



In Mother's Land

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Through Anandi Zhang

Cover image:

Detail from a rammed earth stele celebrating Unity in Diversity  
with soils of Auroville and from around the world.

## **Sri Aurobindo:**

Your life on this earth is a divine poem that you are translating into earthly language or a strain of music which you are rendering into words.

*The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA), Vol. 12, p. 100*

## **Gratitude**

To Sri Aurobindo and The Mother

To Mother Nature and life experiences

that inspire poetic expressions, personal  
and universal

To B, Nikki V., Nina S., Patricia H. and Silky A.

for editing and feedback

To Auroville Design Service for book design

Eyelids part  
Only to meet again.

For the eyes that see  
We are never apart.

**OM...**

Do you come from  
Mother's womb?

Do you reside in  
The womb of Creation?

Let me know  
By your vibration.

## **Miracle**

Mirra calls Her children  
To come home.

Mirra creates an Auroville  
And calls it a miracle.

Breathe  
The air of Auroville  
A living miracle.

Mother (Mirra Alfassa) named the flowers of *Memecylon umbellatum*  
“Miracle (Air of Auroville)”.

## **Auroville**

All reveals

All heals

All rejoins

All rejoices



## **Banyan Roots**

We aspire for  
Mother's Grace.

In answer  
The Banyan  
Spreads her canopy  
And sends down  
Aerial roots.

We make a column of  
Soil and compost  
To welcome them  
To take root  
In the embrace of  
Mother Earth.

A gardener grows flowers  
And blooms among them.

Flowers bloom and wither.

Now I see you withering  
And I wonder  
“Have you bloomed?”

Sole on soil  
Direct connection  
One step at a time

All chappals  
Walk the talk  
Of unity in diversity.

Do chaps and chapesses feel it  
Through awareness of the feet?

When sky speaks of its myriad moods  
There is no language barrier.

Inside the house  
Rays shine through  
Lighting the dim and dark  
Revealing the dirt and dust.

Come out into the open air!  
See the sun in its full glory  
Out there  
In here.

A half full moon, complete in itself  
Fully aware of its phases and cycles  
Faces light and darkness, wax and wane  
With a cool, clear light  
Moving on its track  
Unmoved.



On a full moon night  
Down pours the rain  
Up grow the plants  
Who know full well  
    What nurtures  
    What matters

I lowered my head  
To work on  
Pride and prejudice  
Forgetting to look up  
At the starry sky  
And wonder at  
The marvels of night.

We mix and mingle  
Into hybrids  
Believing ourselves  
A higher breed.

Bias binds and blinds.

Why let it dry or drain  
Your spring of life?

Narrowness of the mind  
Clogs the flow of life blood  
From the Heart.

The mind races  
Faster than  
The light.

It gains in speed  
Loses trace of  
The Light.

Recurring thoughts linger  
Longer than their shelf life  
As one loses control of self  
And leaves the stage open  
To constant cosmic plays  
On the home screen of Mind.

## **Birthday Gift**

When Lord himself  
Prepares a grand gift  
For His birthday  
He sets the worlds  
As a stage  
Invites all His  
Creatures and children  
To participate  
To each play a role  
In the drama that unfolds  
In the play of opposites  
Fighting & mimicking each other  
To realise their resemblance  
To remember the One origin  
To live the finale  
Of a Life Divine  
Now or later



All actors  
Stream in  
To rehearse  
For the Grand Play.

A puppet show is on.  
When it is over  
Hail the show  
And salute the artists  
Holding and pulling on the strings  
Giving voices to the characters  
From behind the screen.

The world now  
Is a movie  
In slow motion.

The Maha Director-cum-Actor  
Intent on perfection  
Fine-tunes  
Every frame.

Ever chained and connected  
We are impossibly driven  
To act, react and counteract  
Till we contact That  
Which alone acts.

“Action!”

“Cut!”

Says the Director.

Finally, the crew celebrates  
Whatever roles they play  
In and behind the Act.

Dressed perfectly  
We come to the show  
Rehearsed perfectly.

Somewhere, somehow  
Something slips in –  
A simmering wound  
Unaddressed, cries out  
Songs and sorrows  
Stains and strengths  
Stories of humanity.

