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The One Who Remembers

Diya Chatterjee is a poet who finds comfort in turning feelings into words. Her writing explores philosophy, morality, mortality, and the complexities of human nature, often through memories, relationships, history, and the quiet moments that shape us. To her, poetry is less about finding the right words and more about having the courage to feel deeply.

Diya Chatterjee

If I ever lost my memory,
I would not go to my family.
I would not go to my friends.
I would not go to my lover.
I would go to my ex-best friend.
I don't think she could ever forget
What everything was like.
She would remember
How much we laughed together.
She would remember the memories
We once thought would last forever.
Perhaps those memories haunt her still,
Eating away at her
The way they sometimes eat away at me.
Yet I would go to her
If I ever lost my memories.



Because she watched me grow
Into the person I am today.
She saw the best in me
And the worst.
She knew my weaknesses
And witnessed my strength.
She knew versions of me
That no one else ever got to know.
Perhaps I—and the memories we made—
Will haunt her forever.
Perhaps they already do.
And perhaps,
Somewhere within me,
I want to haunt her too—
Not with bitterness,
Not with revenge,
But simply with the memory
Of who we once were.

THE RUINS OF US

Asiya Kamal

I sit with the ruins of what love once built,
Among ashes of warmth, my veins still wilt.
The ghosts of laughter haunt my skin,
Echoes of “us” still breathe within.

They call him cruel, they call him wrong,
But my heart hums his name in every song.
Those eyes... how could they lie to me?
They held whole galaxies I used to see.

The comfort, the calm, the sacred place,
His arms, my shelter, my saving grace.
It wasn't illusion, nor fleeting air,
My home was him... my heart was there.

I pushed him away, not out of spite,
But love too fierce can burn too bright.
Now six long months have passed like years,
Each night baptized in unshed tears.



I saw his hand in another's clasp,
My breath gave out... my soul unclasped.
That sight, a dagger dressed in grace,
My world collapsed without a trace.

Was it all a play, a fleeting art?
Was I never enough to keep his heart?
Unlovable... the word crawls slow,
Through veins that ache and still let go.

My mind says "heal," my heart says "stay,"
In the ache of him, I lose my way.
For how do I bury what still breathes inside,
When even in peace, my pain won't hide?

He was my dawn, he was my flame,
Now just a whisper that knows my name.
And I... a ruin, soft and scarred,
Still love him fierce, though loving's hard.

But maybe someday, this heart will mend,
The ache will fade, the nights will end.
Till then I'll sit... with what love became,

And whisper his name... without the blame.

CORRECTION

Anatomy of an Unidentified Woman

Princes Rio R. Napolis is a BSED English student from the Philippines. They are currently pursuing a degree in English education while developing their work as an emerging writer. Outside academics, they enjoy reading, writing, and exploring different forms of storytelling

Rio Napolis

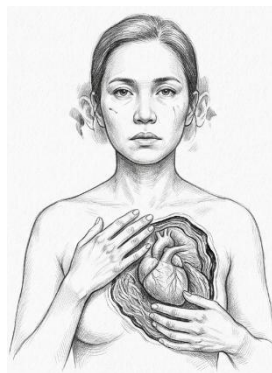
The coroner began the examination by assessing the body as a whole.

There were no obvious external injuries, no blood, no indication of blunt-force or penetrating trauma. At first inspection, there was nothing remarkable about the body except its unusual stillness.

He raised the lids, directed a light across the pupils, and examined the fine vessels beneath the sclera. There was no hemorrhage, no clouding, no visible damage. Only a slight, habitual tension around the corners, as though even in stillness they remained fixed on something farther ahead—another figure already standing at the finish line, another name printed higher on the list, another face receiving what this one had not yet earned.

He moved to the ears. The canals were clear, the membranes intact. Nothing obstructed them. Yet beneath the cartilage lay the faintest residue of voices, preserved not as sound but as pressure: one achievement held beside another, one name placed beside another, every piece of praise carrying the quiet measurement of what could have been greater.

The mouth showed no injury. The tongue was healthy, the throat unobstructed. He found only the pale impressions of words repeatedly pressed back before they could leave—the tongue bearing the shape of restraint, the throat narrowed around everything that had been easier to swallow than explain.



