

MC3

BISWAMIT DWIBEDY



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#100

ESSAY PRESS GROUNDLOOP SERIES

In Essay Press's Groundloop series, curated by Aimee Harrison, Maria Anderson, and Travis Sharp, we seek to bring together authors exploring diverse subjects through loud, innovative architectures.

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INTRODUCTION

When friends from America come to visit India, I take great pride in showing them around the cities I grew up in, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. It was on one of these trips that the artist and publisher Julia Klein suggested I write something about the cluster of temples that used to be my stomping grounds as a child.

MC3 is a third of a larger project, *The Temples of Kalinga*, commissioned by Klein's Soberscove Press. I thank her for the inspiration and support, and Aimee Harrison for her keen eye and invaluable editorial suggestions.

BRIT COLONY

Temples aren't built. They are erected. From here you can see the beginning of the city as we know it today. A small arc that has survived what we call the horizon.

I grew up in a neighborhood with temples from 10 centuries ago scattered about.

It was not my own. An other home, I went back and forth between this house and mine in a town just 20 kilometers away. Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. In the late '90s they were referred to as "twin cities"

and frequently still (though they never twined, or the process has been slow—people always hoping they would merge into one though the distance it takes to travel between them has drastically changed in the last 20 years.

Cuttack was where we lived. It was once the capital of Orissa, which Bhubaneswar is now, thriving city—but when had it not been? Are there records? of these temples almost deserted once, these stones that have survived were left untouched. For if there were temples then there must have been homes. What is the chronology, from sand to stone? And for how long have you and how alone? Entirely not my own.

An autobiography of no one in particular.

The biggest *lingam* you have ever seen,
Which translates to a phallus. We worship
an erection, nine feet and three inches tall. (There are, of course,
other interpretations of this phenomenon
You should look it up.
Bhaskareswara Temple.
No one ever touched that stone, so how can it be shaped that way?
millions of housewives have wondered.

The house was numbered MC3.
Brit Colony.
Right in front of the twelfth century.

How did I, all alone, centuries ago
might have travelled to a future no one thought we'd survive to see.
They thought I was a reincarnation of someone they loved.
Each temple is witness to the biggest mistakes and the deepest desires of an
entire family.

In a way, I grew up with many mothers. My own, of course, but also
the sisters who'd take me to their house and keep me for hours, days even.
This lasted for years but came after
wasn't my second home but third.
And many more to add

MC3

This was the house I thought of as my own, before I had any sense of ownership
When I couldn't tell the difference between my mother &
the sisters. Rina. Luna.

Namita and Binita.
They had two brothers: the eldest and the youngest of four
Saroj and Manoj
Muna and Bubun
the eldest, now dead.

A child of three, spoiled rotten at a stranger's house. Their mother,
whom I called Maa, loved me, carrying me around everywhere she went. I'd spend
time at their house—my mother was busy catering to my father's extended
family—and was happy to have me off her hands. Not that I was a problematic
child at all. Too many people and too many things to do. I must have also loved
being indulged.

They doted over me, so much so that back at my own house after a weekend
at theirs, I'd get depressed, sulk and cry, wanting to go back; I couldn't wait for the
next weekend. Neither could their mother, to whom I was a happy distraction from
the husband she was mourning

How did you find a home opposite where kings have knelt down & ghosts roam this private Rome? How did this come to be public property anyway and who gave you the permission to live amongst the dead

their house, the third one from the right where you take a turn from the tenth century and then colonization began and ended in a spurt.

Funnily, MC3 has remained the same size after all these years, whereas everything around it, living or dead, has changed. Has grown. The entire city. But not this house they move into after their father died. Time stood still here. It turned to stone.

Or that's how I remembered it. But now I know, there were years in between, in Cuttack, after his death, in which they moved out of their sprawling government sponsored bungalow (a privilege allotted to professors at the medical college) into a smaller house.

The bungalow was gorgeous with a courtyard and servant quarters, gardens guarded by hedges of bougainvillea, which they gave up, and moved to something smaller, in another part of the town, on the first floor. Leaving all their friends behind, other doctors' families, all living on street that was (once) right behind the house I spent my first few years in.

I was two or three and memories from this house are vague

In a few years, they move to Bhubaneswar, the Capital City, a planned development.

