Chapter-III

IMAGERY IN

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Love to Tagore is not an emotional nonsense; nor is it a libidinal outflow. To him, it is an irresistible spiritual urge. It bestows deification not only on the earthly but also on the imaginary. It is the call of the should which cannot be denied. To him, love is a varied idea; its facets are many. It is a reality, and not an illusion. It is not a mere sentiment; it is the truth. It is the “White light” of pure consciousness that emanates from Brahma”.¹ Tagore may look askance at Freud and Freudians who believes that love with an inhibited aim was originally sensual and in man’s unconscious mind it is always so. To him, love is a self-offering.

When Tagore started writing, the theme of love was current in Bengali. In Vidyasunder stories and also in Vaishnav poetry of Biharilal, one reads an implicit acceptance of the physical aspect of love. The physical charms of the beloved were admired through imagery soaked in eroticism. Through one finds in them a reticence to dwell directly on the pleasures of flesh, yet there are pointed hints of the hidden delight in the
union of lovers tryst, the teasing and testing of emotions and yet the poet's mind is ever aware of the social stigma of illicit love. The pangs of separation are described with all the subtleties of nuances of feelings in imagery of changing season. The emotional ennui and psychological conflicts did not exist as the lovers were blessed with unwavering loyalties to each other. The lovers turned their back on the useful eyes of society as symbolized by the images of the vagaries of nature, such as storms and lightning. Such a lover may be true to life, but as he is censured by society, he lacks that abandon in love which one sees in the poetry of Meera. Tagore, despite his liking for the idiom of the Vaishnav poetry, has an angry aversion to such a love. He repudiates such an idea of love in unambiguous terms: "Why the Bengali is not a poet":

Due to the lack of sun's rays and the open air, love cannot be pure. It begins to stink. Our love never enters through the gate; it comes and goes through the small window passage, which has made it hunchbacked. It cannot look straight in the face, it startles at the sound of its own footsteps.
Tagore’s idea of love breaks a new ground, as he transfers love to a private world of imagination. In Shelley possibly he has found a new concept of love. When criticized for holding the idea of love which was western rather than Indian, he affirmed:

The contemporary poetry with open, fearless and liberalized emotions, free from the trammels of over ornamentation and fierce, piratical emotions, should be eliminated because it is foreign. Which of the two is really harmful for us, the one that secretly sends poison into the veins of that which openly fights against society?

Tagore, thus categorically rejects the old view of love. His reader is introduced to a new concept according to which love becomes a pious passion, a spiritual infatuation hardly needing an object of adoration. His love is that of a man who loves but does not reason why and what he loves.

Inevitably, Tagore’s objects of love are ever wrapped in mystery. And this is the reason why his readers speak of the ambiguity of his eros. Although he gives a concrete picture of the lover and the beloved and there is no elusive air about their
love, yet the reader groups in the dark to know their identity. Tagore expresses the idea of this ambiguity of love thorough an olfactory image of musk. Man is but a musk deer. Mad with the perfume of love, which is within, the deer runs on 'in the shadow of the forest'. This musk deer image symbolizes barbaric innocence and animal virility. The image suggests that the objects of love have a mysterious enchantment about it. Its fragrance is captivating and stimulating. The image of the shadow of forest suggests that in spite of its bewildering nature, the lover's pursuit for the beloved is a pursuit in the soothing cool of heart. The image of his own desire takes shape and dances before the eye of imagination:

From my heart comes out and dances the image
of my son desires. The gleaming vision flits on.

The poet tries to clasp it firmly. It eludes him and leads his astray. Man's predicament to grasp the objects of love is made evident when in his bewilderment the poet says:

I seek what I cannot get; I get what I do not seek.

The pursuit seems to end in paradox of failure and achievement. But, in Tagore, the idea of love does not admit any
paradox. The lover in his pursuit may fail to get what he has been pursuing: but he succeeds in getting something far more north of love. To him intellection is not wisdom: love is true wisdom. Love is an eternal pilgrimage, and not to love is a sin.

However, despite the ambiguity of his Eros, Tagore's poetry does not lack that Keatsian passionate intensity which is characteristic of sensuous love. In delineating the minute shades of passion. In playing with the emotional nuances of human heart. Tagore has revealed a deep psychological insight into the mystery of human love in its different aspects. Tagore's idea of love has about it many hues, light and shade. In certain poems it is a serene sense, and yet in some other poems it is but a sportive light-heartedness. But the mood of flippancy is alien to the poet.

Tagore superbly describes the strange joyous ecstasy fleet in human heart with the dawn of love in it. It is said that at certain moments silence is more vocal than speech. In the case of certain lovers in Tagore, the saying proves its veracity. In the poem "Day after day he comes" the girl he loves. He simply hangs about the house she lives in. But the girl understands this language of silence. Her heart is filled with a tender feeling for the man who only comes to, and goes from, her house without
speaking a word. She requests her friend to go to him and give him ‘a flower from my hair’. A flower in Tagore is a symbolic image which is ever associated with love. The girl seems to have rewarded the untold love. But womanly coyness compels her to request her friend not to disclose her name to the silent lover “for he only comes and goes”. Her tender heart is touched by pity for the man. He comes and “sits on the dust under the tree”, is suggestive of humility. This inconvenience to the lover is unbearable to the soft-hearted girl. She asks her friend to, “Spread there a seat with flowers and leaves”. The ‘sad eyes’ of the lover bring ‘sadness to her heart’. To her, love is not an unintelligible fantasy: it is the reciprocation of one heart by the other.

