

Two Poems by Sarifa Khatoon Chowdhury

The Number of the Graves in History

The number of the graves in history
Has been steadily rising
Many a true story unrecorded
The weeping of many characters
Get lost in the unfathomable depth of darkness

History is rewritten when necessary
The manuscript of truth cries out
In cunning dark passages
Bagh Hazarika who was flesh and blood
Gets forgotten like Joymoti
History is forgotten
It is merciless
Absolutely unendurable

Can you tell me
Hard times

Will rivers flow upstream
Or we make a retreat

Will new buildings
Built on the graveyards collapse
Will ever a green forest grow
In the desert stretching far away

The Hanging Wall Clock

The hanging wall clock
That needs winding
Is rare now a days.
One or two families
May have it.
But the mild ringing
Of the bell still resonates
Under the sky.
Time has never been arrested
By the hands of the clock.
Its a false charge.
Time never gets old
It's always bright
With new creations.
Man and his history
Turn dusty pages.
The king dies
The subjects die
The trees die .
Something perishes
Something remains
But who keeps a record?

The flowing river becomes
All pebbles
And nobody keeps a record.
You cannot row a boat
Over the pebbles.
Nobody feels sad over it.
But the pendulum of the old clock
Swings and ticks
In each heart.

[Translated by Ananda Bormudo]

Sarifa Khaton Chowdhury is a contemporary Assamese poet based in Doomdooma, Tinsukia. She has two collections of poems to her credit.