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My mother's fascination for broken, unused household items never seems to fade with time. She knew exactly how to recreate a completely innovative piece of art from such products. There's always something extraordinary about mothers, and my mother was no less. I often pondered with the thought as to where she derived all that strength from until I finally came to learn that her name 'Dia' indicates 'God' in Irish. Hence, I trained my mind filled with a sense of pride into believing that nothing is impossible for her.

The livelihood of my family depended on her recreation of something new from the old; and why not, for, as the saying goes- the beauty of something handmade lies in the imperfections. Anything perfect is machine-made.

But this was never a place where she belonged nor struggle so hard to earn a living through this kind of work for she had belonged to a different place and a different time altogether. The lineage of her respectable family background is now lost to the cataclysm of divided borders. However, the partition distanced her not merely from her comfortable home but also her near and dear ones. During the chaos, a few known faces came along with her; some of them could not travel, many were missing while the rest lost their lives in violence. My father was one whom we lost in one of these gruesome violent attacks. Mummy endured it all, like a firm mountain which stands still, facing the rough, angry winds as well as the risk of withstanding sudden brutality and bullets. She was surely on the wrong side of history. People were living on the edge during those times of inconsistency; partition loomed with thick, dark clouds, sweeping away our homes, hopes, dreams, peace and happiness. She endured it all like the silent hordes who also crossed over to the virgin nation. She calmed every ripple that those hazy years wrought. She built up, almost single-handedly, a life of green pastures, bright sunshine and gentle showers of sweet-smelling rain; a life amidst the wide, open fields, the fresh running waters and the floating clouds in the ever widening sky. All this came from her skilled entrepreneurship. An idyllic life bringing us up graciously with dignity and caring for my grandmother. Growing up has not at all been easy for her. Having lost her parents at a tender age and moving from one place to another perhaps kept her on her toes with everything she did, be it with managing the regular, monotonous chores within the four-walls of the house or running outside it to make both ends meet. Her silence and sacrifice seemed to give her strength and energy for endurance but never did she allow the crisis to seep

into the family. She relished and seemed to enjoy eating rice soaked in water overnight with a little salt, tactfully weaving tales around this habit of hers, telling us that when we grow up, we would someday realize the taste of this wonderful dish, while we were fed with vegetables and fish.

It was amidst such inconsistent scenario and disturbing times with our family struggling for survival when my mother took a brave step to begin her profession. To make a new beginning in any field is never easy. Interestingly, she seemed to enjoy her task of making the marvelous out of the discarded. From wax collected out of melted candles, to dried, shriveled leaves, everything attracted her attention and curiosity. Gradually, as time passed by, my mother gained popularity in her region as one of the well-known entrepreneurs.

However, being the best wasn't a guarantee any longer. Business had suffered a fall for some years now. Age had crept in, whose signs were indicated in her slow physical movements and occasional complaints of joint aches. Moreover, the income from selling craft items was dwindling as curfews, police firing, disturbances and terrifying outbreak of sectarian violence stole the peace in the region. The young had begun migrating away from this border area in search of livelihood while those who remained, searched for a gun or a stone.

Who had the time to purchase craft items and appreciate art amidst such disturbance when bloodier battles were being fought in the ground!

I could, by no stretch of imagination, comprehend the turmoil and grueling fear of the harsh reality of migration -the pain of leaving behind everything that is one's own, one's affectionate ties, and the manner in which my mother could have endured it all. My sister and I were mere babies then. Every single 'bloodied moisture' that she shed from her forehead was for our secured future. The phoenix in her rose to rebuild new dreams of a better tomorrow and made her explore opportunities in the 'new and greener' land, which welcomed all of us with open arms. This is our home now, where we grew up, the place where we belong, our new identity where we have survived, found solace, peace, and a sense of security.

My mother was deeply immersed in her thoughts.

"Mummy!"

