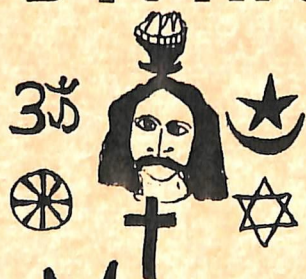


CANTICLES For MEHER

**Poems to the
Divine Beloved**



by Maxwell Reif

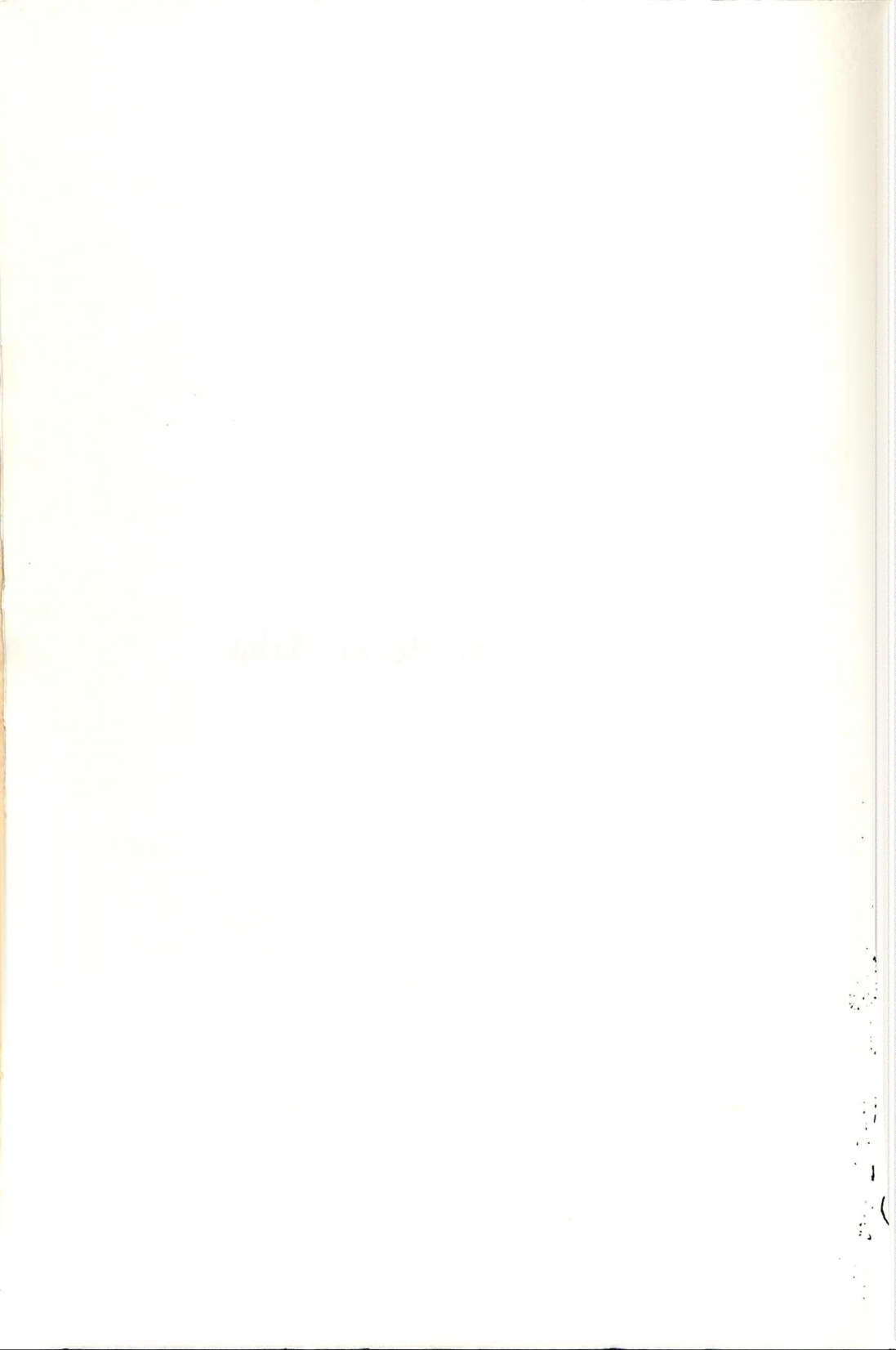
CANTICLES FOR MEHER

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To Avatar Meher Baba



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Meherazad -
May 21-55

Dear Maxwell,

I received your book of poems to the Divine Beloved & reading them felt how truly inspired they are - They are a beautiful expression of your love for Baba & show a deep understanding & insight: I hope this book will be widely read & receive the appreciation it deserves. If it helps to bring the reader closer to Baba & give him or her a better understanding of His ways it has served its purpose.

