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**Three Poems on Kashmir**  
**By Muhammad Nadeem**

**Rhetic Dreams**

Here  
Where mountains ring the city  
Dreams are dead  
Dreams born to fight the ethos of Dark Ages  
Steeped in an impish conflict  
Elaborate arpeggios of assertions  
Unnerved in  
Sizeable slices of the sun  
Coaxed into life – unscathed  
Cupped by sinewy walnut orchards and saffron fields  
Or razor wires and bunkers, sandbags, tanks and guns?  
A roaring fire  
Or hum of a love song  
Sung on the banks of sloshing *Lidder* River  
Knock-kneed beneath crimson *Chinars*  
When horizon is bleeding red  
And bullets fired across *Jeelum*  
Injuring *Zabarwan's* aghast voices  
Where moon doesn't lift veil  
Where dark nights confuse dreams with absolute nightmares  
Sun doesn't shine  
Dreams as Trojan Horses  
Take over nightmares in a home  
Where there was little food and charcoal  
But dreams.

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**Shadows of Time**

I wonder  
How time could cast such long shadows!  
What a pity!  
How can life be so meaningless?  
Invaluable for some  
Life – A nightmare to live with!  
As I lost The Madness in my heart  
Like a tear in a lake!  
Will I be going after misery now  
Or horror  
in this noise of disbelief?  
There is something more feral  
In the grasp of silence

In the comfort of quite solitude  
No smugness – just Blue Shadows  
Leaving...  
Some more will leave...  
What am I holding on!  
Have I to learn to live  
In this new world of Emptiness –  
With hollow rules  
Is this the world, for the rest of my life?  
No! (Exaltation) – a bugle cries  
awoke my lamentations to ask;  
Is to live in it to live in regret?  
When all dreams:  
that would bring more than mere contentment,  
in my core:  
to rest on my eyes  
When sometimes the walls shake  
When sometimes the doors tremble  
A voice ice over my dreamy burning eyes –  
Half blind with tears  
Tears sweeping down my frozen cheeks...  
And then I shout Bring on your storms  
Bring on your earthquakes  
With hope of returning to the 'desert'  
Whose trees bear the poems of peace!  
Where rivers of fire rush past  
Where the shadows of time – flung across the snowy rocks.  
Where I only whisper the prayers of Peace!  
Peace!  
everywhere near me!  
Peace  
within me!

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### After 816 Nights

those weren't the same eyes  
same, but more like swelled  
(as crying is a ritual for them)  
and decorated with kohl

that wasn't the same laugh  
same, but more like baked  
in the oven of pain

that wasn't the same song

same, but more like refined  
in the cradle of emptiness

that wasn't the same you  
same, but more like a person  
i was waiting for

i'm not the same either  
same, but more like a burden  
of exhausted soul  
wrapped in the flesh  
of emotions and memories

memories

of what was there before aleph  
and what now is echoing in the mountains  
mountains...

numb in pain

pain

hidden beneath your  
soulful swelled crying eyes  
beautified with darkness  
of human soul

soul

glittering with icy sparks  
of blissful mourn

mourn

like when the world wept  
as seeing you and me together again

it wasn't the same togetherness  
same, but more like a sad happiness  
crying and screaming and shouting  
to live again

to laugh again

to sing again

**Bio:**

**Muhammad Nadeem** is from Indian Occupied Kashmir. He is pursuing Postgraduate Studies in Mass Communication and Journalism from the University of Kashmir. He writes poetry and his poems have been previously published in Kashmir Life, Precya Review, Parallel Post, Greater Kashmir, etc.

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