
Chapter – 6

"The Ghat of the only World"

The Ghat of the only world is a beautifully warm piece of personal criticism, almost in the manner of the Romantic Essayists where writer Amitav Ghosh responds not only to the world of Agha Shahid Ali's lilting verse but also the poet himself and his personal experience of shared moments with him.

The title of the piece echoes Ali's famous collection-The Country without a Post-Office. It is a homage to Ali the poet and the person, a poignant obituary that presents to us a very poignant vision of death. An ailing Ali's remark to the hospital man about learning Spanish to read Lorca is as moving as it can possibly get. The uncertainty of the final sleep tragically lingers.

Critically speaking, it is a very interesting analysis of Ali's poetry, his experience as a diasporic poet who kept constructing an imaginary homeland through his verse, his double-bind in his relation to Kashmir and its problematic topology and above all his desire to die in his homeland, which was not to be.