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ANINDITA SEN

Translated Poems

Poet: Anil Gharai (1957-2014) is a Bengali Dalit writer from the state of West Bengal in India. Recipient of Sanskriti Award (1991) by President of India, Michael Madhusudan Award (1994), Tarashankar Award (2001), Bankim Smriti Puraskar (2010), Dalit Sahitya Academy Purashkar and many other awards, he writes keeping in mind the sufferings and predicament of downtrodden people.

Sky and Margosa Leaves

“All the muddy roads meet with metalled road”
My father’s words would lead me to the village.
Innocent shopkeeper under the shadow of
Margosa tree. A good fellow with smiling face
I would watch minutely the weighing scale,
as if an expert in accounts.

Father was bursting with pride thinking that I have grown up.
None can cheat me now.
I practised summation by scratching lines,
Subtraction was not matched in that age.
A piece of sky reached the ground on
Touching the margosa leaves.

Can sky provide more shadow
than a man?
Whenever I thought about shadow
I remembered my father as a huge sky,
And the grocer as the calm pole star
We are flying like sparrow,
blue light is cleansing the poison of poverty.

Hymn of Stone crushing

Those who were crushing the stones were singing songs
Their rhythm got drenched in the sweat of their hard labour.
None can remove the amulet of poverty
From their body, poverty burns the mind
In the form of fire.

While crushing stones those who watched the sun
Are tormented by the dancing of the red-faced prickly- heat
Hungry belly cannot realise the language of shepherd
It is like a dry pond of a hungry stomach.

While crushing stones they brave the storms,
Their hair were flying in warm wind
Their breath emitted fire
The well of *Choitra* got frightened by their whispers.

At the time of crushing the stones
They were thinking about the guns.
One morning their chests were pierced by the bullets.

Stone crushing turned their bodies black,
Silent bodies filled with bullets
They don't understand languages other than rice and water.
All their hopes were charred to death
Volcanoes are going to erupt in their cupreous bodies.

Notes: *Choitra*- It is the last month in the Bengali calendar. It spans from mid- March to mid- April.

BIO-NOTE

Anindita Sen is a research scholar in the Department of English, Vidyasagar University of West Bengal. She has published articles in several books and journals.

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