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Mamat Sabyrov

*Oh my love, my
death*

Selected short stories

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Every time when I visited my native places, I saw how young guys just yesterday strong and fresh turned into bearded old men. I did not feel fear of death. Yes, you think about it for a short time, and then again plunge into everyday affairs. Even now, when I am over sixty and have buried many of my peers: yesterday's classmates, fellow students... It still seems to me that death is somewhere far away. But I know it is always near. Since my birth, it has been accompanying me everywhere...

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Condemned

(A parable story)

In the darkness, something was mercilessly strangling him, pressing down on him from all sides. His hands were cold, and his face was terrible.

- Who are you? – Adam asked, barely breathing.
- Death. You are the condemned, and I am your executioner.
- And what is my fault?
- What is yours fault? Your birth. Who once born, must die one day.
- But I am still young.
- Your age or your youth is irrelevant. Everyone has own time.
- But I... haven't managed to do something yet. I can still be useful. I...

Suddenly, the grip of Death began to weaken, and soon the monster completely let go of him.

– You were given a reprieve, – he said in the same nasty, but already fading voice. – I am leaving for now. But this does not mean that I am leaving you completely. I will always be near. I will always flicker before your eyes, always remind you of myself.

Adam sighed with relief. Tears flowed from his eyes.

«From now on I will become a different person. I will do only good deeds. From now on, not a single precious minute will be wasted,» he swore in his soul.

When he came to own, people in white coats were crowding around him. They were saying something, rejoicing...

Three days later, he was transferred to a regular ward from the reanimation. And a week later, he was completely discharged from the hospital.

His usual, everyday life began again. He was a successful merchant, his business was flourishing.

And, indeed, as promised Death was always nearby. When he worked, ate or walked, It circled around him. At the sight of It, his body was seized by trembling, Adam's face became serious, thoughtful. But gradually it began to disappear somewhere, rarely appearing. And one fine day, it completely disappeared from sight. And in its place, an unfamiliar girl appeared. She was very beautiful and smiled all the time.

Years passed. And one day that pretty girl suddenly pounced on him and started strangling him. Her hands were unusually strong.

- Who are you? – Adam asked in fear.
- Your Death.
- Don't lie! I know her. She was different. Very ugly and scary.
- I am the same death. You just managed to forget my face. You were intoxicated with happiness, got carried away by life and forgot about me. But everything has an end. Now your time has come.
- How? So quickly?
- Not so quickly. Quite a lot of time has passed since you were given a reprieve. I tell you, you just got carried away by life and did not notice how the days flew by.

Adam looked at her carefully. Yes, it really was the monster that once strangled him. It began to strangle him with even greater force, and Adam realized that this was the end. That he had missed his chance again, that now there would be no mercy, no moment of respite.

«How could I forget?» Adam screamed. «I shouldn't have forgotten her face. She should have stood before my eyes all the time. Maybe then the end of my life wouldn't have been so tragic, so sad. Death wouldn't have taken me by surprise.

With such desperate thoughts, Adam began to reproach himself, curse himself, tear his hair out. But it was too late... even for sorry... and crying...

Saint

There were two of them. Both in military uniforms and blue caps. One, who was older, was writing something all the time, and the other was shouting, ordering, waving his arms. And old man Burkaniddin, the sixty-year-old mullah of this village, following their instructions, silently collected his simple belongings.

– Why are you so slow?! – the young security officer yelled. – Get ready quickly! Quickly!

And not satisfied with his movement, he kicked the old man a couple of times.

The mullah's seventeen-year-old daughter stood by the door of the old house and watched what was happening with horror in her eyes. Since her early years, after the death of her mother, she had been her father's faithful assistant, she had seen how he received and healed the sick, she had witnessed many of his miracles. People who were literally brought on stretchers magically stood up on their feet after his prayers and started to walk without anyone's help.

For her, her father was a saint, a living embodiment of a prophet, and now she was sure that these two would leave him alone, at least stop mocking him, as soon as her father said a prayer. In her opinion, this did not cost much effort for a man who saved people even from snake and scorpion bites.

But her father was silent and obediently carried out all the orders of strangers. His pitiful, helpless appearance oppressed the girl and she wanted to cry. She could not understand her father's unusual obedience, and she wanted to ask him to show her the magic power of miraculous prayers.

Meanwhile, the two of them, as if gone mad of permissiveness and lawfulness, became more and more impudent, rude and cruel.

They took the mullah out into the street and put him in the back cabin of a polutorka¹. One sat next to him, the other, who was older, in the cabin, and the car slowly moved off.

The girl could not stand it and began to cry. She had a presentiment that her father was leaving forever and would not return.

– Father! – she screamed. – Don't be silent, please. Do something.

At that time, a crowd of fellow villagers gathered near their house. They all loved and respected the old man. And now they silently saw him off, quietly wondering: «Why did he do this?»

