

# PAKISTANI LITERATURE

Issue 30

2024



**Pakistan Academy of Letters**

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Muhammad Iqbal

## One Evening (By the Neckar at Heidelberg)

silent is the moonlight  
motionless are trees' boughs,

the vale's minstrel is mute  
the green hills are quiet,

nature is almost unconscious  
as if fallen asleep embracing the night

in this spellbinding nightly silence  
Necker's currents offer serenity,

on the sky is a quite caravan of stars  
like a procession tolling but rudderless,

hills, mountains and deserts are so silent  
no doubt Nature plunged into meditation,

Shush ! Oh Heart! better you also go silent  
and sleep clinging this grief to your Self.

*(Translated from Urdu by Rizwan Akhtar)*

Noon Meem Rashid

## On My Way Redeemed by Oceans

I am coming redeemed after reuniting with oceans  
having tasted their many bitter flavors  
of their waters indeed a magical potion,  
but unquenched my mind houses those idols  
the same desert is in front of me  
the desert in which the mirror of *Ishq*  
was broken by some invisible hands  
smithereens scattered on the worldly path,  
like the strings of my existence  
just coming inhaling the fragrance of oceans  
lulled by their wafting breeze, but my  
dreams are cold and imbued with thousand  
hypnagogic moments

I am coming bringing a brackish taste of oceans,  
should I show that great nakedness of my life  
(a pretext to be a mendicant with a begging bowl)

Only if there had been a fellow wayfarer  
I would have listened to his story in exchange  
of that my story of the union with oceans,

the story of oceans is indeed the story of *Ishq*  
(spread infinitely like another ocean)

on enunciating this inner nakedness of my soul  
neither the limbs nor my tongue work  
even my imagination does not stay potent,  
in the desert, one needs the feet of a highwayman  
one without any gumption of plundering,  
whose example is that of a half-dead bird  
who has forgotten the use of wings



hoping for hope and kindness from  
some passerby in the desert  
I am replenished with the majesty of oceans  
I'm coming flaunting their shores' grandeur  
my door still opens on them, so that  
the soul's wind finds its way revealing light  
and my turbid darkness is consecrated;  
I still remember that ecstasy and agony  
of oyster shell, very much like a wine goblet  
the ocean's tongue still licks at me, a wave  
like a musical sting touches past my feet,  
my body and mind are filled with those delights  
those islands whose horizons in the mornings  
were fuller and worth seeing,  
and birds over them were absorbed in their tasks  
their silvery notes ordained divine, their manifest  
delights of sonorous whistling have  
absorbed into my blood  
still keeping those idols in my mind  
the same magical potion of oceans' waters,  
I am coming now transformed by their beauty  
but also carrying the grief of an oyster shell  
wrecked on the ocean's shore.

*(Translated from Urdu by Rizwan Akhtar)*

Fahmida Riaz

## To a Girl

you are a dilapidated building  
of oppressive traditions  
embarrassed of its existence  
crumbling under its weight  
every bit of this building  
in itself an evidence of  
dereliction  
its drooping walls  
are like bent dolls

inside this rickety prison  
but of cruel traditions,  
a frenzied intoxicant voice  
a whirling dance  
of rebellious ecstasy  
can cause this derelict building's  
collapse  
the incarcerated princess  
may free herself,  
an incarcerated princess.

*(Translated from Urdu by Rizwan Akhtar)*