

Three Poems by Ranjit Kumar Baruah

Autobiography of a River

The sorrows
Like the currents of different motions
Within the flood water
Keep on coming

The river, too, flows on
Embracing its motion from their motions

The lifespan of breath
A rhythmic ensnarement
Of finding the endpoint
Of endless motion

In the heart of cosmic time
End is a labyrinthine beginning
Of a simple equation
Of precluded judgement of thought.

The Soldier

The man
From his own stone statue
Has gone down to the battle field
To fight a round once again
The eternal guerrilla war

Amidst the distant crowd
The man can hear
His own voice like the gust of wind
That destroys branches and leaves

The man is opportunity quister
He understands
That this naïve make up
Of the freshly bathed sunflower
Of the golden dawn
Has now been burning brightly to weep sorrow

The flag is fluttering vigorously
In the wind
In the voices gradually growing loud
Are ringing the clattering weapons

I haven't counted though
For how many rounds of the battle
The man has gone out
He has tied the shield around his heart

Fighting is better than cowardice.

Translated by Uttam Duorah

Autumn in Crisis

The voice of the *erakhati* bird
Comes spiralling

The outline of tossing *konhuwa*
Is embroidered by vermilion clouds
Frontiers of the mind
Are filled in by warmth
Of damp autumn fog.

And for how long

Fire kept alive in paddy husk
Slowly spreads all around
In a fire pit
And into the lanes and byelanes
Of breath

Orange sunshine
Will harden like stone
And burn
The dry ocean will paint
A line of sadness
Upon the tall column

How long will this continue
This autumn luxury?

Translated by Ananda Bormudoi

Ranjit Kumar Baruah, Retired Professor and Head of the Department Orthopaedics, Assam Medical College, is an Assamese poet based in Dibrugarh, Assam.

Uttam Duorah, the translator, retired as the HoD, English, Women's College, Tinsukia and is based in Tinsukia, Assam.