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(Train of Thought)

by Zhaleh Esfahani,

The sky runs by,
The clouds run by,
The valley runs by me.
The hills roll by,
The lush, green forest,
The river and the sea.
Rush by the stream,
Rush by the town,
The rolling desert and the lea;
All chatter, chatter by,
All clatter, clatter by,
Impatient as the rushing sea.

The blood in my veins,
The thoughts in my head—
They rush on like my life—as one.
Railroad of life, if I want to live,
From thy rush I may not hide;
Take me up with thy waves,
Take me up in thy tide.
On and on like the Moon and Sun.

It cannot be
That Life says to me,
Life's train is not yours to own.
I must not pretend Here is the end,
For much is not yet done.

This poem is an expression of my love for travel. When in my teens I roamed from my birthplace in the City of Esfahan, aged crossroads of history, travel and philosophy. And journeyed throughout my vast, ancestral land of Iran—ancient Persia, older than time; which all the while inspired me to poetry, musing on the wonder of awesome space and time.

I made my way to the USSR, and travelled still more. The Union of Poets of the Caucasus extended me welcome to their conferring minds. So also the writers of the Baltic States. When I made London my base, I travelled yet the more : to Mainland Europe, to Scandinavia, and to America.

This poem was composed in Moscow more than thirty years ago. It has been published in Iran and other countries. It is a sad, critical comment ... Throughout my life I have always been not quite satisfied with that which I have achieved; I want to do more—to write more—to travel more—to be of service to others. I am never content with what I have already done; I don't want to sit around. This poem reflects my hope that I'll do better work; that's what I've always been like.

After I married my beloved husband, he and I emigrated to the USSR. I was only 22 when I left home, and of course my poetry was influenced by the increased scope afforded by travel. Getting to know so many new people; coming into contact with new cultures, new societies; their traditions; their art; their poetry. All of these affect the poet. One can be influenced toward the negative or the positive, but for me it has always been a positive experience. This has been my fortune.

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