
CHAPTER 3
CMT IN THE POETRY OF SELECT ASSAMESE POETS

This chapter delves into the role of conceptual metaphor theory in understanding modern Assamese poetry, specifically focusing on metaphors of **life** and **love** as employed by nine revered Assamese poets: Amulya Barua, Hem Barua, Bishnu Prasad Rava, Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Nabakanta Barua, Hiren Bhattacharya, Nilomoni Phukan, Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi, and Bhupen Hazarika. For these poets, metaphor is more than a stylistic choice. It is a means to convey the complex emotions and existential reflections about life and love. Conceptual metaphor theory speaks about this intricate mapping. It reveals how each poet uses metaphor to transform everyday language into expressions of profound human insight.

The selected poems, deeply embedded in Assamese cultural consciousness, align with metaphorical expressions commonly found in everyday conversation, suggesting a collective linguistic framework. This analysis also extends beyond Assamese borders to draw parallels with metaphors found in Western poetry. Hence, we can see the universal resonance of these figurative expressions across diverse literary traditions.

3.1 METAPHORS OF ROMANTIC LOVE

This section examines how the selected poets capture the essence of romantic love through metaphor. Through their poems we can understand the depth, complexity, and resonance within Assamese cultural expressions. Each poem presents love as an intricate blend of personal experience and shared emotion. This draws upon metaphors that evoke the powerful and multifaceted nature of romantic affection. Through their words, love is rendered both intimate and universal. It connects individual sentiment to broader cultural meanings.

3.1.1 LOVE IS A JOURNEY

Journeys encapsulate the essence of movement from one point to another. It is characterized by diverse routes, landscapes, and encounters that collectively shape the voyage. This metaphor of a journey aligns seamlessly with the concept of love. LOVE IS A JOURNEY, involves a progression through various stages. Each stage presents unique challenges and growth opportunities. This metaphor speaks about the evolutionary nature of love. It highlights the development and transformations that occur as partners navigate these stages together.

We comprehend the abstract notion of love through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, which surfaces in Assamese sentences like:

- *Teuluk duyoy ake dixote goti korise.* They're both headed in the same direction.
- *Duyoy ake loge bohu dur aagbarhise.* They've come a long way together.
- *Xihot atori jua jen bhab hoi.* She feels like they're drifting apart.

In Amulya Barua's poem ***Yearning***, the poet conveys an intense longing for his beloved, mapping her as a source of inspiration and a muse for his creative expression. The poem explores the emotional and artistic journey of the poet. It uses vivid imagery and metaphors to emphasize the depth of his feelings. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY is central to the poem. It portrays love as a vibrant and evolving force. Unlike a static emotion, love is depicted as an ever-changing, transformative experience. It is filled with sensory and dynamic encounters. Through the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, the poet captures the emotional depth and complexity of love, using it to navigate the various stages of longing, desire, and creative inspiration.

*The palette of my life,
A riot of colors,
The hues of intoxicating wine.*

In the opening lines, the poet uses the imagery that serves as a metaphor where the "palette" is mapped to the landscape of love. The riot of colors is mapped to the diverse emotions and experiences that unfold within it. Much like an artist uses a palette to create a painting, the poet uses the metaphor of love as a canvas to express his emotions. The varied colors are mapped to the richness and intensity of the emotional journey that love initiates. It presents an evolving path filled with vibrant sensations.

*A hundred desires,
A hundred longings,
A zone of radiant hopes,*

The poem continues mapping love onto a journey filled with aspirations and unfulfilled dreams. Desires and longings are framed as milestones along the path. This suggests that love's journey involves continuous movement and exploration, like a traveler navigating a physical landscape lighted up by the hopes and dreams that guide them. This forward-moving imagery emphasizes the aspirational nature of love, where longing propels the journey forward.

*Day by day it burns,
A new lightning,
A new star*

The journey of love is marked by both fleeting and enduring changes. The imagery of lightning and stars is mapped to the transformative moments that lightens the path. It redirects or shapes the lover's emotions. These elements say that love's journey is one of constant evolution. Each new experience, whether brief like a flash of lightning or enduring like a star, reshapes and influences lover's heart and expression.

*In the embrace of self
Laden with grace
In the realm of fireflies*

In these lines the poet explores self-discovery through love. "Embrace of self" is mapped to how love facilitates a deeper understanding of one's identity. It acts as a transformative force in the journey. Love is mapped onto a process where the poet reflects and engages with his innermost self. It gives us new dimensions within his emotional and creative world. The imagery of fireflies dancing is mapped to the playful yet profound nature of this self-exploration.

*In the artistry of my life
In the mind's blaze
In the heat of time
Molten to form.*

As the poem progresses, the poet describes the intensity of love's influence on his creative life. Here, love is mapped to a force that fuels artistic expression and creativity. The "artistry" and "blaze" is mapped to the transformative power of love. This suggests that it shapes the poet's life work, just as heat molds and reshapes material. Love becomes a journey of crafting and refining one's identity and creative output.

*I am restless – forever in motion,
Eternally volatile,
My yearning,
A restless journey!*

In the concluding lines, the poet explicitly connects love to an ongoing journey. It is filled with restlessness and constant change. The poet's restlessness highlights love's dynamic and unpredictable nature. It captures the essence of a journey that is never static. The

perpetual motion of love mirrors the continuous movement through emotional landscapes. This shows love as an evolving and relentless pursuit of connection and fulfillment.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY in *Yearning* is **ontological**, providing a tangible, physical framework through which the abstract experiences of love and longing are understood. *Yearning* portrays love as a dynamic, ever-evolving journey. It encompasses the depths of longing, the pursuit of creative expression, and the exploration of self.

In Hem Barua's poem *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, the tender reflections of Mamata's words evoke the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Here her memories unfold as milestones in a deeply personal voyage. Through this metaphor, love becomes an ongoing path defined by shared moments, challenges, and growth of her relationship.

*That morning... a delicate, foggy wintry morning
The carpet of the fragrant, white Sewali near our gate.*

In the letter, Mamata uses the imagery of a foggy winter morning with Sewali flowers carpeting the ground sets the stage for the beginning of their journey together. It is a path that is mysterious yet inviting. The morning is mapped to the start of a new adventure, and the fragrant Sewali evokes a sense of youthful freshness. It symbolizes the initial, uncharted steps of love. Here, their love journey begins with intrigue, and the scene embodies the tender beginnings where everything is filled with potential.

*And in the evening the first time
I visited your house, do you remember
... How the yellow moon beckoned at us?*

Mamata's memory moves to that first evening she visited his house. This visit marks a transition in their relationship. It is a journey from tentative moments to an embrace of intimacy. The yellow moon above becomes a witness to this closeness. It casts its light as guiding them forward, mapping onto their growing bond with its gentle glow. This beckoning moon serves as a signpost on their journey. This is mapped to the allure and magnetic pull which draws them closer into the unfolding story of their relationship.

Through these images, Barua captures how the journey of love unfolds gradually. It is shaped by milestones both grand and quiet. Love's journey is presented as one that is fluid. It carries lovers through phases that reflect both individual growth and shared experiences.

Each memory Mamata recalls serves as a waypoint, a marker of progress in their relationship. This reminds her of the path they forged together and the transformations they underwent side by side.

This journey metaphor is deeply **ontological**, structuring love in terms of movement, development, and the unfolding of time. Love, as presented here is a journey filled with changing scenery and the transformative power of shared experiences. The foggy morning, the Sewali-laden path, the first evening visit under the moon, each captures a stage in their emotional journey. It emphasizes love's ever-evolving nature. In Mamata's reflections, love is as much about the memories that serve as guideposts as it is about the steps they took together toward an unknown future.

LOVE IS A JOURNEY here speaks to love's potential to shape lives in ways that are both ordinary and profound. Like travelers navigating the twists and turns of a road, lovers experience moments of beauty and challenges that test their bond. It pushes them to adapt and grow together. The journey of love is a continual, unpredictable, unfolding of moments. Each moments bring their own meaning, depth, and significance, like the chapters of a story. Through this metaphor, Barua's poem reminds us that love's true essence lies in the journey. Love is the shared laughter, silent support, and cherished memories that define the rich, complex terrain of a life together.

In Nabakanta Barua's poem *Sketches*, the journey of love is presented as a delicate interplay between memories, longing, and existential reflections. Through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY the poem navigates the shared experiences of a couple bound by profound affection and the passage of time, even as they are separated by life and death. This metaphor transforms their love into a voyage that endures beyond physical presence, mapping each moment of reflection onto the broader landscape of a life's journey.

*Once we went aboating
On the Ganges...*

This opening line draws on the imagery of a shared boat ride on the sacred river, mapping the river journey onto the journey of their relationship. The River Ganges, laden with spiritual and cultural significance, is mapped to the continuity of love beyond mortal bounds. The river becomes a metaphorical path they have taken together. It is an endless flow reflecting both the constancy of their bond and the inevitable progression of time.

The Ganges, as the sacred keeper of life's passages, represents the loved one's departure yet hints at a connection that remains firm.

The pale winter moon rose above the old cemetery.

Here, winter and the pale moon map onto the waning of life and love's persistence amid mortality. The cemetery signifies the wife's physical absence, yet the presence of the moonlight connects them. Her existence lives on in his memories, a faint yet perpetual light over the stillness of their past. The quiet beauty of the winter moon over the cemetery creates a serene yet haunting image. This suggests that despite the barriers of life and death, love continues its journey, hovering gently, quietly, even as time passes.

*We remember we talked
We could not hear each other
Though the wind was not disturbing.*

In these lines, the inability to hear one another captures the silent nature of their continued connection. It is a communication without sound, carried by memory rather than words. These maps love as a journey of quiet understanding and acceptance. Here words may fade, but presence endures. The undisturbed wind reflects nature's calm acquiescence to their bond. This suggests that their connection is timeless, immune to external forces and disruptions.

*I do not remember what the sky looked like,
But ..There was a sky...sure.*

The sky becomes a symbol for eternity, something both vast and unforgettable, yet not always consciously perceived. This act of "not remembering" yet being sure of the sky's presence maps the couple's love as an eternal journey. Though it may recede into memory, it is as constant as the sky itself. Their love is implicit, an ever-present horizon guiding him even when no longer directly seen.

*Time is short.
I have no time and have too many problems to solve
I sip in a problem with every sip of tea....*

These lines serve as a reminder of the transitory nature of life. Despite time's brevity, the poet's journey with his wife remains unaffected in its essence, as though they continue traveling together. The shortness of time adds a layer of urgency and preciousness to this

journey. It is imbued in each memory and moment of remembrance with heightened significance, like the fleeting yet impactful nature of a significant journey.

This metaphor is primarily **structural**, as it uses the structure of a physical journey to understand and describe the emotional, evolving path of love over time. Love here is not static. It progresses, changes, and yet, remains rooted in a shared understanding that endures even as life itself transforms.

In Robert Browning's *Meeting at Night*, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY unfolds through the lover's determined voyage to reach his beloved. It is mapped to the emotional and relational efforts that love demands. Browning describes the lover traversing "The grey sea and the long black land," crossing "a mile of warm sea-scented beach" and "Three fields," each stage reflecting the distance and dedication needed in love's pursuit.

*And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!*

The journey culminates in a tender reunion, captured in the lines. Here, love is an active ongoing journey, marked by effort, anticipation, and desire. Browning's imagery evokes the idea that love requires persistence and commitment, where each step brings the lovers closer to fulfillment and connection, making the journey itself as meaningful as the union it seeks.

3.1.2 LOVE IS MADNESS

Madness, understood as a departure from rational thought, encompasses psychological and emotional disturbances. It is characterized by deviant behaviors, disorientation, obsession, and impaired judgment, varying widely across individuals. In the metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS, love is depicted as a force that can induce cognitive and emotional disruptions like a psychological disorder. Individuals in love may show signs of irrational decision-making, unhealthy obsession, and clouded judgment, mirroring the effects of madness on mental stability. Love can compromise rational thinking and lead to actions that defy logic or self-preservation. It pulls individuals away from societal norms and rational behavior, much like madness. This perspective highlights the intensity of love and its capacity to overpower reason. It emphasizes the thin line between passion and irrationality.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS frequently resonates in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Tai mon-tu tak xopi dise.* She's lost her mind over him.
- *Tai tar karone pagol.* He's crazy about her.
- *Tail palei xi xokolu jukti pahori jai.* He's completely irrational when it comes to her.

In Bishnu Prasad Rava's poem *A Blood-Red Sonitpur*, the metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS captures the intensity and irrationality of deep, consuming love. It is reflected in the legendary romance between Usha and Aniruddha. The poem paints a picture of love that goes beyond logic. It results in chaos, sacrifice, and the transformation of an entire city into a landscape marked by passion and bloodshed. The city of Sonitpur, or 'the city of blood,' serves as a symbol of the madness that can envelop love. This illustrates how love becomes an all-consuming force that disrupts normality and compels individuals to act in extraordinary ways.

The narrative centers on Usha, daughter of the Asura king Banasura, who falls in love with Aniruddha, the grandson of Lord Krishna. Their love is sparked by an ethereal dream, where Usha first envisions Aniruddha. This dream triggers an intense, irrational longing that drives the plot forward.

*A blood-red Sonitpur
I carved with blood
By slitting the heart and
Pouring drops of red*

These lines evoke an image of passionate sacrifice, where love's depth is intertwined with the pain of giving. Here, Rava maps the act of "slitting the heart" and spilling blood as a testament to love's agony and devotion. This ontological metaphor renders love as a tangible force, with blood and heart becoming the raw materials from which this "blood-red Sonitpur" is built. Sonitpur, meaning "the city of blood," becomes a place soaked in love's intensity. Here the color red is mapped to both ardor and the suffering such profound emotion can inflict.

*On the strength of the young body
Raising ramparts of fire,
With the wick of love's lamp
Lighting lamps of Deepavali.*

Rava maps fire and light onto love's relentless energy. Love is depicted as a flame that challenges darkness. Lighting lamps of Deepavali, a festival celebrating light's victory over darkness, maps onto the lovers' defiant spirit. This reveals the inner fire that compels the lovers forward. These metaphors link their emotions with external forces. It cast their connection as powerful enough to overcome any challenge, much like a spark conquering the dark.

Rava further enriches the narrative by introducing Chitralekha, Usha's confidante, whose role emphasizes the extremity of love's madness. It is Chitralekha who uses her magical powers to bring Aniruddha to Usha, bypassing the laws of the physical world and societal norms. This act of defiance demonstrates the lengths to which love will drive individuals, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy.

*Seated in the corner, Devi Patralekha
Would play the lute
Adorned and dancing,
Would Chitralekha dance.*

These figures personify love in mythic form, where artistry, devotion, and magic reflect the overwhelming pull of love. It can be perceived that love can shape and go beyond both physical and spiritual realms to fulfill its purpose.

*Breaking the gateway of the east
I shall bring the beautiful golden morn*

These lines speak to a new dawn inspired by love's power. The imagery of "gateway" and "golden morn" maps love as a force capable of rebirth and renewal, even amid chaos. This metaphor connects the arrival of dawn with the lovers' reunion, mapping hope for new beginnings onto their connection. Here, love's ardor not only brings destruction but also fuels a desire for regeneration, for the beauty of a new day despite the turbulence of the night.

*For the wedding bath in the heart
I shall bathe the beloved
With torrents of red.*

This climactic image, drenching the beloved in red maps love's ultimate gift, where the lover's heart pours out devotion so intense it saturates the beloved with its essence. Here, red symbolizes blood and an overwhelming surge of passion and sacrifice. This metaphor

transforms love into a physical act of surrender. Love is willing to offer everything, even life itself, as a final act of unity.

A Blood-Red Sonitpur is a testament to the transformative power of love, a force so potent it becomes madness. The poem captures the irrationality and intensity of this emotion, illustrating how it disrupts the established order and leads to actions that defy reason and convention. Through metaphorical language and vivid cultural references, Rava constructs a world where love is both a creative and destructive force, reshaping personal and collective landscapes with its overwhelming power.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS in the poem operates on multiple levels. It blends the personal, cultural, and mythological, making emotions tangible through the imagery of blood, fire, and light. The madness of love is the irrational passion between Usha and Aniruddha. It is also about the lengths to which emotion compels them to go, leading to the breaking of societal and cosmic boundaries. The poem's use of these elements reflects the way love, like madness, can completely transform and destabilize, pushing individuals beyond their limits and into realms of sacrifice and chaos.

Rava's depiction of LOVE IS MADNESS in *A Blood-Red Sonitpur* is both **ontological** and **structural**. Ontologically, love is given physical form in blood, fire, and dawn, making the abstract force palpable. Structurally, love is mapped onto cultural myths and natural elements, portraying it as a force that transforms personal lives and reshapes the world. Through blood, light, and sacrifice, Rava encapsulates love's capacity to both destroy and create, saying about its powerful duality.

In Hem Barua's evocative poem *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, the character Mamata writes to her deceased husband, expressing an enduring and intense love that has left her in a state of emotional turbulence and yearning. Through nostalgic recollections, the poem explores the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS, capturing the overpowering emotions that disrupt rational thought and plunge the lover into a passionate, almost bewildering state of mind.

*Do you remember the things that happened ten years ago?
The time when we wrote the preface of our life...
A strange intoxication whirled me mad*

These opening lines call forth the memory of love's early thrill, a time when Mamata was swept away by romance. The imagery of "writing the preface" suggests the beginning of

a shared story, a journey where love's power redefines her life. This language maps love's onset as the opening chapter of a transformative tale, one that shifts her reality and awakens her to an emotional landscape she had never known. Within the CMT of LOVE IS MADNESS, this "strange intoxication" symbolizes how love disrupts clarity, immersing her in emotions so intense they mirror madness, pulling her into a realm beyond reason.

*That morning... a delicate, foggy wintry morning
The carpet of the fragrant, white Sewali near our gate.*

The foggy morning, with its soft haze and mystery, maps onto the fogged perception of love's early days, when logic fades under the glow of infatuation. This enchanting yet bewildering phase in love aligns with madness, disorientation, clouded vision, and an overwhelming fixation on another. Like the fog that blurs the landscape, love casts a spell over Mamata, obscuring rationality and heightening her emotions, reshaping her world around her beloved.

*Why did you gaze at me in that way,
At the riha tied around my waist...?
Do you know how I felt?
As if you were a man from a strange land. And I,
I a Sewali lying under the tree.*

Mapping herself to a Sewali flower, a delicate, white bloom symbolizing purity, positions her as vulnerable, under the mesmerizing spell of her lover's gaze. Her beloved's intense gaze, fixed upon her, conveys an obsessive passion, reinforcing the parallel to madness. Here, love becomes an overwhelming force, inverting Mamata's world and binding her with a passion that eclipses ordinary understanding.

Dear daughter, keep smiling in your new home,

The letter continues, with Mamata recalling her father's words, written on her wedding day. These simple, comforting words, meant as a blessing, have transformed over time into something surreal, "like the stories of the Puranas." The years have rendered these memories delicate and otherworldly. Yet the memories remain deeply etched in her heart, as love does linger in her thoughts like a faint yet enduring presence. This remembrance of her father's blessing reflects the irrationality of holding onto something intangible, clinging to a memory that has grown fragile with time. This unshakeable attachment echoes the obsessive nature often associated with madness, symbolizing the way love, even in memory, can cast a lasting spell.

Barua's use of metaphor here is deeply **ontological**, grounding love in the realm of mental states and emotional intensity. Mamata's fixation on her past, on her deceased husband, showcases love's ability to become an all-consuming passion that, even in its absence, shapes every aspect of her life. This conceptualization of love as madness suggests that it is a transformative condition that distorts reality, impairing rational thought and leaving the lover in a world colored by memories and longing. The fragility of her emotions, exposed by her continued dialogue with a partner who is no longer there, evokes the precariousness of the human psyche when gripped by intense love.

In *Mamata's Letter*, the metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS emphasizes the duality of love as both a beautiful and unsettling force. Love enriches life, filling it with beauty and depth. Love holds the potential to overwhelm, causing individuals to lose themselves in their emotions, disconnected from reality.

In Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi's poem *Draupadi*, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS brings forth the complexities of love and desire, highlighting how love drives one to irrationality, blurs logic, and overwhelms the senses. This metaphor captures love's profound and destabilizing effect, mapping it to the disorientation and obsession that characterizes madness, disrupting one's sense of self and perspective.

*Am I an exception?
No, no
I, I am only the Eternal Woman
Full of perpetual mystery
An easy expression of a spectrum
Of colours.*

Draupadi's self-description as the "Eternal Woman" maps her identity onto a timeless embodiment of complex emotions and boundless desires, where the "perpetual mystery" and "spectrum of colors" capture love's chaotic, unpredictable nature. Like madness, love is shown to be an uncontrollable force, enveloping individuals in a whirlwind of desires and emotions that shift and change. Here, Draupadi maps herself onto a vessel for this disorderly passion, portraying love as something unpredictable, as difficult to confine as colors in constant motion.

*I am woman in age after age
Thirsty of such beauty
In this my small forest of life and death
If there had been every flower of every colour!*

Her unending thirst for beauty maps love onto an insatiable and obsessive drive, suggesting a need for beauty that is as boundless as it is impossible to fully satisfy. This “small forest of life and death” represents the mind as a confined space where love and madness meet, with each “flower” symbolizing a unique form of passion. The yearning for “every flower of every color” mirrors madness in its impulsive, limitless cravings, mapping her desire as both irrational and all-encompassing.

*There is no novelty in my desire
The perfume and colour and the mind
Of the woman who was the very first,
Draw designs on the floor of my mind
Where is my fault??*

Her ancient desires, imprinted as “designs on the floor of my mind,” map love onto an obsessive, cyclic force, capturing how deeply ingrained these yearnings are within her psyche. This repetition evokes the endless cycle of thoughts and desires, suggesting love’s ability to disturb reason much like madness. The “perfume and color” convey sensory overload, mapping love’s impact as a total disruption of perception that blurs her grip on reality. The climactic question “Where is my fault??” punctuated by two question marks, further intensifies this emotional unraveling. The use of non-standard punctuation explains Mamata’s psychological agitation and desperate need for absolution. It amplifies the rhetorical nature of her question, signaling not a cry of anguish that reflects love’s descent into irrationality and emotional chaos hallmarks of the metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS.

*In my mind’s canvas
Why another picture comes
And sways again and again
At some opportunity??*

The persistent appearance of images on her “mind’s canvas” maps love onto an endless series of intrusive thoughts, much like the relentless, obsessive nature of madness. This uncontrollable recurrence reflects love’s unyielding hold on her mind. Each image pulls her deeper into a state of inner turbulence, reinforcing the idea that love can fracture one’s peace, much like an obsession that cannot be shaken. The use of double question marks at the end “At some opportunity??” intensifies the speaker’s emotional instability and confusion. It emphasizes her inability to control or rationalize these recurring mental images, signaling her descent into a psychological loop. As with other moments in the

poem, these reflects the emotional excess that love provokes. This aligns with the central metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS by conveying agitation, urgency, and inner disarray.

*Why do I look for Karna
Why does this thirst arise
When I am full up to the neck
Of nectar.*

Her desire for Karna, even when “full to the neck with nectar,” maps onto the self-sabotaging tendencies often seen in love’s madness. This insatiable “thirst” reflects an unending longing, mapping love as an irrational drive that resists fulfillment, like the obsessive urges of madness that can persist even in the face of satisfaction.

*This is a play of illusion
Psychology of a special level
That shakes the still heart
Of great love.*

The “play of illusion” and “psychology of a special kind” map love as a force that distorts reality, much like madness, creating a perception that disrupts inner peace. Love, mapped onto this unique psychology, produces a disturbance so profound that it unsettles the “still heart,” mirroring the psychological turbulence associated with madness, where love transforms into a force that deeply unsettles and reshapes perception.

In *Draupadi*, LOVE IS MADNESS is an **ontological** metaphor, attributing the disorienting and overpowering qualities of madness to the experience of love. This mapping makes the emotional experiences associated with love tangible, depicting love as a force that reshapes one’s thoughts, emotions, and sense of reality, similar to the intense distortions caused by madness. Each portrayal in the poem, from the eternal mystery and obsessive longing to the psychological disarray and illusion, expands our understanding of love’s power. It overwhelms, entrap, and redefine perception, positioning it as a force that is both exhilarating and destabilizing, like madness in the psychological domain.

In John Donne's *The Canonization*, the metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS pulses through the speaker's impassioned and rebellious celebration of love. Love is portrayed as a force that consumes regardless of societal judgment. The speaker declares,

*Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
Call her one, me another fly,*

*We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find the eagle and the dove.*

Here, love is mapped to a self-destructive madness, transforming the lovers into both dignified and absurd figures, flies drawn to a flame, compelled to burn at their own peril. In this fervent embrace of the irrational, love becomes a force that overrides reason, propelling them to extremes where passion defies all logical boundaries. Donne captures love as an intense, overwhelming madness, a state where lovers willingly sacrifice themselves, fully aware yet irresistibly drawn to the flame of their devotion. Through this, love is both a beautiful and consuming form of madness, going beyond reason and embracing the power of its own intensity.

3.1.3 LOVE IS A ROLLER COASTER RIDE

A roller coaster, with its dramatic ascents, swift descents, and abrupt shifts, aptly symbolizes the emotional journey of love, marked by exhilarating highs and profound lows. This metaphor highlights the unpredictable nature of love, suggesting a voluntary commitment to a path fraught with intense emotional fluctuations. Much like riders on a roller coaster who decide to stay secured in their seats despite the risks, engaging in a relationship involves a similar acceptance of potential emotional vulnerabilities. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A ROLLER COASTER RIDE captures this dynamic, underscoring the emotional investment and resilience required in relationships. It provides a framework for understanding how individuals navigate, endure, and reflect on their emotional experiences, revealing both the challenges and rewards of love.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A ROLLER COASTER RIDE finds resonance in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Xihotor xomporko-tu bohu ghat protighat-or xomahar. bohut-u uthon poton ase.* Their relationship has a lot of ups and downs.
- *Xihotor prem kahini-a ek onakangkhito rup loisil.* Their love story took an unexpected turn.
- *Xihotor xomporkotu hothate herai jabo khuje jodiu xihote dhoru rakhise.* Their relationship has sudden drops, but they keep holding on.

In Amulya Barua's poem *Soul Letter*, the poet uses metaphors to delve into the complexities of love and heartbreak, mapping a love relationship to a roller coaster ride. Just as a roller coaster is filled with ups and downs, twists, and turns, the poet explores

how love, too, is marked by emotional highs and lows. The metaphor LOVE IS A ROLLER COASTER RIDE clearly emerges, highlighting how these unpredictable shifts in both can inflict emotional pain. The poet also notes that if these twists and turns are not handled carefully, much like a roller coaster, a relationship can quickly derail, leading to heartbreak and turmoil.

*The harvest moon of autumnal equinox
Showers its golden moonlit on the night flowers
Creating ripples around my restless soul*

The opening lines set a serene and positive tone, depicting the initial joy of being in love. The imagery of the harvest moon showering golden light is mapped to the early phase of love. The phase where everything seems perfect and eternal, as if two souls are harmoniously flowing together, like the melodious tune of a flute. The phrases "golden moonlit" and "harmonious tune" is mapped to the jovial and enchanting state of being in love, akin to the excitement and thrill of the roller coaster's initial ascent.

*The ruptured string of the veena
Awakens its trembling tune
Evoking the heartbreak of separation.*

Here, the poet uses imagery which signals a transition from joy to sorrow, symbolizing the ruptures in a relationship. The "ruptured string" is mapped to the problems that can turn the once-elated journey into a state of limbo, indicated by the "trembling tune." This metaphor captures the sudden, jarring drop on a roller coaster, revealing how love's initial highs can transform into emotional lows when separation or conflict occurs. The mention of "tears roll through the eyes" and the "knot of unknown grief" is further mapped to the sense of sadness, representing the emotional pain associated with love's downturns.

*The sky wrapped in dark clouds
Roars the crazy thunders.*

Here, the poet uses the imagery of stormy weather to depict the inevitable conflicts in relationships. The dark clouds are mapped to the differences of opinion, while the thunder and lightning symbolize the intensity of disputes arising from these differences. Just as thunder and lightning can suddenly alter the calm of the sky, conflicts in love can disrupt the harmony between partners. However, the poet suggests that true connection lies in the ability to move past these storms, as the best relationships are those where "yesterday's fight doesn't stop today's communication."

The metaphor LOVE IS A ROLLER COASTER RIDE encompasses these shifts, portraying love as an emotional journey filled with ups and downs, where joy and sorrow coexist. The poem's use of natural and musical imagery, from the "golden moonlit" representing the initial euphoria of love to the "ruptured string" of the veena symbolizing heartbreak. It maps the emotional states onto the experience of a roller coaster. The storm imagery, with "dark clouds" and "crazy thunders," is mapped to the turbulence that arises from the differences in relationships, showing how love's journey can be both thrilling and daunting.

The type of metaphor used here is both **orientational** and **ontological**. It orients the abstract concept of love in terms of physical and spatial dynamics (the ups, downs, twists, and turns of a roller coaster) and attributes tangible, physical qualities to love that are felt and experienced emotionally. This metaphor provides a vivid framework for understanding love's unpredictable nature, emphasizing that the emotional highs and lows are inherent aspects of the experience.

In Sylvia Plath's Mad Girl's Love Song, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A ROLLER COASTER RIDE unfolds through the speaker's fluctuating emotions. The poet's emotions shift between ecstasy and despair. Love is mapped onto the unpredictable highs and lows of a roller coaster, where passion surges and crashes into uncertainty. The speaker experiences euphoric infatuation, believing in the overwhelming force of love

*I dreamed that you bewitched me into bed
And sung me moon-struck, kissed me quite insane.
Yet, this elation spirals into doubt and disillusionment
I fancied you'd return the way you said,
But I grow old and I forget your name.*

The cyclical repetition of "I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead" mirrors the dizzying motion of a roller coaster. Here the thrill of love is followed by sudden emptiness. Plath's imagery captures the emotional volatility of love. It portrays it as an exhilarating yet destabilizing force, where passion and heartbreak coexist in an endless loop.

3.1.4 LOVE IS A GARDEN

Gardens, with their deliberate cultivation and maintenance, serve as a rich metaphor for love, emphasizing the continuous care, attention, and effort required to sustain and nurture relationships. This analogy highlights the active engagement necessary in love, akin to a

gardener who tills, plants, waters, and prunes to foster growth and vitality. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A GARDEN suggests that love, like gardening, demands deliberate effort, patience, and persistence to thrive, including protective measures against potential adversities. It also reflects the dynamic nature of relationships, which, like gardens, experience seasonal changes and growth cycles, illustrating the phases of harmony, conflict, and renewal. This diversity, akin to the variety of plants in a garden, enhances and strengthens the bond between partners. Each of them brings unique qualities that contribute to the relationship's overall resilience and beauty. The CMT LOVE IS A GARDEN provides a framework for understanding the complexities and demands of love, underscoring that a flourishing relationship, much like a well-tended garden, results from attentive care and the joy of shared efforts.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A GARDEN deeply echoes within everyday Assamese dialogues. For instance:

- *Xihote eta modhur xomporko protipadon kori ase.* They're cultivating a beautiful bond together.
- *Xihotor prem xomoiyor loge loge profurito hol.* Their love blossomed over time.
- *Teu bhul bujabujir proti oti xoseton.* He's careful to weed out misunderstandings.

In Amulya Barua's poem *Am I Really So Cruel?*, the poet crafts an exploration of love's complexities through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A GARDEN. The tenderness, misunderstandings, and beauty of a relationship are illustrated within the vivid landscape of a garden. This metaphor equates love to a garden, a realm of growth, interaction, and nurturing, filled with various elements that embody the joys and sorrows of intimacy.

*I believe my heart
Is filled with boundless love;
Yet you think my heart
Is heartless, so cruel!*

Here, the poet maps the speaker's heart to a garden lush with boundless love, a fertile space of warmth and growth. Yet, to the listener, this same heart appears heartless, as if it were a barren or neglected garden. This contrast underscores the different ways love can be perceived based on one's perspective, much like how a garden might appear inviting to one person but cold and unyielding to another.

With every beat of my soul,

*A sweet melody resounds;
If that isn't yours to hear,
Will it drift far, far away?*

The speaker's soul, described as producing a melody, evokes the sounds of a garden, the quiet hum of insects, the rustling of leaves, or birdsong. These sounds, which enhance the garden's beauty is mapped to the subtleties and efforts in love meant to be noticed and appreciated. If unheard or misunderstood, these melodies may fade into the background, much like a garden's natural ambiance that goes unappreciated. These highlights the missed connections in love.

*You think this cruel soul of mine
Hides its true feelings,
Mocking your heart,
And walks away, loveless and cold.*

Here, the speaker is perceived as distant or deceptive, as if hiding behind thorny underbrush within the garden. Just as dense thickets can obscure one's view of a garden's beauty, so too can misunderstandings cloud the perception of true emotions. This reflects how love, when not fully understood, may seem harsh or uncaring.

*In the garden of endless love,
You're a flower within;
And I, a restless bee,
A wild, fervent bee in yearning!*

This direct garden imagery positions the speaker and listener as a flower and a bee, part of a natural ecosystem within the garden of love. Their relationship becomes a dynamic of interdependence and attraction, where each plays a role in nurturing the other. However, as with a flower and bee, intentions may be misinterpreted. The bee's earnestness might seem intrusive to the flower, illustrating the misunderstandings that arise within the delicate ecosystem of love.

*This small heart of mine
Is like a gentle dew drop!*

The speaker's heart, mapped to a dew drop, suggests vulnerability, purity, and a fleeting quality. Much like dew in a garden, which appears only for a short while each morning, love can be ephemeral and easily overlooked. This metaphor conveys the essence of delicate emotions is undervalued or unnoticed, much like the quiet beauty of dew.

The metaphor LOVE IS A GARDEN in this poem is **ontological**, attributing the tangible qualities of a garden, growth, seasonal changes, and interdependence, to the abstract concept of love. The garden metaphor helps conceptualize the dynamics of love as natural, evolving processes that require attention, patience, and understanding. Just as gardens face cycles of bloom and decay, love too experiences moments of flourishing and struggle.

In *Am I Really So Cruel?* the poet conceptualize love as a garden rich with beauty, misunderstandings, and interwoven connections. Through imageries of lush melodies, dew drops, and the restless bee's yearning, Barua captures the delicate dance between perception and reality in relationships. LOVE IS A GARDEN highlights how love, like any vibrant garden, can be full of hidden layers; thorns and flowers coexisting; where understanding and compassion are essential to fully appreciate its beauty.

In Bishnu Prasad Rava's poem *Would You Pluck Those Blossoms*, love is exquisitely depicted through the metaphor of a garden, highlighting its beauty, fragility, and the care it demands. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A GARDEN embodies the delicate, nurtured nature of love, much like a garden where blossoms unfold, petals are caressed, and fragrant scents drift through the air. This garden of emotions reflects a landscape where love must be tended to with patience, tenderness, and devotion.

*Would you pluck those blossoms
That I bloomed in my heart's garden?*

The poet envisions his heart as a place where he has cultivated love's blooms, each blossom a tender reflection of his affection. Here, the heart is mapped to a garden where love is carefully cultivated. Each blossom symbolizes emotions that have grown through attention and dedication. The act of blooming in the heart's garden maps to the process of love's development and expansion within the speaker's emotional world, as if each feeling is a delicate flower born from his care.

*Would you kiss those petals
That I unfolded with care?*

The petals are mapped to visible manifestations of affection, each one carefully unfolded as the speaker opens himself to vulnerability and intimacy. These petals represent the tender gestures and expressions of love, delicately shared with the beloved. The careful unfolding maps to the way love is revealed gradually and cautiously, adding layers to their connection.

The blossom I smeared with love potion

The blossom is mapped onto a cherished feeling infused with “love potion,” symbolizing the essence of affection. This love potion maps to the enchanting, intangible qualities of love that imbue the relationship with depth and allure. It creates a fragrance that symbolizes love’s power to captivate. This metaphorical fragrance maps onto the allure that fills the space between them, drawing them closer in an atmosphere charged with emotion.

*The garland strung with the heart’s thread
That I had once gladly taken around my neck,*

Here we can map the garland to a symbol of commitment, unity, and pride in their bond. Crafted from the blooms of the heart’s garden, this garland maps to the culmination of shared feelings and memories that connect them. Placing it around the neck symbolizes acceptance and pride in their relationship, mapping onto the joy of wearing one’s love openly.

*That garland, would you today,
Throw away, uncared?*

However, with this question, the poet introduces the fear of love’s neglect. Here, we map the potential of abandonment to the risk of seeing love’s delicate blooms; once cherished; left unattended, symbolizing the heartache of love’s impermanence. Rava’s garden metaphor paints love as a process of continual growth and care. Just as a garden requires consistent attention, weeding, and tending to maintain its beauty, love also depends on ongoing acts of nurturing. The speaker’s question about discarding the garland hints at the potential heartache that comes when love, once flourishing, is left untended. This abandonment reflects the sorrow that can accompany love, illustrating how even the most cherished emotions may fade if neglected.

Would You Pluck Those Blossoms speaks about the sensory beauty of a love that is both enchanting and fragile. Through the CMT LOVE IS A GARDEN, Rava captures the cyclical nature of love’s growth and vulnerability, the joy of nurturing connection, and the pain of possible rejection. Each line of blossoms, petals, garlands, and fragrances reminds us that love, like a garden, is a space of beauty that requires care, a delicate balance where joy and sorrow coexist.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's *In the Golden Dawn, My Champa Blossoms* the poem weaves together rich images of nature's beauty to convey love's delicate growth, resilience, and celebratory essence. This vibrant portrayal aligns with the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A GARDEN. This is mapped to the dynamics of love onto the flourishing elements within a garden. Garden is a space cultivated to nurture, bloom, and delight. Through this metaphor, love becomes an ever-growing entity, inviting attentiveness, care, and celebration.

*In the golden dawn, my champa blossoms,
Like the Seuti and Malati,
My champa blossoms in golden hues.*

The blossoming of the champa at dawn is mapped to a love that renews with each day, enriched by beauty and gentle beginnings. By mapping dawn's golden light onto love, the metaphor evokes an image of affection that is constantly reborn, as each day brings fresh opportunities for love to unfurl and deepen. Mapping the champa to other flowers like Seuti and Malati highlights love's diversity, like a garden containing many unique plants, each contributing its own beauty.

*Its fragrance like a garland,
With colors like the Revati,
Dancing gracefully, oh,
My champa blooms in gold.*

Here, the metaphor extends as the champa's fragrance spreads, likened to a garland adorning life with joy. The image maps love as a sensory experience, as fragrance does, enriching and decorating the spirit in the same way a garland enhances a celebration. Revati's color is mapped to the grace and vitality, while the act of "dancing gracefully" reflects love's expressive, dynamic nature, akin to the movement and change found in a thriving garden.

*Golden butterflies,
Silver butterflies,
Hover and glitter around my Golden champa in full bloom.*

The butterflies, fluttering around the champa, are mapped onto the allure and admiration that love draws. Their graceful movements encapsulate how love attracts attention, bringing life and color to the relationship, much like butterflies enliven a garden in bloom. This interaction illustrates love's magnetic quality, as butterflies are naturally drawn to flowers in the same way lovers are drawn to each other.

*Wildflowers too,
Bloom beautifully,
Birds sing melodies, In enchanting tunes.*

Mapping the presence of wildflowers and singing birds onto the ecosystem surrounding love, the metaphor broadens to include the communal, supportive environment that fosters and celebrates love's growth. Wildflowers, representing spontaneity and natural beauty, enhance the metaphor of a garden filled with diverse life, where different forms of love, like different plants, contribute to the overall harmony and richness.

In William Shakespeare's *Sonnet 116*, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A GARDEN emerges through the portrayal of love as enduring, resilient, and ever-nourishing, like a carefully tended garden. The line,

*Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come*

employs natural imagery to evoke the idea of growth, decay, and renewal within a garden's cycle. Love, like a thriving garden, withstands the ravages of time, flourishing even as beauty fades and seasons change. This metaphor conveys love as a nurtured, unyielding force, one that resists the transient effects of time and continues to grow stronger through care and commitment. Shakespeare suggests that much like a garden, love demands patience, dedication, and the resilience to endure life's inevitable challenges, blossoming continuously in a timeless harmony.

3.1.5 LOVE IS A DREAM

Dreams, with their sequences of thoughts, images, and sensations occurring free from reality's constraints, offer a vivid metaphor for love. In dreams, where ordinary limitations are diminished and emotional and psychological experiences are intensified, individuals find parallels to the experience of love. Love, akin to a dream, can transport individuals to a realm of amplified sensations and limitless possibilities, infusing life with new meaning and vibrant colors. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A DREAM underscores love's capacity to enrich personal identity and elevate experiences, like transformative dreams. Similarly, the deeply personal and subjective nature of dreams reflects how love is shaped by individual perceptions and emotional landscapes. However, just as dreams can be fleeting and leave a sense of longing, love too can be ephemeral and leave lasting impacts even when it may not endure.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A DREAM resonates profoundly in everyday Assamese expressions, like:

- *Tair logot jiyai thokatu jen ek kolpona.* Being with her is like living in a fantasy.
- *Tair bhoi jodi xar pale xi herai jai.* She's afraid she'll wake up and he'll be gone.
- *Teulukor prem otibastobik jen onubhob hoi.* Their love feels surreal.

In Amulya Baruah's poem *Essence*, the poet beautifully explores themes of love, loss, and self-reflection through emotive imagery. Interpreting the poem through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A DREAM illuminates the ephemeral, elusive, and sometimes illusory qualities of love, drawing parallels to the transient and often intangible nature of dreams. This metaphor captures the intensity and transformative experience of love, mapping it to a journey through the surreal, emotional landscape of a dream.

The poem opens with the speaker describing how they are "lost, Chasing the heavenly stream of love," mapping the way one might chase after an unattainable dream. The metaphorical journey of navigating the "river of love" maps to a pursuit filled with aspiration, yet fraught with uncertainty and the potential for disorientation. It is like trying to navigate a dream where clarity and direction are elusive. The pursuit of love, despite its lofty ideals, results in the speaker losing themselves, highlighting the illusory and shifting nature of an ideal that is insubstantial as a dream itself.

*The illusions of this world, how deceitful,
I forgot my own self.*

This evokes the disorienting effects of dreams, where reality can blur and distort. The loved one is described as a "pure shadow," mapping the intangible and fleeting essence of love. This imagery enhances the sense that love can be a transient and mystical experience, like the fleeting visions encountered during sleep.

*Death kissed the wine of love,
Yet I wandered aimlessly in a futile dream,
A form without a shadow.*

The metaphor here maps love to a dream that persists even in the face of loss or finality, like how dreams can continue despite logic or reason. The description of aimlessly wandering and being "a form without a shadow" is mapped to the surreal, nonsensical journey of dreams, where one feels disconnected or detached from reality. This imagery

mirrors the sense of disconnection one might feel when emotionally adrift, highlighting love's capacity to evoke a dream-like state that can feel both profound and disorienting.

*That vast desire, it was only you.
Even now, whose tender dawn,
Painted strokes in the green forest,
At the farthest reaches of my heart,
Lingers still, a golden mark.*

In the concluding lines of the poem, the impression left by love, described as a "golden mark," is mapped to the lingering impact of a vivid dream. Just as dreams can leave emotional imprints or insights upon waking, so too can experiences of profound love leave lasting marks on the heart. It persists beyond the dream-like state of the relationship itself. This metaphor underscores how love, like a powerful dream, can be both transformative and haunting, its effects remaining long after the moment has passed.

The metaphor LOVE IS A DREAM in this poem is **ontological**, attributing the qualities of dreams, ephemeral, surreal, and emotionally intense, to the experience of love. This approach conceptualizes love as an encounter that transcends ordinary reality, offering deep emotional engagement that feels as vivid and transformative as a dream.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's poem *My friend, in desperate longing*, love is intricately woven into the fabric of dreams and desires. The poem creates an atmosphere where anticipation and yearning blend into a sensory experience. Through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A DREAM, the poem draws parallels between the ethereal nature of dreams and the intense, often overwhelming, quality of love. This metaphor allows for a nuanced understanding of love as a surreal experience that elevates, transports, and sometimes torments.

*Dreaming of a smile,
In dreams, whispers of love
Enchant her, making her swoon.*

Here, the lover's smile and whispered words echo through her dreams, mapping love onto the dreamscape, where everything feels heightened yet intangible. The beloved's presence within the dream captures the elusive quality of love, vivid and consuming yet beyond reach. Love, like a dream, appears as a spellbinding force, leaving the one who experiences it in a state of longing, as enchanted as she is helpless.

*In dreams, news of the beloved,
She waited along every path,
The spring breeze caresses her,
Touching and passing by.*

The act of waiting in dreams while the beloved seems to be close but unreachable is mapped onto the temporal and spatial disorientation of a dream. The spring breeze, gentle and transient, symbolizes the fleeting nature of love's presence within the dream, touching her yet slipping away. This mapping reflects how love often feels just within reach and simultaneously elusive, as dreams can create a sense of closeness even in absence.

*The touch of kisses' delight,
Leaves her restless,
Her body, without peace.*

Here, the metaphor of love as a dream expands to capture the sensory impact of love on the body. The imagined touch of the beloved's kiss in the dream world leaves the lover in a state of restless yearning, mapping the intangible experience of love onto a physical response, where dreams spill over into reality, blurring the boundary between the waking and dream states. Love, like dreams, manifests deeply within, affecting both mind and body in profound ways that linger.

