Chapter - II
A Brief Survey of Contemporary Indian English Poetry
English in India has acquired unmistakable Indian aroma, reflecting essentially Indian image and echoing typical Indian melody. Reading Indian English poets now one observes a natural inflow of Indian words in English vocabulary, Indian anecdotes, Indian clasical and mythological allusions, Indian social and political references and where necessary, coinage of words and phrases which have native Indian regional flavour and, at the same time, ease of understanding.

If one writes in a language other than his own, it is natural to experience a process of assimilation and linguistic naturalisation in one’s creative expression. Mulk Raj Anand is right when he asserts: ".... there is an echo of the mother tongue behind all Indian English creative writings."¹ Not only hundreds of words the language of Indian are used but writers and poets cannot help “echoing the rhythms of their mother tongue” in their creative expression. Braj B. Kachru also notes: “Indian English vocabulary reflects the local socio-cultural realities and attitudes of the users.”² The recent poetical writings in English indeed show an absorption of typical Indian elements and gracefully. The truth is: In Indian English creative writings we notice both “a national identity and a linguistic distinctiveness”³ of poets. The linguistic and cultural facets reveal literary traditions that transforms/extend contexts of situation within which their creativity may be as we read recent collections of poems by comparatively
less known poets Syed Ameeruddin, S.N. Tripathy, Gopal Honnalger, Niranjan Mohanty, T.V. Reddy, P. Raja, Biswakesh Tripathy, Srinivas, Vijaya Goel, Rajni Krishnan Kutty, Sudha R. Iyer, Laxmi Narayan Mahapatra, D.C. Chambial, R.K. Singh, I.K. Sharma, D.H. Kabadi and many other we discover through their imagery, thought, feeling, setting and rhythm an exploitation of the literary past of their regions including proverbs, chants, folk songs, epics, classics, symbolic system, oral tales etc. They imaginatively replay their knowledge into their own intellecutal, social, psychological attitudes and values. They try to present an assemblage of their interest in response to the larger cultural and societal value system.

The extended awareness of several recent poets provides a dynamism to their creativity in that responds to various issues with a mind which does not admit of restrictions or narrowness. To quote Edwin Thumbo they remake the language", where necessary by adjusting the interior landscape of words in order to explore and medditate the permutations of another culture and environment."4 Their nativeness in themes, imagery, attitudes, feelings, moods, passions, associations to quote Mulk Raj Anand, are bound to appear" into the texture of their speech and written expression."5 Yet their "inner ethos" vibrates with universal "echoes" in that they feel and think themselves as part off larger humanity, betraying the characteristic Indian ethos "Vasudhiv Kutumbakam" conscious experimentation with
fresh imagery is yet another noticeable feature of recent poetry. To-day's poet live in a changed condition and old and conventional models of imagery do not prevail upon most to the major new voices with a few exceptions. They have therefore made a solid achievement in the field of imagery in many ways. Their imagery is new, powerful and bold. Hundreds of poets have sprung up in the post-Independence India. We have a rich crop of poets who are represented in various anthologies of the poetry of the last twenty-five years. These are Dom Moraes, Nissm Ezekiel, P. Lal, A.K. Ramanujan, Kamala Das, Shiv K. Kumar, T. Parthasarthy, Adil jussawalla, Give Petel, K.D. Katrak, Gauria deshpande, Keki N. Daruwalla, Saleem Peeradina, Pritish Nandy, Jayanta Mahaparta. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Keshav Malik, Mamta Kalia, Rakshat Puri, Arun Kolatkar.

Eliminateds by some critics and anthologists from the contemporary Indian-English poetic scene, and regarded by other” as fully Indian” because of his nativity and parentage, Dom Moraes deserves to ranked among the best Indian poets in English even on the basis of his poems written before he became a british citizen. Indian or British, he has remained a poet of unusual grace and sensibility. We have reason to regard him a true Indian English poet as his poetry betrays his intense involvement with his native country. Further, he made laudable contribution to the tradition of Indian English Poetry. No one can deny that he was one of the foremost of the new poetry
in Indian. With the publication of his first of poems, A Beginning, he emerged as an original poet in Modern Indian English poetry though he had no connection whatsoever with the writers work-shop tradition. S.C. Saha says, “With Dom Moraes we come to a new group of poets who equally balanced between their art attitude.”

