

WINTER 2021

VOL. 46 NO. 3

Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER



Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls;
Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,
The forge where the Archmason shapes his works.
Thy servitudes on earth are greater, King,
Than all the glorious liberties of heaven.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*, p. 686



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CONTRIBUTORS

DEBASHISH BANERJI is the Haridas Chaudhuri Professor of Indian Philosophies and Cultures and the Doshi Professor of Asian Art at the California Institute of Integral Studies. He was introduced to the writings of Sri Aurobindo in the 1970s and has been a student of his philosophy for over 40 years. Since 1990, he has published extensively and been involved equally in academics and Sri Aurobindo community activities in the U.S.

ELLEN DAVIS is a transformational mediator, coach, and embodied movement yoga facilitator. A former dancer and choreographer, she founded Yoga of Ballet and has been teaching professional classical ballet internationally for over 40 years, including at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. She is also archivist and manager of an art estate, writes about the creative process, and enjoys photography.

RON JORGENSEN is an everyday mystic. He sees mystical qualities in the common elements of life and always sees the world afresh. His most significant education began in the 1970s during his eight years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville in India, where he studied and practiced Integral Yoga and worked on projects for an Ashram-related group, World Union. Ron makes his home in Enumclaw, Washington, at the foot of Mt. Rainier.

RICK LIPSCHUTZ: What kind of nutcase packs up his whole family and embarks on a pilgrimage from Albuquerque,

New Mexico, to western Massachusetts, believing that in some place called the Pioneer Valley we might find a northeast passage through schizophrenia? A devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, that's who. And one who is engaged, with partner and son, in a pilot project in Open Dialogue Therapy, and continues to write "that novel about the soul" (in fulfillment of his late wife's last words). Now, when he meets with his son, at his son's request, he reads aloud from Sri Aurobindo's poetry. Three portions of *The Soul That Makes Us Matter* and some of his own poems have appeared in this journal. Though officially retired after 30 years in hospital medical transcription, he feels he has come out of retirement and is working as never before on his true vocation.

GARY MILLAR lived at Forecomers in Auroville in 1968. He was admitted as a sadhak into the Sri Aurobindo Ashram by the Mother in 1969 and lived there until marrying and moving to Nepal in about 2009 to research and write his book on finding Annapurna in the Rig Veda. Gary is still living in front of Annapurna.

DOLAN CHAMPA SAHA came to Integral Yoga in her youth in India. An art-lover and scientist with a Ph.D. in microbiology, spirituality tugs at her inner heart—she tries to integrate it into all aspects of life. Dolan recently published *Rays of Inspirations: Through a bouquet of poetry and paintings*, a creative book of prayers, art, and spiritual communions felt in her deepest moments.



ABOUT THE COVER

Golden autumn turning to winter. Cover design by Saili Sawant. To learn more about her work and to view her portfolio visit www.sailisawant.com.

Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

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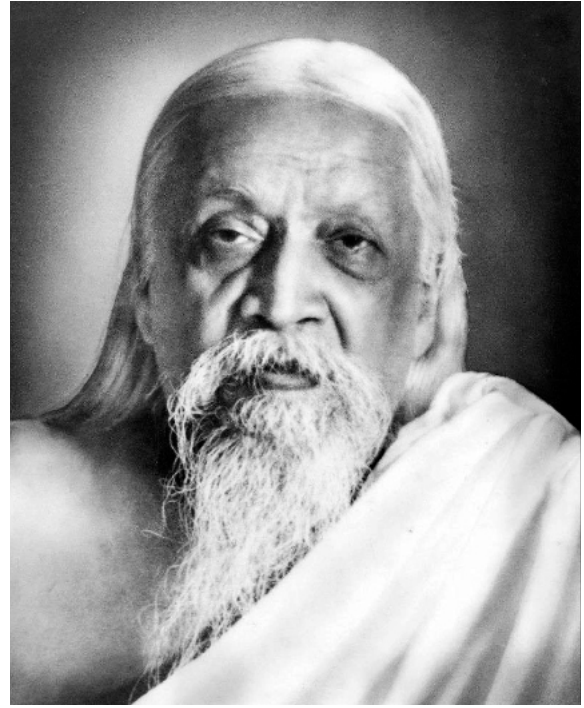
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The Mother (Mirra Alfassa, 1878–1973)



Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo Ghose, 1872–1950)

An extraordinary mystic and spiritual leader, the Mother was Sri Aurobindo's spiritual collaborator. As a child she had a series of spiritual experiences leading to her realization of the Divine. During her young adulthood in Paris around the turn of the century, she became an accomplished artist, musician, and writer. Many of the now world-famous French masters were her friends and acquaintances. During this time she found explanation for her inner experiences in the company of two great occultists, Max and Alma Theon, in Algeria.

In 1914 her meeting with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, India, became the turning point of her life. Six years later she joined him there where she stayed for the rest of her life to collaborate with him in their spiritual mission aimed at complete transformation of human consciousness.

The Mother oversaw the daily activities of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, founded the International Centre of Education, and in 1968 founded Auroville, an experimental international community devoted to human unity. The Mother's spiritual work was concerned with activation of the highest human spiritual potential and the transformation of the earth and of the physical body at the cellular level. Her complete writings are compiled in *The Collected Works of the Mother* and *The Mother's Agenda*.

Sri Aurobindo was India's foremost philosopher, poet and spiritual figure of the 20th century. At age seven he was sent to England where he mastered Western classical literature and languages. He returned to India at age twenty-one and soon mastered classical Indian literature and languages as well. He was active in the Indian independence movement until 1910, when he moved to Pondicherry to pursue his spiritual work.

From 1910 to 1950 his spiritual practice focused on the reconciliation of the spiritual and material realities, with the ultimate goal of utilizing the most powerful spiritual force (the Supermind) to accelerate and transform human evolution. He recognized that the current human state of consciousness is merely a transitional state with endless potential for spiritual development and called for the integration of Eastern and Western cultural and knowledge traditions.

He rejected the world-negating approaches to spiritual development as escapism and embraced embodied spirituality and the reintegration of the feminine Divine.

His most notable works in prose are: *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, and *The Human Cycle*. His poetic *magnum opus* is titled *Savitri*.



POETRY & CONSCIOUSNESS

Sri Aurobindo was a political leader, professor, philosopher, and yogi—but he was also a seer poet who felt that poetry could be used as a path to higher consciousness. In that spirit we present this special poetry issue of *Collaboration*.—Editors

POETRY IS AN ANCIENT ART FORM GOING BACK TO EARLIER periods of civilization all around the globe. Oral traditions such as poetry and storytelling were among the main modes of communication before the dawn of rational consciousness and the emergence of language and writing as we know them today. As a language of the soul, through sound and rhythm, poetry has long evoked human imagination and emotions and conveyed meaningful intuitive experiences in ways that ordinary language often fails to accomplish. If poetry and consciousness are intimately connected, can poetry be an instrument for enrichment and evolution of consciousness?

For this issue of *Collaboration*, we have received a wealth of poetry from our readers. So the editors have decided to make this an all-poetry issue, accompanied by some elucidating texts by Sri Aurobindo on the nature of poetry and poetic creation. Among these are “The Ideal Spirit of Poetry” (a chapter from the book, *The Future Poetry*); also a brief exchange with a disciple, titled “Joy of Poetic Creation,” in which Sri Aurobindo speaks to openness to higher planes and his experience of this in writing a poem. In addition, we have included a piece titled “Three Elements of Poetic Creation,” in which Sri Aurobindo describes elements essential for the writing of a poetry that is genuine and not overly influenced by the intellect. Sublime examples are given in the poems by Sri Aurobindo in this issue, including a wonderful fragment from *Savitri* that describes the cycles of the seasons. Other selections from Sri Aurobindo’s collected poems are “In Horis Aeternum,” as well as two poems in which Sri Aurobindo reveals his highest aspirations and

preparedness to embrace the Divine Radiance, “Bride of the Fire” and “Trance.”

In “The ideal Spirit of Poetry” Sri Aurobindo reflects on poetry, its relationship with consciousness, and its role in the future evolution of consciousness. The main question he lays out at the outset is: “What would be the ideal spirit of poetry in an age of increasingly intuitive mind?” To answer this question, he refers to what Vedic poets meant by Mantra, which he describes as an inspired and revealed seeing and visioned thinking attended by a realization of an inmost truth of God, self and man, and Nature and Cosmos. For him, poetry is Mantra only when it reveals the inmost truth and conveys the “highest power of the rhythm and speech of that truth.”

Sri Aurobindo urges us to seek again the truth of spirit now that mankind has found some knowledge of the material world and vital reality of the “Force from which we spring.” This new vision of poetry “will not be as in the old times something hieratically remote, mystic, inward...” Rather, the emerging consciousness will have intimacy with our earth and embody not just the highest philosophical, religious, or artistic ideals, but also those “in the common life and action of man.” He invites humanity to live in a greater truth than what has hitherto governed our lives. The role of poetry is to “express the soul of man to himself and to embody in the word whatever power of beauty he sees.” The ideal poet is a poet-seer-creator who is also a rishi (sage).

For Sri Aurobindo the role of a poet is to interpret or reinterpret the past, point to the future, and in doing so reveal “the face of the Eternal.” The intuitive poetry that

Sri Aurobindo is concerned with would attempt to harmonize five eternal powers: Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life, and Spirit which he refers to as the “five suns of poetry.” The poetry of the future will kindle these five “suns in the heavens of our highest mind.” Such poetry will first be based on intuitive faculties, but has the potential to rise towards a “greater power of revelation nearer to the direct vision and word of the Overmind from which all creative inspiration comes,” and yet, it will not be remote or intangible, but will make the highest gradations of consciousness near and visible.