May your love for Beloved Baba & your desire to serve Him be your guide through life.

Love in Beloved Baba to you
from all your Meherazad family in
His Infinite Ocean,

Mehera
—

early poems

Honeymoon

When Life was in the Pink
And You were Food
And I was hungry,
And You showed me to Your Feast,

Why, the world was Pink and Laughing

And You were Honeycomb,
As much as needed
To fill my appetite.

The Real World laughed into this shadow-plane like bells
And blew it up like a balloon, with Laughing-gas!

You had me escorted
By Saints and tame lions, and the Sun
Stayed round and cool in the sky all day and night
And birds sang in three languages; When life was pink
A quiet Miracle was happening,
A joke had been told and was met
With Silent Laughter that grew
Into a mighty atmosphere of Love.

The gates to the Kingdom had opened then
And I went inside the gates
Lost in Your atmosphere.
Oh, Your Highness, Oh, Friend, I remember
How You threw Your Robe around me, and all life
Was covered smiling and pink with only You.

Now, after the myriad crisscross paths
Of the famous Labyrinth, and the straight and narrow
Hidden somewhere therein,
Sun is hot and nights again are dark;
Longing grows,
And the pull of the world.

It grows tiresome. You know how tiresome it grows;

Won't You take out Your brush
And pinken things just a dab?

Song Of The Perrenial Christ

Many years ago He came
To the hills of Galilee
And told them, "You shall know the Truth
And the Truth shall make you free."

He straddled the hills like a God
But they scourged Him like a man;
And from the ruins of His broken form
A brand new Age began.

He walked the green hills of India
Ages earlier still
And as Divine Beloved Krishna
Unfurled His perfect Will.

He taught the warrior Arjuna
To obey His every command,
Trevelling thereby the road to Him,
In Perfection taking his stand.

And in our own day His lovely form
Perfumed our world again
As Avatar Meher Baba,
Foremost among men.

For He had finished the Journey
All souls are embarked upon,
Yet returned to our cold world
For our sakes alone.

As the Ages roll on and on
The Christ will never fail
To hear our hapless cry for help
And come to pay our bail.

The Search

Every time I wake up
I wonder when I'll really wake up.
It's been years now, and still no sign
Of really Dying and being Born.

And like a Pilgrim in the desert I keep travelling on,
Looking for the only non-Mirage there is, the city
called Love,
But all I see are shifting sands.

And how do I know this "city" exists?
In answer my mind brings me back
To a small room, long ago,
And the broad smile of a friend
As he told me God was real,
And Who God was—

And as he spoke, and then stopped speaking,
His smile went on and on

And the room filled with a Presence,
And time and space collapsed
Completely into Love,
Which devoured us both
And into which we disappeared,
Yet remained:

And the Sun rose in its Glory,
And bathed me in its Light,
And fed me with its Honey,
And blessed me with its Sight;

And in the folds within my "robe",
For an instant I knew Truth,
As told of in the ancient times;
And I'd gained Eternal Youth.

And I tell you, friends,
When I left that room,
I sang a different tune
And searched a different search:
For nothing I'd known could satisfy me,
Once time and space had given way to Love,
Like the thinnest of shells parting to reveal
The vastest Universe inside.

And I saw that what I'd known
Had never been very real,
But stood to mark time
As we wound our way to that Love uniting all.

Pride Of Action

Gifts You bestow,
If we pile them on our heads
As attributes of ourselves,
Will crush us. But if we use them
As Yours, for Love, they will merge
Into the flow of Love
And never a burden be,
But Wings

To fly the Spirit deeper
To where we have forgotten

even our

forgetfulness.

Missouri Darshan*

Darshan streams
From Your picture,
Oh, Merciful, smiling Father.

Darshan streams
From walls and ceiling and floor,
Lives in my body's every pore.

Darshan is this human form,
This Miracle of Life,
This Vision of Color
They call a World.

*Darshan is the Blessing of the Master.