As an **ontological** metaphor, this portrayal treats love as an entity akin to a dream, giving it a tangible, physical presence that can profoundly impact the lover's inner world. This perspective allows love to be understood as an experience that is felt deeply, even when intangible.

By mapping love onto the dream state, the poem suggests that love's presence can elevate and intensify ordinary experiences. It transforms ordinary moments to something beautiful and surreal. Just as dreams bypass everyday reality to reveal hidden desires and emotions, love has the power to reveal layers of feeling, perception, and longing that might otherwise remain hidden. Dreams are inherently personal and subjective, shaped by the dreamer's psyche, just as love is uniquely interpreted and felt by each individual.

In Edgar Allan Poe's poem *A Dream Within a Dream*, the metaphor LOVE IS A DREAM is poignantly conveyed through the themes of impermanence and the fleeting nature of experience. This concept is captured in the lines,

*All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.*

Here, Poe suggests that reality, including love, is as ethereal and insubstantial as a dream. The imagery of grains of sand slipping through his fingers underscores the intangible and elusive nature of love, as it cannot be grasped or held indefinitely. This portrayal not only emphasizes the dream-like, transient quality of love but also its delicate, poignant beauty, leaving an impression that, like a dream, love is fleeting and yet profoundly moving in its impermanence.

3.1.6 LOVE IS ETERNAL

Time and space are viewed as finite boundaries of human existence, yet emotions like affection and connection cut across these limits and suggest the concept of eternity. This eternal quality in emotions represents a depth and steadfastness, unaffected by external circumstances or the passage of time. These mirrors to how immutable truths stand resolute against change. Such emotions, once formed, become a permanent element of existence, enduring as long as memory and consciousness. In love, this implies a continuity beyond physical presence or life stages, persisting in memory, spirit, or legacy. Eternal love, unlike transient experiences, is seen as immutable, resisting the effects of time and maintaining a boundless, enduring impact on relationships and personal identity. This perspective frames love as a perpetual force, emphasizing its capacity to shape legacies and personal histories indefinitely.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL is deeply woven into the fabric of everyday Assamese language. For instance:

- *Xomoiyor tulasonit xihotor prem xofol hol.* Their love will stand the test of time.
- *Teur tair proti thoka prem ketiau mlan nohobo.* His love for her will never fade.
- *Teulukor hridoy sirodinor babe poripurok.* Their hearts are forever intertwined.

In Bhupen Hazarika's poem *On Leaving These Illusions*, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL is woven into the speaker's reflections on the nature of love and mortality. The poem captures a yearning for an enduring connection that transcends the material world. It expresses the speaker's realization that true emotional bonds carry significance far beyond earthly illusions.

*Mesmerising illusions of the world,
When I will take leave of these all.*

Here, we map the “illusions of the world” onto the distractions and desires that often captivate us but ultimately hold no lasting value. As the poet contemplates the end of these distractions, a desire for something profound and permanent surfaces the love that has defined his life. This sense of leaving illusions behind is mapped onto the abandonment of worldly pleasures and ambitions. The speaker turns toward love as the only enduring truth.

*My only wish that remains, is that,
By the side of my pyre,
I will get the presence of your fire.*

The pyre, symbolizing the end of life, is mapped onto the finality of death, while the fire of the beloved is a metaphor for love’s enduring warmth and presence. Even in death, the poet longs for his lover’s essence to be beside him, indicating that their bond goes beyond the physical realm. Through this imagery, the poem maps the permanence of love onto the symbol of fire. This suggests that true love is a constant, an eternal flame that continues to burn even beyond life’s end.

*I don’t need a gathering in memoriam,
Neither do I need false praises;
A single droplet of tear from you
Will give me my apt value.*

Here, we can map superficial honors and public displays onto worldly vanities that offer no real solace or meaning. In contrast, a single tear from the beloved is portrayed as holding profound worth, symbolizing authentic emotional depth. This tear, mapped to the eternal essence of love, conveys that the purity and sincerity of their bond are what provide lasting value, surpassing any external tributes.

*My memory fell short of you
As I kept singing for the masses.*

The speaker then reflects on life’s distractions. This line reveals the regret of having focused on external success and fame, neglecting the private love that now seems to hold far greater significance. Here, singing for the masses is mapped to worldly ambitions, achievements that once seemed meaningful but now appear empty compared to the personal love he failed to fully appreciate. This mapping captures a common realization that true fulfillment often lies in intimate, personal connections rather than in public validation.

*Your love which never could be mine,
Had in it, the aura of a divine shrine.*

This line elevates the lover's affection to the status of a sacred space, mapping the idea of a shrine onto love's eternal and spiritual nature. This "divine shrine" suggests that the beloved's love is a sanctified, revered force that transcends ordinary human experience. The mapping of love to a shrine reflects the speaker's reverence and recognition of its power, expressing the notion that love, like a place of worship, remains a constant source of solace and meaning.

*A shrine I will find in your bosom...
A single droplet of tear from you
Will give me my apt value.*

In the final stanza, the "bosom" of the beloved is mapped onto a place of ultimate peace and sanctuary, where the speaker hopes to find rest beyond life's struggles. The tear that would grant him "apt value" reflects the idea that genuine emotional connection is the only enduring measure of worth. This mapping conveys the belief that love provides not only a place of refuge but also a sense of completeness and understanding.

Through the metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL, Hazarika's poem captures the realization that true love endures beyond life's temporal experiences. The speaker's reflections on fame, societal validation, and material pleasures reveal their ultimate emptiness. In contrast to the enduring emotional connection, he shares with his beloved. By mapping love onto sacred and eternal elements Hazarika illustrates that love's impact is timeless, offering solace and meaning that outlast the physical world.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL used in the poem is **ontological**, as it ascribes abstract qualities of eternity, sanctity, and divinity to love. It portrays love as an enduring entity that transcends human existence.

In the final lines of *Mamata's Letter*, the enduring nature of love emerges through Mamata's words, revealing a constant hope for reunion. Here, love is beyond time and physical boundaries, aligning with the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL. This metaphor envisions love as an ever-present force, unaffected by separation or the constraints of time, a sentiment beautifully captured in her quiet longing and steadfastness.

*What more. There isn't much to write
When you return, do let me know. I'll go beyond
The river Bhogdoi and call you
From the Lohit... the day you return
Do not forget to let me know beforehand.*

In this image, crossing rivers is mapped to the willingness to overcome all obstacles in the pursuit of love's reunion. Rivers often represent boundaries, yet here they are transformed into passages connecting the present and the future, mapping love's boundless nature. The rivers Bhogdoi and Lohit act as symbols of separation. It also act as reminders of the persistent journey Mamata is willing to undertake, fueled by a love that remains constant despite physical distance and loss.

Love remains, Mamata.

This simple yet powerful sign-off distills her enduring affection into a single phrase. It resonates with an affirmation of eternal love. Her love is perceived as a force of nature, undisturbed and unchanging through all circumstances. This closing line is mapped to the notion of love as a perpetual presence, an eternal entity that stands resilient against the ravages of time.

The metaphor of LOVE IS ETERNAL here is **ontological**, bestowing love with the timeless quality of permanence that defies the natural flow of time and mortality. By conceptualizing love in this way, it becomes more than an emotional state. It is an unbreakable bond and a timeless commitment that continues to connect those separated by life's boundaries.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's poem, *I'll Be Loving You Always*, the essence of love's infinite nature is delicately captured through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL. Here, love is envisioned as a force that is beyond fleeting moments, extending into a timeless expanse. Through descriptions of devotion and transformation from sorrow to joy, Agarwala infuses love with qualities of permanence, resilience, and healing that surpass temporal limits.

*I'll be loving you always
With a love that's true always.*

This refrain, repeating "always," serves as the poem's heartbeat, mapping eternity onto the act of loving. By asserting love's constancy, the poet conveys a commitment that does not

wane with time. The consistency of “always” reflects a boundless quality, framing love as a perpetual state. It is akin to a universal truth that exists independently of the ordinary constraints of time.

*Not for just an hour
Not for just a day
Not for just a year
But always*

In these lines the poet contrasts limited measures of time against the vastness of “always,” emphasizing love’s unbounded nature. Here, each moment, the hour, day, and year is mapped to transient experiences, which are then negated by the repetition of “always.” This creates a tension between the finite and the infinite, underscoring the boundless scope of love. It exists beyond the ordinary ticking of time. Through this mapping, Agarwala affirms love as an eternal element, rendering it timeless and unchanging.

*Everything went, and the whole day long
I felt so blue
For the longest while I forgot to smile,
Then I met you.*

These lines reveal how love fills the void left by past sorrow, signifying love’s ability to replace enduring pain with a lasting sense of peace and joy. The phrase “for the longest while” conveys a feeling of timeless despair, which is eventually replaced by the uplifting, perpetual light of love. This mapping captures love as a restorative force. It positions love as an antidote to suffering, one that transforms temporal sorrow into sustained happiness.

The poem's structure reinforces the **ontological** nature of the metaphor, LOVE IS ETERNAL, where love is given the intrinsic property of boundlessness. By employing the metaphor of eternal love, Agarwala explores the depth and resilience of love as a commitment that is beyond fleeting emotions and moments. The poem’s repetitive structure mirrors the cyclical, steadfast nature of love itself, suggesting that true love endures all seasons and circumstances.

In the poem *Tete-A-Tete*, Nabakanta Barua creates a timeless space of connection and silent understanding between himself and his beloved, capturing the serenity of shared presence even beyond life. Through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL, the poem unfolds a vision of love that cut across physical existence. The poem celebrates a connection that does not depend on words or gestures.

*Ah, it is pleasant
We are sitting, simply sitting
Sitting silently.*

The simplicity of sitting together, unmoved by the need for conversation, maps love onto the eternal presence. In their quiet togetherness, love is depicted as a profound companionship that needs no verbal confirmation. It resonates with the idea that true affection is undisturbed by the silence. Here, love is understood as a state of quiet existence, where mutual presence alone is enough to sustain it.

*I have so many things to tell
Which I know I cannot, shall not tell*

These lines reveal the poet's internal struggle, mapping his boundless emotions onto the constraints of silence. This highlights love's depth, acknowledging that sometimes words cannot encompass the entirety of feeling. The restraint becomes an act of love itself, a testament to the poet's understanding that silence, too, can hold immense meaning and respect for the shared bond.

*Last night I talked with me
Of too many this and that—
I was in an anguish to tell*

This captures the poet's desire to communicate the myriad thoughts that swirl within him, mapping love onto a longing for expression. The implied self-dialogue underscores the bittersweet nature of eternal love, where connection remains, yet the ability to share is constrained. The imagery of "last night" reflects his wife's daily ritual of visiting his memory. It reinforces the continuity of their bond, cherished and renewed with each silent interaction.

*The sun above is throwing little
pebbles of its rays
Through the leaves of the tree,
They are falling on your nose, lips and arms
Not on mine*

Here the poet subtly acknowledges his ethereal state, mapping the absence of physical sensations onto his existence beyond life. The sunlight, which illuminates his beloved but not him, mirrors the tangible experience of love she still holds, as opposed to his intangible presence. This gentle separation of their physical experiences reflects the nature of love. It goes beyond mortality respecting the boundary between the living and the departed.

*We are sitting, sitting —
And we have had our talk.*

This concludes their silent communion, mapping the essence of their conversation onto a shared understanding. This affirmation that their sitting together constitutes a conversation without words epitomizes the concept of eternal love. It suggests that their connection, forged in life, endures without the need for spoken language, evolving into a sacred bond that words cannot disrupt.

This **ontological** metaphor envisions love as an unchanging and timeless entity, persisting beyond the physical world's limitations. Love, as presented here, is a presence that remains constant, a force that continues to influence and comfort even when communication becomes impossible.

In *Tete-A-Tete*, the poet captures the enduring nature of love, demonstrating that it is a bond sustained through silent understanding and eternal presence. This metaphor enriches the portrayal of love as a silent, everlasting dialogue, one that continues to echo through moments of quiet togetherness.

In Nabakanta Barua's poem *Sketches*, the essence of love is portrayed as timeless and enduring. It brings together the bonds of connection that persist beyond spoken words and physical presence. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL resonates through the verses, as Barua crafts an intimate portrayal of love that endures beyond the confines of time, space, and the mundane demands of life.

Once we went aboating on the Ganges...

This line evokes the image of a journey shared, a silent communion across the flow of time. The Ganges, sacred and ancient, becomes a witness to this eternal love. The river, symbolizing both faith and continuity, represents a love that, like its currents, moves eternally. Here, "aboating" suggests that their love is like a voyage, mapped to an unspoken bond that is beyond life and death. It recalls moments of togetherness that the poet and his beloved shared in the midst of time's relentless passage.

Time is short. I have no time and have too many problems to solve.

The poet acknowledges the burdens and constraints of life, where worldly concerns consume his moments. The imagery of "sipping" and "inhaling" problems is mapped to life's demands which invades even the smallest moments. Despite these constraints, the

poet's love remains, an unbreakable presence quietly affirming itself beneath life's pressures. This acknowledgment of love against the backdrop of fleeting time serves as a reminder of love's enduring nature, a steady force unmoved by external disruptions.

*Ah, it is pleasant
We are sitting, simply sitting
Sitting silently.*

In this stillness, the poem reveals love's profound silence, where words become superfluous. The couple's quiet companionship reflects an understanding that does not require expression. Here, the metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL is beautifully mapped to the simplicity of "sitting, simply sitting," where time seems to pause, and love exists as a silent, unspoken connection, requiring no reinforcement. This moment of shared presence, filled with tranquility, illustrates that love is an ongoing, unbroken thread woven through every moment of life, even in the absence of words.

*The sun above is throwing little pebbles of its rays
Through the leaves of the tree,
They are falling on your nose, lips, and arms
Not on mine.*

In this scene, the sun's rays represent the selective grace of love, illuminating the beloved with warmth and tenderness while leaving the poet untouched. The mapping here links sunlight to the embrace of love's quiet, enduring energy. Love is a warmth that reaches the beloved across the distance of separation, maintaining a connection even in silence. The imagery of sunlight as a symbol of love's touch suggests a bond that remains resilient. It finds the beloved through the "leaves of the tree," even as the poet observes from afar.

This conceptual metaphor is **ontological**, attributing to love the timeless quality of an eternal entity, a steadfast presence that transcends the physical world. In the poem, Barua captures love as an essence that flows beneath life's demands and constraints. Through images of quiet sitting, sunlight filtering through leaves, and journeys on the Ganges. Love is depicted as an ever-present energy, an unspoken language that endures even in the face of worldly turmoil. .

In John Keats's poem *Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art*, the metaphor LOVE IS ETERNAL emerges in Keats's desire to emulate the steadfastness of a star. It embodies a love that endures beyond the transient nature of life. Keats's wish for constancy in his love is beautifully captured in the lines,

*No, yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest.*

Through these words, he conveys a yearning to remain perpetually beside his beloved, savoring the rhythm of her breath as a timeless, undisturbed presence. His wish to "live ever or else swoon to death" intensifies this longing, depicting love as an eternal, all-encompassing force that either sustains endlessly or consumes entirely. This sentiment reflects Keats's vision of love as unbreakable and undying, a constant presence that transcends life's impermanence.

3.1.7 LOVE IS COMPANIONSHIP

Companionship, a fundamental human need for connection and belonging, is characterized by its comforting presence and emotional support within close, enduring relationships. This reciprocal relationship involves a mutual exchange of support, understanding, and loyalty. This contributes to emotional resilience and a shared journey through life's challenges and achievements. More than mere coexistence, companionship entails a deep integration of lives. Personal experiences and emotional landscapes are intertwined, fostering individual and mutual development. As companionship evolves, it adapts to changing needs and circumstances, highlighting its resilience and adaptability. This dynamic enhances personal growth, emotional stability, and the depth of interpersonal connections. This emphasizes the transformative impact of companionship on emotional health, social functioning, and life satisfaction, thereby underlining its intrinsic value in meaningful relationships.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS COMPANIONSHIP echoes strongly in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Jibonor ontim muhurtoloi akeloge thakiboloi xihote smriti xongrokhyon korise.* Together, they're creating memories to last a lifetime.
- *Teuluke akeloge hat-e hat dhor jibon nirman kori ase.* They're building a life together, hand in hand.
- *Jatra pothot duyure xohojugi.* They're each other's support along the way.

In Bhupen Hazarika's poem *Me and My Silhouette*, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS COMPANIONSHIP emerges portraying the shadow as a steadfast companion. It provides comfort, guidance, and resilience through the solitary journey of life. Here, Hazarika uses the shadow, or silhouette, as a powerful **ontological** metaphor to represent the enduring presence of love within oneself. The shadow is a profound companion, a part of the self that offers continuous support. This metaphor maps the abstraction of love and companionship onto the concrete, personified image of the silhouette. This suggests that companionship, even in isolation, resides within.

*Who says I am forlorn... Me and my silhouette,
Both are each other's companion.*

In the opening lines, Hazarika creates a firm declaration of defiance against loneliness. This line introduces the relationship between the speaker and their silhouette as one rooted in mutual presence. The shadow provides solace, contradicting the superficial perception of loneliness.

*Planet! Don't say I am forlorn,
Me and my silhouette
Are each other's companion*

These lines emphasize the poet's assertion that true companionship, even in solitude, can be found within. The shadow, usually an insubstantial reflection, is mapped here as a source of profound connection. It is elevated companion to be real and present as any physical friend.

*When I build a house,
In the vast sandy stretch of hope
It's only my silhouette that
Uplifts sand for me.*

Here, the poet extends the metaphor by mapping the abstract process of building dreams and aspirations onto the supportive role of the shadow. The image of "uplifting sand" conveys resilience in adversity. The shadow provides motivation and means to construct the "house" on uncertain sands of hope. This metaphor captures the internal nature of resilience. It speaks about pursuit of personal dreams, one's inner self, symbolized by the silhouette to remain as the only reliable source of strength and continuity.

*Even in a dark road,
It's only my silhouette that*

Carpets the way with light for me

Hazarika's portrayal of the silhouette as a guiding light reveals an **orientational** metaphor. The shadow is positioned as a source of direction through the uncertainties of life. In these lines, the silhouette assumes a paradoxical role as the bringer of light. This reversal "a shadow casting light" is mapped to the illuminating power of inner companionship. The shadow metaphorically "carpets" the speaker's path with light. This mapping effectively conveys that true companionship provides a way forward even in darkness. Amid life's most difficult times, it is our inner self which is often neglected or unappreciated, offers clarity and guidance.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS COMPANIONSHIP in *Me and My Silhouette* brings to light Hazarika's exploration of self-reliance and inner strength. The shadow, a metaphor for the speaker's inner self, reflects an eternal form of love that does not depend on external presence. When the speaker reflects, "Loneliness is my comrade... Only truth is my very own silhouette," Hazarika underscores the notion that solitude can be a state of companionship with oneself. This relationship with the silhouette becomes a powerful metaphor for resilience and self-acceptance, mapping love and companionship onto the relationship with the inner self. The inner self remains "truth" amid the "false" nature of distant, unreliable friendships.

Through the layered metaphors of companionship, resilience, and light, Hazarika's *Me and My Silhouette* view self as a constant and comforting presence. It transforms solitude into an empowering journey of introspection and strength. This mapping of companionship onto the silhouette enriches the poem's narrative. It asserts that the most profound relationships can reside within, illuminating one's path forward and offering a sense of belonging.

In Robert Frost's poem *The Master Speed*, the metaphor LOVE IS COMPANIONSHIP is beautifully expressed through the image of two partners moving together in perfect harmony. Frost captures this unity in the lines,

*Two such as you with such a master speed
Cannot be parted nor be swept away
From one another once you are agreed
That life is only life forevermore
Together wing to wing and oar to oar.*

Here, Frost portrays love as a shared journey where two individuals are so deeply aligned in purpose and movement that they become inseparable. This image of partners moving “wing to wing and oar to oar” emphasizes a synchronized bond. Each supporting the other through life’s challenges and joys. Love, for Frost, is not a solitary pursuit but a profound companionship, where life’s path is enriched by shared experiences and deep mutual understanding. This metaphor underscores love as a powerful and steadfast connection, enabling partners to journey through life together, resilient and unbreakable.

3.1.8 LOVE IS PRECIOUS

Precious elements, valued for their rarity and inherent worth, are often treasured in human relationships for their symbolic significance, transcending ordinary transactions. When love is viewed as a precious element, it highlights its exceptional role in enriching lives and deepening connections. This perspective examines love's unique contributions to personal fulfillment and emotional wealth. It emphasizes its capacity to add depth and meaning to individual experiences and relationships. The preciousness of love involves its lasting impact, akin to a rare gem that needs careful preservation and thoughtful appreciation. This concept also suggests a fragility in love, requiring protective measures. By viewing love as precious, we gain insight into its transformative power and the way cherished emotional bonds are cultivated, maintained, and revered, significantly enriching the human experience.

The idea that LOVE IS PRECIOUS holds a special place in everyday Assamese expressions. For instance:

- *Tai teur xoite kotua proti-tu muhurto mulyoban buli gonyo kore.* She treasures every moment with him.
- *Tair prem tar babe ek mulyahin upohar.* He treats her love like a priceless gift.
- *Tar xannidhyoi taik bhagyaboti kore.* She feels lucky to have him

In Bishnu Prasad Rava’s poem *If Not Nahar*, translated by Madan Sarma and Gautam K. Borah, love is depicted as a precious, sacred entity. The poet’s use of cultural and natural imagery paints a picture of love as something rare and deeply valuable. This illustrates the lengths to which the lover is willing to go to express this feeling. Through the metaphor LOVE IS PRECIOUS, Rava creates a layered narrative that not only speaks to the beauty

and intensity of romantic love but also to its transformative and sacrificial nature. This **ontological** metaphor imbues love with qualities of rarity, purity, and ultimate worth.

*If not Nahar
It's Tagar for sure
If not either Tagar
Kapou will
Suit you for sure.*

Here, the poet begins with an offering of flowers, nahar, tagar, and kapou, which are emblematic of Assamese culture. Each flower represents a different quality of love, from the fragrant beauty of the nahar to the delicate appeal of the kapou. Through these flowers, Rava illustrates that love is flexible and adaptable, able to take on different forms to suit the beloved's desires. This sequence of offerings serves as a metaphorical journey, each flower mapping to a distinct quality of affection that the poet holds for his beloved.

*What if even your Kapou
Suits not my bun?
I'll then pluck the flower of my heart
And tuck it in your lovely bun.*

Here, the poem shifts from external offerings to an internal one, the "flower of my heart." This change signifies that when material symbols fall short, the lover is willing to reach within, to the very core of his being, to find something that will resonate. The "flower of my heart" is a deeply personal and irreplaceable gift, mapping love to its purest form. It is an offering of one's own essence. The mapping of his heart to a flower expresses love as a profoundly valuable, precious part of himself that he is ready to share.

*I'll bail water of the ocean
And bring for you
The most precious stones.*

In this image, Rava intensifies the metaphor of love's value, suggesting that even the treasures of the ocean are at his beloved's disposal. The act of "bailing water of the ocean" speaks to the lengths he is willing to go, mapping love with mythical feats. The poet's devotion is boundless, able to go beyond natural limits in the pursuit of symbols that convey his affection. Here, the ocean is mapped to the depth of his feelings, while the precious stones represent the rare beauty of love's gifts.

*I'll pierce the bosom of the clouds
And tear out for you*

the beautiful flower of lightning.

With this powerful image, Rava brings a sense of danger and awe. The act of tearing out “the flower of lightning” speaks to the poet’s willingness to harness the extraordinary forces of nature to express his love. The lightning, fleeting yet beautiful, symbolizes the intensity and urgency of his feelings. Here, love is mapped to a force that is both natural and ethereal, one that cut across earthly limitations and requires courage to attain.

*If flowers of ruby suits not
My necklace of seven strands?
I’ll break my heart open
And make you wear
The blood-red coral of my heart.*

The poem reaches its most intense moment in these lines, where Rava offers the “blood-red coral of my heart” as a final, ultimate gift. The heart is mapped here to a rare and precious jewel, suggesting that love’s true worth lies within one’s own being. By offering his own lifeblood in the form of coral, the poet illustrates love as an experience that demands total surrender and sacrifice. The coral, vibrant and red, evokes both beauty and mortality, capturing the poet’s readiness to give all that he is.

Throughout the poem, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PRECIOUS is expanded and explored using rich, layered symbols. The flowers, ocean stones, lightning, and coral create a tapestry of images that express love as something rare, dynamic, and deeply treasured. Each element, from the humble nahar flower to the powerful lightning reveals love’s ability to transform, adapt, and persist. Rava’s use of cultural symbols and natural elements enriches the narrative, making love an expansive force that shapes life’s journey and touches on the extraordinary.

In William Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18*, the metaphor LOVE IS PRECIOUS is elegantly conveyed through the poet’s portrayal of his beloved’s beauty as both timeless and invaluable. Shakespeare declares,

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander’st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st.*

These lines elevate love to the realm of an “eternal summer,” impervious to the passage of time and untouched by decay. The beloved’s beauty, preserved in verse, becomes a

treasure that defies mortality, immune to the inevitable wear of life. In mapping love to something precious, enduring and beyond measure, Shakespeare captures the essence of love as a treasure, cherished and safeguarded, much like the finest jewels or metals that retain their luster and worth indefinitely. This poem celebrates love as something profoundly valued, transcendent, and eternally admired.

3.1.9 LOVE IS PHYSICAL

Physical interactions, marked by touch, presence, and direct engagement, are essential in expressing and perceiving love. It provides a foundation for building and sustaining emotional connections. These interactions, including gestures like hugging, kissing, and holding hands, serve as conduits for conveying affection and enhancing closeness and security. Conceptualizing love as a physical phenomenon reveals how these tangible expressions reinforce emotional ties. It offers comfort, reassurance, and a tangible sense of belonging and acceptance. The dynamic nature of physical expressions of love evolves with the relationship and the needs of the partners. It varies from the passionate intimacy of new love to the comforting touch of long-term partnerships. Examining love through its physical manifestations allows to understand how these interactions embody and boost the emotional and psychological aspects of love. It creates strong bonds and enriches relationships through direct and experiential forms of human interaction.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PHYSICAL strongly echoes through everyday Assamese expressions. For example:

- *Prothomor porai tai teur proti akorxito*. She felt drawn to him from the start.
- *Tar uposthiti-a xi taik xihorito kore*. She feels his warmth whenever he's near.
- *Xihotor xomporkoi tair hridayot eti sin thoi goise*. Their relationship left a mark on his heart.

In Hem Barua's poem *Your Sweat-Soaked Face*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, the poet portrays love as a physical experience, exploring its sensory dimensions and passionate intensity. The physical expressions of love are beautifully explained, bringing forward the metaphor LOVE IS PHYSICAL. Here touch, presence, and the environment embody the profound connection between lovers. The poem's language is imbued with sensual imagery. It aligns love with natural elements to capture both the ecstasy and intensity inherent in romantic union.

*Come love, keep your hand on my hand
And your lips on my lips*

The poem opens with these lines grounding love in the tactile simplicity of physical connection. The imagery of “hand on hand” and “lips on lips” is mapped to the intimacy and closeness, reflecting how the act of touch serves as a powerful expression of affection and unity. This direct contact conveys the essence of love as something felt and experienced on the skin. It is similar to the heart, where closeness and connection become inseparable.

*Let the clouds that lean against the sky
Come down in torrents*

These lines weave natural elements into the emotional landscape of love, enriching its intensity and physicality. Here, the clouds which are assumed as heavily resting upon the sky become a symbol of an impending outpour. It parallels the powerful release of emotions within love. The mapping of this image begins with the source domain of clouds and rain. It is represented as a natural force, building in tension and finally descending. This tracks onto the target domain of emotions in love, which accumulate and then pour forth in an equally overwhelming torrent. In this mapping, the clouds leaning heavily can be seen as a metaphor for suppressed feelings in love, feelings that grow heavy and seek release. Just as clouds can no longer hold back their rain, emotions in love, too, seek expression in the face of mounting passion. The torrents of rain, cascading from above, align with the rush of desire and affection. It is perceived as a powerful flood that immerses the senses, binding lovers in an all-encompassing force.

*Down the dust-laden paths
Let incessant rain bathe the trees
And drown the voices of the birds.*

The poem continues with a series of powerful images. Here, the rain is mapped to love’s cleansing and transformative power, bathing and nourishing the surroundings like love nourishes the soul. The rain, with its incessant nature, submerges other sounds. It emphasizes love’s all-encompassing presence that drowns out distractions. The sensory appeal in these lines creates a picture of love as a force that immerses one fully, with no room for anything outside its grasp.

*In the mirror of a forlorn river in some dense forest
Let your face be aglow, drenched in sweat*

In these concluding lines, the lover's sweat-soaked face reflected in the still river becomes a powerful emblem of the fervor and intensity of love. Here, the source domain of sweat and reflection in a remote, untouched river is mapped onto the target domain of love's physical and emotional demands. The sweat, a natural response to effort, symbolizes not only the physical closeness of lovers but also the depth of their shared passion. Glistening in the quiet, secluded mirror of the river, this image suggests that love's true essence is revealed in moments of exertion and vulnerability. Here the lover's face, marked by effort, reflects a devotion that is both consuming and transformative. This mapping presents sweat as a visible testament to the depth of love. It illustrates how love leaves its unmistakable traces in the physical world, echoing the intensity of its emotional undercurrents.

Barua's poem deftly uses **ontological** metaphors, rendering love as a tangible force that impacts the physical and natural worlds. The poem celebrates the physical manifestations of love, portraying it as an intimate force that is deeply intertwined with nature and human existence. This perspective brings forward a profound understanding of love as a powerful, consuming entity. Here the physical and emotional realms blend seamlessly, enriching the human experience through connection, passion, and the unspoken language of touch.

In *Definition of Love*, Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi skillfully extends the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PHYSICAL, portraying love as an intensely corporeal experience through natural imagery. Her use of symbols like the sky and the flower enlightens the physical and transformative dimensions of love, mapping it as a vivid interaction between two complementary forces. The imagery of the "large blue sky" entering the "budding flower" evokes the dynamic interplay between male and female energies. This speaks about how love fulfills both physical and emotional longings.

*Perhaps then enters the large blue sky
On the budding flower; collapses to the root*

These lines invoke the sky's vastness as a symbol of the lover's presence, which envelops the flower, signifying the beloved. This entry into the flower metaphorically reflects love as a physical union. This suggests the immersive and transformative potential of intimacy. The sky, expansive and powerful, is mapped to the uncontainable scope of love. The budding flower, tender and receptive, is mapped to the delicate vulnerability inherent in such an experience. The phrase "collapses to the root" implies that love penetrates to one's

core. It signifies that love, in its physical manifestation, reaches the innermost parts of one's being, evoking a sense of completeness and transformation.

*The thunder enters proudly inside the vortex
Turns into ash*

This line intensifies the physicality of love with the image of thunder. It symbolizes passion, entering the vortex, which represents the lover's being. The process of thunder turning into ash suggests that love, while powerful, can also bring dissolution and change. This imagery captures how love's passionate force can be both life-affirming and all-consuming. This transforms one's existence as it satisfies physical desires. The turning to ash is mapped to the transient and transformative power of love, which leaves an indelible impact, marking the lover's body and soul.

*The abode houses of
Thigh, breast, body.*

This line brings the physical essence of love into vivid focus, anchoring it within the intimate spaces where desire is both nurtured and expressed. By designating these areas as "abode houses," Bordoloi creates a mapping that brings love into the tangible, specific contours of the human form. Abode houses symbolize places of shelter and presence, which track onto love as an embodied force. Thighs, breasts, and the entire body are portrayed as love's domains, physical spaces where passion dwells and takes form, imbuing love with a visceral immediacy and presence. Through this mapping, Bordoloi emphasizes that love is rooted within the body. Its impact marked by the physical landscapes it inhabits, underscores the undeniable link between desire and the corporeal foundation of intimate connections.

In *Definition of Love*, Bordoloi uses LOVE IS PHYSICAL as an **ontological** metaphor, attributing physical properties and sensations to love, and thus grounding it in tangible experiences. Each line and image invite us to conceptualize love as something palpable, understood through its impact on the body and physical world. The interplay between sky and flower, thunder and vortex, enhances our appreciation of love's depth and sensuality. It portrays a powerful and grounding force. Through this metaphor, the poem highlights love's multifaceted nature, its capacity to envelop, transform, and reside within the physical self.

In another poem *Kabita* written by Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi, translated by Pradip Acharya, love is depicted through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PHYSICAL. It captures the presence of love as a tangible, nurturing force that can be experienced and held close. The poet evokes this sense of love as a natural refuge and a boundless space. It uses images of the forest and the sky as elements of comfort and freedom within the lover's heart.

*Keep a patch of the forest in your bosom
To give you the shade to rest in*

Here the poet maps the forest as a place of shade and rest, suggesting that love is a physical sanctuary providing both security and peace. The "patch of the forest" in the bosom represents a tangible space for love, offering solace much like the heart offers refuge. This imagery aligns love with nature's ability to soothe and protect, illustrating how love, rooted in the depths of the heart, creates a comforting enclosure where one can retreat. The bosom, symbolic of the heart and emotions becomes a haven of rest and tranquility. It maps love to a comforting and grounding force that offers physical and emotional refuge.

*Keep a bit of the sky in your bosom
Where two birds for once can fly alone.*

Here, the expanse of the sky maps onto the vast and liberating aspects of love. The sky symbolizes freedom and openness, with the "two birds" representing lovers who, while deeply connected, retain their independence. By holding "a bit of the sky" within, love becomes a source of liberation, allowing personal exploration within the sanctuary of shared affection. The sky's limitless nature emphasizes love's capacity to encourage individuality and growth within a close relationship. It captures how love nurtures both unity and personal freedom.

This metaphor is **ontological**, attributing the physical properties of the forest and sky, shade, protection, and freedom to love. The physicality of love in these images speaks about its role as both a comforting enclosure and an expansive space for growth and freedom. Through the metaphor of love as physical space, *Kabita* conveys the depth and warmth of love's impact, mapping it as a powerful, corporeal force that protects, liberates, and sustains. Bordoloi's portrayal of love as a "patch of the forest" and a "bit of the sky" adds dimension to our understanding of love, highlighting its dual role in offering a comforting haven and an expanse for exploration.

In *I Sing the Body Electric*, Walt Whitman brings the metaphor LOVE IS PHYSICAL to life through a powerful celebration of the human body and its profound connection to the soul. Whitman affirms that physicality is integral to love and existence, as expressed in the lines,

*O my body! I dare not desert the likes of you in other men and women,
nor the likes of the parts of you,
I believe the likes of you are to stand or fall with the likes of the soul, (and that they are
the soul,)
I believe the likes of you shall stand or fall with my poems, and that they are my poems.*

In these verses, Whitman portrays the body as sacred, emphasizing that love finds expression through the physical form, with each part reflecting the beauty and unity of human experience. His words suggest that the body and soul are intertwined, each amplifying the other. The body, in this view, becomes a vessel of emotional and spiritual expression, grounding love in the tangible and illuminating the depth of human connection through the physical self.

3.1.10 LOVE IS BRITTLE

Brittle materials are characterized by their hard yet fragile nature, prone to breaking or shattering under stress without much deformation. This quality reflects a condition where structural integrity is compromised by vulnerability to external forces. In a similar vein, love can be understood as brittle when considering its susceptibility to damage under the pressures of misunderstanding, conflict, or neglect. The brittleness of love suggests that while it may be strong and enduring under favorable conditions, it can suddenly and unexpectedly fracture when faced with challenges. This highlights the delicate balance required to maintain it. Exploring the brittleness of love further, it becomes clear that relationships require fortification through mutual respect, shared values, and common goals.

The CMT LOVE IS BRITTLE often appears in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teur bhab hoi morombur jen jikunu muhurtote nih hekh hobo pare.* She feels like their love could shatter at any moment.
- *Tair bhoi kore je eta xoru kathate xomporkotu bhangi jabo pare.* She is always afraid that a small reason might crack their bond.

- *Xihotor bisakhbur thunuka hoi porise*. The trust between them has been shattered

In Hem Barua's poem *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, the narrator, Mamata, pens a poignant message to her deceased husband, weaving in memories and reflections. Through its tender and vulnerable tone, the poem embodies the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS BRITTLE. It evokes how love, while capable of enduring over time, remains vulnerable to the unrelenting forces of loss and change. The metaphor infuses each line with a delicate tension, portraying love as something cherished yet fragile, resonant with the memory of a loved one who has passed.

*Dear, here I'm lighting a candle.
I'm writing to you after a long time.
The lovely breeze outside
Is lashing at the candle...
Wait, let me close the window...*

The image of a candle being lit in remembrance is mapped to both the light of enduring affection and the vulnerability inherent in love. The flickering candle, exposed to the breeze, maps the fragility of memory and connection. Just as the candle's flame can be extinguished by a single gust, the poet captures how memories are susceptible to fading. It needs mindful protection to stay alive. By closing the window to shelter the candle's flame, the poet symbolically closes off the world to preserve the fragile bond with her late husband. It highlights that the memory, though precious, can be disturbed by the smallest external force.

*Do you remember the things that happened ten years ago?
The time when we wrote the preface of our life...
A strange intoxication whirled me mad.*

Mamata's letter then reflects on a past shared with her husband. Here, memories are mapped to fragments of a brittle past, barely retained but deeply cherished.

*That morning... a delicate, foggy wintry morning...
And in the evening the first time I visited your house,
Do you remember ... How the yellow moon beckoned at us?*

The metaphor continues as she narrates these lines. The language suggests a time long past, almost dreamlike, yet filled with joy and connection. The soft winter morning and the moon's gentle light is mapped to the tender beginnings of love, alluding to its delicate and ephemeral nature.

*Dear, do you remember
What Deuta wrote to me?
'Dear daughter, keep smiling in your new home.'*

Here, Mamata reflects on her wedding day. The words of her father, now memories themselves, sound “like the stories of the Puranas.” Here, the mention of the Puranas, ancient and revered texts, conveys a sense of timelessness. They are fragile stories passed down, delicate as they rely on memory and retelling. These lines are mapped to how love, like a family tradition or an ancient text, can be a powerful source of identity and meaning. But requires protection to endure, vulnerable to the passage of time and the silence of loss.

*Towards the end, as Mamata discusses her young son, she notes,
Your Babul has really grown
His tiny pomegranate seed-like teeth... a smooth tooth-line.*

The image of pomegranate seeds is mapped to the beauty and new life. It contrasts the fragility of memories with the continuity of legacy through her child. Despite this enduring connection, her husband’s absence remains palpable:

*He doesn't leave me alone, even for a while
Sometimes I get very angry... you're not by my side... that's why.*

This line speaks to the brittleness of her own strength. As she grapples with raising their child alone, her love and memory of her husband supporting her yet fragile in their ability to fill the void of his absence.

*What more. There isn't much to write
When you return, do let me know. I'll go beyond
The river Bhogdoi and call you
From the Lohit... the day you return
Do not forget to let me know beforehand*

The closing lines embody the fragile hope she continues to hold, even knowing it is unlikely to be fulfilled. Her words reach across time, mapping love and loss with longing and remembrance. The candle, sheltered but flickering, stands as a symbol of a love both enduring and vulnerable, reminding us that love’s beauty lies in its brittleness. Its capacity to light the darkness yet be extinguished by even the gentlest breeze.

In *Mamata’s Letter*, Hem Barua uses the LOVE IS BRITTLE metaphor to portray love as both resilient and delicate. By attributing the physical properties of brittleness to love,

Barua emphasizes its preciousness and the tender care it requires to be sustained. The poem becomes a moving testament to love's power and vulnerability.

In Lord Byron's *When We Two Parted*, the metaphor LOVE IS BRITTLE resonates deeply through imagery of broken vows, coldness, and silent grief. The fragility of love is painfully depicted in lines like,

*Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.*

These words say how love, once cherished, can shatter, leaving only sorrow and regret. The recurring themes of silence and tears, both at the moment of parting and in the thought of future encounters emphasize the lingering pain of a love that has crumbled. Byron's portrayal of love as delicate and easily damaged reveals the emotional scars left by its loss. It captures the vulnerability and sorrow that accompany the remnants of a love that could not withstand time or circumstance.

3.1.11 LOVE IS FIRE

Fire, known for its intense heat and dynamic nature, is a dual force that can sustain life or cause destruction, requiring careful management to balance its benefits and hazards. Similarly, love is mapped to fire in its capacity to deeply warm and invigorate the human spirit. It also holds potential for volatility and damage if not managed with care. The intensity of love can bring profound comfort and joy, fostering growth and connection within nurturing boundaries. The metaphor of love as fire underlines the need for balance and continuous attention in relationships. Like controlling a fire to prevent destructive spread, love requires vigilance and moderation to maintain its positive influence. Love's transformative nature, akin to fire's ability to alter substances irreversibly, can change individuals and their paths dramatically. This duality of love to enrich and potentially overwhelm underscores the importance of thoughtfully managing emotional dynamics. It recognizes when to rekindle or temper feelings to keep the relationship balanced and thriving.

Through this lens, love is viewed as a dynamic and powerful element that must be respected and tended with wisdom and dedication.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS FIRE frequently ignites imagery in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Tair proti teu motoliya hoi porise.* His love for her blazes intensely.
- *Tair uposthitit premor a jak ushnotto botahe tak boliya koribo khuje.* He feels a warm glow whenever she's near.
- *Xihotor prem mlan hobo khujisil kintu akou jui sikhar dore ujoli uthil.* Their love flickered, then roared back to life.

In Amulya Barua's poem *Yearning*, the poet portrays the intensity, passion, and transformative power of love, using fire as a central metaphor to explore these themes. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS FIRE reveals the consuming and ever-changing nature of love, emphasizing its capacity to ignite creativity and passion while possessing a volatility that requires careful handling. By examining the poem through this lens, we uncover how love, like fire, can burn brightly and bring warmth but also has the potential to cause turmoil and transformation.

*A riot of colors,
The hues of intoxicating wine*

In the opening lines, the poet speaks of the energy associated with fire. The bright colors and warmth of the imagery maps the vibrant, overwhelming nature of love's passions. Just as fire can fill a space with light and energy, love's intensity can saturate a person's life with a powerful, consuming force. This initial depiction mirrors fire's dynamic and vivid presence, mapping how love has the capacity to dominate one's senses and emotions.

*Day by day it burns,
A new lightning,
A new star.*

Love's energy is mapped to the relentless nature of fire, which continues to burn and transform its environment. The imagery of lightning and stars maps the unpredictable, electric quality of love's impact like fire's capacity to spark suddenly and alter everything around it. This portrayal emphasizes love's power as a force that can be both beautiful and destructive. This highlights its ability to dramatically change one's emotional state.

*In the heat of time,
Molten to form,
The wheel of life's work.*

This description is mapped to the process of personal growth and transformation to the forging of metal in fire. The intensity of the heat molds and shapes, just as love's experiences refine and define the individual. The metaphor of fire here emphasizes that love, like a flame, has the power to create and transform. This symbolizes the ways in which it can shape one's life and identity over time.

*With sparkle and flash,
In the burning, burning,
The heart's desire carried*

In these lines the poet further emphasizes the enduring and consuming nature of love. The continuous burning is mapped to how love, like fire, can persistently affect a person's life. It can illuminate their experiences and provide moments of intense brightness. The sparkles and flashes capture the fleeting moments of joy and passion that love ignites, mapping how love can animate one's existence while maintaining its ever-present intensity.

*I am restless – forever in motion,
Eternally volatile*

Finally, the poet's expression of restlessness is mapped to fire's inherent dynamism. Just as fire is constantly moving, changing shape, and consuming its fuel, love, too, is depicted as an uncontainable, volatile force. This restlessness reflects love's unpredictable and transformative nature, showing how it propels continuous change and evolution in a person's life.

The metaphor LOVE IS FIRE in *Yearning* is an **ontological** one, where love is endowed with the tangible properties of fire. This approach allows love to become a more accessible and relatable experience. The poem uses the CMT LOVE IS FIRE to explore the passionate and transformative aspects of love. The imagery of fire throughout the poem serves to capture the intensity and complexity of love, emphasizing its power to dominate, inspire, and define one's life.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's *My friend, in desperate longing*, love is depicted with a fervor that aligns seamlessly with the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS FIRE. This metaphor evokes the intense, consuming nature of love, which stirs passion and longing within the lover, as ignited by an inner flame that refuses to be extinguished. The poem's language and

imagery convey love as a dynamic force that can transform, overwhelm, and render the individual restless.

*The touch of kisses' delight,
Leaves her restless,
Her body, without peace.*

Here, love is mapped onto fire, with each touch from the beloved igniting the lover's senses, leaving her in a state of unrest and longing. The lover's reaction is mapped to the effect of fire, both captivating and disruptive. Just as fire provides both warmth and an insistent heat, love here is a source of delight. It is also an unsettling force, stripping away peace and igniting a passionate response that cannot be contained or ignored.

This **ontological** metaphor casts love as an element with inherent properties of heat and intensity, like fire. By portraying love as a force that can be both nurturing and volatile, it provides a tangible framework through which the transformative and consuming nature of love can be understood.

*The spring breeze caresses her,
Touching and passing by*

Further extending the metaphor, maps how love like a breeze, fans the flame of desire, intensifying her yearning. This gentle yet provocative touch of the breeze maps to love as a sustaining force, fueling the flame that flickers within her heart. The breeze's caress does not diminish the fire but instead stirs it, as an ember reignites when given air, mapping love's potential to inflame the heart unexpectedly, intensifying longing and passion.

