



AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Why are There Tears in Your Eyes?

Rebom Tajom

Every day and night, different shades of color are painted in the sky as per the wish of nature. Changing of seasons only affects me in my changing clothes. Only sight can merely appreciate the beauty of spring, no longer sensing and pleasing participating in it. Autumn rains allow me to witness the beautiful sight of mother's love and care, how a chicken mother allows chicks to hide under her wings. The scorching sun hits me differently more than usual in my sleep, in my dream. I am no longer part of this world; I am with the people in an unforeseen place who have left me for the heavenly abode. The sound disturbed and wakes me up from a deep slumber. My eyes were wet with tears; the soft voice calling me Kakam (grandmother). Why are there tears in your eyes? The question awakes me to realize I am in the same place, remain invalid for many years.

She laments! Sometimes having a long life seems like a curse. I have seen all my loved ones passed away. The pain becomes more when I think of not having or meeting them again in this life. Life is so fragile; I have seen and been with people whom I met after my family, but I am not blessed to see my siblings' end, nor even that of my parents. What curse I have brought upon myself in this life?

Instantly, I could see the tears rolling down from my Kakam's eyes and hear the murmur she did herself, but could not catch the words she utters. Curiosity within me compelled me to ask about the life she endures. Kakam, is this the life all women have to go through? She replied with a gentle smile, wiping her tears from the blanket she used to cover herself. She said, we had four siblings, three girls, and one boy. Destiny has played different roles in each one's life. I had a life which is different from everyone.

The relationship we had is not the one the world has today. Like destiny, our future partner was already decided with the help of a chicken liver by a shaman (priest) while we were in the womb of our mother. This sounds very clumsy but is indeed the truth. When I was small like you, my mother in every possible manner tried to convince all siblings to live with each other with utmost love and respect. I still remember her saying, "a sister staying with parents before

marriage is like a dream and it remains a wish once you get married." It's just a wish if I see today.

I left my home when I was just 14 without introspecting on what future lies ahead. Now I am a mother of 8, but only one child remains with me, and he is your father. Our customs do not allow us to live with girl children as we follow patriarchal norms. Your father was my last born, and he is the only son I have. Due to that, I have undergone many questions posed by my husband and society. Living in a patriarchal society, our priority always lies on men. It is true indeed; women prioritize themselves when they are daughters of their parents, but once they get married, son becomes a priority. Woman is very contradictory by nature. Most of the questions and suggestions about having only one son were raised and given by women, including my mother-in-law. Above all, what makes me wonder is why my own mother supported the system. All those things were overlooked by me in my youth, as it was mandatory to live a submissive life.

After your iiji (grandfather) left this world, I have lived my life as a single mother for 16 years and hope for many years. For a woman, once you get married and have a family, there is no question of leaving that family as it is the custom we follow. But for men, it is a different story. After one month of his wife's death, society encourages him to find someone who can support and take care of his household duties. It seems and happens that woman's existence is associated with household duties. The sound of cracking fingers and the long yawn pulled me out of my deep engagement in the story. Kakam, is this the life women deserve to live? Do we deserve to be treated in this manner? Oh, Unga (baby), things have changed a bit today. However, even today, a woman's status and value are associated with men and sons. Above all, I have a different story to tell: the day I gave birth to my second daughter was the day my father took his last breath, which is why I couldn't attend his funeral. The weight of the pain still remains recent, as if it happened yesterday.

A strong gust of wind blew away the fluffy clouds that drifted across the sky. The soothing and cold breeze reminds the approach of evening. She grasps her blanket, pulls it up to her chest, remaining silent yet with an intense desire to share more about the life she left unsaid. Kakam, I call her. She murmurs again but I could not hear the exact words, but the word 'mother' was clear to me. I asked, what happened to your mother?

She starts by saying, ‘After I left home, I could rarely meet my parents, family, and rarely did I visit my own village. Indeed universal acknowledged truth, once a woman gets married; she needs a ‘passport’ (in our dialect, we called gaati geji nam) to visit into her own birthplace where all the memories of yesterdays left buried.’ Passport in a sense different from the passport what a people use to travel on other countries. It is socially accepted passport by the society I belong. Passports in a sense of meat and rice beer. This passport holds the identity, status, and respect of an individual as well as the value given by society. Married women were not free to visit their parents’ house with empty hands. If someone did, it became the talk of the village. If rice beer and meat were offered to them, the family invited the entire village. The invitees created a carnival- like situation. The most disheartening part was when my parents had to pay for the gift I offered them. While my mother was giving me the exchange gift, I notice the deep cuts and cross marks on her face, revealing the life she endures. With a heavy heart, in situations, many emotions and thoughts need to be expressed, but only a few were said while big things remain unsaid. Life is full of obscurity, but hope lies within that very obscurity. The fragility of life didn’t allow me to think I was seeing my mother for the last time during my visit to the village.

Two dreadful news hits me, freezing my life forever. Gripping the blanket tightly, she started to loosen it and crossed her two palms, placing them over her forehead. Her eyes were filled with tears, on the verge of rolling down. Before they could, she covered her eyes with both hands. A gentle breeze blowing over the clouded sky made the situation more emotion. News of my daughter meeting an accident; not merely an accident she died on the spot. This news numbs the whole family and the numbness is still in my life. I have been destined with a life full of grief. Before one tragedy ends, another comes. After the burial ceremony ends, everyone left, even my family who attended. On the same day, I got the news that my mother was hit by a car and she died on the spot. Our customs and rituals do not permit us to leave the house before the completion of five days after the misfortune occurs in the family. Numbness and darkness hit hard as a nail within me. The atmosphere was calm, calmness was meant to be there after heavy stories. The whining of mosquitoes brings back my conscience of the life that has made us to create many stories, yet more stories are to be created. Kakam, I said, it’s time to get inside.

Bio:

Rebom Tajom is from the beautiful state of Arunachal Pradesh, North East. She likes to depict the emotions and experiences of pain and trauma that women go through throughout their lives, yet remain unnoticed by society. She believes that through writing, one can discuss the issues and emotions that often go unnoticed.