

Vacation

Aneek Chatterjee

Every family here, in this part of the
world, has an invisible dictum
for a life cycle for the 'stronger gender':
Study hard; get a respectable job,
government preferred; get married; have
children; retire with a fat pension.

When I wanted to be a writer,
eyebrows were raised; and I searched
for a government job.

But when that job was encircling me,
I was floating in the ocean with a pen,
a writing pad, and an octopus.

I wished to survive.

Father, an arm of the octopus, was attacking.

Mother, another arm, was clueless.

Wife, whom I loved blind since college days,
appeared blind. Junior octopus, in middle school,
asked her mom:

“How will we go for vacation trips?”

I am still working for the government, for my family,
for the relatives, for the neighbours, for the colleagues,
for the fishermen, grocer and laundry.

Back on land, a lizard;

I've taken a vacation from myself.

I

Aneek Chatterjee

I cry inside, ...

inside a pool of blood.

Because masculinity does not

permit crying out loud.

I cry inside the pale,

stone walls of my home.

Because you do not permit

adult men to be ridiculous.

I dance on a lighted floor,

where all dazzles and laughter

are recorded daily

in morbid, spontaneous dark.

We

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Last evening we had a scuffle
over beer and over our favourite
football teams.

The day before, we went for a
long drive, - three hundred kilometres.
& we shared seventy-five kms each.

Last evening we shared blows; -
some hit the target, some missed.

This morning we had a conference
call. Hits were pardoned and misses
were laughed at. We went for the long drive
again in the midst of the conference.

This evening we are planning another
round of beer.