I remember going there with them on the first day, packed in their small Fiat with the cracked enamel surface which was so intricately coming apart, lines all over, like the back of some ancient hand.

The car barely worked and might have even broken down a few times on our way to the new house, that day in the early '80s. They were not just moving houses, they were moving between two cities. I'd make this trip numerous times over the next 10 years. The time it took to go from one city to the next will shrink; now it barely takes half an hour, when once it took half a day.

I never knew their father, having only heard stories about him from his family and mine, tracing similarities all the time between my young life and his, so recently concluded.

Up until the end of my twenties I was under the misconception that I was born 21 days after his death.

That is how long it takes for the soul to transform itself, to find another body. Where else do you think all that energy goes?

Now he was dead and they had to move and we are in a car packed with the things you pack last when leaving your home of many years. The dishes from your last meal; clothes that were left out to dry just that morning.

The sisters sat in the back seat, placing me snugly in one of their laps, as we watched the almirah descend slowly from the balcony, tied with ropes, the men making warning noises as the huge metal box wobbled mid-air.

A bowl of milk in the back seat, the kitchen in your car, the first thing you do when you move into a house is make tea. This would be the beginning of a new life. Four fatherless children. Their mother had already tried working once, in Cuttack, in a small office under a railroad track. In the years between their father's death and the move to Bhubaneswar, the children had tried their hands at several small businesses, nothing serious: things you could do while still in school, working at the concessions stand at a movie theatre, tutoring neighborhood kids, that sort of thing. They moved as soon as the girls finished college.

It was as if I was moving with them, which couldn't be, my mother would not let such a thing happen, but there I was, in their mother's arms.

We must have gone to the temple the very next day, if not that evening, but I really don't remember my first time there. I just know that I was there, all the time. It became my playground.

Now, each time we go to Bhubaneswar we marvel at the traffic; the streets used to be deserted by seven p.m. whereas now they bustle with cars and crowds, students from all over the country. We used to have trouble finding a rickshaw after dark to go to MC3, in Old Town, a ghostly part of the city. Buses on their way to the holy city of Puri would stop at Ravi Talkies, a movie theatre at least 30 years old now, and Old Town was a few miles further towards the timeworn part of the city

30 years ago, people who lived in Bhubaneswar would come to Cuttack to shop but now it is the other way around

Dr. Prafulla Tripathy was the best anesthesiologist in the state of Orissa. Which was once Utkal. And Kalinga. And many other names you will discover.

It all started years before my birth, when they said I died.

Where I come from, reincarnation is child's play. It happens in front of us every day. I was born a year after the death of my father's professor.

Who meant to my father just as much as my teachers mean to me.

We'd always heard stories about his relationship with his teachers, not knowing that someday I too would develop these wonderful friendships with my own.

My father met Dr. Tripathy at the SCB Medical College, where the professor taught and my father was a student. Dr. Tripathy was famous for two things, his mastery over death and his love for the finer things in life. Operations that lasted hours followed by lavish dinners at his house. The government hospital he worked at was the best in the state of Orissa,

the name of the state has been changed to Odisha, a decision I disagree with because the "sh" makes it sound like the language from our neighboring state Bengali—with which Oriya, the language we speak, has a complicated history

students and patients flocked there, keeping the doctors busy. You can imagine the need for doctors in India in the '70s. Both generous and revered, the professor liked to keep his distance, but my father had somehow landed in his inner circle. Then again, it is also nice to have a postgraduate student to run errands for you. Alcohol was everywhere.

Right at the peak of his career, the professor was detected with cancer and the disease lasted two years during which his family watched, stunned and confused, as his health deteriorated. They would go from a place of privilege to one verging on poverty.

My father tells me stories of his professor's insufferable pain during the last days, in stark contrast to how handsome he was before, an awe-inspiring presence around campus. I remember him as the man who once drove his family to Chennai when no could have imagined such a thing (long before my birth). Cars were certainly a luxury back then. The Seventies. His wife wore sunglasses. They posed on a bridge. There was a photograph of them in the glass cupboard that also held the first books I fell in love with. They were a series of encyclopedias, bought when my father's old children were smaller, and I still remember the "Peas Pudding Hot" nursery rhyme from the first volume. Each section of the book ended with a series

of questions, just like the ones we were made to answer in school, which made the book seem like it was aimed at self-learning. As if just a book would be enough to learn all that was

Now his daughters present a scientific paper at the college that the elder sister's daughter attends, which makes me think of how proud their father would have been to see these sisters who work together—

Perhaps the house, MC3, was a gift from his wife's very wealthy brother.

