

Tulika Chetia Yein's Poem

Which Flower is Pretty

I've an urge to set sail on a pinnacle
And move away
Forging ahead
Splitting the waves
To be by your side

Hey what're you doing

During those days of poring over tales
About the plough and the soil
Daubed with mud
I stood beside you
And picked up berries
When you harrowed the field
I ran after you
To fill the creel with little fish

When the new seedlings were transplanted
You apprised
This tuft is for the votary
This tuft is for guests
This tuft is for worshipping this worn-out frame
I swear
That day the odour of your body
Made me frenetic

Seated upon a soft ridge in the fields
You tucked into my mouth a handful of repast
From the bundle wrapped with a gamocha
And asked -- which flower is pretty
I stared straight into your eyes as I swallowed the food
Counting with my fingers I said
Cape Jasmine, Plumeria, Pandanus
Four o' clock, Arabian Jasmine, Foxtail

You laughed at my answers
Hey silly, it's the calf of the leg
And for me
Your calves are the prettiest of flowers on earth

My dreams dropped

Upon the meadow of your heart
On the Mahapurusha's Tithi in mid-September
I prayed with my parents in the Naam-ghar
In the fields of Kati Bihu I burnt the sky-lamp on a pole
In the wintry fields I became a reaper too
That very year before becoming a dancer
To your drum-beats in Bohag
I tried to erect a palace on your bosom
Before brightening up my heart's red on my forehead
With the long veil drawn across my face
I sought to raise the fecundity
Of our sky of love

Yet you moved away
Trampling over the roses of love
Along the path by which Dushyant disappeared once

The flesh of the body
Impaled the foes
With my blood
A lamp burnt on your floor

Now whenever the mridanga sounds in the sky
The odour of mud makes me frantic

In my ears ring
Which flower is pretty -- which flower is pretty
Hey silly

Translated by **Krishna Dulal Barua**

Tulika Chetia Yein is an Assamese poet and novelist based in Sivasagar, Assam. She has three collections of poems to her credit. Currently she is the editor of a literary magazine *Chiphung*, published from Dibrugarh, Assam.

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