

Moinak Dutta

The Talkers

He thought it was time to write about the talkers. After all only he could do justice to their story. He was always part of it. The story of the talkers grew in him over the years as he witnessed every moment of it.

How many years ago it got started he can't recollect nowadays... but it had been a blissful evening after a short spell of shower. Surely it had been an evening cool and indolent.

The man was at home when a message came to his cellphone. He, the narrator, can't even recollect the content of the message proper though he was shown the content by the man...but that message from her prompted the man to revert and to that reply he got another rejoinder... things started that way.

Next few days there was silence from both sides. She did not call or SMS. He was busy with his works...his station post manning alphabets. He had been always alphabetically inclined. His books and poems surrounded him from his childhood. She must have somehow been leading a similar life...not fully similar but to a great extent alphabetical in her own ways.

That year when the rains ended and autumn had set in with a festive spirit in the air, they had graduated-from SMS-ing to talking. Talking over phone for long insipid hours had become a way of life for them. They talked. In their talks, they explored the unknown deserts...unseen valleys...unheard music...distant eclipse...near and imminent issues-political, social, economic, historic even prehistoric . They talked about life-its necessary burdens and stresses and pulls;its insults and injuries;its superciliousness, morbidity, pathos and also ecstasies. They talked about issues back home-the fodder scam, the murders and rapes,the heavy dew damaging crops, the potholed roads, the movies in which there were excellent fight scenes of swords. They talked day in and day out. Several times during the day and even sometimes at nights when the moon slept tranquil white like a baby in the arms of cloud, they talked exchanging thoughts and emotions. They talked about also fears and suspicions and doubts. They always had issues to raise. Being good talkers both found enough resources at hand to extend and elongate their talks.

Sometimes they would unburden their souls. They would feel lighter after talks quite satisfied offloading bags of their personal worries and cares.

Talks made them tensed sometimes;

Sometimes talks rejuvenated them.

They found their talks essential to their being so much so that people around them suspected them to be in love.

If talks of heart bring closeness to people, they were close to each other.

They were definitely attached to each other by their inexhaustible treasure trove of talks.

They exchanged their minds sometimes in their talks.

Their talks took them to different and varied things, almost as varied as life itself.

In their talks they replicated life-an online virtual world of their own.

They owed each other that.

They never grew tired of talks.

Interestingly the wide range of daily experiences only enriched and embellished their talks.

Being human beings susceptible to certain tendencies towards wrong judgements and fears, they also had violent talks sometimes-full of aggression, hurt, disappointments, accusations, and again they talked over them to get over them.

They distanced themselves from each other because of wrong perceptions about usage of words and phraseology. They were so alphabetical!

They dissected words and syntax. They constructed sentences out of whims without care.

Still they talked.

Aggressions dissipated to remorse sometimes. Sometimes they would just cry.

Sobbing replies came disjointed.

In cellular connected system they erected a world-a virtual talk based one.

Conversational.

They were always conversational.

People around them thought them to be in love-a conversational and unconventional one this time.

They talked about so many things.

In their talks three separate novels they created.

And they talked about those novels then.

New characters surfaced.

They braced the storms and the gales.

In their talks they wrote poems, depicted a moonlit lucid evening, painted a Monalisa not even smiling.

They talked.

So much conversational they were!

Several years after when they were on deathbeds, they were placed side by side.

To everyone's dismay they still talked. There was no sound emanating. Only their lips moved perhaps. But unwittingly that worked fine for them!

After all those years they had no need to talk noisily. In silence they could even talk!

They could read each other's mind.

That way they died.
The talkers.

Sitting by the Indian Ganges Side

Sitting by the Indian Ganges side

You and I, will read a poem

You might think of Andrew Marvell

And I perhaps too, think Carpe diem,

(Seeing the River thus

Flowing for ages

Just like our lives and us,)

So enchanted by the day's mirth

Perhaps will I weave a song too,

Just by your side

Spending the day long overdue.

