

# Poems of Gitanjali *Through Theatre*

Visual Communication  
Project II  
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Submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirement for the  
degree of Master of Design in  
Visual Communication

November 2002

Industrial Design Centre  
Indian Institute of Technology  
Mumbai

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The Visual Communication ProjectII entitled

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*Through Theatre*

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Guide:.....

Chairperson:.....

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GITANJALI  
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Gitanjali Badruddin was born on the 12th of June 1961. Sixteen years later, her life came to a tragic end. The culprit cancer. But what she has left behind is a legacy; a testimony to her strength, her faith, her love a testimony to the beauty that was and shall always remain Gitanjali.

We will never know if Gitanjali's poems were ever meant to be found. Written during the period of her illness, the little sheets of paper bearing her thoughts were hidden in books and sofa cushions among other nooks and crannies of the house. Gitanjali's mother Khushi Badruddin found the poems, more by accident than anything else, only after Gitanjali had passed on.

Then began the journey in Khushi Badruddin's efforts to immortalise her daughter. She began contacting publishers and editors. A few of the poems first appeared in newspapers, and eventually along with the rest of them, they found their way to the pages of a complete collection of the *Poems of Gitanjali*.

HER POEMS  
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HER POEMS  
HER POEMS

Gitanjali's poems are deeply touching to say the least.

**TREAD SOFTLY**

*Tread softly  
Oh friend  
My dreams  
Are  
Scattered around.  
Crush them not  
Under thy feet  
Nor  
Consider them  
Not.  
I still dream  
The promise of  
Joyfilled tomorrows.  
Tomorrows,  
That may or  
May not  
Cross my path  
And yet,  
I dream.  
Although  
My dreams  
Are  
Scattered around  
Therefore  
My friend  
Tread softly,  
Crush not my dreams  
For they are  
Too feeble to protest.*

Gitanjali's poems are not very long, averaging about 25 lines. The lines themselves bear just a few words. And though the language used is very good for someone of her age, the poems do not bear the rhyme or lyrical quality of most renowned poets. The emotional expression however, is just as strong if not stronger than the best of them.

HER POEMS  
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HER POEMS

Gitanjali's 110 poems, written during the period of her illness, feature the people, things and emotions that affected her life the most. Her family, her friends, her pets, nature, sadness, joy, death and above all God among others. Most of her poems are tributes and messages to each of these characters.

Through the poems one also gets a picture of Gitanjali's mental state between the time she was diagnosed with cancer and her death. Some of the poems carry the natural and obvious plea for help and respite from a person who is fully aware of her impending end. She begs of God to give her a new lease on life. But most of her poems however carry an unimaginable fortitude. The courage she has displayed, knowing that her life is drawing to a close, is something we can all learn from. She accepted death and often had conversations with death requesting it to come unnoticed so that the people around her would not be hurt too much. She seemed to worry more about her loved ones than herself. Self pity is one element that has not really featured in any of Gitanjali's poems. She seemed to have made the most of whatever little time she was handed on earth.

# THE MEDIA

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## **The need to translate poetry into another medium**

The existing medium of expression for Gitanjali's thoughts is poetry. Her words.

But poetry is a very passive medium to the lay man. And in today's fast paced world, where no one has the time to "*smell the roses*" as it were, it has become important to take some of the most beautiful creations to the people - to carry emotions to them in ways they would care to understand. And all this being done without damaging in any way the content or the meaning of the written word.

Out of several media of communication, I short listed three:

### ① **The INTERNET**

Each poem would be accompanied by a dynamic or static visual.

The poems themselves would either appear in the form of dynamic type or through audio (or both), as the visual appears on screen.

Each poem would stand as a separate entity and would be accessible from a menu simply by clicking on it.

### ② **An INSTALLATION**

In a created space, Gitanjali's poems would be translated into life size installations, sequenced such that a viewer would end up walking through a labyrinth of visual interpretations of her thoughts.

Sculptures and images in the form of paintings and photographs, would carry the meanings of each poem.

Colours would play a very vital role in the setting of moods and expressing of emotions.

The three dimensional space would also be used effectively to enhance the essence of a given poem.

### ③ **THEATRE**

The content and essence of each poem would be enacted while the poems are being read out, in front of a live audience.

Here the use of literal actions and gestures would be used in conjunction with metaphorical devices and abstractions to convey emotions in the best way possible.

Apart from the effective use of light and sound, other devices like film and digital imaging would be incorporated to heighten and emphasise meaning.

# THEATRE THEATRE

## **Why I selected THEATRE**

In any form of communication, no medium conveys a message more emphatically than a live and personal one. What a person would come up and tell you in words and gestures creates a greater impact than what a poster or an advertisement with the same message would create (subject to the level of intensity, sincerity and quality of the communicator). As a natural tendency, human beings are more drawn to things they can relate to, and find things that are happening live in front of their eyes, more convincing. This is especially so in the case of communicating emotions.

Among all media of communication, all these basic human tendencies are fulfilled most completely in a live performance. Film too is one medium which amply carries human emotions to a varied audience. But the two dimensional screen and the scale of the characters and images tend to instil distance between the characters and the viewers. A live performance almost always (if not always) invites human interaction. And since dance and music are extremely subject to personal preference, theatre is the one medium that stands as the most powerful communicative device for human emotions.

The drawback of theatre however, is that it only reaches out to a finite audience at any given time. However the plus side is that, for that audience, if executed well, the performance is the nearest experience to being witness to the actual incident or event being enacted.

It is effectively a question of quality over quantity.

## **A need to revive FADING MEDIA**

Once out of school, poetry and theatre plays a very diminishing role in our lives. They are rapidly dying art forms.

The irony is that everyday more of us are putting up small performances of deceit, may it be at our work places or in our homes. And what's more we are really good at it (or so we believe).

But none of us wants to take the time off to consider theatre as a real option. A very small number even attend plays. And this in turn affects struggling theatres and theatre groups, for whom the meaning of the word struggle is revived constantly.

Poetry is also currently strapped down in the same boat. There are probably very few even moderately literate people who have never written a poem in their lives. We love to express our deepest emotions through silly rhymes. And yet how many people actually derive pleasure in reading other poets, or attending poetry recitals.

POETRY  
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POETRY

# MY GOALS

# MY GOALS

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# MY GOALS

Thus **my goals** in this project are:

- ① To communicate through the best suited media (theatre), a set of written thoughts, emotions and messages.
- ② To attempt to revive the dying media of poetry recitation and English theatre.
- ③ To pay tribute to one of the finest young poets of our country.
- ④ To add a little expression and passion into graphic design a field constrained by rules.

If successful, I hope to take this play to larger audiences. As a student project, restricting factors of budget, time and resources like venues play very large parts in the production.

Apart from the emotional quality and the goals mentioned above, this play also other unique potential:

It is very flexible as far as the length of the performance goes. The play could cover anything from one to 110 poems at one time. It could also be made in the form of a ten-part series, where eleven poems are performed at a time on over a period of ten days.

These poems can also be linked differently. Each one is a little story in itself. Thus they could be kept as individual entities or linked to form a story.



# A FEW PLAYS

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*Among the plays I have attended the following four stand out, in terms of execution and difference in genres:*

## **“Aur Kitne Tukde”**

Hindi

A very serious and brilliantly enacted political drama  
Starring Dolly Ahluwalia, directed by Kirti Jain  
(Venue: Prithvi Theatre)

Easily the most convincing acting performance I have witnessed.

Set across the period of the partition of India and Pakistan, the play told of the few joys intermingled with horrendous tragedy.

The characters selected were of different backgrounds thus giving everyone in the audience something to cling on to.

Parallel stories were intermingled and eventually connected very effectively to script a very emotional, touching and deep-seated story.

## **“Jesus Christ Superstar”**

English

Musical depicting the life of Jesus Christ  
(Venue: St. Andrew's Auditorium)

Here singing ability precedes acting ability but not by much. Song and dance is used at times as a means of conversing as and at times to enhance a feeling or a mood, like festivity.

A performance of this kind also demands a larger performing area to accommodate extravagant dance steps executed by a relatively large cast.

Even the aisles were used in a successful attempt to take the festivities to the audience.

Another interesting feature was the narrator, who appeared and narrated (sang) on stage in between scenes, rather than be heard as a voice over. He was also one of the key characters in the play Judas.

Effective use of costumes. Not every character had an elaborate costume. The level of detail and precision varied in accordance with the importance of the character.

### **“Breathe in, Breathe out”**

English

Satire on the various stage of life.

Starring Lillette Dubey

(Venue: Sophia Bhaba hall)

Four characters were used to portray the various stages of the life of one deceased woman. The characters were however a reflection of almost every human being and his/her aspirations and fears.

The interesting aspect was that all four actors were on stage at the same time discussing their fears and dreams - past and future, like they were different characters.

The youngest one was curious, in love and full of hope completely unaware of the future

The second one was more mature but jaded.

The third was an old lady who had experienced a whole life time of joy and misery.

The fourth was the deceased woman.

It was a wonderful example of showing different aspects of one person's life. It also showed the different sides to a person.

### **“Ye Dhuan Shor Dhamaka”**

Hindi

**Street Play** - Political satire on the communal problems all over the world.

Performed by **Darshak**

(Venue: IIT Campus School)

The interesting aspect here was the use of just four actors to play several roles, by merely changing their hats. For instance an actor portrayed the U.S. simply by wearing a hat bearing a likeness to Uncle Sam's hat.

The props and clothing were minimal and crude.

An important feature of street plays is they don't allow breaks for set and costume changes. Every action is visible to the audience and requires precise timing, rhythm and continuity. The structure and story of street play is also built around this constraint.

The audience often becomes part of the act.

The tempo of the play is also a key factor.

A FEW PLAYS  
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A FEW PLAYS

# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## RECITATION TECHNIQUES

### 1. The actor recites

Here, actors act out the poems like regular play, with the person playing the part of Gitanjali reciting the poems.

### 2. Single reader

A third person reads the poems as the visuals are being enacted on stage. This reader could be:

In one corner of the stage or  
As a voice over or  
Walking around the stage.

### 3. Multiple readers

Several readers of with different voices and accents would read the poems as a voice over. The voices would be a reflection of the emotions in the poem and not of a likeness of Gitanjali's voice.

Some of Gitanjali's poems seem to conflict each other, due to her reactions to changing situations.

E.g. in some poems, she yearns for a long life and happiness, while other times she just wants all of it to end fast.

Such poems would be recited in tandem by two or more readers in a sort of **argumentative style**.

### 4. A collage

Selected parts of different poems would be selected and recited as a group. The verses would form a kind of collage. This would work well for elements that recur in several different poems.

### 5. Accompanied by a strong narrative

A parallel narrative would be interspersed between selected poems to emphasise meaning.

The narrative could also contain questions to the audience (mostly rhetorical).

# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## PROPS

Props can **create the setting** for an act before the actors step out on the stage.

They form **relationships** between and **define** characters.  
E.g. There are two actors on an empty stage. Add a fence in between them, and they suddenly come across as neighbours or rivals.

They are a direct measure of the level of **abstraction versus realism** of any play.

Within a play a prop can occupy a prominent place and be **character** in its own right.

## Some of the key props I would be using

### Chairs

Seating arrangements are often a measure of the lifestyle, and personalities in any given household.

### Table

Similarly the things lying or placed on a table speaks of the interests and activities of the household.

### Bed

The bulk of Gitanjali's thoughts, dreams, prayers, tears and smiles would have been born and borne while she rested.