He examined the hands next. The joints were sound. The nails clean. Across the palms ran shallow calluses, almost invisible, formed by years of holding certificates, turning pages, signing forms, accepting awards, reaching for the next thing before the last one had been allowed to mean anything.

The thoracic cavity revealed no structural defect. Beneath the sternum, however, the heart sat surrounded by a dense accumulation of grief with nowhere to travel. It had settled between the ribs instead, compacted by years of being carried quietly.

Along the inner lining, he found something darker: a thin residue that had hardened without decay, resentment preserved so carefully that it had become indistinguishable from duty.

He examined the skin last.

Unbroken.

Immaculate.

Every imperfection had been concealed beneath layers of careful maintenance, until perfection itself had become a kind of armor.

No weapon was recovered.

No single wound was found.

The body had simply become very good at surviving examination.

He searched the remaining records for a name, a distinguishing mark, anything that might establish who had occupied the body.

Nothing remained.

By the end of the examination, even the body itself offered no certainty of who it had once been.

CAUSE OF DEATH: UNDETERMINED.

IDENTITY: UNIDENTIFIABLE.

At That Party

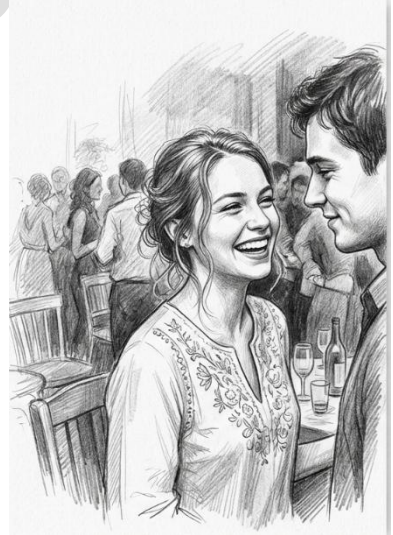
Hiya Thanki

Your laughter lit the corner of my dim evening
doubt paused,
and in that pause,
my heart tip-toed towards yours.

We spin on borrowed light,
a song lengths me into memory,
now that melody returns
and my skin burns pink inside.

We no longer talk,
You no longer cross my streets
yet the moments cling
like dust on a keepsake.

You'll never be mine
but I've kept you in my mind,
as though you were made
just to remind me
how wild something felt one night



****The Deepest Place****

****Nasir **** - is a contemporary poet dedicated to uncovering the extraordinary in the quiet moments of existence. Through minimalist yet deeply resonant verses, Nasir explores the landscapes of love, loss, and inner sanctuary. When not writing, Nasir can be found searching for the stories hidden in the silence.

Nasir

You are not a chapter
in the story of my life—
you are the silence
between every word.

I could lose the world,
lose every dream,
lose even the person
I once thought I was—
but if your love remains,
something in me
will still be home.

You are not a part of my life;
you are the deepest place
from which my



life begins. ❤️

CORRECTION

THE STORY BETWEEN US

Ashwini ghonmode

Tera mera rishta jese barso purani kahani....

Tera mera rishta jese ganga sa behta pani....

Shuruvat kaha se kru milne se kru....

Ya mulakat se kru...

Tere mere bich ki ye chemistry...

Shabdo me kese baya kru...

Tumhari vo mujhe apna banane ki koshishe...

Mujhe behad pasand aati he...

Rat bhar jagkar mujhse bate Krna....

Mujhe kuchh apna sa lagta he....

Kuchh to bich he hamare...

Jo itni bato se bhi Mera dil nhi bharta....

Aaj bhi vo bate sunne ka dil karta he....

Par tumhare pas vakt nhi rehta...



Kher masla vakt ka nhi dilchasbi ka he....

Ab tumhara dil nhi karta bate karne ka...

Varna tum bahana na dete vakt na milne ka...

Pehle ka vakt bada hi pyara tha

Vakt par khana kha lena khubsurat sa message tha ...

Ab vo message najane kyu nhi aate....

Din kam me chala jata he...

Aur rat intjaar me gujar jati he...

Ek hi fark he Aaj aur kal me...

Kal tak tum bat karne ka bahana dhundte the...

Aur aaj bat na karne ka bahana banate ho....

Teri meri bich ki kahani ab bas ek yad he...