Among the poems we are happy to publish in this issue is a beautiful one titled “The Lines of Bougainvillea Bushes” by Dolan Saha, who writes about the inspiration she received from rows of bougainvillea bushes when she was studying in Chennai and had recently become acquainted with Integral Yoga. Dolan has introduced this poem in her piece titled “Coming in the Clasp of Divine Grace” by explaining the background and context of its inspiration. While the experience described in the poem took place in another time and place, the poem resonates with the joy of experiencing the Divine in Nature. “She of the Garment Green” by Gary Millar speaks to the immense beauty of the Himalayan region, where he lives in view of the great Annapurna. In this lovely poem Gary describes the realization and expression of the Divine Mother as experienced in Mother Nature. We are also glad to have two poems from Rick Lipschutz, “Steep Ravine Trail Song” and “All That the Sunset Measures.” Both of these deeply expressive poems go beyond describing the experiences they recount and evoke a wider, more expansive experience of the natural world and the divinity within it. Ellen Davis’ poems “Maps” and “Love Eternal” weave together the transcendent and the immanent in mystical experiences. “Maps” takes us through the key landmarks of the spiritual journey: self, time, eternity, form, formlessness, essence and substance, beauty, immanence, transcendence, and unity. “Love Eternal” is an ode to the beloved, the dance between the lover and beloved and the joy of unity, complementarity, and experience of wholeness through spiritual union.

We are also pleased to present an essay titled “The Future Poetry in Our Times?” by Debashish Banerji in which he provides a synopsis of the book *The Future*

Poetry, highlighting how future poetry could be an aid in the evolution of consciousness. Among Sri Aurobindo’s key principles, Debashish highlights the power of intuitive speech as a means for union with higher states of consciousness, as well as the power of rhythm to convey the vibrational context for higher states of consciousness. Other key principles highlighted are revelatory power of image, suggestive power of metaphor, phonetic value of words, as well as multiplicity of meanings of words according to different contexts. Debashish shares that his own poetry is an ongoing exploration of Sri Aurobindo’s principles of intuitive poetry along these lines.

The first of his poems is titled “Poetry” which points to the hidden powers of poetry to transcend our ordinary consciousness of the mind and the senses and awaken and elevate us to higher realities. “Implosion” is a somewhat enigmatic poem in which Debashish alludes to the advent of a spiritual figure (Sri Aurobindo) during the later period of Bengal Cultural Renaissance, using powerful images such as *Kal Baisokhi*, violent thunderstorms, winds, and torrential rainfall in northern India, the great beauty of which have inspired poets as well as artists, especially in Bengal. “Okawa 1914” transports us to the time of the Mother’s arrival in Tokyo, where she stayed with Dr. Shumei Okawa, a university professor and leader in the pan-Asiatic movement in Japan who had deep interest in India and had heard of Sri Aurobindo. In their year-long stay, the Mother, Okawa, and others in their company discussed their vision of a new Asia and a new world.

We hope that our readers will enjoy this special issue.

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JOY

of

Poetic Creation

SRI AUROBINDO

ANTHONY LL

In this letter to a disciple, Sri Aurobindo describes the uncommon linking of the vital joy of creation with the deep originality, sweetness, and power of the psychic being (the evolving soul) in a poem written by the disciple.

POETRY TAKES ITS START FROM ANY PLANE OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS, but, like all art, one might even say all creation, it must be passed *through* the vital, the life-soul, gather from it a certain force for manifestation if it is to be itself alive. And as there is always a joy in creation, that joy along with a certain *enthousiasmos*—not enthusiasm, if you please, but an invasion and exultation of creative force and creative ecstasy, *ānandamaya āveśa*—must always be there, whatever the source. But where the inspiration comes from the linking of the vital creative instrument to a deeper psychic experience, that imparts another kind of intensive originality and peculiar individual power, a subtle and delicate perfection, a linking on to something that is at once fine to etheriality and potent, intense as fire yet full of sweetness. But this is exceedingly rare in its absolute quality,—poetry as an

expression of mind and life is common, poetry of the mind and life touched by the soul and given a spiritual fineness is to be found but more rare; the pure psychic note in poetry breaks through only once in a way, in a brief lyric, a sudden line, a luminous passage. It was indeed because this linking-on took place that the true poetic faculty suddenly awoke in you,—for it was not there before, at least on the surface. The joy you feel, therefore, was no doubt partly the simple joy of creation, but there comes also into it the joy of expression of the psychic being which was seeking for an outlet since your boyhood. It is this inner expression that makes the writing of poetry a part of sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Letters on Poetry and Art*, pp. 9–10

Coming in the Clasp of
**DIVINE
GRACE**

DOLAN CHAMPA SAHA

THE FOLLOWING POEM CAME FROM A RECOLLECTION OF A memory from 1999 in Chennai, India. Even as I write this, the memory comes alive with the feelings, as though I am reliving them again; thus, the major use of present tense.

A brief background on how the poem's inspiration shaped: I had recently come to know Mother and Sri Aurobindo from my schoolteacher. I was supposed to be busy in studies; instead a beautiful daze came over me. It continued for days, though the intensity varied. My teacher gave me a small book to read and that was my first taste of the Divine Mother. The more I read it, the more it felt like I was floating in beauty. I could not read for my upcoming entrance exams. Something just caught hold of me and it felt like the most beautiful feeling on earth. The only thing I felt like doing those days was to remain immersed in the splendor of the words of the book. I got very attached to it, but had to return it soon. So, I started writing the book's quotes—and my pen flowed. Inspirations came rushing in for poetry and painting. Everything I touched felt or became beautiful. I didn't have such lovely paintings or words before. I had forgotten the practical world. My heart felt so light, seized by glory. Every day, I got more and more absorbed in a magnificent love that was hard to touch and catch hold of, yet was engulfing my whole being. Lightness came

over me and the days passed in wonder and beauty. It felt like the whole world was filled with grace and magic.

As I went for my walks those days, it felt like the whole of nature was speaking to me. Mother loved flowers, so I went to pick some for Her. But I couldn't tear them off the tree—a subtle sensitivity overtook me. Even that small tear pierced my being with a loud bang. Thus, I picked them from the ground—the most beautiful and fresh ones possible. For the time being everything was filled with so much light—that even the dust-laden flowers were shining with beauty.

That very memory brings back those subtle feelings now. It was Chennai, so the place was filled with bougainvillea flowers of all kinds. And I liked to pick them. I liked to play with different colors and then form a new art with them each day in my decorations, while offering. I then felt a strong affinity with the flowers.


I miss them a lot now, hardly get to see them anymore—guess they only grow in tropical lands. But, those flowers saved, guided, and protected me in my journey that followed. A part of me still melts at their remembrance! I soon learned they were flowers of Divine Protection! I then engulfed their spirit and took their touch with me, wherever I went. As I write this, the feelings get so alive, as if the flowers never left me—even though I now am in a land where I never get to see them.



THE LINES OF BOUGAINVILLEA BUSHES

DOLAN CHAMPA SAHA

JOCELYN ERSKINE-KELLIE



I walk past your rows,
Caressing your leaves, in silent presence;
You exude a lovely marigold of color glows.
Your petals shining; myriad in their essence
Blossoming bright and vibrant in Nature's care
Filled with a lively suppleness and simplicity rare!

You talk to me through your heart's cove
And thread together our spirits' sounds.
I seem to overflow in that love ...
As if my feet not on the grounds
But merging in you, disappearing, soaring aloft ...
Melting into a coziness that is so beautiful and soft!


My being so light and feathery,
Fluttering with the sway of the wind's cue,
Like a colorful butterfly in glee.
As though flowing in and becoming one with you ...
You radiate a softness that is hard to touch.
Yet you touch the softness in my heart so much.

I feel so safe and nourished in your perfumes.
I then take your flowers for my holy altars.
After your love, I could not pluck your blooms.
Thus, I bent down to pick your offers
Of love; the generous gift of your hearty blossoms,
On Mother Earth's bosoms!

I admire the gift of your flowers
As I take them to my shrine's arms.
My Divine welcomes the dust kissed petals' showers,
Filled with the delight of thy perfumes' charms
Accepting with Her infinite heart, wide open in luminosity
Thy offerings of art, filled with love and generosity.

Note

This submission originally appeared in the journal *New Race*.



She of the Garment Green

GARY MILLAR

Returning to Her fields of garnet-green
Her tresses in the wind across my face
A fire is felt from breeze's inner being
As my breaths move Her dangling lace ...
I stay near Her, nestled in this dress
Of Mother-Earth, the Woman of this slope
Upon which life evolves, as She will bless
In seasons of delight with heart-filled hope ...
Soon rice will come from heaven's divine rain
That we will eat in prayer beneath Her feet
These showers of Descent will bring again
Her company, at last, in each heart-beat ...
For when reborn I know Her grain will fill
My seeking soul, upon this holy hill

H-EN-M PIXABAY



STEEP RAVINE TRAIL SONG

RICK LIPSCHUTZ

As I follow down
Steep Ravine Trail,
the little streams are singing.

