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The Song of Unity

- Madduri Nagesh Babu

Translated into English by

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The Sun and the Rain laughed becoming a hard storm
Do we need to lose our brotherliness foolishly?

If the Sky and the Earth became one
Couldn't the two and the three rise as one strong fist?

We are instigated something between us so as we got separated
Do we need to lose our brotherlyhood foolishly?

Even the wild animals can't kill among themselves
Do we need to fight against each other like enemies?

The so-called leaders who made us classified cackled at us
Do we need to lose our brotherlyhood foolishly?

The bloodied tamarind ponds' Meera Sab is as witness
Don't you come together my brothers of Dalitland?

Knowing the truth that The Dalit is only our way
Come, *You* and *I* could become *We* to rule our land.

About the Poet:

Madduri Nagesh Babu was one of the known poets of contemporary Telugu literature. He was a scholar, administrator, poet and critic. Madduri Nagesh Babu was popular for his works on questioning the Caste hierarchy. He studied the Hindu Sastras from the Dalit point of view and encounters the hegemony of the elites through his poems. His works were the true sources for bringing identity among the Dalit masses. He was a poet who wrote the poems even against his own Dalits especially the Dalit

elites. His polemical work *Putta* (The Ant Hill), an epic in form, attacks the passive attitude of the Dalit elites towards the insults and atrocities the Dalits were being experienced in their day-to-day life. The other works by Madduri were *Rachabanda* (The Rock Platform), *Godhavari* (The River Godhavari) of which the later was published posthumously. The poems of Madduri Nagesh Babu try to relocate the sensibility of John Keats, aestheticism of William Wordsworth and nostalgic identity of Seamus Heaney. Like W.B. Yeats, he used symbols to make his thoughts more direct and comprehensive.

The present poem *Ikyageetham* (The Song of Unity, 1998) is taken from “Meerevutlu (What is Your Caste?)”, a collection poems written by Madduri Nagesh Babu in Telugu language.