And the daughter cried even louder, begging:

– Father, ask Allah, please. I know that he will not refuse you.

But the old man did not respond to her requests. He sat silently and looked into the distance.

At that moment, his mind was occupied with completely different thoughts. It was as if he was already living in another world. After all, unlike everyone else present here, the mullah knew that this was his last trip, that he was destined by fate to die in the dark dungeons of the OGPU. And he humbly walked towards death.

Through many mysterious signs and prophetic dreams, he not only had a premonition of trouble, but also clearly, as if on the palms of his hands, he saw his fate and was ready for his death, for the pre-death trials. He even stocked up on ten meters of white material for a shroud, which was now lying in his kurjun². The upcoming torments did not frighten or disturb him at all. On the contrary, he considered them a necessary, inevitable condition for deliverance from sins and purification.

– Go to your sister, – he said to his daughter. – Don't worry. Everything will be fine.

¹ Polutorka – «One and half ton» – soviet style lorry, capable to transport the 1.5 ton of weigh in limit.

² Kurjun – the bag.

The old man was calm about his believing daughter. He was absolutely sure that God would always be with her, would always protect and take care of her.

But the little girl didn't know all this, and she still cried and begged:

– Father, do something, please...

Don't block my sun

He had the same dream every time. He was completely healthy, climbing a winding mountain path to the top. Around him was indescribable beauty: bushes with green foliage, scarlet and blue flowers. Suddenly he stopped, enjoying the singing of birds, looked ahead, mentally counting how much was left to the top. It was in this place, halfway, that he always woke up, never having reached the cherished height... Waking up, he heard the singing of birds – in reality, with such joyful, ringing voices, as if they were performing a hymn to the new day.

The old man lay and looked out the window, where the branches of an apricot tree were visible. He thoughtfully returned to his dream, trying to remember every detail, and involuntarily recalled a cartoon about a dog who dreamed of hunting every day.

«We are somewhat similar,» he thought. «We both yearn for the past.»

From the hallway came light footsteps, the sound of water from the tap, the hiss of a boiling kettle. A few minutes later the door opened and the granddaughter entered the room – a dark-skinned girl of about nineteen with large, deer-like eyes. She carefully seated the old man in the stroller and rolled him into the kitchen. After breakfast, she took him out into the garden, covered him with a warm blanket and, having said goodbye, hurried to classes – she was a student.

The old man sat and watched the sun rise. The higher it rose, the more pleasant it became for the body, warming his arms and legs, numb from the morning coolness. The son and daughter-in-law woke up late, around nine, and before that the old man was alone – among the trees and white flowers.

The garden was small: a couple of apricot trees, four apple trees and about ten cherry trees. Everything was repeated day after day, for many years in a row, and he knew in what order and when each tree would bloom.

The first the apricots pleased the eye after a long winter were, then the cherries and apple trees.

When he had just fallen into this difficult trap of illness, became immobile – after a stroke – he complained to friends who came to visit him that he was bored, that there was no one to talk to, that he wanted to communicate with the birds, but, alas, he did not know their language.

Now, after so many years of loneliness and immobility of the body, it seemed to him that he understood them. He mentally talked to them, recognized each one by their voice, by appearance. He lived like this for several years.

But last year everything changed. Next to their house, the construction of multi-story buildings began. At first, only a tower crane was visible, the blows of hammers, the noise of trucks, the crackle of drills, the cries of workers could be heard. Everything was built quickly – day and night.

The concrete boxes gradually turned into houses with windows and balconies. And one day, lights came on in these windows – people appeared everywhere.

And then the hardest part began. There were too many cars and too much noise. Music played day and night, and dozens, hundreds of eyes looked at him from the balconies and windows. There wasn't a minute when someone wasn't staring at him. One would leave – another would appear. He had no peace or personal space left.

But the worst thing was that he lost the sun. Now it only appeared closer to midday, around eleven o'clock. Until that time, the garden and the house were in the shadow of a huge twenty-one-story building. And then, when new high-rise buildings of the same kind were built to the south and west, it became really cold – as if permafrost had arrived.

When construction had just begun, company representatives offered to sell them the house. But the son and daughter-in-law refused – they considered the mansion to be elite, and the proposed

amount did not suit them. Gradually, all the neighbors moved out, and their house was left alone in the middle of high-rise buildings.

Then the developers no longer asked, knowing that eventually the family would have no choice. The old man became despondent. It seemed to him that enemies surrounded him from all sides, that there was no point in living without the sun.

«It turns out that all this time I lived, endured pain and loneliness only thanks to the sun...» he sighed.

«Don't worry,» his granddaughter reassured him. «We'll move soon. We'll live where there's a lot of sun.»

Monotonous, dull days passed. The old man almost never left the house, sitting in his room all day and looking out the window. The son and daughter-in-law were in no hurry to sell the house – it was hard for them to come to terms with the fact that their luxurious mansion was going for next to nothing.