The ecstasy in my sister's childlike voice shook her from her reverie. She responded with a smile, turned around as a little bundle of energy cascaded down the path and wrapped her little arms around her five-foot frame. As she embraced her little one close to her bosom, she thought that all the looming hardships couldn't erase the joy she felt for her eleven year old daughter. Her universe was in her blue speckled eyes.

Priya and I was the warmth of a wintery afternoon in her life. We were her world.

"Have you completed your homework darling? Your school will soon reopen."

"Mummy, I'm completely tired writing for so long. I don't wish to see my books for some time. Please take me with you to the big market in the city where you do business."

"My little angel, what will you do there? It's a crowded place and I will be busy throughout the day". "I will help you sell them!" Exclaimed Priya with all the zeal she could muster.

My mother smiled. She knew exactly why her angel wanted to brave the hard trip to the city. Just across the street from her little shop was a shop selling colourful candies where children buzzed in like bees. I noticed this when I accompanied her once in a while, where children would assemble licking sweet candies. Lozenges, candies and toffees always managed to find a way to a child's heart.

Mummy sat down and saddled her daughter on her lap. "No, my little one. I will be gone for a while. You have to stay at home and help your grandmother and elder sister. You also have to study hard. Every item that I sell is for your future. I will bring you candies while returning home".

"Mummy, you look completely exhausted. Why do you have to work so hard? Don't worry so much. Come play with us for a little while. You have not played with us for a long time. Don't refuse please. We will all have some fun together."

My mother stroked Priya's expectant face and smiled. "I so wish I could. But if I don't work, how will you fulfill your dreams! If my children don't find their dreams, my own will be lost. Today you are known as my child but tomorrow, I wish to be known by your name"

"Don't worry Mummy! All your dreams will be fulfilled. Everyone will know you as Priya Choudhury's mother, that's a promise".

No child can foresee the future just then; her words were merely an innocent remark to pacify Mummy, cheer her up and get her to participate in playing games with us.

Fourteen years have rolled by like a distant dream but these memories keep rushing to my mind every time I come home.

As I drove past the sunny and shady paths, crossing the quiet villages, amongst joyful cheers of little ones playing in the green fields, I thought that the earth itself seemed to have completely changed and wondered what it would have been like for a woman to be in a place which we call our home, away from home. Be it the gentle breeze on a searing summer night, the rows of apple orchards where great heaps of crimson fruits lay under the loaded trees, the golden cornfields or the group of jubilant young peasant girls who stooped and sang to themselves, with sickle in hand, to cut and carry off the plume-tipped stalks of maize-straw for the winter stores before the sun lost its blazing summer heat and gradually paved the way for the snows of winter, my mother must have had these vivid images running across her mind. Each time my mother thought about these memories, there must have been a keen, desperate urge to retreat.

She protected us from the 'worldly sin', providing us shelter, like an oak tree with its branches spread apart. We were taught to enjoy the sound of the flowing streams, the morning dew, the whistling wind, the floating clouds, the twittering of birds hiding among the branches of trees, to find solace and happiness in the little joys that altogether, define the true meaning of life from the time she single-handedly struggled to face the upheaval of partition. She lost her youth, her husband, and a large part of her motherhood, all cruelly swept away with time; and yet taught us to dream, to smile, to hope, to rise and never to yield; and here we stood, once again, to tell our story to her, to narrate the series of episodes that we had to undergo to finally make a mark in the world.

This was one of the happiest days for the family with my sister qualifying for the Administrative Service. A confident young lady; her sparkling blue eyes seemed to have borne the fruits of my mother's sacrifice. On the way home, she took me back to our childhood, recollecting the day she had made a promise to her procreator, though it had all the seriousness of a fairytale that day. As she stepped out of the car, the neighbours rejoiced crying out, "Priya's mother! Look who's here."

My mother stepped forward with the same calmness and pleasant smile across her face as she had years before to greet both her daughters home after the long journey came to an end as the day gave way to the dusk.