## **Robes and Roles**

What robes do you wear?

What roles do you play?

What makes your eyes roll?

What makes them shine?

What makes you roar with anguish?

What makes you roll with laughter?

When will you shed robes and roles?

**“Let’s Honour All...”**

Lime-light  
Shining for some  
Sour for others

With all in Thy domain  
O deathless sum-light  
So sweet, sweaty and bright!

## **Abolition of the Ego**

Eucalyptus  
strips and sheds  
its bark  
and lays bare  
the inner skin  
in the sun.

Mother named *Eucalyptus* flowers “Abolition of the Ego”.



i build obstacles  
And pray to Ganesha  
To remove them.

I build bridges  
From stumbling blocks  
And enshrine Ganesha within.

These bugs  
Red and black  
Walk twined

One steps forward  
One steps backward

As a couple  
They still manage to  
Move on

Tango?  
Tangled?  
Time to go?

Time to know.  
Time to grow.  
Time to renew.

Concern  
Clouds

Worry  
Wears

Fear  
Freezes

Anger  
Agitates

Violence  
Violates



Cynics cook  
Sour dishes

Churning  
Brings out  
Deepest yearning

Where longing ends  
Belonging begins

Clarity enters  
Anxiety exits

When We are lost  
There is a hole.

When We are found  
The hole is full filled  
It becomes a whole.

Till the heartland  
Till it becomes  
The Homeland.

## **Collector**

I am a collector  
Not of  
Taxes, gossips or complaints  
But of  
Smiles, fragrances and nectars

Why compare and compete?

Come in pairs.

Complement.

Complete.



## **On a Cycle Path**

A white cow stepped aside  
Quietly, gracefully  
When it felt my presence.

I passed  
Quietly, gratefully  
Without ringing the bell  
Or falling into a yell.

## **A Dialogue**

“Who really understands you  
in the whole universe?”

“I guess the universe itself.”

“Is it important for you  
that I understand you  
more and more?”

“It’s not important.  
It’s inevitable.”

I was chewing  
A hard-to-digest incident.

She called and told me  
Where she felt I was in pain.

In an instant  
The unvoiced lone suffering  
All vanished.

She knew it and cared  
Across miles' distance.

I knew it and am convinced  
That we are truly connected.

## **Goodwill**

“Bless you!”

Say it, mean it always  
Not just when I sneeze.

Goodwill to all.  
God's will to All.  
Good for souls and cells.

I thought I have drifted away  
Or have gone astray.

Nay, nay, nay...  
La Mère still holds sway.  
She has the final say.  
She knows the way.  
She is the way.

Wait, wait, wait...  
I'm on the way.

I have been missing Thee  
For as long as time lasts  
Even though you reside  
Right here inside of me

## **Guru**

Guru is a water tap  
Turn it on  
To clean or drink



In Her moment of humour  
Mother named bitter gourd “Sweetness”.

Bitter, sweet...flavours of life.  
Like or reject them, they just exist.  
Significant or not, they still pass.

Thy bright smile  
Blows the clouds away.  
The sunlit blues of sea and sky  
Re-appear in my bruised heart.

O Mère  
Your smile  
Mysterious and mischievous  
Drags me out of misery  
Draws me into the mystery

## **See-Saw**

*(a game for children of all ages :-)*

See-Saw

See-Saw

Up and down

Round and round

I am up, you are down

You are up, I am down

I am in the centre, so are you

I see you, you see me

Who oversees

You and me

And us all?

## **Leader and Follower**

In a game

The facilitator instructs:

Find a partner

Let your index fingers touch

One is A, the other B

Decide between yourselves

Now

A to lead, B to follow

B to lead, A to follow

A to lead, B to lead

A to follow, B to follow

...

That to lead

We to follow

## **Here Comes the CROCODILE!**

Run, run, run to safety!  
Help each other  
Protect the young  
Challenge the monster  
Kill it or drive it away.

Children love this game  
And never get tired of it.  
They fake fear  
To experience  
Courage and collaboration.

The crocodile never comes.  
The game still goes on.

A group of three-year-olds  
Clap hands and declare  
“We are the monsters...”

Kids grow and group up  
Point fingers and denounce  
“They are the monsters...”

