

Laugh Till the End



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Through Anandi Zhang

Inspired by many

Including you

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

The children must be educated in an atmosphere of love and gentleness.

No violence, never.

No scolding, never.

Always a gentle kindness and the teacher must be the *living example* of the virtues the child must acquire.

The children must be *happy* to go to school, *happy* to learn, and the teacher must be their best friend who gives them the example of the qualities they must acquire.

The Mother, *On Education*, pp. 194

What if the whole Earth is a school?

What if each one is a teacher and a student?

It “dawns” on me that it is our duty to make life so interesting that all the gods and goddesses want to come and join in the play—a Life Divine, isn’t it? Otherwise, we will be taxed by the inner, eternal law.

The poems in this collection each came in their own time, and flow in the sequence of Nature, Man and God.

Would you like to add a bit of your touch in it?

May we enjoy the banquet of life in all its flavours.

The sky cried so much
Her face brightens up.

The cloud cries
When it can no longer
Bear the burden
Of over-abundance.

It gives away some, in tears.
Then it resumes its clear poise
And smiles.

Got caught
In the rain

Got free
In the rhyme

Star-gazing

*“Let’s look up to bright stars
Who look down upon us
In the dim dark.*

*Never mind
What they think of us!”*

The snake
Sneaks away
On seeing man

These bugs
Red and black
Walk 'twined

One steps forward
One steps backward

As a couple
They still manage to
Move on

A bug walks on a book
And starts to
Read between the lines.

A frog and I
Stay close
In silent wonder.

*“Shall I make a move
And give it a kiss
Before it hops off
Before it turns into
A prince?”*

A frog leapt out of the cup
As I took it for a drink.

What a lively surprise!

A mosquito inside the net
A humming musician that annoys
A constant companion
Through the night
A relation of blood
A hide-and-seek game of
Life or death

Spiders
Adept at networking

Flies
Expert at dodging

Catch me
If you can.

I put a hand
Into the pond
Not to catch fish and fry them
But to fish for their tiny kisses.

O those soft itchinesses
How they pluck on
The cords of my heart!

Two pairs of eyes
Lock gazes.

*“Will you come in?
Or shall I get out?”*

I ask the cow
Across gate and fence.

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.

Chasing Cows

Nobody invited me
Nobody urged me
Nobody taught me
Nobody paid me
To chase cows
When they come
Inside the fence.

When they come
Inside the fence
It is an invitation for me
To put aside everything
Important or not so much
To follow the inner urge
To chase cows.

You know, you need to use
The right tone and pitch
Accompanied by
Clapping hands and
Stamping feet.
And yes, the pace...
The pace matters.

You see, nobody taught me.
It comes with intuitive practice.
And I get paid
From the sheer satisfaction
Of chasing cows
Out of the fence
Loving them as they are
Even if they've eaten my veggies
Never minding the fact
That these clever cows
Might sneak in, again
Soon enough.

Well, when they come
Inside the fence, again
I might chase cows
Or just let them be.

And I consider this
An indispensable service
To our growing community
Even if you might disagree.

Never mind!
We can still live together
Whether we agree or not
On chasing cows.

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?

What makes you blush?
What paints you with a brush?

What colours dye you?
What do you die for?

Whisper it into my ears.
Let's keep it a secret
Between you and me.

Questioning drives me on wild
Quest drives me onward

Why does a new-born
Have to cry?

How will Laughing Buddha
Descend into this world?

With a grin?
I guess.

We look at the new-born twins
Eager to know their names
Eager to differentiate them
In face of their likeness.

Contrast

A calm and candid child
An anxious and abrupt adult

She says,
*“When my child gets naughty,
It’s my motherly duty to whip her.”*

“How can you do it?”
I asked.

“Yes. How can you do it, Mom?”
Her daughter asked.

*“How can you do it?
Now I am with your daughter.”*

*“If you are with her,
I might whip you as well.”*

*“I will place ribbons
Into your hands
To replace the whip.*

*So that you will derive
A cosmic dance
That ties us all together.”*

All laughter
In the end.

Nothing
No One
Is
Dead
Serious.

Joy

I made a kite
For a child to fly

Who is in joy?

*The maker
The player
Or the kite
That is born
And flies high?*

O Joy
How contagious!

A child
Senses everything
He laughs and cries
And plays mischief

To him
I say

*You know everything
And you are dearly loved
This is an invitation
To play
In another Way*

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

All stayed indoors
Sheltered from the rain
Except for a little girl
Who played and played in it.