### Window frames

In her condition, Gitanjali's view of the outside world would have fitted into the rectangular window frames of her house and the hospital.

## Abstractions and Metaphorical props

**Colours and flames** for dreams

**Bubbles** for moments of joy

A **treasure chest** for hidden happiness

**Flowers** for life

# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## **BACKDROPS**

The background in any communicative medium plays a large role in completing the picture, creating an atmosphere setting a scene and enhancing an emotion or a message.

### **Painted backdrops**

They would be used largely to create the setting for a location. E.g. the interior of the house or exterior of the school campus.

### **Backdrops with projected images**

These would mostly be blank screens with images projected on them. This would enable the use of video. E.g. a shot of the sea or a bird flying in the sky.

**Text** in the form of selected words and lines from the poems would also be projected to lay emphasis, where needed.

### **Making the backdrops mobile**

In order to change the settings with out halting the play, the backdrops would be manned (coincidental to the flow of the play).

They could be separate screens or in the form of one long scroll, with all the scenes painted on them in a line each scene blending into the next.

Mobile screens will also be used in the foreground at times, to cover parts of or the entire the stage.

This device will be a part of the act as well as enabling transition between scenes and rearranging of sets.

# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## Costume

A costume is to a character what props are to a set. It gives you an introduction to the character even before the actual acting begins.

And like backdrops, they can enhance the mood and situation of a character.

Apart from the type of outfit, the **colours** of a costume go a long way in defining the character of a person.

Bright colours for *joy and dreams*

Dark or dull colours for *sadness and death*

Pastel shades for *innocence and hope*

Traditionally white for *mourning* / red for *celebration*

At times the projector will be used to project the colours and images onto the costumes.

## Dance

Most Indian dance forms are very potent in their ability to express purely through actions, the entire spectrum of human emotions. Something that Gitanjali's poems are not short of.

Free-form dance will also be used to add rhythm and beauty.

## OTHER DEVICES OF EXPRESSION

Beyond props and physical performances by actors, there are several other devices that would be implemented in order to deliver meaning and emotion to the fullest.

# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## Abstraction

Abstraction of various emotions and physical emotions will be used as a powerful yet subtle device to convey meaning on differing levels.

**Abstraction** is often based heavily on metaphorical content, present in:

1. **Objects**
2. **Symbols and characters**
3. **Colours**
4. **Sounds**

### 1. Objects as metaphors

Candles, flowers and bubbles:

*Strong metaphors for something beautiful.*

*Something that spreads joy.*

*And yet something that is tragically short lived.*

Cage, chains, ropes:

*Symbols of being trapped -*

*Of boundaries and limitations.*

Balloons, beach balls:

*Signs of freedom and fun*

### 2. Symbols and characters as metaphors:

An angel and the grim reaper:

*Signs of hope and death respectively*

Also enacting phrases like "To kick the bucket"  
*meaning 'to die'*

Horizontal and vertical elements

*for sadness and joy respectively*

### 3. Colours as metaphors

On backdrops

On props

On costumes

Through lighting

### 4. Sounds as metaphors

The laugh of an infant:

*The sound of innocence*

The sound of glass breaking:

*Heartbreak*

Chaotic noises

*For confusion, uneasiness and restlessness*

Ticking clock

*For time running out*

# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## Lighting

Lighting is a very important aspect of theatre, best used for:

- o Creating and controlling the **ambience** and **atmosphere** on a set.
- o Simulating **environmental** conditions.
- o Drawing **attention** towards characters.
- o Enhancing **emotions** and **expressions**.
- o Adding **colour** with the aid of filters.

### Other lighting effects

A wall of light bulbs or strings of decorative lights can be used to create varying patterns by controlling the sequence of illumination

### The Pause:

- Darkness
- The complete absence of light.
- The moment of shock.
- Allowing only for sounds; voices.

Such pauses can also be used by the cast to change positions and props.



# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## Sound

Sound in most forms of communication, can be explored very effectively in the background as well as the foreground.

### Speech

Accent, delivery style, pace and voice quality all act to enhance specific meanings.

A child's rendition of a poem as opposed to a grown up's rendition would bare the contrast in these elements.

### Music

Music (background or onstage) is commonly used to set and enhance a desired mood and the pace of the performance.

Also used to smoothen transitions between scenes.

### Onstage sounds

- Actors voices
- Dropping objects
- Breaking something
- Tearing paper

### Backstage sounds

- Opening / closing doors
- Doorbell
- Voices calling out
- Crowd noises

### Recorded sounds

- Dogs barking
- Birds chirping
- A flock of birds taking off simultaneously
- Ambulance
- Ice cream vendor
- Crowds (cheers, chaos, whispers, murmurs)
- Alarm

### Metaphorical sounds

To increase the impact of any given message.

### Simulated environments:

- Street (traffic, vendors, voices)
- School noises (children, bell, teachers)
- Sea side (waves, breeze, birds)
- Temple (bells, prayers)
- Whether (storm, wind, rain)

### The pause

- Complete silence
- The element of surprise
- Allow for complete focus on movements
- Allow for only breathing to be heard

### Only sound

As on the radio, an entire story can be narrated, complete with effects, simply through the audio medium. Similarly, in this play there would be brief instances of complete darkness, with only the employment of sound (enhancing elements like fear, loneliness, and death)

# TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS TECHNICAL ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## INCORPORATION of OTHER MEDIA

With the inception of technology, theatre is no longer restricted to the actors as means of communication. Apart from props and elements like sound and light, several other media can be used effectively to enhance and heighten a performance. And my objective is to select the best suited ones.

Thus I will be incorporating **video, animation** and **photography** as part of the performance. These would be projected onto the backdrop to create dynamic backgrounds and settings:

To create landscape settings

*Like the sea side or the school campus*

To portray a parallel world

*Where the stage is Gitanjali's reality, and the screen is her fantasy (future and past).*

To project metaphors:

E.g. Close up of eyes for *emotional value*

Colours for *moods*

## THE VENUE

(OPTIONS)

I considered four possible locations for the final performance. Two outdoor, two indoor.

### Outdoor

The outdoor circular space behind IDC  
The stage at Great Eastern Gardens, Kanjurmarg

### Indoor

The IDC auditorium  
The lecture theatre

Both kinds of locations pose **advantages** and **disadvantages**:

### Outdoor

Creates an automatic scenic and serene setting.  
Larger performance space.  
Option of using the entire 360 degrees.  
Freedom to position the audience. Around the circle, on one side or on the first floor corridor.  
Allows for interaction with the audience. Gives the audience the freedom to move around.

### Indoor

Climate does not become a constraint.  
The ambience can be controlled.  
Lighting, from complete darkness to flooded bright lighting, is possible.  
The viewer's visual perspective becomes definite. Every angle of the 3 dimensional space can be controlled.  
No unnecessary distractions.  
Ascending seating provides all members of the audience with a good view.

## The Final Venue

The Venue I have selected is the outdoor stage at **Great Eastern Gardens, Kanjurmarg**.

### My reasons:

The stage is ample in size for my performance.

The semicircular seating and the circular stage are catered for theatrical performances and allow flexibility in movement and orientation on stage.

The entire area is not too large. This has two advantages:

The relative position of audience and actor can be controlled.

It can be enclosed to attain the benefits of an indoor space.

Being in a residential colony, availability for rehearsals does not become a hindrance.

TECHNICAL  
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ASPECTS and OPTIONS

## GENERAL NOTES for the PRODUCTION

(Consistencies that I will endeavour to maintain through the play as a whole).

1. Gitanjali's poems are **not dated**, and since her mother found all of them after the death, there was no way of deciphering the order in which they were written.

### **Result:**

The performance will not depict a passage of time. It will be events and thoughts happening without there necessarily being an order. There will not be a literal start and finish to the story.

2. Almost all the poems have an air of a terrible **loneliness**. The word 'we' very rarely occurs amidst all her lines and the word 'I'.

### **Result:**

This would be brought across by effective lighting, background music and relative positioning of the characters on stage, through the course of the play.

3. The level of **language** used is very good for someone her age.

### **Result:**

This will be reflected by the readers of the poems. There will be a certain **maturity** in the delivery

4. Physical **likeness is not a priority**. Gitanjali's poems do not possess a physical face or a voice, but they do instil emotions and produce visuals of her world.

### **Result:**

Thus the person playing Gitanjali in person or in voice may not bear any resemblance to her (like the movie Patch Adams).

In this case Gitanjali would be played by several different people of varying ages to best suit the message and meaning in the respective poems.

5. There are several **elements** in the book that recur in most of her poems. God, for instance, features even when the poem is about her parents.

### **Result:**

Through the play, while one poem is being enacted, **elements** from other poems would make brief and subtle appearances.

E.g. in the midst of a relatively joyous poem, a symbol of death (like the grim reaper) would subtly pass in the background, keeping the audience rooted and aware of her reality.

# THE STAGE

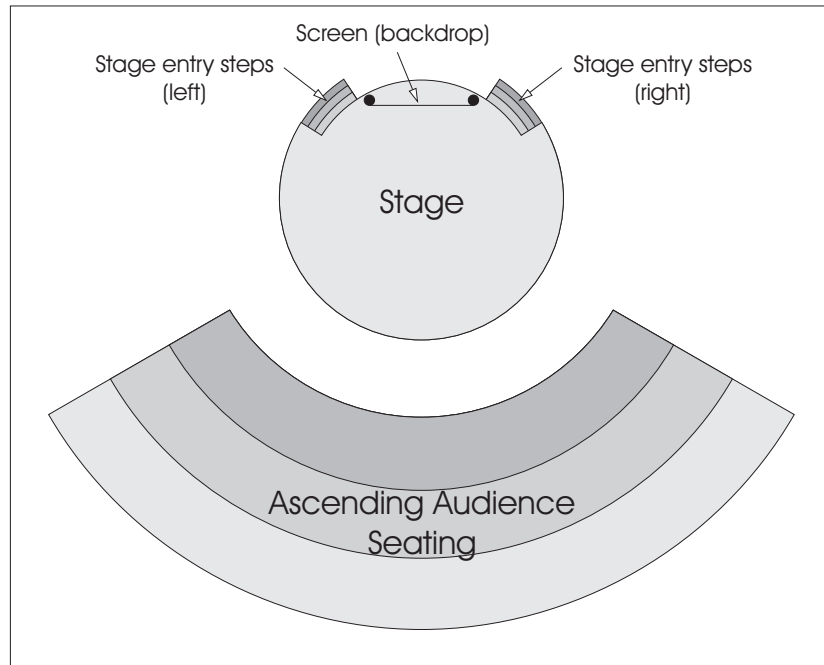
# THE STAGE

# THE STAGE

## The stage:

Diagrams of the stage and the lighting arrangements

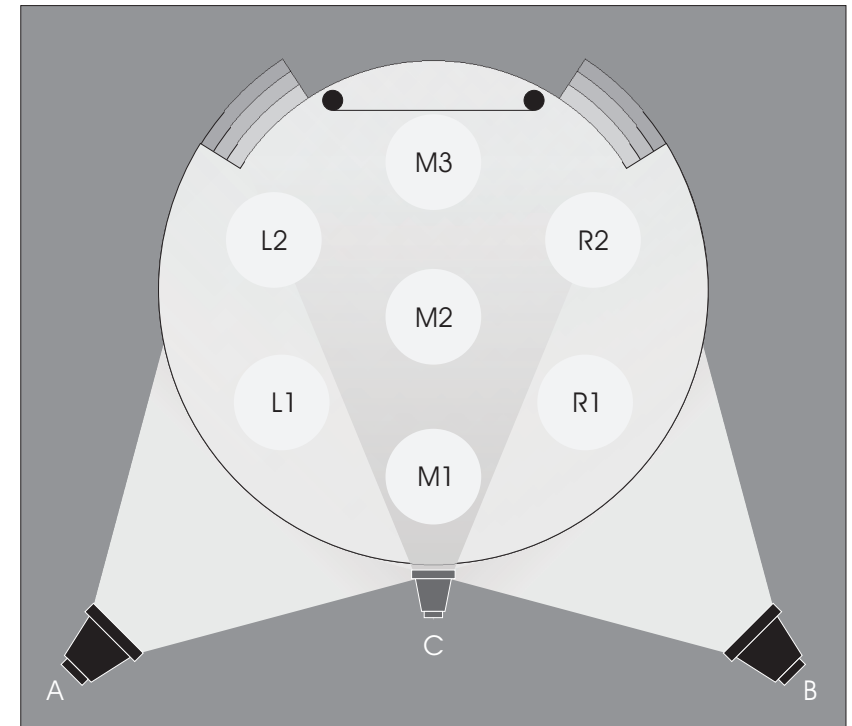
The diagram below is a complete top view of the venue.



