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JAGANNATH PRASAD DAS, PARAMITA SATPATHY

MY SARI

Here, I wrap myself In a five-yard-long respectability and bask in my own glory.

I don't remember If I had begged for this glory with folded hands at on me.
en gift

conal Literating or had it been roughly thrust on me. or it was the hesitant maiden gift of a dreamy-eyed youth.

The other day my sisters were vainly boasting of their easy comfortable clothes in the geometry of simple words.

But I had kept silent. How could I have explained to them that my robes were divinely ordained?

I returned home that night shredded the saree to pieces And chanting a mantra for each single one consigned them to the wind.

One piece was to provide a patch for the torn skirt of the rag-picker woman,

another to cover up the naked mutilated body of the woman raped and discarded in the village grove

One more for the burns ward of the Government Hospital to cover bed number ten on which lay the bride who could not get enough dowry

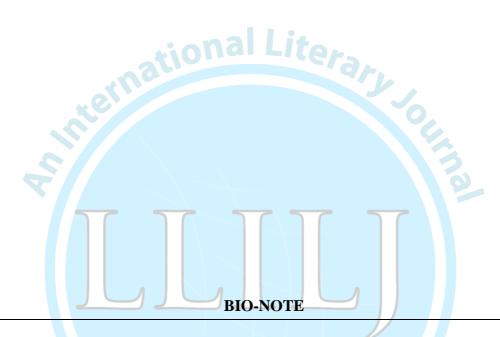
And, last of all to be stitched to the skimpy top of the bar-maid serving drinks to half a dozen customers in the five-star Hotel

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In the morning, I found all the pieces back, joined in a conspiracy to engulf me again

But, yet bits of my back, waist and breast are left bare which even this five-yard sari is unable to hide.

(Translated from Odia by J.P. Das)



Translator: **JP Das** or **Jagannath Prasad Das** is an eminent litterateur from Odisha who has dominated the Odia literary scene for over forty years. His literary oeuvre comprise poetry, plays, short stories, novels and essays. He has been adorned with Saraswati Samman, Sahitya Akademi Award, Nandikar Award and many others. Born in 1936, Das lives between Delhi and Bhubaneswar.

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Poet: **Paramita Satpathy** is an influential voice in Odia literature. She has written poems, novels and short stories and has published around twenty books in Odia, English, Hindi and other major Indian languages. She has received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award in 2016 for her collection of stories *Prapti: A Boundless Moment*. Besides she is honored with Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award, Bhartiya Bhasha Parishad Puraskar and many others. She joined Indian Revenue Service in 1989 and at present is working as Principal Commissioner of Income Tax in Delhi.

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