

UNFINISHED RUINS

By Shyam Sunder Sharma

Tread gently amongst my ruins;
trample not the fallen leaves,
dead, yet they come alive with the breeze.

They rise and dance with the wind.
Oh! Visitor, be patient with them.
Hear them rustling and whispering tales.

And if they fancy you
then maybe they will even caress your cheeks.

Touch not, the headless torso,
does it not ooze royalty?

Hmm, it was once a king.
The king of forlorn hearts may be!
Its history is lost just as its head.
The king of hearts had little use
for it any ways.

Nothing is what it seems.
That dried up well under the banyan tree
is not just a dumping hole.

But if you have the thirst
then crouch real low,
with ear to ground
and you will hear
ceaseless water flowing underneath.

You don't have to dig it out of me
Trust me, the sound itself can quench the soul.

Scream not in my eroded inner chambers.

My crumbling sanctorum and
its falling facade is held up by
these cannibal walls
and props built belatedly.

Do you not know they snatch up everything,
every word that is flung at me.

But if you were to
just sit closely
for hours, for days,
for months, for years,
for decades, for a lifetime,
may be.

For the moment
when a bulbul would
swoop in and sing
then you will hear me
echo back after a pregnant pause.

Such inaudible sounds
always seep through these cannibal walls
built around me.

Tread gently amongst my ruins.
Do not drink off the earthen pots,
they leak, they do not contain
but drain whatever is poured into them.

It is a defence mechanism
you see,
they were lined with poison
yet refuse to kill,
instead they drain
whatever is poured in them,
bearing mute testimony
to historical crimes,
unwilling accomplices,
laden with conscience.

Such a sorry state,
they try hard to break down
but something holds them up.
Tread gently amongst my ruins.

ASTRONAVIGATION TO MOKSH

Gently,
he unfold the undulating map,
spots the spot, he seeks.

There it is,
just out of reach,
beyond the mounds and
their bounds,
across the lines that
crisscross,
there it is,
the spot called
detachment.

He bleeds that spot on the map.

Hush, hush,

He tells his pulse;

come this far on impulse.

Allowing the blood to clot,

He holds his palm upwards,

offering it to be ploughed

by the big dipper,

and then,

letting the *Sapt Rishi*

re-align his bearings.

Hush, hush,

He reminds his pulse,

come this far on impulse.

Moksh must be somewhere

across,

after we cross this horizon

of detachment!

THE ANGST

Ah! The chasm between
the reality and the shadow.

Never the twain shall meet.

What the eyes conceive,

what the heart perceives,

and the mind conjures

always run tangent.

This is the angst.

Not blind rage,

where vision negates,
what the sight deduces.

Coloured and shaded,
in prejudices and notions galore,
The image construed,
is never what it is meant to be.

Far removed from reality,
it takes the form
of a motif or a talisman,
spurring us to action
or an indecipherable amoeba,
that feeds silently
on our inaction.

If only,
the pulse could read,
what the impulses feel.

We would have
a clear image then,
Won't we,
of the shape of things to be?

THE KITE AND THE TREE

"Hey, I am so sorry, you got stuck,
I didn't mean to obstruct,
So sorry, hope you are not hurt!"

"Well, thanks to you brother,
you stretched your arm out,
I would have hit the ground otherwise."

"Oh, you are welcome,
I have been alone since seasons now,
it is been a while since the bulbul perched.
And you have such nice colours.
But tell me, why this string,
when you have wings?"

"I am a kite that glides with the winds,
but controlled by the string."

"Sigh!, Wish I could untangle you brother,
Just, you wait, wait for some other birds,
the bulbul is choosy and I have no fruits,
but I am certain, we will have some company,
and they will set you free.

"I would love to fly free,
to flirt with clouds and sing with breeze,
I am sure, you understand what I mean."

"Oh, yes, I do, hang on brother,
being tattered doesn't matter,
look how scraggy I am, still I stand!

Tuck into my arms if the wind gets strong.
I will ask the birds to set you free of this string,
how cruel to tie you up with this.

Hang on brother and wait,
your time shall come,
and then chase your dreams,

Episteme: an online interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary & multi-cultural journal

Bharat College of Commerce, Badlapur, MMR, India

Volume 3, Issue 4

March 2015

take off again with the breeze
that sings!

EPISTEME

BCC-ISSN-2278-8794

PAPER PLANES

His poems were so ruffled then,
they were never shared,
instead they were declared
to the winds.

He would scrawl his feelings
on clean white sheets of paper,
unfazed by his illegible hand or
the grammar and syntax.

Sitting on the ledge,
just below Gun Hill,
you will know if you
have been to Mussoorie.

He would fold up each poem neatly
into paper planes
and let them glide
with the winds.

Some would get trapped
in the undergrowth,
some would crash,
even before taking off!

But some flew,
out of his hands,
to beyond.

Gliding to where eyes
couldn't reach.

He never kept copies;
you see,

it wasn't easy for him
to read his own handwriting
& feelings.

Bio:

Lieutenant Colonel Shyam Sunder Sharma took premature retirement from the Army. He is a War wounded officer and recipient of Shaurya Chakra. Single parent to two daughters, Shyam is an avid birdwatcher and nature lover. He holds a Master's degree in English Literature. Published in various anthologies and magazines, Shyam was a Guest Poet at Fermoy International Poetry Festival at Ireland in August 2013 and the event coordinator of the Delhi Poetry Festival 2014. He is known as Driftwood Ashore on Face Book, where he also runs a very active Poetry Group - Poets, Artists Unplugged.