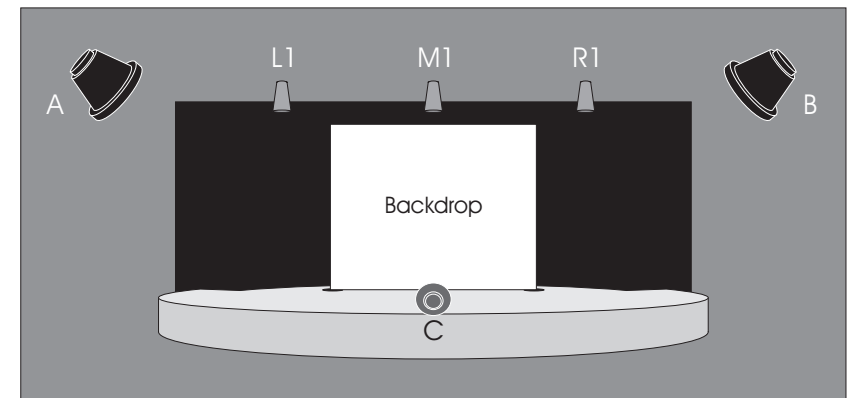
## Lighting:

Here L, M, R are the spot lights are the large stage lights

Top View



Front View



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Good evening.

The lights fade out.

A video starts playing on the backdrop (this would be a common device used intermittently through the course of the performance).

Video:

Wide shot of a beach the horizon. A little girl is running around happily (probably on a beach) with a kite on a very short string (about two feet long) in her hand. Her pace slows down a little and the circles she's running in become smaller, as she begins to tire. Suddenly, she stops; her back to the camera. The kite loosely touching the ground near her feet. She is looking into the distance. In the background we see the setting sun.

As the sun sets, the video fades out and we are in darkness again.

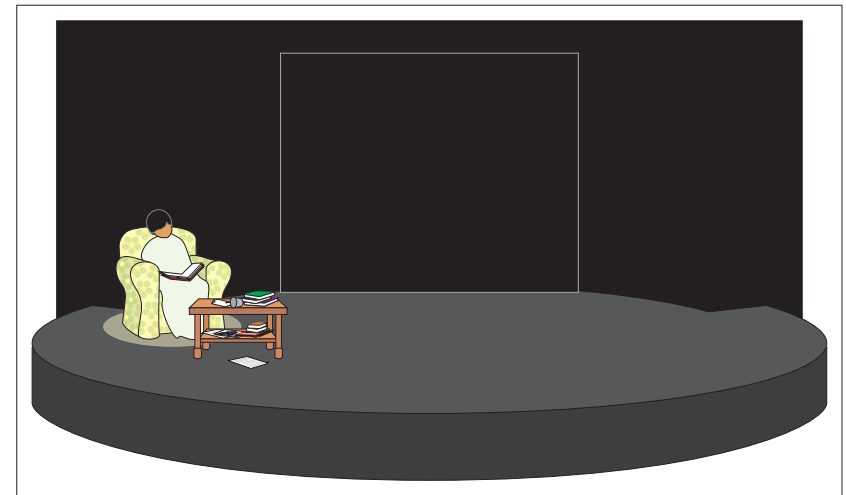
A dim light (C) comes on, revealing the stage. In the background soft melancholic starts playing.

On the stage, towards the left, is a coffee table and a sofa chair. The coffee table is a simple wooden table with a shelf below to keep books, papers, etc. It is in a bit of a mess with a few books and magazines lying scattered. A glass is also perched precariously on the edge, ready to fall to the ground. The chair is upholstered in light lime green. It looks a little worn and faded. A book is lying on the chair.

The light fades out. Darkness. The music continues, but steadily softens.

From the right of the stage we see a small light moving towards the centre. It is Gitanjali's mother carrying in her hand, a candle. She walks across the stage, stops at the coffee table and bends to place the candle on it. She tries moving some of the things on the table to make space for the candle. A book and the glass fall down, breaking the calm. Gitanjali's mother shows no reaction. She places the

candle on the table and sits down on the chair. She accidentally sits on the book. But once again bears no reaction. She casually stirs a little, just enough to remove the book from behind her, places it on her lap and sits back. She looks tired. She rests her head back and shuts her eyes.



Her head starts moving a little. She seems uneasy. Her mind shifts restlessly between a bad dream and fatal reality. She opens her eyes. And just stares at the candle for a few seconds. She looks down at the book in her lap, opens it and starts flipping through its pages absently. She lifts it up a little in an effort to read. As she does this, a piece of paper falls out onto her lap. She picks it up, and as if struck by something on that little sheet, leans forward to get a better look at it in the light of the candle. And as she wipes a tear off her cheek, a voice reads out these words...

“ I am named  
GITANJALI  
After the famous book of Tagore  
I wish and pray  
Oh! help me God  
I so live that ....  
I live up to the name.”

Gitanjali's mother wipes her tears with her saree. She flips through the book again, but this time faster (as though flipping through a flip-book). Back and forth. Nothing falls out. She drops the book on the table, and picks up another one. As she does this, she accidentally knock over the candle. We are once agin in darkness.

The dim light (C) fades in a little.

Gitanjali's mother is on her knees behind the coffee table, going through the book and papers. In one hand she seems to be holding a few more similar sized pieces of paper. The light fades out.

This time when it comes back on, Gitanjali's mother is standing she has in her hands several pieces of paper, which she is now going through rapidly. In the background lines are read out randomly. They are lines and titles from the papers, being read as they are flipped through. The face of Gitanjali's mother bears emotions ranging form disbelief to grief. In the background we still have the soft music playing. The lights fade out.

This time the lights stay out for a couple of extra seconds. When they come on...

*[From this point on, each poem (on the left) is accompanied by the corresponding performance (on the right). The performance will take place in accordance to the poems recited on the voice over]*



## NOTHING IS UNIMPORTANT

- 1 { Does early death come  
As a punishment?  
Or  
Does it come too late,
- 2 { For those who are tortured  
By incurable pain?
- 3 { Is death really cruel?  
Or
- 4 { Is it merciful?
- 5 { Why do we shun death?  
Haven't we known about death?
- 6 { Doesn't death follow life?  
It sometimes  
Over-takes us, and
- 7 { Sometimes, walks sluggishly  
Behind.
- 8 { Death does bring grief,  
Just as any parting does.  
Goodbye itself carries  
The spark of death.  
When you bid goodbye  
To a loved one, doesn't it
- 9 { Bring changes, and adjustments?  
Isn't the silence, and  
The loneliness disturbing?  
Nothing is unimportant  
Not even death.
- 10 { When I see death  
Looming-in-view  
In these lines  
I take my refuge:
- 11 { *"When sickness comes and bids us rest awhile  
In some calm pool, beside life's too swift stream,  
Why rail at fate, and count ourselves ill used?  
'Tis then one's soul awakes, weaves dream on dream."*

Lights everywhere (A & B) as Gitanjali steps out on the stage. As she walks to the front, the lights fade out while simultaneously a spot light fades in (M1). Gitanjali stops slowly under the spot, just as the poem is about to begin. The basket/pouch containing the flowers hangs by her side. She looks poised to start a conversation with the audience.

1. Gitanjali picks the withered flower from her basket and casually plucks out a petal. Then she plucks out another, and another. She does not however drop them.
2. She squeezes the flower with both hands in anger.
3. Pulls out a few more petals. Is about to rip the flower apart. Stops.
4. Opens out her fists and holds the flower along with all the loose petals gently on the palms of her hands.
5. Parts her palms a little and lets everything fall through.
6. She goes down on her knees. Reaches to pick it up with one hand while taking out one of the other flowers with her other hand. Before picking up the petals, she looks from to the other.
7. And then turns her head ever so slightly to look over her shoulder.
8. She then puts the bloomed flower back, picks up the petals, holds them in her palms. Looks at them for a second. A sad smile on her face. She blows the away slowly but hard.
9. When the petals are in the air, the lights go out. There is a second of eerie silence. Then the lines "Nothing is important, not even death."
10. The spot light comes on. This time, a little further back -centre stage. All that stands in it is the fully bloomed flower.
11. With the spot still on the flower, the last four lines get projected on the back drop (red on black), as they are recited.

## MEMORIES ARE ALL THAT I HAVE

- 1 { Each morning  
When I greet  
The world  
My heart swells up  
And my eyes fill with tears.
- 2 { As I take in  
The past and the present  
The time stands still  
For a while
- 3 { From the spring-board  
Of my memory  
Many thoughts  
Dive into my mind
- 4 { Some are happy,  
Some are painfully sad  
These memories are all that I have
- 5 { I live on them  
I feast and depend on them  
I could die...
- 6 { Did I say die?  
Oh no! No dear God  
Please let me live  
Hold me tight my mother dear
- 7 { Do not let me sink  
Into the depths of my woes  
I promise  
Never to speak in despair again.

No lights on stage.

An animation gets projected on the back ground:

The ticking of a clock in the back ground is almost inaudible. It gradually increases in volume as the poem progresses. The animation begins with random bright colours fading in and floating about (like a media-player visualisation) for a few seconds....

1. A tiny bubble appears and grows. It rises, floats and takes the shape of a heart. It bursts softly, into tiny drops of liquid that begin to fall down slowly like tears. The tears disappear as if they merged with a larger water body. There is a mild movement of the liquid.
2. Then everything goes absolutely still. The ticking ceases.
3. A tiny orb drops into the liquid from above, creating a great big splash. The liquid thrown into the air starts to run down along a flat surface (like water running down a mirror).
4. The running liquid takes the rough shape of a smile.
5. And without stopping, the sides continue to drip to take the shape of a frown and then starts to break up. At the same time a spot light in the centre (M1) fades in.
6. Gitanjali runs out in a state of panic and stands in the centre towards the front of the stage, facing the audience. She is lit with the central big light (C).
7. But she sees the audience looking over her shoulder and turns her head back with a jerk towards the screen, and notices suddenly what's happening. She runs toward the screen. Bends just before reaching it and picks up a large paintbrush (the kind used to paint walls) that was lying there. The light by this time has faded and is now just bright enough to let the audience faintly decipher her form and actions with out affecting the animation. With the brush, Gitanjali paints the liquid back into a smile with one large stroke along the screen. (From this point on the animation and the actors movements have to be perfect sync). She breathes a sigh of relief, and turns around.

