

CREATIVE SPACE

Forbidden fruit

AISWARYA SASI

With sparkling eyes, he said, "Mama, tell me a story!
A new one this time – with kingdoms, battles and glory..."
The mother, just twenty years old, smiled weakly at her five-
year-old son.
Closed her eyes, and with a hint of melancholy began.

"Once upon a time," her tone as hard as rock.
"There was a blissful kingdom with joy round the clock!"
Her glazed eyes into an old dream seemed thrown
"Upon this happy kingdom, the sun always shone!"

"Did it live happily ever after?" asked the lad bright.
A pregnant pause punctuated the ever so still night.
"My dear child, if only things had gone that well...
No, upon the poor kingdom, great misfortune befell."

"Towards the kingdom on a dark, moonless night,
Rode a sinister marauder when all was quiet.
Ruthlessly, the kingdom's gates he did tear,
House after house, and stripped the kingdom bare."

"Satisfied with his malevolence, he sat complacent.
Smiled, even, as he listened to the screams of torment.
Hungry now, lazily he pulled out his apple,
And ate till his bottomless stomach was full."

"He left the kingdom in ruins, at his whim.
Nonchalantly strewing his pips behind him.
The hapless kingdom, once the most royal lair,
Lay sorrowful and scared, broken and bare."

Distractedly over her son her eyes did sweep,
And beheld the little boy, fast asleep.
Yet she went on; of her story's halt not a trace,
Tears crawling down her scarred, bruised face.

"To the crumbling kingdom's aid, its neighbours came,
Though the kingdom would never quite be the same.
In the quietest corner, a little apple plant did shoot,
The kingdom's dwellers knew whence it had its root."

"To cut it down they resolved, livid with rage,
For looking at it took them back to the outrage.
'You can't cut it down,' the voice did sting.
The voice belonged to the neighbouring king"

"The plant is more than twenty weeks old,
A life is at stake. You must do as you're told.
Water it and nurture it as you would your own.
The weak, helpless kingdom could not even moan."

"The end," she whispered as she started to weep.
Transiently he awoke, and fell right back to sleep.
He didn't have her eyes, though he bore her name
Even six years thence, she would never be the same.

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