In the poem “why did he choose to come…?“ Love is a pleasing confusion of mind. A ‘wandering youth’ comes to the door of a girl every day at dawn. He is a singer and he weaves his songs with fresh tunes every time.

As there is no monotony in nature, so he sings which are eternally new and fresh. The song, the minstrel of love, makes her heart restless with love. She cannot put her heart in her daily work. Her eyes are filled ‘with the mist’, which symbolizes the confusion of mind. The call of love cannot be evaded and
it has disturbed the normal routine of her life. As she comes in and out, every time she passes by him, and "Hey eyes are caught by his face". But she does not know whether she should speak to him or keep silent. It is certainly a hamlet Ian dilemma. She seems to be at war with herself. Social considerations and feminine shyness seem to be too strong to break; the call of love seems to tender to be ignored. The images of dawn, youth and song suggest that she has awakened to a new sensibility which is not a romantic haze but a reality. Her comment, "why did he choose to come to my door" does not suggest her aversion to the call of love; it suggests an annoyance which is indicative of the secret acceptance of the power of love over beauty.

In the poem "when the lamp goes out....."\textsuperscript{10}, the poet speaks of the ambiguous working of a girl's heart. Her heart is lit with the light of love but her womanly shyness does not allow the rays of love to come into the poem. At every dawn, she gets up early with the early birds, and when the lamp goes out by her bed declaring the end of night, she decks her loose hair with a 'fresh wreath' and 'sits' at her open 'window' eagerly waiting for 'the young traveler' who daily comes along the road in the rosy mist of the morning. The images along the road in the rosy mist of the morning. The images of 'dawn', 'early birds' and the
‘fresh wreath’ on her loose hair are suggestive of an eager and delightful expectation. The image of ‘open window’ suggests a warm heart which is ready to welcome love. The image of ‘rosy mist’ in the morning symbolizes a feeling which is lovely, fresh and all-devouring. The young traveler wears a pearl chain on his neck and ‘the sun’s rays’ fall on his crown. He stops before her door and ‘the sun’s rays’ falls on his crown. He stops before her door and asks her with ‘an eager cry’ where she is. But her womanly shyness does not allow her to disclose her identity to him. She cannot say, “She is I, young traveler, she is I”. It is ‘dusk’ time ‘The lamp’ is not lit yet. She is listlessly braiding her hair. This is an image which symbolizes suspense and anxiety. She does not know it the lower comes back or not. But the young traveler comes back. He comes on his chariot in the glow of the setting sun. This image in Hindu religion is always associated bridegroom to the door of the bride. His horses are foaming at the mouth and the mouth and there is dust on his garment suggesting that he has traveled far a wide in search of the lady of his heart. This time he alights at her door and repeats the same question; “where is she?” This time, too, her womanly shyness prevails over her heart. She does not disclose her identity to her lover and he has to go back in despair.
It is an ‘April night’. The heart of the girl is filled with remorse and repentance because her shyness has always stood in the way of love. She cannot sleep. The image of the ‘despairing traveler’ flits across the eyes of her imagination. The ‘lamp is burning’ in her room. The breeze of the south; comes gently. The ‘noisy parrot sleeps in its cage’. These images suggest that love has maddened her with a positive abnormality. She has put on a ‘bodice’ of the colour of peacock’s throat, and the colour of her mantle’s as ‘green as young’ grass. These images have some voluptuousness about them. ‘She sits upon the floor at the window watching the deserted street’. The night is ‘dark’ and through that ‘dark night’, which symbolizes a frustrated desire, she keeps on humming: “She is I, despairing traveler, she is I”. The poem undoubtedly conveys that to ignore the call of love is a guilt which disturbs the serenity of mind. The imagery of the poem is both suggestive and evocative.

