

The Frail Billet

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He instantaneously stepped towards the gigantic, splendid and glorious mosque which had the history of long breath but poorly mated one, since for a long time there was a rush of people, old and young dreams. The gates exalted yet often perplexing, like an urchin pigeon locked and sacked: this was merely a view of any long momentous dungeon whose bars were rustic due to the period of long and short monsoons, dry and hard summers, haunted and bewitched ramparts. An elongated epoch of splendor offered it a twofold advantage, what was begotten rose to its summit of praises: the tattered pieces of old and new clothes stitched on the steel gate bars were grimy to exorcize the free witches. A tree of Bunyan stood aloft, alone in the middle premises: a memento of long narration which beleaguered the dry twigs like some old chuckled bones and the sound seemed so gauche like civilization is falling. Soulless walls and roofs were in nasty conditions, sometimes there are such giant holes that a fat monk can easily peril through it. It was a nebulous day and often the western winds drifted the clouds hither and thither.

“This may be my last step” uttered Hashim in a crying mood “if this be not, I will end up badly. Terrible the journey! Terrible the destiny and bad the thought”.

Soon the mellifluous voice of muezzin pierced through his ears, a soft Song of Dawood; high and low pitch gave a double benefit to thaw out the old rusted hearts:

“I bear witness there is no god but God”

As the voice began to mount after every break, the sweat bubbles began to appear on his warped nose and fell simultaneously in a regular pattern. His body began to shudder like a brood of an Ababeel left for an ill destination. He wiped his beard immediately and sighed deeply.

An old man passed before rapidly, pushed him slightly on his left shoulder “sorry, old man...you not old....poorly boy...hungry? No hungry me, you hungry”.

He spoke in broken English and then hurriedly opened the outer gate of the mosque:

"You enter the mosque? Non-Muslim? You church having, No...Everyone has Muslim...No! such a fallacy” he asked while being extensive furious.

The old man was so enchanting, although having a withered face and a stark white beard redolent of an antique civilization carrying with it the history of such a long time: a live figure of some old statue whose shoulders have fallen into crumbs and whose face is coarsen with plenty of dust, yet so an astonishing picture it was. This old man has since been the custodian of this mosque when a dearth of six years ended after people prayed after him for two days. The drought was over and people became happy thanking him for his favors. Soon people began to perceive him as a linking bridge between themselves and God. He remembers how then his father brought a long pinafore for this rector and since then he is wearing it through summers and winters, though now a shabby and old Pheran it has turned, it is nonetheless a remembrance of long history.

10 years ago, Muneera, as was the name of his daughter, became the appalling object of the whole village, with her eloquent and charismatic features bewildering the young folk who would wait vainly for her return. She would pierce the whole village with tetchy steps and magniloquent movements and walk straight beside the roaring river. Her two long front locks confused her eyes which were uncoursed after a genteel wind passed through the banks and her dupatta was unstitching again and again from her shoulders. The perfume she spread, like the intellectual smell, was so innocent that grudged the whole band of faeries. She was intelligent, brave and sensitive, and she was unlike while likely everyone. As she knocked the giant wall, a tiny creature appeared like a Bengali farmer, a small nose, little head, two fast eyes, and two short legs and unlocked the gate. The college was in apparent confusion with dense clouds sheltering the college in an extended lap. What happened subsequently happened but only wretchedness and corrosion which has crippled his body in horror and fear.

“Who kneels down before his majesty? I wouldn’t at least” he alleged lightly, not being so encyclopedic “What is it that frightens me, what damn, what? my arms! My legs, eyes! Oh so mortified my forehead” Cried and fell down Hashim before he tried to move his way to the entrance.

