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SHREYA PATHAK

Men are not medals

It was sometime back,
When I stop treating men as medals
To be worn around the neck.
That was the time when I discovered
Those men who didn't treat
A woman as a precious possession.
They let her discover herself,
Uncover her inner being
And never let even their strongest desires
Weigh her down.
Even in her darkest and most passionate,
They let her find the light on her own.
And when she let her guard down,
They waited patiently for her
To get back on her feet.

So, I realised men are not medals,
To be worn around the neck
Or to be displayed on the wall.
For when we win medals
We want to preserve them,
We don't want anyone to touch them,
What admire them from a distance
And applaud the winner of the medal
For what she has achieved
With sweat and determination.

No, men are not medals
To be worn around the neck
Or to be displayed on the wall.
When once I had treated a man like a medal
He simply drifted away
An invisible space crept in,
Little by little; as he kept
Drifting away, overcome by a feeling of suffocation
And a continuous fatigue,
Too tired to please or gratify me,
Too tired to talk or walk or even look
For when you preserve something for too long,
You forget to treasure it.
Do pickles thrive in preservatives,
Men, like women, simply wither away.

So, I learnt my lesson the hard way.
While medals need to be kept closed,

Men should be left on their own at times.
While medals need to be showcased,
Men must be allowed to walk free.
While medals must be dusted and cleaned every day,
Man can remain unkempt sometimes.
While the medals must be shown off to others,
Men must be treasured within the heart.
When a woman treats her man right
The man too, must find a way
To give back the mutual respect and love.
Such a man is more precious
Than a medal or an achievement
For you will never fear losing him in the crowd.
Thus, men are not like medals
To be worn around the neck
Or to be displayed on the wall.

The Scars on My Body

Eons later, he returned to inspect the scars on my body.
The scars that he had left,
With whiplashes and knife marks
Of broken promises
Of unanswered expectations
Of bent wills
Of deceit and lies, and rejections.
My body had become a veritable map of the scars.
Time had healed them but hadn't been able to erase them.
Let me tell you the tale of my scars.

The one on my back,
Was from the time when I wanted and he didn't.
I was young and immature,
I didn't know that asking for what I wanted
Could leave a whiplash,
Right across the middle of my back.
Hence, the gaping wound to remind me
That women must not demand.

Then, there is the one on my right inner thigh.
How I got it is a funny story really.
It's from the time when I didn't want but he did.
So, he pulled down my pyjamas
And slashed it right across.
That was to teach me an important lesson
So I'd never repeat my mistake.

There's one on my face too, the ugliest of them all.

It ran across the entire length of my left cheek.
It had appeared for the first time when he lied to me,
And I saw the things I wasn't meant to.
It kept getting longer and deeper every time I saw
The texts, the photos and the call logs.
The night he didn't come home,
The scar on my cheek began to bleed.
This is also the one that has healed the least.

But the deepest scar is the one near my heart.
I cannot clearly remember when it happened.
It had appeared for the first time,
After being together for six months, I think.
A feeling of rejection that turned into an open wound,
When I had given everything but received nothing.
It was almost invisible for a long time,
And was made so stealthily, that I wouldn't have noticed it,
Had it not been for the constant dull pain near my heart.
The more I gave, the deeper the gash became,
Because, each time I gave, I received nothing in return.
But the night he left with the other
Was the night the scar near my heart began to bleed profusely,
Issuing love-blood.

Years had passed, the scars had healed, the marks still visible.
He decided to come back and inspect them.
He took off my dress,
He touched each scar trying to recall when and how they were inflicted.
His memory failed,
But mine didn't.
As he touched them, they started opening up again,
One by one; all four of them.
He saw with a slight irritability that they hadn't healed at all!
Saying I looked ugly,
He turned around and walked out.
I waited for some time (hoping).
Gradually, when my entire body was covered
With blood from my freshly bleeding scars
I knew I would have to patch them up,
Yet again.

BIO-NOTE

Shreya Pathak is a high school English teacher based out of the city of love, Agra. Having been an avid reader of all kinds of literature in English she has found poetry as the perfect platform to express her innermost feelings. Dancing is her passion and she loves spending time in the midst of nature. These are the feeble attempts in baring her heart out on certain themes that she has been touched by.

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