

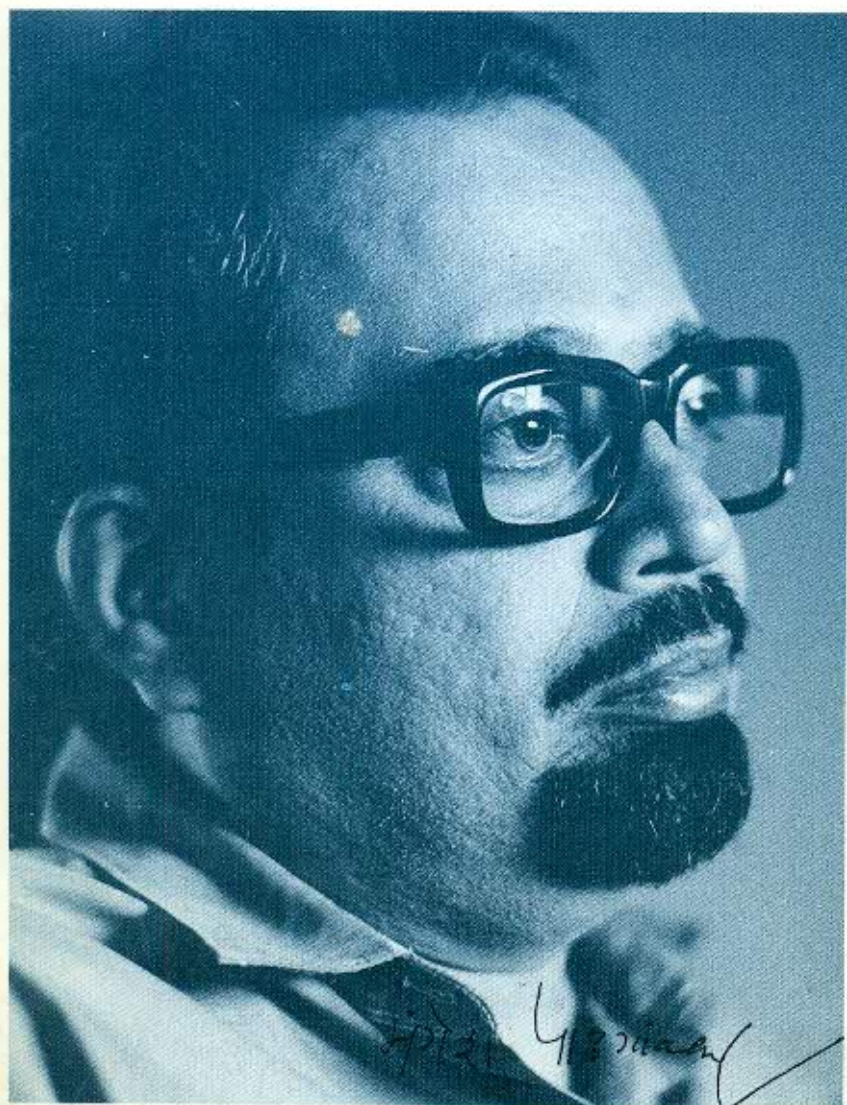
30 October, 1990



Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Mangesh Padgaonkar



At the Sahitya Sammelan in Pune in 1949 Mangesh Padgaonkar presented his poems and in doing so appeared for the first time before the public. The late Vitthalrao Ghate was the Chairman of the Kavi Sammelan (poets' session). After listening to Padgaonkar's poems, Shri Ghate declared from the Chair that he saw in him "a major poet of tomorrow." A year later, in 1950, Padgaonkar's first collection of poems, *Dharanriya*, was published. It was graced with a Foreword by the distinguished Gandhian thinker, the late Acharya S. J. Bhagawat. In praising the collection Acharya Bhagawat says in the Foreword, "Poetry has been given a high place in human life because appreciation of it liberates the true reader into a world of bliss. I sincerely feel that many poems in *Dharanriya* are good examples of poetry that justifies this high estimation."

