



Hidden Footprints

The paint peels off its walls in clumps, the
wooden floor exhales in the hidden footprints,
I watch birds circle over the painted canoes
and slip my memories back into the river.

All around me are the multiple shadows meaning
something more than the toes of the ghosts,
I remain lost in the nazm of Aga Shahi, the
grey mist still smears my bruised palms

I talk with myself deep into the night under the
watchful gazes of yellow and white owls,
out in the distance, the street light shout
the unknown alphabets in slow speed.

I add a few more wrinkles late in the night,
one more thread of memory lodges in silence.

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Images

Moving and solemn a day I offer a bunch
of roses in the quiet river,
I quiver navigating the mountain paths, the
morning light gives the safe passage

In this moment of silence, a tiny bird sits
on a run-down wooden bench,
her eyes are fixed on a lonely insect
hiding behind the heaps of grass.

I remember the dents and playful smile
and her words linger on my lips,
where does she go knowing there is no
exit, neither for she, not for me.

I leave the canvas as it is today,
waiting for the moon rise tomorrow.

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City Chromosome

Babus and Bibis turn into a circle of inferno,
swap places, not knowing where the winding
alleyways lead to ecstasy or curse.
the late night has claws and shards.

Crows and pigeons snuff out the calmness of
the morning purging the dissident minds.
cathedrals share space with the shining mall,
smoke filled pubs connect city people.

The broken rooftops and old bridges watch
astronomical clocks tracking stars and planets,
riots and conflict reshape the soul of its people
not the urban looks, nor the driven agenda.

Tourists bustle and absinthe mansions turn slowly
into a bohemian massif, a ramshackle mindset,
ghostly dryads dance in the ruins of palaces.
under the shaky porches, rusted iron railings.

Literature and myth live in every brick and stone
resolving even medieval alchemical mysteries.
whispers capture the fables, sing folk songs,
the city doesn't let go, either of you or me.

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Gopal Lahiri is a bilingual poet, critic, editor, writer and translator with 30 books published, including eight solo/jointly edited books. His poetry and prose are published across more than one hundred journals and anthologies globally. His poems are translated in 18 languages and published in 16 countries. He has been nominated for Pushcart Prize for poetry in 2021. He has received Setu Excellence Award, Pittsburgh, US, in poetry in 2020. He has been conferred First Jayanta Mahapatra National Award on literature in 2024 for his significant contribution in Indian English Writing. His collection of poems 'Alleys are Filled with Future Alphabets.' has received Pan Asian Ukiyoto awards.