

*GEMS*

*from*

**SRI AUROBINDO**

Poems for Students

INSTITUTE OF HUMAN STUDY  
HYDERABAD

# Contents

Invitation	.. 3
Who	.. 4
Revelation	.. 6
One Day	.. 6
A Tree	.. 7
The Fear of Death	.. 7
A Child's Imagination	.. 8
God	.. 9
Light	.. 9
The Blue Bird	..10
Bridge of the Fire	..11
Krishna	..12
Shiva	..13
Man, The Despot of Contraries	..14
A Dream of Surreal Science	..14
Electron	..15
The Golden Light	..16
The Miracle of Birth	..16
Self	..17
The Hill-Top Temple	..18
Because Thou Art	..19
Man, the Thinking Animal	..20

## Invitation

With wind and the weather beating round me  
Up to the hill and the moorland I go.  
Who will come with me? Who will climb with me?  
Wade through the brook and tramp through the snow?

Not in the petty circle of cities  
Cramped by your doors and your walls I dwell;  
Over me God is blue in the welkin,  
Against me the wind and the storm rebel.

I sport with solitude here in my regions,  
Of misadventure have made me a friend.  
Who would live largely? Who would live freely?  
Here to the wind-swept uplands ascend.

I am the lord of tempest and mountain,  
I am the Spirit of freedom and pride.  
Stark must he be and a kinsman to danger  
Who shares my kingdom and walks at my side.

## Who

In the blue of the sky, in the green of the forest,  
Whose is the hand that has painted the glow?  
When the winds were asleep in the womb of the ether,  
Who was it roused them and bade them to blow?

He is lost in the heart, in the cavern of Nature,  
He is found in the brain where He builds up the thought:  
In the pattern and bloom of the flowers He is woven,  
In the luminous net of the stars He is caught.

In the strength of a man, in the beauty of woman,  
In the laugh of a boy, in the blush of a girl;  
The hand that sent Jupiter spinning through heaven,  
Spends all its cunning to fashion a curl.

These are His works and His veils and His shadows;  
But where is He then? by what name is He known?  
Is He Brahma or Vishnu? a man or a woman?  
Bodied or bodiless? twin or alone?

We have love for a boy who is dark and resplendent,  
A woman is lord of us, naked and fierce.  
We have seen Him a-muse on the snow of the mountains,  
We have watched Him at work in the heart of the spheres.

We will tell the whole world of His ways and His cunning:  
He has rapture of torture and passion and pain;  
He delights in our sorrow and drives us to weeping,  
Then lures with His joy and His beauty again.

All music is only the sound of His laughter;  
All beauty the smile of His passionate bliss;  
Our lives are His heart-beats, our rapture the bridal  
Of Radha and Krishna, our love is their kiss.

He is strength that is loud in the blare of the trumpets,  
And He rides in the car and He strikes in the spears;  
He slays without stint and is full of compassion;  
He wars for the world and its ultimate years.

In the sweep of the worlds, in the surge of the ages,  
Ineffable, mighty, majestic and pure,  
Beyond the last pinnacle seized by the thinker  
He is throned in His seats that for ever endure.

The Master of man and his infinite Lover,  
He is close to our hearts, had we vision to see;  
We are blind with our pride and the pomp of our passions,  
We are bound in our thoughts where we hold ourselves free.

It is He in the sun who is ageless and deathless,  
And into the midnight His shadow is thrown;  
When darkness was blind and engulfed within darkness,  
He was seated within it immense and alone.

## Revelation

Someone leaping from the rocks  
Past me ran with wind-blown locks  
Like a startled bright surmise  
Visible to mortal eyes,—  
Just a cheek of frightened rose  
That with sudden beauty glows,  
Just a footstep like the wind  
And a hurried glance behind,  
And then nothing, – as a thought  
Escapes the mind ere it is caught.  
Someone of the heavenly rout  
From behind the veil ran out.

## One Day

### THE LITTLE MORE

One day, and all the half-dead is done,  
One day, and all the unborn begun;  
A little path and the great goal,  
A touch that brings the divine whole.

Hill after hill was climbed and now,  
Behold, the last tremendous brow  
And the great rock that none has trod:  
A step, and all is sky and God.

## A Tree

A tree beside the sandy river-beach  
Holds up its topmost boughs  
Like fingers towards the skies they cannot reach,  
Earth-bound, heaven-amorous.

This is the soul of man. Body and brain  
Hungry for earth our heavenly flight detain.

## The Fear of Death

Death wanders through our lives at will, sweet Death  
Is busy with each intake of our breath.  
Why do you fear her? Lo, her laughing face  
All rosy with the light of jocund grace!  
A kind and lovely maiden culling flowers  
In a sweet garden fresh with vernal showers,  
This is the thing you fear, young portress bright,  
Who opens to our souls the worlds of light.  
Is it because the twisted stem must feel  
Pain when the tenderest hands its glory steal?  
Is it because the flowerless stalk droops dull  
And ghastly now that was so beautiful?  
Or is it the opening portal's horrid jar  
That shakes you, feeble souls of courage bare?  
Death is but changing of our robes to wait  
In wedding garments at the Eternal's gate.