*Continued*

*Continued*

8 { Although  
I've been through  
The deepest sorrow  
Deeper pain and grief  
And yet...  
I beg of you dear God  
"Please let me live".  
  
My tears flow silently  
Fast and free  
My bruised heart  
Murmurs faintly  
And I make a promise brave  
Never to indulge  
In self-pity again.

9 { I raise my weary eyes  
To catch a glimpse  
Of the fading Day-Star  
Hoping  
He will come again  
To greet me  
And warm up  
My shattered heart.

8. She suddenly turns her head again as if the audience was looking at something behind her. She notices that the smile is once again changing into a frown. She changes it back into a smile again. But this time the dripping follows immediately transforming the frown back into a smile. Gitanjali gets frantic. She begins painting faster. But the dripping also gets faster. Simultaneously the recitation in the background also gets faster with a distinct desperation. She persists, not willing to let the frown catch up with her. But she gets tired. Her arms hurt. Her whole body hurts.
9. She turns around and drops the brush, and slowly walks away. Meanwhile the dripping liquid takes the approximate shape and colour of the sun, which begins to set. Gitanjali turns her head to look at the screen for a brief moment as she continues to walk of the stage. As the sun sets the animation and the light black out.

## SLEEP

- 1 { Sleep,  
When did we meet last?  
You and I  
Seem to have become strangers,  
Once not long ago
- 2 { You were so close to me;  
You would enfold me and
- 3 { Take me by my hand  
To escort me
- 4 { To the distant hills  
And help me build
- 5 { Castles in my dreams.
- 6 { Now it all seems so strange;  
I only remember you so vaguely.
- 7 { Remember how once we shared  
Some tendermost thoughts?  
Now I am left  
With memories alone,  
Sometimes some word rings  
To revive our past...  
Like a lullaby,
- 8 { A goodnight kiss  
Reminds of me of that  
Beautiful thing  
Called sleep.
- 9 { And now I lie staring at the dark,  
Lonesome and sad.
- 10 { Once in a way  
Sleep  
Overtakes me  
And then the dreams  
Seem so far away.

One spot light (R1) on the right of the stage fades in to reveal Gitanjali, seated on her bed. She is sitting on the edge of her bed. Her head is down. She looks like a wreck, broken and tired. She is swaying slowly to and fro. In the background we can faintly hear “Rock-a-by-baby”. But it's broken and there's some static disturbance as well. The song continues in the back ground throughout the poem (and it could be followed by an Indian lori). The volume however drops a little when the poem is being read.

1. She gets up slowly from the bed, as the two bright lights (A & B) fade in and the spotlight (M1) starts to fade out. She takes two steps forward, raises her head and looks blankly, sleeplessly at the audience. The audience can see her condition more closely. Her dark circles. She looks around her, a very worried look on her face. She looks sad.
2. She turns her head suddenly to her right as though she heard a loud but welcome sound from that direction. Sleep is standing there in the far left hand corner of the stage.
3. She takes a few steps in that direction rapidly increasing in pace.
4. She raises her arm half way to point out to the hills. But Sleep runs out . She stops dead in her tracks; her hand is still up.
5. She timidly raises her finger to the sky.
6. She drops her hand slowly, along with her head. She turns towards the audience.
7. She begins to take a step forward, when she suddenly lifts her head and turns it to her left. Sleep is now on the right far corner of the stage. Gitanjali speeds of again in that direction, but stops again in similar dismay as he vanishes again. This time however blowing a kiss at her just before he goes.
8. She raises her hand to her cheek and holds it there. She is however panting a bit from exhaustion.
9. She turns towards the audience once again and walk over to her bed. Slowly but not too slow. She looks dejected but is definitely headed for the bed. She is wandering aimlessly. The two lights (A & B) fade out while the spot (R1) fades back in.

*Continued*

10. She lies down on the bed (with a little difficulty and exhaustion), and shuts her eyes. Sleep reappears. He walks over to the head of the bed. He bends over and kisses her on the forehead and then pulls a bed-sheet over her.

Two seconds after the poem ends, Sleep, still looking down at Gitanjali raises his finger sharply towards the light above him, with a slight flick, as the light goes of.

## MY BROTHER

- 1 { I have a big brother  
But he is only big  
In name.
- 2 { I am the one  
Who bullies him  
And  
Makes him cry in vain.
- 3 { I love and adore him
- 4 { And bore him no end  
With the games of Chinese-checkers  
And cheating immense.
- 5 { He is crazy about many things  
Including jeans and stickers
- 6 { You'll find one  
On his knee-cap  
And  
Another under his bum
- 7 {
- 8 { He is a bit crazy.  
Not in the sense  
You guess:
- 9 { It's music  
He's mad about  
And there's nothing  
That can be done.
- 10 { He is a book-worm  
And  
Loves to stamp his name  
Whether it's on his book  
Or mine  
He cares a damn.
- 11 {
- 12 { He loves me better  
Than  
He ever did before  
May be he feels  
Sorry for me but  
Doesn't like to show it.

Gitanjali walks out briskly onto a well lit stage (A & B) stage carrying a big carton (like a T.V. box).

1. Her brother comes running after her to retrieve the carton, which belongs to him. Gitanjali stops close to the opposite end of the stage and puts the carton down. The light (L1) over her fades in. She quickly turns and stops him with a hand gesture and banishes him off the stage. He puts his hands up in defeat, with a slight smile on his face - (the kind of expression a grown up has when pretending to surrender to a child in a wrestling match). He walks off the stage from where he entered.
2. Gitanjali giggles, followed by a happy, affectionate smile. She stands behind the box.
3. She bends down and pulls out an oversized Chinese-checkers board from the carton and quietly shows it to the audience, open with both hands. As she does this she looks towards the entry point of her brother to make sure he's not looking. She has a sly smile on her face, as she hides the board on her right of the box.
4. She bends down again and pulls out two pairs of jeans (one in each hand and lifts them up a little showing them to the audience.
5. She drops one pair back in the box and shows the audience the sticker on the knee of the other one. The sticker is a large one in bright colours and can't be missed even from a distance. She then turns the jeans around and shows the sticker on the seat.
6. She bends down again digging in the box.
7. She lifts her head and smiles and shakes her head a little.
8. She pulls a miniature guitar out of the box. She tries to strum, with a little Hindi movie-esque guitar body movement. But is not too successful. With a resigned look on her face, accompanied by a slight shrug of the shoulders, she puts the guitar back in the box. As she does this she peeks around to see if he's looking. He's still off the stage.

*Continued*

*Continued*

13 { I love him better too  
I confess  
Than I ever did before  
But in my case it's different:  
Then I was only a child  
Which I am not anymore.

9. This time she pulls out a very big book, and opens it. Her brother sneaks back onto the stage. And starts tip-toeing towards her, but along the back drop initially. Gitanjali flips a page and shakes her head. She turns the book towards the audience and points to the corner where something is scribbled. Continuing to shake her head, she taps her chest gesturing that it's her book.
10. She suddenly turns to see her brother close behind her. She drops the book in, and bends fast to pick the box up.
11. But he grabs her from behind, around the waist and lifts her off the ground. He spins around a couple of times carrying her, as she bursts into laughter. He has a big smile on his face. He puts her down. She sits down, gasping for breath but still laughing.
12. He bends down and kisses her on the head. Touches her hair gently. He goes and picks up the box, and gestures to her to come along. She raises her finger and nods her head with a smile ("you go on, I'll be there in a second"). She turns back to the audience, smiles and gets up slowly.

## MOTI MY FRIEND

- 1 { Moti my friend,  
I miss you no end.  
I think of you  
Each time, I see  
The loaf of bread.
- 2 { I can only request  
People to see  
If you are being  
Fed.
- 3 { I care for you  
In a very special way  
Which you'd never know  
Anyway.
- 4 { I think of you  
When I am snug  
And kept warm.
- 5 { Wondering...  
If you are shivering  
With lack of love  
Or someone  
Pitied you  
And given you  
A rug.
- 6 { Each morning when  
I am driven to hospital  
The glimpse of you  
And your faithful paw  
Which you hand me  
Through the window  
Of the car.
- 7 { My heart whispers  
A prayer for you
- 8 { May you find a friend  
To take care of you.

The stage is softly and evenly lit (A & B). We see a chair with a relatively high back, placed a little towards the back and right of the stage. The chair is facing the left. A bed-sheet is draped over the back of the chair. In the background we hear faint street sounds.

Gitanjali walks onto the stage from the right. In her hand are a saucer of milk and a loaf of bread on a quarter plate. As she walks out, stills of children playing with their dogs are flashed on the top left corner of the back drop. This is done in quick succession, but just slow enough for the audience to decipher each image. With the start of the video, the sounds of dogs barking slightly dominate the rest of the streets sounds.

Gitanjali walks to the centre of the stage, goes down on her knees and places them down. She looks around her as if waiting, hoping for someone to come. The video stops and the audio softens as the poem begins.

1. She looks down, a little sad. She absently adjusts the bread in the plate and moves the other saucer an inch forward.
2. She stands up, looks around once again. Looks down and turns.
3. She walks to the chair and sits down with some difficulty. She lets out a small cough. She looks week. She turns to pull the bed-sheet around her.
4. She has wrapped herself in the sheet.
5. A cold shiver seems to run through her for a second. She pulls the sheet a little tighter and leans her head back till it rests on the back of the chair. Still looking towards the milk and bread.
6. A video starts to play on the back drop. It is from the interior of a car, looking out onto the street through the right rear window. Gitanjali's position is such that it appears like she's sitting in that car. Currently everything is motionless. The street sounds have gently faded in without any special focus on anything in particular.

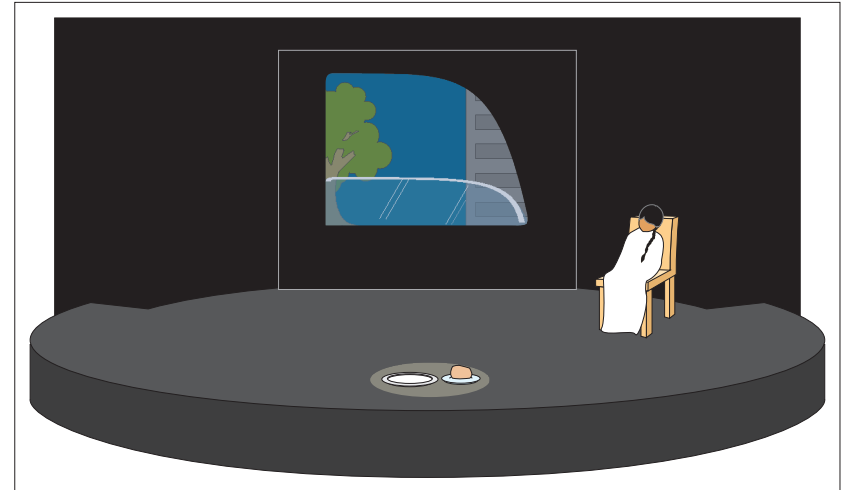
*Continued*



Gitanjali turns her head towards the screen, as if looking out of the window of the car. The car starts with a slight jerk (in the video the street appears to move backwards).Gitanjali also gets a slight jerk with it. The jerk of the car is accompanied by the sound of a car starting, and then in motion.