We play childlike games  
And disguise as adults  
Feigning innocence and maturity.



The children  
Dressed differently  
In skins and skirts  
Walk across fields of play  
Hand in hand.

*A seamless view.*

A small smiling girl  
Wearing a cute skirt  
With curls in the hair  
Plays with cushions  
For meditation  
Busily putting them  
In rows and circles  
Or random forms  
Walking on and around  
Caring not to sit on

When carried away  
By the arms of an adult  
In the middle of the play  
She still smiles on  
She still plays on  
In the arms  
Of the adult

The adult  
And those around  
Children at heart  
Chuckle at the child  
Walk on with the child  
Who still smiles on  
Who still plays on  
  
The game is still on

Who holds sway  
In the world?

The swing sways  
High and low  
As the child  
Kicks off ground  
Let go of fear, and  
Let out cries of joy.

A pool full of kids

Laughing

Splashing

Swimming

A few pairs of watchful eyes

Look on, alert for their safety

Forgetful of the youthful joy

They used to enjoy themselves

There inhabits in us  
A youth that never ages –

Accepts Adventure  
Grows in Gratitude  
Enthused with Energy  
Loves Life  
Empowered in Equanimity  
Surrendered in Solitude  
Sincere in Simplicity  
Yes to Yoga  
Open to Oneness  
Unaffected by Uncertainty  
Trusting in Transformation  
Humbled by Humanity

The child's eyes  
Pure and bright  
Pull my sight  
From the adult world  
Steeped in right or might.

He told a vivid story  
Of the fight  
Between Divine and Devil  
As if vivifying an ancient tale  
That stays alive by tell-tale.

The tale went viral  
Infecting numerous  
Affecting numberless



In the “all-reveal” pressure cooker  
Heat and steam build up  
Find no easy release  
While the cooking  
Goes on  
Till  
We are ready  
To serve.

We call and cry  
For peace  
In a broken voice  
With a broken heart.

Peace walks out  
Lingers no longer.

“One day  
I will come back  
To stay and settle  
When you are  
No longer in pieces.”  
So says peace.

“Once in a while  
I will visit you  
Even uninvited  
To assure  
that I am here  
For you  
With you  
As you  
Always.”

Will death die in its due hour?

Will dis-ease decease?

Will debate brake?

Will conflict confine or refine?

Will patterns of the “past tense”

Trigger present and future tension?

Or will they train us to shift attention

To what makes us fresh and free?

Will hate melt into heat

Of the Flame burning up

In the bodily frame?

Will smile and soma  
Sweeten a sour dough  
Make it more digestible?

Will Her Love and Laughter  
Be the magic thread and touch?

Will I, we, you...  
Yes, You!  
Join in  
To will it?

A living will  
Before and beyond  
Death and dying.

True freedom  
Never bound  
Seldom found  
Ever around

I took framed images  
To Free Store  
For their free flow.

Now my storage space is free  
For all divine images  
To come alive.

They call for spiritual transformation.  
We indulge in scholarly transcription.



When all is said and explained  
Plain like water, without sugar  
Where shall we find  
The mysterious Beauty  
The Bride behind the veil?

Why be so cruel  
Taking away all  
Fun, joy and sweetness  
Of the supreme adventure  
Of Self-discovery?

## **Turbulent Times**

Waves and foams  
Splash to the shore  
Recede  
Then rise again

Some avert  
Some watch  
Some engage  
In the play

Shiny days  
Rainy nights

Even the weather  
Has preferences  
And patterns.

Something called  
And held me back  
When I was on the brink of  
Comment and conclusion  
Before slipping all the way  
Down to drowning complaints  
That flood the face of Reality.

A timely halt  
In times hot.

Pointing fingers  
Is not the way  
To figure out  
Who's got the point.

## **Feedback**

Not to avoid, allude or auto-play  
In muted mutual dissatisfaction

Not to flatter, flatten or feed  
The ego, subtle or overt

Not to pry, pick or prick  
Loopholes in “others”

Not to demonstrate  
Right or wrong  
Better or worse

But to give and receive  
In growing goodwill  
A trusting incubation  
Full of candid calm  
And comprehending compassion  
Of crescent co-travelers  
Careful in the art and act  
Carefree in what comes  
In the dance of Two in One

When noise riots  
Quiet silences its steps  
And walks in unnoticed.



