

CHAPTER - III

SHETTY AS A CITY-SINGER

A place where a writer is born and brought up plays an important role in shaping his mind and attitude. He sensitively responds to his locale and landscape. Ezekiel depicts Mumbai experiences in his poetry and so does Dilip Chitre. Mahapatra is known as an Orissan poet, Daruwalla explores the Gangetic belt in his writing, Arun Kolhatkar wrote about Jejuri, a little town South of Pune in Maharashtra, for Eunice D'Souza, Goa is creative force, and in Ramanujan's poems South India comes alive. Since all these poets belong to cities, the urban experience dominates their consciousness. It provides the main impetus for their imagination.

Manohar Shetty is a city poet. He is born and brought up in Mumbai. He is dubbed as a Bombay poet, not only because it is his hometown, but because it exerts a strong influence on his creativity. It has diffused an urban tone in his poetry. Moreover, he belongs to new generation of Bombay poets such as Darius Cooper, Imtiaz Dharker, Melanie Silgado, Raul d'Gama Rose, Santan Rodrigues, R. Raj Rao etc. In fact, Mumbai is a city of diverse experiences and multifaceted life. Since the coming of the poetry of Nissim Ezekiel, Mumbai has been an inexhaustible source of themes. Adil Jussawalla, Arun Kolhatkar, Dilip Chitre, Dom Moraes, Eunice de Souza, Gieve Patel, Kersy Katrak wrote poems on Mumbai. Ezekiel generation of

these poets express a describable attitude, either of denunciation or of celebration of city-life. For new poets of next generation, city is a spatial equivalent of the self's condition. With new techniques, they explore their urban experience.

The feature of Shetty's city poems is that they are not merely 'poems on Mumbai', but they deal with life in any Mumbai-like city.

Raj Rao explains :

"A poem can be about Bombay (or life in Bombay) without making specific references to the city's localities or landmarks, or even without using the word 'Bombay'."¹

Several poems in Shetty's collections *A Guarded Space* and *Borrowed Time* explore urban life. They disclose different facets of Mumbai.

I

In this section, I will analyse those poems which present his distinct view on city life.

Shetty loves Mumbai in all her forms. Though the city is pervaded with vicious inequalities, it unleashes throbbing energy on him. The city is a combative place where the poor runners can hardly survive. Such a city is horrible. In the poem 'Bombay' (*A Guarded Space*) the city is presented as a beast devouring itself and everything around it.

Marooned by the unkillable
Cycle of mutilations it widens
Mutant serrated teeth
To rip and masticate the tightening
Torniquet of the sea.

It is a place which makes you retch out everything from the
crammed trains and buses every evening and regurgitates it the next
morning.

Ribs like ladder rungs,
Convex stomach ballooning,
Its paw scoops the tide for more :
Drips, shovels a larger clump
At each meal. For each meal.

The city is presented here as a monster devouring land and
people. The whole poem is a metaphor itself. Shetty presents the evil
side of the city. However, he does not hate it. Ezekiel's poems also
depict the seamy side of Mumbai, however he uses technique of
direct presentation. There is 'a sense of affectionate dislike' in
Ezekiel's poems. On the contrary, Shetty uses indirect method
without expressing a certain attitude. Despite its all pejoratives,
Mumbai has a hold on him. While talking about this poem, he says,

"There is an obvious reference to land reclamation;
however, it is not the kind of poem I usually write. O do
not relate to places directly and with the same authenticity
I do to personal relationships and to undefined, marauding
inner anxieties. But a city will grow invidiously into you
with its smells, its clangour and overpowering physical
presence. Images of it will flicker in and out
unconsciously."²

City has other side. It is a beast as well as a beauty. As it has repulsive appearance, it also has inner deformities. In his poem 'Mannequin' (*A Guarded Space*), Shetty discloses inner vacuum behind external attractiveness. He presents city as a feminine entity. The poem carries the influence of Thomas Gunn. In 'In Praise of Cities', Gunn talks of the city as a feminine entity, both sweetly seductive and whorish :

She presses you with her hard ornaments;
Arcades, late movie shows, the piled lit Windows.
Of surplus stores. Here she is loveliest;
Extreme, material, and the work of man

"The city", Gunn writes, "is indifferent to the indifference that conceives her", and it "compels a passion without understanding."

