7 Suhini

The current is strong, the canals flow strongly, but
the flow of love is extraordinarily strong. Those
whose love is for God the Profound are absorbed
in thoughts of closeness. Lord, bring back the one
who has captured my heart.

Fresh streams flow before me here; ahead of me the
mighty river flows. You sit at home in comfort,
friends, safe in your husbands’ care. But if you
once caught sight of Sahar’s lovely face, then
perhaps you would not try to hold me back, but
would all plunge in with your pots.

Many women stand on the bank and proclaim their
love with cries of “Sahar, Sahar!” Some care about
their lives, some say they are sacrificed to him and
plunge in. Sahar belongs to those who happily
plunge in.

Crows sit crouched in the trees as the day draws to its
close. When she hears the evening call to prayer,
she goes to seek the spots where her dear Sahar
dwells.
She grasps her pot and enters the river, looking long at its twists and turns. How right it is to sacrifice one’s head at the beloved’s feet. This is the mystery of union. Lord, deliver safely across all those whose time of ecstasy is the night.

She grasps her pot and enters the river, looking long at its twists and turns. She has arrived at the place of whoever fears the place of the lord. Shah says: No fearful place will stop lovers filled with longing.

Lord, safely deliver across all those whose time of ecstasy is the night.

She grasps her pot and plunges in, putting her trust in God. The alligator grasps her leg, the cayman has her head. Her bracelets mingle with the mud, the current grabs her hair. Countless creatures cling closely to her, and river monsters maul her body. Whole schools of fish surround her, as Suhini is severed limb from limb.

It was good that the pot broke, and good that my bracelets snapped. How heroic are those who seek the lord, the only raft for all who drown. My husband, Dam, is false and foul; in my heart I hold Mehar.
It was good that the pot broke; it was actually an obstacle. The instrument plays in my being, the rebab dwells in my spirit. Without Sahar, I would give up great virtue.

It was good that the pot broke, oh my heart, so swim for a while. I keep my eyes controlled every day. The chief of the herdsmen has shown me the straight path.

It was good that the pot broke; do not give up hope. The raft of Do not despair of God’s mercy⁴ is the one for you to swim with. Desire for the beloved will let you behold Mehar’s face.

Once her pot fell to pieces, her props were gone and the woman died. But it was then that Suhini heard the calls of her Mehar.

Do not take your self with you, forget your props. Love will take you through the torrent and get you safely across. Let yourself be supported by longing, if you would reach the other side.

Set off without your self, and go without any aids. Use steps of love to travel across the water, Suhini. Take love’s name and go to the side where the beloved lives.
There is no greater support than love in the heart. Insincere women stand on this bank and demand a raft. For those who go without one, the river turns into a mere stream. Actually, it is love that gets lovers to their destination. Whirlpools do not stop those who seek Mihar.

They seek so hard to find Mihar, but it is Mihar who looks for them. For all who feel the force of love, a raft is only a handicap.

Sahar is the same as Suhini, and it is Sahar who is the sea. This mystery is magical, this puzzle is profound.

There were many loudly roaring whirlpools and crocodiles in the waters where she hurled herself and was carried by the current. Through divine favor she crossed the waves, says Latif.

Fearful is the force of the river, where there are mighty monsters. There are countless crocodiles in the water, terrifying in their thousands. “I do not think I have any strength in my body apart from you,” she cries. “Lord Sahar, who hides all faults, come quickly to me in the torrent.”
Fearful is the force of the river, where the whirlpools roar. Suhini is among the wild river creatures, and the waves roll over her. "Come quickly and with kindness, oh Sahar my beloved," she cries. "Oh my guide, give me your hand, and rescue me from the deep."

Fearful is the force of the river, where the whirlpools roar. The terror of the far bank fills my heart. Love destroys the force of the current, says Shah. Oh lord, be kind to me, and in your mercy let me cross over.