According to Tagore, love has its own tongue. It cannot be kept a secret. In “when I go alone....”\(^{11}\) the girl, possibly either due to her social consciousness or her individual shyness, wants to keep her love a secret, but finds herself in a dilemma. Tagore presents her dilemma through three different images. In the first image, the girl goes ‘alone’ at ‘night’ to her love tryst. Through
a lovely image of silence, Tagore seems to convey that nature is cooperative in keeping her secret a secret. ‘Birds do not sing’, “the wind does not silent but stir, the house on both sides at the street stand”, it is produced by her own ‘ankles’ — a noise that groves the noise louder at every step of hers — which is making the world know of her secret love-tryst. In the second image, the girls are seen sitting at her balcony. It is night, a suitable time for a secret love meeting. As she cannot see, she listens to his footsteps. Nature again seems to be a happy helper. Leaves do not rustle on the trees, and the water is still in the river. This time it is not the music of her anklets, but the wild throbbing of her heart which proves inimical. Her heart beats wildly, and she is helpless to keep it quiet. The third image presents the meeting of the love and the beloved. The lover ‘comes’ and sits by her side. Her body ‘trembles’ and her eyelids ‘droop’. The images unquestionable suggest a secret dizzy rapture in the heart of the girl. The ‘night darkens’, the ‘wind blows out the lamp’, and the ‘clouds draw veils over the stars’. This image of complete darkness is suggestive of culminate of love is secrecy. Now her predicament is the ‘jewel’ at her breast. It shines and gives light and thereby unveils their secret meeting. The poem indicates that love is, no doubt, a private affair, yet it seems to be conscious of the norms society as it embraces the problem of honour and
dishonor, virtue and vice, and social and antisocial. But as the poem reminds one of the secret love-trysts of Radha with Krishna, one feels that love, which is above promiscuity, dispenses with the man-made social norms. Social values fade into nothing before the call of soul.

It is curious that Tagore's early poetry pictures love in its erotic aspect. The poet seems to be delighting in the physical aspect of beauty, and in the sensual idea of love. "Rahu's Love"\textsuperscript{12} which appeared in pictures and songs may be treated as a representative poem dealing with the physical aspects of love. Rahu's love is an insatiable hunger of flesh. Rahu, the mythical demon, is the symbolic image of frustrated desire relentlessly pursuing its object of love. His love is but a carnal desire. His passion is as dark as his figure. The imagery, employed by the poet, is crude and sordid. Rahu's love is sensual and greedy; it is all-devouring passion. It knows no discipline. It is possession and not freedom. His love is Freudian love talking to the platonic.\textsuperscript{13} The moon, the beloved, does not like him. He will hang about her 'like an iron chain' fastened to her 'feet'. He claims her to be his prisoner – 'The captive wretch'. His love is a knot which no one unties. His 'ruthless desire' is an iron chain clanking at her feet. It shall pursue her ever and anon, in
all her actions and in all her movements. She cannot escape
him. Whether or not she likes him, whether or not she likes
his presence, he wills always he with her. He shall haunt her
all her life:

My figure dark you will ever see when you
laugh, when you cry, now in front, now behind,
now at your side.

Alone, at dead of night, sitting up with heavy
heart, startled, and seized with fright, you will see
me by you seated, my eyes on your face.

His dark figure shall never allow her to see her world
in its proper perspective; like a ‘dark anxiety’ he shall always
surround her. He is resolved to have in his arms and keep her
there ‘one livelong night’. His heart is burning with an insatiable
thirst: ‘A thirst so great as burns in me even ages will not allay’.
The very ‘burns’ suggests the fire of lust, the appetite of flesh
and, therefore, Rahu’s love is not a love in Tagore a sense.
Moreover, the images like ‘figure dark’, ‘anxiety dark’ and his soul
‘benighted and lost’, ‘hunger’ and ‘thirst’ suggest something which
is not is good taste. They speak of the oddity and incongruity
of his passion. His passion may be very intense and virile but,
like his ‘future dark’, it is a dark passion having nothing noble about it. Love of Rahu is a law of nature:

Death always follows life, hope is shadowed by fear. Like of a DAKINI the wide world over, night is trailing day. Light and shade are linked together by the World’s decree: so your beauty will keep alive this sate less hunger in me.

The crime of his beloved is that she is an innocent beauty, and so he is bounding her up. Rahu’s resolution is the resolution of a hound who will not allow any respite to his prey. His love is an acquisitive desire—a desire to want, to get. This desire has certainly sprung from the sense of inferiority complex in him. It points towards the fulfillment of that deficiency from which he had been suffering through acquisition. The aim of such a desire is the self are of the self, getting without giving. Rahu’s love is what C.S. Lewis calls a need love as opposite to the gift-love.14 His desire is acquisitive. He wants to complete or fulfill himself joining with another person who is what he is not or has what he does not have.15

Some poems of Sharps and Flats reveal an Eros which is a mixture of sensuous elements. The imagery, employed, by the poet, is not only erotic, but also suffers from perverted
ingenuity, converging into horrifying conceits. "Bodily Union" may have been written by a surrealist, it is more frank than a work by D.H. Lawrence. In it Tagore seems less near to Keats and more near to Byron and John Donne. In "Her Feet" love is 'the red lotus of Desire', which blushes 'Kisses', the lovers, while kissing each other, make an pilgrimage to the confluence of lips. The lips of two lovers are two 'waves' which swell, break and mingle in a kiss: "In the law of love lips". Tagore himself had admitted the presence of sensuality in some of the poems a Sharps and Flats. But the poet makes it clear that in some of them there is shown a struggle to come out of the carnal which he wants to get rid of completely. "The Prisoner" exemplifies it. The imagery employed is self-expressive. The poet in love is a prisoner in a flowery prison. Carnal love is but 'fetters' for his heart which seems to have realized that love is far above physical enjoyment, and that love is a freedom of heart to be laid at the feet of the beloved. He requests his beloved to take away her 'fettering arms' and to stop those kisses which are like draughts of wine. He feels that 'this flowery prison' is close and stuffy and hence the prayer: "My prison" is close and stuffy and hence the prayer: "My captive heart set free, my love". The carnal passion finds expression through the symbolic image of 'night of full moon', which seems endless. The poet's heart 'pines'
for the 'light of dawn' in the sky-an image symbolizing the full freedom of soul. The two images, as put by the poet in juxtaposition, indicate that the poet has realized that love is not a physical pleasure; it is freedom of joyous self-offering. The idea of physical love seems to have filled the poet with nausea and his soul seems to have been struggling for emergence from it. But as carnal desire is a natural tendency of heart. The escape from its snare is not easy. The eager escape cannot so easily be materialized; its helplessness is expressed in the lines:

Caught in mashes of your long loose hair, from you shall I ever escape?

The poet seems to be fully aware that sensuality is a hard rock to break. It is an all-devouring and all-alluring passion, he tells his beloved;

Your eager fingers, meeting together, are weaving all over me a tactile net. Whenever I open my drowsy eyes, I see that moon with its non-stop smile.

There the helpless psyche of the poet seeks the cooperation of the beloved. He tells her that his soul is not averse
to love, that it only wants to break away from the prison cell of the carnal, and that it yearns for a love which is a voluntary but honorable submission to beauty without involving any taunt of disgrace. So he requests her to:

Take my fetters off, set me free:

My free heart then I’ll lay at your feet.

The beloved seems to have readily granted the prayer, for with the publication of ‘Manasi’ Tagore completely bids goodbye to erotic love. The erotic passion transcends into the ideal and the spiritual, displacing the ganadonal agitation by a disciplined and serene commitment.

In fruit Gathering, the poet categorically states his aversion to the undisciplined and unrestrained passion, through the image of “The foaming wine that having burst its vessel in a moment would run to waste”. Such a love is undesirable. He prefers the love which is cool and pure and which is like God’s rain that blesses the thirsty earth and fills the homely earthen jars. The images suggest that, such a love is a benevolent desire to give. He prays to God to send him the love that keeps the heart still with the fullness of peace:
Send me the love that would soak down into the centre of being, and from there would spread like the unseen sap through the branching tree of life, giving birth to fruit and flowers.¹⁹

Love in Tagore’s view, becomes the highest manifestation of consciousness. Its idea seems to be animated by a virile piety. It has nothing sensual about it. If it is a desire, it is a benevolent desire. The desire is alien to the utilitarian. Its essence eludes the grasp of the worldly wise; it is comprehended by the little girl,²⁰ who is a symbolic image of pure soul. She knows that “Love is not for any practical use. It is an end in itself.”²¹ The ‘Love-lit’ maiden has information that the young prince is to pass by her door. She is so enamored and enraptured that she cannot attend to her daily work. Her love is an all devouring passion. She is the prince’s bride, whether or not be ears for her. She will put on a select garment and braid her hair. The imagery evidently suggests the preparation of an Indian bridge to go with her bridegroom. The mother, an image of worldly knowledge, and soul in ignorance, is taken aghast at the foolish audacity of her daughter. She looks at her daughters with dumb amazement. The little girl reads the thoughts of her mother and tells her that the transcendental felicity of loving and giving is its own
reward; she knows well that she will be ignored by the prince. Ever for a moment he shall not glance at her window and will pass out of sight in the twinkling of an eye. Only the 'vanishing strain of the flute' will come to her sobbing from afar. The moment of ecstasy, the union of the lovers, will not be realized. The young prince really passed by her door, and she saw him. The image, 'the morning sun flesheď from his chariot', suggests that he is an image of fresh and dazzling beauty. The little girl unveiled her face. Man – made custom melt themselves in the fire of love. She 'tore the ruby chain' from her 'neck' and 'flung' it in his path. The prince, in the vanity of his rank, not only neglected the waiting bride, but also neglected the offering of love. The ruby chain, the symbol of love – offering, was crushed under the wheels of his chariot. It only left a 'red stain' on the dust. The image 'red stain' suggests that to the young maiden, love is a selfless scarifies. She has sacrifice her heart on the alter of love. The flute brings to her, not a message of union, but a 'sobbing strain'. Her love has been neglected, but this neglect does not breed blank despair in her. She is all serenity because she has loved.

This idea of love as sacrifice is made more manifest in "The Unknown". The poet does not know his beloved. She
is an unknown one. But he is determined to know her. Unless he knows her, she cannot escape his grace. She seems to be the lady of imagination and the grasp, too, is imaginative. He saw her face for the first time while he was half asleep. He fixed his eyes upon her and asked where the lay hidden 'behind the curtain of self-forgetfulness'. The lady seems to dwell in mysterious land forlorn. It is not easy to know her real self. Moreover, ordinary human love, 'sweet love whisperings', will not do. She seems to be a slave of her coyness. To free her from the chains of coyness the use of force has become inevitable. Hence, love resolves to use force to free her from the bondage of shyness:

Out of your fear, your shyness, your hesitations,
I will snatch you by force, and bring you into the fierce light of the day. You will wake up in tears.

