

The Beast

*Jagdish Mohanty**

Dear Readers, a helpless lamentation of a soundless distress is hidden in this story. Be interested. Advance slowly towards the story. Throw away the words, take away ornaments of poetry. Scratch away the thin layer of words, dig deep and uproot to reach the depth. Blow away the similes and metaphors. Then you will see a helpless distress lying supine, without a covering. That is our goal. Come, it will take you to an unfamiliar world where your politics and election, hunger and exploitation do not exist. There is no love, no attachment, nor tears nor taste of a kiss. Yet all these are there – in different forms and different taste. There you will meet raw nature in every atom, every molecule. You will meet the whole universe. It will take you beyond millions of light years to another universe.

Many think of him as uneducated and uncultured. Without any experience and sensibility. An inert piece of clods – *Jada Bharat*. He has no politics, no sense of discrimination between good and bad. He does not know love and affection, has no attachment to anything. He has not benefited by dish antenna, nor does he understand the language of star T.V. So he does not know what love is. From time immemorial he is not even a man for the Odia readers of stories. He is animal of flesh and blood, of arteries and veins, of bones and bone marrows, of hairs on skin and head, of nails and teeth, of eyes and ears and a nose. He has only a stomach, no brain. Such ideas are wrapped round him that his real appearance is not visible to Odia readers.

Yet, beneath all these layers is hidden his real character; like Valmiki, like Ratnakara, merciless in killing, soft in death, cool in judgment, hot in love. Come he will take you to such a man. Come he is sitting on the bond of the pond. The chameleon has appeared by shaking its head thrice. The forgetful dragonfly will be dragged away to its depth by the tongue of the frog. Come, come quickly.....

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