

The Magical Universe

by **Kanchan Bhattacharya** (March 2016)

There are places where things change, change forever- whispers happen and these are quiet places where eyes rest, and flicker when one visits nearby places, waiting for a move. Places one hides in skin deep precautions, lies and into graves, if death intervenes. Places one wants to return. Places that have closets full of memories, but rarely pictures. Places where the protagonists find no way to let anyone know. These are the dreams, the nights and days where they had left home...

They have left all behind, in low morale. They have been through jail, war, insurgency, fights, and have faced loneliness, solemnized with neglect, used and tormented. They have connived, railroaded themselves into graves, and have resurrected themselves, worn dark glasses that remain invisible, and yes, hide their real eyes. They have returned to be their old cheerful selves. They hide festering wounds waiting to erupt, and still seek comfort in Hotel Auschwitz where checking in is simple, no questions, no eyebrows raised. Each time they hesitate less and less, temporize, and use reserves they never believed they had. They find the window of darkness, and the freshness of ecstasy. They have enemies, and are enemies of the state, broken away and need new nests. They improvise with images and false lives. With wings of surreal waxen feathers, they fly when the time is right, when the heart is dry...

Conscious of the time they spend with each other, they never hesitate as the fan begins to turn, the door is closed, locked and know it is time. Time it shall be, so little of it and the partings are deep. There is always a silhouette at the partly closed door. And a want. For eternity, the finality of knowing it is going to be a long wait.

There is a bath, mandated. There is the careful removal of traces. Checking over and over again, a parting, abruptly looking away, the welling of tears, and knowing they cannot talk. And the continental barriers open up, the transatlantic voyage begins, Pompeii is overrun by the Vesuvius, and Atlanta vanishes into the deluge...

They are home next, separate homes. The tryst becomes a myth. She sends an

email. "It was beautiful", he reads and deletes it, but in remorse he replies, "Yes love, can we do it again, sooner than later!"

At *her* home, she cooks and waits, her husband reads the papers and asks for dinner. He would know someday. And *his* wife notices those tell tales, long strands of hair on hair suit. She weeps.

Guilt is magical, each tosses on his or her bed. Now the four wait, nothing to say, just silence, just the loneliness in this magical universe...

Extramarital affairs happen. They will, always. Don't look for reasons. Know not. Hide.

... Listen: // We have done it again we are // Still living. Sit up and smile, // God bless you. Guilt is magical... James Dickey

✘ **Kanchan Bhattacharya**, b 1949, is an Indian poet and has authored four books of English Poetry- *Opus*, *Arrival*, *Enchantment* and *The Roots of Love*. His work has found place in several anthologies in India and abroad. He has written haiku, tanka and has two more books coming up by 2017, *The Flight of the Devil* (humor), and *Those Amorous Blooms*, laden with erotic verse.

He is a veteran soldier, taught electronics in a University and in an engineering college, and is working on solar energy for the domestic user.

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