Or perhaps it was made conveniently possible because he had been a renowned doctor, or perhaps it was a smart investment he made—I could enquire further but that is not the point. The government had built houses along these temples and sold them to people, with just enough land around them to be made into bungalows if you didn't mind facing someone else's window, which could be nice for certain conversations.

But this house remained the same: it did not grow into a bungalow with balconies, or a stack of apartments, a hive holding 15 families.

Almost exactly across from the door to the *Bhaskareswar* temple, everything around it has changed over centuries, millennia. MC3 refuses to.

With a stone as your witness

Watch that lake appear there with this stone as your witness. This is a reflection. At the heart of each stone is a lake, black with black fish swimming in it. A lake or pond is essential to anything living, from a temple to a stone to city. This stone is a living thing. It will not stop growing. You do not survive centuries by being dead.

You once read. You once saw in erode of stone your own reflection. You grow up in front of someone, who dies. This happens all the time. Generations have died right here, this stone as their witness. All the familiar faces that used to visit are now ghosts in the garden, telling each other stories, reasons to keep coming back.

They think you can predict the future. They think you carry over the spirit, the dead come alive at the table every night, according to your tastes, what you want to eat, an ancient recipe. Each time you cook it, you invite your ancestors to dine with you.

You're just a child of nine, climbing the stone stairs of a temple, nine-centuries-old. One for each step to the altar where you had to give his daughter away. With this tall stone as your witness, you thought you were someone else from a past life only one that they recognize. At night, the stones come alive. Tigers mate in the temple. Fish eat the mossy steps. No one is allowed on the premise so what are you doing here?

Adorning the walls and archways, some animal is always watching. It grows in that crevasse. Like some animal, always awaiting a death, we were drawn to the stone, to pour milk over it and pray that no more body parts are stolen, that her face survives these very difficult centuries, worse than it has ever been, one and after the other, and there are wars waiting to be fought still. We milk over the stone. We trace our fate in the bone of the narrow hands that give on each side of the temple, an entrance, and a different story from each side about why are you here? When was this altar built for me and who but I might touch when it is gone? So you come back. Delay the departure. So we might live a little longer.

ODRA

Kalinga

Since the state keeps changing its shape still
We give it a new name with each one, come
pause between them, is never lost, only hidden,
a twig sprouting out of the crack
an obscure history of a popular game

we always begin with a war. This time in 251 BCE

once we were much stronger. When the entire country
was taken over by the Mauryan empire, Odisha
retained an autonomy, only there was no country
back then. We fought for a nameless opponent
and the only one benefited was the one who didn't.

But now a movie is being made, or has been, and will be.
We keep trying to build the glory days of which only
these rocks survive. The landscape is all we get,
an exaggerated member.

Along which millions walked
Some deported, some lost, mostly the dead
have multiplied since that change of heart,
which came to him in the shape of a woman
who'd lost a father, a husband, a son, but
not her mind.

(We will speak later of how the becoming is geographical, the topology, a skin.

Racing hills end on it. An erect nipple
in all that hair. Trees that breathe
in this hidden forest
carved on the walls
and archways brimming
with animals in the dark.

green in
the sun

these rocks hide their heat as antiquity itself
works on you like a glue
under which the men carve
yet another erection.

The boy you didn't meet

I used to live

late in the afternoon and head straight for the ninth century.
A child of nine.
Every child of mine
remained small.

Can see from this house, a temple, built on a hill built out of digging compulsively
and find nothing there. A hill built out of itself and the temple will thus keep
growing as they keep digging deeper, his massive breathless after the
climb. The witnesses stare out of their windows into the flight of stairs, from where
you see my home, so prone to storms. Such delicate air.

At the fold of prehistory an arising,
From what had been before an insurmountable task. There really are caves down
there, buried under the lake burning under the earth another religion without birth
or death.

My home made of touch-me-nots. When I left, we spoke only of the dead. They roll on these steps; they grow out of shrubs in the garden, their fingers reaching out, sharp as thorns, holding out roses on your walk home.