Fearful is the force of the river, where many creatures dwell. Sailors cannot plumb the depths of the water. Wild beasts roam roaring in the river. In the deep water entire boats go under, and not a trace is found of their timbers. No one who enters those terrible whirlpools emerges from them. Oh Sahar, help those who cannot swim to get across.

There is tumult and uproar in the river, where the waves crash. Hundreds of people with floats are aghast when they enter the water. Those who truly can swim think it requires only a single leap to get across.
To enter the water quickly is the act of the
determined. Ten times a day Dam taunts
me. Reason, sense, and modesty are all three
destroyed by love.

Without looking for a safe place, she finds nowhere to
enter the river. Filled with desire for Sahar, she
has one thought upon another. In the dark night
and surrounded by whirlpools, she is distressed
by fantastic thoughts. The pain caused by her
beloved makes the river seem of no account to
her.

She enters where she will; only insincere girls inspect
the riverbank. Only in appearance is her body
with Dam; her heart is joined with Mehar. In her
desire for Sahar she thinks the river is a ditch.

Her route lies in whichever direction the river flows;
only insincere girls inspect the riverbank. Those
who are filled with desire for Sahar do not ask
about entry points or landing places. Those who
thirst for love think the river is a mere step.
It does not matter where she enters from, difficult places become easy. Suhini crosses safely, unaffected by the whirlpools. Her eyes are filled with the brightness of her beloved. The true lord did right by her, because her search for him was true.

From the very first, Todi was a seeker of the lord. She had no boat or boatman, nor had she tied herself a rope. The middle of the river seemed knee-deep to her.

From the beginning Todi was favored by love. Around her neck she wore her beloved’s garland of honor. The landing place she found is the support of all the world.

Abandon that love which makes you happy, Todi.
Away from Sahar, insincere girls put on proud airs. Great is your error if you spend your days with Dam.

First learn the lesson of the Law, Suhini. The truth of Reality far surpasses the Way. It is Gnosis that is the real task of lovers.
Patience is found in the dwelling places of the grateful. Those who have been joined with him in union do not disclose anything about it. Those whose hearts have been destroyed swim across without any help.

She enters the water while the rain falls on the midwinter night. Let us go and ask Suhini what she knows of love. For twenty-four hours a day she bears only Mehar in her mind.

Everyone enters the water in Savan; she is happy in winter. In the torrent of her love she hurls her body into the deep water. There is no justice in the river, which kills lovers.

Oh river, do not wear away these overhanging banks, you too will be held to account. The days of Savan will not be here forever. By tomorrow your floods will subside.

The fires of my beloved Mehar burn in my heart. The burning power of love casts those whom it consumes into the torrent. For those who know about Sahar the river is as smooth as the desert.
"Sisters, the bells stir my whole body. How can I disclose to all and sundry the love that their clappers have aroused? The beloved to whose branch I cling sends me his support."

Black are the eddies and black is the night, in which the black snakes hiss. Both banks of the wild Indus are threatening. The waves strike her as she goes across to Sahar. She is guided in midstream by the tinkling of the bells.

"Remembering my beloved is what keeps me alive. What will he do with me when I find him? My being overflows with thoughts of him. He cannot be separated from me, for he pervades my whole heart.

The sound of the bells in the river thickets arouses me. My dormant feelings for my beloved Mehar are stirred. I will collapse at his camp on the far bank.

I heard the sound of the bells on the far bank as I slept. They stirred my consciousness and filled me with the desire for his camp. I swear to God that the fragrance of my beloved Mehar has reached me. Let me go and see my dear one face to face."
Where is Mehar, and where are the bells tinkling?
Where is my beloved’s bonfire, and where is the far bank? I have spent my whole life thrashing through the water to reach it."

She drank a draught of love from Mehar. The taste of that drink intoxicated her. She was struck by the arrow of love, which is sharper than steel, says Latif.

“May Mehar never die, and may his byre never be bare. May the hair of the heifers’ herdsman never be twisted. Sahar is my glory, though men taunt me because of him.”

