

EIR is commemorating the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on Oct. 31, 1984, by reprinting the following poem by Kenneth Kronberg. It first appeared in Congress Varnika, the official journal of the ruling Congress Party (I) of India. The author has recently directed the Schiller Institute Research and Education Fund's production, in Leesburg, Va., of *The Parasite*, a newly translated, full-length comedy by Friedrich Schiller.

**In Memoriam
Indira Gandhi
died October 31, 1984**

I

Ascending now the steep steps at Jaipur,
The watchman paused, held up his lamp;
Below, the moonlight shimmered like a gauze
Of purple muslin, and the wind was damp.

A little further, on the arch above,
A solitary figure plies his trade:
With sextant, glass, and astrolabe,
He plots the stars' emerge from evening shade.

"What see you, father?" cries the guardsman out
(As torchlight wheels, and ashes fall);
What future profit do the stars reveal?
Will Fate betray us, all our hopes recall?"

And, turning from his hoops of beaten brass
As if to wake, the sire replies:
"Dear son, my measures cannot scan our fate,
For God's not dicing with the patterned skies—

The circles of the stars are moved by One
Who Law upholds, not moment's hire. . ."
"But surely, father, some small sign He shows,
Some silent message echoes my desire?"

The watchman placed his torch upon the fire,
Awaiting answer to his quest;
The elder put his instruments to rest,
And challenged, said, "My son, what men call blessed

Are not the birdsongs' momentary joys;
Such things soon fade, as lotus hues;
These lustrous forest minstrels were but made
To image the unfolding of God's muse."



Unchecked, the guardsman did his cause pursue.
The night was still; an owl swooped past;
No soul disturbed their discourse thus, until
The dawn spread open to the world at last.

II

Above all else, what endeared her to us
Was her toughness of intellect, the star
She wore diamondlike in the Indian sky.

She was descendant of a nation-building
Family, and sought to lift her people
Upon the pinnacle of history.

Now she is gone, this jewel whose enemies
Called tyrant. Harsh winter whistles through the trees.
They, they will inherit this barrenness.

III

The "Discovery of India," she knew,
Was India's discovery anew
That ancient pathways strengthen our resolve
To generate the future, to evolve—

That knowledge of the past will guide our way,
As God's untested spacecraft we embark,
To lift us beyond height, whence we survey
The mobs of ignorance, suspicions dark—

That misery and tumult, pain and want
Are not man's state of nature, but a cave,
Whose depths may be illumined by a spark
Brought down from heaven, to emblaze our hearts.

Beside man's hearth there burns a sacred fire,
Nurtured by huntsmen 'gainst the starlit night;
O, let the orchids that adorned her pyre
Become the blossoms of that holy light!

For the India she saw, was never known
Except as past and future, never shown
Except to those whose vision could contain
The lofty Himalayan mountain range.

Her ashes blow, they billow in the wind;
Like birds they twist, they soar beyond our sight;
Remember us, Indira, on your flight;
Bear witness to things greater than our sins.

How rare those moments, when our eyes reveal
A beauty born of certitude and warmth;
How short those glimpses, which above we steal,
To recognize God's triumph over death!

Let the stars' celestial motions
Unwind flowerings of grief;
Let her fathers' secret ages
Mourn nobility too brief.

IV

"From fairest creatures we desire increase";
From all God's creatures we desire increase;
From each and every flower and leaf
Our hearts burst open for the soul's release.
Our Bard, who fashioned music from the rude,
Unfinished letterings of earthy men,
Bequeathed to us a father's attitude
Toward those who seek their nurture from our pen;
For wisely sang he praise of nature free,
Of love and beauty, twilight, of the Age—
What star amongst us dare to sing as he,
Unstrained, the precious goodness man attains?
Indira, like Shakuntala, fly o'er:
Lead continents of children to explore!

Kenneth Lewis Kronberg
10.25.86

NOTES

Jaipur Greatest of the 18th-century astronomical observatories built by the scientist-statesman Jai Singh.

"*The Discovery of India*" Jawaharlal Nehru, Mrs. Gandhi's father, wrote this history of India while imprisoned during the 1940s.

"*From fairest creatures we desire increase*" The opening of Shakespeare's sonnet series, the great fugue which charted the laws of verbal action in the English language.

Shakuntala Heroine of the drama by Kalidasa, the fourth-century author considered to be the greatest poet and dramatist of Sanskrit literature.

Work on this poem began in earnest the day after the explosion of the Space Shuttle