Delhi

Delhi, the grand old woman .

Delhi comes to me
With the scent of my granny
Old and bearer of all that
Our ancestral house at Daryaganj stood for-
Books everywhere,
Piles of them on desks and floor,

Then a little moving away from there
 Will put me invariably at entry points
 Of galis and kuchas- several of them;
 Modernity has installed cables all over the city
 They hang like loose strings of memory linking the old with the new,

But given the chance to go astray,
 I would choose the old galis sure
 And dip my nose and fingers and soul
 At Batashe wali or Anwar Ali,
 The wooden brackets with ornate designs upon them at the havelis would filter rays of twilight
 sun
 Upon the dusty floor
 And I would perhaps sit with Mirza Ghalib saab in his last haveli
 At Ballimaran;

Given the chance
 I would stop for a while at Behram Khan Tiraha and admire the peepul tree there
 Majestically guarding the three lanes running to three different directions,
 Given a chance,
 I would take the hand of my granny
 And sit before her
 Only to hear her stories.

Rebecca

Rebecca is that kind of woman whom I have met not quite oft. Her soft pallor of skin gleamed in light . Her hands had swift smart movements every time she would sit before me and talk. And her talks are different from other women I met. She never talked about groceries or soap operas shown on tv. Instead she laid expansive forms of dreams, like finding a river dolphin somewhere and bringing it home and befriending it. Or riding an elephant through the tea gardens at *Dooars* all alone, without even the *mahout*.

With her warm smile bright
 She would cast a spell upon
 She was different

About the Poet

Born on 5th September, 1977, Moinak Dutta has been writing poems and stories since his school days. Presently engaged as a teacher of English in a government sponsored institution. Many of his poems and stories are published in national and international anthologies and magazines and also dailies including 'Madras Courier', 'The Statesman' (Kolkata edition), 'World Peace Poetry anthology' (United Nations), 'Spillwords' (published from New York, USA), 'Setu' (published from Pittsburgh, USA) Riding and Writing (as a featured poet twice, published from Ohio, USA), ' The Indian Periodical' 'Pangolin Review', ' Tuck Magazine' 'Duane's Poetree', 'Story mirror', 'Tell me your story' (literary and travel magazine), ' Nature Writing ' magazine (U.K.), ' Oddball magazine' 'Soft Cartel' magazine, 'Diff Truths' magazine, 'Ethos Literary Journal', 'The Literary Fairy Tales' 'Defiant Dreams' (a collection of stories on women empowerment published by Readomania, New Delhi), 'Dynami Zois' (a selection of short stories comprised of works of authors from India and abroad) ' Muffled Moans' (a special anthology against women and child abuse, gender violence, published by Authorspress, New Delhi,) ' Quesadilla and other adventures (an anthology of food poems published by Hawakal Publishers, Kolkata) etc.

He has written reviews of books and fictions, among which notable ones are: on 'The Upanisads' (translated by Valerie J. Roebuck) which can be found at www.blogapenguinindiaclassic.blogspot.com and the review of ' The Ballad of Bapu' (written by Santosh Bakaya). Written some essays and articles on education and literature and other topics which had been published in both e- books/e - journals (like Cafe Dissensus) and as printed books/ papers (like one on 'Amalgamation of social media and literature: pros and cons, published by Viswa Bharati Research Centre and Sahitya Anand), 'Erothanatos' (academic and literary journal) etc;

His first full length English (genre: literary/romance) fiction '**Online@Offline**' had been published in 2014, by Lifi Publications.His second fiction(genre: literary/quest) titled '**In search of la radice**' was published in 2017 by Xpress Publications. Also worked as an editor of a poetry collection titled 'Whispering Poesis', which had over one hundred poems from sixty poets from different parts of India and abroad, published in 2018 by Poesis. Works as Executive Editor of a literary and art webzine 'The Kolkata Review'. Loves to do photography apart from listening to music and watching films and traveling.