

Citation: Rasheed, S., & Javaid, S. (2022). Discovery of Existential Paralysis, Death, and Resolve in Autoethnographic Poetry of Taufiq Rafat through Poundian Image: A Study of Poetic Therapy. *Global Language Review*, VII(II), 221 – 232.
[https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022\(VII-II\).19](https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022(VII-II).19)



▪ DOI: 10.31703/glr.2022(VII-II).19

▪ URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022\(VII-II\).19](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022(VII-II).19)

▪ Vol. VII, No. II (Spring 2022)

▪ Pages: 221 – 232

Discovery of Existential Paralysis, Death, and Resolve in Autoethnographic Poetry of Taufiq Rafat through Poundian Image: A Study of Poetic Therapy

Saba Rasheed

Teaching Assistant, Department of English, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Sahar Javaid

Lecturer, Department of English, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: sabarashheed@gcuf.edu.pk
(Corresponding Author)

▪ p-ISSN: 2663-3299

▪ e-ISSN: 2663-3841

▪ L-ISSN: 2663-3299

Abstract: Poetry therapy is a very useful technique to cope with extremely unbearable emotional experiences in the lives of poets by manoeuvring autoethnographic poems as a form of self-therapy. It engages a process of self-disclosure to transform the developmental changes taking place in the affective domain of humans to bring emotional equilibrium. The poetic techniques of conjuring subjective images in superposition with objective metaphors – Poundian Image – imply the existential themes of loss, death, dread, meaninglessness, void, resolve, etc., to relate the otherwise inarticulable emotional states. This paper seeks to investigate Taufiq Rafat's autoethnographic poems about loss and death in his family from his anthology *Half Moon: Poems (1979-1983)* to discover his existential thematic dimensions – fear of death, existential paralysis, the journey towards death, existential resolve through spiritual relief, and everlasting memories – to come to term with the ultimate reality of death using Ezra Pound's theorization of Poundian image. Moreover, the study also takes into account the use of ethnographic poems as self-therapy.

Key Words: Autoethnographic Poetry, Poundian Image, Existential Themes, Poetry Therapy

Introduction

The loss of near and dear ones seems to be a highly complex and personal phenomenon that needs a medium to disseminate the emotions it storms. Poetry, a medium to articulate unarticulated emotions to convey truths about human nature (Percer, 2002), serves this function best as a form of palliative care. The brevity, concrete images,

and observable metaphors designed through poetry engage analogy with the theme of loss to communicate the unclear emotional states by evoking powerful emotions. Metaphor conjures an image to mind, which, through association, brings other relevant thoughts and images to come to terms with the objective reality of the emotion being borne. It captures the subjective experience of the

poet and, through metaphor, expands it to the objective experience. By using these techniques, the poetry reflects affect in context, i. e., the emotional response to a painful event in the life of a poet.

Traumatic incidents inspire the poets to record their experiences in poetry, and in this process, they transform and heal through self-revisitation and examination to come up with the purpose of life ([DeSalvo, 2000](#)). In this regard, autoethnographic poetry creates lived experience of the poet ([Alsop, 2002](#)). These poems address the otherwise negligible but painful and difficult events of life to seek loss and death ([Reed-Danahay, 2021](#)). They focus on the what, how, and why of the lived experience, its reactions, and emotions felt by the poet ([Jones et al., 2016](#)). It is a process of thinking and revising to create a distinct identity as an optimist survivor of the suiciding lived experiences. Autoethnographical poems tend to portray this story of survival. Figuring out the reality of death in culture, autoethnographic poetry becomes a process of finding the meaning of life from an utterly painful lived experience. ([Custer, 2014](#))

Autoethnographic poetry becomes a source to connect blood relations through the use of family stories, myths, and metaphors that connect the past with the present to give meaning to the poet's life ([Mazza, 1996](#)). The poet's troubled mind gets a healing effect by composing autoethnographic poems to lighten the depression in an utterly depressing state of the lived experience while sharing vulnerable emotions ([Mazza, 2016](#)). The unheard and unimaginable crises of life are brought into the poet's consciousness to make them comprehensible, and their expression demises the poet's internal turmoil to recover himself into the new face of reality. ([Pennebaker, 2012](#))

