

Tapan Barua's Poems

True, the Forests are No More as Before

True, the forests are no more as before
However it has become a lot easy to skip and jump;
The only need is to attain the skill of calculations.

The days have stiffened
Only for the troop of monkeys
The trees have become sparse
The days come to an end
Prancing on the clanging roof-tops.

With such a thought a meeting was arranged
Those living in the jungles and thickets came out

Preparing to discuss
Everyone looked at each other's face and asked—
How have the humans become so good in prancing,
There the day before, here today
Again tomorrow perhaps at some place or the other
Everyone together proposed to think out a solution
Where and how one could climb with leaps
Onto the branch of humans.

Against Ravages Against War

I'll hand you rifles and machine-guns

Tanks, anti-tank missiles

I'll hand you sophisticated multiple-attack rocket launchers
For air-to-air, ground-to-ground, ground-to-air, air-to-ground attack

I'll hand you sea-demons of ships and submarines

I'll provide if necessary even biological armaments
Apart from fighter-jets and bombers undetectable by the radar

I'll hand you nuclear stuff

I'll
Constantly message from the satellites
Brief on tackling any emergency

They say --
What took place at the Kurukshetra
What happened in the two World Wars
Forgetting everything
We'll form a hostile unending queue
Displacing amity with an inhuman air of preparation

Have you ever heard the alarm-cry of the siren
Have you ever heard the screams of someone in distress
Have you ever seen a picture
Of the mingling of blood and tears
Ever seen an inconceivable scene of someone beheaded by the roadside
Ever seen corpses white as the jasmine

Ever seen the sorry plight of the maimed and the crippled

Ever seen city after city ravaged by bombardment
The misery of the absconders turning into refugees in foreign soil
After forsaking their homesteads, assets and country
Ever seen the ailing and the wounded being dragged out of hospitals and
riddled with bullets
And the 'holi' of hot blood splashes
Sprayed on the opposite walls and pillars

Ever heard the sky-shattering rumble of ballistic missiles
Ever seen the sky-high archway of sooty smoke impeding the entry of light
Ever seen the countless being pressed and pushed for burial in the same
gutter

Have you ever confronted the onslaught of enemy troops and tears trickling
out of terror
Ever seen any day living bodies getting benumbed and turning into ash within
moments?

You say -- Everyone's blood is red
You say -- There's only one God
You say -- Ours is a single village
You say -- We're all brothers and sisters

You say -- Ignorance is the root of all crumbling acts
You say -- At present everyone is well-educated and civilized
You say -- War is the work of barbarians

How twisted are your words
How twisted are your actions
As a gift you always offer a holy book
From which a hooded viper begins to dance once the pages are opened!
It's the passengers who are seen travelling on luxury ships
Who's seen the lethal missiles and nuclear bombs concealed underneath!
Yes, visibly we even shake each other's hands
While secretly we spread the chilling toxic fomentations!

Amid this lot of provocation
Why then are there talks on global warming
Talks on pollution control by each and every country

O' war-mongering people, O' adorers of destruction
Why then these discourses and discussions
On the demonic horror

It's not armaments!

Offer a pen
Offer a handful of rice-grains
Offer an establishment
Offer a healthy environment

To converse with those
Stricken by the war-fever
Offer a heart and a voice

Offer some remedy
To keep the soil, water and air
Free from ailments.

Translated by Krishna Dulal Barua

Tapan Barua is a prominent Assamese poet based in Namrup. He has fourteen collections of poems to his credit.

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