**Goswami, Joy (1954 -)**

Sumanta Mukhopadhyay

Joy Goswami has been one of the most popular and versatile of contemporary Bengali poets. In his 32 collections of poems he has experimented with almost all available literary forms and styles. Besides numerous political pamphlets and volumes of critical notes, Joy has written 14 novels and several short stories marked by innovative and unconventional use of language and form.

Born in 1954, Joy Goswami spent his early boyhood in Kolkata till his family moved to Ranaghat – a distant suburb of the city – in 1959. His father Madhu Goswami was an extremist freedom fighter who initiated an interest in music and poetry in Joy. The loss of his father when he was only eight years old has proved an enduring influence on his poetry. His mother Sabita Goswami, the principal of a girl’s school in Ranaghat, was very protective of him until her death in 1984. Joy discontinued formal education owing to failing health after his tenth grade.

In his first three publications, *Christmas o siter sonnet guchcho(Christmas and Winter Sonnets,*1977*), Protnojeeb(The Archaeological Animal,* 1978*) and AleyaHrad(The Lake of the Will- ’O-the-Wisps,*1981*),* Joy depicted a world of fantasy, where eerie, graphic images drawn from a primeval time with powerful sexual overtones, appear terrifyingly real and imminent. *UnmaderPathocrome(The Curriculum of the Insane,* 1986*) and Vootumbhagoban(Ghostly God,* 1988*)* are creations of this particular phase. Thereafter, Joy seems to momentarily turn away from the highly introspective, condensed sophistication of his early collections – his poetry seems to look outwards into the world, into the din and bustle of existence, almost revelling in its ordinariness. This world is carefully deciphered in the immensely popular collection *Ghumiechho jhaupata ( Are you asleep, Jhau leaf;* 1989*)*. In his next collections, *Ek(One,*1990*),* and *Aj Jodi amake jigges karo (If you ask me today,* 1991*)* as well as in his first novel *MonoramerUponyas (Novel of Manoram,* 1992*),* Joy indicated the painful negotiation and contradictions between the social human being called ‘The Poet’ who struggles to earn a living and his cosmic timeless counterpart, ‘The Poetic Self’.

His return to Kolkata in 1990 after thirty years marked the beginning of a period of remarkable fecundity:in next twenty years he wrote twenty-five collections of poetry, fourteen novels, three long narrative poems and numerous personal essays for literary magazines. This period is also characterised by two contrary tendencies in his poetry: the transformation of several outdated modes of representation into a completely modern poetic language; and the creation of an increasingly complex, evocative and elusive lexicon/language for poetry, in collections like *Bajrbidyutvortikhata (My Notebook of Thunder and Lightning,* 1995*), Surjoporachhai (Sun asunder,*1999*), HorinerJonye ekak (A monologue for the Deer,*2002*), MoutatMoheswar (*2005*), Valotibasibo (I will love,*2008*)* and *Mayer Samne Snan Korte Lajja nei(There is no shame to bathe in front of the mother,* 2012*),* where he makes use of disparate elements and techniques like automatic writing, anti- poetry, free verse and violation of philological rules.

His highly popular and influential column – a series of critical essays on Bengali poetry – in the daily “Sangbad Pratidin” has been collected as *Gosaibagan*(*The garden of Gosai*, 2010). His pamphlet *Sasoker proti*(*To the rulers*,2007) – criticising the policies of the Left Front Government of the time in the wake of the Nandigram Massacre –generated considerable public debate and response.

**Timeline**

1959 Family moves to Ranaghat

1971 Leaves institutional education

1977 *Christmas o siter Sonnetguchcha*

1989 Joines News Paper

1989 *GhumiechhoJhaupata*

1990 Ananda award

1991 Moves to Kolkata

1992 Novel, *Manoramer Upanyas*

1999 Marries

2000 SahityaAkademi Award

2007 Protest Against Nandigram Massacre; *SasokerProti*

2010 Collection of essays, *Gosaibagan*-1

**Select Bibliography**

Surprisingly there are no such English translations or anthology of Joy’s poetry that can be enlisted. I can mention two links of [www.parabas.com/translation](http://www.parabas.com/translation) where skye lavin and oindrila mukherjee translated some poems of joy. Those links are - joygoswami\_skye.html and joygoswami\_oindrila.html .

I could not remember any English work on joy. In Bengali there are few. I am sending this serially.

1. Notun kobi ; Bhaskar Chakroborti (1979), godyo samgro,Kolkata,2013
2. Joy jatra; Bhaskar Chakroborti (2003),ibid
3. Ekta duto andhokar (2004),ibid.
4. Dudando Foara matro, Desh,Swapon Chakroborti (2012),Kolkata.
5. Dirghyo kobita, Joy Goswami,(2011), Gronthyo porichoy, Kolkata
6. Joy tabo bichitro anonda,(1990), Avik Majumder, Raktomangsho,Kolkata.