Bali

*Every year, on a certain full-moon night, we alight
we arise
at four in the morning and go down to the river
at the mouth of the river my home*

It's a cultural influence traced across the waves from when they started maritime my town at the mouth of the river and from the exact same spot. Men have been missing

have been washing ashore, the lamp that burnt a boat. I am not sure if we celebrate their arrival or departure. Especially when the sea was so much closer back then.

Other evidence suggests that Kalinga was the name of a son of King Bali Which adds another layer to the infamous *Bali Jatra*: translated as both a trip to Bali and a carnival on sand.

(It's called *slesha*, how the words can have entirely different meanings at once. Parallel narratives. Some say the boats are what we wish for, and if they make it to the other side, others say his (Duryodhana's) wife was from Kalinga,

a woman who watched her man lust after another man's wife. She was too busy, with her life going astray, she traced back to the curse of a sage Known for his verses in the Rig Veda, what we learn later, history is shaped the way our verses are, which relates to Stein's idea of composition as a signature of its time.

In language of research, the more you look the more you see that you cannot see the man you are married to was a monster, a demon, an asura, or none of the above. Don't make these days, the buildings' design calculated in the apothegm of a poet.

So the history of Orissa can be traced back to the birth of arithmetic. Is just a name I prefer because of the way it sounds, decided the son who set up this land as our own. (The name of my state is now changed to Odisha, which I think is incorrect,

the “h” doesn’t belong there, (it’s a Bengali pronunciation,
the language our own is often mistaken for
(they hear my name and think I am Bengali

We find a guest and ask him to raise a son with our wife. All this, I assume, is based
on something written which was, I assume, once sung. Nothing could have survived
for so long otherwise. Except for my home. That poem.

And if you believe all the sources then it couldn’t possibly be one person to
have achieved so much in his life, it must be the name that kept repeating in
different texts there were poets known for what they could make you believe in just
a few words so naturally it didn’t take much time to finish anything,

Chitrangada’s Daughter.

It was she who married Duryodhana. And his younger brother, who is
known for his misplaced bravery—lived up to his name.
You could trace the lineage to any face that smiles at you
from the wrong side of a war, and even though the King later changes his mind, it’s
at a price, never mind the peace he later preached.

Utkala

Meaning: The land with an abundance of the arts

like rice
we throw
we grind
& make vines all along the walls

simultaneous to the name Kalinga, an overlap in the cultural imagination.

Then there was Odra to the north

To the Bloody War That Had Happened Before Christ Was Born
(some say it was actually in 265 BC) In Central India

which spills down south and further back
(with Buddhism seeping in from the sides)

Megasthenes mentions a Calingae

Short-lived yet magnificent,
with the Mauryas began the glory of a kingdom.

Colony

All temples have a single kind of architecture.

There are three different kinds of temples, depending on the cult.

From where the trees are gone. That tree was important to us in the scorching sun. There was an entire economy growing underneath: a fruit-seller, a makeshift restaurant that had been there forever and a group of men playing cards, gambling on the sly. The town feels just as sleepy, only now, there are more people living around the temples, ignoring how lucky they are to have a view like that.

Bhubaneswar was an emerging city back then, a funny thing to call a place that had been around for centuries. It was eerie almost. Who had stolen the lost glory of the city? Had it always been this quiet? But even in its silence the city had its charms, brightly lit night markets in government built cubicles.

MC3 was on Baragadh Road, which roughly translates to “big district road”.

Was this a thriving center in the ancient times? There are no palaces, no evidence of where the people stayed, not that I know of yet, but only temples and caves

Brahmeswara, Bhaskareswar, Mukteswar.

STONE SUTRA

Meaning

In Latin: *Tempulum*
square in which
house of gods
may be erected

Devagriha: House of Gods
Devalay: Territory of Gods
Devakula: Lineage of Gods

In the North: *Prasada*
In the South: *Vimana*—a space ship
Or *Harmya*:

The term Mandira, what I know as the word for a temple, was first used in the seventh century. They say the first temple was built in the third century. In Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan spread across the country, particularly in the Gupta Age.

Influenced by: *Shilpasastra*, *Vaastusastra* and *Natyasastra*.

“However, an inscription of 1235 AD in the *mukhamandapa* of the Amritesvara temple at Holal in Bellary district of Karnataka speaks of a fourth style i.e. Kalinga in addition to the above three.”