Lost In The Dark Cloud

When I strain
And cannot move an inch,
I need not curse myself,
But only realize
You may be reining me in
For reasons of Your own,
Knowing the Grand Plan of my life,
While I myself
See not an inch in front of my face.

Worry, misery, fly away:
What we pass through is only
Our Beloved's Care
Manifested toward us
As a tractor turns the earth,
That Life may grow.

Our deepest despair,
Our greatest pain
Are but to temper us
To feel and know You more
Through Faith that parts the clouds
And makes all clear.

So let us be trodden over a hundred times,
More pliable each time.

Song To Hazrat Babajan

(Who unveiled Meher Baba in 1913)

When they get close enough,
You give them Your kiss,
Under the spreading neem tree
Down in ancient Poona.

They wander, the puerile and neglected,
In the ignorance of their vacant dreams,
And the keenness of Your sunlight glance
Does not miss a one.

They puff upon their beedies*
And try to hide from God,
As they journey, from horizon to horizon,
Right past You without turning,
Taking thus the long road to Your feet.

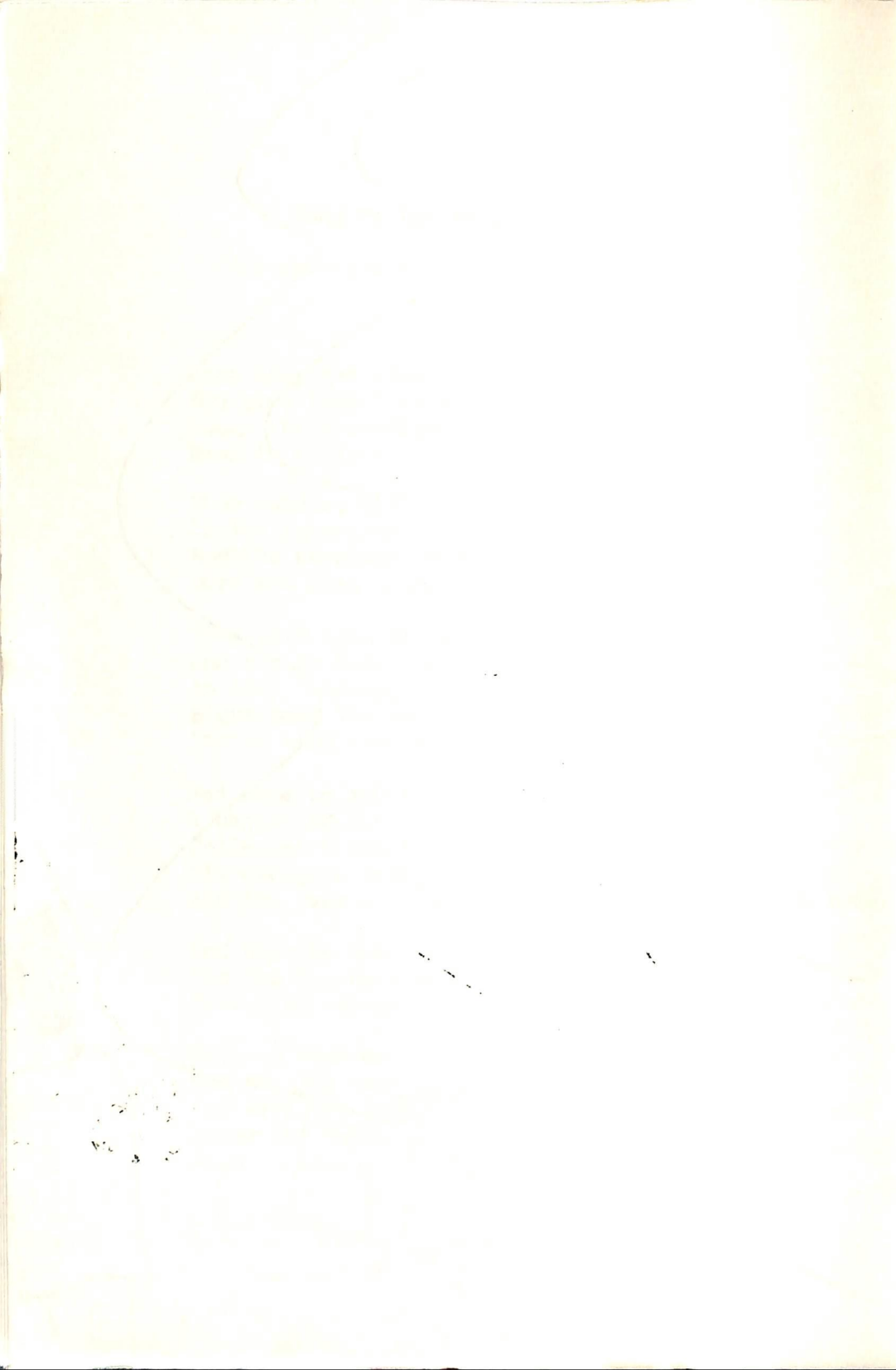
And once in awhile,
A beggar of Earth
Collapses there in defeat,
His struggle over,
And You take him under the wings of Your great love.