Dom Moraes first collection of poems bagged one of the most coveted honours in the British Literary world-The Hawthorondom Prize. He was the first non-English writer and the youngest at the age of eighteen to have been awarded this prize which had remained unawarded for fourteen years in the absence of a worthwhile poet in the native land of the British Muse. One can easily guess about the kind of originality Moraes wielded in his poetry. In the atrophied atmosphere of Indian English poetry where poets plod their way to fame Nissim Ezekiel and grow up in age and maturity only Keki N. Daruwalla comes closest to him in his meteoric rise as a poet with his *Under Orion*. The other collections of Moraes are Poems (1960) and John Nobody (1965).

Moraes’ poetry is technically very competent, The sonnet form is his favourite but he is also lyric poet of love, nostalgia and romanticism. The personal theme in his poetry makes him a romantic but his experiences are couched in symbols and myths, making him a modern poet. This is what makes him an abstruse poet. As H.M. Williams says “his poetry is firmly in
the tradition of symbolism and surrealism." There are traces of T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats and Dylan Thomas in his poems but he is a poet with his own voice. There is a new kind of freshness in his poetry. K.R.S. Iyengar says, "His lyrics have a subtle and vibrant quality; the familiar is touched with the allusive light of romance, the unfamiliar is brought near and grows intimate, being touched by understanding." Now Moraes has entered the mainstream of English poetry but his early success inspired others in India.

P. Lal, the founder of the writers workshop, has to his credit seven volumes of verse in English and several valuable translations of Indian scriptures. More conventional and romantic in diction and incongruous in imagery, he is not a poet of the stature of Dom Moraes or Ezekiel though he impresses us by the strong note of feeling and rhythm. His poetry presents a new kind of romanticism "a personal lyrical awareness of the world seen in vividly emotional terms." But his images without experience and we may say that he is a potent example of dissociation of sensibility in Indian English poetry.

Nisim Ezekiel who has been a prolific poet of consistently good work during the last twenty-six years has established himself as a master of simple diction, controlled rhythm and ease in poetry. His "On Bellasis Road" and "The Night of the Scorpion" exemplify these qualities. The
result is that he is not a difficult poet through the simplicity of his poetry is deceptive:

\[
\text{How freely they mention} \\
\text{breasts and buttocks} \\
\text{They are my poetic ancestors} \\
\text{Why am I so inhibited.}\]

We may describe Ramanjuan as an ‘Imagist’ as he depends on images for total poetic effect. In the poems of both the volumes he has evidenced his mastery in developing images as objective correlative of emotions. Under the impact of Dylam Thomas he triumphs in creating images of poignant suggestibility:

\[
\text{My cold parchment tongue licks bark} \\
in the mouth when I see her four \\
\text{still sensible fingers slowly flex} \\
to pick a grain of rice from the kitchen floor.}
\]

"The Last of the Princess" is a fine poem, and "Breaded Fish" is still better in its pathetic force of emotion. Although he has genuine sense of form, some more condensation would have given his poems more charm and power. His “Snakes”, a fine poem of dream imaginary, needs a greater compression in its details than has been achieved by the poet.

For seeing a remarkable command of imagery in Indian Poetry in English, one has to turn to R. Parthasarathy. He is one of the most widely known poets; some ten anthologies have included selections from his work
which until 1976 was uncollected and has now been published in *Rough Passage* (1976). Though he could not win the *Common wealth Poetry Award for 1977* he was highly commended by the judges for his book. Exactly a decade ago, however, he had been awarded the *Ulka Poetry Prize*, sponsored by *Poetry Indian in 1966*.

Parthasarathy is an English-educated Tamil Brahmin. *Rough Passage* is a long poem in three parts written over a period of 15 years between 1961 and 1975. He "writes about the traumatic experience of visiting England and his search for and discovery of Indianness, his Tamil past, and the discoveries of love." His "*Any Father's Son*" is a powerful short lyric on a great theme—the rashness of life's transitoriness. *Home-Coming*, the third and final part of *Rough Passage*, explores the phenomenon of homecoming, the return to one's hoe. It is a sort of overture with the aim of starting a dialogue between the poet and his Tamil past. It is a technically dazzling section. The Indian ethos of his poetry is its typical feature. Parthasarathy himself has observed: "From the beginning, I saw my task as one of acclimatizing the English language to an indigenous tradition.