The poem presents city as a shop doll. The doll is symbol of beauty, 'Bathed in rich ring of light'. The sole purpose of putting her at elevated place is to attract the people. Thus, her beauty is deceptive, because there is a deep emptiness behind the splendours of a city. The strategy of the poem is that instead of the world looking at the mannequin, we have here an object looking at and into the mechanics of human existence. The mannequin picks up a face from the sea of people milling around her. This is the face that 'recurs' and hence she has been able to register and reproduce that oft-seen image, she says,

I watch his
Worried brow, the perpetual brief-case
Weary with age, as he vanishes past
Too pressed for time to appreciate
My groomed slender frame.

Another figure that stops before her transparent cage is of a woman. There is a longing for silk and ear rings in her eyes. The mannequin speaks,

I would like to erase that longing
In her eyes - ornaments can be replaced;
But a vacant darkness swarms
Within me too, and I cannot go beyond
This fixed fond smile.

The poem employs a strikingly new technique. Here the city speaks about her hollowness in the voice of the personified mannequin. The mannequin finds her counterpart in that woman. Behind "fond smile" there is 'a vacant space'. Moreover it cannot be filled or removed, since it is 'fixed'.

Shetty maps the area of mind. He is interested in inner realities rather than in the external ugliness of the city. The poem conveys a truer, more subtle view of the city and of its hollow dwellers of whose the man and the woman are representatives. They encounter the city in the form of mannequin. There is little hagiographic delineation of their encounter with the city. Every corner of city is filled with such vacant minds. There are other men and women who belong to this species of hollow human beings. They are not commoners. They are

subject of his next poem 'Pedestals'. (*A Guarded Space*). Although
safe in high places, they are separated from each other and also,

are severed from illiterates and fools.

These high-brow men and women are indifferent to common
people. These are weak-minded intellectuals,

But their knowledge that can comprehend
A tangent look has strength
Enough to shut, compressed as a book.

In the second part of the poem, Shetty continues to reflect
on their attitude. These are 'glib men' whose briefcases are filled
with lies.

In narrow dens they crane veined necks
In stiff unison, judge and inspect,
Accept or reject as they please.

Ties and briefcase are symbols of their frigid attitude. The last three
lines in the first part of the poem and the last two lines in the second
part are typographically separated from the rest. They work as
Shetty's comment on their pretentious lives. These are Mumbai's
most visible bureaucrats and clerks and bookworms. Their life is
mechanical, bound to the hands of the clock. They are such people,

Whose time-tabled lives deny
The heights of marooned minds.

Shetty reveals their mechanical life without denouncing them. His tone is gentle. The structure of the poem is compact and symmetrical. There is a perfect balance between the two parts.

If the high-brow people cannot go beyond their time-tabled lives, the common men are trapped into their routine life. They follow their daily activities without slight change like a numbered that runs on the same route for many years. Their minds are so fixed that even after retirement, they cannot transform themselves. The poem 'The Recluse' (*A Guarded Space*) pictures such a man who lives alone in a corner of the city.

Phantoms roaming in his head
He wakes every morning from the spell of the dead.

Physically he is exhausted, his mind is not at rest. Tired he sleeps, but wakes without energy on a routine. Sleep is metaphorically described as 'the spell of the dead'. Life continues as usual.

The air crackles and hums like cables,
Newspapers drop like bomb on doorsteps :

Shetty uses the negative images, 'phantoms', 'the dead', 'bomb'. His imagery comes from modern world, perhaps because, the phenomena of mechanical life is the result of indifferent modern world.

But tense as the lizard on his window-sill,
He cocks his ears to a train's whistle

Newspapers and trains are agents of mechanical city life. The man in the poem is used to the sound of the train that even when he listens to it 'he cocks his ears.' The use of simple present tense shows automation and the routinisation of life in the city. The problem of such men is that they can not break the routine.