And in a moment recognize yourself.

Thus, love is mirror in which one sees one's true self. When the bondages of fear, shyness and hesitation are removed, love becomes a freedom. In this freedom of the beloved, the lover finds his own freedom. The day passes by. The twilight descends on the sky. The lover prays to God to tear asunder all
bondage and ‘blaze forth’ the fire in which he can recognize her. Fire, a symbol of purifying Nature-force, becomes an image of love for the poet, and he resolves to offer his “life in scarifies into that fire”.

In fact, love may be divided into two broad categories: selfish and selfless, selfish love or love for the welfare of self is based on convenience. It is possessive and carnal. It is a debased desire. Rahu’s love falls in this category. It is Self-service, friendship and the complete self-surrender. It is free from sex and social ties. It is a perennial found of joy and peace. It is not a feeling of Eros. It there is anything erotic in it, it has a spiritual characteristic. Love as spiritual Eros is Tagore’s forte.

In “Petition”\textsuperscript{23}, love is a selfless service. The surge of love seems to in undated every crook and corner of the mind of the lover. The vision of majestic beauty flits across the camera of his mind. The image of beauty becomes to him a royal personage, a queen, to be adored and worshipped. The lover’s only desire is to establish an inseparable association with the queen of beauty. He prefers to be a self confined servitor enjoying the company of his queen. He cherishes a concealed hope that his love will be rewarded, that the beauty adored would realize the
purity of his passion and grant the petition. The poem opens with the address to the image of Royal Beauty:

Hail O Queen,

Queen of the Queens,

Be Kind to this humble servant.

It is ‘after chamber hours’. He looks like the pale moon appearing at the end of night. She knows that he is her ‘devoted servant’ and asks him why she is approached at that odd hour and what his prayer is. There are thousand at her beck and call. A word of command from the Queen is for them an honour bestowed on and a victory achieved. But this lover is honoured in his humility and victorious achieved. But this lover is honoured in his humility and victorious in ‘sitting the duffer of a beggar’; but to him, she is his queen as well as his goddess. He is blessed in seeing her beaming face. His petition is to be knighted by becoming the gardener of her flower-beds. To him, the vocation of a petty gardener is better than the achievements of warriors and the dignity of court life:

Weapons of war, the bow and the arrow,
I fling on the ground, this head — dress and the courtly attire.

I place at your feet,

Take back from me all your high offices.

He prays to her not to send him as her "ambassador escorting her golden vessels to remote lands". Nor does he desire to be sent to conquer new shores and; unfurl her 'victorious banner' in 'distant horizon'. Worldly fame cannot tempt him to miss the company of his queen. Her state is queenly. Many in it. It spreads far and wide. In it 'the steeples of the temples and spires of the sky-scrappers' bite the horizon, 'engulfing the eternal silence of the stars'. But these activities are on the 'other bank' on this side while she lives in a distant palace:

Your stupendous snow-white palace, spotlessly clean and studded with sapphire rises alone on the top of the hill surrounded by coloured clouds.

This descriptive image of the 'stupendous snow-white palace' which is 'spotlessly clean' suggests sexual purity. The lover desires to breathe his days in the 'secluded corner' of such
a palace. He shall live ‘unobserved’ beneath her ‘southern window in deep shadow of budding inhumanly shrubbery. “He shall be ‘listening to the cooing of the retiring pigeons”. On a grassy courtyard, ‘fountains shall spout cascading all through. They shall render ‘the noon bewildered with pain’ and ‘piteously mournful’ because they will impoverish its scorching power. Outside on the terrace of this palace of piety, ‘the household peacock will dance’ ‘spreading its cluster of plumes with puffer up pride’, the swans with their white neck ‘will stray cackling on the mossy green’ and the ‘tawny doe will roam in the greenish shadow’. These images cumulatively create an atmosphere of joy and peace.

Then a very important question arises; is love useful? Is love an activity? The queen calls her devoted servant an indolent, and the work-shrinking servant, asks in what way he shall be useful. The answer is that the ‘collective of joys in their hundreds’ is not wholly useless. He knows that “Love is an activity, not a passive effect”24. It is primarily ‘giving’, not receiving. He recounts to her his activities. His duty shall be to keep that ‘Sylvan Path’ fresh through whish she loiters ‘with the rising sun in the spring and in the autumn’. This walk at dawn shall refresh her. It shall ‘discard the warmth of indolent sleep’
from her 'languid body' in 'the cool current of air'. The 'praise'
of her feet shall 'bloom in flowery letters' every morning in the
midst 'of delighted mass of grass' which shall be longing for her
'touch'. He shall prepare an artistic, multi-coloured garland of
jasmine buds, he shall put the garland on 'platter of gold', and
humbly present it silently to her. At 'dusk' she will 'entwine' this
garland on her 'forehead' around her 'coiffure'. She shall be
preparing herself for the love-tryst as the images speak:

Where in a secluded chamber you will braid your
hair with your fair lotus-like-hands, and a golden
mirror on your lap releasing on your back your
luxuriant hair like a swollen spring of darkness
flowing unrestrained in curly waves.