Parthasarathy is undoubtedly one of the most sensitive Indian poets who possess a keen sense of art.
To sum up in the words of Murli Das Melwani, “Parthsarathy is a polished poet. His images are starting. The search for roots in culture and languages are the two themes of this poetry.\textsuperscript{12}

Kamala Das and Gauri Deshpande are the two signatures who have made their mark as outstanding women poets. Both are love-poets and write mainly about love-relationships. But whereas Kamla Das is more concerned about the pathos of the life of women, Gauri Deshpande is interested in feeling away the layers of memory:

\begin{quote}
..... I find
myself an onion
layer after layer of seeming meaning
and intent, sufficient by itself
leading to no heart.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

The final effect of Gauri Deshpande’s lyrics, which are generally in conversational rhythms is not of intensity as much of embarassment and thinness but when she attains the brevity of an imagistic texture, her poetry becomes super. “It Comes Slow” is a fine short lyric. “The Guest” is still a better poem in which the depth of feeling is conveyed through powerful image.

\begin{quote}
Your are gone now.
The perfect mouth that kissed my words
no longer by.
And as the clouds heap and heap upon the west
\end{quote}
As opposed to this, Kamala Das possesses a greater iconoclastic fervour and frank tone. She communicates a powerful female sensibility in her poems. Yet, some of her lyrics like "The Morning At Apollo Pier" and "Lines Addressed To Devadasi" are romantic self-confessions and "A Request" is nothing but decadence. However, her lyrics are charged with a passionate urge and forceful drive of the rhythm, and she is a strong link in the Romantic tradition of Indian English poetry. She also possesses a sense of the pity of things, which ends appropriate expression in "Middle Age" and "Death of The Goat". As the innovator of 'prose poems' in Indian English Writing and using predominantly personal subject-matter for both poetry and fiction Kamala Das has created her own niche in Indian literature.

Pritish Nandy is a prolific poet of quantity rather than quality. He has several collections of verses to his credit. His poetry strikes the note of protest and experimentation in Indian English poetry. As Gauri Deshpande says, "Nandy is innovate and profuse." He succeeds in his experiments in the use of rollicking rhythm of long lines as in "In the Heart's Confessional". In certain poems such as in "He Returned Towards Silence" he achieves memorable poetic effect. Nandy also experiments with typographical rhythm as in "The Centaur's Deathwish". But in spite of these experiments, nothing genuinely poetic has been achieved and his poetry needs condensation and brevity for greater poetic effect instead of prosaic...
elaboration. Lack of concreteness in imagery is a damaging defect of his poetry.

K.N. Daruwalla is undoubted a highly promising poet. Though he started writing poems only lately and his first collection Under Orion came out in 1970, he has become a major voice in the field and ranks with poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and R. Parthasarthy. As Nissim Ezekiel himself says, "By putting Daruwalla among his contemporaries one sees how he scores heavily over them. By depth of feeling, economy of language and originality of insight, Daruwalla commands respect.\textsuperscript{15} The other collections of Daruwalla's poems in which he displays his poetic maturity and originality are Apparition in April (1971) and Crossing of Rivers. His "The Immolated Kings" is a long poem which was published in Indian Horizons built has not been widely noticed.

Daruwalla has a mythopoeic imagination which can discover poetic stuff in rituals, festivals and religious ceremonies. "Aag-Matam", "6th Moharram 1393", "The Immolated Kings" and many poems in Crossing of Rivers illustrate this quality. The poems of his third collection are on a single theme: the Ganges at Benares, the holy city of the Hindus. Social awareness in his poetry is another unique quality of Daruwalla as a poet. He is as sharp an observer of the Indian scene as Nissim Ezekiel and therefore is most alert to the social, political and cultural realities of today India. "The
"Epileptic" and "Collage I" illustrate his presentation of the Indian landscape. His tone is ironic in such poems:

*If we had plague*
*Camus-style*
*and doctors searched for the virus*
*there would be black-market in rats.*

Daruwalla possesses sure command of rhythm and poetic material which make his poems works of enduring significance. "Black Rain" and "Death of a Bire" are powerful poems. His inventive efficiency is marked in longer poems which none else has attempted with such ease. Reminding of Keats "The Eve of St. Agnes", as a triumph in narrative poetry, "The Immolated Kings" shows the poet's xompelence to present an exotice and superstitious theme in a sustained rhythm and appropriate diction. The well-chosen varying stanza forms, which provide a breathing space in the continuity of the narrative, also add to the necessary suspense of the story. A natural ease and smooth flow are the two fundamental pre-requisites of narrative, which have been effectively deployed here to sustain the structure of the poem. Everything adds to a narrative ease which makes its own rhythm, as in the regular rhythm pattern in parts I, III and VII. The landscape paintings heighten the intensity of events and the general atmosphere of horror. The natural handling of the theme transports us in a world altogether different from ours. It is not for nothing that Nissim
Ezekiel is all praise for Daruwalla: “To most Indo-Anglian poets, simple expressions of emotion with a sprinkling of imagery exhaust the craftsmanship. The rarely attempt the dramatic, the creation of characters and situations, the poetic dialogue and the sustained reflection on an experience. Even descriptive skill is rarely demonstrated. Daruwalla is in a different class. The poems of The Crossing of Rivers are indicative of his exact, concrete and integrated imagery. “Daruwalla’s capacity of conveying complex emotions at once varied and conflicting is seen in his vignettes”. His favourite images are those of violence, disease and ugliness and they are part of his compulsion to tell the whole truth, however cruel.

