

Nabarun Bhattacharya's Poems

Traffic Signal

...the Policeman crucified at the crossroads

-- Mayakovsky

Not everyone can

Yet a few beyond death

Silently waits in the sky

Witnessing movements of stars

Like bewildered Traffic police

Did I ever know

Someone like him

Whose passage was never seen

Who had to leave

With hazy eyes

Before making sense of what is happening

I am unable to erase

Wondering about that

Dark water gust

I silently stare and wait

In the sky bewildered
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And through icy glasses gaze

Reddening, yellowing, greening moon...

Tampered Utensil

I could guess it is not too far from pilgrimage

As the number of lepers thicken

Meeting with politicians frequently

Help me guess

Assembly or Parliament election is near

Coins Scattered

 On a piece of cloth

A blind old man singing

 The cruelty of God

 Name unasked

A politician I never met

But have seen

An ordinary tampered utensil in his kitchen

He is Lenin

Disabled Three

(1)

Raincoat of sky

Covered Diamond Harbor Road

That noon

A dumb boy and deaf girl

Crossing the road

That love was speechless

(2)

Touching with fingers

I felt all - face, nose, throat

Holding railings I realized it is jail

Cold weight of manacles around neck

Wind and rain came searching for me

Felt philosophy is brail

(3)

Undivided party worker's leg

Was struck in firing inside Dumdum jail

Since then for both sides he uses crutches

A child watches and wonders

If this is what is stilt?

A Family Poem

Our family of three
Son Tathagata, wife Pranati and me
Three mirrors gazing back at us
In gloomy light like fish's eyeball
The gleam that never sleeps
Perhaps a half shadow of luminance stays
Gas Oven burning in darkened home kitchen
Phosphorus touch on cheeks of sand and rock
Wiped again and again by murky sea

But it may not be my family
Perhaps my wife and son
Stripped and walked in Auschwitz Gas Chamber
Me a tailor or cobbler half skilled
Shot at head by a bullet near icy pit
With infected chest I used to come up from mines of Natal or Spain
Laid upon wooden shelves they coughed as well
Smoky sunlight spreads
Hoofing incessantly the sun vomits blood
Sooty lungs in the moon

In every blowing wind last gasp of us
So many times my family got erased
At homeland
Diseases, Bullets , Hospital corridors, Malnutrition, Fear
Everywhere, in all places, every time we were

We could have been Nikolai Bukharin's family
We could have been brass country Chilli's three
It is so common to see
Someone who claims to be a writer, someone who teaches,
Someone who is a student mad for sports
Perhaps captivated in Leningrad, coffinless and starved,
From Stalingrad my last postcard
Reached destination where nothing remained but shell hole
Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen , Karaganda
- Somewhere falling flat on the face specs broken
Hated Hitler heart and soul
Yet no allegation against comrade Stalin
At Dresden, Warsaw, Prague
Our pianos, wall clocks, toys charred along with us
Perhaps just now we gathered at Chechnya for prayer
After a while Russian bombs shall descend from sky
At Vietnam, Japanese day, Iraq, Rwanda

Many many families of three

Disenfranchised of even a photograph

However apart from all these there are so many unnamed families

Those who collectively commit suicide

Or murdered for reasons unknown

Some families vacate rooms as well

Without prior information

Mirrors eroded of mercury are not mirrors any more

They turn transparent glass

In every blowing wind last gasp of us

Across countries and continents quiver, assassins'

 Numbing Hypnosis

In this open eyed neon the executioner will arrive for sure

All three witnessing spider nets hugging constellations

Terrorized by absurd inexorable brutal meteors

 Mediterranean assumes silence

Killing Fields

O God, if the killing fields change

Shall I surrender my head

Before sword delicate like hair?

God, haven't you told

To bow down head

I am prohibited.

Type

choked sky crematorium

city's blue funeral

mounting stairs of meaningless days

nighttime hollow cough, drunkard's face

erupts cough and verses

words while floating

on the road

in drizzle typewriter verses wake up

blind typist sits in the dark

-----**Translated by Samrat Sengupta**