

Meeting Under The Starry Skies Of Gulmarg (rev)

She bent gently on the Gulmarg north slope and asked for my hand,
I pulled her up and the two of us started walking in the moonlight,
The mountainous halo draped Gulmarg in quiet elegance.

Why is Gulmarg so beautiful?

It is because here the mountains and skies meet in such a majestic way,
And the pine trees stand in such graceful solemnity to point to the almighty.

Kinara pulled me down to the ground wanting to sit down,
I obeyed her without objection,
We looked at each other's eerie moon-drenched faces
And instantly and simultaneously realized
That there could not have been a more romantic scene than that.
She pulled my hand to her torso and said, "Tell me, you will never leave me."
I looked deeply into her eyes pondering her question,
But before I could frame an answer she replied for me,
" In front of the eternity that we are witnessing at this moment,
Let us take an oath that only an eternity could break us."

She was as light as a bushel of conifers:
Petite and sleek, a shaft of velvet gleaming in the moonlit skies.
I lifted her with one arm and threw her away in front of me
To see how light she was.
She was not hurt but shrieked with cherubic delight.

The moonlight slow-danced with mellowed euphoria,
Hallowing Gulmarg's starry dome above.

She asked me if I had gone out with any other woman in Gulmarg's moonscape,
I replied that it might have been only in my dreams, which she did not believe.

Love is the reward for sacrifices one makes,
Pain is the catharsis for one's freedom,
Death is a punctuation mark in the search for the absolute,

Life is merely the vehicle of a being,
Gulmarg is not the truth but a road to it.

Suddenly we came to a stopping point
At the Gulmarg boundary leading to Tangmarg,
I realized that we had to part and was struck by pain,
Kinara would not leave my hand,
She asked me if I would see her again.
As I was coming from Pakistani intelligence I was hesitant to lie,
So, I suddenly pushed myself in the direction of my unit,
Glancing briefly at her crumbling face,
Tears flowed unabashedly on it,
Ultimately, she released her grip on my hand
And after one heart-full look at me told me,
“Adil, let’s never forget each other.”

I ran toward my unit on the other side of the mountain,
Suddenly I was startled by a helicopter noise,
I looked and saw a Pakistani helicopter descending in front of her,
I ran toward it yelling that she was my friend, not a spy,
Paratroopers jumped to the ground and pounced toward Kinara,
Spraying a hail of bullets,
She shrieked violently, “I am not a spy, I am a child of God,”
By the time I reached her she lay in a pool of blood -
As if draped in a red sari -
Inundating the ground around her,
In a few moments a face that smiled so well became still.

I hurled obscenities on troops,
They banded my mouth and handcuffed me,
I shook my arms and legs in protest
But was tossed into the helicopter,
Which became airborne momentarily,
I saw Kinara lying below as if in deep sleep
But the grand mountains of Gulmarg stood silent.

After I reached my unit
The universe seemed broken into a billion pieces,

Heaven and hell disappeared,
I was not sure if God existed.

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