A mighty khatun

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A graceful lady limped
in Jinnah's outpatient clinic,
manicured toes
tucked in black chappals.
Body seated
on a wooden bench,
a calm and dainty woman.
Thick spectacles rested
on her slender nose.

Lesions dotted
her PET scan,
hijacking her body
like a band of
malicious pirates.

She bravely stood
clasping my hand,
as I wondered how
to grasp that moment
when her inner strength triumphed
and her saffron dupatta shimmered,
in the rays of Karachi's splendid sun.

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COMMENTARY

The subject in this poem is my mother, Dr. Fatima Hashamali, a dedicated pediatrician and a humanitarian who lived her life serving some of the world's poorest children in Kenya, Tanzania, and Pakistan. Through her short cancer journey, she was always calm and composed, often helping the sick and the destitute despite her own pain and illness. She embodied the word "grace."

GLOSSARY

Khatun	An Urdu word referring to a woman.
Jinnah	Refers to Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre.
Chappal	A type of sandal.
Dupatta	A long scarf worn over many South Asian women's outfits.