



THEME OF LOVE IN *BEYOND THE HORIZON*

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ABSTRACT :

Beyond the Horizon is the first collection of poems by Prof. Dr Annie John who has been working as Head, Department of English in A. R. Burla Womoen's College, Solapur, in the state of Maharashtra in India. She has authored and edited over twenty textbooks and reference books so far. She is in the editorial boards of many esteemed journals. *Beyond the Horizon* is her first book on creative writing which contains heart-touching and thought-provoking poems on varied subjects. They deal with various themes. However, the present paper aims to explore only the theme of love in this collection of poems. It is an attempt to study various facets of love as delineated in it.

KEYWORDS : love, promise, trust, time, life.

INTRODUCTION:

Dr Annie John is a budding poet of great promise. Her first collection of poems *Beyond the Horizon* vouches for it as it contains the poems of great quality. It contains the poems written by her over the period of ten years as she said in the preface. Her poetry has evolved with her over the span of ten years. Obviously the poems are autobiographical. The major themes she deals with in these poems include love, life, passion, bliss, trust, companionship, desire, disappointment, loneliness, death, etc. However, the most dominant theme of the most of the poems in the collection is love.

Delineation of various aspects of love:

Various facets of love, a noble feeling are delineated in this collection of beautiful poems *Beyond the Horizon* by the poet ranging from filial love to spiritual love. Here is the detailed description of the delineation of the different dimensions of love in her poems.

Filial love:

In the very first poem titled *Father* she expresses her filial love for her beloved father. In the poem *Bliss* she writes:

Bliss it was
to lie in your arms
your steady heart whispered
infinitie love

Her father's unconditional, protective love for her made her childhood blissful. He was her father, guide, and philosopher; he was 'a lighthouse' guiding and protecting her in her 'wreckful times'.

He had solutions to all her problems and led her 'through life's tumultuous path'. She had not an iota of worry for her father was always there by her side to guide and protect her. He was her pillar of strength and a protecting angel. That is why; his untimely death leaves an unbridgeable deep chasm in her life. However, she takes heart for she knows that he must be still showering love on her and protecting her from all kinds of dangers from the heaven.

The last poem in the collection *Mother* too expresses filial love, but this time love between mother and daughter. If the poet's father was her pillar of strength and a protecting angel, her mother was the light of her life. The poem expresses a strong bond and intense love between the poet and her mother. She loves her mother so much that the ravaging impact of powerful, unsparing Time on her once beautiful mother fills her with great anguish. She states many virtues of her beloved mother – dignity, charity, spirituality, loving nature, forgiveness, 'soothing' speech, etc. These qualities of her mother make her a beloved person among her relatives and acquaintances. In short, the poem describes the poet's deep filial love towards her beloved mother.

Conjugal love: Her life partner's intense and infinite love for the poet brings her bliss, Edenic bliss. She basks in joy due to his immeasurable love for her. There is intense love between them which makes time fly. Therefore, she says in the poem *Time*:

Time
assumes the
wings of a bird
and flies hastily when
with you
Wish I could lock it in
the cage of my heart
and throw away the keys
into the deep
dark ocean

His love for her makes his company blissful; therefore she longs to be in his company all the time. She wishes that time should freeze so that they do not have to part from each other. He too knows how to love for in the poem *The Melody of My Life* she says:

You touch
the cords of my heart
and at a time
solitary
produce a music
exquisite
The melody of my Life

Like Edmund Spenser in his poem *One Day I Wrote Her Name on the Strand* (Sonnet No. 75 in Amoretti) the poet talks about the love's permanence in the following lines:

You and Me
And our distinct bodies
With our lips locked in ecstasy
Proclaim loves permanence, potential
You and Me
Although for a short time now
The relics we leave on the shore of time

Hypothesise the soul's solidarity, singular.

