

The Ending of “The Postmaster”

ANON. (1918)

But Ratan had no philosophy. She was wandering about the post office in a flood of tears. It may be that she had still a lurking hope in some corner of her heart that her Dada would return, and that is why she could not tear herself away. Alas for the foolish human heart!

Tagore, *Mashi and Other Stories* (London: Macmillan, 1918), 169. [HathiTrust](#).

DEBENDRA NATH MITTER (1911)

But Ratan’s mind knew not the light of such truth. Flooded in tears she hovered round and round the post office. Perhaps a faint flicker of hope was in her heart—that *Dādā Babu* might come back and this thought held her as a bond and she could not leave the place.

Oh! foolish human heart, delusion never breaks off, the dictates of reason come but too late, the strongest proofs are set aside and false hopes are clung to with the whole life and heart, till at last the nerves are torn asunder, the blood of the heart sucked up—hope flies away, then one comes to one’s senses and again the heart yearns for the snares of a second delusion.

Modern Review (Calcutta) 9, no. 1 (January 1911): 39. [HathiTrust](#).

WILLIAM RADICE (1991/2005)

But Ratan had no such philosophy to console her. All she could do was wander near the post office, weeping copiously. Maybe a faint hope lingered in her mind that Dadababu might return; and this was enough to tie her to the spot, prevent her from going far. O poor, unthinking human heart! Error will not go away, logic and reason are slow to penetrate. We cling with both arms to false hope, refusing to believe the weightiest proofs against it, embracing it with all our strength. In the end it escapes, ripping our veins and draining our heart’s blood; until, regaining consciousness, we rush to fall into snares of delusion all over again.

Tagore, *Selected Short Stories*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 2005), 47.

AMIT CHAUDHURI (2001/2004)

But no such insight came to Ratan’s mind. She, weeping unstopably, was only wandering again and again about the building of the post office. Perhaps there was a tenuous hope in her heart, to do with dadababu coming back—trapped, she found herself unable to go far from where she was roaming. Alas, the mistaken human heart! Its delusions never end, the laws of reason enter the mind after much delay, disbelieving incontestable evidence it embraces false hope with both arms and all its might to its breast; in the end one day, severing the umbilical cord and sucking the heart empty of blood, it flees, there is then a return to one’s right senses, and the mind grows restless again to embrace its next delusion.

The Vintage Book of Modern Indian Literature, ed. Amit Chaudhuri (New York: Vintage, 2004), 34.