

Anirban Dutta's Poem

Trees

Those that have gone through the severest of violence
Are the trees.

After flowers-fruits branches-leaves
Get chopped-plucked for the slightest need
If anything is sought to be severed right at its base
It's the tree.

In the name of widening the streets
In the name of erecting houses
In the name of livelihood through the sale of wooden frames
Trees are brutally felled.

Why do you needlessly cry as being oppressed
If at all one has to cry, let it be a tree
Why do you needlessly revolt for the crisis of identity
If at all one has to revolt, let it be a tree.

For you there are havens galore
There are cities towns villages
Where is a tree safe?
Even amid the forsaken mountains a tree has no security.

Yet in the forest abodes
Whom haven't the trees lent hospitality?

For the munificence of trees
As a human you remain
Birds remain as birds
Tigers as tigers
Fish as fish
Not a thing does a tree seek in return from anyone.

Seeking nothing from others
Treading upon no one's courtyard
Backing out from nothing
Uttering no acrid word before anyone
Rather tending everyone with care
Further, even after death
Donating its body -- it's the tree.
Despite utmost desires can a human be a tree?

With fresh sprouts from its base
Even after being hewed down
The philanthropic and courteous trees
Are no demonic humans
To hold them up
You needn't be least terrified.

Translated by **Krishna Dulal Barua**

Anirban Dutta is an Assamese poet and writer based in Hawajan, Biswanath, Assam.

Krishna Dulal Barua is a prominent translator and writer based in Nagaon, Assam. He received the Katha Award for translation in 2005.