—
Dibishada Brajasundar Garnayak, *Evolution of Temple Architecture in Orissa*

So the origins of the Kalinga style were known in Karnataka. There was an exchange between this home and the other, my own (I live in Bangalore

There was also a sub-style of the North Indian style, which means that the artists must have travelled here, on their way to elsewhere Bali?

Rathas, the word for chariots, is the plan and *pagas*, which can also be deciphered for climate—or something like feet—an extent—is the elevation.

How high the weather

Sati

Let's play a game of joy and release. The site is the control of the mind over hand and feet and controls all three as soon as you enter. It's all your technology combined, on television, a legitimate show opines that Indian gods are aliens.

These are patterns repeated over and over,
what he calls the "qualities without a name."

It's a video game, where the warriors are beautiful women and grotesque masks come to mate at night, where cities that have made their way from mythology & are now going back. That's what history is. No matter the beautiful "narrative" we must bid it goodbye.

But how can I? It's right there when I wake up.

Lesson One: if at any point the architect feels like he is failing, he should quit never mind if these weren't places of pilgrimage, we are interested in daily lives, why you went there every day & which one of your visits isn't seeking

a darshan. A tirtha of the mind

Which everyone must seek at a certain age.

"Its support is in the place itself"

which is to say: The gods play around this lake, any lake itself is the sun dispersed, and so things grow in darkness, "*the umbrellas of lotus leaf ward off the sun's rays*"

(where rivers are bracelets on the earth, an adornment on sacred ground. On which fell the disembodied body of a woman

dead sati

across 51 blooming cities. We don't care about the rest of the world.

Plan

Is essentially always a square. Which turns to a circle.

The diagram builds a communication between all times and all places.
Between the priest and the architect, and hence the (self-)importance of all these guides.

The plan is to make them go there to look at—*darshan*.
He asks, “will I see the goddess tonight?”

The architect on the other hand was required to know poetry. Other sciences, and astronomy, which forms an ocean out of stones. The crowds come in waves. Whereas the architect himself is doomed to become a ghost and wander the earth if he doesn't know math then his worth will “faint” in time like a timid man in a battlefield as if it were only a watercolor.

A work on something as modern as paper.

The Architect

Closely related to the word *Stapatha*, which is the Patron,
Stapathi, the Architect
Is the one who makes the arrangement for this existence
whereas the former provides for it.

Must be capable of stepping back, astonished at his own work

Whose Patron is *Viswakarma*
who had nine illegitimate sons with a *Sudra* woman, and all of them experts in the arts. Their father rides a peacock giving out the boon of dexterity.

Any work of art is a material reconstitution
of limited human personality
achieved by employing rhythms to create
imitations of the divine.

It is the rhythm
he leaves behind like a musician
that we worship the astonished animals
turned this way and that their ears raised
shocked that they cannot move
trapped in the heat of this music.

Cord and Rod

Sutra
and *Danda*. You see how it works out. A Sutra is a bit of knowledge or something repeated over and over again on your very breath which is also the word used for a piece of string used to measure. I've seen it in construction all around town.

The proper measurement of should be known
each breath must also honor the art that life itself

is in the likeness of the universe, and its reduced image on your palms.
Hence all that sex what your carve.

Each architect has an assistant, a son or disciple, who accepts the tithe
Sutragrahin applied astrology
of the everyday, that will outlast time.

The construction must start under auspicious stars.
The builder's life is connected to the measurements of the temple, his disciples weave into it an autobiography, both collective and anonymous.

It's a confidentiality agreement of the most effective kind:
You are not allowed to come back home until the work is done.

Stapathi

Master of What Stands or Abides

Make matter stick to order
when the world around us is going up in chaos. The diagram is a trick to make the supreme principle stick to a spot by geometric contrivance. What is bound to withstand all the disasters which never happen, and happily take the credit

in regards to stability in an impermanent world
the very foundation is a demonstration of precisely that bestowed on everything moving, a spot of calm, your home is ruled by death in that you are allowed to live in it.
At any moment, an isn't anymore

but it is also a rhythmic formula that asks the ghosts to leave
"the site" magic of an active Earth in their erection conjured up in 16 dishes of lunar shape, which is to say a bit of the moon in each, which is fire, and also the earth (science will prove later) a field grazed by cows before Good Sir got there. Thus purified by their impurities we ask her to bring a little cow dung before the feast

and even the ground all over like a mirror
with her very own hands because no one ever adheres to the original number. There are always more mouths to feed, a square is always multiplied, the four directions, sunrise and sunset are tied to this plan, an "intellectual foundation" that will foretell how each stone grows and knows it is the nature of the soil.