7. She turns to look at the loaf of bread. Pokes her fingers out of her bed-sheet and kisses them as if blowing a kiss. She turns her head towards the screen again, as a second of the flashing dog pictures and the sounds of dogs barking, interrupts the video of the car in motion, which then resumes.
8. The lights on stage fade out as the spot light (M1) fades on the food.

The video also fades out and is replaced once again by the flashing stills and the barking sounds. Moments later everything fades out into darkness, including the spot light. This time we hear one dog barking. Quite distinctly.



## THEIR EYES HELD NO PROMISE

- 1 { The night  
Of the storm  
Held me  
In the grip of fear.
- 2 { It was not so much  
The storm that I feared  
It was the  
Over-whelming emotions  
The sinking feeling  
Of two loving souls
- 3 { That held me close  
To their heart.
- 4 {
- 5 { It was not so much  
My own pain and suffering  
But their blood-drained  
Faces that stared  
Into the space.
- 6 { Their eyes held no promise  
And looked beyond me  
Not once daring  
To meet my  
Dying probing eyes.  
Not that I am proud  
Not that I am a non-believer  
But I long stopped begging  
For mercy.
- 7 { Not that I am proud  
Not that I am a non-believer  
But I long stopped begging  
For mercy.
- 8 { Looking up to their faces  
Who try to hide their  
Pain and sorrow.
- 9 {

Loud thunder accompanied by lightning (all the stage lights randomly flash in quick succession). On the background is a video of a stormy sky clouds, violent lightning. This continues through the poem, but the intensity and brightness varies in accordance with the sound and flashing of the stage lights. All of this goes on a few seconds before the poem begins. Then the noise subsides.

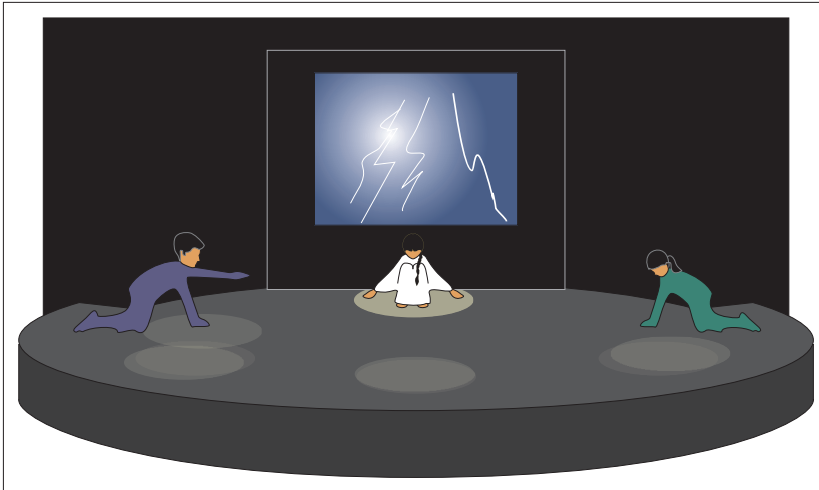
1. The flashing continues. However the spot light at the back (M3) fades in slowly, brightening to illuminate Gitanjali sitting on the ground. Huddled. Her arms wrapped tight around her knees. She is trembling in fear. Crying. The flashing of the spot lights continues, but the two big lights (A & B) hold steady very dim at first, but steadily brightening.
2. The two lights stop brightening at about half intensity. The spot light on Gitanjali is at full intensity. Gitanjali's parents enter from either side, stop close to the entrances and start moving their heads, looking around them. Searching for something, a little frantically. They start move a few steps toward the front of the stage, along the perimeter. The flashing of the reaming lights continues dimly.
3. They suddenly spot Gitanjali as she stretches her arms towards them. They almost begin to move toward her.
4. But there's another loud clap of thunder, and the lights begin flashing at full intensity again. The parents stumble and fall.
5. Everything goes dark for a brief moment. The noise subsides. The two big lights (A & B) come on to half intensity along with the spot light (M3) on Gitanjali. There is no more flashing as even the video in the background fades out. The parents begin to crawl toward her very slowly, with great difficulty. Gitanjali stretches out her arms again.

*Continued*

*Continued*

10 { I am sorry for their sake  
And not for myself  
At least dear God  
I plead with you  
Either put an end  
To this wick of candle  
Or let it glow steadily  
For a few years more.

6. As they continue to crawl, another video begins on the back drop. It is a series of only faces and pairs of eyes (fewer faces than pairs of eyes) of different unrelated people. The expressions portrayed are all the expressions contained in the poem - fear, sadness, anguish, pain, tears, etc. The images form a changing collage, with continuous overlapping. Very rapid. The parents continue to crawl.
7. The images are interrupted for a brief moment by a storm scene and a loud clap of thunder. The two big lights (A & B) also flash a couple of times in quick succession. The parents falter again. All three are in pain. Gitanjali is stretching hard but can't seem to move her body. They are all crying. They begin to move forward again.
8. The video of the faces and eyes resumes, as the parents stop in their tracks, exhausted and drained. They fall over. They reach hard but can't move anymore. They give up and freeze in their places. Gitanjali continues to reach hard. All the lights fade out.
9. Only the spot light (M3) over Gitanjali comes back, to reveal a cage around Gitanjali (this has been lowered from above). She holds on to the bars. She looks tired and her head hangs low.
10. She looks up towards Him and tries to shake the bars, very slowly, very tired, with a lot of effort. She drops her head back down again and lets her hands slide down the bars, as the light fades out.



## I BESEECH YOU

- 1 { I seek you God  
In my prayers,  
I seek you God  
Everywhere
- 2 { I seek you  
In the rising sun,
- 3 { I seek you  
When the day is done.
- 4 { I seek you even  
When I dream and drift,
- 5 { I seek you  
For your healing touch  
When I am in pain,  
And wish so much to thank you  
When you take the pain away.
- 6 { I seek you in my mother  
And
- 7 { In my father too,
- 8 { I seek your guidance  
In all I say and do.  
And if perchance
- 9 { I fail to be good  
And take your name in vain
- 10 { Please God understand  
For I am so much in pain
- 11 { I thank you  
For those few rare moments  
When you make me laugh  
Though in pain,
- 12 { I cherish those moments  
Like a treasure  
And live on the happy  
Memories you gave.

Gitanjali is standing in the middle of the stage, eyes closed and hands joined in prayer as the spotlight (M2) fades in on her. Her hands are joined like this pretty much for the entire poem as she remains on the same spot throughout. Her eyes never open.

1. Lights (A & B) fade in everywhere, brightening the stage and the backdrop, as the spot light fades out.
2. The light changes to a yellowish orange tint (C fades in while A & B fade out)
3. Changes to a deep blue (C fades out as A & B with deep blue filters fade in)
4. Various filters cast changing bright coloured lights (A & B)
5. The bright lights fade out as the spot light (M2) fades in (dim). She tilts her head to her left just a little bit, with a slight shrug of the shoulders and a smile on her face, as if a loved one had crept up from behind her and blown very, very softly into her ear. Her eyes are still closed and her hands still joined. Her smile widens in the warmth of the glow. Happiness.
6. The spot light (R2) on the right comes on
7. The spot light (L2) on the left comes on
8. The spot light (M1) in front of her also comes on
9. The three lights suddenly go off leaving only a full intensity spot (M2) on Gitanjali, as she suddenly clenches both fists in front of her face, raises her head a little, her face fraught with pain, as if something sharp suddenly pierced her skin.
10. In the same motion, she joins her palms again drops them a little and drops her head till they touch. As she goes down on her knees. On her face this time bares sorrow, tears.
11. Head still bowed she shakes her joined hands in a pleading/ thanking gesture, as a smile creeps back onto her face.
12. As the smile turns into a blush and eventually a giggle, as she almost falls back and sits down. The light in the meanwhile softens a little bit and the orange light (C) fades in just a wee bit to add colour.

13 { I feel your presence  
In my mother  
And  
In my father's clasp  
And I am sure  
You know that  
I seek nothing  
Save the truth.  
In you lies the truth  
And, therefore,  
I seek you.

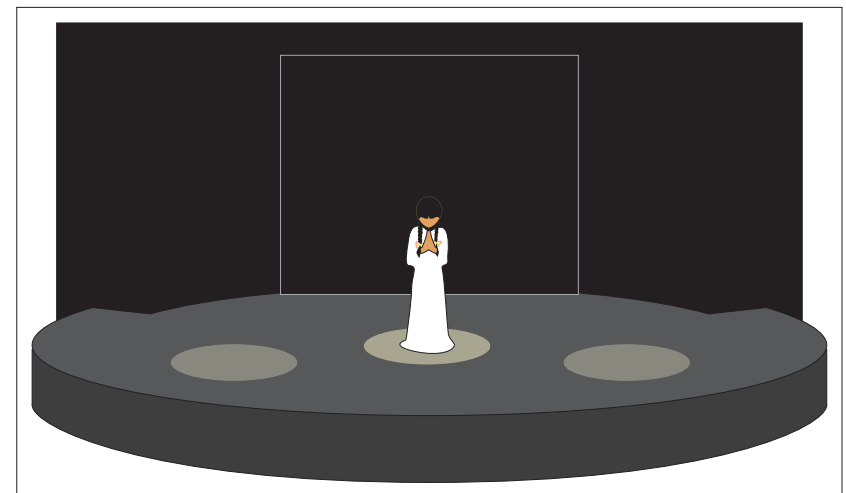
14 { I shall seek you most  
At my hour of death  
And I beseech you  
My dear God  
To be by my side  
And hold my hand  
And take me  
Where you want.

With child-like faith  
I cling to this hope;  
So please have mercy  
And come to me.

13. Her face slowly returns to its initial serenity, while all three spots around her (L2, M1 & R2) fade in very slowly at the same time. They brighten gradually as the two main lights (A & B) fade in bathing the whole stage in light, while once again bringing into focus the background.

14. She looks tired, and very slowly falls of to one side and lays down. Her joint hands serving as the head rest in typical theatre sleeping pose. All the lights except the spot on her (M2) fade out.

After the last line, the spot also goes off like a light bulb being turned off before one goes to sleep.



## THE HEART OF GOLD

- 1 { Grannies are many  
And many more there will be  
But this Granny  
I am talking about  
Is none other than
- 2 { My Bibi.
- 3 {
- 4 { My Granny is not  
Just mine  
(Though very much she's my own)  
She's in no small measures too  
Yes, that's exactly what she is  
With a heart of gold and as large  
As the ocean wide.
- 5 {
- 6 { Sympathetic she is to the core  
She'll deny herself a morsel  
And feed you more
- 7 { She is always there when needed  
Sunshine, rain or thunder  
Whether it will cost her health  
She little cares for that  
Just that moment all she cares  
Is that you need her care.
- 8 {
- 9 { If I am not much in pain  
It's because...
- 10 { She's on war-path with HIM  
Her prayers go hand-in-hand  
With my Grandpa's  
Knock the doors of  
Heaven above  
And melt the heart of God.
- 11 { I worship the ground  
She walks on, and kiss her  
With my eyes -- bless her soul!  
She is the most adorable  
'Cause she's not just my Grandma  
She's the maker of my mother divine.

Dark stage.