The herds grazed the pasture, then crossed the river and came to an island. By God’s grace, says Latif, they will pass over the flood.

The herds grazed the pasture and crossed the river, avoiding the whirlpools. Thousands will raise their heads in relief, as guaranteed by Sahar. Safe and happy, the buffaloes will get across.
There is nothing but the river as far as the eye can see; the other bank is far away. The crazy woman enters the waves, where there is danger to her life. When creatures overwhelmed by the torrent see their faults, they are overwhelmed. If you grant them your mercy, no one is in the power of the current.

It is easy for lovers, even if the river rages. In the end their hearts cannot rest without the torrent. Going toward Sahar, they will sacrifice their lives. Sahar is the helper of those who love him.

Realize that those who enter the water will get across. If you leap into the wild Indus, Mehar will be with you as your float.

Shah says: Those whose eyes are fixed on Mehar’s face may plunge into the deep water without a float, and the river cannot drown them.

"The torrent rages where my heart’s desire is strongest. There the swift current roars. Bring me to Mehar in the waves, says Latif."
My pure love cannot be checked, however much I try. Overcome by the surge of passion, I enter the water and sacrifice my life. To go there is a duty for those who have Mehar in their hearts.”

She has absolutely no fear of Dam. She does not let the water wet her clothes. For the sake of Mehar the woman crosses the eddies in the dark night.

“Sisters, come to me when people lie in unbroken sleep, for I am troubled by thoughts of my beloved. If anyone speaks against me, I take their taunts as a compliment.”

If Suhini had not entered the river, how would she ever have been heard of? She would not have spent much time in this life. It was the drink of milk he gave her that made her crazy.11 Shah says that it was love that killed her. She would have died anyway, but she was doubly rewarded through drowning.

The whirlpools whisper to one another at dawn, saying: “In the middle of the night her eyes long for the water. Although they are given draughts to drink, still their thirst is not quenched.”

How can the fish that is always in the river stink? Its only worry is “Where can I drink water?”
All the waves are rubies, and the current smells sweeter than musk. Many scents of ambergris come to her from the water. Yesterday, longing for her beloved, Suhini plunged into the eddies.

“Tell on the riverbank what you saw in the deep. There is a great abundance of water; do not let your hem get wet. If you keep thinking of Sahar, you will get across safely.

Only Sahar can undo the knot he tied in my heart. Oh God who listens to all, let me be joined to Sahar, so that this knot may be undone.”

Sahar’s beauty preceded the writing of fate. There was no Be and it was,” nor any other idea. Suhini’s song came before the angels were created. It was then that she fell in love with Mehar, says Latif.

Suhini found her entry point and crossed over the river to Mehar before the time of the covenant. She was true to the mystery of “Am I not your lord?” and they said, “Yes.” She saw the path of the beloved’s love and she showed it to others.

I have been married to Mehar from the time of the covenant, when God said, “Am I not?” to the souls. How can anyone turn back what has been ordained in the book of fate?
From the time when God the One declared, "Am I not?" to the souls, her heart was drawn to Mehar and she desired to love him. Fate broke her pot in half in the current of the river. In its depths, the woman fulfilled what had been decreed for her by destiny.

From the time when almighty God aroused the souls with "Am I not?" she has been in search of the straight path, says Shah. Only a few among millions experience the valley of oneness. Many are swept away by the delusion of the river.

"I burn, I am grilled, I am roasted, I write, I yearn. My body's thirst for my beloved is not sated by drinking. If I were to swallow a whole ocean, it would not make a single mouthful."

The night is dark, her pot is unbaked, it is the twenty-ninth night of the lunar cycle. There is no trace of the moon, the river is in spate. Suhini has come for Sahar at midnight. This is divinely ordained; why else would anyone enter the whirlpools?

