

# Quill & Scope

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## Water

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# Crossroads

*Parvati Singh*

The sound of giggles and laughter  
Echoed across the rolling green landscape  
My siblings and I were taking turns  
Wielding our homemade bow and arrows  
Shooting arrows against gravity  
To pierce the cloudy evening sky  
And provoke the Indian god Indra  
Into sending showers of cool raindrops  
Across our summer oasis

No raindrops came  
Our attempts ceasing  
After my mother shouted at us  
To stop trying to reenact scenes  
From Hindu mythology

One day a thunderbolt did come down  
With such high velocity  
That it hit my grandfather multiple times  
Leaving him paralyzed from a stroke

Seeing the sad looks on my parents faces  
I often visited my grandfather  
Exuding infectious enthusiasm  
Trying to make my parents and grandfather laugh

Each time I saw my grandfather, my Baba  
We would play our tic-tac-toe game  
He beat me a few times  
On those occasions, I proudly told my parents  
That Baba's cognition was still present  
Trying to awaken hope and elicit faint smiles



Then one day a tactless idiot  
Claimed my Baba barely had a sliver of comprehension  
This information shattered my spirit  
And left me standing at a crossroads

Time seemed to have bifurcated  
In the distance, life appeared to be rapidly accelerating  
Except in my personal bubble  
Where everything slowed down  
Almost to the point of suspension  
As I contemplated the paths that lay before me  
One of avoidance  
One of oblivion and fake energy  
Or one of acceptance and action

The sharp wailing cries of my mother  
Woke me from my trance  
I saw the grief painted across my parents' faces  
And it dawned on me that as I stood at my crossroads  
A life had literally passed me by

Since then, I have hoped to do something bigger than myself  
And to make a positive impact in this world  
Maybe it is out of regret  
Or it is out of a desire to emulate my grandfather's selflessness  
Or maybe it is from seeking redemption

Either way, the next time a thunderbolt  
Shoots down from the sky  
I will not make the mistake  
Of being paralyzed at my next crossroads

*\*Submitted as an entry in the 2014 Pharos Poetry Competition*