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Our Guilt Trips and their Exodus

They have come from the hills, flooding the plains; cooks, waiters, coolies, masons. Called ‘Neps’\textsuperscript{1} en masse, this generic term deceives their skin, tanned by sun, and molten tar, they foster the arteries of our growth.

\textit{By the rivers of Tsangpo,}&
\textit{Padma and Brahmaputra}&
\textit{Tears deluge to more tears}&
\textit{They search for Zion}&
\textit{in these callous plains}\n
We search for our ‘civilized’ traces, call them ‘primitive’; their women are lissome, men do not ‘threaten’, we praise their candour, honesty and dimensions!

\textit{By the rivers of Tsangpo,}&
\textit{Padma and Brahmaputra}&
\textit{Tears deluge to more tears}&
\textit{They search for Zion}&
\textit{in these callous plains}\n
As the thought pendulum swings, we fear their \textit{kukris} at night. We wonder if they bear portable home maps behind their smiles to check and cross-check, if their folks still live safe and huddled in memory’s tattered rubble.

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\textsuperscript{1} Neps for Nepalis is an umbrella term used for all the people of the Northeastern part of India, who come to mainland India in search of jobs. India’s Northeast is a strife-ridden area comprising eight states. It is also one of the most ethnically composite areas in India, plagued by ethnic conflicts and militancy.
By the rivers of Tsangpo,
Padma and Brahmaputra
Tears deluge to more tears
They search for Zion
in these callous plains

They are angels again at sunrise,
when they leave for summer,
we believe they have a mule’s spine
to load and unload the nightmarish
burden a nation that clings to our skin.

By the rivers of Tsangpo,
Padma and Brahmaputra
Tears deluge to more tears
They search for Zion
in these callous plains

They have spread like slick over the sea,
their memories stay and never leave without
a trace. Have we not had enough transferring
our guilt in lieu of patronage
we dole out in coffee spoons?