And when He comes upon his bicycle,
The One You have awaited all these years,
Your Kiss brings in the world's new age.

Nothing ever escapes You,
And nothing ever will--
And even God Himself comes to Your door--
Under the spreading neem tree,
Down in ancient Poona.

*beedies: Indian cigarettes





ghazals

Separation

I am a fantasy of Your Mind.

Why, then, do You go on causing Yourself
so much pain?

Perhaps I did heinous things in the Past,
but such answers don't satisfy,
For "Time" and "Past" are also creations of
Your Mind.

A thousand answers to these questions I've heard
but still
The riddles dwell unsolved in my fantasied
breast.

Across Epochs Your Mind needn't travel at all.
It comprehends all Time in the Eternal Present.

Why, then, make the waves of Your Ocean churn?
Intimate One, why not dream instead of fair sea,

Of an emerald isle in a turquoise sea You dream
once;

On a small raft I have paddled all my life
toward that place.

Oh, Meher, Your longing for Yourself creates
so much trouble.

Max says, why not dream of Union and end this
torture?

Bubbly

Bubbly, oh Bubbly, the West puts you on TV.
But the Ancient vinages they'll never even see.

Too many commercials drive away the real thing.
Yet all Creation's a Commercial for its King.

How is it we tune into those ads that are glib
But vacuous: "men's" and "women's", but not the
mighty Soul's "Lib"?

One sip of real bubbly and you can feel the Master,
Then expire from too much Grape: He gets you there
much faster.

Why no one desires this Product is a real Mystery—
Since the one passing it by, like the Vintner himself,
is He.

Oh, Saki, You make even the dumb into great orators!
Why is it then that You have so few lovers, beaus,
and couriers?

Max says, to be your slave is much more grand
than to be royalty.

Why is it then that the West
just wants to watch TV?

Paradise

It seems You have moved me to the Garden of
Earthly Delights.
After years in the valleys You've taken me
to the heights.

All food is Your Banquet: all pleasure is Your Joy.
You've come out in the open and stopped being coy.

Pleasure buzzes like happy bees 'round my cells.
Air is like honey and sound is like music of bells.

After years of denial, now You're telling me "More!"
I feel like shouting "Too Much!"—falling faint
on the floor.

Beloved, Abundance is Your middle name.
I'm throwing away all the books I thought explained
Your Game.

Hitting us on the head with Truth, now it's beauty
and pleasure!

Killing us almost with work, now it's enjoyment
and leisure.

Max would gladly take as Forever this moment a-buzz.
But his life with You shows every "now" becomes a "was"

Riches

Don't I always forget how Infinite You are?
Why should I stop Your Flow by worrying?

Oh, Cornucopia, rather than torture the mind,
I will give all I have knowing that You will re-
plentish.

The world is my Bank, it is Your savings vault.
Worry is the only madness in this spindrift world.

Poverty and riches, does anyone know what they are?
The Ancient One's Hand can make poverty riches
and vice-versa.

When we delight, it is You delighting in us.
Otherwise, what use is Your Creation?

Gone Beyond, You reside now in all things.
I toast Your Omnipresence with my next drink.

Max says, the secrets whispered by MEHER
Are so obvious only an idiot can understand them!

On Beloved Baba's Picture, 1960

Here is the God Who has suffered for all of us.
In His eyes you can see an unbearable, terrible
pain.

The Redeemer became stooped and broken by the
redeemed.
How can God allow Himself to feel so much anguish?

His Suffering is laid bare for all to see.
Those drinking the Wine forget about the grapes
that were crushed.

How can You suffer so for the world, Beloved?
Clearly this stretches my mind till it cracks
and breaks.

How could You, the pinnacle and summation of
human beauty,
Become so bent and gnarled like a withered old tree

The Lover who will not shrink from understanding
this mystery
Will understand all mysteries under the sun.

