

Classic Poetry Series

Dina Nath Nadim
- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Dina Nath Nadim(1916 – 1988)

Dinanath Nadim (???????) was a prominent Kashmiri poet of the 20th century. He was born in Srinagar city and with him began an era of modern Kashmiri poetry. He also virtually led the progressive writers movement in Kashmir. Rooted to the soil of Kashmir, Nadim's language was spoken Kashmiri, though he initially wrote in Hindi and Urdu as well. He influenced a large group of poets of his age as well as younger than him.

Nadim also wrote operas like Vitasta (Jhelum River), Safar Taa Shehjaar (The Journey And The shade)Heemaal Taa Naaegrai (Heemaal and Naagraaj), Shuhul Kull (The Shady Tree) and Bombur Taa yamberzal(Bumble Bee And The Narcissus Flower), the most popular being Bombur Taa yamberzal', which was the first opera to be published in Kashmiri. Me Chhum Aash Paghich (I am hopeful of tomorrow) is the most powerful Anti war poem in Kashmiri which Nadim wrote.

A Breeze Left For A Walk

A breeze left for a walk
for it
wanted to attend a fair.
A wind engulfed it;
the breeze lost its soul.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Broken Mirror

A broken mirror
shone on junk.
A cow came
and
looked at it;
a dog came
and
breathed at it;
a mad woman lifted it
and
wrapped it in her rags.
Nobody knows
what happened to the broken mirror
afterwards.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Chrysanthemum Espied A Marigold

A chrysanthemum espied a marigold
and said:

'Why hurry!

Stay a while.

The sunshine is still all colour.

You are in the dawn of youth;

my childhood died a long ago.

Yours are the shavings of autumn;

mine is only the incense of spring.'

Dina Nath Nadim

A Cloud Shinned Up A Mountain

A cloud shinned up a mountain,
a lightning struck it;
it felt helpless
when
trapped in the lap of the mountain range;
flight was forbidden,
a rock gripped it
and
it fell
and
reached the bottom
with a bang.
I thought it was a thunder
till
the unexpected happened in home.
A friend invited a friend to a feast.
Does anyone ask the first snowfall:
'Where were you born? '

Dina Nath Nadim

A Coat For Rain

I WALKED into that room.
I took the raincoat off, set it hanging

On a nail; I spun around
Cold, to consider at length and well

Myself, it seemed, hanging there
On a nail—

These are the same
Shoulders, these are my arms

Disjuncted, I have known this
Incoherence of buttons

Clinging—Unreasonable, unyielding thread!—
This way and that to all too familiar holes

—Thus, duly inspected, I
Took to the door, I checked myself

Out, out from this rack
Of cloth, this institution, this store.

Then there were two
Strangers, yes they were both

Strangers, the two of them something
Odd, and surpassing eager—

“Is there anything his he left behind
Anything to survive, something used

Something old, something he wore
To cover his head, something scribbled

Or green, something fresh, a poem
He did not live to publish? He had on a coat

At the end,
For rain.”

“Yes he did,
There is a room above
Where it hung
on a nail.
We none of us could
Bring ourselves
To look
Till the day we tried it on
Ourselves,
Till it fit
And we let it lie after, left it well enough
Alone
It’s been a few days since
We let
The rag-picker have it
For who
Knows how much.
What’s it to you?”

“It is wanted, naturally,
By the museum of letters—
Won’t you say who has it
Or if there is a mark
To certify it?”

“And how will you get your hands on it?
Will you fish for it
On the mountain
Of rags? Listen,
Friend,
There is something,
Stitched into the lining,
A label its very own:
SHEIKH ALLAH,
TAILOR-MASTER”

Dina Nath Nadim

A Flower Spoke To The Soil

A flower spoke to the soil
but its pains remained untold;
the bushes were pruned
but
they were trapped in snow.

They say the garden is abloom,
the sunshine washes the flowerbeds
and the cool reigns.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

A Hut Leaned Against A House

A hut leaned against a house
counting its days
winter after winter.

One winter
snow shattered its roof;
another winter
rain felled it.

Someone bought the house
and
raised a bungalow instead.

One upon a time
a hut was there;
now
it is sod.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Lone Naked Poplar Stood Aloof

A lone naked poplar stood aloof,
there was a crowd of crows.
The leaves of a Chinar shook
and the children shouted: 'Caw'caw.'
The crows fled like the wind
and
the branches trembled.
The poplar looked all around
and
found itself alone.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Path, Running Through A Field

A path, running through a field,
ended near a stream.
Over the other bank
they shaped a road
that led to a village.
Someone sent a message
over the stream.
The stream howled
as
it heard the tales of the village
and
the city.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

A Pebble In The Street Corner

A pebble in the street corner
lay washed by the sun.
The builder
piled a stone upon stone.
The pebble was lost
in the gravel.
Long back
Fate had written on its face:
'For the road'
The builder ground it.
The pebble was dust.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Road Jumped Into A Lane

A road jumped into a lane;
darkness was rooted there.
Two doors closeby
whispered
and
laughed
when they saw the road.
If spoken
the talk will lengthen.
The flowers shed tears below
and
the sky was starry above.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

A Sculptor Sculpted A Relief

A sculptor sculpted a relief,
painted it
and
rediscovered its each limb.
When he looked at its face
he found the lost
and
lost the find.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Shoe

A shoe
with its mouth open
lay on the road
longing for a draught of water.
A dog came,
shattered the shoe
and
took it to a stream.
Is thirst quenched?

A brick said to a stone:
'You are a part
I am the whole.'

Dina Nath Nadim

A Teaf Detached From A Tree

A leaf detached from a tree
and
fell dancing upon the earth.
The turf said:
'This is a friend come
from the unstable
and
fallen upon the stable.'

Dina Nath Nadim

A Thin Stream

A thin stream
flowed down the hill
like a king.
A twig was its crown.
The river will overflow its bank
and
shake the earth.
After a splash
the twig got stuck against a mound of sand.
Beauty is no slave to hollowness.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Vessel

A vessel
washed by the raindrops
looked like a woman's liquid face.

The raindrops
washed off its sins.

Somebody came
and kicked the vessel.
Shards lay here and there.

Two days later
children played with fragments.

From hell to heaven
there are two and a half steps.

Dina Nath Nadim

A Wind

A wind
carrying twigs
climbed down a hill
and
walked on the riverbank.
The twigs got stuck against a mound of sand
and
found their place.
Since then the people say:
'The twigs are always for the fire'.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

By The Foot Of A Hill

By the foot of a hill
a butterfly winged back trembling
to its home.
On the way
flowers welcomed it and said:
'Come,
sit beside us
and
live your youth.'
The butterfly replied:
'You tempt and unfold and madden;
I show my colours in vain.'

Dina Nath Nadim

His Colour Told Me

His colour told me
it was he.
I tried to name him
but
my breath froze,
lips petrified
and mouth was still.
All was darkness
but
a lightning showed its teeth.

Dina Nath Nadim

I Will Not Sing Today

I will not sing today,
I will not sing
of roses and of bulbuls
of irises and hyacinths
I will not sing
Those drunken and ravishing
Dulcet and sleepy-eyed songs.
No more such songs for me !
I will not sing those songs today.
Dust clouds of war have robbed the
iris of her hue,
The bulbul lies silenced by the
thunderous roar of guns,
Chains are all a-jingle in the
haunts of hyacinths.
A haze has blinded lightning's eyes,
Hill and mountain lie crouched in fear,
And black death
Holds all cloud tops in its embrace,
I will not sing today
For the wily warmonger with loins girt
Lies in ambush for my land.

Dina Nath Nadim

In The Mid Summer

In the mid summer

the leaves of young poplars
fell.

Only a few leaves
crowned them;

the rest were taken away
by the rain.

Listen:

'Fellow travelers are strangers here.'

Dina Nath Nadim

Ink Spilled On A White Cloth

Ink spilled on a white cloth,
night ran away
after a long sleep.
I recalled the day
when
a crowd stared at me
for
a patch hid a hole in my garment.
The white
and
the black
quarreled.
All existence rests on this duel.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

My Hope Of Tomorrow

I dream of tomorrow
When the world will be beautiful !
O how bright the day, how green
the grass !
Flowers paradisaal, earth aching
with joy,
And dancing mountains of love
in his breast !
The world will be beautiful !
A rare confluence of happy stars !
With my eyes sparkling without
collyrium.
Rose-red nipples, breasts swelling
with milk
The world will be beautiful !

Dina Nath Nadim

Mynahs Espied A Small Blackbird

Mynahs espied a small blackbird

and

from afar said:

'Hey, where are you going so early?

Who do you call up this time?'

The blackbird replied:

'You have to hide the booty of autumn,

I have to collect the treasures of spring.'

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

Plant Irritably Said To The Slope

A plant irritably said to the slope:

'You have held my feet.

I crave for

a jump

a play

and

a song.'

One day rain cast aside the plant.

The slope lost its patience.

Who knows

the plant may have been wise

but I know that

I am a ninny.

Dina Nath Nadim

Raincoat

I entered the room
Took the raincoat off
Draped it over the peg.
Turned around, suddenly
Looked at it long.
It looked like me
Suspended from the peg.
The very same shoulders,
Long unwieldy arms, and
Upper back
The same stature and
Girth of neck collar here.
Buttons unsettled by the pull
Of buttonholes.
I looked at it well
I looked at it all over.
Opened the door and
Walked out.
Walked out of this length
Of clothes.
This establishment
This shop.
Two unknown men came,
Asked them:
"Any personal effects
Of the deceased?
Any old clothes, skullcap,
Scribblings, notes,
Unpublished poems?
He took to wearing
A raincoat
Towards the end."
"Yes! He had this coat.
It hung from a peg
Upstairs.
One could not bear to
See it, initially. Then
We wore it one day.
Wore it till it suited us

Then it lay around.
Some days ago
A rag collector came.
We sold it to him, finally.
Say, why did you need it? "
"We required it, of course,
For the literary museum.
Who did you sell it to?
Any identifying mark?
We might still
Find it."
"But how/
How do you expect
To get it
From the mountain of rags
At the collector's?
How will you fish it out?
As for the identifying mark, well
Yes!
Embroidered on the inner
Lining, was the
Label
'Sheikh Ilahi Tailor Master'"

(Courtesy: Braj B. Kachru, *Kashmiri Literature*; , *Gems of Kashmiri Literature*;
Kasmir, Canada)

Dina Nath Nadim

Sonnet

Such are days I can believe the moon to be
Unleavened bread, but for scars I see unseam
A neck so collared in every dissolute color; I'll believe,
Instead, the moon is cut from threadbare Pampur tweed.
The moon is bread, if through a spent halo in decline
She yet shines, something too finely used or unseemly old,
Something a man may slip in with money owed
The peasant girls—this moon is counterfeit coin.
The moon is unleavened bread and the mountains
Hunger. The Clouds again put out kitchen fires.
But in woods I'll see by glimmer light and glean faeries
By the glow of their cooking stoves and on distant peaks I'm sure
There's a little rice that's trying to grow. I'll let my hunger know,
I'll heave my eyes to the heavens.

Dina Nath Nadim

Spring-Wind Passed By Our Door

Spring-wind passed by our door
and
with restive fingers
beat its breast.
I asked a flower, 'What happened?'
In a corner
it puckered its lips.
Soon a dry petal appeared
and
the springbushes
beat their breasts.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

The Crows Shouted

The crows shouted
for
they knew not how to spend the leisure;
the nightingales adorned their nests,
the hay became stacks.
The nightingales hatched,
their breaths were visible.
One flight --
and the world knew the newborn.
Suddenly all shouting stopped.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

The Moon Rose Like A Tsot

That day, the tsot-like moon ascended
behind the hills looking
wane and worn like a gown of Pampur
tweed
with a tattered collar and loose collar-
bands,
revealing sad scars over her silvery
skin,
She was weary and tired and
lusterless
as a counterfeit pallid
rupee-coin
deceitfully given to an
unsuspecting woman labourer
by a wily master.
The tsot-like moon ascended and the
hills grew hungry.
The clouds were slowly putting out
their cooking fires.
But the forest nymphs began to kindle
their oven fires.
And steaming rice seemed to shoot up
Over the hill tops.
And, murmuring hope to my
starving belly.
I gazed and gazed at the promising
sky.

Dina Nath Nadim

The Oil In The Lamp Dwindled

The oil in the lamp dwindled;
the wick was a flicker
and
the light too dwindled.
A moth danced into the dying flame;
the half-burnt hope
fell into a niche.
When the flame died
darkness gave a hysterical laugh.
Why trust laughter!
Weeping knows no end.
Who lost
and
who won?

Dina Nath Nadim

The Silence Of The Night Said

The silence of the night said:
'The dew is born.'
Each leaf perspired.
The morning ray was aghast
and
died near the frost.

Dina Nath Nadim

The Song Of The Boatwoman From The Lake Dar

I

I got these Crisp and fresh from
the Dal
Hay valay, come and buy! hay valay,
come and buy!
These are tiny eggplants, and these
are round gourds.
Hay valay, come and buy!
Hay valay, come and buy!

II

These are peppers, and these are
brinjals.
The brinjals are like pitchers of wine
banging their heads in this boat of
mine,
Hay valay, come and buy!
Hay valay, come and buy!

III

The crisp bundles of radishes
are glittering in the shade
of weeds, the red marsh turnip
is blushing like a blushing beauty,
as it the dawn has blossomed into
flowers.
Hay valay, come and buy!
hay valay, come and buy!

IV

May dust fall on you! Stop it!
You have taken enough now.
I know, dear lady, I cannot blame you,
tor the high prices are crushing us all
now.
Let me go!
Come on, lend me a hand with this
basket, I really must go now.
Hay valay, come and buy!
Hay valay, come and buy!

V

What can I tell you, dear lady.
My child was born only last Thursday,
Though I didn't feel up to it, I dragged
myself out and left my little one behind.
It was painful to leave him away
from me.
Hay valay, come and buy!
Hay valay, come and buy!

VI

My little one!
My little one is pale like a radish,
My little one is pale like a jasmine,
My little one is naked and nude
shivering and cold like a lump of ice.
My little one is crying and crying, the
tears roll down from his eyes like drops
rolling down from lotus leaves.
Hay valay, come and buy!
Hay valay, come and buy!

VII

My little one's nose is like a lotus seed,
just like his father's nose;
My little one's face is tiny, just like
his mother's face.
To us both he is like a lotus, sprung
from the mud of dalay hay
Hay valay, come and buy!
Hay valay, come and buy!

VIII

Lo! I seem to hear a baby cry;
Lo! I seem to feel a sensation in my
breast.
My heart doesn't seem to be here now.
Dear lady, I must really go now,
Hay valay, come and buy!
Hay valay, come and buy!

The Topmost Branch Of A Tree

The topmost branch of a tree
trembled in the early morning
and
saw its shadow on the ground.
It looked towards the sky
but
fell in love with the earth.
A wind shook the tree;
it lapped the pain.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

The Wind Lost Its Way

The wind lost its way
but
a whirlwind caught it
in the middle of the road.

The leaves swerved
and
screamed.
Satan had entered the fray.
It was daytime.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim

Time Rested On A Picture

Time rested on a picture,
trees grew like mad;
On the canvas
there was a forest.
He who took the road
reached home.
Breath came into being.
Where is the forest?
Where is the mind?

Dina Nath Nadim

Two Eyes Gazed Out Of A Window

Two eyes gazed out of a window
and then
came the wind.

The willows clothed the bride,
the anklets were for the bridal dance,
the headgear looked a rainbow.

Revellery was afrenzy
where the spring happened.

The people closed their shops,
not a sound was heard.

[Translated by Arvind Gigoo]

Dina Nath Nadim