Musings on Covid Pandemic and Beyond
Musings on Covid Pandemic and Beyond

Poems by
K. V. Dominic
Musings on Covid Pandemic and Beyond
(Poems)
ISBN

Copyright © 2021 K. V. Dominic

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author.

Printed in India at Thomson Press (India) Limited
## Contents

*Foreword*  
*Preface*  
1. Coronavirus, Mightiest Wizard of All Times  
2. Covid Victims and Villains  
3. Covid-19 Exodus 1  
5. Haiku on Covid-19  
6. Mask can’t Suppress One’s Hunger  
7. Nithin’s Sublime Sacrifice  
8. Subaida’s Donation to Covid-19 Relief Fund  
9. Magnetism of Mother  
10. Amazon Forest is Burning … Burning  
11. Beat Plastic Pollution  
12. Bleeding Thodupuzha River  
13. Chernobyl Tragedy  
14. Dharavi Slum  
15. Enlighten Them Lord Buddha  
16. Every Human Being is a Poet  
17. Farmers’ Suicides  
18. Flood Victims  
19. Function of Religion  
20. Had I been Born as a Dove  
21. How Can We Relish Our Dish…?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Coronavirus, Mightiest Wizard of All Times</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Covid Victims and Villains</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Covid-19 Exodus 1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Covid-19 Exodus 2</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Haiku on Covid-19</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Mask can’t Suppress One’s Hunger</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Nithin’s Sublime Sacrifice</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Subaida’s Donation to Covid-19 Relief Fund</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Magnetism of Mother</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Amazon Forest is Burning … Burning</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Beat Plastic Pollution</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bleeding Thodupuzha River</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Chernobyl Tragedy</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dharavi Slum</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Enlighten Them Lord Buddha</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Every Human Being is a Poet</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Farmers’ Suicides</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Flood Victims</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Function of Religion</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Had I been Born as a Dove</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>How Can We Relish Our Dish…?</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. I can’t Count my Country Free
23. Man and Dog
24. Mother Boiling Stones for Children
25. Mother Earth Goes on Weeping
26. Murder of Nature
27. Nature is God
28. Ode to Sun
29. On Visiting Achyuta Samanta and KISS University
30. Result of Whose Karma?
31. Smiling Face
32. Sublime Nature Love
33. Tribute to Toni Morrison
34. Wastage for the Dead
35. Sex Workers and Society
36. Snake and Man
37. Lifespan of Humans and Birds
38. Children Deserted
39. Gopalakrishnan, the Noblest
40. Lessons from my Rocky Dog
41. Shadows
42. Elegy on Professor T V Reddy
43. Jai Javan! Jai Kisan!
Foreword

In the very first poem of this collection “Corona Virus, Mightiest Wizard of All Times” K V Dominic opens with an instance of apostrophe. Human being is sublime. The poet addresses man as the mightiest of all creations and most intelligent. And then there is the bathos. Despite man's excellence he is so impotent before too negligible and invincible corona virus.

The second section states that the viruses were born long before the emergence of cellular organisms. Needless to say that the viruses are strange phenomena that behave like the living and multiply when they reside in living organisms. But they are inert in an inert body. So the habitats of virus are indeterminate. And it is a pity that the human beings goaded by science and technology have been in quest of hidden treasures simply destroying the ecosystem. The poet asks – who asked you to kick hornet’s nests in jungles? Alas! Alas! The Corona virus has been thereby spread all over the human world. The poet thinks that the so called science and technology were originally kept in the Pandora’s Box. And man's greed has opened the box to spread the corona virus. Just as the thrust for knowledge led Faustus to death, similarly man is being dragged to death due to his thoughtless scientific enquiry. In fact, disinterested curiosity accompanied with a reverence for Nature might lead us to light instead of darkness and fear of death. That is the legitimation.

In the third section, the poet observes that man should have realized the laws of Nature before his adventures into Nature. If Darwin's survival of the fittest, at all holds good, the mass massacre of man being attacked by the hoards of corona viruses only proves that man is not fit for living on earth. The great wars were prelude to this writing on this wall. Dominic is the Daniel to decode this implication of Nature. Dominic observes that H1N1 virus, cousin of corona virus took away fifty million
human lives hundred years back. And a day might come when man might be wiped off from the face of the globe just as dinosaurs have been a thing of the past. They vanished in the Mesozoic era.

The fourth section points out that man had better correct his attitude. Much of modern technology could be deleted or revised. The poet addresses man and says that lockdown of your nations shower blessings on you abundantly. The lockdown has purified the air that man defiled earlier. Water is now clean, the animals are now happy and the birds are merry. The fishes are gleeeful, the plants and trees dance gaily. In other words, is it Eden revisited?

The fifth section ironically states that corona virus is on the surface a blessing and not a curse because human life has once again been in close touch with Nature. Towards the second half of the twentieth century the first mushooming of cities and spread of urban values and so called science and technology simply robbed man of the wealth of Nature. Nature does not mean simply material wealth hoarded in her womb. Nature is also our Mother. Overwhelmed with grief we rush to Nature for some solace. Think of Bathsheba in Far from the Madding Crowd. Presently after a bone breaking labour below the copper sun when the farmer takes rest for a while, the Mother fans him with gentle breeze and restores his spirits. Economics does not understand what wealth the countless daffodils or the myriads of stars in the encircling gloom bring to man. However we economic men have put Nature out of joints. But corona virus stands in the way of ceaseless flow of transport. Factories have been shut down. And once again the sky is clear, the air is pollution free, the fishes are playful. And Dominic says: “Corona virus regained / rights of all animals / animals now travel anywhere they like”. These lines are quite significant. The word ‘regained’ might remind the reader of Paradise Regained, which overflows with love and mercy. And of course, Dominic speaks of an emergent jurisprudence where animals have the right to life as much as men do have. This is a futurist
jurisprudence that might overturn the human civilization. The latter must come closer to their Mother Nature, where books are writ on brooks and sermons are writ on stones. Dominic’s vision of the earth as the playground of cubs and calves is time and again.

In the sixth section the poet shares the apprehension of separating man from Nature. It is like separating the child from the mother. We must not blame our stars for that. Man has been the architect of his fate, however dismal it might have been. It is the scientific brain of man goaded by greed for wealth and luxury that welded the nations together as it were into a global village. And Dominic points out that a home with little love is sure to shatter. And corona virus as the agent of our erstwhile activities and greed shattered all the so called worldly dreams. Now brisk movement from one country to another, from one continent to another seems to have collapsed at the instance of traffic signal the name of which is corona virus. Me the reader can imagine the poet grinning and saying with a chuckle: “Empires of all corporate / crumbled liked US twin towers”. The crumbling of twin towers is significant. It is not enough to say that the terrorists down razed the towers. It was but the preamble of what turned out presently after. American democracy is now in jeopardy. America has masterminded the empires of all corporate. But Dominic tells us that this kind of capitalism which ignores the poor and the majority cannot sustain long. And Nature retorts through the spread of corona virus.

The seventh section states that with the advent of corona virus the hollowness of religion has been exposed. The self-styled priests and godmen are now pent up in their locked houses. They do not take shelter in God and work for the ailing humanity. Thus science, wealth and religion are helpless before the hordes of corona virus. Some religious people might attribute the pandemic to the wrath of God. Pope Francis II has attributed the pandemic to man’s ill treatment of Nature. The poet himself also asked in section two of this poem: “Who asked you to kick
hornets’ nest in jungles? Why did you trespass corona viruses’ habitats?” What Dominic points out hereby is that God is not arbitrary. If angry, God has reason for that. Our activities goaded by our Faustian ignorance and arrogance have brought us on the brink of our doom. Hence Dominic seems to be a revolutionary who seeks to do away with the whole gamut of rituals that the human civilization has innovated. We need not go to the church or mosque or temple. God lives in our huts and hearts. If every human heart and every hut is deemed as a temple, the ailing humanity will be transformed. It will be a world where love and joy will be there on security. This is a piece of Dominic’s social and political thought. But may we ask Dominic in our all humility – Is a human world possible at all sans rituals? When Dominic chants this poem to resist corona virus is it not re-enacting the shamans and the rishis of yore to drive away evil? When we could realize that every human heart is the seat of God all of us will be turned into shamans. Consequently the whole machinery of churches and temples and states and governments will wither away. Dominic is an anarchist as Kropotkin and Tolstoy and Gandhi were.

To resist the spread of corona virus there have been lockdown all over the globe suspending the so called human activities impelled by technology and greed. Consequently Time seems to have been retrograde. The state of Nature as conceived by Rousseau is the paradise upon earth which reincarnates. Now children get love and care of father and mother. Wives care the need of their husbands. There is no threat of thieves. Stray dogs and animals and birds are loved and fed. The stanzas eight and nine posit that it is the environment that pollutes man. Remove the machines and the modern machinery of administration, the parents need not rush to the office and they can remain in the nest taking care of the kids. This suggests a whole range of thoughts and dreams. Once the urban civilization is suspended, people must live on simple diet of grains, vegetables and fruits. This reminds of Gonsalo in The Tempest. Once the complicated life of too much getting and spending vanishes, people will be in
their elements, honest and truthful and loving. If people were loving, Nature would respond to their love and load their granaries with fruits and vines and paddy on her own. If there were no surplus how would they feed the stray animals? Or else the poet invokes the physiocrats. And surely once these dreams come true, we will not find any more the whining boy plodding his weary way to school. Rather he goes to Nature called by impulse to Lucy and Shankuntala. And there are books in running brooks and sermons in stones. Dominic is a kin of the romantic poets, Shelley and Keats, Shakespeare and Kalidasa.

