



poem

Circles of Passion

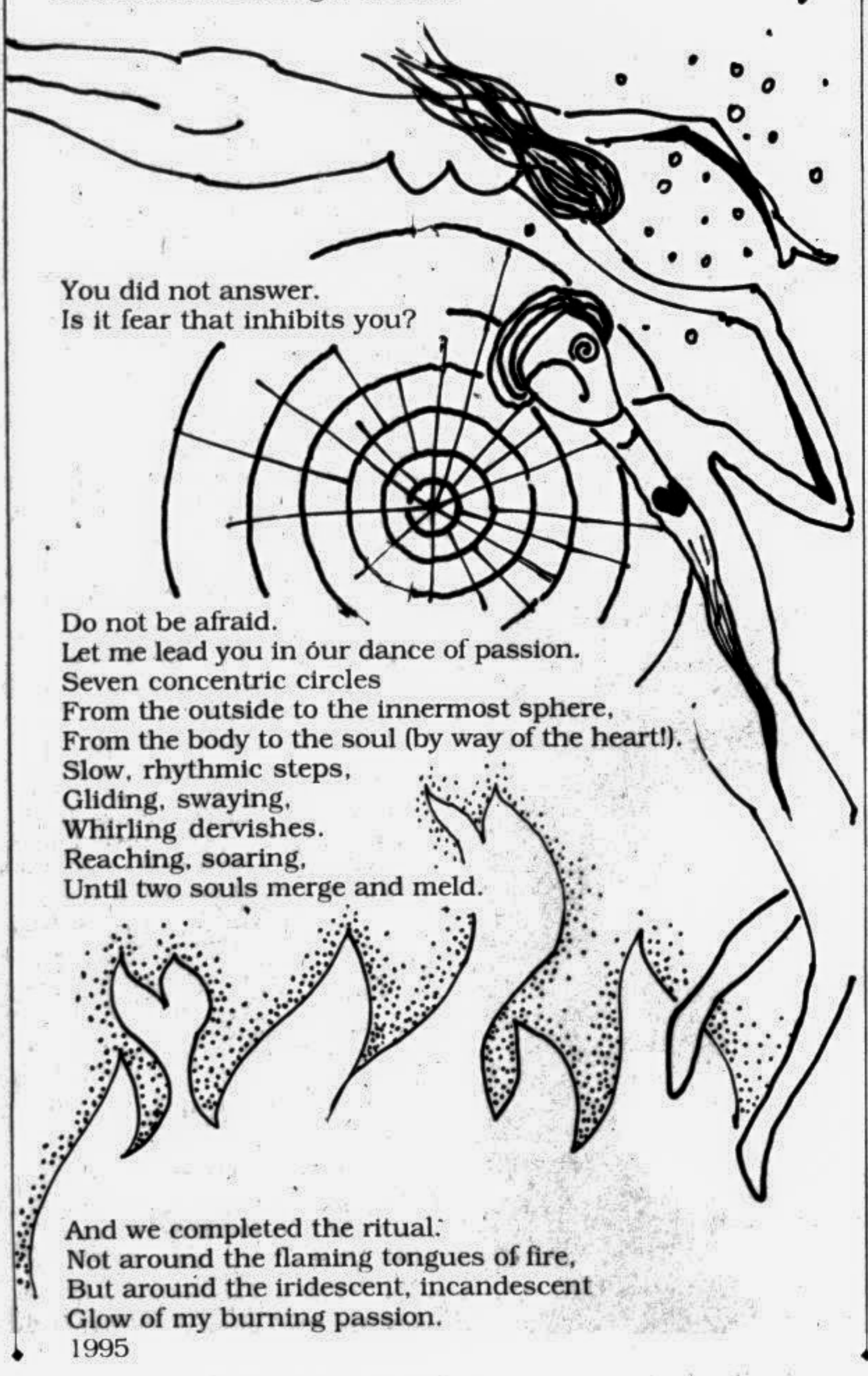
by Rebecca Haque

I asked you, "Like the seven stages of grief,
Are there seven stages of love?"

