

# Lutfa Hanum Salima Begum's Poems

## Lock and Key

The lock and the key  
Both are each other's  
One for the other  
Yet both aren't alike

The lock is solemn as prose  
As a poet the key is restless

Entrusting everything to the lock  
People sleep in peace  
While moving away afar  
They keep the key with them all along  
Still keys get lost  
Unawares  
After losing the key  
The lock cannot breathe  
Or fall asleep  
Waveless river-waters are inert  
Keyless locks too are inactive  
Locks that are unable to move out  
In search of their keys  
Remain hanging at their places  
As stiff sculptures of dejection

Hanging on an invisible door after losing the key  
The stiff sculpture one day saw me and said—  
Because of untrustworthy people  
One day we were born  
Today for the lack of trust even upon us  
People fix sensors on the door

Oh, this happens to be a talking lock  
I've found a companion with whom I can converse

## The House

You've built a house of your own  
Fixed your name-plate on the gate  
In case the acquired bliss spills out  
There's a lock in the grilles of the gate at night

You've built a house of your own

You've been saved from being a vagrant  
Nevertheless, pointlessly your unease mounted  
But while hankering for a house you'd grown frenetic  
Then you grew restless to go out while you were inside the house  
To return home after you'd gone out

But even when you were inside the house  
You were totally drenched in the downpour of thoughts  
The tender leaves of your dreams  
Withered even under the soft sunlight  
In the very interior of the house  
You were split asunder by the bullets of apprehension  
Oh dear, you couldn't understand

That the body of your house is real  
Your body isn't, it's unreal  
The real never protects the unreal  
And never do they dwell together

A house is steady and stable  
You're restless and flippant  
A house is mute, you're eloquent

The facts don't go together

Still you can be an oil-painting  
Hanging on the wall  
Of your newly-built house

There you may or may not dwell

*Translated by* **Krishna Dulal Barua**

**Lutfu Hanum Salima Begum** is a prominent Assamese poet based in Guwahati. She has seven collections of poems to her credit. She received Munin Borkotoky Award for poetry in 1996.

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