

5.10 The Seven Gates (for Madhu Tandon) (2000)

After years enough
I learned that living I
could rid myself of guilt and fear:
but when it came
to the time of dying
you showed me a hill with seven gates.

At the first, I shed my raiment
and walked forward without nakedness.
He who watched the second gate
asked me my name:
I gave it up and went on
walking nameless, just myself.
At the third gate
I had to give up my desire:
walked free, but
did not lose my thirst for you.
The fourth required of me
to leave behind my knowledge:
I surrendered all that I
had ever known, and all my works,
proceeded less a fool.
The fifth gate was such
that my body could not pass:
I left it there
but kept my essence going on.
At the sixth gate I declared
I carried only love,
and the guardian waved me on.

At the seventh gate
you received me, bade me through:
you kissed me, pitied me
and said that those had been
the seven gates of life, not death,
and that I was out of time.

New Delhi – December 2000.