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## GITANJALI

### Song 1: The Vessel and the Flute

In this song, the poet imagines himself as a **frail vessel** that God continually **recreates** and fills with **new life**. The **symbolism** of the human body is compared to an **earthen pot** that is often destroyed and **reshaped**. Life is **endlessly reincarnated**. The poet also sees himself as a **humble flute** made of **reed**, on which God plays **eternal melodies**. The **joy** the poet feels while singing is **inexplicable**. Despite his **small hands**, he receives **infinite gifts** from God, and his heart continues to expand, symbolizing the **ups and downs** of life as **hills and dales** carried by God.

### Song 2: The Singer and the Song

This song presents two images: one of the poet as a **singer** commanded by God, and another of the poet's **song** as a **bird** unfolding its wings and touching God's **feet**. The poet feels **proud** and **honored** to be chosen by God. Through this act of **singing**, the poet surrenders to God and gains such **intimacy** with Him that he calls God his **friend**.

### Song 3: The Music of the Divine

In this song, the poet imagines the **world** as God's **music**, a force that **illuminates** and **activates** everything. The music of God is likened to a **light**, a **breath**, and a **river** that flows endlessly. The poet struggles to express his response to this divine **music**, feeling **captivated** and **baffled**. He feels trapped in the **meshes** of God's eternal music.

### Song 4: Preparing the Heart for God

In this simple song, the poet compares himself to a **host** preparing his **house** for a **great guest**: God. Since God resides in his **innermost heart**, the poet vows to keep his **body**, **mind**, and **soul** clean from **untruths** and **evil thoughts**. All his actions should reflect the **divine presence** within him, acknowledging that it is only through God's **strength** that he can act.

### Song 5: The Bridal Mysticism

This song uses **bridal mysticism**, a literary device that compares the poet's relationship with God to that of an **ardent lover** and a **cold-hearted beloved**. The poet asks God's **permission** to sit by His side, just as the lover seeks the beloved's presence. The poet desires **silent communion** with God, which brings him peace. Without this **divine connection**, the poet's life feels like **meaningless toil**. The poet sees God in simple, **natural phenomena** like the **buzzing of bees** in the summer, symbolizing the divine in everyday life.

### **Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (1882, Posthumous)**

- ❖ A collection of **original English poems**, published after her death by her father.
- ❖ It includes famous poems such as "**Savitri**," "**Sîta**," "**Lakshman**," and "**The Royal Ascetic and the Hind**", which retell Indian legends from the **Mahabharata** and **Ramayana**.
- ❖ Toru Dutt's poetry reflects a **blend of Indian mythology and Victorian literary style**, showcasing a unique **fusion of the East and the West**.
- ❖ Some of the major themes in this collection include **heroism, devotion, fate, and the role of women in Indian society**.

### **Notable Poems from *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan***

#### **"Savitri"**

- ❖ Based on the **Mahabharata**, this poem narrates the story of Savitri, a devoted wife who brings her husband back from death through her wisdom and faithfulness.
- ❖ The poem highlights **female strength, devotion, and resilience**.

#### **"Lakshman"**

- ❖ A dramatic dialogue between **Sita and Lakshman**, set during **Sita's abduction by Ravana** in the *Ramayana*.
- ❖ It captures **Sita's anger and despair** as Lakshman refuses to leave his duty and go after Rama.

#### **"The Lotus"**

- ❖ A symbolic poem comparing the **lotus (associated with Hindu deities)** to the **lily (Western ideals of purity)** and the **rose (symbolizing love and beauty)**.
- ❖ It represents Toru Dutt's **fusion of Eastern and Western cultures**.

### **Prose Works**

#### ***Bianca, or The Young Spanish Maiden* (Unfinished, Written in English)**

- ❖ A historical romance novel set in **Spain**, showcasing **Toru Dutt's knowledge of European history and literature**.
- ❖ It was left incomplete due to her untimely death.

#### ***Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers* (1879, Posthumous, Written in French)**

- ❖ This is **one of the first Indian novels written in French**.
- ❖ It is a semi-autobiographical work about a **young woman struggling with loneliness and longing for love**.
- ❖ The novel reflects **European Romanticism**, with themes of **melancholy, personal suffering, and an exploration of emotions**.