Only the granddaughter, seeing how her grandfather was fading away every day, never tired of encouraging him:

«Be patient, Grandpa.» There's just a little bit left...

Thought about death

They say that thinking and talking about death is a bad omen. And some argue that the more you think about death, the further it moves away from you. So my thoughts about death can also be perceived as a timid attempt to avoid its powerful embrace. Besides, I am at such an age that whether you want it or not, it reminds me of itself every time, its terrible image constantly appears before my eyes.

Life is a stream of smoke

One scientist once shared a revelation about the existence of the human soul. According to him, the human soul resembles a wisp of smoke. Since no one has seen death in the face, and those who have seen it have not returned, his statement so far claims to be only another hypothesis, no matter how famous the scientist was.

But one day I found confirmation of this. One morning I went to visit a sick aunt. The aunt is a heroic mother, she gave birth to eleven children at the age of forty-five. She was lying on her back in bed, shaking, looking like a child and crying like a child. And her frightened children were circling around and also crying. Seeing me, she asked where my mother was and when I told her she was home, she asked me to call her urgently.

«Tell her that auntie is not feeling well,» she said.

That day she died. My mother was with her until the last minute, and when she returned home late, she shared her terrible observations.

“When she was dying, a stream of black smoke came out of her mouth, like her last breath,” she said. My mother was a simple, illiterate woman. And she knew nothing about discoveries, about the human soul. She said what she saw.

Many years later, in Issyk-Kul, I heard a story from a local resident. He also claimed that he had seen people off on their last journey many times, and that the human soul was like a stream of smoke.

«It is like a thin stream of smoke,» he specified. He also looked like a simple worker. It is unlikely that he read scientific works about the human soul.

This is what surprises me. Surprises and amazes. Three different people, completely unfamiliar with each other, made the same discoveries. This means that the soul really does exist, no matter how much the materialists deny it. This means that there is another, more perfect and just world – Hell and Heaven...

Our world is fair despite everything...

We, people, often say, complain that there is no justice. At least in this world.

But, in reality, this is not so. Our world is fair, even very fair. Everything changes, everything flows. Day turns into night, after darkness comes dawn. The strong grows weak, and the weak, on the contrary, grows stronger. The poor one day becomes rich, and the rich one turns into a beggar. Everything depends on the behavior of a person. How he will endure wealth and poverty, joy and sorrow. Isn't this justice? It would be extremely offensive if only those in power triumphed, if only the weak and sick fell ill and died...

Even in such things as a protracted illness, sudden death, which outwardly seem extremely unfair to us, the highest justice is hidden. It is just that because of the veil we are not able to unravel their secret, which is known only to the Almighty, to see their true essence.

Hello, death

Since death is inevitable, there must be a promised Paradise.

Then all that remains for us is to resign to such a fate. And of course to live with dignity, so that one day, without a drop of regret, you can leave this mortal, frugal, inconsistent but damn hell sweet world.

To wait and prepare for the final and major meeting, so that one day you can boldly say – hello, death, I am at your service!

The frying pun of hell

– You, Zhyke, understand us correctly, – said my colleague named Boru. «For you in other world heaven is guaranteed. You don't drink, you don't cheat. But for us, there is nothing to look forward except Hell, so we want to at least have a little fun in this life. It's clear that we will go straight to the frying pan. Come on, Zhuke, say a toast. I'm getting ready to hit the road tomorrow. I need to hold a deserving ash, wake for my late mother, who lived to be a hundred years old. Last year, during the funeral, I slaughtered three horses and one cow. And this year on ash I'll slaughter one horse. I'll bring you the remains.

– You didn't bring us anything from three horses and one cow. Now, you certainly won't bring us anything from one horse. So, you'd better shut up, – Zhuke objected.

– What a bastard you are! – Boru howled.

– Don't speak bad words, you and I are already aksakals. Everyone is looking at us. If we continue to behave decently, we might end up in the place on the frying pan where it is not very hot.

– There is no such place on the frying pan.

– You speak as if you have already been there.

– Judging by the known descriptions of hell and my presentiment that is true, – Boru sighed heavily.

I want to be little again...

«I want to be little again,» said the eight-year-old daughter dreamily. «Then daddy would be young again...» (The poor thing is always sad, grieving, seeing my gray hair).

«But... No, I don't want to go back to childhood. In that case, there won't be Sherik. And there won't be Betty too.

Although she is little, she understands with her childish mind that, having become a few years older, she has not only lost something, but also acquired a lot. For example, a brother and sister.

If she were return to the past, she will have to sacrifice her last acquisitions...

The path that leads to God

Once, an acquaintance of mine asked:

«Do you believe in God?»

«Of course,» I answered.

He looked at me suspiciously.

«You are probably sick, right?»

«Why do you think so?»

«Does a healthy person believe in God?» He was a convinced atheist and a passionate lover of alcohol.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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