

# Two Sisters

The two sisters looked the same.  
Their height was the same and so was their width!  
Even their complexion was the same.  
So true that they certainly were sisters  
Of adjacent rooms of the same house.

Every morning they woke up and stretching their limbs, looked out.  
The whole day they gossiped, what everybody was about  
No passer-by escaped their keen attention.  
'When does he leave? And when does that other one return?  
What does she do? And will those two never learn?  
And if he stares, why does she get airs?  
What on earth are these two discussing? And what are they back there  
planning?'  
The same questions the whole day. The same trivial past time.

They watched the street all the time, even when no one went or came  
this side.

Sometimes crows and sparrows and pigeons perched on their bodies.  
But did they care!  
Unmoved, they were.  
The sparrows even dropped their warm droppings.  
But the sisters never picked a fight.  
Nor did they shake their heads to shoo the sparrows off.

They just stuck to their curious musings and their colourful comments.  
And then it was evening.  
As the shadows came, they bid good night to each other.  
Shut themselves up and went to sleep.

It was dawn and they watched the world to while away their time.

And then, suddenly one morning ...  
One sister went mum.  
Just sat looking depressed and glum!  
The other sister was all worries.  
What's the matter with her now, she wondered. Why is she so quiet  
like?

The other one opened her mouth to sigh, "From tomorrow I am not  
going to watch with you dear.  
I shall not see you.  
Shall not say a word to you.  
Never, never again shall we meet.  
This is the last day of our friendship."  
She became tearful as she said it.  
Her bolts shuddered.  
Her glass panes went cold.  
And blurred with concern.

The second sister listened with an open mouth.  
Her panes became hot with fear.  
Her bolts bent.  
With great efforts she composed herself and tightened them.  
And collecting all her wits; asked, "Tell me please, what's with  
tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow I am getting a makeover!  
The concept of a hall is over, you know.  
Now there is the living room!  
Everything is so ultramodern!!" The first sister blurted.

"What language are you speaking in, dear?"

You were all right till the other day!  
And  
What in the world is a makeover?" The second sister asked in exasperation.

"How can I help? This is what has been falling on my ears for the past eight days.

Makeover is doing away with simple and convenient things and replacing them with odd, ostentatious ones.

Look at those folding chairs. Aren't they lovely?

How nicely they fold over and rest on us on two legs when not being used? Isn't it fun answering their queries about the world outside?

Don't they look elegant while working when they are on all fours!

Children climb on them and looking out from us to wave to their parents. Isn't that a gratifying moment for us?

And now those people are going to replace the chairs with baseless bean bags!

Remember how we lost track of the time while chatting away with the tube lights? We have stayed awake in their company for so many nights. Wasn't it fun when one of them winked at us once in a while?

And now the tube lights are going away. The people in the house say, the tube lights are greedy and consume a lot of electricity.

And so they are going to fit lamps inside panes fitted into the walls."

The first sister groaned.

"This is terrible!!

To whom shall we talk if they block the lamps' mouths in the walls?

Do they want us to mutely watch? Silently see and say nothing?

And what about Mr Fan, the round rounder? Is he leaving too?" The second sister asked anxiously.

"it is bad news all the way!!

And I can talk about it only today

Because they are fitting an AC into my mouth.

With has its own fan inside, so uncouth!!"

"So you will have an AC in your mouth all your life?

This is really the limit!!"

The second sister lost her cool. "What right do they have to gag us with things?" She was furious with rage.

The first one was not so disturbed. "Do not lose your head, dear," she said, "My lifestyle is undergoing a change."

The second sister rattled her bolts in annoyance. "Please speak so that I can understand." She said.

"From tomorrow  
There will be  
no opening and shutting  
no looking out  
no rueful creaks of the door joints.  
Nothing but rolling in a line.  
In short, I am getting a sliding door!"

"Fine! Anything else? Let's hear all."

The first sister replied, "You know how irritating these bright white glass panes are!

The sun's glare is just unbearable, don't you think? Whichever way you turn, all you get is a burn.

But..

Tomorrow, I am getting fitted with coloured panes.

Such lovely dark brown panes!

Noon will be banished from tomorrow. Morning will be followed by evening.

No noons, no burns!!"

So cool! So wonderful!"

"Tell me, do you really approve?

Won't you be colourblind with those brown panes? Won't you miss all the colours?

You will never know the real colour of anything.

Your whole world will be dark and grey!!

I am sure, the charm of an all-grey world will last only a few days. And then you will remember the old days; days of hot afternoons but colourful hues.

Your AC will cool the people inside but you will always be hot with a headache!

Your cheeks will be swollen, blowing hot air all the time. And then you will know the difference between a breeze and a blow.

Take care dear ...”

“Yes, you are so right!

They can go change me outside; but inside I shall remain the same!

Peering out at dawn!

Pensive in the twilight!”

Her sister’s smile cleared her panes. “Open, shut or slide; but you see the world only if you peer outside; so goes a Indian proverb. Don’t you agree?”

And the two sisters laughed in unison!

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- Rajiv Tambe