

Taste of Sea in Her Tea

It was a misty Istanbul morning, as she took the ferry from Asia to Europe and back. The sea breeze washed her face, a few drops of it mixed with her tears and fell into her tea as she sipped. She gazed towards the east, towards the Black Sea. She wanted the breeze to take away her sorrow to the land of her mother, the red headed Georgians who stole the fire from God and brought down the Caucasus Mountains, where in a magical land resided a seven headed dragon who had elixir of life within its palms, waiting for those with bold and daring. And towards Russia, where melancholy resides better than in the Mediterranean.

She stood up as the ferry passed Hagia Sophia, and Blue Cami, a church, and a mosque, places of worship, their crescent moon and star visible above misty clouds. She opened her arms, closed her eyes; in her imagination she joined the flock of seagulls that hovered like a cloud from mosque to the church and back. Would the hollowness under her left breast become full again, if she spun like a dervish, faster and faster; would the eye of the hurricane that resided where her heart once was, become still?

Red headed young man, with long eyelashes twirled in her hollowness. He was her unfulfilled journey, her un-borne child. How far was Istanbul, Constantinople from Bloomington, Boston, Virginia, his childhood dwelling places. He resembled her Georgian great grandfather, same willowy figure, blue eyes, long eyelashes and red head and beard.

Other men resided in her heart before, maybe even a better man, but none left a broken window under her left breast where wind blew hot and cold at random, sun came through at rare joyful moments, and rain caressed it with kisses and chiseled its truth messages. You are empty you are empty, let go and let him be. He said so, let go.

Cold wind blew through her hollow, where her heart used to be. It was now buried under the baby boy cherry tree.

She loved him as she loved herself. It wasn't his willowy figure, talents, smarts, knowledge, accomplishments or lack of them, it was the spirit that he was born with that she fused with, like two rivers flowing into each other with ease, like the Black Sea and Mediterranean meeting on the Bosphorus under her ferry, making a different sea, that was fast and wild, exciting and mesmerizing. But there was a dark side to the prince that would rise up suddenly when threatened... Thunders are frightening on Bosphorus, sunsets are otherworldly enchanting. He put a bent one-day to his river, told her no trespassing!

The ferry passed by the Byzantium Princes' Tower, whose lover died upon trying to swim to her shores on one of those cold rainy Bosphorus nights. These days people have their wedding receptions there, against the backdrop of minarets and reminisces Ottoman Sultanate. Do their ghosts hover with envy, joy, happiness or resentment over the happy lovers?

A young man approached gave her a napkin smiling, "What ails you? Casualty of love?! He is not worth your tears, you are beautiful to cry." Kind words of the stranger brushed warmly over

her left breast, blood flew to her womb, her heart was beating there. Where he once kissed, caressing her heart with his lips.

The unexpected wave washed over her, taking the napkin with it. Her eyes closed once again, she tasted the salty mixture of the sea and tears in her tea. Ahhhh she exhaled, turning her face to the sky, letting the sudden ray of sunshine coming behind the Princes Tower bathe her face dry. Shimmering on radiantly, she thought she saw his smile dancing in the sea, greeting her, as he used to after making love, hello there!

Are you ok the stranger asked?

She caught herself smiling back. Hello there!

Filiz Cicek, 2009, Bloomington