

“Speaking the Unspeakable: The Narrative Ethics of Silence in V.V. Ganeshanathan’s *Brotherless Night*”

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Abstract

*V.V. Ganeshanathan’s novel *Brotherless Night* reimagines the Civil War of Sri Lanka through the intimate perspective of the protagonist, Sashi, a Tamil woman who becomes the voice of both a witness and a survivor of violence. This research paper explores how the author constructs silence as a complex moral and political act rather than a simple absence of speech. By considering the novel within the frameworks of postcolonialism and trauma, this study argues that silence in *Brotherless Night* functions as both a form of ethical resistance to the dominant Sinhala nationalist discourse and a strategy of survival. The restrained narration by Sashi reflects the psychological tension between remembering and forgetting, between testifying and protecting the unspeakable.*

The study further examines how the narrative redefines the concept of voice for marginalized Tamil communities, especially women whose stories have been excluded from mainstream historical accounts. Drawing on theoretical insights from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Judith Butler, and Cathy Caruth, the analysis demonstrates how Ganeshanathan’s prose captures the fragile space between trauma and narration, where silence becomes a language of moral responsibility. The novel’s fragmented storytelling, personal memory, and reflective tone resist the linearity of official war histories, offering instead an alternative archive rooted in empathy and emotional truth. This paper contends that the novel transforms literature into a site of witness and reconciliation. By turning silence into mode of remembrance, Ganeshanathan restores dignity to silenced Tamil voices and also confronts the ethical dimensions of speaking, listening, and remembering in post-war Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Silence; Testimony; Trauma; Feminist Resistance; Memory; Reconciliation.*

Introduction:

In the history of South Asia, the thirty-year long Sri Lankan Civil war remains a painful chapter, it can be interpreted by militarization of the state, forced disappearances of civilians, ethnic cleansing, and the strategic silencing of the Tamil voices. *Brotherless Night* by V.V. Ganeshanathan, contributes to Tamil post-war literature illuminating the silenced history through the retrospective narration of Sashi, a young Tamil woman who contemplates on her life amidst a climate of fear, mourning and loss. The fragmented structure of the novel shifts between past and present, it mirrors the unstable and ruptured nature of war memory. Sashi confesses, “There are things we cannot speak, even when they define us,” revealing the profound emotional burden that language cannot always carry.

Brotherless Night belongs to the set of Sri Lankan Tamil writings, including works by Anuk Arudpragasam and Shobasakthi which challenges state propaganda by focusing on marginalized voices. Still Ganeshanathan brings a distinct focus to the ethical dilemmas embedded in storytelling itself. The first-person female narrative provides a chance of visibility to Tamil women testimonies which have largely remained unarchived in the dominant Sinhala discourses. As Sashi remarks, “We learned early that silence could save a life,” underscoring silence as both psychological refuge and political resistance.

Most of the research available are engaged with displacement, trauma, and gender in post-war literature, only a few have addressed the ethics of silence, how silence became a political act against erasure. It is often believed that trauma can only be healed by narration, by

Ganeshanathan complicates these assumptions by asking what is lost or justly exposed when the most painful stories are forced to narration.

To analyze the ethics of silence and speech in the novel, this paper draws on key thinkers in postcolonial and trauma studies whose ideas help illuminate the narratives deeper. Gayatri Spivak’s argument, “the subaltern cannot speak” is crucial to understand how the Tamil civilians, especially the women, from the history have been denied with a platform of legitimate expression. The structure of power refuses to hear their voices and hence they are erased. Ganeshanathan addresses this silence by positioning silence of Sashi as a conscious act of resistance rather than passive consequence of oppression. Sashi chooses silence and refuses to participate in dominant narratives that distort Tamil experience, asserting instead her own form of agency.

The trauma theory by Cathy Caruth further supports this reading by explaining how traumatic memory disrupts narration. As Caruth states trauma, “is not fully grasped at the moment of occurrence,” it returns in fragments through memory and language. The structure of the novel with temporary shifting and pauses reflects this instability showing how Sashi’s silence arises from the limits of what can be spoken without retraumatizing the self or dishonoring the dead. The character thus becomes a mode of expressing what exceeds language.

