Preface

I was introduced to *Abol Tabol* of Sukumar Roy at a very early age and was fascinated by this unique work. The surreal characters and places became a reality to me. They followed when I moved to Texas twenty-five years back. In order to make my virtual “friends” adapt to the new setting, I began to translate the poems keeping the essence with subtle changes in ambiance. Thus “Kathburo” became “Woody”, “BurHir Bari” turned to a “Crooked House,” and “Hukumukho Hyangla” was renamed “The Geek.”

I have made an effort to keep the original spirit of the work as much as possible. In some cases, I have failed to do it. But even then, I wanted to make it available to those who love Sukumar Roy. This is my homage to one of the greatest masters of nonsense literature.
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Nonsense

Come all of you packed with whims,
Riding on a carriage full of dreams;
Come on all crazies chasing a fantasy,
Clashing the cymbals hard around rims.
Go to a place of genuinely weird songs,
Where no tune is ever right or wrong;
Travel to a place with blow of the wind,
Let your mind float a distance long.

Crazy curious minds wander around,
Dancing all the way without any care;
Come on in and do the real grotesque,
No code or rule can hold you back here.
With bizarre moves and flawed decisions,
We paint the land red, make the bells chime;
Come on everyone and make some errors,
In a land of absurdity laced with rhyme.
Of Geese, Hedgehogs, and Hedgehogeeese

The goose and the hedgehog, not following grammar,
Formed Hedgehogoose Corporation, only last summer.
The seagull told tortoise, “Come on, let’s have some fun,
And make Tortoiseagull the largest merger under the sun.”
Cockatiel-headed lizard had a diet problem that may look silly:
How could he give up eating worms switching to green chili?

Goat had a hidden agenda; he always had this idea in mind,
To form a joint venture, for which flamingo was a good find.
The giraffe was really tired of roaming around in the prairie
He yearned to gang up with the eagle, a thought really eerie.
“Is it the mad-cow disease?” the heifer asks herself loosely,
“I wonder why the wretched rooster follows me so closely.”
The whalephant is in doldrums; he isn’t really full of glee;
While elephant loves the jungle, whale yearns for the sea.
A lack of horns gave the leopard a severe manic depression;
Growing antlers was the cure, thanks to deer’s contribution.
Woody the Wood Taster

Bearded old Woody boils wood in a pot under the sun,
Licks and eats the stuff while it is hot, not exactly for fun.
Shaking the head from side to side, he hums a little song;
With a scholarly mien, Woody thinks he can never be wrong.
What he mumbles is mostly gibberish after eating the food,
Soot in the sky, he declares, makes all the holes in wood.
With his bald head sweating, the guy blurts out in rage,
“Those who don’t grasp it must readily be put in a cage.
These mutton-headed idiots appear to be absolutely blind;
The arguments make you think they have lost their mind.
Ignorant about timber theory, they don’t know why
Holes in wood occur when half-moon comes by.”

He scribbles the data, until his fingers become sore,
On wood knots, holes, pitch pockets and much more.
Which wood would taste good, which one to trash,
Ask him and you’ll know which wood knot is fresh.
From the sound of a timber log, he can tell you for sure,
How to deal with all the species that are very mature.
“Digging their ancestry, I know which wood is haughty;”
He goes on saying, “I can tame the wood that is naughty.
Some logs are easy to domesticate, some are quite shy;
Some are emaciated, yet others are very lively but dry.
Quite a few are dumb, who don’t know the truth from a lie;
The wood holes and splits differ by species, I know why.”
The Case of the Stolen Moustache

Quietest man in the corporate headquarters was our boss,
Nobody really knew that he had a head disease so gross;
He was in a good mood, quite relaxed, rocking in his chair,
But suddenly he startled and flew into a rage—what a flare!
Throwing his limbs up in air, rolling the eyes, he uttered,
“Hey, pick me up, do it quick; I am completely shattered.”
Some called a doctor, others the police, out of sheer fright,
Yet others said, “Pull him up gently, or else he may bite.”
Everyone moved about, looking very busy and a little puzzled,
The boss shouted out, “My moustache? It’s been embezzled.”

Lost moustache? Strange indeed! He sure didn’t mean it;
It looked quite all right and was there, didn’t thin out a bit.
They kept on assuring him, holding a mirror right in his face,
The theft didn’t occur; such a thing doesn’t ever take place.
Blowing his top, he yelled out, chasing the gang down the hall,
“I don’t care what you say, and loathe you for sure, one and all.
Dirty like a spiky broom, a moustache so ugly and unclean,
Shambabu’s old milkman grew such a thing, that I have seen.
I’ll kill the whole lot, if they say this moustache is mine,”
With these expletives blurted out, he imposed a hefty fine.
Choking with rage, he got the diary to write down in style,
“Give your staff an inch, and they sure will take a mile.
All of them are numskulls, these clowns in my office;
My own moustache got stolen, they didn’t even notice.
I feel like swirling around holding their moustache in my hand,
Shave the idiots’ heads with a spade, which will be rather grand.
The thought that you own your moustache is absolutely wrong.
Everyone is known by the moustache, to which we all belong.”
A Suitable Boy

They told me in Posta while there last afternoon, That your daughter is getting married pretty soon. 
The bridegroom is Gangaram, is that right? Would you like to know whether he is bright? Lacking not really much, he is quite eligible; Don’t be upset by the looks, he is presentable. Only exceptions, of course, are his cheek and jowl, That resemble more or less, I think, those of an owl.

Education? Let me tell you whether he is capable; The kid’s perseverance, no doubt, is very admirable. After only nineteen attempts, as the records indicate, He finally gave up the hope to get a school certificate. Assets? The kid sure doesn’t have any money pit; With no resources, he can hardly make ends meet. Spoiled are all his brothers, it’s very unfortunate; One is round the bend, one is incredibly obstinate. Yet another has acquired some really dubious skills; He is now in jail for forging hundred-dollar bills. The youngest one plays drums, that’s what I hear; Working for the local disco, he gets five dollars a year. Gangaram suffers from jaundice and infection of spleen; To call in sick, for him it’s simply a matter of routine. But then he is very highborn, maybe not that smart; A descendent of King Kangsha, who was no upstart. Shyam Lahiri of Banagram, I tell you here and now, Is closely related to Gangaram, but I’m not sure how. Well, search is over, you’ve got a son-in-law for you; It’s not really bad, quite a suitable boy in my view.
Mr. & Mrs. Owl

“My dear!” Mr. Owl hoots,
“Excellent are your toots!
Listening to your buzzes,
My entire heart waltzes.
They are so full of glee,
Like Bohemian rhapsody.

