In a Night of Rain

Behind this time of rain, the old town stinking of mould and wet dogs’ skins, a mist of embarrassed thoughts slowly sweeps the dark space at the river’s edge where our homeless women have put up their huts. There’s a sound of crying in there, of an evening jasmine being born, the sounds of satisfaction after love’s being made. Who cares why this frail flower raised its head and smiled? Or when one loved he merely quickened his death? On a night such as this something goes far away, into a world where no one can follow anyone. An hour when remembrance is vague, the unknown coastline of a land disappearing into the sea. A time when indecipherable words of a lost language filter down the mossed stairs from the empty mouths of men. Here a man’s heart is moved, but the feeling is needless like that of serving my country which hangs above me: a tall, rosewood-framed portrait of an ancestor that had lost its light and meaning—in that relentless space where the water doesn’t wet the earth anymore, but has lost its purpose, like a benediction.

— Jayanta Mahapatra