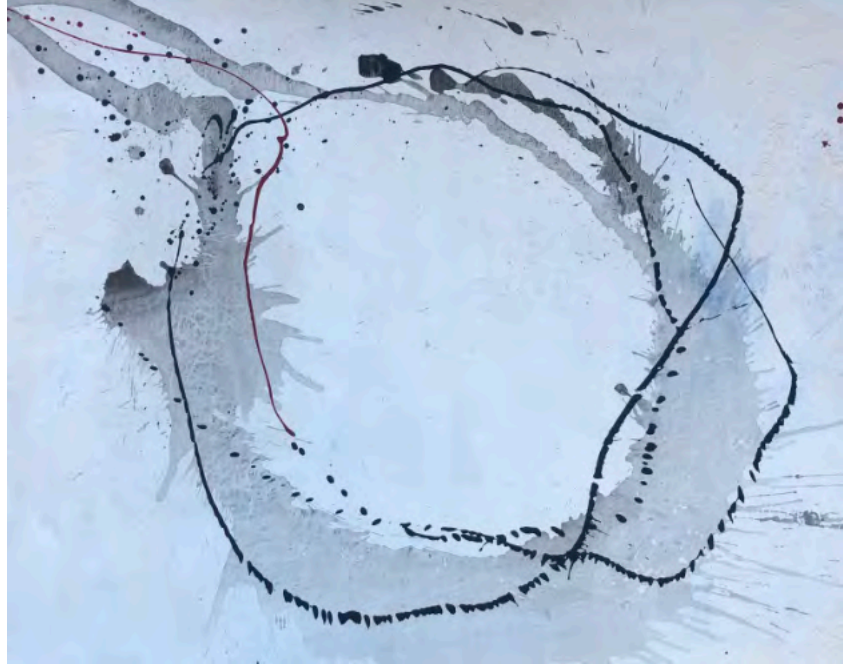
I look at a leaf,
it's the first time.
Waterfall, spread your silver veil.

Alone
in this state
plunging to the sea

our loves
are blooms of death
but not in your golden cup.

Come drink with me
at the round sunrise
from the grail of the flowers.

The ray that sent us here returns:
that one to rescue love
from catcalls of despair.



MARIE-CLAIRE BARSOTTI

Roadside Haiku

RON JORGENSEN

Only one who sees
the un-seeable can do
the un-doable.



LOV*e*TERNAL

ELLEN DAVIS

CHROFIT

She dances her beauty like a prayer in the night
And the moon cloaked in heaven casting shadow and light.
Her life knows no boundaries, in it her soul takes flight,
My lover, sweet beloved, soft Mother of Sight.
Her eyes see beauty, perfection and no fight
Between yes, no, high, low, dark and light.
Cherishing diversity, celebrating its play,
Honoring even those closed to the day.
Mistress of Truth, Master of Love,
Stretched out in surrender, so below as above.
Infinity I do see when I meet her gaze;
Eternal, supernal, beyond mind's maze.
In her arms I rest from future and past,
Until the prayer comes for it to ever last
Where she laughs and laughs and laughs in my night,
Tickling all of the cobwebs out of their fright.
A child, her innocence giving birth to creation,
Seeds sprouting spirit within manifestation.
All of this she sees so equally in me,
Embracing every opportunity with her lover to be.
In joy, in gratitude, at each other's feet we meet.
Alone, together, always complete.
Greater a whole our union creates
Freedom, healing, opening new gates.
Our trust in God, revealing life impersonal.
Our alignment with Truth and what is invincible.
Our focus on Love and what brings greater balance.
Our insurance a surrender to the present and its Silence.
Splendour is the Grace which brought her to me
As my sun as my moon as my mystery.
In each other we see ourselves and the Divine,
Masks thinning, spirits winning, souls forward to shine.

Three Elements of Poetic Creation

SRI AUROBINDO

POETRY, OR AT ANY RATE A TRULY POETIC POETRY, COMES always from some subtle plane through the creative vital and uses the outer mind and other external instruments for transmission only. There are three elements in the production of poetry; there is the original source of inspiration, there is the vital force of creative beauty which contributes its own substance and impetus and often determines the form, except when that also comes ready made from the original sources; there is, finally, the transmitting outer consciousness of the poet. The most genuine and perfect poetry is written when the original source is able to throw its inspiration pure and undiminished into the vital and there takes its true native form and power of speech exactly reproducing the inspiration, while the outer consciousness is entirely passive and transmits without alteration what it receives from the godheads of the inner or the superior spaces. When the vital mind and emotion are too active and give too much of their own initiation or a translation into more or less turbid vital stuff, the poetry remains powerful but is inferior in quality and less authentic. Finally, if the outer consciousness is too lethargic and blocks the transmission or too active and makes its own version, then you have the poetry that fails or is at best a creditable mental manufacture. It is the interference of these two parts either by obstruction or by too great an activity of their own or by both together that causes the difficulty and labour of writing. There would be no difficulty if the inspiration came through without obstruction or

interference in a pure transcript—that is what happens in a poet's highest or freest moments when he writes not at all out of his own external human mind, but by inspiration, as the mouthpiece of the Gods.

The originating source may be anywhere; the poetry may arise or descend from the subtle physical plane, from the higher or lower vital itself, from the dynamic or creative intelligence, from the plane of dynamic vision, from the psychic, from the illumined mind or Intuition,—even, though this is the rarest, from the Overmind widenesses. To get the Overmind inspiration is so rare that there are only a few lines or short passages in all poetic literature that give at least some appearance or reflection of it.

When the source of inspiration is in the heart or the psychic there is more easily a good will in the vital channel, the flow is spontaneous; the inspiration takes at once its true form and speech and is transmitted without any interference or only a minimum of interference by the brain-mind, that great spoiler of the higher or deeper splendours.

It is the character of the lyrical inspiration, to flow in a jet out of the being—whether it comes from the vital or the psychic, it is usually spontaneous, for these are the two most powerfully impelling and compelling parts of the nature.

When on the contrary the source of inspiration is in the creative poetic intelligence or even the higher mind or the illumined mind, the poetry which comes from this

quarter is always apt to be arrested by the outer intellect, our habitual thought-production engine. This intellect is an absurdly overactive part of the nature; it always thinks that nothing can be well done unless it puts its finger into the pie and therefore it instinctively interferes with the inspiration, blocks half or more than half of it and labours to substitute its own inferior and toilsome productions for the true speech and rhythm that ought to have come.

The poet labours in anguish to get the one true word, the authentic rhythm, the real divine substance of what he has to say, while all the time it is waiting complete and ready behind; but it is denied free transmission by some part of the transmitting agency which prefers to translate and is not willing merely to receive and transcribe. When one gets something through from the illumined mind, then there is likely to come to birth work that is really fine and great. When there comes with labour or without it something reasonably like what the poetic intelligence wanted to say, then there is something fine or adequate, though it may not be great unless there is an intervention from the higher levels. But when the outer brain is at work trying to fashion out of itself or to give its own version of what the higher sources are trying to pour down, then there results a manufacture or something quite inadequate or faulty or, at the best, “good on the whole,” but not the thing that ought to have come.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Letters on Poetry and Art*, pp. 5–7



MARIE-CLAIRE BARSOTTI



all that *the sunset* measures

RICK LIPSCHUTZ

GLORIA SAYAVEDRA

Where would the sun set if there were no silence
and if there were no one to say farewell?
Silence runs deeper than the river,
silence runs farther than the trail.

There where the trail ends in trails endless,
mountains upon mountains to the sun,
I have seen ten thousand sunsets
from mountain passes where the endless trails still run.

Where would my feet go if there were none to follow,
that nothing-after noon—no evening behind?
Farther and deeper into silence
footsteps echo, but the silence few can find.

Stand still, and listen to the sunset
move these mountains. Hear its melody.
All of the sunset's measure live in twilight—
the river sends its boat to carry me.

The mountain walks, we never meet the summit.
Fire strides the ledge and plateaus toe the light.
A range beyond, we pass into the silence:
still greater suns arise from stars more bright.

Rock-cradled city of sand, and wave-crest rising,
Earth find in you joy and turn the sun
to work in silence, like a garden
and work where gardens haven't yet begun.

Count sunset's rule no mark—nor scale this voyage—
and time not ours: the measure there is no farewell.
Through every rocky heart, rides there a river,
silence that shatters mountains in its trail.

IMPLOSION

DEBASHISH BANERJI

You came to and left the earth
At a time of time compression
Like a glint in the eye of the cyclonic depression
Over the Bay of Bengal.

The *kal boisakhi* of the *bauls*
The unpredictable seasons of whirling ecstasy and madness
Remnants of shamanic communitas
Beat their thunderdrums
Around that silent eye.

Only the gods knew of that arrival and departure
The quantum flash of your chariot with its sun flag
Your archetype disclosed and aborted
A light wrinkle on Time's forehead
Hazy with enigma.

But that which comes can never leave
Becoming part of actualized immanence
The living present past
Or past as present's palimpsest
From the viewpoint of Becoming.

Into this hauntology you imploded
Fusing with the atomic idea
The inmost jewel in the cosmic lotus
Imprinted with your Logos.

Not an alien element this
But an imperceptible intimate essence
Opening a dimension through a fold of deconstruction
And in keeping with radical infinity,
Immanent yet transcendent.

Occult surgeons suture the body for the feast
Humans wait like cattle for mass enlightenment
While your invitation expands within like a dawning
Duration stretching its fingers
Back to the future.