Section nine states that measures taken to stem the spread of corona virus have revolutionized human culture. What characterized the human culture before the sudden or revolutionary advent of the virus? Well, there was the unimpeded flow of artificial food that flooded the dinner tables and kitchens. Consequently the ailing crowded at five star hospitals, operation theatres and medical stores. But measures to maim corona virus have controlled the flow of artificial food and consumption of medicines and so on. This evidence of absence of ailments only proves that modern civilisation that glories in artificial way of life is phony.

In section ten the poet eulogises the deadly corona virus because it has reined well the attitudes of extravaganza during its reign. Even churches and mosques and temples are closed and millions are thereby saved of festival expenses. Dominic hereby points out how capitalism has appropriated religious practices and they have turned into hollow sham. And may be the introduction of an artificial disease corona might destroy a chronic disease and then vanish. Thus on one level corona virus is not a bane but blessing. This might remind the reader the principle of Hahnemann – similia similibus currentur. Thus Dominic like a physician seems to remind that both the diseases of modern times and corona virus which have been administered by God are destined to be done away with. Dominic thus charges us with fresh hopes when humanity is on the brink of death.
What is Corona Virus like? In the parole of the poet Dominic “Lifeless becomes live entering into live cells and multiplies.” This is a unique feature. That which is inert all of a sudden becomes living and multiplies once it enters into a living body. Is it not a marvel that our science and philosophy cannot explain? And virus enters human body irrespective of gender, age, race, religion and nation. Virus does not distinguish the rich from the poor. In other words such concepts as race, religion and nation, even age and gender are rather human constructs. They might have some functional value in our day to day mundane life. But they do not have any intrinsic value. The body is what counts. True, because anybody which is living, be it of man or animal or of some worm, is the temple of God. The body must be preserved as long as it is alive. The human constructs such as rich and poor are hollow sham. So the virus makes no distinction between such differences. Since virus might overwhelm the body of the rich as well as of the poor such differences such as rich and poor make no sense. But it is a pity that we are more busy to sustain the differences. One nation fights with another. One gender is preferred to another. Dominic exhorts us to forget such differences and focus on the general health. Artificial food spawns obesity among those who are swelled with money and pride. Hunger emaciates the poor. And it is the virus that becomes the agent of their death. Dominic observes that body should be the chief value for humanity to take care. Other considerations are of little use.

It is customary to blame poverty for widespread diseases like epidemic. The rich and the elite attribute poverty to underdevelopment. But the corona virus affected the so called developed countries first. There has been mass massacre in the USA, Italy, France, UK and China. There has been no place to bury bodies. The churches have been turned into mortuaries to keep dead bodies. This shows how the notion of development has dragged the developed countries to dungeons of death. What engendered development in the aforesaid countries? Dominic posits, “When governments give priority to economy / and
neglect the lives of the citizens / coronavirus spreads like wild fire." Economics is not an end in itself. Economics is a discipline that studies man in his everyday longings and their satisfaction. This creed laid down by Adam Smith has been totally forgotten. The developed countries have their own poor people. Besides, their development has cashed on impoverishing and looting the other countries. Science and technology have been their minions. Thus by way of showing how development fares, the poet also debunks the misuse of science and technology in the world today.

Billions of dollars are being spent by the different countries of the world for the purpose of the defence while countless men groan in hunger and pain. True that Nero was a great king bent upon spiritual quest. Our notion of Nero is distorted. It is said that Nero was playing on a violin while Rome was burning. And in the present context, the world is a horrid spectre of the state of nature as Hobbes saw in his nightmare where every man or rather every nation is against every nation and life is a nasty brutish and dull. Sorely affected by the attack of the aggression of corona virus in the face of impending doom our statesmen are no better than our mythical Nero who fiddled when Rome burned. Dominic observes that if the scientists were employed to resist misfortunes, if any thrust upon man by Nature, our mother Gaia would be an Eden for human habitation. The children of the earth would live in that case in perfect harmony charged with fellow feeling and brotherhood.

True that corona virus made its best harvests in the so-called developed nations. Mark you, corona viruses have been likened to the farmers. But unlike the latter corona virus grows disease and death. But death in life is always being cultivated by the capitalist system whose faithful attendant is stark poverty. Thanks to lockdown, industrial, agricultural labourers, fisherman and poor farmers, traders and taxi drivers are being starved. They do not have the bare income to keep the wolf away from their door. Thousands of migrant labourers – “Some have lost their lives / Many lost their jobs /...... / They all want
to be back home”. Their hearts are filled with anxieties for their families that are far off. They take refuge in the ill-treated government camps. And think of their habitats living in single room huts using dirty common toilets without enough water where social distancing is impossible. Dominic’s poetry speaks of hard facts with data culled from real life and evokes pity in the reader like another Buddha and thereby asks in suggestion whether the world could not be made in a different way, happy and healthy with a little love and mercy. Dominic teaches us that true poetry should exhort to read our everyday news from a different perspective whence love and sympathy are engendered.

There is no sense in building castles in the air made of words culled from ether and the sky. Thus his poetry strikes a fresh note in the realm of literature.

The poem “Coronavirus, the Mightiest Wizard of All Times” precisely personifies the virus. The virus likens a man who conjures magic. The corona virus is as it were the mightiest magician of all times. Whatever we experience in his activities unites the opposites – the sharps and the flats. The poem progresses as it were with the aid of opposites. In one part we hear bass. In another part we hear trebles. The poet is, as it were, now weeping, now smiling. He speaks of churches stuffed with dead bodies. And trucks are loaded with dead bodies knowing not where the dead bodies should be disposed of. Fear of death has impelled the governments to decree lockdown. Lockdown is ordained in prison houses. One wonders whether corona virus, the prince of the wizards has converted the earth into a prison house or not. True, a Hamlet could find the boundless skies in a peanut if he were not the Prince of Denmark. On one level, Dominic finds himself imprisoned, thanks to the gifts of technology. Dominic, the Prince of Denmark found this busy world during BC or before corona virus in a state of war. But as soon as he doffs his princely robe he finds that lockdown has reduced a lot of deadly air pollutants in cities. Reduction of Seoul 54% and Wuhan 44%, Los Angeles 31%... But Dominic is no climatologist. He is a poet. And he knows that stars are
visible in city skies to ease uneasy minds for quite slumber. There has been a steep fall in the noise that benumbs the cities. And the poet observes thousands of birds who have come back to balm aching minds. When Keats exclaimed, “My heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains my senses” was he engrossed with a nightmare with a life in city two hundred years hence? The future was present with him. The part seventeen clearly describes the horrors of city life full of noise and no skies but apparelled in smoke. We get the bass juxtaposed with the trebles of the thousand birds. And does it mean that the apparent life in confinement could be likened to a paradise provided if we were less materialist and back to Nature? With Dominic Nature offers us the best code of life. And now we readers smile. Dominic makes us weep and makes us smile.

In the Part 18, Dominic posits that corona virus teaches us the necessity of self-reliance. Self-reliance with him does not mean a life in isolation. Self-reliance is engendered by the reliance in non self. Dominic points out that globalisation created nation dependent of each other. May be Ricardo thought in the self-same line. But the economic thoughts and policies are never meant for the well-being of the masses. Development economics, in other words, is hollow sham. With Dominic, unless a society finds solutions to its necessities and demands, it will suffer, starve and perish.