Taufiq Rafat (1927-1998), the father of modern English poetry in Pakistan, reflects upon death in the family through

autoethnographic poetry to present existential themes. Existentialism is a philosophical approach that has it says that life is meaningless inherently and the universe does not provide it with any code of life. One's actions and impulses form one's identity, and self-discovery with a purposeful meaning to life is the only code of life. The existential themes take into account the subjects such as dread, loss, death, meaninglessness, void, resolve, responsibility, freedom, identity construction, etc. ([Milne, 2009](#)). This paper examines Rafat's poems on death in the family, especially of his younger brother, to cope with the existential dilemmas he comes across in the face of these traumatic experiences of life through poetry therapy. These reflections make him realize the ultimate objective truth about the nature of death along with facing the fear of death in the family.

Literature Review

Poetry therapy as a form of self-healing art gives meaning to the traumatic lives of the otherwise isolated lost people through autoethnographic poetry while exploring existential themes. [Blinne \(2010\)](#) asserts that penning down his autoethnographic poems is a tactile process of self-healing that gives him a sense of connectedness with his past, present, and future. While the personal anecdotes of the fictional Dr Bob relate that poetic healing is a source of self-discovery as well as its dissemination ([Coulehan, 2010](#)). [Carroll \(2005\)](#) relates a tremendous increase of poetic expressions in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack to soothing the people from this traumatic experience for self-relief. Correspondingly, Rich Furman has multiple scholarly studies to relate the most distressing emotional states he encounters at losing his loved ones through poetry resulting in self-knowledge. His range of subjects includes the use of poetry therapy to cope with the discovery of his father's lung

cancer, the loss of a dearest friend and a dog Belinda, and the distress given to him by the biological father of his step-children (Furman, 2003). He shares his memoirs to relate these varying emotional breakdowns. The discovery of his father's disease culminates in his disorientation from the study, but it helps him face the reality of death (Furman, 2004). He relates his memories spent with a friend on his loss to show that his friend was a very part of his life (Furman, 2004). Similarly, his dependence on his 12 years old dog Belinda after her death is lamented by disclosing the fact that she taught him the ways of loving, and she used to inspire him to perform his intellectual activity (Furman, 2006).

Identically, Sharma (2019) records how did poetry help him in coping with the loss of his father and brother into his own self-knowledge. In the beginning, he felt like having suicidal tendencies to end every painful memory as having no other resort. He started dialogues with poetry, which made him realize that death – the only reality – can come to him at any time as a reward for life, like a sweet sleep. Before that end, life must be lived properly as a code of life. This realization extinguished his fear of death and helped him move on. Hence, through autoethnographic poetry, he not only copes with personal loss but also finds his 'self'.

Theoretical Framework

In his essay *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste* (1913), Ezra Pound (1885-1972) identifies three characteristics of modern poetry being brief, straight, and direct (Ayers, 2008). Where brevity means the shortest possible expression, straight implies prose-like language with natural rhythm, and direct states the presentation of concrete images no matter subjective or objective. The main focus of his attention is seized by the concept of concrete image. Pound clearly describes that the images and metaphors should be clear, exact, and easily observable. There

must not be abstractions that cannot allow scientific scrutiny as the expressions such as dim lights of peace (Pound, 1913) do. The reason behind that lies in the mixture of concrete and abstract concepts, which makes the process of examination difficult to dissect. It should be as concrete as possible instead of being abstract. Concreteness is achieved through the exact description of the image struck upon using visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile, olfactory, kinesthetic, and organic imagery. Pound elaborates on the image as being kinetic or moving (Kenner, 1973). Further, Pound defines the concrete image as an emotional and intellectual whole (Pound, 1913). It is devised on such a level that the created objective metaphor for the subjective image evokes, on the part of the reader, the same emotion felt by the poet at the sight of the image. Where the intellectual process is the poetic activity to conjure the objective metaphor in juxtaposition with the subjective image (Milne, 2009). Pound's world-famous "In a Station of the Metro" is the embodiment of the Poundian image. In this poem, Pound describes the moving image of a crowd on a Metro station and juxtaposes it with the metaphor of petals sticking temporarily on a wet bough to imply the theme of man's sojourn on earth. Hence, the subjective image of the moving crowd on the station finds its objective correlative of a petal on the wet bough. A form of superposition of two ideas is shaped through this technique.