The Outer Walls

An assemblage of animals
bordering the grotesque
A lion atop an elephant
welcomes you. From above
Looks like a body laid open, bare,
we have them standing naked
to renounce the very vehicle that got us here.

Leave your body at the door and enter.
The stairs are lined with shoes
so what enters inadvertently is not desire
(enter mine.)
Each temple as a man that is part woman
for what else is the empty space
now that they are ancient. Back then, we didn't know.
It was all very new.

It's easier to follow a discussion online
likes eavesdropping on theories shared by your aunts.

There remains to each body something a bit wild, a little jungle
where all those names I do not know yet align, so I go searching
for them in my garden. We've all heard stories, how a certain
phylum survives. This is the flower he held. That is the fruit
offered on his chest, a trunk, the branch he broke & this is that
balance between flesh and foliage. All that we are not looking at
continues to grow faster than a city's demise our lost cause,
staves off, a passion for what we can do without. The simple
tools we use to assess prehistory.

Bhu

Goddess along with element *prithvi* yield her surface

The ghost of her is embedded into the Earth for it to fertilize into roots
of words in common.

Vastu: Material Things

Vastav: Truth

Bhumi: The Ground

An Early Science of Material Things

The Relation of Plan to Site is that of tonic to
musical composition & a square can
be converted into an octagon, triangle or circle, even the mandala is a closed
polygon as essential form that denotes his agreement with the plan.

A measure of the elevation of the temple is always related to music, in the *taal* or
chhanda, which is essential rhyme, an intricacy or fold caused by a repetition.

One presupposed the other, and results from it, charted out in the celestial
using a cord, a mark of order and "perfection beyond life and death." Sometimes
the bamboo rod is rotated in circles that will make the square.

Measurement

Fire and Altar
Circle and Square
Chart a spine along the East-West line:
One of them terrestrial and the other
box inside a box is how we thought
these pixels would look
each with its own fire burning.

They build it step-by-step
replaced the square by circling fire by
fire it's the brick that transforms
the domestic into the celestial whose
Nucleus is also a square in which are
Planets rooted in "the feet" as home
a measured sound made to remember.

We take a walk with each breath.
Fire and Altar
Meaning and Form
is ritual, as commentary
occurs simultaneous to the pouring
of ghee onto the raised platform
which measures the extent of the Earth.

(Bedi, not sonically unrelated to Veda, sounds like a part of our family name, Dwibedy, who is someone who is supposed to have studied two out of the four Vedas. I clearly haven't

Now leaving behind the circular form of the Earth because we are more interested in the Heavens, whose form is cubed, glass inside the ice, we play with a small square each time we sit around fire, we harvest a small field, and civilization begins.

You are the fire times the length from your elbow to the tip of your little finger. Each one of us is five times this size. And at our most, with the arms extended with the middle line being the square root of the distance between you both.

Imagine a scene: two men sitting side by side by fire by earth by all that is present. Two spines coincide, at a great Indian wedding, or that's what it looks like from behind, their backs, glistening, as they sat facing the fire.

Even the navel is a square and

measures a span. And the fire pan made of clay is the cube of the womb that holds the entire manifest universe. We anoint the rocks and place it inside each brick, a temple, the *Grabhagraha*, and extend out,

here the earth forever remains a handful of grass, will keep on budding, there is infinity but we now need to know about the patterns that could have helped these temples survive because nothing I do will. The God inside was never one.

It was just an excuse to keep coming back to stare at all these men made out of stone.

Vimana

Later translated into an airplane, a vehicle, a measuring rod.
You wouldn't have been allowed to enter
but might have been able to sneak in. Hiding
the composing parts, together in an assemblage

To measure is to give it a new shape each time, for so much depends
on your hands, whose shadows measure the sun. The inner rhythm
of man are evoked in these short walks during which the shadow
always falls to the inside and it is the repeating that has raised
an entire metaphysics out of a single rock.

But that happens elsewhere, by another beach.

