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April Morning, Calcutta

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April Morning, Calcutta

The hoots of the early morning sirens
still call the famished workers
to their place, wake me up
to the first, diffused light of an eastern day.
The buildings lie in contrast
to one another: one tall and straight,
in long need of a coat of paint,
others, unplastered, waiting
for their end, and so many
that are to be watched as if forever,
tempting me to live inside them, in comfort.
The swing bed I lie on, takes care of
my thoughts, puts them to
something like a sleep that wouldn't come.
A flock of pigeons carry away
my day's appointments and responsibilities
to a corner that seems to store old things.
Time falls on my eyes and turns into sleep.

The workers must have started their
routine habits, the inmates
of the ancient buildings dreaming of their
requirements of the day, as my son sleeps
his long and tired, late-night sleep.
In the other room, my friend is perhaps
meditating on that region beyond
the gods and goddesses where there is
no clock nor time, no flowers nor worshipping.
I think, in a house on the next road,
and another, who stopped counting

his money long ago, is readying himself
for a whole day of songs, even as
someone else is learning to know
what each new day means, how important
each small word we speak or hear, is.
And, with help from some strange quarters,
I suddenly let myself go free of all those things
that are attached to this limp body and name.

-Bibhu Padhi
Odisha, India