

CREATIVE SPACE

The Silent Teachers

SWARUPA BHAGWAT

The day I entered medical school,
Memories I so much cherish;
With dreams and expectations which,
I doubted, would ever perish.

On a marble table in the dissection hall,
There lay that pallid cadaver,
Far beyond the books and blades,
There was much more to discover.

“O young minds,” said our tutor,
“Remember your stepping stones.
Here are your silent teachers,
Not mere figures of flesh and bones.”

And so in the quest for healing
Of the sick and the diseased,
Nervously, we all stepped into
The dreary world of the deceased.

Oh! Those shrieks and swoons!
And anxiety there to prevail!
Sight and stench of lifeless creatures
Made our senses frail.

Why this disgust? I pondered
With each new passing day,
“What amazing abodes of creation,”
Shouldn’t we rather say?

Cutting through the fat and muscles,
Unfolding the mysteries of humankind,
Overwhelming respect and kindness for them
Filled up my enlightened mind.

A breadwinner? A philanthropist? Or an orphan?
Who were ‘they’? none of us knew,
The sheer epitomes of once vibrant splendour,
Great treasures of knowledge and learning,
Indebted to them, I wonder.

Today I recall
The words of Vesalius, verity no less vital,
“Genius lives forever. All else is mortal.”

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