

The Greatest Wealth

by [Shamik Banerjee](#) (April 2024)



How a Dog Sees the World –Franz Marc, 1912

Sonnet

They came as light into my darkened world,
Rekindling everything that once stood grey—
The need to wield my pen, so thoughts unfurled,
To be the lively man again who prayed.
Six years of oneness, then this sudden pause
That seems eternal; time's reversed its course.
The kibble bowl's exactly where it was
When Neeku left us. Life has lost its force.
Now there's no hopping on the etagere
Or pawprints on the matting, though their noise
From gambolling still echoes in the air.
Two mortal friends gave all the love and joys
No man can give, but left this void within
And these immortal scratches on my skin.

The Greatest Wealth

What's gentler than a balmy breeze
That rolls from healthy trees
To smooch one's supine body on
A sunlit lawn?

Or, warbled tunes of sundry beats
Mixed with some baas and bleats
That keep the mental radio's
Frequencies low?

Music or peace, the countryside
Is where God tends to hide

Man's greatest, most sought-after wealth:
His spirit's health.

To Regret

You follow me persistently alone,
Requesting that I end my vain pursuit
Of retribution, but no heed is shown
By me, for when I gobble down the fruit
Of fury and belligerence, my goal
Is just to fling a venom-leavened speech
At my antagonist to hurt his soul.
I give a death glare, raise my voice, and screech.
But when the act is done and I am calm,
You inch into my mind, reminding me
Of my abusiveness. I sit down, palm
My head, and seek reversibility.
You occupy my brain's unknown recesses
And sting me day and night like blown abscesses.

Nonverbal Communication

When she exhales an 'uff', she needs a hand
With threshing. Forehead-wiping indicates
Myalgia's kicked in; she cannot stand.
I take her place. Her quick looks at my plates
At lunchtime mean she's asking, "How's the food?"
My restless jaws reply, "It is lip-smacking!"
Her daytime lie-down tells: she wants a good
Massage to keep her knee cramps from attacking.
But in my case, such signs are not required.

Tea—sharp at five. Used clothes—turned clean and clear.
The bed is made before I say, “I’m tired.”
She makes my world just how it should appear,
Yet needs no cues. My mother’s mind and heart—
Indeed, The Maker’s most impressive art.

The Bus Stand

How long before your bus arrives, my dear?
Some minutes hence or so?
The heavens know I wish to keep you here
And utter, “Do not go.”

This stand is where we first embraced and kissed;
This stand will be our last.
A place that brought us joy now steals our bliss—
Grief’s arrow strikes too fast.

Don’t think about our happy days; they’re done now.
Come near, let me adore
Your pretty face as I make you a bun now,
Then let us kiss once more.

Don’t go with dewy eyes, my love. Don’t grieve.
The person whom you’ll wed
Is deemed best by your father. Please believe—
You’ll have good days ahead.

Your bus has come. Don’t take a window seat,
Lest you turn back and see
My bleak form standing here—all frozen feet,
Engulfed by agony.

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Shamik Banerjee is a young poet from India, residing in in Assam with his parents. Some of his poems are forthcoming in *Willow Review*, *Big Wing Review*, and *Pulsebeat Poetry Journal*.

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