Tum kisi aur ko vakt dete ho ye sachhai he....

Hamare bich ab bas antar reh gaya he...

Tum yad karna nhi chahte...

Aur me bhula nhi sakti...

The Chapter That Never Meant to Be

G. VARSHIKA

The chapter that never even started,
but ended soon?

Like lightning on a tree,
so fast, so dangerous ...

The day we saw each other,
the moment our eyes met,
everything disappeared for a minute ...

The sound of birds chirping,
the sound of dogs barking,
everything stopped ...

It was a beautiful story
that none of us knew ...

You came,
made me fall in love
when I said,
I would never love a person ...



You changed my thoughts,
but you still make me confused
with all these mixed feelings ...

CORRECTION

The Story Between Us

Anupama Sham Budhrani is a profound and well-known poet and author. She has completed her M.B.A and Post Graduation in Computer Applications.

Anupama Sham Budhrani

I would love to grow old with you,
help you to do, a things few.
I Love you as much as I can,
i can always be your buddy, your true man.

I can sing songs for you,
make you your instant coffee brew.
I can give you things that are fresh and new,
never let you stand in a long queue.

I can Make our lives comfortable,
keep our relationship stable.
I can always make my self available,
and Live this lovely life fable.

The story between us is so magical ,
It is amazing and romantic .
Iwish time could stop for us,
to celebrate our relationship buzz!



This is Us

My name is Pratiksha Bhatt. Weaving emotions and thoughts into words is my passion. I write poems that resonate with readers easily. If you find your story hidden in my loosely rhyming lines, I am close to successful writing. When not writing, I am searching for travel destinations and latest music releases with my two sons, Yatharth and Vihan.

Pratiksha Bhatt

It felt like a cool breeze, calm and refreshing,
My world lit up with happiness and joy when I found you
Melting all things tense and tiring, your presence cheered me up,
And made me look for excuses to go close and surround you
Giving me true meaning of life, you showed how trivial things can bring joy,
I felt a gush of pleasure, whenever I was around you
We laughed, loved, lived together, discovering something new in each other,
I admit I liked everything about you
Your smile stole my heart every time I tried to make you laugh,
Left me grinning like a girl, while thinking about you
Times may have changed, but we remain the same, I admit I won't be able to live at all without you

THE ROOM THAT WASN'T THERE

G. M. Hrushikesa Chaitanya was born on August 2 and is currently studying in 11th grade. He discovered his passion for writing at the age of 10 and has been creating original stories ever since. He enjoys writing psychological thrillers, mystery, horror, suspense, and emotional fiction, focusing on gripping plots and unexpected twists. Along with writing, he loves reading books and exploring new story ideas. As a young aspiring author, he dreams of publishing many original works and inspiring readers through creativity, imagination, and meaningful storytelling. He believes every great story begins with a single idea.

G.M.Hrushikesa Chaitanya

When Maya woke up, the first thing she noticed was the silence. Not the peaceful kind—the unnatural kind, the kind that made every small sound feel like a warning. She was lying on a hotel bed she didn't remember sleeping in. Her clothes were still on. Her shoes were beside the door. Her phone was on the bedside table, fully charged. The last thing she remembered was driving through heavy rain. After that, nothing.

Maya grabbed her phone and checked the time. 8:14 AM. There were seventeen missed calls from an unknown number. Before she could call back, someone knocked on the door.

Three slow knocks.

Maya froze.

“Housekeeping?”

No answer.

She opened the door. An elderly hotel employee stood outside.

“Good morning, Ms. Rao. I hope you slept well.”



Maya stared at him. “How do you know my name?”

He smiled as though the question was strange. “You checked in three days ago.”

Three days.

Maya felt her stomach tighten. “That’s impossible.”

The man looked at her for a moment. “You’ve been asking that every morning.”

Then he walked away.

Maya followed him to the reception desk. The receptionist pulled up her booking. Room 308. Checked in three days ago. Paid in cash. Three nights. Her signature was on the form.

Maya stared at it.

It was unmistakably her handwriting.

“I don’t remember any of this.”

The receptionist lowered her voice. “You should go back upstairs.”

“Why?”

The receptionist glanced toward the corridor. “Because last night you asked us not to let you leave.”

