



FALLING IN AND OUT OF LOVE AS THE MAJOR THEME OF VIKRAM SETH'S *THE ACCOUNTANT'S HOUSE*

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ABSTRACT

The Accountant's House is written by Vikram Seth and is taken from his collection *From Heaven Lake* which is written by him when he has been enjoying his second year in China. In *The Accountant's House*, the poet has beautifully describes his major theme of all his poems: 'on falling in and out of love'. This means to get rid of one's memory gradually. This theme is presented here by poet's meeting with an Accountant, the surroundings of his house, and the family of that Accountant. Vikram Seth has been known for his emotional verses and this is one of those poems where he has described the cruelty of the situation. However, that grief is presented in a light hearted manner as we have to face the harsh realities of the nature and the life has to move forward. Thus, this is an excellent example of Vikram Seth's creative genius. Let us try to find out how it has been done.

Key words: Accountant, Barefoot, Doctor, Happiness, Lost.

INTRODUCTION

The Accountant's House is written by Vikram Seth who is a poet and a novelist. He was born in the year 1952 in an Indian Hindu family in Calcutta, India. His mother and father were quite famous in their respective fields as his mother Ms. Justice Leila Seth was a famous judge of the Delhi High Court and his father Mr. Premnath Seth used to be an advisor at the leather industry. He has written several novels and poetry which made him famous. He is a famous Indian poet in the contemporary English speaking world. His famous novels are: *The Golden Gate*, *An Equal Music* etc, and his famous collections of poetry are: *All Who You Sleep tonight*, *Three Chinese Poets*, *Mappings*, etc. He has won many awards like: Padmashri, Pravasi Bhartiya Samman, etc.



The Accountant's House is a poem from his collection *From Heaven Lake* which is written by him when he has been enjoying his second year in China. His poems in the collection describe so many themes and the some of the poems re-examine places portrayed in the travel books. The poems, such as *The Accountant's House* and *Research in Jiangsu Province* show the nervousness among the people who are studying and doing research and come across so many people in their research works while some poems are simple and have been written for the purpose of normal enjoyment. However, there are some poems which bring to our mind certain places that have been already ruined like the Confucian temple which had been a part of Suzhou, Nanjing but had been ruined. Seth has shown this and described it at the end of the year of the school, then he shows the garden in the title poem of the collection. He has shown the flashes of unanticipated sentiments in the poem *A Little Night Music* which can be noticed in the following extract,

*White walls. Moonlight. I wander through
The alleys, skein-drawn by the sound
Of someone playing the erhu.
A courtyard; two chairs on the ground.
As if he knew I'd come tonight
He gestures, only half-surprised.
The old hands poise. The bow takes flight
And unwished tears come to my eyes. (A Little Night Music, 1-8)*

In *The Accountant's House*, the poet has beautifully describes his major theme of all his poems: 'on falling in and out of love'. This means to get rid of one's memory gradually. This theme is presented here by poet's meeting with an Accountant, the surroundings of his house and the family of that Accountant. The poet is in a bit tension regarding his income and expenditures. The poem also tells us about the grief of the Accountant family as they have lost their only son last summer festival. However, that grief is presented in a light hearted manner as we have to face the harsh realities of the nature and the life has to move forward. Thus, this is an excellent example of Vikram Seth's creative genius. Let us try to interpret the poem regarding such issues. In the beginning we have been served that the poet wishes to go to Accountant's house due to some income and expenditures related questions. The poet goes there with his friend Doctor. The description of that place is as following:

*"We go in the evening to the Accountant's house,
It is dark and road is slush,
the fireflies fleck silver,
The ash flicked off by my companion, the barefoot Doctor, is Gold." (1-4)*



This stanza means that they went to the accountant's house and the surrounding was very dark, the road was tattered and filled with the sewage and the dirty rainy water and slush. It's stinking and the fireflies are lighting in that area with some mosquitoes and other insects. However, the companion of the poet is a Doctor who has been forced to remove his shoes due to the slush and thus poet describes him as 'barefooted'.

Later the poet describes that when they went to the accountant's house. They welcome the poem and his friend with smile. Then the poet came to know that their only son died last spring festival. However, they all were smiling.

*"His wife and two daughters smile as I come in.
They pour tea. Their son died last Spring Festival.
We smile and discuss electricity fees." (5-8)*

Then it seems that accountant's character is a bit emotional kind. Their family seems happy but accountant seems a little sad and poet rightly notices that. In the midst of the discussion about the income the accountant suddenly shouted with cry and said:

*"No one knows how he died. He came home from play
And his head was hot, his nose bled, and he died." (15-16)*

In the next lines the poet describes that although they have lost their son but still they are smiling and laughing because they have accepted that what happened has happened by the nature's order. Thus, they have to forget about that and should move forward, and enjoy the happiness of the world with whatever present and not to be too gloomy with the lost. The poet discusses this issue by the two daughters and their father's attitude. The poet says:

*"Yet they laugh, yet they laugh, these lovely people...
the two girls smile shyly, boldly at the stranger and the
father discussing matters of much importance together." (17-20)*

Thus, after discussing all the issues in the poem, we can grasp the intention of Vikram Seth and can comment that it is a poem which leaves us with a sense of hope in the middle of sadness, a realization that life has to move on and on, no matter what, there is always something worth living for and that is what gives meaning to our lives.

Thus, this is a poem of great intelligence. It looks a bit direct poem but after the reading of two- three times we can get the complete idea of what the poet intends to. However, this is also one of the poems which we can put in the masterpieces.



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