Love as fire in this poem suggests both warmth and volatility, a force that must be tended with care. Just as fire can be nurturing or destructive, love, too, must be respected for its power to transform profoundly. Left unchecked, fire can consume and devastate, like unbridled love that disrupts inner peace and brings restlessness. This metaphor underscores the duality of love's nature: it can bring joy, yet it demands balance and wisdom to prevent it from overwhelming. The poem portrays love as something that requires thoughtful attention, like fire needs careful tending to sustain its warmth without losing control.

In Christopher Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*, the metaphor LOVE IS FIRE subtly emerges through the poem's vibrant and alluring imagery, even if the metaphor of fire remains unspoken. The speaker's passionate appeals and grand promises evoke a fervor akin to the consuming nature of fire.

*Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields*

In these lines, the verb "prove" suggests an intense desire to experience and test love's pleasures, like fire that transforms and purifies. The cumulative effect of these lavish promises seeks to spark a passionate response, mirroring the illuminating and consuming force of fire. Marlowe's portrayal captures the essence of love as a radiant, transformative power that both entices and engulfs, igniting a longing as profound and uncontainable as fire itself.

3.1.12 LOVE IS EPHEMERAL

Ephemeral phenomena, inherently transient and brief, can profoundly impact the environment and those experiencing them. Similarly, love, when viewed as ephemeral, highlights its fleeting nature that, despite its short duration, leaves enduring effects on individuals. This perspective underscores the impermanence of emotional states and relationships, significantly shaping personal histories and emotional landscapes. The transient nature of love prompts exploration into how such brief experiences deepen our understanding of emotional attachment and transformation. Just as ephemeral events can alter perceptions and inspire awe, transient love episodes can evoke intense joy, sorrow, and personal change. This understanding challenges the view of love as permanent, presenting it instead as a dynamic force capable of intense but temporary impact. Acknowledging love's ephemerality fosters a greater appreciation for moments of connection. The inevitable changes in human relationships are appreciated, encouraging individuals to engage deeply with the present and prepare for the natural progression of emotional experiences.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS EPHEMERAL finds resonance in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Xihotor xomporko grismo kalor boroxunor dore khyanosthayi asil.* Their bond was as transient as a summer rain.
- *Tar bhab bur ratipuar kuwolir dore khyonikote naikia hol.* His feelings for her disappeared like morning mist.

- *Teulukor xihoronbur ondhokaror sikhikonihe asil.* Their romance was a brief spark in the darkness.

In *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, Hem Barua captures the delicate transience of love through memories that evoke a profound sense of ephemerality. This conceptual metaphor, LOVE IS EPHEMERAL, resonates deeply, portraying love as a fleeting force that, while momentary, leaves indelible imprints on our lives.

*Do you remember what Deuta wrote to me?
'Dear daughter, keep smiling in your new home.'*

This poignant memory of her father's words marks a time of joyous anticipation, a blessing bestowed at the beginning of her married life. Yet, these words linger as shadows in her memory, softened and shaped by time, mapping how moments of love and guidance can slip into the realm of remembrance, cherished but distant.

*That was seven years ago.
To me it sounds like the stories of the Puranas.*

By mapping these memories to the Puranas, i.e., ancient stories passed down through generations, Mamata evokes the feeling of a love that feels mythic yet unreachable, like a cherished tale from the past. This reference to the ancient reminds us that while love may be intense in the present, it is also susceptible to the slow passage of time. It fades into stories but gain an eternal quality in the act of recollection.

Last summer we performed Deuta's death anniversary.

The mention of her father's anniversary further underscores the ephemeral nature of love and life. Even as she honors him, the annual ritual serves as a marker of love's and life's inevitable progression. With each passing year it serves as a reminder of how people and memories evolve into the past.

This metaphor, LOVE IS EPHEMERAL, is **ontological**, attributing to love the characteristics of transient phenomena. Like fleeting moments that shape us yet cannot last, love here is presented as a series of experiences that, while temporary, leave lasting echoes in the heart. The metaphor reflects the impermanence of intense emotional states and relationships. It speaks about how they influence and shape us even as they dissolve into memory. This view of love prompts a reverence for each encounter, celebrating love

as an exquisite yet transient experience that ultimately deepens our connection to both memory and identity.

In Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*, the metaphor LOVE IS EPHEMERAL is powerfully expressed through the speaker's passionate plea to seize love in its fleeting moments. The inevitability of time's relentless march is captured in the lines,

*But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.*

Here, the image of "Time's wingèd chariot" conveys the swift approach of age and loss, while the "Deserts of vast eternity" emphasize the emptiness and permanence awaiting beyond life's boundaries. Marvell's vivid evocation of

worms shall try

That long-preserved virginity,

further underscores the decay that time brings, urging the lovers to embrace passion while they still can. Through this metaphor, Marvell captures love as a fragile and transient force, one that must be cherished in the present before it vanishes irretrievably into the sands of time.

3.1.13 LOVE IS PAIN

Pain, a fundamental human experience, serves as a signal of physical or emotional harm and also as a crucial protective mechanism. In the emotional realm, pain manifests in response to loss, betrayal, or unmet expectations in interpersonal relationships. Viewing love through the lens of pain underlines the complexities and potential hardships accompanying deep emotional commitments. This perspective shows that while love is often associated with positive emotions and fulfillment, it also inherently carries the potential for pain due to its deeply personal and unpredictable nature. Conceptualizing love as pain reveals how emotional vulnerability and attachment can lead to hurt when relationships change, or love remains unreciprocated. Acknowledging the dual nature of love, its capacity to bring immense joy and profound pain, encourages a nuanced understanding of its effects. It urges individuals to approach their emotional lives with an awareness of both the highs and potential lows. Recognizing the pain tied to love fosters

greater empathy and resilience, helping individuals navigate and grow from the challenges. It enriches the discourse on love and deepening our understanding of the human condition.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PAIN often surfaces in everyday Assamese conversations. For instance:

- *Xihotor bished tar babe okhoniyo hoi poril.* Their breakup left him in unbearable agony.
- *Tar kotha bhabile bukukhon kunba atukurot bikhai.* Her heart aches every time she thinks of him.
- *Tai ane eta birad bhug korise jitu puron koriboloi bor tan.* She felt a deep wound that refused to heal.

In *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, Hem Barua captures the bittersweet intertwining of love and loneliness through Mamata's reflections on raising her son, Babul, alone. Her words evoke the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PAIN as she grapples with both joy and sorrow that love has brought into her life. She is speaking particularly about the period where her beloved husband was not present.

Your Babul has really grown

His tiny pomegranate seed-like teeth... a smooth tooth-line.

This image of her son's "pomegranate seed-like teeth" conveys both the beauty and delicacy of growth, mapping the innocence and sweetness inherent in maternal love. Yet, this joy is steeped in pain, the tangible reminder of her husband's absence looms large, casting a shadow over these milestones. This duality underscores how love, while tender and life-affirming leaves a lingering ache when experienced without the presence of the loved one.

He doesn't leave me alone, even for a while

Sometimes I get very angry... you're not by my side ... that's why.

Here, Mamata's frustration reflects the strain of single parenthood, a love that is as taxing as it is fulfilling. Her anger, rooted in the overwhelming responsibility she faces alone, is mapped to the profound absence of her partner and the strain that love can impose when the burden is shared with no one. In her longing for her husband's companionship, we see love's painful aspect, the vulnerability that deep attachment brings, where even love's beauty can feel burdensome.

LOVE IS PAIN emerges as an **ontological** metaphor, framing love as a powerful yet often distressing experience. Mamata's tenderness towards Babul intertwines with the pain of her solitude. It says that love's intensity can both uplift and burden, particularly when its natural balance is disrupted. This metaphor speaks to the human condition, where love's beauty is often matched by its capacity to wound. Through Mamata's quiet anguish, the metaphor LOVE IS PAIN comes to life, emphasizing that while love enriches, it also leaves us exposed to profound vulnerability and loss.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem, *Flowers of a Sad Night*, the poet immerses us in a nocturnal landscape steeped in longing and sorrow. Here memories of a lost love reemerge with the intensity of physical pain. This work can be understood through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PAIN, mapping love's emotional weight to the visceral experience of grief, loss, and longing. The stillness of the night, accompanied by the cicada's lament, creates a haunting ambiance that amplifies the poet's yearning and heartache, painting love as both cherished and agonizing.

*When the night is made still
By the cicada's sad song
And the lost darkness of saddened hearts
Looks for you in the margins of the night*

These lines evoke an image of hearts reaching out in the darkness, seeking a presence that has faded away. Here, the night and darkness is mapped to the poet's internal void, with the "cicada's sad song" mapping with the poet's own grief. The poet maps the "darkness of saddened hearts" to convey an emptiness and aching loss. It transforms love into a place of quiet agony, where even the night's creatures seem to echo his pain.

*The moon sheds tears on leaves,
The soft fragrance of your body
Comes all alone
Down the stairs of my silence*

Here the metaphor takes on a physical form, as the moon itself sheds tears that fall upon leaves, blurring the boundary between nature and the poet's own despair. The moon, here personified as a mourner, parallels the poet's sorrow. The fragrance of the beloved becomes a lingering memory that pervades his solitude. By mapping the "soft fragrance" descending "down the stairs of my silence," the poet captures love's lingering presence. It

suggests that even in its absence, love haunts him, moving within the quiet spaces of his being and stirring up both comfort and sorrow.

*In that intimate moment of sleeplessness
Your disembodied fragrance
Envelopes me*

These lines heighten the sense of intangible closeness between the poet and his lost love. The "disembodied fragrance" surrounding him is mapped to love's continued impact, felt so acutely that it disturbs sleep and brings a haunting intimacy. The act of "enveloping" maps love as an ever-present force, its essence woven into the fabric of the poet's awareness, inescapable and overwhelming.

*The gateway to my heart
Weighs down
With flowers*

These lines complete this exploration of love's burdensome beauty. The heart, mapped as a "gateway," becomes a passage overwhelmed by the weight of flowers. Each flower blossom embodying memories of love now transformed into a poignant load. This weight maps love to a form of sorrow, emphasizing how even beautiful memories can become a source of heaviness, as the heart, though filled with love, struggles under its accumulated ache.

This **ontological** metaphor, LOVE IS PAIN attributes love with the qualities of physical and emotional weight, loss, and grief. It presents a powerful force that fills the soul with both beauty and sorrow. Through *Flowers of a Sad Night*, Bhattacharya reveals love's dual nature, its capacity to elevate yet burden, to comfort yet wound. The poet's imagery of night, moonlight, fragrance, and flowers constructs a world in which love endures as an indelible mark, simultaneously tender and painful. Each line, filled with the weight of sorrow, enriches our understanding of love as an experience that, while cherished, carries the inevitability of pain. It presents an intimate portrait of love's ability to both heal and haunt.

In *Sonnet 147: My love is as a fever, longing still*, William Shakespeare brings the metaphor LOVE IS PAIN to life through haunting imagery of illness and madness. He maps love to a feverish ailment, "longing still for that which longer nurseth the disease" and "feeding on that which doth preserve the ill," illustrating a passion that perpetuates its own suffering. The speaker's reason, cast as a physician, has forsaken him, its "prescriptions...

not kept," leaving him "frantic-mad with evermore unrest." Through these lines, Shakespeare captures the tormenting, relentless agony that love can bring, a consuming force that defies logic and shatters peace. The metaphor reaches its painful peak in the final lines:

*For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.*

Here, love is revealed as a self-destructive obsession, driving the speaker to despair and madness, and transforming beauty into darkness. This powerful depiction of love underscores its potential to inflict deep, enduring anguish, consuming those who surrender to its fevered grip.

3.1.14 LOVE IS A CONTAINER

Containers, as enclosed spaces, hold or limit their contents, distinguishing what is inside from the external environment. Applying this framework to love, the container metaphor conceptualizes love as a vessel that encapsulates emotions, memories, and shared experiences. It defines the relationship's unique characteristics. It portrays love as a safe space for intimacy and vulnerability. Each person contributes their emotional presence and personal history, shaping the "container's" contents. Like any container, love can hold various elements such as shared goals, affection, and mutual support that interact to form a cohesive entity defining the relationship. Moreover, containers have boundaries, which in love represent the limits within which feelings are exchanged and nurtured. It is adaptable over time that reflect the evolving needs for closeness or personal space. As the contents within a container can shift or mix, so can love to involve dynamic interactions where priorities, emotions, and roles transform and adapt. This metaphor highlights the structured yet flexible nature of relationships. Emotions and experiences are safeguarded yet reconfigured, allowing relationships to grow and adapt while preserving their core essence.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A CONTAINER frequently finds its way into everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Tair hiya khon teur moromere bhorise ase.* Her heart feels full of love for him.
- *Xi atori juat tai xunyota budh korise.* She felt empty when he left.
- *Teulukor prem aru barhiboloi thai ase.* Their love has room to grow.

In Nilomoni Phukan's poem *I See You Stark Naked*, the intensity of love is expressed through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A CONTAINER. This metaphor envisions love as an all-encompassing, immersive space where the speaker is completely enveloped. It allows them to feel both contained and transformed. Through evocative language, the poem illustrates love as a boundaryless entity that holds and shapes the speaker's experiences. It speaks of vulnerability and profound connection within its depths. Here, love is a place that captures and contains the entirety of the self, a domain that offers both liberation and entrapment within its embrace.

*I see you stark naked
I shut my eyes and kiss you*

These lines introduce a sense of intimacy and vulnerability, creating an image of a space where openness and trust flourish. In this protected "container" of love, the speaker feels secure enough to engage deeply with the beloved, mapping love as a vessel that shields them from external interference. This metaphorical container forms an emotional haven, allowing connection and intimacy to exist freely, unguarded and uninterrupted.

*I sink and submerge
In the mysterious dark woods, I hear again*

The poet evokes an image of profound immersion, as the speaker metaphorically "sinks" into love's embrace. This sensation of sinking and submerging maps love as a vast, boundless space, one that fully holds the speaker's mind and heart. The "mysterious dark woods" signify a secluded, enclosed realm, a container where love's presence enfolds the speaker entirely. It makes the experience intense like mystical immersion.

The heavy clamorous tone of the water

This verse within this container metaphor suggests a realm saturated with emotions. Water, a symbol for feelings, surrounds and fills this container, enveloping the speaker in resonant, fluid sounds. This auditory immersion maps love as an inclusive environment. Here emotions flow continuously and surround the speaker on all sides. It intensifies the experience of love's power to hold and amplify their inner world.

*I immerse my totality
If you I die, I spring to life*

This line reflects love's transformative power. Here, love's container holds parts of the self and the speaker's entire being, a place where they undergo both death and rebirth. The

juxtaposition of death and rejuvenation within this container explains love's capacity for profound change. This space within love's boundaries is mapped as one of emotional metamorphosis. Here loss leads to renewal, suggesting that in love, one finds both destruction and new life.

*Even after losing everything
I haven't lost you anyhow*

The poet affirms love as a place of permanence, a container that preserves the beloved and keeps the essence of the relationship intact. Despite any external losses, this container of love remains steadfast, acting as a repository for an enduring bond. Love is mapped as a secure space that holds and protects. It allows the beloved to remain preserved, unshaken by the changes of the external world, and reinforcing love's role as a constant and unbreakable refuge.

This poem employs an **ontological** metaphor, where the abstract experience of love is given tangible qualities by mapping it to a container. This framework explains love as a safe and immersive space that holds the speaker's vulnerabilities, desires, and transformative experiences within it.

In *I See You Stark Naked*, the metaphor LOVE IS A CONTAINER encapsulates love's dual role as both a sanctuary and a space of profound transformation. Through images of immersion, submersion, and intimacy, the poem conveys love as a place that absorbs, holds, and preserves emotions, memories, and shared experiences. The poet finds both a refuge and a source of self-renewal within this space. Here love's boundaries offer the safety needed for complete vulnerability. The closing sentiment, where the speaker clings to the beloved even after "losing everything," reveals love's power as a container to preserve essential connections amid external losses. It reinforces love as a lasting and protective vessel. This CMT highlights love as a sanctuary that provides emotional safety, depth, and the capacity for personal rebirth.

In *Sonnet 31*, Sir Philip Sidney frames LOVE IS A CONTAINER that entraps and confines emotions. It holds the lover in a state of sorrow and unfulfilled longing. The speaker sees himself and the Moon as sharing a mutual plight, both silently burdened by unrequited love. The Moon becomes a metaphorical vessel, silently climbing with a "wan face." It carries the visible signs of its own unspoken suffering. This sense of containment in love is expressed in the line,

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!

which reflects how love can envelop and confine the lover's feelings. This fills them with sorrow and inescapable yearning.

3.1.15 LOVE IS AN ALBUM

Albums, which organize and preserve photographs or music collections, function as repositories that chronicle significant events, experiences, or artistic expressions. It captures moments in a structured format. Conceptualizing love as an album highlights it as a curated collection of cherished memories and experiences. This emphasizes the accumulative nature of love where each moment, joyful or sorrowful, builds the narrative of a relationship. The metaphor of love as an album illustrates that each memory or phase, like the pages of a photo album or tracks on a music album, has its own significance and contributes uniquely to the whole. Some memories may be revisited often, stirring strong emotions, while others serve as reminders of past times. Additionally, just as albums can be shared or remain private, aspects of love may be expressed openly or kept for personal reflection. This perspective frames love as a dynamic compilation of interactions and emotions. This is similar to actively compiling and curating an album where each entry enriches the broader narrative of one's emotional life.

In everyday Assamese speech, the idea that LOVE IS AN ALBUM is a common theme. For example:

- *Protitu pristhai xihotor premor smritiye bhorai rakhise.* Their love story is filled with pages of memories.
- *Akeloge thoka protitu muhurto tai khojotone rakhi thoise.* She cherishes each moment they captured together.
- *Teulukor xomporko-tu jen ek obismoroniyo smritir xonkolon.* Their relationship is like a collection of unforgettable snapshots.

In *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, Mamata reflects on her son's growth with a quiet poignancy that calls to mind the metaphor LOVE IS AN ALBUM. This metaphor suggests that love, like an album, preserves and curates moments of tenderness, loss, and joy. Each memory is a page, each feeling is an image to revisit.

*Why does the little one stare at me?
... At ..My white dress?*

He is used to it... since his birth!

Here, Mamata's son, accustomed to her white attire, grows up in an environment shaped by her widowhood. The white dress, an unchanging fixture in his life, is mapped to the album of love. It is perceived as a snapshot of loss and resilience preserved within the silent pages of her memories. Like a photograph gazed upon repeatedly, this image is both a familiar comfort to him and a reminder to her of love's endurance and pain.

*And when he grows up I'll
Put him in a school.*

This thought, reaching into the future, is mapped to the act of preparing blank pages in an album, awaiting memories yet to be recorded. The mother's love extends beyond the present, anticipating moments and milestones that will add to this collection of memories. Like an album that grows richer with each addition, her love for her child is a compilation, capturing both present familiarity and future hopes.

This metaphor is **ontological**, framing love as a repository of emotional snapshots. By mapping love to an album, the poem illustrates how relationships are built from a series of significant yet quiet moments. Each moment adds depth and continuity to the narrative of love and loss. Each entry, the gaze of a child, the steady white dress, plans for school contributes to this album. It encapsulates not only her love but also the strength and resolve it inspires within her.

Through LOVE IS AN ALBUM we come to see that love is not a static feeling but a living archive of moments. Some moments are mundane, and others are profound. Together the moments shape the intimate world between parent and child. This metaphor emphasizes that love, like an album, is an active process of preservation, one that grows richer over time as new memories are added to those carefully stored.

In *Lines Written in Early Spring*, William Wordsworth subtly conveys the metaphor LOVE IS AN ALBUM through his gentle reflections on nature and emotion. He captures scenes of tranquil beauty and a profound sense of harmony with nature. This evokes images as if they were pages in an album, each contributing to a layered emotional experience.

*Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes,*

In these lines, in the description of birds "hopping and playing," Wordsworth presents moments of serene joy and contemplation, snapshots of the natural world that embody love and connection. These cherished glimpses form a reflective collection, akin to an album that stirs both joy and melancholy, preserving precious moments of life and love. This metaphor explains how single, beautiful experiences are gathered and treasured, weaving a tapestry of memories that holds deep emotional resonance.

3.1.16 LOVE IS SACRIFICE

Sacrifice, defined as the act of giving up something valued for something deemed more important, is pivotal in the dynamics of personal relationships, particularly in the context of love. It underscores the willingness to forego personal gain to benefit others. This reflects the depth of one's commitment and affection by setting aside individual needs to nurture and support a relationship or a loved one. Conceptualizing love as sacrifice entails exploring how acts of giving be it time, resources, or emotional energy strengthen bonds and foster mutual respect and appreciation. Although sacrifice may involve loss, the resultant gains in relationship depth and longevity are substantial. Understanding sacrifice in the realm of love deepens appreciation for the complexities of human relationships. Through this lens, love is appreciated for the resilience and growth fostered through selfless acts and shared challenges.

In everyday Assamese expressions, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS SACRIFICE is a recurring theme. For instance:

- *Teur premor jurotei tai xokolu kosto mur pati lole.* She went through all the obstacles embracing his love.
- *Taik xukhi koriboloi xi xokolu koribo pare.* He'd go to any lengths to make her happy.
- *Tair xopun puraboloi xi nijor xopunbur bixorjon dile.* He let go of his dreams to support hers.

In Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi's poem *Gandhari*, we find the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS SACRIFICE, capturing the depths of love through Gandhari's enduring commitment, selflessness, and relentless resilience. This metaphor conveys love as a devotion that is beyond personal comfort and desires. It defines one's identity through acts of giving and enduring for the sake of another's well-being. Gandhari's sacrifice for her husband and

family exemplifies the self-abnegation and unrequited support that often underscore profound love.

*I am a woman, yet not a woman
Not that woman! Whose mind's sky
Changes color every moment.
A lover—yet not a lover
In that sense: for her blind husband,
Who blinds her own sight.
I had covered for many long years
My eyes, so as not to deceive.*

Here, Gandhari's act of covering her eyes, symbolizing her commitment to sharing her husband's blindness, embodies love as sacrifice. The source domain of blindness, i.e., choosing to limit her vision maps to love as a form of unwavering loyalty. Here her self-imposed blindness signifies devotion that is beyond personal needs. Her voluntary loss of sight signifies the ultimate dedication, where she forsakes her own vision to honor her husband's condition. This portrayal of love as sacrifice goes beyond fleeting affection. Instead mapping love to loyalty and loss of self is defined not by needs but by silent, selfless devotion.

*I am an eternal wonder!
From ordinary motherhood,
How unique I am!
Standing at the edge of this blood-red,
Gloomy graveyard of Kurukshetra,
I gaze at my own self.*

Gandhari's painful self-reflection as she stands at the battlefield of Kurukshetra embodies a love marked by sacrifice and sorrow. Unlike ordinary mothers, her maternal love is deeply scarred by loss. The graveyard of Kurukshetra amplifies the enormity of her sacrifices. This underscores a love that endures even the agony of witnessing her sons' deaths. Kurukshetra's graveyard, filled with desolation, is mapped to Gandhari's maternal role. It conveys a strength that defies ordinary attachments through love fortified by grief.

*I am a mother to my children—yet not a mother
Offering her life,
Restless, wild, and engrossed
In fervent prayer
For her son's well-being.
But I am not a mother—I have no child*

*A hundred sons? That's a laughable matter,
That's a hundred nightmares,
An ominous advent
When I close my eyes
For dreams of happiness!*

Here, Gandhari's conflicting roles as a mother and her sense of loss illustrate love as a painful sacrifice. Restless and fervent prayer reflects her unfulfilled yearning, mapping to love that endures despite its futility. Her role as a mother is a paradox of love bound to sorrow, embodying the torment of a maternal heart that, though fractured by loss, remains devoted.

*In countless shadowy huts,
In the kingdom of affection
A mother reigns supreme,
Where evening after evening,
Under the tulsi plant trembles
A mother's love,
On the child's head descends
The petals of tenderness.*

In these lines, Gandhari imagines an idealized form of maternal love. Here affection flows unbroken, serene, and nurturing, unlike her own sacrificial experience. The "kingdom of affection" and trembling "tulsi plant" suggest a love marked by tenderness, a realm where sacrifice does not entail loss. This contrast starkly with Gandhari's life where love is entangled with bereavement and longing.

*But what does this pain of mine signify?
Even before becoming the queen consort of Hastinapur,
One son secretly took place in my womb.
That son, born without a womb,
Is here within me,
One son—one and only,
His name is Dharma.
Then? Then why the sorrow?*

The metaphor of bearing Dharma as her "son" speaks to her inner reconciliation with loss, mapping love onto the ultimate sacrifice of self-fulfillment for the sake of higher values. Dharma, representing virtue, embodies Gandhari's enduring love as a commitment to principles beyond personal gratification. This positions love as a legacy of duty, even at the cost of her own happiness.

*In my house burns a hundred funeral pyres,
On each forehead,
The vast emptiness of the crematorium.
But today, the flame of the pyres
Has not been able to ignite
This empty field.*

Here, the unyielding emptiness contrasts with the burning pyres. It symbolizes the resilience of her sacrificial love, which remains unchanged amid unimaginable grief. The empty crematorium is mapped to love that remains resilient amidst loss. Gandhari's love, though marked by profound loss, refuses to be extinguished by tragedy. It illuminates her identity as a mother and wife who endures despite the devastation surrounding her.

*My dry eyes
Burn with only
A single light
Like a star burning
On a new moon's night
How this terrifying darkness around
Has brought forth
An invincible light from within,
To witness that scene.*

The "single light" in Gandhari's dry eyes amidst darkness is mapped to her enduring love. Here inner strength and self-sacrifice keep her spirit alive, despite the depths of her suffering. This light, born from the essence of sacrifice, becomes an unbreakable bond that sustains her through her darkest moments. It suggests that true love, like a constant flame, persists even in the face of overwhelming shadows.

In *Gandhari*, LOVE IS SACRIFICE serves as an **ontological** metaphor, lending the attributes of selflessness, endurance, and hardship to the concept of love. Each line speaks of love as a force that extends beyond personal fulfillment. Here sacrifice becomes a source of strength and resilience. Gandhari's sacrifices, from her blindfold to her devotion amid sorrow, embody love's power to endure, transcend, and transform.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem *Are You Happy?*, the poet uses potent, layered imagery to explore love's inherent sacrifices and emotional weight. It is captured through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS SACRIFICE. This metaphor reveals love as an experience often marked by personal compromise, vulnerability, and endurance. It is an unspoken

bargain that may require individuals to relinquish personal desires for the well-being of the beloved.

*In my heart a rose garden
One day a rose dripping blood
Asked of the dry thorn in secret
Are you happy?
Happy, are you?*

Here, the poet maps the “rose garden in the heart” onto the experience of love itself, a space that blossoms with beauty and emotional richness yet cannot escape the thorns of pain it carries within. The rose, traditionally a symbol of love, is here transformed through the image of dripping blood, mapping love’s allure onto a bittersweet realm of sacrifice. Here beauty is inseparable from suffering. The rose’s quiet, pained question to the thorn “Are you happy?” maps the tension between love’s enchantment and its potential to inflict heartache. The thorn, essential to the rose yet unyielding, maps onto love’s inherent defenses and the protective barriers we build to guard against pain. By entwining itself with the rose, the thorn embodies how, in love, even defenses can become part of the sacrifice, creating a bond both beautiful and vulnerable.

*I stood rooted straining my ear
In the cubit deep darkness of the rose*

The poet maps his rooted stance onto a profound commitment. It captures how love can anchor and hold one in a state of willing surrender. This darkness at the rose’s core maps onto love’s deeper, often concealed sacrifices, drawing the poet into an introspective, shadowed space. Here attachment and loss coexist. In being “rooted,” the poet suggests an unshakable connection, one that binds him within both the luminous and shadowy aspects of love. Here each sacrifice weaves a deeper sense of belonging but also of melancholy.

*In summer and in winter
Wear away the petals of the flowers*

This imagery maps the seasonal erosion of petals onto the natural progression of love. Here love undergoes changes and sacrifices with the passage of time like flowers in the garden. As the petals fall, love’s initial vibrancy maps onto something more resilient, willing to yield cherished parts of itself to endure. This cycle of blooming and decay illustrates how love adapts. This sustains itself by embracing each seasonal shift, mapping the transience of external beauty onto an internal, unyielding resilience that defines love’s essence.

This metaphor, predominantly **ontological**, attributes the qualities of sacrifice to the experience of love. By drawing on the natural elements of a rose garden, the poet offers a relatable, tangible framework to grasp the painful compromises that love entails.

In *Are You Happy?*, Bhattacharya paints a nuanced portrait of love as a sacrificial force, shaped by beauty and suffering alike. Through the bleeding rose and resilient thorn, the poem reveals love's intrinsic fragility and strength. It illuminates the deep, often silent sacrifices made in the name of affection. By embracing the cycles of summer and winter, where petals naturally wear away, the poet acknowledges that love's path is both enriched and complicated by sacrifice. The rose's questioning of the thorn, asking if happiness remains amid loss, touches on the delicate balance of finding joy within love's inherent sorrows.

In William Blake's *The Clod and the Pebble*, the metaphor LOVE IS SACRIFICE is beautifully illustrated through the contrasting views of a humble clod of clay and a hardened pebble. The clod speaks of love as selfless and giving, as seen in the lines,

*Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a heaven in hell's despair.*

This perspective presents love as a pure act of sacrifice. Here one relinquishes personal comfort and desires for the happiness of another, transforming even despair into joy. The clod's view of love emphasizes that true love is about finding joy in selfless giving, enduring hardship for the beloved's sake, and creating a "heaven" amid "hell's despair." Through this, Blake captures love as an enduring, compassionate force that finds its deepest fulfillment in sacrifice and devotion.

3.1.17 LOVE IS THE DRIVING FORCE

Driving forces are essential elements that propel actions, decisions, and dynamics across mechanical, biological, and social systems. It initiates and sustains movement and change and often guiding the development and direction of processes and behaviors. Considering love as a driving force positions it as a primary motivator. It influences a broad range of human actions and interpersonal dynamics. This transforms love from an emotion to a powerful catalyst that inspires individuals to act, innovate, and engage deeply with life and others. Conceptualizing love as a driving force reveals its influence on personal

aspirations, ethical behaviors, and social interactions. It drives people to overcome challenges, pursue achievements, and build relationships that might otherwise seem daunting. It compels individuals to prioritize the welfare of others, often resulting in acts of kindness, altruism, and collaboration. Furthermore, the transformative potential of love can redirect life paths, inspire new ventures, and reshape societal norms.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A DRIVING FORCE that underlines the ordinary language expressions in Assamese such as:

- *Tar premor xoktire tai aji jibito.* His love makes her alive.
- *Jibontu bor kothin. Tumi asa babe hei jiyai asu.* Life is tough. You are keeping me alive.
- *Tai tar premor majote herua hahi-tu ghurai pale.* She found her lost smile in him.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem ***Feasting***, the poet captures the profound, transformative nature of love, embodying it as a driving force that propels and sustains personal pursuits and resilience. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A DRIVING FORCE resonates throughout the poem. It highlights how love motivates self-revelation, vulnerability, and unshakable dedication to one's true path, even amidst hardships. Here, love is not merely a passive feeling but an active force, one that ignites movement, growth, and tenacity in life's journey.

*You well know that this poet has nothing else
Just one lone shirt that too, is giving at the seams*

Bhattacharya uses the image of a single, worn shirt to map a life pared down to its essentials, mirroring the poet's journey of vulnerability and self-exposure. This shirt, threadbare and giving way, maps onto the poet's state of being. The poet is stripped of material comforts, living a life committed wholly to his poetic calling. The worn fabric embodies the toll of this commitment. Here love for the craft demands resilience and the surrender of superficial layers. The shirt's fraying edges map love to the act of sacrificing comfort and embracing authenticity, a shedding of unnecessary barriers in pursuit of a deeper truth.

*Love must be like this
it removes the covers
to soothe the heart*

Here, the poet maps love onto an act of uncovering, a deliberate peeling away of facades to reveal one's true self. In stripping away these layers, love maps onto a force that exposes the raw, unprotected heart, creating space for healing. This act of removal symbolizes love's transformative power to reveal inner truths and vulnerabilities, mapping love onto a journey of openness that brings clarity and self-acceptance. Love, as Bhattacharya presents it, soothes by touching the heart's unguarded places. It strips away illusions to reveal the essence beneath, guiding one toward emotional clarity and wholeness.

This metaphor, primarily **ontological**, assigns the motivating qualities of a driving force to love, explaining how it shapes actions, decisions, and self-expression. Conceptualizing love as a driving force provides insight into its role as an impetus for growth and change. It catalyzes individuals to push through challenges and engage with life completely.

In *Feasting*, Bhattacharya portrays love as both a force of revelation and resilience. Through the image of the lone, fraying shirt and the act of uncovering to soothe the heart, love is depicted as a source of strength and clarity. It urges individuals toward a path of authenticity. This driving force is not without its sacrifices, as suggested by the poet's frugal existence and unyielding commitment to his craft. Yet, the rewards are intrinsic and profound. Love provides the courage to endure life's hardships and the strength to hold onto one's true self.

In Emily Brontë's *Last Lines*, the metaphor LOVE IS A DRIVING FORCE resonates deeply. It captures the poet's profound faith and the inner strength it inspires. This love, directed toward God, fills the speaker with a boundless courage to face life's storms without trembling.

*No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear;*

These lines reveal how this divine love emboldens the speaker. It provides resilience and a sense of purpose that is beyond earthly challenges. Brontë's words suggest that such spiritual love is a powerful, sustaining energy that "animates eternal years" and "pervades and broods above." This love shapes and transforms, sustaining and guiding the soul through all trials. Through this metaphor, Brontë says that love is an enduring force that fortifies the spirit and empowers it to confront even the most daunting hardships.

3.1.18 LOVE IS DIVINITY

Divinity, commonly linked with the attributes of deities such as holiness, sanctity, and a higher purpose, conveys a profound level of reverence, purity, and moral integrity that surpasses ordinary human concerns. When love is conceptualized as divinity, it is more than a simple emotion or psychological state. It is elevated as a sacred force deeply influencing human behavior and perceptions. This perspective places love in a realm of awe and profound respect, underscoring its potential to inspire, heal, and transform individuals and communities. Exploring love as divinity extends to its motivation for ethical behaviors, altruism, and selfless actions. It highlights its transformative impact on personal values and encourages a life led by compassion and empathy over self-interest. It also considers how perceiving love as divine enhances connectedness to something greater, promoting a life perspective that prioritizes harmony and universal welfare. This view enriches our understanding of love's role in personal and social dynamics. It emphasizes its potential for contributing to spiritual growth and collective well-being, showcasing love's unique position as both a deeply personal emotion and a powerful universal principle.

In ordinary Assamese expressions, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS DIVINITY is seen in statements like:

- *Prem sorgiyo*. Love is heavenly.
- *Niyoti xokti xali; kintu prem tatukoi xokti xali*. Fate is strong, but love is stronger
- *Teur prem-e taik chandra xurjyo-ku neusibo porar xokti dile*. Love can move sun and stars.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem *Longing for Sunshine*, the metaphor LOVE IS DIVINITY is woven into celestial imagery. It portrays love as a transformative and sacred force that elevates the experience of human connection to a supernatural level. This conceptual metaphor positions love as a divine presence, a sanctified experience that pervades every aspect of the beloved's existence. In this elevated portrayal, love is a sacred cosmic power that grants meaning and beauty to even the smallest moments and objects.

*In this night of vigil
I am dreaming of the harvest
Smiling golden in your soft lips*

These opening lines map love onto a sacred journey toward fulfillment, with the "night of vigil," symbolizing a period of patience and introspection. This set the stage for an awaited transformation. Here, the poet envisions love as a harvest, a moment of abundance that requires devotion and faith. The image of the "beloved's smile, glowing with golden light," maps onto divine radiance, suggesting a warmth that mirrors the life-giving force of the sun. This radiant smile becomes a symbol of spiritual nourishment, as if love itself ripens into a harvest that fills the poet's soul with both richness and grace. In this mapping, love transforms into a sacred phenomenon, a golden blessing that bestows a profound sense of purpose and fulfillment.

*As if, the sun is coursing down
The sleep of a thousand stars*

The image of the sun moving through a sky filled with slumbering stars extends the metaphor. This map love onto a divine energy that reaches into the soul's deepest recesses. The sun, emblematic of light and enlightenment, maps onto a force that awakens dormant parts of the poet's inner world. It brings clarity, warmth, and purpose. The stars, often distant and unreachable, here map onto the hidden, latent potentials within the soul, illuminated by love's presence. Through this image, love becomes a force capable of bridging the gap between the earthly and the divine, touching the finite soul with the infinite light of divinity. This mapping explains love's power to transcend, connecting what lies within with what lies beyond. It cast a golden, divine glow on the poet's journey toward spiritual and emotional wholeness.

This metaphor is **ontological**, where love is endowed with the qualities of a divine, all-encompassing force. Through this conceptualization, the poem allows us to see love as a sacred cosmic presence that permeates existence and influences the heart in ways that are profound and deeply transformative. The poet's use of celestial imagery like sunlight, stars, and radiant light reveals love's power to bring divine warmth and enlightenment to human experience.

In *Longing for Sunshine*, Bhattacharya captures the divine essence of love, depicting it as a force capable of reaching into the darkest parts of one's soul. It cast light and unveil the beauty where there was once only shadow. Through the portrayal of love as a divine entity that illuminates, nourishes, and transforms, the poem suggests that love's highest form is one that is beyond personal desire. It lifts the lover into a state of reverence and

awe. This interpretation of love encourages to view love as a bridge to something greater than themselves. It is a sacred connection that, like divine light, is both uplifting and eternal.

In William Blake's *Auguries of Innocence*, the metaphor LOVE IS DIVINITY is intricately expressed through the poet's vision of interconnectedness and cosmic justice. Blake invites to perceive the divine in the small and ordinary, capturing this in the lines,

*To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.*

Here, Blake suggests that love and divinity reside in even the smallest facets of existence. It reveals a world where every detail holds profound, universal significance. This concept deepens in the lines,

*A Robin Red breast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage
.....
He who shall hurt the little Wren
Shall never be belov'd by Men.*

These verses emphasize that every act of kindness or cruelty resonates with divine consequence, underscoring that true love is aligned with sacred principles. Love, as Blake sees it, is an extension of divine will. Here even the humblest gestures are imbued with spiritual weight, reflecting a harmony with the universe itself. Through this lens, love becomes a divine force, sanctifying life's smallest acts with eternal importance.

3.1.19 LOVE IS A STAR

Stars perceived as celestial bodies that emit light and heat essential for navigation. But stars are not limited to this, they also symbolize aspirations and dreams across various cultures. Stars embody hope, guidance, and the eternal nature of the cosmos. Conceptualizing love as a star positions it as a guiding force in personal journeys, like how stars lead travelers or influence natural cycles. Exploring love as a star involves its role in providing inspiration and direction in life. Like stars that guide explorers to their destinations, love serves as a guiding light in personal decisions and life paths. Additionally, just as stars provide light and comfort in darkness, love offers solace during tough times. The enduring visibility of stars, which remain constant across generations,

mirrors the lasting presence of love, impacting successive generations and linking time and space.

In Assamese expressions, the CMT LOVE IS A STAR frequently lights up conversations. For instance:

- *Dur xuduror porau xihotor prem ujoli uthise.* Their love shines brightly, even from afar.
- *Tar onubhobore tai gutei prithibi khon puhorai tulise.* His feelings for her illuminate his entire world.
- *Kothin xomoiyotu teulukor preme bat dekhuwai.* Even in difficult times, their love lights the way.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's poem *Oh Friend, My Beloved Will Come*, the depiction of love cut across traditional narratives. It embraces sensory imagery that intertwines light, nature, and human connection. Through this evocative portrayal, love aligns with the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A STAR, offering a unique perspective where love is seen as a luminous guide and a source of comfort, hope, and direction. This metaphor underscores love's transformative presence. It connects the abstract essence of love with tangible elements of light and celestial guidance.

*With the radiant moonlight,
Its beams glistening
On the leaves of the trees*

In this image, the poet maps the beloved's presence onto the luminous constancy of moonlight, which bathes everything it touches in a gentle, guiding light. Just as the moon's beams fall steadily and enlighten the world from afar, the beloved is imagined as a distant yet profound presence. It embodies beauty, serenity, and the promise of guidance. The mapping of moonlight to the beloved's arrival suggests an influence that reaches across space. It cast a soothing radiance over the poet's heart, like a celestial beacon that guides travelers through the night.

*In a friend's eyes,
Sparkling like dew*

Here, the poet maps love onto a star reflected in the eyes of another. It captures the joy and longing that glimmer in a friend's gaze. The comparison of this light to dew sparkling at dawn reveals love's tender, inspiring influence. Just as dew glistens with a fragile, radiant beauty, love's power subtly radiates warmth and inspiration, touching not just the lover

but all those nearby. This mapping of starlight to dew explains love's delicate, ephemeral quality. It suggests that, like dew illuminated by the sun, love leaves a lasting, gentle glow that brightens hearts with fleeting yet memorable warmth.

*In the pain of separation,
In the longing for union,
My beloved will come*

In these lines, the poet maps love onto a star that endures through darkness, providing light and hope even from afar. Love's light, like a star's, goes beyond distance, bringing comfort in moments of sorrow and longing. The beloved's distant presence acts as a guiding force for the poet's heart. It illuminates a path through the shadows of separation with the promise of reunion. This mapping casts love as an enduring flame, one that persists and shines through absence. This offers the poet solace and direction, like a star guiding lost travelers toward home.

The type of metaphor here is primarily **ontological**, where love is conceptualized as a star with qualities of constancy, guidance, and illumination. By framing love in this way, the poet endows it with a cosmic permanence. It suggests that love, like a star, exists outside of time and persists even across distances.

Through the metaphor LOVE IS A STAR, the poem conveys love's role as both a guiding force and a source of inner strength. This portrayal extends beyond individual experience, hinting at love's universal role as a source of solace and direction across cultures and eras. Stars, known for their steadfast light, have historically been symbols of aspiration and inspiration. By conceptualizing love as a star, Agarwala highlights its ability to influence, comfort, and guide individuals through the emotional landscapes of life.

In William Shakespeare's *Sonnet 116*, the metaphor LOVE IS A STAR is beautifully expressed, presenting love as a guiding celestial body. Shakespeare encapsulates this image in the lines,

*O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.*

Here, love is mapped to an "ever-fixed mark" and "the star to every wand'ring bark," suggesting its role as a guiding force, like the North Star, unshaken even in the face of

storms. This star, constant and unchanging, serves as a navigational beacon. It's worth is immeasurable yet indispensable. Shakespeare's portrayal explains love's enduring and stabilizing presence, a force that remains reliable and true. It provides direction and assurance amidst the uncertainties of life.

3.1.20 LOVE IS A SPARK

Sparks, arising from sudden impacts or friction, are fleeting yet intense phenomena capable of igniting significant transformations under the right conditions. By conceptualizing love to a spark, it is seen as an initial burst of emotion or connection that, though brief, can ignite deeper, more enduring relationships. This conceptualization underscores love's dynamic and initiating qualities, saying how even momentary interactions can lead to significant emotional developments. Exploring love as a spark involves considering the conditions necessary for these initial bursts to evolve into lasting bonds. Similar to how a spark needs combustible material and appropriate environmental conditions to grow into a flame, love requires nurturing, compatible circumstances, and mutual effort to develop from a fleeting spark into a sustained relationship. This perspective highlights the importance of foundational moments in relationships and the potential inherent in initial attractions.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A SPARK often flickers within everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teu usoroloi ahilei tair hiya khon ujoli uthisil.* She felt her heart ignite whenever he was near.
- *Teulukor xongjugor firingoti-a puhor bilaisil.* Their connection ignited a spark between them.
- *Teulukor preme teur jibonot anandor sikhikoni korhiyai anisil.* Their love brought a spark of joy into his life.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's poem *Oh Friend, My Beloved Will Come*, love is conceptualized as LOVE IS A SPARK, an intense, fleeting ignition that has the power to inspire and transform. Through its vivid imagery, the poem maps the experience of longing, companionship, and anticipation, each evoking the initial and dynamic qualities of love. It is like the sudden ignition of a spark that can set something far greater into motion. Here, love's transformative power is emphasized, beginning as a brief flash but holding the potential to deepen and endure over time.

*With the radiant moonlight,
Its beams glistening,
On the leaves of the trees*

Here, love is mapped to the gentle shimmer of moonlight, a glow that, while fleeting, holds an intense beauty. It cast a spark of warmth and enlightenment amidst the night. This mapping draws parallels between the beloved's presence and the moonlight's quiet radiance. This suggest that love, like a spark in the dark, brings light, hope, and resilience even through moments of uncertainty. The beloved's arrival becomes a beacon, a tender promise that offers direction and inspiration.

*In a friend's eyes,
Sparkling like dew*

This imagery deepens the metaphor of LOVE IS A SPARK, mapping love onto the sparkle of dew that glistens with the first light of dawn. The mapping captures love's sudden, transient beauty, a fresh, delicate glow that evokes the intense emotional pull of early connection. Just as dew sparkles before evaporating with the warmth of the sun, love's initial spark is elusive yet impactful. It creates a powerful, lasting impression that lingers even after its immediate brilliance fades. This mapping highlights love's ability to evoke joy and wonder, touching hearts with its fragile still present.