Common man is puppet in the age of machine. His life is controlled by external forces which are beyond his control. This theme is traced in the poem, 'The Common Chronicle' (*A Guarded Space*). The poem begins and ends with the same line -

My eyeballs burn in the sun.

It indicates cyclic repetition in his life. The routinization of life is clearly reflected in the lines, when he says,

I cross and recross a web of streets,
Climb and reclimb the same stairs.
I occupy a registered seat.
A giant thumb presses a button somewhere;
The cells in my head and the plugs in my lungs
Buzz into action.
At five o'clock I am swifted off.

He has turned into machine. 'A giant thumb' of mechanical life has complete control over him. Shetty does not lament the state of common man. He says,

"The common chronicle is a pretty simple poem written very early in my career. It is about the mechanical life of a commuter in Bombay, or any other city, with the last

line echoing the first, illustrating that he or she is caught in an endless trap (of daily routine) over which they have no control.”³

Machinelike man cannot have positive attitude. He cannot even escape from the situation. He experiences an existentialist anguish. He faintly admits,

I sleep like a corpse; my dream are black.

Shetty presents a gloomy picture of city-life in this line. The images are self-explanatory. Mechanization, lack of communication, feelings of separateness and ennui, boredom, loneliness are common diseases of modern society. Man is alone among familiar faces. He is lonesome (The Recluse), as he is separated from other men and himself. A concealed feeling of strangeness is subject of the poem ‘The Strangeness’ (*A Guarded Space*). The poem is addressed to the common man. While following routine, he meets familiar faces and objects. However, there is a sense of strangeness that seethes in his mind. The very first stanza depicts this picture,

Sometimes you seem unhinged -
Alone in a room for instance
When your mind escapes
Or after vacant days you wake
To a darkening evening and
You are not a part of anything

Evening appears unfamiliar to him. The method of indirect presentation is used by the poet. The words ‘vacant’, ‘darkening’,

‘frail rails’, ‘fatigued’, ‘dazed’ create the gloomy imagery. Common man becomes a stranger to his own place. In all such shallow acquaintances, he hopes for true familiarity.

you look
For someone solid, familiar,
The faces drifting like apparitions.

This is a typical Eliotlike imagery that shows facelessness of people. The problem however lies somewhere else. The optimism of the common man keeps him away from facing the problem although he recognises it.

You realise through the dense miasma
The problem is deeper but you
Do not want to face it, it will go away.

The poet juxtaposes the ‘strangeness’ and ‘familiarity’ with equal intensity and presents strangeness in familiarity. The truth is that a sense of strangeness deeply lies at the bottom of mind. ‘The strangeness’ is phenomena of city mind. The poem works thus to indicate states and moods of mind by presenting the combination of objects, spaces and ideas which go to make it up. A city-mind suffers from different ailments. It is half-alive and half-dead. Laying at many amenities, it experiences dissatisfaction. There is general feeling of illness that is depicted in the poem ‘The Malaise’. Shetty describes,

Not nausea, sunstroke vertigo
But an eternal erosion of the soul
That dismembers flesh and bone
From a tough, subverse world.

The subverse world is city world. The feeling of the malaise affects the soul. It develops at night when mind is more vulnerable,

In darkness, it grows
slow as roots, soft as maggots;
scrawls on sleepless lids,
strange dreams of black magic;
Unfurls in defeated nerves,
Warm white wings of a death-wish.

The poet uses metaphor of animal ('scrawls', 'unfurls', 'wings') for it. The last alliterative line shows that the malaise-affected mind ultimately desires for death (after an eternal erosion of soul).

Boredom is a common phenomenon in city life. In the poem 'Bored' (*Borrowed Time*), Shetty frankly presents a series of covert memories that come up when mind is bored. However, he does not try to find the causes, but enlists the effects of the state of ennui.

My bored mind invites things
I had shut out : the soft
Explosion of a runover pup, a baby
Sparrow I once stepped on,
Lose in thought.

