Chapter - III

Major Concern and Occupation of The Poet
Darulwall’s concern is not concentrated on a particular scape-goat. It is free floating generalized concern directed against the whole structure of society which is trotten to the core. His paranoid sensibility lacks trust in society and constantly apprehends attack through violence coming in the shape of riots and rapes, caste conflicts and natural calamities, police brutality and politician’s excesses. In his conceptual desert there is no oasis of freedom from violence. It is all pervasive. When it comes in the form of communal riots, the town turns into a “mass of liquefied flesh seething in fear” ("Curfew in a Riot Torn City"). Oil Slick brings into focus another sort of violence:

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\text{It cleaned up}\]
\[\text{The oyster-beds and looked under}\]
\[\text{The coral dapes for hiding children.}\]
\[\text{Fish bobbed up, lead grey, sturgeon grey.}\]
\[\text{Whatever came in the crook of its soft, smooth, arm}\]
\[\text{Turned belley up in the brown was of the sea.}^{1}\]

“Death by burial” shows yet another kind of vilence perpetrated by man on man,

\[\text{There is nothing much to distinguish}\]
\[\text{One lathi blow from another,}\]
\[\text{The same inverted back, the same are through the air}\]
\[\text{The curve consummated on the cowering body.}\]
\[\text{And beneath the raining blows}\]
A swarm of limbs
Twisting like tentacles.

The poets show a penchant for depicting such raw violence and even in those poems where violence seems to have taken retreat, there is something explosive.

Another feature of Daruwalla’s poetic terrain is corruption, which, as he says, is the “chemistry of flesh” (Collage II). To point out this rottenness in the macro-body, the poet presents body panoramas. The anatomist of the body uses the diseased macro body to expose the malady of the macro body. The images, metaphors and symbols of the diseased microbody shock our sensibilities. These images are negatively dynamic and hopelessly insurmountable. Pollution of the Ganges is expressed through images of disease.

Now a cataract in your eyes
Films the world
With a brown haze.

His “town is tumour growth” and “The river keeps moving dark as gangrene”. The glaciers have “bleeding eye”, Passions flake off like “dandruff, like falling hair, like scar tissue”. There is “a gland in the tree’s groin.... Turned tumorous”. The stars are “lighted ulcers on the sky’s belley”. The land is “hard as rigor mortis” and “hope is a diseased kidney which has already been removed”, “Gout or elephantisis” force bandits to
chop fingers as “there is no other way of taking a ring off”. “Caries” is a very appropriate image to focus attention on the stinking structure of society

First when the teeth got caries
They stuffed them with silver.
The relief; Earlier even politicians
As they talked to him
Took their hankies to the nose
...... It dawned on him
That in the absence of stink, ideals
Are almost within reach .......

Thus Daruwalla’s poetic latitudes do really run around the “body map”. From the diseased micro bodies we are gripped by a more shocking, almost nauseating vision of corruption presented through images of dead mutilated parts of human bodies symbolic of the isolated, deconstructed self-centred selves. The poet seems to relish this panorama of putrescence.

.....
The drift as it comes to us now
Is aroma/stench/nausea
Jostling each other!.

There is an exhibition of “Chopped fingers”, “placenta like a bloody undergarment”, “half burnt skull”, “Charred ribs”, “Suddenly the tree”, etc.

The poet seems to have lost grip on aesthetic perception. No moral vision lurks even at the backyard of the poetic inspiration. Words unwrap a
bundle of such sensory impressions that arouse “Vibhatsa”. The “rottenness of death” that Draruwalla presents is “unmitigated by maggots”, this mutilated bodyscape is almost revolting

Plucked, half baked from the fires of death
This skull is glazed blue only in patches.
The rest is shale-grey in colour, speckled
Near the eye-holes with copper tints
Perhaps the fires burnt out
When the skies broke
Or firelogs were not placed upon the body crosswise
Or he had no son to bash his head apart.6

Like Isidore Lucien Ducasse the poet excels in a written exercise of decay and putrescence emphasizing the broken images of man and society

We need someone acclimatized to hellfires
To survive the nuclear embers of the world,
Someone who can eat
What is available
Baked fingers of children
Roasted female rumps
And limbs charred to soft coke
In the oven earth.7

In such a mudscape of corruption and violence the post-modern poet does not feel that the world is created by a merciful loving God. For him it
is a graveyard of morality where truth has no present, no future, only a hypothetic past

*Truth was last sighted in a credibility gap,*
*Slouching ahead in his Og-Overalls.*
*He hasn't emerged since, we do not know*
*If a mad hyena has got him by the balls.*

A sensitive soul can do nothing in this ambience but write obituariees of positive values and norms of yesterdays which are replaced by the axioms of establishment. Such a dark social forest of dehumanizing brutality fills the poet with a terrible rage and the structure of this rags shows two distinct moods—fear and defeatism.

