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## A Love Poem

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Whenever there is a demand from her, I start thinking what to tell, how to tell, drama, emotions, situations and in some cases morals. Seldom, I draw a blank, but silence will never satisfy her. Then, I force, and ferret out an incident or two from my mind and drive her to sleep. This night, I have something for her, ready to travel in a world, of which she has no clue of.

“Pa...Grand pa, no sleep....story, story.” A usual, expected demand from Bali at nine. This night I am prepared.

I was, that day, eagerly waiting for Ramu. Ten is not his time. By now he would have left his office, for my village. I know, I can expect him post lunch or by early evening, at four. Even after being recognized as the poet of all times, at sixty, I cannot be myself, moments before opening the letter, often sent by the award committees.

I wanted to calm down, be more spiritual, stable. Hence, decided and selected a village deprived of network and telecommunication facilities to stay, just a few weeks before the judgment. This is India, I can find peace.

Three plates having peels of different fruits, six cups of tea were there to witness my walking and my habit of talking to myself. I cursed another witness, the ever running clock. He never cared for me. Didn't stop when I wanted him to. His sound, rhythmic, tik-tik, was irritating.

Finally, his cycle's bell started ringing or I just started hearing it. The bells' sound, my heart beats were racing against it. My poems, oh! Dearest of all. My creations. You would lose, now, at this moment. All those thousand lines were in front of my eyes, narrating the agony, pain I suffered and the time I spent on them, removing a word, a mark, beautifying the pale sentences, what not. I started hating them. The bell stopped.

“Ramu.” He was not answering my calls, looked depressed and dejected. I have lost it. His gestures were clearer than the words written in that small letter. I sat down, thinking nothing, wiping my sweat. My lines, lines without value, without readers, recognition. What are they? I doubted. My poems, are they just words without feelings, meanings, emotions, why the world is so cruel that they cannot read and feel them? Don’t they speak? My poems, are they dumb? No voice? All of a sudden, he threw an envelope at me, “What kind of a poet you are, can’t you write anything for a woman, a simple woman, working all the time?” I couldn’t respond to Ramu’s outburst.

“Words, words, only words...”.....”Useless.” Ramu went on saying.....

“Gita said no, again, warned me not to praise her or write poetry on her. Eyebrows, hair, lips, legs. What is this? Autopsy?” I started making sense of his anger.

Known for romance, Ramu had pleaded me for a poem to impress Gita. That’s the time I wrote ‘.....’

“Can’t you understand me, her, life? Beauty...body, what have you written?”He went on and I was more worried about the envelope that was lying right there....

Oh! Her eyes are closed, she is off to bed, can hear her breathing, snoring....

And the letter read,

Dear .....

Congratulations on winning the Best Poet of the Decade award for the poem ‘.....’ The talent you showed in writing this poem is worth of all respect. Your words do speak. ....

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