These memories are not of dignified sort, 'shy women returning from toilets', 'women putting hands on the waists of scooterists', 'close, close to the crotch' or 'demure hostess wiping a sly fingernail on the underside of an armrest'. Further, he confesses,

No, I can't think
Honourable, memorable thoughts
When I'm bored, utterly bored;
My mind opens a drain
For white mice to ferret
Around in sewage

The stanza is a fine example of his use of animal imagery. A bored mind can hardly churn out the excitement of poetry. Yet the mind can play games with imagination as Shetty shows in the poem and the thoughts needn't all be honourable nor strikingly spaced out.

The foci of Shetty's poems on Mumbai are a city-mind and general city-life. The common man in city is his interest whose mind is endlessly trapped in rustle of life.

II

Shetty's art is multicoloured. As he is an able mindscape painter, he is also sensitive to different sights of city. The poems under scrutiny in this section are different projections of city sites. These are common scenes however, in Shetty's hand they achieve liveliness. Darius Cooper says,

"Shetty is primarily a visual poet. What is seen around him is carefully catalogued and presented by a discerning eye."⁴

Ready example of his skill is the poem 'Neighbourhood' (*A Guarded Space*). The poem depicts mid-afternoon listlessness in city. It consists of four powerful vignettes which really bring the neighbourhood alive. The old woman's character is central to and common in all four scenes. Her eyes are more active - 'narrowed' and 'probes' in the first scene; 'mercurial' and 'boring' in the second; 'shifting' and 'stopped' in the penultimate and ultimate scenes respectively. They keep watch on the activities of other characters. Shetty describes,

And in the shaded varandah
The same scene played
Over and over : an old woman,
Face grey as tiles, eyes
Narrowed over pincerlike nails
Probes for crawling lice

The scene is experienced daily. The sameness of the scene creates the feeling of jadedness. A servant boy is washing the kitchen utensils.

By a dank of map of water
Creeping to the delta of a gutter
Under a snarling tap;

Shetty taps even unrecognised details in the description. The words 'map' and 'delta' have effect of expanding the scene to geographic dimensions, and expanding the mood to a kind of mid-afternoon inertia. The third stanza pictures one more participant - an old man going to toilet - an effete city man. The last vignette is of a

washerman putting the clothes on a strung coir rope. The clothes are described as,

They droop like limp tongues,
Their shadows touching the splayed
Feet of roots, one wet
Blanket too heavy for the rope
Drying stuck to the peeling
Pillar of the trunk.

There is subtleness in description. The use of metaphoric language is apt. Shetty must be praised as Futehally writes,

“I suspect the poet had no aim beyond that of describing his neighbour’s backyard, but he has done it so acutely that the poem goes beyond itself”⁵

To look from different angle, in my opinion, the poem hints at the reciprocal relation between the mood and the atmosphere. The dull afternoon mars the activeness of its participants.

Shetty explores city life to its utmost extent. Mumbai is his centre of focus. As a film city, she has a special recognition. For Mumbaikar, Hindi movies are as important as railways. The advertisement boards of these movies are displayed at every corner of the city. Shetty handles this aspect of the city life in the poem ‘Three Hoardings’ (*Borrowed Time*). The poem acknowledges the impact of films, especially Hindi films, on the pedestrian’s life. The first hoarding is about a film called ‘Love Story’, in which

The O in Story encircles
The heroine, her pink lips

Sighing open as she leers
shyly at the hero who lolls
Against the wall of the L,
A cigarette clenched in his grin.

Commercial success of these films depends on their advertisements. Hence, they are made alluring. The second hoarding also advertises the film entitled 'All ROUNDER', in which the hero is shown rounding off a cover drive. For Shetty, these hoardings are symbols of commercial life. He notes the arrangements of the letters, colours used and shapes. He superbly interprets the action, clothes and styles of the characters in relation to the titles of the movies.

The third hoarding is variation in the series. Here, the poet concentrates not on the hoarding itself, but on the art of the painter. The hoarding is to advertise the STATE Lottery. The painter finished the words MONEY ! WIN WIN MONEY ! and by the evening, left the letters to get dry. The poet describes his art in the following lines:

Hunched over in khaki
And paint-dabbed vest, his
Exclamatory sign is a dagger
And a star of blood -
His own artistic touch.