When concern is directed against an object insurmountable, it results in fear which involves retreat. When we see a rock falling over us or an automobile bearing down upon us, we run in fear. Fear and anxiety pervade the poetic world of Daruwalla. There are echoes of Kafka, Camus and Eliot. The very word “Angst” which is the title of one of his poems, suggest Kirkegaardian affinity

*Angst was your child crossing the road*
*While manholes gaped and*
*Potch boil in tar drums*
*And discharging jets of blood from their headlights*
*Motorized monsters*
*Rumbled across like revolutions.*
Angst was your child
Belong ferried across the night.
Angst was your lost past
Calling from the forest.

Even an act like love making is fraught with fear

They are your innermost fears –

... Your hand around
The half-moons of her torso
Groping apprehensive
For the flowering coral
The bumour that may emerge
Like a jacked-up lump of death.

Life is a "fissured valley" where everything cracks, whether it is the heart or the skull of friendship. Everywhere trap doors wait to engulf a person:

Dust on the stone shelves
And a mouse trap
Its teeth rusty, yet poised
For the fill
..... there are no windows, no
Skylights; everywhere mousetraps.

The days are full of apprehensions and nights bring no relief:

My nights are still uneasy, turning over
What bait you will set for me
What ambush you will spring.
My dreams are full of rat-raps
The desire to kill and the fear of being killed
Are aspects of the same passion.  

Since everything that is positive evades one’s grasp, there emerges at attachment to fear, which clings to the psyche:

...... The fear
It's all have my dear
The things I panic from
Could never excite a lyre.  

The utter hopelessness of the situation awakens a sense of defeatism:

"Go to Auden and Sartre” they said
“For a vocabulary of defeat”
...... For a landscape of meaninglessness
Go along with him.  

The Indian ethos- where senses supurate, passions putrefy and life turns into an empty dream- does not need to import the foreign brand of existentialism

Then why should I tread the Kafka beat
Or the Waste Land
When Mother, you are near at hand
One vast, sprawling defeat?.  

This mudscape of despair and inverted defeatism is a sort of hangover under which the poet constantly drifts. Nothing expresses it so aptly as the
word “impotence” which often occurs in his poety. In Mother-Collage II. Daruwalla talks of “impotence which is disem-bodied and become a way of life”, and in “Death by Burial” it is a “Crooked man-made penis that could not rise to the occasion”.

But Daruwalla’s concern is not invariably this rage of impotence. His socially viable self has a strong wish to shatter social structure. This ritual of destruction he performs through the weapon of satire. The poet is consistently satirical and his poems impress a rageful recognition of this corruption which has permeated through every molecule of the macrobody. Nothing escapes his vision. Like a bird of prey he is every ready to pounce on his victims. In a “Monologue in the Chambal Valley” he represents the brutalization of women as a reality of the repressed and fragmented male selves. The poet, in a matter of fact way, gives a roll list of women from different regions as if they were different breeds of dogs or cattle to be displayed and then to be sold like a commodity.

..... taut breasted ones from the hills
Brown ones from Bihar-soft and over-ripe,
Daughters of the desert, daughters of the forest tribes?
Where did we not sell them?
Is holy fairs, in cattle markets.14
The poet reaches down into people's insides and rips their evil out
Corrupt priests are his next target

To legalize a bastard you've to bribe the priest-
The catechism also has its price.
He'll wed you to a Turk or a Rabbi's daughter
Even though you may be uncircumcised. 

His unrelenting satiric social consciousness strips the holy places of
their moral façade!

... The Pandas calculate
The amount of merit that accrues to you
At each specifies ghat.....
Dante would have been confused here.
Where would he place this city
In Paradise or Purgatory, or lower down
Where fires smoulder beyond the reach of pity? 

Nest, the poet desllates the pose of the politician his irony is sharper
here than a mere gap between what is and what is not:

In the city his house remained as it was,
Cows and goats tethered in front,
... People must still think that he was
Simple, one of them.
Only in the bed room air conditioners hummed
And thick ruge covered it wall to wall
And he started asking friends
"What are those Swiss banks?
How the hell do they operate?.  
Mere parodies of law and order survive. The poet presents verbal calisthenics which reeks of pollution from every pore. Bribing is an accepted norm of the establishment:

It was graft all the way, first the judge's steno.
"It is the rope for you", he said. We bribed him more
And he didn't type the judgement on the given day.
We bribed the warder, got large-sized.
Handcuffs and a wrist-band to boot
And beneath the band a thick layer of grease.
You just need to cough out an amount, and everything works:

You may adulterate oils, make tablets out of chalk
Sell meat turning maggoty, fish turning state;
Switch sawdust for jute, at the worst of times
The right buck at the right time tips the scales.