The follows a beautiful forest image which in its
overtone is half erotic and half religious. The queen of beauty
'would be seated in a swing' which is decorated with Malti
flowers. The scene is the bank of a lake, 'studded' with lilies
the Saptaparna tree:

A curious moon will shower through the interstices
of leaves a thousand kisses upon your forehead, eyes, breast and
parts of your robes.
The forest itself charmed by her beauty. Her 'Joyous body' will be encircled by the sweet forest fragrance which will rise like a 'sensuous scented breath'. There is undoubtedly a lurking eroticism about these images. But even in this erotic atmosphere the lover’s heart is not touched by Eros. The feeling of service is supreme in his heart. He shall simply 'set the swing in a slow and rhythmic motion', for to him service to beauty is love. The night comes. The queen is in the arms of sleep. At her bed-side, a lamp burns 'unwinding' all through the 'somnolent night'. The lamp, too, seems bewitched. It is a personified image. It drinks beauty through its 'sleepless eyes focused stead vastly on the superbly beauteous slumbering form undreamable by gods and men'. But the love is not jealous. His only desire is to 'light the lamp with scented oil'. He tells her explicitly:

O queen, I shall have your skirt dyed with the yellow extracted from the stalks of the shefals flower:

The seat for your pedestal I shall daily cover with blesses decorative painted with sandal wood-paste and kumkum, each an imaginative piece with a new conception and set in a new style.
The forward he asks for is again a service to beauty. Every morning he shall prepare flower bangles for her tiny wrist which is like a lotus bud. He shall bring them to her in a lotus leaf and himself make her wear them. Every morning he shall prepare for her a garland from 'the young shoots of Ashok'. After 'painting' the soles of her feet with the 'red essence of Ashok', he shall kiss away a tiny speck of dust from 'the edge' of her toe. Such a sex – free love, a vegetarian love, may be unacceptable to the modern psychologists. They shall certainly make face at such an idea and charge it with different types of complexes. But it is love-love which knows only 'giving and service' and which, in fact, is an offering. The images of flower bangles, lotus leaf, garland, red-essence of Ashoka with an overtone of religion trance and love spiritualism.

The idea of love is Tagore at times takes the form of esteem. The lover looks at the beloved with a sense of admiration. He has his own standards of goodness or greatness and holds her in high regards because of her qualities and accomplishments, her artistic talents and her beautiful nature. Such an admiration at times reaches the height of an unqualified veneration. It signifies a positive judgment and approbation of the excellence which the beloved possesses or exemplifies. In such a case the
lover looks at his beloved as a child looks at his mother or a devoted servant at a charitable queen. Certain poems of Gitanjali sparkle with such a love. In them the relation between man and God is conceived of as that between the lover and the beloved ‘the life of my life’ and assures her to keep his body pure. He knows that his beloved is a symbol of purity and purifying power. He knows that her ‘living touch’ is upon all his limbs. The beloved this time is not an unsophisticated rural maid but Supreme Beauty, Supreme Goodness and Supreme Truth. Her touch makes the poet feel the impulse of divinity within him. This knowledge ‘has kindled the light of reason’ in his mind. He assures her ‘to drive away’ all the evils from his heart and keep his ‘love in flowers’. His beloved has her ‘seat in the innermost shrine’ of his heart. Her power gives him strength to act and he pledges to ‘Endeavour to reveal’ her in his actions. Tagore’s “Basundhara”\textsuperscript{25} embodies such a like every mother and the poet, representing every man, is her “Security”\textsuperscript{26}. She is ‘the home’ man comes from and she is nature, soil and the ocean. Her love is unconditional and the child needs her love and care physically as well as psychologically. Tagore’s love for the earth is love of an infant for its mother.
Basundhara is a 'mother made of earth'. Man comes from her, lives on her lap and return to her lap and returns to her after his death. This idea is supported both by The Bible and the mystic poets of India. The poem begins with the poet's yearning to go to the bosom of Mother Earth. He exhorts her to take him back 'inside her lap under her wide skirt'. Curiously enough, the poet refuses to rest in peaceful seclusion. On the contrary, he requests to rest in peaceful seclusion. On the contrary, he requests her to 'let him' spread upon her whole body to feel the ecstasy of union:

Let me pervade myself upon your earth; let me spread myself out on all horizons. Like the joy of spring.

Her loves enlarges his heart 'breaking upon the ribs of my chest': it frees him from narrow self-centeredness. Such a love demolishes 'the bound of stone - A narrow wall, my own dismal/Dark dungeon'. Freedom from the dungeon of self will hilarious heart that he wants to 'flow' all over the world. This 'flow' may involve 'swinging, murmuring, trembling, stumbling, scattering, radiating, shivering and starling' which suggest a painful journey. But this painful journey is better than the confinement to the self. As a child of the dren, he shall move I the moss, in the moss, in the lichens, in the grass 'in the
branches, in the barks, in the leaves'. He wants to share the joy of life with them, to be succulent with the mysterious elixir of life. He desires to 'touch the cornfields bowed with the weight of golden ears' with the moving fingers; he wants secretly to fill the 'petals of fresh flowers' with 'golden lines', 'fragrance of nectar' and 'drops of honey'; he wants to diffuse 'assuredness over the brine of the vast ocean'. He wants to dance from coast to coast of a speechless Earth 'with endless tumultuous tunes'; he wants to 'transmit' his 'words over the waves' in all directions with an exulting hilarity. He also wants to be spread, like a white scarf, over the snow-caped peak of the mountain, 'Amidst soundless, solitude. 'Thus, he would identify himself with grass and planet, leaves and flowers, rivers and seas, hills and peaks and share the sweetness of life with them.

