

Into the Dust

by Arnapurna Rath (November 2014)

The moss-laden walls of the ancient home
in a village lost in folklore,
wait to crumble into the dusts of history.
Snake-like creepers climb through the boundaries of time,
leaving footprints of green moss on abandonment's slime.
The mud-baked backyard,
dreams of the women of the household,
huddled together by the embers of the evening,
gulping down left-over rice soaked in water,
with pods of garlic and raw onion rings.
The smoky kitchen corner,
where mothers and aunts polished their earthenware,
played with spices and curried-gossips,
cooking their lives and lies with care,
is engulfed by the smoke of the past,
covered with the soot of loneliness.
The courtyard,
where a family of forty ate together
fought one another over food, land, and wives,
stands in frozen stillness,

a witness to those little scuffles and greater togetherness.

The ticking wall-clock

hung on the soulless walls of the empty verandah,

burdened with the grime of time,

is still lost in time keeping.

The tick of every second

matches the counting fingers of the old grandfather,

struggling with his fermented cloud of memories,

gazing at eternity with empty eyes,

waiting for children and grandchildren to come back

from the cities of oblivion, until,

he melted away into the arms of the unknown.

The moss laden walls of the ancient home,

count their days,

With a stoic refusal to turn to dust.

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