The night is dark, her pot is unired, she has no float with her. For the sake of her beloved she dives in without delay. Love makes the Indus seem like a bare plain.
It was not on this bank or on that one, but in the middle of the river that the poor girl swam. Her beloved is on dry land by the river's edge, all the rest is deep water. Plunge in, do not look around you; he shows his mercies to those who drown.

It was not on this bank or on that one, but in the middle of the river that the poor girl swam. She plunges in without looking at the pot, which got a hole in it. Oh God, bring her to safety from the raging river.

Thousands of oceans roar, but still Suhini's constancy is unshaken. Is that how true love is broken?

Do not set your hand on the beloved's raft as you drown. In the morning he will say to you: “We delivered you across.”

Even if you are drowning, do not touch the beloved’s raft. If you think you will reach the beloved, then go with the current against you. Step in the direction where there is no safety hut.

Sahar is the savior of those who drown on dry land. He puts them on his shoulders, says Latif, and takes them through the waves. He delivers those who embark on lengthy quests as if the beloved were near.
If you drown in preparation for dry land, then go ahead and drown. Do not gather straw and thorn and sticks to make a raft. Otherwise there will be no call from Sahar, nor will Suhini be heard.

What you consider to be poems are divine verses. They direct the mind toward the beloved.

Lord, it is you who drowns and you who saves, no one else has any power or claim. My condition is known to Mehar. Save the honor of this pot that is entering the whirlpool.

The herons are her pallbearers and the current is her bier. The cranes that live on the eyots offer their shoulders to carry her. When the recording angels looked at her, her desire was fixed on Mehar.

Standing at the landing place, Mehar calls out to the boatmen: "I will lend a hand, if you will cast your nets. If we trawl the depths, we may find my beloved."

Seizing the reeds on the riverbank, the lover stands and sighs: "My friend, why did you drown my beloved Suhini? Oh river, I shall complain against you on the day of resurrection."
Where the eddies whirl, where the whirlpools churn, swimmers did not find their rope, sailors did not plumb the depth. Many who do have floats stand trembling on the bank. How did you come to the place to plunge in from, you foolish girl?

Standing on the far bank, he calls to me, saying:

“Come!” Not only is the deep water flowing fast, but also the waves are turbulent and the wind is blowing. I realize that those who have God as their helper will not drown.

Foolish girl, recognize Sahar on the far bank. Get rid of fantasy, fancy, and fear. Make your heart a mirror, and behold him in your heart. Proceed along this path, to enjoy the experience of seeing him.

The one for whom I search stands on the far bank. My beloved has taken my heart, roping it to himself.

Those who are drowning cleverly grasp the bushes. See how well the reeds behave, says Latif. Either they take those who grasp them to the bank or they go with them in the current.
The tender blades of the reed take those who are drowning out of the deep water. Either they take them across, says Latif, or they lament them from the start. Reeds are deservedly well known for saving people. Either they give support to those who are drowning or they go with them in the current.

You must depart to the other side; construct your raft for the deep water. These turbulent waves have held back the bravest of heroes, says Latif. They have been stopped in the middle of the river. But those who have experienced the Indus refuse to rest on its islands.

She goes with an unbaked pot and she does not ask for one that has been fired. She crosses the turbulent water, says Latif, and goes to her herdsman. How can she overcome the love by which she is herself overcome?

Suhini was happy when she saw the designs drawn by the potter. The water washed away the pattern and the glaze could not withstand the impact. In her thoughtless youthful pride, Suhini thought it was fully fired. In the Indus she came to know that it was unbaked.
"So what if it is unfired? The favor of my beloved is firm. Sahar is my beloved, it is wrong for me to look at Dam. Whether squalls or strong winds blow, I will go on to the far bank."

The unfired pot was quite unable to withstand the river and it crumbled into pieces. She lost her strength in the stream, her arms became exhausted. Pouring in from all sides, the waves buried her. Her heart was filled with the reality of the angel of death.

The pot deceived her, its designs drove her mad. "Alas, alas, Suhini is drowning," the waves lamented. The unfired pot killed the lovely girl in the waves.

