

Dhri Jyoti Kalita

Zam-Zam

Kallu was instructed  
with a poem:  
Oblivion is what  
I need  
every time.

He is entrusted  
Keys of the box.  
Zam-Zam  
for his songs,  
for efflorescence,  
for flavor  
and  
for finding elixir.

Asadullah tells Kallu:  
No encircling  
of Kaaba.  
For the Zam-Zam  
drenched  
my Jama-i-Ahram.

Asadullah brought  
with him  
the plebeian trespasser.  
Intervened a tradition,  
ruling tradition.

Alai stood in praise-  
of Asadullah.  
Prominent *shagird*.  
Opposed Momin.  
Loyal *shagird*.

Saki. Saki. Saki.  
Divinity.  
Mood of the Sufi.  
Mood of the horizon.  
Inebriated jolly

of seer,  
Asad.  
Seeking oblivion in a tavern,  
thoughts merge  
and flowers bloom.

*Shauq* of playing game  
with Mughal Jan.  
For hours  
they played.  
*O domni*.  
O Mughal Jan.  
O Zam-Zam.  
O Asad.

Asad played.  
Asad sang.  
Asad—the hedonist.  
Asad—the worker.  
Playful worker.

No Zam-Zam,  
No play.  
No Mughal Jan,  
No work.

That I am flummoxed  
for the absence  
of a tradition.  
O Zam-Zam.

#### Notes

Story of Mirza Ghalib, the eminent poet of the Mughal era of India; Asaduallah—his middle name; Kallu—his trusted servant; Momin-his contemporary; Alai—one of Ghalib's favorite disciples; Shauq—penchant for something; domni—a courtesan, a singing and dancing girl; Zam-Zam—the Holy water at the Prophet's birth place, people wash their hands and feet with Zam-Zam to sanctify themselves while encircling the Kaaba at Haj. Here, Zam-Zam is an ironical replacement of the French wine which Ghalib drank every evening while he sat to compose his poems and songs.