Dominic is very apt in his delineation of the impact of corona virus. He calls it a revolution or a forced change of social structure. Just as the advent of Jesus in the West brought about a total change in all the spheres of life and thought, and just as the Industrial Revolution effected a radical change in every sphere of life and action, so does corona virus mutated our time honoured beliefs and way of life. While this life and mission of Jesus, God the Son in human flesh, completely changed the world, technology and science did the same thing during the eighteenth century. And curiously enough certain tiny viruses have overwhelmed the civilisation today. In Part nineteen Dominic has dwelled on this sudden change with great insight,
power and force. During Covid the tiny entities have toppled the human civilisation and made it upside down. They have clamped down upon man physical distancing and social distancing. Thanks to the feebleness of science, henceforth the mother cannot caress her child. Face to face contacts are getting impossible by degrees. Science comes to man's aid. You cannot hug your mother. Your speech must be substitute for it. The student will not learn anything from the way of life of his/her teacher. He/she must learn from the teacher through the computer. True the governments can save a lot as salaries spent for teachers. Corona virus has saved a lot of time and money. People are freed from use of cosmetic powder, lipstick, bleaching, dyeing etc. In fact everybody is being transformed into a phantom. We are at the lion gate of a world crowded with phantoms. While Dominic assures us the long queues at the counters and shops are swayed away by virtual queues, Plato would not be happy at all in such state of affairs. Plato in his Republic bans poetry and poets because with him the world of senses is actually an illusion. Poets rebuild the world with words. Thus with the aid of poetry we are doubly removed from reality. And with corona virus and the advent of computer age, man now journeys from the world of senses to the eerie world of shadows where zombies will gambol. And any such changes require lot of martyrs. Where are the martyrs in the so called revolution? Many have died of want, of personal protective equipments risking their own lives and families depending on them – they worked and died for millions of their fellow men. The Part nineteen loves at the other side of its face dwelling on what a revolution is like. There have been some men who are drugged with the notion of revolution. The poet tells us that any conscious attempt at revolution is perhaps hollow sham. While Nature compels the civilisation to reorganise itself, man's efforts to bring about a revolution seems to be quixotic. Dominic's legitimation is that nothing is in man's hand. If we don’t want to live as zombies in the life to come, we had better drowned our
science and technology and knowledge into the ocean of corona
virus and resurrect.

In part twenty, the last section of the poem, Prof. Dominic
writes that the Covid has divided history of human civilization
into two ages – Before Covid Era and After Covid Era. This has
replaced B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. or Anno Domini. In
other words Christ the life of our life or the spirit of resurrection
has been erased and Covid which is a dirge to death has taken its
place. While after Christ meant redemption for humanity, After
Corona (A.C.) might mean life after death for humans. One
wonders whether Jesus has been obliterated from the collective
mind of man. Or will he resurrect under the aegis of Life after
Death? Does it suggest the Second Coming? Yeats saw the lion
slowly moving its thighs. And Dominic pursuing the esoteric
strain explains:

A new world is going to be born
A new civilization and way of life
Change for a better world or worse
Time will prove within a few years. (Part 20)

In short the future of man is indeterminate.

K. V. Dominic, shut up in Kerala, sings hymns unbidden hiding
in the privacy of the glorious light of compassion till the world is
wrought to sympathy with hopes and fears it hidden not. And it
appears to the present reader that the main theme of poetry in
this volume is nostalgia or homesickness. The very first poem
Coronavirus – Mightiest Wizard of All Times” complains why
man has kicked a hornet's nest in jungles. He asks: Why did you
trespass Coronavirus' habitats?” Think of the flood victims.
Women wait for night to discharge body waste. They have lost
all their domestic possessions, important documents and even
their huts. Where will they go when the floods recede? (“Flood
Victims”) Ordinarily the poets are used to look at the sky where
one might wing and sing charged with blithe spirit in ecstasy. But
with Dominic there is nothing but dreamless sky above and
monstrous drowning water below. We are used to the deep
chasm between life here and life hereafter or between earth and heaven. With Dominic the chasm as at now are the sea of coronavirus. Coronavirus functions as the chasm between Nature and the comfortable life in cities.

John lives by banana farming  
Worked hard on leased lands  
Lockdown blocked sale of fruits  
He hasn't swam across Nature  
Still he is drowned by the pandemic  
(“Covid Victims and Villains”)  

The message is very clear. The more there is urbanisation, the more humans become hapless and helpless. Perhaps developed nations are to be blamed. And Dominic points out that the so called developed nations have become the greatest casualty of the corona pandemic. He is up with arms against what we call the triumphs of modern civilization. Just think of the boons and banes of atomic energy. It occasioned Chernobyl Tragedy. The atomic reactor there, the largest in the world, burst out like a volcano four hundred times destructive than Hiroshima atom bomb. Life is impossible there for another twenty thousand years. Lakhs live with cancer now. (“Chernobyl Tragedy”) True that there have been countless poems debunking the explosion at Chernobyl, but no one has directly pointed out how horrible the aftermath of Chernobyl tragedy has come to pass. This directness of statement is what distinguishes Dominic's poetry from the rest of the world. And he cries:

"Amazon forest is burning... burning  
Nothing but our own house on fire"  
("Amazon forest is Burning... Burning")

This reminds us of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Christian in a vision did see that the mundane world getting and spending is a burning and his nightmare seems to have come true. Are dreams ever true? But Chernobyl, Hiroshima and the aburning Amazon woodland only proves that dreams come true. Doesn't the reader find here a touch of Coleridge? The tribe of Coleridge has created eerie verses collecting material from the real life. But
Dominic seems to tell us that the real life itself could be more eerie than what the poets could ever imagine of. Just as at the sight of countless daffodils a poet could not but be gay, at the sight of Chernobyl and Amazon now being swept by the waves of coronavirus, our poet cannot but be sorrowing. And he finds Thodupuzha river bleeding. What is a river but the fountainhead of sublime thoughts? It's melodious gurgling ripples and mellifluous eternal flow feast for both eyes and mind. But mark you how long can the bard be locked up in his world of loving thought, the source of sublime thoughts? The bard can't remain in the nest and continue his song when the very river gurgling nearby carries the freight instead of the ambrosia of water. (“Bleeding Thodupuzha River”) True that Dominic wistfully registers the countless deaths that have taken place in Italy or the USA. Coronavirus the leveller treats the rich and the poor with the same cruelty. But not only the bard who is feeling homeless observing blood in Thodupuzha river, knows what ails the denizens of the Dharavi slum where one million people live in five hundred and twenty acres. 1.6 billion people live in various slums of the world – one fourth of earth's urban population. (“Dharavi Slum”) The world has been rushing towards urbanisation. Many panegyrics have been uttered in favour of urbanisation such as those of Mumford. And if anyone were in search of Dante's Inferno, the reader could hold the hand of Dominic and experience the real hell upon earth with Dominic which outdoes the dungeon as described by Dante in ugliness and horror. One wonders whether forced out from Florence the modern Dante/Dominic, the Christian leads us across the Inferno in quest of Paradiso which is alive with the light coming from our God the Father who is our home.

Let us have a bird’s eye view of the Inferno. The river Thodupuzha is bleeding. The poet hears her sobs in ripples. Thick mangroves on either side protected her from sun’s heat. Habitats of innumerable birds and fishes gave way to stone walls erected on her chopped limbs.
Crushed from both sides she flows
Tears streaming with a moaning warning music
(“Bleeding Thodupuzha River”)
Does the river Thodupuzha remind us of Lethe and Styx? Once you cross it you find average thirty three farmers in India commit suicide everyday. Here rain water is diverted to low lands where poor people struggle for survival. Their huts are swept away with flood but ironically enough they cry hoarse for drinking water.

They have nothing but dreamless sky above
and monstrous drowning water below (“Flood Victims”)

The traditional motto – reward for the pious and retribution for the offender is upside down in this blunderland (Alice is said to have visited wonderland) Krishnan shared his land with the poor, built houses for the homeless, fed them with food and gave them money. But see he is hit by the pandemic. Thus while good Samaritans are being tortured, the kins of Barabbas flourish.

Kurian runs a huge quarry on hill
Trucks of rubbles flee here and there
Poor neighbours protest in vain
Kurian got support of court (“Covid Victims and Villains”)

Lo! An atomic reactor bursts at Chernobyl burning ten lakh children and forty lakh lives where life is impossible for another twenty thousand years. (“Chernobyl Tragedy”) A small river in red and brown colour carries the wastes of leather industry to the western sea that hastens the nascent Serbonion bog heavy with pollution and putrefaction. (“Dharavi Slum”) Nauseating smoke mounts up the sky from Amazon forest aburning. The smell and smoke of shrubs, trees, small and big animals, birds, flies, fishes, insects reptiles dying everyday afire make the sky murky. (“Amazon forest is Burning... Burning”)

And hark the mother of eight children is boiling stones to pacify her starving little ones. Thieves killed her husband. (“Mother Boiling Stones for Children”) The poet can hear mother earth groan. (“Mother Earth Goes on Weeping”) Wordsworth is espying the world too much with us getting and spending wishes
if we had been pagans. And Dominic is as it were a pagan listening to the groan of Gaia. Dominic’s heart overflowing with the milk of human kindness is as it were a mother quarantined, full of tears, torn away from his suffering fellowmen and Nature whom he cannot help serve and caress. The world transformed into Inferno is as it were on the verge of the drowning heaving for breath under the heavy weight of plastic. ("Beat Plastic Pollution") The fault does not lie on our stars; we humans are responsible for our state of affairs. Dominic posits,

Born to poor parents
fifteen thousand starve
and die everyday
Result of whose karma? ("Result of Whose Karma")

In the face of dismal and eerie sheen Dominic chants hymns to Lord Buddha. ("Enlighten Them Lord Buddha") When priests turn into traders of religion F. R. Leavis prophesies that the poets should replace the priests and Dominic is a priest leading us on through the encircling gloom. No. Unlike Dante’s Inferno, the Inferno perceived by Dominic is not a sandscape sans any source of zest for life. Dominic’s wonderful poems on “Covid-19 Exodus” reminds us of the God’s chosen seed. Fleeing from Egypt -