This paper uses the theoretical model of Poundian image to scrutinize the autoethnographic poetry of Taufiq Rafat to seek loss at death in a family. The selection of the model depends on the literary quality of poetry to throw images and metaphors encompassing variable emotional responses carried through the economy of words.

Discussion

The realization of death makes everyone serious. Man tries to ignore the ultimate

reality of death throughout his life until it reaches man. And when it reaches, even the carefree child becomes a sober old man. Its arrival affects people in different ways. Mostly, people fail to cope with it and become paralyzed by its approach. They go into depression after thinking about the end of life, which bereaves man of all the charms of life, and life becomes meaningless and empty. A similar situation is faced when there occurs death in a family. The family members are like a complete body. If a brother dies, one's hands are cut off with him. Similarly, with the departure of each relative, all the human body parts also die one by one until his complete physical demise in his own physical death. The discovery of a family member's impending death puts weak people in existential dilemmas. They make one dumb, and the suppression of these feelings puts one on the verge of emptiness leading to depression, a living death. But the expression of depressing events, stories, and good memories help one to come back to life. Autoethnographic poems, in this regard, come to rescue the poets. A strong faith in God and practical knowledge of the world help him to cope with the situation bravely, which is termed as existential resolve through spiritual relief.

The present paper is an attempt to unveil all these aspects of Rafat's autoethnographic poems. He relates the events, stories, and memories of his relatives near to, of, and after death. The sharing of these experiences relieves him of emotional burden, and he gets wiser by understanding the reality of his own death. This section deals with all the steps to face death, including the fear of death, existential paralysis, the journey towards death, existential resolve through spirituality that restores a meaningful life, and the memories that are never forgotten through the theoretical lens of Poundian image to reflect various emotional experiences in facing the music of these crucial experiences of life.

Fear of Death

The powerful might of death to put an end to every charm of life accompanied by physical torture and mysteries about the afterlife presents death as the most fearful phenomenon of life. It is feared by everyone, whether strong or weak. This dread makes one avoid the thought of death. People do accept it but only for those who taste it. No one tries to think of it for one's self as real and imminent. No one wants to face it since it is unknown to cope with it. It is deferred in everyday life with a view that it will be faced with its approach. Its discovery makes people suffer from emotional turmoil leading to depression with no way out. People lack the ability to communicate with it.

Rafat communicates this facet of human personality to avoid the impending death in his poem "Tomorrow is Pakistan Day". Rafat states that his brother tries to avoid the thought of his death by diverting his attention toward the ongoing activity of loud rehearsals of planes to prepare for the celebrations of Pakistan Day. He tries to divert his attention to the noisy chatter of the visiting relatives. He avoids the meanings of their comforting words in the time towards his death hour. Even he pays attention to the slam of the door. These meaningless activities keep him safe from the fear of death. The objective metaphor Rafat juxtaposes with it is the 'closing doors'. Diverting attention from anything can be articulated by the action of closing doors. Rafat describes human fear of death as avoiding it and engaging oneself in some other activity instead.

Similarly, "Hospital Blues" articulates the diversions to avoid the thoughts of death. The concrete moving image for subjective experience relates that Rafat's brother is hospitalized. He remains in the room, which is painted blue. Blue is associated with the sky and sea. These open and wide spaces symbolize intuition, imagination, and freedom. They are presented as a metaphor

for the free spirit of Rafat's brother. The subjective image encompasses the concrete moving image of his brother, who wants to get diverted from the thoughts of his impending death. Clearly announcing his boredom, he orders Rafat to arrange for him books featuring "cowboy yarns, spy fiction" (Rafat, 2008, p. 25) and many likewise genres to stir his imagination. Rafat arranges "a portable TV set" (Rafat, 2008, p. 25) for him. His brother engages himself in the series of ongoing test matches to amuse himself and diverts his attention. He also takes a carefree stroll with Rafat in the evening while talking about so many topics looming around about worldly affairs. All these creative activities speak of the diversions he wants to take to keep him from thinking about death.

