

Quatrains from an Indian Notebook

Barry McDonald

--for Alvaro Enterria

--Only the hand that erases writes the true thing
Meister Eckhart

According to Frithjof Schuon, poetry is a “finite image of the Infinite.” (*Frithjof Schuon, The Garland, 1994*). The following poems by Barry McDonald are meditations on various spiritual themes, many of which relate to *Advaita Vedanta*, mostly composed during a trip to India. (*VoV*).

The Compass

Still as a boulder in a flowing stream
In solitude a man sits down to pray;
A life is shaped by all this moment means
And by it he is guided through the day.

On earth there is no greater work than this:
To learn what's necessary is an art.
Rooted in Being, Consciousness and Bliss,
God's Name is the true compass of the heart.

The Echo

Invoking God, a priest of certainty
Will take a high and long view of the day;
Because he's summoned by eternity,
From head to heart he travels on the way.

Around him every person says *I am*,
But few know where the echo first began.
Resounding in the cave of nothingness,
A timeless voice repeats *not this, not this*.

Sanctuary

Closing the eyes a temple door is seen;
To enter there abandon every dream.
Where emptiness establishes its shrine,
Eternity peers through its mask of time.

Deep in the sanctuary of the mind
A bell to wake a god is all we find –
Where every moment is a prayer bead
The word that silence teaches is our creed.

Sandcastles

Like sandcastles beside a rising sea
There are no worldly dreams that we may keep.
Death draws us near, as waking does to sleep,
What's nearest to the heart is all we seek.

Behind each veil discern the Absolute:
With every lesser treasure now be done –
With nothing but the beauty of the Truth
The wise man will stand naked in the sun.

The Search

In search of what will make us feel complete
We think the music of desire is sweet;
But ego is the shell and not the pearl –
And world is God, but God is not the world.

A drop of water on a lotus-leaf,
Lit by the sun this life on earth is brief.
To seek the Truth a man falls deep in thought,
But in the heart the seeker is the Sought.