The concept of testimony by Dori Laub, underscores that the relational nature of storytelling, emphasizes that witnessing requires both a teller and a listener. The narratives of Sashi gestures that the readers are a moral witness, and are invited in remembering Tamil sufferings. Her silence challenges the readers to listen beyond words to acknowledge that some experiences resist full articulation.

To reassure the claim, Judith Butler’s idea of “grievability” is a center point of the study. It is claimed by Butler that the political system decides that whose lives are worthy for mourning and whose lives are not. In the case of Sri Lanka, the lives of Tamil’s are considered ungrievable and are erased for the memories of the public. Ganeshanathan by narrating and deliberately withholding some stories tries to restore the dignity of those who are denied recognition turning silence into a powerful expression of ethical mourning.

All together these theories reveal that silence in *Brotherless Night* is not a void but a meaningful presence. It functions as survival strategy, moral protection and political resistance allowing the novel to challenge erasure while honoring the emotional truths of war memory.

This research paper argues that *Brotherless Night* transforms silence from a sign of oppression into a narrative form of moral witnessing. Through silence, Ganeshanathan challenges majoritarian narratives and reconstructs Tamil memory as an act of resistance, reconciliation and dignity.

The Context of History and Politics: Silencing the Tamil Voice

The thirty yearlong Sri Lankan Civil war, unfolds within a sociopolitical landscape shaped by extreme control, censorship and erasure of Tamil voices. Truth turned into an expensive currency as Tamil civilians, journalist and artists faced continuous surveillance and intimidation. The narratives of Tamilians were banded as treasonous and separatist, while the propaganda of the state machinery was framed as patriotic defense of sovereignty. Silence was a form of survival and speaking turned to the act of risk. As Sashi recalls, “We learned early that there were questions one could not ask, names one could not say, and memories one must lock away.”

The novel captures the psychological terrain of living under constant fear, where telling the truth was not only suppressed but also criminalized. The fear also echoes Gayatri Spivak’s notion of “epistemic violence”, the systematic destruction or denial of marginalized knowledge systems by dominant powers. Spivak’s insight of “the subaltern cannot speak” does not suggest that subaltern is muted, but it rather implies the impossibility of being heard. In the novel the testimonies are buried, histories are rewritten and grief rendered politically inconvenient. The protagonist’s silence thus shows that both the impossibility of speech and personal trauma is embodied in it. The reticence showcased by her not only reflects her apathy but a deep awareness of the dangers of articulation: “Sometimes silence was the only language that did not betray the dead.”

The transformation of silence into a moral stance shows state censorship by refusing to participate in its rhetoric. The act of not speaking resists Sashi to the reduction of Tamil suffering into the sanctioned category of collateral damage and terrorism. As Judith Butler describes her silence becomes a form of “grievable resistance” where mourning is subjected to political act. Butler’s claim that, “not all lives are considered grievable” stands relevant to the Tamilian’s as they were considered ungrievable.

The war ended but censorship persisted in subtler ways like cultural intimidation, historical revisionism and vilification of dissent. Even decades after the conflict, Shashi’s choice to narrate events selectively, shows an ethical attempt to bear witness without violating the sanctity of those lost. As she confides, “Telling everything was impossible. Some truths needed the dignity of silence.” In this way, Ganeshananthan dramatizes the inner conflict of testimony in post-war Sri Lanka: how can one speak truth in a nation built on denial?

Brotherless Night also falls in the growing corpus of the Tamil literature of Sri Lanka that tries to reclaim histories that are silenced and rehumanize those dehumanized by the war. Many Sri Lankan authors navigate the aftermath of violence with a mediate tone but Ganeshananthan differs by confronting the ethics of narration, she presents silence as a fact that speaks more truthfully than words. Her approach is more intimate and moral. The first-person narrative oscillates between confession and silence as the “limit of testimony” termed by Dori Laub. As states, “one cannot truly witness alone”. This statement resonates with Shashi and her hesitant story telling which allows readers to participate in the act of witnessing and connect to the silence of Sashi.

Another aspect of Ganeshananthan’s writing is women’s interiority within the politics of war memory. The silence of the protagonist carries a gendered dimension; the Tamil women were silenced doubly. Her refusal to narrate certain details especially concerning to her brothers and her involvement with LTTE shows grief, guilt and constraint. Her statement, “To speak was to choose a side, and I had already lost too much to belong to either,” encapsulates the tension between self-preservation and political responsibility that defines her narrative.

