

JOY GOSWAMI

Three Poems

..... a shooting star dropped into the sea

Before that there was a long tail of fire in the sky—for a moment

Before that the fields the trees the mountains flashed white—for a
moment

The reptilian bird froze in flight

The world will be destroyed in a moment

Since then this scene returns in the dreams of birds before they die

After murdering his own son
Look, the poor man walks away

After selling her own daughter
Look, the mother returns

From their savings spill sand instead of tears,
Money and blood—all in the shape of coins

After that all is water. Only in the coin-shaped stones
Will a fire blaze up one day, a sunken country

Scorched by anger and mourning,
And in this fire a madman paces, searching

The slow man sits in a field
A mountain in his head
Before him a plate of earth and grass

He digs into the plate
As if it were a pot of curds, deeper
His hunger is endless—the mineral wealth
Of the world disappears in a slurp—the womb
Of the oil stored in the earth is emptied

His hand is covered with the muddy soup, as if it were his plate
The man drums on the emptied earth

Translated from the Bengali by Joy Goswami and Christopher Merrill