

The Owl Sight

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Translated from Assamese by
Dr. Ananda Bormudoi



A PWF Book

The Owl Sight

*A collection of poems originally written in Assamese by
Prakalpa Ranjan Bhagawati and translated into English by
Dr. Ananda Bormudoi.*

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Sleep

While searching for a connection
Between the common place and the eternal
At times I consider myself a passenger
Dropped by someone on the road
Dotted by bumps and holes
In a far away place.
There is no end to wayfarers.
Sometimes I imagine myself a player
In a vast stadium.
Referee's whistle makes me run to the target.
Fellow players jostle me
But I try my best not to be elbowed out.
At other times I feel
I have been dreaming awake.
In unfathomable depth of water
I have been crying for the bank
Stretching hands for the reality.
A ray of light at daybreak
Or in a word of love
Life will wake up from sleep.

A Smile

A smile may be
Some twists or chasms in the muscles,
It may very well be an ornament of the feature
But it's no luxury.

It's a rose in the face of a child
That has stopped crying,
A ray of light on a half fed face.

For such reasons
Mona Lisa pinned her smile
In a bend in her eyebrow.
Following her Laughing Cavalier
Picked up the smile from his moustache
And wore it on his forehead.

In future when painters will draw
Portraits of men in masks
They must not forget this smile.

The Incidents

A bird one day introduced itself to me
As Tejimola* and cajoled me to be a tree.
I became a luxuriant tree. On a branch of the tree
She blossomed forth as a flower.

Another day she cajoled me to become the merchant
And to go out on trading. I instantly traded in many countries
And came back with treasure of seven seas.

One day a youngster introduced himself to me
As a raven and cajoled me to become an ocean.
I became one clasping many rivers and rivulets.
But I didnot give him water to wash his beak
And a sparrow to eat.

One day a few incidents introduced themseleves as a story
And cajoled me to become the author. I wove
The incidents together and found the text. Now
The text is uncertain whether the author dies
Or the reader is reborn.

** Tejimola is a popular fictional character in Assamese folktales which is similar to Cinderalla, the character found in European folk tradition.*