The contribution of Ganeshananthan to post-war literature lies in ethics of remembering which is a balance between revelation and restraint, truth and silence. While other writers frame trauma through experiential immediacy, but on the contrary Ganeshananthan positions silence as a narrative structure, changing absence into resistance. By not sensationalizing violence, she aligns with Spivak’s warning against representing the subaltern in ways that redefine their oppression. But she allows silence to become vessel of dignity, preserving the humanity of the unspeakable. This way, *Brotherless Night* drives beyond testimony to collective amnesia. The act of measured storytelling, fragmented, cautions become a moral intervention in the memory of politics. As Sashi in the end of the novel says, “All that remains are the stories we dare to tell, and the silences that protect the rest.” With this the author defines the role of writer in post-war Sri Lanka.

Silence as Trauma and Ethical Constraint:

Trauma, as Cathy Caruth argues in *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), is defined by its resistance to full verbalization. It is “the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available.” This inability to express trauma directly in its unspeakable nature, is the main theme of *Brotherless Night*. Sashi’s narration is marked by fragmentation, hesitation, and ellipsis, reflecting the psychological rupture that trauma inflicts upon language itself. Her silences are not narrative gaps but manifestations of the limits of speech in representing unbearable memory.

Ganeshananthan deliberately structures the novel to mirror the disjointed rhythm of post-traumatic recall. Sashi often pauses mid-thought, retracts sentences, or acknowledges her inability to continue. At one point, she confesses, “There are things I cannot tell — not because I do not remember, but because remembering feels like betrayal.” This admission reveals trauma’s paradoxical nature: the survivor’s simultaneous compulsion to remember and need to forget. The repetition of withheld details, especially concerning the deaths of her brothers and the violence she witnesses in Jaffna also exemplifies what Caruth calls the “latency” of trauma, wherein the event returns belatedly, demanding articulation yet defying coherent narration.

Ganeshananthan’s prose reflects this haunting quality. Memory appears in flashes, often interrupted by silence or an abrupt shift in tone. When Sashi recalls her brother’s

disappearance, she says, "We waited for news that never came. After a while, even hope became dangerous." The omission of specific details of who took him, how, and why, enacts the very process of psychic suppression. The silence here is not ignorance but survival; the act of withholding becomes a means of protecting oneself from the violence of recollection.

Sashi's trauma, therefore, aligns with Caruth's assertion that trauma "does not simply serve as a record of the past but precisely registers the force of an event that is still in process." Her fragmented narration keeps the past unresolved, emphasizing the persistence of trauma as an unfinished wound rather than a closed chapter. The unsaid, the pauses, and the silences in *Brotherless Night* all testify to the impossibility of speaking what has not yet ceased to hurt.

While silence in *Brotherless Night* originates in trauma, it also evolves into a conscious ethical choice. For Sashi, speech is fraught with moral risk and the danger of misrepresenting the dead or transforming suffering into spectacle. Her refusal to fully narrate certain events is thus an act of integrity rather than suppression. She reflects, "I wanted to tell the truth, but not every truth was mine to tell." This distinction reveals her awareness that storytelling itself can become a form of violence if it strips the dead of their dignity or appropriates their pain for narrative closure.

Ganeshanathan's narrative restraint embodies what Dori Laub describes as the ethical limits of testimony. In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing* (1992), Laub insists that testimony must balance between remembering and re-traumatizing: "The listener to trauma must recognize the boundaries of witnessing; one cannot speak for the dead, nor should one force the wound to open." Sashi's voice performs precisely this balance. Her silences mark the boundaries of what can ethically be told. When she recalls the aftermath of a massacre, she notes, "The bodies were there, but I will not describe them. Some memories are not meant for words." This refusal to depict graphic violence transforms the novel into an ethical space of mourning, where silence becomes respect rather than repression. It challenges the voyeuristic expectations often attached to trauma narratives, the demand to see suffering in order to believe it. Instead, Ganeshanathan's aesthetic of restraint insists that recognition can occur through empathy and quiet acknowledgment rather than sensational revelation.