The pity is that even the decent ones are corrupt and in a curved universe, there is no place for straight lines

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

The poet angrily points his finger at the system responsible for starvation and suicides:
A child tucked in each armpit
She jumps into the well
Her husband had run away with their last meal.
First utensils, then silver anklets,
Lastly cattle. A pregnant cow
Was sold for seven millet cakes
There is no red-light area in the town
Where starving daughters can be sold. 21

The poet's concern against caste-system and communalism is expressed in a super mocking tone in "Death by burial". The low caste people have "sprung from the feet of Vishnu". The poet compares them to toe-nails for the specific reasons that the growth of toe-nails is always an irritant and is cut down. The last section of the poem ironically expresses communalism rampant in India. Whether the bodies of the lynched burglars are to be burnt or buried is a heated question amongst the villagers as the population of the village is equally divided among Hindus and Muslims:

Enough cause for a riot,
With half the village shouting
"death by fire"
And the other half
"death by burial". 22

Daruwalla's agust turns into a metaphysical sneer. Like his hawk the poet surveys and weights the scene and waits to swoop down on the next victim. He makes no effort to tone down this explosion of conscious anger
which is not just a patch work of surfaces. Like his hawk he has fused of hate burning and with that hatred and anger he scans each depravity

... marking out their fate,

The ones he would scoop up next,

Those black drags in the cup of his hate.  

This vehement attack is carried out in the most structure way. The signified and the signifier are related in a coherent way. The images of kinetic forces are appropriate for such destruction. But this sort of anger that lacks a moral vision and poetic inspiration can not be anything more than a disguised expression of a repressed innerself. The poet’s subject matter is Indian and so are the sittings of his poems but he does not show the Indian quest for the eternal verities. He also lacks the Indian faith which goes along with intellectual scrutiny. Gordon Bottomley had described pre-independent Indian poets as Matthew Arnold in a saree. Daruwalla may be called Indian Lucien Ducasse who represents the angry mood of the Seventees and Eighties of this century.

Daruwalla does not appear to be happy with ever growing urbanization of the country. He thinks so because most of communal disturbance took place particularly in urban areas. Hence he says, “the town is tumourgrowth”. He thinks the city-dwellers to be different towards each other. He expresses this feeling in heart rendering situation. The poet calls
them idle butchers who have nothing to do with people's suffering and misery. In this poem the poet also draws a fine picture of the police officials engaged in restoring peace and normalcy.

He tells that all the efforts of the police officials are undone by the mischief-mongers by causing to spreading the disturbance from the metallic roads of the city to that of the dusty and muddy road of a village. Hence, he calls this communal flare up a contagious disease.

The poet aptly describes the severity of the disturbance and its afterward effect in following lines:

"Blood and fog
Are over half the own
And curfew stamps along the empty street".

The phrase 'empty street', clearly speaks of the deserted look which the city bears after the imposition of curfew on it. Similarly, magnitude of death and destruction is so great that blood appears to be pervading atleast half of the city, if not the whole.

But even in this deadly silence, there are some people who search their prey as avidly as to 'barracudas'. While on the other hand, there are majority of the people in the street, whose emotions and feelings change as quickly as to the goers of taxis. To quote Daruwalla: using a sensual imagery in the following lines:
"........ streets
Back to front, walls bulging towards
Each other in a half embrace". 2

In the following lines, the poet depicts how life activates in the city after remaining nightlong under curfew, when the sun breaks:

"towards the first embryonic finger
A scurry of footsteps
A jungle of walls interchanging shadows
Announce that town has come"

But this stirring of life and the calmness of the morning proves to be short-lived because:

"suddenly a gunshot
Dynamites the silence"
And once again the police start relief operation. Even after knowing it well that the hoodlums and culprits are taking shelter “on the rooftops” being armed with ‘brick-bats, soda bottles/and acid bulbs’ the police fail to take appropriate action against them. The poet satirically presents their lukewarm tendency in the following lines:

"reluctantly they move up over crooked stairs no one
Wants
Acid running down his face the face running with
Acid and
Spend a life-time trafficking
With bizarre mirrors"
Quite contrary to the peace-loving people and the police, is the attitude of the always ready to kill and to be killed. The poet depicts their mental state very accurately in the following lines:

"a street is lined with idle butchers
Strange: death and curfew have not stampeded
Here: tense and sullen they watch your prowling
Jeep-red meat hanging on the comb red meat
Ranging on their jowls."

"You keep them within gunsights behind the forehead is
The pit you fear for they are the sick tribe and if they lose
Their heads others will lose theirs"

In the above lines Daruwalla satirizes the police again for lacking in timely action and succumbing to the pressure of these undesirable elements.

In the following lines the poet laughs at the insanity of the rioting people, when he tries to probe the cause of all these ugly state of affairs; idle butchers. They have nothing of the kind of fear because they are 'brainaick'.