The condition worsened and he deteriorated to a chicken leg, supple and frightened, managed to bury his face under legs. What sediments could stand or what rocks hold their spaces behind this ditch of horror, so disturbed was everything, in such bewilderment and darkness, at a long sight there was no human being nor any demon or Jinn but void was everything as if every tree was there but soulless, no walls but bewitched: there was that sky too which shook its head under intimidating clouds. At a snail's pace he looked back and what he saw was but a poem he wrote that night “To my Jaan”;

To death which makes turbulence
 You shall be no more, nor your wishes
 So frail and easy that are
 Sing to that lord created.
 Nor the boundless sky shall you see
 What hills or towers of immense strength?
 But He that when says “be”, done is all
 Let us melt then
 To streams, summers, and seas we praise,
 In my lap let the flowers sprout
 Tearing their heads in peace and love

The sun rose early, shone like a smoldering lamp and ran towards the destination: a fair destination which had an end, a clearly visible path so tempting, alluring or magnetizing and waiting with a burning stick. A little creature passed before his legs with resentment and haste, Hashim slowly pushed it with his feet to the other side but all the while it was taking its end breaths. Horror and dismay spread through his nerves and he began to tremble, _ the body was shivering and tumbling_ so frightened, and nervousness prevailed throughout his body, a sudden cry came:

“Now you will kill me with my weakness” he sighed, “how I am going to kill an animal? If I kill not it is killed already. What this world has other than death? Every day so many people are killed and at night all die in darkness _ those who die not are already dying. So many souls fly, so many shrivel, so many cry, there are desiccated and emaciated souls, soft and brittle ones, hard and scrumptious_ so wretched a life”.

He remembers how_ and mumbles with the addition of esoteric shocks which wobble his hot blood to shores, that immediate past or yesterday: so scaring and dark it was, a heavy pillow upon a tiny creature creeping and ambushing_ a burning mantel of extensive heat ran in his whole body. He immediately checked his Whatsapp messenger but oh, he had already cleared the whole chat history early this morning but a deuce again kidnapped his nerves and he immediately backed up: so fed was he, but no less a treacherous old man. He began to read, read and read; more than an experienced catalyst was he and fell down while reading his message:

“dher is smthng but insnty of vich ai m dyng”

“u chose madns” She had replied instantly

“madns???”

“I m consumd”

“whi shld u er thnk fr mi, hu the Iblees drvs u to mdnes. Becids I dn’t kear f uthrs hav to dy raily fr mi. Mi dr frnd, I m pst d aig...”

“ Pst de aig? hehe... r u rail?”

“sai nt wht u thnk”

“I mst sai...whi shud pple nt sai thei thnk. Whi evr hmans neid to prtnd...flsfying cmfrt. Li!li!li...saste loog hai ajkal”

“ dig untu de erth... dis phlsophy neids nt wrk n. I m bhodie nd vil b maryd imdatly....soml vil b watng”

“ iz dere a devil dat I trst”

“ I prfr nt to”

“ dn I vil nt liv n absens”

“ u hav sch a lrg mouth.... du nt spyke to mi nd nvr. Wat ppl vil thnk, I vil brng shaim to mi home....pleeeez beh Khudais Hawal”

“lstn!lstn!lstn....suno” the message remained single marked.

This became the daily routine of interaction and every time Hashim was flickering through different apps to check her status and posts. “If there was anyone in her life it must be palpable or somebody would have known or will know”. These obsessions made him a scavenger and he would skip lessons and chapters “For God’s sake, hold me to your chest..... you are so pure and unexposed. My sweet chobrii...lets come to no ways we had our destination, but a fair journey with no outer skirts, to little hamlets we enjoy natures bestowed cherubic, to heavens with unlimited distance, to stars so glittering, to heavens our muse shall smell, to bewitched woods we shall have our day, to threatening clouds we shall forget all wisdom. Then we are not ourselves but that mermaid shall you be and I will have my ways following you in a dense and evil world. Oh, such a world shall we possess, no grievances nor references, no records nor dairies, like baby chickens we shall fall, with fears, but no solitude or fake wisdom, no embellishments nor similitude, poor beings then we are, besieged ducklings driving in melodious days. If you shall be, be my comfort, my fishling!! Let's walk meekly and calmly, beneath my shadow shall your eyes glimmer like an etch, so naked the eyes may bring holocausts, gulls to wave in the air, asteroids to melt on the earth and faeries to mourn of their feathers. If only you shall be, be a leaf that I will carry you, blithe you, spread you, drive you, catch you, unease you then my dear.. we shall have supper among the starry havens. My Hoor where are you running, my..my..mmm”. He busted down on the floor like a boneless chicken, murmuring to himself, terror was spreading throughout his body after his jaws began to strike knees. The tremendous effort he put, again and again, to stand on his legs but the poor miserable thing was stumbling and falling. His body was quivering so intensity that people began to encircle this creature and were waiting for him to be dead or half dead. No man could durst to approach him as the tears were so heavy and falling in a fixed order and the sound seemed like bricks of strong age were breaking or similar to that of

fire consuming woods of tiny ages: everyone who tried to get hold of his arm felt himself as concatenated with a running trimmer.

