

The Gift of Sacred Thunder

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Friday morning, the twenty-second of March 2013. Dry, dusty hot hours of mourning and reflection. Days of anarchy and arson stilled by the impending burial of the elderly statesman. Sanity prevails in the soft studied eulogies. Polite, deferential unity in respect and grief.

I embrace this quiet rationality with a smile in my heart. This smile is soon skewed by the strong images of senseless violence, of hateful victimisation of the powerless that scream at me from the pages of the daily newspaper. As my eyes flit from one shocking picture to another, a thousand words rush to my tongue. I painfully swallow the words; they are toxic.

I look up at the patch of blue sky. I draw a deep breath. I sigh at the absurd human tragicomedy of recent events. I breathe in the crumbs of acrid soil suffocating the city, and my tongue rubs against the grains of dust in the air. I think to myself, will the madness resume once the body is laid to rest in the sacred ground?

My spouse leaves the house after breakfast, travelling miles out of the city on the dusty road north to a worksite. It will be nightfall before he returns. I lounge for a while, taking in Lyse Douchette and Obama magnificent in Israel, the fiscal disaster in Cyprus, and bark cynically at the glitzy new romance in the continuing saga of Tiger Woods. Looking at his smug face, I am incensed. Hideously irrational for a split-second, I internalise his ex-wife's humiliation. In my head I play a perfect hole-in-one with a nine-iron to his head. I say a prayer for my own spouse, for his safe return, and I thank the Maker for the auspicious alignment and conjunction of stars and planets and mating of true minds. Where would I be today, what would I be today, I silently address the Maker, if you had not given my stormy ship the sturdy anchor of such a faithful mate?

> The leaves of the sprawling mango tree on the south rustle furiously and a shower of hard, dry leaves fall and brush the dusty earth.

Powdery dust everywhere, and I slide from room to room with the dusting fabric in my hand, quietly swaying to the liquid heavenly tones of Yanni playing by the Aegean sea. The