

Translation of Anwar Kamar's Urdu Short Story

“ROTI RISAAN” In English

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Abstract

Anwar Kamar was an urdu short story writer. His short story Roti Risaan was written in Urdu and it deals with the feelings, emotions and helplessness of a blind person and throws light on the plight of a blind welder. This is about Feroz, who was a welder, and one day while welding he lost his eyes. The writer has very minutely depicted the helplessness of a blind person and how he becomes dependent on others even for small acts. This story throws light on the issues related to the identity and psychological condition of a blind person, fidelity of women, the plight of a proletariat like a welder and conditions in which a welder has to work. This story was written in urdu and this is the English translation of Kamar's short story Roti Risaan.

“Well-wisher”

When Rafeeq and Zebalnisaa went into the room and we heard the sound of latching at the door, I saw that blind Feroz's face became pale and his forehead began to sweat.

He said, “Brother Rasheed! I had put my cigarette box here just now.” While saying this he started searching it turning his hand on the table which was placed between us. Giving him that box, after picking it up from the floor, I said – “ It had fallen down, take it. If you say, shall I light it.?”

“No, you do not bother, I can light it.”

Lighting his cigarette Feroz smoked. Then he said, “I was a certified welder in Bharat Bijli Company of Bombay. It was just six and a half year had passed, I was welding wearing my glasses, suddenly one spark arose, ripping the protective glass niche and melting the glasses, it sat down in both of my eyes.”

Saying this, Feroz lowered his black eye glasses and showed me his eyes. There was nothing, but one and a half inches deep pits, explaining the plight of his eyes. Then he said,

"When I regained consciousness, after several hours, I was in permanent darkness. When I turned my hand on the face, I felt several layers of bandages tied on my eyes."

Zebalnisa was weeping, putting her head on my feet. I said, "Why are you crying?" what happened? I will get well soon. Where is Zafar?"

She started crying more loudly and it was so loud that hospital bed began to tremble. A few hours later doctor came on visit and he did not keep anything secret from me. I was informed that I had lost not only my eyesight but my eye clods too.

"I had worked in the company for five years. Taking its given fund, Bonus, and accident insurance allowance, we came to Nasik. Here we bought this house. When we bought it, it was not so strong and airy. We have spent enough money for making it new."

"You just spoke about Zafar, is Zafar the name of your son?"

"Yes. These are summer vacations and he has gone to his aunty, my sister's home in Bombay" There is an English Boarding School in Devlaali. It is called Baanz High School; Zafar is getting education there in fifth standard. This is the same school in which Yusuf Shahab used to study during the time of British Rule."



We heard some bold and frank talk between Rafeeq and Zabalnissa from inside the room and I saw that vexation on Feroz's face became more visible and cheerfulness of his soul began to disappear. Shortly after some time we began to feel enthusiasm, fun and love in their talk.

Feroz's head began to shake and the cigarette between his fingers began to tremble. He said, "If you don't mind, shall we move to the courtyard."

I knew that he did not want the road roller of shamelessness should anymore move on his manliness and nobility. When we came and sat down in the courtyard, he got rid of those voices and felt relaxed. He lighted the second cigarette and spoke after taking a sigh and smoke of relief. "Can you see a well in the courtyard?"

I said, "Yes. I can."

Zebalnisa says that it is very deep. She always stops Zafar from going near it, but she herself pulls water, filling the container for household use. Please do come here in the spring season. Here is all green in all the directions. You can see so many types of birds here in the spring season that this thick Neem tree seems to present the picture of a crowded airport. I get my cot laid in the very courtyard."

Sometimes Zafar, sometimes Zabalnissaa and sometimes Roti Risaan like you speak to me about all these things. I have lost my eyes, but I can still hear, speak, test and feel.

“While pulling container from the well, when Zabalnissa sings ‘My Sweetheart became unfaithful’, twittering birds on the tree become silent and with their whole attention begin to listen her song. Very often some high speed truck passes on the speedway; otherwise, here is always silence.”

At the same time we heard the sound of latch opening from inside the room.

I saw that vexation lessened form Feroz’s face but now he was in a state of disappointment which dominated his existence. He was sitting bending his head.

“Rasheed! Would you sit?”

Considering, Feroz’s presence, Rafeeq spoke through such gestures, which made me realize that I had experienced something unusual. Zebalnissaa was a non-ordinary woman.

Standing from the chair, I looked at Zebalnissaa, medium height, wheat color, curly hair, brown eyes, proportional nose, bright teeth, smiling lips, long neck, open throat blouse on which in spite of her Sari’s border being placed, one could feel the rise and softness of her breasts. Pulling her sari’s border from the chest, she had caught it up at the waist.

“Ok! Feroz Shahab, shall we go now.” I said.

“Feroz said with great hesitation, “If you come again please do take us to Zafar’s school in your car. Principal would be very happy meeting us.

We sat into the car, which was parked outside the courtyard. Feroz was standing with the help of a walking stick. Zebalnissaa standing near him kept on bidding us adieu, waving her hand, till very far away.

Work cited:

Ashraf Khalid: Barre Sagheer Me Urdu Afsana, volume 2, 2011, Modern Pub. House New Delhi.