

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Hem Barua**

## **- poems -**

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# Hem Barua(22 April 1915 – 9 April 1977)

Hem Barua (Assamese: হেম বৰুৱা; also known as Sonaram Chand or Hemchandra Baruah) was a prominent Assamese poet and politician from Assam.

## <b> Early Life </b>

Born on the 22 April 1915, at Tezpur, Hem Barua obtained his M.A. degree from Calcutta University in 1938 and joined the J.B. College, Jorhat, in 1941 as lecturer in Assamese and English. He left it next year during the Quit India Movement and was imprisoned in 1943. On his release, he joined the B. Barua College, Guwahati, and later became its Principal.

## <b> Literary Career </b>

Hem Barua was the author of several books. He became the President of the Assam Sahitya Sabha in its annual session held at Dhubri in 1972 and was regarded as one of the pioneers of modern literary movement in Assam.

## <b> Political Career </b>

Hem Barua left the Congress in 1948 and became a member of the Socialist party. Later he was elected to the National Executive of the Praja Socialist Party. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Gauhati in 1957 and 1962 and from Mangaldoi in 1967. He was the member of the Lok Sabha till December 1970.

# Mamata's Letter

Dear, here I'm lighting a candle. I'm writing  
To you after a long time. The lovely breeze outside  
Is lashing at the candle... Wait, let me  
Close the window...

Do you remember the things that happened ten years ago?  
The time when we wrote the preface of our life  
... A strange intoxication whirled me mad.

That morning... a delicate, foggy wintry morning  
The carpet of the fragrant, white Sewali near our gate.  
And in the evening the first time  
I visited your house, do you remember  
... How the yellow moon beckoned at us?

Why did you gaze at me in that way,  
At the riha tied around my waist...?  
Do you know how I felt? As if you were a man from a strange land. And I,  
I a Sewali lying under the tree.

That day in the sea of our mind  
Trembled a thousand waves. Dear, do you remember  
Do you remember what Deuta wrote to me?  
'Dear daughter, keep smiling in your new home.'  
That was seven years ago. To me it sounds like the stories of the Puranas.  
Last summer we performed Deuta's death anniversary.

Your Babul has really grown  
His tiny pomegranate seed-like teeth... a smooth tooth-line  
He doesn't leave me alone, even for a while  
(Sometimes I get very angry... you're not by my side ... that's why)

Why does the little one stare at me? ... At  
My white dress? He is used to it... since his birth!  
And when he grows up I'll  
Put him in a school.

What more. There isn't much to write  
When you return, do let me know. I'll go beyond

The river Bhogdoi and call you  
From the Lohit... the day you return  
Do not forget to let me know before hand

Love remains,  
Mamata.

Post-script: You know, this year the Magh Bihu bonfire lit up  
so brightly. Granny's black goat has given birth to two little ones —  
one white and the other a dappled grey.

[ Translated by Snigdhamalati Neog ]

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# Momotar Chithi

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# Your Sweat-Soaked Face

Come love, keep your hand on my hand  
And your lips on my lips  
Let the clouds that lean against the sky  
Come down in torrents

Down the dust-laden paths  
Let incessant rain bathe the trees  
And drown the voices of the birds  
In the mirror of a forlorn river in some dense forest  
Let your face be anglow, drenched in sweat.

[ Translated by Snigdhamalati Neog ]

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