Maya’s heart began pounding.

“Why would I say that?”

The receptionist didn’t answer.

That afternoon, Maya searched her phone. There were hundreds of photographs. Most were ordinary—roads, restaurants, random buildings. Then she found something strange.

A photograph of the hotel corridor.

The picture had been taken from inside Room 308.

At the end of the corridor was a door marked 309.

Maya looked outside her room.

The corridor ended at a blank wall.

There was no Room 309.

She went downstairs.

“Where is 309?”

The receptionist's face changed.

“There is no 309.”

“I have a photograph of it.”

The receptionist looked at the screen. Her hands began trembling.

“Delete that.”

“Why?”

“Please.”

Maya refused.

That night, at exactly 2:13 AM, she heard three knocks.

Knock.

Knock.

Knock.

She sat upright.

The sound had come from the wall beside her bed.

She pressed her ear against it.

A woman's voice whispered from the other side.

“Maya.”

She stepped backward.

The voice came again.

“Don’t open the door.”

Maya grabbed her phone and turned on the flashlight. The wall looked normal.

Then she noticed something.

A thin line.

A door outline hidden beneath layers of wallpaper.

Her breathing stopped.

She touched the handle.

It turned.

The door opened into a dark corridor.

At the end was Room 309.

Maya stepped inside.

The room was identical to hers. Same bed. Same curtains. Same lamp.

But the walls were covered with photographs.

Hundreds of them.

All of Maya.

Sleeping.

Eating.

Walking.

Crying.

Driving.

Some photographs showed moments from years ago. Others showed things she had never seen before.

Then she found a photograph that made her blood run cold.

It showed Maya standing inside Room 309.

The date on the photograph was tomorrow.

She dropped it.

Behind her, the door slammed shut.

A man's voice came from the darkness.

“You finally remembered.”

Maya turned.

Nobody was there.

The lights flickered on.

A television switched itself on.

Security footage appeared.

Maya watched herself entering Room 309 three nights earlier. She was crying. She was carrying a bloodstained suitcase.

On the recording, another woman followed her.

The woman looked exactly like Maya.

Maya stepped closer to the screen.

“No...”

The recording continued.

The second Maya turned toward the camera.

And whispered, “If she wakes up, she won't remember what she did.”

The screen went black.

Maya stumbled backward.

Then she noticed the suitcase sitting beneath the bed.

Her hands shook as she pulled it out.

Inside was a bloodstained dress, a broken watch, and a photograph of a woman she didn't recognize.

On the back, someone had written:

SHE WAS THE FIRST ONE.

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door.

Three times.

Maya didn't move.

A voice whispered from the other side.

"Don't look down."

Her heart stopped.

Those were the exact words she had heard in her dreams every night.

She slowly looked toward the floor.

There were wet footprints leading from the door to the bed.

But they weren't coming into the room.

They were coming out of the bed.

Maya pulled the bedsheet away.

Nothing.

Then her phone rang.

Unknown number.

She answered.

Her own voice spoke.

"Run."

Maya backed toward the door.

"Who are you?"

A pause.

Then the voice answered, "I'm the part of you that remembers."

The call ended.

The lights went out.

When they came back on, Room 309 was gone.

Maya was standing in Room 308.

Morning sunlight filled the window.

The hotel manager entered with two police officers.

One officer looked at Maya carefully.

“Ms. Rao, we’ve been looking for you.”

“For what?”

The officer held up a photograph.

It showed Maya standing beside a dead woman.

“You disappeared three days ago after the murder.”

Maya stared at the photograph.

“That isn’t me.”

The officer turned it around.

On the back was Maya’s handwriting.

I killed her. I just don’t remember why.

Maya began shaking.

Then the hotel manager quietly said, “There is something you need to understand.”

“What?”

He pointed toward the corridor.

“Room 308 doesn’t exist either.”

Maya turned.

The corridor was empty.

No door.

No room.

No hotel.

Only a long white hallway stretching into darkness.

And at the far end stood another Maya.

Smiling.

Holding the bloodstained suitcase.

She whispered,

“Now you remember.”

CORRECTION

Love in the Age of Climate Change

G.M.Hrushikesa Chaitanya

We learned to love beneath uncertain skies,
while summer lingered longer than before,
and every sunset carried different colors,
as if the world was changing at its core.