Separation from such a beloved mother, viz. death, makes the lover a 'sojourner in exile' and he feels lonely. Naturally, she is a 'Collyrium-coloured, wish-giving cow'. Trees, vines, birds, animals and human beings get from her the milk of life and joy. Every living being on her lap seems to be wild with a delirious joy. The poet would become 'one with every soul', joys. This joy would grant him a transcendental sensibility. It would make the green woods greener and the morning says
brighter by transmitting 'a new quickening light' to them. His 'charmed feeling would paint' the sky and the earth with the colour of his heart. This added beauty would bring a poetic frenzy to the poet, emotive frenzy to the lover and 'frenzy to sing to the songster bird'. This is the reason why 'streams of soul' in 'numberless times' have adorned her with their lives. After living on earth, after adoring her, they recede into her womb to resurge into new life. They have 'mingled their heart's abortion' with her soil. The poet also mixes his ardent love with theirs and resolves to 'dye' her skirt with a lively colour; he 'yield' his all for her adornment and continues to 'revolve' round her in order to remain near to her:

......As an insect, a beast, a bird, a tree, a shrub, a creeper, you will recall me often and place me upon your warm pulsating breast:

Through the ages and in all my births, your breast in my mouth would satiate a hundred million desires of life. Nectar-like breast-milk of a hundred million joys you would make me drink to the dregs with profound affection.
The poet entreats her to take him back into her lap, to collect him 'within her arms in a deep embrace', and to make him 'response, upon her breast'.

The down-trodden and the despised, which are habitual of bearing insults and oblivious of their rights, are objects of love. Unlike Shelly's, Tagore's poetry refuses to be confined to the arid region of abstract principles. It shows that the poet is less interested in the cult of organized patriotism or an unfocussed cosmopolitanism, and more interested in universal humanity, which transcends all barriers of time and place. "Call Me Back to Word" is expressing his anger. The idea of love talks the form of sympathy for the weak. The poet sees the world burning in the fire of hatred and exploitations, and he hears to wake up to the call of the real. His poetic heart is touched by the sufferings of the poor. There arises a question from the mind of the poet:

Who blows the conch to wake the people of the world?  
Whence come the walls that resound in the sky?  

From what dark dungeon do forsaken women cry for help?
The answer comes from the poet’s heart—a heart overflowing with the love for man—that it is the poor whose silent sighs are reverberating across the earth and the sky. The animosity of the cruel exploiters in brought home with a deft artistic touch with an image:

Bloated insolence with million snouts sucks the heart-blood of the weak. Proud injustice mock at pain.

Human beings have been converted into cringing the savage-greed of the civilized people is stripped naked. The poet’s anger is directed against the killers of human freedom. His sympathy is decidedly with the aggrieved black Africans. In “The Poet of Man”, Tagore salutes the poets like Wordsworth, who have made peasants, weavers and fisherman the theme of their songs. He states that nature has always fascinated him, but man has always baffled him. However, in spite of this candid confession, Tagore’s poetry reveals him as a poet of man. For instance, in “The Foreigner”28, he declares that man can have his home in every clime and his country every region of the world, for the has discovered ‘love in each speak of earth and joy in the spread of the sky’. In “Basundhara”28 the poet says:

..... How I long in my mind.
To be the Kinsman of all people in all lands.

But it must be admitted that Tagore’s love of man unconsciously merges into his love for God. It is his prime belief that “He is in the sea, on the shore; he is with the ship that carries all love is a psychological necessity both for man and God. In this Leila of love, both man and God are co-partners. Love is human heart, is the endless play for the joy of God”\(^{29}\). It is God’s will:

Thou hast taken me as they partner of all this wealth. In my heart is the endless play of thy delight. In my life thy will is ever taking shape.

Love, by bestowing divinity on man and by making God assume human from, brings man and God at par. Tagore’s use of ‘thou’ and ‘thy’ without the capital ‘T’ is significant. His God is a person who loves and desires to be love. Since love has joy in store, God, who is the king, decks himself in beauty to Captivate human heart. Thus God’s love enters human love. The two loves becomes one, and human love attains divinity:

\[\text{\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots}\]
Thy love loses itself in the love of thy lover, and there art thou seen in the perfect union of the two.

