



PLANTING  
THE SAPLING

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*Govind Singh*

# **Planting the Sapling**

**Govind Singh**

Unific Publishing House

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# Dedication

Dedicated to the Youth of India,  
for in their hands lies their future,  
and the future of this great Nation.

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# Foreword

**E**very book has a story to tell, this book is a collection of poems written by Dr. Govind Singh, now a noted academician and environmentalist, during his school days. It is a narrative by him of a time when he is at the cusp of completing his school life. Everyone has a wondering ability but few are the chosen ones who can give words to their thoughts. This book is the best example of that.

Planting the Sapling is a beautiful, innocent work from the time of Dr. Singh's adolescence age. Each and every poem in this book brings you closer to the world of Nature and to Human Ecology. Each page attracts your attention towards the journey of a school boy who is experiencing the realities of life, beyond merely gaining knowledge.

The world is like a learning battleground to the young boy where survival depends on the ability to acquire knowledge and perhaps not on questioning the given knowledge. The young boy attempts to do both nevertheless. Time indeed waits for none. Having joined school at age four and now, with the blink of an eye, completing school education, time goes on for the young boy. The only way to trap the moments of life is to cage them in the memory of your mind.

These poems have thus far remained a hidden part of Dr. Govind Singh's personal diary. All the poems are going to remind and take you back in time to your own school life. Planting the Sapling is a splendid book with much nostalgia to spare.

- **Vareesha Ansari**

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***Vareesha Ansari completed her Bachelor's in English (Honours) from Indraprastha College for Women, Delhi and her Master's in English from the Department of English, University of Delhi.***

# Preface

**P**lanting the Sapling is a collection of poems composed by me during the dusky days of my school life. The poems, however, not only capture the melancholy departure from uniform days, but also the thoughts and aspirations of a nurturing youth on the cusp of completing his senior secondary school. All of these poems have lived inside the pages of my personal diary since they were first born at the turn of the new millennium in 2001-02.

One among these (*Nature's Little Magic Tricks*) was published by me on the Delhi Greens Blog (<https://delhigreens.com>) in 2007 under the title, Nature - The Greatest Magician. In 2013, I began a career as Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies in the University of Delhi and it was this poem, discovered by many of my students that made them push me to publish all of my poems composed along with Nature's Little Magic Tricks.

All the poems in this collection are written in the Vasant Vihar branch of Guru Harkrishan Public School, New Delhi. My school blessed me with some great teachers, especially in the English faculty. Or perhaps it was my love for languages that made the latter more special than the others. Though not part of the curriculum, I was introduced to the poems of the Romantic Era early on in my life. It was perhaps this familiarity that helped me better appreciate the interdisciplinary subject of Environmental Studies that I later chose as a career option.

*Planting the Sapling* is as an attempt to instil the spark of creative expression in all young people. Adolescence is a challenging phase. It is the learning and doing in this phase that paves the way for achieving greater things in life. While planning for the future, youth need to deal with their anxieties and stress. But these should not overpower and overshadow the moments and memories of the most exciting phase of any person's life.

I thank my students, friends and family for it is their insistence that made the publishing of this book possible. While the inspiration of putting this book together came from my students, it required the instructions of a teacher to see it through. I thank Prof. Sydney. R. Rebeiro, noted academician and Adviser & Dean, Alumni Affairs, University of Delhi for his guidance and words of wisdom. I am hopeful that this collection of poems will help people of all ages relate to the questioning and wondering days of their adolescence.

**- Dr. Govind Singh**



# Nature's Little Magic Tricks

We feel so surprised and thrilled  
when a magician brings back a woman he just killed.  
And when he takes out a rabbit from an empty hat,  
we just adore him and our senses lay flat.

Why then are we not amazed,  
at the magic which we have always gazed?  
For even if they are not, what every theatre picks  
but they are still, nature's little magic tricks!

The sun rises every morning, from the east as they say  
and touches almost everything, with its each single ray.  
To the other end it reaches by travelling all day,  
and after slowly descending, it finally sinks in the bay.