Silence as Feminist Resistance:

In *Brotherless Night*, silence does not merely reflect trauma or ethical restraint but it also emerges as a feminist strategy of resistance within patriarchal and militarized structures that continually seek to define, regulate, and appropriate women's voices. Sashi's narrative is deeply situated in a social context where Tamil women's bodies and words are policed both by the Sri Lankan state and by the Tamil militant movement. Her silence, therefore, signifies not submission but a subversive refusal to participate in narratives that exploit female suffering for political or ideological ends.

As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak famously asserts in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), "The subaltern cannot speak", not because she lacks a voice, but because structures of power do not permit her voice to be heard or recognized. Sashi, as a Tamil woman caught between warring masculinities, the Sinhala-majority state and the Tamil militant groups that embodies this paradox. Her silence is not the absence of speech but a form of speech that resists co-optation. In one powerful moment, she observes, "They wanted me to speak for them, but not as myself. Every word I said was twisted into someone else's war." This statement encapsulates the condition of the subaltern female subject, whose words risk being appropriated by patriarchal or nationalist discourses. By choosing silence, Sashi preserves her autonomy and moral integrity, she refuses to become the mouthpiece of either side. Her quiet defiance thus transforms Spivak's theoretical lament into an act of agency: if the subaltern cannot speak within the master's language, she may resist by not speaking at all.

Ganeshanathan's feminist reconfiguration of silence also contrasts sharply with the historical erasure of Tamil women's perspectives from both state and insurgent narratives. As Sashi reflects on the violence around her, she notes, "The men had stories about bravery and revenge. We had stories about endurance." This distinction elevates women's endurance and their capacity to survive, remember, and quietly mourn, as a radical counter-narrative to the masculinist glorification of war. By centering Sashi's restrained yet penetrating voice,

Brotherless Night recenters Tamil women as the moral custodians of memory, challenging both colonial and nationalist frameworks that have historically silenced them.

Sashi's silence also becomes a space of agency as a means of controlling her own story in a world determined to narrate it for her. Her choice not to disclose certain experiences, especially those involving gendered violence, is a refusal to allow the voyeuristic gaze of the reader or the state to consume her trauma. This restraint embodies what feminist theorist Susan Sontag calls "the right not to look, and not to be looked at." Sashi's silence reclaims this right: she decides what may be seen, what may be known, and what remains private.

In several key moments, Sashi's silence shields her from both the oppressors and her own community. When a neighbor demands she denounce one of her brothers as a traitor, she replies only, "There was nothing to say that would not wound someone I loved." This moment reveals silence as an act of protection and a compassionate resistance against the logic of polarization that demands speech as loyalty. It also aligns with Judith Butler's concept of "grievability" from *Precarious Life* (2004), which argues that mourning itself is a political act when the state denies certain lives the right to be grieved. Sashi's silences, her acts of private mourning, reclaim the right to grieve her brothers and community, thereby humanizing those whom the state has deemed disposable.

In this sense, Ganeshanathan's narrative challenges the masculinized discourse of war, which privileges action and speech over endurance and quiet witness. Sashi's silence becomes a gendered form of strength and a way of preserving empathy in a world numbed by propaganda and hatred. Her refusal to narrate every horror transforms her into what Spivak calls an "ethical witness," one who bears the pain of others without appropriating or commodifying it.

Ganeshanathan also redefines storytelling itself as a feminist act. The novel's structure is a reflective, non-linear, and intimate, mimics the rhythms of oral female narration. As Sashi recounts her memories to a young American journalist years after the war, her voice alternates between confession and withholding, suggesting that to tell one's story truthfully is to know where to stop. "There are things I remember," she admits, "but I will not say them aloud. They belong to the silence that kept me alive." Here, silence becomes not just survival but defiance, a conscious rejection of the narrative economy that consumes women's pain for moral instruction or emotional catharsis.

Through Sashi, Ganeshanathan articulates what Chandra Talpade Mohanty calls "feminist solidarity through difference." Rather than claiming universal female suffering, the novel foregrounds a specifically Tamil woman's experience, located, historical, and politically fraught. Her silence speaks to a shared, though not homogenized, form of resistance: an insistence that women's survival and grief are themselves revolutionary in a world that prefers their disappearance.

Ganeshanathan's portrayal of silence is also deeply entwined with an ethics of care. In the war-torn community of Jaffna, speech often endangers lives; silence, by contrast, becomes a form of protection and empathy. Sashi's medical training symbolizes this ethic, she heals quietly, listens carefully, and speaks sparingly. Her silence is not passive but attentive, embodying what Carol Gilligan in *In a Different Voice* (1982) describes as the moral language of care: a mode of moral reasoning grounded in relationality, compassion, and responsibility rather than authority.