They are

"It was a fight over the dead perhaps!"

Lastly, the poet talks about the contagious nature of the riot which gallops towards the nearly in a spiralway:

"ut the war has traveled
Outwards in a spiral"
He equates curfew with contagious because it was imposition of the former on the city, which led the riot from city to the nearby villages.

In “Presitilence” the poet has dealt with the theme of disease and death. On the one hand, he has talked about the devastating epidemics like plague and cholera in this poem; while on the other hand, he laughs in a satiric vein at the failure of the physicians and medicine men who fail to diagnose the patients correctly, out of the impending fear of death. In the poem at hand, Daruwalla makes a realistic portrayal of the human sorrow and suffering. He depicts it so vividly that it appears that the poet himself has felt the pangs of death of disease which the great epidemic awarded in its spate. The loss of human life is so great that people have started deserting the villages and taking shelter in towns and cities. Not only this, even the muscles of the shoulders of ‘palanquin-bearers’ have become’ as smooth as river-stones’. To quote Daruwalla:

“Shoulders round as orbs
Muscles smooth as river-stones
Glisten
Till a dry wind scourages
The sweat from off their backs”

Daruwalla presents a lively picture of the dead ones in the following lines:

“On the string-beds they carry
No henna-smeared brides. Prone
Upon them are frail bodies
Frozen bodies delirious bodies
Some drained of fever and sap
Some moving others supine
Transfixed under the sun'.

The above lines amply speak of the unhappy and heart-rending situation of the time. They also make one feel about the magnanimity of those deadly diseases which are now only the matters of talk. At another place in the poem, Daruwalla says that owing to plague and cholera, death has become so frequent that the dogs of the street start to run after an ambulance whenever they come across it. The following lines are worth quoting in this connection:

"mongrels tail the ambulance
Till dust and gasoline fumes
Choke them off"

In the midst of such a great calamity, how indifferent the phyicans and nurses are towards the people afflicted with these deadly disease can be seen in the following lines:

"Who says they have cholera?
They are down with diarrhea
Who says it is cholera?
It is gastro-enterities
Who says they have cholera?"
The are not only unable to diagnose and treat the diseased correctly but they are also white with the fear of impending death. Their reflectance towards the sufferers and patients has been remarkably described by the poet in the following lines:

“the hospital-flowrs are marble-white
Black bodies dirty them
Nurses in white habits
Unicef jeeps with white bonnets
Doctors with white faces received them”

The above lines also slyly dig at the callous medicinemen and physicians and help the readers to have a good laughter at their cost.

Now the post talks about the mental-state of those persons who have been spared by death to be a witness of this dreaded calamity. They have become so much accustomed to allow these sad affairs in their mind any more. They like to unload their mental burden as quickly as does the arm of a crane. To quote the poet:

“but memory like a crane-arm
Unlochs its ploughed up rubble”

“angst” makes a probe into the causes of Daruwalla’s pressing-anxiety. This poem consists of three sections. In the first section of the poem, the poet reveals what underlies his mental-worry. Every-growing
population is one of his main concerns. The poet feels frightened in the face of a huge crowd. In his own words:

_Such crowds, that open spaces_
_Turn claustrophobia_

Secondly, the poet is worried to think of the ever-growing danger of the destructive potential or radioactivity:

_Death-light that falls like a rain of radioactive spikes._
_Death-light that falls_

Through holes in the azana bolt. To Daruwalla his entire world appears to be sitting on a vast valcona and to him even the forests and cliffs are not free from impending danger to life on earth:

_Cows grazing on meadows of bithmen_
_A bulldozer that shovels_
_Children over a cliff._

In the third section of the poem, the poet is greatly alarmed at ever-growing environmental pollution. He is conscious of the growing pollution in big cities that even motor-riders appear to him to be monstrous and revelers in people's blood:

_Angst was your child crossing the road_
_While manholes gaped and_
_Pitched boil'd in tar-drums_
_And discharging jets of blood from their headlights_
_Motorized monsters_
Rumbled across like revolutions
Angst was your child
Angst was your lost part
Calling from the forest.

Thus, ‘angst’ expresses the poet’s growing apprehension at arms race and nuclear proliferation. The other thing which places him in alarming situation is the unchecked growth of deadly diseases like caner and thirdly, he finds human existence in perils due to evergrowing environmental pollution. In fact, the poet’s concern on these major issues are quite genuine and appreciable. The poet has very lucidly put them before the readers to appraise them of the growing dangers. Use of images and similes are quite apt and appropriate. Hunger-74 is a long poem. It consists of nine sub-poems, each of them deals with some particular theme relating to the untold suffering of the masses caused by the unprecedented draught and famine on the one hand, while at the other it also brings the power-hungry corrupt politicians to lime light. The poet lays their manners and hypocrisy threadbase by making them a satiric portrait of the poem. The poet’s attitude towards them is unspiring to the end.

