

Rootless Wanderer

~~~Padmaja Mishra

The renovation of my ancestral home  
has been finished now lately.  
The rooms have been restored like before.  
The walls have been painted teal  
But my once excited self now regrets.

I was the one, who wanted to see it in a new frame.  
But that house no longer seems to be mine.  
Or did I live in a facade all these years thinking of it as mine?  
I don't hear the doors calling me back.  
Neither do I hear the incoherent echoes  
of my giggles in the childhood inscribed in the nooks of that house.

The walls now don't have the imprints of my tiny hands.  
Nor does it have my footprints dipped  
in the red vermillion dye as I ran through the porch.  
The greeting cards I pasted, the utterly imperfect drawings,  
the crafts I made out of bamboo shoots all are stories of a bygone era.  
As if they weren't there, ever.

The asbestos had greater comfort than the new roof.  
The patio where I fell in love with the moon and the stars is covered up.  
Not a single star peeps in.  
Not even the moonlight spreads its warm embrace.  
I don't find a single sign of me there.

Puzzled, I rethink, is this the same, where I dreamt of happily ever after?  
We haven't lived there since years, but at least I felt belonged to.  
But it pains me,  
My home has turned into a house again.  
And I,  
a rootless wanderer.

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