Your screeching voice startle,
Trees, plants, and crepe myrtle.
In tunes that are so intertwined,
A wild mix of chords I find.
My sorrow and fear sensations,
Arrhythmia and palpitations,
All are lost and gone forever,
Listening to your song, my dear!
Crazily piercing is your voice,
My tears roll out, not by choice.
A Ticklish Matter

There lives an old tickler seven seas away
When you are there, steer clear of his way.
If you visit the loony old man in the barn
His tickle treats will give you a stomach churn.
Nobody knows his home address or zip code
He seeks you out to taste his tales a la mode.
With origins unknown, his stories are bizarre
They bring out tears, much more than laughter.

One can’t make any head or tail of his jokes
Yet you have to laugh, just because he pokes.
Not only you hear absurd stories from the bore
He tickles with a long feather that makes you sore.
“Kestodas’s aunt, Tee! Hee! Hee!” he says with a grin,
“Sold goose eggs, linseeds, yams, and pumpkin.
The pumpkins were crooked, eggs lean and thin
The yams had bright designs painted on the skin.
The aunt sang round-the-clock in a tune not so rough
In a mix of bark, coo, meow, and a bit of horse-laugh.”
He pinches your shoulder as this drivel lingers
And pokes your ribs with his twig-like fingers.
Falls down laughing while he continues to tickle
And he sure won’t let you go until you giggle.
Weapon of Mass Destruction

Bhismalochan Sharma sings aloud on a hot day of summer,
The sound waves travel speedily from Delhi to Myanmar.
Risking his own life, fiercely he sings at the top of his voice,
With heads spinning, people run far and wide having no choice.
Some die out of sheer shock, yet others have a violent shake;
And they cry out loud, “Stop singing, our lives are at stake.”

Leaving the wagons by the roadside, the horses turn turtle;
Bhismalochan sings his heart out, caring a fig for this debacle.
With legs upturned, the animals faint by the dozens and more;
Tails upright, they go totally berserk and utter, “What a bore!”

The sonic boom shakes the sky and demolishes the houses around;
Bhismalochan continues singing, oblivious of fury of the sound.
There’s this crazy goat roaming around, an expert in street fight;
Enraged by the melody, he jabs the singer’s rear; what a sight!
It strikes the weaponized song right on the head with all its might;
“O daddy!” screams Bhismalochan before turning absolutely quite.
The Inventor

Chandidas’s uncle has built a machine, design is very bold; People in town cheer him for the job, whether young or old. When uncle was a little kid, maybe a year old or even less, He loudly uttered “Gunga”, quite something I must confess. Any other kid would have spewed pure nonsense at this age; The word “Gunga” from uncle’s mouth made him a pure sage. Everybody said, “If this kid survives, we sure can tell you, He will really be somebody due to his extraordinary IQ.”

That very uncle has built a machine before reaching his prime, The device shortens a five-hour trip to one and a half hours’ time. Simple but original, I have seen the machine with all its gear; If you study it for a few hours, the concept will be very clear. Words fail me to express the sheer beauty of this equipment; Strap it to the shoulder to find out the merit of his achievement. Hang down from the device all the food you would love to eat; Fried hilsa, chicken mole, sweet balls, or even curried goat meat. As the mouth rushes toward the front from where the food sway, Application of carrot-stick theory makes them move further away. Pulling force of all those delicacies is so effective on the mouth, It makes you walk fast in any direction including north and south. Even after walking tens of miles, you’ll not feel exhausted at all; Appetizing smell of the mouth-watering grub keeps you on the roll. People in town, young and old, don’t have any doubt in their mind, This unique step by Uncle of Chandidas is a giant step for mankind.
Crazy Warrior

Crazy as he is, Jogai is always here, you see;
Smiling with mouth closed, humming like a bee.
Makes sudden stops while walking on the street;
Jumps across from right to the left, in a heartbeat.
Standing back with rolled up sleeves and belt tight,
Poking the air with an umbrella, he hollers, “Fight!”
“A decoy?” He shouts, “Jogai isn’t such an easy catch;
One Jogai to seven Nazis, he fights the lop-sided match.”
Bursting with enthusiasm, he jumps hither and thither;
Thrusts forward at times, only to retreat thereafter.

Swishing sound of his umbrella can be heard at random;
With eyes closed, he whirls around; what a conundrum!
These hops and steps make him huff, puff, and sweat;
All of a sudden, he falls on the ground, absolutely flat.
Hand and feet in air and cloudy eyes, he throws a tantrum,
“Jogai has been hit by a cannon ball; he is dead and mum.”
He winces for a minute, having made this piercing din;
Then turns dead quiet, as though rigor mortis has set in.
Moments later, he sits up straight, scratches the head;
Puts hand into his pocket to bring out a notepad.
“Listen, Jogai,” he writes, “The battle was gruesome;
But brother Jogai died only after killing a fivesome!”
Shady Deals

Strange may it sound, I tell you the truth, it’s not really fake;
Fighting with the shadows has given me a nasty body ache.
I catch shadows for a good living, for your information;
Sun and moon-shadows, and those of other denomination.
Dew-laden fresh shadows early in the morning you get;
Crispy sun-dried shadows in the summer are hard to forget.

When the falcons fly up above in the sky at noon,
I hunt down their shadows using a sharp harpoon.
Shadows of ravens and storks, I have tried them all;
Bland shadow of a light cloud doesn’t taste bad at all.
I know for sure, more than others, shadows and their mind;
Anybody else chasing a shadow, you will probably not find.

The shadow of a tree lies on the ground absolutely calm;
The very idea that it does such a thing is incredibly dumb.
Get it from the horse’s mouth, what it does for real;
When you hear the truth, don’t think that it’s surreal.
When alone and unnoticed, the shadow of a plant,
Looks sideways with a very rapid eye movement.
At that very moment, you have got to catch it unaware;
Trap it speedily from the back using a cane container.
Whether it’s toothless, too pale, or very heavy and dark,
The shadow of a tree tastes much better than its bark.
It’s no good to take the herbals that grow in the meadow;
All your maladies will run away fast if you eat a shadow.

Make a soup using fresh shadows of neem and bitter melon;
Snore heartily in your sleep after drinking the concoction.

If you can catch a papaya shadow in a moonlit night,
Sniff it hard and you’ll be ready to give your cold a fight.
Eating the shadow of a sour-plum tree that’s very dirty,
Makes the lame grow a leg and ready to dance in a party.
If you want to survive the long rainy days in the monsoon,
Drink hot tamarind shadow for three weeks, using a spoon.
I have in my collection the sweet shadow of a sapote tree;
Sponged, washed, and preserved; won’t give it for free.
Purely domestic, it’s a brand new remedy for hiccup;
The price is reasonable; pay only fourteen dollars a cup.
Potbelly Pumpkin

If Potbelly Pumpkin dances around,
Don’t go near any stable nor make any huge sound.
Don’t look back, not even to the left or to your right;
Hang on all fours from a radish tree holding it tight.

