

LONERS IN THE CROWDS

Origin (Telugu): Nijam

Translated by: Elanaaga

Forests keep blooming every day
Why not masses? We know not.
Human trees burgeon
once in a blue moon.
Some, particularly, never sprout.

Soon after darkness descends,
all the lights glow;
only the human lamps don't.
Why? Not known.
They grope in the darkness
either for want of fuel
or for that of common sense.

Accustomed to carrying yoke,
they bow to whip, hanker for a leader,
become slaves to delusive rhetoric.

They don't intercommunicate,
congregations they are though;
nor do they march together.
Don't even catch the palanquin offered.
Foolishly, they grieve amid multitudes.
They are loners in the crowds.

NON-PHYSICAL COITUS

No hint that they
met each other even once.
No love letters, FB intimacies,
bodily touches or lip-locks.
No mingling of wind with perfume,
no entries into body mutually.
No, none at all.

They're leagues apart
from each other.

No indication of
relationship whatsoever.

In this vast universe,
they had no home, nor a bedroom.

Intercourse of hearts
or ejaculation of minds –
we know not. But the earth
gave birth to a baby.

Happy we should be,
for it hasn't turned
an ostracised Sita.

WHO IN WHO?

When I can't see her world in mine,
can't view her sky in my land's mirror,
nor can listen to her tempo in my heartbeat,
can't glance at myself with her eye,
nor can bath in the acid rain of her tears
to become a washed pearl,
I am me, she is she.

Not only parallel lines,
curved ones too don't meet.
Many are the colours that can be shown;
so, can't abandon individuality
and merge with the other.
Not that one is omnipotent
and all the other formless.
Similarity vicinity, intimacy
are all evanescent.

Meet, depart, again meet
and then tread own path

Oneness is a myth
Only disparity is the truth.

HOMETOWN

How hard it is for the birdies
that've left a tree!
Amid boiling oil, burning desert,

jaguars of golden bracelets...

Poplars of riverbanks
are captured in the clasp
of cleft tongues.
Prairies are ruled by pythons.

Shattered are Siberias' dreams
of swinging on the treetop branches.

To the wayfarer of wind,
all destinations are impenetrable.
In the incarnation of mourning,
the firmament is fearing itself.
Skies of freedom and unity of universe
turned engulfing beasts.

While plundering, a hamlet it is.
But while donating, it's a hometown.

Bio of the original poet:

Nijam (pen-name) is a senior journalist, now working as Editorial Adviser of a local daily newspaper. His actual name is Sriramamurthy. He has published 4 collections of poetry so far. His poetry is replete with progressive thoughts; he readily raises his voice against the inequalities that exist in the present society. His poems consist of economy of words and neologisms.

Bio of the translator:

Elanaaga (Dr Surendra Nagaraju) was born in Elgandal village of Karimnagar District, Telangana State in 1953.

A doctor (Paediatrician) by profession, Elanaaga is one of the leading poet- translators in Telugu literature. He has penned 24 books so far. Fourteen of them belong to poetry while the

rest are in prose. Twelve works were originally written in Telugu, while the other 12 are translations. His books include those of free verse, metrical poetry, experimental poetry, language related essays, poetry on classical music, standard cryptic crossword puzzles, translations of prose and poetry and so on. Besides translating Somerset Maugham's The Alien Corn into Telugu, he rendered Latin American Stories, African stories, Somerset Maugham's other stories and world stories as well and published them as books. He has rendered 4 Telugu books into English.