The first section of the poem is subtitled ‘Caléndar, starting with June’. This section narrates how people looked at the sky for rains during the month of June. But clouds always elude them:
First the clouds fleshed past like migratory
Birds. Then in answer to some unheard utterance
From the parched tips of this land
They settled like birds come to roost.

Everything, accessory to rain was to be found on the earth but not rain.

The poet puts it:

All the accessories were here, humidity loam,
Wet earth-odours—everything except rain

Even during the month of September, the month of heavy rain, 'the
sun came out so sharp as shining' and 'the sky intense blue' Daruwalla puts
it very beautifully:

The sky an intense blue, the stars
Lighted ulcers on the sky's belly

Likewise, rest other months (of the year) went without rain.

Consequently, lakes and ponds went on shrinking. The month of April, is
exhaled flickers of fire instead of causing mango to blossom. People did not
get water even to quench their first thirst, not to talk of their fill:

The underlying irony of the last sentence heightens the severity of the
draught.

In the second section of the poem, the poet recalls that during the
critical period no other plant was visible excepting some shrubs at the foot
of the hill:
From the dusk of the foothill pines,
Long shadowed and clear,
I walk down hill
To the dusk of chickets
Short and stubbed
And frazzled with the cry of jackals.

In absence of moisture and rain even the shrill cry of crickets and the
crack of locusts became rare in the evening and at night.

The shrillness of pine-crickets,
The crackle of locusts being fried,
Is gone. Instead a night-jar works through the
Night like a pebble bouncing
Along on ice-bound gradient
The morning presented all the more heart-rending sight.

The ribs of hunger-sticken people assumed almost bow-like appearance. There seemed to be nothing except bone in their bodies:

The ribs prominent:
Latitudes running around the body-map
Ribs prominent had there been flesh or skin
To encase them
You could have used the rib-bowl
To draw water from a well-
Hand there been water in the well
In the third section of poem, the poet further talks about the oppressive heat and hot wind:

* A hot wind throws
* Scabs of this once living river
* Into your sunstruck face,
* As you traverse the bridge,
* Pylo after pylon
* Over a river of sand,
* A swathe of iron-filling in the sun.

The poet tells that even the very existence of the earth was in danger. It appeared that ‘the land was being baked like’ an earthen dish in ‘a cosmic kiln’. Save ‘the blink koel, the stupid koel’, every other creature on the land apprehended by the impending death:

* The land is an earthen dish,
* Empty as always,
* Baked and fired in a cosmic kiln.
* There are smity-fires overhead
* They are forging another sky;
* The coppersmith birds shricks insistent
* That death is round the corner

Not only the people but other animals, birds and plants on the land were past all hope of rain. They did not have even a bit of hope of rain and coming monsoon:
Hope is a diseased kidney
Which has already been removed
They have forgotten to board the ship.

In the fourth section of the poem, subtitled ‘notes’, the poet says that while the poorer section of the society was hard-pressed by the unprecedented famine caused by drought, in the country, there was another section of people interested in trading in misery and affliction of the people. Consequently, hoarding, black marketing and profiteering became the order of the day.

Pointing towards people’s rush near the bus-stand, Daruwalla says:

No end to hoarding;
Breaking open the lockers they find
A briefcase full of rice.

General hardship of the people was so great that even a husband ran away with his wife’s meal. Consequently, ‘she jumps into the well’ to commit suicide:

A child tucked in each armpit
She jumps into the well-
Her husband had run away with their last meals

The poet further says that during the critical period food was dearer than human life. Ironically he says:

There is no red light area in the town
Where starving daughters can be sold.
The river-bank comes to the rescue,
Its sand soft as volcanic ash
In 'jointtings', again one finds hunger and misery pervading the scene. People have to live without food several evening, even roots and grass-leaves were not available to them:

Hungries an empty nest
To which birds fly back in the evening.

Daruwalla mockingly depicts the apathetic attitudes of the governmental machinery in the following way:

Cables are flashed from the outposts
“Foot riots Sane Rice-specials at once”
From the capital words bounces back
“Silo-owners have gone off for the night.
Despatching armed police instead.”

