

Reflection

The Story Takes Time: A Day Out of My Diary**Hina Latif***King Edward Medical University Lahore*

To read and to write had always been my hobby for long. From the early days of my childhood when I used to read each and every sign board on way to my grandma's home, every piece of paper that comes into my field of vision. **Reading is like breathing in, writing is like breathing out**, and I used to experience it every passing day, getting scolded from my father for reading newspaper while having my lunch, or writing little stories or critiques in a magazine for kids, "focus on your food, focus on your studies only". A child who used to be an introvert, mostly silent with a smile, who used to share her every single thought or activity with her diary only till her house job, but her patients and medical field made her an extrovert, seeking some thrill in everyday by managing her patients, talking endlessly to them to cover all the aspects of medical history. Yes you will find her switching her shield of Extrovert/introvert now n then even though she lost her diary connection lately.

Book reading was a hobby I inherited from my parents. I can still recall words of my father in his full voice "**either write something worth reading or read something worth writing**". I remember when in grade 6, I won a contest of being best critique in a kids magazine and got a prize of 3 books. I was waiting anxiously for him to come home from office and to share my little achievement. Here he was saying "focus on your course books only, don't waste your precious time". With a heavy heart I picked that magazine n my gift books when he ordered, 'leave this stuff here', later I found that magazine in his drawer highlighted n marked with a star.

To me, Major concern of writing a diary was to hide it at a place not in reach of anyone at home



and I did it successfully over so many years till I started my post graduation training and switched to digital diary on phone for better access. Oh yes the day I got my 1st salary, I bought him a gift along with my meagre salary amount, with a deep smile and teary eyes he asked me to have it all. "Its yours my child. Do tell me how much you need more". In the evening I saw him crying while having a chit chat with my mother.

Days, months and years were passing at full tilt when my sister had an invitation for her post graduation convocation and asked our parents to accompany. His 1st note was always a Big NO, 'I have some work to deal with, and my poor clients will suffer'. Same was the case when I topped my district in high school and he was called by chief guest to accompany me. 'OK baba mother will attend sister's convocation and you will go with me on my post graduation. Promise?' "Ok...promise" he replied.

Time doesn't pass, it continues. Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind. Swift fly the years and I cleared my IMM in a go. I used to love

all the prayers I ever had from every patient of mine. One of my staff members used to ask at the end of every shift, Dr.Latif your bucket of prayers is full now? And I used to smile with a head nodding, oh yes, but sometimes with an easy call it made me felt deficient of those prayers. On weekend I used to tell father about my different patient's stories. Deep down I always feared renal failure since he was diabetic but with a good compliance. Though we had a chance of chit-chat for hardly an hour every weekend only because of his busy routine but I always longed for those cherished moments. Indeed Life isn't a matter of milestones but of moments.

I always used to take pride how my name rhymes with my father's name, I don't know it's a feeling I can't describe in words but it used to pound my heart with a sense of deep joy and protection. From the very start of my educational career, with so many premature promotions I used to bring top most position for him along with my siblings and the mere sight of that beaming smile on his face while reading my report card healed all the fatigue of my hard work always. I wanted to do everything that could bring that smile on his face, eyes shining with tears of joy, for that I could put my whole life at stake. My post graduation exam time had finally come with training getting over in few months and he kept on irritating me to gain weight and look like a doctor. "Who will take u as a doctor, improve your eating habits and focus on your health" 'I am healthy baba, ok. Mostly I didn't find proper time to eat. It will be over soon'. I used to say in my defense which was a fact too. On every weekend we had the same exchange of words & then in the evening I see him bringing a lot of stuff for me to make me healthy.

7th July

It was a late weekend night .I was at home trying to study for my upcoming exam. Everyone was asleep except me and my father as he used to sleep around 2am or 3am after thoroughly studying his court cases. When he was back to bed I noticed something unusual, he was a bit drowsy. Questioning revealed his unexpected high blood sugar level as the culprit which he never had, precipitated by some infection. Reluctant to visit healthcare facility nearby as always, finally I had to get all the i/v drugs at home and in the morning he was all set to perform his prayers fully conscious with a soft smile glowing his face. A little

sense of achievement took over my heart and I headed to offer my nawafil for being able to do so with ALLAH's blessings.

