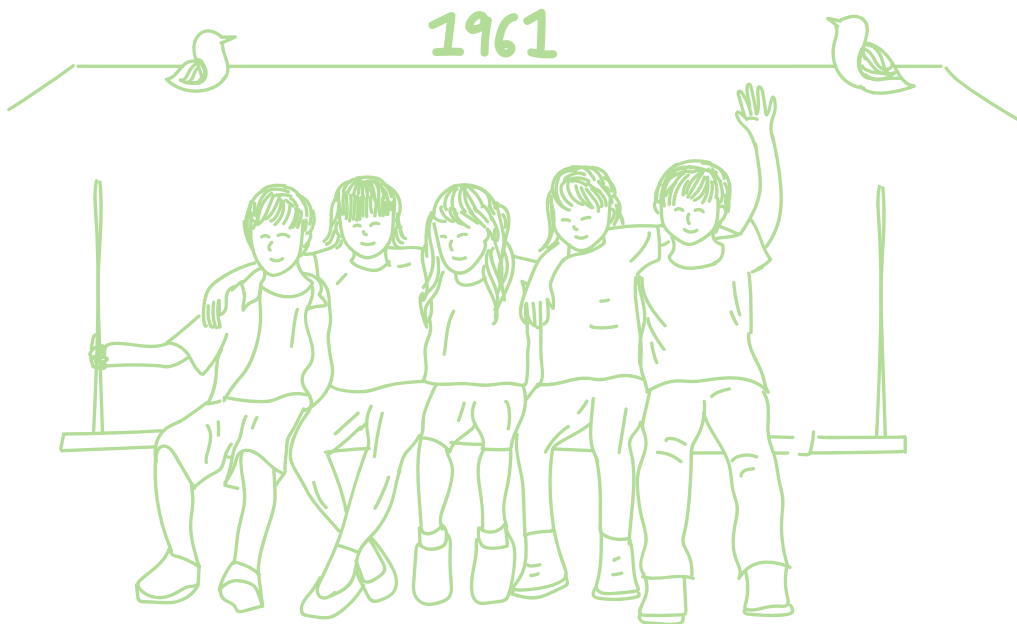




For All Things Left Behind

Vasanthi Vasudev

This is a true tale about each and every one,
When the year was simply, nineteen hundred and sixty-one.
Our lives were full of people and abounding spaces,
Cheerful and carefree, 'twas all about happy faces.



1961

A dozen sparrows danced courtship, pair by pair,
Dazzling sunlight toasted crisp, the dewy, morning air.
Summer, long and dusty, was well on its way,
We, wide awake, were garrulous and gay!
Delicate metal bars secured shady courtyard, on top,
On them, excited sparrows twittered in merry skip and hop.
In the dead centre was a sombre, dark well,
Brass pots and pans lying around, pell-mell!
The rose wood swing, was one hundred years old,
Shining, majestic; it swayed on chains, long and bold.
Half a dozen, boys and girls, big and small,
Hung and swung like acrobats, without any a fall.
We spread on it for grandma's tales, steadfast, to hear,
Heads filled with visions, fantastic; some, even queer!
We had the swing and courtyard, for all our playful wants,
We could even 'hide and seek' amongst its shrubs and plants.
We knew nothing of any blinking, beeping screen,
Anything 'virtual' was never known or believed to be seen!
Nothing much was artificial in nineteen hundred and sixty-one,
If time had stood still, battles many, would have been won!

1961

Alas! That wasn't so.... Sorry is my state, like every one,
Sixty years later, in twenty hundred and twenty- one!
Peering into computer screens, boxed in weeny spaces,
On 'fb' and 'insta', I search, for mirth and happy faces.

I never see a single house sparrow, forget a pair,
I'm bundled in blankets, breathing 'centigrade- controlled' air.

Summer, long and humid, is well on its way,
But 'bio clock', elsewhere, I can neither wake or be gay!
Sun blocked windows with tiny ventilators, atop,
Not a crevice, slight, for a sparrow to skip or hop!

In the dim room, what's what is hard to tell,
Computers, cell-phones and wires, strewn pell-mell!

The slender wood -ply swing is really not so old,
But leaning against the wall, how can it sway so bold?
It's dumped and piled with hundred things, big and small,
At a mere breath, they will tumble and all, fall!

Seated, bored stiff, in my 'travelling armchair,'
At sparrows and swings, on LED screens, do I stare!
I've only the 'dead' swing and poster bed for every want
For there is not a soul around, not even a breathing plant!

I can only see what's on my electronic screen,
No one, not even a neighbour, is here to be seen!

2021

1961

If only I could see those sparrows so chirpy
Spend time with people, make merry and party,
Oh! If I could sit near the courtyard in my stately swing,
Rocking a hearty cheer, with friends, in the evening!
If I could stretch my neck and wink my winsome eye,
And not have to peer into mobile screens so still and dry!
If only I could zoom and drop into nostalgia's glowing lap,
Flee from dismal reality's dingy mouse trap!
From this artificial, lonely life, I have to scurry,
To rush into the past, I am in a tearing hurry.
It's my future, not the past, that is fully gone,
It's but natural; to good old days, I am so drawn!
Back to my future I am wont to go,
There's precious little here, that I won't let go!
Here, please take my entire life from twenty twenty-one,
And give me, in return, just a day in nineteen sixty-one!

Verses
BY VASANTHI

2021