

A VISIT TO MY OLD VILLAGE

Written by

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An evening stroll
in my tiny old village I took;
saw the old folks
once so young,
now so frail and weak.

Aged with time at nature's quest
they stared at me in total disbelief
They seem to think I too
have aged along with them perhaps
Yet neither of us could fathom
what time and years
had done to us in tandem.

Stories we had to tell in plenty
of days gone by in time so lengthy,
And as evening turned to twilight,
it was time for us to bid "boa noite".

Since my last visit there
many years had elapsed,
Had promised myself
that some day in the future
I will once again meet
the folks who I had left behind
from times so sweet.

Goodbye and farewell are not easy
as they always are resonant
Of nostalgia and yearning,
of anxiety and reminiscence,
To depart at the thought
of never meeting again
those you hold so dearly.

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The old banyan tree still stood there aloft
but the mango tree had stooped somewhat
My name on its bark
that I had carved when young
I could barely see
As probably some naughty lad
Had peeled its bark off in jealousy.

The nunerca tree is long dead and gone;
It's shade so cool that once sheltered
Children ten score or more
Playing beneath surroundings so sylvan.

"When will you return?"
My childhood friend asked
"I know not" I said as I gasped.
"Will meet again for certain
Before I depart"
"Certainly we will" I heard him say
As I turned away.

It hurt so much as I turned to go
that I did not look back
Lest my friend see the tears
in my eyes that I tried to disguise
to make him believe if I could
that it was just plain cold sweat.

Outside the men were absorbed
in some sort of a discussion
While in the balcao
women folk chatted their lives away
And coconut trees
in the gentle evening breeze
Firmly held their sway.

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Then as darkness fell
and homewards I walked,
Seeing a score of people together pray
by the wayside cross I stopped,
The light from the candles
reflected in their faces,
They sang in perfect chorus,
their gaze at the cross
Fixed as if by magic.
hearing them sing the litany
And unable to resist
I joined them in harmony.

Later on my way home that night
heard the hooting of the owl in the distance
and in the darkness bringing to mind
thoughts about my grandma who would say
“Go away and leave us alone,
you silly little bird”
“No one here is dying today”
and making the sign of the cross
She would shoo the bird away.

This thought, an eerie feeling,
a cold chill, to my spine did bring,
Alone I hastened my pace homeward
from slow to brisk
the evening star in the west
leading me on my way
Glad to be once again
with my folks at home
while moments ago I seemed
in my thoughts some light years away.

And bringing to a close
a visit to my village that day
For the last time I watched
the sunset of my holiday
Uncertain of my return
to behold another glorious dawn

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or sunset beyond.

Tony Fernandes

Canada 31/10/2010 For reviews on my book please click on the link below wherein a stanza from the poem that I last sent you has been excerpted.

<http://www.goanet.org/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=290>