Notes

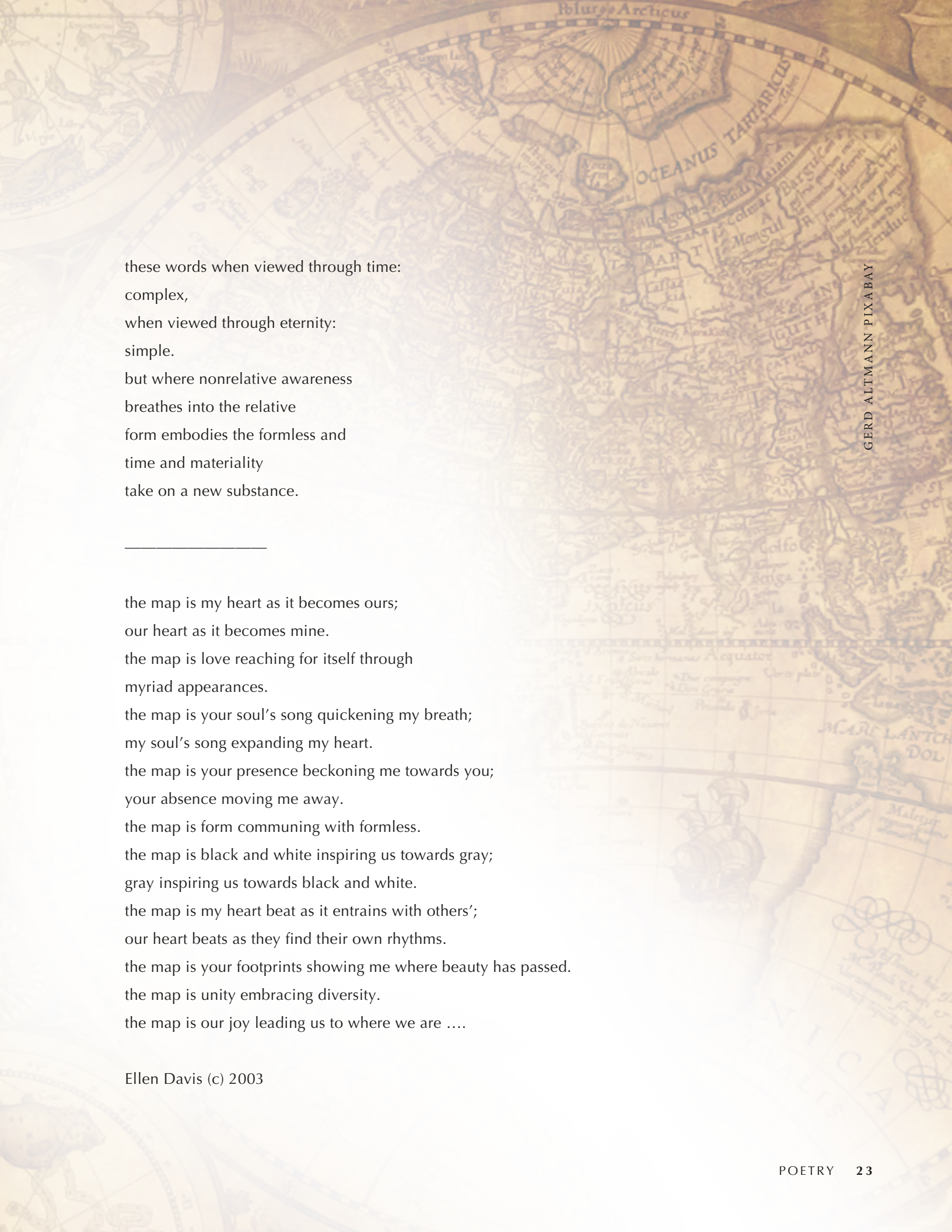
Kal boisakhi are severe and untimely spring storms; *bauls* are wandering mystics who are attuned to Nature and for whom singing and dancing constitute a spiritual path.

maps

ELLEN DAVIS

ahhh, this is the new language
where experience
as i, we, all;
self, soul, essence,
vibrates into expression
bridging time with eternity,
the dual with the nondual,
the one breathing the two
and then back into itself.
you see a map?
the traces of our footprints
traveled along mysteries' path;
a map to mystery
where what is known
is trust in now,
in our breath,
letting ourselves as kaleidoscope
be breathed into life;
letting ourselves as eternity
be breathed into time.
you see a map?
the future calling us

to where we have yet to travel
and yet have been all along;
where we see that
we have been letting
ourselves as time
breathe ourselves into eternity.
you see a map?
the past calling us
to retrace our steps
again and again
with a new light,
a new awareness,
where past meets future
giving birth to now,
where now gives birth
to past and future;
to eternity
and the awareness of what
has always already been.



these words when viewed through time:
complex,
when viewed through eternity:
simple.
but where nonrelative awareness
breathes into the relative
form embodies the formless and
time and materiality
take on a new substance.

the map is my heart as it becomes ours;
our heart as it becomes mine.
the map is love reaching for itself through
myriad appearances.
the map is your soul's song quickening my breath;
my soul's song expanding my heart.
the map is your presence beckoning me towards you;
your absence moving me away.
the map is form communing with formless.
the map is black and white inspiring us towards gray;
gray inspiring us towards black and white.
the map is my heart beat as it entrains with others';
our heart beats as they find their own rhythms.
the map is your footprints showing me where beauty has passed.
the map is unity embracing diversity.
the map is our joy leading us to where we are

Ellen Davis (c) 2003

POETRY

DEBASHISH BANERJI

Poetry is the true thought of the other
It wakes in the middle of the night.

Thought of the other is not imagined existence
Or reconstituted in the mind from the evidence of the senses.

Yet it is a sense more concrete than the senses:
Touch of touch, sight of sight, thought of thought, rumble of knowing

Thought of the outside comes unbidden
It breaks like a bolt of thunder.

O the lightness of the thought of the other, *utthapana*
I am freed of myself, I know you exist.

The inside is no more inside, touched by the outside
It is the outside in, inside out.

Note

Utthapana means levitation.



The Future Poetry in Our Times?

DEBASHISH BANERJI

SRI AUROBINDO CONCEIVED OF A ROLE FOR POETRY RELEVANT TO our future, in keeping with his philosophy of history, according to which we are transiting from an Age of Individualism to a Subjective Age which holds the promise of ripening into a Spiritual Age. In *The Future Poetry*, Sri Aurobindo uses the Tantric conception of “the seeing word,” *paśyanti vāk*, to refer to the power of intuitive speech which unveils an inner sense of intimacy and identity with the truth of what is presented. It is an inner recognition that brings with it a taste of non-duality. Sri Aurobindo describes this itself as a kind of yoga, union, with a higher state of consciousness. One is raised to a state of universal consciousness or close to such a state, which Sri Aurobindo describes as the intermediate planes mediating between our human mentality and the Truth-Consciousness of Supermind. Sri Aurobindo relates this potency of speech to the mantra and discusses the powers of poetry that aid in achieving its effects. Looking back at the Vedic *ṛik* but also at examples of English poetry through its history, he gives primary importance to the power of rhythm, *chhanda* in Sanskrit, meter in English, to convey the vibrational environment of this higher consciousness. But he discusses other poetic powers as well, the visionary power of the revelatory image, the vital movement of phonetic values, *śabda*, the suggestive power of metaphor, contextual exploitation of allusive connotations, or significant

statement of idea. Of these, too, he pays special attention to phonetic value, the inner-sound image of words that carries the vital suggestion of their concrete reality in consciousness. The origin of words go beyond their semantic denotation, according to him, and are founded on vibrational movements that leave impressions in the vital ether (*akāśa*) of the hearer. Words also awake echoes of multiple meanings according to context. This constitutes the allusiveness of words. These are the powers he utilized in his own poetry. Though he seldom used rhyme, he was meticulous in his use of a standard meter, most frequently the iambic pentameter or blank verse.

The Future Poetry was serialized in *The Arya*,¹ its last installment coming out in 1920. Contemporaneous English poets he discusses there include W. B. Yeats, George Meredith, Edward Carpenter, and Walt Whitman. The same year, 1920, saw the publication of a book of literary theory and criticism, *The Sacred Wood*, by T. S. Eliot, which has been considered a revolutionary text heralding the modernist turn in English poetry.² In this text and the poetic movement it was associated with, the reliance on musicality through meter and rhyme in Victorian and Georgian poetry was severely criticized as empty and vapid, while concreteness of imagery, thought, and critical insight based on historicity were held up in its place as central to poetry. Free verse challenged the metrical regularity of past poetic forms, further loosening blank

Sri Aurobindo intended to enlarge *The Future Poetry* to address developments in modernist verse... [b]ut he didn't get around to this work. How would a more contemporary adaptation of his principles of intuitive poetry look?

verse towards a greater closeness to the spoken word. These changes to premodern forms of poetry have become normalized in our times. In heralding these changes, Eliot worked in close association with several others, very influential among whom was Ezra Pound, who was inspired by the visual foundation of the Chinese ideogram and initiated the movement known as Imagism.³ This represents an alternative verbal potential to the phonetic basis of Indo-European speech, one in which sound is tied more directly to image.⁴ Pound was also well versed in classical poetry and carried out a number of experiments in meter.

Sri Aurobindo, in his corner in Pondicherry, kept himself sporadically informed of these changes. In 1942, he wrote and published the essay "On Quantitative Metre," in which he devised a principle of meter closer to spoken language based on an adaptation of classical quantity and stress in natural diction. In this essay, he parses free verse passages from Eliot's "Hollow Men," Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," and other modernist sources, using his adapted principle to show how successful examples of free verse derive a good part of their power from the heightened diction and regularity of an underlying quantitative metrical structure. In his own adaptation of this principle in *Savitri*, we see how some of the most powerful passages there combine the pitch of meter with sound, image, idea, and allusion to express an intensity that may best be called synesthetic.⁵ In Sri Aurobindo's commentary on the *Kena Upanishad*, he refers to that text's evocation of a sense behind the external senses,⁶ identifying this at the mental level as the "sixth sense," *manas*, itself a subsidiary synesthetic working of the supramental Sense, *samjñāna*. It is a nearness to this knowledge-by-identity by inner sense that one encounters in these passages from *Savitri*.

Sri Aurobindo intended to enlarge *The Future Poetry* to address developments in modernist verse, for which purpose he had a disciple, Nirodbaran, read out modernist poetry to him. But he didn't get around to this work.

How would a more contemporary adaptation of his principles of intuitive poetry look? I feel it is left to us to experiment in this direction, through the development of the inner ear, the synesthetic sense, a receptivity to higher universal perceptions, new principles of rhythm, and an intensity of combined sound, idea, and image in word-units that awake the magic of an inner identity. My poetry is an ongoing experiment in this direction.

