

# Alakesh Kalita

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ASSAMESE POET

10 Poems by Alakesh Kalita  
Translated by Kaustabh Kashyap

# To The Readers

(From the anthology Boga Phool Aru Tejor Taap)

Ask me to metamorphose into your sweater  
The kerosene lighting up your lamp  
Tell me to while away my time like a Sunday  
supplement causing Page 3 giggles  
To disappear like monotonous Sundays.  
Ask me to do nothing at all  
Except to observe, to pay heed, to comprehend.  
Otherwise caution me  
Not to wound the words so that  
Blood doesn't sputter out and coat the conversations.  
Say that the night tugs your companion shadow  
Towards its own state of darkness,  
That you don't really approve of.  
All through the day it seems like I am melding mud  
and cow dung for mud walls,  
Whereas your walls are made of concrete.  
When my voice is honey-sweet, weaving meanings  
like a lump of jaggery  
To suckle on your precious kernel,  
Does it seem akin to pushing inside your bosom with  
stealthy intents?  
The price of my tears can never outweigh  
The worth of your laughter.  
Say it, say it for the last time  
What is all this tortuous drill between us!

*Alakeshkalita*

# Earthy

(From the anthology Boga Phool Aru Tejor Taap)

The season of rain trickles down the soles of my feet  
Without seeping inside the pores of my skin.  
It is busy in gauging arboreal lives  
An expert at zoology.  
As if  
I have engaged in some pointless blunder in the year.  
Only during sunny days when the humpbacked cater-  
pillars come out  
Lodge blotches, the sensation of touch is awakened  
In my colossal love for nature  
I am filled with reverence, when I scratch.  
I shall prefer to perish  
When the earth's womb turns ravenous.  
Along with the falling leaves withering away.  
When she becomes dusty winds in my quest  
Or when the memorial stone is drenched in dewdrops  
When the sky is clear, cloudless.  
Sliding over the skies of men  
On the sky over stones  
Hangs a liberated moon  
And the halo of the sky  
Sneaks through the skin.

*Alakeshkalita*

# God

(From the anthology Boga Phool Aru Tejor Taap)

Like the lone baton of fire kept ablaze upon the sky  
By a cotton-silk tree, love shall always hold its  
ground.

If somehow one day the world went extinct  
My heart underneath my chest would go on throb-  
bing in poisonous beats.

Upon the shrivelled shell of a dead spider in a desert  
I shall shower meaningless rainfall.

My throat is too parched to be quenched for good.  
After eons and eons of the passage of time

When the earth sprang up with green pastures again  
Even then I was the spring of knowledge/ wisdom  
The compassion of unchanging love.

Upon first chancing upon a handful of water  
I pondered about the sense of thirst.

I fancied the creation of a pair of lips  
Foremost for the yearning of intimacy

In that much simplicity  
Love existed for eternity.

*Alakeshkalita*

# 42

(From the anthology Nisphol Utsav)

I know and understand that sense of pain  
The spring sky is gloomy,  
He is arriving again with a wilting bunch of flowers  
In our heart's crumbling home.  
The evenings remained incomplete in the teardrops  
wiped away-  
Becoming the flag of Therigatha, following his  
footsteps.  
Suddenly, some new bird warbling a new song is heard  
Indeed, he thinks  
Come and listen to my hopeful ballad of incomplete  
youth of eternity,  
These are boundless, ambrosial, varied.  
The cuckoo heralding evening bids farewell to time's  
passage with such hope!  
I have prepared a seat of soft words for him,  
Whose meaning isn't different from the babble of  
newborns  
Perhaps its love or some other ancient intoxication  
Which is circular, repeating, ceaseless.  
Come and perch upon my poetry  
After the everlasting storm,  
Today, as if in this sudden dawning of some day from  
the future  
The heart of clouds has grown strangely asleep and  
quiet.

*Alakeshkalita*

# 9

(From the anthology Nisphol Utsav)

Not even a thin shred of hope is left  
On the mobius's lace,  
My days—  
Returning back.  
To this spell of time as well I have offered my final  
farewell,  
Even though the birds have invented sweet songs  
Meant for recollecting me with anguish,  
The mirror of time past.  
By bearing that tiny sky,  
I have decided not to go ahead anywhere  
My favourite window for a long time.  
Dry gooseberry kept in salt  
And several days old tobacco.  
On this map of ages  
There wouldn't be a single trace anywhere,  
Of my disappearance.  
I couldn't do anything,  
When time danced  
To sing that song which compels you to dance!  
Just like till the wee hours of the night yesterday in  
the nearby apartment  
Some people  
Were feasting,  
Even through them time has passed away.

