



POETRY

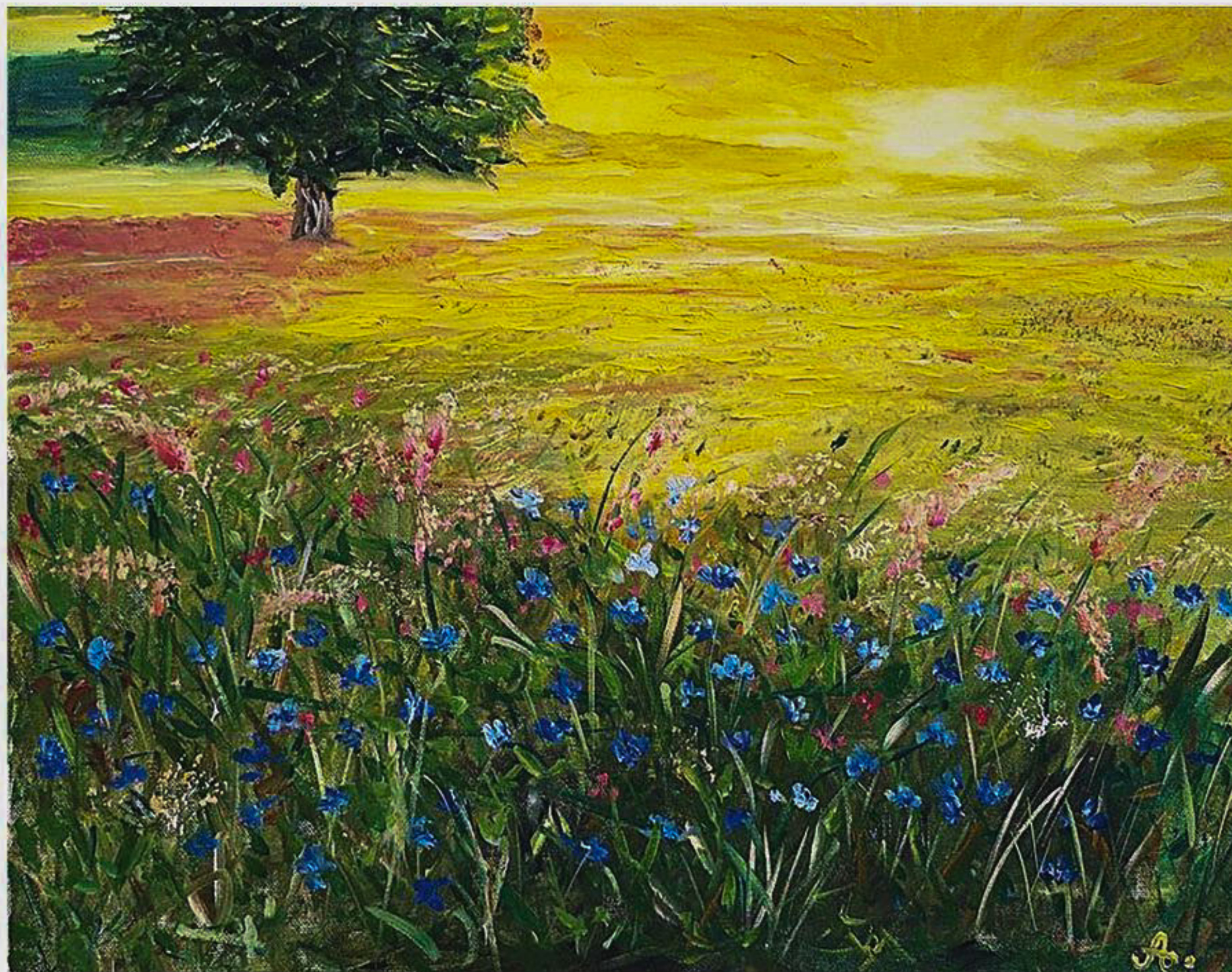
Poems of Jibanananda Das

TRANSLATED BY SHAMSAD MORTUZA

Had I but an eternal life (“Ananta Jibon Jodi Pai Ami”)

Had I but an eternal life — and returned to the earth alone,
I would amble along timelessly to see
How the green grass sprouted,
How the yellow grass withered,
How the sky whitened at dawn
Shaking off the red blood stains of Munia
How the lines scrawled the chest of the evening;
I would see the stars over and over;
I would see a strange woman depart loosening her hair bun
With no glow of dusk-drawn awe in her face.

Had I but an eternal life —
And returned to the earth alone to amble along timelessly,
I would see -
Buses and trams stained in dust,
Slums and street bazaars,
Alleys and broken utensils,
Fights, expletives, scorns, rotten shrimps-
And things that are not even wrought;
Yet, I would not see you in that life that runs eternally.



The Cat (“Beral”)

My daily errands bring me face to face with a cat all too often:

In the shades of a tree,
In the lights of the sun,
In the throngs of brown leaves;
In its feat over few pieces of fish bones
That lay on a skeleton ground.
I see it losing itself like a bee;
Yet a little later it's seen scratching the bark of a
krishnachura tree-
Drifting from the sun that
It has followed all day long:

Now you see it,
Now you don't.

Its white paws toy with the soft saffron sun of an
autumnal eve;
Before giving a short leap
To bring the darkness like a small ball in its grip,
And then to spread it all over the world.