

# Two Poems By Cheniram Gogoi

## The Man in the Fallow Land

What is life

A distance—a stone's throw away

Fish caught after draining out water  
And eaten with rice of fresh harvest

Happy is the man whose days pass and clothes tear out

He talks and sings in sorrow

If there is food, he is hungry  
If food is not found, he is not hungry either.

Once you were in a sylvan habitat  
Once you were a poet of the bawdiness

Today you are a farmer to till fallow land as hard as rock in April

May finds *Ahu* stalks ripening in the sun

You love yourself  
Each poor of the world is your son and grandson  
You hate yourself  
You are now ruled by an unforgivable pain

You have no suffering  
You have no irony of fate

What is life  
A distance—a stone's throw away

Food for hunger  
A word in loneliness

And yet it is dumb.

## I am the Shadow of a Tree

The April Sun is blazing and scorching in my front yard  
Beneath the trees are the shades

Days have gone  
All my friend and brothers and children who loved their land  
Left me alone in search of their land  
I am the shade of a tree.

*Translated by Ananda Bormudo*

**Cheniram Gogoi** is an Assamese poet based in Dibrugarh, Assam. He has two collections of poems to his credit.