Along similar lines, "Coma" shares the avoidance of the thought of the death of his father on the part of Rafat. Rafat relates that he finds himself unable to sit beside his father's death bed. He is very absorbed by the pain and emotional storm, seeing his father struggling to catch his last breaths. Rafat wants to avoid the reality of the loss of his father in a night. He wants that some other relative, distant from emotional bonding with his father, comes to sit by his side and relieve Rafat of facing this dilemma. This concrete image for the subjective experience of Rafat finds its objective metaphor of a white-bearded man. This man is a reference to the death angel. The struggle of Rafat's father to catch his breath on his death bed suggests the presence of a death angel there. He must be standing by his father's side, drawing his soul gradually. The image of the death angel is a figure feared all over the world. People always try to ignore his looming presence in the world. To avoid the invisible presence of the death angel, Rafat wants to leave the place.

Existential Paralysis

Death is an unbidden guest. It comes without permission. It does not care for the planning

of man. It does not care for the things which will be left undone in the absence of the victim. It does not care for the bereft's physical and psychological attachments with the victim. Like a mighty emperor, it puts an end to whatever it likes. Man is helpless before it. He cannot escape or bully its mighty hand. He cannot delay or speed it up. This merciless facet of death introduces limitations to the freedom man is promised. It is accompanied by unbearable physical torture lulling all the senses of man. This helpless state of man can be interpreted as existential paralysis that puts a man into emptiness.

Rafat reflects this aspect of death in his autoethnographic poems. "Things Left Undone" shares the fact that Rafat's deceased younger brother was many upcoming tasks on his head. The rough sketches, notes, annotations, references, and many more secondary materials he collected with arduous efforts, spending his money and time, to put his creative ideas to life. But the mighty hand of death did not care for it. All the preparations went waste. Death puts a period to all his future tasks. The preparatory material was left abandoned by its performer. All his incomplete tasks found their home in the dustbin instead of a creative life. The Poundian image seeks its objective metaphor for the aforementioned subjective moving image of sketches left undone going to the dustbin in the form of visiting and ceremonial cards. These cards also find their permanent home in the dust bin. They have no place and importance after the event is attended. They are felt as useless and got rid of.

On a similar scale, the metaphor of the thrower and the knife ending in smoke in "Poems for a Younger Brother" tells the same tale. The thrower of the knife is the man having willpower, courage, and determination to complete his task of throwing the knife. But death does not care for the dedication of the thrower. Whatever

he performs meets a fall finally, just like the fall the thrower is going to meet in the end.

Journey towards Death

The death of a family member is an unforgettable and unbearable loss that culminates in devastating emotional experiences. Family is an analogy for mother nature, for it is considered to be a bond to fall back upon in every situation of grief or happiness. Brothers are the pillars of the house to hold the ceiling intact since they share solidarity, cooperation, and sentimentalism, unlike neighbours. Family relations provide support, care, protection, guidance, knowledge, help, attention, and emotional sustenance to satisfy one's psychological and physical needs and keep one from loneliness. They accept you for what you are. The death of a near and dear one bereaves man of all these pillars of a lively life. The absence of all the aforementioned needs and desires puts the man into the existential dilemma of dread, nothingness, meaninglessness, and emptiness of life. Man realizes that he has no control over the forces of nature since he is helpless before fate. This germinates a sense of self-pity over man's limitations. The existential paralysis relating to the limitation of man in the face of death suppresses his free spirit.