If Potbelly Pumpkin screams,
Don’t ever sit on the roof, not even in your dreams.
Lying on your stomach, wrapped up in a thick quilt,
Sing “Radhekrishnahradhe,” without any feeling of guilt.

If Potbelly Pumpkin does laugh,
Keep standing on one leg by the kitchen, this is no bluff.
Speak Persian whisperingly in a very husky voice,
Skip three meals, sleep on the grass; there’s no choice.

If Potbelly Pumpkin intends to sprint,
Climb up the windows as fast as you can, at one stint.
Dissolve shellac in hookah water, paint your face red,
Don’t venture to look at the sky by moving your head.

If Potbelly Pumpkin decides to scream,
Wear turban and ride a pot that doesn’t have any seam.
Spread collard green on the head, ground to a fine paste;
Use a piping hot pumice stone to rub your nose in haste.

Those who take it lightly and don’t care how they behave,
Would make Potbelly upset and face consequences very grave.
How do the predictions come true only then you’ll comprehend;
Don’t blame me, I made it clear in advance what I recommend.
Watch Out

Hey, Pelaram Biswas! What are you doing, for Pete’s sake?
Don’t breathe so heavily and make your body shake.
Do you know what happened to Bhutonath last year?
Poor guy kicked the bucket while breathing fresh air.
Isn’t this huffing and puffing with mouth open so wide,
An invitation to the insect population to enter and hide?
Bipin’s uncle old Holo Roy, from next block in this area,
Ate a fly and suffered five long months from diarrhea.
Be cautious my friend, don’t tread heavily on the ground;
Walk slowly, tiptoe if you can, without making any sound.
Don’t travel back and forth, never ever turn to the right;
It pays to be careful, says the code in black and white.

Haven’t you read about the guy from I don’t know where?
He fell into a well going from somewhere to elsewhere.
Whether in the morning or at noon, listen to me good,
Bathe no more in Ghose Lake in this neighborhood.
Fat as you are, who knows what is there in your lot;
Before it turns serious, give this advice a little thought.
Nobody knows what will come next, don’t get so mad;
If something really happens, that will be extremely sad.
Your talking back is not going to make things any mad;
You behave like a spoiled brat who is annoyingly sassy.
If you follow the reckless lifestyle despite my advice,
One of these days, rest assured, you will pay the price.
Romesh’s uncle-in-the-middle was also a big know-it-all;
He wouldn’t pay heed to any of my advice, big or small.
The other day while crossing a street near Channi bazaar,
Not surprisingly, I am sad to say, he was run over by a car.
Baburam the Snake Charmer

Baburam Snake Charmer,
Are you going very far?
So delighted to see you,
Give me a snake or two;
A no-nails and eyeless snake,
With an antler, which is fake;

That doesn’t walk or crawl,
Hates either to bite or maul;
No skill at hissing or putting,
Doesn’t do any head-buttting;
Well-behaved and very nice,
Drinks milk and eats rice;
Get them now live and intact,
A pair of snakes to be exact;
The club makes me feel very bold;
At one strike, I’ll knock them cold.
Quack

Come here, check out my surgical skills;
All the cutting and sewing with related frills.
My guru told me, “Listen carefully my boy,
To excel in profession, practice first on a paper toy.”
A pinch of enthusiasm with a dash of zeal a day.
Combined with this training, take you a long way.
All this hard work has turned my blood to water,
But now it is easy as running a knife through butter.
See all these machines for folding, cutting, stitching?
Got some more for broken limbs that need gluing.
With eyes closed, I can cut a papier-mâché to its core,
My delight increases as I hash it up more and more.

Cut up the legs, slit the throat, and detach an arm,
Then I use superglue to reattach them real firm.
Now I want some live patients, do you hear?
Get me half a dozen real quick, Bhola dear!
Nandi who lives next door has arthritis, I’m sure;
I doubt whether he plans on getting a good cure.
I’ll dupe him to come here someday for a review,
And then rip through the arthritis, making him all new.
Who has a runny nose? Who has got a raucous ear?
Come quick, fear me not; the doctor is right here.
Who’s there with broken legs? Bring him here and now;
I’ll fix him up right away; using screws, that’s how.
Your mouth looks swollen; got a bad toothache?
I’ll mend it dear; don’t cry for heaven’s sake.
Hammer twice on one side, thrice on the other;
Will pull your tooth out; where is the extractor?
Be you a male or a female, blind or bald;
I couldn’t care less whether one is young or old.
West Nile virus or common cold from far and near,
A single strike of my hammer, will make it disappear.
To Catch a Thief

How very scandalous! What a shame!
Very appalling is this fraudulent game!
When I take a nap before my high tea,
Food portions turn smaller than a pea.
Someone everyday eats my pudding,
What ensued yesterday wasn’t just mugging.
Five chicken cutlets, a dozen bread rolls,
Two delicious pralines, and two cake balls;
Pudding was also there among other food,
When I got up, my grub was gone for good.

How long can I take it? There’s a limit;
Enough is enough, it’s about time to stop it.
I’m now on the watch for a whole day long,
Catch and send the crooks to where they belong.
Be it Ramu-Damu, or Ghose-Bose from next lane,
Your days are numbered, let me make it plain.
All your tricks and gimmicks, I’ll keep on check;
And grab you soon, by the scruff of your neck.
Shield in hand, I’m hiding here in good stead;
There’s no way to escape, if you stick your head.
Pay heed to my warning, I ask to you every day;
It’s requital time my friend, I’m pleased to say.
Strange, Stranger, Strangest

The good old shaman who lives nearby, dear brother;  
Do you know he uses hands to eat his daily dinner?  
Lack of food makes him hungry, that’s very serious;  
His eyes are shut when he sleeps; I’m really curious.

Strangely his feet touch the ground while he walks;  
Listens with ears, sees with eyes, how miraculous!  
With the head on headboard side, he sleeps on the cot;  
Let’s go and verify whether these are facts or not.
After a long thought, brother dear, this is what I assess:
Everything is good in this world including carrot cake,
Real stuff is definitely good, so is the one that’s fake.
Cheap products are good, so are the ones very costly;
I’m good, you are good, so are your buddies mostly.
Sound of music around here is good, I hasten to add,
The cloud covered sky is good, it makes you so glad.
Simply good is ripple-inducing cool southern breeze;
Summer is good, so is monsoon that comes in a whiz.

