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## GRANDMOTHER'S HANDS

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The phantom touch of my grandmother's  
frail fingers,  
hands weaved with my braid lingers,  
a second longer with each night.  
The bridge between our language seeps  
the sieve of our hollow tenderness,  
familial intimacy tethering us together—  
translation became our myriad feather.

The severance of our colours bleed  
through all my verses, her silences  
foreground the atrocities—  
at the hands of fair strangers who  
sought the land as their own,  
she carries the agony alone in her bones.

Interlacing the vicious cycle in my hair,  
like those white flowers we plucked  
from my mother's forgotten garden,

with trepidation, that it won't leave us rotten—  
shame, nothing lasts forever, rose tinted glasses  
come off when dusk becomes dawn.

Internalized abhorrence is rarely given speech  
inside our cemented walls; muscle, blood and bone—  
we all know it rests inside us, howling profanities,  
the cycle repeats day and night despite the caution,  
we persist nonetheless, hope of it all ending  
is tenuous, but it exists in the same realm

as the hands of my grandmother,  
entwining prayers of tranquility  
in my braid, each twist like a rosary—  
beseeching love for all, in defiance  
of the oceans that divide us.

**\*The poem was adjudged 2<sup>nd</sup> in Inter College Poem Writing Competition organized by BCM College of Education, Ludhiana on the occasion of International Peace Day 2022.**