

# And We Open the Gates

By Devakanta Barua

A painting by Nicholas Roerich.  
Is on my table.  
It's title?  
Titled, "And we open the gates".

Which gates?  
The gate to the East or to the West?  
Or Yama's gate at the South, it suggests?  
Or is it the Northern door of grand exit  
That receives the great souls at the point of transit?

I'm Devakanta, the poet,  
Past is the prime of my life.  
Resting for a while by the roadside  
I cherish dreams  
Of interminable ways  
Ways of  
Failures endless

Roars of laughter, fun and frolic  
Spring in the recess hall and ring in my ears.  
Where is the space for rest?  
On the threshold of its closed passage  
Crowd crash for a space.  
Then where is the open gate?

I know, the rapturous rhythm of life  
Makes my soul restless.  
I know I'm bereft of all the ways  
Other than being on the ways.  
But would I have an open gate  
Where the journey ends?  
Could I reach the grand entrance  
In my soul's spell  
Unlocking on its own  
Welcome me with warm youthful embrace?

A long journey it was!  
Riding the golden palanquin  
In Peru with Inca.  
A wild sojourn in Mexico  
The wide vista of my youth  
As daring as death  
Soulful of offerings, I paid  
Along with the longing souls  
Of lovelorn handsome men  
And beautiful dancing maidens.

Dance of demons  
Led the procession

To Nineveh's winged bull, in celebration.  
Into that too I plunged in wanton abandon,  
Hanging garden at Babylon.  
Inanna's temple—  
Thousands throng at the threshold  
With their longing for love.  
I relished the elixir of love  
Of princesses and Devdasis  
To my heart's content.  
Joined the prologue  
To men and women's mindless mirth  
And carnival spirit  
On the backdrop of marvelous Crete  
Sea's bosom exotic.  
Such were the vagaries of my wandering spirit.  
But where is the open gate?  
Closed are all gateways!  
On the heaps of books  
The painting by Nicholas Roerich  
In stasis  
Ushers in to the sole gateway  
Open after all these listless vagaries.

*Translated by* **Dr. Pori Hiloidari**

**Devakanta Barua** (b. 1914-d. 1996) was a noted Indian poet, journalist and politician of Assam. *Sagar Dekhisa* is his only collection of poems.

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