Max says, who of the Lovers among us
Will throw their bodies under the wheels
of the train of Life?

Residence

Where do I live? Do I live in the World?
No! I live in the Bosom of my Lord Meher.

This is why many might not understand me.
To the world, I might seem to live there but be Mad.

Where we look from determines what we see.
Don't the God-Realized see only themselves?

World sees a world: those with hearts fixed on Him
See only Him and a Garland 'round His Being.

"Cause-and effect" may rule what they call the
world,
But on islands of Grace, only His Love rules all.

My Beloved has taken me on Love's wings to an
island
Where rubies and sapphires fall as common as
spring rain.

Max says, people of the world seeing this rain
from afar
Might think it only some kind of air pollution.

His Presence

At dawn and at dusk Time somehow pauses:
We can feel more easily the Causer behind the causes.

Our every moment is marked, there is no chance
thought.
At the moment of birth our lives are from us
bought.

Therefore, when Beloved shows His rosy cheek,
be grateful.
For in tomorrow's heat only that memory will keep you
wakeful.

Fall not into day's sleeping, but remember
His Kiss of the dawn and the dusk as a living ember.

That lights your life with an inner glow until
He returns, again your living soul to thrill.

Worldly beloveds, His reflections, eternally go by,
And the palm tree reflects His Beauty, and the sky.

[illegible]

Idleness and Busyness

Idleness is not laziness to my Lord Meher.
Busyness is not industriousness to the
Omniscient One.

Since I stopped trying to run with the world,
I merely count the petals in my Beloved's Garden.

Does the succor of man come through grimfaced labor,
Or through holding out an empty cup to God?

Honest are they who do naught all day but Sing:
Guileful those who divide the Ocean into "mine"
and "thine."

Chasing Omnipresent Ocean to pocket its waters
Rouls the reflective mirror of its Being.

A world that knew all has its Source in God
Would be a world with only kindness for all.

Max says, see how my Beloved is always giving?
How many will slow down long enough to hold out
their cup?

"J'accuse"

The World stands ready to accuse the Lover
at the drop of a hat
Of everything they'd like to do themselves,
and bag him like a cat.

Or maybe dangle him neatly between two trees,
Or place him in boiling oil up to his knees.

Eleven of Jesus' top twelve were slaughtered;
It's a wonder all humanity doesn't get drawn and
quartered.

But that'd leave no one to do the torturing,
And torturers are sorely needed in God's
Joke-posturing.

"Wanted: torturers: excellent pay," read the ad in Hell.

"All you need to do is go up to the Earth to dwell."

"Signed, God," read the ad. "Cause I can't leave
my Lovers hanging."

They need something to prod them, some hammer on
their heads and hearts banging.

"It gives them wings: course you won't see them
But your own ... when they've ascended."

But your pay will be the Grace, next life
to get your ways mended."

Francis

"Ghazal"— the perfect word to describe the drinking
of Wine
To make the Lover drunk with effacement of "mine".

(Though yet a Mine, where Treasure is concealed
Till the gate-lock is broken and Love-gems lay re-
vealed.)

The Beloved who lives in the sky and in the heart
Has decreed that from somewhere within us
a new Love-feast should start.

But my own Love-mine is blocked with valueless rocks
To be blasted to get to the Love behind the locks.

The "I", the "me", the "mine" are boulders blocking
Love's way.
When they're gone there may be no ghazals,
for I may have nothing to say.

Francis the poet-king, meanwhile, is like Hafiz,
the Perfect Master.
Reading his Love-wrought words seems to help one
to travel faster.

Max's travels are snail's, but his matchless words
show the way
To laughter and drunkenness, Peace, and the Light
of Day.

Complaint

Who are You to be the God of this world?
With the one hand You give, with the other
take away.

Even as we wave hello to loved ones,
With the other hand we are bidding them adieu.

As we first come through the gates of our mother
Life is preparing to pat the earth down on top of
our grave

You put cream in our saucers, and when we finally
let down our suspicions to enjoy,
The cats have drunk it and there's nothing left
at all.

Though I have known You long only as the God of
Love,
Now surfaces this aspect of the Game You play.

Are we only toys You play with like a selfish
child?
The secret of Love must be hidden here too some-
how.

Oh, Meher, You appear today a very cruel God.
Max begs, won't You show the Mercy behind this
veil too?

