Reading Excerpt A

*In Praise of Krishna: Songs from the Bengali*
Translated by Edward C. Dimock, Jr. and Denise Levertov
Anchor Books, New York, 1967

POEM 1

*I who body and soul*
*am at your beck and call,*
*was a girl of noble family.*
*I took no thought for what would be said of me,*
*I abandoned everything:*  
*now I am part of you,*
*your will is my will.*
*O Madhava, never let our love*
*seem to grow stale—*
*I beg you, let the dew*
*not dry on our flowers,*
*that my honor not be destroyed.*

When he heard these words from her beautiful mouth, Madhava bowed his head.  
He knew he held the flower of her life in his keeping.

POEM 2

*Beloved, what more shall I say to you?*
*In life and in death, in birth after birth*
*you are the lord of my life.*
*A noose of love binds*
*my heart to your feet.*
*My mind fixed on you alone, I have offered you everything;*
*in truth, I have become your slave.*
*In this family, in that house, who is really mine?*
*Whom can I call my own?*
*It was bitter cold, and I took refuge*
*at your lotus feet.*
*While my eyes blink, and I do not see you*
*I feel the hearth within me die.*
Let the earth of my body be mixed with the earth
my beloved walks on.
Let the fire of my body be the brightness
in the mirror that reflects his face.
Let the water of my body join the waters
of the lotus pool he bathes in.
Let the breath of my body be air
lapping his tired limbs.
Let me be sky, and moving through me
that cloud-dark Shyama, my beloved.