

O My Unhappy Land by Rabindranath Tagore

O my unhappy land,
With every one that ever you dishonoured
You too must equal in dishonour stand.
All those you ever kept
Of human rights bereft,
Or made to stand before you, while your hand
Drew them not to your breast: with each of them
You too must equal in dishonour stand.

When you staved off the touch of man each day,
The god of human life you turned away.
By the Creator's wrath,
Sitting at famine's gate,
Your rice and water must you share with all:
With all, in your dishonour, equal.

Where, from your seat, you thrust them and reviled,
There your own strength you heedlessly exiled.
Where trampled in the dust
They grovel, you too must
Descend as low, for your own acquittal:
With all, in your dishonour, equal.

He whom you cast down, binds you there below:
He whom you press back, draws you backward too.
He whom you shroud in dense
Mantle of ignorance,
Veils your own good by that obstructing pall:
With all, in your dishonour, equal.

A hundred centuries' shame upon your head,
The God of Man you never referenced yet.

 But lowering your gaze,
 The god of the mean and base
Descending to the dust do you not see?
There must you one with all in dishonour be.

You do not see death's herald at your doors
Branding the pride of your line with his curse.
 If yet you cannot speak,
 If yet you should hold back,
By your own pride binding yourself in thrall,
In death, ground down among the charnel-ash,
You shall be one with all.

---Translated by Sukanta Chaudhuri