

RUSTED MEMORIES



Dr Venugopal Menon

Memories are vague and faint of the luxuriant campus
Majestic buildings perched on expanse of rolling hills
Life in the hostels as lavish models of sizable families
The food of the mess we often relished, yet loved to loathe

Glancing back, those were gleeful, carefree days
No hassles except from the habitual tormenting tests
We had fun even within the tangles of Cerebellar webs
Or as mazes of Microbiology messed with our tiny brains

We learned pages and volumes of text on intricate topics
Of nerves meandering through masses of muscles and organs
Of vessels traversing tissues nurturing their numerous functions
And of cells specialized to carry out a myriad of distinct options

What a wealth of clinical matter that was all ours to learn
Queues in outpatient and heaped on floors of chronic ward
Babies with scabies, dehydrated and gasping for breath of air
Cries of pain from blocked arteries or stones slicing the ureters

When we coddled with the cadavers, frigid and dark
Soaked in pungent formalin and dye stuffed arteries
Not often we realized there was a live human in its past
Full of vibrant desires once filling the now still frames

Agenda was to teach us the physical body and its functions
What makes it fall sick and how to bring it back to tick
Medical education is to learn what to put in or take what out
Healing the sick, having lost track as the prominent sentiment

Curriculum likes to condone teaching what life is all about
As to how and why a man was made different from a mule
Or where we came from with empyrean intent endowed on us
Doctors need not be nosey reaching beyond illness and wellness

If the cold stethoscope, hammer and needles were to wait
Until after we allay their fear and ease their apprehension
Before all the tapping and probing, will it be nice and polite
To show some concern and an eagerness to help

When we tally the balance sheet of life, worn out from having lived
After we pursued varied paths and compiled sacks full of encounters
What stand out are not the posts we held or the fortune we amassed
But what earnest impact we made in those who looked up to us for aid

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