

In the Ceaseless Current That is Grief

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On your fluttering eyes descend the blue of the sky
Winter's soft sunshine caress your tender red lips
Dawn's birds all call out to you to come to them
Shraabon's clouds pour on you their invigorating drops
Your sweet voice lilts in the lines of my poems!

You are the boon I receive for my morning prayers
You are the limit of my love and my happiness,
You make pain boundless for me, keeping me in sight
Like an eager doe, eyes intent on bathing me in light.
Tucked in your bosom my restive soul finds peace!

Someone seems bent on snatching me away from you
But if I lose you I'll become blind like Homer
If I lose you I'll drown in a whirlpool like a rudderless boat
I'll lose sight of gardens, losing myself in funereal darkness.
The scent of roses, the thrill of kissing and songs of the heart
Will drift toward pain; I'll cry inconsolably thinking of you;
I'll surely die like a baby bird, crying for its mother
Even as *Boishakh's* storm blows it away!
All lights in the poet's eyes will dim eventually.

Won't the death of the poet agonise you?
I'm used to people hurting me
I like the density of grief and know its depths
I like the tears that stream down cheeks,
I know that from ceaseless currents of grief
Creativity's channels break free!

Trans. Fakrul Alam

¹ Muhammad Samad is an award winning poet and an academic who is currently the Vice Chancellor of the University of Information Technology and Sciences, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Author of several volumes of poetry as well several academic books, Muhammad Samad has been a Visiting Professor at Winona State University, Minnesota, USA twice in 2005 and 2009, and worked as a Fellow at Katherine A Kendall Institute of International Social Work Education, Washington DC, USA in 2009.

Mother Tongue

At the sight of your beauty
At the sight of your beauty
At the sight of your beauty
At the sight of your beauty
At the sight of your beauty
At the sight of your beauty
At the sight of your beauty
At the sight of your beauty

dew-drops on the grass glow
kalmi bursts out laughing on the lake
sea gulls start dancing on the sea
time's nightingale begins to sing
grain-maidens sway like waves
the boat's sail takes the wind
the girls of the dusk blow their conch-shells
Ajanta women pose for dance
the meditating *Buddha* opens his eyes.

Trans. Kabir Chowdhury

Maa, Tears Well Up in My Eyes for Ali

[On seeing the photo in newspaper of the Iraqi child, *Ali Ismail Abbas*, a victim of the Anglo-American barbarity]

Maa,

this photo of a boy with his two hands chopped off, his body burnt,
his face distorted by pain; this photo is Ali's. What's his fault
in the eyes of Bush and Blair? Why did they cut off his hands?
Will he now be able to paint? Or, to shoot his catapult?
Will he now be to tie a knot with a piece of thread on the tail of a grasshopper?
How will Ali now be able to catch fish with his fishing rod and hook?
How will he slowly unwind the thread from his reel and control his kite?
How will he scatter on his courtyard, one by one, mustard seeds and grains of
paddy and wheat for his flock of pigeons?

Maa, how will Ali now ride his bicycle?
How will he hold the stick of ice-cream?
How will he enjoy the ride on the merry-go-round at the Children's Park?
How will he embrace others on the day of the *Eid*?
Or cut the cake on his birthday?
During the *Puja* or Christmas or the summer fair, Ali will
no more be able to go about holding the hand
of his parents and look for toys...

Maa, you will see, the teacher will Ali a severe scolding!
But, how could he have turned so many pages of his book?
How could he do his homework?
The teacher won't even be able to make him hold his ears
and stand on the bench.
Oh, *Maa,* tears well up in my eyes for Ali...

Trans. Kabir Chowdhury