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

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 child-like games
And disguise as adults
Feigning innocence and maturity.

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

I look into your eyes
In a photo.

Finally, here is something
Unblinkingly ever-lasting.

I laughed
At myself
So loud
That I woke up
From sleep
Still laughing.

Today
Facing the intertwined impasse
The impossible mess
For the first time
I am able to laugh whole-heartedly
Amused at the witty charm
Of the gracious Lord
Amazed at the infinite clues and cues
And the key inside
That opens all doors

I tried to be funny
And told a joke.

Nobody laughed.

I had to laugh
At myself
Alone
In a crowd.

Then
Everyone laughed
Including myself.

With a heavy dose of light humour
We managed to make our friend
Change course in the dire mire
Of heavily soaked sullen seriousness
And emerge with muddy mischief.

You raised your eyebrows.
Their dancing beats
Enlivened a face
O so solemn!

Both of us were happy
Just for a change.

Moonlit starry sky
Makes me reminiscent
Of the night we looked up
Talked, laughed and wondered
And refused to fall into slumber.

Lantern lights
Swirling fans
A plate of food
A chat with friends
A laugh over
Something
Or nothing

A moment to enjoy
A moment in joy

That
Magical
Moment
Passed.

I stubbornly search
In the storage
Of memory
Only to find
Scattered snapshots
And flying dust.

Search by key words -
We might catch clues
Remember words
Lose the key.

We each wrote a key word

Rapped

Rhymed

Relayed stories

Chatted

Chuckled

Changed the world

With a word game.

He couldn't sleep.
Counted how many times
The neighbour's dog barked
In the chilly silent night.

This kept him wide awake
While the whole world slept.

I dozed off
Reading a book.
No need for a pillow.

Piles of books
No knowledge.

While she was praising me
I chinned up so much
That the sunglasses
On top of the head
Fell to the ground.

“You see?!
When the head
Rises too high
Something falls.”

We both laughed
At the scene
And the actors.

Eyes fixed
Fingers dancing
On the screen

O mobile phone
Our toy
Playmate
Lover

The phone fell
Onto the ground.

My heart leaped
Into the air.

*“Where is
A safe landing?”*

A man marries custom
Becomes a customer
Behaves customary

They stick to the rule
And measure men
With the same yardstick.

Losing Self-control
They dream of
Controlling

Patients
Lose patience
Pretty soon

A meeting

One protagonist

A couple of

Supporting actors

A few silent observers

Many a script-writer

All wanderers

Cynics cook
Sour dishes

Inferiority complex

Super complex

Superiority complex

Even more complex

For it wants to

Be superior

Whatever

It may be

Whatever

It takes

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

Collector

I am a collector

Not of

Taxes, gossips or complaints

But of

Smiles, fragrances and nectars

Goodwill

“Bless you!”

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

He had his hair cut
And left some beard
As he figured out
How to comb it
With his fingers.

A clear-cut sense of ownership

He shaved his hair.
Claims no ownership
To what's gone
While he proudly strokes
What's left curled up
Above his lips.

*“No, I will not shave it
Or share it with anyone.
Definitely not
With a bowl of soup.”*

I pass by a cyclist
One hand on handle
One holding two rows of eggs
Perfectly peaceful
Not likely to go astray or fall
Or break the eggs or his heart
For the moment.

“Am I jealous?”

*Oh, no, of course not
That much
Just a little.”*

I thought I was sick
With stagnant monotony.

Then the next moment
I decided to open up
To talk with someone
To bring in full presence.

There she came
Inviting herself to my table.
Conversation and laughter flowed.
We infused so much liveliness
That no one could stop.

One change of thought
Made all the difference
For a day.

*“You look so pretty in this dress.
It really suits you so well.”*

*“Thanks. This dress has been receiving
More compliments than myself.”*

“Well, I meant YOU are pretty.”

*“I know pretty well –
A suitable dress really matters
As if our whole Beauty and Being
Hangs on it.”*

“Yeah, I know what you mean.”

*“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.”*

Alone or lonely?

*“How do you feel
When you are alone?”*

*“You mean,
‘Do I feel lonely’?”*

*“Yes.
Don’t you...
Sometimes?”*

*“I need to be alone, sometimes.
That’s when I am fully myself,
Knowing that the whole wild world
Is our playground with infinite playmates.
In fact, I can feel like a fool,
Alone, in a crowd, sometimes.*

*A fleeting feeling,
But it can happen.”*

*“Yeah, it happens
To me, too,
Sometimes.”*

She avoided the crowd
And became a recluse
In the city jungle.