21st july:

It's Eid-ul Fitre. I was back home last night. He was feeling little exhausted for few days. On his way back to home after eid prayer, he was all drenched in sweat from head to toe with dyspnea. Situation was getting out of hand with his symptoms not resolving with all the medications we can had at home. Finally I had to take him to my workplace as majority of the private setups were off because of eid. While he was in emergency with me, he was all fine except his moderately disturbed oxygen saturation. A non smoker with a clear X-ray and a fine heart, all these made me ponder about pulmonary embolism, mere thought of which made me shudder to my spine. While in emergency icu, I resuscitated a patient with VT with my team, somehow we managed to pull that patient back to life. That moment, the expressions on my father's face were so enigmatic. Few moments before, he was asking my team members to not to discuss the ECG of that very patient with me as I am his CHOTI DOCTOR. Just few minutes of resuscitation of that very patient made me a BARI DOCTOR for him and he was all relieved and complacent to be with me for his treatment. That petrifying pulmonary embolism was there for me as a challenge when most of my seniors were not willing to admit as he had no risk factors. Relevant investigations confirmed it too with no evident cause; he got admitted and treated for that. A day before his discharge while I was heading to his room in a private hospital's staircase, my mind was all foggy, clouding with his health concerns and my Part-II exams apprehension. What if he has an Intra-cerebral bleed with theses anticoagulants? NO, NO...not at all nothing can harm him as I have prayers of so many patients with me. But, I was wrong this time. Shaking all these thoughts off my head and praying hard for his health I moved to see him.

14th August

I was back to hospital a day before for my exam preparation. But had a very disturbed sleep at night as if something bad is about to happen. I called home. Everyone was fine. 'It seems to be my exam stress I guess'. But early morning I got a call from my baby

doctor brother that baba is unable to walk properly after having a fall followed by vomiting. In tears I asked him to bring him immediately to my workplace. In an hour he was here all dressed up on his favorite day of the year i.e. Pakistan's birthday but with closed eyes, getting comatose with every passing moment, with the only response of raising an eyebrow when I was calling him baba baba. He had ICH and needed immediate surgery. Again another holiday made me helpless in arranging the best neurosurgeon for him. Sooner with the help of my kind hearted mentor I was able to shift him to a good setup for further treatment. He was on assisted ventilation followed by another surgery the next day. My whole life was struck in the beep of an ICU monitor and a bed of my father with varying concerns every single day, sometimes arrhythmias, sometimes infection, unresponsive metabolic acidosis, ATN etc etc. There came the day of my part II written examination and I wasn't willing to leave him alone for a moment when my mother asked to go for my exam for father's sake. I gathered up the little courage I was left with and attempted the exam.

14th September

He was improving little bit every day when a final jolt again put him in deep slumber. The only hours I used to leave him were from 4am to 6am. I was just back to room to offer prayer when I got a call from icu about his CPR. All I had to manage my screaming elder sister and baby brother along with my baba who was seeing off for heaven abode. That day wasn't less than a doom's day for us all which I never want to recall at all. Day next to his death I got a text of clearing my

written exam. To pen down all these feelings about your loved one's loss is never ever easy, u try to muster up your courage but again escape before even opening the 1st page. It took me so many years baba to just share it with my diary and these watery eyes don't make me write a single word. Life is blur baba, life is blue without you !!!

FEW DAYS LATER

Choti doctor of her baba was there at CPSP for his final practical examination. At the end of the day here I had a letter of congratulations in my hand. I folded it hurriedly and move to a nearby taxi to reach back to my workplace and tried calling my mother. She wasn't feeling well after baba's death and I was away because of my exam. On way back, when I opened the letter of congratulations, all I could read was a single word Ms. Latif and nothing else. Tears rolling down the eyes made the whole picture blur. I was blubbering like a child when that middle aged driver asked me “what has happened beta?”

“Uncle I have passed my exam” with a shaky voice I managed to answer after few minutes.

“Why are you crying then? You must be happy you became specialist doctor?”

“Uncle: I lost my father three weeks back with whom I planned to rejoice my convocation”.

He stopped the car on a side, brought me some drink and said “pass honay ki khushi apnay iss baba k sath sahi. I do have a daughter. I ll make her a doctor like you”.

Here I was standing on the roadside with someone else's father, sharing my bitter sweet moments, but with sentiments of a father being proud of his daughter's little achievement, tearful eyes and a charming smile ; the smile my baba had for me..!!!