

Gopal Chandra Hazarika's Poems

What are the Names of Herons this Side

We sat on the same bench together
Sometimes changing seats
We were all agog for each other's company
It seemed our innocent laughters would never end
We shared secrets in whispers.
We shared our joys and sorrows.
Weren't we lucky in mutual sympathies?

Time flowed on
And we were swept apart
We didnot know how.
A few herons flew away to the other bank.
The herons that remained
Got scattered

Now we have none to share a small thing
To tell something without being on guard.

Will anybody listen to the tales piling up?
Does anybody care for my sorrows?

Don't I need a crony to walk ahead
Along the dusty path in front
To show the coins I gathered
To show me sympathies
At my shattered state
Someone who shared the bench?

I was angry with my mother
When she forgot the name of someone of our group
' You can't remember a name '.

With the lapse of time
Now I fail to recall their names
The herons on this side.
I have been trying to recall
For several days
And there is none
Whom I can ask.

The Down Train

Morning at 5 O clock the train runs westward whistling
Past my house and I wake up.
It remains dark in winter.
And the clocks crow in the neighborhood.
Some people grow angry for disturbing sleep
And they begin to grumble.
Adjusting the blanket in winter
And opening the windows in summer
They again fall asleep.

I cannot sleep after the train's departure.
I cannot remember the day when the train first sped past my house.
I felt sad looking at the long rails when the train left.
I felt the train carried away someone near and dear to me.
My eyes always watered.
Once my father left me before I was aware of what had happened.
I felt very lonely in the evening.
I remembered all his advice and all the negligence we meted out to him.
I cried out at times.
To save him from the state of negligence
The train carried him westward far away .
Mother became lonely when father left
And she would sit on a bench outside most of the time.
As the train whistles past
She looks at the rails longingly.
I cannot tolerate her gaze and turn away.
Mother left another day to meet father.
And then when I could hear the whistle at a distance
I came out hurriedly to see which compartment my mother boarded.
The train speedily passed
Before I could steal a glance.
All departed one by one
My brothers and sisters and inlaws.
I look at the rails as the train rushes past.
The railway remains deserted.
Someday I shall also wait at the station
To board the train to an unknown destination.
Will someone watch the train whistling past
After I have gone ?
Will he be sad and longing?
Will he drop tears?

Translated by Ananda Bormudoi

Gopal Chandra Hazarika is an Assamese poet and writer based in Dibrugarh. He is a retired Professor of Mathematics of Dibrugarh University. He has five collections of poems to his credit.