Arbind is walking with his
family to his parent’s house
two hundred kilometres afar
Arbind carries son aged three
on his shoulders and his wife
Asha carries daughter aged two
on her weak shoulders ("Covid-19 Exodus 1")

Mother pulling her heavy trolley bag
with ten year old son sleeping upon it
Walking in bright sunlight
through National Highway 44
Having lost her job and livelihood
("Covid-19 Exodus 2")
These are wonderful vignettes photogenic in essence with the aid of which the Exodus of the Bible is brought home to the readers in vivid contours. And surely it interprets the Exodus in a new light. The concentration camps under direct control of the despotic Pharaoh are but the cities where they had crowded under the illusion of getting job and procuring livelihood. But the love of parents and mother’s magnetism, though both dim and dull, burns eternal in the human breast. And they respond to the call of the heart to return to their native villages. This is a peerless imagery of millions marching home representing Eros against the bleak background of widespread death and Thanatos. Thus unlike the hell of Milton, the Inferno of Dominic is not one monotonous, dreary desert dappled with the winds of despair and despondency blowing through the realm of visible darkness. Every matrix of the existence is woven with the two threads of weal and woe. Tony Morrison and the Aeolian harp of T. V. Reddy (“Tribute to Toni Morison”, “Elegy on Prof. T. V. Reddy”) have chanted paeans of love and life triumphing over the eerie spirit of death and annihilation. Charged with their voice and the voice of their predecessors, they are on a long march to their homes where love and Nature do wait for their homecoming. With Dominic, Nature is God. Think of the Thodupuzha River, the source of sublime thoughts laden with melodious gurgling ripples and mellifluous eternal flow. Think of the Amazon Rain Forest - pillars of life, fountains of one fifth oxygen of earth. Thus Nature is a fountainhead of life. The dismal state of man grovelling in the dungeon of Inferno has not been affected by any accident or any deus ex machina. Man is responsible for his life in slums where none dares to enter.

Situated in marshy boggy lowlands
Narrow lanes are full of mud
mixed with people ‘s urine, faeces
and stinky blood and water
oozing from boiled skin of goats.

(“Dharavi Slum”)
The highest voice of humanity posits: as you sow so you reap. Precisely it alludes to *karmaphala* of Indian philosophy. Rather one might find the explication in the Hindu scriptures of much of whatever the Holy Bible says. When a few dogs are driven away Dominic reminds us of the Hindu fact that someone of the dogs might have been one of our forefathers in some earlier births. (“Man and Dog”) Consequently every so called subhuman species is our kin. This legitimises that *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. The whole multiverse in some way or other is a relative of ours. And we should treat what Said names as ‘the other’ as our kin. Thus explicates Coleridge: “He prayeth best who loveth best all things great and small”. When Wordsworth exclaims: “To me the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts too deep for tears”, the self is not pent up in the flesh and blood of a particular body. It is everywhere. It is in everything. Every particular atom has the omnipotent, omnipresent, omnibenevolent God the Father in it. We should treat the other or the Nature in this context with love and reverence. Once we learn to love and respect Nature, the Inferno is transformed into the Purgatorio. Dominic is our Virgil who leads us to the lion gates of Paradiso where Beatrice has been waiting for us. With thanks to the lockdown, the birds and the animals are free to chirp, twitter and gambol, the mellifluous breeze from heaven seems to blow. With Dominic every man is a potential poet. (“Every Human Being is a Poet”). When the Inferno is transformed, the poet in every human being will be manifest and the paradise will be here and anon.

Om Tat Sat.

*Ramesh Chandra Mukhopadhyaya*
Preface

Glad to present before you my 7th poetry collection in English entitled Covid Pandemic and Beyond. Starting with Winged Reason in 2010 the second collection Write Son, Write appeared in 2011. They were followed by Multicultural Symphony (2014), Contemporary Concerns and Beyond (2016), K. V. Dominic Essential Readings and Study Guide (2016), and Cataracts of Compassion (2017). My poems were translated into various languages by renowned poets and critics and thus five books were published. They are: Abheepsa (Hindi – Trans. Dr. Santhosh Alex in 2016), Aapni Abheepsa (Gujarati – Trans. Fr. Varghese Paul, SJ in 2016), Poèmes Philosophiques de K V Dominic: Poèmes sur la justice sociale, les droits des femmes et de l'environnement (French – Trans. Dominique Demiscault in 2019), Winged Reason – A Bilingual Translated Anthology of Poems (English and Tamil – Trans. Dr. Barathi Srinivasan in 2019), Write My Son, Write (English and Bengali – Trans. Dr. Sabita Chakraborty in 2019). Compared to the earlier poetry collections, this book has taken a longer time for composition. The reason for the delay was the dearth of themes and topics. Unlike the majority of the contemporary poets, I have been focussing more on values and messages in my poems. Through my poems published so far, I have touched upon almost all themes, topics and issues of the present world. I have great satisfaction in my style and the poems were accepted wholeheartedly by the readers, critics and scholars across the world. Already researches leading to PhD degrees have been begun on my poetry and one Assistant Professor as well as reputed scholar in West Bengal has been awarded the doctorate on the topic of social realism in my poems. A few other scholars are pursuing their researches.

As we have been passing through the agonies of the Covid pandemic since the end of 2019, the writers all over the world
have been affected directly or indirectly by this vicious phenomenon. As a result, hundreds of books have come out during this pandemic times dealing the banes and boons of Covid-19. This book of mine starts with poems on Covid pandemic. Out of the 43 poems nine are on Covid and the first poem “Coronavirus, Mightiest Wizard of All Times” runs to twenty sections. The themes and topics of the rest of the poems are as various as Nature, environment, animals, plight of farmers, sex workers, slum dwellers, karma, religion, tributes, elegies, social criticism, etc.

I am immensely grateful to Prof. Ramesh Chandra Mukhopadhya, the renowned philosopher, poet, critic and scholar who has taken much pain and found time to write a long and excellent foreword to this book. He has been like a mentor to me, boosted me in my poetic ventures and has already written and published two critical books on my poetry titled Write My Son, Write – Text and Interpretation: An Exercise in Reading (2016), and K V Dominic Criticism and Commentary (2017), and then edited a critical anthology of 37 papers entitled Poetical Sensibility of K V Dominic’s Creative Muse (2019).

Before winding up this preface let me express my deepest gratitude to Shri Sudarshan Kcherry ji, the CEO of Authorspress, New Delhi who has agreed to publish this book. He has been so loving and considerate to me that out of my 40 books 29 have come out his world renowned publishing house. Wishing all a very happy future life freed of coronavirus,

K. V. Dominic
Coronavirus, Mightiest Wizard of All Times

Part One
Oh human being, mightiest of all creations!
Most intelligent! Emperor of all beings!
How impotent you are!
How imprisoned you are!
How swept away you are by too negligible and invisible coronavirus!

Part Two
Viruses were evolved even before you were born
Who asked you to kick horns’ nests in jungles?
Why did you trespass coronaviruses’ habitats?
Isn’t your greed that opened the Pandora’s box?

Part Three
Balancing is law of Nature
Survival of all species based on survival of the fittest
Homo sapience is no exception
Nature limits human numbers through its powerful weapons: invisible, invincible deadly viruses
H1N1 virus, cousin of corona virus took away fifty million human lives
hundred years back
Curtain of Covid-19 tragedy has just risen
and none can predict its length and depth
How many will survive is yet to be seen
There might even come an age
when human species disappears
as Mesozoic era of dinosaurs

Part Four
Oh human beings,
time has come
to correct yourself
Lockdown of your nations
showers blessings
on you abundantly
You are doing now reparations
Started playing concordant notes
Began flowing with the eternal flow
Your lockdown has purified
air you have defiled
water you have polluted
Man, look at Nature around you
How happy are animals now!
How merry are birds!
How gleeful are fishes!
How gaily dance plants and trees!