It is very difficult to accept the reality of death occurring to some close relative. Weak people get paralyzed at such discovery. They find themselves at lack in uttering even the name of the disease. This situation puts their consciousness into nothingness, isolation, and meaninglessness of life. Autoethnographic poems become a source to express these fears lying inside the human heart. Rafat accepts this traumatic discovery and gets his catharsis through the expression of fears related to death. To relate that pain, Rafat takes the support of Poundian images having images with their correlative metaphors to disseminate the turmoil of

varying emotional experiences at work in different stages on the road to death. Rafat's autoethnographic poems are enriched with Poundian images to symbolize the theme of the journey towards death. Rafat relates the events that happened during the discovery of his brother's disease, his foreign flight for the cure, his last scenes on his deathbed, his funeral shower, his last look, and after burial.

Rafat's autoethnographic poem "Cancer" is the sharing of his grief for his brother's deteriorating condition with the description of his diagnosed disease, cancer. The speediness of the sudden death of Rafat's otherwise healthy and young brother is given free expression in the subjective moving image of the internal bodily turmoil cancer causes. The poet says that a cancerous tumour has taken over the whole body of his younger brother. The quick multiplication of the damaged cells, instead of their natural death, in his body, is supplied with the metaphor of "springtime swiftness" ([Rafat, 2008, p. 18](#)). The growth of trillions of infected tissues overtakes his body in no time, just as various flowers start blooming suddenly in the spring.

Rafat directly confronts the theme of death in the family in the symbolic title of "Flight to London". The Poundian image flowers itself in this poem to imply the theme of death through the juxtaposition of two moving images of the straight-going walk and aeroplane as Rafat's subjective and objective experience, respectively. The subjective experience is concretely described through the straight walk of Rafat's younger brother, who is going toward the plane, and all the relatives watch this proceeding standing behind him at the airport. They see him fading towards the plane. The image of a moving aeroplane is juxtaposed with the above subjective image as an objective metaphor for it. The aeroplane gains height in the sky from the road over to the mountains until it becomes a speck. And finally, it disappears into the sky. The

aeroplane is a metaphor for his brother, who is also leaving and gaining height towards the plain. His physical existence will disappear under the ground after his death, just like the aeroplane that disappears in the sky. Moreover, the title is metaphorical, where the flight to London refers to flight to the realm of death.

The Poundian image is composed of the juxtaposition of subjective and objective images to employ the theme of the last days of life surfaces in Rafat's 'Half-Moon'. The presentation of concrete images stages the scene of a hospital where, inside the hospital room, Rafat's younger brother is heaving his last breaths on his death bed. Rafat juxtaposes with it the image of a half-moon in the sky, which is on its journey towards its disappearance or becoming no moon. Moon is the symbol of life. The decrease in its size symbolizes the decrease in one's time period of life. Hence, in the poem, the decreased size of the moon presents a metaphor for the remaining days of the life of Rafat's brother. The moon, as well as his brother, is going to complete its journey of life into the realm of nothingness. Rafat suggests the impending death of his brother by declaring the absence of the moon in his brother's life as he asserts: "he will never see it (moon) again." ([Rafat, 2008, p. 16](#))

"Under the Shower" is the unveiling of the otherwise unbearable experience of watching one's brother receiving his funeral shower. The poet says that his brother is being given his last shower. Unknown people are giving him the final bath. He does not know them. He has never seen them before. But, today, their "strange hands" ([Rafat, 2008, p. 19](#)) are preparing him for his final meeting with God. Since this appointment was going to be very important, he made sure to present his best face before God. The image of receiving the shower by strange hands operates as a metaphor for the miserable plight of Rafat's brother. He cannot dress

himself now. He is at the mercy of others now.

"Coffin" takes this journey a step further after he has been made ready for his final appointment with God. Cancer has sucked his lifeblood, and he is turned pale. His face is composed. He is put in a coffin with a glass window on the face. People hustle in the great crowd that has gathered to have his last glimpse. He is prepared now with his final best presentation. Relatives come, mourn the loss, and leave so that others also get a chance to see his last look. The image of Coffin presents an objective correlative metaphor for the cage-like situation of Rafat's brother. He is lifeless and passive.

