

*Anshika Upadhyay*

**THE  
QUINTESSENCE**

A collection of Poems

Alok Prakashan

# **The Quintessence**

**(A collection of Poems)**

**Anshika Upadhyay**

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**Alok Prakashan**

## **Dear Readers**

I am putting forth my collection of poems “The Quintessence”. These are my feelings which I have come across at different times in my small journey from childhood to an adult growing through several phases of life. In the past I have written a story book in Hindi titled “Abhivyakti” which was applauded and received well by the readers.

I am sure this collection of my feelings as my poetries “The Quintessence” will definitely churn your feelings and emotions by making you sometimes sad and sometimes laugh.

**Anshika Upadhyay**

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# J The Old School

Moving slowly through the old corridors  
Past the old embrittled walls of my school  
I heard a constant hubbub of children  
Playing and running around  
Perhaps they were the hope  
Of this decaying edifice

As I moved on, I saw every classroom  
Each was empty, But no...  
A young one of about six  
Was sitting alone

His gaze fixed at the garden outside  
His mind probably set in a different world  
I was overcome by a deep desire  
To ask him why he wishes to be alone  
Why has his mates deserted him

*Why doesn't he play among the twigs and  
flowers?*

*That he is secretly admiring*

*I thought it better to watch him from far  
As he picked up a pencil and started to write  
On a piece of paper*

*He was writing or may be scribbling  
His expressions turning from furious to calm*

*To quiet still, or rather, sorrow  
Then he rose, and with an effort, started to  
walk*

*He limped as he made his way through the  
door*

*I hid myself and then, when he was out of  
sight,*

*I went inside and read the manuscript  
There, amid the incorrectly written words  
And a horrible penmanship  
Lay his grief*

*The grief of being deserted*

*The grief of being rejected*

*All this was reflected in one question*

*I know that life is meant for the fittest*

*But can't I have a chance to live my  
own?*

*It was ill-framed, but how powerful!*

*I was touched by his innocent petition and  
wondered...*

*Why was he been left unanswered?*

*Why, in the midst of care, has his silent grief  
been unnoticed?*

*And then I wondered*

*Was it the age of it, or such loopholes*

*That had embrittled the edifice...*

## 2 The Park

*In the midst of the colossal giants  
That surround this borough  
There is a small blotch of greens  
A small paradigm of nature `s face  
The only one in the core of this city  
It is called a park*

*I sat there, watching  
The sky, or a patch of it  
Not covered by the giants  
Not freckled by the artificial flies  
The trees, old and dying  
Left uncared for*

*Then, I flexed my gaze on the boulevard  
The sun had just risen, the dawn had just  
metamorphosed*

*Into a bright new morning  
And just as it did the rabble grew  
A legion of old and young  
Left their shelters and were out  
To take over from where they had left  
To start afresh, their interminable spree*

*I watched them run, I watched them walk  
Watched them laughing and talk  
They were loyal to their masters  
To the holders of this civilization  
For they had not the slightest hint  
Of discontent on their faces  
Even in the face of consternation  
They carried on  
With a sort of uncanny obliviousness*

*Not that I was any different  
I belonged to their creed  
I took wake in the wake of dawn  
Slept in the denouement of the dusk  
I too laughed and talked*

*But had always had a dubiety within  
A suspicion, an indecision  
As to who is my companion  
Among all these compatriots,  
Who is my confederate?  
Or do I really have one.  
And so I come here.  
To be left alone for a while  
To unravel the mysteries hidden  
Deep within me*

*In an enclosure, just like this park  
With these unchaperoned trees  
Like my unheeded thoughts*

# 3

## *The Conclusion*

*Mankind has always a doubt,*

*What is this world all about?*

*In this big circus of jugglers and clowns,*

*Are we here only to frown?*

*Competition is the only word to be heard,*

*Not a little time to see even a bird!*

*Money and money just to earn,*

*Are we all here only to flounce?*

*Who is incredible or what is a dunce?*

*We all look like the Looney tunes,*

*Don't believe in anything looking straight*

*Upside down is this world's trait*

*After so much of thinking and investigation,  
We finally come to a conclusion,  
With uncountable ups and downs,  
World is just a roundabout.*

# 4

## Moods of the year

Oh dear! It's June, the peak of this summer.

Can't go out to watch the mummer,  
Can't step out on the burning bowels of the earth,

And can't stand under the fire some Sun without a cover.

