To a Cheetah

Chin on crossed paws
A philosopher’s abstraction in stony eyes
Smoldering with the instinct of a snuffed-out cigarette

You look unblinkingly at illusive skyline
Just like a glowering grass-widow
Slightly unsure of her feelings.

I sincerely appreciate your feelings
But if you be a little more practical
Your life here is not that lousy

By any means, you see.
Here also you attract
Undivided attention

Of school children
On Visit to a Zoo
Which back at school

Becomes the title of their essay
Wherein your tawny yellow coat
Covered with round solid-black spots

Of various sizes merging into
A band pattern on the tail-end
Finds a sure mention

Just as it would oblige
Philosophers and poets
To evaluate the physical play of black and yellow
On metaphysical level.
This underscores your aesthetic presence
And academic relevance.

Here every need of yours is heeded
Physical, emotional
Even spiritual, right?

Healthy food and healthy mate
For increased genetic variation
And immunized progeny

Against infectious diseases and climate changes.
Your misogynist taste
Except for the estrus

Is also cared in as much as
You can be all by yourself
Unbothered by your weepy wife.

And if you don't know
Let me tell you
They say

Compared to a wild cheetah
A zoo cheetah's life is
Considerably longer.

After all, life is what matters the most.
The show must go on
At any cost.

Here at least there aren't any lions or hyenas
To bully over you.
You are the king of your cage.
And above all
You are still the fastest animal on earth
Without having to run for the title.

Doesn’t all this make your life tolerable
And your world workable
By any appreciable degree?

And who the hell in this world
Has been granted all his wishes so far
That you grumble over your lot?

Thank god for what He has given you.
Just look beneath and you would realize
What wretchedness creatures suffer.

And, honey, you very well know
We-look-before-and-after-and-pine-for-what-is-not
Live-here-and-now and stuff like that.

Now you are growing old
And it doesn’t befit you
To be grumpy or whatever

Nostalgic about things beyond your reach.
What influence would it leave
On your cubs?

And what else a cheetah like you to do
Apart from all that you are doing?
Earning a livelihood for the family

Keeping it in good humour
Teaching your cubs the worthwhileness
Of a caged cheetah-life
So that they don’t have any reason
At any point of time in their lives
To be sullen about anything

Like you.