**THE IMMIGRANT'S SONG**

BY TISHANI DOSHI

Let us not speak of those days

when coffee beans filled the morning

with hope, when our mothers' headscarves

hung like white flags on washing lines.

Let us not speak of the long arms of sky

that used to cradle us at dusk.

And the baobabs—let us not trace

the shape of their leaves in our dreams,

or yearn for the noise of those nameless birds

that sang and died in the church's eaves.

Let us not speak of men,

stolen from their beds at night.

Let us not say the word

disappeared.

Let us not remember the first smell of rain.

Instead, let us speak of our lives now—

the gates and bridges and stores.

And when we break bread

in cafés and at kitchen tables

with our new brothers,

let us not burden them with stories

of war or abandonment.

Let us not name our old friends

who are unravelling like fairy tales

in the forests of the dead.

Naming them will not bring them back.

Let us stay here, and wait for the future

to arrive, for grandchildren to speak

in forked tongues about the country

we once came from.

Tell us about it, they might ask.

And you might consider telling them

of the sky and the coffee beans,

the small white houses and dusty streets.

You might set your memory afloat

like a paper boat down a river.

You might pray that the paper

whispers your story to the water,

that the water sings it to the trees,

that the trees howl and howl

it to the leaves. If you keep still

and do not speak, you might hear

your whole life fill the world

until the wind is the only word.

**SUMMARY**

Setting: 19th Century, Starts in India where the immigrants originally reside and then transitions to a new country.

Tone: Melancholy, Reminiscent, Home-sick, Morose

NARRATOR: Third person narrator; an individual that is part of the events of the poems

Form and Meter: Iambic Tetrameter

ANALYSIS:

The speaker of the poem is an immigrant herself and establishes a sense of unity with the intended audience who are also immigrants. The speaker suggests that they look forward into the bright future ahead of them and don’t dwell on the past – what they lost or left behind – as it will make them lose sight of why the sacrifices had to be made. What is special about this poem is the speaker forces the reader to imagine the world the immigrants used to live in by telling the fellow immigrants not to think about it the disturbing images. The images in the first stanza are associated with dark feelings. Comparing mother’s headscarves to a white flag captures the sense of hopelessness and despair the immigrants felt whilst in their homeland. The white flag also references the war going on around them that they so desperately wanted to get away from. In the second stanza, the speaker shifts from the tormenting past into the optimistic present where the immigrants are holding a job and making a living in their new home, where they can break bread which might have been a luxury many could not afford in their previous living conditions. The speaker wants the audience to imagine their grandchildren, which in doing so revitalizes the spirits of the immigrants and motivates them to work hard in order to make a future possible for their offspring and generations after. Imagery like that can really speaker to a reader especially if the reader can relate.