



1985

## Poems

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# Poems

## **Abstract**

The Poet who was silent and Hope

## THE PAKISTAN ACADEMY OF LETTERS AWARD, 1981-1982

The Pakistan Academy of Letters (Islamabad) selected Alamgir Hashmi's *My Second in Kentucky* (Vision, 1981) for its 1981-1982 (1402 A.H.) prestigious national literature prize, the Patras Bokhari Award. The award is named after the famed writer and scholar, the late A.S. (alias Patras) Bokhari, who made a lasting contribution to both English and Urdu letters. This is the first time that the award has been given for English poetry. The award was announced on 16 May 1985. *Kunapipi* wishes to congratulate Alamgir Hashmi.

## Ezenwa-Ohaeto

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### THE POET WHO WAS SILENT

(For Odia)

On the stage  
His voice rang clear  
Prompting lusty cheers from the sheep-audience:  
The Chief Celebrant  
At the unscheduled ceremony,  
But he broke the magic circle,  
As he stepped beyond.  
Did he know  
Truth need fists  
When he unclasped his clenched fingers  
Choosing the company of lions?

## HOPE

The Ikoro\* booms  
The Ekwe\* echo  
And flutes weave intricate rhythms.  
Tense, expectant eyes  
glue on market paths.

It's time, for  
Leopard Killers  
Proceed to market

They come  
In artificial splendour  
Draped with leopard skins  
Matchets flashing  
Raffia skirts dancing in the breeze.

But are the Leopards dead?  
Leopards who devour in the slums  
Leopards who hustle in the towns  
Leopard pen-butchers.  
While our leopard killers celebrate unheeding.

Perhaps the leopards are now bold  
Perhaps the killers are tired  
Perhaps the ovations are deafening.

Our eyes searched  
beyond the market place  
And in the distance  
We glimpse approaching  
Luminous shape of Nemesis.

\*Ikoro and Ekwe are hollowed-out wooden instruments. The Ekwe is used for sending messages and as a musical instrument while the Ikoro is used for the most important messages or as alarm.