Here, "the rhythm evokes a reality and the measure builds it up"
in the way they are performed
and to what the performance leads us

Both the *Vedi* and the *Veda* are symbolic compositions,
as much air as Earth, measured into
multiplying units of nothingness. So it is the body of
a God
we are

proportionally measuring throughout. The wall is thick. The inside width is half its
external width. So technically, it is only half full. This is the womb. And the height
of the temple is double the external width of the wall.

The stone the donor offers, however, is measured in fingers we
flower and pour milk over

the measure of a true man
is elementary, not architectural. They suspect it to be more original
than the relationship between an image and the divine.

Prasada

Not a building up, but a settling down.

And always an offering.

Your build a home keeping in mind

the many who come hungry

and return, having tasted

her grace in each morsel

feeding thousands of strangers.

Istaka

Named after what is produced from but has no place in these rituals

Both his body & a bodily device

remained its own pristine architectural form.

The wood and trees are symbols of

each book as a dharma

the foundations of which are laid out in a stone jar

in the center of 64 squares

wrapped in cloth and anointed, enshrined.

Lotus and Tortoise

are like the support of the temple

balanced atop a crocodile from whose mouth the water pours out.

No gods are involved now.

This is the worship of pure stone

before history entered.

Stone

In India, stone came to popular use in building after the sixth century, which seems impossible to believe. By then we had found the tools to dislodge the tooth from a hungry mouth and feed it aesthetics instead. Each structure that wasn't used

erupts out but doesn't bite down the earth. Its lightness is that of breath itself as you walk around it, admiring the origins of filigree.

The four stones down there are four books

a la Little Sparta and the foundation to any temple is a text. In that, the same mantras are used to measure just how long is your breath, how far can you walk times the time it will take you to walk around the temple every morning. I'll see you by the ninth century, in, say, 45 minutes.

That stone lotus is actually an onion. A soft breast, exposed, the ripple of his wearing nothing but gold. That's the sun behind, and all over his shoulders, a jar full of treasures that has just been opened. Underneath each temple, infinite wealth, returned to earth. Each walk around the premise is also a turning back of time, a return of everything that isn't yours and everything that had been sacrificed

Take a leaf and place it on the golden sun. And then to the folded stone, add a flower, and place on it both Earth and Air, facing the golden man who holds the tortoise in one hand and the promise of a long life in another, the fire, his navel, the seed and germ, donated again according to the status of the owner.

But even the stone was marked. Was not suited for the lower castes. This nothing to be had still lingers, and so we worship the air instead.

What was, by nature, colored as such, was sanctioned ours and everywhere they found it, they called home.

At night the Priest and the Architect go out to appease everything that lived before them,

and will together supervise,

which is to say, build a relationship between everything that happened

and all that is about to come.

And just as suddenly
Goblins appear in the story
in the lab they conduct tests on samples from the quarry
in which each severed specimen carries a small rock within it,
pith they called prehistory.

Superstructure

Unchahara: A Tall Garland

The elation and elevation are related
in a non-sensuous relationship, and hence the
arrival of stairs for the body
seeks to reach its highest point.

& release
a vision
for which we had climbed
& stood in line for a day.

How step-by-step we rise up until
at the very top, a fierce lion
guarding the untamed sun, the unnamed god
whose gender it takes us some time to
figure out. Centuries, in fact.

Is a game of
expansion and contraction
where qualities of the heart are
seen all over this truncated body.

The walls are the neck in which
blood flows down to the animals below,
closer to the ground, their stone
mouths open. It is impossible to quench
their thirst.

Curvilinear

As a rule, we are only because
men have looked down upon
us with such kindness
straight into your eyes.
Warriors stare each other down.

Reach its climax at the *Shikhara*, or The Vortex
is the subject of the verse. Has been, since way before
Pound's age, peaks like the city allover a pleasure.
We are not given credit for. Like how to make time
move by not moving. How to make a new time
in the palm of your hand, a son made of dirt,
is our most popular deity, with an elephant's
borrowed tusk and a half
the trunk, which leads to good luck
depending on what side it points to
sitting idle an idol at your desk.

And sometimes the temple changes shape mid-way,
imperceptible to all but who had imagined this.

Graha: Planet
Gruha: Home

One is derived from the other, and as is a foe
like a planet that is all retrograde
right when you are planning a vacation
to see the temple that is never a building
but a massive crown on a momentary
bow down.

Worked
generation after the next.
They pushed the sleep out of their eyes.

