

***ENMITY AND OTHER POEMS***

**By Shalini Samuel**

Between you and me

A flame buds, slow and steady

Harsh and impolite

When you exhale, it burns my nose

When I exhale, it burns your hair

One day it may destroy us.

Dear enemy, I am fed up

When I hold a white flag

You burn it seeing the coward in me

Alas! White heart becomes black smoke

Blinding my eyes, the smoke escapes

You still hold the flame

I encase the flame in a glass box.

South door hears your deeper heart

North door understands your feelings

East door knows to tackle your rough mind

West door heals your wounds

The floor and roof, shows love and care

Behind those glass doors, the flame dances

Gradually hatred flicker disappears, sans fuel

In dearth of cherished seconds, we stare longingly

The seconds we exhausted propelling animosity, smiles.

***BALLAD OF JEPHTHAH (THE TRAGIC VOW)***

On a Monday morning, a handsome brave knight

Walking on the lanes of Mizpah, dreams of night -

The enthralling night sky survey with his only daughter.

Away from brawny friends, forgetting the slaughter

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, fantasizes he will lead

Jephthahhhh. His half-brothers call from the streets

Raneth he to hug them, sensing warm love beats

Love mocked at him; driving him out, effortlessly

Away from Mizpah, from his father's legacy

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, fantasizes he will lead

He ran to Tob, with a gloomy worn up heart

Not to be the pain of his loveable clan- apart

he went, faraway, with his followers, to the knoll

His heart was still vacant, waiting for the right fill

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

For Gileads, the Israelites days rolled by peacefully,

God brought them a danger, from Ammon, beautifully

Sons of Ammon, descendants of Lot, Israel's kin

Claiming Mizpah to be their lost land, came they, to sin

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

Oh the God favours Jephthah, the future king

Trembled, scared elders discuss, by a spring

Only Jephthah can deliver us from this trouble  
Hatred for the son of harlot, blasts akin bubble  
Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gillead  
Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

Oh the valliant son, welcomes the elders, obediently  
The very ones who laughed at his birth, frequently  
“What this harlot’s son can do for you?” asks he sarcastically  
Oh yeah. Trouble has brought you here, he laughs drastically  
Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gillead  
Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

Make me your king, if God gives enemies to my hand  
Agreeth they, for they have no way to save the land  
Before he walketh to the battle, the king, maketh a vow  
I will keep it Lord if you gift me victory, I promise and bow  
Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gillead  
Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

What was that tragic vow, the test of the Lord, the rouse?

I will give to you, whatever that comes out of my house

The one I see first, whilst I return winning, from battle field,

Peacefully, I will give it as burnt offering, my Shield

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

Valliant warrior, sent all his enemies for burial

Driving away the men who stood against Israel

From Aroer to entrance of Minnith, twenty cities

As far as Abel-keramim, he struck boldly with ease

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

The slaughter was great, he was the mightiest dome

Victorious, the son of harlot walks back to his home

To Mizpah, who is the first he will meet?

A cattle, a pet or a servant, his thoughts tweet

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

**BCAC-ISSN-2278-8794**

Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

Nearing the gates of his home, his heart misses a beat

His only daughter, with tambourine, dancing for the beat

Came running, happily, proclaiming her dad's victory

Alas Jephthah's pride dissolved, he fell like a sick tree

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, still dreams he will lead

The victory gala turned into weeping heartbreak

The responsible daughter rose up, out of the ache

Dear Dad, do to me as you have promised to the Lord

The Lord has given victory, let's keep up the word

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, still dreams he will lead

Tears flowing from Jephthah's eyes, longer than Nile

Wiped it she, with her brilliant, valiant smile

Give me two months, I and my friends will cry

Let the hills hear the sorrow of my virginity

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, still dreams he will lead

The love for his only daughter or the vow, his word

He was in the hall of judgment of the mighty Lord

Crieth he, of his ill-fated dream and the vow

To the wilderness, he let his Princess go

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Unaware of the tragic vow, dreams he will lead

Two months ran by, so fast, will the Princess return?

Jephthah, wished, she not return, to his dreadful castle

But she came back, keeping up the word, gracile

Her song still echoes in the hills and that cannot be written

Jephthah the son of harlot, the son of Gilead

Aware of the tragic vow, proffered his daughter.

the age old scroll unfolds itself, once again  
the vintage smell enthralls my soul  
I feel so possessive when my fingers move on it  
I try to read word by word, embossed letters smile  
the letters in gold, kisseth my bereaving soul  
I look again keenly,  
hoping I could find my oldest pal, could I meet him again  
I look again keenly,  
the letters in gold, kisseth my bereaving soul  
I try to read word by word, embossed letters smile  
I feel so possessive when my fingers move on it  
the vintage smell enthralls my soul  
the age old scroll unfolds itself, once again

**Bio**

**Shalini Samuel** born in Kanyakumari, southern tip of India. After completing her schooling (2002) from St.Teresa's MHSS, Kanyakumari, she graduated in Information Technology (2006) and took her Master's in Computer Science from Noorul Islam College of Engineering (2008), Kanyakumari. Writing journey of Shalini Samuel started as a blogger and slowly crept into Muse India. Holding the branches firmly she ventured into poetry. Her poems got published in International journals like Tajmahal review and she also contributed to Inklings anthology. More of her poems were published in journals in the past five years. Contemporarily she is venturing into fiction and essays too. She has written few poems in her mother tongue Tamil. Her passions include photography, gardening and cooking. She loves to take challenges and learn from it. She is eager to learn and cherish all nook and corner of writing.