

TONGUE OF FIRE



MAHMUDUL HASAN HEMAL

What destiny seeks is a grave, a narrow place
To sleep a final sleeping.
Unwise is what you boast for, a winning race
Or an obese bank account.
Tell what gives you pride, O foolish human life
What makes you happy under a tightened knife?

The advocates with death inside their pockets
Do come five times a day.
You know, knows your ring and your wife's locket
That what approaches is death.
Tell, O my fellow, how you dare provide death
A smirk with no confirmation of next breath?

You live in illusion, feed illusion to your soul
When you forget the words.
You can't sleep in your castle; awaken, you growl
Sleep blesses the truth.
Narrate, my poor friend, why you betrayed the God
Why missed what is to be done and what not?

You hear voices, Nine fathom deep; they call you Liar
'You are a liar! You are a liar!' - says the tongue of fire!

Social Justice Warrior



BENJAMIN HASAN

Clean supreme, mind so green:
Find my words very mean.
Dogs eat words,
Men eat warts,
Sniff my breath of lies.

Write my ink, search the link:
Find my words very mean.
Dogs eat paper,
Men eat taper,
Skip my meaning to lies.

Read my black, blind to green:
Find my words very mean,
Dogs eat books,
Men are crooks,
Lead my voice to lies.

She Came Back

SIMRAN NOVA

The darkening sky pushed the crimson sun towards the horizon and the blue of the sky gave way to orange as a familiar figure appeared at the gateway. I thought I was hallucinating at first, but then it hit me that it was not possible. She stared at me from afar and bit her nails; I suppose, wondering if she should have come at all. But then she stepped in and as she moved towards me, I saw that she had brought me blood red roses; I smiled in spite of myself, I could not believe she had remembered.

She placed the flowers right beside me and looked at me with grim grey eyes. She still had faint traces of a smile line but her frown lines were much more pronounced than I had remembered. Her hair, too, was different: straight, brown and calm instead of wild auburn. I felt like shaking her till she woke up from the trance she was in and telling her that the façade of normalcy she was putting on was not going to impress me at all.

She reached into her overcoat and pulled out a piece of paper with her trembling hands. A jolt of surprise went through me as a single tear drop flowed down her cheek; I had loved her for half my life and I had never seen her cry. She started reading from the wrinkled sheet:

"I seem to have loved you in numberless forms, numberless times..."

*In life after life, in age after age, forever.
My spellbound heart has made and*

*remade the necklace of songs,
That you take as a gift, wear round your neck in your many forms,
In life after life, in age after age, forever."*
And as she read, I relived it all in my head, as I had millions of times in the last 20 years we had been apart. My mind tinged the memories a romantic sepia as we walked hand in hand in the deserted roads of our hometown. I could hear the crunch of the autumn leaves as we stepped on them carelessly. We swore that we would change the world someday. I fell in love with her more and more each time I thought about that day. The taste of cinnamon rolls still lingered on my tongue and I could still see her tangled auburn hair disheveled in the chilly wind. I gave her a bouquet of roses with this very poem written in a piece of paper hidden in it. It was the best day of my life.

That was the day before the accident. She did not come to my funeral. I left a piece of my soul in my grave in hopes that she would be here someday, it only took her 20 years.

I lay as dead as the day in the darkness of the night as she apologized for not seeing me for all these years. She had left the town the day after my death, she told me, and this was the first time she had come back. She sat with me for hours in silence. At last, before she left, she whispered, "I am sorry I had to kill you."

* The poem is an extract from Rabindranath Tagore's 'Unending Love'.