The *laya* is the rhythm they exist in.
It happens at odd times, but at least once every afternoon,
when all of them are lost in the sound of the shore
taking shape to the sea. Talking shop,

what isn't a family business?

So he appears with ten hands, or in another alternate shape, with four
hands on a white lotus in a mantra from *ishanashagurudevapadati*

whose meaning isn't in the language per se
But vibrations that cast before meaning as if
we were meant to carry tradition of counting
in our sleep, each grain of rice you didn't eat &
write on it instead formulae it is composed of

neither math nor number

but leads the unmanifest across the threshold of
being inseparable from the male in her a point
both sperm and speed; particle and wave that
ends in the void the very high point it supports
its body intricately one becomes a mode of void
itself—from which existence bursts forth.

Deva Prasad

My brother's name
is also the seed,
what they feed
the God, and
what he feeds us. Is what she dwells in,

which is why, all food, all books are sacred.

These are all ancient names of what you will once call home.

The shape of the fire altar is independent of time.

Each temple is an offering made to the gods
by giving them a home.

An inward realization can only be achieved
by draining out your wealth and strength. So he went on
another building rampage.

“A world conquer campaign,” as my brother used to say
drew a straight line across a map
and let the priest and the architect connect
the fact that often it was a Queen
on whose insistence these gardens were built.

“The Hindu temple doesn’t fulfill its purpose by being built. It has of necessity to be seen.”

Thus the ornate stone
and hence her weight in gold.

So we go out walking down the street, scared that someone will,
“a chain snatching” incident, though that has never stopped us from wearing
all that jewelry & only that.

You cannot miss the lack of clothes. That’s just
a necklace, strategically placed, the less is more
was all the rage in the ninth century
and the tenth
and so on.

Goes both upward and deeper, thicker.

In each part of the body of the structure, a purpose
and hence the pose. Then add to it any number of pillars
multiplying the circumference into a square. The walls of the temples
actually tell a story of what was at that time happening there, and are hence
a collective autobiography of a group of men
who were in the business of remaining anonymous.

So the animals you see carved in time have all actually been sacrificed.

These were the rites, remembered on the surface of the temples,
as horses, men, orgies.

They say the Rajarani Temple still remains incomplete,
though all the sculpting was done in situ

& in south India, even the temples had a gender,
male, female, or neuter depending on the material
used in their making?

To make a brick, wet the soil with milk of mango
and pine
and three other fruits whose names aren’t given to us.

The brick must also be used only for the temple that it has been baked for arranged
as if pressed from the center towards the perimeter by the small hollow of the
womb.

Thus, each temple is a man with a woman inside. Or a man inside a woman.
Measured into pilasters and turrets, steps out of its own limits, elastic boundary
oscillating between what it means to be devoted and free. So it breathed. What
thing isn’t hollow in the middle, empty inside from the pressure with which it
impresses itself on the walls, like a fingerprint

“A monument stands in space. It doesn't face it.”

Each brick retains a bit of the landscape it was once a part of, and that's what draws
the crowds, the trees now having (swiftly) disappeared who soften the stone
with each touch, and it listens to them
and is thus a monumental success, bathed in the same fire as each brick of the
temple, and just as each cell breathes,
the essence, they say, stays burnt into the mud,
the feminine part that steps into the fire to become the man that will represent
the universe whose parts we will come to worship.

The building has always been a living thing
and in each shell, laid out in relation to the course of the sun
the sun that has now run its course.

From five to nine, and eight fingers deep, embedded in the earth,
which is embedded in the Temple
as the inbuilt distinction
of the generous one

and let the elephants walk on
her back embedded in each brick.

AUTHOR BIO



Biswamit Dwibedy is the author of *Ozalid* (1913 Press, 2010), *Eirik's Ocean* (Portable Press/Yo-YoLabs, 2016), and *Ancient Guest* (HarperCopllins, 2017), with two books, *Hubble Gardener* and *Erode*, forthcoming from Spuyten Duyvil Press in 2018. Recent work can be found in the Brooklyn Rail, Poetry Foundation, Almost Island, and The Bombay Literary Magazine. He is a co-editor of Journal 1913 and the founding editor of Anew Print, an independent press devoted to translations and reissues. Dwibedy has an MFA from Bard College, New York, and lives in India, where he teaches at the Srishti Institute of Art, Design, and Technology in Bangalore.



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