

Two Poems by Dr. Nanda Singh Borkola

The Earth of Sunshine

After a long interval I went to my village in search of the cropland
The familiar trees, the slender stream, birds flapping their wings.
I could find none and the sky was black
With smoke spiralling out from chimneys of tall buildings.
Concrete structures enveloped the cropland.

Friends and acquaintances stopped visiting
Industries are fast growing on the cropland.

I am digging into myself in a bid to retrieve the cropland.

Father's plough and yoke are lying unused beside the barn
The roof is slowly collapsing
A pole is lying in a corner of the floor.
Can the concrete of life be broken with this pole?
The corpse of the cropland is lying
Like fish caught in a gill net
Bloated and eyes pale.

The lost cropland has left a lot of memories
Tales of pearls, light and footprints trailing away.

The things were green at the beginning
Then turned yellow to copper colour.
Along the path of globalization, the soul of the cropland
Is fumbling for the seasons in reeking smell all around .

Sunflowers are blooming in the cropland
Flowers are blooming in the faces
Flower loving farmers have dragged clouds sweating out blood
Tears roll down in joy.
Crop and flowers are now blooming in the burrows.
Sun shines in the tears of the sun lovers
The foliage dances in the sun.

A soft melody from the song of a cowherd
Comes wafting almost unheard and half understood
The theme is the masses, the land and the cropland.

The masses have now become graver than the mountain
Taller, firmer and more determined.
They have picked up from the zamindar's house
Words locked up in a treasury.
And long afterwards the words have blossomed forth
In the faces of those who carry sunflowers.

In Search of an Identity

Man traverses all around in search of an identity.
The river flows on across hurdles from the mountain to the sea.
The tree strikes roots and directs green from beneath
Foliage spreads out to the sky for sun, shower and moonlight
They tell tales of man, land and forests.

Karna stood firm against *Doryodhan's* arrow ignoring death
Just for an identity.

Grandfather *Bhishma* slept on a bed of arrows believing
One day *Hastinapur* would hoist a white flag for his identity.

The *Pandavas* wandered through the forest
Tolerated insults to *Droupadi*
The conspiracy of the *Jatugriha*
And bloodied *Kurukshetra* for an unsullied identity of *Hastinapur*

Man travels everyday with or without purpose knowingly or unknowingly
Their eyes shine with a desire for identity.

Basudev and *Daivaki* endured the death of seven children
For *Mathura's* self esteem and identity
Suffering in an iron cell.
The dream of *Gokul* invited them
Yamuna cleaved a way
All for an identity.

The battle of *Saraighat* between the *Ahoms* and the *Mughals*
The peasant massacre at *Patharughat*
The ten thousand *Ahom* soldiers who died at *Alawoi*
Everybody's eyes shone with the identity of the land
Assam, Assamese and the flag fluttering above .

Bordoichila comes whirling in *Bohug*
Rivers overflow during summer
Fishes swim upstream in swarms
The drumbeat comes from *namghar*
The identity is kept alive.

Konhuwa blooms in autumn
Sewali lies scattered on the grass
The rice stalks conceive
Fog unfolds a bedsheet
Snow covers the mountain
Everyone joins the festival of nature
Just for an identity.

When rain sings
The field clasps the crop.

The funeral pyre burns the body
Crematorium becomes an identity to burn many others
And the Crematorium remains the ultimate identity.

[Translated by Ananda Bormudoi]

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