The river is voice
in this desert of human lives.
A sail is hoisted,
the colour of daggered flesh.
Beggars hoist their deformities
as boatmen hoist their sails.
The Ganga flows through the land,
not to lighten the misery
but to show it.

Daruwalla’s use of imagery is an important component of his poetic technique. Indian English poets such as Ramanujan, Kolatkar, Mehrotra and Shiv K. Kumar have written image-oriented poetry. Daruwalla’s has a narrative bent of mind but he makes use of imagery in a manner that it
invests his poetry with freshness and clarity. Content and imagery go hand in glove in his poetry.

Although Shiv K. Kumar belongs to an older generation, it is only lately that he has like Daruwalla emerged as one of the most authentic and major voices in Indian English poetry. His first collection of poems, *Articulate Silences* (1970) was followed by *cobwebs in The Sun* (1974) and *Subterfuges* (1976). His themes are varied—poverty (“Rickshaw-Wallah”), unrequited love (“Waiting”) and the theme of cultural interaction, but it is his preoccupation with unhappy sexual love that looms large. The rawness and intensity of feelings gives it a force. As J. Birje-Patil says, “We are confronted with a sensibility in the actual process of encountering experience and an illusion of a barefoot walk into naked reality is created.¹⁹

Shiv K. Kumar is a highly skilled poet who possesses a keen sense for form and style. He commands imagistic brevity and concreteness on the one hand, and the grip of posed rhythm on the other. He has the capacity to convey his meaning through a sophisticated use of image words e.g. “To A Young Wife”. The concreteness of visual imagery in his poetry is remarkable; for instance, in “And Death Shall Speak With Many Voices” the imagery is employed to evoke the sad and inevitable event of death which is nothing but the total extinction of the body. In “Indian Women” also the same quality is evinced, “till even the shadow roll up their contour
...and are gone beyond the hills.\textsuperscript{20} The poet has distinguished himself by the use of fresh metaphors and new images.

His ability to create a memorable image is seen in his famous poem

"An Indian Mango Vender"

\begin{quote}
She squats
on the dust-broomed pavement
behind a pyramid of mangoes
washed with her youth's milk
tintured with the musk-rose
in her hair
through the slits
of her patched blouse
one bare shoulder
two white moons
pull all horses
off the track.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

Objective in tone and structure, Kumar's portry is characterised by modern diction. He is primarily a lyric poet and his lyric impulse forces him into expression and creativity. \textit{Articulate silences} (1970) has poems of this type. He is happiest in his small vignettes e.g. "To A Young Wife", "An Indian Mango Vendor" and "My Mother's Love". This is the type of verse which bears an infinitely genuine feeling examples of which are rather rate in the body of recent poetry. A "representative of the more cerebrative and
economical kind of poetry”, Rakshat Puri has three books of poems. Through not widely published, he is noted poet of beauty and power. The reason perhaps is that his poems are well grounded in experience.

They have a greater sense of locality and environment. The places in his poetry, as in “Multan” “Lodhi Tomb”, evoke feeling. His “Descent” is a powerful poem of feeling which moves in a fluent and moving rhythm. The note of melancholy is also dominant in his poems “collage” a sad memory of a nation’s past combined with nature-image of wind hunted autumn” and “the dim hawk screamed/Dry in the wheeling sun”, present a grim collage of sad remembrance. In “At The Morgue” We note a nostalgia, loughing the point of deep sensitively engaged in revealing the “misshapen stretch of memory”.

Katrak has the natural gift of narrative fluency and apt imagery. His “Malabar Hill” and “Durga on Hiltop” are memorable poems. His verse is generally contemplative which is aided by conversational and reflectional and reflective rhythm and tone.

Adil Jussawalla is noted for the technical expertist of his poetry. He is generally inventive in imagery and strikes a note of modernity by his use of novel images. Although he wants to gain poetic effects by rhetoric, we come across lines of utter beauty and simplicity as in “Dog” from The missing Person Jayanta Mahapatra has emerged as a strong voice in recent
poetry. He shows a mastery of polished diction and rhythm and his poetry is a poetry of fine objective correlatives. He is experimental without being reckless. It is his maturity that has made him an established poet.

