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LAYLA MASCARENHAS

Beggars in Love

Knock! Knock!
Who's there?
A lover.
A lover who?
A lover who wants your love.
Get lost!
Why?
You're a beggar, not a lover.

Knock! Knock!
Who's there?
A beggar.
A beggar who?
A beggar who wants to share a few coins with you.
Welcome! You're not a beggar!
I am.
You're a giver!

Two beggars sat at the street corner
Keeping each other company.
Sharing bread and stories.
Nothing much to give,
Only presence.
The Master passed by
Dropping coins in their bowls.
Give us today our daily bread!

Forwards

Forwards.... Can anyone stop them??
Good Morning...Good Night...Sweet Dreams...
Arrrrgh!!
I'm glad that WhatsApp limits
The number of forwards to five at a time.

Even at festivals
People don't stop
To personalize a message,
But send a one-size-fits-all

Happy Diwali, Eid or Christmas.

I'd prefer a single line
Typed out by someone
Who'd really cared to ask
How I am.
And actually bothered to read my reply.

A simple
Howz U? Would do.
Health? Improving?
Job scene?
Family?

Earlier, people called to ask
How Are You?
Now, beautiful sunsets, cats and dogs,
With words superimposed
Impose themselves on you.

Twenty years ago it was heart-tugging email forwards,
Ten years ago it was SMS jokes.
And I worried that a colleague was being forward
When he started forwarding four per day.
It's a 500 messages pack, don't worry! I was told.

It's the speed and ease
Of sending without thinking
Funny memes and videos that made you laugh.
Wi-Fi made it cheaper
And sends the canned stuff faster.

I think a charge of one buck
Would do the trick.
Just one buck would make people stick
To messages that matter...
Loving, meaningful exchanges.



BIO-NOTE

Dr. Layla Mascarenhas spent 19 years raising a family of four while working part-time. She now works full-time as an Assistant Professor of English at V.M. Salgaocar College of Law, Miramar– Panjim, Goa. She researches Children’s Literature, Animated films, and Teaching- Learning strategies at Higher Education. She writes poetry, sings and plays the piano.

Email: stillbuzzing@gmail.com