"Mound" presents the scene some days after the burial of Rafat's brother as the concrete moving image of Rafat's subjective experience. The family visits the graveyard. The women start weeping again. The body of his brother is no more visible. It is lying under tons of ground. He has taken a new identity now. He is recognized as a "mound" ([Rafat, 2008, p. 21](#)) now, which is deformed with time having scars on it. The petals spread on the grave are withered. These deteriorating images of the scarred mound and withered petals present a show of the gradual deterioration of his fleshly body into the skeleton. This subjective image is given juxtaposition with the objective metaphor of the marigold. In Hindu mythology, they are called flowers of the dead to symbolize a break of relation and despaired love through death. Their fragrance is said to seduce the soul toward the altar. The poet says that he will spread marigold on the grave. The deteriorating body of Rafat's brother presents a direct comparison with the deadly symbolism attached to the marigold.

Existential Resolve through Spiritual Relief

Existentialism means that man has come alone and will go alone. He has to give

meaning to his life through the functions he performs since life has no meaning inherently (Sartre, 1967). It is the process of completing one's set missions to create an individual identity or self. The existential thought, the meaning of life, survival, and one's ability to construct a meaningful life (Bugental, 1978), is achieved fully at the realization of death that it is imminent and can occur at any time, and it will finally come to everyone. One can realize it by feeling it in reality as to be detached from the loved ones and alone in a box with no escape forever. How will that be dealt with?

The expression of these unarticulated fears gives man courage and strength not only to face death but also to understand its real meaning and the real meaning of life afterwards. Death is a necessary evil without which man cannot enter the realm of paradise – a promise of a permanent and peaceful life without any pain. The pain of death is nothing before the rewards of death. After death, man gets the chance to come to see his Creator. It puts an end to all worldly worries. Through death, the system of the world operates properly. If no one dies, the world will brim over with people struggling to find resources to live and coping up with old age. Death is a mighty guest that balances the system of earth from getting out of control. All these beliefs help man understand the necessity of death not only for his near and dear ones but also for himself. The understanding of this fact makes one sober enough to cope with death bravely.

The realization of the other meaning of death makes man wiser and teaches him the way to cope with the loss bravely. Man has to live after the death of close relatives. He cannot die with them. If he takes the loss too seriously and never forgets it and keeps remembering the dead all the time with tears in his eyes, people get bored of him and start considering him a curse instead of sympathizing with him. His continuous

mourning results in the negligence of his otherworldly duties toward other fellow humans. Furthermore, it keeps man from enjoying the precious gift of life. The realization of death as an ultimate authority gives courage to man to behave otherwise under such circumstances. Man learns to mourn the loss in his heart only since this loss is never compensated throughout his life while attending to his worldly duties with lively participation. It not only saves man from the pity on the part of others but also gives him personal relief by remembering the diseased in his heart and through his eyes. Rafat, in this regard, uses autoethnographic poems to transfuse the glimpses of how to cope with the situation of death wisely and practically.

Rafat's "Flight to London" is the disclosure of this aspect of his poetry. Rafat's younger brother knows that he has been diagnosed with cancer and will fail to recover from it. He comes to the airport to leave for London amidst the lively gathering of relatives. His face never shows any sign of internal emotional turmoil. He walks straight with an erect back unaided by any support. Similarly, Rafat is also not blind to this fact. He holds the tears against the back of his eyes, smokes cigarettes, smiles at strangers, and engages himself in lively talk with his relatives. Similarly, all the relatives who have gathered to see him off to London do not show any sign of anxiety or fear in the open. This moving image of subjective experience juxtaposes with the objective metaphor of the slow and steady flight of the aeroplane without any stop or stumble.

Analogously, Rafat's "Long-Distance Call" relates the composure of Rafat before his neighbours. Rafat, in his monologue, anticipates that the call he is going to receive in his neighbour's house is about the death of his brother. He gets ready properly by taking a quick wash and by wearing his slippers and spectacles. He plans to greet the neighbours peacefully first. He resolves to hold the

receiver with a strong grip in order to avoid any mishap on his part before the neighbours. He will not even let his hand on the receiver shake, giving them any hint of his emotionally charged storm of painful feelings. All this planning shows he beforehand plan to cope with the death of his brother bravely. The memories put life back into the berefts.

