24-Apr-12

I had been to college by car. I got two practical files checked, happy about that. I had been thinking of not going over to Dhaka alone, it could have been for bad. I had told Akash to come with me, he agreed and we rushed to the lab next door where Dhaka sits. I was there and what I see as Dhaka questions me for the pages that needed to signed, I was alone there. Luckily, Dhaka didn’t pester too much and checked the file. MP Sir has dude-ingredients, easy and cool to deal with, MP file checked.

Vibha has been easy to talk than recently. It was nice to talk back over to Sonam as her group was there in the class to complete their files. Vibha thinks we can still try to make it together one more time.

I was home on time.

In the evening, it was so sexy outside but I had no one to hang out with. I was feeling lonely, and was missing Mahima, I wanted to be with her and the group but I could not have. I would was doing in-and-out of the door, I was in the park and then feeling like an idiot while thinking of playing with those primary school kids. I went to the terrace with a book. What I see is Mahima and her other girl-friends under the tree next to C-block. It felt like I should have done something to catch the attention but then I had waited for half the evening for someone to meet me up so then why not wait for the other half as well and not pester these middle-school girls. Mahima had got a new hair-cut I thought. It was something like bob cut from the terrace. I also wanted to enjoy the evening, I came down with the mind of playing kicks with that third-grade kid, but then didn’t because of the act being a potential-embarrassment. I thought to go to the back-side park and sit there for the evening. Here, Srishti disturbed me; she was going to the market via this park. I came back to the society.

The mother of Anusha-and-Dimpi (the neighbors from flat no-5 on the first floor) Rena auntie was coming down the entrance foot-steps and I was going up. She said a ‘hello’ with a smiling face and I said ‘Namaste auntie’ just to keep it cool-and-calm as it came from her. She asked about what I have been doing as in academically. I had never expected her to do that after the way the things had turned out to be so bad with the people of society and me. Everything soured in those days from last two-three years. This moment of today was totally unexpected.

I came home just another time as of the evening and I hear amma talking on the phone. It was from Tri-Nagar as she was asking about Babbu, ‘what has happened to him’; her tone was intense, high, curious and sad. I was already having a bad time and I knew I should have been studying but it was literally impossible given the sexy weather in the evening outside. I rushed out without bothering to even stand there for a second. The next time when I came back in, I was told that I was going to Tri-Nagar. Amma was preparing, babaji was dressed, and so that makes four of us, including the driver. Amma was really off-the hook, she had been told that it was an emergency and that Babbu had stopped breathing, or was breathing with difficulty. Amma was shocked over the news of Babbu having passed already, or near passing, the call had been confusing and with incomplete information.

It was 1810 when the call had come. Driver took his time in coming over here via bus. It was about after an hour that we left the society gate. We picked up badi buaji and the surprise guest- Anil fufaji. It took a lot of time to get there, maybe two hours or more, I don’t know. I hadn’t come by wish; I was pushed by fat-whore. After having waited for hours, I thought in the car, whatever happens tonight, I don’t care, I don’t care if anyone dies or lives today, but the night should not be a long one.’ *I was going to be wrong this time.*

It had begun drizzling when we had picked badi buaji and fufaji.

I was slightly noticing the place and the roads and the market and the shops. I had been here a very long time ago, it’s been years, maybe five-six, I myself don’t know. I knew this place as a child. Amma was ahead in reaching the door of that set-aside-corner-room of Babbu-Sadhna. She cried with heavy breathing, ‘he has already left, he has already left.’ ‘You could have waited for me; you could have waited for your mother’.

There were five people here already, not counting Babbu. Sadhna, the carpenter-and-care-taker, one woman, and two old men (one aged almost same as babaji was Hem, babaji's real younger brother) constituted the crowd. There was this woman who was fat, dressed in saree, with ornaments and accent that made her the typical example of local women here in this corner of the National capital. The other old man was of shorter height, maybe 5-5, had side-combed short hair of grey color with slight black streaks still visible. He was well-spoken, well the best one in talking among all of us right now. He was active physically, and he caught my attention when I heard him using English phrases quiet fluently and with right pronunciation.

Babbu lay on the floor with cotton in the mouth, nostrils, and a bed-sheet put as drape on him. I recognize the face and it didn’t look like dead, it looked like he slept in peace. I had seen him sleeping the last month when he was here. Amma was broke; she was crying and was beating up hands against her chest. Badi buaji and the woman held amma, trying to calm her down. The room was small, Babbu’s bed touched the wall and his pillow was just touching the opened door. The floor-mat was spread in the front and on the left of the door.

