



The Crescent Moon

Rabindranath Tagore

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The Crescent Moon Details

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Where Reason makes kites of her laws and flies them, and Truth sets Fact free from its fetters.” (18)

The 4 star rating should suffice to validate that beyond Gitanjali, Tagore’s sublime touch and masterful grace is still present.

This is my most favored among the lot.

THE BEGINNING

"WHERE have I come from, where did you pick me up?" the baby asked its mother.

She answered half crying, half laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast,-- "You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling.

You were in the dolls of my childhood's games; and when with clay I made the image of my god every morning, I made and unmade you then.

You were enshrined with our household deity, in his worship I worshipped you.

In all my hopes and my loves, in my life, in the life of my mother you have lived.

In the lap of the deathless Spirit who rules our home you have been nursed for ages.

When in girlhood my heart was opening its petals, you hovered as a fragrance about it.

Your tender softness bloomed in my youthful limbs, like a glow in the sky before the sunrise.

Heaven's first darling, twin-born with the morning light, you have floated down the stream of the world's life, and at last you have stranded on my heart.

As I gaze on your face, mystery overwhelms me; you who belong to all have become mine.

“For fear of losing you I hold you tight to my breast. What magic has snared the world's treasure in these slender arms of mine?”

Other works by Rabindranath Tagore:

The Gardener (4 Stars)

Gitanjali (4 Stars)

Nationalism (3 Stars)

This book forms part of my remarkably extensive reading list on Nobel Prize for Literature Laureates

This review, along with my other reviews, has been posted at [imbookedindefinitely](http://imbookedindefinitely.com)

Moujan Taghavi says

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Kathryn says

I absolutely love Tagore's "Gitanjali" I was slightly underwhelmed by this in comparison as several of the poems were quite, well, boring to me. However, a handful were absolutely exquisite! (Would be interesting to reread this as a mother.)

Grace says

It is a collection of poems that center around a mother and her child, those tender words and language that pass between the two.

It has a few illustrations, the likes of which are not seen today.

I say this with the utmost respect to the genius of Tagore, that I did not quite enjoy these collection of poems. I am sure that the original work, in Bengali, must be delightful.

Perry Whitford says

Tender and lyrical Bengalese prose poems about both sides of the mother-child relationship.

The initial poems are from the mother's perspective, delighting in her baby at play and at rest, in laughter and in tears. Then the perspective shifts as the child grows, addressing its mother and trying to make sense of the adult world.

The imagery is rich in the nature of India, with constant references to the Ganges, banyan trees, the champa flower, jasmine and bamboo. The author translated it into english himself, so I don't think that much of the original atmosphere was lost.

I always wondered just what a prose poem is exactly. Now I think I know.
Here's a sample:

The smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps--does anybody know where it was born? Yes, there is a rumour that a young pale beam of a crescent moon touched the edge of a vanishing autumn cloud, and there the smile was first born in the dream of a dew-washed morning--the smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps.

Greg says

The poetry collection "The Crescent Moon" contains a number of introspective poems. Tagore wrestles with

the world and his feelings, those around him and himself. My favorite poems are:

“The Home”

I paced alone on the road across the field while the sunset was hiding its last gold like a miser. The daylight sank deeper and deeper into the darkness, and the widowed land, whose harvest had been reaped, lay silent.

Suddenly a boy's shrill voice rose into the sky. He traversed the dark unseen, leaving the track of his song across the hush of the evening.

His village home lay there at the end of the wasteland, beyond the sugar-cane field, hidden among the shadows of the banana and the slender areca palm, the coconut and the dark green jack-fruit trees.

I stopped for a moment in my lonely way under the starlight, and saw spread before me the darkened earth surrounding with her arms countless homes furnished with cradles and beds, mothers' hearts and evening lamps, and young lives glad with a gladness that knows nothing of its value for the world.

“When and Why”

When I bring you coloured toys, my child, I understand why there is such a play of colours on clouds, on water, and why flowers are painted in tints—when I give coloured toys to you, my child.

When I sing to make you dance, I truly know why there is music in leaves, and why waves send their chorus of voices to the heart of the listening earth—when I sing to make you dance.

When I bring sweet things to your greedy hands, I know why there is honey in the cup of the flower, and why fruits are secretly filled with sweet juice—when I bring sweet things to your greedy hands.

When I kiss your face to make you smile, my darling, I surely understand what pleasure streams from the sky in morning light, and what delight the summer breeze brings to my body—when I kiss you to make you smile.

“The End”

It is time for me to go, mother; I am going.

When in the paling darkness of the lonely dawn you stretch out your arms for your baby in the bed, I shall say, “Baby is not there!”—mother, I am going.

I shall become a delicate draught of air and caress you; and I shall be ripples in the water when you bathe, and kiss you and kiss you again.

In the gusty night when the rain patters on the leaves you will hear my whisper in your bed, and my laughter will flash with the lightning through the open window into your room.

If you lie awake, thinking of your baby till late into the night, I shall sing to you from the stars, “Sleep, mother, sleep.”

On the straying moonbeams I shall steal over your bed, and lie upon your bosom while you sleep.

I shall become a dream, and through the little opening of your eyelids I shall slip into the depths of your sleep; and when you wake up and look round startled, like a twinkling firefly I shall flit out into the darkness.

