"Mask

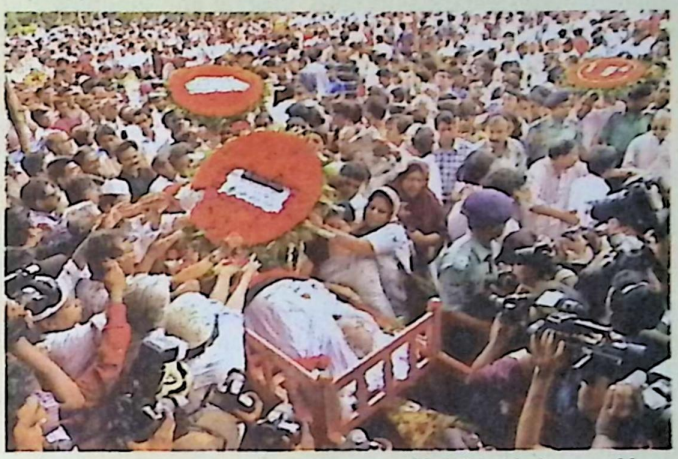
Shower me with petals,
heap bouquets around me,
I won't complain. Unable to move,
I won't ask you to stop
nor, if butterflies or swarms of flies
settle on my nose, can I brush them away.

Indifferent to the scent of jasmine and benjamin,
to rose-water and loud lament,
I lie supine with sightless eyes
while the man who will wash me
scratches his ample behind.
The youthfulness of the lissome maiden,
her firm breasts untouched by grief,
no longer inspires me to chant
nonsense rhymes in praise of life.

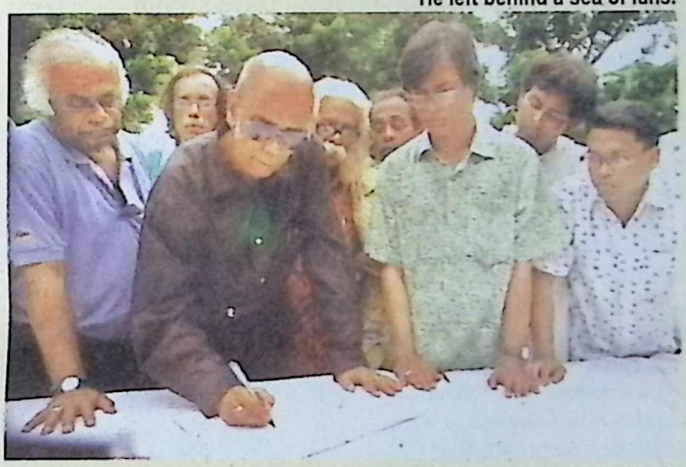
You can cover me head to foot with flowers,
my finger won't rise in admonishment.
I will shortly board a truck
for a visit to Banani.
A light breeze will touch my lifeless bones.

I am the broken nest of a weaver-bird,
dreamless and terribly lonely on the long verandah.
If you wish to deck me up like a bridegroom
go ahead, I won't say no
Do as you please, only don't
alter my face too much with collyrium
or any enbalming cosmetic. Just see that I am
just as I am; don't let another face
emerge through the lineaments of mine.
Look! The old mask
under whose pressure
I passed my whole life,
a wearisome handmaiden of anxiety,
has peeled off at last.
For God's sake don't
fix on me another oppressive mask.

From: Selected Poems of Shamsur Rahman.
Translated and Edited by Kaiser Haq."



He left behind a sea of fans.



Syed Shamsul Huq, a long time friend writes in the condolence book.

who became a constant source of inspiration. In the late 40s Rahman was a student of English at Dhaka University and had just started to contribute to the weekly Shonar Bangla, the only paper published from Dhaka. It was at that time that he came upon a book 'Dhushar Pandulipi' by Jibananda Das which his friend Zillur Rahman Siddiqui had lent him, though only for a day. Rahman spent the whole night pouring over Jibananda's dreamy imagery, drinking it all in so that the impressions would last him a lifetime.

Rahman regarded Das with reverence and considered him the only exponent of modernism in the region that he is indebted to. It was Das's vivid recreations of idyllic nature combined with Rahman's own experience of living in old Dhaka that shaped the poet Rahman later became.

Thus he was always a soul searcher, an exponent of deep emotions. Often his words were like a soliloquy although carefully chosen to capture attention of a certain audience. He was mot definitely a romantic with no intention to shock but only to share his innermost feelings. "It was the heart that spoke in my poems first, and all other factors like society and politics were secondary" he said. Which is why his poems deal with