## A Child's Imagination

O thou golden image,  
Miniature of bliss,  
Speaking sweetly, speaking meetly!  
Every word deserves a kiss.

Strange, remote and splendid  
Childhood's fancy pure  
Thrills to thoughts we cannot fathom,  
Quick felicities obscure.

When the eyes grow solemn  
Laughter fades away,  
Nature of her mighty childhood  
Recollects the Titan play;

Woodlands touched by sunlight  
Where the elves abode,  
Giant meetings, Titan greetings,  
Fancies of a youthful God.

These are coming on thee  
In thy secret thought;  
God remembers in thy bosom  
All the wonders that He wrought.



## God

Thou who pervadest all the worlds below,  
Yet sitst above,  
Master of all who work and rule and know,  
Servant of Love!

Thou who disdainest not the worm to be  
Nor even the clod,  
Therefore we know by that humility  
That thou art God.

## Light

Light, endless Light! darkness has room no more,  
Life's ignorant gulfs give up their secrecy:  
The huge unconscious depths unplumbed before  
Lie glimmering in vast expectancy.

Light, timeless Light immutable and apart!  
The holy sealed mysterious doors unclose.  
Light, burning Light from the Infinite's diamond heart  
Quivers in my heart where blooms the deathless rose.

Light in its rapture leaping through the nerves!  
Light, brooding Light! each smitten passionate cell  
In a mute blaze of ecstasy preserves  
A living sense of the Imperishable.

I move in an ocean of stupendous Light  
Joining my depths to His eternal height.

## The Blue Bird

I am the bird of God in His blue;  
    Divinely high and clear  
I sing the notes of the sweet and the true  
    For the god's and the seraph's ear.

I rise like a fire from the mortal's earth  
    Into a griefless sky  
And drop in the suffering soil of his birth  
    Fire-seeds of ecstasy.

My pinions soar beyond Time and Space  
    Into unfading Light;  
I bring the bliss of the Eternal's face,  
    And the boon of the Spirit's sight.

I measure the worlds with my ruby eyes;  
    I have perched on Wisdom's tree  
Thronged with the blossoms of Paradise  
    By the streams of Eternity.

Nothing is hid from my burning heart;  
    My mind is shoreless and still;  
My song is rapture's mystic art,  
    My flight immortal will.

## Bride of the Fire

Bride of the Fire, clasp me now close, —  
    Bride of the Fire!  
I have shed the bloom of the earthly rose,  
    I have slain desire.

Beauty of the Light, surround my life, —  
    Beauty of the Light!  
I have sacrificed longing and parted from grief,  
    I can bear thy delight.

Image of ecstasy, thrill and enlace, —  
    Image of bliss!  
I would see only thy marvellous face,  
    Feel only thy kiss.

Voice of Infinity, sound in my heart, —  
    Call of the One!  
Stamp there thy radiance, never to part,  
    O living sun.

## Krishna

At last I find a meaning of soul's birth  
    Into this universe terrible and sweet,  
I who have felt the hungry heart of earth  
    Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's feet.

I have seen the beauty of immortal eyes,  
    And heard the passion of the Lover's flute,  
And known a deathless ecstasy's surprise  
    And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.

Nearer and nearer now the music draws,  
    Life shudders with a strange felicity;  
All Nature is a wide enamoured pause  
    Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to be.

For this one moment lived the ages past;  
The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.

## Shiva

On the white summit of eternity  
    A single Soul of bare infinities,  
    Guarded he keeps by a fire-screen of peace  
His mystic loneliness of nude ecstasy.  
But, touched by an immense delight to be,  
    He looks across unending depths and sees  
    Musing amid the inconscient silences  
The Mighty Mother's dumb felicity.

Half now awake she rises to his glance;  
    Then, moved to circling by her heart-beats' will,  
    The rhythmic worlds describe that passion-dance.  
Life springs in her and Mind is born; her face  
    She lifts to Him who is Herself, until  
The Spirit leaps into the Spirit's embrace.

## Man, the Despot of Contraries

I am greater than the greatness of the seas,  
A swift tornado of God-energy:  
A helpless flower that quivers in the breeze  
I am weaker than the reed one breaks with ease.

I harbour all the wisdom of the wise  
In my nature of stupendous Ignorance;  
On a flame of righteousness I fix my eyes  
While I wallow in sweet sin and join hell's dance.

My mind is brilliant like a full-orbed moon,  
Its darkness is the caverned troglodyte's.  
I gather long Time's wealth and squander soon;  
I am an epitome of opposites.

I with repeated life death's sleep surprise;  
I am a transience of the eternities.

