

Perspective Of Time

It was some six weeks ago that I met you accidentally at my cousin's place -

Twenty-four years since I glimpsed your face -

The face that seems to have a new emotion playing on its sculptured contour -

The contour that made you different.

Your eyes were still securely placed under the arches of the same wayward dense eyebrows,

But the dissipated restlessness and the dark ancient glint in them were entirely new.

I approached you with excited trepidation, pained wonder;

You recognized me with an electric but unsure gesture.

Crossing the distance between us with measured flippant steps,

Your right hand hooked my neck in wild embrace,

While your withered mustache breezily rubbed my face.

We froze in that eternal silent union, till our speech rescued us from this strange moment.

Your face - the smooth monitor of your emotional world -

I found riven by the deep fault lines of pathos.

Its classic shape and sculpted features seemed smothered by strong sad experience,

The sparkle in the eyes was replaced with the dimness of distance and dismay.

The serene thoughtfulness and wonder had gone;

What was left was still smoldering ashes of an ancient fire,

Elegant ruins of a grand mansion.

Seeing you my life's checkered tapestry uncoiled,

Transporting me to the folds of our shared past -

Into the echoes of our histories;

To the nascent awareness burgeoning at the threshold of our young adulthood.

Concatenations of the past images coalesced into kaleidoscopic mosaics,

Breathing new life in the old joys and new vitality into the old pains.

In the inferno of our youth we were lead to dream of an enchanted life:

Of ideals and caring, of beauty and daring, of truth and adventure,

There would be causes to fight for and missions of justice to accomplish,
There would be inspiring challenges to meet and elevating work to perform,
Equality among people would be the norm and gender gap would go to permanent
nap,
Freedom of man would be guaranteed and the peace in the world would be a
cause to fight for.

We were buffeted by our innocence, propelled by our conscience;
Life appeared God's gift to us to create beauty and dream dreams;
The humankind was a community and its problems were our problems;
The current of life felt strong and the challenges before us were inviting.
Time ribboned out of its spool and all roads leaped to future;
We had the emotion to go ahead and seemed to possess the vision of our goals.

But the ways of the world soon unfolded their swooping arms,
Planting roadblocks in our projects.
There was much suspicion of our motives, much cynicism on our designs.
Soon our work looked tedious and our confidence started to wilt.
We lost the way to our dreams
And they haunted us with nightmares.

Why is human life so difficult,
Why are so many humans insensitive?
If God gave us capacity to dream,
Then why didn't he give us the resources to realize them?
The world has a long history, the human has come a long way,
But the strife for existence continues.

Much has happened all these years, much did not happen,
The irreversible arrow of the hallowed time made its ineradicable marks,
The transient blossoming of our lives withered on the way,
We paid the price for the shining spark of life,
Till the wreath we wore hurt us with its thorns,
For every joy we had, we paid twice in pain.

Life is a shining garden on the horizon,
For whose glory we are compelled to bleed.
It is a promise we must take unquestioningly.

A thousand times we fall on the way to Elysium,
But we must pick up ourselves and resume the enchanted journey,
We must not complain, as it is not the hero's way.

Today I look at your wasted face
And feel the perspective of time hallowing our lives.
I feel torn and ashamed that I could not do much to soften your misery.
We are a blip in the cosmic dance, invisible in the cosmic time,
What is man's life to the universe, what difference does our anguish make.
We are a brief spark in the blinding darkness,
Strewn planks of a ship wreck.