1. Images of old ladies (grandmothers) are flashed on the screen. Some of them are seen playing with or feeding a grand child. They bear all kinds of expressions. The flashing increases in pace, until....
2. The last image suddenly freezes - it is the shadow of a lady against a plain background. This image comes suddenly and is accompanied by a spot light (M2) suddenly coming on to reveal with a bang (like a movie hero) Gitanjali's grandmother (Bibi) standing in the middle of the stage. To one side of her is a stool, to the other is a basket with a handle and a cloth covering its contents. Behind her is a chair, against which is leaning a walking cane. Her food is lying in a plate on the stool. Beside the plate is a glass of water.
3. The two big lights (A & B) come on as the spot light (M2) and the video go off. We now see Gitanjali on the right of the stage on her bed. She is on her stomach, writing something in a book.
4. In the back ground we hear children's voices calling out to Bibi ("Nani", "Bibi", "Dadi", etc.). Bibi looks to her right and acknowledges the children (out of sight) calling out to her. She picks up her basket and starts moving towards them with a smile on her face. She walks really slowly like we see old ladies walking in movies and plays (not that bent though). She walks up to the entrance, as the voices in the backgrounds continue ("Nani chocolate", "Nani mujhe", etc.). Bibi takes out some chocolates from under the cloth and throws them with some difficulty gently into the air, through the wings. We hear chaotic but gratified voices.
5. As Bibi turns around slowly, Gitanjali is now seated on her bed with small gestures of hunger. She rubs her stomach a little. Her expression is a little despondent.
6. Suddenly as though finding a new lease on life and shedding off about forty years, Bibi rushes towards the stool. Picks up the plate lying on it, and rushes over to Gitanjali.

*Continued*

*Continued*

- 12 { When she laughs  
I like her best  
For she has those moments rare
- 13 { I pray to God and wish her well  
For all times to come  
May God give her  
Tons of courage  
To cover my form  
With a touch-of-iron  
In her heart of gold.

- She thrusts the plate towards her (like in a cartoon). Gitanjali takes the plate a little startled, but eventually happy.
7. Bibi flings the cloth off the basket, and pulls out of the basket in succession, a hat, an umbrella and a pair of ear muffs. As she pulls out each one she drops it on the bed in front of Gitanjali (all her actions are exaggerated cartoon-like movements). She turns and runs back to the stool, picks up the glass of water and runs back to Gitanjali and holds it out for her with both hands (one holding and one supporting from below). As she's holding out the glass she gasps for breadth a little, due to all the running. Gitanjali takes the glass from her hand and starts laughing in adoration.
  8. Gitanjali gets choked a little due to the laughter and coughs a little. Bibi pats her and strokes her head, as the coughing reduces.
  9. She continues to stroke.
  10. Bibi turns around with a jerk. She looks up, and with her eyes up, walks over to chair, picks up the stick and starts waving it threatening Him with it. She sticks out her chest in rage and defiance. The spot light (R1) comes on on Gitanjali. Gitanjali looks up suddenly. Bibi turns around and sees the light. She looks pleased. She turns her head back up to the point she was looking with an approving-boss kind of expression.
  11. Gitanjali looks towards her Grandmother with a huge smile on her face, shaking her head a little in a kind of "this lady is incorrigible" kind of way. Meanwhile Gitanjali's mother enters from the right and sits by Gitanjali's side also smiling at Bibi's antics.
  12. The mother puts her arms around Gitanjali's shoulders and Gitanjali sinks back into her, both of them laughing, as Bibi turns towards them giggling as though she pulled one over the almighty.
  13. Bibi sits down on her chair quite exhausted, as the spot light (M2) comes on on her, accompanied by the fading out of all the other lights.

The spot (M2) also fades out.



## THE NAKED SHOCK

- 1 { Gitanjali has come  
Gitanjali has come  
Is the general roar  
In the School Corridor  
From one friend to another  
And to those  
She still matters most
- 2 { Gitanjali !!!  
Is she Gitanjali ? ?  
They stare with a naked shock
- 3 { But they say not much  
For the fear of hurting  
Whom they still love as much.

- 4 { Gitanjali is not unaware  
Of her beauty shorn  
But swallows the pain  
With her pride  
And offers her smile  
After all . . .  
Illness too is  
A gift of God  
And Gitanjali accepts it  
With grace and in good stride.
- 5 →

Bright lights (A & B) at full intensity. The backdrop is a typical painted school campus scene.

A crowd of about ten people walk onto the stage from the left. Among them are boys and girls (around Gitanjali's age) in school uniforms and a few teachers. As they walk onto the stage they seem to be discussing something among themselves. As they reach the centre, one of them points away to something in the distance to the front and right.

1. A couple of them turn. There is murmuring, as the rest are looking in all directions, wondering what's happening. Finally after moments of confusion chaos all of them look in the same direction. Their expressions are those of eagerness and joy.
2. But all of a sudden, their expressions begin to change to those of near horror. They stand agape, as the left light (A) fades out leaving only the right light (B), which is shining directly on them.
3. Suddenly, there is movement among them, as they realise that they shouldn't be rude. Some look away for brief moments while others force themselves to smile. One even stretches out her arms a little in a half-welcoming gesture.
4. The awkwardness doesn't last however, and all the eyes now return to the same point, all the forced smiles turn into genuine ones and all the faces bear true affection. They take a couple of steps towards the edge and start calling out to her with gestures (like a mother would call her shy child out onto the stage for the first time). Then one of the girls gestures in a "we should come there?" kind of way. The girl signals to the rest of them. The teachers tell the children to go on ahead and that they would wait their turn. All of them now have complete affection and pride on their faces for their darling Gitanjali. All the children, then walk briskly (almost run) of the stage towards the point. Vanishing to the right of the crowd.
5. The light goes of.



## THE BIRTHDAY GIFT

- 1 { Hanging in my wardrobe  
is a dress, dream come true.  
It's just the thing I wanted  
all these years through.
- 2 { It's a dress bought  
with tons of love  
from many many miles,  
it's not the money  
which went in it but  
the joy, the pleasure  
and the smiles.
- 3 { I wore it for a short while,  
touching it with love and care,  
but soon hung it back in cupboard
- 4 { for I didn't want to be tempted  
to wear. 'cause it's my...
- 5 { "Birthday Gift", which is just a...  
few months away.
- 6 { But I do often want to see it  
and make sure it's there.  
For it's not really just a dress  
it's a whole lot more. The love,  
the care, the sentiments, and  
the devotion all speak through it.
- 7 { Just to say...  
"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU".

Well lit stage (A & B). On the backdrop we see a large double door (the entire stage height) of a closet. This could either be a prop or of cloth and stitched along the hinges to the backdrop. The door is slightly ajar (this could be done simply as an illusion like a painting). On the right of the stage we see Gitanjali lying on her bed, reading a book.

1. Gitanjali turns her head towards the closet. Through the gap in the doors, a few butterflies seem to fly out (there would be a hole in the backdrop through which little coloured pieces of paper and confetti would be blown up and out onto stage). Gitanjali gets off her bed in wonderment and walks slowly towards the wardrobe.
2. She opens the closet, and steps back (to one side), as there is another burst of flight of little pieces of paper. This time it's a large burst. A second later, images of family and friends are flashed on the space within the closet. There are lots of smiles and a lot of love in those pictures. The pictures form a changing collage.
3. Gitanjali reaches into the closet and removes the dress from there. She holds it in front of her and twirls around and dances a bit with it.
4. She suddenly puts it back, in order not to be tempted. She closes the closet doors as the collage fades out.
5. She looks over her shoulder and smiles the sweetest smile. She takes a step away.
6. But turns and opens the closet door once again just a wee bit. Once again there is a spray of butterflies. She looks up in wonderment and twirls in it. This time the spray is continued as she keeps twirling in joy under it.
7. The song "Happy Birthday" starts getting sung, as the spray ceases. The song is started off by the voice reciting the poem, but is slowly joined in by several voices (sounding like family and friends). Gitanjali stops twirling. She starts looking around her for the voices.

*Continues into the next poem ("Good Wishes")...*

## **GOOD WISHES**

Happy birthday  
Happy birthday  
Many cards and  
Greetings I get.

Down the dark  
Passage of my life  
I travel with  
The good wishes  
Of you my dear  
Friends.

My pathway  
Lights up  
With lightning  
That thunder strikes.

Your good wishes  
Stand by me,  
Even though  
My future stands  
Shaky  
Day and night.

*This poems continues from “The Birthday Gift”, with the singing of “Happy birthday”....*

Suddenly something comes flying from behind her (over the backdrop) and falls on the stage. She goes and picks it up. It's a greeting card. As she is reading it, another one comes flying. When she goes to pick it up, another ones comes flying over, and another. The number increases and soon it's almost a shower of greeting cards and once again she twirls in amazement. Some even come sliding from beneath the backdrop. In the mean while the coloured wheels on the lights (A & B) illuminate the stage in rapidly changing beautiful colours. Creating a very happy, joyous atmosphere. The shower reduces and stops, Gitanjali starts running around the stage collecting all of them, and dropping them on the bed. Her expression however undergoes transitions first, she's very excited, then she starts getting a little panicky (like time is running out), then she goes onto pure joy.

(Gas balloons and streamers could also be released to add to the festivity)

## **I LOVE YOU**

I love you  
In thousand  
Different ways.  
I love you  
Through n' through  
I love you  
For your pain you suffer and  
The joy you give.  
I love you  
For the tiring times  
When all you did was  
Smile.  
I love you  
For your lullabys  
Though your heart  
Wept-inside.  
I love you  
For your love for animals  
And for the sick and poor  
I love you  
For your cooking,  
And for mad things you  
Sometimes do, Like;  
Remember . . .  
The ride-in-the bus?  
When the city was wet  
The thunder threatened  
To tear the sky, and  
We both sat snug  
Holding-hands.  
The wind was strong  
So was I, I defied  
The wind and put up  
The window, you yelled  
But, I did not hear.  
The rain was on my face  
Kissing me tenderly and  
Slipping away.

Dark stage.

The spot light (L2) to the left of the stage fades in to reveal Gitanjali's mother sitting on the same chair she sat on in the beginning. This time she has in her lap a large book (1/4 imperial size).

On the backdrop is a projected image of the cover of a book (it is the same book in Gitanjali's mother's lap). There is a title on the book that reads "*I love you*".

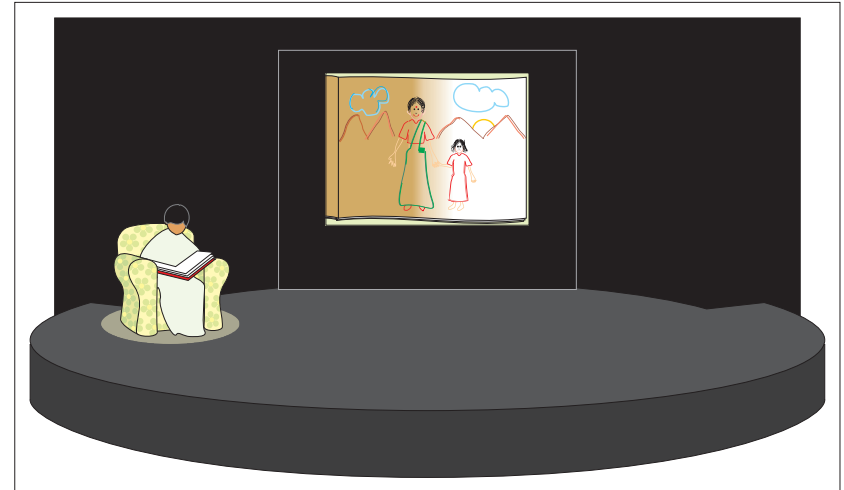
The poem begins as she slowly opens the book to the first page. Simultaneously, the book in the projected image also opens to reveal the first page. It's a drawing by Gitanjali about her mother.

