

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/3

Santosh Alex
Summer

For me,
Summer is a journey,
back from the cacophony of a city
to the serenity of a small hamlet

Strung to unknown bonds,
roaming around in abandon
through paddy-fields and barren playgrounds,
frolicking in the pond and
swaying atop guava and tamarind trees,
the days go by

Soon that I realise,
the value of these bonds,
the city summons me back

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Dictionary

As I put my pen to paper
words went and hid somewhere
I left them to their will

I saw one in the morning newspaper,
a few on the satellite channels
and some in contemporary magazines

They just slipped away
as I tried catching them

In the evening,
as I sat to tutor the children,
words peeked out of the dictionary
donned in new meanings
and mannerisms

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Ark

Returning on the wings
of the southerly winds
I crossed the small rivulet,
swaying paddy fields,
vast barren grounds,
secluded walkways,
and the nameless hillock

Time flew by,
catching dragonflies,
collecting abrus seeds,
tasting mango kernels
and Jackfruit flaps
and so did another vacation

When I opened my eyes,
I was atop Noah's ark

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Offence

Oh! How I wish to hear
the Koel's voice
the harvest songs
the Boatmans ballads
the music of the river
the humming of the bees
the rustle of bamboos

Oh! How I wish I could travel
atop the westerly and easterly winds

Hearing a commotion
when I came out
I saw the koel, farmers
Boatmen, river, bees, bamboo
the westerly and easterly winds
being taken in hand-cuffs
charged of noise pollution

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Distance

As the pain in my hand
became unbearable
I measured the distance
between eyes and tears
wings and their flaps
earth and its chasm
things and their shadows
waves and the ocean
cattle and their ropes
I am still unable to measure
the distance between
my hand and its pain

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Gandhi

Gandhi

He is once again in news

The young recognize
a smiling Gandhi
on the currency notes
For them, he is
merely a piece of paper

Publishers remember
his experiments with truth
For them, he is
merely a book

Politicians unveil
his statutes at every nook
For them, he is
but merely an occasion

Then there are
seminars
awards
and Universities
to his name

But my friend,
have you seen the Gandhi
that I knew?

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Eight Annas

Shopping for vegetables
I got an eight-anna
in change

It is an eight-anna
that Amma had given me
as a hand-out
on Vishu

and I recall how I then sprinted out
to buy sweet-meat

Today,
even beggars don't accept it
and the grocers and chemists
have replaced it with a toffee

No, I shall not part with it
For I know it's real worth

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Black

Once
all colours got together

Red

Blue

Green

Yellow

White

Black arrived late,
but in its hurriedness
it collided with others

and then, no one
could make out each other