Part Five
You wake up by chirps and tweets
of variety of birds in morning
Flies and flowers
greet you with smiles
Coronavirus regained
rights of all animals
Animals now travel
anywhere they like
Roads and streets
you made through their habitats
they use for rest and
playgrounds of cubs and calves

Part Six
Oh human beings,
You used your scientific brain
and brought world
under one home and market
Your greed for wealth and luxury
linked all nations together
through trade and globalization
A home with little love
is sure to shatter
And coronavirus shattered
all your worldly dreams
Empires of all corporates
crumbled like US twin towers
Growth of a country
neglecting poor and majority
can’t sustain long
and Nature retorts

Part Seven
O coronavirus,
You could easily do
such an inconceivable miracle
which sages tried
and failed from ages to ages
Churches, mosques, temples,
synagogues, gurdwaras and
all such worshipping places closed
Preachers, priests, shamans, godmen
have sought shelter
in their locked houses
Those who looted
wealth of the masses
are never to be seen
offering their hands
when millions drown
in the ocean of coronavirus
Coronavirus has opened
blinded laity’s minds
Worshippers now understand
God lives in their houses and hearts
They now know well
hollowness of rituals
God can never be
pleased by rituals
Instead He demands
love and compassion
Be compassionate to
all humans, non-humans,
Nature and universe
Coronavirus has proved
deficiencies of religions
Religions fail to
cure physical ailments
Medicines, treatments
dieting, cleanliness, exercise
keep one healthy
and save from illness
Irrational priests propagate
pandemic as God’s wrath
But Pope Francis II
asserts Covid-19
aftermath of man’s
ill-treatment of environment
Part Eight

Lockdown brought happiness and peace in houses
Children get love and care of father and mother
Husbands shower love on their wives
Wives care needs of their husbands
Old parents get proper attention and love
Pets and domestic animals are happier than before
There is no threat of thieves
since police patrol everywhere
Governments function well day and night
Beggars and homeless are sheltered in camps
Patients are treated well in hospitals
Man has become humane and compassionate
Stray dogs, animals and birds are loved and fed

Part Nine

Coronavirus is a blessing in disguise
Except of those millions inflicted
majority became hale and healthy
Lockdown checked
flow of unhealthy artificial food
Scarcity of income
changed people's eating habit
People turned to simple diet
of grains, vegetables and fruits
that protected body
from attack of diseases
Five Star hospitals are being closed
Operation theatres are seldom used
Pharmaceutical corporates
which killed millions of people
are sinking in the ocean of loss
Medical labs are frequented less
Part Ten

Oh coronavirus,
you could rein well
people's attitudes of extravaganza
Made them rational and frugal
Marriage ceremonies and feasts
for hundreds and thousands
limited now to a dozen or two
Burials and all other ceremonies
conducted with handful of attendants
Since churches, mosques
and temples are closed
millions are saved of festival expenses

Part Eleven

Coronavirus has established
vulnerable nature of human beings
Virus enters human body
irrespective of gender, age,
race, religion or nation
No discrimination to poor or rich
A billionaire or a beggar
proves helpless before its attack
Lifeless virus becomes live
entering into live cells and multiplies
Healthy body resists their attack
while weak bodies
succumb to their conquest

Part Twelve

Coronavirus made its best harvest
in most developed nations –
USA, Italy, Spain, France, UK, China
Prosperity and luxury made one undisciplined
Never cared for social distancing
and locked down life in houses
When governments give priority to economy
and neglect lives of the citizens
coronaviruses spread like forest fire
Hundreds die in New York City everyday
mounting to eighteen thousand as on First May
No place to bury bodies, graveyards are all full
Churches turned to mortuaries
Even trucks full of decayed bodies
waiting for their burial somewhere

Part Thirteen
World spent 1917 billion dollars in 2019
for defence unnecessary
US 732 billion, China 261 billion
India 71, Russia 65, Saudi Arabia 61
France 50, Germany 49, UK 48
Coronavirus’ destructive power
was known to developed nations
even at its very first outbreak in China
Had these nations started research
months back and spent several billions
for its antivirus, the world could now
swim across this pandemic ocean

Part Fourteen
Poor are easy preys of pandemics
Half of the world population –
more than three billion people live in poverty
Industrial, agricultural labourers, fishermen
poor farmers, traders, taxi drivers
worst affected by lockdown
Incomeless they live at governments’ mercy
Millions of migrant labourers
reside idle in government camps
Their burning minds are with their families
thousands of kilometers away
struggling for survival
and fighting against many diseases
It is harvest time and
they ought to be back home
lest crops aren’t lost
Lives of millions in slums most pathetic
With no income they
plead for governments’ help
Living in single room huts
using dirty common toilets
not sufficient water for cleanliness
social distancing is impossible
And coronavirus has its easiest job

Part Fifteen

Millions of diasporas all over the world
Some have lost their lives
Not even shown to the dearest ones
they are buried in alien lands
Many have lost their jobs
They all want to be back home
Lockdown has cancelled their flights
Losing their jobs their future is bleak

Part Sixteen

Coronavirus created
hundreds of martyrs
Doctors, nurses, health workers
sacrificed their lives
for their people and nations
Many have died of want
of personal protective equipments
Risking their own lives and
families depending on them
they worked and died for
millions of their fellowmen
Services rendered by police and fire force
equally laudable and dangerous
Scorching sunlight, heavy rain
lightening, thunder, wind, snowfall
never dissuade them
from their selfless, humane duty

Part Seventeen
Lockdown has reduced a lot
deadly air pollutants in cities
New Delhi, most polluted capital city
recorded 60% fall of PM2.5
Reduction of Seoul 54% and Wuhan 44%
Los Angeles 31%, Sao Paulo 32%
Mumbai 34%, New York 29%
Paris 20-30%, Madrid 11%, London 9%
Stars are visible in cities’ skies
to ease uneasy minds for quiet slumber
Since noise has come down considerably
thousands of birds have come back
to balm aching human minds
with spectacular views and melodious music

Part Eighteen
Coronavirus has cautioned people
necessity of self-reliance
Globalization created nations
dependent of each other
Since the economic principle
evolved for selfish financial gains
it lost its soul of humaneness
Majority of nations suffered
while a few mighty like US gained
And these wealthy developed nations
are the worst preys of coronavirus!
The pandemic warns all societies
to be self-sufficient and independent
From smallest unit of homes
to villages, cities, districts, States,
nations, self-reliance is required
World economy is bound
to sink to the bottom
Unless a society finds solutions to
its necessities and demands
it will suffer, starve and perish

Part Nineteen

Oh coronavirus,
you have made revolution
in all spheres of life
Academic bodies have started
online classes, video conferences
webinars, online exams and interviews
Buildings of schools and colleges
can be used for many other purposes
Governments can save a lot
as salaries spent for teachers
Mask has become part of apparel
It has saved a lot of time and money
People are freed from use of cosmetic powder,
lipstick, bleaching, dyeing, and such
unnecessary chemical applications
Since civil law forbids people from spitting
Roads are clean and rid of infectious germs
Long queues at counters and shops
are swept away by virtual queues
Competitions of sports and games
are done in closed stadiums with
virtual spectators and applause
People enjoy them free of cost at their houses
Part Twenty

Oh mighty coronavirus,
tiniest in size
you made history on earth
History of human race
divided into two
Before Covid-19 (BC)
and after Covid-19 (AC)
Unlike AD/BC or CE/BCE
BC/AC is universal and phenomenal
A new world is going to be born
A new civilization and way of life
Change for a better world or worse
Time will prove within a few years

+++
Covid Victims and Villains

John lives by banana farming
Worked hard on leased lands
Lockdown blocked sale of fruits
He hasn't swum across Nature
Still he is drowned by this pandemic!

Krishnan shared his land with the poor
Built ten houses for the homeless
Fed them with food and money
He hasn't swum across Nature
Still he too is hit by this pandemic!

Kurian runs a huge quarry on hill
Trucks of rubbles flee here and there
Poor neighbours protest in vain
Kurian got support of court
He has obstructed flow of Nature
But he is least hit by this pandemic!

Lolan leads a pure veggie life
Treats domestic animals as his family
Feeds stray dogs, birds and insects
He hasn't swum across Nature
Still he too is hit by this pandemic!

Many politicians live on people's donations
Their service is less but earnings more
Lockdown never made them bankrupt
They have obstructed flow of Nature
But are never hit by this pandemic!
Salim lives by his little teashop  
Charges less for tea and snacks  
Serves poor free of cost  
Lockdown tumbled his life and service  
He hasn’t swum across Nature  
Still he is drowned by this pandemic!

Shamans exploited people’s ignorance  
Looted wealth for future generations  
They are least affected by lockdown  
Sure, they have blocked flow of Nature  
But are never lashed by this pandemic!

***
Covid-19 Exodus 1

Lockdown has drowned lives of millions of labourers in the world Several millions are already unemployed

Covid-19 lockdown in India tumbled happy life of Arbind and his family Lost his job in plastic factory in Delhi No income now for daily life Since house rent has been due building owner drove them out Arbind’s parents and brothers live at Moradabad in UP Though he has nothing left as ancestral property, he is sure his loving parents and brothers will give them a shelter Since vehicle traffic is blocked Arbind is walking with his family to his parents’ house two hundred kilometers afar Arbind carries son aged three on his shoulders and his wife Asha carries daughter aged two on her weak shoulders And they have a huge heavy bag carrying together with their hands After journey of few minutes tired they put bag on road and rest a minute and resume their walk Being not so literate they have no idea when they will reach their destination
Arbind represents thousands
of migrant labourers on exodus
Some are caught by police and sent to camps
Nearly fifty have died run over by vehicles
Of late sixteen were killed by goods train
while sleeping tired early morning on rails
Absence of trains compelled them to walk
Alas, the train itself took away their lives!

+++
Covid-19 Exodus 2

Another distressing scene on TV
A victim of Covid-19 lockdown exodus
Mother pulling her heavy trolley bag
with ten year old son sleeping upon it
Walking in burning sunlight
through National Highway 44
Having lost her job and livelihood
going from Punjab to her house in Jhansi, UP
Eight hundred kilometers on foot
Already passed more than 500kms
Tired of walking, her little son
has bent upon bag and slept
And wearied she pulls on hopefully
She is one of millions on streets now
Why is fate so cruel to the poor?
Haven't the governments
any prick of conscience?
How can they ignore such piercing sights?