Through the poem Gitanjali's mother continues to slowly turn page after page (coinciding with the turning of pages on the screen). Each page contains a different drawing by Gitanjali, depicting the fun times, the love and the emotions that she and her mother shared.

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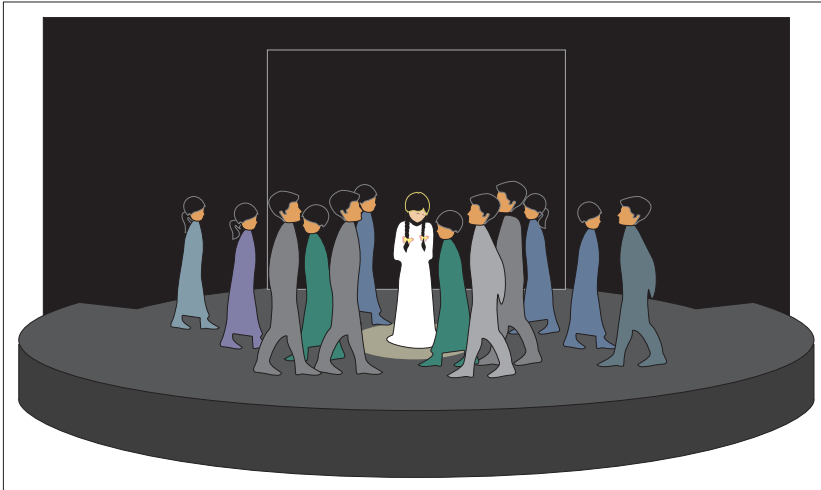
*Continued*

I love you for your every act,  
Except  
When you get over-protective  
Then I really get ragged  
For then, I'm mad at you  
And couldn't care if you were hyrt.  
But, a little later as always  
We make-up and giggle.  
I love you  
For my-cake-baking-sessions  
For using away all the butter  
Just when you needed it most  
You stopped dumb and  
Could not even utter . . .  
Then a peal of laughter  
Broke the awkward silence  
While all my friends were around  
Then one-by-one  
Each of us joined  
The beautiful sound of laughter  
And licked our buttery-fingers.  
Who can feel one with all  
Little children or old people  
You are loved by them all.



## SOLITUDE

- 1 { I take my refuge  
In solitude
- 2 { Then I dwell upon my thoughts  
I look over my shoulders
- 3 { At the gone-by past  
The bitter sweet memories  
Are tapered with  
Sad and joyful times  
The time  
That has gone by swiftly
- 4 { Leaving me behind  
With nothing worthwhile  
To claim as my own
- 5 { Except  
For my distorted form  
I long scenes  
Where no one ever smiles or weeps  
And happily to slumber I'll be gone.



The stage is well lit by two lights (A & B).

Gitanjali is sitting alone in the centre of the stage. Her chin resting on her hand, elbow on her thigh.

1. She looks bored and sad, as she seems to be making imaginary scribbles with her finger on the floor in front.
2. She suddenly sits up straight and looks to her left and her right as she hears faint voices in the background. She jumps to her feet in excitement.
3. A stream of people of various age groups enter the stage from both sides. She puts her hands out half way, waiting to greet them. But they just pass her by. In the crowd we see a child running with balloons in his hand. Another one with a kite. Two other children are playing with a ball. A couple of grown ups are engrossed in a discussion. One of them has arm around the other's shoulder. A mother is taking care of her child. Etc. None of them seems to notice Gitanjali as the just pass her buy at quite a brisk pace. This flow is continuous

Through all of this the two bright lights become gradually dimmer and the spot light (M2) over Gitanjali fades in becoming steadily brighter. At the same time, her expression changes from joy to sadness, and eventually complete numbness as she just stares through the crowd and through the audience.

4. The crowd thins with less activity happening. The lights continue to fade
5. Gitanjali turns and walks off the stage in that numb trance. The crowd also clears of gradually leaving only an empty spotlight on the stage.

## STARS IN MY EYES

- 1 { Walking through the valley  
With dew-kissed grass  
Beneath my feet.
- 2 { The birds chirping upon  
The treetops happily.
- 3 { The cows walking merrily  
With the sound of music  
Around their neck.
- 4 { The herd of sheep  
Walking closely knitted  
Bleating at the intrusion  
With protest.
- 5 { The love of my life  
The horses  
Grazing in the far off fields.
- 6 { The solo howl  
Of a stray dog  
Who has no friend to care  
Except his own reflection  
He sees in the stagnate water  
As he stares.
- 7 { The crystal clear  
Springs on the way  
That help us nourish  
Our thirst.
- 8 { The Sunrise  
In it's infancy  
Raises its head  
To greet the world.  
Stretching its arms  
Full of warmth  
To inwrap the world.  
Giving much joy and happiness  
Just as at the end of each day
- 9 { The Sun with all its glory  
Lowers his tired head to rest.  
Bringing about a touch of gloom  
As he enfolds his eyes  
Suddenly there's a nip in the air.

(The entire poem is done though a video or animation to decide, but definitely one of these.)

Dark stage. The video fades in onto the screen:

We are at ground level, looking at the back of a pair of legs (Gitanjali's legs), very close - just up to about a foot from the ground. We can see the bottom of a white dress (Gitanjali's dress). All around is grass. We are in a field.

She is walking. Slowly, as if smelling the grass, smelling the air. Her dress softly swishes about. The camera follows her at a fixed distance.

As she continues to walk...

1. We hear a gentle breeze around us.
2. We hear the chirping of early morning birds.
3. We hear the cows mooing in the distance. Far away, the sound almost seems to reach the ear at the same speed that the cow is mooing. A faint tinkling a kind of after thought.
4. We hear the soft but chaotic bleating of sheep. The bleating gets louder, and more chaotic for a moment, then settles down.
5. We hear the clops of horse hooves. Soft. Out of rhythm. We hear a soft neigh. Then another one.
6. We hear the extended howl of a solitary dog, in the distance. The dog ceases momentarily and then begins again after receiving no response to the one he is calling out to.
7. We hear the gentle trickling of water fading in in the background. The sound becomes a little louder, accompanied by soft splashing sounds. The ever so subtle sound of a bubble or two bursting.
8. The background becomes steadily brighter, as the sun shines on Gitanjali's face. She casts a shadow backwards that grows from scratch. Towards us. The light around changes from a whitish light to a yellowish light and eventually to a deep orange evening light. The shadow lengthening correspondingly.
9. She stops walking. The light fades a little. We hear a gentle cool breeze.

*Continued*

*Continued*

10 { I too like the Sun  
Will sink soon  
With stars in my eyes.  
Leaving behind the radiance...  
Of love.  
11 -> Shining through your eyes.

10. She resumes walking. But this time the camera does not follow her. We see steadily more of Gitanjali in the frame. She becomes smaller until we can see the whole of her in her dress, blowing gently in the breeze. She stops. Turns to look at us. Her body is only half turned though. The sun behind her head creates a magnificent glow around her head. An aura. A halo. She smiles.
11. As she turns back to wards the sun again, the video fades out.

## RESPITE

- 1 { Be silent  
Oh please be silent  
Let me hear  
The whisper of God
- 2 { He cares  
Oh he does care
- 3 { For he has  
Answered my prayers
- 4 { All my troubles  
Are melting away  
And my pain with-held  
  
I am happy  
Oh I am really happy  
As I've never been before
- 5 { I am feeling  
At my best  
With my family  
Home and my pets
- 6 { If perchance  
You cared to whisk me away  
I shall have no regrets  
For you have shown  
Consideration, love and care  
And gave me  
The much needed . . .  
Respite.

Dimly lit stage (C).

Gitanjali walks onto the stage as if following some very faint voice. Her family and friends follow her out onto the stage from both wings (they are a little away though). Gitanjali stops in the middle of the stage a little towards the front). The others are talking among themselves as they approach her. They seem to be moving forward to console and comfort her.

1. Gitanjali suddenly raises her hands. Puts one finger to her lips, in an emphatic gesture of "silence!" Everyone stops dead in their tracks. Murmuring wondering what's happening. Gitanjali moves her head looking around her (mostly upwards) trying to listen to the voice she hears trying to decipher its direction and origin. She continues to move to the front of the stage as she does this.
2. As the large lights (A & B) fade in, a few bubbles start getting blown onto the stage. Gitanjali turns her head to see them. She then turns her head to the other side, smiling.
3. She starts back-peddalling, looking above her and all around her at the bubbles. They increase in number. Everyone is now looking at the bubbles in wonderment. By this point the stage is completely lit and bright.
4. Gitanjali starts trying to grab these bubbles. She is very excited, as she jumps around the stage, trying to latch onto these creations. Balloons also start floating in. She hasn't been this happy in a long time. She twirls and dances bathing in the joy of His love. She starts gesturing to everyone, pointing towards the bubbles. A few of the younger ones also get in on the act of trying to catch the bubbles. But they don't move too far off their spots.
5. Gitanjali is truly happy. She starts running around to each of the people on stage - hugging them. From behind and from the front. Some lovingly pat her head. Some kiss her on the head. But even as she is doing this her attention is still towards the bubbles and the balloons.

*Continued*



6. The rest of the people slowly start moving off the stage, like happy guests at the end of a great party. Gitanjali continues to try and catch a few bubbles, as she moves alone to the centre of the stage, endowing the audience with her bestest of smiles.

## MY DADDY

- 1 { I'll let you into a secret  
There's a kind soul I know  
2 { Who dwells in my heart  
From the time unknown  
3 { It's from him that I gain  
My strength, courage and hope  
4 { He keeps kindling my heart  
With each cherished glance  
It's fuel of his love that  
Makes my heart glow  
5 { He sits up beside me  
With my head cradled in his arms  
6 { He tells me lovely tales  
And warms up my shattered heart  
He takes my cares away  
And soothes my aching heart  
7 { His heart bleeds within his soul  
He tries his best to act  
But he little knows about  
His Bul-bul  
That she chirps  
Only  
8 → To make him feel swell.

Dark stage. One spot light (R1) to the right, fades in just a little. Gitanjali enters the stage from the right and stands in the spot light.

1. She is about to tell the audience something, when she looks up at the light. She finds it too dim, and signals to it kind of calling it with hand gestures. The light brightens and she looks satisfied. She looks back at the audience, ready to relate her story.
2. Standing under that spot light, Gitanjali enacts these lines, literally translating words into actions.
3. The central light (C) fades in to reveal Gitanjali's father in the centre of the stage, sitting on the edge of Gitanjali's empty bed. In his hand he has a book. His other hand is on his hip. He is looking at Gitanjali, shaking his head, trying in vain to get her to sit in one place. He has a faint 'this girl!' kind of smile on her face. But Gitanjali pays him no heed. As she continues to circle and move, enacting the words, her father turns his head, and gestures with his hand, trying to get her attention. He had been reading out a story to her and now she won't sit in one place. He turns his head towards the audience in resignation. Meanwhile the two big lights (A & B) fade in a little illuminating the stage just enough to cut out any harsh shadows.
4. Gitanjali is now right behind her father. She bends and lights a diya that is lying unseen behind him. She picks it up and spins with it. The smile on her face becomes wider and more enchanted. As she spins the diya goes out.
5. She places it down and gets into bed lying down with her head in his lap.
6. He suddenly turns to look at her, with a big smile on his face. Rubs her hair. He picks up his book which he was holding limp in his lap, and starts reading (silently, but with gestures). Gitanjali turns onto her stomach and raises her head, resting it on her hands (propped up at the elbows). A beautiful smile on her face. As he gets more engrossed and animated, Gitanjali lowers herself slowly on his lap and closes her eyes.