## A Dream of Surreal Science

One dreamed and saw a gland write Hamlet, drink  
At the Mermaid, capture immortality ;  
A committee of hormones on the Aegean' s brink  
Composed the Iliad and the Odyssey.

A thyroid , meditating almost nude  
    Under the Bo-tree , saw the eternal Light  
And rising from its mighty solitude ,  
    Spoke of the Wheel and eightfold Path alright

A brain by a disordered stomach driven  
    Thundered through. Europe, conquered, ruled and fell,  
From St. Helena went, perhaps, to Heaven.  
    Thus wagged on the surreal world, until

A scientist played with atoms and blew out  
The universe before God had time to shout.

## Electron

The electron on which forms and worlds are built,  
    Leaped into being, a particle of God.  
A spark from the eternal Energy spilt,  
    It is the Infinite's blind minute abode.  
In that small flaming chariot Shiva rides.  
    The One devised innumerably to be;  
His oneness in invisible forms he hides,  
    Time's tiny temples of ( to ) eternity.  
Atom and molecule in. their unseen plan  
    Buttress an edifice of strange onenesses,  
Crystal and plant, insect and beast and man, -  
    Man on whom the World-Unity shall seize,  
Widening his soul-spark to an epiphany  
Of the timeless vastness of Infinity.

## The Golden Light

Thy golden Light came down into my brain  
    And the grey rooms of mind sun-touched became  
A bright reply to Wisdom's occult plane,  
    A calm illumination and a flame.

Thy golden Light came down into my throat,  
    And all my speech is now a tune divine,  
A Paean-song of thee my single note;  
    My words are drunk with the Immortal's wine.

Thy golden Light came down into my heart  
    Smiting my life with Thy eternity;  
Now has it grown a temple where Thou art  
    And all its passions point towards only Thee.

Thy golden Light came down into my feet:  
My earth is now thy playfield and thy seat.

## The Miracle of Birth

I saw my soul a traveller through Time;  
    From, life to life the cosmic ways it trod,  
Obscure in the depths and on the heights sublime,  
    Evolving from the worm into the god.

A spark of the eternal Fire, it came  
    To build a house in Matter for the Unborn.  
The inconscient sunless Night received the flame,  
    In the brute seed of things dumb and forlorn



Life stirred and Thought outlined a gleaming shape  
Till on the stark inanimate earth could move,  
Born to somnambulist Nature in her sleep  
A thinking creature who can hope and love.

Still by slow steps the miracle goes on,  
The Immortal's gradual birth mid mire and stone.

## Self

He said, "I am egoless, spiritual, free,"  
Then swore because his dinner was not ready.  
I asked him why. He said, "It is not me,  
But the belly's hungry god who gets unsteady."

I asked him why. He said, "It is his play.  
I am, unmoved within, desireless, pure.  
I care not what may happen day by day."  
I questioned him, "Are you so very sure?"

He answered, "I can understand your doubt.  
But to be free is all. It does not matter  
How you may kick and howl and rage and shout,  
Making a row over your daily platter.

"To be aware of self is liberty,  
Self I have got and, having self, am free."

## The Hill-Top Temple

After unnumbered steps of a hill-stair  
    I saw upon earth's head brilliant with sun  
    The immobile Goddess in her house of stone  
In a loneliness of meditating air.  
Wise were the human hands that set her there  
    Above the world and Time's dominion;  
    The Soul of all that lives, calm, pure, alone,  
Revealed its boundless self mystic and bare.

Our body is an epitome of some Vast  
    That masks its presence by our humanness.  
    In us the secret Spirit can indite  
    A page and summary of the Infinite,  
    A nodus of Eternity expressed  
Live in an image and a sculptured face.

## Because Thou art

Because Thou art All-beauty and All-bliss,  
My soul blind and enamoured yearns for Thee;  
It bears Thy mystic touch in all that is  
And thrills with the burden of that ecstasy.

Behind all eyes I meet Thy secret gaze  
And in each voice I hear Thy magic tune:  
Thy sweetness haunts my heart through Nature's ways;  
Nowhere it beats now from Thy snare immune.

It loves Thy body in all living things;  
Thy joy is there in every leaf and stone:  
The moments bring Thee on their fiery wings;  
Sight's endless artistry is Thou alone.

Time voyages with Thee upon its prow —  
And all the future's passionate hope is Thou.

## Man, the Thinking Animal

A trifling unit in a boundless plan  
Amidst the enormous insignificance  
Of the unpeopled cosmos' fire-whirl dance,  
Earth, as by accident, engendered man:

A creature of his own grey ignorance,  
A mind half-shadow and half-gleam, a breath.  
That wrestles, captive in a world of death,  
To live some lame brief years. Yet his advance,

Attempt of a divinity within,  
A consciousness in the inconscient Night,  
To realise its own supernal Light  
Confronts the ruthless forces of the Unseen.

Aspiring to godhead from insensible clay  
He travels slow-footed towards the eternal day.