*Our friends, entwined,
In the pain of separation,
In the longing for union,
My beloved will come*

Here, the beloved's anticipated arrival is mapped to a spark that endures within the heart. It keeps love alive even in the face of distance and longing. This spark, though small, sustains and grows in the poet's heart, embodying an enduring connection that is beyond physical absence. Love becomes the quiet ember that persists, deepening and intensifying over time. It suggests a bond that remains constant despite the hardships of separation. This mapping conveys love's profound ability to endure, a light that, like a spark, has the potential to reignite fully upon reunion.

This is an **ontological** metaphor, where love is conceptualized as a physical spark, an intense, momentary ignition that sets off a sequence of emotional transformations. In viewing LOVE IS A SPARK, the poem narrates love's initial force as both intense and transformative. Like a spark needing the right conditions to become a lasting flame, love

too requires care, connection, and mutual intention to develop from a fleeting moment into a sustained relationship. In this light, *Oh Friend, My Beloved Will Come* emphasizes how even a single moment of love can leave an indelible mark. It sets in motion a journey that, like a spark, holds the potential for warmth, passion, and lasting impact.

In Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* 43, the metaphor LOVE IS A SPARK is embodied through expressions of love's powerful and transformative nature. This dynamic force is captured in the lines,

*I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.*

Here, Browning portrays love as a spark that rekindles and redefines past sorrows, channeling them into a passionate and affirming energy. Love, in this light, becomes a fiery, elemental force that awakens the soul. It transforms old griefs and youthful faith into a profound, renewed strength. This depiction suggests that love, like a spark, has the power to ignite the deepest reserves of emotion and belief. It illuminates and revitalizes the spirit with its transformative warmth.

3.1.21 LOVE IS UNITY

Unity, conceptualized as the state of being indivisible and integrated, is highly valued in societal and organizational contexts. It is celebrated for its ability to harmonize diverse elements. It fosters a sense of community and shared purpose. When applied to love, unity emphasizes the role of love in bridging divides, aligning interests, and melding distinct personalities into a cohesive, harmonious relationship. This perspective of love highlights its capacity to forge a collective identity where personal boundaries are respected yet seamlessly integrated. Exploring love as unity further reveals how this emotional bond acts as a fundamental force for collaboration and mutual support. Similar to how unity within a community promotes cooperation and collective well-being, unity in love encourages partners to work together towards common goals, share burdens, and celebrate successes as one. By viewing love through the lens of unity, we gain insights into its ability to deeply connect individuals and empower them to act as a unified entity.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS UNITY often resonates within everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Akeloge thoka xomoy khinit xihote nijoke xompurno onubhob kore.* They feel complete when they're together.

- *Akeloge thoka buli bhabhi tai xanti pai.* She feels at peace knowing they're united.
- *Tair usorot xi nijor antu onkho bisari pale.* He found his other half in her.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's poem *Oh Friend, My Beloved Will Come*, love is beautifully captured as a force of unity, describing together anticipation, longing, and the bond between hearts. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS UNITY courses through the verses. It cast love as an energy that bridges distances and deepens connections. It harmonizes both nature and human relationships into a singular, cohesive experience.

*Oh friend, my beloved will come,
With the radiant moonlight,
Its beams glistening,
On the leaves of the trees.*

Here, the poet maps love onto the gentle spread of moonlight that softly touches the leaves. It creates an image of serene unity between heaven and earth. Just as moonlight bridges the distance between sky and land, love becomes a force that harmonizes and connects, bringing separate lives into a shared existence. The moon's embrace of the earth through its light mirrors love's capacity to unify. It speaks about a bond that is as intrinsic and natural as the meeting of light and leaves. It is a quiet yet profound connection that fills both the heart and the world.

*In a friend's eyes,
Sparkling like dew,
On lovely cheeks,
My beloved will come.*

The dew's sparkle in a friend's gaze further deepens the metaphor, mapping love onto the refreshing, renewing quality of morning dew. Dew, a symbol of unity between night and morning, captures love's essence as a revitalizing force. It enriches relationships with each glistening encounter. This subtle sparkle, gently resting on the cheeks of friends, maps love onto a force that both beautifies and binds. It reinforces bonds with the same quiet power that dew brings to the earth. Through this imagery, love is shown as a natural, life-giving presence. It enhances connection, nurturing relationships in its gentle, fleeting way.

*Our friends, entwined,
In the pain of separation,
In the longing for union,
My beloved will come.*

Here, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS UNITY becomes more profound as the poet maps love onto the entwining of lives and emotions, sustained even through longing and absence. The words "entwined" and "longing for union" evoke love's strength in fostering mutual support. It creates a communal bond that is beyond individual experience. This love, strong enough to endure separation, maps onto a journey shared among friends, a collective strength and hope that keeps them bound together, awaiting reunion. The poet's words convey a love that is both grounding and uplifting. It is a force that holds steadfast even in distance. It brings hearts together on a shared path toward wholeness.

The poem employs an **ontological** metaphor by conceptualizing love as a unifying, tangible force that bridges and harmonizes disparate elements. Through images of moonlight, dew, and entwined friends, it highlights love as a binding force. It nurtures and revitalizes connections, making love a collective experience that draws people closer, whether through shared anticipation or intimate companionship. Through these natural and relational images, the poem captures love's timeless power to unify. It shapes individual lives into a single, enduring path shared across the boundaries of space, time, and heart.

In John Donne's *The Good-Morrow*, the CMT LOVE IS UNITY is realized through imagery that merges two individuals into a single, harmonious entity. Donne employs geographical imagery to convey this unity in the lines,

*My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
Where can we find two better hemispheres,
Without sharp north, without declining west?*

Here, love is portrayed as the creation of a perfect, undivided world. It is a union where the lovers form two halves of a complete globe, free from discord and imperfection. This depiction suggests that love cuts across individual boundaries. It merges the lovers into an ideal, unified whole, where each finds completeness in the other. It embodies a seamless and enduring bond.

3.1.22 LOVE IS MAGIC

Magic, traditionally linked with the mysterious or supernatural ability to influence events and transform reality, captivates due to its enigmatic power and the awe it inspires across cultures. When love is conceptualized as magic, it is seen as a compelling force that affects individuals' perceptions, emotions, and connections in ways that often seem inexplicable

and remarkable. This view positions love as a dynamic and transformative element within human relationships. It can create significant emotional shifts and enhancing personal well-being. Delving deeper into love as magic explores its ability to alter one's experiences and life course. Similar to how magic spells or rituals bring about sudden changes or realizations, love can trigger deep insights, personal growth, and a renewed sense of purpose. It has the power to dissolve barriers, heal old wounds, and foster an appreciation for life's complexities and beauties. The 'magical' aspect of love sustains individuals through hardships. This perspective recognizes love as a potent, mysterious source of energy that enchants and transforms human lives.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MAGIC finds resonance in everyday Assamese conversations. For example,

- *Xi tair fale sale, tai mantra mugdho onubhob kore.* She felt spellbound every time he looked at her
- *Teulukor prem bixudho jadoor dore.* Their love feels like pure enchantment
- *Xi tair jadukori mantrar odhinot ase.* He's under her magical spell.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's poem *My friend, in desperate longing*, love is portrayed as an enchanting force. It is seen through the lines with a mystical allure that resonates with the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MAGIC. Through this lens, love becomes a spellbinding presence, one that captivates, transforms, and transcends the ordinary. It immerses the beloved in a state that defies logic and control. The metaphor of magic captures the essence of love as an influence that operates beyond ordinary comprehension, evoking wonder and transporting the lover into a heightened state of being.

*In dreams, whispers of love
Enchant her, making her swoon.*

Here, the poet maps love onto the spellbinding nature of magic. Here the gentle whisper of love weaves through her dreams like an incantation, causing her to swoon. Words like "enchant" and "swoon" deepen this mapping, painting love as a bewitching force that leaves her breathless and entranced. This delicate spell awakens her senses, casting her into a state of ecstatic vulnerability. It transforms her from a dreamer into an enraptured soul caught in love's irresistible allure. Her heart, under this magical influence, no longer remains within her control, as if touched by a mystery.

*The spring breeze that
...caresses her,
Touching and passing by,*

These lines serve as another layer in this metaphor. The gentle, fleeting touch of the breeze maps to the magical touch of love, soft, subtle, yet profoundly moving. Just as a magical spell might brush the material world, leaving behind a trace of its essence, so does love. It feels like a breeze, leaving her in a state of lingering anticipation. This brush of love, quiet and ethereal, soothes her heart while simultaneously stirring it. It creates a longing that stays with her. It holds her captive to an invisible, enchanting force that both soothes and excites.

This **ontological** metaphor casts love as an entity with magical properties. It suggests an operation through enchantment and bewitchment, beyond ordinary human control or understanding. Much like magic, which can evoke a sense of awe and wonder, love also introduces a transformative quality. It leads the lover to experience emotions that feel out of the world. In its magical essence, love disrupts reality. It bestows a dreamlike quality to the ordinary and turning moments into unforgettable memories.

In William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the metaphor LOVE IS MAGIC is conveyed through Oberon's description of a mystical flower. This enchanting metaphor comes to life in the lines,

*Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.*

Oberon describes how the flower's juice, when applied to the eyelids of a sleeping person. It compels them to fall passionately and irrationally in love with the first being they see upon waking. This portrayal of love as a magical, uncontrollable force induced by supernatural means reveals its transformative power. It casts love as a spell that captivates and alters perception. Shakespeare highlights the mysterious, otherworldly quality of love, as it seizes hearts and reshapes emotions with an irresistible, magical allure.

3.1.23 LOVE IS A STORY

Stories, fundamental to human culture and communication, convey experiences, emotions, and values through narrative structures that resonate across time and space. These

narratives are crafted to engage and inform, imparting moral or philosophical wisdom. It encapsulates complex human experiences in compelling formats. Conceptualizing love as a story emphasizes its dynamic nature as an unfolding narrative. Here relationships develop through distinct chapters filled with characters, conflicts, and resolutions. This perspective views love as a narrative that evolves over time. It is shaped by actions, choices, and backgrounds of the individuals involved. Like any engaging story, love features moments of tension and triumph. The protagonists facing challenges that test their resilience, adaptability, and commitment. Each phase of a relationship is seen as a chapter contributing to the overall narrative arc.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A STORY often unfolds in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Xihotor premor bohu mer pak ase.* Their love has its own twists and turns.
- *Xi tair xoite thoka premor eta xofol porixomapti akha kore.* He's hoping for a happy ending with her
- *Tai onubhob kore jen xihote nij porir dekhon xadhu likhi ase.* She feels like they're writing their own fairy tale.

In Nabakanta Barua's poem *Sketches*, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A STORY captures the intricate layers of shared experiences, silent understanding, and deep yearning that define a relationship. Through poignant lines and evocative imagery, Barua frames love as a narrative that evolves across different stages. Each moment adds layer to the unfolding story of connection between two individuals.

*Last night I talked with me
Of too many this and that...*

In these lines, the poet's introspective dialogue maps self-reflection onto the narrative of a shared story. It is like a chapter woven with memories, thoughts, and quiet revelations. Love here is constructed as a rich, ongoing tale. It is filled with both spoken words and silent reflections. Here each internal conversation deepens the story's layers. This inner dialogue becomes a process of revisiting moments and emotions. It reminds us that the story of love often consists of these private musings. It shapes the unfolding narrative of their bond.

*Once we went aboating
On the Ganges...*

This journey across the Ganges maps their shared experience onto the unfolding story of their relationship. It is a passage marked by shared moments and silences. As they drift along the river, each ripple, each pause is written into their shared narrative, just as characters progress through the pages of a book. The Ganges, with its sacredness and unending flow, mirrors love's ability to endure and grow. It carries their relationship forward through both quiet and profound moments. The river, symbolizing life, death, and continuity, reinforces love as a journey. It holds onto cherished memories while moving toward new horizons.

*I do not remember what the sky looked like,
But ..There was a sky...sure.*

Here, the sky maps onto the eternal backdrop of their love story. It is an infinite presence that provides context and depth, even if it goes unnoticed at times. This vague recollection symbolizes how certain details may blur over time, but the essence of their connection remains constant. The sky, like an overarching theme, is a silent witness to each moment and chapter they share. It grounds their journey in a sense of timelessness and continuity.

*Ah, it is pleasant
We are sitting, simply sitting
Sitting silently.*

This quiet moment maps their connection onto a shared story. It flows even without words, rich enough to be carried forward in silence. Their quiet companionship becomes a testament to a story written with shared spaces, gentle gestures, and comfortable silences. This scene conveys that the most profound parts of love's story are sometimes found in these wordless exchanges. Here mutual presence speaks louder than words. It creates a bond that resonates deeply even in stillness.

Barua's use of metaphor here is **ontological**, as it imbues love with qualities of a story. It is composed of events, characters, and reflections that create an unfolding narrative. Conceptualizing love as a story underscores the continuity and complexity of human relationships. It shows how they evolve and are recorded in the intimate, shared moments between two individuals. This metaphor explains love as a dynamic narrative crafted over time. It is filled with conflicts, resolutions, and unspoken truths that together build the story of a life shared.

In Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *How Do I Love Thee? (Sonnet 43)*, the metaphor LOVE IS A STORY is beautifully embodied as the speaker unfolds the many facets of her devotion. It is similar to the chapters in an evolving narrative. Each line reveals a new dimension of her love, from its profound depth and breadth to the quiet constancy of everyday affection. Her love is dynamic, growing and deepening, suggesting a story that becomes richer with each passing moment. The poem itself transforms into a testament to this unfolding tale. It reaches its climax with the promise that this love will endure "better after death," hinting at a story that surpasses even the boundaries of life. The opening lines capture this narrative essence:

*How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight.*

Through these words, Browning illustrates love as a continuous and boundless journey. It is a story that is beyond time and lives on in the eternal pages of the soul.

3.1.24 LOVE IS TIME

Time, a fundamental dimension where events unfold sequentially from past to future, is crucial in all aspects of life. It is integral to understanding dynamic systems, including relationships. It dictates the rhythms, phases, and transitions essential for growth and change within human experiences. Conceptualizing love as time highlights how duration, sequences, and precise timing critically influence the development and potential outcome of relationships. Love is seen as an entity that evolves over time that collectively determine the trajectory of a relationship. Further exploring love as time reveals how shared experiences deepen and strengthen bonds. It allows relationships to evolve, adapt, and mature.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS TIME often finds expression in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Bohu jugor pora xihot ekatamo.* They've been together for ages.
- *Xihotor preme-e xodol bhabe xomoiyor porikhyat uttirno hoise.* Their love stood the test of time.
- *Xihotor prem dine dine garh hoi uthise.* Their love grew stronger over the time.

In Nabakanta Barua's *Sketches*, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS TIME is woven into the fabric of each line. It reflects how love and time are intrinsically linked, influencing each other profoundly. The poem captures the sense of fleeting moments and lingering memories. It portrays love as a narrative shaped by the passage and scarcity of time. The poet's reflections reveal how time becomes both a medium and a barrier in the pursuit of connection, intimacy, and expression.

*Time is short.
I have no time and have too many problems to solve.*

Here, time is mapped as a finite resource, dwindling under the weight of life's many demands. Each moment spent tackling a problem becomes a moment sacrificed from love. It is mapped to love as a commitment that requires time for nurturing and emotional connection. This urgency explains the poet's awareness of time's fleeting nature and the constraint it places on his ability to cultivate his relationship fully.

*I sip in a problem with every sip of tea
I inhale a problem with every puff at my cigarette.*

This constant rhythm of problems filtering into daily actions maps onto the gradual erosion of time available for love. The ritual of sipping and inhaling, actions woven into the fabric of each day, highlights how life's distractions consume time. It leaves little space for affection and connection. Love, in this mapping, emerges as an experience that demands mindful attention. It is an intentional carving out of time amidst the encroachments of routine and responsibilities.

*Ah, it is pleasant
We are sitting, simply sitting
Sitting silently.*

In this moment, their shared silence maps onto a precious interval within time. It is a pause where love thrives without need for words. This simplicity reveals how love can fill even the quietest spaces, flourishing in these small, often fleeting pauses. Such moments, though transient, build a deep intimacy. It demonstrates that love's narrative is not only written in grand gestures but in the gentle accumulation of quiet, shared intervals.

*The sun above is throwing little pebbles of its rays
Through the leaves of the tree,
They are falling on your nose, lips, and arms
Not on mine.*

The sun's movement, casting its light on her but not him, maps the passage of time onto the changing phases of existence. This selective touch of sunlight captures love's ephemeral nature. It illuminates her momentarily while leaving him in shadow, symbolizing the distance between phases of life and death. This fleeting interplay of light and shadow reflects love's dependency on shared timing. Here each moment's beauty and warmth remain brief, yet deeply cherished.

This CMT LOVE IS TIME is **ontological**, endowing love with the properties of a measured, continuous entity, subject to the constraints and progression of time. Through this lens, love emerges as a dynamic force. It is interwoven with the rhythm of time, growing, shifting, and enduring alongside it, leaving an indelible imprint on the soul even as time continues onward.

In *To His Coy Mistress*, Andrew Marvell masterfully explores the metaphor LOVE IS TIME by presenting love as a force bound tightly to the passage of time. The speaker urges his beloved to embrace the present. It emphasizes the fleeting nature of youth and beauty. He contrasts the dream of endless time where love could grow "Vaster than empires, and more slow" with the unyielding reality of "Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near". It is a relentless reminder of life's impermanence. This urgency is poignantly captured in the lines,

*But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.*

Through these images, Marvell suggests that while love, in its ideal form, may strive for eternity, it must contend with the ever-present shadow of time, pushing lovers to savor each moment before it slips away into the vast "Deserts of vast eternity." The poem portrays love as a race against time's inevitable march. It urges a passion that is both intense and immediate.

3.1.25 LOVE IS LIGHT

Light, essential for visibility and growth, cut across its physical properties by symbolizing clarity, warmth, and guidance, playing a crucial role in natural and technological processes. When love is conceptualized as light, it is seen as a fundamental force that illuminates lives. It provides direction and comfort and brightening experiences by

dispelling the shadows of loneliness or despair. This perspective considers how love, like light, affects perceptions, relationships, and personal growth by offering clarity that reveals beauty and flaws. It leads to greater understanding and appreciation of oneself and others. Love's role in guiding decisions and actions parallels how light directs pathways, with its warmth fostering security and emotional growth. Viewing love as light emphasizes its transformative power. It is capable of changing perspectives, enriching experiences, and leading individuals toward fulfillment and enlightenment. This underscores its vital role in human emotional and social ecosystems.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS LIGHT frequently seen in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Tair xanidhyot tar prithivi khon ujoli uthise.* She lights up his world.
- *Aagontuk dinburot xihotor premor poth prokaxito hoise.* Their love illuminates the path ahead.
- *Xomoiyor kothur bastobtar majotu xihotor milon jiliki uthise.* Their connection shines brightly even in hard times.

In Nabakanta Barua's *Sketches*, the metaphor LOVE IS LIGHT emerges as a compelling force. It transforms, elevates, and brings warmth to the most silent moments shared between the poet and his beloved. Through this metaphor, love is mapped onto light, illuminating and beautifying the ordinary. The poem's imagery captures how love, like light, enhances perception. It cast a radiance that enriches every glance, breath, and silence shared between the two.

*The sun above is throwing little pebbles of its rays
Through the leaves of the tree,
They are falling on your nose, lips and arms
Not on mine.*

This tender scene maps love onto a series of delicate illuminations. Here sunlight becomes a means of revealing the beloved in a warm, radiant glow. The poet's use of "pebbles" to describe the rays suggests a gentle, selective touch that graces the beloved's features. It creates an intimate portrait that contrasts with his own quiet absence from the light. This mapping of love as light reflects its sacred quality, capable of elevating even the simplest moments to something deeply cherished. The sunlight, by illuminating only one, subtly

hints at boundaries, perhaps the divide of life and death that prevent complete unity yet still allow the poet to bask in the beauty of his beloved from a distance.

*Ah, it is pleasant
We are sitting, simply sitting
Sitting silently.*

In this scene, the act of sitting together in silence maps love onto a radiant presence that fills the moment with warmth and connection. The repeated emphasis on “sitting” highlights the strength of their quiet companionship. This suggests that love needs no words or gestures to communicate its depth. This metaphor of light, cast upon a silent communion, portrays love as an invisible yet comforting force that transforms even the quietest spaces into something significant. Here, love becomes a gentle light, capable of bridging gaps, creating solace, and illuminating the moment with meaning through mere presence. It underscores love’s ability to fill even the most still and empty spaces.

This conceptual metaphor is **ontological**, as it imbues love with the physical qualities of light. Its warmth, illumination, and the way it directs attention, casting beauty and clarity on those it touches. Like light, which reveals and guides, love here provides the poet and his beloved with a profound sense of understanding and completeness. It quietly illuminates their shared moments and goes beyond the barriers of mortality.

In *She Walks in Beauty* by Lord Byron, the metaphor LOVE IS LIGHT is elegantly embodied in the woman’s beauty. It is described as a harmonious blend of darkness and light. This radiant metaphor is captured in the lines,

*And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.*

Here, love is portrayed as a soft, celestial light that enhances her beauty, a gentle illumination that heaven reserves from the brightness of day. The woman’s innocence and tranquility glow with a serene radiance. This suggests that love, like light, can elevate, soften, and ennoble the soul. Byron’s depiction reveals love as a calming, unassuming brightness that touches and transforms everything it encounters. It casts a peaceful, tender glow that transcends appearance and reaches the spirit itself.

3.1.26 LOVE IS SILENCE

Silence, often characterized by an absence of sound, holds profound significance as a space for reflection, understanding, and non-verbal communication in environments overwhelmed by noise. Considering love in terms of silence emphasizes the non-verbal elements of relationships that convey deep feelings and thoughts where words fall short. This perspective on love appreciates its presence and expression through quiet moments, shared stillness, and the unspoken bonds between individuals. Conceptualizing love as silence reveals how gestures, expressions, and shared experiences can communicate support, understanding, and companionship without words. This highlights the deep connections forged in quietude where comfort and reassurance come from the calm assurance of being understood and valued.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS SILENCE often resonates within everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Eta xobdou nukua koiu xihotor prem-e bohu kothai koi gol.* Their love spoke volumes without a single word.
- *Nirob muhurto burot xihotor moromor enajori odhik xoktixali hoi uthise.* In the quiet moments, their bond grew stronger
- *Mone mone thoka xomoikhinitu xihotor xompokobur modhur asil.* Their relationship found peace in the unspoken moments.

In Nabakanta Barua's *Sketches*, the metaphor LOVE IS SILENCE weaves through the verses, capturing the depth of a connection that transcends words. The poet's reflections reveal a love where communication flows through the profound quiet that exists between two souls. This silence, rich with presence and meaning, is mapped onto love as an enduring state. Here presence becomes enough to communicate an entire lifetime of shared experiences and understanding.

*We are sitting, simply sitting
Sitting silently.*

Here, silence is not an absence but a full, gentle presence, a space in which love flourishes without the need for words. The simplicity of "sitting silently" becomes an emblem of intimacy. Here unspoken words and quiet companionship carry as much weight as spoken declarations. This silence, mapped to love, reflects a serene completeness. Here being together brings the comfort of profound understanding. The repetition of "sitting"

underlines the shared stillness, a pause in the flow of life that allows them to exist in each other's company, untouched by the demands of the world around them.

*Last night I talked with me
Of too many this and that...
I was in an anguish to tell
But now
This is enough...we are sitting.*

This passage reveals the tension between the inner urge to communicate and the quiet acceptance that mere presence suffices. The poet's "anguish to tell" is pacified by the recognition that true love does not always need words; just being together is enough. Love here is an unspoken understanding, a shared silence that speaks volumes. It suggests that sometimes, words are inadequate to convey the depth of feeling that silence naturally holds. The "anguish" that initially drives the poet fades as he finds peace in silent communion, a gesture of acceptance, knowing that love resides in what they share beyond language.

*The sun above is throwing little pebbles of its rays
Through the leaves of the tree,
They are falling on your nose, lips, and arms
Not on mine.*

This moment of selective illumination, where sunlight touches the beloved subtly conveys the otherworldly nature of their connection. The rays, like whispers of love, softly adorn the beloved. This suggests that love's quiet light touches her in a way that is as intimate as it is ephemeral. Love as silence here becomes a radiant presence, unseen but felt. It casts a gentle warmth upon the beloved even as the poet himself remains in the shadows.

This conceptual metaphor is **ontological**, as it attributes physical qualities to the abstract concept of love. It transforms it into a tangible silence that fills the spaces between words. Silence, often perceived as emptiness, is redefined as the essence of love providing a sanctuary from the chaos of life. It offers a profound way to communicate without words. Through the metaphor of silence, the poem celebrates the idea that love's truest expression often lies in the spaces between sounds. Here hearts understand each other in stillness. In this quietude, love is strengthened, affirming that sometimes the deepest emotions are those left unspoken, resonating in the silent presence that two souls share.

In William Butler Yeats' *When You Are Old*, the metaphor LOVE IS SILENCE resonates through the poem's quiet, reflective tone. Here love is cherished and mourned in solitude. This is a love that is beyond the superficial, one that adored "the pilgrim soul" and "the sorrows of [a] changing face." Yet, it is not a love expressed in grand declarations, but rather one remembered in the silent spaces of memory and loss. Yeats envisions a future where the beloved, now aged, reflects on:

*how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.*

The image of love retreating to the distant stars suggests a deeply felt yet quietly endured sentiment, elusive and enduring in its silence. This portrayal emphasizes the profound, almost ethereal quality of love. It is something that lingers softly, present yet unobtrusive, as if woven into the very fabric of memory and the silent night sky.

3.1.27 LOVE IS WATER

Water, essential for life, is a versatile substance that nourishes, cleanses, and adapts to its environment. It exists in various forms, liquid, solid, and vapor each critical for sustaining ecological and biological processes. Within the context of love, water symbolizes the essential, life-sustaining qualities of love. It reflects its ability to adapt and flow within the contours of relationships, filling spaces with nourishment and facilitating growth. This analogy highlights how love, like water, is vital for the emotional and psychological health of individuals, hydrating and sustaining relationships over time. Conceptualizing love as water involves exploring its properties of flexibility and adaptability. Just as water changes states in response to temperature and pressure, love transforms and evolves with the dynamics of relationships. Water's ability to shape landscapes through persistence and gentle erosion is mapped to how love influences lives and connections through consistent, gentle influence. Additionally, water's purity and clarity can be mapped to the transparency and honesty essential for deep and meaningful relationships.

In Assamese conversations, the CMT LOVE IS WATER often seeps into expressions. For instance:

- *Tar proti thoka tair prem nirob bhab-e boi jai.* Her love for him flows effortlessly.
- *Xi tair moromot dub goi thoka jen onubhob korisil.* He felt like he was drowning in her affection

- *Jetia-i teuluk akeloge thake tetia-i teulukor abeg uposi pore.* Their passion overflows whenever they're together.

In Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi's poem ***In Your Love***, we encounter the profound and fluid beauty of love expressed through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS WATER. This metaphor captures love's fluidity, nurturing essence, and transformative depth. This present it as essential to life's emotional landscape, much like water is to the physical world.

*In your love, gentle waves
Stroke the shore of my being,
Honey pours into my heart,
Oh, how sweet, how sweet.*

Here, the poet maps love onto the rhythmic embrace of soft waves, a steady caress that reaches the deepest shores of the soul, just as water shapes a shoreline over time. This gentle movement, combined with the sweetness of honey, evokes a sense of love's nurturing power. Its ability to soothe, nourish, and bring profound contentment. Love, like the waves and honey, fills the spirit with warmth. It illustrates how it flows gently yet pervasively, leaving an indelible sweetness.

*How did it happen, how did it go,
That a mere bud turned into a blossom,
Fragrance overflowing,
Such delight, such appeal.*

Here, love is mapped onto the blossoming of a flower, a transformation that reflects growth and fulfillment. Like water absorbed by a budding flower, love provides the essential nourishment that allows the soul to flourish. The image of "fragrance overflowing" highlights how love, fully embraced, radiates beauty and joy. Just as a flower in bloom fills its surroundings with its scent, reminding us that love's fulfillment brings a radiance that touches everything it encounters.

*Your love, my love...
Softly, the flowers whisper to the breeze,
Ah, what have you done?
Hidden, as if spring laughs secretly,
Unfolding... in secrecy.*

This unfolding of love mirrors the quiet flow of an underground stream, nourishing and sustaining in hidden yet vital ways. Love here is mapped onto this concealed source,

quietly fostering growth and life. The spring's "secret laughter" evokes the subtle joy love brings. Its quiet presence is hidden yet profoundly enriching. Love, like an underground spring, gives life and energy, its effects felt deeply even if unseen.

*Your love, my love...
A gentle rustling,
Oh, in our togetherness,
Filled to the brim with serene waters,
Who... in that stream – in that passion,
Like a river of love,
I will let myself flow,
Oh, such yearning,
Such sweetness,
Such loveliness,
Such longing.*

Love now becomes a river, and the poet surrenders to its flowing current, mapping love onto the immersive, all-encompassing nature of a river. The "stream" of passion captures the continuous pull of love, as if its course guides them effortlessly. This image reflects love as a unifying force that binds and carries them forward. It evokes a deep sense of unity, desire, and surrender. Love, like a river, draws them into its depths. It makes them part of its boundless flow, embodying both the calmness and intensity of yearning.

In Bordoloi's work, LOVE IS WATER is an **ontological** metaphor, as love takes on the physical properties of water, its ability to flow, nourish, and adapt. Through this mapping, love becomes tangible, highlighting its necessity for emotional well-being. It illustrates its ability to fill, shape, and support the inner landscapes of those it touches. This portrayal shows how it moves and transforms, sustaining life just as water does in the natural world.

In *Meeting at Night*, Robert Browning presents love as a fluid and unstoppable journey, aligning with the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS WATER. The speaker's passage across the "grey sea" and "long black land" conveys the notion of love as an element that flows through space and overcomes barriers to reach its destination.

*...startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets..*

These lines illustrate love's dynamic energy, moving forward despite obstacles. Just as water relentlessly pursues its path, so too does the speaker, drawn to his beloved. The

imagery of the sea embodies love's fluidity and depth, while the journey across it reflects love's undeterred, immersive nature.

3.1.28 LOVE IS DRUG

Drugs significantly alter physiological and psychological states, often consumed for their pleasurable effects or as an escape from reality. However, these effects can lead to addiction. Here the body and mind become dependent on the substance. This results in harmful consequences such as health deterioration, erratic behavior, and social isolation. Conceptualizing love as a drug highlights its ability to profoundly affect emotional states. It triggers biochemical reactions in the brain that produce feelings of happiness and attachment. This analogy explores the potential for emotional dependency on love, akin to substance dependency. Here individuals seek constant validation or affection to maintain a sense of fulfillment. The absence or loss of love can lead to withdrawal symptoms like emptiness or despair, mirroring drug withdrawal effects. Thus, while love can bring immense joy and connection, the mapping to a drug underlines the importance of balance and moderation in emotional attachments. This perspective offers insights into the dual nature of love's impact. This suggest that love can be both healing and debilitating, depending on the context and intensity.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A DRUG frequently surfaces in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Tai tar uposthitir proti axokto.* She feels addicted to his presence
- *Tar prem tair kostor pora mukti dibo pora ekmatro xompod.* His love is the only thing that can ease her pain.
- *Teur proti thoka prem madokotapurno.* Loving him is intoxicating.

In Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi's poem **Words and Words**, the concept of love as a powerful, holistic experience is explored through the metaphor LOVE IS A DRUG. This metaphor paints love as an intense and transformative force. It can alter perception, elicit deep emotions, and create a sense of oneness with both the self and the surrounding world. Love, like a drug, brings euphoria and connection but also hints at dependency and a potential loss of control.

*I am in the midst of words
The words are in my mist
In the midst of words I am.*

Here, the poet maps love onto a comprehensive cloud, a presence that surrounds and fills her consciousness. It creates an intoxicating state that blurs the boundaries of self. Just as a dense mist merges the landscape into an indistinct haze, love wraps her in a heightened, dream-like awareness, where self and surroundings dissolve into one. This mapping suggests that love is an immersive experience that saturates every part of one's being. It transforms reality into an interconnected, emotional expanse.

*With words I see
I recognize
I make acquaintance
I get smell
I touch
Every trembling
I perceive akinness.*

Love is mapped here onto a state of intensified sensory perception. It evokes an experience where every sensation is amplified, every detail feels alive. Just as a powerful influence heightens each sense, love sharpens her awareness. This connects her to the world in a way that transcends the ordinary. Through this mapping, love becomes a transformative force that reveals hidden beauty and depth in even the smallest details. It creates a profound kinship between herself and everything around her.

*Words make me
Stand in a moment
In a number of layers
I become him
He becomes I*

Love's transformative power reaches its peak here, as the poet maps the experience onto a blending of identities. Here boundaries between self and other vanish. This layering, where she and her beloved merge, suggests a multidimensional connection. It reflects how love dissolves individuality, like an intense experience that brings profound unity. This merging speaks to love's ability to create a shared identity, erasing distinctions between two beings and elevating them into a singular is beyond existence.

*Sounds make me distressed
Make me ardent
Make stunned
Make me excited
Rouse the innumerable
'T's within myself*

Blow gently

In a flash

Indistinctly

Here, the poet maps love onto a powerful, unpredictable surge of emotions, akin to the highs and lows that an intoxicating experience might induce. This awakening of “innumerable ‘I’s” suggests a fragmentation of self. Here love’s impact is both exhilarating and destabilizing, momentarily dividing and expanding her sense of identity. The sensations rush through her like a fleeting but impactful presence. This reveals love’s ability to bring both intensity and ephemerality, like a profound encounter that leaves an indelible mark, yet ultimately slips away.

This metaphor is **ontological**, attributing the qualities of a potent, mind-altering drug to the abstract nature of love. Through the CMT LOVE IS A DRUG, Bordoloi explains the multifaceted and overwhelming nature of romantic emotion. Each line, from being enveloped in words to the merging of identities and the fragmented self, captures love’s complex power to shape and reshape one’s reality. This imagery adds layers to love as both intoxicating and disorienting, a force that can uplift but also bring dependency and emotional turmoil, like the dual effects of a powerful substance.

In John Donne's *The Ecstasy*, the metaphor LOVE IS A DRUG unfolds through the portrayal of lovers in a state of intoxicating union. Donne depicts their souls as leaving their bodies to intermingle in a euphoric state, reminiscent of the powerful, thought provoking effects of a potent drug. This is beautifully conveyed in the lines,

Our souls (which to advance their state

Were gone out) hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,

We like sepulchral statues lay;

All day, the same our postures were,

And we said nothing, all the day.

Here, the lovers are entranced, motionless and silent, immersed in a profound connection that surpasses the physical. Their ecstatic state, where souls silently merge and communicate, illustrates how love acts as a transformative drug. It heightens their perception and elevates them to a realm beyond ordinary existence. Donne’s metaphor captures love as an intense experience, one that, like a powerful drug, transforms the mind and body in its profound embrace.

3.1.29 LOVE IS RUPTURE

Ruptures signify significant breaks or disruptions that alter a system's structure or function. This leads to profound changes and necessitates repair. In geological terms, a rupture can lead to seismic events that permanently alter the landscape. Similarly, in relationships, ruptures represent conflicts or breakdowns that disrupt the normal flow and potentially reshape future emotional connections. Conceptualizing love as a rupture highlights the impactful and sudden changes within relationships. This draws attention to the transformative potential of these disruptions. This analysis explores ruptures as dual-natured, both as catalysts for growth and sources of strain. Like geological ruptures that force a new order in the physical world, disruptive moments in relationships can lead to significant emotional and relational shifts. This can include endings or dramatic changes that require adjustment and growth. The concept of love as a rupture includes the recovery and healing processes, exploring how relationships evolve post-disruption.

In Assamese speech, the CMT LOVE IS RUPTURE often finds a place in expressions. For instance:

- *Xihotor prem-e tak sinno bhinno kori pelale.* Their love tore him apart.
- *Teulukor xomporko-tu tukura tukur hoi poril.* Their relationship shattered into pieces.
- *Duyu atora atori huat xi bhangi poril.* He was left broken after they drifted apart.

In Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi's poem **Words and Words**, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS RUPTURE captures the forceful, boundary-breaking nature of love. This highlights how it disrupts the self, reshapes identity, and redefines existence. Through this lens, love appears as an intense, overwhelming experience that fractures old structures, leading to both disintegration and reinvention.

*I am in the midst of words
The words are in my mist
In the midst of words I am.*

These lines map love onto an engulfing presence, mapping it to a mist that blurs perception and envelops the poet entirely. This immersive imagery suggests how love can obscure clarity. It pulls the self into a hazy, dreamy state where boundaries dissolve, and ordinary awareness fades. The mist evokes love's power to disrupt the familiar. It creates a disorienting yet transformative atmosphere where everything is softened and seen anew.

*With words I see
I recognize
I make acquaintance
I get smell
I touch
Every trembling
I perceive akinness*

Here, love is mapped onto an intense awakening of the senses. Here every detail of experience is heightened and charged with meaning. Each action like seeing, recognizing, smelling, touching reflects how love breaks through routine perceptions. This brings a heightened sensitivity to even the smallest vibrations of the world. Love, acting as a rupture in ordinary awareness, deepens sensory connections. This allows the poet to feel a profound kinship with the world, making the mundane intimately alive.

*Words make me
Stand in a moment
In a number of layers
I become him
He becomes I.*

This passage maps love's transformative power onto a merging of identities where the distinction between "I" and "him" dissolves entirely. Here, love creates a rupture in individual identity, pulling layers of self and other into a unified existence. The merging suggests that love reshapes the boundaries of identity. It forms a layered connection, binding two beings in an unsettling yet profound unity that shifts the foundation of selfhood.

*The scent of the sky
Gives me in a moment—wings
I enter
Into the depth of the
Perfume of the soil
I become tree with trees
River with rivers.*

This imagery maps love onto an expansive union with nature. Here the self merges into the vast landscape of existence. The act of becoming "tree with trees" and "river with rivers" shows love as a powerful force that breaks down the isolation of individuality. This allows the poet to flow into the natural world. Love ruptures the barriers of self, liberating

the poet to become one with all life. This achieves a profound sense of unity with the earth and sky, as if dissolving into the fabric of nature itself.

Sounds make me distressed

Make me ardent

Make stunned

Make me excited

Rouse the innumerable

'T's within myself

Blow gently

In a flash

Indistinctly

In these final lines, love is mapped onto a fragmentation of the self, awakening countless identities within. This rupture brings forth a kaleidoscope of emotions, moving from distress to ardor, from being stunned to exhilaration, illustrating love's capacity to destabilize and enrich the inner self. Each shift in feeling echoes the unpredictability of love, as it awakens and stirs the depths of one's being. It creates a dazzling, transformative energy that both excites and unsettles. The imagery of "blow gently, in a flash" captures love's swift and intense impact, a flash of emotion that disrupts the self's equilibrium. This leaves an imprint as disorienting as it is exhilarating.

The metaphor in this poem is **ontological**, attributing the qualities of rupture disruption, transformation, and reassembly to the concept of love. Through the imagery of love as rupture, Bordoloi's poem brings out the intense, shattering nature of romantic emotion. It explains how it breaks through old patterns and redefines existence. This portrayal of love deepens our understanding of its potent, life-altering force. It illustrates how it fractures, reshapes, and renews the self, much like a rupture can transform the physical and emotional landscape.

In W.H. Auden's ***Funeral Blues***, the metaphor LOVE IS RUPTURE is poignantly captured through the speaker's profound sense of loss and the complete shattering of their world following the death of a beloved. The poem powerfully conveys the emotional and existential rupture brought about by this absence. This shows how the loss of love can dismantle one's entire sense of being. This devastation is especially evident in the lines,

He was my North, my South, my East and West,

My working week and my Sunday rest,

*My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.*

These words underscore the loved one's essential role, as if they were the axis around which the speaker's world revolved. This rupture is further magnified in the final stanza,

*The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.*

In calling for the cessation of cosmic and natural elements, the speaker expresses the complete void left in the wake of this loss. It is a disruption so profound that it unravels the fabric of existence itself. Through this imagery, Auden captures the devastating rupture that love can cause when severed. It leaves the speaker in a desolate state of irreparable despair.

3.1.30 LOVE IS A COMMODITY

Commodities, valued for their scarcity and utility, are objects or substances like raw minerals or oil that become highly sought after due to their limited availability and unique attributes. They are owned, traded, and exchanged, with their value fluctuating based on market demand and perceived worth. This framework can be applied to understanding love as a commodity. Here emotional exchanges are treated similarly to tangible goods, involving concepts of value, ownership, and scarcity. Conceptualizing love in this manner highlights how it is perceived in terms of value and exchange, much like scarce resources. Individuals often seek, attain, and sometimes hoard love in various forms like romantic, familial, or platonic. The transactional nature of commodities mirrors the social dynamics of love. Here affection and emotional investment are "traded" in relationships, often with expectations of reciprocity. Ownership is a significant aspect, with love frequently discussed in possessive terms. Like a rare commodity, love can confer power, status, or fulfillment, and its absence can trigger feelings of loss, longing, or inadequacy.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A COMMODITY often appears in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Ai xomporkotur babe xi jothesto kosto korise.* He's investing a lot into this relationship.
- *Teuluke xubidhar babe snehor beboxai korisil.* They traded affection for convenience.

- *Teu taik bhalpuare uposai dise, a-ai jothesto nohoi ne.* He showered her with love, hoping it would be enough.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem *A Bouquet*, love is depicted through the imagery of a tightly held bouquet of golden flowers, invoking the metaphor LOVE IS A COMMODITY. This conceptual metaphor casts love as a tangible, valuable object, that can be owned, traded, and potentially withheld or shared. Through this lens, love is presented as both a precious possession and a complex, transferrable asset.

*Everybody was crowding round...
Somebody opened her eyes
And I her palms.
A bunch of golden flowers
Bone dry in her fist*

In these opening lines, the poet reveals a cherished but lifeless token of love, tightly clutched even as its essence fades. These "bone dry" flowers map onto love that has been grasped too firmly. It is perhaps guarded and held onto so closely that its vitality has withered. The act of holding love with such possessiveness speaks to the notion of ownership. Here love is seen as something to keep rather than to nurture and share, risks losing its warmth and life. By mapping these dried flowers to love, the poet highlights the dangers of hoarding affection. It reminded us of that love, when treated as something to be owned, can lose its essential beauty and resilience.

*I quietly took away
The bunch of flowers
A humming bunch
Of honeyed spring*

As the speaker gently removes the flowers, they transform, no longer lifeless but now "a humming bunch of honeyed spring." This shift illustrates how love's essence and energy revive when released, moving from one hand to another. The act of exchange imbues the flowers with renewed warmth and life, mapping love as something dynamic and fluid. Here, love gains vitality when it is shared. This suggest that its true worth flourishes not in possession but in the act of giving and receiving. Through this imagery, the poet reveals love's boundless potential. It shows how like spring itself, it can blossom with new life when freed from the constraints of ownership and allowed to move and breathe.

This metaphor is **ontological**, as it attributes concrete, possessable qualities of commodities such as value, transferability, and scarcity to the experience of love. By interpreting love through this lens, the poem encourages a reflection on the implications of treating love transactionally. In *A Bouquet*, Bhattacharya delicately critiques the commodification of love. This warns against viewing it as an asset to be controlled or kept exclusively. Through this lens, love's true vitality lies in its exchange and mutual appreciation.

In Edgar Allan Poe's *A Valentine*, the metaphor LOVE IS A COMMODITY is delicately woven through the portrayal of love as something to be discovered, valued, and held dear. The speaker invites us to search intently for a hidden name within the poem. He refers to it as a "treasure," a "talisman," and an "amulet". These are symbols of great worth, often sought after or safeguarded. This presentation of love as something precious and elusive aligns with the notion of love as a prized possession, one to be carefully sought and treasured.

*Search narrowly the lines! - they hold a treasure
Divine- a talisman- an amulet
That must be worn at heart*

Poe's lines, reinforce this metaphor, suggesting that love, like a rare and valuable object, is something to be cherished and safeguarded at one's core. Through these images, Poe explains love's rarity and its status as a prized possession.

3.1.31 LOVE IS A FLAME

Flames, emerging from the combustion of fuel, provide warmth and light and carry deep symbolic meanings of passion, intensity, and transformation. They illuminate and consume, acting as beacons through darkness. It requires careful management due to their volatile nature. These qualities make flames a fitting metaphor for love. It highlights its transformative power to both nurture and overwhelm. Like flames, love can comfort, guide, and clarify, dispelling emotional darkness and serving as a source of light during times of uncertainty or hardship. However, this metaphor also captures love's intensity and unpredictability. Just as flames need tending to prevent burnout or destruction, love requires careful attention and balance. Uncontrolled, a flame can consume everything in its path. Similarly, love can overwhelm, leading to emotional turbulence or burnout if not managed with care.

The conceptual metaphor that LOVE IS A FLAME underlies the ordinary language articulation in Assamese such as:

- *Tai mur bukut akura jui logaise.* There's a fire starting in my heart.
- *Tumar morome muk ujolai tulise.* Your love is shining on me.
- *Tai mur preyokhi.* She is my latest flame.

