

Tapan Barua's Poems

The Time is Now

(Dedicated to all differently abled persons in the world)

When I peep into the core of his heart
When I put my hand upon his for a moment
And feel the sensation

I hear his heart say—much like you do
I too have dreams, I too nurture desires ;
I hear his hand say—I too have the zest for life
I've the passion, the warmth of perception.

When I travel by train and suddenly come across them
I hear them say—
We too have sonorous voices
I hear them say, though we've no eyes
We do have our eyes to see you
Though we're hard of hearing
We do have our ears to hear the train's whistle.
"Please Sir, we may have no legs
But to polish your shoes we do have our hands."
Again sometimes I hear someone among them say—
"Sir, just because my hands have been severed by the train
Shouldn't I remain alive,
Would you like to see, apart from bathing and the like,
What I can do with my legs?"

When I try to peer into their hearts
I see that they too laugh as we do after all,
Weep as we do, converse very much like us.

When I put my hand upon theirs
I perceive that they too have the same sensation of touch;
The thrill and warmth are just akin to ours.

The intensity of love I've for my mother
Is quite the same as what they have for theirs
They too are aware of birth and death
They too are conscious of life's struggles.

Then where's the difference,
Where lies the disparity?

Today who'll raise one's voice on their behalf—
The time now is to shun all negativity
The time now is to make them self-reliant

This is the time to banish discrimination
This is the time to bestow upon them equality of rights and dignity
This is the time to regard all people as human beings.

The Touch

Were you as tender as moonlight
Were you as warm as the warmth of your heart
Were you as pure as the current of the Ganges

Were you billowy enough
To raise waves on the eyeballs
Were you strong enough to have two rivers merge into one
Were you intense enough to brighten up
With the thirst of a new ray of light

A bloom of moonlight
And
The fragrance of those moments
Between a couple of fingers
A pair of hands

Would you remain alive in my bosom
As an eternal feeling!

Translated by **Krishna Dulal Barua**

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

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