Everlasting Memories

Last but not least, the memories of a dead relative do not diminish in the berefts' minds. The void that the death of a family member creates in a man's life is never fulfilled. Over time, the grief lessens but never diminishes. The related regrets always remain. Every day, one thing or another reminds the memory related to the departed relative. They remain alive in memories forever. Rafat voices this fact in "Goodbye, Perhaps". He says that he has lost a younger brother before his mother, father, and sister. He was not the most beloved of all of them to Rafat. But, every day, something reminds Rafat of him. Some happening or thought puts Rafat in associating them with his brother's memory. He daily gets a reminder that his brother is gone. And his memories appear to him like poems which he utters without any editing in natural expression.

Rafat makes his own world alive through memories of the decedents of his family members. He keeps them alive in his thoughts. In "Mound", he visits his brother's grave. The weather becomes very pleasant. The cool wind starts blowing. The trees start moving hysterically. Rafat asks his brother to cherish the pleasing weather. He spreads marigold on his grave. Marigold has ambivalent symbolism to its credit. On the one hand, it is taken as a symbol of death and the break of a relationship disseminating the emotion of despaired love. On the other hand, its bright colours share an analogy with the sun, a symbol of life, strength, and power.

In spirituality, it becomes a symbol of hope in the afterlife, which is permanent and promising as compared to that of worldly life, which is full of pains. Death puts an end to worldly pains. It is the reward for life.

"Indestructible" is enriched with Rafat's memories of his brother. The character sketch of his younger brother makes him alive before our eyes as the image of subjective experience. He is a tall, strong, sturdy, noisy, naughty, and crowd-loving guy. He always teases Rafat and follows him to his friends. He becomes the centre of attention at every party. In the whole family, he is known as the most bullying youngster. He keeps his lively and adventurous nature alive in his youth, too, by becoming a lieutenant. The metaphor of Lieutenant's stars, superimposed with the image of his boyhood energetic nature, symbolizes the youthful liveliness of his soul. He brags about his stars everywhere. Mother kisses his stars. He is full of energy and optimism as well as the apple of the eye of every family member. Even the reader cannot help loving his character. Nobody can imagine bearing his embrace with such a deadly disease taking him headlong into the pangs of death.

"Shirt" is a metaphor in itself. The late loved ones are kept alive by using their accessories on important events. Following the same thought pattern of connectedness, Rafat composes "Shirt". The speaker of this poem is the wife of Rafat's brother. She gifts her deceased husband's shirt to Rafat so that she may have a hint that her husband is alive also if his clothes are being used. Rafat does love to wear this shirt to keep his brother's memory alive. But the shirt is loose to him. His brother used to have a heavy and long physique as compared to Rafat, who is rather weak and short. However, he wears the shirt, and the touch of this makes him feel his brother's fragrance. The image of the shirt becomes an objective metaphor for the subjective image of the memory of Rafat's deceased brother.

Likewise, "Hospital Blues" is another memorable poem relating to the carefree walk of Rafat and his brother. On a pleasant evening in a garden, they have a walk. They discuss many ongoing things like weather, cricket, petty matters, etc.

Relating to the category of poems on the memory of decedents, "Memories on a Cool Night" is another addition. Rafat gives a subjective image of his impressions. He says that his family has reduced from ten family members to five. He remembers the loss of his father, mother, brothers, and fun-loving sister in a pleasant mood since he has come over the grief now. All have travelled to the next world. He wonders how they will be faring there in Paradise. The image of an objective metaphor for the memory of the deceased family members seems to be the cool wind at night after many hot days, inducing a feeling of spiritual relief.