The first collection, *Dharanriya*, won Padgaonkar an honoured place in Marathi poetry. The late veteran writer and critic V. S. Khandekar wrote an article, "A New Star on the Poetic Horizon," in *Satyakatha* to express his heartfelt appreciation. The poems in this first collection show the impress of Borkar and Kusumagraj.

His second collection of poems, *Gypsy*, was published in 1953. Ramdas Bhatkal of Popular Prakashan put it out as his first poetry publication. In *Gypsy* one sees Padgaonkar in his own poetic individuality. There is a Foreword by the elder Marathi

critic Professor W. L. Kulkarni. In it he says: "Padgaonkar's genius is now self-luminous. It has developed, almost moment by moment, its power to perceive and to express new truth and new beauty. Today it is a powerful genius and it has created its own imaginative world."

From *Dharanriya* in 1950 right up to *Bolgan* in 1990, Padgaonkar's poetry has shown a continuous development.

Padgaonkar was prompted to poetry by his mother. She never became well-known, but continued to write poems to the end of her life. Her father too wrote poems. So Padgaonkar inherited two generations of yearning for poetic expression. He was only seven or eight when his mother read him with feeling the poems of Keshavasut, Balakavi, Govindagraj. He was not old enough to understand these poems, but his inner consciousness seems to have absorbed the world of poetry without knowing it. His mother used to keep these books of poems in an old, rusty tin trunk. Padgaonkar says gratefully that the rusty tin trunk proved his true university. He wrote his first poem in 1942 as a schoolboy. He had the fortune to receive guidance from W. L. Kulkarni at this stage. Shri Kulkarni was his teacher at school and later at college. He read each one of Padgaonkar's poems and discussed it with him; and he made him read many books of poems. Padgaonkar was enriched also by a close association with the elder poet



Receiving Sahitya Akademi Award from Umashankar Joshi, 1980



With his grandchildren Rupak, Tanay and Raina

Borkar. Borkar loved him like a son and gave him guidance. After Borkar, Padgaonkar found a guide in the Editor of *Satyakatha*, Professor S. P. Bhagwat. Padgaonkar considers it one of the most fortunate events in his literary life that he found such an editor, with his extraordinary literary perception and wide-ranging sensibility. Together with these formative influences must be mentioned one person more: his wife Yashoda, a lover of literature who has all his life been a sustaining power. Their love-marriage in 1950 was an inter-religious marriage; for Yashoda was the daughter of the Rev. Bhaskar Krishna Ujgare. The Rev. Shri Ujgare was himself a poet.

Padgaonkar's poetry has remained true to his experience while it has constantly developed new forms. He has handled with exceptional mastery forms so diverse as love poems, nature poems, poems of social and political satire, poems of mystical awareness, dramatic poems, songs, *gazals*, limericks, poems and songs for children, radio musicals, *bolgani* (speech-poems). Such diversity of authentic inner experience and effective expression is rare. Padgaonkar's poetry weaves for itself a new shape to follow inner experience. It has consistently refused to stand under the banner of any "ism", whether of ideology or of literary theory. Its loyalty is to human life itself in its endless forms. Hence this poetry, which is an unending quest for the creative possibilities in the world around, the inner universe of one's expe-

rience, and the language in which poetry finds its outward expression, cannot be subsumed under any of the conventional labels of criticism. It flows from its own inner strength. It has avoided the showy ornamentation of imagery, artificial complexity, attention-getting acrobatics of "experiment", and wrestling with the natural idiom of language. It has blossomed as a flower, from its inner natural promptings, and gone straight to the sensitive reader's heart. The "gypsy" who must always wander on, who can be tied down to no camping-ground, is the natural quality, the true inner law, of Padgaonkar's poetic genius.

Padgaonkar has followed many occupations — school teacher, college professor, assistant editor of the weekly *Sadhana*, producer on the A.I.R. and editor with the U.S.I.S. His songs have been popular over the last twenty-five years. He has refused to consider songs a form of cheap popular entertainment and maintained in them a true poetic quality. He is known particularly for his poetry readings. Over the last forty years he has carried poetry into the ordinary home by poetry readings not only all over Maharashtra but even in England and the U.S.A. For forty years Maharashtra has responded enthusiastically to the work Padgaonkar, Karandikar, and Bapat have done in taking poetry to the people in this manner.

