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THE SHORT STORY

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The Whole of All Your Scattered Pieces

"Now that I feel the breeze of mighty art,
I gradually quiet down, and I hear:
'Find the lines written on the walls of your heart,
Don't let them go, bring them all here.'"

It was a typical afternoon. Devin was lying on the couch, reading poems by his favorite author. He was about to put away the book and treat himself to a cup of tea when he suddenly sprang to his feet and nodded several times with a shrewd smile on his face. Devin felt as though he had found out about the most guarded secret on earth, and his lust was finally fulfilled. He had this gut feeling telling him he could turn simple day-to-day occurrences into something magical, something that would be worth reading.

Having decided what to write about, he rushed outside. The atmosphere of the outdoors gave him fresh enthusiasm and liveliness. But he was unable to say for sure whether it was liveliness or frost that caused butterflies in his stomach. Devin's mind was invaded by many unknown feelings, which he had been looking for so long. There was nothing that would prevent a so-called inspirational awakening from occupying his imagination. He heard church bells ringing. Although he didn't know the name of this urge pushing him towards the church, he succumbed to it anyway.

Ah, maybe that was what he longed for; enough food for thought that would give his imagination a long whip.

He slinked into the church. The service was over, so there was hardly a soul there. The moment he looked around, Devin, dizzy with the smell of incense, knew he could write about the dimly lit church. He would say a few words about the sculptures, whose faces were twisted with pain but brightened by bliss. Devin bowed with his gaze fixed firmly on the floor tiles. Yes, he could also describe the pain of being downtrodden; he could make those tiles come to life and say they sighed every time human footsteps were heard.

He was off to a good start, wasn't he? He could write about the storm crashing against the roof and praise the persistence of those who try hard to protect others, even if it means sacrificing their own lives. He knew he could write about the confession box, something that had overheard so many secrets. He could say that one day it would grow tired of being silent and would give away all the concealed truths that had been cast into its wooden walls. You know, just like boiling water does not know where to put its anger and goes about overturning the lid of the pot.

His feet and hands were not as numb as before entering the church. Ah, yes, he could also write something about loneliness and unity. He realized he could write about life with its hardships and good times when his gaze landed on the organ. He knew he could write something about the ravages of war contrasted with being out of harm's way when he took a closer look at the cracked walls of the church. When he saw a priest murmuring prayers to himself, he imagined those who knelt, answering the last question of the Bishop. He could write about inevitability, which he ultimately connected with the final vow, "*I do, with the mighty power of God*" and the Bishop ending with "*Hear our prayers, Amen*".

Oh, stained glass – something unreachable or unattainable that would trade its gracefulness for *"a quick kiss in the dark from a stranger?"* He smiled. It was time to leave.

On his way out, he looked at the door handle and thought about all the dirt in the world. He would surely be able to write something about that, but his poem would be drained of joy, giving way to excessive pessimism. It

might then be regarded as an intentionally manipulative piece that acquired all its power through bleakness and misery. Maybe a few positive thoughts would not harm his imagination, which was still rambling through the small tunnels that connected the church chambers.

Devin shivered when his body was assaulted by the cold raging outside. Suddenly, he laid his eyes on the old spaniel, which he had seen many times in the dark corners of the street, lying on a wet piece of rag. He was now sleeping cozily in his new kennel by the church entrance.

Raindrops started tumbling down on Devin's shoulders. He could write about rain and say how it had the intention of destroying people's concerns.

The door of the church creaked open, and a not-so-friendly-looking man loomed out of the darkness. Devin had just seen him standing at the confession box with his head bowed. That was it! He could describe how the rain washed the confessor's muddy footsteps off the pavement blocks. He could build bridges between the old piece of rag and the new kennel. He would write about the raindrops still eager to soak people's parched hearts with rays of hope. He would add that without human effort and willingness to clean the muddy pavement, not with an old, dirty piece of rag, but with a dry cloth of faith sucking in all human despair, even a thousand raindrops would not be enough.

I do not know if he succeeded in giving his poem the kind of joy he wanted to give, but I do know that from that day forward, he would not be the same person he was before. He knelt, put the paper on his knee once again, and wrote:

"No more questions, you'll see this is
The whole of all your scattered pieces."

At once, Devin knew that eventually, if not already, he would surely write something worth reading.

Author's Note

Tedo Sharadenidze is a 26-year-old scholar, teacher, and published author of poetry and prose from Batumi in western Georgia. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Humanities (English Studies) from Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. During his undergraduate program, he studied for a year at the University of Alcalá de Henares in Madrid, Spain, in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. After completing his BA degree, Tedo continued at Batumi State University in the Faculty of Education and Exact Sciences, completing the Teacher Certification Program. He then obtained a Master's degree in Humanities (English Linguistics) at Batumi State University. As an IELTS instructor, Tedo teaches English as a Second Language (AP Language and AP U.S. History) to high school seniors at the American School Nike in Batumi, where he is also the head of Quality Management. He is an Assistant Professor at BAU International University in Batumi, teaching Modern Teaching Methods and Research Methods.

Tedo's writings mainly address the themes of alienation, indifference, eccentricity, internal conflict, childhood mirth, and the inability to defy what fate has thrown at you. He is motivated to write by the desire "to turn simple, day-to-day occurrences into something magical, something that would inspire others to put pen to paper."