Take with you a fired pot with fine designs. Return the unfired pot straight to the potter. Suhini, hear in your heart what the lord commands. Or else the waves of the Indus will deceive and destroy you.

"I am lost, my kind beloved, come back to me. Except for you, lord, I have no aid or support. It is up to Sahar if he gets people out of the deep river."
It is Sahar's favor that will get them out of the deep river. We will find support from no one else there. Meehar, grant me an escape from the torrent.

A single loud cry is heard in the water and on dry land, and in the forests and plains. All things deserve the gallows. They all make thousands of Mansurs; which ones will you hang?

Thoughts of the beloved are everywhere, and Punhun is present everywhere. The whole land is Mansur; how many of him will you slaughter?

The waves have thousands of forms, although water is the same to look at. Abandon the idea of fathoming the deep. Where love has no limit, destroy your desire. If you stop searching for landing places, you will get near to the beloved.

If I do not return home and perhaps spend time with him without him telling me to, I shall surely die beside my beloved’s bonfire. It is not his form or his beauty that has driven me crazy. It is said that separation outweighs being together. That is why I turn around and swim back.

If my beloved comes to me on the day of resurrection, that is quite near. The glad news of being together sounds more distant than that.
How could I have known the danger of plunging into the water? How can anyone avoid the destiny decreed by God? Fate and love combined to thrust me into the waves.

It is not the reed or the pen that is to blame. Fate was written where no arm can reach. To whom should I complain when destiny moved the pen?

There is no limit to suffering, there is no limit to love. Love cannot be calculated, it knows its own limit.

The love I bear for you within me, my darling, cannot be grasped. My skin is burned in the oven of love and is set on fire. My beloved has pierced a hole in my heart without an awl.

Either let me swim myself or deliver me across. Either let me try myself or make an effort for me. Do not place a barrier in my way, oh my husband, for I am alone.

Many days have passed since I saw him; how can I know who he is? Many suns have set while I longed for him. Years have passed without him, away from whom I cannot stand a single moment.
Away from Sahar, Suhini is utterly impure. In the place where he lives, her impurity is destroyed. She becomes pure when she is beside the milk drinker.17

Away from Sahar, Suhini is unclean. She never washes her face with this water. If she was with her beloved, Suhini would bathe herself.

Away from Sahar, Suhini is feeble. She has developed a fever; alas for the wretched woman’s state. Weak and without beauty, she is sick and heaves bitter sighs.

Away from Sahar, Suhini is in pain. She is sick when with Dam, but healthy with the herdsman. The medicine for Suhini’s body is to see him. If she sees Mehar’s face, she immediately becomes well.

Love rages at me every day. Beloved, why do you not come and restrain it?

So long as she was alive, she was ill and never rested for a moment. She entered the earth, yearning for her beloved.
So long as she was alive, she never sat at ease. After she was dead, she was enfolded by the waves and taken to Mehar.

Blessed is the dark night, accursed is the moonlight.
May I not see anyone else between me and Mehar.

It was not the river, or a pond, or a lake, that drowned Suhini. Even after death, she went to Mehar with longing in her eyes.

Far more abundant than the rains of Savan or the grains of sand in the desert are the countless favors he has shown me.

Without my beloved, of what account am I?
Oh slave, flee from sin, not that there is profit in virtue.
There is nothing in piety, nothing in the rebab. You will become good in yourself, if you get rid of impurity.
Even the impure become pure, if they are attached to the divine court.
What the dust contains you will not find in anything else.
The sparkles on the water are all only bubbles. On your way toward the other side, humbly cling to the guide’s stirrup.
Swift eagle, use your talons to catch the thief.
By going along in a veil, do not lose sight of the beloved.
The self is subdued in union, like the inflectional vowels in assimilation. 22
For the beloved's sake let yourself be roasted, swallowing annihilation.
Give the nectar of paradise to those who yearn for wine.
These are all the responses of one who is destroyed by love.