A little seed which we see fallen around,  
if picked by somebody and sown in the ground,  
would eventually come out, grow and become a tree  
but we'll not even blink our eye, at this strange mystery.

Is it not unfair  
to Nature's magic show?  
That no one ever applauds it,  
neither friend nor foe.

And when Nature shows its strangest magic,  
which, called death, is less amusing and more tragic.  
Everyone starts hating Nature, thinking it of no worth.  
Not realizing that they never loved it,  
on or after their birth.

# Freedom

From the tiniest ants, who have no words  
To the big and small animals and birds  
The only thing common in this whole animal kingdom  
Is the very intense love for freedom.

A bird captured in a cage  
Would struggle and show its full rage  
And keeping most of its body outside the bars  
It would try its best to get out  
And reach for the stars.

An ant captured in an inverted bowl  
Constantly moves about without fail  
Until it finds a small hole  
And then to its freedom it sails.

This love for freedom is also seen  
In the so called human being.

The poorest and the richest countries  
Have always wanted to be free  
For which, on everything,  
They happily agree.

Thus, it has been truly said that  
If not in this world of Continents seven,  
*It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.*

# **The Beginning Sometimes Has No End**

If you begin from the beginning,  
And end up from where you began,  
Do you end the beginning,  
Or start it all over again?

# The Weak Can Never Forgive

Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.  
The weak can ever even admit that they're wrong.  
For even to start saying it,  
The weak take so long.  
The strong say it simply,  
As if a mono-toned song.

To forgive, one requires a big heart  
With care and love bound,  
Something, which in the weak  
Is not at all found.

So to forgive and forget everything  
Is not just any other thing  
But requires a lot of courage gathering  
Which, only the strong can bring.

And the weak simply keep crying  
Their eyes just don't seem to be drying.

To forgive is not in their nature,  
No matter how hard they try.  
And so, all they ever do is cry.

# Survival

If it is fine for a person  
To sell his house  
In which he has lived for long  
With his spouse.

And just to get some extra bucks  
He simply calls for some trucks  
And shifts to an ordinary new place  
Without giving his memories much a space.

If it is fine for a person  
To love, hate and patch up again.  
And to find a new love  
In almost every rain.

Then I'm sure that  
In this world where emotions deprive  
Only the heartless have  
And will survive.

# This Strange World

World, I always thought  
Was a strange place to belong  
Where everyone cared only about themselves  
From dusk to dawn.

And when I wanted to fit in  
I knew I had to follow its way.  
To this, the people and societies had a lot to say.

They told me to speak The Truth  
*No matter what*  
And to never tolerate injustice or anything of that sort.  
I listened patiently and followed them to my best  
As I wanted to fit in and be like the rest.

Once, when I was going back home  
On a cold winter night  
I saw two children  
Having a very fierce fight.

It was neither for fun  
Nor did they want to prove their might  
But for a torn piece of cloth  
Which they both held tight.

I pitied their plight  
And did what I thought was right  
And giving them my overcoat  
Walked away from the site.

But the next night  
As I walked on my usual way

I saw some more children  
Half naked as they lay.

Realizing I couldn't do much  
I turned to the people, without delay.

And the world became stranger to me  
As nobody had anything to say  
And they simply walked their way.

# The Mind

If you feel good  
Everything is good.

If you feel bad  
Everything goes bad.

If you feel that it is enough that you have had  
You wouldn't have more of it  
No matter how much after it, you are mad.

Because everything that happens in front of you  
Or even at your behind  
Is nothing but just  
The state of your mind.

If you think you are right, you are,  
Even if you are wrong otherwise.  
If you get something and you think you don't deserve it,  
you will always hate its every single bit...

If you eat only veg, then on life's living edge  
All the people who kill, you will find most unkind  
As everything is nothing but just the state of your mind.



# Look Up, There's No Limit

Deep in your heart, down there somewhere,  
There's a suppressed dream, hazy and unclear.  
It is not to attain riches or power or respect,  
Not even to be highly smart or perfect.

