

The Shavian laughter: a Prose Poem

- Dr Khairul Chowdhury

I'm teaching "At the Round earth's imagined corners" anthology of poems now. Remembering, how Professor Kashinath Roy on a hot summer day lesson on the Shavian laughter in the seminar room of Dhaka University, said "Ram o' Ram, you're so happy and complacent on earth!" - to contextualise the Shavian laughter to the time and space of our Dhaka University classroom.

To contextualise the Shavian laughter, Professor Kashinath Roy narrated the background story of the line "Ram o' Ram, you're so happy and complacent on earth!", he said, "when EAST Bengal was in the grip of Ayub Khan, a military-power-pirate of the west Pakistan, once Ayub celebrated his basic demonocracy and backward march in the history, Ayub used to visit EAST Bengal every now and then, he used to be greeted by the rams in Dhaka with tears of happiness in their eyes: 'we haven't seen your pretty graceful face for so long, we missed you dear for so long!'" Then, appeared the great poet Shamsur Rahman of EAST Bengal and threw that line to them: "Ram o' Ram, you're so happy and complacent on earth!"

I'm not envious of your happy lot, Ram o' Ram! I'm too happy in your happiness, Ram o' Ram!

To face the peddlers, to face the antipatterns, to face the anti-pedagogues, to face anti-people demagogues, to face anti-perestroika, to face anti-periodic history, to face anti-peptones, to face anti-performers – I comfortably say, "Ram o' Ram, you're so happy and complacent on earth!"