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ISSN 2278-9529
Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Home Coming

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It was almost after six years that I was going back to my hometown. The last time I went there was with my mom and sisters, to sell my house. We sold our house to one of our acquaintances; they were our neighbours, the owner of a big jewellery shop. After my father had passed away, Mom and I left our home town and moved to Mumbai. I remember locking the home and leaving it with a heavy heart and tear-filled eyes. How my mom was, again and again, looking back to get a glance of the house, she was quietly taking steps forward and probably memories were flashing in her mind. She came there as a newly-wed bride. Her journey of a new life started there, she spent almost twenty-five years of her life there. I was engrossed in these memories, suddenly my daughter asked, “How far is it, Mumma? We will also visit the bakery shop that you always talk about; we will buy pastries from there.” Nodding my head I simply smiled. She was very excited to see my home where I had spent my childhood; my home was the place which I kept on describing every now and then...to the extent that the picture of the entire house was in her mind. She was eager to visit the small garden area where I used to sit and study, the rooftop where my father and I would lie down and view the stars at night, the beautiful night sky and twinkling stars used to fascinate me, mesmerized and enthralled I loved to spend hours looking at the pole star and constellations as a child.

I wanted to visit those places in my house again. The very idea of reliving and re creating those moments was infusing a surge of exhilaration. A home is just not a building; it is a reservoir of memories. As I was lost in my thoughts, I suddenly realized that we have reached our destination; I knew it would be a nostalgic moment. It was around 7:30 p.m. still I could see it in the twilight, the dim light that was enveloping the atmosphere could not blur the long-awaited sight of my old abode. As I reached near it, I realized that the gate and the little garden that used to be at the entrance weren't there, instead there was a huge iron gate nicely painted with golden color and as I entered I saw in the place of the garden there was a hall beautifully carved with all modern embellishments and lightings. The owner of the house welcomed me; she desperately wanted to flaunt how they have changed our home into a big palatial building.

As I entered, the owner started showing my previous home to me as if I was coming to the place for the first time. She said, “We have utilized each and every space wisely.” I could see that the windows have been transformed, and were turned into covered shelves now. There were no open spaces; the whole house had become stuffy and boxy. The ventilators and windows which used to give the glimpse of the outside garden were closed, and were now used as cabinets. The rooms were not the same, they were revamped. The verandah was completely covered for security purpose; even the sky wasn’t visible from there. Everything was shining, the glaring walls, the décor, the expensive artifacts, and wall pieces. I was trying hard to find out at least one little corner which could remind me of some past memory. I was trying hard to feel good that I was visiting my old home after a long time, but everything seemed alien. Nothing was same. The owner suggested me to go to the rooftop. I always wanted to take my daughter there, but now I was not feeling like to go there. I wanted the memory of at least that place to remain intact. A sense of loss overpowered me, which I never felt before, not even when we sold the house and left the place. Perplexed and dumbfounded, I decided to leave, as I stepped out, my daughter said, “Your house was beautiful! Mom” I just said, “This isn’t my house.” The new developments were so prominent that they affected me internally, but in the very next moment I thought that change is inevitable. My home and the corners which I was trying to find out lie deep in my memories unscathed, untouched, and will remain so forever. Moreover, I was happy that the family of the owner is quite happy living there. We went to the bakery then and purchased some pastries, they were delicious, the aroma and the taste of the pastries was still the same.