

Parting, Praying: Three Poems

Friends and Lovers

I was lucky to have you as my friend
 In those early years when it was the trend
 For boys to fall in love with pretty girls
 And win them over with artificial pearls.

But we were friends—serious, sober and solemn—
 And took our friendship to be a rare gem
 Amongst the worthless trinkets of love and sex;
 ‘Why are humans,’ we wondered, ‘such wrecks?’

Meanwhile you grew in beauty and in charm
 And the ground on which I had once stood firm
 Gave way to the tides of darker passions;
 Who had known I had in store such lessons!

I was a fool, I know, made wise by time;
 Was it any different in your prime?

A Stanza on Linguistic Communalism

I know after I’ve lost you for ever
 That we used two different names for water—
 You called it by *jol* and I by *pani*—
 Yours – hinduish, they say, mine – musalmani.

A Prayer for My Teacher*

May you live, I pray, a thousand years more;
We, the tiny pebbles, on your vast shore,
Be washed by the waves of your gentle care;
May your knowledge ever increase and share

With all the world the wondrous fruits it bears;
If your lustrous eyes ever fill with tears,
May they be tears of joy, not of sorrow;
May you pass from today to tomorrow

In decency and grace as in the past;
May we find you as helmsman at the mast
To guide our small boats through thunder and rain;
May we true to your legacy remain.

May you live a thousand years more I pray
Your sweetness and your light to give away.

Md. Rezaul Haque

*This sonnet is a small gift to my teacher Prof. Fakrul Alam of Dhaka University on his 59th birthday.