Notes

1. A philosophical journal published between 1914 and 1921, in which Sri Aurobindo's major writings were serialized.
2. Particularly the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (Eliot 2015, pp. 42–52) represents a manifesto of modernist poetry.
3. See Ming Xie, *Ezra Pound and the Appropriation of Chinese Poetry: Cathay, Translation and Imagism*. New York: Routledge. 1999.
4. A good example of Pound's imagism is the two-line poem, "In a Station of the Metro": The apparition of these faces in the crowd: / Petals on a wet, black bough (Pound 1990: p. 111).
5. Synesthesia, literally "union of the senses," is a phenomenon where the impression of one sense organ is experienced also by one or more other sense organs. Poetry of a heightened intensity may evoke an inner concreteness that seems to awaken and be grasped by all the senses. Though technically the term ideasthesia is used for this kind of experience, it is a form of synesthesia. Many passages in *Savitri* tend to awake this phenomenon, a good example being Book One, Canto I, "The Symbol Dawn" (Sri Aurobindo 1997c, pp. 1–10).
6. "That which is hearing of our hearing, mind of our mind, speech of our speech, that too is life of our life-breath and sight of our sight. The wise are released beyond and they pass from this world and become immortal." See *Kena Upanishad* I:2 (Sri Aurobindo 2001, p. 5).

THE IDEAL SPIRIT OF POETRY

SRI AUROBINDO

The Future Poetry, Sri Aurobindo's vision of the unrealized potential of this art form, contains two parts. Part one weaves together mantra, mechanics, and the history of poetry. The following first chapter of part two summarizes his whole thesis. Enjoy!—Editors

TO ATTEMPT TO PRESAGE THE FUTURE TURN OR DEVELOPMENT OF mind or life in any of its fields must always be a hazardous venture. For life and mind are not like physical Nature; the processes of physical Nature run in precise mechanical grooves, but these are more mobile and freer powers. The gods of life and still more the gods of mind are so incalculably self-creative that even where we can distinguish the main lines on which the working runs or has so far run, we are still unable to foresee with any certainty what turn they will yet take or of what new thing they are in labour. It is therefore impossible to predict what the poetry of the future will actually be like. We can see where we stand today, but we cannot tell where we shall stand a quarter of a century hence. All that one can do is to distinguish for oneself some possibilities that lie before the poetic mind of the race and to figure what it can achieve if it chooses to follow out certain great openings which the genius of recent and contemporary poets has made free to us; but what path it will actually choose to tread or what new heights attempt, waits still for its own yet unformed decision.

What would be the ideal spirit of poetry in an age of the increasingly intuitive mind: that is the question which arises from all that has gone before and to which we may attempt some kind of answer. I have spoken in the beginning of the Mantra as the highest and intensest revealing form of poetic thought and expression. What the Vedic poets meant by the Mantra was an inspired

and revealed seeing and visioned thinking, attended by a realisation, to use the ponderous but necessary modern word, of some inmost truth of God and self and man and Nature and cosmos and life and thing and thought and experience and deed. It was a thinking that came on the wings of a great soul rhythm, *chandas*. For the seeing could not be separated from the hearing; it was one act. Nor could the living of the truth in oneself which we mean by realisation, be separated from either, for the presence of it in the soul and its possession of the mind must precede or accompany in the creator or human channel that expression of the inner sight and hearing which takes the shape of the luminous word. The Mantra is born through the heart and shaped or massed by the thinking mind into a chariot of that godhead of the Eternal of whom the truth seen is a face or a form. And in the mind too of the fit outward hearer who listens to the word of the poet-seer, these three must come together, if our word is a real Mantra; the sight of the inmost truth must accompany the hearing, the possession of the inmost spirit of it by the mind and its coming home to the soul must accompany or follow immediately upon the rhythmic message of the Word and the mind's sight of the Truth. That may sound a rather mystic account of the matter, but substantially there could hardly be a more complete description of the birth and effect of the inspired and revealing word, and it might be applied, though usually on a more lowered scale than was intended by the Vedic

Rishis, to all the highest outbursts of a really great poetry. But poetry is the Mantra only when it is the voice of the inmost truth and is couched in the highest power of the very rhythm and speech of that truth. And the ancient poets of the Veda and Upanishads claimed to be uttering the Mantra because always it was this inmost and almost occult truth of things which they strove to see and hear and speak and because they believed themselves to be using or finding its innate soul rhythms and the sacrificial speech of it cast up by the divine Agni, the sacred Fire in the heart of man. The Mantra in other words is a direct and most heightened, an intensest and most divinely burdened rhythmic word which embodies an intuitive and revelatory inspiration and ensouls the mind with the sight and the presence of the very self, the inmost reality of things and with its truth and with the divine soul-forms of it, the Godheads which are born from the living Truth. Or, let us say, it is a supreme rhythmic language which seizes hold upon all that is finite and brings into each the light and voice of its own infinite.

This is a theory of poetry, a view of the rhythmic and creative self-expression to which we give that name, which is very different from any that we now hold, a sacred or hieratic *ars poetica* only possible in days when man believed himself to be near to the gods and felt their presence in his bosom and could think he heard some accents of their divine and eternal wisdom take form on the heights of his mind. And perhaps no thinking age has been so far removed from any such view of our life as the one through which we have recently passed and even now are not well out of its shadow, the age of materialism, the age of positive outward matter of fact and of scientific and utilitarian reason. And yet curiously enough—or naturally, since in the economy of Nature opposite creates itself out of opposite and not only like from like,—it is to some far-off light at least of the view of ourselves at our greatest of which such ideas were a concretised expression that we seem to be returning. For we can mark that although in very different circumstances, in broader forms, with a more complex mind and an enormously enlarged basis of culture and civilisation, the gain and inheritance of many intermediate ages, it is still to something very like the effort which was the soul of the Vedic or at least the Vedantic mind that we almost appear to be on the point of turning back in the circle of our course. Now that we have seen minutely what is the material reality

of the world in which we live and have some knowledge of the vital reality of the Force from which we spring, we are at last beginning to seek again for the spiritual reality of that which we and all things secretly are. Our minds are once more trying to envisage the self, the spirit of Man and the spirit of the universe, intellectually, no doubt, at first, but from that to the old effort at sight, at realisation within ourselves and in all is not a very far step. And with this effort there must rise too on the human mind the conception of the godheads in whom this Spirit, this marvellous Self and Reality which broods over the world, takes shape in the liberated soul and life of the human being, his godheads of Truth and Freedom and Unity, his godheads of a greater more highly visioned Will and Power, his godheads of Love and universal Delight, his godheads of universal and eternal Beauty, his godheads of a supreme Light and Harmony and Good. The new ideals of the race seem already to be affected by some first bright shadow of these things, and even though it be only a tinge, a flush colouring the duller atmosphere of our recent mentality, there is every sign that this tinge will deepen and grow, in the heavens to which we look up if not at once in the earth of our actual life.

But this new vision will not be as in the old times something hieratically remote, mystic, inward, shielded from the profane, but rather a sight which will endeavour to draw these godheads again to close and familiar intimacy with our earth and embody them not only in the heart of religion and philosophy, nor only in the higher flights of thought and art, but also, as far as may be, in the common life and action of man. For in the old days these things were Mysteries, which men left to the few, to the initiates and by so leaving them lost sight of them in the end, but the endeavour of this new mind is to reveal, to divulge and to bring near to our comprehension all mysteries,—at present indeed making them too common and outward in the process and depriving them of much of their beauty and inner light and depth, but that defect will pass,—and this turn towards an open realisation may well lead to an age in which man as a race will try to live in a greater Truth than has as yet governed our kind. For all that we know, we now tend to make some attempt to form clearly and live. His creation too will then be moved by another spirit and cast on other lines.

And if this takes place or even if there is some strong mental movement towards it, poetry may recover something

A greater era of man's living seems to be in promise ...
But first there must intervene a poetry which will lead
him towards it from the present faint beginnings.

of an old sacred prestige. There will no doubt still be plenty of poetical writing which will follow the old lines and minister to the old commoner aesthetic motives, and it is as well that it should be so, for the business of poetry is to express the soul of man to himself and to embody in the word whatever power of beauty he sees; but also there may now emerge too and take the first place souls no longer niggardly of the highest flame, the poet-seer and seer-creator, the poet who is also a Rishi, master singers of Truth, hierophants and magicians of a diviner and more universal beauty. There has no doubt always been something of that in the greatest masters of poetry in the great ages, but to fulfil such a role has not often been the one fountain idea of their function; the mind of the age has made other demands on them, needed at that time, and the highest things in this direction have been rare self-exceedings and still coloured by and toned to the half light in which they sang. But if an age comes which is in common possession of a deeper and greater and more inspiring Truth, then its masters of the rhythmic word will at least sing on a higher common level and may rise more often into a fuller intenser light and capture more constantly the greater tones of which this harp of God, to use the Upanishad's description of man's created being, is secretly capable.

A greater era of man's living seems to be in promise, whatever nearer and earthier powers may be striving to lead him on a side path away to a less exalted ideal, and with that advent there must come a new great age of his creation different from the past epochs which he counts as his glories and superior to them in its vision and motive. But first there must intervene a poetry which will lead him towards it from the present faint beginnings. It will be aided by new views in philosophy, a changed and extended spirit in science and new revelations in the other arts, in music, painting, architecture, sculpture, as well as high new ideals in life and new powers of a reviving but no longer limited or obscurantist religious mind. A glint of this change is already visible. And in

poetry there is already the commencement of such a greater leading; the conscious effort of Whitman, the tone of Carpenter, the significance of the poetry of A. E., the rapid immediate fame of Tagore are its first signs. The idea of the poet who is also the Rishi has made again its appearance. Only a wider spreading of the thought and mentality in which that idea can live and the growth of an accomplished art of poetry in which it can take body, are still needed to give the force of permanence to what is now only an incipient and just emerging power. Mankind satiated with the levels is turning its face once more towards the heights, and the poetic voices that will lead us thither with song will be among the high seer voices. For the great poet interprets to man his present or reinterprets for him his past, but can also point him to his future and in all three reveal to him the face of the Eternal.