In "Eid Morning", Rafat shares the memory of his dead father. The day of Eid is a very special event for Muslims. Every Eid morning makes Rafat nostalgic about the bygone Eids he has spent under the supervision of his father. He remembers that his father used to wake up early in the morning to prepare for Eid prayer. He would wake his children, bathe them, and dress them himself. Then they were given breakfast together at the breakfast table. Everyone following him would go to the mosque to offer prayer. Rafat relates the importance of his father as the head of the family. This subjective character sketch of his father has an inherent metaphorical image of the father juxtaposed within itself. Father is like a house for the children. He shelters them from the rainy day, provides food for their growth, practical knowledge for their development, a guarding eye for keeping them on the right path, and loves and cares for their emotional sustenance.

Correspondingly, "Snapshot of my Father" is another poem of memory in which Rafat gets nostalgic while seeing the picture

of his father, now dead. The picture paints the sense of duty of his father. He sits in a chair on the porch outside his office in a "cotton dress and chappals" (Rafat, 2008, p. 134) with his traditional strictness, pride, and a hint of a smile. It is a summer evening. It is getting dark outside. The white hair of his father presents a direct comparison with the growing darkness. The objective metaphor of growing darkness in the evening is juxtaposed with the white hair of his father. Both symbolize the last days of his life. He is to complete his journey of life and going to become part of the darkness.

Conclusion

It is concluded, encompassing the above discussion, that Rafat deals with every emotional experience related to death in the family, from the fear of death to the existential paralysis at the thought of death to the expression of suppressed witnessing of the events of the journey towards death to how to cope with death wisely to come back to life with memories of the dead in a pleasant mood in his autoethnographic poems employing Poundian image. Death brings in its wake a lot of physical pain ending the charms of life accompanied by the mysteries about the afterlife. People fear it and articulate this aspect by ignoring its thought to divert their attention. The avoidance of death is articulated through the subjective moving images of reading curious fiction, watching test matches, talking about other worldly topics, listening to the unintelligible noises of rehearsals of planes, the chatter of relatives, and slamming of doors and avoiding the figure of death angel along with their objective correlative metaphors of blue paints symbolizing freedom and closing doors symbolizing the avoidance of the lane of death. Death, like a mighty emperor, has the power to end every human effort and planning. The limitation of man before death puts him in a situation called existential paralysis. Rafat juxtaposes

the image of rough sketches, notes, and annotations prepared by his brother with the metaphor of visiting and ceremonial cards as the activity of the knife thrower and knife ending in smoke in the face of death. The existential paralysis creates an articulated void inside man by the suppression of thought about death. The expression of these thoughts relieves man by lessening his pain. Rafat gives articulation to the unarticulated sights – he has witnessed and suppressed inside him – that happened to his brother on his journey to the realm of death. Rafat supplies concrete moving images of the quick spread of the cancerous tumour in his brother's body, his diminishing walk towards the plane to visit London for the cure, his last days on death bed, his funeral shower, his funeral appearance, and his final identity as a mound to mean the theme of death through their object correlative metaphors of springtime swiftness, diminishing aeroplane, half-moon, strange hands, funeral box, and marigold respectively. Understanding death as a necessary evil that gives meaning to life gives to man the courage to cope with death wisely. Rafat uses the concrete moving images of a cheerful meeting of the relatives

at the airport to see off the patient and the composure of Rafat while receiving the news of his brother's death in front of neighbours for the subjective experiences juxtaposed with their objective correlative metaphors of steady movement of the plane without any stop and Rafat's strong grip of the receiver respectively. Furthermore, the departed souls always find a way to remain alive in the memories they leave for the berefts. Rafat shares the memories of his decedent family members by delineating the concrete images of reflecting upon their blessed afterlives in correlation with the pleasant wind on a cool night, of the naughty character sketch of his brother with lieutenant stars as a metaphor for his adventurous nature, of the shirt of his deceased brother being worn by Rafat after his brother's death to keep him alive, of the description of Eid days spent under the supervision of Rafat's deceased father, and the old photograph of his father relating his few remaining days of life through the images of the evening and white hair. Hence, Rafat's autoethnographic poems relate to his emotional experiences of coming to terms with the reality of death in the world.

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