



SIYAHİ STORIES · 5 POEMS · IMPERMANENCE

How the River Forgets

Nature never mourns anything. It just keeps moving until moving becomes its own kind of peace.

FIVE POEMS · ONE LONG EXHALE · FROM THE SIYAHİ ARCHIVE

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Grief, when it's about romantic love, tends to be loud — it wants an audience, a villain, a song to blame. Grief about mortality itself is quieter and much harder to argue with, because there's no one to be angry at. Five poems from Siyahi, read together, form a kind of meditation on exactly that — not the loss of a person, but the plain fact of impermanence, and the strange comfort that nature seems to have already made peace with the thing that unsettles us most.

Start with the least sentimental sentence in the whole book

Most writing about death reaches for softness. This one line refuses, and in refusing, says something more useful than most elegies manage.

Mar gye usey nhi... reh gye unhe taqleef hai...
Zindagi ko kosiye janab... maut to badi nirdosh hai....

— the one who died feels nothing. It's the ones left behind who carry the pain. Curse life if you must, sir — death, in the end, is entirely innocent. [Read “Mar Gye” in the book →](#)

It's a strange kind of comfort, but a real one – the suggestion that we've been aiming our grief at the wrong target all along. Death doesn't do anything to anyone. Life is the one that hands out the difficulty, and keeps living regardless.

II

And once you stop being angry at death, you can finally notice everything else

What follows is a small chain of wonder – the kind of question a child asks about the sky, except asked by someone old enough to know that no one actually has the answer.

Surya kade pahun nawal watte,
Chandra peksha itka motha kasa?
Chandra kade pahun nawal watte,
Samudrat bhar toh ghalto kasa?

Samudra kade pahun nawal watte,
Rastyatil pratyek nadi bharto kasa?
Nadikade pahun nawal watte,
Osad srushtit jeev ante kashi?

Yatil kahi jeevankade pahun nawal watte,
Ya sarvanchi den wisarto kasa?

– looking at the sun, it's a wonder – how is it so much bigger than the moon? Looking at the moon, another wonder – how does it move the entire ocean's tides? Looking at the ocean, yet another – how does it hold every river that runs into it? Looking at a river, one more – how does life even take root in barren land? And looking at some of these lives themselves, the final, quietest wonder of all: how do we manage to forget the sheer gift of it? [Read “Surya Kade Pahun” in the book →](#)

Each stanza hands the wonder off to the next, like a relay – sun to moon to ocean to river to a small stubborn seed of life – until it lands, finally, on us, the only link in the chain

capable of forgetting how remarkable the whole thing is. The poem doesn't scold. It just notices.

III

Because nothing here repeats itself exactly, and that's not a loss either

If every sunrise, every rainfall, every pair of eyes really does see something slightly different, then impermanence stops being a threat and starts looking like abundance.

Har hrutu mein alag sawera,
Har barish mein alag guzara.
Jis disha bhi chalein jahan mein,
Har ankhon mein alag nazara!

— every season carries its own dawn, every rainfall its own particular passage through it. Whichever direction you walk in this world, every pair of eyes takes in a slightly different view of the very same thing. [Read “Har Hrutu Mein Alag Sawera” in the book →](#)

Four lines, and they quietly undercut the whole premise of grieving change: nothing was ever meant to repeat. Difference isn't the tragedy. It's the design.

IV

Which is exactly the lesson nature keeps demonstrating, patiently, without asking to be thanked

The book turns here to the two creatures who move the most and complain about it the least — birds and rivers — and asks what they might know that we don't.

Panchhiyon ki tarah koi,
Yun hi ghar badalta hoga...

Nadiyon sa bhavuk koi aur,
Behna jarur azmata hoga...

Uss bahav mein mausam unhe,
Badalna sikhata hoga,
Kahin ant mein sagar unhe,
Theherna samjhata hoga!

— someone, like birds, must simply keep changing homes without ceremony. Someone else, tender as a river, must surely test what it means to keep flowing. Somewhere in that current, the seasons teach them how to change — and somewhere at the very end, the ocean finally teaches them how to be still. [Read “Panchhiyon Ki Tarah” in the book →](#)

This is the emotional hinge of the whole piece: movement isn't the opposite of peace, it's the path to it. The bird doesn't fight its next migration. The river doesn't resent the distance still ahead. Both simply move until the ocean — the largest stillness available — finally receives them.

And eventually, that same patience teaches you how to stand back up

The set ends not with the ocean's stillness but with something more immediately useful — the practical, everyday version of the same lesson, for anyone not ready to become a river just yet.

Koi hawa ke sath chalkar,
Badalon se jhagad lega!
Koi angdai sath kehkar,
Bas dharti se lipat lega!

Patte bikharna sikha denge,
Wakht guzarna sikha dega!

Ek bar aspass dekh loge agar,
Zindagi samhalna sikha degi!

— walk far enough with the wind and eventually you'll find yourself arguing with the clouds. Stretch out fully and you'll end up clinging to the earth instead. The leaves will teach you how to scatter; time will teach you how to simply pass. And if you look around, just once, life itself will teach you how to stand again. [Read “Koi Hawa Ke Sath Chalkar” in the book →](#)

Five poems, and not one of them asks you to stop feeling the weight of impermanence — they just keep pointing at things that have already made their peace with it: a sun too enormous to fully understand, a season that will never repeat itself, a bird that changes homes without complaint, a river that keeps moving because moving is simply what it does, until an ocean finally holds it still. The river doesn't forget what it passed through. It just doesn't carry it as weight. That might be the whole trick.

The Innocence of Death → Wonder → Difference as Design → Movement → Standing Back Up

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Siyahi by Saumitra S. Phatak

Original poems in Hindi, Marathi, and English.

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