

Two Poems by Sarifa Khatoon Chowdhury

What Strange

In the pitch dark night of the black moon
I have blindfolded myself
With a black cloth
And yet
Everything dazzles around me
Everything is bright and clear.

Stuffing my ears with wax
I am sitting as one stone deaf
But words and sounds
I can hear so distinctly
Silence passed on silently.

I wanted to play the dumb
And a shower of words drenched me
And I recited Tagore's Seshar Kavita
Debated and discussed
Many a topic.

Having decided not to move out
I locked the gate
Bolted the door
And then began
The journey on foot.

I went on and on
Across deserts and wilderness
And rivers to arrive at the sea shore
And to stretch my hands
to the infinite
But my hands
We're tightly bound.

Strange
Isn't it?

Along the Footpath all alone

At midnight
Who went along the footpath
Men or shadows
Before it was determined
A gust of storm burst out
And a host of suffering
Hiding under a polythene blanket
Woke up.

No there is none
Then who passed by
Sighs are slipping through
Fallen leaves

Who are they
Sitting in a circle
Under the peepul tree
Probably they conversed
While walking along the footpath
Like shadows
At midnight

Day after day
Collage of things known and unknown
Pile up alongside the roads
In the town
Air becomes heavy
With ancient words
Of love and anger
Noise and exuberance

Night after night
Sufferings wake up
The Sighs come and go

Who can tell
Whose hearts they have broken
And where they are moving
We are also moving with them
Along the footpath
Lonely in the crowd.

Translated by Ananda Bormudoi

Sarifa Khatoon Chowdhury is an Assamese poet and novelist based in Doomdooma, Assam. She has two collections of poems to her credit. She is a Consulting Editor of *PWF*.