Curried chicken on a bed of pilau, that’s a good dish,
Equally good is masala potol cooked with hilsa fish.
Raw is pretty good, so is ripe, be it vegetable or fruit;
Straight is good, so is crooked if that is your pursuit.
Drums are good, so are cymbals that clink really fine;
Pigtails are good, so is baldness that helps the scalp shine.
Pushing a wheelbarrow is good, one can do it for fun;
Kneading the dough is good, for baking a good bun.
It’s good to listen to music that is classical in style,
Beating of fine cotton is good, at least for a while.
Taking a bath is good while water in the pool is cold,
But the best of all, when all said and done, I’m told:
Is freshly baked flat bread soaked in a syrup of molasses.
**Metamorphosis**

Pretty ugly a creature, he has an anatomy very strange;  
Whines about everything that he sees within his range.  
The guy roams around the pastures crying all the while,  
He is always busy recording complaints in a large file.  
Demanding in nature, he constantly asks for this and that;  
Chances that he knows what he really wants are very fat.  
Like a cuckoo in a melodious tone, he would love to sing;  
Hearing his own voice, he utters, “This is not the thing.”  
The birds with absolute freedom fly so high in the sky;  
The painful thought that he is wingless makes him sigh.  
How gorgeous the elephant looks in his tusks and trunk;  
He would love to have such a head replacing his own junk.  
He envies the kangaroo that can leap forward real fast;  
Such powerful legs, lean and thin, for him are a must.  
The vigor of a lion he doesn’t have without any mane;  
Having no tail as a komodo, how can he remain sane?

Blending these traits to become all-in-one is one of his goals;  
He could then boast, “Look at me,” to all those lesser souls.  
After shedding buckets of tears, on August twenty-two last,  
He became what he wanted, the metamorphosis was fast.  
With chronic depression gone, he was cheerful for a while;  
Musing over this transformation, he even wore a faint smile.  
Is it appropriate for an elephant to do a triple jump and dance?  
Can a kangaroo survive on banana leaves, is there any chance?  
Cuckoo-call from a flattened mouth may not be very pleasing;  
An elephant trunk on a bird-torso will definitely call for teasing.  
“There flies an old elephant” will not be a flattering remark to hear;  
They may also shout, “Shame on you!” and pull his tail and ear.  
If someone barges in and asks him right in his elephant-face,  
“What is your name and address? What values do you embrace?”  
He doesn’t have any answer to the questions; what can he say?  
Sitting with an apologetic face, he can’t throw his thoughts away.  
“Not a horse, not an elephant, I’m not related to the reptile kind;  
Not a bee, not a moth, I’m not something here on earth you find.  
Fish or frog from water I’m not, neither a leafy tree on ground;  
Neither shoe nor shade, I am a big fat nothing in this surround.”
Baldy

A sun-soaked brick stack very hot, the king sat on that spot;
And gobbled a bagful of peanuts without really eating;
A heavy woolen wear, gave a burning sensation on his rear
“We sure need rain for a solution,” mumbled the king.

From the noon onward, he didn’t utter a single word;
With a glum face, the king held a writing tablet tight;
Sweat-soaked and forlorn, bewildered and alone;
He scribbled furiously that nobody understood right.

The sun so bright, pierced the head with all its might;
That made his blood waltz through the neurons;
On this sizzling noon, the king said, “I’ll be dead soon;
I’m being baked, you morons; bring ice quickly in tons.”

Everyone cried, “What is happening? He will die thinking;
Pray tell, oh dear king! What’s going on in your mind?
Blanche is your ruddy face, like a refried mango roll surface;
The reason for such royal sweating, how can we find?”

“What goes in my mind is not a travesty,” utters His Majesty;
“Extracting it from my grey matter, I throw it out in open air;
Let me tell you guys, no matter how you advise,
There’s simply no answer to it, even if I you try a whole year.

A baldy walks under a bel tree, it’s written in this book you see;
No doubt about that, but the question is, “How many times?”
The problem still remains unresolved, even though it’s very old;
There’s no report on it so far, not even in simple rhymes.

Even if it’s a million and more, who’s going to stop that chore?
The question is absolutely bewildering, I’m at my wit’s end.”
As soon as the king stopped, a skinny water man hopped;
He prostrated at the king’s feet, making his whole body bend.

“How is that, your majesty?” He grinned with utmost courtesy;
“I see Baldy the little brat quite often, the report is up-to-date;
He waltzes under my bel tree, with an attitude very carefree;
The kid is there at least twenty-five times a month, to be accurate.”
Tutoring Made Easy

Hey, Shyamadas! Come on quick, have a seat here;
In five minutes, I’ll make that concept crystal clear.
Feeling feverish? That’s a lie; I detect a flaw;
Heard you making a din outside; I’m not deaf, you know.
Your uncle is sick? Need a doctor? Call him at noon;
I can prescribe a remedy for the uncle to get well soon.
Let me explain that theory in details, today without fail;
Will drill it into your head, if necessary, using a sharp nail.
Which theory? Forgotten already? Threw it out in the air?
What did I say at Bishtu Bose’s party? Recall with care.
What’s the harm to hear it again, even if you didn’t forget?
You avoid me like a plague, as if to be a dolt is your target.
I’ll tell you in a bit, what’s the rush? Sit down on the floor;
Kids nowadays, I have to say, are impatient to the core.
Hey you, why are you sitting? Get the books from shelf;
With you around, do you think I’ll carry the load myself?
Be careful; you need help? I have to do your job?
Oh my god! I don’t need the dictionary, you slob.

Enough is enough! Now pay attention that is due;
Hey Gopal! Ask Khedi to bring some paan to chew.
Where was I? Oh yes, matters turning from dark to light,
Effect the roots of five elements that become very tight.
You have to dig deep into the roots of all these events,
Find out the source that provide nutrients to elements.
Sunlight, for example, falls on a grassy green meadow;
Moonlight, side by side, covers it albeit with a shadow.
What now? Is there any reason for yawns while I speak?
Your looks are vacant, as if everything I say is Greek.

What do you mumble? All these are nonsense and gibberish?
To grasp the concept, you need grey matter, and not rubbish.
A fat head filled with cow dung that’s absolutely dry,
It’s impossible to drill into it, no matter how hard I try.
Hey Shyamadas! Getting up already? Going home?
Why then you wasted my time if you run and roam?
To words of wisdom, these urchins turn a deaf ear,
Wish I could twist their ears real hard but with care.
Surreal Sounds

Boom! Boom! Bang! Bang! What’s the matter?
Flower is blooming? I thought it’s a firecracker.
Swooshing and whooshing is deafening the ear;
That’s probably its smell traveling through the air.
Bam! Bam! Thud! Thud! I hear from inside;
The temperature is dropping fast, don’t go outside.
Be quiet and listen carefully! Do you hear a splash?
Is it the moon setting? Running a 100 meter dash?
Daylight penetrates dawn; crash, crash, crackle!
Bratatat! Bratatat! Someone is breaking sleep cycle.

Ideas are moving around, making a lot of buzz;
Zillions of minds are dancing to the sound of jazz.
Ding dong! Ding dong! Ringing of pains start;
Voomp and wham! Listen to the breaking of heart.
P-taff! Ping! Poomb! Is someone killing time?
Let’s run real fast to flee the scene of crime.
Crooked House

Wearing a smile, the old lady bakes rice;
She lives in a crooked house, not very nice.
Her blanket is sooty, hair is so muddled;
Back is hunched, blinking eyes are addled.
With toothpicks and glue, she repairs the door;
Uses spit-reinforced thread, to fix the floor.
Entry to the house, gives you a fright;
It shakes if you sneeze, even if very light.
A vendor’s call or the honking of a car,
Topples the frame from a distance that far.

Doors are twisted with holes aplenty,
Sweeping the floor loosens the shanty.
The porch roof bends down when it rains,
Props it up with sticks, she has got brains.
Using amazing tricks, the old lady does repair,
The crooked old house, with utmost care.
King of Bombagarh

The King of Bombagarh, does anyone really know why
Hangs on the wall, dried and framed, mango-pulp fry?
Why does the queen always strap a pillow to her head?
Why does the queen-brother drive a nail through bread?
Why do the people there flip when they catch a cold?
Why do they paint the eyes at full moon, young or old?

Why are the maestros wrapped up in quilts that have clamps?
On their shiny bald heads, why do the pundits stick stamps?
Why do they soak watches in butter, very pure and melted?
Why do they spread course sand paper right on the king’s bed?
When in royal court, why does the king act like a fox and howl?
Why does his premier sit on his lap and play an earthen bowl?
Why does the king hang broken bottles from the back of his throne?
Why does his aunt play cricket with zucchini that’s home-grown?
Wearing a hookah-garland, why does the king’s uncle dance?
Does anyone have the answers? Are they all in a deep trance?
Code Twenty-one

Lord Shiva’s own domain, it’s gorgeous;
The laws of the land are really outrageous.
If you slip on the road while in motion,
The police, for sure, will give a citation.
Face trial by a judge, rain or shine,
Twenty-one dollars will be the fine.

Here in town before six in the evening,
You got to have a permit for sneezing;
Doing it without a license gets you in trouble,
The police will be on your back on the double.
You have to take the snuff for the crimes,
And sneeze really hard, twenty-one times.

If you got a tooth that has gone loose,
A four-dollar tax is what they impose.
Grow a moustache, and they holler,
You better pay taxes, worth a dollar.
Prick your back and slouch the shoulder,
Make twenty-one salutes, that’s the order.

While walking on the street in this town,
You look to the left or right, up or down,
It’s reported to the king with no further query,
The platoons charge forward in a great hurry;
Standing in the sun at noon, they make you sweat,
And drink twenty-one scoops of water from the vat.

If it’s a poem that you happen to write,
They put you in a cage that’s very tight.
Tables of multiplication, in many tunes you’ll hear,
From a hundred Orissans, singing them to your ear.
They make you write balance sheet in a ledger,
Twenty-one long pages, for the local grocer.

At night by the hour twelve or more,
While asleep, if you happen to snore,
They will soak your head, sure and swift,
With a mix of gum arabic and pure bullshit;
Followed by spinning you twenty-one times,
Drying you out for twenty-one hourly chimes.
The Geek

The geek with a hookah-face
His Bangla origin is easy to trace
Have you noticed his recent lack of smile?
What does this lack mean?
Was he ever in quarantine?
Have you spent time with him just for a while?
Except for his Uncle Shamadas
Who deals with substance hazardous
The guy really doesn’t have any kith or kin;
Is that why he looks so sorry
With a pale face full of worry
And sits there all the time without any grin?

He used to hop the surround
And dance happily all around
Filled with ecstasy right up to his neck;
Through the hours four and twenty
He heartily sang do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti
With no trace of gloom, not even a speck.
   It was only at noon the other day
   Sitting comfortably on a bale of hay
He was eating mashed plantain from a bowl;
What happened between now and then?
   Has his uncle gone to heaven?
Is he in pain from broken cheek and jowl?
Hookah-face hollers with a blink,
   “It’s not exactly what you think
The problem is hard, that much I can say;
   It’s all about swatting a fly
Priority of the issue is very high
The thought haunts me throughout the day.
   If the fly sits on my right
Code states with all its might
That I make use of the right tail very swift;
   If left is preferred by the fly
The rule that I have to apply
Is the use of other tail that I got as a gift.
   But how do I resolve the riddle
If any rascal sits on the middle
I don’t have any clue to tell you in details;
   Which tail to use and in what mode?
There’s no answer to that in my code.
I can’t do much with only a set of two tails.
DanrHe DanrHe Droom

Vroom, vroom, vroom! The cars are moving fast; Some who are real screwballs, get run-over and lost, Lords and ladies brake heard and utter, “Holy ghost!” But we play the tabla nonstop, never do we stray, “DanrHe DanrHe Droom! Derey Derey Derey!”

Heavy rains on a monsoon day make the roads muddy; Why go out to catch a cold, in this sultry evening, buddy? Be it morning, be it evening, be it twelve at noon; Get the work, call in sick, go not to office soon. Listen to us sing at night, under the moon’s soft ray, “DanrHe DanrHe Droom! Derey Derey Derey!”

All those nerds at study carrels are feeling exhausted; Some are looking pathetic, others are flabbergasted. A few with ashen faces have excitement of neurons, Some are sitting tight and shaking heads like morons. Forget the thoughts, join us in a song, don’t go astray, “DanrHe DanrHe Droom! Derey Derey Derey!”

Bunch of dolts are wasting time being hopelessly sad; Working hard, walking very fast, generally feeling bad. They don’t see the essence of life, even for a while; It’s rooted deep in music, just open your melody file. Join us in a full-throated chorus; never be in disarray, “DanrHe DanrHe Droom! Derey Derey Derey!”
“Did you say white is red? Hey there!
It was yesterday, that’s what I hear.
And you snore without any tact,
There’s a block in your nasal tract?
All your cats are clumsy and fat,
I doubt whether you can deny that.
And to top it all, I also heard,
None at your home keep any beard.
Why is that so, you moron?
I’ll beat you to a pulp, spot-on.”
“Shut up! Don’t utter one more word!
Will smack your face to move forward.
Don’t show me your angry look,
Or behave like Captain Hook.
If you don’t stop the shouting bout,
Ignore the code and continue to flout---,”
“I couldn’t care less for your veiled threat,
Karate, you know, is what I’m good at.”
“Still jumping around? Alright,
Come on, fight! Come on, fight!”

“Out any idea about my might;
I’ll show you a piece of me, just outright.
Had my uncle been here somehow,
You would have been dead meat by now.”
“Hey! Are you going to hit me? Stop!
Wait a minute while I call a cop.”
“Now! Now! Don’t be so mad, dude;
What do you want to do? Don’t be rude.”
“Well, to tell you the truth, my friend,
I’m not upset at all, that’s not my trend.
Why should we fight for nothing?
Very sorry! Have some spice or something.”
“I’ll shake hands, dear big brother;
Let’s go home, both of us together.”
“Don’t worry, man; it’s alright;
How do you do? Good night!”
Almanac

A wonderful book that holds everything for Mr. Know-it-all
It even tells you the worth of all bureaucrats, short and tall.
From the art of making a good chutney to cooking pilau,
The book elaborates on all different paranormal know-how.

Learn all about making soap, ink, or even fluoride toothpaste;
Read all about exotic Vedic rites or wake rituals in haste.
An almanac that presents all you ever wanted to know, in print;
But for stopping a charging bull, it doesn’t give you any hint.
Ghostly Tricks

Without my glasses I clearly saw the night before last, 
A live baby ghost playing under moonlight at full blast. 
He jumped about with real gusto from his mother’s lap, 
Moved his legs right and left, used the hands to clap. 
Heard the clatter of the mom’s giggle that was quiet wild, 
Pulling his hair she measured how smart was the child. 
Waves of laughter surged forward in tunes not so somber, 
The eerie sound could be mistaken for sawing of lumber. 
She punched the kid right and left, pulled his ears and hair; 
Threw him up lovingly, dangled him down from the air. 

“Hey! Skinny baby with dirty face,” she kept on saying, 
“Smile at me you owl-face kid, and just keep on playing. 
You are my dancing-monkey, my adorable wood dowel; 
My pet skunk from Amazon forest, my fatso in a towel. 
My raindrop in the month of May on a partially sunny day; 
You are my herbal honey extracted from a dry bale of hay. 
Spice vendor for my crock pot, and for my tears and delights, 
Rider of my dream-horse, racing on windy moonlit nights. 
Mud-smeared Ganesha, full of dough from whole grain, 
Toothless little cry-baby mine, if you ever cry again,” 
Having said that she threw a mud ball at the baby’s face, 
Instantly they disappeared, leaving not even a faint trace.
The Little Brats

My god! What a bunch of little devils!
Will end up in chair someday or in cells.
With flour smeared on face like a gnome,
This one shatters bottles around the home.
The other one crawls up top of the cabinet,
Falls from the bed without any safety net.

My god! What a bunch of little devils!
Instead of rice pudding, they eat stone seals.
The one who is toothless uses the tongue,
To lick a candle, diet on which he is hung.
That one drops ink on the floor at leisure;
Catches flies generally, eats with pleasure.

My god! What a bunch of little devils!
Uncle Tom would have died eating those bagels.
The old man was suspicious by the smell,
That made the brats real mad, you can tell.
Spiky with rage turned the Mohawk-cut hair,
Uncle left in a hurry, getting up from the chair.
Grumpy Griffin’s Predicament

For little grumpy griffin life is tough
Without any fun it’s really very rough
Tell him a joke and he’ll utter,
“There’s no way I’m going to laugh.”

He lives very much in perpetual fear
With a laughter-phobia very severe
Looks around with a blinking eye
To see things those are far and near.

There’s no rest for him at day or night
Thought of a giggle gives him a fright
“Will get a thrashing if you laugh,”
He tells himself with no delight.

Visits to the wilderness are on freeze
He is not allowed to climb on trees
Lest he loses his prized grumpiness
Due to the effect of the monsoon breeze.

Without having any peace of mind
He looks up at the clouds only to find
They are filled with vaporized laughter
And make sounds of a different kind.

When all the bushes within his sight
Are plunged in the darkness of night
Glow worms party and dance around them
To the tunes of chuckles and waves of light.

He asks those who are so intent
To laugh to their hearts’ content
“Don’t you realize how much pain?
It causes me each and every moment?”

The whole griffin household for sure
Is filled up with lots of yells and roar
Absolutely closed to the winds of mirth
Laughter is not allowed to enter its core.
Glee

We are laughing, we are smiling, laughing forever in glee; All three of us compete in smiling, as gummy as it can be. My brother is laughing, so am I, and the younger sibling; Nobody knows why we laugh, we sure keep on giggling.

I ask myself, why I laugh? Avoid laughing from now on, The very thought makes me giggle, it comes out spot-on. Laugh is there with eyes open, it is there when the eyes are shut; Pinch on the nose, still we laugh; it doesn’t stop, no matter what.

We laugh seeing a lunar phase, a weaving loom or a rowing oar, Mice or man, a balloon or van, train or oil can, and much more. We start chuckling when we read, see the alphabets, and the pen; Chuckles fill up the space, bubbling up like fizz from a soda can.
Uncle Nando, that’s Nando Gosai from next neighborhood,
An amiable and quiet old guy, by nature he is very good.
With a clean bill of health, he always had peace of mind;
Smiling face and hookah in hand, he had no ax to grind.

One fine morning, he had a whim to see a psychic:
With teeth clattering he came back, emaciated and archaic.
No answer he gave to queries, simply looked up at the sky;
Shuddered every now and then, river of tears flew by.
Rushed in the neighbors, including the doctor, in throng;
“Why are you crying, Uncle?” they asked, “What’s wrong?”
“What’s there to say?” he replied, “It’s written on my palm;
Life line is in danger; Saturn at any time may do me harm.

All these days, I knew nothing about zodiacal track;
If my soul decides to leave, who’s going to it hold back?
My forefathers’ piety has helped me cross sixty somehow;
Your Uncle Nando may kick the bucket any moment now.
What threats are there in store for me, you just can’t tell;”
Having said that he cried out loud like a shrieking door bell.
I was in the neighborhood this morning to visit the legend;
The old guy was there minus his smile, no hookah in hand.
Of Scents and Sovereigns

Ding dong rang the royal bell, the king sat on the throne with a frown;
The old premier’s mind shook and trembled as the sound died down.
“Why does your shirt smell?” asked the king, being not in a fine mood;
“That’s a perfume, my lord,” came the reply, “The smell is rather good.”
“Whether it’s good or not, let my physician sniff and decide,” the king ruled;
The physician declared, “I can’t really smell, your majesty; got a nasty cold.”
“Well, summon Ram Narayan Patro,” hollered the ruler in a tone very tough;
Patro was very apologetic in revealing that he had just taken the snuff.
“With the nostrils clogged by the staff, how can the smell find its entry?”
The monarch reluctantly resolved to get the job done his chief sentry.
The chief had eaten betel leaves laced with spices and camphor, very pure;
Aroma of the mix filled up his head; he couldn’t smell any more for sure.
The royalty then asked Bhim Singh the court wrestler to do the chore;
Bhim called in sick complaining of acute dizziness in his body core.
He came in person and reported running a high fever the night before;
Having said that he closed both the eyes and fell flat on the royal floor.

The desperate king got hold of his brother-in-law Chandraketu at last;
“What don’t you give it a shot?” cajoled the king, “You can do it fast.”
“I would rather be hanged,” said Chandra with his feelings really hurt;
“Than be forced to die a ridiculous death by smelling a stinky shirt.”
A ninety-year old man was in court watching the charade from the rear;
He had lived long enough to witness such absurdities, had nothing to fear.
Boldly he proclaimed, “All these people are useless, uttering simply trash;
I’ll do it, my lord, if you permit, and give me some generous tips in cash.”
The king announced, “You’ll get a thousand dollars right here and now.”
The enthusiastic old man made a spectacular dash after doing a bow.
He smelled a zillion odors pressing his nose on the premier’s garment;
Absolutely spellbound, the entire court looked at him in amazement.
The whole kingdom applauded to the beating of drums in all time zones;
People were simply astounded by the magical powers in those old bones.
Crybaby

Some babies claim easy fame, shedding tears cheap,
Their whining is real thin, lacks any professional grip.
They snivel only when hungry and weep if you yell,
Scream when in acute pain or a scary story you tell.
Whimpering now, smiling next, without any logic;
A hug or a candy, to stop the brawl, works like magic.
This is a blubber, what I call, completely spurious,
To listen to scream truly amazing, you may be curious.
  Mr. Booth’s hyper kid, Nando Ghose’s neighbor;
  Listen to the kid crying, that’s a genuine whimper.
  Screams at his time of choice, spurring out in rage;
  Force of tears is like current from a burst barrage.

Whines at midnight or at dawn, without any reason;
Meaningless blubber renders the air, be it any season.
Tears stream down non-stop, along the storm drain;
  Mom and dad are exasperated, seek help in vain.
Scream from a steel-clad throat, doesn’t stop a moment;
Tear drops are torrential, it goes beyond any comment.
An x-box or candy, or a ride trendy, just is not enough;
Mother’s hug or a magic rug, fails to make him laugh.
A scream that is ceaseless, makes his nose very runny;
Open mouth may gobble the house, not really funny.
Such a ghost-busting whimper, make the neighbors run;
Congratulations to the Booth kid for a job so well done!
Rhymes of Tom Cat

An eerie night with pitch black emptiness,
The trees are covered with velvety darkness.
Bunch of black props from a banyan tree,
Glow warms brighten them, all for free.
The shrubs are calm, silence everywhere;
Come on, dear Tom Cat, let’s sing together.
We shall sing in whispers and sing out loud;
Song that softens the mind, makes you feel proud.
Bright light at midnight filters through the mist;
Half a moon, night-blind, rises on the east.

Right beside a clay pot, I recall with no mistake,
Lying from yesterday, is half a piece of cake.
Sprinting to the spot quick, I see from afar,
The pierced-ear bulldog is licking lips with care.
With cake-filled mouth, he stands under the moon;
Gone are the hopes, I feel like a deflated balloon.
Nothing else to look forward to in this world;
A saga of deception, life is an illusion unfurled.
Empty all around, the surroundings are loony;
Face of my missus looks like soot from chimney.
Sorrows of the broken heart, I suppress in my voice;
With fury unleashed, let’s sing a song of our choice.
**Directions**

Hello there! Jagmohan, come here my friend, come close; Do you know Adyanath’s uncle? Directions to his house?
Haven’t heard of Adyanath? Does Khogen ring a bell?
Shyam Bagchi is his in-law of sorts, everyone knows it well.
Check out the landlord of Kestomohan, Shyam’s son-in-law,
Look up the uncle of what’s-his-name’s brother-in-law.
He is a cousin of Adyanath’s uncle, albeit a step removed;
Get me the directions, brother dear, address of this dude.

Directions?
Take Amratola exit, and pay close attention,
It leads you to a trifurcated road, drive toward any direction.
Drive straight, with an eye on the right my friend;
Keep pressing the pedal, until you find a sharp bend.
There you’ll find, both on left and right, exits galore;
Move out and reenter in circles, for an hour or more.
A sudden change of lanes to the right, I tell you, is a must;
Followed by a change of three lanes to the left, very fast.

That brings you back to Amratola exit, I’m sure;
Go wherever you like from there, ask me no more.
Once Upon a Time

“Once there lived a king…” “Hold it, buddy! It’s not the king, the tale is about his caddy.”
“He had an uncle from his mother’s side…” “Objection! The guy was his aunt’s husband, note the correction.”
“The king’s uncle had a goat, in fact it was a billy…” “Tell me, does a goat grow wings and look silly?”

“One fine morning, there sat on the flat roof…”
“Flat roof on a tin shed? Give me the proof.”
“His gardener, who was an Orissan out and out…”
“What gardener? It was Meherali, there’s no doubt.”
“Heartily he sang an aria at the top of his voice…”
“Not an aria! It was a country song of his choice.”
“Hey, that’s enough; pipe down, will you?”
“Excuse my interruptions, please continue.”
“The uncle became irate, got up from his bed and made a sudden chase around the homestead. Finally he caught the gardener by his pigtail…”
“What pigtail? He was bald, check out the detail.”
“Whether he didn’t have any hair or had only a few; What difference it makes to a numskull like you? I feel like catching you by the scruff of the neck. Holding the head tight, beating you on the back. No more cutting into my tale with your tomfoolery. Now, my friend, what makes you leave in a hurry?”
Notebook

A pencil in one hand, a notebook in another; To write down all thoughts, use them together. All important information, I note them here; Bug’s diet or number of legs of a grasshopper. Why does it feel sticky with gum on finger? Why is the cow uneasy when you tickle her? Reading literature and through observations, I have reported my findings and solutions. Ear is aching, the boils look ugly to the sight; Come on quick, Rama! Bring the flash light. Ever since yesterday, I am struggling to assess, Soap or cracker, what do they use in molasses?

Let me jot down clearly this short thought chain, Brother-in-the-mid may know it, I’ll pick his brain. Why does the stomach growl? Do you ever wonder? Why is ptychotis oil so pungent? It’s time to ponder. What makes a chili hot and bay leaf smell so strong? Why do we snore? And startle when things go wrong? What is Dunduvi? Who is Arani? I see a vacant look; How would you know without reading the notebook?
What Me Worry?

Have no fear, I won’t hurt you at all, have no fear;
Can’t beat you in wrestling to be honest, brother dear.
With a heart that’s very soft, I am not really furious;
Not possible to gobble you up, to be very serious.
Horns on my head, I presume, make you ill at ease;
Don’t you know I can’t use them due to a head disease?

Come to the cave, visit us here, for a few hours or a day;
Such hospitality you’ll never forget, what else can I say?
You won’t be coming? My huge club gives you a fright?
Won’t hurt much, even if I hit you; the club is very light.
I’ll grab your legs if you deem these as empty assurances;
When I pin your head down, you’ll realize the consequences.