+++
Haiku on Covid-19

Congregation prays:
God save us from the pandemic
God: I am helpless

Man: Aren't we your dearest?
God: It's your ego tells you so
All my creations darling to me

Man complains to God:
Are we fated to live with mask?
God: Enough you polluted air

Dawn now echoes birds’ chirps:
Thank you, thank you, thank you God
For restoring our rights

Coronavirus to man:
A lesson for your conceit
Be humble and kind

Man to coronavirus:
What harm have we done to you?
Virus: you called us

Earth to human beings:
Except you all are happy now
Reward for your crimes

God to human beings:
Mask you wear is punishment
For masking in your lives
Little boy to mom:
You punished for using cell phone
Now force for online classes

Earth to human beings:
You wash your hands for survival
Crimes’ blood still remains

Infants wail to guilty adults:
Pandemic is your own product
We are drowned in it

Animals warn humans:
Exploit more you perish more
Creator protects us

Mother Earth to quarryman:
How ruthless you dynamite
Mother’s breasts that fed you!

River to her mother sea:
Man raped and stabbed head to foot
Threw his waste on me

Plight of human being:
Social being now antisocial
Result of his karma

Members of same group
Bound to keep distance each other:
Reward of leagued crimes

Animals to humans:
You are caged and we are free
Tit for tat, mind you!

★★★★
Mask can’t Suppress One’s Hunger

Jafer, 70, led dignified life
Worked hard as head load labourer
Covid lockdown tore his dignity
No bank balance and none to help
Hunger drove him shamelessly
Goes with dirty mask from door to door
fearing police and rebuke of residents
Alas, Mask can save from disease
but can’t suppress one’s hunger!
Nithin’s Sublime Sacrifice

Couple Nithin and Athira engineers at Dubai
Covid-19 spread and lockdown started
Both volunteered services for covid patients
Athira is now eight months pregnant
Longed to reach home Kerala earliest
Pledged in Supreme Court for chartered flights
Flights granted with half capacity
priority for pregnant women, children and old
somehow they got tickets for both
Nithin preferred to stay there and
send Athira alone to Calicut airport
Sublime sacrifice of his ticket
for sending another pregnant lady
He paid for tickets of two persons
who needed urgent return
Athira returned and admitted for delivery
several days before due date
Meanwhile Nithin died of cardiac arrest
He has been a heart patient for more than a year
Athira gave birth to a daughter and
she is not revealed of Nithin’s death

+++
Subaida’s Donation to Covid-19 Relief Fund

Subaida’s donation to Covid-19 Relief Fund
Viral news in channels and newspapers
Subaida Umma aged sixty lives at Kollam
with her husband and brother, both heart patients
She runs a teashop for livelihood
Lockdown has closed the shop for more than a month
Kerala Chief Minister’s daily press meets on TV
detailed donations, small and big, flowed to CMDRF
Even children donated money they received
as gift for the Vishu festival
News of such sublime donations
Motivation for Subaida for her donation
She sold her two goats and received Rs. 12000
5000 was set apart for rent and 2000 for electricity bill
She walked far away to the District Collector’s office
Donated Rs. 5000 to CMDRF
The CM expressed deep gratitude
Praised Subaida as a model in his press meet

+++
Magnetism of Mother

Most touching scene on TV
Two year old daughter
crying violently to go to her mother's arms
Her mother serving as nurse
in nearby Covid-19 hospital
Being quarantined she has been
in hospital for more than a month
Child had never experienced
her absence even for a day
Her incessant cries to meet her mother
compelled her father to bring her to mother
Seeing her darling crying to come to her
tears ran from mother's eyes like brooks
She was forbidden to receive the child
Mother could only see her crying child
from entrance gate of hospital building
She couldn’t bear it for long
waving ta-ta to her sweet daughter and husband
she went inside crying
Father tried hard to detract child
from mother’s magnetic pull
Forcefully took her back home
with tears brimming in his eyes

 três
Amazon Forest is Burning ... Burning

Amazon forest is burning ... burning
Nothing but our own house on fire
Fire set by irrational cattle ranchers, loggers
Permitted by selfish short-sighted government
to clear and utilize land for business
Fumed high to an international crisis
More than 150 acres lost every minute now
Millions die every day – shrubs, trees,
small and big animals, birds, flies,
fishes, insects, reptiles, snakes, worms …

Amazon Rain Forest, pillars of life
Fountain of one fifth oxygen on earth
Largest rainforest spreading
5.5 million square kilometers
Covering territories of nine nations
Major portion sixty percent in Brazil
Shelter to 390 billion trees,
40000 species of plants,
2200 species of fish, 1294 species of birds
International beef and leather industries
responsible for eighty percent deforestation
Since 1970 eight lakh square kilometers forest lost
One third of Amazon inhabited by indigenous people
They love their dwellings and surroundings
and forest loss only eight percent!
Loggers have killed natives and encroached their land
Tribes are decimated fast resulting in genocides

Green Parties have taken up issue worldwide
But Biocentrists are muffled by selfish
Anthropocentrists who have least love for Nature

+++
Beat Plastic Pollution

Let’s go back to Nature
Go back to natural containers
we left for ease and fashion
Beat plastic pollution
before plastic drowns
man and entire universe

+++
Bleeding Thodupuzha River

Alluring Thodupuzha River
Source of my sublime thoughts
Her melodious gurgling ripples
and mellifluous eternal flow
feast for both eyes and mind
Gazing her intent every evening
I could hear her sobs in ripples
Complaints after complaints
against human beings who torture her
Father Sahya feeds her every day with pure water
Mission of her life is feeding all –
animals, plants, fishes, birds, flies, insects...
Human beings pollute her daily
disposing garbage of all kinds –
plastic, kitchen wastes, human discharge, toxins of
factories, pesticides, insecticides, herbicides
Thick mangroves on either side
protected her from sun's heat
Habitats of innumerable birds and fishes
Gave way to stone walls
erected on her chopped limbs
Crushed from both sides she flows
Tears streaming with a moaning warning music
Chernobyl Tragedy

World witnessed in 1986 another manmade tragedy Chernobyl atomic reactor the largest in world burst out like a volcano with annihilating radiation four hundred times destructive than Hiroshima atom bomb The entire city was burnt Fifty lakh lives lost including ten lakh children and those in womb Four crore people were radiated Radiation spread to four lakh kilometres Life is impossible there for another twenty thousand years Lakhs live with cancer now Babies are born with deformities Energy is abundant in Nature But be vigilant in tapping it
Dharavi Slum

Dharavi slum in Mumbai
One million people in 520 acres!
World’s third largest slum after
Orangi Town, Karachi with 2.4 million
and Ciudad Neza, Mexico City with 1.2 million
1.6 billion people live in various slums of the world
One fourth of earth’s urban population!

One of the filthiest slums in the world
none dares to enter its interior
Situated in marshy boggy lowlands
Narrow lanes are full of mud
mixed with people’s urine, feces
and stinky blood and water
oozing from boiled skin of goats
Leather, textiles, pottery products
main industry of people with
annual turnover of one billion dollars
A small river in red and brown colour
carries the nauseous filth to western sea
Those multi-millionaires of world
using finest leather products
never care for those wretched
artisans living in this hellish world

More than fifteen thousand
single room factories function
making turnover of several millions
While Muslim community
engages in leather industry
Hindus live on pottery and textiles
Tamil migrants are vendors of food
They cook and supply idlies, vadas
fry-ups to the entire slum

Horrible impassable lanes of Dharavi
make it a fort of underworld crimes
Police fail to check or even support
illicit breweries and large scale liquor sale
Innumerable brothels with prostitutes
of all grades attract city men of Mumbai
Rich customers coming in cars are
brought on palanquins to five star brothels
Transgender sex workers are favourites
of rich Muslim men in fifties and sixties

Unity is the strength of Dharavi
No labour problems or conflict
between workers and owners
People resist government’s move
to demolish huts and build new
flats for their accommodation

Monsoon doubles agony of Dharavi
Water flows through lanes and huts
Dark colour of water has changed to orange
Muddy water with feces has drifted away
Incessant rain has purified stinky air
To save children from floating
they are seated on desks tied together
Cooking too done on tall desks
in the light of kerosene lambs
Children sleep in clothes cradles
tied to the main beam of the hut
Parents sleep on the upper berth
of the three tier bed while
feces float on water below
Aren't they our brothers and sisters?
Can't the rich save the poor
with what they throw out after consumption?
Is it one's fault one is born poor
or merit one is born rich?

***
Enlighten Them Lord Buddha

Those traders of religion
living in pomp and luxury
Palace like houses and
expensive luxurious cars
Claim to be representative
of Christ born in stable
Lived a humble simple life
with poor disciples and fishermen
Eating just bread and fish
Sacrificed life for saving the masses
Jesus, isn’t it high time you
descended and drove them out
as you did in Jerusalem temple?

