

# Translations



## *CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION*

**Volume 6:1**

**(ISSN 2454 -9495)**

**July 2024**

### Kokborok Poems as Self-translations in English

*\*Lincoln Murasingh*

#### **River**



*Photography by the poet*

We say we love river  
But never search for its source  
We say we love river  
And stole all the stones from its heart

We love river  
But never bothered to know  
Why so many rivers died?

Truck laden with sand and stone  
Pass through the heart of river

We say life is like a river  
And yet we let them die!

## **In Search of you**



*Photography by the poet*

In Search of you  
I have come to the centre of civilization  
Packed with people, city full of life  
Leaving my paddy field in the *Huk*.

In Search of you I came a long way  
Leaving behind my hill, enchanting tune  
Of my *tipra flute*  
I have given up all my old habits

I no longer play my *choñgpreng*, *kham* and *sarinda*

I have forgotten how to weave my clothes  
My children forgotten their mother tongue.

In Search of you I have encountered  
A new sun rays in my life  
So unfamiliar, so unfriendly  
Burning me every day a bit by bit.

In Search of you I have lost myself  
Now I am like a rootless water- hyacinth  
Floating in the water  
Searching desperately for the lost land  
To tie my roots.

---

*Huk*: Shifting cultivation

*Tipra flute*: Traditional flute of Tipra tribe

*Chongpreng*: three string musical instrument of Tipra people

*Kham*: Traditional drum made of wood

*Sarinda*: Tipra musical instrument

## HOW I AM?



Photography by the poet

You asked me  
How I am?  
So, I must tell you about my hills  
My forest that I have lost  
I must tell about my river  
That lost its name, my stream dried up  
And the *Gaireng* I have deserted.

You asked me  
How I am?

So, I must tell you  
My sky is full of stars.  
Faraway behind the hills  
Someone singing a song of despair,  
Remembering his broken love.

My heart is like a stone now  
It hardly rains for many days.  
Here my children's fight themselves  
Roads drenched with blood.  
My God of *Rondok* is unwell  
Depressed just like me.

The roads of love are all closed  
Smashed in the middle  
From stream to river all dried up  
The forest is dead  
Only my heart not dried yet.

---

*Gaireng*: Traditional Hut of Tipra tribe  
*Rondok*: Traditional deity

Translated from my Kokborok poem  
"ANG BAHAI TONG"

---

### **About the Poet and Translator**



\***Lincoln Murasingh** writes poetry in Kokborok and English. He has published one book of poetry, his poems were published in Indian literature, a Sahitya Akademi Journal, India, some of his poems have been also published in Sweden, and in various Kokborok journals. He was awarded Sumitra Kar Tarun Lekhak Samman in 2023. He is currently working in SBI. These poems as self-translations from Kokborok, here talk about the identity crisis, the plight of the marginalized Tiphra people who are facing the challenge of saving language, culture, identity and the nature with which they are deeply connected.