An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit. These are indeed the five greater ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry. And towards three of them the higher mind of the race is in many directions turning its thought and desire with a new kind and force of insistence. The intellectual side of our recent progress has in fact been for a long time a constant arduous pursuit of Truth in certain of its fields; but now the limited truth of yesterday can no longer satisfy or bind us. Much has been known and discovered of a kind which had not been found or had only been glimpsed before, but the utmost of that much appears now very little compared with the infinitely more which was left aside and ignored and which now invites our search. The description which the old Vedic poet once gave of the seeking of divine Truth, applies vividly to the mind of our age, "As it climbs from height to height, there becomes clear to its view all the much that is yet to be done." But also it is beginning to be seen that only in some great awakening of the self and spiritual being of man is that yet un-lived truth to be found and that infinite much to be achieved. It is only then that the

fullness of a greater knowledge for man living on earth can unfold itself and get rid of its coverings and again on his deeper mind and soul, in the words of another Vedic poet-seer, "New states come into birth, covering upon covering awaken to knowledge, till in the lap of the Mother one wholly sees." This new-old light is now returning upon our minds. Men no longer so completely believe that the world is a machine and they only so much transient thinking matter, a view of existence in the midst of which however helpful it might be to a victorious concentration on physical science and social economy and material well-being, neither religion nor philosophic wisdom could renew their power in the fountains of the spirit nor art and poetry, which are also things of the soul like religion and wisdom, refresh themselves from their native sources of strength. Now we are moving back from the physical obsession to the consciousness that there is a soul and greater self within us and the universe which finds expression here in the life and the body.

But the mind of today insists too and rightly insists on life, on humanity, on the dignity of our labour and action. We have no longer any ascetic quarrel with our mother earth, but rather would drink full of her bosom of beauty and power and raise her life to a more perfect greatness. Thought now dwells much on the idea of a vast creative will of life and action as the secret of existence. That way of seeing, though it may give room for a greater power of art and poetry and philosophy and religion, for it brings in real soul-values, has by its limitation its own dangers. A spirit which is all life because it is greater than life, is rather the truth in which we shall most powerfully live. Aditi, the infinite Mother, cries in the ancient Vedic hymn to Indra the divine Power now about to be born in her womb, "This is the path of old discovered again by which all the gods rose up into birth, even by that upward way shouldst thou be born in thy increase; but go not forth by this other to turn thy mother to her fall," but if, refusing the upward way, the new spirit in process of birth replies like the god, "By that way I will not go forth, for it is hard to tread, let me come out straight on the level from thy side; I have many things to do which have not yet been done; with one I must fight and with another I must question after the Truth," then the new age may do great things, as the last also did great things, but it will miss the highest way and end like it in a catastrophe. There is

no reason why we should so limit our new birth in time; for the spirit and life are not incompatible, but rather a greater power of the spirit brings a greater power of life. Poetry and art most of all our powers can help to bring this truth home to the mind of man with an illumining and catholic force, for while philosophy may lose itself in abstractions and religion turn to an intolerant other-worldliness and asceticism, poetry and art are born mediators between the immaterial and the concrete, the spirit and life. This mediation between the truth of the spirit and the truth of life will be one of the chief functions of the poetry of the future.

The two other sister lamps of God, colour suns of the Ideal, which our age has most dimmed and of whose reviving light it is most sadly in need, but still too strenuously outward and utilitarian to feel sufficiently their absence, Beauty and Delight, are also things spiritual and they bring out the very heart of sweetness and colour and flame of the other three. Truth and Life have not their perfection until they are suffused and filled with the completing power of delight and the fine power of beauty and become one at their heights with this perfecting hue and this secret essence of themselves; the spirit has no full revelation without these two satisfying presences. For the ancient Indian idea is absolutely true that delight, Ananda, is the inmost expressive and creative nature of the free self because it is the very essence of the original being of the Spirit. But beauty and delight are also the very soul and origin of art and poetry. It is the significance and spiritual function of art and poetry to liberate man into pure delight and to bring beauty into his life. Only there are grades and heights here as in everything else and the highest kinds of delight and beauty are those which are one with the highest Truth, the perfection of life and the purest and fullest joy of the self-revealing Spirit. Therefore will poetry most find itself and enter most completely into its heritage when it arrives at the richest harmony of these five things in their most splendid and ample sweetness and light and power; but that can only wholly be when it sings from the highest skies of vision and ranges through the widest widths of our being.

These powers can indeed be possessed in every scale, because on whatever grade of our ascent we stand, the Spirit, the divine Self of man is always there, can break out into a strong flame of manifestation carrying in it all its godheads in whatever form, and poetry and art are

among the means by which it thus delivers itself into expression. Therefore the essence of poetry is eternally the same and its essential power and the magnitude of the genius expended may be the same whatever the frame of the sight, whether it be Homer chanting of the heroes in god-moved battle before Troy and of Odysseus wandering among the wonders of remote and magic isles with his heart always turned to his lost and far-off human hearth, Shakespeare riding in his surge of the manifold colour and music and passion of life, or Dante errant mid his terrible or beatific visions of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, or Valmiki singing of the ideal man embodying God and egoistic giant Rakshasa embodying only fierce self-will approaching each other from their different centres of life and in their different law of being for the struggle desired by the gods, or some mystic *Vamadeva* or *Vishwamitra* voicing in strange vivid now forgotten symbols the action of the gods and the glories of the Truth, the battle and the journey to the Light, the double riches and the sacrificial climbing of the soul to Immortality. For whether it be the inspired imagination fixed on earth or the soul of life or the inspired reason or the high intuitive spiritual vision which gives the form, the genius of the great poet will seize on some truth of being, some breath of life, some power of the spirit and bring it out with a certain supreme force for his and our delight and joy in its beauty. But nevertheless the poetry which can keep the amplitude of its breadth and nearness of its touch and yet see all things from a higher height will, the rest being equal, give more and will more fully satisfy the whole of what we are and therefore the whole of what we demand from this most complete of all the arts and most subtle of all our means of aesthetic self-expression.

The poetry of the future, if it fulfils in amplitude the promise now only there in rich hint, will kindle these five lamps of our being, but raise them up more on high and light with them a broader country, many countries indeed now hidden from our view, will make them not any longer lamps in some limited temple of beauty, but suns in the heavens of our highest mind and illuminative of our widest as well as our inmost life. It will be a poetry of a new largest vision of himself and Nature and God and all things which is offering itself to man and of its possible realisation in a nobler and more divine manhood; and it will not sing of them only with the power of the imaginative intelligence, the exalted and ecstatic sense or the moved

joy and passion of life, but will rise to look at them from an intenser light and embody them in a more revealing force of the word. It will be first and most a poetry of the intuitive reason, the intuitive senses, the intuitive delight-soul in us, getting from this enhanced source of inspiration a more sovereign poetic enthusiasm and ecstasy, and then, it may even be, rise towards a still greater power of revelation nearer to the direct vision and word of the Overmind from which all creative inspiration comes.

A poetry of this kind need not be at all something high and remote or beautifully and delicately intangible, or not that alone, but will make too the highest things near, close and visible, will sing greatly and beautifully of all that has been sung, all that we are from outward body to very God and Self, of the finite and the infinite, the transient and the Eternal, but with a new reconciling and fusing vision that will make them other to us than they have been even when yet the same. If it wings to the heights, it will not leave earth unseen below it, but also will not confine itself to earth, but find too other realities and their powers on man and take all the planes of existence for its empire. It will take up and transform the secrets of the older poets and find new undiscovered secrets, transfigure the old rhythms by the insistence of the voice of its deeper subtler spirit and create new characteristic harmonies, reveal other greater powers and spirits of language, proceeding from the past and present yet will not be limited by them or their rule and forms and canon, but compass its own altered perfected art of poetry.

This at least is its possible ideal endeavour, and then the attempt itself would be a rejuvenating elixir and put the poetic spirit once more in the shining front of the powers and guides of the ever-progressing soul of humanity. There it will lead in the journey like the Vedic Agni, the fiery giver of the word, *yuvā kavīḥ, priyo atithir amartyo mandrajihvo, ṛtaciḍ ṛtāvā*, the Youth, the Seer, the beloved and immortal Guest with his honeyed tongue of ecstasy, the Truth-conscious, the Truth-finder, born as a flame from earth and yet the heavenly messenger of the Immortals.

SRI AUROBINDO, *The Future Poetry*, pp. 217–226



NEIL ROSESTECH

In Horis Aeternum

SRI AUROBINDO

A far sail on the unchangeable monotone of a slow slumbering sea,
A world of power hushed into symbols of hue, silent unendingly;
Over its head like a gold ball the sun tossed by the gods in their play
Follows its curve,—a blazing eye of Time watching the motionless day.

Here or elsewhere,—poised on the unreachable abrupt, snow-solitary ascent
Earth aspiring lifts to the illimitable Light, then ceases broken and spent,
Or on the glowing expanse, arid, fiery and austere, of the desert's hungry soul,—
A breath, a cry, a glimmer from Eternity's face, in a fragment the mystic Whole.