Sashi's narration demonstrates that listening, to the wounded, the bereaved, the silenced, can be as powerful as speaking. She remarks, "Sometimes the only way to honor someone's story is not to interrupt it with your own." This philosophy underlies Ganeshanathan's entire narrative aesthetic: storytelling becomes an act of listening, and silence becomes a form of feminist ethics. In doing so, *Brotherless Night* reframes silence not as absence or submission but as a profound moral stance and a refusal to reproduce violence through language, and a commitment to remember without exploitation.

Storytelling, Memory, and Reconciliation:

In *Brotherless Night*, storytelling becomes the central moral act through which Sashi negotiates between silence and speech, trauma and testimony. Having lived through the Sri Lankan Civil War, a period defined by censorship, erasure, and terror, Sashi's act of narration itself represents resistance against oblivion. As Dori Laub writes, "There is, in each survivor, an

imperative to tell and thus to come to know one's story" (Testimony: Crises of Witnessing, 1992). Yet, as Ganeshanathan illustrates, telling is never simple; it is a slow, fragmented process that must pass through silence to reach articulation.

Sashi's narrative, framed as a retrospective conversation with a young American journalist, represents this fragile act of telling after silence. She notes, "For years I said nothing. I thought silence would keep the past buried, but it lived inside me, shaping every day I lived." Here, memory functions as both burden and necessity. Sashi's eventual decision to speak is not motivated by a desire for confession or closure but by a sense of moral responsibility, the duty to bear witness when so many voices have been lost. In breaking her silence, she enacts what Cathy Caruth calls "listening to trauma": the process by which both speaker and listener engage in an encounter with the incomprehensible, acknowledging that "the story of trauma is the story of a wound that cries out" (Unclaimed Experience, 1996).

Through this act of storytelling, Sashi bridges the gap between personal suffering and collective history. Her voice becomes a conduit for others' memories, carrying the stories of her family, neighbors, and patients who did not survive. Yet, unlike official histories or journalistic accounts, Sashi's narration avoids certainty. Her storytelling embodies what Paul Ricoeur, in *Memory, History, forgetting* (2004), describes as "the ethical duty of memory", to remember truthfully while acknowledging the limits of one's knowledge. Ganeshanathan thus situates storytelling as an ethical practice of humility: the narrator does not claim to represent the whole truth but offers fragments of lived experience as testimony.

Memory in *Brotherless Night* extends beyond individual recollection to encompass the collective experience of a silenced community. The novel repeatedly emphasizes how remembering itself becomes a political act in post-war Sri Lanka, where Tamil suffering is marginalized or denied by official narratives. Sashi remarks poignantly, "They wanted us to forget. They said remembering would keep us divided. But forgetting was another kind of death." This statement encapsulates the moral tension between the state's demand for amnesia and the survivor's need for remembrance. In refusing to forget, Sashi reclaims the right to memory as an act of resistance. Her storytelling performs what Marianne Hirsch terms "postmemory", the process by which the next generation inherits and reimagines the traumatic past of their predecessors (Family Frames, 1997). By narrating her experiences to a younger listener, Sashi ensures that Tamil history persists in the collective conscience, transcending the silencing mechanisms of both war and peace.

Ganeshanathan constructs memory not as static recall but as a living dialogue between past and present. The novel's nonlinear narrative mirrors the fragmented nature of remembrance, oscillating between scenes of domestic intimacy, moments of terror, and quiet reflection. This fragmentation conveys how memory resists chronology, functioning instead as what Ricoeur describes as "recollection in tension with forgetting." Each remembered scene in the novel is shadowed by what cannot be remembered as the unnamed victims, the unspoken atrocities. Through these absences, *Brotherless Night* transforms the act of remembering into a form of communal witnessing.

The significance of Sashi's storytelling lies not merely in what she remembers but, in her commitment, to remember responsibly. When she recounts her brother's death, she withholds specific details, saying, "I could tell you how it happened, but that would make it smaller than it was." This line captures Ganeshanathan's ethical aesthetics and the recognition that certain memories demand reverent silence rather than descriptive precision. Memory, in this sense, becomes an ethical space where love, loss, and respect intersect.