In *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, Hem Barua paints an intimate picture of love's warmth and intensity. It beautifully encapsulates the concept of LOVE IS A FLAME. This metaphor allows to perceive love as flame, a force that illuminates, transforms, and consumes with its fierce, radiant energy.

*Why did you gaze at me in that way,
At the riha tied around my waist...?
Do you know how I felt?
As if you were a man from a strange land. And I,
I a Sewali lying under the tree.*

In these lines, the poet maps the gaze onto a spark that ignites passion. Its intensity exposes Mamata in a moment of vulnerability and surrender. She maps herself to the fragile Sewali flower resting under the tree. It evokes innocence and openness, as if love itself is a flame that irrevocably transforms everything it touches. This gaze, tender yet consuming, maps onto love's power to dissolve boundaries. It leaves her raw, seen, and fundamentally changed within its light.

*That day in the sea of our mind
Trembled a thousand waves.*

The imagery of waves stirred by an unseen force map onto the inner tumult of desire, as passion surges and swells within. The sea of their shared consciousness, alive with trembling waves, symbolizes the depth and force of their bond. It is a love that moves like a firestorm, stirring everything in its path. Just as fire disturbs the air, creating movement and warmth, the waves in this sea reflect love's consuming power. It reshapes and deepens their connection with an intensity that cannot be stilled.

This metaphor LOVE IS A FLAME is both **ontological** and **experiential**. Ontologically, love is cast as a physical force with the properties of a flame. Its warmth, intensity, and transformative nature provides a framework to express how deeply it can affect and

reshape those who experience it. Experientially, love's flame is seen in their interactions, evoking the way it enlightens, warms, and even overwhelms them.

In *Mamata's Letter*, the flame metaphor communicates love's dual capacity to illuminate and consume, explaining its dynamic, elemental power. The fire demands care and attention, like love needs to be nurtured with devotion and balance to keep from overwhelming. Through the gentle, radiant presence of this flame, Barua illustrates love's power to guide, illuminate, and transform, while acknowledging its volatility and need for respect and mindfulness.

In Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi's poem *In Your Love*, we are enveloped in a gentle landscape of emotion, evoking the natural beauty of love through imagery that blends tenderness and intensity. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A FLAME breathes life into the poem, capturing the essence of love as a powerful, consuming force like radiant, transformative, and vital. Each verse unfolds like a flame, flickering softly but with an undeniable heat that grows and sustains. It embodies love's capacity to bring both warmth and illumination.

*In your love, gentle waves
Stroke the shore of my being,
Honey pours into my heart,
Oh, how sweet, how sweet.*

Though soft like waves, the warmth here hints at a subtle flame. It radiates through the heart like a quiet heat that melts and infuses. The honey, resembling melted wax, maps onto love's warmth. It embodies the gentle yet powerful heat that releases sweetness into every corner of the soul, filling it with comfort and tender intensity.

*How did it happen, how did it go,
That a mere bud turned into a blossom,
Fragrance overflowing,
Such delight, such appeal.*

This transformation from bud to blossom reflects a small spark growing into a steady flame. The fragrance, spreading freely, maps onto the warmth of love. It permeates the speaker's world like the expanding glow of a fire, uplifting and illuminating all it touches. Love here is depicted as a quiet, glowing force that nurtures and brightens, suffusing everything with joy.

*Your love, my love...
Softly, the flowers whisper to the breeze,*

*Ah, what have you done?
Hidden, as if spring laughs secretly,
Unfolding... in secrecy.*

The silent blossoming of spring parallels the concealed nature of a hidden flame that begins gently yet holds a potent warmth. This secret laughter, like a flame growing beneath the surface, suggests how love transforms subtly, with a quiet yet undeniable power. It lights and warms even when unseen. Love unfolds here with the strength of a flame whose warmth spreads through every part of the soul.

*Your love, my love...
A gentle rustling,
Oh, in our togetherness,
Filled to the brim with serene waters,
Who... in that stream – in that passion,
Like a river of love,
I will let myself flow,
Oh, such yearning,
Such sweetness,
Such loveliness,
Such longing.*

In these lines a subtle flame lingers, mapping love's passion onto a quiet but powerful fire. The "gentle rustling" in their closeness mirrors the soft crackle of a flame. It hints that beneath love's calm surface lies an intense and smoldering desire. This flame signifies the persistent yearning within their togetherness. It is a warmth that radiates quietly but burns deeply, illuminating and transforming each encounter. This yearning, like a flame seeking fuel, reflects love's boundless appetite for connection. It continuously seeks to fill and fulfill.

The metaphor LOVE IS A FLAME used in this poem is **ontological**. Here love is given the physical attributes of a flame like its warmth, its ability to comfort and transform, its potential to ignite a person's inner world. By mapping love onto the qualities of a flame, Bordoloi illustrates the multi-dimensional experience of love. Love becomes an essential, life-giving force, much like fire in the natural world. It is capable of guiding, warming, and illuminating even as it envelops the beloved in its fervent, holistic glow.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem *A Rose Tree*, translated by Pradip Acharya, we encounter metaphorical expressions that shape a profound portrayal of love through the conceptual

metaphor LOVE IS A FLAME. This CMT illuminates love as a force that, like a flame, brings warmth, light, and transformation. It penetrates the heart and stirs life within it.

*Flying through darkness
a glow worm came and slept in my heart*

The poet introduces the glow-worm as a tender metaphor for the lover, mapping the beloved onto this small creature that brings a flickering light into darkness. The lover, like the glow-worm, embodies warmth and gentle illumination. It cast a soothing glow within the poet's heart. Just as a flame dispels shadows, love here brings solace to spaces once hidden in darkness. It fills the heart with a soft, persistent light that lingers and transforms.

*When I think about you
a lone star blossoms in the sky*

The image of a solitary star blooming at the thought of the beloved extends this metaphor. The lover's presence is mapped to a distant, enduring light that pierces the night sky. The star, an ever-shining flame, represents the radiance of love. It is a constant force that lights up even the vastest darkness. This image suggests that love's essence is both steadfast and beautiful, with the power to lift the ordinary into something timeless and profoundly moving.

*Adding fragrance to my blood
when I think about you by myself
stars talk from rose to rose
a swarm of fireflies glow
in the niches of my blood*

Here, love's presence within the poet's body is mapped onto fragrance and light coursing through his veins. The sweet scent flowing through his blood signifies how love pervades his entire being, like warmth spreads from a flame. The stars "talking from rose to rose" and fireflies glowing within his blood capture love's enchanting and animating force. It enlightens and enlivens his senses. This imagery maps love onto a vibrant, illuminating energy. This suggest that it fills every part of the poet with warmth and radiance, intensifying the experience of love both physically and emotionally.

Who planted a rose in my heart?

In this final line, the poet questions the origin of the love blossoming within him. The rose, a flower that thrives with warmth, maps onto the nature of love. It symbolizes how it blossoms and grows with care and attention. This rose in the heart, filled with beauty and

fragrance, embodies the tender, vibrant essence of love. It is rooted deeply, becoming an inseparable part of the poet's inner world.

The metaphor throughout this poem is **ontological**, as it gives the abstract qualities of warmth, light, and growth to the concept of love. It envisions love in a more physical and relatable way. In *A Rose Tree*, Bhattacharya's use of the CMT LOVE IS A FLAME allows for a rich, layered exploration of love's aspects like its power to bring light to dark spaces, its warmth and ability to transform, and its potential to enliven and fill one's life with beauty. The presence of glow-worms, stars, fireflies, and roses collectively underscores love's life-giving force. It explains how it is both gentle and consuming, illuminating yet volatile. Through these images, the poet portrays love as an essential, radiant force that colors the experience of life itself.

In *Song: to Celia*, Ben Jonson reflects the metaphor LOVE IS A FLAME through the intense and unquenchable longing that the speaker feels. His "thirst that from the soul doth rise" signifies a deep, spiritual yearning that ordinary means cannot satisfy. It captures the nature of love as an enduring flame that burns within.

*The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.*

.....
Not of itself, but thee.

The speaker's desire is so profound that even divine nectar from Jove wouldn't compare to Celia's kiss or presence. This suggests that his love is like an eternal flame, fiercely burning in his soul. The rosy wreath he sends, which "grows, and smells... not of itself, but thee," evokes how this love, like a flame, transforms and enlivens. It symbolizes a passion that becomes inseparable from the beloved herself.

3.1.32 LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE

Forces like gravity, magnetism, tension, and applied pressure significantly influence, move, and transform objects in the physical world. It ranges from the gentle pull that keeps objects grounded to powerful energies that can dismantle structures. These forces, shaped by proximity, intensity, and resistance, exert varied effects based on their context. While some, like gravity, are consistent and predictable, others can dramatically vary in impact. Framing love as a force draws parallels to these physical dynamics. It portrays love as both

a stabilizing influence like gravity, which pulls individuals together, and an unpredictable force that can have powerful effects, akin to magnetism or tension. Love can draw people closer or drive them apart.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE can be seen in ordinary Assamese expressions like:

- *Premot bor beyakoi porile*. Mad in love
- *Akebare premot dubi morise*. Drowning in love.
- *Chandrai prithivir sariuphale ghurar dore, he'u tair sariuphale ghuri fure*. He revolves around her like the moon revolves around the earth.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's *My friend, in desperate longing*, love emerges as an intense, palpable presence. It captures the power of emotions that affect both mind and body. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE view love as something that acts upon individuals with both subtlety and strength, similar to forces in the physical world that can influence, move, and transform. Through this lens, love becomes more than a feeling. It is an active force capable of stirring profound responses in the lover.

*The spring breeze caresses her,
Touching and passing by*

These lines beautifully maps love onto a gentle but influential physical force. Just as the breeze softly brushes against her, igniting a ripple of emotions that linger even as it passes, love here is a caressing, tender force that leaves its mark. This touch of love, like a passing breeze, is gentle yet potent. It stirs up feelings that cannot be resisted. It brings movement and sensation, demonstrating how love acts on the beloved as an unseen yet powerful force that affects her deeply.

*The touch of kisses' delight,
Leaves her restless,
Her body, without peace.*

The act of kissing here becomes an embodiment of love's force. Although the kiss brings delight, it leaves her in a state of restlessness. This mapping reflects how love, like a physical force, does not simply touch the surface but penetrates deeply, leaving a powerful impact on the individual. Love's effect is dynamic, altering her state and infusing her with a kind of emotional turbulence. It is similar to the effect of a sudden force that cannot be contained or easily soothed.

As an **ontological** metaphor, love is treated here as a tangible force with physical properties, acting on individuals with an undeniable presence. This approach enables an understanding of love's influence as something beyond emotion. It acts as a concrete force that affects one's physical and emotional state.

In portraying love as a physical force, the poem captures the active, uncontrollable impact love has on individuals. Much like physical forces such as gravity or magnetism, love can pull people toward each other, creating an emotional connection that feels as real and as binding as any physical bond. Alternatively, it can act unpredictably, creating feelings of longing, restlessness, and emotional strain, echoing the way forces can sometimes create tension within systems. Love, as a force, has the power to touch deeply. It disrupts tranquility, and lingers, exerting an influence that is neither fully visible nor entirely within the lover's control.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem, *In My Veins*, translated by Pradip Acharya, the poet draws on the metaphor LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE to convey the overwhelming, visceral experience of love. It is something that courses through him like an intense, unstoppable natural phenomenon. This metaphor captures love as an elemental force, one that surges and flows within. It impacts him with the intensity and unpredictability of a storm. The phrase "Clouds roared last night, down my veins" recurs throughout the poem. It echoes the forceful impact of love as it travels through him. By returning to this line, the poet creates a sense of recurrence, a theme in which love, like a storm, persists and reverberates. It occupies his veins with a powerful presence.

*Clouds roared last night,
Down my veins
Rolled
Clouds of summer end
With the speed of lightning*

In the opening lines the poet describes love as a storm coursing through his veins. It is mapped to summer clouds rolling with lightning speed. Here, the poet maps the sensation of love to a fast-moving, electrifying storm, highlighting its intensity and capacity to fill him completely. This mapping suggests that love, like a powerful physical force, can rush through the body. It leaves a path of transformation in its wake. The mapping to lightning captures the suddenness and ferocity with which love can enter one's life. It leaves the individual captivated by its energy and swept up in its force.

*What deep darkness of virgin hair
Kept rose-hued blood under cover?*

Bhattacharya uses the imagery of darkness and blood to explore the hidden, potent nature of love. The “virgin hair” and “rose-hued blood” evoke beauty and passion held beneath a mysterious, concealing surface. Here, love is mapped as an internal force, one that seeks to break through boundaries or coverings to reveal the depths of feeling underneath. This image powerfully encapsulates the tension between concealment and revelation. It suggests that love, as a force, constantly pushes against any attempt to hide or contain it, like a storm that finds its way through the smallest openings to make its presence known.

*Clouds roared last night
In my veins clouds of summer end*

The repetition reinforces the idea of love as a recurring, relentless force within the speaker. The clouds, repeatedly roaring within his veins, evoke an ongoing emotional experience. It is perceived as a force that doesn’t dissipate but rather cycles and returns. The seasonal reference to “summer end” evokes a sense of change, a transition between warmth and the coming of a colder phase. It captures love’s role in creating an emotional landscape marked by shifts, turbulence, and intensity.

This metaphor is **ontological**, attributing the characteristics of a physical, natural force to the abstract experience of love. By framing love as a force akin to a storm or natural phenomenon, the poet renders love’s effects both tangible and dynamic. It captures the way it permeates, transforms, and often overwhelms one’s inner landscape.

In *In My Veins*, Bhattacharya’s use of LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE provides a powerful visual and emotional. This framework explains the experience of love as an uncontrollable, pervasive energy. Through the storm imagery, love is perceived as an experience that rolls through the veins like a thunderstorm, bringing both beauty and disruption. The repeated imagery of clouds and storms conveys love’s dual nature. It can bring renewal and cleansing or leave a path of tumult and transformation.

In Hiren Bhattacharya’s poem *A Day in Spring*, translated by Pradip Acharya, love is portrayed through the metaphor LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE. It invokes the imagery of natural elements as carriers of emotion and intimacy. The poet’s use of the wind, intertwined with sunlight, conveys the affectionate and gentle force of love as something that penetrates personal spaces. It wraps around the speaker in a comforting embrace.

*Holding hands with sunshine, the wind came
through your bedroom and sat by me*

The opening line maps the wind as a gentle embodiment of love, entering quietly yet intimately, like a close companion or lover bringing warmth and light into private, secluded moments. This wind, touched by sunlight, suggests love's radiant presence. It fills the most personal spaces with a soft, undeniable glow. Love, like this sunlit breeze, arrives subtly but fills the room with warmth and comfort. It cast a gentle light over intimate moment.

*Resting its head on my shoulders
caressing my back with its fingers*

Here, the wind's tender movements deepen the metaphor, mapping love onto a soft, affectionate touch. This wind, embodying love, is no longer simply an unseen force but feels as real and comforting as a lover's touch, caressing and soothing. The mapping here suggests that love, like a physical presence, brings a closeness that reassures and connects. It offers a warmth and strength through its gentle, tangible contact. Love is portrayed as a comforting embrace. It strengthens bonds and envelops the speaker in profound intimacy.

*it unfolded the half-strung garland
of Champak flowers, like the radiant rainbow*

As the poem unfolds, love's transformative power is mapped onto the wind's gentle touch, which brings the beauty of an incomplete garland to life. Just as the wind reveals the colors and fragrance of the garland, love uncovers the beauty within. It has the capacity to turn potential into radiance, like a rainbow breaking through rain and sun. This garland, half-strung and awaiting fullness, symbolizes latent beauty. Through love's touch, it blossoms into vibrancy. Love, like the wind's gentle unveiling, is a force that enhances, beautifies, and reveals the hidden depths within. It cast light and color onto what once lay unseen.

This metaphor is **ontological**, as it imbues love with the tangible, dynamic properties of a physical force. It can enter, touch, and transform personal spaces and experiences. By mapping love to an elemental force like the wind, the poet perceives love as a tangible, palpable presence that changes and enhances everything it touches.

In *A Day in Spring*, Bhattacharya skillfully uses the metaphor LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE illustrate the profound effect it has on both physical and emotional planes. Through the personified wind and sunlight, love becomes a presence that quietly yet undeniably

reshapes personal spaces. It fills the air with warmth, and reveals beauty previously hidden. The wind's gentle caress, the sunlight's radiance, and the unfolding of the garland together create a harmonious depiction of love as a force that both comforts and transforms. The metaphor reveals love's dual capacity to subtly alter and enhance our surroundings and inner worlds. It portrays it as an essential, grounding element in the emotional landscape.

In Emily Dickinson's *A Bee his burnished Carriage*, the metaphor LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE comes alive through interaction between a bee and a rose. Dickinson portrays the bee "driving boldly to a Rose," where their "Moment consummated" suggests an encounter of intensity and movement. The physicality of this interaction is evident in the lines,

*The Rose received his visit
With frank tranquility
Withholding not a Crescent
To his Cupidity.*

Here, the rose welcomes the bee's approach, offering herself with openness and grace. It embodies a captivating exchange where love is a dynamic force of attraction and surrender. The bee's bold advance and the rose's tranquil acceptance portray love as a powerful energy that prompts action and reaction, leaving each transformed. In this metaphor, Dickinson suggests that love's force is tangible, stirring movement and emotion with a physical intensity that leaves behind both rapture and humility.

3.1.33 LOVE IS A PLANT

Plants, as living entities, grow and thrive under favorable conditions with necessary sustenance, attention, and environmental support. This analogy extends to love, mapping affection and attachment to the organic processes. It is essential for life, requiring nurturing to flourish. Just as plants need water, sunlight, and nutrients, love requires time, care, and mutual support to maintain its vitality. It emphasizes its progressive, evolving nature. Love, like a plant, goes through growth stages like sprouting, blooming, and eventual decay. It symbolizes its development and transformation over time. This perspective highlights that love's growth is dynamic and responsive to its environment, influenced by external conditions and internal conflicts. The metaphor underscores the delicate balance needed to sustain love. It necessitates continual effort and patience akin to a gardener tending a garden.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A PLANT takes root in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Xomoiyor loge loge teulukor prem profurito hoboloi dhorile.* Their love blossomed over time.
- *Tai xihotor xomporkotu xojotone lalon palon kori ase.* She's carefully nurturing their relationship.
- *Tair babe xihotor bandhun dine dine modhur hoi ahise.* She feels their bond is starting to bloom.

In Hiren Bhattacharya's poem *She*, the poet paints an intricate and tender picture of love. It uses imagery that evokes the natural, blossoming qualities of a plant. Through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A PLANT, the poem presents love as something that grows, nurtures, and heals. Each touch and kiss cultivate beauty and resilience within the beloved. Love is thus mapped as an organic force, blooming and spreading, mirroring nature's gentle cycles of growth and renewal.

*I laid my hands on her breast
on all my five fingers
the fragrance of flowers*

Here, the poet's touch maps onto an act of nurturing like planting seeds of affection within her. The lingering "fragrance of flowers" on his fingers symbolizes the beauty and warmth that love releases when tenderly cultivated, like a garden's scent permeates the air. This mapping of touch to fragrance reveals love's transformative power. Here every gentle gesture leaves behind a presence that is as enriching and soothing as a blooming flower. It fills the senses with its lasting sweetness.

*I kissed her every wound;
on my dry lips
one, two, some seven red roses*

Each kiss becomes a "red rose," mapping her wounds onto blossoming flowers. This suggests love's ability to heal and beautify. The roses evoke love's resilience, as each gentle touch allows beauty to emerge from past hurts. Through this mapping, love is depicted as a nurturing force capable of turning pain into something beautiful, like a gardener's care brings life and color to a garden. Each kiss fosters a renewal of the beloved's heart and spirit. It transforms what was wounded into something vibrant and alive.

*I laid my hand
on her breast;
on my shaken fingers
the sway of flowers*

The poet's touch evokes the "sway of flowers," mapping love onto a living, delicate force that responds to presence and touch. Just as flowers sway gently in the wind, love here is shown to be sensitive, alive, and receptive. This mapping suggests that love is a dynamic experience, adapting and moving with each gesture of affection. The "sway" captures love's fragile balance, hinting that it must be treated with care, for like a fragile bloom, it may wilt under a heavy hand. It reminds us of love's need for tenderness and respect in order to thrive.

The metaphor used in this poem is **ontological**, as it assigns physical, sensory attributes of plants to the abstract concept of love, making its qualities more tangible and relatable.

In *She*, Bhattacharya masterfully intertwines the metaphor LOVE IS A PLANT, presenting it as a living, breathing entity that requires care and devotion. Through imagery of flowers, fragrances, and gentle sways, he suggests that love, much like a plant, can grow and flourish when nurtured. Each line reinforces the idea that love, like a well-tended plant, can turn wounds into blossoms and transform hardship into beauty. By portraying love as a tender, evolving connection, the poet reveals its potential to both heal and flourish.

In *A Red, Red Rose*, Robert Burns presents love as a vibrant, flourishing force, mapping it to a plant.

*red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June.*

This metaphor of love as a blossoming plant evokes beauty, vitality, and resilience. Just as a rose blooms with the season, love unfurls with depth and intensity. Burns deepens this image by emphasizing love's enduring nature, declaring,

*I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.*

Here, he entwines love with natural forces. This suggests that, like a plant firmly rooted in the earth, his love remains unwavering, deeply rooted, and resilient. It defies the limits of time and distance. Burns's portrayal captures love as a natural entity that grows, endures, and thrives with a strength that echoes the boundless power of nature itself.

3.1.34 LOVE IS WAR

War, characterized by intense conflict, strategic maneuvering, and a drive for victory, frames relationships in the metaphor of love as arenas of contention, struggle, and negotiation. This perspective suggests that love, like war, can involve conflicts over values, boundaries, and desires. It requires acts of compromise, assertion, or resistance to achieve harmony. Such dynamics highlight love as a rewarding yet challenging experience that demands resilience and strategic communication to overcome difficulties. Additionally, just as war involves tactics and sacrifices, individuals in relationships must navigate disagreements, confront vulnerabilities, and sometimes concede needs for the partnership's sake. This CMT emphasizes the strength and endurance required to maintain or protect a relationship. It portrays love as an endeavor where victories and losses shape its evolution. While love may encounter moments of conflict, these battles are integral to the growth and transformation of the bond.

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS WAR often emerges in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Xomporkotu jiyai rakhiboloi xihote kothur bhabe jujisil.* They fought fiercely to keep their relationship alive.
- *Teur hridoy joy koratu eta kothin bijoyor dore onubhob hoisil.* Winning his heart felt like a hard-won victory.
- *Kothin poristhitir majotu tai taloi morombur xasi rakhise.* She's defended her love for him through every hardship.

In Nilomoni Phukan's poem *She'd Been Pursuing Me*, love is portrayed as an ongoing battle, one that consumes the speaker's thoughts and brings both allure and pain. Through the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS WAR, the poem captures the intensity and lingering effect of a powerful but adversarial love. This metaphor frames love as a force that pursues, destabilizes, and challenges the speaker. It leaves emotional wounds that reflect the tumultuous nature of human attachment. Each line encapsulates love as an intense conflict. Here the speaker's heart is trampled and pursued by an unforgettable, enigmatic presence.

She'd been pursuing me even in my sleep

This line suggests an unyielding force that shadows the speaker, infiltrating even moments of rest. Here, love is mapped onto a relentless adversary, an inescapable presence that

penetrates the speaker's consciousness, like an enemy advancing on a battleground. Love, like warfare, becomes an invasive force that disrupts and unsettles. It transforms the sanctuary of sleep into a field where vulnerabilities are exposed. It leaves no peace even in slumber.

*Could that uprooted tree be there
Upon her face*

This line introduces an image of upheaval, with the uprooted tree symbolizing a life destabilized. The tree's displacement mirrors the way conflict alters landscapes. It leaves scars that persist. Her face, mapped onto an uprooted tree, embodies both beauty and the raw force of destruction. This suggests that love has the power to shake and transform the foundations of the speaker's life, like the ambush of war.

*Are the twin streams with reddened waters
Flowing in her lips*

Here, the "reddened waters" evoke a mix of allure and peril. It symbolizes passion interwoven with pain. This imagery of flowing streams conveys love's dual nature. Here attraction is tinged with the risk of injury, echoing the paradox of beauty and bloodshed found in warfare. Her lips, the origin of these streams, map onto love's irresistible pull yet hidden dangers. It reveals a force that captivates yet leaves its mark.

*Could those two black horses be there
In her eyes*

The poet invokes black horses symbolizing strength, mystery, and looming threat. This suggests untamed forces within her gaze. Her eyes, bearing these "black horses," map onto love's intense allure coupled with hidden risks. It is perceived as if her gaze alone could trigger an emotional upheaval. It initiates a battle that leaves the speaker defenseless and vulnerable to her power.

*Each night even today
She pause trampling my heart*

The image of her "trampling" his heart reveals love as an act of repeated conquest. It inflicts pain like an assault that never ceases. Her presence maps onto an unrelenting attack. It is symbolized by the weight of her steps that dominate and oppress, as though love itself bears down upon the speaker's heart. This act of trampling emphasizes love's

capacity to dominate. It leaves the speaker's heart a battlefield marked by surrender and loss. It illustrates the intensity of love's power to overpower and control.

This metaphor is primarily **structural**, as it relies on the structure of warfare to shape the emotional experience of love. Through mapping pursuit, destruction, and injury, this metaphor allows to understand love's complex emotions as a form of adversarial engagement. Here we can see that conflict, passion, and vulnerability coexist.

In *She'd Been Pursuing Me*, Nilomoni Phukan uses the LOVE IS WAR metaphor to convey the turbulent and consuming power of love. Each line, whether it describes the pursuit, the uprooted tree, reddened waters, or the trampling transforms love into a series of acts that mirror the struggles of a battlefield. His heart becomes a site of conflict. It repeatedly overtakes woman's intense, almost combative presence. This metaphor emphasizes that love can provoke an ongoing struggle. Here the speaker grapples with an overpowering attachment that brings both desire and pain.

In *The Flea*, John Donne uses the metaphor LOVE IS WAR through the intricate battle of persuasion he wages to win his beloved's consent. The flea, which has mingled both their bloods, becomes a battleground where he argues that their unity within this tiny creature symbolizes a bond that should not be denied. He employs a series of logical "attacks," presenting arguments as though each were a strategic maneuver, highlighting the tension and resistance he faces. His persistence reflects the nature of conflict transforming love into a struggle of intellect and will.

*It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled be,*

3.2 METAPHORS OF LIFE

This section delves into the metaphors that shape the poets' portrayals of life. It highlights how Assamese cultural history and context influence these conceptualizations. The interplay of cultural heritage and social context reveals a unique perspective on life. It underscores the dynamic nature of metaphorical expression. As Kövecses (2005) suggests, such disparities in metaphorical conceptualizations emerge from the evolving relationship between cultural legacy and contemporary circumstances. It reflects the richness and adaptability of metaphor in capturing the human experience across linguistic and cultural landscapes.

3.2.1 LIFE IS A JOURNEY

Journeys, defined by movement, development, and progression, encapsulate life's path marked by experiences, challenges, and milestones across stages like childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Like any physical journey involving varied landscapes and obstacles, life features periods of smooth progress, struggles, and unexpected shifts that necessitate adaptability and resilience. These experiences enrich personal growth. It creates a tapestry of achievements, lessons, and transformations. In life's journey, time and space serve as guiding dimensions. It influences transitions from one phase to another. Despite setbacks, continuous movement and momentum are essential, with each stage, encounter, and decision molding one's trajectory. Life, in its essence, is a journey through its emotional, psychological, and intellectual realms.

We comprehend the abstract notion of life in terms of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which manifests itself in clichéd linguistic expressions like:

- *Teur unnotir jikhola dal sthir hoi porise.* His career is at a standstill.
- *Xixuk jibonor adi kalsuat diya xikhai xihotor bhobitshyat gorhe.* Giving children a good start in life shapes their future.
- *Tai ek notun jibonor xondhan korise.* She's embarking on a new career.

In Bhupen Hazarika's poem *Me and My Silhouette*, the conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY unfolds through the relationship between the speaker and their silhouette. It illuminates themes of solitude, resilience, and the enduring companionship found within oneself. The speaker's silhouette is more than a mere shadow. It becomes a trusted companion, guiding and supporting them as they navigate the uncertainties and hardships of life's path. The poem's use of **ontological** and **orientational** metaphors enriches this concept. It turns an internal relationship into a broader commentary on self-reliance and the nature of human experience.

*Who says I am forlorn...
Me and my silhouette,
Both are each other's companion.*

The poem opens with a powerful assertion. Here, the speaker rejects the notion of loneliness by embracing their silhouette as a companion. It elevates this "shadow" from a mere reflection to a symbol of resilience and self-sufficiency. This metaphor of companionship with one's silhouette maps onto the idea of inner strength as a steady,

enduring presence that supports the speaker on their journey through life. It suggests that one's own presence is enough to ward off isolation. It turns solitude into a source of comfort rather than abandonment.

*When I build a house,
In the vast sandy stretch of hope
It's only my silhouette that
Uplifts sand for me.*

The "vast sandy stretch of hope" symbolizes the shifting foundation of life's aspirations. Here dreams may be fragile or uncertain. Yet, the silhouette, the speaker's inner resolve lifts sand and aids in constructing these dreams. This imagery maps the process of building one's life onto the act of gathering strength from within. It shows that the speaker's resilience endures even amid life's uncertainties. The silhouette's supportive role here underscores the idea that self-reliance is the foundation of growth and the strength to overcome life's challenges.

*Even in a dark road,
It's only my silhouette that
Carpets the way with light for me.*

As the poem unfolds, the speaker addresses the challenge of dark paths. Here, the silhouette becomes a guiding beacon. It illuminates the path ahead when the journey grows obscure. This metaphor maps the silhouette's presence onto a source of inner light that guides in times of darkness. This suggests that inner strength and self-belief can reveal the way forward even in times of darkness. By depicting the silhouette as a source of light, Hazarika conveys that internal guidance, and resilience can sustain the speaker's progress when external support is absent. This offers direction through the power of self-belief.

Throughout the poem, the speaker's solitude is celebrated as a powerful wellspring of resilience. The silhouette, as the speaker's "true friend," stands in contrast to "false" friends from afar. It symbolizes the authenticity of self-reliance over superficial connections. This companionship of the silhouette serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of inner strength. Here solace, stability, and companionship come from within. By affirming that solitude can foster growth, the poem maps the journey of self-discovery as one grounded in inner assurance rather than external validation. It emphasizes that true resilience is built upon the quiet certainty of self-understanding.

In *Me and My Silhouette*, Hazarika employs an **ontological** metaphor to transform the silhouette from a passive reflection into an empowered companion. It embodies resilience, support, and guidance. The **orientational** metaphor further enriches this journey by depicting the silhouette as actively engaged, uplifting, and illuminating the way forward. This profound portrayal of life as a journey emphasizes that the strength to face hardships often comes from within. By embedding these layered metaphors, Hazarika offers a poignant perspective on self-reliance. It suggests that life's journey is shaped not just by external experiences but by the depth of inner companionship.

In Hem Barua's poem *Grandmother*, translated by Ananda Bormudoi, the poet delicately captures the profound journey of life. It is shown through the lens of aging, resilience, and introspection, as embodied by a grandmother who faces the trials of time with unwavering determination. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY beautifully frames this narrative. It offers insight into how life's progression is both experienced and reflected upon through the passage of time.

*Ignoring the scorching mid-day sun during summer
And the devastating flood
Ignoring winter cold alike
She moves on with her flowing grey hair like jute.*

The poem opens with a portrayal of the grandmother, pressing forward through life's relentless elements. Her resilience against seasonal extremes maps onto the endurance required for life's journey, with each season representing distinct hardships. Her grey hair, mapped to flowing jute, symbolizes both the wear of age and the strength that binds her spirit. She stands as an embodiment of resilience. She moves through life's trials with unwavering resolve.

*What have you been looking for, Aita
Bending over your stick
And scrutinizing the ground?*

Her slow, careful gaze toward the earth, supported by her walking stick, reflects the introspective journey that often comes with age. This act of looking back on life, mapped onto the image of scrutinizing the ground, suggests a search for memories, missed opportunities, or cherished dreams. This quiet reflection underscores a universal truth of life's journey: that as we move forward, there are moments we pause to examine the path we've traveled, seeking understanding in the footprints of our past.

*I am looking for the lost twenty years of my youth and dreams
Wondering if it perished in the dust of the road.*

The metaphor of youth and dreams settling into the dust poignantly captures the inevitability of time's passage. Here, the grandmother's search maps onto the longing to reclaim fragments of the past years and aspirations that may have faded along the journey. This image conveys that as we progress, parts of our past, our youthful hopes and dreams, fall behind, becoming like dust on the road. It is unreachable yet ever-present in our hearts, woven into the fabric of memory.

This poem presents an **ontological** and **orientational** metaphor, grounding the abstract concept of life as a tangible journey through time and space. Life here is conceived as a path along which experiences are gathered and memories sometimes lost. It echoes the way travelers may drop keepsakes along the road. There is a spatial orientation that pulls us between looking back at youth and dreams. It continues forward, which helps us conceptualize aging and memory through movement and distance.

Through *Grandmother*, Hem Barua reveals life's bittersweet progression, the journey we all embark upon, shaped by resilience and reflection. The poem, in all its simplicity, captures the essence of life's journey. Here the road we travel is as much about what we encounter as what we leave behind. It creates a narrative of resilience, loss, and the quiet grace found in life's continual forward motion.

In *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, we journey through Mamata's memories, reflections, and enduring hopes as she pens a message to her departed partner. The entire poem beautifully encapsulates the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY. It reflects love's progression as a continuous voyage through time. It is shaped by pivotal moments, enduring memories, and profound longing.

*The time when we wrote the preface of our life...
A strange intoxication whirled me mad.*

This line sets the beginning of their relationship as the "preface" to a book. It maps love's early days onto the opening chapter of a shared narrative. The enchantment and thrill of young love mark the start of a journey together. Each moment hints at the unknown pages ahead, brimming with promise and adventure.

*That was seven years ago.
To me it sounds like the stories of the Puranas.*

In reflecting on her past, Mamata elevates her memories to the timeless realm of ancient tales. By mapping her own love story onto the epic qualities of the Puranas, she suggests that these experiences are etched into her life as mythic landmarks. These are moments that, though distant, resonate with the depth of wisdom and nostalgia.

Last summer we performed Deuta's death anniversary.

Marking significant events like a parent's death anniversary, the poem places these commemorations as milestones on life's path. Each ritual is mapped onto a reminder of time's passage and the emotional shifts that punctuate life's journey. Through these observances, we glimpse the cyclical nature of life, with love and memory enduring as constants against time's relentless flow.

*When you return, do let me know.
I'll go beyond the river Bhogdoi
and call you from the Lohit...
the day you return.*

The imagery of crossing rivers to reconnect underscores love's power to go beyond distances, whether physical or emotional. The rivers Bhogdoi and Lohit, symbols of separation, map onto the challenges and distances Mamata is willing to bridge to reunite. Here, the river's movement mirrors the journey of life itself yet always striving toward union. It talks about love's capacity to overcome barriers for the sake of connection and reunion.

In this unfolding letter, every memory, hope, and ritual frames her life as a journey, an ongoing process marked by milestones, transitions, and boundless longing. By depicting life in this way, the poem reveals how life is both the path and the destination. It is a rich experience with diverse terrains and moments that define one's existence. Through Mamata's poignant words, *Mamata's Letter* invites to contemplate life's journey as a continuous interplay of love, memory, and hope.

In Nabakanta Barua's *The Gloom*, life unfolds as a journey where darkness and light alternate. Each stage is marked by profound changes that reflect the human condition.

*Last night Someone poured ink into Umiam
How the streetlights emitted darkness!*

These opening lines evoke a haunting, disorienting darkness, where even streetlights intended to guide appear to emit shadows rather than light. The image of ink spilled into

Umiam, a usually serene lake, disrupts its clarity. This maps the lake as a mirror of self-reflection and depth. The ink here symbolizes confusion and sorrow. It cast a haze over what was once clear and introspective. This disturbance in the lake mirrors times in life when hardships cloud one's inner clarity. It transforms the journey into one of obscured paths and uncertain steps.

*The whole day the sky blotted
It with the clouds*

Here, the poet evokes an image of an overcast sky heavy with clouds. It symbolizes the weight of grief or emotional turmoil. The vastness of the sky maps onto the breadth of human emotions, while the clouds maps life's burdens, obscuring any brightness. Just as clouds conceal the open sky, these emotional obstacles interrupt the freedom and clarity of life's journey. This mapping illustrates how the natural rhythm of life can be paused or redirected by forces beyond control. It emphasizes how emotions alter one's perception of purpose and progress.

*Mixing the gulmar and
The golden cassia hues
The sun prepared
A tiny speck of an orange light.*

Here, the blending of colors is mapped to hope and renewal, the vibrant gulmar and golden cassia hues symbolizes prosperity. Against the darkness, this "tiny speck of orange light" appears, mapping onto a beacon of hope that begins to enlighten the path once more. Like a traveler glimpsing light after a long night, this moment signals the eventual return of clarity and direction. It reminds that hope is the force that dispels darkness. The sun, with its power to illuminate and sustain life, represents an inner and outer positivity. It gently cast away shadows and reorients the journey with renewed purpose.

In this **structural** metaphor, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, the poem reveals how we move through stages of obscurity and revelation. Here the interplay of light and darkness provides insights into life's evolving course. By exploring life's stages through a journey filled with both clouds and orange-tinted rays, Barua offers a nuanced look at the balance between despair and hope. The imagery serves as a reminder that while moments of darkness may blur our path, perseverance and the inherent cycles of life ultimately bring clarity. It shows that every journey is marked by periods of difficulty and insight, both necessary for reaching fulfillment and understanding.

In Nabakanta Barua's poem *Measurements*, the act of taking measurements of body, emotions, and intangible aspects of life reflects a deeper journey through existence. Each line examines layers of human experience, transforming ordinary actions into metaphors for life's greater journey. It is a path marked by attempts to measure, understand, and find meaning within the abstract. The CMT LIFE IS A JOURNEY guides us here. It encapsulates the way each measurement and reckoning becomes a part of life's unfolding odyssey. Here introspection and self-awareness form the waypoints on this ongoing path.

It is afternoon now.

Let's go to the tailor's; to get measured.

This line sets the tone for a reflective journey. It suggests that in life's "afternoon", a time of maturity and self-assessment, one must pause to understand where they stand. Just as a tailor's measurements prepare one for a new garment, this moment of self-assessment acts as a preparation for the journeys yet to come. Here, the poet implies that understanding oneself, much like taking measurements, is a critical step toward navigating life's unfolding path.

Measurements of the palm and the heart

We shall give measurements of the entrails.

And the kidney and the liver

These lines extend the metaphor into the depths of the self. This suggests that the journey requires more than surface-level understanding. By measuring internal organs, the poet maps the act of self-reflection onto an exploration of one's hidden and essential parts. This introspective "measuring" serves as a metaphor for delving into the core of one's physical and emotional self. It prepares one to face the complexities that lie ahead.

Give measurements of hormones and affections

Let us give measurements of life

Here, the metaphor elaborates to include the intangible forces like emotions and thoughts that guide one's life journey. Just as unseen currents shape a traveler's course, these invisible aspects of our being influence our paths and decisions. By emphasizing these "measurements," the poet acknowledges the powerful undercurrents of feelings and instincts that drive our lives. This maps the inner forces as essential factors in shaping the direction of one's journey.

*We can only give measurements.
We can only take reckonings
We shall record that suicides have
Swelled considerably.*

The poem shifts to a collective reflection on the shared hardships of society. Here, the act of “taking reckonings” maps onto society’s obligation to acknowledge the struggles we collectively face. These reckonings become markers along a challenging path. It underscores the universal hardships we encounter and the pressing need to understand and confront shared sorrows that affect the human journey as a whole.

When will someone stitch the garment to fit man?

The poem’s closing question symbolizes the yearning for fulfillment and completion along life’s path. The “garment to fit” suggests an ultimate harmony or purpose that each individual seeks. It is a perfect fit that signifies self-acceptance and contentment. This image of a garment that fits maps onto the life-long quest for understanding and unity within oneself. It represents the final goal to find a sense of belonging and self-alignment. This feels as complete and comforting as a garment tailored to fit. It brings comfort and peace to the traveler on their life’s journey.

This metaphor in *Measurements* is **ontological**, transforming life’s abstract qualities into elements of a journey like milestones, self-reflection, societal reckonings. Each quality is like a step toward deeper understanding. By mapping life to a journey of continuous measurements and evaluations, Barua captures the essence of our efforts to make sense of the path we follow and the preparations for unknown challenges ahead. The poem questions if the measurements we take will ever synthesize into a reality that fully suits the human condition. It culminates in a “destination” where all these preparations and reckonings fulfill a true purpose. Through the metaphor of life as a journey, the poem explains the endless human quest for meaning, self-discovery, and fulfillment.

In Nilomoni Phukan’s poem *History*, life unfolds as a journey through a landscape filled with haunting, surreal imagery. This journey marked by the act of rowing through a world on fire, obscured by smoke, and inhabited by ominous scenes evokes a powerful sense of existential and historical hardship. Through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, the poet guides us through an exploration of persistence amidst devastation and sorrow. The poem is an exploration to navigate a world seemingly scarred by memory and loss.

Both of us were rowing past a forest ablaze

This opening line captures the intensity of navigating life's adversities. It maps the act of rowing through a burning forest to the experience of journeying through painful, turbulent stages. The "forest ablaze" serves as an emblem of unavoidable hardships. This signifies that one cannot evade life's fires but must face them head-on, testing one's strength and resilience as they push forward.

The birds waded through a sea of mist like smoke

Here, the birds, typically symbols of freedom and clarity, wade through a shrouded landscape of mist and smoke. It reflects the obscured vision that often accompanies life's journey. This imagery maps onto the times when individuals must move through life despite uncertainty and confusion. The mist and smoke create a sense of limited perspective, yet forward motion is necessary. It underscores life's demand for perseverance even when clarity is elusive.

*We saw the serpents so many
Drifting along the waters*

Serpents passively floating on the water represent hidden dangers and potential threats encountered along life's path. Just as serpents in a river suggest underlying risks, life's journey holds both visible and unseen challenges. It requires vigilance and courage. The image of serpents drifting quietly with the current highlights that not all dangers announce themselves; some lie subtly beneath the surface. It underscores the quiet, pervasive nature of certain trials in life.

*Moving on and on we came across
A little cottage close to the waters*

This line introduces a fleeting moment of respite amid life's harsh journey. The cottage, seemingly abandoned and beginning to smolder, represents the temporary sanctuaries we encounter. It bears the marks of past struggles. The cottage's smoldering state maps onto life's brief moments of peace, tinged by the adversity endured along the way. It reminds that even rest carries reminders of the hardships we face.

*We heard the shackled sky sob in the distance
Like a helpless alms seeker*

The sobbing sky evokes a deep, universal sorrow. It expands the journey beyond individual struggle to encompass collective grief. This imagery of the "helpless alms seeker" speaks

to a sorrow that transcends personal experience, evoking the shared pain of humanity. Along the journey of life, such encounters with universal suffering remind us of our shared condition. It connects our individual stories with the broader human narrative of loss and longing.

*Again we slowly started to row
Through the smoke and the night*

As the travelers continue their journey, smoke and darkness close around them, symbolizing life's more daunting phases. This image maps onto life as a journey that demands resilience. Here clarity may be absent, yet the will to press onward remains essential. The persistence through darkness and smoke emphasizes the importance of endurance. It explains how even in the face of uncertainty and adversity, progress relies on an unwavering commitment to move forward.

This metaphor is **ontological**, as it provides a tangible framework by equating life with the physical act of moving through challenging terrains. Through the act of rowing, the poet transforms life's abstract experiences into a concrete journey. This suggests that the journey's worth is found not in reaching a specific destination but in navigating the path itself with steadfastness.

In *History*, Phukan's portrayal of LIFE IS A JOURNEY encapsulates the endurance and quiet courage required to face life's historical and existential burdens. Through landscapes of fire, smoke, serpents, and a weeping sky, the poem casts life's journey as a passage marked by both personal and shared sorrow. The act of rowing forward, regardless of the bleak surroundings, reflects an understanding of life as a continuous progression through hardship and mystery, demanding resilience. The metaphor ultimately paints life as a journey where individuals encounter hardship, beauty, and the weight of collective grief. In this journey, the commitment to press forward amid adversity becomes a testament to human perseverance and strength. It reflects a universal experience of seeking meaning and enduring amidst the shadows.

In *The Road Not Taken*, Robert Frost uses the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY to narrate the choices we encounter and the paths we ultimately take. The diverging roads symbolize life's decisions, with each path representing a different direction and set of possibilities. Frost reflects on his choice, suggesting that the journey of life is shaped by these decisions, even though their outcomes are uncertain.

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

These lines capture this metaphor, conveying how each choice defines the journey's unique outcome and the individuality of one's path through life.