*I was making it sure that I don’t record too much into my brain, it was going to harm if I do that. I had my senses open to whatever was happening in my immediate environment. I would not put down those facts which I don’t clearly remember. I will put most of the information as a piece of clue, and not as a scene.*

* I had hit my head twice on the board attached to the door-frame above the small doors of height about 5 feet- 5 inches maybe. It was first time right when I had tried to enter the room. It wasn’t just on my head that the board had banged, it had happened with the old-man, and I think with whomsoever who tried to enter the room with paying attention to the space that was available for entering through the door.
* Badi buaji had shed a few tears to sympathies with amma.
* These three people (Hem, woman, old-man) start telling stories as to what had happened through the day along with the versions of carpenter-care-taker and Sadhna.
* Carpenter had left around 1130 for work, and he normally informs Babbu about it. Babbu would even respond in ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to him.
* Babbu had been in weak health today, he had been pulling long breaths. He also had lose-motions which would be temporarily fine on some days. His condition had seriously worsened in the last few days. Carpenter had been suggesting Sadhna of informing amma about Babbu’s deteriorating health and the affected breathing pattern.
* Sadhna had called few days back and even today but she had never told too much about the falling health of Babbu. She was never clear with the information she would call to give. She would be stressed and confused. The woman, at this moment, said that she had told amma that Babbu had stopped breathing. The old-man supported Sadhna by saying that the bad news of such high intensity could actually send the listener off, so it was right up to a certain limit if Sadhna didn’t directly tell it.
* Sadhna had fed banana and milk to Babbu around 1200. He had been eating it willfully, though he was uncomfortable with breathing. Sadhna had been taking care that she doesn’t feed him anything heavy, or too much water that may enter his wind-pipe.
* She had called doctor twice, and he had checked the condition of Babbu. It was before 1330. Sadhna had said that she had called the doctor twice, once before Babbu stopped breathing and then once after he had stopped breathing. It was at this moment that badi buaji tried to question a lose-string-of-the-story. Doctor that badi buaji thought Sadhna was talking about, leaves at 1330, and then who came to see Babbu in the evening. Sadhna had called a doctor, she also gave a name and it was known to badi buaji. There was never a problem about it.
* The old-man would usually come and say ‘RAM-RAM’ to Babbu and he would even respond in his own way. Babbu could speak quick and short words and he would respond to ‘RAM-RAM’ by saying ‘RAM’ once in a hush. The man had come to see Babbu in the afternoon and had learned of his bad health. Babbu hadn’t said anything but had looked at him with familiar eyes. Babbu had recognized him. He compared the long-and-heavy-breathing of Babbu to an old-relative of his, who had died after showing similar behavior.
* Carpenter comes back at 1630 from work and sees Babbu still breathing abnormally. He tells Sadhna to inform amma about it. Sadhna didn’t this one time.
* According to Hem, Babbu had lost breath after 1700. The carpenter, woman and the old-man supported this fact and didn’t add to it.
* “Doctor had seen Babbu, so there was no point in waiting for anything, or further medical examination,” suggested Hem at some point when they had come over the time of 1700 hours in their story about the day.
* Amma had been complaining why she wasn’t called early. Why she wasn’t called in the afternoon when he showed abnormal breathing? To this the story-tellers said, that his health had been fluctuating between good-and-bad and one can never tell when the end is supposed to come. They themselves were not expecting it happen like this, they said it has been early seeing his health in the last days.
* Erstwhile, the mother of Mogli had also come, and she had pointed on me to ask if I am the son of Babbu. She had been there, and watching the scene, she didn’t say anything, or played any specific role other than that of a spectator. She had pointed to me and asked if I am the son of Babbu. I had nodded to say ‘hello’ and to answer to question, but she didn’t respond to that. Oh yes, she did by looking away and with that rustic and disgusting face expression on her face.
* It was babaji, amma, badi buaji, Sadhna, and just us here and no outsider as such in the room right now. I was sitting with my back against the wall. Babaji was on my right. He spoke to push me to rub my hand on Babbu’s head; he was all covered under the drape. I was nodding to say ‘no’ and he kept pushing until amma spoke ‘he is son and not father that he has to rub his hand on Babbu’s head’. Babaji still pushed me to do, I move myself to the body, and slide my hand calmly on the head under the cloth.
* It was about the time that the next proceeding with the dead body should happen. Amma tell Sadhna to put turmeric around the body as people saw two ants roaming on the drape. Hem went to bring ice-blocks to use under the body to keep it safe from catching bacteria. He took his time to get the ice-blocks in rickshaw from away from here.
* Amma had not brought her address-book so it was difficult to spread the news. Badi buaji told it to fat-whore and Manju buaji in the first place. Then, they planned for cremation in the presence of Ghost just soon as he reaches here. Badi buaji told him that he takes the first means of transport (either airplane or train) and reaches here fast, at all means before 10AM next morning.
* Anil fufaji had given me R500 in private, in the name of bringing floor-mats. I had refused, but he said that the money was for the floor-mats, and he hadn’t even given me time to count.