For Sashi, storytelling functions as a path toward healing, not by erasing trauma but by allowing her to coexist with it. Ganeshanathan refuses the notion of reconciliation as mere forgiveness; instead, she envisions it as a process of ethical acknowledgment. Through narration, Sashi begins to reclaim agency over her past, transforming pain into empathy. She admits, "Telling the story did not make it hurt less. But it made the pain less lonely." This line underscores the communal aspect of storytelling and the idea that healing emerges not from closure but from shared understanding. In narrating her past, Sashi not only honors the memory of the dead but also creates space for dialogue with the living, including those outside

her cultural and national boundaries. The journalist who listens becomes a symbolic witness of a stand-in for global readers invited into this act of ethical listening.

Dori Laub's theory of testimony provides an illuminating parallel here. Laub argues that testimony is a "process of constructing narrative truth in the presence of an empathetic listener." Sashi's decision to tell her story decades later suggests that healing requires both time and relationality, the presence of a listener who can bear witness without judgment. By entrusting her story to an outsider, Sashi participates in a broader human reconciliation, extending her personal testimony into a universal plea for empathy.

Judith Butler's notion of precarious life also resonates throughout the novel's conclusion. Sashi's narrative affirms the shared vulnerability that unites all human beings, even amidst ethnic division. She reflects, "We all lost someone. I wanted to believe that grief could be a bridge, not a wall." This assertion transforms mourning into reconciliation and a vision of healing grounded not in political resolution but in mutual recognition of suffering. Ganeshananthan suggests that storytelling, when undertaken ethically, can become a transformative act of care, opening the possibility of solidarity across difference.

Conclusion

Brotherless Night by V.V. Ganeshananthan stands as an ethical human exploration of post-war, where witnessing is created by silence, memory and storytelling. With the character of Sashi, the novel reimagines the possibilities of narration in the face of unspeakable trauma. The traditional expectations are challenged by the silence that is born out of pain, compassion and integrity, that suggests unspoken words can be as truthful as spoken words. In forming this ineffable, Ganeshananthan transforms silence into a mode survival and resistance, claiming it from passivity and oppression. In this research silence is emerged multifaceted, as an ethical constraint, symptom of trauma, a bridge to reconciliation and ultimately a feminist act of defiance. Drawing upon the theoretical aspects like: Cathy Caruth's notion of trauma, Dori Laub's theory of witnessing, Gayatri Spivak's concept of subaltern and Judith Butler's ethics of grievability, the paper shows how the novel is interconnected between personal suffering and political history.

The narrative by Ganeshananthan redefines what it means to bear witness. In the dominated literary landscape of patriotism or vengeance, Shashi reflects an alternative ethics that is grounded in care, empath, and respect for the dead. Her silences resist the commodification of pain and the simplification of complex moral realities. As she says, "There are stories I can tell, and stories that must remain in the silence between them." This awareness transforms the act of narration into a moral responsibility. Silence becomes a language of dignity and a means of preserving humanity amid the dehumanizing logic of war.

Moreover, *Brotherless Night* contributes significantly to the evolving body of post-war Sri Lankan Tamil literature by centering a woman's voice as both witness and moral agent. Her novel foregrounds remembrance as an ethical practice. By the novel's end, Sashi's storytelling becomes an act of reconciliation, not with the perpetrators of violence, but with the past itself. Her words do not seek to heal in a sentimental sense but to acknowledge pain honestly and preserve the dignity of loss. Sashi articulates the novel's central ethical vision: remembrance as resistance, storytelling as moral continuity.

Ganeshananthan's achievement lies in her ability to fuse the aesthetic with the ethical, to transform narrative into a form of justice. Her work demands that readers not only listen but also reckon with their role as witnesses' suffering. In this way, *Brotherless Night* extends beyond the Sri Lankan context, offering a universal meditation on the limits of speech, the power of silence, and the responsibility of memory.

Ultimately, the novel insists that reconciliation does not mean forgetting or forgiving, but remembering well. It is through storytelling, tender, careful, and incomplete, that both speaker and listener may begin to share the burden of grief and, in doing so, restore the fragile possibility of humanity. Ganeshananthan transforms silence itself into the most profound form of testimony, a moral voice that endures beyond words.

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