

The rendezvous

by Sushma Krishna

The rays sneak in through the broken ceiling onto her eyes
Up and high, the morning star set to arise
Another day of work and silent cries
Meet Amani, the village girl so nice

She waves a bye to her little brother
To school, off he runs farther
With a bag around his neck
She longs to follow and check.

Deep into the bushes, she gathers fire-wood
Lonely and Scared, of men in the neighborhood,
She trusts Jai hanuman will do her good
She could be a fighter, had she understood.

Out from the shed, hears she a cow's mow
Milk to deliver for the houses on the row
Distance long, heavy pot, to walk on toe
She huffs and puffs keeping her head low.

The chapatis on the Tawa are ready by noon
Before baba returns after ploughing soon
So are the hauled pots of water- Can she ever get a boon?
A fading song on her lips with a melancholy croon.

The sheep graze on the mountain slope
On the soft grass she relaxes, as an idle lope
The blue sky, the colorful birds, all dreams and hope
Loosens the burden of the tightened rope

The muddy floor cleaned bright and shine
The clothes washed and hung up in a line
Night descends, the moon behind the pine
Coming of age, she is not fine

Her father seems to be in a hurry
A teen's marriage on cards, to not worry

It is the family tradition and a raining flurry
That she cannot defy, all blurry

Learns she, of some changes in gender roles these days
Of women who plan their families with amaze
Of women who lead the family life with a blaze
To her, it is all still a cloud of smoke and haze

She understands these little but all
Seem to stand the test of time for a fall
The wait may be too long, but a bold call
A red-carpet entry for the grand hall

What she needs, she knows not yet
Money, power, beauty, she has to rise and set
It has been a life only of regret
Someone, she herself has not met

The time is now, says her inner voice
She wonders if she has a choice
To stand up for her health and rights
To listen and not put up an inner fight

Amani, now the goddess of aggression
Forcing herself out of oppression
Makes herself an honest confession
It's her decision and no more a submission

Lucky that she was beheld- quite a story to listen
Next morning elsewhere, not yet a conclusion
Awareness in the air, girls must fly with a healthy vision
And stay enabled for their family missions.

Dr. Sushma Krishna is a Medical Doctor, a Microbiologist, and a Public Health personnel from India. The poem, which is based upon the author's real life experiences, describes the life of Amani, the village girl who lives in her innocent dreamy world taking up the responsibility of her family at a very young age. She is completely oblivious and unaware of what freedom is, of what reproductive and sexual rights and justice are for a woman, until one day when she chooses to have a say in her marital and sexual life, seeking freedom.