



Abhishek
&
Other Poems

kmg

In Gratitude to All on the campus of STOTS
for sound and silence
for smell and smile
for touch and taste
for light and shade

(kmg.feb.2014)



A Visitor to the Seminary and his poetic impression

These five wonderful poems were born out of the living experience of Fr. Dr. K .M. George during his visit to St. Thomas Orthodox Theological Seminary (STOTS), Kalmeshwar, Nagpur, 17-28 February 2014. His “powerful feelings recollected in tranquility” gave birth to five enchanting poems: *Abhishek the Anointed One*, *An Eco-Meditation*, *A Pilgrim’s Riddle*, *A Morning Vision* and *White Versus White*.

As the same theologian- artist himself taught us in a general lecture in the Seminary on Surrealism in *Art and Theology*, there is a strong surrealistic touch in his poetic composition also. The poet here invites us to experience the world around us and to go beyond them freely to enjoy things which ‘the eyes cannot see’. The readers are guided to experience a unique fulfillment through this process as the poem on the *Anointed One* brings out: “Suddenly all the flowers broke into cute, green, singing, kanni mangoes”.

The Seminary Community thinks that the visit and the presence of teachers like this theologian will contribute greatly to the fulfillment of the potentials of all in and around the Seminary. May the Gurus like him continue to bless the “*Kanni* (tender) mangoes” so that they could produce beautiful trees that bear delicious fruits again.

It was when the father of Abhishek got an opportunity to teach about the Holy Spirit at the Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam, that he gave that name to the newly born child. After seventeen years of that naming a theologian-poet from the OTS visits the Prerana Special School under the auspices of our new Seminary in Nagpur and meets Abhishek who is a student there and exposes the meaning of the name. In the poem Abhishek the Anointed, a great guru humbles himself to be a student and the student becomes a guru. By comparing this meeting indirectly to that of Nathaniel and Jesus Christ, all the mentally challenged are honored as they are fully identified with the figure of Christ the Anointed one.

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Fr. George organized an eco-meditation in the Seminary on February 21st. Those who were not able to attend it can also have a taste of it through the poem “An Eco Meditation” which affirms the harmony and integrity of creation.

In the poem *A Pilgrim's Riddle*, the Pilgrim who represents humanity observes the squirrel which rushes down the teak and disappears among the thick dry leaves below and the squirrel which shot up the teak and disappears among the thick green leaves above and asks “Are they one or two”. This observation leaves enough space for us to meditate on the *maya* vision of differences and the riddle of Dvaita and Advaita. There is a subtle allusion to the Son of Man who descended and ascended.....

Poets are seers who open the eyes and ears of many to the world around us and seers are poets who open minds and souls of many to the unknown worlds. A poet and seer gives a picturesque description of squirrels, heron, gray and green leaves, wheat fields, weeping farmer, the blue sky..... The readers of these poems can see, hear smell and touch the realities around STOTS which are quite unnoticed by the ordinary inhabitants. The Pilgrim Guru draws our attention to the riddles and meanings of life through and beyond them.

As these words are noted when the nation celebrates Holi, these poems appear to be colorful celebration of interconnectivity and unity of life and the glory of the little ones in this world.

The poem *White against White* which depicts the painful experience of a mighty wind and hailstorm on February 23rd 2014 in Maharashtra State, especially in Kalmeshwar where the Seminary is situated, ends with these words of hope “Thank God, Hope is a Phoenix bird/ Ever rising from its white ashes”. These poems inspire us to continue in the life giving mission.

May the spirit of creativity who inspired these poems continue to bless each one of us to experience new horizons of meaning as we read these poetic pieces again and again.

Abhishek the Anointed One

Leave Upasana*
Go to Prerana*
Take the straight path*
Turn left, then right.....
Again right
Right? Right.
Right never ends.

Bask in the balmy air
Smell orange plants blossoming
Jasmine-like , white, citrus fragrance
Go to the mango tree in full bloom
Stay under its thick foliage
Smell its golden fruity dreams
Wait for the One who comes.....

There appears Abhishek, the anointed one,
with a broad smile and a nod of welcome.

Hey, do you know me....? asked Abhishek
I know you,”... he told the total stranger.

Where did you see me , Abhishek?
Asked the worn-out traveller in all surprise.