Moment-mere, yet with all Eternity packed, lone, fixed, intense,
Out of the ring of these hours that dance and die caught by the spirit in sense,
In the greatness of a man, in music's outspread wings, in a touch, in a smile, in a sound,
Something that waits, something that wanders and settles not, a Nothing that was all and is found.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Collected Poems*, p. 553

Okawa 1914

DEBASHISH BANERJI

Suddenly I was plunged into a lifeworld of 1914 Tokyo
The lifeworld of Shumei Okawa and his visit to Hara Prasad's talk
Where he saw a young French lady who stirred him to his depths
He saw a light in her eyes as of the great morning of the world that was about to dawn

She and her friends dreamed of a New Asia, a new world
And carried behind them the presence of Aurobindo Ghosh
The greatest of all modern thinkers in the mind of Okawa.
While war raged in the world
Okawa glimpsed the chariot of the Sun
A singular space-time affect
This lifeworld was Okawa's yet more than Okawa's.

The subjectum of revolution repeats
Familiar and intimate yet different
Okawa in his visit to Hara Prasad's talk
Could hardly contain himself for its quantum
I could remember its flash-point intensity
And thrilled to the retrospective messianic
The friction of the door almost parted.

Walter Benjamin intuited another time-structure
Tunneling through discontinuity in subjective space
The irreducible atoms of experience,
Both metaphoric and metonymic—
Mythical, typal and literal—
Each an indestructible skull in Kali's necklace
Or a drop of Fire self-ignited in memory
Pressing for rebirth.

Note

Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was a German Jewish philosopher, cultural critic, and essayist.

SELECTED PASSAGES ON *SAVITRI*

THE MOTHER

The following passages from the Mother, Sri Aurobindo's co-equal spiritual collaborator, describe some of her impressions of *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo's master epic of transformation.

THIS ANALOGY BETWEEN THE ANCIENT FORM OF SPIRITUAL revelations and *Savitri*, this blossoming into poetry of his [Sri Aurobindo's] prophetic revelation is... what could be called the most exceptional part of his work. And what is remarkable (I saw him do it) is that he changed *Savitri*: he went along changing it as his experience changed.

It is clearly the continuing expression of his experience....

The breath of revelatory prophecy is extraordinary! It has an extraordinary POWER!

Mother's Agenda, September 23, 1961, p. 333

Every time I read *Savitri*, I feel as if I am reading it for the first time, really. It's not that I understand it differently, it's that it's completely new: I never read it before! It's odd. It's at least the fourth time I read it.

And truly there's everything in it. All the things I've discovered lately were there. And I hadn't seen it. It's odd.

The first time I read it, it was a revelation; it hung together perfectly well from beginning to end, and I felt I had understood (I did understand something). The second time I read it, I said to myself, 'But this isn't the same thing as what I read.' It hung together, it made up a whole—and I understood something else. Then recently when I read, at every passage I said to myself, 'How new this is! And how the things I have found since are there!' Today again, that's how it is, as if I read it for the first

time! And it puts me into contact with the things I have just discovered.

It's a miraculous book. (*Mother laughs*)

Mother's Agenda, June 6, 1970, p. 230

Savitri is really a condensation, a concentration of the universal Mother—the eternal universal Mother, Mother of all universes from all eternity—in an earthly personality for the Earth's salvation. And Satyavan is the soul of the Earth, the Earth's *jiva*. So when the Lord says, 'he whom you love and whom you have chosen,' it means the earth. All the details are there!

Mother's Agenda, Jan. 22, 1961, pp. 37–38

Let's take *Savitri*, which is very explicit on this: the universal Mother is universally present and at work in the universe, but the earth is where concrete form is given to all the work to be done to bring evolution to its perfection, its goal. Well, at first there's a sort of emanation representative of the universal Mother, which is always on earth to help it prepare itself; then, when the preparation is complete, the universal Mother herself will descend upon earth to finish her work. And this She [as *Savitri*] does with Satyavan—Satyavan is the soul of the earth. She lives in close union with the soul of the earth and together they do the work; She has chosen the soul of the earth for her work, saying, 'HERE is where I will do my work.'

Mother's Agenda, July 28, 1961, p. 282



Savitri

SRI AUROBINDO

CYCLE OF THE SEASONS

This selection from *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo's odyssey of the soul, is a central moment in the poem's narrative arc. In the preceding canto, King Aswapati received a boon from the Divine Mother, the promise of a portion of herself—Savitri, as his daughter to be. In the passage below, Earth celebrates the approaching divine birth expressed by the unsurpassed beauty and majesty of Sri Aurobindo's nature poetry. It is better read aloud, fully stopping with each period, and with as much imaginal contact as possible.—Editors

BEAUTY'S FESTIVAL

A MAENAD of the cycles of desire
Around a Light she must not dare to touch,
Hastening towards a far-off unknown goal
Earth followed the endless journey of the Sun.
A mind but half-awake in the swing of the void
On the bosom of Inconscience dreamed out life
And bore this finite world of thought and deed
Across the immobile trance of the Infinite.
A vast immutable silence with her ran:
Prisoner of speed upon a jewelled wheel,
She communed with the mystic heart in Space.
Amid the ambiguous stillness of the stars

DEWANI GUPTA

MARIE-CLAIRE BARSOTTI

She moved towards some undisclosed event
And her rhythm measured the long whirl of Time.
In ceaseless motion round the purple rim
Day after day sped by like coloured spokes,
And through a glamour of shifting hues of air
The seasons drew in linked significant dance
The symbol pageant of the changing year.
Across the burning languor of the soil
Paced Summer with his pomp of violent noons
And stamped his tyranny of torrid light
And the blue seal of a great burnished sky.
Next through its fiery swoon or clotted knot
Rain-tide burst in upon torn wings of heat,
Startled with lightnings air's unquiet drowse,
Lashed with life-giving streams the torpid soil,
Overcast with flare and sound and storm-winged dark
The star-defended doors of heaven's dim sleep,
Or from the gold eye of her paramour
Covered with packed cloud-veils the earth's brown face.
Armies of revolution crossed the time-field,
The clouds' unending march besieged the world,
Tempests' pronunciamientos claimed the sky
And thunder drums announced the embattled gods.
A traveller from unquiet neighbouring seas,
The dense-maned monsoon rode neighing through earth's hours:
Thick now the emissary javelins:
Enormous lightnings split the horizon's rim
And, hurled from the quarters as from contending camps,
Married heaven's edges steep and bare and blind:
A surge and hiss and onset of huge rain,
The long straight sleet-drift, clamours of winged storm-charge,
Throngs of wind-faces, rushing of wind-feet





Hurrying swept through the prone afflicted plains:
Heaven's waters trailed and dribbled through the drowned land.
Then all was a swift stride, a sibilant race,
Or all was tempest's shout and water's fall.
A dimness sagged on the grey floor of day,
Its dingy sprawling length joined morn to eve,
Wallowing in sludge and shower it reached black dark.
Day a half darkness wore as its dull dress.
Light looked into dawn's tarnished glass and met
Its own face there, twin to a half-lit night's:
Downpour and drip and seeping mist swayed all
And turned dry soil to bog and reeking mud:
Earth was a quagmire, heaven a dismal block.
None saw through dank drenched weeks the dungeon sun.
Even when no turmoil vexed air's sombre rest,
Or a faint ray glimmered through weeping clouds
As a sad smile gleams veiled by returning tears,
All promised brightness failed at once denied
Or, soon condemned, died like a brief-lived hope.
Then a last massive deluge thrashed dead mire
And a subsiding mutter left all still,
Or only the muddy creep of sinking floods
Or only a whisper and green toss of trees.
Earth's mood now changed; she lay in lulled repose,
The hours went by with slow contented tread:
A wide and tranquil air remembered peace,
Earth was the comrade of a happy sun.
A calmness neared as of the approach of God,
A light of musing trance lit soil and sky
And an identity and ecstasy
Filled meditation's solitary heart.
A dream loitered in the dumb mind of Space,



Time opened its chambers of felicity,
An exaltation entered and a hope:
An inmost self looked up to a heavenlier height,
An inmost thought kindled a hidden flame
And the inner sight adored an unseen sun.
Three thoughtful seasons passed with shining tread
And scanning one by one the pregnant hours
Watched for a flame that lurked in luminous depths,
The vigil of some mighty birth to come.
Autumn led in the glory of her moons
And dreamed in the splendour of her lotus pools
And Winter and Dew-time laid their calm cool hands
On Nature's bosom still in a half sleep
And deepened with hues of lax and mellow ease
The tranquil beauty of the waning year.
Then Spring, an ardent lover, leaped through leaves
And caught the earth-bride in his eager clasp;
His advent was a fire of irised hues,
His arms were a circle of the arrival of joy.
His voice was a call to the Transcendent's sphere
Whose secret touch upon our mortal lives
Keeps ever new the thrill that made the world,
Remoulds an ancient sweetness to new shapes
And guards intact unchanged by death and Time
The answer of our hearts to Nature's charm
And keeps for ever new, yet still the same,
The throb that ever wakes to the old delight
And beauty and rapture and the joy to live.
His coming brought the magic and the spell;
At his touch life's tired heart grew glad and young;
He made joy a willing prisoner in her breast.
His grasp was a young god's upon earth's limbs:

Changed by the passion of his divine outbreak
He made her body beautiful with his kiss.
Impatient for felicity he came,
High-fluting with the coil's happy voice,
His peacock turban trailing on the trees;
His breath was a warm summons to delight,
The dense voluptuous azure was his gaze.
A soft celestial urge surprised the blood
Rich with the instinct of God's sensuous joys;
Revealed in beauty, a cadence was abroad
Insistent on the rapture-thrill in life:
Immortal movements touched the fleeting hours.
A godlike packed intensity of sense
Made it a passionate pleasure even to breathe;
All sights and voices wove a single charm.
The life of the enchanted globe became
A storm of sweetness and of light and song,
A revel of colour and of ecstasy,
A hymn of rays, a litany of cries:
A strain of choral priestly music sang
And, swung on the swaying censer of the trees,
A sacrifice of perfume filled the hours.
Asocas burned in crimson spots of flame,
Pure like the breath of an unstained desire
White jasmines haunted the enamoured air,
Pale mango-blossoms fed the liquid voice
Of the love-maddened coil, and the brown bee
Muttered in fragrance mid the honey-buds.
The sunlight was a great god's golden smile.
All Nature was at beauty's festival.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*, pp. 349–352





Bride of the Fire

SRI AUROBINDO

Bride of the Fire, clasp me now close,—

Bride of the Fire!