We sing out loud  
Chaotic or in chorus.

The silent witness  
Waves Her arms  
And conducts in Grace.

Sometimes  
Children play wild  
And forget to  
Put things  
Back in order.

What can a mother do?  
Continue to smile  
Or feign a stern response?

External means  
Not what She means

Makeshift tools  
Not replacement  
For internal shift  
Or eternal uplift

O Mère

Have you pre-paired us?  
How do you prepare us  
In every act of the play?

We still don't know.  
Who makes us so?

In a sweeping glance  
She sees what's sweeping us  
And what sweeps away the clouds.

We speak little.  
Even that much seems an excess  
For we commune  
In sacred, subtle, sweet ways.

Thy hand holds me  
In a soft strength  
That sustains  
In a warmth  
That melts  
In a touch  
That stays

She captures my heart  
And holds me hostage.

Grudgingly, gradually  
I surrender, readily.

For She is the host  
That never ages  
Through the ages.



She gives us  
Acu-pressure  
She inserts needles  
Into our acu-points  
Not to inflict acute pain  
But to release it  
So that we walk in life  
Alive and pain-free

I hold a smooth stone  
And wonder  
How much rubbing  
It has gone through.

She rubs two stones.  
Frictions ignite  
Sparks of a fire  
That burn upward  
From within.

All is in Her hands.

She sets out to  
Unearth precious stones  
In deep, dark mines  
Carve and polish each diamond  
In its multi-facets  
And run an invisible thread  
Through them all.

Then, She puts it around Her neck  
To honour the jewelled Crown  
Of conscious, blissful existence.

Facets are not  
The whole diamond  
That I am.

She knows how to  
Cut and polish the stone  
Make it precious  
Make it know its value.

She knows, I know.  
That's why I can smile on  
And learn a bit of Her ways.

## **Karma Yoga**

She is Queen of beings

We are work bees

Work and be

Be sweet

Share sweetness

She prepares a soup  
Sweet, sour and spicy  
For Her children

We savour, sweat, smile or swear  
Stumbling and surrendering  
To Her secure embrace  
To Her saving Grace

She changes Her designs and plans  
Sets to do, undo, redo indefatigably  
Therefore, She is.

She never defeats.  
She never loses.

She wins with a wink.  
She wins over our hearts.



Mirra, the Mother, the Master  
Has a Master Plan, a Vaster Plan.

Melt in Her arms, warm and vast.  
Merge our dreams in Her dream.  
Re-member the parts we are and play.

See the Miracle in countless mirrors?

Don't smear, sneer or snore.  
Don't be smart or small.  
Surrender and behold  
The Divine Smile.

Life is not  
A moment's image  
Captured and framed.

The river of Life  
Flows on and on  
All the way  
To Thy embrace.

O La Mer!  
Take in every drop of me.  
Let me find you  
And lose my self  
At this very moment.

Tributaries  
Join mainstream  
Not to remain there  
But to flow into sea.

All rivers  
Run and rush to Thee  
O La Mer

All waves  
Rise and fall in Thee  
O La Mer

All foams  
Are born and burst in Thee  
O La Mer

## **Surfing**

Ride on the waves  
Soar high  
Dip low  
Breathe  
Look forward  
Be one with the rhythm  
Of La Mer  
Master of movements  
A child at play  
In Her vast embrace

## **DivineConsciousness.com**

Not a Drive in the Cloud  
Thou art webmaster in Thy domain  
Assuming countless names  
Residing in myriad forms

How many have visited you  
And stayed faithful?

O Mother

Thy gaze follows me everywhere.

Thy Grace wraps me up  
in a cocoon of Love.

Shall I peck at the cocoon  
and emerge as a butterfly?

I know Thy heart will not  
be broken.

You will only break into  
tears of joy  
for Thy child.

“The child in me is weeping.  
Is it a good time for weaning?”

“Yes, dear. Keep growth your focus.  
After weaning, you are still here with me  
As you have always been, and always will be.”