The constant companionship of popularity and literary quality is rare and difficult. Among Marathi literary men Mangesh Padgaonkar is fortunate in being blessed with both.

A Select Bibliography

Poems

DHARANRITYA Pune: Dnyanaraj Prakashan, 1950 96p. 18.5 cm.

GYPSY Bombay: First Edition Popular Prakashan, 1953 Seventh Edition Mouj Prakashan, 1987 116p. 21.5 cm

CHHORI Bombay: First Edition Popular Prakashan, 1957 Second Edition Mouj Prakashan, 1988 80p. 21.5 cm

UTSAV Bombay: First Edition Popular Prakashan, 1962 Second Edition Mouj Prakashan, 1989 88p. 21.5 cm

VIDOOSHAK Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966 94p. 18.5 cm

SALAAM Bombay: Mouj Prakashan, 1978, 1981, 1987 63p. 21.5 cm

GAZAL Bombay: Mouj Prakashan, 1981, 1989 96p. 21.5 cm

BHATKE PAKSHI Bombay: Mouj Prakashan, 1984 90p. 21.5 cm

TUZE GEET GANYASATHI Bombay: Mouj Prakashan, 1989 112p. 21.5 cm

BOLGANI Bombay: Mouj Prakashan, 1990 120p. 21.5 cm

Personal Essays

NIMBONICHYA ZADAMAGE Pune: Continental Prakashan, 1954, 1958 132p. 18.5 cm

Poems for Children

BHOLANATH Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1964 24p. 21.5 cm

BUBBLEGUM Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1967 18p. 21.5 cm

Verse Plays

SHARMISHTHA Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1960 116p. 18.5 cm

Translation

MEERA Bombay: (Translations of Meera bhajans in the original metres) Popular Prakashan, 1965 79p. 18.5 cm

Limericks and Nonsense Poems

VATRATIKA Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1963 140p. 18.5 cm

Edited

BORKARANCHI KAVITA (collected poems of B. B. Borkar) Bombay: Mouj Prakashan, 1960 364p. 21.5 cm

YUGATMA (Essays on Gandhiji) Bombay: Maharashtra Rajya Gandhi Shatabdi Samiti Prakashan, 1970 202p. 23.5 cm

SANHITA (selected poems of Vinda Karandikar) Pune: Continental Prakashan, 1975 204p. 21.5 cm

Musical Plays for The Radio

Radha	1956
Billhan	1956
Janabai	1957
Vat Pandharichi	1958
Khrista Janma	1960

Songs

Over 1956-1990, has written songs for radio, television and direct recording by HMV. Over 60 of these have been set to music and issued on records and cassettes.



In his study

Translated into other Languages

MARATHI KAVITA: MANGESH PADGAONKAR

Ahmedabad: Translated from Marathi into Gujarati by Dr. Suresh Dalal. Gangotri Trust Publication, 1977 62p. 21.5 cm

SALAAM New Delhi: Translated from Marathi into Hindi by Prof. Vasant Dev, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. 1990 78 p. 21.5 cm

Translations of American Literature

THOMAS PAINECHE RAJNAITIK NIBANDHA Bombay: Political Essays by Thomas Paine. Pearl Publication, 1957 208p. 18.5 cm

NAVAVADHUCHE AGAMAN Bombay: The Bride Comes To Yellow Sky by Stephen Crane. Pearl Publication, 1958 216p. 18.5 cm

APULA APAN VAIRI Bombay: Self-betrayed by Joseph Wechsberg. Parchure Prakashan, 1959 268p. 18.5 cm

MAZA DEV, MAZA DESH Bombay: God and My Country by Mackinley Kantor. Parchure Prakashan, 1960 84p. 18.5 cm

AMERICAN SAHITYACHA ITIHAS Bombay: History of American Literature by Marcus Cunliffe. Vora and Co., 1961 400p. 18.5 cm

BHIDALI RATRA PAHATELA Bombay: The Waters of Kronos by Conrad Richter. Parchure Prakashan, 1962 112p. 21.5 cm

BALPANICHA KAL SUKHACHA

Bombay: Prairie Town Boy by Carl Sandburg. Parchure Prakashan, 1963 146p. 18.5 cm.

