

What Do You Know?

by Dilip Mohapatra (June 2016)

What do you know
of the price of a piece of cloth
fluttering on the top of the mast
that is paid with
the sweat and blood of the martyrs
who rotted in the four by six cells
whose bodies hung at
the end of the oppressors' noose
who took the bullets
and the brunt of the bayonets
that ripped their entrails
and riddled their hearts?

What do you know
of the value of a piece of cloth
that proclaims your sovereignty
your liberty and honour
that is embedded with
the aspirations and
emotions of the millions

who leave no stones unturned
to carve a niche of your nation
on the global atlas
and keep it flying high
come what may?

What do you know
of the value of a piece of cloth
that drapes the coffin
of the valiant hero
who lays down his life on the borders
so very willingly
so that you may continue to
live in the comforts and security
of your home
and his eternal breath replaces
his ephemeral breath
to keep it fluttering ever after?

What do you know
of the value of a piece of cloth
if you question the timing

if you question the occasion
if you question the motive
for it to be hoisted
in the premises of temples of learning?
Remember its not just a symbol
nor is it a poet's metaphor
it's the glue that unifies and binds
with a heart of its own that beats
only for you.

Dilip Mohapatra (b.1950), a decorated Navy Veteran started writing poems since the seventies . His poems have appeared in many literary journals of repute worldwide. Some of his poems are included in the World Poetry Yearbook, 2013 and 2014 Editions. He has four poetry collections to his credit published by Authorspress India, and one non-fiction, a book of wisdom titled Points to Ponder. He holds two masters degrees, in Physics and in Management Studies. He lives with his wife in Pune. His website may be accessed at dilipmohapatra.com.

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