You did not answer.
Is it fear that inhibits you?

Do not be afraid.
Let me lead you in our dance of passion.
Seven concentric circles
From the outside to the innermost sphere,
From the body to the soul (by way of the heart!).
Slow, rhythmic steps,
Gliding, swaying,
Whirling dervishes.
Reaching, soaring,
Until two souls merge and meld.

And we completed the ritual:
Not around the flaming tongues of fire,
But around the iridescent, incandescent
Glow of my burning passion.
1995



profile

Desnos, The Poet of The Night

by Jean-Marc Dupuich

The French poet Robert Desnos died some fifty years ago, on 8th June 1945, deported to the camp of Terezin in Czechoslovakia. He was born in 1900 and had been one of the earliest Surrealists, the oracle of the dream sessions. His poetry broke with automatism and would remain faithful to the sources of the night.

Think of you Desnos who left from Compiègne... The poet Aragon thus sang the "Complainte de Robert le Diable" (the lament of Robert the Devil). The trains of death set off from Compiègne and, on 27th April 1944, Desnos was flung into a convoy. He had joined the Resistance in 1942, they day after the raid on the Vel d'Hiv stadium. He had worked in intelligence and cried revolt in his poetry. "Yet the heart hated the war and beat with the rhythm of the seasons/ But a single word, Freedom, sufficed to awake the old anger".

Freedom and the nights of the Twenties. A wave of dreams spread over the Surrealists. Desnos astonished people by his disposition to vaticinate and to speak an automatic, oratorical and lyrical language without hesitating. "Nobody would have rushed into all the paths of the marvellous like he did", Andre Breton admired. He played with words and sought the sense in the affinity of sounds. Hence the aphorisms of Rose Selavy (a pun on c'est la vie: that's life!), a character as erotic as life, taken from Marcel

Duchamp, rests on equivocal coincidences.

From the last poems in "Corps et Biens", his first collection (1930), Desnos imposed a regular meter, a respect for rhyme and a composition in verses, on the puns and images that surged forth. It was not only affiliation to tradition but another way of exploring the possibilities without forgetting the rhythm and simple beauty of old songs and nursery rhymes. In the postscript to "Fortunes" (1942), he asserted his quest for a both popular and lyrical poetic language.

Newspapers and, above all, the radio provided him with a fantastic means of inscribing his words in the "public domain". He presented daily programmes, invented advertising slogans, adapted Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" together with Alejo Carpentier, promoted serials by producing "La grande complainte de Fantomas" on the air, and songs. He became a music critic and was fascinated by the cinema, another popular art.

He was fond of "little cafes, and bars at dawn", "early-morning men" and "women waking early in the



Robert Desnos

morning". He wrote "The man who wishes to catch typhoid/In order to rest in a nice white bed". He wrote "Women dragging bruised feet to work". There was

nothing ideological in this sympathy. In 1927, Desnos reproached his Surrealist friends for their political commitment.

He loved Paris where he

was born, and the working-class districts where he wandered away his childhood and his idle youth, Saint-Martin where his family lived, Saint-Merri, and Les Halles where his father worked. And the streets and the walls of the town opened onto a mental landscape of seas, rivers and lakes, dark forests and Medieval lands with their emblematic flora.

He loved songs, and a woman singer. He was madly in love, but without requital. "Oh pains of love!" She was "the mysterious one" in "Corps et Biens". "I have dreamt of you so much that it is, no doubt, no longer time for me to wake".

She was the star which remained silent in "The night of loveless nights," long blues of wanderings and despair. And then another night was born to love, in another form, that of a mermaid, in another woman, Youki.

Heartless nights and then nights of love which are "nights of every twenty-four hours", nights over Paris, nights of Fantomas, nights in cinema auditoriums, nights of "quatre sans cou" (literally "four without necks", a pun on "quatre

cents coups" (having a whale of a time)), nights of hypnotic dreams, nights of Resistance and nights of many many poems. They were Robert Desnos' nights, with his shadow theatre, his conniving sky in which his eyes so blue, so pale, blinked as "the sources of the night are so very bathed in light".