But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.  
The weight of my breasts and womb crushed me.  
I shrank Pitifully.  
Then ... I wore a shirt and my  
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored  
My womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl  
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,  
Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in. Oh,  
Belong, cried the categorizers. Don't sit  
On walls or peep in through our lace-draped windows.  
Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better  
Still, be Madhavikutty. It is time to  
Choose a name, a role. Don't play pretending games.  
Don't play at schizophrenia or be a  
Nympho. Don't cry embarrassingly loud when  
Jilted in love ... I met a man, loved him. Call  
Him not by any name, he is every man  
Who wants. a woman, just as I am every  
Woman who seeks love. In him... the hungry haste  
Of rivers, in me... the oceans' tireless  
Waiting. Who are you, I ask each and everyone  
The answer is, it is I. Anywhere and,  
Everywhere, I see the one who calls himself I  
In this world, he is tightly packed like the  
Sword in its sheath. It is I who drink lonely  
Drinks at twelve, midnight, in hotels of strange towns,  
It is I who laugh, it is I who make love  
And then, feel shame, it is I who lie dying  
With a rattle in my throat. I am sinner,  
I am saint. I am the beloved and the  
Betrayed. I have no joys that are not yours, no  
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.

### DETAILED SUMMARY

#### **The Speaker Talks About Politics**

The speaker begins by saying she **does not know anything about politics**. But still, she **knows the names of the people in power**. She can **repeat their names easily**, just like she can say the **days of the week** or the **months of the year**. She says her list of political leaders **begins with Nehru**, who was **India's first Prime Minister** after independence.

## A DIFFERENT HISTORY - SUJATA BHATT

### Life:

- ❖ **Born:** May 6, 1956, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.
- ❖ She grew up in a **multilingual environment**, speaking Gujarati at home, Hindi in school, and English in literature studies.
- ❖ In **1968**, at the age of **12**, she moved with her family to **Pune** and later to the **United States**, where she continued her education.
- ❖ She studied at the **University of Iowa**, earning an **MFA in Creative Writing** from the famous **Iowa Writers' Workshop**.
- ❖ She married the **German writer Michael Augustin** and later moved to **Germany**, where she currently resides.
- ❖ Her international experiences deeply influenced her poetry, making her one of the most prominent **Indian diasporic poets writing in English**.

### Major Works

#### Poetry Collections

##### **Brunizem (1988)**

- ❖ *Debut collection*, which won the **Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Asia)**.
- ❖ The title refers to a **type of soil found in the Indian subcontinent**, symbolizing **roots and belonging**.
- ❖ Famous poems:
  - **"Search for My Tongue"** - A powerful poem about the conflict between **her mother tongue (Gujarati) and English**.
  - **"Muliebrity"** - A nostalgic poem about a **girl in India collecting cow dung**, celebrating **female strength and dignity**.

##### **Monkey Shadows (1991)**

- ❖ Explores themes of **childhood memories, cultural identity, and the supernatural**.
- ❖ She often reflects on **the contrast between India and the West**.

##### **The Stinking Rose (1995)**

- ❖ A unique collection **centered around garlic**, using it as a metaphor for **cultural differences and sensory experiences**.
- ❖ Poems in this collection examine **relationships, history, and politics**.

##### **Augatora (2000)**

- ❖ Explores **Indian mythology, Hindu gods, and philosophical themes**.
- ❖ She experiments with **language and memory**, reflecting on **her identity as a global poet**.

##### **A Colour for Solitude (2002)**

- ❖ A historical and feminist collection based on the life of the **German painter Paula Modersohn-Becker**.

- ❖ Nehru's writing is eloquent, analytical, and deeply introspective, revealing his doubts, frustrations, and hopes for India.
- ❖ The autobiography is divided into 68 chapters, each covering different phases of his life and India's struggle for freedom.

### Significance and Impact

- ❖ The book became a landmark in Indian political literature, offering a firsthand account of India's nationalist movement.
- ❖ It showcased Nehru's intellectual depth, socialist leanings, and commitment to democracy and secularism.
- ❖ It remains an essential read for understanding India's pre-independence history, Nehru's leadership, and the ideological foundations of modern India.

## Part 1: Childhood and Early Life

### Chapter 1: Earliest Memories

Nehru begins by recalling his **childhood in Anand Bhavan, Allahabad**, where he grew up in a privileged and well-educated family. His **father, Motilal Nehru**, was a **wealthy lawyer**, and his mother, Swaruprani Nehru, belonged to a traditional Kashmiri Brahmin family. Nehru remembers **growing up with servants and tutors**, experiencing a **blend of Indian traditions and Western influences**. He describes himself as a **shy, sensitive child** with a **strong imagination**.

### Chapter 2: Family and Background

Nehru provides a detailed account of his **family's history**. His father, **Motilal Nehru**, was **westernized, progressive, and influential in both legal and political circles**. Motilal **initially lived a luxurious lifestyle**, embracing British customs, but later **turned towards nationalism**. Nehru discusses his **father's shifting political ideologies**, which would later shape his own.