AMERICAN SAMAJ Bombay: The American Society by Kenneth S. Lynn. Vora and Co., 1963 300 p. 18.5 cm

TE ZUNJAR PRAVASI Bombay: The Oregon Trail by Francis Parkman. Parchure Prakashan, 1964 338p. 18.5 cm

AMERICAN SANGEETAKAR Bombay: Story-lives of American Composers by Katherine Bakeless. Parchure Prakashan, 1964 236p. 18.5 cm

CARL SANDBURG Bombay: Carl Sandburg by Harry Golden. Parchure Prakashan, 1965 280p. 21.5 cm

HE SARE MANAVASATHI Bombay: The Cause is Mankind by Hubert H. Humphrey. Vora and Co., 1965 146p. 18.5 cm

JINKU KINVA MARU Bombay: Lights Across the Delaware by David Taylor. Parchure Prakashan, 1965 398p. 21.5 cm

VATADYA Bombay: The Pathfinder by James Fenimore Cooper. Majestic Prakashan, 1966 336p. 21.5 cm

JEEVAN TYANA KALALE HO Bombay: A Simple Honorable Man by Conrad Richter. Parchure Prakashan, 1968 298p. 18.5 cm

DAVID WAGONER: KAVI ANI KAVITA Bombay: U.S.I.S. 1971 28p. 21.5 cm

WILLIAM STAFFORD: KAVI ANI KAVITA Bombay: U.S.I.S. 1972 27p. 21.5 cm



With Kumar Gandharva & Vasant Bapat

A Chronology



- 1929 10 March: Born Vengurla, Dist. Sindhudurg, Maharashtra.
- 1946 Matriculation from Wilson High School, Bombay. Entered Wilson College as a pupil.
- 1948 Left home and college to wander over South India and Sri Lanka.
- 1950 Married Yashoda Bhaskar Ujgare. *Dharanriya*, his first collection of poems, published.
- 1951 Teacher at Wilson High School. Obtained Teacher's Diploma from the University of Bombay.
- 1952 Stayed with Acharya Kaka Kalelkar at Wardha to study Hindi literature.
- 1953 *Gypsy*, his collection of poems, won the Maharashtra State Award. Joined the weekly *Sadhana* as Assistant Editor.
- 1956 B.A. (Honours) with Marathi and Sanskrit, University of Bombay; first rank in the First Class; Tarkhadkar Gold Medal and Gadkari Prize; University Merit Scholarship.
- 1957 Teaching as a Fellow at Kirti College, Bombay. Assistant Producer for the Spoken Word, All India Radio, Bombay. Collection of poems, *Chhori*, won the Maharashtra State and the Madhya Pradesh State Awards
- 1958 M.A. with Marathi and Sanskrit, University of Bombay; first rank in the First Class; N. C. Kelkar Gold Medal; University Merit Scholarship.
- 1960 Joined Somaiya College, Bombay, as Professor and Head of the Department of Marathi.
- 1961 Joined Mithibai College, Bombay, as Professor and Head of the Department of Marathi.
- 1964 Member of the Film Censor Board. Joined All India Radio, Bombay, as Producer of the Spoken Word.
- 1967 Collection of poems, *Bubblegum*, won award from the Maharashtra State Government.
- 1970 Joined the United States Information Service, Bombay, as Marathi Editor in the Press Section. President of the Sadanand Literary Conference at Audumbar. Appointed Justice of the Peace.
- 1974 President of the Sharadotsav session of the Indore Maharashtra Sahitya Sabha.
- 1980 Collection of poems, *Salaam*, won the Sahitya Akademi Award.
- 1984 Poetry readings in England and the U.S.A. Inaugurated the 13th session of the Christian Community's Marathi Literary Conference.
- 1987 President of the Literary Conference of the Marathi Wangmaya Parishad, Baroda.
- 1988 Inaugurated the Gujarati Literary Conference (Jnanasatra) at Bhavnagar.