The sixth section of the poem is subtitled ‘rhapsody on a hungry night’. The scene of hunger and water scarcity, again dominates the scene. It also depicts how profiteers were mad after making money from the misery and suffering of the masses:

“At wayside flagstations
Profiteers offer us
Ten thousand per wagon
Waif women are offered
One back for a roll

Referring to water scarcity the poet says:
Instead of water
Splashed shades of the jujube;
Instead of crops
Crag-grass and fern

This section further mocks of the hypocrisy of both the government
and opposition parties, which are out to make profit out of people's misery.
Instead of solving the problem of food and water of the hard hit either tries
to defame each other and to make a political profit at people's cost:

Where one side harangues
"Democracy in danger!
The men ar corrupt!
So forget your vocations
Take a one-year holiday
And go for them hard"
And the others declaim
"Democracy in danger
The plan is in danger!
Foreign hand in all this;
It's despair that will kill you
Not a shortfall in vitamins
So look out for hop"

Pointing out the ignorance and innocence of the common mass, the
poet says:

Sheep are looking for green words
On the dry page of the earth.
The seventh section of the poem is subtitled 'paradise'. It highlights the one section of people in the country, who are fortunate enough. This section of the people enjoys heavenly pleasure 'in a five star hotel' in drinking scotch and enjoying 'cocktails' and 'blue bilm':

Paradise, of course, is the skylark Room
In a five-star hotel
Scotch for the gents, and for the ideas, Sir,
Shall it be cocktails

Poing at the coberet going on in the hotel, the poet says:

A crooner sings in sackcloth, the bra
And the painties made of hersian thread.
Her false-nots fly like anvil sparks.
She has missed her vocation, her fote is bed.

The eighth section of the poem, is subtitled, 'Yes, friends', 'Yes, friends'. It describes a minister's tour of a drought-affected area. The minister's artificiality, lack of feeling and facts-distorting power are highlighted here. The poet puts it very beautifully how he starts his talk with his district officials:

.......... But why these flowers?
Faminie stalks the land and you greet me
Us if I am death come to deliver you!
No flower in future, for that is bourgeoise
Practise. And no feel touching, for that is feudal.
The minister further asks the government officials to distort the crime-figure. He suggests them to show some of the deaths caused by murder, as hunger-death because the area was drought affected:

_Half the people go hungry here_
_So get the death-figures of the town and have them._
_Hunger is the chief assassin!_

Similarly, he suggests the officials to show the death of his former secretary caused by a motor accident not in an encounter:

_I am sorry to hear that!_
_And when it that the police shot them?_
_A mother-accident? That could have been contrived._
_The axle broke? Nothing happens in this beastly_
_Place as it should have happened_

Deposing the purpose of his visit of the drought-hit area the minister says:

_Why do I tour a thriving district_
_During drought, you will ask? Party funds;_
_Like granaries elsewhere, the Party coffers are empty._
_I am touching only the fringe of my mandate but the_
_Head office expects a six-figure cheque;_

Mentioning the political harangue, Daruwalla says:

_Seventy six men have starved to death here_
_My colleagues tell me_
_And a hundred girls sold!_
You night-creatures of this man-made night
My heart goes out to you! No one cares
A blob of spittle for the common man these days.

Distorting the fact the minister tells the crowd that it is highly deplorable that day by day 'public urinals' are shrinking in number, as old urinals are being dismantled and government offices being erected there. He distortingly calls the dismantled Harija House to be dismantled old urinals. The following lines deserves attention again for high political harangure:

Ministries expand while public urinal shrink;
But! Assure you there'll be hell to pay!
You cannot fool around with the tax-payer's urinal.

This section presents a high political satire. It brings the leaders of the day to their true nature in lime-light. Dominating irony and satire keeps the sway right from the beginning of the section to the end.

In 'caries', Daruwalla wages war against the hypocrite politicians, once again. He maintains that they bear double-personality. They are specious in nature. Outwardly they appear to be innocent and simple which is elusive in nature but inwardly they are very shrewd. Daruwalla presents a lively account of how they deceive the people by their fine rhetoric and great promises:

His half-truths had an edge over his rivals now.
*His clichés were backed by better amplifers*
His smile was more toothsome
The people he bombarded with his grapeshot lies
Were more vulnerable.
The election was already in his pocket;
Pointing towards the money grabbing nature of the politicians and
their pretentious simplicity, the poet ridiculously remarks:

In the city his house remained as it was,
Cows and goats tethered in front,
Open drains flowing all around,
Clogged with offal and spinach-leaf.
People must still think that he was
Simple, one of them,
Only in the bedroom air conditioners hummed
And thick rugs covered it wall to wall
And he stated asking friends
"What are those Swiss banks?
How the hell do they operate?"

Daruwalla humorously says that such persons are exposed sooner or
later:

Now it is not the mouth which stinks;
Only his words,
Like maggots from the body
Of overripe fruit

Talking about the growing immorality and vice which grips the city,
the poet's anger gets expression in the following lines:
If mass rape is what you want
Create some other species in your own image,
People in whose language
There is no word for pain,
People whose greeds are few
And can be shoveled
On the dunghill of fulfillment.

