

HE & SHE

Both of them lay quietly in bed. He on his side and she supine on the rightside of the bed, her long legs crossed at the ankles. They felt drained and exhausted. He closed his eyes and his arms where he pillowed his head on felt warm and almost sticky. The window was open and the tiny balcony opposite to the bed lookedout on the sea, now just a vast black with white frills. Normally the port city received its share of oxygen inthe evenings wafted by the Bay of Bengal everyday. Today the black sea seemed to have sucked all the air. The ceiling fan was doing its painful asthmatic grind. He turned andlookedup.angrily. He was naked except for the blue shorts which was drawn inches lower his navel. He let out a deep sigh which had holed up deep in his navel like a slender snake. She was looking at the ceiling too. Her hands were crossed below her naked breasts. That was a position which her mother always complained was manly, but one she couldn't wriggle out of. But then if she had to go by her mother's moral commandments she would not be here lying in bed naked nor living in the city all by herself excepting ofcourse these weekend visits by him regularly. She really enjoyed and lookedforward to his weekly visits invariably announced by three short jabs at the doorbell. He always made it after 6 pm. Occasionally he brought a couple of cans of beer. She loved beer in a tall glass, frothing and especially loved that sensuous feel of tingling cool when she held it. He liked his samosa or pakoda after every three gulps. But no, she loved only that fresh icy bitter tang in her mouth. And when he kissed her between gulps beer tasted like liquid pakoda. So she

laid down anirrevocable norm that he shouldn't kiss her(at least onlips) till she finished her glass. She was strictly a one glass guzzler.

He finished his bottle and they made love. With or without beer it's a routine she had come to enjoy not unduly needed by any moral ethical injuctions of her mother. Would he marry her? He did not seem to be ina hurry to tie the knot. For that matter she wasn't either, although she lazily wondered what he thought of her if he had to marry her. She closed her eyes. Longafter, she always soaked in and floated on gentle languerous waves of plesure.

She knew she still has some thing of him. She has his faint masculine odour rubbed off on her sprinkled with his favorite deo. She turned on her side without opening her eyes. She felt likea soft sieve. He flowed in and out of her. She slid her hand to her pubic region where he gently pinched her. She ran her fingers over andfelt the smooth bristle. She suddenly realized she was exploding. In one fluid movement she slid off the cot and rushed into the bathroom where she let go off her.

When she stood up her familiar face looked out of the mirror on the wall. Her nose delicately wrinkled at another familiar faint odour of her urine and his body. She bent over the pink bucketful of water. The cool clean water and the white mug bobbig on it was inviting. She hada quick vigorous bath. She towelled herself, wrapped it over her breasts and walked out fresh like a dew wet lily. She straight walked over to the window her arms firmlyclaspd over her chest suddenly a huge wave of fresh air streamed into the room completely overwhelming her. For a moment she felt she would float out of the room like a balloon in its wake.

Now she looked out her window. A part of the shimmering expanse of the port city of Chennai spread out below and away from her. She was standing at the window of her tidy little flat.

Tired of lying he got up. He looked at the other side of the bed and sat on the edge of the bed with both his hands supporting him on either side. It wasn't really hot. He was intently looking at a spot on the floor. He felt almost crushed. Earlier in the evening he lost his steady job at the call centre and he knew he had to anchor again inside a month. He was angry and hated himself. He went to the bathroom and splashed water on his face. He towelled his face threw it over his shoulder and walked over to the window.

Now he looked out his window. A part of the shimmering expanse of the port city of Visakhapatnam spread out below and away from him. He looked back at the narrow hospital cot. He looked out again. He was standing at the window of his room he shared with another friend.

(Extension of a joke read some 30 years ago)

