

Khagen Saikia's Poems

Issue: Vol. IV, No. 3, November-January, 2025-26

By the Kolong

The people shiver in the cold, I too shiver, perhaps you too
The wintry chill creates another veil of mist
When I stand by the Kolong
The silent mist play
Now nothing can my mind retain except hunger

I've met you a number of times by the Kolong, I still remember
I don't understand how you forget my face so frequently
Like a waveless tune of the flute shrouded by the veil of mist
The issues of our relationship too loses pace, pauses somewhere
Memories slump for rest, perhaps as gems of weary reminiscences
Of the path's fatigue
It could also be such that you're trying to flee further afar
I'm shorn of warmth as a dumb man
Or am made restless with an anxious mind

It has to be you only, I've no notion of someone else
I somehow remember the words vaguely
The town hasn't a single rose
Don't utter a word anymore, it might not sound pleasant to me
You too may have to repent
For despite being not sighted, there may be a rose or two
Somewhere in some nook or corner
The fact isn't such that can be dismissed or ascertained

The Kolong is now in the heart of silent mist, I'm standing all alone
Before my eyes is the tale of half-hidden terracotta
Slowly and lethargically I plod homewards
Perhaps I'll meet no one along the long road
You too will be moving afar
The town is engulfed by mist as by a white veil
Where no trace of the existence of the Kolong
Or of the rose remains
By then the sunflowers lose their consciousness

For a Poem

Just as my soul and body are inalienable
So are the countries and the continents, the inextinguishable desires
I simply stand at a point as a speck of dust
In quest of an epic, in anticipation of the birth of a poem

I seek to open the doors of a new civilization as a smooth piece of artwork
Triumphing over all woes and frustrations, grief and human setbacks
In the fire I sacrifice a poem rich in equity
For the total possession of the future
In the rhythm of the steps of a thousand horses,
The limitless starry moonlight of my dreams
Lies a tension in every continent
In quest of a tune
The practice of self-sacrifice goes on for a new poem
For years and ages with basil leaves in hand, the hymns of art
Keep watching the star-studded sky each standing upon a dot
For a poem where human defeat turns to ice in the shudders of their lives
Where we see the storm of art, the sparkling festivity of victory
Just as my soul and body are inalienable
So are the doors of those dreams inseparable
Where the world runs as we solicit
For an epic poem I'm waiting as a speck of dust
With the hope of a new civilization, for a new romantic thrill
To sing paeans in every heart, across countries and continents

Translated by Krishna Dulal Barua

Khagen Saikia is an Assamese poet, novelist and writer based in Nagaon, Assam. He has six collections of poems and six novels 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.