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TRIJITA MUKHERJEE

Dr. N. Mukherjee

The name plate on the outer wall of the house says

Dr. N. Mukherjee

B-15/74

Dr. N. Mukherjee is a grandfather
and he resides in this house, I tell you
in the photographs on the walls
of the drawing room, the tv room, and his bedroom
in front of which grandmother, M. Mukherjee
lights an incense stick every day.

He lives in the medical books
now collecting dust on table in his bedroom,
In the cotton and woolen shirts and pants in the almirah,
in the bottles of sorbitrate tablets hidden in various corners
like the lining of the sofa, under mattresses,
in the fridge, on the dining table,
in the event of a sudden heart attack-
he suffered eight heart attacks my mother has told me.

He lives in the broken stethoscopes
and other medical instruments on a shelf,
bills stuck for the last ten years,
in case he ever needs them, on an iron rod,
his walking sticks, one dismantled,
the other resting against the sofa in the tv room.
There are shelves in the kitchen with
empty bottles of Horlicks Lite because he had diabetes.
Tea mugs he drank from, gathering oil and grime-
he loved gobhi pakoras in the evening.

In the big closet hangs his sweaters and coats
from the loving, dear sister from America
and batteries, pliers, screwdrivers
with which he could fix anything in the house
and playing cards and a plethora of broken, unused things
like staples and staplers and paper weights
from various pharmaceutical companies
on the dressing table and in the drawers.

If you sit in the verandah in the evening
you will sometimes see him walking around the house
with his hands behind his back-
he is scared to venture out of the house anymore.

Of Men and a Woman

Checking my phone in between writing
Shows 'no notifications'.

Not getting WhatsApp and Insta messages
Makes me feel forgotten by the men

Who remember me when they are horny
My life revolves around men

For them I postpone my heartbeats
And adjust the pace of my pulse.

I am trying to learn self-restraint
In this, one cannot give away one's tinder stories.

Like the time a guy climbed off of you
And said "I am done."

Or the time another one
Looked down your bare back

And said "whoa you are hairy".
I mistake longing for love

And desperation for love
And loneliness for love

And silent screams, for love.
I am naive and stupid

All their synonyms and everything in between.
I scroll through profiles of strange men on dating apps

And send them clever one-liners

And questions that I think will grab their attention

Because I have reduced myself to an existence
That depends on the might of a man.

I say I am a feminist
All I am is a lonely little bitch.

PALAM TALKIES**(for paulami aunty)**

To explain to the cab driver where he has to arrive

I have to give the reference of the palam phatak-

“Aap palam side hain ya Delhi cantt. side?”

Palam phatak is the centre of our existence-

Get stuck at it when a goods train is passing by

And you will be late by an hour

on your errand to the tailor

Or to Amrita’s parlor

(150 rs. for a normal wash, with conditioner)

In the midst of work and cooking and TV

You can hear the trains sounding their whistles-

A forlorn call to wash away passengers

Waiting at the station.

A walk from home to gate no 1

Brings me to cigarette shops

(Ek pe udhari chalti hai)

And the mandi, which has its own politics-

Society gates ke samne mehenga

A little ahead, sasta

Phatak ke uss paar mehenga

Phatak ke iss paar, sasta-

Sasti zindagi ke mehenge phal.

It's a small town if you think about it,

Almost defying Delhi

And screaming it's lackadaisical ways

In narrow gulleys and honking scooters and bikes.

I live in Palam,

phatak ke paas.

Haus khas se 130 rs. bante hain.

Do come over for tea.



BIO-NOTE

Trijita Mukherjee has completed her post-graduation in literature in English from Ambedkar University, Delhi. She started writing poetry at the age of 14 and has written for school and college magazines and journals. Trijita has been published in *WiFi for Breakfast* brought out by Delhi Poetry Slam and her visual art has appeared in *Otoliths*. Born in Pune, she has changed many cities and 11 schools but Calcutta remains her favourite city and she hopes to go back and live there someday.

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