I have shed the bloom of the earthly rose,

I have slain desire.

Beauty of the Light, surround my life,—

Beauty of the Light!

I have sacrificed longing and parted from grief,

I can bear thy delight.

Image of ecstasy, thrill and enlace,—

Image of bliss!

I would see only thy marvellous face,

Feel only thy kiss.

Voice of Infinity, sound in my heart,—

Call of the One!

Stamp there thy radiance, never to part,

O living Sun.



Collaboration: Help Wanted

AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN OUR ASPIRATIONAL JOURNEY TO COLLABORATE WITH the Divine, some are called to work together in spiritual practice, and some are called to pursue a more solitary way.

This “Help Wanted” call is for those who are yearning to join a networked laboratory of consciousness, a co-laboratory, and practice an integrated collective yoga by volunteering for our journal and association.

The Sri Aurobindo Association (publisher of *Collaboration*) and the *Collaboration* journal team are not “normal” volunteer groups. We find that working together inwardly and allowing the outward product to reflect that connection are crucial.

The aim of *Collaboration*, the only journal of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother published in America, is to reach evolutionary allies who are striving toward human unity, the divinity of Earth, and the evolution of consciousness. The vision we hold for the current and future emergence of *Collaboration* is less to broadcast and more to welcome all who share our integral aims.

We sense there is a place for anyone ready to volunteer through collective practice with the Sri Aurobindo Association and *Collaboration*. Above is an attempt to describe our inner work together. Below are some examples of the outer work we have together. Does any of this spark your volunteer capacities?

GRAPHIC DESIGN / PRINT LAYOUT / ART / ILLUSTRATION

We need graphic designers, especially with experience in print layout. We also need artists and illustrators. Please have a look at the last four journal covers online at <https://www.collaboration.org/journal/issues>. These are the kinds of original images we are looking for. We would

love help acquiring stock and original art, photography, and illustrations that fit the parameters of beauty, originality, and contextual harmony.

COPY EDITING / CONTENT EDITING

Do you have an eagle eye for correct grammar, spelling, syntax, and punctuation? Are you looking to help developing writers hone their ideas into a cohesive whole? Are you familiar with copy-editing style guides? We need you!

PROJECT MANAGEMENT / VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

The Sri Aurobindo Association has been growing. Video meetings have been invaluable in connecting volunteers centered in the United States and spanning the globe, from India to Panamá, Canada to Germany. We need individuals with organizational and project management skills to facilitate connections across the Sri Aurobindo Association’s web, marketing, publishing, and financial groups.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

If this call inspires you, please contact us at info@collaboration.org and let us know that you are responding to our “Help Wanted” posting. Please tell us about yourself, including how you sense that your skills, passions, and interests will support our collective work.

Mobilizing for the Manifestation,

Mateo Needham

President

Sri Aurobindo Association

Sri Aurobindo's 150th Birth Anniversary Issue

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

for
Collaboration Journal
SUMMER 2022 | VOL. 47 NO. 2

DEADLINE MARCH 1, 2022

Collaboration, Summer 2022, will celebrate Sri Aurobindo's 150th birth anniversary. For this special issue we invite you to participate—by attending to and reflecting on the depth and relevance of this incomparable seer and prophet figure in your own life and also in the emerging currents of integration, world unity, and renewal in our time of transitions and global crises. Some possible themes to consider are a) tributes to various aspects of Sri Aurobindo's life and work; b) relevance of Sri Aurobindo and Integral Yoga in today's world of transitions and global crises; c) short reflections (two or three paragraphs) on personal experiences with Sri Aurobindo and Integral Yoga, including your introduction to this path.

MISSION: *Collaboration* is the journal of Integral Yoga published in the United States. Our mission is to share articles, conversations, poetry, and art that deeply engage our transitional times with the beauty, joy, and hope of the vast wisdom and practice of this evolutionary tradition and its founders, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We explore and celebrate particularly the individual practice of yoga in this country as well as currents and expressions of the collective yoga of the American soul in our times.

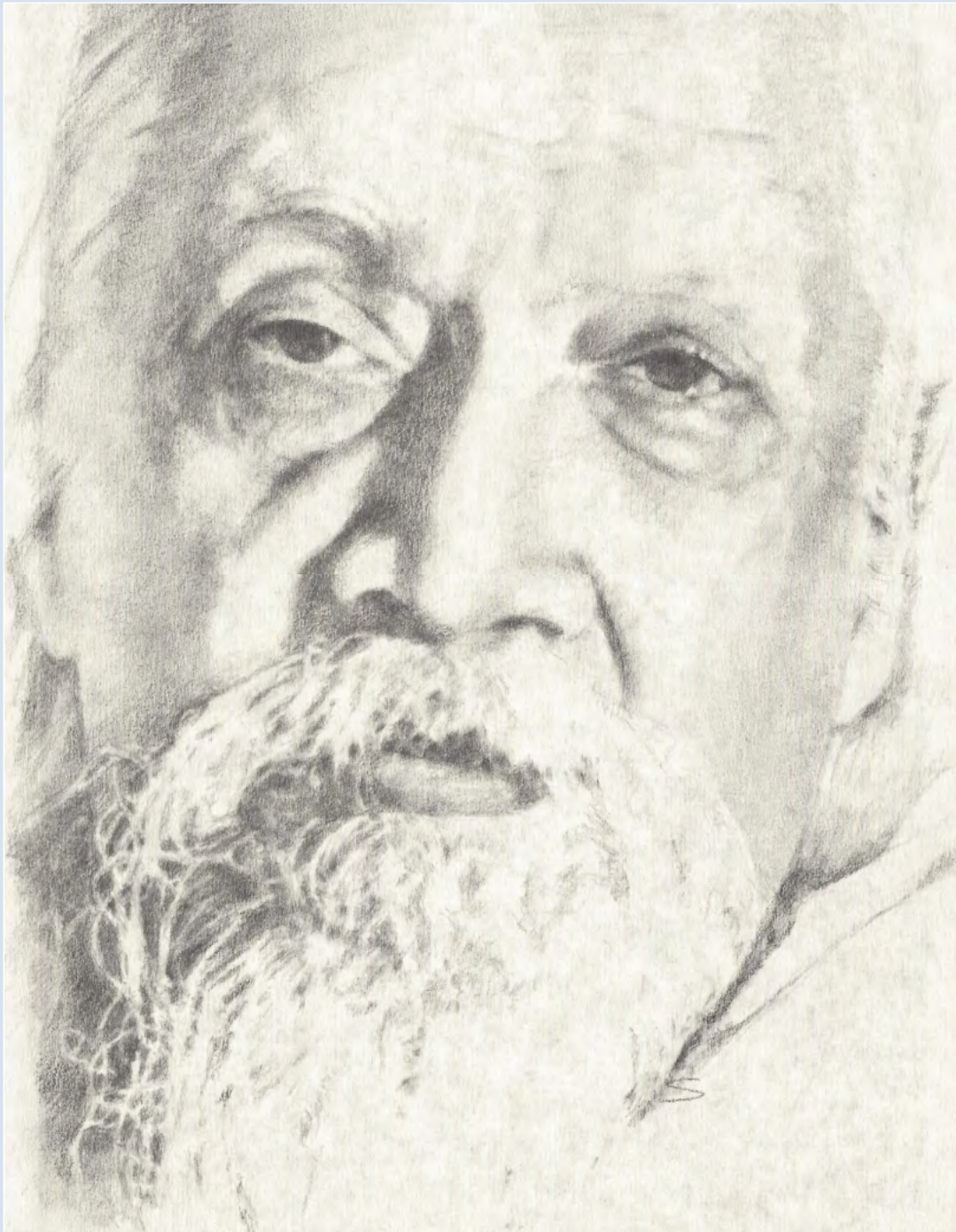
AUDIENCE: *Collaboration* is a means of reflection, encouragement, and inspiration for the Integral

Yoga community here at home. We also want to highlight friends and allies in related areas of personal and social transformation. Including these fellow travelers requires sensitivity from our contributors, whom we ask to refrain from using references and terms of Integral Yoga and the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother without explaining or clarifying them.

CONTENT: We welcome many kinds of contributions, especially those that share, in ways both personal and universal, the surprises of grace, intuition, and delight in the widening—or stuck—moments of our lives. We also love to publish submissions that challenge the increasing polarization of our personal and social lives or embrace that fragmentation and find its deeper meaning and healing in the integrative and inclusive currents emerging in our time.

DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2022

Please contact our editorial team for the word count suitable for your contribution before submitting at editor@collaboration.org. This will allow us to provide you with writer's guidelines that reflect our editorial criteria.



SANDRA STORWICK

TRANCE

A naked and silver-pointed star
 Floating near the halo of the moon;
A storm-rack, the pale sky's fringe and bar,
 Over waters stilling into swoon.

My mind is awake in stirless trance,
 Hushed my heart, a burden of delight;
Dispelled is the senses' flicker-dance,
 Mute the body aureate with light.

O star of creation pure and free,
 Halo-moon of ecstasy unknown,
Storm-breath of the soul-change yet to be,
 Ocean self enraptured and alone!

SRI AUROBINDO, *Collected Poems*, p. 548