3.2.2 LIFE IS A STRUGGLE

Struggle, often associated with enduring effort or conflict, is a fundamental aspect of the human experience. It drives change, fosters resilience, and facilitates progress across various contexts, from personal growth to societal developments. Viewing struggle as an inherent part of life emphasizes the dynamic nature of human existence. Here obstacles and conflicts act as impediments and catalysts for development and transformation. Conceptualizing life as a series of struggles reveals how these challenges shape individual character, influence decisions, and impact life trajectories. Struggles, ranging from daily hassles to life-altering events, provide opportunities for learning and adaptation. This perspective also acknowledges the cumulative effect of struggles.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE is a recurring theme in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teu nijor bhitoror danob buror xoite juji ase.* He's wrestling with his inner demons.
- *Xokolu kosto pahori tai dhoirjyo dhoribo parise.* She's holding on, despite all the hardships.
- *Jibone teuk itur pisot xitu protyahban japi dise.* Life has thrown him one challenge after another.

Amulya Barua in his poem ***Dog***, depicts the harsh reality of survival through the imagery of stray dogs scavenging for food. This serves as a powerful metaphor for the struggle faced by the impoverished. The poet artfully juxtaposes these images. It uses the dogs as a metaphorical representation of society's marginalized and poverty-stricken individuals who struggle for basic sustenance. The metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE emerges clearly, highlighting the challenges and adversities faced by those living in poverty. The dogs' relentless search for food amidst heaps of waste is mapped to the constant effort people make to survive in difficult circumstances.

*Each of them carries on their mouth
A desiccated, juiceless bone*

The poem opens with an image of street dogs scavenging near garbage piles, clutching “a desiccated, juiceless bone,” which mirrors the scarcity of rewards gained from relentless effort. This imagery maps onto the exhausting struggles of humans in impoverished conditions. Here each attempt to secure even basic needs often yields little satisfaction. The phrase “a bone without caste or race” is mapped to life’s hardships, suggesting that hunger and deprivation are universal burdens. The mention of a “scrap of leather from a broken shoe” reinforces the sense of scarcity. This symbolizes how those in need must rely on fragments to survive.

*In hunger they forget
‘Nonviolence is the ultimate virtue’.*

Here, hunger becomes an all-consuming shadow. It is a powerful force that drives us to forsake their values in the fight to survive. This relentless “shadow” maps to the unyielding presence of hardship. It portrays survival as a force capable of overriding ethics. This image reflects situations in human life. Here extreme need compels people to abandon ideals, mapping the desperate choices made in conditions of scarcity. As the poem progresses, Barua describes the dogs’ society as “chaotic” and “aggressive,” where “Hunger is calmed only by relentless struggle!” This depiction maps onto the social realities within impoverished communities. Here competition for limited resources often leads to tension and conflict. The societal structure of the dogs, driven by hunger and aggression, reflects human societies beset by inequality. Here scarcity and struggle often overshadow harmony.

*Driven by hunger, by the allure of greed,
Dull bones and scraps of leather
Become rich, tender ‘protein’ to them.*

The poet maps the dogs’ acceptance of unappealing food to human tendencies to normalize deprivation, transforming “dull bones and scraps” into satisfying sustenance. This transformation maps the way individuals in poverty are forced to adapt to minimal and often inadequate resources. One finds resilience and survival in whatever is available.

*Do we live only to eat,
Or do we eat to live?*

These lines add a reflective depth to the poem. It probes the purpose of existence amid a life of relentless struggle. This line maps survival as a holistic journey. It suggests that for

these dogs and by extension, for marginalized humans life often becomes limited to fulfilling basic needs. It is void of the experiences many take for granted.

*This pack of hungry dogs...
But there is another pack,
A pack that feeds,
Born of noble lines.*

Here, Barua introduces a juxtaposition between the hungry pack and another “noble” and well-fed pack. It maps the disparity between those who live in comfort and those who face deprivation. This image reflects the class divide, where resources and privilege are concentrated among the few while the majority struggle to survive. It highlights the inequalities that define social reality.

This conceptual metaphor, LIFE IS A STRUGGLE can be understood as an **ontological** metaphor. Here life’s intangible experiences are comprehended through tangible imagery like the dogs’ fight for survival. The poet uses this metaphor to illustrate the grim and continuous challenges faced by people. It emphasizes that life is a battle against constraints and adversity.

The exploration of the poem through this metaphorical lens provides a profound understanding of the human condition. The plight of the dogs, as portrayed in the poem, reflects the broader societal struggle. It draws stark parallels between animal and human survival. By mapping life’s hardships onto the imagery of dogs scavenging for sustenance, the poet evokes empathy and encourages reflection on societal inequalities and the universal nature of struggle. This approach highlights the complex emotional landscape of life. Here the fight for survival is constant. It emphasizes the societal and ethical implications of poverty and deprivation.

In Bhupen Hazarika's poem *A Night Drenched in Cold*, the poet captures the intense struggles faced by the marginalized sections of society, particularly daily wage laborers. Hazarika uses the chilling imagery of a cold night to map the harsh realities and relentless hardships. These individuals endure as they struggle for the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Their lives, marked by uncertainty and deprivation, are portrayed with deep empathy. It highlights how their cries for help often fall on deaf ears. This poem, when analyzed through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE offers a poignant exploration of human resilience amid adversity, as well as a critique of societal indifference.

*A night drenched in cold, a night steeped in chill,
In the freezing night, a night soaked in cold.*

Here, the cold night is mapped to the harsh, unforgiving conditions that shape the lives of those on society's margins. The repetition of "night" reinforces the persistent nature of these struggles. It maps the night's chill onto the ongoing, relentless hardships faced by the vulnerable.

*For the farmer without clothes,
A dying ember in a broken stove,
Flickering faintly—
Let me be a warmth,
A crimson warmth*

The first figure emerging from this desolate, frozen landscape is the farmer. The farmer's bare state and the image of a "dying ember in a broken stove" evokes extreme poverty. Here even essential warmth is a rare luxury. The faintly flickering ember maps the fragility of life and scarce resources, barely sustaining existence against the bitter cold. Here, the poet's wish to be a "crimson warmth" maps onto a deep desire to provide comfort and protection. It emphasizes that compassion can act as a force of warmth against life's unforgiving chill.

*In this cold, shivering night,
For the day laborer without food,
The hidden hunger deep within,
Suddenly flaring up—
Let me be a fierce force,
A fierce force.*

The poem then turns to the plight of the day laborer. Hunger, portrayed as something that "flares up," takes on a haunting quality. It is a relentless force that gnaws away at the laborer. This visceral image conveys the day laborer's ongoing battle with starvation and want. The poet's wish to become a "fierce force" maps his empathy onto an empowering response, a drive to counter life's unyielding hunger with strength and sustenance. This symbolizes a fierce, protective force to shield against relentless deprivation.

*For the fear-stricken heart of a minority,
The unspoken cry—
Let me be a tender shield,
A sweet shield,
A sweet shield.*

The poem's focus shifts to the fear and insecurity faced by marginalized communities. The "fear-stricken heart" and "unspoken cry" reveal the emotional toll of living with constant fear of prejudice and exclusion. The poet's desire to become a "tender shield" map onto the profound need for safety, acceptance, and protection. It offers the hope that empathy can provide refuge from society's harsh judgments. This metaphor extends the struggle beyond survival. It highlights the need for emotional security in a world marked by discrimination.

*For the choked voice of a singer,
A song that could bring the dawn, yet hasn't,
For that immortal melody—
Let me be a nectar voice,
A nectar voice.*

The poet speaks to the silenced voices of artists and dreamers. The "choked voice of a singer" symbolizes stifled creativity, a voice suppressed by society. The song "that could bring the dawn" suggests a potential for transformation and hope that remains unrealized. By wishing to be a "nectar voice," the poet maps his empathy onto a longing to nurture and liberate these voices. This tells us the importance of self-expression and creativity as channels for hope and renewal. In seeking to amplify suppressed voices, the poet envisions compassion as a source of solace and a beacon for change.

By weaving together these **ontological** and **orientational** metaphors, Hazarika brings the struggles of marginalized communities into focus, grounding their experiences in palpable imagery. It conveys both the physical and emotional landscapes of poverty, fear, and suppression. The orientational aspects of his desire to "shield" or "uplift" suggest a directional, protective force. It emphasizes that even in the darkest moments, companionship, empathy, and solidarity can provide light.

By examining life as a continuous struggle, Hazarika's poem deepens our understanding of the resilience required to navigate life's difficulties. It shows how the marginalized face battles on multiple fronts, from economic deprivation to social exclusion and the suppression of their voices. Hazarika's portrayal encourages to recognize these ongoing struggles, advocating for empathy, solidarity, and collective action as pathways to societal change.

In Nabakanta Barua's poem *Measurements*, life is portrayed through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE, capturing the endless complexities and challenges of

existence. The poet weaves a narrative where life is mapped to the meticulous act of taking measurements and the deferred promise of stitching. It symbolizes the struggle to understand, evaluate, and reconcile the multifaceted aspects of human life. This metaphor paints life as a cycle of constant assessment and unfinished tasks, reflecting the incomplete and uncertain nature of human efforts.

It is afternoon now.

Let's go to the tailor's; to get measured.

Measurements of neck chest hands and arms

Measurements of the palm and the heart.

These opening lines set the tone for the metaphorical mapping. Here the act of "measuring" signifies the continual self-assessment required in life. The poet portrays life as a relentless struggle to evaluate oneself, both physically and emotionally. Measuring the "palm and the heart" adds a layer of complexity. It emphasizes the duality of human existence like balancing tangible, physical realities with intangible, emotional dimensions. This mapping highlights the struggle to comprehend and reconcile the external and internal aspects of being.

We shall give measurements of the entrails.

And the kidney and the liver;

Give measurements of hormones and affections.

The poet deepens the metaphor here, suggesting that the struggle of life extends to internal conflicts and processes. The intricate details of measuring organs and emotions reflect the effort to dissect and understand the human condition. Life, as a struggle, involves grappling with both biological and emotional realities. It underscores the exhaustive nature of this continuous self-examination.

Let us give measurements of life,

Of this that and several things.

Give only the measurements.

We shall think of the stitching later on.

These lines highlight the inherent incompleteness of life's journey. The act of giving measurements without stitching maps the perpetual postponement of resolutions. Life is a struggle where efforts are made to address its complexities, yet fulfillment and meaning remain elusive. The deferred "stitching" maps the unachievable goal of fully resolving or understanding life's challenges. It leaves individuals in a constant state of striving.

*We can only give measurements.
We can only take reckonings
We shall record that suicides have
Swelled considerably.*

Here, the poet shifts the focus to societal struggles. It reflects on collective reckonings of grief and loss. The rising number of suicides becomes a grim reminder of the existential struggles faced by humanity. This mapping extends the metaphor to a broader, societal level. Here life's adversities and the burden of measurement reveal not only individual hardships but also collective despair. The struggle is not only personal but communal, a shared reckoning with life's harsh realities.

*Just give measurements.
We shall think of the stitching later on.
Merely think.
Someone after us will measure anew
Saying that our measurements have gone awry.*

The cyclical nature of measuring and re-measuring captures the repetitive and generational struggles of life. The deferral of stitching points to the persistent incompleteness of human efforts. It acknowledges that future generations will reassess these measurements explains life's enduring uncertainties. This cycle of struggle reflects the notion that life's challenges and questions are never fully resolved. It is rather passed down, to be revisited and re-examined endlessly.

When will someone stitch the garment to fit man?

This poignant rhetorical question encapsulates the central struggle of life: the search for meaning, fulfillment, and harmony. The metaphor of stitching a garment to fit man maps the unattained ideal of tailoring life to meet human aspirations and needs. This unfulfilled goal emphasizes the perpetual nature of life's struggle. Here meaning and resolution remain tantalizingly out of reach.

Through the structural metaphor of measurement and stitching, Barua constructs a narrative that captures life as a process of continuous effort. Here definitive answers and resolutions remain elusive. The metaphor maps the tangible act of taking measurements onto the intangible struggles of human existence. It makes life's challenges more relatable and poignant. The repetitive nature of these acts like measuring, adjusting, and deferring explains the cyclical and unresolved nature of life's journey.

In *Measurements*, Nabakanta Barua masterfully uses the metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE to depict the unending effort to understand and navigate the complexities of existence. From individual introspections to societal reckonings, the poem portrays life as an arduous journey. It is marked by perpetual striving, unfinished tasks, and deferred resolutions. Through this layered metaphor, Barua presents life as an ongoing process of striving, seeking, and enduring.

A renowned English poem that embodies the metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE is William Ernest Henley's *Invictus*, a powerful testament to resilience and defiance in the face of hardship. This poem captures the relentless spirit required to confront life's battles. It emphasizes inner strength as the cornerstone of survival.

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul*

In the opening lines, Henley reflects on the darkness that envelops him yet celebrates an indomitable spirit that remains unbroken. Later, the line "*My head is bloody, but unbowed*" poignantly expresses his refusal to surrender. It explains a life marked by struggle and resilience. Through his defiance, Henley's speaker suggests that the essence of life lies not merely in enduring hardships, but in the unyielding will to rise above them. It affirms a vision of life as a constant battle that requires courage, strength, and resolve.

3.2.3 LIFE IS A PUZZLE

Puzzles, with their intricate complexity, require analytical skills and patience to fit disparate pieces into a coherent whole. Each piece of a puzzle is essential to the overall picture through a process marked by trial, error, and moments of insight. Viewing life as a puzzle highlights the methodical challenge of assembling diverse human experiences into a meaningful narrative. Life is composed of interlocking components like choices, relationships, and events that together reveal the larger picture of one's existence. Delving into life as a puzzle, we see the strategy and patience needed to navigate its complexities. Here each decision or event fits into a broader framework, akin to puzzle pieces finding their rightful place. Some pieces connect easily, providing clarity and progress, while others require additional context to fit.

We comprehend the abstract notion of life, too, through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A PUZZLE, which surfaces in Assamese sentences like:

- *Sigi jua xokolubur moi etiau akelog koriboloi sesta kori asu.* I'm still trying to put all the pieces together.
- *Jibonor ai xomoikhini sobi akhonor eta tukura matro.* This phase of life is just one piece of the bigger picture.
- *Tai nijor mote rohosya xomadhan koribo bisare.* She's determined to solve the mystery of her purpose.

In Amulya Barua's poem *Failure*, the poet presents a somber meditation on the disappointments and challenges that life brings. By analyzing the poem through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A PUZZLE, Barua explores the complexities of human existence. It illustrates how life's obstacles and uncertainties often feel like pieces of a puzzle that are difficult to assemble into a coherent whole. The metaphor underscores the intricate nature of life. Here each event or experience, like a puzzle piece, must fit into place often with difficulty and frustration.

*If every day, my friend,
Life's crimson drops,
Relentlessly, fate consumes,
Sip by sip*

The opening lines map life to a process of gradual depletion. Here "crimson drops" is mapped to moments of vitality that are continually "sipped" away by fate. Life is conceptualized as something fragile, consumed by external forces, much like puzzle pieces that are removed one by one, changing the overall picture. The crimson drops, in this mapping, symbolize life's fleeting moments. Each "sip" marks the impact of time on the whole, illustrating how every event subtly alters the larger structure of one's life.

*If every day,
The tender buds
Of sweet dreams
Shatter and scatter away*

Here Barua map dreams onto "tender buds" that, when they scatter, evoke dreams that were fragile and unfulfilled. These buds, broken and scattered, represent dreams or aspirations that, like pieces in a puzzle that refuse to fit, are disconnected from the desired picture. This imagery captures the frustration of attempting to construct a coherent vision

of life only to see it undone by unachievable dreams or broken expectations. Thus mapping the experience of life to a challenging puzzle that defies completion.

*Then why,
With a heart full of jest,
Should we celebrate
This festival of life?*

Here, Barua maps life to a celebration, a “festival” which is questioned when dreams and moments of joy seem so easily shattered. The line parallels life to a puzzle that, despite one’s efforts, resists coming together into a whole. This mapping brings out the futility in engaging with life’s “celebration” when the pieces (experiences, dreams) continually defy fitting into a coherent whole. It challenges the notion of celebrating life when it feels fragmented or hollow.

*Dreams of joy, my friend,
Are now soaked in sorrow,*

These lines map dreams onto an evolving journey from hope to despair. Here, the hopeful dreams have transformed, “soaked in sorrow,” like puzzle pieces that have changed form. It complicates the task of fitting them into a coherent life narrative. This shifting of meaning captures the disappointment felt when dreams fail to materialize as envisioned. Each piece or experience that once held promise now evokes sorrow. It highlights the poet’s growing disillusionment with life’s unpredictable and difficult to assemble puzzle.

Through these mappings, Barua’s poem depicts LIFE IS A PUZZLE with constantly shifting pieces. Each dream, hope, or moment that initially promises fulfillment is, upon scattering or loss, revealed as part of an incomplete and sometimes disorienting whole.

The metaphor of LIFE IS A PUZZLE in *Failure* is **ontological**, attributing physical characteristics of a puzzle like its interlocking parts, complexity, and the need for careful assembly to life itself. This perspective conceptualizes life’s trials as elements that, when pieced together, should ideally reveal a coherent pattern, though they often do not. It emphasizes the challenges of trying to make sense of a fragmented reality. Here some pieces fit together easily, while others remain elusive or refuse to align. It leads to confusion and existential questioning. Life, like a puzzle, is dynamic and evolving. It requires continuous effort to piece together the experiences that define our understanding of the world and ourselves.

In Wallace Stevens' poem *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, the metaphor LIFE IS A PUZZLE unfolds through the interplay of life's fleeting pleasures against the stark reality of death. The poem presents a contrast between the vibrant imagery of the "roller of big cigars" and the "muscular one" preparing ice cream stands against the solemnity of a dead woman's body being readied for her funeral. The line "Let be be finale of seem" invites acceptance of life's puzzling nature.

*Call the roller of big cigars,
The muscular one, and bid him whip
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.*

.....

*Let be be finale of seem.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.*

Here appearances and reality blur, compelling us to seek meaning within fragmented experiences. The repeated line, "The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream," reveals life's transient joys. It reminded us that sensory pleasures, though powerful, are ephemeral in the face of mortality. Together, these lines capture life as a puzzle that defies resolution. It is a struggle to reconcile beauty and finality, pleasure and impermanence. Here each piece contributes to an image both intricate and incomplete.

3.2.4 LIFE IS A GAME

Games, structured forms of play governed by rules, provide entertainment and challenge. It fosters strategic thinking and skill development through competition, goal setting, and interaction. The analogy of life as a game highlights the strategic and competitive aspects of navigating life stages and societal structures. It emphasizes the role of choices, tactics, and interactions in shaping one's life journey. This perspective stresses the challenges and rewards of pursuing personal and professional goals. Conceptualizing life as a game explores parallels between game mechanics and life decisions. Viewing life through the game lens illuminates the motivational aspects that drive individuals to strive for achievement, like players seeking to win or score high. This metaphor captures the complexity of human existence. It underscores the proactive engagement required to effectively navigate life's challenges and opportunities.

To illustrate the depth and cultural resonance of this metaphor, the following Assamese sentences use everyday expressions that can be understood by the CMT LIFE IS A GAME:

- *Tai ane lagisil j jibonor protyahban neusibo poratu protijugitar bibhinno stor paar huwar dore.* Navigating life's challenges felt like moving through different levels in a competition.
- *Teu nijor karmamoi jibonok ek kaukhali protijugita hisape loi xabodhanere porikolpona korisil.* She approached her career like a strategic match, planning her moves carefully.
- *Protitu xidhantoi jotil khel akhonot prodorxon kora unnoto khelor nisina asil.* Every decision was like making a crucial play in a high-stakes match.

In Amulya Barua's poem ***Failure***, the poet presents a poignant and reflective meditation on the disillusionments and hardships that life entails. Analyzing the poem through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A GAME offers a framework for understanding the unpredictable and challenging nature of existence, like the outcomes and struggles inherent in any game. The metaphor captures the emotional and existential complexity of navigating life. Each experience of loss, and triumph unfold within a competitive and often uncontrollable environment.

*If every day, my friend,
Life's crimson drops,
Relentlessly, fate consumes,
Sip by sip*

In the opening lines the poet crafts a powerful image of life's vitality gradually draining away. This image map life onto a game where essential resources symbolizing vitality, hope, or resilience are slowly depleted. Fate acts here as a relentless opponent. It takes away the "crimson drops" of life with each passing day. This captures the experience of an ongoing challenge where one's strength diminishes despite one's efforts. This slow, inevitable loss reflects the struggle to maintain vitality and hope in a game that appears rigged. The rules of the game feel beyond one's control.

*If every day,
The tender buds
Of sweet dreams
Shatter and scatter away*

These lines expand this metaphor, mapping dreams to delicate aspirations that repeatedly fail. Here, the tender buds represent one's hopes or plans, which scatter and shatter like failed moves in a game. This scattering aligns with the disappointment of a player whose

carefully laid strategies fall apart. It reinforces life's unpredictability and the frequent harshness of its outcomes. This metaphor emphasizes the challenge of staying motivated when plans consistently fall short of expectations. It captures the experience of playing a game where desired outcomes are continually disrupted.

*Then why,
With a heart full of jest,
Should we celebrate
This festival of life?*

This question maps life's challenges to the existential paradox of playing a game that feels unwinnable. Just as a player may lose the initial joy of the game after repeated setbacks, individuals may question the purpose of engaging with life enthusiastically when losses accumulate, and odds seem overwhelming. Here, the poet prompts why one should continue engaging wholeheartedly in life's game. One should not be disappointed when the rules seem impossible to overcome, instead explore the notion of life's "festival" as both beautiful and difficult.

*Dreams of joy, my friend,
Are now soaked in sorrow,
Today, life
No longer holds any need*

In the closing lines, the poet expresses the weariness of a player who, after facing numerous defeats, begins to question the point of continuing. The transformation of "dreams of joy" into sorrow maps onto the disillusionment one feels when a game becomes an endless cycle of losses. It leads to a state where the desire to play diminishes. This imagery suggests that when life's struggles outweigh moments of joy, the game of life begins to feel meaningless. It evokes a sense of futility that contemplates on whether the constant striving and hoping are truly worthwhile.

Through this layered metaphor, Barua uses the imagery of a game to illuminate life's relentless struggles. It narrates how persistent hardships and losses shape individuals' views of existence, often causing them to question the purpose of continued engagement. Each image within this metaphor reinforces life's paradox of beauty and difficulty, reflecting on the resilience needed to keep playing.

The metaphor LIFE IS A GAME in this poem is **ontological**, as it ascribes the attributes and dynamics of a game such as rules, strategies, wins, and losses to life itself. This metaphor

helps to conceptualize life as a competitive and unpredictable arena. Here individuals make strategic decisions, face opponents like fate, circumstances and navigate uncertainties.

Nilomoni Phukan's poem *The Man Extended One of His Hands*, delves into the repetitive, aimless rhythm of life. It presents the existence as a series of interactions devoid of ultimate direction or clear purpose. Through the lens of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A GAME, the poet captures this cyclical, seemingly trivial process. This maps life's actions to moves in a game whose players do not fully grasp the rules or objective, nor the meaning behind their participation.

*The man extended one of his hands towards me ...
I've seen his sighing withered hand
Many times before.*

Here, the man's repetitive gesture of extending his hand mirrors life as a game with repeated, familiar moves. The "withered" hand reflects exhaustion and weariness. This maps life's actions to mechanical, repetitive game moves that lack progression or fulfillment. Each gesture, instead of advancing the game, leads to another cycle. It highlights how life's actions become stagnant through repetition, suggesting an existence drained of newness and purpose.

*Within numerous entreating cold and warm hands
In the palm of his hand lie
Reports of planets and stars, heaven and hell*

In these lines, the poet imagines cosmic knowledge held in the man's palm. It creates an image of power or wisdom. However, just as players might hold game pieces without knowing their purpose, this cosmic knowledge reflects unseen rules in life's game that elude understanding. The mapping here aligns the unknown rules and cosmic knowledge with the mysteries of the universe. This suggests that life's rules, like game rules, require respect and adherence even if their true meaning remains obscure.

*He remains preoccupied with childhood games
Walking upon his own void*

The poet introduces the idea of childlike pursuits filling adult lives. Preoccupation with trivial actions symbolizes how life's routines are mapped to games that, while distracting, hold little substance. The phrase "walking upon his own void" evokes an emptiness in these repeated actions, mapping life's movements to a game played in a vast, hollow space.

This suggests that even meaningful actions may lack depth, with every step reinforcing life's emptiness. This is similar to a game with no real stakes or end.

*The man is unaware that the chair upon which he's seated
Doesn't belong to his father ...
It's his grandpa who's sitting upon it*

The poet uses the inherited chair to map the inheritance of roles and responsibilities. The man's obliviousness reflects how individuals unknowingly continue family legacies or roles without realizing their origins. This is mirrored to a game where players assume pre-assigned positions, following the same rules or patterns without questioning their meaning. Here, life's inherited roles and histories are mapped to the rules of a game that shape players' roles. It often traps them within preset limits.

*He has been ailing for quite some time
Wallowing in his own blood at times ...
The men of earth water fire and blood
Remain at play in the void sans beginning or end*

The poem describes individuals representing natural elements, endlessly engaged in life's struggles. The line maps life's existence to a perpetual game. A game that lacks clear purpose or conclusion. The void "sans beginning or end" further reinforces this. It suggests that life, like an endless game, cycles through stages without providing closure. The players, embodying fundamental forces like earth, water, fire, and blood, represent universal elements engaged in an eternal loop. This implies that life's game continues without giving a final answer or clear victory.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A GAME in this poem is **ontological**, attributing to life a framework of rules, roles, and repetition. Each of the man's gestures like extending his hand, sitting in an inherited chair, remaining engrossed in "childhood games" illustrates a sequence of actions lacking a clear resolution or reward. Through this framework, the poet questions whether life possesses any intrinsic meaning or if, like a game, it consists solely of the roles and moves that people mindlessly repeat. The poem uses familial and cosmic imagery, like the "planets and stars" or the generational chair, to underscore the universal and timeless nature of this "game" we call life. Each life becomes an inheritance of roles and routines, passed down through time, with players largely unaware of the deeper significance.

Rudyard Kipling's poem *If* beautifully embodies the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A GAME. It presents life as a journey where strategic thinking, resilience, and composure are essential. Kipling's verses highlight the nature of life's unpredictable challenges, like the risks and rewards inherent in a game.

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,*

These lines poetically illustrate the willingness to embrace life's gambles, to risk everything, lose, and yet rise without bitterness. Here, life demands a spirit of adaptability and courage. It urges one to engage wholeheartedly in its trials while maintaining grace amid success and failure alike. Through this metaphor, Kipling suggests that, as in any game, life rewards those who approach it with resilience, a calculated risk-taking spirit, and an unwavering will to persist.

3.2.5 LIFE IS A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW

Stained glass windows, commonly found in places of worship and historic buildings, are works of art that assemble colored glass pieces into complex, meaningful designs. It transforms natural light into vibrant displays. Conceptualizing life as a stained-glass window highlights the multifaceted nature of human experiences. Here individual moments, relationships, and challenges each contribute distinctly yet integrally, much like pieces of glass to the overall image of one's life. This metaphor allows to see how diverse life aspects, similar to pieces of colored glass with varied shapes, colors, and textures, are crucial for the complete design. Just as light reveals a pattern through a stained-glass window that individual pieces alone do not show, life's blend of joyous and painful experiences can form a coherent and beautiful whole. This perspective underscores the beauty that arises from diversity and complexity. It suggests that life's richness depends on how these experiences intertwine. Viewing life through this lens allows to appreciate the intricate patterns our individual experiences create when seen as part of a greater whole.

We comprehend the abstract notion of life through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW, which finds expression in Assamese sentences like:

- *Tair jibontu jen akhon rongin porda jot bimurto hoi uthisil rongor bisitro xomahar.*
Her life was a colorful tapestry of experiences, each moment adding a unique shade.

- *Smriti bur jen teulukor jibonto arhi jot sristi hoisil mozaic kora akhon xomoiyor sutal.*
Their shared memories were like vibrant patterns, creating a beautiful mosaic of their time together.
- *Teur obhigyotai ek xomridho aru boisitropurno sitro onkon korisil, jot protitu ghotonat nijor rong xongjugito hoisil.* His experiences painted a rich and varied picture, with each event adding its own hue.

In Amulya Barua's poem *For the Sake of Mistakes, the Creator's Design*, the poet reflects on human flaws, societal disparities, and the existential questions these issues raise. Through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW, the poem offers a nuanced view of life's complexities. It explains how like the diverse pieces of a stained-glass window, come together to form a larger, multifaceted picture that can be both beautiful and poignant. The metaphor emphasizes the idea that life is composed of various experiences, some bright, some dark that collectively create the human experience.

*Drawn to wealth's glittering allure,
Playing with riches, yet wealth slips away at a touch.*

Here, wealth is mapped to the shifting colors of stained glass, beautiful and alluring but ultimately elusive. Just as the colors in stained glass are transient and change with the light, the attraction of wealth fades when one tries to hold on to it. This line maps wealth to the temporary brilliance of stained glass. It suggests that its value is fleeting and superficial.

*The vast, silent mansion of pain
Built in the shadows.*

This mansion of pain symbolizes the darker fragments within the stained-glass window. It is necessary to provide depth and contrast. Shadows in stained glass add dimension, just as the pains and struggles of life add depth to the human experience. The “silent” nature of this pain hints at society’s reluctance to acknowledge suffering. This suggests that darkness is often hidden away, essential yet unspoken. The mapping here relates pain to the dark glass pieces. It is crucial for the window’s overall composition yet often overlooked in favor of brighter, more appealing sections.

*That beggar on the city street beside you—
Have you ever uncovered their hidden mystery?*

These lines use the beggar as a unique, overlooked part of the window, mapping the undervalued lives that contribute to society’s larger narrative. In the stained-glass

metaphor, each individual, regardless of social standing, represents an integral piece that contributes to the beauty of the whole. Just as each piece of glass has its own color, shape, and role, each life has a story and significance. The mapping here suggests that true empathy requires looking beyond superficial judgments. It recognizes the worth in every life, like acknowledging each piece in a window's design.

*A single fragile flower wilts in this world,
Yet no one offers a heartfelt plea—
Is this the fabric of creation?*

Hazarika touches on the overlooked suffering in life. It is mapped to a wilting flower that goes unnoticed. This fragile flower represents a delicate part of the stained-glass window, possibly faded or neglected. It urges us to question whether life is complete when parts of it go unappreciated. The mapping here portrays neglected lives as faded pieces of stained glass, whether the window or life itself can be whole if parts are ignored.

*One melody fades as another rises,
Tumbling through the world.*

This line captures the dynamic nature of existence. It is like the continuous shifts in light through a stained-glass window. Each color and shape interact to form an evolving, harmonious picture. This represents life's continuous flow of joy and sorrow, hope and despair. The mapping of life's ever-changing melodies to the shifting colors in stained glass reflects the idea that life's experiences, though fleeting, contribute to an ongoing and beautiful story.

*The great mistake of humanity—
But whose fault, is it? The world's error, and yours as well,
For in mistakes lies the Creator's design.*

Here, Hazarika frames human failings as essential pieces in the stained-glass window of life. It says that flaws and errors are as integral to life's fabric as triumphs. This line maps human imperfection onto the window's imperfections, underscoring that every mistake, every flaw, is part of a purposeful design. In this view, life's stained-glass window is completed by a collection of both light and shadow.

Barua's exploration of these themes through the LIFE IS A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW metaphor is **ontological**, as it assigns physical attributes to abstract concepts like wealth, sorrow, and human dignity. The stained-glass window is both fragile and resilient. It is a complex and layered creation like the human experience itself. Each element in the poem,

whether the beggar, the wilting flower, or the allure of wealth maps onto a different fragment of the window. It together forms a design that is greater than the sum of its parts. Hazarika challenges to look beyond the immediate or beautiful parts and acknowledge even the dark or overlooked segments. This explains that it is in this totality that we find the Creator's design, crafted through "mistakes" and suffering as through beauty and light. Through this reflection, the poem becomes a powerful commentary on empathy, resilience, and the interconnectedness of all human experiences.

In William Wordsworth's *My Heart Leaps Up*, the metaphor LIFE IS A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW emerges in the poem's reflection on life's unity and beauty. The speaker's heart leaps at the sight of a rainbow. It is mapped to life's intricate and colorful nature. Just as a stained-glass window is crafted from a collection of colored panes, each unique yet part of a larger image, life is depicted as a sequence of interconnected moments, "Bound each to each by natural piety."

*So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old*

Wordsworth's lines capture this continuity, where each phase of life, childhood, adulthood, and old age contributes its own hue to the mosaic of one's existence. Each experience, like a pane in a stained-glass window, holds its place in the full picture. It reveals life's beauty through both its individual colors and its cohesive whole.

3.2.6 LIFE IS A RIVER

Rivers, dynamic natural systems essential for ecological balance, support diverse life forms and navigate through varied landscapes. It shapes the land and accumulates experiences from tributaries and the environments they traverse. Conceptualizing life as a river captures the essence of a continuous journey influenced by external forces, internal currents, and interactions with others. It emphasizes life's fluidity and the constant motion of moving forward. It meets, adapts, and overcomes obstacles. This metaphor allows an exploration of how individual lives, like rivers. It starts as small streams and grows through contributions from various tributaries, expand and evolve through new experiences, learning, and relationships. The river's journey, with its bends, branches, calm depths, and turbulent rapids, mirrors the highs and lows of human existence. Just as rivers impact the

landscapes they travel through, individuals influence their environments, leaving legacies that can alter the course of future streams.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A RIVER flows naturally through everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teu dhour xoite agbarhiboloi xikise.* He's learning to go with the flow.
- *Tair jibone ek onakankhito goti adori lole.* Her life took an unexpected turn.
- *Teuluke poribortonor xunt otikrom koriboloi sesta korise.* They're navigating the currents of change.

In Amulya Baruah's poem *Essence*, the poet embarks on a contemplative journey through love, loss, and self-discovery. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A RIVER frames these themes, portraying life as a continuous flow, like a river that navigates through diverse landscapes. It encounters both calm and turbulent currents. This metaphor captures the nature of life's emotional and existential experiences as dynamic. It shapes our existence as we move through them.

*In reality, my dear, I saw myself lost,
Chasing the heavenly stream of love.*

The poet likens love to a "heavenly stream" and "river," mapping love onto the image of a flowing current that both attracts and overwhelms, much like the unpredictable nature of life's journey. Here, the river's flow is mapped to the pull of intense emotions, guiding yet disorienting the speaker. This metaphor of love as a river highlights how life's emotional currents can sweep us into unforeseen directions. It suggests that love, while beautiful, can also obscure self-awareness, leading to the speaker's sense of being "lost."

*The illusions of this world, how deceitful,
I forgot my own self*

These lines convey the deceptive nature of worldly attractions. It maps life's illusions onto hidden currents within the river. Just as still water can conceal powerful undercurrents, the "illusions of this world" mask deeper truths. It distracts the speaker from their true self. This metaphor reflects how external appearances and desires can mislead, much like serene river waters hiding strong currents. It emphasizes the challenge of keeping a true sense of self amid life's surface-level attractions.

*Death kissed the wine of love,
Yet I wandered aimlessly in a futile dream,*

A form without a shadow.

Here, death is mapped to the inevitable end of a river's journey, a reminder that life, like a river, flows toward an ultimate destination. The image of "a form without a shadow" suggests a detachment from one's essence, as if the speaker has lost their reflection in turbulent waters. This conveys a feeling of existential isolation within the journey of life. Here the connection to oneself and others is transient, often lost in the swift, unyielding flow of experiences. The metaphor reflects the void that mortality can introduce. Here the rush of life seems to leave behind a shadowless form, an identity shaped but ultimately impermanent.

*Even now, whose tender dawn,
Painted strokes in the green forest,
At the farthest reaches of my heart,
Lingers still, a golden mark.*

This "golden mark" at the heart's edges maps the way a river indelibly shapes the landscapes it touches, altering them forever. The imagery maps the impact of love onto the nourishing qualities of a river. It shows how love can leave profound, lasting marks on the soul, like a river enriching and transforming its banks over time. The "tender dawn" painting strokes in the green forest further emphasizes the life-giving influence of love. It suggests that just as rivers bring growth to their surroundings, meaningful connections infuse life with beauty, depth, and enduring resonance.

This metaphor of LIFE IS A RIVER is **ontological**, attributing the properties of a river like its fluidity, movement, and influence on the land it traverses to life itself. It conceptualizes life as an ongoing journey through various terrains. Here the emotional and existential currents we navigate are as unpredictable and transformative as the course of a river.

In Bhupen Hazarika's poem *I am a Wanderer*, the metaphor LIFE IS A RIVER captures life's ongoing, unbound flow, and the ever-changing experiences that shape our journey. Like a river, which constantly adapts to new terrains and carries with it all it encounters, life is presented as a continuous journey of freedom, fluidity, and connection. The wanderer in the poem becomes an emblem of this river. It drifts freely through diverse landscapes, understanding and embodying all he encounters. This conceptual metaphor, LIFE IS A RIVER reflects the transient, adaptable nature of existence. Here movement, adaptability, and interconnectedness are essential.

*I am a wanderer, I am a wanderer,
I belong to every place,
every place belongs to me,
all are one and the same,
just with a different name,
they all are home to me.*

Here, the speaker's identity as a wanderer is mapped to the image of a river that flows freely through diverse lands, embracing each as home yet bound to none. This fluid connection to "every place" reflects the essence of belonging everywhere and nowhere at once, like a river whose journey is continuous and unconfined. This metaphor captures the expansive spirit of the wanderer's life. Here each place he travels becomes part of his experience, familiar and welcoming, as a river connects various landscapes without losing its course.

*I understand everybody's song,
I can sing anybody's song,
I need no annotations,
as I understand the emotions.*

Here, the wanderer's empathy and openness to others' experiences are mapped to the river's nurturing quality as it touches and enriches all lands it flows through. Just as a river adapts to and nourishes each place it encounters, the wanderer resonates with the songs and emotions of those he meets, forming deep connections without the need for explanation. This connection illustrates the wanderer's ability to carry with him the richness of diverse perspectives. It absorbs stories and emotions as seamlessly as a river gathers nutrients along its path.

*I have no friends, I have no foes,
still thousands my heart knows,
I don't give in to love,
from hate too I have risen above,
I like people as they choose to be.*

The poem then delves into the theme of emotional detachment. The wanderer's impartial view of humanity is mapped onto the resilience of a river, which flows on, unaffected by the obstacles it meets. Like a river that moves past rocks and falls without altering its course, the wanderer's detachment reflects a deep neutrality. It engages with others without attachments or judgments. This metaphor highlights the wanderer's acceptance of

people as they are. It shows an enduring, unobstructed flow through life that is still untroubled by strong emotional ties.

*Like the ever free flowing air,
a moment here and then elsewhere,
I have no one to keep and care,
no one waits for me anywhere,
wandering is all of the life to me.*

The theme of freedom and transience appears strongly in the lines. This passage conveys the wanderer's ultimate liberation, mapped onto the river's endless journey. Much like a river that knows no final destination, the wanderer is bound by nothing. He's free to move continually from place to place, unburdened by commitments. The mapping to "ever free flowing air" and the river's course captures a life of impermanence. Here each moment and place is temporary. It emphasizes the freedom found in embracing life's inherent transience.

Hazarika's exploration of life as a river emphasizes the universality of human experience. The wanderer's assertion that every place belongs to him and he belongs to every place resonates with the river's path, touching and becoming part of each landscape, it crosses. This sense of interconnectedness underscores the idea that despite differences in geography, culture, and identity, there is a shared human essence that binds all experiences together. The wanderer's ability to understand and connect with others, expressed as the capacity to sing anybody's song without annotations, reflects a profound empathy. It is an understanding of emotions that is beyond linguistic or cultural barriers, like a river nourishing and uniting diverse lands along its course.

Hazarika's refrain, *I am a wanderer*, serves as both a **structural** and **conceptual reinforcement** of the river metaphor, emphasizing the journey as the essence of life. The wanderer's self-definition maps the unending journey of a river. Its course is defined by movement rather than any one destination. This structural repetition strengthens the metaphor of life as a river. It portrays existence as a journey shaped by the freedom to keep moving forward. The poem, through its layered metaphors and evocative imagery, celebrates the endless possibilities that lie in a life unbound. Here every experience becomes part of the ever-flowing river of one's journey.

In Bishnu Prasad Rava's poem *Of This Flowing River of My Life*, translated by Suranjana Barua, the metaphor of LIFE IS A RIVER beautifully captures the essence of existence.

This flowing river symbolizes the unceasing passage of time, guiding life between the definitive banks of birth and death. These banks, like life's boundaries, frame the journey that every individual undertakes. It provides structure and containment. The river's flow, steady and relentless, maps the inevitable progression of life. It highlights its dynamic and ever-changing nature.

*Of this flowing river of my life,
Birth and death be two banks*

These lines establish the foundational metaphor, mapping life onto a river that flows between the definitive boundaries of birth and death. The river's flow, contained by its banks, maps the inevitability of life's beginning and end. The imagery suggests that, like a river constrained by its course, life unfolds within set parameters. It makes the struggles to navigate and find meaning within these confines an essential part of existence. The metaphor emphasizes the transient nature of life. Here each moment contributes to the broader journey. It cannot halt the relentless passage of time.

It flows with foam and bubble

The poet maps the image of foam and bubbles to the fleeting and ephemeral aspects of life's experiences. These elements reflect the turbulence and beauty that coexist in daily existence. Just as foam and bubbles are transient features on the surface of a river, life's joys and challenges arise and dissipate, leaving behind a memory of their presence. This mapping conveys the fragility of human experiences and the struggle to find balance amidst the impermanence of emotions and events.

*At times, in between
A current of brimming youth*

The poet introduces the metaphor of youth as a powerful current within the river of life. This current is mapped to the vitality, energy, and potential, it also hints at the unpredictability and intensity that characterize this phase of existence. Like a river's current, the energy of youth can shape the direction of life. It propels individuals forward while presenting challenges that must be navigated. The mapping here reflects the dual nature of youth as both a time of strength and a period marked by turbulence and self-discovery.

Through these metaphors, the poem captures the essence of life as a journey that requires resilience and adaptability. The river's flow maps the continuous effort to move forward

despite obstacles, while the foam and bubbles highlight the transient nature of life's moments. The current of youth serves as a reminder of the power and potential that can influence the course of existence, even as it brings its own set of challenges.

In *Of This Flowing River of My Life*, Rava's river serves as an **ontological** metaphor. It gives shape to life's journey as a tangible, moving entity. Just as a river carves paths, nourishes lands, and bridges worlds, so does life's journey shape and connect those who live it. Every interaction is mapped to river's touch on its banks. It leaves an imprint, enriching both the path and the traveler. This metaphor elevates life's progression to dynamic, revealing strength in movement, beauty in transience, and the interconnectedness that binds all human experience.

In Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi's *Unvanquished*, life is encapsulated through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A RIVER. It portrays existence as an unyielding flow that navigates sorrow and adversity with resilience and grace. The metaphor emphasizes the continuity and adaptability of life, with its flow symbolizing the dynamic and persistent nature of human endurance. Through vivid imagery, the poet maps the struggles and triumphs of life onto the course of a river, creating a powerful narrative of perseverance and acceptance.

*I shall die tomorrow
Let me remain alive today*

These lines introduce the dichotomy of life and death, framing the journey as finite yet immediate. The river metaphor maps the present moment of living onto its continuous flow. Here the endpoint of the river, its merger with the sea is mapped to mortality. The focus on staying alive today underscores the value of the journey itself, like the river's path. It is celebrated for its motion and purpose despite the inevitability of its destination. The poet's awareness of death does not overshadow the vitality of the present mapping to how a river embraces its course regardless of its conclusion.

*O, my swift-flowing sorrow,
Keep flowing
Through the narrow-crested forest.*

The imagery of "swift-flowing sorrow" maps emotions onto the currents of a river. It highlights the relentlessness of grief and challenges in life. The "narrow-crested forest" is mapped to the obstacles and confined spaces the river (life) must navigate. It symbolizes

the periods of hardship and constraint. This mapping reveals the poet's understanding that sorrow, like a river, must be allowed to flow and not be resisted. The metaphor speaks about the inevitability of challenges and the importance of moving through them with resilience.

I am not weary

The poet's declaration of unyielding strength aligns with the river's perpetual motion. The mapping here equates the refusal to succumb to weariness with the river's inability to stop flowing, no matter the obstacles it faces. This reflects the poet's resolve to embrace life's struggles as part of its dynamic and unbroken progression. Just as a river is defined by its movement, so too is the speaker defined by her refusal to falter.

In *Unvanquished*, Bordoloi crafts a metaphor that maps life to a river, flowing through beauty, sorrow, and obstacles alike. Through vivid imagery and thoughtful mapping, the poem portrays life as an unstoppable journey where each experience, even sorrow, is part of a greater whole.

The metaphor LIFE IS A RIVER operates as an **ontological** metaphor. It is attributed to the tangible characteristics of a river to the abstract concept of life. The river's flow embodies life's continuous progression. Like a river, life encounters with varying terrains like narrow passages, forests, and open stretches symbolizing the myriad challenges and transitions individuals face. This metaphor allows to grasp the fluidity of existence. It emphasizes that life is not static but a series of interconnected movements.

In Ezra Pound's translation of Li Po's *The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter*, the metaphor LIFE IS A RIVER flows through the poem as the river-merchant's wife reflects on her journey through life and love, paralleling the river's winding path. The river is woven into the narrative when the husband departs "into far Ku-tō-en, by the river of swirling eddies," a passage that symbolizes both the physical and emotional distances that have grown between them over time.