According to the poet love is more powerful than the powerful time that affects everything, but love. Love triumphs over time though it otherwise regarding other baser things. Love, for her, is the God and hence eternal. Death i.e. Time cannot defeat it. This idea is expressed in her poem *Love Triumphs*:

The moss around the grave
 My dewy canopy
 The half visible tulip with fragrance mild
 Flutters and proclaims
Love is here to stay
 The autumn leaves spread on the tomb
 My shield from prying eyes
 Combating evil forces even deep below
 Questions
Oh! Death where is thy power?
 The north star with its silver lining
 Pierce deep within the silent casket
 Tenderly touches me and
 Reassure
Love triumphs perpetual

Though love triumphs over death and lives even after death of lovers, love in the life on the earth incomparable. Therefore, the poet wishes to relieve her life with him in the following lines:

Passionate love: The poet has expressed the need of this primitive urge to be fulfilled. *Primitive Desire* is one such poem in which she expresses her desire for passionate love in the following words:

Having once traversed enforced enclosures
 My soul now seeks deliverance
 My repressed self
 Primeval passions
 A desire so primitive
 Flows unobstructed

In her other poem *I Carry Thee* she writes:

I carry thee within myself
 And during some temptuous moment
 Live life to the fullest
 The ecstasy of my life

When her life partner makes her intense, passionate her joys know no bounds; she is on cloud nine. Her ecstasy is expressed in the poem *On Cupid's Wings* in the following words:

You filled my life with love
 Immeasurable intense
 Took me into your arms
 And unfolded a world of blissful delight

Unrequited love: The poet's love for her life partner is not reciprocated by him. The poet, who loves him from the bottom of her heart, is disappointed by him. Her disappointment in love is expressed in some her poems, especially later poems. In the poem *Promise* she writes:

You promised me joy but
left me with sorrow

You promised me companionship but
left me with solitude

You promised me bliss but
left me with a curse

You promised me life but
left me with impending death

Are promises made to be broken?

The whole poem is permeated with her sorrow caused by the disappointment in love. He made her tall promises which he did not keep. He promised her joy, pleasure, companionship, bliss, and life, but left her with sorrow, pain, solitude, curse, and impending death instead. The distrust between them is the root cause of their problem. It has made hell out of their marital life. This cause is mentioned in her poem *Trust* in the following words:

What should I do to prove my fidelity?
Trust does not demand proof
Trust does not torture
Trust does not question
Trust does not expect an answer
Trust does not raise her voice
Trust does not maintain a dreadful silence
Trust is a truthful relation you share together.

Distrust i.e. suspicion was the cause of Othello's tragedy; the same is the cause of the rift between the poet and her life partner. It has destroyed many lives, is destroying many and will destroy many more in future. Could Sita, an epic heroine of Ramayana convince her husband of her fidelity even after going through such great ordeals? The poet also asks her life partner what she needs to do prove her fidelity to him. She is also knows that he will not believe whatever she does. The only remedy is to trust each other; trust is the most essential ingredient of successful marriage. Trust only ends torture, unnecessary annoying questions, arousal of temper and dreadful silence, and brings bliss in marital life. His lack of trust in her brings tears in her eyes. In the poem *Tears* she writes:

Tears flow incessant
When overwhelmed with pain
They fail to cease
When at a loss of things
The crystal clear tear makes its way
Through realms of grief

However, she also talks about the necessity of crying in the same poem as she finds healing power in tears. She writes:

Tears do what tongues fail
 They begin where words stop
 Healing the heart and soothing the soul

She is distressed because of her estranged relationship with him. Nonetheless, she is hopeful that those old golden days will return with the return of the trust between them. In the poem *You and Me* she expresses this hope in these words:

You and Me
 Under the sycamore tree,
 And the taste of juniper
 On our parched throat
 Revives our passion, dreary

You and Me
 On the golden shore,
 And the heat of the scorching sand
 On our bare feet
 Burns our ego, fake

That the poet begins the word me, which she uses for herself, with the capital letter implies that she wants equality with him that man is unwilling to recognize, let alone hence the use of the word 'ego' in the last line of the second stanza. Ego has destroyed many happy marriages. Therefore, the poet wants their ego to be burnt as she is well aware that ego is one of the major reasons of break-ups. Her disappointment in love is also expressed in another poem titled *Sad Inheritance* in these words:

My desires carry a legacy of sad inheritance
 A desire to inherit primordial love
 A desire to inherit unconditional love
 But
 In my kingdom
 Love a faux pas
 Trust ephemeral
 My desires carry a legacy of sad inheritance

