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Editor's Note

South Asia today is crawling with things that have appointed themselves as saviours and fosterers of identity cultures. This has not happened over a weekend but unfolded over a century and more. The accelerated globalization, as crafted by its neoliberal caretakers, has served to inflate the vanity of the crawling new armies of cultural occupation. It has augmented their local cunning by lending them the tools to forge new rationales. 'We must be rooted in our soil,' they mumble sinisterly, yet hopping from continent to continent.

Yes, we must be rooted in our soil. But what is soil? What is its genesis? Can anyone slice it up between us and them and others? What brings fertility to the soil? And what brings upon it the curse of barrenness?

To be rooted in the soil is to experience the withering away of any exclusively defined identity claims to intellectual, affective and cultural property rights.

Soil absorbs, transforms and only so preserves what comes to and partakes of it.

Soil knows no walls and respects no fences.

Soil lies and rolls and flies and dissolves.

Soil engenders and feeds and nurtures.

Soil buries.

Soil holds.

Soil lets go.

Soil does not advertise itself in the flower's petals.

This Winter-Spring number of *South Asian Ensemble* affirms yet again, in its many offerings, the paradox that to belong is to be free. That only the free can belong.

As the varied literary offerings in these pages exemplify, the highest destiny for identities is to be consecrated to their own transcendence.

Rajesh Sharma