On the next day he comes back to draw the remaining words

Now he's back in the same vest
To flesh out the stencilled
Calligraphy; Rs 10 LAKH
And STATE LOTTERY surface

The painter is a true artist. He does not wish to complete the work bluntly although he is to please himself with the scanty amount of money as a payment for his art. Shetty depicts a heart-rending picture of commercialization in his eyes.

His dreamless eyes scrutinize
The royal flush of cash,
Wary of the raw deal,
The missing watermark.

Life in city is full of contrast. There is no place for commoners. Lottery is a means of easy money but hardwork is not rewarded adequately. 'Floorshow, Bombay' (*Borrowed Time*) is another poem that brings a common picture of Mumbai life. It presents a model in floorshow. The show is pregnant with all usual vibrations - flickering light, cheap liquor, mirth and music. She is in mermaid-costume and in full make-up. The description follows

Smoke-screened sighs escape
from the redly-lit audience when she bends
Crabwise instead, unwinds a ream

Of ribbon from the cleft
Of her sex, the tantalising yards
Cheered like a victory parade.

This is something that can be called heartbeats of metropolitan life - late night-shows, DJ parties, beauty contests, floor-shows. Such shows are usually arranged in restaurant and hotels for commercial purpose. Models are chief attraction of the customers and visitors. Commercialization of life is the subject of the poem. Since, Shetty

had experience of running one of his family restaurants, he is well acquainted with its pageantry. He does not pass the judgements, but presents the scene as it is.

Like the centers of entertainment, there are some workplaces that hold our attention. They are open and common. The site of building under construction is such scene. Shetty presents three photographic pictures of a construction site in the poem 'Blueprints' (*Borrowed Time*). In the first picture, male labourers are shown as laying the bricks engrossed in their work. In the second, he describes the women carrying the load of cement upward. They stand in chain on the uneven steps perfectly balancing themselves. The poet empathetically points,

You can see the weight tremble,
Balanced on their heads; a grey gruel.

The labourers work without fuss. Their competency at work is admirable. The line that begins with 'you can see...' works like refrain. It is used at the end of all parts of the poem. It assumes the presence of the onlooker. The last part presents usual pathetic scene when after week's labour, these men and women gather to collect their wages,

The contractor sits at a desk
In the compound; small
Cylinders of coins surround
The registrar he inspects. The cement-
Powdered labourers wait in a queue;

The scene is commonplace. These labourers are illiterate and innocent. They belong to hardworking folk. They have belief in their employee. This aspect of their character is traced in the concluding lines

You can see that the blue
Whorls of their thumbmarks will not
Be changed or forged.

In these poems, Shetty attempts to present the city-scenes sincerely. His attitude is neutral to these sites. He comes out as a sombre-faced poet, lost in his serious thoughts to present these common scenes with as much sincerity as he can. Although there is no sign of deep meditation on these scenes or they are not fused with philosophical insights, he penetrates the reality to present it as it is.

As if to prove this 'serious' label wrong Shetty delights with a light-hearted poem, 'Street Scene' (*Borrowed Time*) which is thoroughly enjoyable because of its rhythm and language.

A fracas ! A fracas ! O look
How they run to join in the fun !
His tooth has fallen to a fisticuff !
Look how they dance on it,
How they prance to the rhythm of a boot !

This is humorous description of street fighting called as 'fun'. The people enjoy to take part in it. It is a kind of entertainment for the bystanders. The police jeep arrives. The street fighters are beaten,

arrested and put into the jeep. Yet, they behave as if nothing has happened.

How they cheer in the dust
Of the jeep, punch the wind,
Shadowbox, buff their shoes and feet
On the bloody street, and O look
How they laugh, and Slap and Slap and Slap
Each other on the back.

These scenes and like them are part of the city life. Hardly one finds poetic qualities in them. However, with artistic touch of Shetty, they shade off their coarseness, and turn into spectacles.

III

For Shetty, a city like Mumbai is inexhaustible source of experiences. His discerning eye explores each corner of the city. Life in day is different from life at night. The cabret, the filmworld, the hoardings, street scenes, the restaurant, all come under his microscopic gaze and get transformed into a series of images that transcribe a world seen by the pedestrian eye.