It's a dream to do that one thing,  
Doing which would make you laugh and sing.  
And the only reason that you don't live up to it,  
Is the fact that you are scared  
It won't be an instant hit.

But the one thing  
that you must always keep in mind,  
Is that if you are determined enough,  
All else is left behind.

And if you still fear the worst  
And aren't ready to do it,  
Look up, there's no limit!

# Time and Tide Wait for None

To avoid it today and put off till tomorrow,  
Is the main reason for many people's sorrow.  
As it never happens how they think and say,  
Because when tomorrow comes, it comes as today.

The promise of tomorrow  
Is a trick of the mind  
Made, when in sheer laziness,  
No other excuse it can find.

To utilize time today  
In the best possible way  
Is the only way to succeed  
And not follow others, but Lead.

To complete everything on time  
And declare it done.  
Is sometimes lot of fun  
As you don't have to be on the run.

And even in the cool summer breeze  
Or the warm winter sun  
Time and tide still waits for none.

# Just Do It!

At the end of the day  
When all is said and done  
Generally, more is said than done.

To say and forget  
Not do it and regret  
To fail and fret  
And have all the measures met  
But still not get  
A bit upset  
Is nothing but to let  
Your life be pushed  
In an already lost bet.

# The Sun Will Rise Again

Tried your best, but couldn't succeed.  
Think it's over, "I can't lead".

Among the standing crops,  
I'm just a wilting weed.  
Waiting for the farmer's blade,  
Or the stray cattle to feed.

If you think it's finished, think again.  
Just for a minute, forget the pain  
Or the humiliation that defeat has brought.  
And look up in the sky, to the greatest battle every fought.

The sun rises every morning  
And struggles hard to stay up there.  
But the Earth brings it down by dawn  
And by night, it is nowhere.

This, it has been doing ever since  
And so far, all its efforts have been in vain.  
But tomorrow morning, no matter what,  
The sun will rise again!

# See it, to Believe it

Looking back at your life,  
It's every single bit,  
You'll realize for sure  
And you'll have to commit  
That only those stories you remember  
And only those stories were hit  
Which were exaggerated a lot  
And were made with a lot of wit.

If you strain your brain  
And think a little more  
You'll realize that deep in your brain's memory store  
Only those incidents you can recall  
Which insulted others or led many an image to fall.

But the one thing that  
You must also realize  
Is that these were incidents  
Which you never saw  
With your own eyes

And no matter how much you consider yourself wise  
You can never actually be sure  
whether these were true or all lies.

And so, before you let anything  
settle in your mind  
You should, for yourself, find  
Whether what you are hearing is true or hollow

*And see it to believe it*  
Is the one principle you should always follow.



# First Love

When the cold fails to shiver you,  
And the heat makes no difference, too.  
When you don't get any sleep,  
All night long.  
And life suddenly becomes  
A very beautiful song.

When you keep smiling  
Without any reason  
And lose track of time  
Month or season.

Then, as with your senses you part  
Your brain  
dominant body  
Is finally conquered by the Heart.

And ultimately, with the self you depart  
Becoming more inclined towards things  
Such as nature and art.

You might consider it weird and strange  
But it is indeed First Love  
That has happened to you  
And brought the change.

# My Love for You

The sun may not rise,  
After the long and lonely night.  
Looking at the moon,  
May cease to be a pleasant sight.  
The huge mountains,  
May lose all their might.  
And the world,  
May end up in a very big fight.

But just as the morning dew  
Which touches only the chosen few  
My love for someone as beautiful as you  
Has and will always remain pure and true.



# Forever Yours

When the going gets really tough.  
And everyone around, starts acting very rough.

When nothing is going your way.  
And the best of your friends betray.

All you need to do,  
Is to just turn around.

And within a distance negligible,  
As compared to a mile

You'll always find me there,  
With welcoming arms and a big Smile.