Keshav Malik’s poetry, has three collections of poems to his credit. His poetry is a fine fusion of sound and colour on the one hand and on the other shows his excellent image-making capacity. His poems are notable for the novelty of images.

Arun Kolatkar who brought his first book of poem Jejuri (1976) is a good poet of quality. He has won the Commonwealth Poetry Award for 1977 for his book. Like Rakshat Puri and Jayanta Mahapatra he has a strong sense of place. “Jejuri” is a record in poems of a visit to temple of that name. It describes visits to ruined temples, encounters with priests and others, and fantasies inspired by temple sculpture and architecture” his language is effective and simple.

Besides these poets, the space permits a passing mention of Suresh Kohi, S.D. Jaggi, O.P. Bhagat, Deba Patnaik, Mamta Kalia, Tillotama Rajan, Siddharth Kak, Tejaswini Niranjana, Syed Amanuddin, Vimala Rao, Subhoranjan Dasgupta, and Nasima Aziz etc. Some of these are promising poets and may give a new turn to recent Indian English poetry.

There is variety within the framework of modernity in contemporary Indian English poetry under the influence of modern British and American
Poets, our major poets ushered in an era of modernism in poetry. A new awareness of tone, content and structure in the supporters of new poetry unleashed a creative passion resulting in a great deal of wholesome experimentation over the last two decades. Thus, post-Independence poetry in English is a poetry of revolt and experimentation, innovation and craftsmanship, of vigour and vitality. A typical contemporary Indian English poet introduces a quality of neo-modernism by moving away from the diction, tone and theme. He represents his vision of life experientially through an employment of modernist poetic techniques, through concrete imagery and subtler nuances of words. There is noticeable in the English writing of this period a growing sense of assurance, of hope perhaps, in the ultimate value of its the poets and writers become increasingly impatient of the dead-weight of such shaky tradition as was available to them locally. The Indian English verse, tentative and fragile gradually adopts a stance courage and occasional rashness. It is a phase of feverish poetical outburst and its turbulence and energy are too raw for any formal labelling or categorisation in terms of trends.

The majority of our poets show that the future of Indian English Literature lies in its poetry. Our poets today have a creativity not seen in the earlier poets and, if only this, they stand on the verge of a poetic Renaissance.
In their desire to belong to the present, poets everywhere seek to reflect on and relieve it in the poem. As the confluence of the “three directions of time”, the present provided “the source of presences”, shaping the creative consciousness of several recent poets. Their search for modernity vis-a-vis the crises of essential ideas, beliefs and systems, seems to have isolated them in their own mind but not without leading to reconciliation in some way. And, discovering the “real reality” could be tricky because we ourselves are part of it, its disintegration, division or disappearance, or its conversion into the instant or fixed present. To quote Shiv K. Kumar.

I know
if I prove any deeper
all the particles will
slither into the hole
the sea will belch
and all evidence descend
into the subliminal bed.22

The despairing dehumanizing influences of the so-called civilized existence its socioeconomic realities the tragicness one is obliged to suffer have left deeper marks on the contemporary psyche. To quote O.P. Bhatnagar-
We're afraid of speaking the truth
And resisting whatever is unjust
foul and corrupt in our bones

Several sensitive poets derive sustenance from encounter with the immediate and the tangible; they act trying to understand what it is vis-a-vis their own dreams, often seen in a half sleep-restless and fraught with countless dangers and surprises; they explore their own mind, body, psyche, their own life, sometimes with an awareness of lack of harmony with their surrounding. They are baffled at the life and living in the shadows of those religious, political and social systems that sustain us at the same time as they oppress us; sometimes their anguished awareness invites them to self-examination, at other times the sense of being different or not belonging appears as a challenge, a spur that incites them to action, to go for and face the outside world, to reflect on its genesis, the past and the future.

They reflect on the condition of the individuals isolated from the society (and not exiled or alienated), and ponder over various levels of human relationship and problems of existence: perversion, corruption, degeneration, morbidity, privacy, insecurity: terrors of bloodshed; pain and agony of aimless killings and death, feeling of helplessness; awareness of political and social turpitude; mockery of idealism, values and morality; tendency to manoeuvre truth; game of convenience; exploitation of the poor
and the innocent, in short, the hypocrisy operating at all levels. They address themselves to embodiments of modern corruption even as they try to betray what it is like to be a human being vis-a-vis new set of vulgarities every now and then.