In this section, I would bring forth typical city- characters delineated by Shetty. Foremost among them is an actor who appears in the poem 'Thespian' (*A Guarded Space*). He can successfully cast himself into different roles - gambler, villain, or monarch. However, off-stage he is non-descript. The poet praises him,

Natural plagiarist, a human palimpsest !

The poem shows the change in his character from an honest actor to an insincere professional. As he wins recognition and popularity, the poet finds the change in his character.

But once I remember, he portrayed
An actor : suave, debonair,
And with much character. Backstage,
I discovered he too had changed :
Suave, debonair, his
Handshake had much character

Earlier, the actor and his roles were separate, but now, they are same. It means that he is not left with his own character as he earlier was with. It points to decline in his art. This actor presents usual pattern of decline in all actors. It is a general phenomenon observed in life of actors.

From the world of an actor, Shetty brings us to the gallantry of 'The Daredevils' (*Borrowed Time*). He describes their rare courage. These men are the guests to the speaker of the poem who is the host to them. He speaks of his first guest who is 'a parachute jumper'. He jumps from 20,000 feet. He shows an askew limb. The speaker wholeheartedly approves of his adventure. The second daredevil is a Yamaha rider.

Who straddles his Yamaha
Helmetless
At a gravity-defying tilt.

There are scars on his face carved deep as an epitaph and as intricate as heiroglyphs. The third guest is hang-glider. The host says,

My third guest tugs off his
Left boot, and there's no foot.
He shrugs : My hang-glider
Looped into a cliff.

In contrast to these men, the speaker admits that he has nothing to show. Yet his adventure is of different kind. He says,

So I smoke my sixtieth smoke
And offer a sober toast
With my thirteenth whisky

The speaker represents those city-mongers who take pride in their misadventure. They lack positive force in life.

Shetty meets these people of diverse characters in the flood of city life. He transforms them into word-images. A typical city character is presented in the poem 'Four Comic Strips'- part three (*Borrowed Time*). She is a rich fashionable woman placing order at a restaurant. She is described in following words :

The snake at the restaurant
Has a neck as long
As a dinosaur's, and a necklace
Of emeralds.

This is quite funny to the extent of nerve-breakdown. The delicate lace of the shoes is visible. The poet further describes,

Her tongue quivers like a earring :
'Cancel the mice, please. Instead,
I'll take the frogs' legs.'

This is a humorous description of so-called standard lady. It is a parody of the formalities followed while placing orders in the big hotels.

Last picture in this group is of 'The Lunatic' (*A Guarded Space*). The poem begins with the description of the full-moon night - 'clouds snare the full moon and a sudden/ Gust of wind rolls'. The poem evokes the tense atmosphere. The presence of the lunatic is sensed through his shadow. The poet uses the cinematic technique to project him.

His huge shadow drifts
Across the grille, hovers to a standstill.

He looks horrible - 'eye like marbles', 'feet scuffing', 'mouth ovel' and 'hollow laugh' that lofts over the compound. The poet observes him but doesnot dare to laugh in return. The lunatic stands there,

Till the moon suddenly brims and slips out
And trembling, not laughing at all, he
Turns slowly back to his cot, dragging
His huge shadow behind him.

This lunatic is often seen by the poet so 'the' article is used. Here again, Shetty doesnot fail to prove his descriptive power.

IV

Shetty surveys city life. As he produces interest in city characters, and street scenes, he also depicts certain objects that are associated with city life. The objects like-sea-shore boats and littered bottles, haunted and unfinished houses, hoardings are trivial but he creates a fascination for them. He makes them subjects of his poems.

A main feature of Mumbai is her beach. Tired by routine life, people come to freshen themselves. The beach is littered with different objects. They are thrown in the sea and are flung away on the beach by the waves. In 'Message in a Bottle' (*Borrowed Time*), the poet describes a littered bottle. He comes across it on a beach. His curiosity is aroused by its content. His eyes,

Captured the jigsaw fragments
Of a gilt-framed mirror, wigs
and vials of spilling cosmetics
Spinning like a roulette wheel in space.

The bottle is relic of died love. The poet wants to lament the death of the lovers.

