

Beyond the Beaten Track

ग्राम्यमाता

- कलापी

ऊगे छे सुरखी भरी रवि मृदु हेमन्तनो पूर्वमां
भूरुं छे नभ स्वच्छ, स्वच्छ दीसती एके नथी वादळी;
ठंडो हिमभर्यो वहे अनिल शो उत्साहने प्रेरतो,
जे उत्साह भरी दीसे शुक्र उडी गातां मीठां गीतडां!

मधुर समये तेवे खेतरे शेलडीना,
रमत कृषिदलोनां बाल नानां करे छे;
कमलवत गणीने बालना गाल राता'
रवि निज कर तेनी उपरे फेरवे छे!

वृध्द माता अने तात तापे छे शगडी भरी,
अहो! केवुं सुखी जोडुं कर्ताए निरम्युं दीसे!

त्यां धूल दूर नजरे उडती पडे छे,
ने अश्व उपर चडी नर कोई आवे;
टोळे वळी मुख विकासी ऊभां रहीने,
ते अश्वने कुतूहले सौ बाल जोतां!

धीमे ऊठी शिथिल करने नेत्रनी पास राखी,
वृध्द माता नयन नबळां फेरवीने जुए छे;
ने तेनो ए प्रिय पति हजु शान्त बेसी रहीने
जोतां गातो शगडी परनो देवता फेरवे छे!

त्यां तो आवी पहोंच्या ए अश्व साथे युवान त्यां;
कृषिक ए ऊठी त्यारे "आवो, बापु" कही ऊभो.
"लागी छे मुजने तृषा जल भरी दे तुं मने" बोलीने,
अश्वथी उतरी युवान ऊभीने चारे दिशाए जुए;

"मीठो छे रस भाई! शेलडी तणो!" एवुं दयाथी कही,
माता चाली युवानने गई ज्यां छे ऊभी शेलडी!

प्यालुं उपाडी ऊभी शेलडी पास माता,
छूरी वती जरीक कातरी एक कापी;
त्यां सेर छूटी रसनी भरी पात्र देवा,
ने कै विचार करतो नर ते गयो पी.

The Country Mother

- 'Kalapi' Sursinhji Takhtasinhji Gohil

Rise the Hemant* sun blushing and soft
the sky is clear blue, no clouds in sight;
the cool breeze refreshes and enlivens
and full of verve parrots sing sweet songs.

In a sugarcane field on a morn that is luscious
children of farmers are playing a game
perceiving the rosy cheeks of lotuses
the sun gently caresses them.

An aged couple is warming itself
with the flames of a fire-place.
Oh! How happy seems the pair
created at leisure by the Maker!

Rising at distance is a swirl of dust
and a man approaches on horse-back.
All the children gather together
and gawk at the horse in wonder!

The old lady turns and slowly rises
uses slack hands to shield weak eyes
her beloved husband still calmly site
scanning while humming and shovels hot coals!

Presently a youthful rider arrives there
saying "Welcome, sir" rises the farmer.
Says the man "Please give me some water."
As he dismounts he looks hither and thither.

"The cane juice is sweet" the mother kindly says
to the sugarcane patch the young man she leads.

The mother stands with a vessel near a cane
slices it but slightly with a sharp blade.
The juice flows freely, the vessel quickly fills
the man drinks up, the while something thinks.

"बीजुं प्यालुं भरी देने हजु छे मुजने तृषा,"
कहीने पात्र युवाने माताना करमां धर्यु.
कापी कापी फरी फरी अरे कातळी शेलडीनी
एके बिंदु पण रस तणुं केम हावां पडे ना!
"शुं कोप्यो छे प्रभु मुज पर?" आंखमां आंसु लावी,
बोली माता वळी फरी छूरी भोंकती शेलडीमां.
"रसहीन धरा थई छे, दयाहीन थयो नृप;
नहीं तो ना बने आवुं," बोली माता फरी रडी.
एवुं युवान सुणतां चमकी गयो, ने
माता तणे पग पडी उठीने कहे छे -

"ए हुं ज नृप, मने कर माफ बाई!
ए हुं ज छुं नृप मने कर माफ ईश!
पीतो'तो रस मिष्ट हुं प्रभु! अरे त्यारे ज धार्यु हतुं -
आ लोको बहु द्रव्यवान नक्की छे एवी धरा छे अहीं;

"छे तोये मुज भाग कै नहि समो ते हुं वधारुं हवे,
'शु माटे बहु द्रव्य आ धनिकनी पासेथी लेवुं नहीं?'
रसे हवे दे भरी पात्र बाई,
प्रभुकृपाए नक्की ए भराशे;

सुखी रहे बाई! सुखी रहो सौं,
तमारी तो आशिष मात्र मागुं!"
पगलुं उपाडी ऊभी शेलडी पास माता,
छूरी वती जरी ज कातळी एक कापी;
त्यां सेर छूटी रसनी भरी पात्र देवा,
बहोळो वहे रस अहो! छलकाई प्यालुं!

"I am still thirsty, do fill up the vessel once more"
the man hands the vessel again to the mother.
Again and yet again she cuts slivers
but, why, not even a drop oozes!
"Is the Lord angry?" Tearfully she queries
again the knife in the sugarcane she plunges.
"The soil's essence is gone, or the Ruler's
compassion!
Impossible otherwise" sobs the mother again.
Startled is the young man hearing this
and falls at her feet and rising utters-

"I am the Ruler, please forgive me mother
I am the Ruler, please forgive me Maker!
While I was drinking I had thought, Lord
such fertile soil –these people are so well off.

"I must raise my share –it is yet so small-
why not tax more these well-to-do people?
Now mother fill up the glass with juice
it will certainly now fill with God's grace.

"Be happy, mother! Remain happy all of you,
I only seek blessings from all of you!"
The mother again approaches the cane
cuts just a sliver with the very same blade.

A jet of juice spouts to fill up the vessel,
Flowing profusely, overflows the vessel!

* The cold season of December-January

("Beyond the Beaten Track"भांथी पृष्ठ वांचन)

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