

***ONE FOR SORROW, TWO FOR JOY AND OTHER POEMS***

**By Vinita Agrawal**

Mynahs were crucial to our happiness during school days

Sighting one, signified sorrow

Two, joy.

Three was for letters

Four for a boy

Five for silver, six for gold

Seven for a secret never to be told

We pined for two always -

two warm, coffee colored, yellow-beaked birds

hopping innocuously, unaware that they were making or breaking our day.

\*

Fifty now, I rarely step out, so I rarely spot them.

But when I do, I desire to see just the one.

Sorrow, the faithful one.

Better permanence than ephemera...

Better something that watches over you no matter where you are

Tucks you in to bed at night

Wraps your mind in its folds

it's tight fist closed over every beat

of your thudding heart.

At fifty, school days seem imaginary

Days where games were everything

Or vice versa

Where two gawking birds set the dictum to the day.  
I couldn't shed my burdens on the poor mynah now, if I tried.  
Couldn't unhitch sorrow's backpack from my shoulders  
and lay it like a dirty brown rag on sunny emerald grass  
Couldn't depend on ochre clawed two-for-joys  
to walk over it, transforming my day, just like that.

***THE BONSAI***

with aerial roots  
strives to be a forest in a living room  
despite the shallow chlorosis.  
Each root, each shoot  
breathes air from a fan  
and soaks in patches of mottled sunlight.  
The horticulture of growing great trees  
in tiny trays and beakers  
is all about careful trimming and wiring  
good soil and peat  
so that bark grows upon bark  
thickens with an infinite yearning to survive  
sometimes even flowering.  
A reflection of a vast landscape in miniature  
A nerve to live  
gloriously, valiantly  
on mere spoonfuls of water.  
And as the moisture makes heavy the roots,  
colors start to glimmer on its branches

displaying a desperation  
to be spared from oblivion.

**Bio**

Author of three books of poetry, Vinita is a Mumbai based, award winning poet and writer. Recipient of the Gayatri GaMarsh Memorial Award for Literary Excellence, USA, 2015, her poems have appeared in Asiancha, Constellations, The Fox Chase Review, Pea River Journal, Open Road Review, Stockholm Literary Review, Poetry Pacific, Mithila Review and over a 100 other national and international journals. She is contributing editor for [www.thewomaninc.com](http://www.thewomaninc.com). She was nominated for the Best of the Net Awards in 2011. She was awarded first prize in the Wordweavers Contest 2014, commendation prize in the All India Poetry Competition 2014 and won the 2014 Hour of Writes Contest thrice. Her poems have found a place in significant national and international anthologies. She has read at SAARC events, at the U.S. Consulate, at Delhi Poetree and at Cappucino Readings, Mumbai. She can be reached at [https://www.pw.org/content/vinita\\_agrawal](https://www.pw.org/content/vinita_agrawal) and at [www.vinitawords.com](http://www.vinitawords.com)

Author of Words Not Spoken, the Longest Pleasure and the Silk of Hunger.

[www.vinitawords.com](http://www.vinitawords.com)