

chapter - 6

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An old woman

Summary of the poem :-

An old beggar woman catches hold of the sleeve of the speaker & insists on getting a fifty paise coin in alms. She tags along with him & promises that she will take him to the horseshoe temple. If he tells her that he has already seen the temple, she hobbles along with him & catches hold of his shirt tightly & again insists on getting a fifty paise coin. She will not let him go. Like all other old women, she, too, sticks to him like a burr (prickly seed case of plants which stick to clothes.) He turns around and wants to get rid of her. In order to end this useless activity, he tells her family to leave him. When she remarks,

"What else can an old woman do on hills as wretched as these".

He looks right at the sky in contemplation. As he looks on her, he finds that the cracks that begin around her eyes have spread beyond her skin. The decay of the old woman has spread to the hills & the temples & in our lives. The old woman stands there alone. And he is reduced to the small change in her hand.