

**Akhtar Mirza**

**A Story**

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There is a four-walled house made of stones

in a valley, surrounded by mountains.

This house has many rooms in it

which are cloaked in the wilderness of thousands of years.

And in one of these desolate rooms,

three men are sitting in a charpoy

in a manner as if they are out of themselves,

as if they are not there;

they are three,

only three.

And the fourth one is the statue

that is standing outside.

Everything is surrounded by darkness

and, in the darkness,

there is the fear of lingering silence.

But these three are illuminated.

They are fully lit up.

They do not have any ominous fears

hanging over them

nor do they have any grievances

afflicting them.

They are talking

and the air is motionless.

Ears are sticking out for a sound

but their conversations are voiceless.

Accidentally, one of them looks up

to the air,

and the air resumes its motion, worrying.

The moment the air moves, their conversations become voiced

and their swift waves plunge towards the courtyard.

Then a shadow-like thing dangles.

Seeing the shadow, one of these three

wraps up his body out of fear ...

On the second day, when the sun's rays knocked at the door,

there were only two in the room

and ...

two statues were outside.