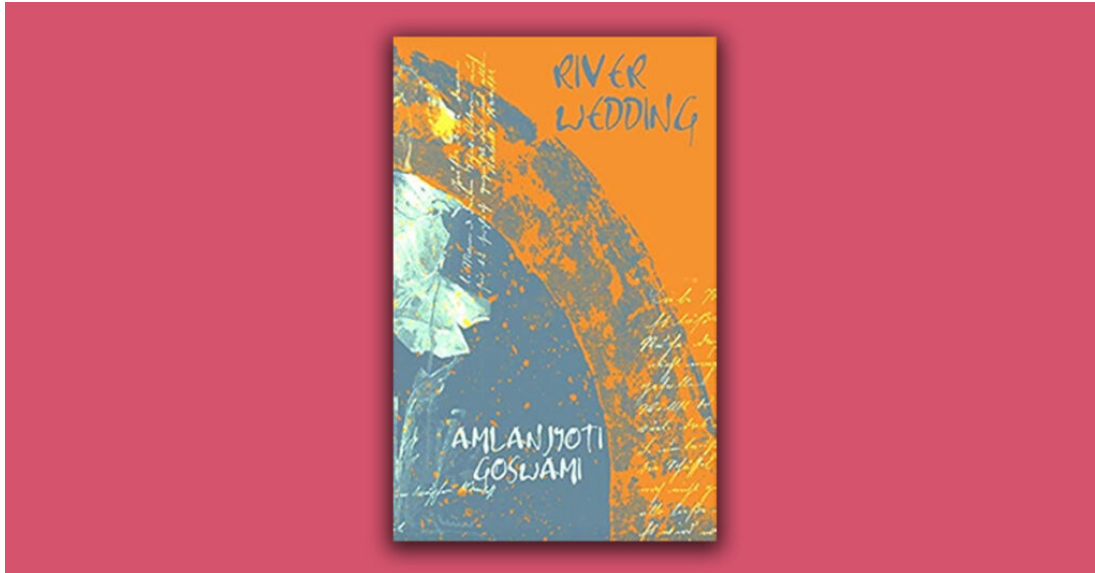


Why I Write Poetry?

Amlanjyoti Goswami



I write poetry because it makes me feel strange. This is the closest language can get to the pleasure of meaning. Poetry is language walking on tiptoe, along a tightrope called life. One must not think too much. Reading poetry is a beautiful experience that makes life meaningful. Poetry is life preserved in little moments, where attention asks for a hand. It is learning to share 'in the one nature that reads and writes' (Harold Bloom). To that end, it is a community, not of belonging but of sharing, the triggers of language, the muteness of song.

To write poetry is a brave act, of unspeakable courage, in the face of odds both human and outside the realm of reason. But the mind works as a corkscrew. It unearths description and then steps aside, letting feeling guide the way, with the eyes of a hawk searching for crumbs of meaning where there is only solitude. Poetry provides no answers but only leads to further questions. It is Alice in Wonderland, without the Cheshire Cat grinning from ear to ear.

If poetry comes to you, welcome her with open arms, and tell her there is a place for her somewhere. Let her find you, possibly sleeping and let her jerk you awake, reminding you that you have been dreaming for too long. There is only so much time left. Wake up! Poetry tells you.

Poetry has its own rewards that the market doesn't understand. It does not have much patience for recognition, the shawls and sandals. Let her be, let her wander, and do what she likes. The lines that get scratched on the page are only the tip of the iceberg. If only we knew what lies beneath!

The next time someone asks me to write another poem, I will vanish and tell the person – you are speaking to the wrong guy. Yes, we share the same name but nothing else is the same. He lives outside somewhere, outside reason and time. If you find him, give him my address, and let him know I am looking for him too.

Amlanjyoti Goswami has written two widely reviewed books of poetry, *River Wedding* and *Vital Signs*, both published by Poetrywala. *River Wedding* was shortlisted for the Sahitya Akademi award. Published in journals and anthologies across the world, including Poetry, The Poetry Review, Penguin Vintage, Rattle and Sahitya Akademi, he is also a Best of the Net and Pushcart nominee. He has read at various places, including Delhi, Mumbai, New York, Chandigarh, Boston and Bangalore. He grew up in Guwahati and lives in Delhi.