He had written, "Oh nothing can separate the mermaid and the seahorse". The Gestapo decided otherwise. On 22nd February 1944, Youki saw him for the last time. He was to go through the long torture of deportation, from Compiègne to Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Flossenbourg, Floha and Terezin. That was where he died, exactly one month after the Liberation. The care and devotion of the young Czech nurses, who knew his poetry, could no longer save him. On 8th June 1945, with no strength left in him and with no life left, he rested. Was it the sleep that he had evoked in "Apparition"?

"A beautiful sleep, a good sleep ...

So that finally, covering the universe,

A bouquet, a huge bouquet of red roses, bloom".

L'Actualite En France



Photo by A K M Mohsin

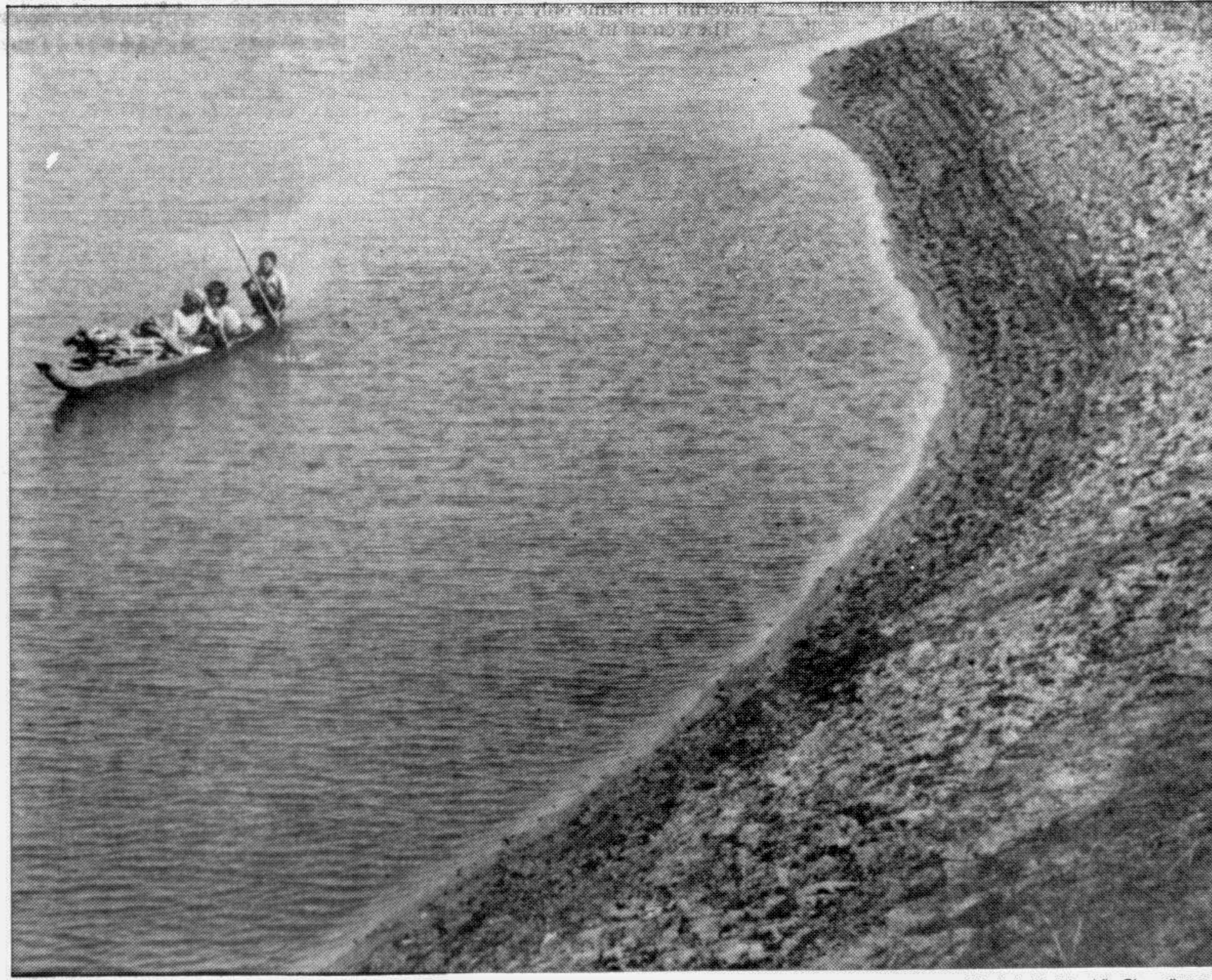


Photo by Kutubuddin Chowdhury

photography

The Chime of the Countryside

by Fayza Haq

THE exhibition of *Ruposhi Bangladesh* by Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association held at Purana Paltan showed that press photographers could take artistic photographs as well. They brought in the flora and fauna of the country and showed Bangladesh full of boats, fields, smiling people and endless golden sunsets. Some of the pictures, however, were incongruous such as the beggar with his pets, including dogs and a monkey and a blind man walking with support of a child in the sunset. By and large the exhibition was a promising one and drew large crowds.

Let there be rain by Sainul Haq won

the first prize. It has village children going around performing a ritual of a rain dance with rice *kulas* on their heads. Apart from the participants there are observers, and the fun and gaiety of the village tradition is caught well by the camera.

Sunset at Sea Shore by Nasim Sikdar which was awarded the second prize has the conventional twilight picture, only the sandy beach has unusually large shadows and more than the run of the mill cluster of people on the beach. The waves on the sea look tranquil. Boats and ships are seen in the distance while the sun is like a burnished gold disc in the horizon.

