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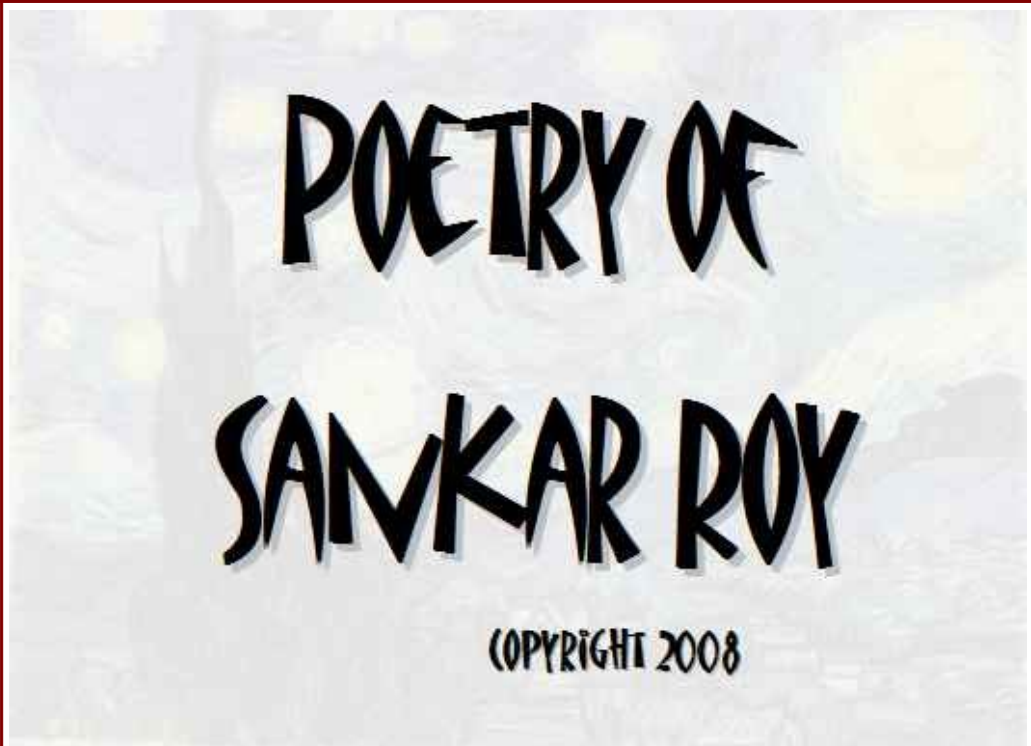
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Lost

It was somewhere here, now we can't find it.
Where it could be? No one in this house seems to know.
Without it now what do we do? We look around
everywhere— in the attic room, in the basement, garage,
under the furniture, everywhere. It is not to be found
anywhere. As if it grew legs and walked off.

It is not that we simply lost something, the idea
of losing something itself is unsettling. We ask
ourselves what it was and conclude
it was not anything material, not even spiritual,
something else.

My wife declares— we lost love!
I say I still have love. It's got be something else.
Our children suggest perhaps we lost our fear.
But we're so afraid that without whatever we lost
our lives will never be the same. Was it a good thought?
a song, our anger, our devotion to God?

We cannot remember.

Delta

The bus driver thinks I should try my luck
somewhere here. It is where the river splits
its arms creating a huge delta-chest of mud
and embraces the ocean. The river holds its keepsakes here,

such as my father's ash, my mother's bones,
terracotta bricks from my ancestral home
in its palms before submitting everything to the ocean's feet.
The delta is composed of only purified dirt.

The river has to grind everything—the deity's clay face,
hay-roof from my great grandfather's broken hut
in its water mills before it hauls them all the way
from *Bansberia*, *Hoogly* and beyond.

The delta is a transitory mausoleum,
an ephemeral morgue where I can still see
a deceased relative's face engraved
in the sludge before it is too late. It is a repository of stories

of my family's century-long distress, my last chance
to remember their deaths, their starvation.
The bus driver thinks I should get down
and dig earth with bare hands to see how black water

fills the hole with tears of my grandfather's sisters,
each of them widowed while in their teens.
The ocean does not accept anything before it is consecrated,
until all substance forget resentments and become holy again,

before they let off umbrage of human sufferings. If I am lucky,
I may also watch the spirits rising
in the vapor from the wet ground, circling around me
as if I am a living superstition.

Diagnosis

"Your blood is eating
into your own flesh you know."

"Sounds like a river of blood,
quite turbulent, breaking
onto its shore."

"Yeah, you can say so.
Just like a tumultuous river,
blood also recreates
body cells. A lot more
than what you originally had.
It creates bone islands, fleshy gorge."

"I see, sounds like an army battalion."

"That is a better portrayal. Imagine
tiny little ninja soldiers,
wearing white navy caps,
attacking their own territory.

Usually they are quite disciplined you know,
law-abiding and orderly.
Then someday they just wake up
confused, cannot differentiate
between the good and the evil."

"Yes, I understand. Years of affliction,
torture of own people,
own organs can do it, surely."

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