*Alakeshkalita*

# 1

(From the anthology Nisphol Utsav)

I will chase myself away.  
Where only sweet flowers bloom, dispersing their  
pleasant fragrance  
And the farewell of old age in the mortal world is  
graced by billowing saccharine waves.  
This is merely a small festival of a toxic evening  
Celebrated by the smoke rising from burning the plas-  
tic garbage  
By those of us who do not succumb to the bites from  
swarms of mosquitoes;  
For the amusement of cleaning the passage of time in  
a corner of the compound.  
After several days since that festival, if someone digs  
up the ground  
I will be discovered in an embrace of plastic waste.  
It is good that it will be torn to shreds  
That cruel love that was there for the sake of the soft  
words of youth alone.  
After all of that, I will chase myself away again.  
To that place where only sweet flowers bloom, dispers-  
ing their pleasant fragrance...  
But I shall forever be in love with the wind that blows  
through the evening groves,  
And shall not tolerate it if I find it mingled with the  
odour of sweat and the scent of blood.  
After abandoning me all to myself, you should not  
worry about my existence at all.

*Alakeshkalita*

# Artistry

(From the anthology Joabelir Boxonto)

What can be done to keep art alive?

How is it so important: she asks just once and immerses herself

In knitting wool quietly.

In the aquarium adorning the drawing room

Whatever the fishes are up to at the moment

Nobody comes to know.

This morning a kitten was pressed to death

Under the front wheel of my car.

Mercy is lost from the paths.

I have just poured myself a glass of water, it is cold

She says she too needs a glassful.

It is half past eight in the evening

For what reason, one wonders,

Is she a bit better organised today?

The sake of art ?

Suddenly she starts to undo

Two strands of wool from the knitting.

But the subtle smile she wears on her face

Is very much unperturbed.

Perhaps the mere act of knitting wool

Is so much filled with art!

*Alakeshkalita*

# In Autumn

(From the anthology Joabelir Baxonto)

Autumn days taught me to feel bothered for no reason  
whatsoever.

Then it was that age when just below the ribcage  
An unripe sweet fruit starts budding with a/an pungent/  
bitter/acrid taste.

Then like the sweet chirping of a robin  
Within that unripe fruit a seed starts to signal.  
For this incubation

I was really unprepared, I liked mathematics.

I liked mathematics because

I memorized the tables really well when young

Like a bamboo shoot I had a joint

Covered by calyx.

One day upon examining myself out of curiosity

Like a crow I cawed and cawed and had my first  
ejaculation.

I was really unprepared for this sudden dishonour.

The innocence of youth abandoned my home

And before starting any new calculations

An immense zero came and entered my notebook.

That was my first poem,

I had no reason to sulk in self-pity

I really liked mathematics even then.

Monkeys leave their teeth marks on unripe fruits, rip  
them apart.

Within the fruit a tree of the future beckons

Goes on fighting against the wind.

O my dear heart

The favourite sweet fruit of youth

Your whole story started

In an unreasonably bothersome period of autumn.

*Alakeshkalita*

# Introduction

(From the anthology Boga Phool Aru Tejor Taap)

I am mesmerized by my own uniqueness.  
(That) my immense blackness  
Is laced with stripes of red, white and yellow  
And two greenish horns.  
I present myself like a suit-piece in the tailoring;  
I possess the intimacy of wool,  
And a reason more genuine  
Than the mercenary performance of the salesman.  
I am a human being  
Forged by a mortal humanity in terms of a  
Mortal body.  
I exist in this world  
To nibble upon a word liberated from the discourse.  
Now people have freed the moon from fables  
Glued it upon the firmament of eternity.  
Rambling about in the alleys of delusion for ages  
At last  
I have procured a dream in the neighbourhood of  
your dreams.  
I have spent money.  
When you visit me as a neighbour  
You don't bother to come closer  
To the sky-clad mountains to the north,  
Because after everything's said and done  
My hospitality is not yet gratifying.  
I have an unpardonable past.  
My anger prepares me for bracing harsh winters  
Keeps me warm.

*Alakeshkalita*