

GARDEN AT HAZARIBAGH

Samuel Solomon

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Mihir Vatsa
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Scotland

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To
Vivienne
(Lover of Gardens)
S.S.
26-10-1946

Garden at Hazaribagh

PART 1

This loveliness shall fade when we are gone—

The glowing cannas flushed with flaming rose,
Like sunset on the Himalayan snows,
The cannas flame-pink lodged in living green
Of smooth-clipped hedge against the waters' sheen;

The blue and gold, the purple and the pink,
All rich-embroidered by the waters' brink;
Torenia blue and *linearis* gold,
(Dear zinnia *linearis*' starry fold
That burn to amber 'neath September's moon,
Stay yet awhile and do not fade so soon!)

Blue salvia that wave in fairy wands
Along the path descending to the ponds
Where in October's soft-crisp morning light
The water-lilies swarm like stars in white;

Verbena, creeping blossom, purple-mauve,
Banked lush against the gold, seen from above
Where flowered terraces green-banked decline
To greet the garden's lovely curving line,
Trim-edged with box and flowered, sloping straight
Down to the lakes through orbe'd wicket gate;

And in the foreground, gracious tree, that seems
Hard by the terraced steps to dream strange dreams,

Clad in green sober lace, warm dreams of youth
When shedding all her garments bursts in truth,
Sheer naked truth of only blossom blue,
Singing her April love songs, ah so few,
When brimming o'er in passion's tense carouse
The blue rain drips from jacaranda's boughs.

But now the mood is softer, there's repose
In the cool shade, fresh splendour in the rose
That rears once more her lovely head on high
To proud-stare gladiolus in the eye, --

(Brave gladiolus, otherwise the queen
Of all fair flowers in monsoon garden seen;
And here most fair where loveliness she wafts
Against the far and feathery bamboo shafts.)

Friends of the garden, will perchance you stay
When we have said farewell and gone away?—

Black-bootee'd lamb the children love to tease
Where coreopsis dances in the breeze?
Entrancing visitor! O, rare blue jay
That flash magnificent in the lightning ray
And quick, our introductions hardly done,
Bid us adieu and in a trice are gone?

There is no need for answer— 'tis enough
That we have breathed this loveliness, and rough

And smooth we know, as only lovers do,
While hand in hand we've sat and watched the blue

Fade in the dusk and seen the shadows pass
Across the lawn where white birds stain the grass

In the dead centre, where in lotus bowl,
Epitomizing still the garden's soul,
All plain and passion spent, all travails done,
Blind mermaid prays towards the rising sun—

The blue and gold, the purple and the pink,
All rich-embroidered by the water's brink;
This loveliness shall fade when we are gone.

End of Part I

PART 2

Like sound of rushing streams the cowbell trill
The ear, a thousand wooden bells that fill
The air with waves of murmuring beauty spent
In forest green and blue immanent.

O thousand bells that for a thousand years
Have rippled on, the woodlands here among,
Ere yet the first of thousand gardens sprung,
Your monotone perpetual of tears,
Of joyful tears, that though the hand of Time
Shall smite, the music still shall chime;

O tell, be it in cadence slow, subdued,
How fares the garden through the seasons rude?

Is all that prayerful beauty now struck dumb?
Stricken in summer and in winter numb?
Are all the roses withered? All paths choked
With weeds and tares where once the children stroked
Black-booted lamb, frisking in morning sun?
Is all the blue and gold and flame now dun?

Where is the terraced splendour, where the line
Of smooth-clipped hedge against the water's shine
Where once the flowers towards the fall of day
Glowed loveliest against the sliver-gray?

Where is that beauty fled? — It matters not;
For still a radiance lingers o'er the plot,
Distilled of former loveliness that clings
To beauty immanent in Heart of Things.

What if the charm is broken? Still by day
Shall flash across the green the rare blue jay,
And in October's soft-crisp morning light
The water-lilies swarm in starry white;

And still in April's passion-tense carouse
Shall blue rain drip from jacaranda's boughs,
And in the evening, still when shadows pass
Shall white birds droop in wing and stain the grass;

And when the moon her blue enchantment spreads
O'er the hushed earth, transfiguring empty beds
And tangled vegetation to sublime
Rare moments stolen from the hoard of Time,
This loveliness shall stay—

— and when the clouds
Are banked above the lakes in black monsoon,
Lashing the earth with rain in misty shrouds,
Or changing yet, at eve, their furious tune
To quiet sunset ditties,

billowing blue,
Pale blue and gold and purple, flame and pink
And crimson such as only Eden knew,
All rich embroidered o'er the waters' brink—
This loveliness shall stay— when we are gone.

End