The Treasure

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Article

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As her small bare feet were carrying her slim figure on the newly washed sand of the Atlantic shore, she was gazing unto the red sun that was slowly drowning in the grey ocean. The lazily moving ship seemed like a black shadow, tempting to drown with the sun.

This image seemed very familiar to her. What was it? She squeezed her eyes and looked again, the black image still was slowly moving. An image re-lived in her mind. It was a dawn. She had easily slipped out of her bed on the yard, with the sound of the Azaan.

They had spread their Sajjadas and performed the prayers. Some had slipped back into their beds, and some women in the family had started quietly moving around to get their morning tasks done. Being one of the three children in this large family, she hadn't assumed the duties of the female members in the family quite as yet. She had slipped back into her bed, like the men of the family who would, to wake up later for a busy day in the market.

One person, her favourite uncle, wouldn't go back to bed. His ritual was reciting the Qur'an, and then a long, long poem would be recited. She had not known what it was. But she had heard the women during leisure hours, as they sat together with their embroidery kits, that someone had taught him this poem, in the prison.

That morning she had briskly and lightly walked up to the thin stream that ran in the eastern side of the house, where her uncle would sit and recite this sad poem, as he looked into the water. Hiding her small figure behind the old apple tree, she had looked at him, tears flowing from his beard as he sang. She stood there looking at him, as he sat quite drowned in his own world. She had remembered his profile highlighted by the slowing rising sun behind the wall.

One dawn, he had seen her sitting right across him on the other side of the stream with curious eyes fixed on him. That was the day, when he started teaching her the long poem in praise of the fourteen infallibles. With her childish joy, she would echo his deep voice as they both sang along.

She stopped. The sun had drowned. Looking behind, she saw her grandchildren joyfully running away, and playing with the small waves.

It is time, she thought, that I'll teach them the poem.

Contributed by Mahwash Hirmendi, mhirmend@opal.tufts.edu [2] . An excerpt from "My Sisters"

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