I saw you standing under the mango tree”*

Suddenly the golden flowers broke
Into cute, green *kanni** mangoes,
Raising a hymn of great joy.

*Upasana is the new residential building at STOTS campus. The word means deep devotion or worship. Remember Tagore's words in Gitanjali, " Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads. Whom dost thou worship in the dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see that thy God is not before thee. He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil".

*Prerana is the school and home for the mentally challenged children started by the STOTS

*Straight path alludes to Orthodox Christian tradition (orthos-straight)

* Remembering Nathanael meeting Jesus (John 1:45-50)

* Kanni means virgin, tender.

A Morning Vision

A tree on this side
Form known
Name unknown
A tree on that side
Form known
Name unknown

In between the two
The Blue sky;
Name and colour Known
Form unknown

A white heron spread her wings
From behind This tree,
Flew across the blue sky,
Disappeared behind That Tree

Wintry morning spread its misty veil
Over This and over That.
The Blue remained,
In between the two trees,
Ever formless.

(19th February 2014)



A Pilgrim's Riddle

The Path lay straight, serene
Between the tall teak and a sprawling tamarind
The Pilgrim walked up and down,
Facing East and looking West,
Looking East and facing West.
A grey squirrel rushed down the teak,
Disappeared among the thick dry leaves below.
A grey squirrel shot up the teak,
Disappeared among the thick green leaves above.
One descended on the earth
One ascended to the sky beyond
Are they one or two ?, quizzed the pilgrim

A white heron sensed the riddle
She circled the campus thrice.
Settled on a bare Bodhi tree
Standing forlorn in Noman's land.

The Path-straight, serene-
Quietly merged with the misty field

(20th February 2014)

An Eco- Meditation

They all sat in concentric circles.

One of them, Prometheus -like, brought a spark from the rising sun in the East

Another one rose from the West, lighted a wick, kept the West enlightened

Others rose from the North and the South, lit their lamps
waking up North and South to the light of life

The Chorus sang:

All Light is one.

*“ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.
He was in the world and though the world was made through him, the world
did not recognize him . He came to that which was his own , but his own did
not receive him. ”*

One of them carried water from the four rivers of the Garden of Eden
Another one stood up and received the crystal water pot and cried out:

Waters from the holy Ganga.

Still another rose to receive the water and said:

Water from the Nile

Yet another one got up, received the water and said:

Water from the Amazon

And then followed others:

-Water from the Pampa

-Water from the Mississippi

-Water from the Yellow River

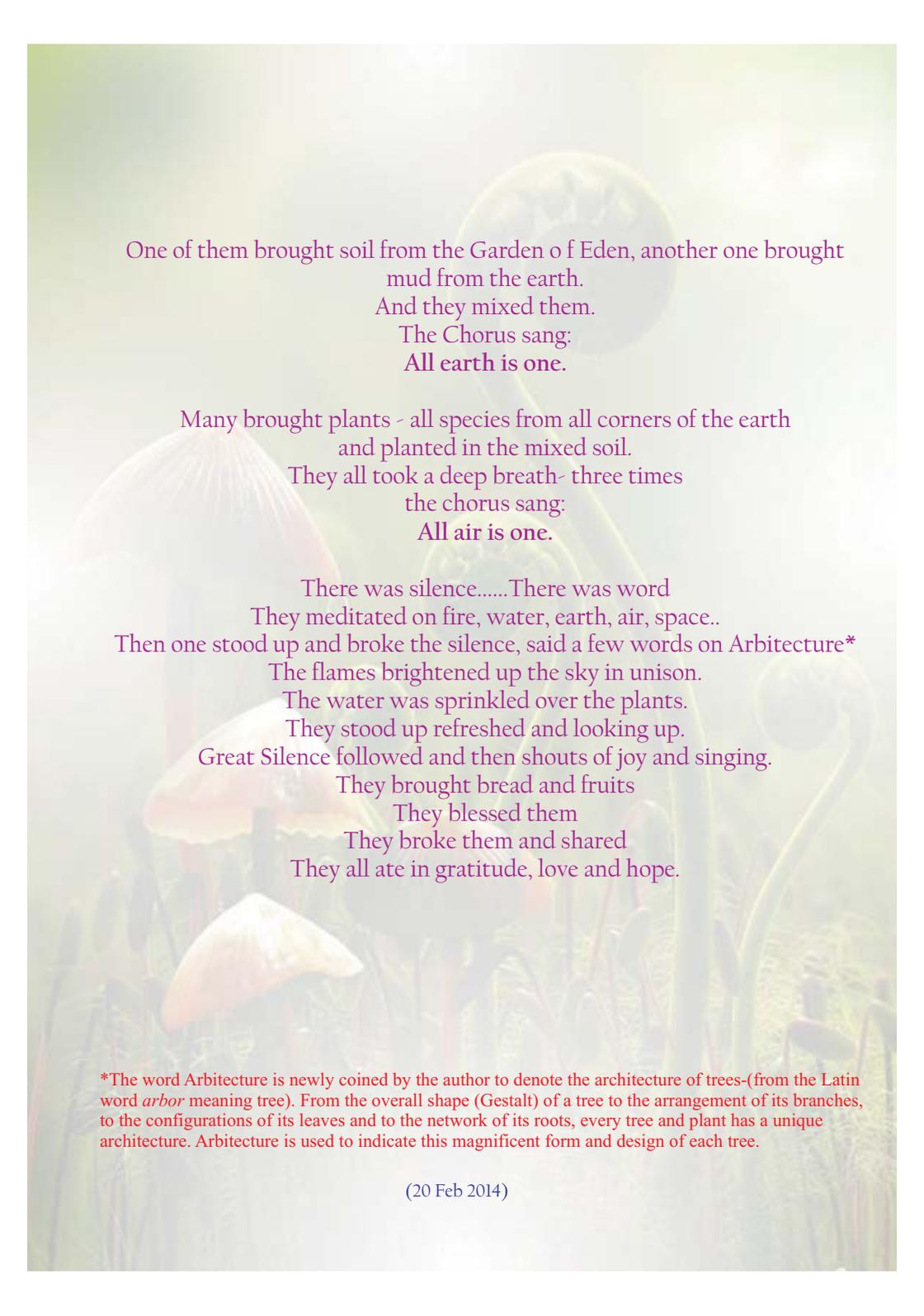
-Water from the Arctic

-Water from the Antarctic

-Water from the Jordan.

The Chorus sang:

All waters are one



One of them brought soil from the Garden of Eden, another one brought
mud from the earth.
And they mixed them.
The Chorus sang:
All earth is one.

Many brought plants - all species from all corners of the earth
and planted in the mixed soil.
They all took a deep breath- three times
the chorus sang:
All air is one.

There was silence.....There was word
They meditated on fire, water, earth, air, space..
Then one stood up and broke the silence, said a few words on Arbitecture*
The flames brightened up the sky in unison.
The water was sprinkled over the plants.
They stood up refreshed and looking up.
Great Silence followed and then shouts of joy and singing.
They brought bread and fruits
They blessed them
They broke them and shared
They all ate in gratitude, love and hope.

*The word Arbitecture is newly coined by the author to denote the architecture of trees-(from the Latin word *arbor* meaning tree). From the overall shape (Gestalt) of a tree to the arrangement of its branches, to the configurations of its leaves and to the network of its roots, every tree and plant has a unique architecture. Arbitecture is used to indicate this magnificent form and design of each tree.

(20 Feb 2014)

White versus White

Dusk darkened deep into Kalmeshwar,*
Threatening clouds loomed low.
“Windows of heaven were opened”*
In thunderous flashes and howling hailstorms
Frozen February turned febrile, violent.

White callous hailstones hauled on to
White delicate orange blooms.
White is crushing mighty from above
White is crumbling fragile from below.

Wheat fields wailed
White cotton dreams
Drenched in melting ice.

The old farmer wept,
His soiled white *kurta* all wet,
Tears dripping down his white beard.

Yet he stood up,
Scanning the horizon,
In flashes of lightning,
For a silvery white lining
Out at the far, far end.

Thank God, Hope is a Pheonix bird
Ever rising from its white ashes.

23 February 2014

*Genesis 7:11

*Kalmeshwar is a district in the State of Maharashtra which had devastating hailstorms on 23rd night of February destroying wheat, cotton and orange crops. Several farmers committed suicide in total despair.





St. Thomas Orthodox Theological Seminary, Nagpur
(STOTS)