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Description

“Andhera” by Raziya Sajjad Zaheer (1918 – 1979)

Translated by [Saba Mahmood Bashir](#)

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Abstract:

The name Razia Sajjad Zaheer (1918-1979) brings to mind an image of a well-built woman with a full-throated laugh. I am not sure, if that is how she laughed. However, the reason why I have this image embedded in my subconscious, is because I have seen such a photograph. After all, not many photographs of writers and poets of that generation are available. With regard to translating the story ‘Andhera’ (Darkness) into English, one can easily accept that translating from one culture into another is always a challenge. Although it was published in 1961, roughly six decades ago, the source language used in the story is very familiar even today. Not much has changed in terms of the vocabulary of language. However, there were two main challenges: how would I translate the cultural nuances and secondly, how would I express some of the protagonist’s inmost feelings in another language. The story revolves around fear – the fear suffered by a woman travelling all alone in a first-class railway train compartment. A story so rooted in the cultural milieu of its belonging, had its own challenges with regard to all the cultural transmissions. I wonder what would Razia Apa, herself a translator would have felt about it.

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Works cited

Razia Sajjad Zaheer’s “Andhera” was first published in *Biswin Sadi*, 1966. I have translated it here as “Darkness” from the short stories collection of Razia Sajjad Zaheer, “Allah de banda le” published in 1984 by Sima Publications, New Delhi, available at <https://www.rekhta.org/ebooks/allah-de-banda-le-raziya-sajjad-zaheer-ebooks>

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