Enlighten them Lord Buddha
the purest soul that lived on Earth
Born and brought up as prince
renounced all such luxuries
Chose life of ascetic poverty
Taught the world ways of salvation
Salvation from sufferings of life
Salvation through nishkam karma

+++
Every Human Being is a Poet

Every human being is a poet
both literate and illiterate
Poetry is born in our minds
and grows into a tree
and serves entire universe
through nishkama karma
Poetry needs no words or language
Illuminating the world
Serving humans and non-humans
through selfless action is poetry
One who writes something
and does just its opposite
can never be called a poet
Poets have no walls of
religion, race, caste or nation
Love of entire universe
is their religion and creed

✦✦✦
Farmers’ Suicides

Average thirty three farmers
in India commit suicide everyday
Reasons are innumerable
Governments are main culprits
Drowned in debt no other option
If instigation is a crime
governments should be punished
Rulers and politicians turn parasites
thrive at the sweat of feeding farmers
Nay drink their blood and lead to suicides

+++
Flood Victims

What right have high land, mid land dwellers to drown low land people in flood? Why have you filled your paddy fields, ponds, streams, canals, wells and wet lands with soil and diverted rain water to low lands where poor people struggle for survival? Flood victims of low lands in Kerala Houses drowned in flood for more than a week Thousands struggle in government camps Plead for water, food, dress, medicine 'Water, water everywhere, but...' Collect rain water to quench their thirst Men, women, old and young live together with no toilets Women wait for night to discharge body waste They have lost all their domestic possessions Important documents and even their huts Where will they go when floods recede? Their dreams of future are bleak and doomed They have nothing but dreamless sky above and monstrous drowning water below

✦✦✦
Function of Religion

Where does religion lead us to?
Happiness, bliss, shanti, nirvana?
Or superstition, illusion, communalism,
intolerance, prejudice, hate, exploitation,
violence, bloodshed, massacre and war?
Its ideal function is former
but History proves latter more
Had I been Born as a Dove

Patriotism has injected in me
greatness of my country
Land which bore great sages and Buddha!
I boasted of my country to foreign friends

Most inhuman diabolic crimes and
rapes and murders of angelic children
seldom heard in other parts of the world
drown me in ocean of grief and dejection

How can humans become so mean?
Had I been born as a dove
I shouldn’t have felt so much of pangs

✦✦✦
How Can We Relish Our Dish...?

How happy we are
when prices of cereals
vegetables and fruits
shoot down like manna!
Happier we are
if it comes down to
Rupees thirty, twenty
ten or even less
But we don’t listen to
wails and sobs of
farmers and their families
echoing from those
weeping goods we purchase
Silently and unaware we support
those cut-throat middlemen
who exploit those miserable
Poverty stricken, debt-drowned
farmers suicide everyday
How can we relish our dish
when we savour their tears?

***
I can’t Count my Country Free

I can't count my country free
when majority struggles for survival
when farmers starve and end their lives
while governments support billionaires
in looting earnings of common men

I can't count my country free
when servants (govt.) kick their masters
and elected rulers turn corrupt
and drink the blood of masses who feed

I can't count my country free
when religions brainwash peoples’ minds
uproot common sense and secular thoughts
and drown them in superstitions

I can't count my country free
when a woman fears to travel alone
tread alone a road day or night
or fears to work with men
and live with them in their residences

I can't count my country free
when caste system still exists
and Dalits are treated underdogs
overworked, tortured and murdered

I can't count my country free
when others dictate what to eat
what to wear, where to pray
and what to speak

***
Man and Dog

Man and dog equal victims of covid pandemic
When millions of people are affected
and thousands die everyday
thousands of dogs starve and die
Though not affected by corona virus
lockdown made stray dogs’ lives miserable
They are seldom fed on roadsides or doorsteps

Man, when you deny food to them
you may deny that to your own body
Mightn’t they be your previous births or your parents’?
When you drive them away or throw stones at them
you may do that to your own self or to your parents

Man, why do you treat dogs as inferior?
What makes you different is your developed brain
language craft and manual skills
Man, you have used your brain
more for destruction than construction
What good your brain has done for this planet or other beings?
Rather you attempt most for devastation and extinction
Root cause of all pandemics and even natural calamities is your brain
Man, you use your tongue more for pollution than for telling truths
Use your hands more for exploitation of nature and environment
Now compare your skills with your inferior dog
Dogs run faster than you; able to see both in light and darkness
Its hearing, smelling senses are far far superior
It loves you deeper than your dear and near ones
Tragic report of a dog’s love for its little mistress sunk millions eyes in tears recently  
6th August landslide at Pettimudy tea estate near Munnar swept away four labour camps with eighty poor labourers  
Dead bodies sunk with mud more than twenty feet thick  
Bodies were dug out with much labour day after day  
Kuvi was searching for his little mistress Dhanushka aged two  
He was crying and running here and there not eating anything  
Sniffing deep and stretching ears longing for her call of kuvi kuvi  
Rescue team continued digging mud and search in valley river  
On 14th augast their eyes were drawn to Kuvi staring and crying at  
something floating down the river five kilometres away  
Dhanushka’s decayed body was stuck on a tree  
across the river and rescue team brought it to the bank  
Kuvi ran to the body crying and crying and making others weep  
Dhanushka’s father’s body was found but mother’s and brother’s still missing  
Rescue team has not lost their hope even after seventeen days  
They are determined to find out the missing bodies five and Kuvi is now member of the police dog squad!  

★★★★
Mother Boiling Stones for Children*

Heart rending news from Mombasa in Kenya
Penina Bahati Kitaso, mother of eight children
boiling stones to pacify her starving children
Tired of waiting and waiting they sleep with hunger
Widow and illiterate Penina fed her family
washing clothes of the neighbourhood
But social distancing of Covid-19 stole her income
Her husband died last year
on an encounter with the armed thieves
Her neighbor Priska Moman shared the tragic
news with the media and opened an account for her
Benefactors have started helping the family

***

* Based on BBC report
Mother Earth Goes on Weeping

Happiness brims mother’s eyes
when children relish their dish full
She would appease her own hunger
with what is left after children fed

Mother earth goes on weeping helplessly
when her mighty one percent sons
squander food and resource stored for all
and starve and exploit ninety nine percent

+++
Murder of Nature

Beware Man!
Mountains, Earth
Rivers, Seas …
Living, vibrant
energetic like you
Compared to their
size and power
how insignificant you are!
More you murder
destroy, exploit
heavier your burden
of Prarabda Karma
and Sanchita Karma

+++
Nature is God

God is in Nature and Nature is God
Crime against Nature is sin against God
Forest, quarry, sand mafias raped her
Stabbed her body deep from head to foot
She started bleeding immersing most of her children
Perpetrators are below one percent
Whereas victims are innocent cent percent
Lying helpless and wriggling with intolerable pain
she taught her human children
necessity of harmonious life
Poor and rich, literate and illiterate
all are equal in basic biological needs
And religion and caste are just superficial robes

+++
Ode to Sun

Pranam to you Sun, emperor of skies
Sustaining us and all living bodies
for billions of years
With your multicoloured
scintillating beauty
wakes us to karma at dawn
strokes us to rest at dusk
Burning out day after day
sacrifices your life for
all lives on earth and
innumerable heavenly bodies
Kindly enlighten us mortals
to serve and sacrifice for others

†††
On Visiting Achyuta Samanta and KISS University*

“Generations to come, it may well be, will scarce believe that such a man as this one ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth.” – How Einstein glorified Gandhi sixty years back is attributed by thousands on another Mahatma, and Gandhi’s true disciple, Achyuta Samanta. What can be nobler and humane than giving shelter, education and self-reliance to 30000 poorest and neglected children of God? Provided employment to two hundred and fifteen thousand! The smiles and cheers from those 30000 pupils made me feel that we have descended on the real heaven on earth. There is no doubt that Bharat Ratna and the Noble Prize will seek Achyuta Samanta one day or other to honour him and inspire millions to follow his humane sublime path.

* Achyuta Samanta (born 20 January 1965) is the founder of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT); Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India which provides free accommodation, food, healthcare, and education from class 1 to post-graduation with vocational training.
Result of Whose Karma?

God, our Father
why don't you
reveal us
your plans?
Why can't we find
sense in your
actions tragic
and comic?
Babies with purest souls
born blind, deaf
dumb, handicapped
mentally deranged
Born with fatal,
chronic disease
Result of whose karma?
Kidnapped by beggars
Tortured, starved
blinded, maimed
Used for begging
Result of whose karma?
Raped by father
brother, relative
friend, neighbour
teacher, priest
Mass raped and
even murdered
Result of whose karma?
Born to poor parents
fifteen thousand starve
and die everyday
Result of whose karma?

