

BIBHU PADHI

TRIBAL VOICES

They should be here somewhere,
their invitations to all of us
to join them for the final time.

They left us while we lived—
our minds full of insignificant things,
our bodies lethargic and dull.

It is night, and the fireflies
are everywhere, like thoughts
and dreams, our messages of love.

The voices have joined our
own voices, the choric songs
dissolving in the night air.

I must surrender my voice
to the ancestors, their songs
enfolding my voice's rise and fall.

Look, how the voices are playing
in the middle of a story of return
and love, of words of compassion.

A little further away, there are the trees,
listening to the voices and feeling
comforted, the breeze carrying

our words of thankfulness
to the remote voices, our songs
merging into the night.

And now the fireflies have
moved away to other zones,
other, more dear needs.

At the end of it, it is the distance
of the voices, our voices falling
on the earth, its subconscious

loneliness, its eagerness to see
and hear me, when I am forgotten
by the world and its dark floor.