Let's stay inside the cool environment of our house.

It's much better than to stay out.  
Next thing to do is switch on the Air conditioner,

And sit near the window to watch out the soft Sea.

*Oh dear! It's August, It's raining so  
heavily.*

*All I started doing is writing poems  
empirically.*

*Wearing raincoats or holding umbrellas  
can't*

*Wholly save you from getting wet.*

*The best way to be protected is to sit at home  
quietly.*

*Oh dear! It's December, the season for  
snowfall.*

*Can't go out and have ice-creams for all.*

*Can't step out to touch the extreme cold thick  
ice layer.*

*Just sit near the window and out stare.*

*Finally! It's March, the season of spring  
No hot, No rain, nor having frozen pot of  
ink.*

*Now the Sun will give required heat  
And pleasant breezes will blow through the  
streets.*

*I would like to wish for this beautiful season  
Of spring, flowers, scent and nectar ...  
May be with us  
Throughout the year.*

# 5

## Oh Mirror

Oh mirror!

Tell me what I am!!

You say I am a human?

An embodiment of all the intelligence

And thinking possible?

But you lie...

Because I feel...

Like a weightless grain of sand

Blowing away with the wind

Not knowing anything

But just flying

In a more confident way...

Believing nothing

But my destiny.

# 6

## The Mother Nature!!

With golden hair and silvery face,

With eyes colored blue,

And pure like a drop of dew.

Who could be so beautiful?

With so much of charm,

Who could be so gentle?

Causing no harm.

I hold down my pen and take a deep sigh,

Look down to the ground

And then raise my head high.

The one with all such features,

It could only be Nature.

*Then I look out of my window,  
with little bit in doze,  
And I wonder looking at the,  
Twinkling stars,  
That enlighten my heart.*

7

## The Reverberation

Where are the smiles??

Where are the smiles??

They have all faded  
And went away miles...

This little shattered body  
Is withered and dead  
The soul has fled  
To unknown land...

The hopes and affection  
The ties and bonding  
The earthly relations  
Nothing survive...

*Still the sun rises  
And moon glitters light  
The stars still twinkle  
But the sky looks chide...*

*In anguish and despair  
The life has lost its flair  
Oh, bring it back its moments  
Before it loose its poise...*

*Will someone hold the finger?  
Or someone reach the soul  
Will all the lovely gestures  
Allow to reach the goal...*

*If this is so called eternity  
If this is so divine  
Then why the souls unhappy  
And why they cry and whine???*

## The Reminiscence

I stood and looked,  
At the far-far lands.  
Couldn't see anything!  
But, the barren plains.

Hills were nude,  
No greenery at all,  
Where gone the bushes?  
Which grew so tall.

The berries in the jungle,  
And sparrows have gone!!  
Only vultures, and pigeons  
And bats live long

Where rivers are flowing?  
And springs are falling?  
No peacocks crying,  
Or giving a calling...

I want to go...  
Back in time.  
To enjoy the sunset,  
And sunshine.

Oh! Bring me back...  
Those dusty roads.  
I will be happy,  
Wearing my clumsy clothes.

Where one can imbibe,  
The tranquil breeze.  
Away from the bustling,  
Crowded streets.

## 9

## The Combat

*One chilling night,  
She sat so quiet,  
No rugs on her back,  
Only sari to drape.*

*It was just this fire,  
Which gave her desire,  
To beat the cold,  
And save her one year old,*

*She gathered some twigs,  
Which gave her dream wings,  
She hold her baby so tight,  
And was now determined to fight.*

*The cold was fierce,  
And night was scary,  
There stood no hope,  
And teeth went jittery.*

*She tightened her tattered,  
Sari with all her might,  
Giving her baby,  
The heat all night.*

*The night was incredible,  
The battle half won,  
The baby was alive,  
But she left numb.*

# 10

## The Marionettes

Neither as a king  
Nor as a beggar  
The baby was born  
To a homeless mother

She was happy  
To see his charm  
She was obliged  
And very calm

She blessed her child  
And kissed his cheek  
She knew that everyone  
Gets what he seek

*She spent her time  
Around her babe  
And made him play  
With toys she made*

*Then came the blessings  
In disguise  
A merchant got a view  
Of her sculptured toys*

*He gave her gold  
And precious stones  
He bought her cart  
And a brand new home*

*She refused the gold  
And diamonds and jewels  
But took the cart  
And went ahead.*