Me, my wife, sons all nine, the whole family is here;
You deserve a group bite for having such an absurd fear.
Pseudo Bull

Not a bull, the pseudo bull, in fact, is a bird;
Visit Haru’s office, if you like to see the nerd.
The eyes are drowsy, with a face that’s really big;
The shiny black parted hair is certainly not a wig.
The horns are three-way bent, twisted is his tail;
A mild pat makes him scream, indeed very shrill!
The bones are very loose that make a rattle;
Please don’t holler, it gives him an awful startle.
His demeanor can’t be described in a short rhyme;
Take a good look at his portrait; how very sublime!

The pseudo bull wheezes leaning on the wall;
Without any reason, you may see his tears fall.
May come chasing at times, fumes with anger;
Turns turtle, gets a lockjaw; it’s really bizarre.
No rice, no bread, and he doesn’t eat pancakes;
No chicken, no fish, he has a dislike for steaks.
Proteins are unwanted, pies give him the fits;
Soap stew and scented candle, that’s all he eats.
Anything else gives him a cough so cataclysmic,
His body shakes and legs tremble; it’s very horrific.
One day he ate a torn dishcloth toasted like bread;
For three months he was in bed, almost half-dead.
If you are wondering how the bull can be bought;
I’ll offer you a good bargain; just give it a thought.
Hit and Miss

Check it out, boys! It’s so sleek;
Pay attention and watch the trick;
Birds sitting on that tree, will magically drop.
Jumping up right on the barrow,
Equipped with bow and arrow;
Aiming high, I shoot the target at the treetop.

With a basket made of thatch,
Uncle Gosto crawls to catch,
The birds on the spot, before they hit the floor.
Hey, Uncle! You seem mad;
Oh my god! I missed it bad.
Are you hurt by the dart? Do you feel sore?
The Wrestler

Juggling with elephants is a child’s play for Shashticharan
With a massive frame like steel, he weighs close to a ton.
A mugger tried to whack him with a bamboo pole the other day
It broke like a straw touching his elbow, to the mugger’s dismay.
While jogging on the street, what happened to him was a freak,
On his head, out of the blue, dropped a huge chunk of brick.
When it struck his shiny skull, the massive piece of tile,
Crumbled to dust instantly; Shasti moved on with a smile.
At Shasti’s shout, all the buildings in town shake and tumble
When he blows, the traffic down the road crash and crumble.

In a second, with bare hand, he splits a thick wooden plank
Hundred barrels of water for his bath is hauled from the tank.
He eats three baskets of roasted pistachio for his breakfast
Fourteen pounds of full cream yogurt for the meal is a must.
You lose count of the number of dishes he eats for lunch
Nineteen kegs of iced tea are brewed for his thirst to quench.
Except for ten dozen donuts, he doesn’t eat much for snacks
Buttered tortillas are baked for dinner in hundreds of stacks.
Macho internees, ten in all, give him massage at night
They thump him with huge mallets, not a pretty sight.
If I say more, you may think all these are concocted and lies
Why not go to Baniatola to see things with your own eyes.
A Scientific Research

Come here! Let me examine your head, you’ll feel no strain;
I’ll use a “holescope,” to measure the impurities in your brain.
Will check the part that makes you sassy, the lobe that makes you dumb;
Spot the part that’s loose and fluffy, and the lobe that’s crimpy and numb.
Let me probe the segment that makes your mind wander and sway;
Locate the enormous holes through which your thoughts fly away.

A heavily dented head covered with moss, it seems very leaky;
Have to do a thorough analysis; hey kid, don’t get so panicky.
Hold the ears, stand with a slight slant, and stick out your tongue;
I’ll do a complete scientific study of the brain; this is no harangue.
Placing a magnet on the head, I’ll reflect its flux with a stick;
To measure the spin rate of your head, allow me to use a brick.
Aunt! Dear Aunt!!

Can’t really stop laughing, oh dear aunt!
Seeing apples growing on a large maple tree;
A shiitake mushroom shading an elephant;
And a stork laying eggs in a crow’s nest, for free.

I made a trip to Hooghly only the other day,
This is classified, don’t let the story spread;
Saw three fat pigs feeding on a bale of hay,
None of them had any hat on their head.

What People Say

Do you know what Sitanath Bondo just did tell?
The clear sky over our head has a sour smell?

But after a heavy rain, it is not sour anymore;
I have licked it right after; it’s sweet to the core.
Rainbow

To see a beautiful rainbow on the clear sky,
People have come out from houses nearby.

A grumpy old man makes a loud outburst,
“The color of the rainbow is not at all fast.”

Concert

Beat the drums, blow the flute;
Clang the cymbals, play the lute.

Puzzled are people in the booth,
Sherriff’s kid has grown a tooth.

Story Time

Listen to a story my boy, “There was a guru;”
This is how the tale does brew.

Jadu and Bangshidhar were twins, not friends;
This is exactly how my story ends.
Speak Out

Does anybody know why,
In Aka Chora town nearby,
None of the doctors eat rice with potato?

It’s written in black and white,
Potatoes turn brain foamy and light,
Leading to low IQ, close to that of a tomato.
Nonsense

In the land of clouds at a misty night,
Backdrop of rainbows, spectrum of light,
I sing aloud any song of my choice,
That may be in tune or in dissonance.
Whatever you like you can do it here,
A place without barrier, brother dear.
Here under the sky so bright and vast,
Dreams drift around, slow or fast;
Melodies cascade down like a stream,
Scores of fairy tales unfold on its brim.

Sparks of surprises here you will find,
That illuminate the sky and the mind.
Before I depart today, brother dear,
I’ll speak my heart out loud and clear.
What I say may not make any sense,
Most people may miss the essence.
There goes my inner self, let it swim,
All the way down the stream of whim.
Lyrics come out nonstop and mellow,
Nobody today can prevent that flow.
Clearly I can hear deep in my mind,
The sound of tabla, only one of a kind;
Ram-khata-kot, ghechang ghetch,
Play word games with puns that match.
Darkness covered by a blanket of light,
Its smell makes the bell ring just right.
The lord of dreams visit the soul in cage,
Five elements are dancing on the stage.
The voracious elephant turns turtle here,
All his four legs are straight up in the air.
With the queen bee and Pegasus around,
The naughty little kid is sleeping sound.
A moonlit chill from light-years back,
Quite a few horse eggs tied in a sack;
I go for a sleep—deep, long, and sound;
End of singing spree, I’ll not be around.
Dr. Ifte Choudhury is an architect by profession. He graduated from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in 1968 and joined as a Lecturer in the Department of Architecture. He left teaching and practiced Architecture in Bangladesh for a few years. Dr. Choudhury did his Ph.D. in Architecture from Texas A&M University in 1994. Currently, he is a faculty in the Department of Construction Science at the same university.