

Reminiscence

by **Dilip Mohapatra** (June 2014)

When you look into the mirror
and a stranger stares back at you
you try to look beyond his shoulders.

You see a little boy and a girl playing house
their baby doll swinging in the cradle
and she offering him a tiny cup
of make believe tea.

You see them in their school uniforms
with their bulging rucksacks
together on a bicycle along a country road
their exuberance echoing and resounding
in the wild shrubs and the empty streets.

You see them exchanging garlands

and taking the seven rounds around the sacred fire
and the vows 'till death does us part'
packing their scant belongings in a hold-all
and with a treasury chest filled with infinite love
they set off to start their adventure together.

You see them lost in each other
oblivious of everyone and everything else
their hearts beating in unison
with the falling raindrops

their eyes fluttering in harmony
with the butterflies in the springs
their sighs resonating with the
hot winds of the simmering summers
their locked lips in ignition
liquefying the icy cold winters.

You see them holding in their laps
their reflections
fruits of their passion.
You see them pushing the prams in the parks
singing campfire songs
attending the parents' day meetings.
You see the lines on their foreheads deepening
their soft hands developing callouses
their hair thinning down
and crow's feet in the corners of their eyes.

You see them on the rear seat of their limo

being driven by a liveried chauffeur to social gatherings
and community events
and see them walking on the red carpets
being ushered to their seats
and people hanging on every word they speak.

You see them on the two corners of the sofa

she watching a soap serial on the TV
and he lost in a Pablo Neruda collection.
The birds on *neem* trees in the lawn are silent
the loony moon looms down menacingly.

He asks hesitatingly for a cup of tea

and she gets up to oblige

and soon goes back to her reverie

while he takes a sip of the tea that she had forgotten to pour.

Then you again look into the mirror

and still find the stranger staring at you

and looking beyond your shoulders.

Dilip Mohapatra, a Navy Veteran started writing poems in the seventies and his recent poems have appeared in various literary journals like *Muse India*, *Helix Magazine*, *Chiaroscuro Magazine*, *BlazeVOX*, etc. His poems have also found place in the *World Poetry Yearbook 2013*. His latest collection of poems, *A Pinch of Sun and other poems* is currently under publication by Authorspress, New Delhi. He did his Masters in Physics at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Post Navy, he held senior leadership positions with the Tata and Suzlon groups of companies. Currently he is the Chief Mentor and Strategic Advisor to KIIT University, Bhubaneswar. He lives with his wife in Pune.

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