Here the poet expresses her longing for true love that emanates from mutual trust. However, she is well aware that her wish is against the wish for there is no place for trust or love in his 'kingdom', which implies his inflated opinion of himself. He does not care for her, her feelings. Therefore, he has broken all the promises that he once made to her. In the poem *Broken Promises* she writes:

You promised to come and share
 all my sorrow
 You promised to be there for
 all my tomorrow
 But your promises lay shattered
 Like pearls from a string

 My screeches, screams, and laments
 proved fruitless
 Your hasty thoughtless act
 has drowned me into a

 Crevasse of solitude

Her life became miserable for she loved him from the bottom of her heart, but he never. Therefore, he broke all his promises to her, which left her dejected, and lonely. Her loneliness is also expressed in the poem of the same name in the following words:

Today, my loneliness and I
 Speak our hearts out
 We have promised to remain true to each other
 To the end of all times

She is so lonely that loneliness is the only company to her for he has broken his promise to remain true to her 'to the end of all times'. She is so dejected due to this rude shock in love that it is difficult for to believe that good things exist in this world. Therefore, in the poem *Illusion* she writes:

I was content with what I believed
 But all my beliefs
 Shattered to fragments

 Today when they say
Life is beautiful!
 I sadly nod and respond
Everything is an illusion!
Everything is an illusion!

Her state is beautifully delineated in the poem *Silence - II* in the following words:

Your silence proved me guilty
 The storm that followed
 Broke down my nest so meticulously built
 The turbulence rocked every foundation
 And rendered me helpless
 The burden so cumbersome
 Chipped my wings
 Hopeless and hapless
 I still wait

She is well aware that her wait is 'hopeless and hapless' for as Oliver Wendell Homes Sr. said, "one's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions", life too, once changed, never gets its original dimension, its earlier state. The lovelorn poet knows full well that she will never relieve those happy old golden days. Her hellish present life will never turn heavenly. In fact, she is living a life-in-death. That is what she expresses in the poem *Fears, Unknown*:

Disillusioned my tears could down a billion griefs
 Desperate, my legs travelled a million miles
 Depressed, died many a death every moment

The phrase 'a billion griefs' expresses her infinite and inconsolable grief. The line: 'Depressed, died many a death every moment' suggest her immeasurable anguish; it implies that hers is life-in-death. She implies that death is better than such loveless, grief-stricken life.

Spiritual love: The poet also brings out the spiritual aspect of love in her poems. Two of such poems are *Novelty* and *Remembering You – II*. In the former poem the poet writes:

What makes our love so true?
Its spirituality which transcends all time
What seals our relationship?
The mating of our minds an undenying reality

The poet rightly thinks that for love to be true it needs to be spiritual. Love at physical love is not all love. It needs to be at mental level – the ‘mating’ of ‘minds’; it should be the unification of two souls. In the poet’s opinion, true love is spiritual or vice-versa; it ‘transcends all time’. She brings forth the spiritual aspect of love in her another poem *Remembering You – II* also in the following words:

An urge to relive life, a regeneration
My renewed passions
And a spiritual awakening
Remind me of you

The poet wishes to relive her life which will be filled with true love i.e. spiritual love which will make her life beautiful and meaningful. She longs to live her life again sans the negative things of the present life and to fulfill this purpose the life renewed and relived need to be spiritual. Spiritual life alone can ensure true love, true happiness – meaningful life.

CONCLUSION:

The poet has delineated various aspects of love, a noble feeling needed for happy, meaningful life. Filial, conjugal, passionate, unrequited, spiritual are a few kinds of love that she has dealt with in some of the poems of the collection. Love in its myriad forms is a major theme of the poems in the collection and this is what makes this work of art precious for love can be hoped to understand only when we come to know its many facets. Therese Nyetam underlines the importance of getting familiar with different aspects or facets of love in her book *The Different Facets of Love: That Make Us Human Beings* in these words:

Why speak about love in all its facets? Love is a diamond – we cannot fathom its depths. By a combination of all its facets, we hope to reach a vision of true love.

As the title of aforementioned book suggests, we become human beings – separate from other living beings- only when we know and experience love, to be specific various facets of love. This explains the greatness of the poetic collection *Beyond the Horizon*.

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