“You are so sweet.”

*“Oh, thank you.
Actually I am
All Spices.
Or it is not me.
It’s the dye
From flavours of life.
What about you?”*

*“Hmmm...
What about me?”*

You dress up
To attend a flower exhibition.

Shall we admire the flowers
Or you?

When I see Beauty
And don't carry a camera
I gaze and blink my eyes
To take a few quick shots.

*“I’m not an artist
I can’t paint.”*

*“There is a painter in everyone.
So says Rumi beautifully.”*

*“This makes life difficult –
For now I have no excuse.”*

A few white hairs...

*“Shall I keep pulling them out
And become bald one day?*

*Or leave them to grow
Into white snow?”*

O My Snow-White dream
Of charming maturity.

I cried, again.

Not because of
Injury or separation
A broken heart or dream
A chilli or an onion.

But because
My heartstrings
Are gently plucked
By your Song.

I have said YES
Before you propose.

Smiles

Reveal the teeth
Wrinkle the skin
Ripple sweetness

A light-hearted smile
Weighs more than
A solemn speech.

“Why are you always smiling?”

*“I once fell down in my childhood
And got up laughing.
I have been smiling ever since.”*

*“Oh...Isn’t it the longest marathon?
No wonder your skin wrinkles.”*

His eyes winked and twinkled.
His wrinkles deepened.

Something in me
Smoothened.

*“Aren’t you afraid of a traffic jam
Noisy and nerve-racking?”*

*“In some moments, yes.
Then a question arises:
Why should I?
Why need we?”*

There is a rhythm
Even in utter chaos.

Navigate through it
With in-built GPS.

Tune to it
As in a dance jam.

Chew it, savour it, and digest it
As bread with jam spread.

*“I’m a treasure-hunter
For what’s precious
In everyone, everywhere.”*

*“My treasure, if any
Lies deep down
In the hard core.
To discover it
You’ll have to
Dig real hard.”*

*“The treasures I hunt
Are not fixed fossils.
They form and flow.
Even if I lift a corner
Of the covering veil
They may still spring out
And steal the show
Ancient and renewed.”*

*“Lemon grass
Organic sprays
Or Sheer Purity
Keep off
Mosquitoes,”*
He says
While waving arms
To ward off
Their relentless kisses.

He made a speech
That left us speechless.

Some left the space.
He continued the speech.

He talks about
Being an introvert.

Words flow
Cannot stop.

You open your mouth wide
Not to speak
But to yawn.

I see you draw
A full stop
To our conversation.

Preparing to talk with family
Ended in hours of dialogue
With myself.

“Once bitten, twice shy.”

“I know.”

“Once bitten, beaten and broken?”

“Well, ...”

“Again and again?”

“Well, ...I don’t know.

Oh, I need some water

To knead it into a play dough

Once again.”

In Her moment of humour,
Mother names bitter gourd “*Sweetness*”.

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

I brought berries
To share with friends.

Savouring the sour sweetness,
They said,

“Let’s plant the seeds.”

“Take me to the tree.”

“Don’t forget me.”

“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!

The sting that spurs

To savour soma
We brave bees and beings
That might sting

Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!
Wow! Wow! Wow!
Aha! Hahaha...

We cry
Out of pain and joy
Saluting the sting
That spurs us
To reverse direction
To find honey within

Silence is palpable.

*“Got to do something about it,
Or not?”*

Tick, tick, tick
Rotate arms of the clock

Tick, tick, tick
Finish items on the calendar

Another day passes.

*“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

Finally I arrived
At God's one-donor store.

Like a savvy customer
I picked, picked and picked
What I thought I wanted to have
Disregarding and discarding
What dismayed and disarrayed

God burst out
Into golden laughter
And reminded me

*"Here I AM the Boss.
And I sell in packs only.*

*Why do you still pick
Yuuu picky?*

*You don't have to
Buy into My Story
Or buy in My Store."*

Now I have to
Either surrender
Or walk away
Empty-handed.

O God,
What humour you extract
Out of human life!
If not deaf and blind
One is bound to hear and see
Your sheer laughter.

Men make facades.
God makes faces
Laughs and laughs.

No longer posing
As familiar strangers
God grins at me
From every face.

God laughs in my face again
Himself wearing another face.

God must be a homeopath
Diluting divinity
And know for sure
Each will follow a path
And arrive home.

You walk into the garden
And become part of
The landscape.

You gaze at fishes in the pond

I gaze at you through the window

Lord gazes at us and
Brims with a borderless smile.