

Poetry Series

Trivarna Hariharan

- poems -

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An Apology Letter To The Chai- Wala

(A 'chai wala' in Hindi is a local way of referring to people who serve tea, to the passers- by or other miscellaneous people, and eke a living out of it.)

His hands do not tremble
From over exertion or
Stress,
Like mine do, invariably,
At the very thought
Of how brilliantly I'd be able to
Pull off an errand assigned to me,
even before I set off to it.
His eyes do not
Complain of lack of sleep
Even after tossing dozens of sleepless nights,
Like mine do, every time
I stay up in my air conditioned, well-furnished room
Partying late with my friends.
His legs do not quiver
In pain, even after hours of
Standing long and running around,
Like mine do, after a brief while of jogging and sauntering around.
His mouth does not water for
The scrumptious delicacies he serves
Every day,
Like mine does, every another hour.
Hopelessly.
His stomach doesn't grumble one bit
for the tea he makes every day.
Like mine does, when my servant doesn't bring me my cup of tea at
Eleven in the mornings and six in the
Evenings,
Precisely.
His heart does not ache for a tip
like mine would, if I were him.
And to think that I scoffed him
today for a reason as petty
as my tea not being hot enough.
Is highly disturbing.
The poor soul didn't even retaliate

or so much as tell me that
he couldn't boil it properly
because the stove wasn't in working fettle.
The realization that he wasn't even at fault,
Is all the more excruciating.
I should've apologized,
Right away, I know.
But I'll do it my way.

I've put the tea on boil.
The fragrance permeates the air,
Just the way his optimism pervades the place.
It feels as warm as him.
As loving as him.
I glance at my watch in desperation.
Wondering if he will turn up.
A few minutes later, as if in an answer to my prayers, I see a slim
fragile little boy walking towards
my door.
I smile to myself in contentment.

I hope that he will enjoy the first cup of tea of his life.
And I hope that it will be the best one.

Trivarna Hariharan

The Art Of Smiling

He'd smile.
Always.
So much that it became quite irksome,
At times.
It wasn't like his world was perfect.
It wasn't like he was infallible.
It was just that
He revelled in his
Imperfection.
Some called him silly,
And some couldn't stand the sight of
a person with so much of
bliss within.
But I often wondered why
No one ever saw
How with every lofty smile
The hole in his heart widened.
I wondered why
No one ever saw how
His lower lip always trembled
A tad
Before putting on that
Deceiving façade.
He'd smile.
Always.
He'd taught himself to.
So he smiled
When the fish
In his aquarium died.
So he smiled
When the first
Love of his life
Told him that he wasn't good enough.
So he smiled
When his best friend
Forsook him
For a richer mate.
So he smiled
When they accused him

Of things he hadn't done.
So he smiled
When his father
Beat his mother up
For no reason.
So he smiled
When all everybody had for him
Was loathing.
He'd smile.
Always.
It was his camouflage.
What a perfidious misleading thing
His smile was.
I wonder if anybody ever bothered
To gauge his tears.
The tears that he wanted people
To see
Beneath the smile.
And the fact that
He wasn't the impeccable person
He posed to be.
I wonder if anybody ever cared
To learn that
He wasn't an angel
Bestowed with all the happiness in the world
He was just a man
Who had mastered the art of
Smiling.
Always.

Trivarna Hariharan

The Song Of The Soul

Those crinkles under his eyes, spoke of laughter.
His whisper, my song, an endless symphony of love,
with all its incoherent staccatos resounded in my heart
like an unforgotten song that has left an indelible
scar on the soul.

His verse, a mark
of my sanity, escalating from piano forte to forte
before finally making its way down to mezzo forte,
waltzing and tangoing,
all at the same time; stable, yet so quavering,
became a repository of sweet nothings to be cherished
for a lifetime.

His mellifluous voice, just like a baffled
fruit waiting to ripen, stayed eternally graceful and
ethereal, as it drew its way from adagio to andante,
ambling along our little sidewalk of dreams. Never dashing.
Never hurried. Soft, elegant steps of affability.

Just like the sound of an overture playing against the backdrop of
vintage wine pouring into a cut glass. Smooth, yet
tasteful. His demeanour, replete of
zeal and vivaciousness that transcended
the bars of meaningless rhythms to trace the
origin of melodies, sunk in with the resilient
largos of my phrases.

The legatos mingled with the staccatos,
the adagio with the andante, the base,
with the soprano, beautifully, yet articulately.

A saccharine, poignant, mortal piece of work,
That had into my heart found its way,
Rendering me grim and pining for more,
Long after it had receded away.

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