This sort of love does not necessarily need the sanctification by the man-made marriage institution. Nor is it conditioned by the considerations of caste and creed, age and rank. Man – made institutions do not stand in its way, for such a love and such loves fall outside the premises of human science like sociology, economics and psychology. It is a divine frenzy, a Gopi Bhav which turns its back on social ties and obligations. It knows only one obligation – to respond to the call of love and surrender one’s self in its entirely. People caustic tongues and goes on his own way:

They come with their laws and their codes to bind me fast; but I evade them ever, for I am only waiting for love to give myself up at last into his hands. People blame me and call me heedless: I doubt not they are right in their blame.30

But this pang of separation is a welcome guest to the psyche of the poet. Moreover, the separation is only physical, and not mental. The poet knows that his beloved is not an earthly creature and, therefore, it is not his ‘portion’ to meet her in his life on earth.31 He never forgets that he can never see her in a
physical form. So he wishes his mind of dwell on his beloved eternally, and carry the pangs of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours. There is a truism in it; as mind is finer than body, so in mental contact the feeling of love is finer and more spiritual. This sorrow of separation leads is finer and more spiritual. This sorrow leads the lover’s mind away from ‘the crowded market of this world’ eternally to meditate on the beloved. Separation from the beloved does not matter much, for he ‘will fill his heart’ with her silence and endure it. With patient hope in his heart, he ‘will keep still and wait like the night with starry vigil and its head bent low with patience”. His humble hope must be rewarded, for law of love is the eternal law of nature. He believes that morning – the symbolic nature of joyous realization of hope will surely come. The ‘darkness’ of doubt and fear ‘will vanish’. The voice of the beloved will pour down in golden streams breaking through the sky. The songs of the morning binds echo her words and the forest flowers reverberate her melodies.32

Tagore depicts the alchemic power of love which is capable of transmuting the base metal into pure gold. The saint, but the purity and innocence of the saint-youth and his entranced gaze completely transform one of the girls. She realizes the
essential glory of womanhood. Love has awakened the dormant divinity in the heart. She narrates the amazing change in her soul:

To live in love on this earth is better than the attainment of paradise, and so love is preferred to heaven. Man attains the Divine through an earthy object of pure and simple love, the poet presents this simple fact in “in the depths…”33. The poem opens with the visual image of a young ascetic who ‘in the depth of forest….. Practiced penance with fast – closed eyes’. He has set his heart on paradise to be one with gods. The lord of paradise, who has often fought against the Titans, starts fearing ‘the man’. He plants to tempt the ascetic to keep his out of paradise. There is a girl whose work is to gather twigs. This girl brings the young ascetic ‘fruits in her skirt’ and water from the stream’ in cups made of leaves. The lord of paradise decides to use her as a decoy to distract the saint – boy. He endows her with a beauty which can break the mediation of any saint:

A breath from paradise kissed the limbs of the girl, who gathered twigs, and her youth ached with a sudden rapture of beauty, and her thoughts hummed like the bees of a riffled hive.
The tactile image 'kissed' has some element of erotic about it. The girl becomes that image of beauty which can break the mediation of any ascetic. The ascetic opens his eyes and the girl appears to him like a 'verse familiar' half forgotten and yet with an added melody made strange. He rises from his seat and tells her that it time for him to leave the forest and start on his journey home. The girls whose heart is enkindled with the fire of passion requests him amidst tears not to rob her of her chance to serve him. Her love, which is in the beginning unqualified veneration and hence a service, now becomes a possessive desire. The young ascetic does not reprove her. He simply sits down again, thinks for long, and remains where he is. It means a secret acceptance. Beauty triumphs over the desire for heaven. But his pure love makes the girl feel both exultant and guilty of her victory: that night remorse kept the girl awake. She began you dread her power and hate triumph, yet her mind tossed on the waves of turbulent delight.

She is delighted not the she is victorious but the she has experienced the divinity of love, and as such the turbulence of passion is changed into an ecstatic serenity. She comes to realize that love is not a possession of body but a freedom of soul. She comes to him in the morning, salutes him and asks
for his blessing. She says that she must leave him. He gazes on her face in-silence and invokes the favor of God to fulfill her wish. The girl leaves him. The ascetic has to begin anew. He sits alone for years till his penance is complete. God himself comes down to him to inform him that he has won paradise. He desires a greater reward than heaven. God asks him what that greater reward is that he prefers to heaven. The ascetic replies: “I want the girl who gathers twigs”.
NOTES & REFERENCES


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8. The gardener, pp, 35-36.

9. ibid, pp, 36-37.
10. ibid, pp, 15-16.
11. ibid, pp, 17-18.
12. One Hundred and One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, pp. 4-5.
14. The Primal love is gift love. In god there is no hunger that needs to be filled; only plenteousness that desires to give. The Four Loves (New York: Harcourt Blake, 1960), p. 175.
17. ibid.
18. One Hundred and One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, p. 7.
19. Fruit Gathering, p. 87.

23. Fifteen Longer Poems of Rabindranath Tagore, pp. 77-84.


26. Gitanjali, pp. 4-5.

27. Fifteen Longer Poems of Rabindranath Tagore, p. 38.


29. One Hundred and One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, pp. 29-32.


32. ibid, p. 14.

33. ibid, pp. 73-74.

34. ibid, pp. 15-16.