
My antipodal ears  
Will never see each other  
With their accompanying respective  
Eyes

When Bhima seized my legs  
In his steel grip  
I thought he was going to fuck me  
Instead, he ripped me into two  
Like what Dante did to the Prophet  
In Inferno  
Tossed my halves in opposite directions

So that they won't come together again  
On the instructions  
Of that Sky Blue Devil of a cowherd  
Actually, he is the one  
Responsible for my demerger  
Arrest him for partition of India  
Arrest him for the cold war  
Arrest him for dividing Germany  
Arrest him for every division in the world

My each part will thrash about  
In agony forever  
My each part will die every moment  
My each part will pulsate with unspeakable pain

Only you can bestow  
The conclusive death upon my writhing halves  
Only then will I turn whole  
Only then, will this torture of living  
In two detached halves halt.

Take my undone breaths  
In the cup of your palms  
Take deep breath

See how my partitioned bleeding soul flows into you  
Invisibly  
And becomes you  
Undivided and whole

Wednesday 29 March 2006  
11: 47 PM

#### VIII) Words are the Threads

Words are the threads I use to weave this jute cloth.  
I intend to cover my naked self with it.  
I will walk on these meaningless streets teeming with utterly boring crowd, lonely  
shops and soulless traffic.  
I will walk and no one will call me names.

Words are the threads I want to use to weave my flimsy skin.  
I intend to cover my mortal bones and flesh with it.  
I will walk on these meaningless streets teeming with bodies and dust, the toxic smoke  
from auto rickshaws, trucks and luxury buses running on petrol corrupted with  
kerosene. I will walk alone and no one will notice me.

I want to wear my memories like clothes and walk these inhuman streets.  
Words are threads with which I intend to weave this tenuous cover.  
I will sing the song with no words in it.

Sachin Ketkar