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ON AGEING MOTHERS

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You are hitting the spring of life
She is entering the dark cold tunnels of winter

You seek solitude to untangle the
persistent inner struggles
She craves the warmth of human company

You enjoy long solitary walks amidst tall
tress under the moon
She relishes the idea of flipping old family
photo albums
Navigating the flashes of life she created
nurtured and lived
The life she can never go back to

You keep thinking about meanings
identities inequalities societies and
rebellions
She waters her decade old Tulsi plant
covered with red dupatta
Smiles at the sight of two non-uniformly
blossoming marigolds

You love the liberating midnight summer
breeze penetrating your skin as you
oscillate with the white rustic swing
The noise of its squeaky hinges meddling
with the swishing sounds of rustling leaves
She sits on the terrace and slices a mango
Wondering when did the solitude of swing
start offering you a presence more

comforting than her company
You think of leaving it all
Breaking free from all the bonds
Running as far as your lungs and muscles don't collapse
She is empty
Exhausted
Too worn out to want to run away
Even to the past where you ran behind her

You stretch your body on the uneven grass
Feeling the moist soil with the hands
Just about to light their first cigarette
She closes her eyes
Sighs
Groans
Implodes
Why did you learn to sleep without her
And when?

You make promises of taking her to the
lake when you come back
Her eyes look at you questioningly
For offering your time in instalments
To someone who devoted a lifetime to you

You confront someone
That you feel detached
You ask that someone why do you have to
owe so much to her
That someone shouts back at you
From the mirror
Because she runs to the back gate from the veranda
Just to see you wave back from the main road
If you happen to notice her

You want to come back to take her away
She wants you to stay
Share the silences and laughter with her
Before life withers away