### Chapter 3: Education at Home

Since Nehru belonged to an elite family, he did not attend regular school but was **educated at home by private tutors**. His earliest teacher was **Ferdinand T. Brooks**, an Englishman who influenced Nehru's thinking. He studied **history, science, and literature**, though he felt **lonely and isolated** due to the lack of interaction with other children. His father encouraged **reading and debate**, which helped develop Nehru's **critical thinking skills**.

### Chapter 4: Influence of Nationalism

Although Nehru's father was a loyalist to the British in his early years, he gradually **became more nationalistic**, which impacted young Nehru's thoughts. The **Partition of**

## Legacy

- ❖ Dr. Ambedkar is widely regarded as the "**Father of the Indian Constitution**" for his pivotal role in drafting the document.
- ❖ His efforts laid the foundation for **social justice policies in India**, including affirmative action for Dalits and other marginalized communities.
- ❖ His birth anniversary, **April 14**, is celebrated as **Ambedkar Jayanti**, a national holiday in India.
- ❖ His ideas continue to influence **political, social, and legal reforms** in India.

## Awards and Honors of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

- ❖ **Bharat Ratna (1990)** – India's highest civilian award, given posthumously for his contributions to the nation.
- ❖ **Columbia University Recognition (2004)** – Honored as one of its most influential alumni.
- ❖ **Honorary Doctorate (1956)** – Awarded by Osmania University for his work in law and social reform.

## B.R. AMBEDKAR'S ANNIHILATION OF CASTE

### Invitation to Speak

In **December 1935**, Dr. **B.R. Ambedkar** received an invitation from the **Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal**, a group of Hindu social reformers, to give a speech at their conference. Their goal was to **eliminate the caste system** in Hindu society.

### Initial Refusal

Ambedkar initially **refused** the invitation because he **distrusted caste Hindus** and felt their approach to social reform was different from his. However, the Mandal **insisted** and even sent a representative to convince him. Eventually, Ambedkar agreed to become the **President of the conference**.

### Conference Postponed & Canceled

The conference, originally scheduled for **Easter**, was **postponed** to **May 1936**. Later, the Mandal unexpectedly **canceled the conference** after Ambedkar had already written and printed his speech.

### Dispute Over Printing

A disagreement arose over where the speech should be printed. Ambedkar wanted it printed in **Bombay**, while the Mandal wanted it printed in **Lahore** to save costs. Ambedkar insisted on **Bombay**, leading to tensions.

## 1. Introduction – Why I Am an Unlikely President for This Conference

Ambedkar says that the **Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal** has taken a **big risk** by inviting him as President because **many Hindus dislike his views**. He criticizes the **Hindu religion**, especially the **caste system**, and even **Gandhi**, so people see him as **dangerous**—like a snake in a garden.

He points out that **Hindu scriptures (Shastras)** allow only **Brahmins** to be spiritual leaders. He mentions how **Ramdas**, a famous saint, believed **low-caste people can never be gurus**. So, inviting him as President is **against religious tradition**, and many will be **angry**.

Ambedkar usually avoids **religious platforms**, but he accepted this invitation because the Mandal **seems genuinely interested in reform**. However, he warns that he will speak **honestly**, even if his words are **harsh and uncomfortable**.

## 2. Why Social Reform Must Come Before Political Reform

Ambedkar explains that in the early years of India's freedom struggle, there were two movements:

- One for **political freedom** (led by Congress),
- Another for **social reform** (like removing caste and improving society).

Over time, **politics became the main focus**, and **social reform was neglected**. Leaders like **Tilak** believed politics was more important than social change. Congress leaders like **W.C. Bonnerji** even said that issues like **child marriage** or **widow remarriage** had nothing to do with political independence.

But Ambedkar disagrees. He says that **political freedom means nothing** if people still suffer from **social injustice** like caste. He gives real-life examples of **caste discrimination**:

- In **Peshwa rule**, untouchables couldn't walk freely or let their **shadows** touch Brahmins.
- In **Indore**, upper-caste people made Dalits follow **unfair rules**.
- In **Gujarat**, Dalit women were **attacked** for using metal pots.
- In **Jaipur**, a Dalit was **beaten** for serving ghee at a feast.

Ambedkar questions: **Is India ready for self-rule** if it still treats its own people like this?

He says the **social reform movement failed** because it only focused on **family issues**, like marriage, and not the **caste system itself**. Reformers didn't want to **give up their caste privileges**.

He gives examples from **history** to prove that **social change must come before political change**:

- In Europe, **Martin Luther** and the **Reformation** led to freedom.
- In India, **Buddhism** and the **Bhakti movement** helped kings like **Chandragupta** and **Shivaji** bring political change.
- **Sikhism** also changed society before political change happened.

## DETAILED SUMMARY

### 1. Life in the Village (Bilaspur)

Munoo is a **fourteen-year-old boy** living in the village of **Bilaspur**, which lies in the **Kangra hills** near the **Beas River**. He is in the **fifth standard** and goes to the village school. Among his friends like **Bishan** and **Bishamber**, Munoo is the **leader**. However, **Jai Singh**, the landlord's son, competes with him for leadership, showing early signs of class conflict.

Munoo spends his days happily **grazing cows** with his friends, **climbing trees**, and **plucking mangoes**. He is good at hopping from one tree to another. But this happy time comes to an end when he has to **leave the village** with his **uncle Daya Ram** and **aunt Gujri** to go to **Sham Nagar**, a town ten miles away.

Earlier, Munoo's father had **borrowed money from the village landlord**. Due to **poor rainfall** and a **bad harvest**, he could not pay back the interest. The landlord took away his **farm and cattle**, and this **shock and grief** caused Munoo's father to **die**. After that, Munoo's **mother worked hard** to take care of both Munoo and his young uncle, Daya Ram. But she also **died**, leaving Munoo an **orphan**. Now, he lives with **his uncle and aunt**, who treat him as a **burden**. Despite all these hardships, Munoo remained **cheerful and satisfied** – until he had to leave for town to start working.

### 2. Journey to Sham Nagar

Daya Ram, Munoo's uncle, is a **peon (chaprasi)** at the **Imperial Bank** in Sham Nagar. He is proud of being a **government worker**. Munoo walks with his uncle on the road to Sham Nagar. It's a long ten-mile journey. Munoo's **feet hurt** and he has **blisters**, but his uncle doesn't let him **rest** because he's worried about being late for work.

As a cart passes by, Munoo asks if he can ride it, but his uncle refuses. Every time Munoo **walks slowly**, his uncle **threatens to beat** him. So Munoo continues, though exhausted. As they near the town, Munoo is **fascinated** by the things he sees: different **carriages, shops, toys, sweets**, and especially the **train engine**, which he asks about, thinking it is some kind of animal. It's the first time he's seeing such **new and exciting things**.

### Munoo Gets a Job at Babu Nathoo Ram's House

At the **Imperial Bank**, Daya Ram takes Munoo to **Babu Nathoo Ram**, a **sub-accountant**, who is looking for a **boy servant**. Munoo is hired for a salary of **three rupees a month**, with **food and shelter** provided. Babu Nathoo Ram takes Munoo home and introduces him to his **wife, Bibi Uttam Kaur** (called **Bibiji**), and their **children**: two daughters – **Sheila** and **Lila**, and a son – **Prem Nath**, a **medical student**.

Munoo expects to **rest and eat** after the long journey, but instead, he is **immediately sent to the market** to buy vegetables. Bibiji is **short-tempered**, **abuses him**, and often **curses loudly**.

## THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS- ARUNDHATI ROY

- ❖ **Name:** Suzanna Arundhati Roy
- ❖ **Birth:** 24 November 1961, Shillong, Meghalaya, India
- ❖ **Parents:** Mary Roy (women's rights activist) and Rajib Roy (tea plantation manager)
- ❖ **Childhood:** Parents divorced; raised in Kerala
- ❖ **Education:** Attended Corpus Christi, Kottayam; Lawrence School, Lovedale; studied architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi
- ❖ **Marriages:** Married Gerard da Cunha (1978-1982); married filmmaker Pradip Krishen in 1984
- ❖ **Career Start:** Worked at the National Institute of Urban Affairs
- ❖ **Film Career:** Acted in *Massey Sahib* (1985); wrote screenplays for *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones* (1989) and *Electric Moon* (1992)
- ❖ **Financial Success:** Gained security from *The God of Small Things*

### Career Highlights

- ❖ **Screenplay Awards:** National Film Award for Best Screenplay (1989)
- ❖ **Critique of Film:** Criticized *Bandit Queen* (1994) in her review "The Great Indian Rape Trick"

### Writing Career:

- ❖ *The God of Small Things* (completed 1996)
- ❖ Received favorable reviews and commercial success
- ❖ Subsequent works include *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017)