Some of them make poetry out of agreements with themselves: they are driven to understand themselves, their lives. Their ‘personal’ voice is animated by issues and arguments around the mind/body relation, around what most people try to keep concealed—the sexual feelings, the sensations of the flesh; like any good artist, they also seek to make life show itself. They write the awareness of what is denied in our ordinary existence, what is beneath the skin of things around, the psychospiritual strains the moral dilemmas, the betrayals and the paradoxes. They address themselves to embodiments of modern corruption even as they try to betray what it is like to be a human being vis-a-vis new set of vulgarities every now and then.

There are certain poets who combine personal memories with history while there is some kind of a neo-mysticism in the pursuit of others, showing subtle absorption of motifs and memories from their own roots/past in exploring the meaning of their various co-existing lives. The philosophical insight and artistic value of poetic creation make many a recent poet authentic.
Kulwant Singh Gill, who is remarkable for excluding Indian sensibility with variety in the form, content and experimentation, probes man deeply and finds him ever busy covering his "metaphysical" with myths, "Unsure of destiny' failing to decide" and thus, unable to "find freedom". The poet seeks to "Salvage the Soul/from the salty sea of experience" which makes him critical of gods who never relent ("you prostrated self esteem/before his mercy/And wept;/He did not heed/ And slid into kumbhakarana's a sleep") and politicians who profit from people's guile ability he finds the earth "a perpetual hell" with all that its inhabitants have made of it ('yearning', 'Flower-Children', 'Descent into Hell', 'Psychedelic Tragedy') even if he is aware that "from maithuna to moksha/The way is hard and holy."

P. Raja, who is concerned with "the life between birth and death", shows an appreciable competence in converting ordinary experience into excellent poems. He reflects on the mysteries of ordinary living today and explores the reality of "creatures/eaten up and emptied/by a farrago/or doubts and hopes/fears and wishes". The poet wrestles with Indian today and his poetic backyard is a scene of 'unfettered breasts', tyrannical husbands, "toothless men", posing godmen, and a "crowd of weeping philosophers". P. Raja also revels in the downward pull of lust at once sensual and repellant: "A stinking soul, begged in using flesh/adorned/the
fragrant cushion in/the perfumed chest of shame.” He exploits sex imagery very gently and deftly to develop his own spiritual ethos, social criticism and poetic vision. In fact, he is one of those poets who provide, through irony and criticism, antidotes to, what Octavio Paz calls “Moral poison” in a world experiencing collapse of established systems and norms.  

Syed Ameeruddin’s intellectual and spiritual response to the “present social debries” invites exploration of the past for a “new scintillating saga”. The past inspires him to create an alternative atmosphere from within: he reflects the restlessness, aimlessness, uprootedness, despair and frenzy of the present day society and projects what he discovers as eternally true and profoundly admirable in Indian culture and philosophy. Ameeruddin “speaks in terms of provocative and forceful metaphors and relates his work to the relevance of contemporary, the realistic, the non realistic and surrealistic trends in behaviour and relationship between man and woman of our time and their existentialistic attitude towards life. “The poet’s latest collection, Petallic Love Times (1988) projects him as experimenting with Love ideas with keenness of perception and vision, making “a mystic myth”.

Ninranjan Mohanty’s quest is primarily directed at understanding himself and he delights in articulating the rhythms of loneliness and silence—his keymetaphors used to represent life in its striking facet and the dilemmas
of a creative mind ever willing “to mingle in the common lot” In the process he demonstrates a social awareness and concern for the down-trodden beggars, lepers, prostitutes, rickshaw pullers and victims of flood and drought in Orissa. He writes with a probing mind about conflicting experiences and desires, the nostalgia for the lost childhood/love, and seeks a meaning for his existence, his own relevance: “A strange streak of light/stems towards me, when I/separated by me, when I/separated by years and fears/am caught in the woe of my dying, somewhere”. Craving the romance of the past, he indulges in celebrating loneliness, and presents himself against a fallen world, fraught with missed connections, loss, grief, fear, darkness, deathwish, self-pity, unrequited passion and feeling of irrelevance. His “spider mind” fixes “fresh webs to the other world/where the crippled ghosts/ have been long deciphered” (‘Isolation’). In his identity crisis, the poet’s emotions run from mild confession to be mused distraction.