At sixteen you departed

You went into far Ku-tō-en, by the river of swirling eddies,

And you have been gone five months.

The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

The "swirling eddies" evoke the unpredictable, ever-shifting nature of the river, maps life's own constant flow and the changes it brings. Through this imagery, the poet encapsulates

the wife's evolution from a young bride to a woman shaped by longing and separation. Her emotional journey marked by adaptation and quiet resilience reflects the river's fluidity and unpredictability. This metaphor accentuates how life, like a river, moves forward in waves and currents. It carries experiences that profoundly shape one's heart and spirit.

3.2.7 LIFE IS A DESERT

A desert, often characterized by its vast, arid expanses and extreme conditions, serves as a metaphor for life's challenges. It symbolizes an environment of scarcity, isolation, and endurance. Conceptualizing life as a desert brings into focus themes of survival, adaptation, and finding sustenance in even the most barren conditions. It highlights life's ability to test perseverance and resourcefulness. This analogy delves into the importance of resilience and self-reliance, akin to navigating a desert's harshness. The desert's emptiness can be mapped to periods of solitude or existential reflection, prompting individuals to confront their inner selves and search for meaning. However, just as the desert reveals hidden beauty and unexpected forms of life, life too uncovers moments of joy, discovery, and growth amidst difficulties. Viewing life through the lens of a desert provides insights into the paradox of scarcity and abundance. It recognizes the potential for growth, transformation, and renewal even in desolation.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A DESERT often echoes in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teur xopunbur kothur bastabor dhamkhuria morai gol.* His dreams dried up in the harsh reality of life
- *Tai ostitor jolaton porikha xohibo porise.* She's enduring the scorching trials of existence.
- *Nirjanotar xoite bhromi teu jibontu oti bahito kori ase.* He's wandering through a barren phase in his life.

In Bhupen Hazarika's poem *Divine Ganges*, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A DESERT serves as a powerful framework for understanding the speaker's experience of existence. Life is portrayed as an expansive, desolate landscape marked by solitude, longing, and a sense of emptiness, despite superficial achievements and social interactions. This desert metaphor conveys the speaker's inner thirst for meaningful connection and love. It is

perceived as a yearning for an oasis of genuine human warmth and understanding amidst a barren emotional landscape.

*Divine Ganges! I don't want it;
Neither do I crave for golden ornaments.*

Here, Hazarika rejects the allure of material wealth, mapping it to a desert mirage, tempting yet hollow. In this desert metaphor, material goods like the “Ganges” or “golden ornaments” is mapped to the illusions of fulfillment, inviting yet devoid of real substance. The mapping here emphasizes how the desert, symbolizing life, offers up tempting promises of satisfaction that ultimately do not nourish the speaker’s soul. It highlights his longing for something beyond the superficial and transient.

*I simply look for a voice
Quivering with love, passion, and life*

These lines express a deep yearning for genuine connection amidst life’s desolation. Here, Hazarika maps life to an unrelenting desert. He maps his longing for a meaningful, compassionate “voice” to the discovery of an oasis in a harsh landscape. This “voice” becomes the oasis, a rare, life-giving presence that brings the promise of comfort in an otherwise barren world. This metaphor maps the poet’s desire for emotional connection to the life-sustaining quality of water in the desert. It illustrates how true companionship could quench his parched spirit.

*I have seen many waves of the green oceans,
And lost I have many routes
In many a metropolises.
Wandering thus,
I have let tears roll down my heart
In the search of light full of love.*

Here, the poet’s wandering through life, losing routes in “metropolises,” is mapped to his search for meaning amid disorienting illusions. The tears shed along his journey represent the emotional toll of continually searching and yet remaining unfulfilled. Mapping the cityscape as part of the metaphorical desert, the poet’s tears become a reflection of the inner drought he feels. This mirrors the emotional emptiness that persists even amid the distractions of life. His heart, like the desert, remains dry, longing for love that seems as elusive as an oasis.

Maybe each day I get

*Thousands of pats from thousands of people,
Still, I know not,
In the search of a special person's love,
Why I wander around?*

Hazarika conveys the speaker's loneliness despite receiving constant attention. The "thousands of pats" represent superficial recognition that, like a mirage in the desert, appears to offer something substantial but dissipates upon approach. The mapping here likens the transient gestures of approval to illusions in a desert that ultimately fail to quench the deeper thirst within him. His continued search for "a special person's love" reinforces the poet's sense of life as a vast desert, one in which fleeting validations hold no true comfort, and only an authentic, enduring connection can provide sustenance.

*In vast auditoriums,
I have echoed my voice many a times,
And let the faces of my listeners lit with smiles.
But this deep layer of silence
And the load that I carry,
Can anyone lighten
By sharing and thereby making me merry?*

Here though he speaks to crowds and brings them joy, he remains burdened by an inner silence, a silence as profound and empty as a desert. Here, the desert metaphor extends to encompass the emptiness that underlies even his most public successes. His "deep layer of silence" and "load" map onto the barren vastness within him. This suggests that no amount of external acknowledgment can fill this space. His desert of loneliness remains unchanged, emphasizing the profound sense of isolation he feels despite his outward achievements.

*In this life, which is full of inhuman fight,
I simply look for a voice
Quivering with love, passion and life.*

The poem's closing reiterates his longing for a genuine, loving connection in a life otherwise filled with emptiness. Life as an "inhuman fight" captures its harsh, relentless nature, an arid struggle for survival in a world where empathy and warmth are scarce. In the desert metaphor, this "voice" quivering with love is the oasis he desperately seeks a rare, life-giving source that promises solace within an otherwise unyielding and uninhabitable landscape. Through this mapping, the poem conveys a poignant portrayal of life's isolation, with the rare oasis representing the profound connection he hopes to find.

Through the metaphor of LIFE IS A DESERT, Hazarika captures the essence of the poet's experience of life as an arduous, solitary journey. It is marked by a relentless search for meaning and connection. The **ontological** metaphor of the desert portrays his feelings of isolation, even amidst achievements and superficial social connections. It highlights the speaker's longing for a voice "quivering with love" as an oasis in the vast emotional barrenness.

Hazarika's use of the desert metaphor in *Divine Ganges* reflects a duality. While the speaker's life is marked by loneliness and unfulfilled desires, there is also an underlying hope, a belief that, despite the hardships, love and connection can be found. The poem's imagery of wandering, searching, and yearning captures the essence of this metaphor. It illustrates that even in a desert, the possibility of an oasis exists, and the struggle itself becomes a part of the journey towards meaning and fulfillment.

A powerful English poem that embodies the metaphor LIFE IS A DESERT is T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men*, which paints a stark, desolate vision of existence. Life is portrayed as barren, empty, and devoid of purpose, like a desert landscape. Here all that remains are fragments of hope and traces of vitality. In lines such as,

*This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star*

Eliot crafts imagery of a "dead land" and "cactus land" to evoke a scene of life as dry, inhospitable, and abandoned. The reference to "stone images" and "a dead man's hand" highlights the lifelessness and isolation inherent in this landscape. It suggests that life is akin to wandering a vast, unyielding desert. In this view, existence is a journey through arid emptiness. Here the struggle is the quest for meaning amid scarcity, symbolizing profound themes of isolation, spiritual desolation, and the struggle to find purpose in a barren world.

3.2.8 LIFE IS MUSIC

Music, a structured blend of sounds, rhythms, and melodies, uniquely evokes a spectrum of emotions and goes beyond language and cultural barriers. It reflects the complexities of human existence. Conceptualizing life as music, we appreciate the inherent rhythms,

patterns, and variations that color our daily experiences. It is like the diverse movements in a symphony which contribute to a broader narrative, eliciting feelings of joy, sorrow, tension, or peace. Delving deeper into life as music, we see how the balance between structure and spontaneity mirrors the human condition. Just as music operates within certain frameworks yet allows for improvisation, life unfolds within societal norms and personal obligations while providing opportunities for individual choices and creativity. The interplay between harmony and discord in music, akin to the challenges and triumphs in life, enriches our existence. Music's capacity to resonate and create shared experiences maps how connections are formed in life. By mapping life to music, we gain a deeper appreciation for its rhythm and flow, recognizing how various life stages contribute to our overall composition.

In Assamese expressions, the CMT LIFE IS MUSIC often finds a rhythm. For instance:

- *Teu nijor jibonor sondot nasi ase.* He dances to his own rhythm in life.
- *Teuluke akelege eta xundor jibon rosona korise.* They're composing a beautiful life together.
- *Hulosthulor majotu tai xanti bisari aise.* He is finding harmony amidst the chaos.

In Bishnu Prasad Rava's poem *Seated Beside This Stream*, the metaphor of music is beautifully woven into the natural environment. It creates an ethereal and serene portrayal of life's continuous flow. The poem, translated by Suranjana Barua, employs the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS MUSIC to depict how life, like a musical composition, moves through rhythms, melodies, and harmonies. It shapes our emotional and spiritual experiences. The metaphor brings together the elements of nature, emotion, and music to illustrate the interconnectedness of these aspects. It emphasizes how life's journey unfolds like a musical performance, one that enchants, transforms, and flows.

*Seated beside this stream
You used to play the flute.*

Here, the music of the flute becomes inseparable from the steady flow of the stream. It creates an image of life as a continuous, harmonious journey. The stream's perpetual movement maps onto the unbroken melody of the flute. This suggests life's ongoing rhythm, a ceaseless flow that carries us forward. The stream's journey parallels the journey of life, just as each note of the flute's melody is mapped to the steps along that path. Life,

like music, is something we inhabit fully and are swept along with, carried by its rhythm and force.

*Blissful was that tune
Which would snatch my soul.*

This line reveals how music like life's most profound experiences reaches deep into our spirit. It resonates on a transcendent level. The poet maps the soul-stirring quality of the flute's music onto moments in life that lift and carry us through powerful currents of emotion. This enchantment expresses how certain experiences touch the core of our being, transforming us. Just as the melody uplifts and envelops the listener, life's pivotal experiences become more than mere events. They become soulful transformative journeys.

Dancing to the rhythm, it used to flow

Here, the poet captures the rhythm of life through the gurgling stream, which dances to its natural cadence. Here, the rhythm of the stream maps onto the fluidity and movement of life itself. As the stream glows in silver light, mapping the flute's melody, the imagery brings forth an image of life finding harmony in its own rhythms. The moonbeams tremble, and the moon emerges in response to the music, as if nature itself pulses to life's song. This mapping between nature's response and the melody illustrates that life and music are entwined. Each reflect and amplify the other, creating a beautiful, inseparable bond that enriches existence.

*I too would hurry to sit by your side
And listen to the flute.*

Rava conveys a sense of shared experience, mapping the communal nature of music onto life's shared journey. The act of listening together to the flute symbolizes companionship in life's journey. Sitting side by side, bound by the shared melody, shows how life's moments are not solitary but interconnected. The music, like life, becomes a collective experience, a symphony where individuals find unity and shared purpose. The poet beautifully maps this connection onto the image of listening together. It illustrates that life's path is one of shared joy, mutual understanding, and harmony.

The use of CMT LIFE IS MUSIC in the poem brings forth the idea that life, in its essence, is a flowing, rhythmic composition. The gurgling stream maps life's journey. It continuously moves toward its destination, while the silvery glow is mapped to the harmony and beauty we seek within our experiences. The melody of the flute, blissful and

enchancing is mapped to the highs and lows of life. It echoes the need to find balance and harmony amidst the movement. This vision of life as music encourages an acceptance of its rhythm and flow. This embraces both its peaceful and turbulent moments as part of a larger, harmonious composition.

In William Blake's poem *The Echoing Green*, the metaphor LIFE IS MUSIC resonates through the rhythmic and cyclical depiction of activities and sounds. It captures life's natural harmony.

*The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring.
The sky-lark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around,
To the bells' cheerful sound,*

These lines use the cheerful ringing of bells and the melodious singing of birds to echo the musical quality of life's beginnings and communal joys. This harmonious blend of sounds mirrors the symphony of life itself. It unfolds from the vibrant energy of morning to the serene quiet of evening. Blake captures life as a melody of shared moments. It flows with the same rhythm and structure as a musical composition. It celebrates life's progression and the gentle, unbroken continuity that music symbolizes.

3.2.9 LIFE IS A STREAM

A stream, constantly flowing through diverse landscapes, symbolizes the fluid, dynamic nature of existence in the analogy of life as a stream. This perspective emphasizes how life, like a stream, is molded by its surroundings, external factors such as social environment and personal interactions. It reflects a path of continuous change marked by phases of stillness, turbulence, and evolution. Life, akin to a stream, adapts to the contours of its challenges and transitions, requiring flexibility to navigate through life's varied experiences. The gradual accumulation of experiences, similar to small tributaries joining to form a river, enriches an individual's growth and perspective. Streams also nurture the environments they pass through, analogous to the impact individuals have through relationships, contributions, and personal growth.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STREAM flows naturally through everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Nana eka seka aru ukhura mukhura gotiku neusi teur jibon probahito hoi ase.* This stream of life has taken him through many twists and turns.
- *Tai grohon kora pothtu ketiau sthir nohoi.* The path she takes never stands still
- *Mur jibontu matro probahito hoi ase.* My life is just flowing along.

In Bishnu Prasad Rava's poem *Seated Beside This Stream*, translated by Suranjana Barua, the poet beautifully evokes the metaphor of a stream to explore the fluidity and rhythm of life. It blends with the emotive power of music. Through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STREAM, Rava intricately weaves the natural world with human emotions. He portrays how the continuous flow of life is mapped to the gentle, ceaseless movement of a stream. The poem captures this interplay, revealing the interconnectedness of nature, music, and the human experience.

*Seated beside this stream
You used to play the flute.*

The stream is mapped to life's unstoppable passage. It winds through landscapes, like life moves through stages. The movement of the stream maps onto the constant progression of time. It illustrates that life, like water, is in perpetual motion. Just as the stream does not pause, life too never halts. It pushes us onward, even as we sit by its edge, watching and reflecting.

*Blissful was that tune
Which would snatch my soul.*

Here, the current of the stream represents life's ability to pull us into its depths, affecting and transforming our very essence. The stream's pull maps onto life's way of immersing us in profound moments, each twist and turn shaping who we are. The stream's influence on the soul emphasizes how life itself, like water, is a force that shapes, sculpts, and molds. It touches even the innermost parts of our being. Life is not just a passive journey. It is an active, transformative stream that changes us as we move along with it.

*With a gurgling sound, that stream
Flowed to great distances.
Dancing to the rhythm, it used to flow.*

The stream's journey over distances maps onto life's progression through time. It echoes life's continual movement and evolution. Life, like the stream, encounters obstacles and moments of stillness, yet it never stops flowing. This passage reflects how life adapts,

dances around challenges. Life maintains its forward course, whether calm or turbulent. The gurgling and rhythm are mapped to the ups and downs of existence, each ripple and current marking a chapter in life's journey.

*. The silvery moon beams trembled
And out would come the moon*

The trembling moonbeams map onto our emotions. It reflects how life's rhythm aligns with the natural cycles around us. Just as the moonlight dances on the water's surface, our feelings and experiences are mapped to the world's beauty. This suggests a harmony between life and the environment. Life, like the stream, flows in sync with the natural world, influenced by and influencing the elements around it. The poet shows how life and nature share a profound relationship, each reinforcing and reflecting the other's movement.

*I too would hurry to sit by your side
And listen to the flute.*

The act of sitting together by the stream maps onto the communal nature of life's journey. Just as the stream is a shared source of beauty and reflection, life too becomes more meaningful when experienced with others. This moment beside the stream is mapped to the companionship that enriches life's path. It explains that while life flows forward, it also invites us to pause and share the journey with others.

In ***Seated Beside This Stream***, Rava's use of the metaphor of the stream encapsulates the continuous flow and the emotional cadence of life. The poem shows how music, life, and nature are harmoniously connected, each influencing and reflecting the other. The stream's imagery is mapped to life's journey. It always moves, changes and carry along the experiences, emotions, and connections that define existence. Through this intricate interplay of metaphor, Rava provides a profound commentary on life's beauty. Life's rhythm and its capacity to unite individuals in shared moments of tranquility and reflection.

In Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem ***The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls***, the metaphor LIFE IS A STREAM is beautifully embodied in the ceaseless, cyclic nature of the tide, reflecting life's continuous flow and inevitable transformations. The refrain, "*And the tide rises, the tide falls,*" echoes this metaphor. It portrays time as an unstoppable, rhythmic force like a stream that endlessly moves forward. It gently reshapes and erases what has passed. This recurring line emphasizes the unbroken motion and renewal found in life.

Here individual moments are fleeting, washed away by the current, yet they contribute to a larger, ongoing cycle. Longfellow captures the transient yet enduring essence of existence, as life flows steadily onward. It is similar to a stream that embraces each change and continues undeterred, part of an eternal rhythm.

3.2.10 LIFE IS A STORY

Stories, as intricate narratives, unfold over time, weaving events, choices, and experiences into a cohesive whole with beginnings, progressions, and resolutions. It lends meaning and structure to individual moments. Similarly, life is a sequence of interconnected experiences forming a larger narrative where every decision, challenge, and milestone contributes to an individual's overarching arc. Life is dynamic, with each experience building upon the previous. It creates a unique personal history shaped over time. Viewing life as a story emphasizes the role of personal agency and reflection in crafting this narrative. Much like an author decides which events to highlight and how characters are portrayed, individuals shape their lives through their responses to and interpretations of their circumstances. Joy, struggle, success, and failure enrich this life story, with personal reflections influencing the narrative's tone and meaning. Life's unpredictability introduces depth, akin to a plot's twists, while reflective moments help individuals understand their paths. Through this lens, life is seen as an ongoing story, authored by the experiences and perspectives that render each journey unique.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STORY often unfolds in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teu jibonor ek notun odhyai arambho korise.* He's starting a new chapter in his life.
- *Tair jatrai ek natokio mur loise.* Her journey has taken a dramatic plot twist.
- *Teu nijei nijor bhagyo likhuta.* He's the author of his own destiny.

In *Mamata's Letter*, translated by Snigdhamalati Neog, the narrative weaves through intimate memories, subtle longings, and the enduring rhythms of life. It embodies the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STORY. This metaphor allows us to view the sequence of Mamata's experiences as chapters in a larger, interconnected narrative. Here each event and each scene contribute to a deeper understanding of her existence and emotions.

*The time when we wrote the preface of our life...
A strange intoxication whirled me mad.*

Here, she recalls the beginning of their love as a “preface,” framing it as the opening chapter of a shared life story. The word “preface” suggests that their initial connection was a foundational chapter that sets the tone for all that follows. This metaphor maps the start of their love to the first pages of a book, filled with excitement and promise. The “intoxication” she describes highlights the overwhelming joy and thrill of this early love. It draws emotional whirlwind that marked the beginning of their journey.

*Do you remember what Deuta wrote to me?
'Dear daughter, keep smiling in your new home.'
That was seven years ago.
To me it sounds like the stories of the Puranas.*

In these lines, she reflects on the advice her father gave her as she entered this new phase of life. Mapping her father’s words to the *Puranas*, the ancient, mythic stories of her culture, Mamata weaves her personal story into a larger cultural narrative. It infuses her own life’s journey with a timeless, sacred quality. This maps her life to an epic, placing her experiences alongside those legendary stories. It suggests that her memories carry an enduring weight and connection to her heritage.

Last summer we performed Deuta’s death anniversary.

This moment in the poem serves as a marker of both loss and remembrance. It is a chapter of reflection that deepens her life’s narrative. Annual observances like these maps to pauses in her life story. These are moments to remember those who have shaped her journey. Through this ritual, her story gains depth. It reminds that the journey of life includes significant waypoints of memory and respect for those who have passed. This influencing how she navigates the present.

*When you return, do let me know.
I’ll go beyond the river Bhogdoi
and call you from the Lohit...
the day you return.*

Her mention of crossing rivers is mapped to her willingness to overcome boundaries in search of reconnection. In this metaphor, rivers Bhogdoi and Lohit symbolize the emotional and physical distances she is ready to cross, mapping love to a journey filled with obstacles, separations, and hopes of reconvening. Her desire to “call you from the Lohit” suggests a powerful yearning that goes beyond geographical distance. It signifies

an emotional crossing. Here her love and dedication are capable of bridging even the widest divides.

The poem primarily uses **ontological** metaphors to convey its themes. Viewing life as a story emphasizes that each person's existence unfolds like a carefully crafted tale. Here every joy, challenge, and encounter adds depth and meaning to the whole. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STORY in Mamata's letter enriches our understanding of her journey, as a continuous narrative that builds upon itself. Just as each chapter in a story is essential to understanding its full arc, each experience in Mamata's life contributes to a narrative shaped by love, memory, and resilience. Her reflections, marked by tenderness and longing, show that life's unpredictability, like a story's twists and turns, deepens the narrative and leaves an indelible mark on the heart.

In Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Ulysses*, the metaphor LIFE IS A STORY is richly embodied in the character of Ulysses. He reflects on his past adventures and eagerly anticipates new journeys ahead. Ulysses recounts his vast array of experiences, from the fierce battles at Troy to the exploration of unknown lands capturing the essence of life as a continuous, unfolding narrative.

*I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move,*

In the lines, Tennyson conveys the idea that life is an ever-expanding story. It is filled with uncharted horizons and boundless opportunities. Each experience serves as a chapter, contributing to a larger narrative that is never complete but always evolving. This metaphor reveals life as a tapestry of interconnected quests and discoveries. Here every moment enriches the broader story of existence, inviting the soul to journey onward into the unknown.

3.2.11 LIFE IS A BATTLE

Battles, inherently involving conflict, strategy, and perseverance, serve as a metaphor for life. Here individuals continuously face challenges, confront adversities, and summon resilience to navigate through hardships. Just as battles require preparation, courage, and adaptability, life demands confronting obstacles, be they personal, social, or external with determination and strategic adaptability. Viewing life as a battle emphasizes endurance,

resourcefulness, and the capacity to recover after setbacks. Much like a general assesses terrain and anticipates moves, individuals must make critical decisions and adjust to pressures. Victories in life, similar to those in battle, are hard-won and often come with personal sacrifices or losses.

In Assamese conversations, the CMT LIFE IS A BATTLE frequently emerges in expressions. For instance:

- *Teu badhabur otikrom koriboloi ohoroh juji ase.* He's constantly fighting to overcome obstacles.
- *Jimanei kothin nohouk kio teu atmo xomorpon nokore.* He refuses to surrender, no matter how tough it gets.
- *Nitou tai protyahbanor birudhe ekhoni juddho solai ase.* She's waging a daily war against her challenges.

In Hem Barua's poem ***Darkness is Better Than Light***, the poet intertwines mythological, historical, and modern imagery to construct a vivid portrayal of humanity's existential struggles. It is rooted in the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE. This metaphor frames existence as a sequence of conflicts and confrontations, each symbolic of the universal human experience.

We are living fossils, embedded in the rocks of history.

The poem opens with a striking declaration. This metaphor paints a picture of people or entire cultures as timeless relics. It is etched into the fabric of history, like fossils preserved within ancient stone. Here, life is mapped as a struggle against erasure. Here individuals fight to keep their stories and identities alive, resisting the forces that would otherwise reduce them to relics. Like fossils that tell stories of past lives, human experiences and enduring struggles are embedded within the grand narrative of time. It is permanently marked in history's vast records.

*In the ruins of Korea lie the skeletons of Jarasandha,
While vultures circle Asia's despair.*

Here, the "skeletons of Jarasandha" and the image of "vultures circling Asia's despair" map the scars left by historical conflicts. It symbolizes how past traumas continue to haunt modern consciousness. Jarasandha, a mythical figure, represents the lingering impact of ancient battles. The vultures is mapped to exploitation and ongoing suffering. Together,

these images map the struggles of survival in a post-conflict world. Here communities, even long after war has ended, must contend with loss and external forces that prey upon vulnerability.

*As kings wage endless wars,
And sharp swords clash with ferocity.*

This line evokes an image of life as an unrelenting battlefield. Here ambition, greed, and the quest for dominance drive people into endless confrontations. The poet maps human existence onto a theater of war. Here individuals face daily battles, whether for power, survival, or personal growth. This perpetual clash of "sharp swords" underscores how life often feels like a constant state of alertness, where resilience and strength are necessities.

*We are the ashes of Khandava's forest fires,
The Birina flowers, reduced to dust.*

Here, the "ashes of Khandava" and "Birina flowers" is mapped to the remains after devastating conflict. The forest fire maps life's consuming hardships. It reduces everything in its path to dust. The delicate flowers, which once thrived, now lie in ruins, embodying the loss of innocence and beauty to unyielding struggle. The poet maps life's challenges onto the fire. It shows how these struggles can destroy fragile beauty and vitality, leaving behind only the remnants of what once flourished.

Our pyramids are Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

This juxtaposition maps humanity's grand achievements to legacies of ruin. It equates the monumental destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the lasting impact of progress built on suffering. The poet maps progress as a double-edged sword. Here the heights of human capability come at the cost of devastating consequences. Just as pyramids symbolize human endurance and ingenuity, the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki reveal how the same drive can lead to monumental loss. It explains the paradox of human ambition.

Darkness is better than light.

Here, "darkness" symbolizes peace and refuge from life's relentless expectations and harshness. By mapping "darkness" as a sanctuary, the poet suggests that solace can be found away from society's harsh judgments and pressures. This closing line invites us to

accept the unknown, the quiet, and the introspective over the blinding demands of the world. It implies that true peace lies within, rather than in the quest for external validation.

In *Darkness is Better Than Light*, the **ontological** metaphor of life as a battle takes on a philosophical dimension. The poem uses physical imagery to embody abstract concepts like endurance, legacy, and moral descent. As the characters and symbols sink into the earth, they represent the relentless downward pull of life's struggles, the weight of battles both won and lost. The dichotomy of light and darkness, too, serves as an **orientational** metaphor, highlighting the complex duality of hope and despair, revelation and obscurity, that colors the human experience.

By casting LIFE IS A BATTLE, Hem Barua captures the essence of endurance, and the unyielding resolve required to face life's confrontations. This metaphor emphasizes that while battles may be destructive, they also forge resilience and character. It reshapes both individuals and societies. Life's true victories, as this poem suggests, are hard-earned. It often involves profound personal sacrifices. Yet these struggles, though often silent and invisible, leave indelible marks, forming a part of the human story.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's *By the banks of the Luit*, life unfolds as a struggle for dignity and freedom. It is captured through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE. This metaphor casts life's trials as a series of confrontations and moral challenges. It depicts the youthful spirit as undeterred by the possibility of sacrifice and poised against the forces of tyranny. Through this battle metaphor, the poem evokes images of resilience, bravery, and defiance against oppression. It creates a timeless tribute to the power of collective resistance.

*We have no fear of death.
For the noble cause of freedom,
We defy the tyrant's might*

These opening lines, introduce the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE, as the young people embrace their lives as warriors facing down a formidable enemy. Their defiance against "the tyrant's might" maps life as a confrontation with oppressive forces. Here courage becomes the primary weapon in the battle for freedom. Just as soldiers steel themselves for combat, these young fighters commit to face life's battles. They are fearless and ready to confront power with unyielding resolve.

Even if the priest falters,

*And faints in terror,
We advance,
With necks stretched out,
Ready to make the ultimate sacrifice.*

Here, the youths map themselves onto fearless soldiers, prepared to face the ultimate cost of battle, i.e., sacrifice. The image of them advancing, undeterred by fear, captures the spirit of the battlefield. Here they pledge to push forward no matter the risks. This readiness to “stretch out” their necks map a soldier’s vow to face death if necessary. It affirms their role as fighters committed to their cause. Life, through this lens, is a field of conflict where survival and sacrifice intertwine. Here the courageous remain undeterred by the dangers they face.

*In the heartache,
Of abandonment,
Mother, your sons,
Left with only the scars of disgrace.*

The “scars of disgrace” map onto the wounds left by battles fought not only against external enemies but also against the internal pain of loss and abandonment. These scars are the reminders of sacrifices made along life’s battlefield. It symbolizes the personal toll of relentless fighting. In this metaphor, the internal pain endured by those who sacrifice their relationships and stability is as tangible as wounds sustained in battle. The poet shows that life’s battles are not limited to physical confrontations. It extends to emotional struggles, leaving lasting marks on the heart.

*Yet, despite the sorrow and pain,
We have not bowed down.
Though countless cowards endured,
We shall not bear the shame.*

This refusal to “bow down” reinforces the metaphor of LIFE IS A BATTLE. Here honor and resilience are crucial to the fight. In the face of sorrow and hardship, standing firm becomes a warrior’s triumph. It is a testament to the strength and pride required to fight with dignity. The line maps resilience as a core aspect of battling life’s trials. It upholds the courage to persist in conflict, despite suffering. Here, LIFE IS A BATTLE is shown as a struggle to maintain integrity and resist surrender, even when facing overwhelming adversity.

*We, the young lads, pledge our lives,
To wipe away the tears,*

Of our beloved motherland.

Here, the metaphor of LIFE IS A BATTLE concludes with a vow to protect and serve the homeland. It frames life's purpose as one of fierce dedication to collective well-being. Their lives are mapped onto soldiers' sacrifices. It emphasizes that each individual battle contributes to a greater cause. The young men's pledge captures the spirit of warriors promising to defend and heal their homeland. It solidifies their lives as a fight for justice and freedom.

Through the **ontological** lens of the battle metaphor, the abstract experiences of loss, sacrifice, and resilience are rendered as physical encounters in a symbolic battle of life.

*By the banks of the Luit, we are the young lads,
We have no fear of death,*

The poem's refrain serves as a rallying cry. It cements their spirit of defiance and steadfastness. This commitment to a noble cause transforms life's challenges into moments of valor. This aligns with historic narratives where bravery and resilience prevail against adversity.

The metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE intensifies the poem's portrayal of young men's struggles, elevating their journey as a shared fight for liberation and honor. Their resilience in the face of sorrow and danger is mapped to a broader resistance against oppression. It merges the personal aspect with the collective in an epic of courage. This imagery enriches our understanding of life's trials as profound struggles for autonomy and justice that shape the very essence of one's being.

In Bhupen Hazarika's poem ***Come out O Comrade!***, the metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE emerges powerfully, portraying life as a continuous fight against both external adversities and internal struggles. Through vivid imagery and impassioned calls to action, Hazarika compels to confront life's relentless hardships. It draws parallels between individual struggles and the epic battles depicted in mythology. The poem encourages resilience, courage, and unity. It frames the journey of life as one that requires unyielding spirit and moral strength to overcome oppression, hunger, and fear.

*Come out O comrade!
Come out O come out!
Come out and about!*

The poem opens with a fervent appeal. These lines immediately frame life as a collective struggle. It urges individuals to confront adversities both within and outside themselves. The call to “Come out” conveys an invitation to join the battle. It positions each person as a soldier who must rise to face life’s challenges.

*Rama who hails light,
In the land of Ravana to fight,*

The poet’s invocation of these verses’ maps Rama, a symbol of righteousness, to the inner light and courage needed to battle life’s darkness. Just as Rama fought with unwavering strength, the poet suggests that individuals, too, must summon the resolve to confront life’s evils and inner fears with integrity and purpose.

*If the commander rests in the battlefield,
What shall the soldier do standing with a shield?*

Here, the “commander” and “soldier” is mapped to the roles within the broader struggle of life. Here every person plays a vital role. A commander’s rest is mapped to the complacency and neglect of duty, while the “soldier” stands as one ready to fight but in need of direction. This mapping positions life as a coordinated struggle. It underscores that leadership and collective resolve are essential to overcoming life’s battles. Without guidance, even the most courageous efforts may falter. This suggests that each individual’s commitment and sense of responsibility play crucial roles in life’s shared fight against adversity.

Come let’s demolish the cricket devouring our green field.

Here, “the cricket” is mapped to forces of destruction like hunger, greed, or other social injustices that threaten life’s potential and prosperity. The “green field” is mapped to the promise of life, growth, and fulfillment, which are under attack by these figurative crickets. The call to “demolish” these forces maps life as a battle. Here individuals must actively protect and nurture their dreams. It stands against forces that diminish life’s richness. This metaphor of defense against invaders emphasizes that life’s battles are about preserving and enriching our aspirations and dignity.

*Listening to the raw cries of a hungry child
Which brings the death news of lives gone wild.*

The “hungry child” is mapped to the innocence caught in the brutalities of life, while the “death news” evokes the fatal consequences of indifference and neglect. This mapping

highlights that life's battle includes a fight for justice and compassion. It says that true victory is incomplete if the vulnerable are left behind. The poet's line "Why does your ear still not cry?" calls for empathy as a crucial part of the battle. In the struggle for a better life, we must also hear and respond to the cries of those in need.

*Since struggle is the other name of life,
Then why would you not indulge in your final fight?*

Here, the poet declares that struggle is intrinsic to life. This suggests that the ethos of living is found in bravely meeting the challenges life presents. The "final fight" is mapped to the ultimate courage to face one's deepest fears. Here the culmination of life's battles lies in persistent resolve. This mapping asserts that life's journey demands resilience and acceptance of adversity. Here each challenge becomes a moment of truth in the ongoing fight for meaning and purpose.

*History shouts the victory of mankind,
Leaving terror, come let's kill the demons in our mind.*

Here, the poet shifts focus to the internal battles, where "demons in our mind" is mapped to fears, doubts, and insecurities. This mapping extends the battle beyond external forces. It emphasizes that life's greatest challenge often lies within. Victory in life's battle is not only about overcoming external adversities but also about mastering internal struggles. It conquers the fears and limitations that hold us back. By urging to "kill the demons in our mind," the poet suggests that true triumph is achieved through inner strength and self-mastery.

The metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE in *Come out O Comrade!* functions primarily as a **structural** metaphor. It draws from the framework of warfare to convey the nature of life's hardships. Life, in this poem, is a battle that demands constant vigilance, bravery, and unity. It maps the experience of existence to the structured, relentless trials of war.

In *Come out O Comrade!*, Bhupen Hazarika masterfully layers these metaphors to create a rich depiction of life's journey as an arduous, but purposeful struggle. By summoning mythological symbols, invoking collective responsibility, and urging the overcoming of internal fears, the poet captures life's essence as a relentless battle. It is not limited to visible foes but to invisible shadows within. The continuous call to "kill the demons in our mind" suggests that the ultimate victory lies in inner transformation. Here resilience,

courage, and empathy can bring both personal and societal healing, defining the true spirit of life's fight.

In Nabakanta Barua's poem *The First Code of Life*, life unfolds as a landscape marked by sacrifice, introspection, and the complex moral weight of societal expectations. Through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE, the poem illustrates the tension between inherited values and individual integrity. It depicts life as a terrain where moral and ethical struggles are relentless, demanding resilience and self-reflection. This metaphor offers a powerful commentary on the need for inner and outer peace in a world fraught with conflict.

*Offerings to the mother have been washed
With brother's blood;
To satisfy the mother earth
Offspring's flesh has been cooked in her breast's milk!*

The poem opens with visceral lines. Here, the sacrificial image of kin's blood and flesh as offerings to the "mother" maps life's internal wars. The clashes between personal relationships and societal or cultural demands is mapped to a battle where reverence tragically leads to violence. The kin's blood is sacrificed, reflecting the moral devastation that can arise when love and reverence are distorted into acts of brutality. The poet maps human bonds onto the casualties of war. It illustrates that life's internal battles can sometimes demand sacrifice, even at the expense of cherished relationships and values.

*I am a poet, my shelter made of only words
Words only from my bridge
Through the incisive bridge of words, I have crossed
The dark caves of disbelief.*

Here, the poet, as a warrior armed solely with words, maps language as his tool in the battle against ignorance and despair. Words serve as his "bridge" across the battle of disbelief. This suggests that language and thought are means to confront life's struggles. It carries him through moments of doubt and darkness. This metaphor reveals that in life's battle, intellectual strength and expression become powerful weapons. It navigates him across the harsh terrain of misunderstanding and hostility.

*Only a few accused, condemned words
So easily can one juggle with the words!
From which erupts deadly hatred,
Suicidal, fratricidal smoke, and*

*From which originate rivers of blood
Of the confused poor.*

In these lines, words are mapped to weapons, mapping onto the deadly impact of speech as a force in life's conflict. Like fire or swords, words have the power to spark fratricidal hatred, creating "rivers of blood" among those who are vulnerable and confused. Here, the battle metaphor is extended to the destructive capacity of language. Here ill-used words incite violence, causing deep wounds that are often irreparable. Speech becomes an instrument of battle, wielded recklessly, with the poet urging caution about the power words hold in shaping people's fates.

*Ye my people,
the incarnations of the Great Ashoka,
With your tears of repentance
Have your hands washed of
The stains of your brother's blood.*

Referencing Ashoka, who transformed from a fierce conqueror to a symbol of peace, the poet maps the journey from violence to repentance as a battle won over one's own brutality. Ashoka's shift symbolizes the possibility of inner redemption. It offers a pathway away from bloodshed and toward healing. The battle metaphor here reflects the internal conflict between violence and compassion. This suggests that the true conquest in life is one of moral rebirth and unity. This transformation of Ashoka into a force of peace serves as a model. It indicates that the struggle for justice and humanity begins with self-awareness and a willingness to forsake violence.

*Purify yourselves.
Not with the split incantations
But with the stable unity of
Thought, Love, and Sweat.*

This line maps integrity, unity, and meaningful action as the true armor in life's battle. It suggests that purification is achieved through shared humanity of thought, love, and labor. The poet argues that peace and fulfillment are conquered through consistent and dedicated effort rather than symbolic acts. Here, life's battle is fought with virtues like compassion and hard work. Each act of thought, love, and sweat acts as a weapon against division and strife.

The metaphor is **ontological**, imbuing life with the qualities of a battle. Here individuals are compelled to grapple with ethical complexities, familial obligations, and societal expectations, just as warriors face physical and moral challenges.

The First Code of Life uses the metaphor of battle to capture the turbulence inherent in life's moral journey. It emphasizes the need for peace, transformation, and reconciliation. Through imagery of violence, repentance, and purification, Barua's poem confronts the sacrifices made in the name of belief and tradition. It advocates for compassion and ethical clarity. This metaphor reinforces its message that in the battle of life, true victory lies in unity, self-reflection, and a commitment to justice over inherited cycles of conflict.

In Nilmani Phookan's *Do Not Ask Me How I Have Been*, the concept of LIFE IS A BATTLE encapsulates a world imbued with violence, fragmentation, and an unrelenting confrontation with suffering. Through haunting images and stark reflections, Phookan presents life as a brutal battle where resilience is continuously tested. The speaker's introspective and visceral narrative reveals an existence marked by trauma and conflict. This suggests that every phase of life is a struggle to endure in a world defined by loss, cruelty, and relentless endurance.

*Do not ask me how I have been I haven't ask me either
down the Kolong flows a young, female torso.*

Here, the image of a headless, drifting torso maps onto the emotional casualties of life's battles. It symbolizes the loss of innocence and identity. Just as a soldier loses comrades on the battlefield, individuals often lose parts of themselves in life's harsh struggles. This haunting image of a torso floating down the river Kolong is mapped to the damage left behind by the relentless challenges of life. These are moments where personal identity and connection are sacrificed.

*What I was last night
king hermit, farmer, labour;
lover, rebel, poet, a tiger
looking for waterholes
after the kill I forgot what I was*

These lines map the speaker's multiple identities onto the idea of strategic roles that a warrior takes on in battle. Each identity, the king, the farmer, the rebel, the poet is mapped to a new phase or "battle" in life's struggle. The speaker adapts to each battle, shifting between roles to survive life's challenges. It is similar to a soldier's tactics, as they might

change tactics or adopt a different fighting stance based on the circumstances. Life here is depicted as a series of battles requiring different forms of strength, each leaving its mark.

I have not laughed since Auschwitz nor cried either.

This line maps collective human suffering onto personal trauma. Just as some battles in war leave scars that cannot heal, the atrocities of history mark both the individual and humanity, robbing people of joy and even the ability to grieve. Here, life's battles encompass both personal and shared struggles. Here profound suffering leaves a lasting impact. The speaker is a warrior scarred by battle. It carries the weight of these traumas, unable to laugh or cry, as if life's battles have left him emotionally hardened.

*the day clings on to life vomiting blood the bones
and bits trudge along the road with wry laughter.*

The day "vomiting blood" and the bones "trudging" forward map onto the resilience required in life's battles. Just as soldiers push forward on a battle despite injuries, the speaker must continue enduring hardship. The "wry laughter" is mapped to the hardened spirit that results from facing unyielding challenges. It shows how life's battles leave people bruised yet moving forward. Life here is a continual battle, each day marked by pain yet driven by an unbreakable determination to survive.

*for everyone has the same fear
even the dead to say or not to say to do or not to do.*

This line maps the pervasive fear in life's battles onto the experience of living in constant caution. It is like navigating a minefield in a war zone. Each choice in life's battle carries risk, creating anxiety over every decision. This fear unites both the living and the dead, as the caution required in life's battles persists even beyond death. This marks life as a series of careful maneuvers in the face of unseen threats.

*Now even it flickers
Now even it glimmers
adversity travail disaster
and in their wake the banner of man's blood.*

The fleeting "flickers" of hope amid adversity and disaster map onto the temporary reprieves that soldiers might experience on the battlefield. This line conveys that life's battles offer brief moments of peace, overshadowed by continuous struggle. The "banner of man's blood" maps to the sacrifices left behind, like soldiers who fall in battle. This

suggests that life's battles leave a legacy of loss and resilience. Each victory is accompanied by a toll, with survival stained by the high cost of enduring hardship.

*For in my trousers pockets
I carry two forbidden hands
a bullet reddens in flight in my bosom.*

Here, carrying "forbidden hands" and "a bullet" maps onto the readiness to confront and endure life's battles. Just as soldiers carry weapons, the speaker metaphorically carries struggle within himself. It symbolizes an internalized readiness for conflict. These "forbidden hands" and the bullet represent the confrontation with pain and hardship that life's battles require, as each person must be armed with resilience and defiance to face life's trials.

for, it is silence all around the terrible din of peace.

The "din of peace" maps onto the eerie quiet after a battle, a silence filled with echoes of past struggles. Just as soldiers experience an uneasy calm after the intensity of combat, the speaker finds that life's battles leave a quiet that is filled with unresolved tension. This silence is not a true peace. It is a pause haunted by past battles, as the scars of life's struggles remain even in moments of calm.

This metaphor of LIFE IS A BATTLE is **ontological**, as it frames life's abstract struggles within the concrete, structured form of warfare. This perceives the emotional and existential challenges of life as a continual series of confrontations.

In *Do Not Ask Me How I Have Been*, Nilmani Phookan masterfully conveys life as an unyielding battle. It is marked by trauma, loss, and resilience. Each line whether depicting a young torso in the river, the speaker's fragmented identity, or the silent echoes of past horrors emphasizes the weight of existence as a battlefield where survival is never assured. The metaphor of life as a battle captures both the speaker's personal anguish and the collective struggle of humanity. Here every soul fights through an existence defined by pain, resilience, and the quest for meaning amidst unending conflict.

In *The Man He Killed*, Thomas Hardy explores the metaphor LIFE IS A BATTLE. It illustrates the ironies and tragic divisions created by war. Here life itself becomes a field of moral ambiguity and conflict. The narrator reflects on the disturbing notion that, in another setting, he and the man he killed might have shared a friendly drink; yet, on the battlefield, they are reduced to foes:

*Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat, if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.*

This passage captures how life, viewed as a battle, forces individuals into adversarial roles, severing connections that might otherwise exist. Hardy highlights the senselessness of these divisions. It emphasizes the arbitrary nature of opposition imposed by circumstance. The poem portrays life's inherent struggles and the often-painful realization that conflict can arise even between those who could find friendship under different circumstances.

3.2.12 LIFE IS A DREAM

Dreams, characterized by their fleeting, surreal, and incomprehensible nature, unfold during sleep in a realm where reality's boundaries are suspended. It allows exploration of emotions, desires, and fears beyond waking life's possibilities. Viewing life through the lens of a dream highlights its transient and unpredictable qualities. Like dreams shaped by the subconscious and often beyond our control, life is influenced by external forces. Reflecting on life as a dream speaks about the balance between illusion and reality. The impermanence of dreams mirrors life's transient nature, where joys, pains, and achievements are fleeting yet impactful. This dream-like perspective invites contemplation on the nature of consciousness and existence. It encourages questions about reality, imagination, and how these perceptions influence our understanding of the world.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A DREAM often drifts into everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Xofolotat tair xopun bastob hua jen lagisil.* Her success feels like a dream come true.
- *Ane bhab hoisil jen teu akhon bastob prithibit sori furise.* He feels like he's drifting through a surreal world.
- *Ratipuar xopunor dore jibonor puabur mlan hoi porise.* Life slips away like a dream fading at dawn.

In Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's poem *Poet*, Agarwala intricately weaves the ethereal beauty of dreams with the grounding force of reality. It presents life as a delicate balance between imagination and duty. Through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A DREAM the poem explores the allure of imagination juxtaposed with the unyielding call of responsibility. Here reality and reverie blend, creating a nuanced portrayal of the human condition.

*With a fancy for imagination,
Flying amidst the white clouds of dreams*

Here, the poet's affinity for imagination is mapped onto the act of flying. It portrays life as an inner journey that elevates the mind and spirit. The "white clouds of dreams" is mapped to the purity and infinite possibilities, with the poet's imagination moving as freely as clouds in the sky. This line highlights how life, when seen through the lens of dreams, allows one to embrace boundless ideas and perspectives. LIFE IS A DREAM here is an experience of freedom and expansiveness, offering release from reality's constraints.