When, on the great festival of puja, the neighbours' children come and play about the house, I

shall melt into the music of the flute and throb in your heart all day.
Dear auntie will come with puja-presents and will ask, "Where is our baby, sister?" Mother,
you will tell her softly, "He is in the pupils of my eyes, he is in my body and in my soul."

"My Song"

This song of mine will wind its music around you, my child, like the fond arms of love.
This song of mine will touch your forehead like a kiss of blessing.
When you are alone it will sit by your side and whisper in your ear, when you are in the crowd
it will fence you about with aloofness.
My song will sit in the pupils of your eyes, and will carry your sight into the heart of things.
And when my voice is silent in death, my song will speak in your leaving heart.

See my other reviews here!

Daniel L. says

Giving the Child a Voice of Tenderness

So respected has Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore's writings and philosophy been that he was the first Easterner to win the Nobel Prize. Though "Gitanjali" and "The Gardener" rank among his most famous works, this little gem is not to be overlooked. Tagore shows a sympathetic understanding of children's feelings and fantasy akin to Robert Louis Stevenson ("A Child's Garden of Verse"), Janusz Korczak ("King Matt" and "When I Am Little Again"), and Federico Garcia Lorca ("The Cricket Sings") in such poems as "The Home" and "Crescent Moon." Tagore's voice is one of patience, empathy, and tenderness.

BC Batcheshire says

Most of the poems have wondrous imagery and lovely lines. The illustrations are quite nice. I think it would serve as a good book to read to a very small child because it would likely be enjoyable to the parent as well, as the theme is childhood and child-rearing. Overall, a very pretty book.

Harperac says

This collection was less rewarding than Gitanjali, but I suppose that was inevitable. There were specific things about this collection that grated on me, though. They were as much the translator's fault as Tagore's, but they really impeded my enjoyment of the poetry. (My copy is a 1950 reprint of a prose translation - maybe the original translation?)

For example, the constant use of 'fairy' and 'fairyland'. While I'm sure the translator had the best intentions, these words are highly charged with associations. So, even when I'm trying to convert the European fairies into Bengali ones, I'm inundated with mental images that come from gift cards and children's TV shows. It's distracting.

And the focus on childhood strikes me as sentimental and indulgent too often. That's something I can lay at Tagore's doorstep. It all felt very 'put on', like a bad play. But even this could be the translator's doing.

Nevertheless, the writing can be excellent very often, and when Tagore succeeds in evoking the adventure and wonder of childhood, he succeeds with aplomb. I don't regret reading it, but I wouldn't really recommend it to anyone either.

Louis says

There are many lovely poems in this collection, but strikes me most is the focus on the parent-child relationship. This is a pervasive theme throughout the book. There are wonderful poems exploring the beauty of a child's world, poems exploring challenges of the parent-child relationship, and poems of transitions and death in the parent-child relationship. Nearly every poem in this short collection brought thoughts, memories, and emotions connected to my sons. In general, this is a great poetry book, but for parents it is particularly a wonderful gem.

Gajendra Dadheech says

One of the best writings I have ever encountered. Nice little writeups establishing relations between nature, parental love and child. It's just entralling to read about child's imagination from someone profound in art of converting thoughts into the words.

One excerpt from the book :

Baby's way

.....

Baby knows all manner of wise words, though few on earth can understand their meaning.

It is not for nothing that he never wants to speak.

The one thing he wants is to learn mother's words from mother's lips. That is why he looks so innocent.

Baby had a heap of gold and pearls, yet he came like a beggar on to this earth.

It is not for nothing he came in such a disguise.

This dear little naked mendicant pretends to be utterly helpless, so that he may beg for mother's wealth of love.

.....

One more if you are still reading this, not the book yet:

Sympathy

...

If I were only a little puppy, not your baby, mother dear, would you say "No" to me if I tried to eat from your dish?

Would you drive me off, saying to me, "Get away, you naughty little puppy?"

Then go, mother, go! I will never come to you when you call me, and never let you feed me any more.

If I were only a little green parrot, and not your baby, mother dear, would you keep me chained lest I should fly away?

Would you shake your finger at me and say, "What an ungrateful wretch of a bird! It is gnawing at its chain day and night?"

Then, go, mother, go! I will run away into the woods; I will never let you take me in your arms again.

....

Mel says

defamation

why are those tears in your eyes, my child?

how horrid of them to be always scolding you for nothing?

you have stained your fingers and face with ink while writing -- is that why they call you dirty?

o,fie! would they dare to call the full moon dirty because it has smudged its face with ink?

for every little trifle they blame you, my child. they are ready to find fault for nothing.

you tore your clothes while playing--is that why they call you untidy?

o, fie! what would they call an autumn morning that smiles through its ragged clouds?

take no heed of what they say to you, my child.

take no heed of what they say to you, my child.

they make a long list of your misdeeds. everybody knows how you love sweet things -- is that why they call you greedy?

o, fie!what then would they call us who love you? p.17

*i love this one

Vani says

An immensely beautiful collection of poems where a mother talks to her infant, and then the child grows and tells her all his stories & little observations. Towards the end, the mother talks to her adolescent child, giving away little pearls of wisdom.

It's a very tender narrative of emotions and a deep unseen love.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Crescent Moon and Stray Birds, Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore also written Ravʼndranʼtha Thʼkura (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941), sobriquet Gurudev, was a Bengali polymath who reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of Gitanjali and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. Sometimes referred to as "the Bard of Bengal", Tagore's poetic songs were viewed as spiritual and mercurial; however, his "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal.

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