

Meena Devi Baruah's Poem

The Present Time

Sometimes I heard
Mother telling tales
Of virgins
Committing suicide.

I cringed in agony
And cozied up
To my mother's bosom
Filled with assurances.

But the deeds didn't become stories.

The deeds just became records
The sufferings grew
And stiffened into
Speechless stone.

Kunti's miseries
Cursed by Durvassa
Became stories
In the pages of the epic.
The poet sublime
Understands and yet
Fails to understand
The ebb and flow
Of miseries
That mounts up
In Kunti's bosom.

It is as if
To adorn
With the title of virginity
Will wipe off
The history of farce
Of the age.

Today's Draupadi
Out of bounds
Of courtyard
Is insulted
Everywhere
In the alleys
Of village and meadows.

Nowhere to find
The armour of protection
Nor to find lord Krishna
To raise voice
Against injustice.

The lechery
Of some
Intensifies
The pair of hands
Offering assurance
Fails to give protection,
Agony of many Nirbhayas
Merged into the silence
Of Maumitas.

Why song of man
Not sung by man,
In the moonlit night
May the tiny ones sleep
Painting on the eyes
The image of trust
Of man on man
And bathe the sea of humanity.

Translated by **Nayan Jyoti Hazarika**

Dr. Meena Devi Baruah is an Assamese poet and writer based in Doomdooma, Assam. She has one collection of poems to her credit.

Nayan Jyoti Hazarika is an Assistant Professor, Department of English, Duliajan College, Assam.