

In Praise of Dasia Bauri

It is evening. The street lights are on.
An old man on an old bicycle riding into the dark
of a village nearby
singing a *bhajan*, which seems to be his favorite,
O, my dear Lord, why don't you take away this life,
could also be another untouchable Dasia Bauri
who, denied admission, called the God from the temple
to where he was — the seashore at Puri. Like him,
you also do not belong to your community of beings.
Thrown out, you seem to have dragged behind you
your godforsaken but godfather-ridden world.
With the evening wearing out, with the old man gone,
you are bound for home — home is what is left
for you at your return, everywhere, forever —
and every time you return, you are sure,
in every house there will be a temple,
in every temple there will be a poet
and in every poet a Dasia Bauri:
untouchable, oblivious of a sea by his side
and of the world beyond it,
ageing blissfully into his God's night.

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