

Translation

“Paye Cholar Path” (The Wandering Way) from *Lipika* by Rabindranath Tagore

Translated by
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The Wandering Way

1

Here is the wandering way.

It travels through the wild into the open fields, through the open fields to the riverside, passing the banyan shade, just beside the mooring boats; and then, crosses the river, and turns from the dilapidated quay and meanders into the village; and then, along the linseed fields, it continues into the bower of the mango-groves, following the edge of the large lotus-pond, and then passing Rathtala reaches a hamlet unknown to me.

Innumerable travellers people this way – some have walked past me, some have been companions, while some have been only distant mirages; some are veiled, some are not; some are going to replete their vessels, while others have returned water brimming in them.

2

The light of the day dims; darkness descends.

Once upon a time, this way appeared to be my own path, intimately mine; but now I realize, I have been given the permission to travel along this way only once, and no more.

Crossing the lemon grove, there is the pool side; there, the bank of the twelve shrines; there, the visible silt in the river; there, the cowshed, and it continues beyond the granary - to all this spectacle of the familiar glance, the familiar voices, the familiar faces I can never ever return and call out, ‘Hey there!’

This path is one on which we keep walking, it is not a path for retracing.

On this ashen evening, I look back this once; I feel that, this path anthologises many long-forgotten footprints, attuned to the strain of Bhairavi.

All the stories of the lives of all the travellers, who have travelled along this way, across all ages, have been transformed into a singular scratch on this dusty way; that singular streak continues to travel from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun, from one grand golden gate to another.

3

O dear wandering way, do not render the many voices of the many eras speechless, tethered to your dusty ways. I am listening to the sounds of the dust, tell me secretively their tales.'

The way directs its forefinger towards the dark curtains of the night and remains silent.

'O dear wandering way, there were so many thoughts, so many desires of so many travellers- where have they all gone!'

The mute way refrains from speaking. It only spreads its gesture from sunrise to sunset.

'O dear wandering way, all the footsteps that had once fallen on your breast as a shower of flowers, are they nowhere to be found today?'

The way may not know of its own end, where, the flowers that disappeared, and, the songs that are in stupor, reach, where, in the light of the stars the inextinguishable pain celebrates the festival of lights.

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