

Street of South Abbott

~~~ *Sumaya Firdous*

South Abbott Street, a quiet street, except after 8 pm when dogs set free themselves from the shackles of public rush during day hours. Houses of the streets, conscious of the situations around, engulf themselves in the darkness. Solemnly, she mounted on her bed and thought about the house in neighbourhood. These thoughts and images filtering through these thoughts displeased her. The house nearby has the possession of an Old man on the death bed. His face, like a canvas, carved with untimely wrinkles told the story of human destiny.

Time passed in a blink of eye. Short days and long nights turned into long days of scorching summers. Streets lighten-up with the lights and decorated with prominent three colours. People around her seemed to be the hound of a new order; lifeless and purposeless. One morning, before scorching day approached, she heard the sound of Clock Tower first time in her life. It was not the sound that could sooth her soul and spirit; instead it was like a pounding shell that had the power to stop a trickling heart. She stood there for a while, tried to take some rest at the same place where she used to sit, in the middle of two roads. It was the place beautifully constructed, surrounded by benches and roof-top so that the tired subjects of a frayed and ragged race could relax and found some peace. There used to be pigeons, people came and fed them and enjoyed the sight of their flight to freedom. But, she stood still there, in front of the bare and ravaged place. No place for a little stay, no pigeons, except dozens of wagers excreting their sweat and blood while laying some tile paths leading to nowhere.

She went home, resting on her bed, simultaneously looking at her book shelf. The shelf of books carried the weight of literature, bereft of her own identity and distinctiveness. She thought no one has explored indigenous literature. What could be the reason? Perhaps, they took things lightly and for granted. Next day, in the morning, she went to the city and thought to preserve some books that would tame and reclaim her identity. Unfortunately, every book seller shrugged their shoulders. When asked about the reason, they said, such books are no longer in the syllabus. So, it will be loss of business to keep such books.

Disheartened, she dejectedly left the last shop and found a roadside book seller. She looked at his collection and found one book only. She bought it immediately and kept it in her book shelf with this hope that her next generation will go through it.

On a morning of a fading summer, with the heat still having that bite, she was on the same road. Everyone around her was busy, vegetable vendors selling vegetables, sweepers cleaning roads, business about to start and a few School busses moving around for some event. They were singing patriotic songs and dancing. Public stuck in jam packed traffic. One driver tried to cross the signal as he had some emergency was beaten up ruthlessly. The city of hopes and opportunities where time could have been utilized for some good cause was drenched in chaos, bedlam and pandemonium. Everything wrapped in a hubbub of nuisance and annoyance for the natives of the land.

She reached her destination where she found a woman carrying her baby boy in her arms. The little boy was crying and his mother wasn't able to understand about his bad mood. She offered the boy a chocolate and both the boy and his mother felt it by heart. While sitting on her chair she understood that no one would speak or converse about the chaos and hubbub but would ignore and merely spent their days till they reach the stage of Old man in neighbourhood, though the old man had the memories of a beautiful past preserved in his chest, but the fate of the natives running helter-skelter was like the palms of the wagers working on the footpaths, ravaged and devastated.

~~~ *Sumaya Firdous is a passionate author who writes from the soul—a weaving that cannot go unnoticed in the world.*