Infatuation  
A fantasy  
In infancy

Sucking and licking  
Weeping and laughing  
Goodbye and hello again  
Again and again

Mother, expert at weaning  
Directs me to  
Savour the soma  
Of loving oneself  
One Self  
In all

I strayed off the main road  
And stumbled upon  
A path back home.

O Mother  
Where else will you lead me?  
I am already at home.

A tadpole mistakes many  
For its mother  
In its formative years.

When it grows into  
Her shape and spirit  
It finds her at last.

Its seeking ends.  
It becomes a mother.

In rehearsal  
For the greater dawn  
To come  
In a brief moment  
In came a movement  
“Oh, I like every one.”

My heart was moved  
To tears  
In recognition of the fact  
That nothing or no one  
Tears us apart.

## **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**

When the universe resides  
in Thy motherly bosom  
When the world is one big family  
When we grow in your Heartland  
Who is your favoured child?  
Who is a guest or foreigner?

O Man  
Cast country, class or caste  
Join the cast in the Lila.

Men make facades.  
God makes faces  
Laughs and laughs.

The imperfect

Us

Home

World

Perfect occasion to grow

Earthy

Homey

Worthy



## **Earth**

Our playground

Our Mother

Our home

Ours

Us

Peel the onion skin  
Of existence  
Opinions fall off  
Revealing union  
At the core

Is She playing a trick and joke?  
Are we playing a role  
And taking its toll?

Look! How She grins.  
Look! How gloomy faces glee.  
Look! How babies are born and bloom.

Variables change constantly.

What remains constant  
In and in spite of changes?  
What constantly creates changes?

That alone is constant.  
That alone is the invariable Creator.

## **Divine Design**

Do not  
Dramatise  
Despise  
Depress  
Depend  
Defend  
Desire  
Divide  
Doubt  
Deny  
Defy  
Dry  
Die

You will be delivered  
Without a delay.

Division is a delusion divinely designed  
Not to deceive or disillusion  
But to derive a clear vision  
A dance and dialogue within one Self.

The Divine devises duality  
A device for the Benign

Straighten the spine  
Align with the Divine

The mind restless.  
The vital revolts.  
The body resigns.  
The soul re-designs.

The ultimate rest is in Thy arms.  
The ultimate revolt is against littleness.  
The ultimate resignation is to let go of struggle.

The Divine is benign.  
The Divine is never  
Scared or scattered.  
The Divine is ever  
Sacred and gathered  
Sole focus on bringing  
The soul to the front  
In confrontation  
And consensus.



Not for or against  
Not static neutral  
Not roles at play  
Not forces applied

No sure and secure ground  
To stand on  
The soul and spirit  
Lure and urge us on  
Till we recognise and realise  
What smiles on  
Behind the veils

Gratitude is a stream  
That knows its source  
And goes on its course  
All the way to the sea.

Drink from the Source  
The spring and stream  
Of constant inspiration.

Quench the thirst  
At long last.

An artist  
Focuses on shadows  
To reveal the light.

I paint on my canvas.

We paint each other.

In what shades?

There is no darkness.  
There is Light only  
Playing with  
Veils and shades  
Of Her own Make  
On the infinite canvas.

## **Surrender**

Ultimate revolt  
Against self

So that we vote  
For Self

You stay immobile and move  
Mountains and seas  
Hearts, minds and souls

Move me  
Like a breeze  
Caressing the face of a child  
Creating dimples and rippling smiles

Lead me  
Like a tour guide  
Treading a treasure-hunt path  
Through misty and mystic landscapes

Take me  
The totality of me  
Into your swirling cosmic dance



Don't let me fall or faint  
For we have a promise  
To dance on and on  
Each movement  
Each moment  
In eternity

The soul  
Sees it all  
Soars above all  
Sails through all

The soul is  
Never severed  
From the Source

The soul is  
The sole thread  
That connects  
And saves us all

Can't you see  
How occupied I am?

I attend to things  
A thousand and one

Then, in one moment  
You sneak in

You hold me  
In Thy gaze eternal

I slip into the Sound of Silence  
With a smile and a sigh

Silence  
Is a womb  
Pregnant with  
A New Creation

One look  
All is said and done.

Thy Grace  
Lights  
All ways  
Always