Explorers - I by Mir Mohiuddin which got the third prize show two boys with hitched up lungs, tied around the waist, wading through rivulets and sandy coast. The manner in which the two lads are clinging together denote that they are obviously good friends.

The beauty of the landscape and the people are well captured in all three photographs.

Hello by Mir Ahmed Miru shows a young girl with a bright dress pecking from behind tall *Kashful*. Nature and humanity have been brought together in an idyllic manner. The attraction of the wild flowers in the fields is as delightful as the figure of the partly camouflaged

girl.

When will it rain? by Shahidullah brings in the image of a farmer walking and pondering over dry cracked earth. Behind are seen fallen rice plants with blurred images of more farmers.

Victory by Mohammed Alam shows village people at play with bamboo sticks. Musicians and a happy captive audience can be seen behind.

Fruits of Labour by Shafiuddin Ahmed Bitu brings in a woman with a maroon and white sari cutting ripe gourds and collecting them for sale in the market.

Splash by Khaled Haider shows two naked boys jumping into the river for a swim from a house with a jetty-like

projection. The feet of a third bather can be seen along with boatmen and houses at the bank.

My precious pump by A K M Mohsin depicts a woman working a bamboo water lifting system. Behind her are seen green fields and trees. This is a delightful picture of a woman at work in rural Bangladesh.

Diligence by Mohammed Alam shows a man toiling to get date plan juice. He is depicted as tied to the tree with a rope while an earthenware vessel hangs suspended from him.

Making Steam Cakes by Nuruddin Ahmed has a woman concentrating on making *pithas* in a village. The back

ground is dark while one finds bright colours on the women's sari.

Eternity by Amran Hossain shows a boat in the sea at sunset. The boats and figures are bathed in dark brown while the waves look a beaten gold.

Anisur Rehman's *Weaving a Dream* brings in a village embroidery worker with the words *Phuler chaetey premer shaurob onek beshi*.

Although there was not much difference in the standard and outlook of the photographs of this *Pahela Baishakh* competition and the others held earlier yet the 33 press photographers of the different national dailies had done a fairly laudable job with their 120 photographs.