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POETRY

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JAYDEEP SARANGI

We Listen to the Vibes of Blood

In our locality
 Those who leave their birth soil
 They never return.
 Those who stay, remain still, standing
 With hunger and sad heart

The Sun rises each day and at dawn
 The eagle makes its day
 The flames rise in the hearts
 We give ears to the vibes in blood.

Untouchable

The man runs out
 To write a poem on fire
 Disregarding the inequality
 He runs in the main street like God.
 I ask him, who is he?
 He replies, I'm *Shambok*
 The untouchable.

Song of the River Nile

Today in the summer
 In the last leg of the afternoon
 Standing in front of our dilapidated home
 I see memories of mothers trolling
 Fire is witness on the canal
 Broken wooden bridge
 Where my mother and I used to walk
 To collect rice in Tinkonika
 We used to return home in the dusk
 My blind father used to wait
 Sitting with the lamp
 Windows are wide open
 The damp nature
 All mysteries unfolded.
 Father used to say,
 I had an appointment. Couldn't make it.
 Unbuttoned his shirt
 And showed his wounds
 As if an ancient warrior.

I used to sit beside his sadness
My father continued with his stories of the river Nile.

Our Draupadi Walks Alone in the Dark

Our progenitor, birth-mother
Used to sing songs of life
No song of fairy tale
She claimed,
We have blood of the black
Bones of our ribs in mud
With huge pains in the chest
Our Draupadi walks alone in the dark
Naked. Unrobed.

**(Poems by Shyamal Kumar Pramanik
Translated from Bangla by Jaydeep Sarangi)**

BIO-NOTE

Jaydeep Sarangi is a poet, translator, academic and interviewer. He won the ‘Setu Award of Excellence in 2019’, Pittsburgh, USA. He specializes in marginal studies, postcolonial discourse and new poetry. Sarangi has produced several books and articles on Dalit writers and activists from India including, *Surviving in My World: Growing up Dalit in Bengal*(2015). With Rob Harle, who lives in Lismore, New South Wales, he has edited six anthologies of poetry that have been published from India and Australia. He edits an international journal for poetry, *Teesta*. At present, he is the Principal of New Alipore College, Kolkata.

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POET: Shyamal Kumar Pramanik writes on social and political values, and engages with Dalit literary texts and forms of movement in his works. His writing glitters with pain, angst, and impactful social commentary. He sees his writing as a commitment which is both social and political in nature. Dalit literature is born out of ideological warfare. Pramanik is a socially-committed artist with a large body of works under his belt. He shows us a better society—one that is based on justice, equality, and fraternity instead of discrimination. His other collection of Dalit poetry titled *Aguner Bornomala* was first published in 2000 in Bengali. In 2019, it was translated to English as *Fiery Garland of Letters*, by Kalyan Basu, brought out by the Kolkata-based publisher, Gangchil. The present collection of poems is rich with earthly symbols which serve to demonstrate his protest against the age-old stereotypes around caste in Bengali society, while envisioning a new world where there is equality and freedom for all.