### Awards and Recognition

- ❖ **Booker Prize:** 1997 for *The God of Small Things*
- ❖ **Other Awards:**
  - Lannan Foundation Cultural Freedom Award (2002)
  - Sydney Peace Prize (2004)
  - Sahitya Akademi Award (2006, declined)
  - Norman Mailer Prize for Distinguished Writing (2011)
- ❖ **Recent Awards:**
  - 2022 St. Louis Literary Award
  - 2023 European Essay Prize (lifetime achievement)
  - 2024 PEN Pinter Prize

## The God of Small Things

- ❖ *The God of Small Things* is a family drama novel written by Indian writer Arundhati Roy.
- ❖ It is a story about the childhood experiences of fraternal twins whose lives are destroyed by the "Love Laws" prevalent in the 1960s Kerala, India.
- ❖ The novel also explores the lingering effects of casteism in India, lending a culturally specific critique of British colonialism in India.
- ❖ *The God of Small Things* was Roy's debut novel, published in 1997.
- ❖ It won the Booker Prize in 1997.

### CHARACTER LIST

- ❖ **Rahel:** Rahel is the main girl in the story. She's a twin, and after 23 years, she comes back to her family home.
- ❖ **Estha:** Estha is Rahel's twin brother. He doesn't speak much because of a sad event from his childhood.
- ❖ **Ammu:** Ammu is the mother of Estha and Rahel. She falls in love with someone she shouldn't, and it leads to tragedy for her family.
- ❖ **Velutha:** Velutha is from a lower caste. He falls in love with Ammu, and this causes problems for him and the family.
- ❖ **Baby Kochamma:** Baby Kochamma is a controlling and mean woman. She is Rahel and Estha's great-aunt and lives in the family home.
- ❖ **Sophie Mol:** Sophie Mol is the daughter of Chacko and Margaret. She comes to visit, and her death is a big event in the story.
- ❖ **Aleyooty Ammachi:** Aleyooty Ammachi is the great-grandmother of the twins. She is an old woman in a painting in the family home.
- ❖ **Baba:** Baba is the father of Estha and Rahel, but he isn't in their lives much.
- ❖ **Baba's father:** Baba's father is an important man who dies before Estha and Rahel are born.
- ❖ **Balls-in-Brackets:** This is a nickname for a man who carried luggage at a train station. The kids don't like him.
- ❖ **Adoor Basi:** Adoor Basi is a comedian who is at the airport when Sophie Mol arrives.
- ❖ **Bellboy:** The bellboy takes the family's luggage to their rooms the night before Sophie Mol comes.
- ❖ **Chacko:** Chacko is Rahel and Estha's uncle. He is a lazy man who doesn't do much with his life.
- ❖ **Chella:** Chella is Velutha's mother. She dies of tuberculosis while Velutha is away.
- ❖ **Conductor:** The conductor is a bus worker who gets annoyed when Ammu and her kids don't know where they are going.

## DANCE LIKE A MAN

- ❖ The play Dance Like a Man was first performed on September 22, 1989 at Chowdiah Memorial Hall in Bangalore, India.
- ❖ The play was directed by Mahesh Dattani, who also wrote the play.
- ❖ He is the first playwright in English to have won the 'Sahitya Akademi Award'.
- ❖ Dance Like a Man is a two-act stage play.
- ❖ The story revolves around three generations, their personal ambition, their sacrifices, their struggle and compromises, internal conflict and the way they cope up with life and dance being the major topic of discussion in the house as it is a topic of debate between the father and his son and daughter-in-law.

### CHARACTER LIST

#### Jairaj:

- ❖ The male protagonist, a Bharatanatyam dancer.
- ❖ He is Ratna's husband and the son of Amritlal.
- ❖ Jairaj struggles with societal expectations of masculinity and his passion for dance, which is often seen as a feminine art form.
- ❖ His relationship with his father is strained due to his career choice.

#### Ratna:

- ❖ Jairaj's wife and a fellow Bharatanatyam dancer.
- ❖ She is more pragmatic and ambitious than Jairaj, often pushing him to succeed in their dance careers.
- ❖ Ratna represents the challenges faced by women in balancing personal and professional lives.

#### Amritlal:

- ❖ Jairaj's father, a conservative and traditional man.
- ❖ He disapproves of Jairaj's career in dance, viewing it as unmanly and inappropriate.
- ❖ His rigid views on gender roles create conflict within the family.

#### Lata:

- ❖ Jairaj and Ratna's daughter.
- ❖ She is a modern, independent woman who aspires to be a dancer like her parents.
- ❖ Lata's character highlights generational differences and the evolving attitudes toward art and gender.

#### Vishwas:

- ❖ Lata's fiancé or husband (depending on the context).
- ❖ He represents the younger generation's perspective on tradition and modernity.
- ❖ His relationship with Lata is a subplot that reflects changing societal norms.