

Rajeev Baruah's Poems

Zebra Thoughts

The day keeps bleating
like a tethered goat

Routine traffic jam
for the city goer

Pizzas flying
on riders' backs

Will traffic ruin
Aainul's dhanda today?

My zebra thoughts
are stuck at the crossing

For Maradona

The divine footwork ceased,
the ground forgotten,
the football flies skyward
and rests there.
We watch without applause,
the referee forgets to blow the whistle.

What a maddening sight!
a breadth of green
and the Tiger Hills' sun
rising between his two feet.

Even before the applause
and the screams could die down
the sweating sun disappeared
premature, almost suicidal

drowned
and drowned

Who will shatter the four walls of silence
and break the wind's bones
to strike the horizon
between the two posts?

Who will now wait for another goal
from that pair of boots
shrivelled like wild banana peel?

Translated by Anindita Kar

Rajeev Baruah is an Assamese poet and writer. He is a former broadcaster with All India Radio (AIR). A recipient of the prestigious Munin Barkataki Award for poetry, he holds a Master's degree in English from Gauhati University. He has published eight collections of poems. Beyond poetry, his prose works include *Noidanik* (2021),

his only short story collection; a critical study on *Franz Kafka* (2020); *Kobita Kenekoi Likhu* (2022), a book on poetic craft; and *Nana Dekh Upoma Onek* (2024), a travelogue.

Anindita Kar is a translator and an occasional poet. Her poems and translations appear in Sahitya Akademi's *Indian Literature*; *Muse India*; *The Antonym*; *Poetry at Sangam*; *Bombay Literary Magazine* among others. Her translations span significant literary projects, including *Indira Goswami: Margins and Beyond* (Routledge, 2022); *Bandaged Moments: Stories of Mental Health by Women Writers from Indian Languages* (Niyogi Books, 2025), Poetry at Sangam's *The Dragon's Heart: World Poetry in Translation* (Jadavpur University Press, 2024) and *The Penguin Book of Poems on the Indian City* (Penguin, 2025). Her most recent work, *The Yellow Metaphor* (Penguin Random House India, 2026), brings together 99 poems by Jiban Narah.