

## **Baijnath Gupta**

(Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, DSN Postgraduate College, Unnao,  
Affiliated to CSJM University, Kanpur)

### **The Twin Pillars of My Childhood**

There lives an old wrestler  
A renowned and revered one  
A paltry thing now  
An abandoned house  
A pool stilled by time  
Caught up in the desolation of desert  
In the frozen wilderness  
No spring returns  
Any leaf, or flower, or fruit  
On the denuded tree  
No youth now visits him  
To learn wrestling tricks.  
A lonely soul!  
Crows have planted their feet  
Around his bleary eyes  
Peeping into them  
Trying to catch a glimpse of his  
Numerous feats.  
Age is counting  
The vanquished opponents  
Lying defeated on his furrowed forehead.

His clothes baring his agony!

He is matched with an equally old wife

His mate in the pilgrimage of life

A woman tottering up and down

A burden now with her back bent

A lamp almost spent

In the worship of gods

A pair of hands calloused rearing and caring for others

A grace shrivelled

The river she taught

Her child to swim in

Stops to gaze at her with pity

And forgets to flow.

With both palms joined

And a pious smile,

She spins many a religious yarn

To the little congregation of innocent tots

In the evening around a Tulsi plant

Concluding with

“Chant Sitaram, O kids, and

Live your life the way

He keeps you”!