When Silence is Deafening

I did what they asked me to do
Said it was for my best
To obey their decision
To trust and leave the rest

Then one day they came for me
Everyone around was joyous
They said I finally got a new home
And I never questioned the need to leave mine

I was told to start a new life
To abide by the norms and be a good wife
I was trained to adjust
Even if things done to me felt unjust

I thought love could never be bought,
Not true; newer demands were sought
If they were met, things remained good
If not, I was reminded of my womanhood

My hopes of happiness were shattered
With the piercing blows of demands,
My self-respect was crushed
Every time with a raise of hand

My pleas were drowned
My requests were rejected
I was done playing by the rules
I was done with my life being torn

I longed to come back
But they said what will others say
There is a reputation to behold
And was sent back to do as I was told

I wanted to be happy
Was that too much to ask?
I decided to take a different path
One many think but a few choose

I stood there, firm as a mountain
A frail one, you might think
But resolute nevertheless
I sought justice till it was delivered

Now you want my forgiveness
To save your reputation
Looking at me with hope
Pleading to forget your actions

I think back to those days
When your shouts were thundering
And know that today
My silence is deafening

– Sandhya Shankar*

**A PhD in Linguistics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Dr. Shankar is an Assistant Professor at School of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth, Adi Sankara Nilayam, Veliyanadu, Ernakulam – 682312, Kerala, India. Email: sandhyashankar912@gmail.com*