Being upset by the dirt and squalor, an stinking air, the poet earnestly
prays God to depopulate the city by making at least ‘one generation sterile’
for ten years:

The world reeks of corrupt bodies
As the neigher world of corrupt souls.
What is there to loose between
Dirty feet, sweating armpits,
Sakepti hearts?
Lord, we are sick of ourselves.
For ten years let seed
Stay clear of the uterus.
Let one generation be sterile;
Castrate the buggers if you like
No more men! No more women!
Save us Lord! Save us from ourselves

In short, these lines are indicative of the poet’s great concern over
growing population and the air full of suffocation, particularly in big cities
like Bombay and Calcutta. Highlighting one-sided love and faithlessness, Daruwalla pathetically remarks:

Even though a vague dust settles on the fruit
Even though love finds itself in one-way traffic,
And passion turns into a no-entry street
I will still hope for favours

In Daruwalla’s ‘Winter Poems’, one finds a gloomy atmosphere having the sway right from the beginning to end. Realistic treatment of various issues perplexing the man and the country, finds apt and lively expression in this volume and this brings the poet much nearer to be called the poet of the social and the poet of the mass. The poet does not lose sight of the ugliness of the city, caused by dirt, squalor and death, even while describing the calmness and beauty of the morning. The poet’s cynicism, again remains dominant in ‘Dawans’:

Water and sky and the farther bank
Breaking apart
And rock-pigeons
That scatter like debris,
Contused purple
    Turns to cyanosed manve
Dragging a half-severed leg
Alone the streets of drawn.
In ‘Vignette!’, the poet presents a sketch of the city when the day breaks. A sense of pervading disappointment again takes the poet in its hold, after the sunrise:

*The sun comes up*
*Like the outer husk*
*Of some some fiery despair.*

But the poet feels that the Ganges remains unchanged and flows us usual:

*The Ganga flows swollen with hymns.*

There is a stirring of life with the sunrise. The Hindu rituals start us usual and likewise lepers, beggers and awards starts their daily business of making a living:

*Lepers huddle along the causeways*
*Like stunted shrubs*
*Black with frost-burns.*
*A thin dwarf, smeard blue with ash,*
*Spiked with a beard,*
*Forested with matted hairs,*
*Cavort ape-like. Overhead the monkeys gibber.*
*Crisp from their river-bath, women*
*Drop coins in coconut-shells*
*But no avarice flickers*
*In the eyes of the palsied,*
*In the faces of the blind.*
In the following lines, Daruwalla talks about hunger, misery and lovelessness of the people:

Perhaps they come to Varanasi
The unloved, the hungry looking
For their souls like the blind
Looking for their lost children.

Pointing towards all manipulating and cunning ‘pandas’ and the red-trafficking in the city simultaneously, the poet makes a sarcastic remark:

In the street of the Lord
The sepial teeth of ‘pandas’
In the street of virginally
The rancous laughter of whores.

In the following lines, the poet’s earnest yearning for a refuge from the nauseating and sickening atmosphere of the city finds expression but he has no where to go because rest other cities are also infested with the same evils:

I wish to tear myself from all this
The wet lick of the city’s fiery tongue
And the sputter of dry red purchased like fuel.
Let thoughts fly away like a scatter of birds
To some other town. But where?

Describing the restlessness, hearlessness, ugliness and deformities of other cities the poet mockingly remarks:
All cities are the same at night
When you walk barefoot
Across their blistered backs. The pavements
Snoring and one insomniac looking up at the
Lidless phosphorescence of the sky. At dawn
Everywhere the ridios crackle with death,
The newspapers drip with bile and acid.

In the second section of the poem the poet is horrified to find that the water-pollution is an international phenomenon. When Daruwalla looks ahead, he views a gloomy future. Presenting the picture of the period, Daruwalla excruciatingly says:

Ten thousand years hence
As the current shifts
On the living waters.
And the most of time runs aground,
All will be death-silt in your valley
As in other valleys;
Birds will chart new routes over Kailas,
For there will be no slugs to feed on here,
On a rain-sluiced evening, three
Spacemen from some other planet will
Dig through your silt-flanks and
Come upon a half-burnt skull
As the Magi came upon the Christ.
Digging at the prevalent system among the Hindus, according to which a son from a kept is not entitled to perform the ‘pinddan’ ritual. Hence, he sarcastically puts:

She didn’t want children,
For a concubine’s children cannot offer
To their ancestors
Lump of boiled rice.

Again, referring to the widowhood of the rive, the poet very wittingly and mockingly puts:

‘You do not have to do all this,
You are not a widow!
‘How do I Know?’ she answered.
‘Some of the men I have slept with
May have died’

In ‘The Fighting Eagles’, the poet makes a similarity between ‘the fighting eagles’ and the fighting people. He adds sarcastically that even the reasons for fighting are same in the case of the eagles and the war-mongers. To quote the poet:

They fought for the same reasons:

A female,
A patch of the sky
Or crag-kingdom
Pointing out the devastation caused during the war and also mockingly talking about the craze of the ar-mongers the poet comments:

Their keening was no longer
Fierce and chill:
A language of pure sounds
But a splurging hysteria.
As they dipped and rose
Their senses reeled.
The enemy became faceless, voiceless
And the crag-kingdom
Black with a million nights of frost
Seivelled round them.