*Continued*

7. Her father puts the book down and strokes her hair softly. She turns around and opens her eyes. Smiling. She tickles him in the stomach. He retaliates. The two lights (A & B) fade out leaving only the central light (C) on. Gitanjali and her father continue tickling and almost attacking each other, ending up in fits of laughter. By the end of it he has enfolded her in his arms, her head against his chest.
8. The light (C) fades out.

## HAPPINESS

- 1 { Happiness  
I have long stopped  
Searching for you
- 2 { Once you were where I was  
And now  
You are out of my reach  
Pray tell me  
What have I done to deserve this
- 3 → If and when  
You do breeze-in
- 4 { Although its just for a while  
I feel the surging tide  
Through the windows  
Of my eyes
- 5 → Because I know
- 6 { You are only paying a short visit  
And will be gone in no time
- 7 { Happiness  
I do miss you  
I miss you all the time
- 8 { Next time  
You decide to be generous  
Please stay a little longer  
At least for old times sake  
And if you and I must part company  
Then please do not return...  
To wake up my sleeping dreams.

In the middle of the stage is a treasure chest (about a foot and a half in length).

Gitanjali walks up to the chest. Stands for a moment and contemplates it. A look of curiosity on her face. She bends and picks it up. Brings it over to the front of the stage, and with the same contemplative look keeps it down.

1. She sits behind the box. dusting it gently.
2. She looks at it from all sides, very casually. Lifts it up. Turning it in her hand. She shakes it up in frustration. She starts to keep it down.
3. But before she keeps it, she suddenly lifts it back up as though she saw something stuck to the bottom of the box. She removes from under the box, a large key.
4. She holds the key up in front of her face, once again puzzled. With the same bewildered expression on her face, she inserts the key into the key hole in the box. Turns the key, and lifts the lid cautiously. Balloons fly out of the box as Gitanjali stares in amazement.
5. Suddenly she tries to grab on to the balloons. But it is too late.
6. She stretches, but they have flown beyond her reach.
7. She looks back into the box, searching all corners, despondent. She picks the box up, turns it upside down and shakes it violently.
8. She puts the box on her lap, drops the key into the box and shuts it. She gets up with the box in her hands. Walks over to her bed and sits on it. Places the box beside her pillow and lies down. Keeps one hand on the box as she shuts her eyes.

## OH DEATH TREAD SOFTLY

Oh death  
I have such  
Mixed feelings  
For you  
Sometimes  
I dread you  
Sometimes  
I await thee  
I know not  
When  
Thou shall embrace me

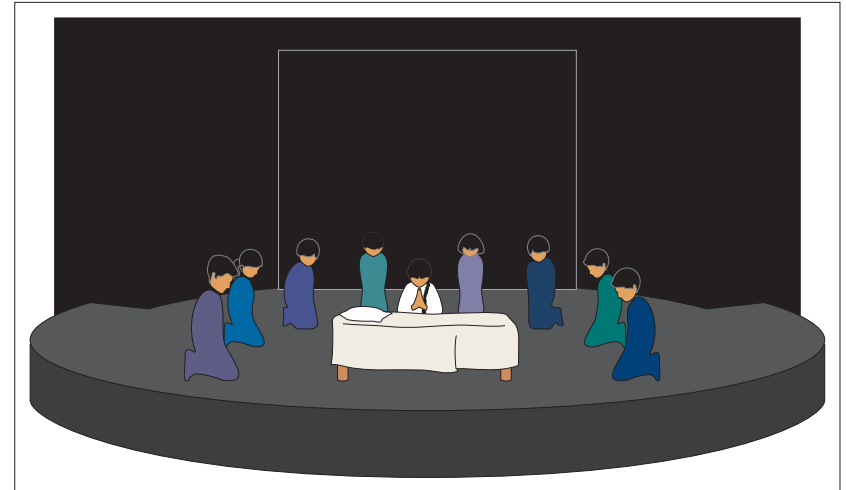
Oh, death  
I do have a favour to ask thee  
When thou comest  
Oh, please dear death  
Do come but  
Unannounced  
For there are crushed hearts  
Within these walls  
Hearts that love, adore and care  
Hearts that bleed  
Inwardly  
And show not a care  
But they do care  
For the one  
Whom you await to claim  
Let them be asleep  
Or take me in my slumber  
For partings are so painful  
Especially for those  
Who reared me...  
From a seeding to a flower

The spot light (M2) comes on in the centre of the stage to reveal Gitanjali praying by her bedside her eyes closed. The bed is placed across the length of the stage. The central large light (C) fades in just a tad to reveal a 6 to 8 other characters on stage kneeling around Gitanjali in a semicircle. They all have their heads down and their hands joined in a clasp down in front of them. Their eyes are closed. They seem to be in a cross state between prayer and devastation. Throughout the poem none of them move.

The poem begins.

1. Death (dancer in black) tip toes in from one side of the stage. He glides around the group - moves in towards Gitanjali - circles her - moves out again, moves in and out of the semicircle seemingly toying with each one of the family and friends. He spreads his cape intermittently threatening to engulf some of them.
2. Death moves in and takes his position behind Gitanjali. He spreads cape and covers Gitanjali with it. He slowly draws it back. Gitanjali has disappeared. He glides around in front of the bed, his back to the audience. He spreads his cape once again. He drops it suddenly and runs gingerly off the stage, as Gitanjali has reappeared.  
As soon as he moves out of Gitanjali's way, she turns her palms upwards (eyes still closed) and blows into them as tiny pieces of silver and gold paper take to flight in front of her. This is accompanied by the fading out of the large light (C) and the end of the poem.

2 { O death  
Tread softly  
For I fear for those  
Who fear for me  
Do not be very harsh  
Spare me, oh please spare me  
Little suffering  
Spare me a little pain  
And please spare me just a...  
Few tears  
To shed them  
In the presence of God  
To show HIM my gratitude  
For after all isn't HE  
Sparing me  
From this cruel, cruel world  
Where there are  
Some people  
Who don't even have a heart.



### **TRANSITION**

(Between “*Oh Death Tread Softly*” and “*An Appeal*”)

The people in the semi circle go off the stage unseen. Two dancers similarly dressed as Death run in on their toes and in one fell swoop pick up the bed, as Gitanjali opens her eyes in a fright and moves her body backwards. The two characters run off with the bed, as Gitanjali rises to her feet in fright. Meanwhile two more dancers (the original Death being one of them) run in with a black platform (the same dimensions as that of the bed) that looks like a box...a coffin. They place this platform a couple of feet behind Gitanjali. They glide off the stage, twirling and trying to scare her with sudden moves as they go.

Gitanjali looks around her frantically, but not at the dancers. It's as though she can't see them, but she can feel a presence that is scaring her.

All the spotlights flash one at a time in very quick succession in a random order, creating the feeling of lighting. The bright light also flashes intermittently. Gitanjali looks very scared. She begins to look around her even more frantically.

Suddenly the lights go out leaving only the central bright light (C) shining on her. It is relatively dim.

## AN APPEAL

- 1 { Death  
Who are you?  
2 { Where do you come from?  
Where will you take me?  
3 { Is the way long?  
Is it dark?

- 4 { I do claim to be brave  
And yet am afraid  
For I know  
What's beyond.  
Death  
I do sometimes  
Expect you  
5 { And at times hope  
You'd never come  
If you must take me  
Do be merciful  
Take me where no one can hurt me  
6 { Or cause me pain  
And I have an appeal  
Do please be kind  
And let me sleep...  
7 { As in my childhood I did.  
8 {

1. Scared, Gitanjali takes a couple of steps back and bumps into the platform. Gets started. The spotlight over her (M2) suddenly comes on. She gets a start again and looks up.
2. The four spotlights (L2, M1, M3 & R2) around her fade in very slowly (they only come on to about 60% percent strength). At the same time the four dancers clad in black gingerly step onto stage (two from either side).
3. Gitanjali closes her eyes and stands, still petrified, she has her hands pressed tight against chest. Once again, she can't see them, but can feel their presence. The dancers glide towards her and begin slowly circling her (their hands by their sides).
4. They (characterizations of death) start doing a kind of tribal free flowing dance around her. They move in close, raising their capes, hiding her one moment, then they move back, and then around...they glide all around in perfect sync. Gitanjali remains still, eyes still closed.
5. Gitanjali begins to loosen her hands a little bit. Her face begins to look calm. She starts to drift off and fall to one side. The four lights (L2, M1, M3 & R2) around her start to fade out.
6. The dancers go close to her and cradle her as she falls. They pick her up as she lies in their arms. They place her down gently on the platform. The four lights fade out. All four dancers come in between her and the audience, with their backs to the audience. They crouch over her with their capes spread. The central spotlight (M2) fades out.
7. There is a pause in the recitation as the dancers suddenly drop their capes and glide out.
8. With the last line being read, all that is left on stage, on the platform, in complete darkness, is a lit candle.



## **TREAD SOFTLY**

Tread softly  
Oh friend  
My dreams  
Are  
Scattered around.  
Crush them not  
Under thy feet  
Nor  
Consider them  
Not.  
I still dream  
The promise of  
Joyfilled tomorrows.  
Tomorrows,  
That may or  
May not  
Cross my path  
And yet,  
I dream.  
Although  
My dreams  
Are  
Scattered around  
Therefore  
My friend  
Tread softly,  
Crush not my dreams  
For they are  
Too feeble to protest.

Before the poem begins children walk out onto stage one at a time with an interval of about three seconds in between each successive child. They come in from both sides.

Each child has in his/ her hand a clear small glass half filled with coloured liquid and a lit floating candle in it. The children place these glasses on the stage at various points and walk out the opposite side from they have entered. They're movements will be to the pace of very soft instrumental music that would be playing in the background throughout. By the end of it there would be about forty such lamps.

The poem begins after half the lamps have been placed.

With the last few lines, the stage is devoid of any human presence and is lit only by these little lamps seemingly scattered all over.

## **FAREWELL MY FRIENDS**

It was beautiful  
As long as it lasted  
The journey of my life.

I have no regrets  
Whatsoever save  
The pain I'll leave behind.

Those dear hearts  
Who love and care  
With the heavy with sleep  
Even moist eyes  
The smile inspite of a  
Lump in the throat  
And the strings pulling  
At the heart and soul.

The strong arms  
That held me up  
When my own strength  
Let me down  
Each morsel that I was  
Fed with was full of love divine.

At every turning of my life  
I came across  
Good friends  
Friends who stood by me  
Even when the time raced me by.

Farewell  
Farewell  
My friends  
I smile and  
Bid you goodbye  
No, shed no tears  
For I need them not  
All I need is your smile.

With these little lamps strewn all over the stage, the poem strts getting recited. A couple of lines into the poem, an image fades in on the backdrop. It gradually intensifies. It is a photograph of Gitanjali. As it gets brighter, the lights on stage also fade in. They get brighter until they drown out the image and the light of the candle. The whole stage is lit up. Maximum intensity.

White.

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*Continued*

If you feel sad  
Do think of me  
For what I'll like  
When you live in the hearts  
Of those you love  
Remember then . . .  
You never die.

The cast take a bow

THE END  
THE END  
THE END  
THE END  
THE END  
THE END  
THE END  
THE END