# The Great Paradox

If you tell a person that he is going to lie.  
And he tells you that you just spoke the truth.  
Does he make you a liar,  
Or proves himself to be a crook?

# Defying Nature

Nature said, "Man, you can't fly."  
Man thought and gave it a try.  
With utmost patience and spirits high,  
Man worked and finally touched the sky.

Nature said, "Man, you have to walk or run very slow,  
And not be like an arrow, shot from the bow."  
But just sometime after he took off from the ground,  
Man reached great speeds, even defeating the sound.

Nature said, "Man, you have to die when you have to,  
Or when some deadly disease touches you."  
Man conquered diseases, without nature giving much clue.  
And is now on his way towards conquering death, too.

Nature said, "Man, you have to be in your limits,  
and stay close to me.  
And neither go up in space,  
nor deep in the sea."

But as man unlocked Nature's mystery,  
He felt as if an arrested bird just set free.  
And instead of flying from tree to tree,  
Man leapt across in space, and entered deep into the sea.

Nature said, "Man, I change and change for good.  
Not yours, but for the good of the animals who live in the woods."  
Man learnt to adjust to Nature's every change.  
And being unaffected, he'll soon be out of its range.

Change is the Law of Nature, is what they say  
And soon it will be Nature that follows  
As everything will go Man's way.



# Memories are all that Remain

At the age of four, I joined my school  
When to the world I was nothing but a fool.  
Learning, I had to do, and to Knowledge I was new.  
With utmost patience, the teachers used to try.  
And put everything in my head, till they used to dry.  
Life then used to be a lot of fun,  
Running here and there, under the sun.

Learning and playing used to go side by side.  
And with no important matters to decide,  
The ocean of life used to look lively, and not dried.  
Oh! I wish I could live those moments again and again.  
But memories are all that remain!

As I left childhood and changed into a teen  
I recollect myself roaming around,  
in the corridors and the canteen.  
Life's values, I learnt in these crucial years.  
And realized, that life was not only laughter but also tears.

Studies were smooth and not much of a trouble.  
But with the realization of life, my worries were only to double.  
Things like Friendship, Love and Trust, I treasured.  
And knew that their importance couldn't be measured.

Life's sudden ups and downs,  
sometimes made me happy  
And sometimes I frowned.  
But soon I realized that life is to be lived and lived to the fullest  
And so, I should stop worrying about the rest  
And have enough zest  
To take any test  
And come out the Best!

With these values and immense knowledge,  
I would probably be joining the college.  
But this attachment of thirteen years  
Will not be broken without tears.  
And the sweet memories will not be forgotten  
For many many years.  
Oh! I wish I could live these moments again and again.  
But memories are all that'll remain.

# Mazhab Nahi Sikhata..

Amidst the killings and the acts of shame.  
As the police and public lay so lame.  
I heard a soft moaning sound.  
From somewhere near the Raj Ghat ground.

I went closer, and to my surprise.  
Saw Bapu, with tears in his eyes.  
And when I enquired for the reason  
that made him frown.  
He just said, "How many times  
will they shoot me down?"

# About the Author



Govind Singh went to school in South Delhi and completed his school education in 2002. He graduated from University of Delhi with a degree in Botany and completed his Master's and Ph.D in Environmental Studies from the same university. He has been studying and learning from nature since an early age. He was born next to River Yamuna in a town named after

the river, and has remained fascinated with Delhi after moving here when he was 8 years old.

In 2007, he gave Delhi its first Environmental Blog, which is now a UN-endorsed flagship project for fighting climate change. Govind Singh initiated the Youth-Climate movement in India in that year and is also the Co-Founder of the Delhi Greens non-profit organisation. As an Environmental Youth Leader and as Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies in the University of Delhi, he has inspired and trained thousands of young people to work in the service of Mother Nature.

He currently works as Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at the Jindal School of Environment & Sustainability, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat (Delhi NCR) where he's one of the



founding faculty of India's first, truly interdisciplinary undergraduate course in Environmental Studies.

For a more complete bio, visit <http://govindsingh.com>.