Lastly, the poet wishes earnestly, had the war been fought in such a place where the majority of the people could have remained untouched by the misery it brought in its spate:

Were they eagles raking up the skies
Or berserk soldiers fighting on a hill?

In ‘Harang’, the poet talks about his own superstition. He does not keep himself aloof from the group of the superstitious people, rather he feels that he is one of them. To him, ‘harang’ is the symbol of impending misfortune and misery. The movement he or any other member of his family sees it, his family is bound to be visited with some kinds of misfortunes or the others. He confirms his superstition by many examples taken from his
daily life. In short, to him 'hamag' is a sinister creature. Talking about the abode of this sinister creature, the poem opens with these lines:

*The bamboo jungle grew around our house,*  
*An arthritic forest*  
*Of tangled bone*  
*Sdpiked with leaf.*

He calls the tangled bamboo as 'tangled bone spiked with leaf'. The use of this beautiful image heightens the experience of the poet and makes his description vivid and lively.

Again, telling about the same and the knotty problem created by the bamboo-forest the poet reveals:

*You cold not cut it-*  
*The stems had hardened so*  
*The chopped limbs could not be moved;*  
*They were inter placed like bone-shards*  
*In a multiple fracture.*  
*You could not burn it after ht rains*  
*It was too green*  
*And if you burnt it in June*  
*Half the town would go cindering with it.*

Apparition in April displays Daruwalla’s great concern for socio-political change but a bit slightly inclined towards the environment. One finds myth being reduced to its personal level as is seen in the poem. ‘Fire-
‘Hymn’. Myth-talk has been given a leaning to direct descriptive and sharply commenting direction, when Daruwalla says:

\begin{quote}
And twenty years since
As I consigned my first-born to the flames
The nearest Tower of silence and thousand miles the
Fire-hymn said to me, “you stand for given”.
\end{quote}

The poet very severely takes to task the politicians of double standards and exposes them to the bone. As Dryden portrays Shadwell in *Mac Flecnoe*, so does Daruwalla in the concluding lines of the poem. He says:

\begin{quote}
He is an old leader after all
Who has gone thrice to jail
-twice for home-rule
And once for sodomy.
\end{quote}

In the poem, ‘To Gandhi’, the poet severely attacks at the person pretending to be Gandhians because of being in Khadi underwear. These lines are noteworthy for deep irony:

\begin{quote}
I dread this October
When urdu poets will trotout
Bastardized quatrains
Switching truth and ahmisa
For saqui and jam
When your portaiots will be unveiled
\end{quote}
And prisoners released
To commit crime afresh.

Daruwalla's *The Keeper of the Dead* comprises three sections. This volume won him the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1984. The poet has dwelt upon various themes in this collection of poems. Some of the important themes dealt with in this volume are: Predatory, distortion of English, epidemics, religious rituals, war and peace, etc.

In 'Hawk', the poet deals with the burning problem of ever-growing exploitation of the weak and innocent. Hawk stands as the symbol of revolt in the poem. He appears as a rebel, out to end the rule of tyranny and exploitation. The sigh of the earth with its objects appears to him horrifying and sickening—hence, he wishes to get lost into air:

*The lend beneath him was filmed with salt:
Glass-seed, insect, bird-
Nothing could thrive here. But he was lost
In the momentum of his own gyre
A frustrated parricide on the kill.
The fuse of his hate was gurning still.*

But in the evening 'the wild-hawk king' returns homeward and takes shelter in the groves where crow, mynah, pigeon and other birds are roosting. The raucous fly of the parakeets excites him to the pitch of frenzy and he is once again back to his old business, i.e. predatory:
But in the evening he hovered above
The groves, a speck of barbed passion.
Crow, mynath and pigeon roosted here
While parakeets flew rancously by.
And then he ran amok,
Rapist in the harem of the sky.
As he went up with a pigeon
Skewered to his heal-talen
He scanned the other birds, marking out their fate,
The ones he would scoop up next,
These black dregs in the cup of his hate.

Daruwalla's hawk appears to be burning with hate against man and
the birds touched and tamed by him. He takes man to be the sole cause of all
the mismanagement and ugly state of affairs in the world. Gradually, the
scene of misery and poverty on the earth unfolds before his eyes:

Moresels of vision are fed to his eyes
As he is unblended stitch by releneing stitch.
Slowely the worlds reforms:
Mud walls, trees burgeon.
His eye travels like the eyes of the storm.
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