

A J Thomas's Poems

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Imminence

1.
Rogue power
Palpable in the throbbing skin covering the world
Twitches again.
The World Order
Quicksilver
Changing by the minute
Following the whims of a single power centre.
The rest, waiting with bated breath
For the all-consuming conflagration.
Unipolar
Sucked into the blackhole.
Creation is but a moment's flashing vision,
An impulse containing the last vestige of life.

2.
Out on a morning walk
I am once again alive
To the greenness of grass, the chirping of birds
The shimmer of the water on the lake.
This too is a moment of creation
My senses sucking in everything around
The poor, incorrigible habit!
Yet, that's my moment's truth.

Present

The thin film of butter between
The two slices of coarse bread—
Past and future—delicious
To the attentive; lost
To those who gloss over it.
The present is
Not in conspiracy or intrigue,
But in true understanding
Of the other, this moment.
No music and laughter
In a diplomatic exchange,
Only caution and vigil prevail,
As the adversaries engage
To win or lose.
The clown always wins, over
The clever courtier.
The present
Is HERE and NOW
Alive and kicking,
In laughter and weeping

In slaughter and terror, too,
And not in brooding over the past
Or fantasizing about the future.
In the vision that one sees
In the life-breath that one draws,
The beloved is present.
The present
Is in preserving the moment.

A. J. Thomas is an Indian English poet, fiction-writer, editor, and translator with more than 20 books to his credit. His latest books are *The Greatest Malayalam Stories Ever Told* (selected, translated and edited), *100 Indian Stories* (edited) and *Once* (novel, translated). He served as editor of *Indian Literature* for nearly 20 years. He taught English at Benghazi University, Libya (from 2008 to 2014) and was a Senior Consultant at IGNOU. His awards include Katha Award, AKMG Prize (which enabled him to tour USA, UK and Europe in 1997), Vodafone Crossword Award (2007) and V Abdulla Memorial Translation Award (2025). He holds a Senior Fellowship from the Department of Culture, Government of India, and was an Honorary Fellow of the Department of Culture, Government of South Korea. Thomas has been invited Guest Speaker in writers' conferences and readings in South Korea (thrice), Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Nepal.