# 11

## The Roise

When I came out  
From my shell  
I was featherless  
Looking like hell

I was fed with  
Two more kins  
They were beautiful  
I looked grim

We then played  
In small old nest  
We were forbidden  
From any quest

*I was accountable  
For all mischiefs  
I got punished  
they were relieved*

*it made me stubborn  
and a bit selfish  
I care for no one  
But my own wish*

*One fine morning  
I weighed my feathers  
I gathered the hope  
And all my courage*

*I took a long leap  
And tried to fly  
Now I was up  
High in the sky*

*I am happy  
For what I have done  
I am confident and brave  
But not gruesome.*

# 12

## The Eternal War

*Amidst the clamor of rain, I stood  
gazing, through the heavy drops, at her  
She was sitting resting his head on her lap  
Maybe weeping, but calm*

*What I recall is befuddlement  
wishing to go near, but wanting to stay  
wishing to console, to help, just by staying there  
what was I thinking? I don't know*

*I suddenly felt it was fire showering from the  
skies*

*I startled at the fieriness of the drops, and  
then it was gone!*

*And then I heard her cries, in my head  
she was soundlessly creating stirs, asking for...*

*I* stared at her, at her still figure in the rain  
Her blurred outlines, still enchanting  
Why then did he look featureless, mere flesh  
Why was she endlessly beholding the carcass

*I* felt the stir in my mind again,  
she was saying, something that felt as hope  
that carcass is of her hope, her dreams, her soul  
she wants him to rise

*She wants him to rise and imbibe her  
as his soul  
she wants him to awaken and embrace her  
once and for all*

*But how well she knows  
he'll rise to be a soulless corpse  
not to embrace but propel her  
not to imbibe but finish her*

*But she wants to stay  
in the shadow of his veneer  
in the silhouette of his viciousness  
she wants to dwell within his corpse*

*If only he awakens, she's willing  
to set herself ablaze, to kill her spirit  
because he's her only desire  
her only hope....*

# 13

## The Epilogue

*My mind is doubtful, my emotions are dead  
my conscience is quiet....*

*I don't know where I am, I can't see  
anything*

*My vision is obscured, darkened by the  
glare of luminosity*

*I think I imagine faces, faces of sorts  
some euphoria stricken, some with guise, some  
guilelessly gleeful*

*I feel they stand tall, as I stand on a  
lectern maybe*

*They are bigger than me, like colossal giants  
I can't dare to look them in eyes anymore,  
they might swallow me*

I fear, and I look away  
But no fear stays too long, fear is engulfed  
by the black hole of numbness  
What do I feel now..? Little frigid blob,  
rolling down my facial skin

Can it be a tear? Seems Implausible,  
because  
there are no pangs of conscience, not anymore  
My mind begins to respond, it is, as though,  
recuperating a fit

As I start to recall a similar setting,  
a setting where I am among these people,  
and euphoria stricken  
a young fledgling  
I stand there celebrating the man on the  
podium

*Getting transported by his monologue to a  
dream world*

*Where I imagine myself to be in his place,  
addressing everyone  
doing a soliloquy, impressing an illusory  
audience  
by a concoction of homilies and make-believe  
inspiring memoirs  
filled with complacency  
Another frigid blob rolls down*

*It is hard to believe, it was the same 'me'  
who had indefinite fancy  
full of varied emotions, ingenuity, ambitions*

*I too had fervor, zeal, eagerness to live  
Then why now, am I a living corpse?  
Why am I doled out in freckles of energy  
across my living fetid carcass?*

*Why don't I feel happy or sad or rueful  
Why don't I feel anything?  
Perhaps, now I'm not young  
not juvenile*

*My youthfulness fell prey to countless wounds  
wounds of aspirations, wounds of dismissal  
rebuff, desertion, ill-founded groundless hopes  
But finally, to my own incredulity, I'm  
here!*

*Standing in place of my nonage hero  
living my dreams  
but with a juxtaposition that*

*I'm not living anymore...*

## About the author



Anshika Upadhyay is sensitive and powerful writer. She also writes a blog with the name Anshika's Reveries. Her story book "Abhivyakti" is a compilation of short stories in Hindi. She is versatile and imaginative but at the same time realistic and has a capacity to give words to her feelings.

She is an alumni of University of Michigan Ann Arbor, USA. from where she has earned her MS degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering.