

# A Hot Pot of Roasted Poems

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# A Hot Pot of Roasted Poems

Rohitash Chandra

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Also by Rohitash Chandra

*Barefoot on Soft River Sand*

*Namaste Fiji: The International Anthology (Editor),  
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*for my Mother*

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## Author's Notes

Some poems from this collection are taken from my previous collection *Barefoot on Soft River Sand*. The poems in this collection address a wide range of themes. I have written these in a passion for life, peace, and the love of god.





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My deep appreciation to Mr. Nam, a noble and respected Korean artist; this book is inspired by his teachings of art and life. I am thankful to Mom, Roni, my two sisters Ranjeeta and Ranjeeni.



To Fiji

*'Let's soak in the rain of reconciliation  
and unity and rebuild the country.'*

*'There are a lot of religious and racial differences among  
people throughout the world. Let's put all forms of differences  
aside and unite mankind to make earth and heaven one.'*

*'We call God by different names, God is one.  
Religion is a means of reaching God, religion is not God.  
Tradition and rituals are the creation of men in the name of  
God. One can obtain salvation with good karma and  
meditation.'*

*'Ignorance is the darkness, let the light of knowledge  
shine in and set you free.'*

*'Love is the road to God realization. Walk on it.'*

Rohitash Chandra



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# I Sugar-Coated Youth and Illuminated Nature





# Summer in Fiji

Green mangoes  
hang on trees  
like beads  
of fancy earrings.

Green weeds creep  
while flowers drip  
fragrance in the air  
and blossom  
in the season splendid.

# The King of the Sky

*for Manoca Back-Road*

The young lad ran out the bed,  
new plans for the day he laid.  
Crossed bamboos – light weight,  
with ‘noose-paper’ folded a kite.

An eel was the tail,  
he ran out the door to test its sail.  
No leaf moved as no wind threw any gale,  
never mind – his plans will not fail.

He flung his kite up in the air,  
ran on the road without despair.  
His kite gained height,  
far away – far away the light weight.

He tightened and loosened the string,  
and steered his kite to bring –  
It away from the electric poles,  
in his hands – the string roll.

The roll of string was,  
spinning on an axel made of a twig  
He was unwinding a lot of thread,  
sailing ahead – the birds flying around were scared –

They thought that the kite was a hawk,  
some birds seemed provoked  
Sail with winds away,  
the mighty king in control of a boy.

It should not rain today,  
or wet, his kite will fall in dismay.  
He joined many more strings,  
and released the kite with wind swings.

Soon as a dot in the sky,  
behind the clouds, it was far lost by  
Tired with the joy of the day  
for home heads the sailor boy.

# Growing Up in a Small Village

*for Saraswati Primary Manoca School*

Yes, I walked down the tracks  
– Through the jungles, in school to doodle,  
In my books hiding under the desks  
– I scribbled pictures of superman and the poodles.

The tracks were covered with marks of hooves  
And lumps, lumps of cow dung  
I swing, I swing large plastic hoops  
Those I picked as junk.

One summer I saw this soil parting with cracks,  
In rain my shoes on sticky muddy puddles.  
The boys looking at the sky with a kite lack –  
The breeze, when leaves are silent and slack.

Wait all day for the ting tang of the metal bell,  
Books – books fill the so called sacks  
In a line marching along the tracks we shall  
Carry these sacks, full of sweat on our backs.

Go home for the soup of two-minute noodle,  
Relax for a while and again stealthily doodle.  
Now I wish my life's colours could turn,  
And I, again a child from man.

## Paintings in the Sky

The rising  
yellow round spark  
is throwing colours,  
penetrating into the clouds,  
fading into cirrus  
glowing the edges  
of cumulonimbus.

# Rain in Nausori

*for the empty rice fields*

Rain falls and crumbles  
on the corrugated iron roof  
like rice grains  
from the field's yield  
crumble and tumble  
on the tarpaulin  
in the harvesting season.

# When I was Young

*for Ranjeeta*

When I was young  
— at age of six or more,  
I was passionate  
for the drops with a soft glow.  
Whenever the rain crackled  
like grains falling on the roof  
I would gaze from the inside  
to see the drops that hop  
— bouncing on water tops.

My chin on my hand palms,  
with thoughts on wrapped short arms  
I wondered of horses and cows  
that after the hot shine  
nodded at the rainbow.  
I would stare and stare  
— to see the crackling flare  
Whenever thunder roared,  
they said that huge drums  
were rolled by the gods.

I would spread my hands  
to feel and touch  
the stream of the drops  
falling from the roof tops.  
I stand there watching  
the leaves fast floating  
with the water soaking in  
all the soil it can,  
washing all the particles of sand.

I remember the vision  
the beautiful rainy season  
The way a rain drop  
bounce in the water and hop  
The drops were so shiny  
on my hands that were soft and tiny.

Give me permission  
to run out of the porch  
and reach my hands for the drops  
to dissolve with the wind of the season  
with arms wide open  
and purify in the rain with no genuine reason,  
for just a little joy and enlightenment.



# Candlelight

Eat all the air — give light  
Swiftly — move in a rhythm  
Burn — the candle.

Shrink and glow, as you grow  
Smaller; like a lamp post  
With giant water drops  
Clinging side to side,  
To the bottom the drops slide  
And slowly freeze.

A unique shape you obtain,  
From far away you gleam,  
Miracles performed by the light beam.

Eat the dark  
Spread your art.

Dark like a ghost,  
Tries to capture you  
With all the power  
It can shower  
Sooner or later  
You may not remain,  
I will light another candle,  
Then shall we meet again.

## Dusk

The sun like a loose kite  
is slowly falling  
into the mountains.

The north-east trade winds  
blow a soft gale  
while the clouds fade from  
one colour into another.

The moon with its round crater-face  
and magical spell of faded shadows  
all night befriends  
the lonely man with a tired face,  
walking home,  
tired and trapped  
in the shoe of a long hard day  
knitted by its lace.

# Water Puddles

*for Mrs Sharma*

The ants felt the drops on them,  
huge and lumpy  
some were carried away rolling  
down the tracks bumpy.

Thunder crackled with light  
roaring like trampling dynamite.

— Millions of soft and tiny pearls  
which were to feed the hungry sea shells  
fell and bounced in the dry well  
soaking the dusty earth's dry swirls.

The ducks had flapped their wings dry  
— now the dusty earth and sand  
is now muddy by the sky  
The shrubs along the roads  
covered by the dust  
— brown, were green again  
purified with the rain.

The plants flower —  
while creeks full of water  
New twigs emerge from the old seeds  
soon the field would yield  
Frangipanis would blossom  
farmers would sing  
of the rain and all the new season  
has to bring.

# The Goat and the Kid

*for Kumari*

In the field down the wild hill  
in soft grass, in green weed.  
the goat which had a big summer belly  
has birthed a white-coated kid.

The white-coated kid shines bright  
when the sun mingles its fur with light.

The young has big floppy ears  
round eyes and fur so soft and dear,  
a bell under the neck  
the kid its little tail wags.

The young cuddles  
— its mother's breast  
to suck milk in jerks,  
wagging its pony tail  
behind its legs.

## He Likes to Eat

He ate and ate  
Took huge bites  
Till his tummy felt tight  
He gained — he gained weight.  
He never cared about being fat  
had a tummy big and wide to let  
He walked a little and often sat —  
—could win any eating bet.

Sometimes he was as lazy —  
as an overfed cat  
offered girls flowers like daisies —  
so he could chat  
He walked like a giant tortoise  
with a heavy load on its back  
chocolate-coated candy was all  
he would fill in his bedside sack.

His hunger would quicken  
If anyone talked about chicken  
Whenever he ate ham and bacon,  
A bucketful of water  
in the morning would him awaken.  
He always said, as eating by his television lay  
That he would change the food he had  
Or he would tumble and potatoes be fed  
His heart would choke and be lazy dead.

# The Yellow Morning

Slowly light eats the dark

— with its spark.

The sun — a bright egg yolk

— burns and rises like a balloon in the sky,

and stretches its arm of ray particles

which penetrate the clouds

— glowing golden edges near the bright yolk  
energizing the land and the horizon.

The flowers are like little factories

where the bees and birds

come to work everyday.

The bright yellow yolk in the sky

rings bells for them —

to open up and attract

new workers day by day.

## II Love, Romance and Passion





# Breathing in Love

*for Roni*

I notice the flowers by the roadside  
Which I used to ignore before,  
Thin blue skies and floating wool-like clouds  
And green leaves dancing in rain shrouds.

With a vacant mind I observe  
bright colourful flowers  
Barefoot I digest the crisp of leaves  
crumbling in the garden.

Usually I smile for no reason, taste the rain and shiver  
Now my soul floats like a bamboo in the river  
Happy the current might carry me somewhere  
Scared I used to be, in love now I can dare.

Songs often play in my mind  
While back and forth with thoughts I wind.  
At night by my window, I smile at the moon  
In love, I feel my heart pounding in tune.

Sugar tastes sweeter these days  
I used to live before, now alive in glorious ways  
My body is now in tune with my spirit  
Love flow in my veins – head to feet.

# Blue Eyes

Her eyes were,  
like the entire deep blue sea  
Trapped inside a pearl  
of the clam shell.

From the steep rocky cliff  
he stared into the deep blue sea,  
Then he tripped and fell  
straight into the shell  
And trapped he was  
inside the pearl.

# The Sound of Music

*for Roni*

Love sprinkles in the air  
As we dance hand in hand,  
The glass of wine tastes  
Your lips with mine  
While the melody moves  
In through your bones making  
Your muscles soft and move  
Along with the tune  
Your body now in my control,  
The wind is playing softly on your skin  
Not so harsh to blow off the candles,  
Now my hand slides on your waist  
And we slowly move closer and closer  
Your eyes spark up with a gesture dear  
To my heart which drowns in love  
As we kiss gently in the moonlight.

## Day by day

Day by day  
the tree of love grows  
firm to withstand the wind  
and storm of everyday life  
its roots firmly in the soil  
the branches garnished with  
soft green leaves grow and  
look towards the sky in hope  
for rain – then flowers blossom  
and sprinkle fragrance  
of love in the air.

Day by day the tree of love  
and life grows.

## Feeling in Love

It feels like being in a pond  
Funny, I feel like growing a horn.  
I can with pleasure roll in green lawn,  
And walk barefoot in foam.

## Their First Kiss

Quietly they were hiding in a room  
surrounded with the clouds in fuzzy  
heart pounding beats around their head.

While approaching her, he felt his body warm  
— the veins rushing blood through his body  
led the war between excitement and fear  
that someone might notice their beautiful secret affair.

The fear dissolved with the wind,  
as he touched her hand for the first time,  
held it softly at first — tightened it,  
as she was looking towards the ground.  
— with his other hand, he softly touched  
her chin and tilted it upwards; then her eyes, captured  
in his, lit- as if there was a candlelight from which the  
spark gave a reflection on her eye.

He could tell that she was shivering without rain  
— and another touch from his hand on her hips  
a spark in her body from which she trembled.

Then he held his fingers on her cheeks  
— their lips melted with each other  
and trembled for long, they could not hear anything else  
but only feel the presence of each other — two souls felt  
their body and merged into one, lost in time.

# Almost

That was it for them,  
they were quarrelling  
like birds on the roofing iron.  
He held her soft hand  
and tried to force her to get out –

Suddenly she tripped  
and her body flung towards him,  
her breasts almost on his chest,  
he could not fight  
the war boiling in him  
between his anger and her soft attraction.

They stopped for a second  
and at peace – ceasefire  
they looked at each other  
it was not worth fighting,  
their bodies couldn't resist each other  
he held her fiercely by her waist,  
in seconds the hormones of anger  
turned into lust  
and love flowed in through their veins  
clinging behind the red blood cells.

Like never before  
all over on each other,  
they kissed.

# Confessions

The words he tries to utter  
lock up in his throat  
His heart thumps to flutter  
when he memories recall.

He pictured her in a tub with foam  
her wet soaking body in soft gown  
For a glimpse of her smile  
he would in her valley roam.

Desires in a candle light gleam  
as her soft lips near he's seen  
His body melts like a candle wax keen  
when towards him she leans.

He, like a piece of cloth  
on her body would fold – with an oath.  
That his love is worth  
ingots of gold – confessions behold.



## The Bride, The Bridegroom

The bride with her bridegroom  
together in the light of the new moon  
Cupid is showering soft petals in the room,  
soon would lust in unjust eyes bloom.  
Why wait, why wait long for this night  
just to hold in bed, thee soft hands light  
To be tied, tied strong in this vow  
no storm shall, apart them blow.

Roses and marigold scatter all around their bed,  
in the gleam of the flame, petals had shred.  
As pretty as a goddess, his heart swings to and fro  
hands around her knees, her head shy and low.  
When he gets closer, expressions on her face grow  
she acts as this she doesn't know.  
He tries to speak, a romantic poem he has to recite  
all he thinks of, is to kiss her gently in the candlelight.

Swiftly he tilted her head, and turned deep into her eyes  
they were lost in time, neither in control  
The sweat on his skin, her lips taste like sugar-salt  
hungry for pleasure, none could slow or halt.  
She tried to, but in pleasure couldn't stop to speak  
at times he heard her voice, later not a sound or noise  
In the glowing candle, her eyes to him would shy-seek  
she was the fish in him, he was the creek.

## Falling in Love

The lady is falling –  
in the well with the gentleman,  
holding on to a few balloons  
falling into the chocolate walled room  
splashing into milkshakes  
and kissing with lips that taste  
sweet like cake.

The gentleman is rolling in bed –  
with soft petals of roses red  
Her beauty is glowing in candlelight  
with sweet glossy lips bright  
They are both tied together with a thread  
in the strong rolling bed.

# Silence

*for Reshma and Michael*

They sit together in the bus  
no expressions to share  
Sometimes their bodies touch—hush  
her eyes would not even glare.

They wait and wait for one to speak  
but false glory holds up care  
No one would dare to make a sound  
-when silence is hard to bare.

It hurts a lot— a tiny piece of dirt  
in one's eye, makes the vision blurry  
There is no good done with the words  
that come and go in flurry.

## Desires

Please come wet wrapped  
from the bathroom, in a towel  
then in my arms, on the bed  
I would your body fold.

Please do not mind my eyes,  
in bed — I'm in control,  
the way you surrender,  
when my love on you fall.

## Quench

The night cold  
with a shower of breeze  
is playing on her skin;

He is getting closer  
her eyes get illuminated  
as her heart rings bells  
butterflies in her stomach.

Close — his eyes magically in control  
her body surrenders to his touch  
as his thirst, on her lips grows  
desires swing to and fro.

In his passion  
her body surrenders in his arms  
they dance slowly in the room  
lighted with hundreds of candles.

Close — her body melts with pleasure,  
their souls enlighten with the candlelight  
corresponding with the slow tune  
her hips swing with him in the room.

# Beauty

Her skin like berries ripe,  
with spots of few pimples  
Flowers blossom in her smile  
as her cheeks curl down into a dimple.

Her eyes are diamonds,  
pearls are earrings  
Lips O sweet lips— damp wine,  
her shoulders rhyme with her hips.

She walks tall and daisies fall above all,  
her dress folds while men's eyes down her legs crawl  
When her clothes soak in rain  
—for a glimpse of her skin, men tumble and fall.

How perfect must god have been to carve?  
her skin bone and flesh,  
Of many creations men may love,  
women's beauty has god blessed.

### III The Science and Philosophy of Things





# Beware

*for Ratu Joni*

The boy at the science fair said  
– Beware; in another five billion years  
the sun will explode into a supernova  
consuming the entire planetary system.

The weatherman said  
– Beware; the next ice age may be here soon  
changing the entire weather system,  
cause and effect of the toxic that we produce.

The poor fisherman with a hungry hook said  
– Beware; the ocean is rising, the polar caps melting  
soon we will with surgery develop gills and flip  
– like underwater fish.

The man with the broken limb said  
– Beware; biological and chemical weapons  
are so powerful – human tissue can melt  
in hours without much pain.

The little boy in the refugee camp said  
– Beware; human figures are developing big tummies:  
thin arms and legs – as if stick figures in cartoons are  
evolving  
food is scarce in the Third World.

# Pain and Pleasure

Pain and pleasure  
are the two  
distinct variables  
in the equation  
of life  
which is governed  
by the simple principle  
of time  
and heartbeats.

# Joining Together

The atoms join together  
to form molecules as cells and fibres  
which make up the tissues  
of our muscles and bones.  
Veins are wired  
with the tissues into the  
skin covering our body.

People live together as families  
in villages – together  
in society which altogether make  
up a country – joining together  
making up the world.

Planets rotate around the stars  
millions of stars rotate around  
the galactic centre making up together  
the Milky Way  
millions of eyes above  
are illuminating the sky dark.

Galaxies together with space  
time, matter and energy  
make up the universe  
all being God.

# Transformation of Energy

*for Ashish*

I wonder  
what was there —  
before the very instance  
when time began.

Before — Time and energy,  
Before — Space and matter,  
Before — Light and the big explosion.

Somehow the universe  
just happened and  
all there is —  
Energy transformation:

Stars age  
explode into supernova  
turn into the mysterious  
Black Hole  
or die into a white dwarf.

Trees die into timber,  
Later wilt into soil —  
or burn into smoke  
and turn to ashes.

The beating heart stops —  
Life starts all over again  
in some mother's womb.

All that we care about  
— this body, this flesh  
turns into ashes or rots into soil.

At least our flesh  
feeds some hungry worms,  
Our soul is a piece  
of glowing energy that  
transforms.

# The Terrible Invention

Of all the inventors  
he was a dead disgrace,  
What in mind did he think of  
for what he had made.

The wars had not been this bloody  
with axes and swords  
although unreasonable,  
the bloodshed was low:

Now hundreds of thousands  
can be killed at once  
With one small trigger  
— there is a big blow.

# Confused I

*for Mrs. Reddy*

Am I

A verse from the  
Holy book,  
A creation by  
The mythical god,  
When my heart halts,  
Where do I go – ?  
-To hell or to the heavenly lord?

Am I

An article from  
A scientific book?

What am I?

# Cycles

*for Christian*

We rise from the soil  
eating green — hunting  
running — sleeping  
developing tissue and vein  
going to school for brain.

We retire into strained  
overlapping skin and tissue,  
grey hair — big bellies  
and old age diseases.

We fall six feet deep,  
rot into the soil  
from which we had risen  
in the first place  
we complete the cycle  
of nature:

Just like water  
that turns into vapour  
by the glance of the sun  
and fall as rain into water again.



# Our Existence

Physically we are cell joined muscles  
and bones. A mechanism beats in our chest  
and pumps fuel all over our body.  
Someday the mechanism gets tired and stops  
our soul would evaporate and fly away  
while the body on the soil would drop.

Spiritually we are more than our brain;  
our soul is connected with the universe,  
we believe in things that may we not see  
and for our belief —  
we are spiritually connected.

We try to explain all that surrounds us  
clinging on the fingers of science and religion.  
We are governed with the mechanism of politics —  
and easily fooled by some.

We classify ourselves into races and religion,  
we develop our own gods in our mind  
chanting hymns — forming religious organizations  
and live by the rules of the scriptures.

We consider ourselves  
superior to other animals  
for the superiority of our intelligence,  
we harm and hunt them;  
— we cage and feed them  
once they grow  
— for blood marinated fibres of meat,  
we kill and eat them.

We are constrained in our mind  
our thinking is usually bound by religion,  
politics and tradition.  
We think — we are in the centre of the universe  
mother nature revolves around us  
as we transform soft green to rubble.

# Life

*for Bhiswa and Deva Bhaiya*

We as children  
invest our happiness in toys  
chocolates and ice-cream,  
we grow — attend primary schools  
run around the green fields  
engage in sports — building our bones.

We grow — as teenagers,  
attend secondary schools  
— we fall in love blindly and hurt ourselves.  
We grow — our hormones sizzle in our body  
as teenagers we dangle in love and lust.

We grow — develop into a career  
raise money — buy a house,  
get married and form a family.  
The early years we live in lust and romance  
then it gets slow... we live with an emptiness  
and to fill it — we have a baby.  
Our home fills with glory again —  
we hold the soft tender fingers  
guide our children to walk the road of life,  
we watch them grow  
we feed their stomach with grains  
we feed their minds with knowledge and wisdom.

We grow old, our children grown  
we wait — to witness the glory of our children's marriage  
then we wait again — to play with our grandchildren.

We have lived, we have laughed  
we fell in love and lived in it  
sometimes we tripped and fell  
cried and slept with sorrow and pain  
Finally, with our experience of life and all in it,  
— we retire into the soil.

# The Birth of the Universe

A spark flicked  
in empty space,  
the clock time  
ticked from zero.

A big bang  
in empty space  
of nothingness,  
time was born.  
matter illuminated  
with energy.

The stars were formed  
the massive galaxies —  
into revolution  
the planets journey the sun  
life — living cells joining  
into intelligent beings  
us.

## For Life

I as a butterfly  
wandered through  
the edge of the universe  
travelling across the milky way  
among the fireworks of stars  
through the planets,  
the solar system  
and brilliant coloured gas clouds  
in search for a home  
a mother's womb  
for life, for breath.

# I Draw the World

I wish that I could  
take out a paper  
and some coloured pencils,  
then with green – draw the trees  
give them some role  
make yellow – the sun  
and draw clouds  
that do not rain acid  
light blue – the sky,  
without a ozone hole.

# Food

So much to eat  
— millions die  
blocking arteries,  
bulging with potatoes.

So little to eat  
— millions die of  
hunger and malnutrition  
big tummies, thin legs  
pale wide eyes  
and sores of life.



## IV Spirituality



## After Death

Nail my coffin and carry me towards the sea,  
its peaceful near the sea, winds blowing –  
there is an old graveyard near.  
I might not feel anything – deep six feet under  
but the trees around me will,  
their roots will pass on your messages.  
I might be told of your utterance  
– as you speak above me  
so don't drop a tear, for that a tear might squeeze  
in through the soil and be all over me.

Look out for the signs,  
of the clouds and singing birds, smiling flowers,  
they all would mean –  
I love you and am waiting for the day,  
to be running in primary school as a boy  
till we meet again...

## Processing the Dead?

The preacher at the church tells me,  
leave your religion, and come to mine  
for you pray to the idols and stones  
in which there's Devil's grime.  
Religions confuse me:  
one says resurrection,  
the other reincarnation.

Is there a security officer sitting  
for processing beliefs of the dead?  
He shall command the dead:  
Christians form a line to the right,  
Hindus form a line to the left.  
"You will be processed further  
according to the beliefs you had".

## Feeling Lost Within

I sit in a small bus; it's dark  
I sit in the middle of the seat; feel uncomfortable,  
— a huge guy is sitting beside me,  
I compress my body and feel lost within  
making no eye contacts  
trying not to look at the stranger;  
the lights from the incoming vehicle hit my eye;  
I wander outside looking at the beautiful houses  
the lights at their porch from inside the bus  
and wish for a better house to live in.

The breeze hits my face flowing;  
just enough to cause the sinus pain  
from the cold coke that I drank in the day.  
The bus is moving as if  
the destination will never come;  
shaking — I have to stand the smell of sweat  
and the sweat from all day  
dried up in the leather of the seat.

Finally passing through the old metal bridge  
I come to my destination; I give a dollar fifty cents to the  
driver. The driver is busy;  
I try not to make any eye contacts  
I walk towards the taxi — for a drive towards home the  
driver asks questions about the gravel road condition; he  
rejects, I walk towards another taxi — the rejection by the  
previous driver hits my head; slowly I speak —  
“ Irrigation Road”.

I sit in the taxi;  
squeezing my body towards the door  
the driver is speaking;  
I can't hear him even though his voice is loud;  
I look up towards the black sky,  
and stare at the moon.

—I walk into my room making no eye contacts;  
fall into bed and think about god  
having no image of god in my head;  
I try not think of Jesus, Rama or Buddha  
For me these are man-made gods;  
I think of not praying;  
god may already know about the situation?  
If He is God then He knows everything  
A prayer is like a waking call for what He already  
knows.

# Final Thoughts by the Sea

*for Jyoti*

Up in the sky,  
a vision of twinkling stars  
made him wander,  
near the sea.  
He took off the load  
down his shoulder,  
of good memories and tears:

He thought of  
his day as a boy,  
waiting for summer  
flying his best kite  
lying like a child close to his mother,  
the grumbling of his father.

The love for his wife  
all that happiness she gave  
the grief he shared with his children,  
when she died.

Then the roaring waves thumped  
the moment on the sand feared by all  
but not by his heart's thick wall.  
He touched his skin cold  
and felt his stiff bones  
his cold body  
was then left by his warm soul.

## The Glory of Heaven

Never had he seen grass so green  
Cool clean breeze, his eyes open keen  
For that he saw colour bright  
Never faded, and been  
Always day, not night.

No more tired and stiff his muscles  
No more trapped in body weight  
Gliding as a cloud above the air  
He felt forever free and light.



## When Heartbeat Stops

The stormy season shall  
soon pass on  
for heavenly joy and lark  
Soon will new orchids bloom,  
after old heartbeats stop.

Leaving his body,  
he shall sail  
with an angel or dove.  
Towards spiritual treasure  
where the rainbow drops.

While sailing towards heaven  
his soul in its spirit hop  
With good karma, one's soul  
on the gates of heaven  
for salvation stop.

## A Dying Man Wishes to Live Again

With the sighs of the owl,  
moves and struggles my soul  
I wish to breathe again  
thus sweat and bleed for grain.  
my soul is not free —  
for emotions and love, my spirit flees.

Flip your wings away  
— spare my soul angel,  
I will not leave this body to embark  
darkness shall not dismay,  
the gleam of my enlightened soul,  
is still a burning spark.

## V Peace and Freedom



# Recipe for Unity and Freedom

*for Satendra and Jyoti Nandan*

## *Step 1:*

Wash the vegetables and meat  
gently in tap water  
taking dirt and hatred away.

## *Step 2:*

Prepare some gravy  
by mixing all the elements  
from each race and religion  
diversifying the taste with unity,  
stir in for five minutes then  
let it cool and marinate for an hour.

## *Step 3:*

Stir-fry the sauce and vegetables  
in such a way that all the races  
are mixed up unified,  
so they cannot tell the difference from  
each other.

Sprinkle the ingredients of tradition  
heritage and culture.

— the more diverse the varieties  
the better it tastes!

*Step 4:*

Fry the meat as usual  
and pour in the blended material  
into the pot of peace,  
stir with a wooden spoon for five minutes,  
then serve with rice in a wooden bowl  
garnished with unity and freedom  
—ready to eat!

## Assume Being Free From Wars

The war has ended in the Middle East  
Terrorists have surrendered in the west  
Borders and bricks slowly began to fall,  
Now serve as artefacts, all the borders and walls.

India and Pakistan are one again,  
Israel with Palestine, are together without claim  
Man for peace, has returned from refugee camps  
Women and children, hold safe hands.

Somehow a wonderful miracle sweetened the air  
As peaceful as the sheep grazing with the deer  
Dark fades away, so does man's cruelty and fear  
No more for deer hunted the bear.

The many religions that man turned to  
Taboos and differences in man's mind grew,  
Rulers of greed and dictators fell for their deeds  
Turned into fire and were burned like weeds.

Now judge no man by skin colour – hair or religion,  
They are starved no more – for a leader's joy or fun.  
Rulers make no more the murderous gun  
Man can walk without fear, free in the sun.

Now he eats bacon she eats ham, they are one again  
Wars for religion are left aside  
For religion and land, man had fought many Jihads  
besides;  
Hundreds were buried at once in huge mass graves.

What will happen to the corrupted leader, where will he  
perform?

The growing season is over, has ripened the deeds of corn

The grief and tears of people be all gone —

The falling tree has grown a bud, now he shall mourn.

Finally man has learnt the reason of life, as seen and gone,

The sacrificial journeys up the river

— to breed and die like the salmon

Now that the church and temple are all foregone

The heart of man is for now — God's home.



## Fiji Islands, May 19th 2000

### I

The light blue sky occupied,  
with patches of funny  
shaped wool, hanging  
above the blue ocean in motion  
— splashing on rocks — green leaves  
of the rain forest — the gentle breeze  
play its soft forest tune.

Green coconuts and kava  
surrenders on every taste bud.

### II

Suddenly the wind flow seized  
— dark clouds circled Suva  
clouds grumbled loud  
and lightning played  
from the sky like firecrackers.

The string of hope broke  
— the people's government  
captured like birds in a cage  
In some villages  
Indian homes were first looted  
then burnt,  
in celebration, for glory,  
envy and false claims.

## The Miracle

The sky sprinkled colourful fireworks and the land was illuminated with millions of candles when all sorts of leaders from all over the world talked of peace and brotherly love. In weeks the good news of peace was spread all over the world. All countries united and merged into one. Arms and ammunition were destroyed, borders vanished – all races and religion were treated equal. Soldiers no more with guns, were doing campaigns of reconciliation and unity. Words of peace were taught in schools and religious organizations participated in the movement of love and unity.

## VI Nature and Survival



## Hurricane Kina

The grey lumpy clouds gather around  
– quarrel groaning and roaring  
coughing out sparks of lights,  
while drops up the clouds are pouring.

The coconut trees are caught up  
in their battle with the winds  
they swing to and fro helplessly  
now that the wind is in control.

The electric poles are rigid for now,  
they might not hold up long,  
big tree branches near the cables entangle  
fireworks of Deepawali, sparks from pole to pole.

The roofing iron is loosely flying,  
undoing the nails – carrying broken rafters along  
while ducks are flapping wings,  
as shattered leaves float dead in the compound.

The grass all around is bent over – sleeping  
as if a helicopter flying low had passed through,  
rain is pouring while the clouds are all over roaring,  
an old radio speaker is noisily cautioning.

The winds run slow and fast again,  
like playing some children's game,  
water is rising, it is not surprising  
buckets of water up the sky had poured.

The river soon be busting out its banks  
and reuniting by water, masses of separated land  
the guests soon be pouring into the house,  
with its relatives of dissolved mud and sand.

Some trees are uprooted and half submerged in water,  
the fight is over, the wind has knocked them in a round.  
broken windows and doors surrender —  
life beating is floating — struggling helplessly around.

# The Tsunami Victims

December 26th 2004

My words hurt to describe  
– what is left by the tsunami waves  
That roared from all the sides –  
and washed away two hundred thousand lives.

Now bare naked soil  
swept out to the sea – people and poor people's toil  
The whole town full of people – vanished,  
villagers were solemn gone, no one left to mourn.

The sail and ships were smashed into wood chips;  
nothing is there left to keep  
Drowned the fisherman, the farmer and the cook  
a new record has been set in Tragedies book.

The trees were broken – ripped and torn,  
leaving the body, their spirits have gone  
Gone all gone, left rubble  
only flesh and dead flesh seems to gurgle.

Those counting bodies could witness the pain  
all wrecks – all wrecks, left no grain  
Bodies were buried in mass graves  
now silent and calm the dark waves.

Some left unidentified corpse at the roadside  
wait till someone comes to claim the rotten remains  
Or let the soil consume the fallen grain  
left no clean water in the well or drain.

A child clung on a tree branch for days,  
his cry – his cry blown by the wind swell  
He waited till the waiting was over  
weak and hungry, the only survivor.

It may take decades to be back again;  
time has surrendered and been crushed under train  
In these ruins it's hard to capture the lost trail's hope,  
a tribute to the souls that to heaven eloped.



# Someone Somewhere

December 26th, 2004.

Someone is being washed away by huge waves,  
while someone is counting bodies in mass graves.  
Someone is the only one to be alive – on an interview,  
– describe how others in the town used to survive.

Someone is helplessness in the crowd,  
where less are alive and more lay dead.  
Someone is among the bodies, being the mother  
holding in arms crying for her dead baby.

Someone feels no presence of God  
what is the meaning of faith in the lord.  
Someone has been living over death  
Losing everything in life they ever had.



## VII Untitled



# Colours

*for Nam*

Colours nourish nature  
with shades of light.

Colours are to the eye wonderful,  
to the heart colours feel beautiful.

Colours may describe on canvas,  
life and love and passion.

Colours may wipe grief in sad eyes  
shine with colours – for colours may be heaven.

Feel the colours around, with all your heart  
the sadness in you, will forever depart.

## The Dead Tree

The tree by the roadside has now  
shattered its old crumbled leaves,  
No weight of a swing can hold its bough  
nor its shade can spill cool breeze.

The huge trunk is half rotting now  
the giant body may soon fall  
suitable for firewood only  
its timber may not be fit for a wall.

Soon may green tender buds rise  
from the old fallen seeds;  
for a new growth towards the sky  
above the shrubs and weeds.

# The River Bank

*for Rewa River*

The width of the river bed  
is wider silting  
biting off land  
— and roots of some huge trees  
as they lay half submerged in water,  
cold wilting  
from green to yellow,  
fade away their leaves.  
The trunk dying  
is far down tilting  
to decay and turn into soil,  
later being washed away melting  
into clay by waters' toil.

## The Old Lady

She was tired in the hot summer sun  
looking for firewood at the timber yard  
A load on her head, in a pile,  
she was walking barefoot down a mile.

She dropped the load off her head  
after walking heavy for an hour,  
Her feet felt sore and dead  
she was tired, sad and hurt deeply.

She was old of about sixty or so  
the load she had was a lot more  
She wore a shawl for the burning sun  
— she was a sad grandmother and mum.

She was promised of land at the vote lore  
from the ministers, chiefs and many more  
For them she had to tick for  
her pain and suffering then were never to grow.

She lived near the hill squatter settlement shore  
her hut was made of rusty tin roof  
Out from the dump site store,  
an old carpet on the soil made the floor.

All her life she worked hard in the farm  
cutting sugarcane was all then but now is gone.  
They snatched her house from her hand  
what grained from the farm and the land.



# Emotions of No Reason

*for Veronica*

Why do the mountains stand tall forever  
And changes so soon the weather?

Why do I have to float high with my dreams  
And land slowly into reality like a lifeless feather?

Why do I weep for people I don't even know  
And have emotions for things that I cannot control?

## Strength

The broken warrior knocks  
door to door for support  
no hinge seems to crinkle,  
no door seems to bother —  
his cry fades in the wilderness  
like smoke in the air.

He may be weak now  
but every second  
the warrior breathes in pain  
is a lesson for him  
for his bones and teeth.

With his passion  
for once again he will  
rise up and bend the sky,  
the moon shall vow to him  
and the birds shall sing his name.

He will capture the light in his fist  
and release it on the darkness surrounding him  
so that the glowing particles can battle  
and regain his strength  
back from the darkness around him.

## Excerpts from Reviews

*"The abstract quality and inner depth present in the excerpt of the poem titled 'Assume Being Free from Wars' would incline most people to ponder on its strong theme and the power this poem has to bring about change. Such words are not merely written but meant which is why the art of poetry is not confined to genius or poets alone."*

Siddharta Sharma  
*The Fiji Sun*

*"...his curiosity about life and questions about the existence of the human race have provided a lot of the fuel for his artistic expressions."*

Amelia Vunileba  
*The Fiji Times*

*"Rohitash portrays in his poems, a rich array of diverse themes where he touches the emotional, moral and spiritual fibre of one's being."*

Reshma Dutta  
*Hobart, Australia*  
Currently Lecturer at The University of Fiji

*"He's a poet of promise and sensitivity and has written life anchored in anguish, and of the joy of living with youthful freshness and honesty. Rohitash Chandra shows a deep commitment to poetry."*

Satendra Nandan  
*The University of Fiji*

*"Rohitash Chandra is a young poet who writes with feeling. There is a humane quality to his poetry, particularly in his tackling of sensitive subjects such as the 2000 Fiji coup, the recent devastating tsunami or a sugarcane farmer whose lease has not been renewed. A sense of hope and celebration of life and love, despite an awareness of pain and suffering pervade his poems. In a sense, if you will, the poet flings his kite up in the air and sees where it goes, like the young lad in the poem 'King of the Sky'. Rohitash is to be commended for his commitment to poetry, not only visible in this book but in his editorship of The Blue Fog Journal and his previous publications of poetry. While he writes about universal themes, his images and sensibility are also very much about the rain, soil, sea and harvests of Fiji."*

Dr Kavita Nandan  
Lecturer in Literature,  
editor of 'Stolen Worlds: Fijiindian Fragments'  
The University of the South Pacific





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## About the Author

Rohitash Chandra was born in 1984 in Fiji Islands. He was trained as a computer scientist. His interests are in literature, metaphysics, spirituality, philosophy, science and religion. He is the founding editor of The Blue Fog Journal.