But when I woke to a sunset
Of polluted blue and scarlet, the lucid
Silence clouded wistful answers;

Sunset is symbolic of a truth in life i.e. death. The poet quickly realises many such things lie at the bottom of the sea. So his curiosity

is silenced. The poem is full of metaphoric description. See the picturesque description in the lines,

The claw-clutched horizon hung
Like the doorway to a vast tomb,
The smoke-signals of clouds
Brushed aside by a cosmic hand.

The lines conjure up the image of the horizon. The sea is a vast tomb wherein many things like bottle are buried. Another object that comes in his eye-sight are 'The Boats' (*A Guarded Space*). They are often seen on sea-shore. The poem pictures an acutely etching of anchored boats.

They lie tied to swirling beds.
Toss in the restless darkness,
Cupped brows chiselled
For movement.

This is unparallel description of the boats. The night in city is restless. Life never rests at night. 'Restless darkness' is a wonderful example of transferred epithet. The description gradually lifts these inanimate vessels upto becoming living entities desperately surviving among the dark 'Eel-sealed waves'.

The poet continues to hunt for objects left obsolete. This time he catches a house. The poem 'Beware, They said' (*Borrowed Time*) presents a vivid picture of a haunted house, but we are left with the feeling that means more than just fear. The description of the house with is full of horrifying objects - 'singing chair', 'laughing knives

and forks', 'wailing of wall' - is cinematic. This technique he has already employed in the poem 'The Lunatic'. The poet narrates,

You will hear, they said,
The doors and windows sighing
Like an ancient man deeply
Unhappy in his grave.

It becomes more horrifying with each next line. Inanimate objects became alive and dead faces in the calendar repeating the words ...

"Hello, Hello, my dear lost friend."

The words have cumulative effect on the new comer. Moreover, the people shrewdly warn the new comer,

It's not a ghostly home;
Only, you shouldn't live alone.

They do not seize terrifying the new comer. Like a haunted palace in a Gothic story, the image of the house is conjured before us.

And beware most of all, they said,
Of the character who stands up
From chapter twenty-two
To dance with the windows and doors.
And sing along with the chairs ;

Living alone in a big house can drive one out of one's wit, but 'Beware, They Said' conveys 'a surreal experience'. If the object of this poem is 'a haunted house', there is another poem entitled 'Bearings' (*Borrowed Time*), which deals with an unfinished house.

Why is it so paid attention? Home is dream-object of man especially one who lives in a city like Mumbai. And it is left incomplete, moreover if it stands beside you, you often see it, then it will cast spell on you, because it 'resemble(s)/ Abandoned ruins.' You cannot stand it 'left out to soak into monsoon'. The poet says,

But it preys on me, this work
kept at bay by violent,
Romantic rain, this incomplete home
A book awaiting the final page.

Abandoned like ruins, the moss spreads everywhere in the house. The fleas gang together. The house 'waits for an unknown master', to be taken care of. Although there is least possibility of the arrival of the owner, the poet is hopeful. He believes that the house will be finished soon.

I look forward to this stranger,
My neighbour's home coming, to a house
Rising out of littered gravel, shrub,
Anthill, wild mushroom;

The poet expects the house with lit windows and shut windows against the cold and the howling monsoon. He presents the home as a symbol of warmth. Here, he echoes Ezekiel's line 'Home is where we have to earn our grace' (Enterprise) addressed to a city entrepreneur.

V

Shetty left Mumbai in 1983. He spent the first quatrains of his life in Mumbai. And though he now lives in Goa, Mumbai still-holds a great fascination for him. He experienced city life utmost. He worked as a journalist and ran a restaurant, the experiences of which he registers in his poems.

Shetty admires city life but not like an unworthy psychophant. He also presents seamy side of it. In ultra modern age, city life is concrete example of hustle and bustle. However, like Ezekiel, he doesnot attaches himself to it. A presence of detached observer prevails in his poetry. His poems are satellite surveys as well as microscopic pictures. His poems of city life are not enlarged pictures or reduced painting. They are sites of his projected self. He employs innovative techniques to present the city life in his poems. He covers every aspect of it.

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