

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

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Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

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Son...I am dead by Bala S.Devi

Strange are the ways of motherhood
Fancy that you have a great mother
Definitions do vary...
I heard a mother once say to her toddler
"My little pet, I am dead and gone...
Never will I see you again...go and play".
I overheard and turned with a cringing heart.
The young mother had been
Cooing and cajoling into the phone
"Come on my girl...say Mama
Come on sweet...say Mama
What did my you eat my dear
Come on angel say Mama"
She snapped the phone and put it in her pocket
"I am at ease now" she said, to a young woman
By her side, seated in the bus.
Her seat mate gave no expression.

Ten minutes passed, again over the cellphone
"Ah my boy, where did you go
Went to play my dear...good

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Bala S. Devi

Son...I am Dead

Take care of your little sister...Ok
Do as Papa says...
Eat what granny gives...
What did you eat son for lunch...
No babu I can't come home
I will never come...go and play."
She was popping popcorns
Chewing fast, expressionless.
Her partner also did the same.
Call after call...
Popcorn after popcorn...
An hour or so, in the moving bus
Over incessant honking of the vehicle
The boy kept calling.

The mother with her popcorns said
"My little pet, I am dead and gone...
Never will I see you again...be at ease
Stop making calls".
Absolutely expressionless ...
I could not read what she felt
The voice was composed
The face the same throughout
Not a word from her uniformed partner.
Is she cruel to those infants?
Is she detached?
Is this motherhood?
Is this Indian motherhood?
Is this Indian-police-motherhood?
Is this *also* motherhood?
Fancy that you have a great mother
Definitions do vary...

- **Bala S. Devi**
devibala25@yahoo.com