In his rural settings, T.V. Reddy observes “woman stand like expiring candles/... bending like famished cattle”, widows” shunned as a viper”, old women “fed on ignominy” and young corn reapers victims of :the lustful eyes of the landlord” and drunken husbands, he regrets “the new man of the plastic age” has not only a callous disregard for woman, but also a relish for “sodden adultery/roll in smuggled comforts/As integrity becomes
crippled/hypocrisy climbs atop the ladder/and reigns supreme in seer's 
garb/mocking at honesty in exile."^28

Disenchanted with his external social existence, like so many other poets, Dwarakanath H. Kabadi, who thinks about himself with intimate impulses, seeks refuge in love, his "cosmic code": through the microcosm of love-birth-love he wants to "Become/A sperm again/And explore a new/That physical world/... where silent fires though/Were raging/Still kept you coal/But warm/And sustained".^29 That is, the poet wants to experience the metamorphosis of body to the level of sperm, which is something new and refreshing. The silence of the womb is what he looks for to learn the secrets of the universe and the meaning of everything one sees or senses.

In fact poets and artists have always shared their feelings and experiences of love in all its rich variety to emphasize, among other things, the essential significance of the opposite sex in their artistic sensibility just as their erotic thought and imagery have highlighted the interrelationship of man and nature. In trying to give and receive pleasure through union of man and woman they seek union and harmony of cosmic forces; consciously or unconsciously they do carry our imagination back to questions and ideas about origin; they make us reflect on a very complex, and ever present, aspect of our lives.
For a number of recent poets, love is vision in action, a journey to freedom: its effective presentation in poetry entails conveying what it feels like to be filled, with desire, an intensely inner experience; it illumines the human body with all its senses, emotions and intellect as the organ to know or explore our worlds and itself becomes a means of access to the psyche, the spiritual realm, where human and divine meet.

Love poetry indeed shows an awareness of the physical body with its variations on sexuality, nudity, sensuality, obsessions, imagined or real pleasure, explicit eroticism etc. but what matters is the articulation and presentation of language form that matches the actual body/mind action, its concentration and concreteness grounded in conscious experience; not merely verification of romantic ideas and feelings, ornamentation or diffused self-expression but concrete, precise, economical, concentrated expression, fusing thought and feeling into appropriate imagery. The criterion of value lies in the poet's expressive invention, extra depth and resonance or meaning with which the language and invests the imagery; the effect lies in the thrill or the physical emotion that comes with the poem's reading.

The new poets included in Rizvi's anthology offer with a personal voice a record of their success in envisioning the moments of psychosexual intensity, passionate sensations, blissful contentment and thrills or pleasure
“on the wave of movement” just as expression of the life force that “You perceive within/with an immaculate joy” is their deeper quest. Their bold intention is; “let us scream what we hide”; they seek body as the form, object and route to inner reality. Their lyrics of the rhythms of heartbeats from earth to sky; their narrators search eternity nestles into the beloved’s body and sail in the sea of pure sinlessness reflecting on incidental and accidental of love experiences. They provide a view of the tension between the poet’s hungry hearts and dismayed consciences; they define love with rare sensitivity, revealing the quality of imagination, poets like A. Chittranjan Sahay, S.N. Tripathy, P.K. Padhy, K.S. Gill, T.K. Kayanthan H.S. Bhatia, R.K. Singh, Sudha R. Jyer, Louella Lobo Probhu, Vineeta Kishore, Rajani Krishnan Kutty, Biswakesh Tripathy, Farhat Amin, Renu Gumani, R.V. Smith, L.N. Mahapatra or J.K. Jagadev now have. They try to give back to poetry its original vitality. I.K. Sharma presents thoughts, images very aptly and carefully. He marks the emergence of new poetry and is powerful in its message.

Another poet, R.K. Singh, uses the facts of sexuality to criticise the contemporary sociopolitical culture. “They are not so much/schemers as blunders/blinded by politics/of convenience/religiously guard/against encroachment/on their privileges/as leaders create/a new elitism/a new tyranny/of mid-term poll when/prostatectom/at sixty frightens/them
anyone/as in sex giving away/balancing oppositions/ despite impulses/ for equally/ they are trapped by gains/ from oneness with top/...” and “They measure a woman’s worth/ with the size of bone concealed/ off their chump they call it love/ as the maso wave subsides/ they try to escape the trap”. As G.D. Barche points out that the poet uses sex images as a means to self-oblivion and resurrection just as he highlights both the rejuvenating and destroying processes of sex.

