

K.V.TIRUMALESH

Tughlak

It was evening. The entire Delhi
Was quiet everywhere.
Empty houses with open doors.
It was difficult to believe that
Only until the other day
There were so many here.

They were walking alone
The two of them—King and Traveler.
There was none to meet on the way.
Not even dogs barked.
Ibn Batuta asked:
“King! What is the meaning of this all?”

The King smiled and said:
“This happens at some stages of history—now
Enjoy the quiet of this evening!
Another day these same streets will be filled
And then the same crowd the same noise.
Were it possible
I would have emptied even the sea
To walk in its depth.”

Then Ibn Batuta alone
Prayed to God thus:
“Let words be born
Where there is silence
Make these ovens burn again.
O God all powerful
Save the secrets of the ocean
From the tyrants!”

Translated from Kannada by the author