* The old-man had been trying to connect to the tent-makers but they weren’t picking up. It should be because of any occasion, like marriage, going on for the night.
* After the ice came, Babbu was lifted from his bed-mattress and lay down on the ice-blocks until he will be finally taken up from there and dressed for cremation.
* Amid all the facts that amma and badi buaji were trying to learn about the day and Babbu, both of them never stopped bringing in religious-bullshit in. they were like acting crazy by telling Sadhna that she should have sung ‘NAMOKAR Mantra’ to Babbu. The fact that Babbu had been to SHKHARJI twice and whoever goes to SHIKHARJI is destined for heaven. They were asking Sadhna of her routines as to how she sung the Mantra to him daily.
* Badi buaji had been telling that she would pray to god regularly that he frees Babbu of his misery. I would think like ‘WTF is that supposed to mean’. The important thing to note is that she said that over thirty-forty times during the period and that too with arrogant pride.
* Manju buaji and fat-whore had been pushing to come. Badi buaji told them to reach here early by next morning. Manju buaji was pushing and she reached here with Anu and fufaji. Both Anu and Manju buaji were crying. Manju buaji complained why she wasn’t brought here in the first place. I didn’t know how to hide my smile when the crying face of Anu and Manju buaji was looking at me. It was difficult to hide the smile; I didn’t know what else to do.
* I had gone to piss, and then taken a seat in the stairs going to the upper floor. The carpenter came over and indicated me to follow him upstairs. On the roof, he placed the chair for me and put down the wooden-four-legged-stretcher for himself. He sat before me and lectured me to think of parents, to think of Sadhna. He had repeated a phrase several times, ‘if you feel bad for what I say, tell me to stop’. I listened to him, and learned it as statements and data, and nothing so personal. I never tried find out what could the motive be.
* Babaji had been giving me calls from downstairs and it put an end to the quick-minutes-lecture of the carpenter-care-taker. I come down and sit with face away from Salil fufaji, whose expression wouldn’t seem real to me, or he didn’t know how to look other than how he normally has his face. Also, I had to not show off my pathetic smile to anyone in this serious situation.
* Manju buaji, Anil fufaji, Salil fufaji and Anu left around 2230. They were told to come back early next morning. They also had to send driver off.
* It was about the time that I first thought of sleeping, but then I hadn’t eaten anything. I wasn’t hungry but I didn’t want to be in a situation when I become helpless by being hungry with no food at midnight in the middle of the sleep. I asked babaji for letting me go the market and get something to eat. I gave him the five R100 notes which Ail fufaji had given me and told him that these were for the tent. Babaji and amma had looked up with surprised/shocked mixed expressions as to what I was saying. Badi buaji was on phone and ignored looking here. A clear repetition of what I had been saying helped babaji come down to normal- the money was given to me by Anil fufaji for getting sheets for the floor and tent. Amma gave me R30 and I had chips for R10, the rest I kept. I didn’t eat much because I didn’t want to be first filling up and then emptying in the morning. The two shops at the corner of the street were open, it was bakery and dairy.
* I came back and carpenter spreads a floor-blanket for me to sleep along the wall on the left of the entrance-door. I fell asleep after tiring myself with the QUADRAPOP (shapes fall from the top, when one settles four pieces of same shape next to each other, the four-pieces vanish) game on the phone. The cheap-creep-shitty-talk of badi buaji was never going to end. For the time being, it was only low, and had only, maybe, paused.
* I was awake again around 1AM; it was because of loud-irritating sound of the whack-shit-brained buaji. She was reciting the same old stinky punch lines about what she wished for Babbu from god. She had said one thing that caught my attention and played significant role in bringing me up from sleep, ‘This house is mine, and that house is his’. She had repeated it, “Babbu used to say that this house belongs to me and that house is NEETU’s”. The two-faced-whack-whore was fucking-bitching, and acting to test me, holy-fucking-shit! I turn on my phone to check the time, take turns in the bed, and then get busy with QUDRAPOP again. I couldn’t have simply got up and rushed out, the way I do in the next minute. It had been enough already. I got to the terrace, sit on the seat and abuse everyone in low voice to myself.
* I couldn’t have sat for long at the terrace; there were an awful lot of mosquitoes. I couldn’t have gone down either to listen to the two-faced-whack-whore-badi-buaji. I open the door for the room that had belonged to Manju buaji once. I lay on the wooden cover of the bed cautiously. It had layers of dust, but not worth paying attention at this moment. (*Was that to send me out of the room, because now I think there wasn’t enough space for four people, amma, two-faced-whack-whore-badi-buaji, babaji and me, to sleep there?)*
* The phone, especially the game QUDRAPOP had come out to be of real help today, or I would have succumbed to the bullshit that amma, badi buaji talked throughout the period.
* I had fallen asleep with specs on, and in the lying-pose in which I sometimes meditate in bed, lie against your back without pillow (which anyways wasn’t there), raise your knees, and do deep breathing.

*The woman was a neighbor from the street, the people call the carpenter with the name Ram-BABU/Sham-BABU (it is Ram-BABU probably; I had heard badi buaji using it). Everything here looked small on the scale, I had always thought of the things as big enough in my memories, and I was seeing the truth now, reality of my past on true-actual scale. It felt like all the dimensions had been decreased by some percentage in perfect proportion as we do on a computer with our drawings.*

-OK