Poets like Sailendra Narayan Tripathy, Niranjan Mohanty, L.N. Mahapatra, Biswakesh, Gopal Honnalger, Rizvi and others celebrate the body to search for a meaningful relation between man and woman; in the nakedness of sex they try to expose truths; through body they peep into the everygrowing consciousness and convert the negative in life into some kind of concreté aesthetic pleasure. They seek peace and comfort in the oasis of love, sex and woman. They find their full expression, their individuality and freedom in sex.

Poetry to Gopal Honnalagers is “knowing that you are alive ... you can feel, see, touch, cry, laugh, make love and fight, walk alone and communicate/ To know and to unknow”30 It is like “making love/more seminal/with intellect” and creating fertile “thoughts of sex? He celebrates a poem like body: “You break/ my hymen/ for a poem/ and so you are
born" (‘Woman speaking to Man’). A luxuriant sexuality is deeply implicated in the core of Hormalgere’s mind. Recurrent sexuality in his poetry helps to underscore an ironic state of selfishness, social disruption and a disturbing isolation in Indian context, just as he challenges the so-called civilised sexual morality and contemporary sexual social standards that do not recognise sex, rather look askance at it; he reminds us how degraded we are in our social attitudes and morality. Gopal Honnalgere creates “a live image of nude” in the nakedness of flesh and thereby exposes how people have turned “unnaturally natural”.

The poet is in the forefront of Indian English poets who are engaged in reviving the ancient Indian tradition and attitudes towards sex that encouraged ordinary man and woman to discover a more modest and metaphorical reflection of cosmic harmony. Through his verses the fights a “primitive fear” that keeps the doors of the body locked against “a naked stillness/or void”. His emotions are upset when he discovers that “she has vanished”. When he doesn’t feel her hand over his body, he introspects: “Where am I? What is me?” ‘She’ thus becomes both the female sex and feminine awareness, the spiritual Prakriti principle in existence.
Mahapatra’s poetic ecstasies are, on the whole, “an affirmation of faith in the self and the world that interact to create the moments of experience”. He sings love songs for himself as “prelude to tryst”.

Biswaokesh Tripathy explores “the Citadel of flesh” with waves varying from youthful exuberance of love and sex and struggle for peace and bliss. His poetic relics of love are rooted in the deepest human hunger and desire and ignited by “needs of origin and survival”. He creates a subtle interplay of personal and spiritual perspective embodying “knowledge and experience” through “confounding tangles of delirious emotions” just as he is sure: ‘If I don’t find peace and bliss/Here and now/where and when shall I find them?’

Biswaokesh demonstrates a rare originality, skill and sensitivity even in his latest creation. A long poem in 140 pages, Konarka: The Temple of Love (1990). He unfolds many myths and legends concerning the “fantasy in stones” the architectural and sculptural fineness and grace of which is realized in terms of emotive experiences that display exhilarating sexuality and revive the ‘exotic bygone days’. His epic of erotica creates “To love in a hundred ways/in a hundred different moods/to keep the heart young/to explore pastures new”. The poet expounds “the romance between the earth and the sun/In all its sensuous beauty” and his native vision propounds:
“Nature is our Mother/And nudism is not barbarism/It is symbolic of the soul’s emancipation” and “That sex is as important and necessary as God” and “Its exalting ability elevates our souls/To divine heights”.34

In a highly negative, hostile, ‘unpoetic’ environment, sex provides a means for ‘symbolic action’, a more reliable and satisfying response to the profoundly difficult social, political and economic situation— not mere good lines or good images or wit or irony— but a concrete ‘action’ in that the poet refuses to let himself be overcome by what is actually so recalcitrant and repressive, frustrating and unmotivating disgusting and hopeless. It is not an escape route but part of a ‘Search’ for the alternative, searching the body and feeling in the present, life itself, vis-à-vis reality, the hell made by men, the external world where we cannot even breathe. In their quest, expression of its nakedness is not an expression of debasement but inner response to the unacceptable, even at times uncorrectable outer stimuli and search for reliable themes and images that counter the enslaving enemies and enslaving protectors of today’s world. The banal interiority that we may sometimes find in some of the recent poets should be seen as a search for new system which is internally fulfilling and externally ‘poetic’: it is part of the process of re-creation in consciousness of the man and woman as the poet believes they exit.
Through sex, a very real presence, they reveal hypocrisy, meanness, inner complexes twisted nature, self-estrangement, the world that is beneath the world; the dilemmas that block and fuel or lives, the selfexistence consumed by our own self-contradictions; the search for reciprocation of what is encountered again and again in body or memory, the compulsions of the dream world vis-à-vis the social world, the exploration of one's own body and mind to avoid or face the frustrations of existence.

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