+++
Smiling Face

Human faces appearing
serious, cruel, unpleasant
Faces with ferocious eyes,
moustaches and beards
Faces we try to avoid
meeting on our walks
But when they smile
look like lotus bloomed
Teeth like lotus petals
Their smiles radiate
like the peeping sun
held by dark clouds
As lotus makes us happy
God wants us smile and
radiate others with happiness
Sublime Nature Love

What a refreshing report showering on  
when mind and body writhe in summer heat!  
An instance of purest love shared by media  
A male hornbill is found dead on road  
hit by some vehicle sped on the way  
Picked up some compassionate nature lovers  
Found many fig fruits inside long curved bills  
Reported case to forest watchers  
It’s a tragedy of a father hornbill  
feeding mother hornbill and chicks  
They decided to save mother and chicks  
Found a tall tree in the midst of forest  
A crevice on trunk twenty five feet high  
Inside it a layer of mud wall  
to save the chicks from predators  
The bills of mother bird were visible  
through a small hole on mud surface  
They fixed a bamboo ladder on the tree  
Started feeding her various fruits  
with a pair of tongs eight times a day  
Eternal bliss they get as reward for pains  
They reveal to world Buddha’s preaching:  
“He who is kind to animals, heaven will protect”  
When father hornbill sacrificed life for family  
millions of human fathers ignore their duties  
some even torture and kill wives and children  

***
**Tribute to Toni Morrison**

A baby black star was born in Western sky on 18th February 1931, but remained unnoticed by glitter of innumerable white stars. The black star then grew to emit sparkling unique rays and dimmed all other stars reigning as queen. Though physically dead on 5th August 2019, her radiance remains immortal for ages and ages.

The first black woman honoured by the Nobel, the most adored novelist in the world, Toni Morison is mouthpiece of the Black and oppressed. Her *Beloved* remains beloved of millions East and West. She is a black pearl and her novels serve as black pepper adding flavour to readers’ mental feast.

+++
Wastage for the Dead

What happens to human being when s/he dies?
What happens to animal when it dies?
What happens to plant when it dies?
What happens to a flame when it is extinguished?
Aren't all creations of God?
Why then man waste thousands for the dead
when thousands die of hunger every day?

***
Sex Workers and Society

Wine and women
weakness of men
from time immemorial
Destiny makes one a call girl
Never enjoys the profession
Society dragged her to the business
Seduced and abused by men
spat away like curry leaves
Patriarchy rules the world
Man controls society
Sinner is extolled
and sinned is punished
Seduced and cheated by men
some are sold to red streets
Some are kidnapped at childhood
and used for begging and sex work
Made pregnant, give birth to
children of unknown fathers
Expelled by merciless society
they go out with their children
Either beg or do some work for survival
Branded as prostitutes
they are abhorred by society
And they continue their life of filth
Transgenders too are outcasts
Beguiled by men many become sex workers

Society has double standards
Adulterer is protected
while adulteress is crucified
When will the day come
when call girls and transgenders
are deemed members of our family?

+++
Snake and Man

Is snake enemy of man?
To some it seems so
Is man enemy of snake?
Never it finds so
Snake is cursed by God in Bible
It is worshipped in Hindu philosophy
Maha Vishnu used it as his sacred bed
Lord Shiva used it as his ornament
Sacred groves of Hindu temples
protect snakes and other creatures
Every being on earth
has right to live on the planet
Why should man kill snake
when it never attacks him?
When will he learn
the necessity of cohabittance?

***
Lifespan of Humans and Birds

O Supreme Being the Almighty,  
Creator of all beings on earth!  
How beautiful are your birds!  
Feasting to our eyes and ears  
Their tweets and chirps  
no doubt make you happy  
But their lifespan is very short  
compared to us, human beings  
Couldn't you grant them longer life?

Our religions teach us to sing  
hymns in praise of you  
But each religion tries  
to please its own gods  
rather than you Supreme Being  
To please their god  
some turn terrorists  
and kill the heathens

Of all your creations  
man is the only one  
who sins against you  
His heinous crimes in varieties  
multiplies and find new terms  
in dictionaries everyday  
Such a man is claimed  
by some religions  
as created in your image!  
O Supreme Being,  
what is your image?  
Why have you granted  
long lifespan to humans  
who stab you day after day?

+++
Musings on Covid Pandemic and Beyond

K. V. Dominic

Children Deserted

Shocking news on TV
Boys aged seven and nine
wailing helplessly on roadside
Their mother dropped them there
telling lie of return soon
and drove away with her lover
How can a mother desert
her children – part of her body?

Elsewhere a newborn baby
found crying in roadside trash
An unwanted child fated to be born
Its mother got rid of burden
to live happily with her lover
Isn't maternal love deepest
and purest of all other loves?

Man throws away hundreds
of puppies and kittens everyday
No guilt of conscience and
they aren't news at all
Days' long incessant wails of
mother dogs and cats
fall deaf to merciless ears

+++
**Gopalakrishnan, the Noblest**

“When a man has pity on all living creatures then only he is noble”, the Buddha teaches
And Gopalakrishnan is one of the noblest
A retired computer operator of State Bank of India bought one acre land near Mannamangalam* forest with his retirement benefits of Rs. 1.5 million
Felled all rubber trees and planted
fruit trees, medicinal plants, rare trees
Now more than 1000 plants and trees including
200 fruit trees, 80 medicinal trees 40 wild trees
All for birds, wild boars, rats, squirrels, snakes
mongooses, reptiles, ants, and all other insects
“For human beings, help is there from friends, neighbours and governments, but for non-humans, the heirs apparent to the entire earth, there is none” tells Gopalakrishnan of his divine inspiration
This heaven of beings is 500 metres from traffic road
A narrow pedestrian lane links to the road
Not even bicycles can enter there
to disturb joys of birds and animals
Gopalakrishnan and his wife Chinnamma have named this animals’ paradise “Praana” and live in a house a little far away
The happiness they feel, very few can attain

***

* Near Thrissur in Kerala, India
Lessons from my Rocky Dog

Dogs and cats are seldom friends
My cute Rocky chases my cats
whenever and wherever he finds
He will be more aggressive in chase
if he finds us noticing him
He is fed chicken mixed rice in evening
Once his hunger is over
he will rest near the plate
Our own cats and even stray cats
then dine from his plate and
he never drives them away.
He will finish the balance food
later before dawn

Now compare man with dog
Is man willing to share his excess food
with millions of hungry mouths?
Neither he shares but throws as garbage
tons and tons of food everyday
When millions have no houses
and are compelled to live in rented buildings
thousands of rich own excess lands
that remain waste as wilderness
Man is the only being who is greedy
and he is the black sheep of this planet earth

+++
Shadows

In my morning
I was thrilled to
follow my shadow
allured by butterflies
tweets of birds
and beauties of Nature

At my noon
I could conquer
my shadow
stamping on it
facing extreme heat

In my evening
I fear
I will be chased by
my shadow
and push me
to pitch darkness

✦✦✦
Elegy on Professor T V Reddy

Lord Venkateswara,
why have you called back
your dear bard so soon?
The spiritual epic, his masterpiece
turned out to be his swan song
It came out of the press just a few months back
Couldn't you grant him some more time
to get feedback of this sublime book?
Gentle breeze would have brought to your feet
more rhapsodies from his lips

Renowned poet Professor T V Reddy,
you were our dearest President
Elder brother and mentor
Your departure without any notice
drowned us in the ocean of grief
Time can't fill the chasm
Irreplaceable is your absence

Started your career as Lecturer of English
Proved eminent Professor, Principal, Emeritus Fellow
Author of 21 books – poet, novelist,
short story writer, critic, grammarian
Your distinct poetic style
meeting point of past and present
Combination of beautiful structured rhymed
poetry and well-crafted unrhymed free verse
Rhythm as musical as ripples of brook
A rural muse of Tirupati, portrayed
beauties of landscapes, flora, fauna,
poor people, animals and birds
Sorrows and tragedies of people around
brimmed your eyes and flowed to paper
Exploitation and corruption of politicians
hurt your mind and composed
excellent lampoons and satires
Spiritual and pious to the core
superb philosophical, metaphysical
poems flowed from your pen

Professor Reddy, how humble and simple you were
Never showy, preferred to be mute in assemblies
Gentle and loving to anyone who meets
Inspired and guided younger poets and critics
Your talk on English poetry enlightened the audience

Lord Venkateswara,
don't you see your bard
shooting rays on you like a star?
Still your bard is yet to be
prescribed in universities’ syllabuses
Don't you want to spread your message
every nook and corner of the world?
Professor Reddy glitters like a gem
among sparkling poets of the world
As sun can't be hidden by moon
we are sure, Professor Reddy
can't be ignored by universities for long

+++
Jai Javan! Jai Kisan!

How can we sleep at night
not letting our minds
to fly to borders
where thousands of soldiers
patrol in minus degrees
to protect us from enemies?
Thousands have sacrificed their lives
fighting against enemies
and inclement climate

How can we take our meals
forgetting farmers who feed us?
Rice, wheat food in dishes
take us to thousands of striking farmers
shedding tears for months on highways
How can we eat happily
when their tears flow
like lava to our minds?
Thousands of farmers
suicide every year
drowned in debt caused by
draught and flood
Pranam to you soldiers and farmers!
Jai Javan! Jai Kisan!

***