*Like a butterfly in the golden hues of dawn and dusk,
Fluttering from flower to flower*

The poet maps life's imaginative qualities to a butterfly's delicate movement. Here each flower is mapped to a new idea or inspiration. The "golden hues of dawn and dusk" evoke moments of transition. It emphasizes that these insights are as fleeting as changing light. Through this metaphor LIFE IS A DREAM is depicted as a gentle dance, a series of transient yet beautiful experiences, like a butterfly's brief visits to each flower. This mapping captures the evanescent nature of inspiration. It reinforces that the dreamlike quality of life is precious yet impermanent.

*Not wishing to forget,
The harshness of reality,
Not wishing to forget,
The stern duties of life*

In these lines, the poet tempers the dreamlike exploration of life with an acknowledgment of life's "harshness" and "stern duties." The poet maps reality's grounding aspects onto responsibilities that act as necessary anchors. Here, life as a dream does not disregard reality's demands but acknowledges them as an essential part of existence. The mapping reflects the tension between the dreamer's yearning for freedom and the practical demands of life. It explains the duality between the liberating qualities of imagination and the grounding force of responsibility.

*Leaving behind the earth and water,
Not wanting to be lost,
In the enchantment of dreamlike fantasies*

In the closing lines, the poet maps "earth and water" onto the stable foundations of life. It represents tangible aspects that nourish and support. The poet contemplates leaving these

behind to pursue "dreamlike fantasies," mapping it to a temptation to escape into the realm of pure imagination. Yet, the poet's reluctance to become "lost" reveals an awareness of the need to maintain balance between dreams and grounded reality. This mapping reinforces that while life as a dream offers enchantment and freedom, it must be tempered by an awareness of life's necessities.

This metaphor of LIFE IS A DREAM is **ontological**, presenting life's moments of wonder and aspiration as entities like clouds, butterflies, earth, and water that we can interact with and navigate between. This tangible rendering of abstract concepts brings forth life's dichotomous nature. Here imagination and duty, like dreams and waking life, coexist and enrich one another.

Through LIFE IS A DREAM, Agarwala delves into the precarious act of balancing vision and reality. The poet's flight among dreams, is tethered to the practicalities of existence. Through this metaphor, life emerges as a journey where meaning is forged in the interplay of reverie and duty. It is similar to one constructing understanding upon waking from a dream.

In William Blake's poem *A Dream*, the metaphor LIFE IS A DREAM is woven through a narrative that fuses reality with dreamlike qualities. This concept is beautifully presented in the lines,

*Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my angel-guarded bed,
That an emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.*

Here, the dream acts as a delicate veil. It blends reality with imaginary and suggest that life, like a dream, is filled with illusions and fleeting moments. The speaker's encounter with a lost emmet (ant) is mapped to the human experience of feeling disoriented and adrift within life's complex and often bewildering landscape. This imagery emphasizes the ephemeral and illusory nature of existence. It aligns life with the qualities of a dream where reality is ever shifting, and perceptions can be as elusive as the dreams that shape them.

3.2.13 LIFE IS A PIECE OF CLOTH

A piece of cloth, woven from individual threads, serves as a tangible representation of interconnectedness, craftsmanship, and purpose. Each thread, whether fine or coarse, contributes to the fabric's overall strength, texture, and design, creating a unified whole.

Conceptualizing life as a piece of cloth shifts the focus to how experiences, relationships, and choices intricately weave together to form the fabric of an individual's existence. Life, like cloth, is composed of moments and actions that, although distinct, are interdependent and contribute to a larger narrative. Exploring life as a piece of cloth also highlights its fragility and durability. Just as cloth can be delicate and prone to wear, life is vulnerable to time, external pressures, and unforeseen events. However, like cloth that can be mended or reinforced, individuals can rebuild their lives after strain or loss. The diversity of cloth types ranging from simple to ornate, rough to smooth mirrors the varied paths of individual lives, with each pattern and texture reflecting personal experiences.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A PIECE OF CLOTH is often woven into everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Tair jibontu jen ximat herai goise.* She feels her life fraying at the edges.
- *Obhigyota bur jen jotil juit utoli uthisil.* His experiences have woven a complex tapestry.

In Nabakanta Barua's *Measurements*, life is mapped onto a piece of cloth that undergoes constant measuring yet remains unstitched and incomplete.

*It is afternoon now.
Let's go to the tailor's;
to get measured*

The opening lines, invites us into a ritual of assessment. It is mapped to a stage of self-reflection in life. The "afternoon" maps a midpoint, a moment of introspection. Here life is mapped to fabric being laid out to assess its shape and dimensions.

*Measurements of neck chest hands and arms
Measurements of the palm and the heart
....entrails, kidney, and liver.*

Barua maps physical and emotional experiences onto this piece of cloth. Here, he expands the metaphor to capture how society pressures individuals to quantify their bodies and their innermost feelings. Just as a piece of cloth is measured meticulously, life itself is examined. It goes down to the heart, hormones, and affections, as these fragments could create a whole identity. Through this mapping, Barua suggests that life, like fabric, is constantly assessed but rarely unified into a complete form. It leaves individuals as unstitched pieces rather than cohesive beings.

Give only the measurements.

We shall think of the stitching later on

These lines highlight the futility of a life fixated on measurement without ever reaching fulfillment. The metaphor here deepens just as a tailor might indefinitely measure fabric without sewing it. People measure their lives in achievements, health, and emotions but seldom consider how these “pieces” should ultimately come together. This mapping portrays life’s journey as incomplete fabric left unstitched. It symbolizes an existence focused on assessment but lacking in purpose.

*We shall record that suicides have
Swelled considerably*

Barua turns to a darker societal critique mapping life’s tragedies and failures as stains or tears in the fabric of humanity. The tally of suicides, “letters in a speech,” or “Christians in Arabia” reflects a world obsessed with counting and comparison. It stretches the fabric of life with superficial data points rather than meaningful understanding. This mapping presents a society engrossed in quantification while missing the essence. It is similar to a cloth which becomes frayed under constant handling without ever being stitched into a meaningful garment.

When will someone stitch the garment to fit man?

This question captures the longing for unity. It is a call for someone to bring together the accumulated measurements and pieces into a coherent whole. In this line, the metaphor LIFE IS A PIECE OF CLOTH reaches its climax. The act of “stitching” is mapped to the purpose or fulfillment, as all the pieces and measurements, like experiences and values, could finally form a complete life. This mapping shows a hope for integration, that one day life’s fragmented moments might unite into a meaningful existence.

The metaphor used in *Measurements* is predominantly an **ontological** metaphor. In this poem, life is conceptualized as a tangible piece of cloth. It undergoes processes like measuring and stitching, like a material object that requires tailoring. This metaphor treats life as a physical entity that can be observed, quantified, and pieced together. It emphasizes an understanding of life through physical aspects and material comparisons.

By depicting life as a piece of cloth, woven from myriad strands of experience and knowledge yet unstitched, Barua reflects on the human tendency to dissect, measure, and record while failing to connect or complete. This perspective reveals the poem’s philosophical depth. It urges to seek meaning beyond superficial measurements and to

value the intricate, often fragile fabric of human connection that binds us. Each metaphor narrates that life's worth lies not in the precision of measurements. Rather the meaning of life lies of our actions, memories, and shared bonds that genuinely fits the human spirit.

In Walt Whitman's *A Noiseless Patient Spider*, the metaphor LIFE IS A PIECE OF CLOTH is delicately woven through the image of a spider endlessly spinning its web. Just as cloth is created by intertwining countless threads, life is portrayed as an ongoing process of connections and efforts to create meaning.

*It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them*

The soul, like spider casts out thread after thread, mapping life as a sum of experiences, thoughts, and attempts to connect with the vast world around us. These filaments, each a moment or experience, interlace to form the fabric of existence. This suggests that life is both fragile and resilient, woven together from countless delicate threads into a unified whole, like a piece of cloth.

3.2.14 LIFE IS A MACHINE

Machines, characterized by their systems of interdependent parts, operate with precision, efficiency, and purpose. Each component plays a unique role in the system's overall functionality. When life is mapped to a machine, it highlights the structured, interconnected nature of human existence. Here individual actions, relationships, and decisions drive the broader function of one's life. Just as machines require regular maintenance, calibration, and adaptation to changing conditions, life demands ongoing reflection, adjustment, and balance to ensure smooth operation. Conceptualizing life as a machine brings attention to the balance between efficiency and potential breakdowns. Like a well-coordinated machine, life needs harmony among its various aspects to function effectively. When one aspect malfunctions, whether it's physical health, emotional well-being, or external circumstances, it can disrupt overall functionality.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A MACHINE is seen in Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Ghorir katar dore dinbur ohajua kori asil.* Her daily routine runs like clockwork.
- *Teu xokolu khini xomrin aru nikhut bhabe solaboloi sesta korisil.* He's trying to keep everything well-oiled and running smoothly

- *Jibon sakrar goti progoti solai jaboloi teu bor kosto koribo logia hoise.* He's working hard to keep the gears of his life turning.

In Nabakanta Barua's *Measurements*, the poem unfolds with a mechanistic view of life. Here human experience is reduced to standardized parts, endlessly measured but devoid of deeper meaning. Through the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A MACHINE, Barua presents life as a sequence of repetitive, calculated assessments. Here every facet of existence is quantified like components of a large, impersonal apparatus.

It is afternoon now.

Let's go to the tailor's; to get measured.

This initial line invites us into a metaphorical "tailor's" where, instead of clothing, life itself is what we measure and attempt to fit into an idealized form. Here, life is mapped onto a machine, where each part undergoes inspection and assessment to ensure it fits within a standard, productive framework. The phrase "get measured" reinforces the idea that society approaches life like a machine. It needs regular adjustments and calibration to function "correctly."

Measurements of neck chest hands and arms

Measurements of the palm and the heart

We shall give measurements of the entrails.

And the kidney and the liver,

Give measurements of hormones and affections."

These lines illustrate how society's approach treats human beings like machine parts. Each part is measured for utility rather than valued for individuality. This mapping suggests a relentless pursuit of optimization. It is similar to checking each component of a machine to ensure it aligns with precise standards. Even "hormones and affections" are reduced to data points, mapping society's tendency to quantify and control the most intimate aspects of life. It leaves little room for the unique, unquantifiable experiences that make us human.

Give only the measurements.

We shall think of the stitching later on.

This line conveys a world consumed with continual measurements. Here "stitching" or fulfillment is indefinitely deferred. In this framework, life is mapped to a machine yet not assembled. It is perpetually focused on optimizing each part rather than integrating them into a harmonious whole. Like a machine undergoes endless repairs and adjustments. Life here lacks completion or meaning beyond its function in the larger apparatus. The notion

of “stitching later on” is mapped to a life where purpose is perpetually postponed in favor of immediate, mechanical assessments.

*We shall record that suicides have
Swelled considerably.*

This line suggests that even despair is measured. It is reduced to a statistic in a mechanized society. Here, life’s battles and struggles are logged like diagnostic data in a machine, devoid of empathy or meaning. By tallying suicides, society tracks “malfunctions” without addressing the underlying suffering. It further maps human lives onto a system where individuals are seen as mere numbers in a productivity chart rather than as complex beings with intrinsic value.

When will someone stitch the garment to fit man?

This line raises the ultimate question of purpose and unity. While life has been dissected and measured like a machine, no one has yet stitched the “garment” to fit the human spirit fully. The mapping here explains that life is an unfinished machine, endlessly optimized but lacking coherence. The “garment” is mapped to the unfulfilled whole of human existence, still waiting to be shaped meaningfully. Through this, Barua critiques a world where life is perpetually measured but never truly realized. It leaves humanity in a constant state of incompleteness.

The metaphor in *Measurements* is **ontological**, attributing tangible, measurable qualities to the abstract concept of life. It captures society’s obsession with quantifying human existence. Barua’s vision of LIFE IS A MACHINE serves as a powerful critique of modern society’s reductionist view. Here individuals are valued more for their function than their essence. Through his portrayal of life as a machine, Barua reveals the emptiness and alienation of a world that measures every aspect of humanity. It fails to see the wholeness that lies beyond these rigid, mechanical confines. This poem becomes a meditation on the loss of individuality. Here the quest for precision and control renders human life as cold, calculated, and ultimately unfulfilled.

A well-known English poem that reflects the metaphor LIFE IS A MACHINE is *God’s Grandeur* by Gerard Manley Hopkins. In this poem, Hopkins uses the imagery of industrialization and mechanical repetition. It describes humanity’s impact on nature and how life, for many, has become as mechanical and routine as a machine.

*And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.*

Hopkins paints life as an unfeeling, mechanized cycle. Here the world is “seared with trade” and human activity has dulled the natural beauty and spirituality of existence. The repeated, mechanical toil of humanity has left the earth worn and distant, like parts in a machine that have lost their individual value. This metaphor emphasizes a sense of life as repetitive, drained of meaning, and driven by the relentless grind of industry and human interference.

3.2.15 LIFE IS AN ILLUSION

Illusions, deceptive appearances that differ from reality, can mislead the senses and offer a distorted perception of the world, often requiring further scrutiny to uncover the truth. When conceptualizing life as an illusion, it suggests that what individuals perceive as real or significant might not align with deeper truths or the ultimate nature of existence. This view highlights the tension between appearance and reality. It urges a deeper inquiry into what is truly meaningful in human experience. Life, seen through the lens of illusion, is portrayed as a series of fleeting experiences shaped by personal beliefs, social conditioning, and external influences. Like an illusion that masks the true nature of an object, life's events and circumstances may create false understandings or expectations. The exploration of life as an illusion emphasizes the transitory nature of existence, prompting individuals to question the permanence of worldly attachments and to seek greater clarity or enlightenment.

In Assamese conversations, the CMT LIFE IS AN ILLUSION appears in expressions, like:

- *Teur sariufale mathu morisika dekha jen lage.* He felt like everything around him was just a mirage.
- *Jibonor xoityota herai jua xopunor dore dhuxor hoi porise.* The reality of life seemed to fade like a passing dream.
- *Ketiaba jibontu aboronor xodrix hoi par hoi jot prokrito xutro lukai thake.* Sometimes, life seems like a veil, hiding the true essence of things.

In Nabakanta Barua's *Measurements*, the metaphor LIFE IS AN ILLUSION emerges with a haunting sense of disillusionment. Here existence seems reduced to a series of superficial evaluations that attempt to capture human worth. This illusion becomes clear as the

speaker repeatedly commands to “just give measurements” as if these numerical assessments alone could reveal life’s ultimate truth. The poem’s language implies that life, once quantified by “measurements of neck chest hands and arms... hormones and affections,” might somehow offer a complete understanding. Yet the illusion lies precisely in this reduction, the belief that endless measurements can capture life’s essence or lead to fulfillment. This mapping where life’s deep complexities are distilled into measurable aspects reveals a world where the tangible masks what is ephemeral and intangible.

Give only the measurements.

We shall think of the stitching later on.

The poet captures the emptiness beneath life’s routines and tasks, where purpose seems perpetually postponed. Here, “measurements” represent all of life’s evaluations, tasks, and goals, mapped as mere shadows of meaning that leave the true purpose always deferred. The “stitching” that would create a complete garment is promised for “later,” mapping that the illusion of purpose is preserved by continually focusing on preparation rather than fulfillment. Life, under this metaphor, becomes a series of abstract tasks. It appears meaningful but leave individuals unfulfilled.

We shall record that suicides have

Swelled considerably.

We shall give count of the number

Of letters in a speech.

Give count of the Christians in Arabia.

Through these examples of “records” and “counts,” the speaker reveals how the world becomes obsessed with numbers and data. It obscures the human stories behind them. These measurements like swelled suicides, letter counts, religious counts are illusions of knowledge that fail to reveal any depth. They offer a mirage of understanding but obscure the complex reality of human suffering, spirit, and connection. Here, life’s supposed clarity through quantification is mapped as an empty mirage. It leaves individuals grasping at fragments that never coalesce into meaning.

When will someone stitch the garment to fit man?

This question expresses a profound longing for completion. It is perceived as a garment that reflects the true shape of human life. The illusion is laid bare in the search for this garment. Each “measurement” promises to bring a final coherence that remains out of reach. This question maps the yearning for a life where each action, purpose, and

experience aligns into a meaningful whole. Instead, individuals remain stuck in an endless cycle of “fresh new measurements,” with fulfillment always deferred.

This metaphor in *Measurements* is **ontological**, as it grants physical form to life’s intangible qualities. It treats emotions, beliefs, and even the self as though they could be precisely quantified or categorized. In framing life as an illusion, Barua critiques the modern world’s obsession with quantifiable progress and superficial assessments. It illustrates how these pursuits might lead people astray from genuine understanding. The poem challenges us to look beyond the illusion of measurable accomplishments. It asks one to recognize that true meaning lies in what cannot be measured, weighed, or quantified. In doing so, it offers a reflection on the transitory and often deceptive nature of existence. Here life’s appearance may obscure its essence, reminding us that what is seen may not always be what is real.

In *Ode to a Nightingale*, John Keats explores the metaphor LIFE IS AN ILLUSION through the contrast between the nightingale's eternal, blissful song and the fleeting, sorrow-filled nature of human existence. The nightingale, embodying an idealized and otherworldly state, sings in "full-throated ease," untouched by the pains of human life where "youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies." As Keats yearns to escape into the bird's untroubled world, he recognizes the impossibility of transcending the illusions of beauty and immortality that the nightingale's song seems to promise. This tension reaches its peak as he questions the nature of his experience:

*Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?*

Here, Keats captures the metaphor, reflecting on the dreamlike, fleeting nature of life. Here the lines between reality and illusion blur. The nightingale’s song, like life itself, becomes an ephemeral vision. It hints at the insubstantial beauty that can only be momentarily grasped before fading into uncertainty.

3.2.16 LIFE IS POETRY

Poetry, as an art form, captures emotions, experiences, and ideas using a concentrated symbolic language. It employs rhythm, imagery, and metaphor to convey meanings beyond the literal. Each poem, structured yet open to fluid interpretation, can evoke varied reactions based on the reader’s perspective and emotional state. It mirrors life which is a collection of moments and experiences with layered meanings. Life, like lines of poetry,

combines the rhythms of daily existence with emotional highs and lows and the symbolic significance of events to form a richly interpretable narrative. Delving deeper, life through the poetry lens showcases the interplay between structure and spontaneity, reflecting life's inherent dualities. Poetry's knack for distilling complex emotions into succinct phrases parallels how significant life experiences can profoundly impact us.

In Assamese expressions, the CMT LIFE IS POETRY frequently inspires conversational themes. For instance:

- *Protitu muhurtoi teur jibonot eta notun pod xongujon kore.* Each moment adds a new verse to his life.
- *Tai doinondin jibonor sondot xoundorjya bisari pai.* She finds beauty in the rhythm of everyday life.
- *Tai ostitwor rupokburot ortho bisare.* She seeks meaning in the metaphors of her existence.

In Nilomoni Phukan's poem ***Poetry Is For Those Who Wouldn't Read It***, the metaphor LIFE IS POETRY unfolds as the poet draws deep parallels between the unspoken nuances of life and the expressive, symbolic power of poetry. Through striking imagery, Phukan explores the varied facets of human existence like the beauty, pain, struggle and love that each person experiences as poetic verses in themselves. Life's moments embody the rhythm and complexity typically reserved for art.

*wounds in their hearts
for their fingers where thorns are embedded*

The lines illustrate the metaphor by depicting poetry as a vessel for pain. Life's experiences, mapped as "wounds" and "embedded thorns," transform into verses that hold universal meaning. Just as poetry conveys deep emotions through language, life, too, brings forth its most intense experiences through personal and collective suffering. Each "thorn" represents both a wound and a verse in the grand poem of existence. It reminds us that life's trials contribute to a narrative that speaks to everyone.

*for the anguish and the joy
of the living and the dead*

Here the poet demonstrates how poetry, like life, bridges the boundaries of time and existence. Joy and sorrow interweave across life and death, underscoring the timelessness of human emotions. Poetry serves as a bridge, holding both the sweetness and suffering of

life. This imagery maps that life itself, like poetry, is a collection of moments that is beyond temporal limitations. It captures emotions that connect generations through shared experience.

*for the outcry that trundles
down the road day and night*

Barua maps poetry as the ongoing, unnoticed whispers and cries within society. It is similar to the unnoticed elements in daily life that still shape the human experience. This line speaks to the persistent but often unheard struggles that characterize human existence. It suggests that life, like poetry, is filled with an undercurrent of striving and resilience. Both poetry and life capture these cries, the echoes of endurance and moments of striving that define our shared humanity.

*for the desert sun
for the meaning of death
and the vacuity of living*

These lines use poetry as a lens to grapple with life's existential questions, mapping the harsh, relentless realities of existence onto the arid landscape of the desert. Here, the search for meaning and the contemplation of mortality emerge as universal truths. Individuals confront these truth in the poetic journey of life. Life's often intense quest for understanding becomes, in this metaphor, a verse capturing humanity's unending pursuit of answers in an unyielding world.

for the yellow butterflies with wings spread on barbed wires

The poem juxtaposes beauty and hardship, reflecting poetry's ability to reveal life's inherent contrasts. The delicate butterflies caught on barbed wire is mapped to the fleeting beauty in a world marked by suffering. It captures life's tendency to reveal moments of fragile grace amidst pain. This imagery suggests that, like poetry, life contains both harshness and beauty. Each element enhances the other's impact in a shared verse of existence.

for the mothers of five hundred million sick and starving children

This line elevates poetry to a voice for the silenced and overlooked, mapping the hardships endured by many as collective experiences. Here, the struggles of life, held within poetry's lines, resonate as a narrative that encompasses a shared universal struggle. This line

reinforces how life, like poetry, connects personal hardship with the broader human condition. It offers a collective expression of endurance and sacrifice.

*For one kiss from you
that man of dust will become dust again*

Here poetry's sense of transience maps onto life's impermanence. The "kiss" is mapped to life's fleeting beauty, while the return to "dust" evokes the cyclical nature of existence. Much like poetry captures life's ephemeral qualities, this line emphasizes the temporality of human experience. Life, mapped as poetry, is thus revealed to be a delicate. It is an ever-renewing cycle where each moment, each emotion, contributes to the unending verse of human existence. Through these images, Barua's poem transforms life into a poetic journey. This is a journey in which each experience becomes part of a larger, shared narrative that cut across individual boundaries.

The poem employs both **ontological** and **structural** metaphors to illuminate life's complexities. Ontological metaphors attributes to the tangible qualities to intangible emotions, making them relatable and accessible. Structural metaphors organize life into the form of poetry to perceive the intricacies of life as a carefully crafted composition. It is filled with rhythm, contrast and narrative progression. Through the metaphor LIFE IS POETRY, Phukan suggests that life is a living poem. Here every experience, whether joyful or painful, adds a line to the larger story.

A famous English poem that reflects the metaphor LIFE IS POETRY is *O Me! O Life!* by Walt Whitman. In this poem, Whitman contemplates the struggles, questions, and cycles of life and ultimately finds meaning in the idea that each individual contributes a unique verse to the "powerful play" of existence. It embodies life as an ongoing, collective poem.

*That you are here—that life exists, and identity;
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.*

Whitman suggests that life, like poetry, is a composition filled with individual verses that contribute to a greater whole. Each life, in its joys and sorrows, becomes a line in the vast, unfolding poem of humanity. By describing life as a "powerful play" in which each person contributes their own "verse," Whitman presents life as a poetic endeavor. Here every individual expression adds depth and meaning to existence.

3.2.17 LIFE IS PRISON

Prisons, designed to restrict movement, autonomy, and freedom through rigid control and limited personal agency, serve as a metaphor for life's inherent limitations. It is imposed by societal expectations, circumstances or the passage of time. These boundaries confine individuals within a predefined structure. Here choices are constrained, shaping daily existence and creating a sense of restriction that must be navigated. Viewing life through the lens of a prison highlights the tension between control and the desire for freedom. Just as prisoners seek ways to assert autonomy within their environment, individuals in life grapple with finding meaning and fulfillment within imposed constraints. Life often feels restrictive, with true freedom and choice appearing as exceptions.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS PRISON resonates in Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Tai nijor dayitor majot abodho.* He feels trapped by his responsibilities.
- *Xi xari jabo nuara eta routine-t abodho hoi porise.* He's locked into a routine he can't escape.
- *Tair uporot rokha bhorokha buror majot tai abodho.* She's confined by the expectations placed on her.

In Nilomoni Phookan's poem *Don't Ask Me How I Am*, the metaphor LIFE IS A PRISON serves as a haunting depiction of existence. It is an unending state of confinement and suffering. Through visceral and disturbing images, Phookan conveys a sense of entrapment within life's boundaries. Here the speaker remains aware of unrelenting pain and cannot find solace. This metaphor illustrates life as a constrictive force, a prison where suffering is inevitable. Here even the prospect of death offers no release from the agonizing awareness of despair.

Don't ask me how I am

The opening line reflects the speaker's inability to express their condition, mapping life as a prison where suffering is incommunicable, too intense to be put into words. The speaker's refusal to discuss their state suggests a deep entrapment. Here anguish is so pervasive that it cannot be shared or understood, like a prisoner's silence, isolated and burdened by an unseen weight of pain.

*Down the Kolong comes floating
A headless girl*

This image powerfully conveys themes of loss and violence. Here, the headless figure becomes a symbol of stripped identity and innocence, mapping life as a prison that erases parts of oneself. This severed, drifting figure symbolizes how life, when mapped onto a prison, becomes a space of isolation. Here one's true essence is lost, submerged beneath layers of suffering. The girl's floating, forgotten body is mapped to the feeling of abandonment, as though trapped within the confines of an emotional prison. In these scene individuality and humanity are left adrift.

*For my corpse
Was lying for forty-two hours
On the pavement of Guwahati*

These lines intensify this image of life's prison, evoking neglect and disregard. The speaker's "corpse" lying unattended for days reflects the experience of confinement. Here even death, freedom and dignity remain unattainable. This notion of life's imprisonment expands here; suffering is extended, bound to the speaker's identity even after life. It confines them in a relentless and degrading existence. Here, life becomes an unending confinement, robbing the speaker of both liberation and respect.

*For I'm open-eyed still
My death too has its eyes open*

Here the poet introduces the image of eternal awareness, as though consciousness itself is imprisoned, forced to watch suffering endlessly. The speaker's "open-eyed" state in death captures a sense of eternal vigilance. This suggests that even death cannot bring release from pain. This perpetual awareness, the inability to escape the vision of suffering, maps life's prison as a place of inescapable visibility. Here existence is bound to endure pain beyond the confines of physical life.

*For in ditches—puddles rivers—lakes
Fish in shoals whisk about*

Phookan uses the movement of fish within small, stagnant waters to reflect limited freedom. This imagery speaks of a confined journey, where movement exists but is meaningless and restricted, like a prisoner walking the same narrow cell paths repeatedly. This mapping of life onto the constrained movement of fish suggests that life's journey,

within the walls of a prison-like existence, offers only the illusion of progress. Here true escape is impossible, and freedom is restricted to the same narrow boundaries.

Hey, ambling horsemen of mine

This line summons horsemen, symbols of freedom and agency but depicts them as “ambling,” slow and restrained. This image of constrained horsemen maps the potential for freedom lost within life’s prison. Although the horsemen symbolize freedom, their sluggish pace conveys that movement is impeded, and liberation remains a distant hope. Life’s prison, therefore, is shown to confine not just the body but the very potential for liberation. It portrays existence as an unending journey without true freedom or escape.

This metaphor is **ontological**, as it imbues the intangible experience of life’s suffering with the structured and oppressive qualities of a prison. In *Don’t Ask Me How I Am*, Nilomoni Phookan portrays life as a prison, encapsulating the speaker’s perpetual suffering and entrapment. The poem’s imagery of the headless girl, the abandoned corpse, the stagnant fish, and the slow-moving horsemen conveys a relentless, unending sentence of pain and loss. Through these scenes, life emerges as a prison that confines the individual to a cycle of despair, with no prospect of release or reprieve. Through this metaphor, Phookan’s poem resonates with a profound sense of isolation, confinement, and hopelessness. It reveals the depths of despair that characterize life’s reality.

In *I Am!* by John Clare, the metaphor LIFE IS A PRISON is poignantly expressed. Clare delves into feelings of isolation and entrapment, portraying life as a personal confinement. Here he is severed from the world and left to confront his struggles alone. He reflects,

*"I am—yet what I am, none cares or knows;
I am the self-consumer of my woes;
They rise and vanish in oblivious host,
Like shadows in love's frenzied stifled throes—
And yet I am, and live—like vapors tossed."*

In these lines, Clare maps life as a prison, where his identity and suffering are contained within himself, unseen and unacknowledged by others. This sense of isolation and self-consumption reinforces the metaphor, as Clare’s existence feels constrained by his own mind. It emphasizes the profound loneliness and limitation that can pervade the human experience, like being trapped within invisible walls.

3.2.18 LIFE IS A RACE

Races, characterized by structured, goal-driven movement with speed and competition towards a clear finish line, provide a metaphor for viewing life as a dynamic pursuit of personal and societal goals. This perspective sees life as a race where individuals progress with varying intensity and urgency. Just as racers vary in strategy, endurance, and motivation, impacting their approach to the race, individuals differ in how they navigate life's trajectory and pursue benchmarks. LIFE IS A RACE involves phases of heightened effort to overcome obstacles or achieve specific outcomes, emphasizing aspects of rivalry and competition. Here individuals measure themselves against others' achievements or societal expectations. This race-oriented view cultivates an environment that values efficiency, progress, and success, and introduces the notion of "winning" or "losing" in life, suggesting that one's level of accomplishment may determine their position in this metaphorical race.

In Assamese conversations, the CMT LIFE IS PRISON surfaces in expressions, like:

- *Xokolure xoite khuj milaboloi xi xodai douri thake.* He's always sprinting to keep up with everyone else.
- *Ane lage jen jibonot tai possadmukhi hoi porise.* She feels like she's falling behind in life.
- *Protijugitat aguai jaboloi teu xonkolpobodho.* He's determined to stay ahead of the competition.

In Nabakanta Barua's poem *Measurements*, the poet masterfully delves into the human experience. This explores it as a continuous cycle of quantification, where every facet of existence is meticulously measured and evaluated. Through the CMT LIFE IS A RACE, the poem highlights the ceaseless comparisons, judgments, and pressures that characterize modern life. Here the goal is not simply to live but to ensure that one's "measurements" align with societal expectations. Life becomes an endless series of assessments. It is a competitive journey towards a life that supposedly "fits."

*Let's go to the tailor's; to get measured.
Measurements of neck chest hands and arms
Measurements of the palm and the heart
We shall give measurements of the entrails.
And the kidney and the liver,
Give measurements of hormones and affections*

These lines set the scene, establishing life as a preparatory phase before a race. Here initial assessments determine one's readiness, much like a racer's pre-competition evaluations. These measurements, which include "neck, chest, hands and arms... the palm and the heart... entrails... hormones and affections," map society's compulsion to quantify every aspect of a person's identity, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. This enumeration echoes checkpoints in a race. It reflects societal expectations that each part of one's life will be scrutinized and measured against predefined standards.

We can only give measurements.

We can only take reckonings...

Here the poet suggests a continuous evaluation process, mapping life onto a race where every step is tracked and judged. In this relentless pursuit of metrics, individuals are appraised like racers measured against speed, distance, and pace.

We shall record that suicides have

Swelled considerably,

Life's worth is reduced to mere statistics, as Barua highlights in these lines. It suggests that society's preoccupation with measurements can lead to dehumanization and an empty pursuit of achievement. These lines map the pressures of a competitive race. Here performance is valued over fulfillment, and results are tallied without regard for individual well-being.

Just give measurements

The poet's repetition of this line reinforces this focus on quantification. It portrays life as a race driven solely by numbers and standings. Here intrinsic value is overshadowed by societal expectations. Much like racers who are judged solely by their performance, individuals in life find themselves endlessly quantified, chasing after metrics that ultimately lack depth or personal significance. Here, the concept of LIFE IS A RACE emphasizes the hollowness of an existence reduced to figures and milestones, rather than meaningful experiences.

We shall think of the stitching later on

Barua points to an elusive sense of wholeness that remains perpetually out of reach, similar to a race where the finish line always seems to recede. The imagery of "stitching" is mapped to the deferred hope for fulfillment. It implies that individuals, like racers striving

for victory, continually push forward without ever achieving true contentment or completion. This unfulfilled longing suggests that life, when seen as a race, propels people toward a finish line that keeps moving. It is a pursuit that drives them forward but never allows for true rest or satisfaction.

When will someone stitch the garment to fit man?

The poet's final question captures the longing for a life that fits harmoniously, without the pressure of competition. This image of a garment that finally "fits" reflects the desire for self-actualization, a yearning to escape the endless race and find inner peace and purpose. In the race that is life, this "perfect fit" remains an unachievable victory. It is a reminder that while the race is driven by constant measurement and assessment, the ultimate goal is an internal wholeness that lies beyond any competitive finish line.

This metaphor, **ontological** in nature, shapes abstract aspects of life as measurable elements. It allows the poet to critique a society where existence is defined by competitive benchmarks and tangible progress markers. In *Measurements*, Barua uses the metaphor of life as an incessant race. It challenges the fixation on quantification and competition that detracts from life's deeper, unmeasurable meanings. The poem speaks about a disillusionment with a life reduced to endless measurements. It portrays existence as a journey marked by racing through societal expectations without ever reaching a truly satisfying conclusion. *Measurements* exposes the hollowness of this competitive race, revealing a world where people are constantly evaluated but rarely understood. It is a race where there is hope of someday finding fulfillment that may always remain out of reach.

In *To an Athlete Dying Young* by A.E. Housman, life is conceptualized as LIFE IS A RACE, with the young athlete's untimely death marking a finish line crossed too soon. The speaker laments the loss of the athlete, who, though celebrated in his youth, is spared the sorrow of watching his fame and glory wane. Housman uses the metaphor of racing to capture life's swift and competitive essence, as well as the fleeting nature of renown, particularly in the lines:

*Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.*

Here, life is depicted as a race that each person must ultimately complete. It speaks about the transitory nature of youthful achievements that inevitably fade with time. Through this metaphor, Housman reflects on the ephemeral celebration of success and the inescapable quiet that follows. Here the athlete is honored but removed from the race's relentless demands.

3.2.19 LIFE IS A TEST

Tests are structured assessments that measure knowledge, abilities, resilience, and preparedness, simulating challenges to evaluate one's readiness. Viewing life as a series of tests implies that existence is a continuous series of trials. It assesses an individual's strength, wisdom, and ethical fortitude through personal struggles, moral decisions, external pressures, and unpredictable events. Each challenge demands perseverance, introspection, and adaptation, with life's progress marked by the lessons and personal growth derived from overcoming difficulties. Furthermore, tests involve evaluations that provide insights into one's character, values, and readiness for future challenges. This suggests that life's "results" are ongoing and continually assess various aspects of one's capabilities and understanding.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A TEST is commonly found in everyday Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teur xohonxilotak nirobisinho bhabe jibone protyahban jonai khaise.* He feels like life is constantly challenging his resilience.
- *Jibonot xonmukhin kora xokolubur teu otikrom koriboloi xonkolpobodho.* He's determined to pass whatever life throws at him.
- *Jibone teuk notunkoi mukha mukhi hua xomosya xomuh xomodhan koriboloi xaju korise.* Life keeps presenting him with new problems to solve.

In Nilomoni Phookan's poem *A Poem*, translated by Niren Thakuria, the metaphor LIFE IS A TEST permeates a narrative rich with imagery of endurance, sorrow, and perseverance. This conceptual metaphor presents life as an unyielding series of challenges. Here resilience, patience, and emotional fortitude are continuously tested. Through visceral images of a relentless, oppressive environment, the poet conveys a world where each day carries a new trial. It assesses the speaker's capacity to withstand hardship and sorrow.

*For days I have heard only one sound day and night.
The burning tyre is stinking*

The opening line introduces an oppressive image that maps to the unending trials life imposes. The burning tyre's stench embodies the constant, inescapable pressures of life's tests, filling the atmosphere with discomfort and tension. This symbol captures the suffocating nature of life's demands, as each burden imposed must be endured with no respite. It hints at the prolonged challenges that wear down one's spirit over time.

*I have shed tears
And wiped them away with one hand with both hands*

In this verse Phookan illustrates the persistence of these trials. Here, the repeated act of wiping tears is mapped to an ongoing struggle to hold oneself together amidst pain. The imagery maps the cyclical nature of life's emotional tests onto the simple yet poignant act of wiping tears with "one hand and both hands". This tells us that life's tests require a constant cycle of resilience, an ability to cope with sorrow repeatedly, and a quiet determination to press on despite the sorrow that threatens to overwhelm.

*In my tears the stones have soaked,
the grass drenched in blood over there has soaked in my tears*

Phookan deepens the metaphor, as the surroundings absorb the speaker's sorrow. The stones and grass, drenched by tears and blood, map the impact of life's trials on both the internal and external worlds. This imagery suggests that life's emotional weight does not remain contained. It is rather transformed to one's environment, leaving lasting imprints of struggle on the landscape itself, as life's tests extend their influence outward, altering everything they touch.

*The overblown surujkanti flowers
have not wilted though they are about to,
the Dichoi and Dibong have not changed
into ice though they are about to*

These lines illustrate the resilience of nature, mapping this strength onto the perseverance required to withstand life's tests. The flowers and rivers, resisting despite harsh conditions, is mapped to individuals who refuse to succumb to life's trials. These natural elements mirror the tenacity required to survive. It shows that even when close to breaking, one can hold on, capturing the essence of endurance that life's tests demand.

For days the moon has not risen over Diroi Rangali

The absence of the moon symbolizes the loss of guidance or hope, mapping the experience of enduring dark, seemingly endless nights without solace. This line says that life's tests sometimes unfold in darkness, requires fortitude even when the comfort of light and hope is absent. The speaker's patience is tested here, as life's journey becomes one of navigating without clear direction. It is a test of resilience and the ability to continue amidst uncertainty.

*Will the sun appear red or black at tomorrow's dawn?
You too do not know*

The closing lines evoke an uncertain future, mapping life's unpredictability onto the colors of the rising sun. The ambiguous dawn, whether red or black reflects the unknown outcomes that lie ahead in life's tests. This is mapped to the risks and uncertainty of facing life's trials. The future remains unresolved, suggesting that perseverance is required despite the ambiguity of what each new day may bring. It emphasizes that life's tests do not come with guarantees, and outcomes often remain shrouded in uncertainty, challenging the individual's strength to endure.

The type of metaphor employed here is **ontological**, as it frames the abstract experience of hardship within the structured realm of a test. By conceptualizing life's pains, sorrows, and trials as structured assessments, Phookan provides a way to understand how life's challenges require individuals to confront and survive emotional, psychological, and existential adversities.

In *A Poem*, Phookan's metaphor of LIFE IS A TEST conveys the relentless endurance required to navigate life's hardships and uncertainties. Through recurring images of struggle, such as the lingering scent of burning tires, the sorrow absorbed by the landscape, and the darkness of nights without moonlight, the poem paints life as a continuous, rigorous test of resilience. The absence of certainty, embodied in the unknown color of the dawn, emphasizes that life's tests may never yield clear answers. It leaves individuals to navigate their trials with patience, resilience, and a capacity to endure. This framing offers a reflection on the universal human experience. It highlights the resilience required to meet life's challenges without guarantee of resolution or relief.

A famous English poem that reflects the metaphor LIFE IS A TEST is *Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night* by Dylan Thomas. This poem captures life as a relentless test of endurance. It urges resistance against the inevitability of death. Through the speaker's plea

to “rage, rage against the dying of the light,” the poem suggests that life’s value is demonstrated through courage and resilience in the face of its ultimate test, mortality.

*Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

Thomas presents life as a struggle where individuals are tested by their reactions to aging and death. Each stanza reflects different responses to this ultimate test, advocating for a spirited resistance. The poem conveys the idea that true strength lies in facing life’s challenges with determination. It treats life as a test of courage and endurance to the very end.

3.2.20 LIFE IS A STAGE

Stages, designated spaces for performances with structured beginnings, progressions, and resolutions, serve as a metaphor for life. This suggests that individuals play various roles defined by unique scripts, responsibilities, and expectations. Much like actors adapt to roles in a play, people assume different identities throughout life’s phases. The roles shift in response to changing circumstances, relationships, and personal growth, reflecting the evolving identity of the individual in a continuous performance. Additionally, just as a stage performance is influenced by an audience, life is guided by social contexts, norms, and the expectations of others. It creates a complex interplay between the “performer” and the “spectator.” This dynamic underscores the importance of authenticity, adaptation, and self-awareness. This metaphor illuminates life’s dual nature as both personal and public. Here each interaction and choice contribute to the larger narrative, shaping an individual’s legacy and the perception of their “performance” in the eyes of others.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STAGE frequently takes center stage in Assamese conversations. For example:

- *Teu notun protyahan bur grohon kori sorsito hoi porise.* He stepped into the spotlight to take on new challenges.
- *Tai bisakh j nijor mote jibon porisalito korat nijor bhumika thake.* She believes everyone has their own role to play in life.
- *Tai mukhar arot nijor prokrito sworuptu lukuwai rakhe.* She hides her true self behind a mask.

In Nilomoni Phookan's poem *Poetry Is For Those Who Wouldn't Read It*, the metaphor LIFE IS A STAGE captures life as a continuous performance. Here individuals enact diverse roles in a world of suffering, beauty, and impermanence. Through stark images of human resilience and sorrow, Phookan presents life as a staged reality in which people navigate through various acts of joy, anguish, and love. This metaphor emphasizes the transient, performative nature of existence. It tells us that individuals move through life like actors. Each actor portrays distinct emotions within a larger narrative witnessed by an indifferent world.

*Poetry is for those who wouldn't read it
for the wounds in their hearts
for their fingers where thorns are embedded*

Phookan maps the image of wounds and embedded thorns onto the suffering of individuals. It parallels the anguish experienced by actors on stage who play roles marked by sorrow or sacrifice. Here, the poet suggests that life's most poignant moments often go unnoticed. It is akin to actors performing for an audience that chooses not to watch, a commentary on the unnoticed pain that permeates human existence.

*for the anguish and the joy of the living and the dead ...
for the desert sun ...
for the meaning of death and the vacuity of living*

The verse captures the range of emotions as scenes in the play of life, mapping the highs and lows, and existential ponderings as successive acts. These universal experiences reflect the shared aspects of human life. Here individuals are compelled to perform through moments of happiness and despair. It echoes the timeless scenes of a play that must be enacted regardless of comprehension or audience.

*for the dark stones cursed by ruins ...
for the red patch between the lusty lips of maidens ...
for the yellow butterflies with wings spread on barbed wires*

Phookan juxtaposes beauty and decay, innocence and brutality, to illustrate life's stark contrasts. These images map onto the conflicting scenes within life's stage where innocence and destruction coexist. Each act reinforces life's duality, like a stage that hosts alternating scenes of beauty and despair, weaving a complex narrative.

*for the anxiety in fire and water ...
for the mothers of five hundred million sick and starving children*

The poet conveys collective human suffering as a pervasive scene in life's play, mapping individual sorrows onto a larger collective anguish. This imagery suggests that life's performance is one of both personal and shared suffering. Here actors on the stage of existence are bound by common trials, evoking the universality of human experience.

For one kiss from you that man of dust will become dust again

This line encapsulates the fleeting nature of human connections, mapping love and loss onto the cyclical conclusion of life's acts. The transient romance, symbolized by a kiss that returns one to dust explains the ephemerality of life's scenes. Each beautiful yet destined to fade, reinforces the idea that the stage is both a space for connection and inevitable departure.

In the repetition, "for that old saying," and the refrain "poetry is for those who wouldn't read it," the poet invokes the irony of life's performance. Many of the performances are oblivious to the human stories unfolding around them. Each experience, be it love, suffering, joy, or despair, plays out whether acknowledged or not, like a stage that remains active despite an absent audience. It conveys a poignant commentary on the isolation inherent in human performance.

The metaphor in this poem is **ontological**, endowing life with the structured characteristics of a theatrical stage. By transforming life's abstract qualities into performative acts, Phookan presents existence as a series of unfolding roles, each charged with its own symbolic resonance. This framework helps to understand life as a collection of acts. Here each person's role is both individual and universal, building a broader narrative of collective human experience.

In *Poetry Is For Those Who Wouldn't Read It*, Phookan deftly uses the LIFE IS A STAGE metaphor to illustrate a world marked by beauty, suffering, and impermanence. Through images of unacknowledged wounds, fleeting love, and the silent endurance of personal and shared hardships, the poem depicts life as an ongoing play. Here each individual performs unique yet interconnected scenes. The poet emphasizes the transient and complex nature of these experiences. It illustrates how each person's role contributes to the larger drama of existence, often overlooked by others.

A famous passage that reflects the metaphor LIFE IS A STAGE is *All the world's a stage* from *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare. This passage explores life as a theatrical

performance. Here each person plays various roles across different "acts" or stages of life, from infancy to old age.

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.*

Shakespeare captures life as a series of roles we assume as we grow, presenting each stage as a scene in a play. Each "age" maps a shift in character and purpose. It tells us that life is transient and performative, with each individual contributing to a collective drama. This metaphor powerfully encapsulates the structured, ever-evolving journey of human life. It highlights its performative nature and impermanence.