

## Enchained Spirit

Tied to the armchair with a broad brown leather belt, his fists clenched, muttering, gasping unintelligibly, under his breath, angry at something or somebody, an unhappy frown shadowing his brow, hair cropped short, feet bare and sharply white...

I recalled his first image...everyone called him Tari;

He was always around the house, on the bed, along the wall, holding on to it for support, sitting tied to the chair, but I never saw him run.....or maybe he could not...he never went to school either...I realized this, days , months, and years later; that was a disturbing evening when he just fell , flat on his face and hit the side of the bed...a sharp cut in the forehead let out a gush of dark red blood...I was terrified, I started crying, crying at seeing him bleed, crying at his pain which I felt , crying because he was hurt; crying because he was helpless; why did I feel so? Why did I like him so much? Who was he for me? He would smile at me when I went near him; he would suddenly grip my arm so hard that sometimes I would shout... "let go! Please; he would laugh, laugh and laugh, and then keep on laughing; the laughter would turn into fits; they made him roll on the floor. No one could stop him, till the laughter turned into tears, into tearful cries, and into moans of pain which no one could stop, and then I knew, he could not, he could never, he would never be able to stop this laughter by himself..I saw my father's concerned face as he paced in the room; then I heard him say "He cannot control this, it will require treatment" I saw my father fill up a small syringe. He was a doctor. He inserted the needle into the shaking arm, the laughter mixed with cries continued. Trembling I went closer, bent over him as he lay there, his eyes were closed , his face was wet; I felt afraid and then I knew... OH! He, he was my brother. He was only six years old. He would be fine when the laughter subsided and I thought all was well. I played with my sister when he would just sit in his chair tied to it. He liked music and songs. Father would put on the black records on the player. Tari would scream for more and it was difficult to stop. Memories of painful cries strike sharply as I turn the pages of my childhood. Mother was always working, cooking washing looking after guests and holding Tari . He was not a normal child. I never heard my mother complain about

him but I could often see her swollen eyes and sad countenance. We never went out in the evenings. Who will look after Tari?

Was always the question. Tari did not know who he was. He could not change his clothes or eat by himself but we knew when he was hungry. He would scream and cry. He wanted to be part of life itself, hold onto something, wish for peace; one day I could not find one of my books; finally I saw it in Tari's hands; he had twisted and crushed it, it could not be read, I cried, `Mama see, what Tari has done to my book" Mama was helpless. Tari could not be punished

It was hot that summer afternoon, as I stepped off the tonga coming home from school, I sensed an unusual silence; my family stood in the porch , heads bent, faces concerned, My heart missed a beat and then beat faster, my bag felt heavy on the shoulder. Tari! I ran to his room; the chair was empty, the brown leather belt hung loose; "We can't find him. It's been three hours now" I heard a voice behind me. I sat down on the steps outside and stared emptily in the air. Evening turned into night. Night, into the next day. Three days went by.

We lost Tari. Why was he in this world which he never knew nor understood? For me he was a bond of love, of unconscious relationship, of mystic entity; a truth; a state, a form, an image yet a shadow; I wanted to help him but I never knew how. Mother was a pillar of patience having him as a child who could not speak of his pain and fears, wants and needs, hurts and happiness. We could tie him to a chair but we could not untie his being, his self, his mind; Tari came into our lives with laughter with hope with a divine presence; he must be in heaven. His soul was alive but his Spirit, Enchained.

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