It was till late night that he found himself sleeping in an upper storey of his house. Unable to locate where he was, he made some haste to run for a cigarette and made a search of his pockets but the pack was missing. This made him intense and he stroke the door at once ran towards nowhere. He searched all the streets which lead to his home like a lunatic but to only a futile search, he began to look for butts. Not a single cigarette butt was there and he began to patter back but to his amusement what he saw was a dustbin bearing the name "Use Me". He turned back and tried to look inside it but he loathed while he put his head in it. Again knelt down to regain his breath, Hashim, with the support of this bin, got up and again put his head in it. "There stands my comfort... a little butt it is, I will at least have two sucks... thanks, thanks to the gentleman who left this jewel". He produced a wet matchbox and tried the stick but no fire came until last one. To his good luck the stick stroke at the corner edge and it was light but to his fate, the butt was squashy and not a single wreath came from it. He spoke loudly and then broke beside this bin.

"Hayei Aala Slaa, Haaye Aala Slaa" uttered Muezzin with peace and tranquility. Immediately his eardrums caught this beautiful voice and with half-closed eyes he observed around but everything was still. No messages were there, no cigarettes nor the clock. It was only a fearful memory that tore him down and his lips began to vibrate in utter confusion and fear. Besides this voice which was so high, there was utter quietness in the village. Only some small maggots could be seen buzzing in the air which made the environment more than a battlefield, black and grey armies threatening one another: so pleasant yet astonishing atmosphere it was. As Hashim raised his stance to that old man who had not gone so far, he could see his

mother calling him when he was preparing to leave for college. This was an unusual and matchless soul which seemed to surround him, torture him and haunt in dreamless nights. She appeared before him at least every Friday night when that bright cataract sucks the darkness to its end. Besides she was every thought to him, in ecstasies and sorrows, a beautiful phantom at least that filled him with a reason to live on. This time Hashim could see her coming from Mehrab and slowing down in bright clothes. A soft mermaid-like she appeared before him and began to wipe his tears and once more he fell into a beautiful dream. She had bought khandtum (sugar and rice mixed) in polythene and poured it in his pockets. Immediately a handful of khandtum he put in his mouth and the sound was so crunchy “Hummmmmmm”, began his steps towards his destination.

“My mother who are you calling... to that son who left you for your Lord, look look!! She is calling me. She to whom I am kingly and to world a filthy maggot. My mother...haaaaa, hold me...Look! look she is calling me and pearls, that are falling from her buttery cheeks, have such a taste. Wrap me and let me sleep in your embrace!! Your spirit that’s flying in the air, let you enter in my heart and mend me again to the world that tore me. The taste of your sweat is better than perfumes spread in heavens”. As he slumbered again to the past, Muneera appeared again and he began to read from the diary and a fountain of drops began to hang on his lids which fainted the surrounding

“uh t iz dfclt to mke u undrstnd, hv drly...”

“hv drly???” she made the reply after an hour later.

“I hav felngs fr u.... lstrn”

“u r insane.... Vee r poles aprt nd so shud u be”

“ whi hmns hav dis prtnsn alvais n maind.... Whi shld thei always thnk aaf bndries.. wht dmn!!dmn, ppl soo poer nd needi r tlkng of lainds.I wud always prfr to b an anml insteidd of humn. Ask a chineze if hee iz nt brn n indean, f thei hav lss bones or glands or thei hav les substns”

“ so gud but I alveys had sm1 n mi dreims... sm1 I kear for, de boi I raily lov and vish wee always wer tghthr, mi arms dat r so dsprate to hold hm”

As soon Hashim read this message, the phone fell down from his hand and he took a long breath, sighed and smoked. He didn't reply till it was late night nearly 3 o'clock in the morning and wrote "My dear Muneera....you had immense pleasure while declaring so simply, I had much pains while letting you go. So simply you spoke!!! So simple and innocent words", he stopped at once and lit another cigarette. He spoke to his mind "what if she is diluted by some wicked and devil man" he thought "she might have been enjoying in some arms from years and....ah yes of course...what did I say? Nothing did I say. What? ", he continued while clearing boogies with the little finger and tried to lie down. It was a rainy day and he spread his Pheran immediately over that old Kangri and wandered, mourned over his past consequences. He slumbered again and raised his stance.

Straight away he looked towards the sky which was still in performance with the specks of rain flying in the air but the mountains were still demining at each stare. The sun strait like a burning atom on the roof, hopping and dancing with the blushful heat, pricking and erasing everything in its way. So nihilistic and void atmosphere it was after the rays periled through the cataract bringing holocaustic odors to mind, it was not merely an expression or temptation but an abscond fire which tears the memories grinded of centuries. The tears did fall in an array of flash raindrops, no dissimulation of any kind but to lathe wrath and fury that summoned death some

smells. The exhaustion was much more than fatigue of a long days plough under an Indian sun. He looked at the front door and all he could see was his mother calling loudly “Hashim.....Hashim, look!! Add some more sugar in your pocket”. He leaned on the third step that pushed his thoughts back to a decade and he fell down onto the least step. He could see again those haunting days of spring noon filled with much confusion and wrath. He had then reached to the college, which was very close to his house, much earlier than usual.

As early he reached the college, the body of long structure wrapped in an Abaya met the same feet at the entrance. When Hashim raised his stance, all was still and what his senses perceived was but a shock that would quite his whole story of life. Her rapid steps proved to be a paralyzing impact for his nerves. A soft journey was beginning to run towards destruction and wrath. As the classes began to be commenced, a bell rang making an awesome and pleasant sound in intervals; he saw a broil chicken hiding face with her bright feathers. It was her and he slowly made his way on the same table. As Mr. Pickwick began to teach with “it was a bad morning and a pleasant sound when Mr. Mole left his home early. He saw that on a high chinar tree there was an owl calling_Gubroo...Gubroo. It was weeping perhaps and tearing its feathers which were swinging in the air like a ship rising to skies against furious tides. Under the same tree, she owl was sleeping calmly. As Mole took it in hands, she breathed her last breath and....”. As Mr. Pickwick was flickering in the class and sometimes mumbling, Hashim spread his legs and swung them to left continuously until the pointed end of his shoes touched Muneera. She at once looked surprisingly and in great confusion towards him. He groped her legs in his feet and she contended to ease the grip but to no result. Her face was turning pale with flashes of surprise and anger. The wrinkles on her cheeks were spreading like strong tides towards her ears

and while she was looking with more opened eyes nowhere, calmly spreading the marble sheets over her eyes. Since then she became a “no” for his every proposal.

The last time Hashim opened his eyes; he saw himself lying on the bare ground and began to move his lips but failed to say anything. His face had no regressions nor happiness but he was beginning to fall into a deeper sleep while peace was spreading in his eyes. Perhaps he was in continuous contention to speak a few words but he was failing again in his struggle. Perhaps he was trying to say “Goodbye..thank you...I found you”.

“ Allahu Akbar Allaaaahu Akbar”

The body lay straight to the face of mosque and all was quiet. His left eye remained half closed while a soft pearl stood hanging there and then moved slowly until it tried to enter in his mouth. A sudden, pure and innocent, little smile spread on his lips and hanged until his face was wrapped. No birds sang and no one wept. The vast sky could not feel the strength of determination this body had in his ambition nor was it mournful, but simple it lay over the head sending extensive fury on earth. The motion of the winds was but genteel and calm, no sighs nor any grief. That’s the law of nature, it never mourns nor grieves to either good or bad soul. No one affects it. So calm and simple. It keeps unchanged... No cries. No regressions. No tears. No sighs. Usual. True. Honest. Selfish. Cruel. Pure...

“LAA ILAHA ILLALAH”