You held my hand beside the quiet river,
where plastic floated where the lilies grew,
and whispered, "If we want a future together,
we have to give the Earth one too.



If You Said You Loved Me

I'm Abhishek Rauniyar, a student developer and writer exploring the intersection of technology and creativity. While coding is my technical pursuit, writing gives me a space to reflect, observe, and turn thoughts and experiences into words. I'm currently pursuing my studies while developing both my skills in coding and my voice as a writer.

Abhishek Rauniyar

If you said you loved the moon,
I wouldn't swear to steal it.
I'd just make sure
you never had to look at it
without me beside you.

If you said you loved the sunset,
I wouldn't trap it in my hands.
I'd just make sure
you never had to watch it
fade alone.

If you said you loved the mountain,
I wouldn't try to move it.
I'd just make sure
you always had somewhere



to rest when the climb was heavy.

If you said you loved me,

I wouldn't answer with words.

I'd just stay

when everything else

feels heavy.

CORRECTION

THE JOURNEY I NEVER PLANNED

Garima uikey

“Where I never planned to go became the place where I found the most beautiful memories of my life.”

The Girl Who Had No Plan

There was a time when I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I was a confused girl who had reached Class 12 without a clear career plan. While everyone around me seemed to know what they wanted to become, I was still trying to figure myself out.

Then one day, my elder brother suggested something.

“Why don't you try law?”

I thought about it. Law sounded different, challenging and interesting. I also wanted a career where I could build my own identity. So, finally, I decided—I would study law.

A Decision Called Law

I appeared for CUET and was allotted a college in Gwalior. Everyone was happy, but for me, there was one big problem. Gwalior was far away from my hometown.

I had never lived away from home before. My mother came with me to leave me there. Everything felt unfamiliar—the language, the culture, the city and, most importantly, the feeling of being alone.

It was my first college. And I had no friends.

For the first few days, I tried to adjust, but every evening I felt more homesick. One day, my father called.

“Friends bane?”

I quietly replied, “No, Papa.”

He simply said, “Koi baat nahi. Do-teen din mein ban jayenge.”

I waited. Two days passed. Then three. But nothing changed. I was still sitting alone.

My father understood what I couldn't explain properly. He supported my decision and brought me back home.

At that time, I thought coming back meant I had failed. I didn't know that it was actually the beginning of something much better.

The University I Never Knew About

After returning home, my admission was done at Mangalayatan University. The funny thing was that I had never realised that such a large university was so close to my hometown.

I had found a new beginning without even looking for one.

And then came another completely new experience—hostel life.

Mangalayatan Girls Hostel

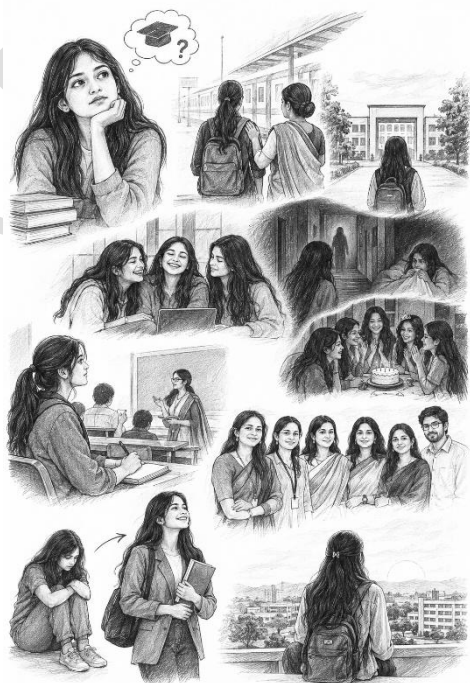
My first day at the hostel was not perfect. I was an introvert, I didn't know anyone properly, and everything felt new.

My roommates had completely different personalities. Neha was short-tempered, Chhavi was quiet and calm, and I was the introvert who usually preferred staying silent. Three different personalities, one room.

Slowly, we became friends. The hostel became a place filled with laughter, late-night conversations, gossip, exam preparation and countless memories.

But our hostel also had one mysterious story.

One day, a rumour started spreading throughout the hostel.



“Hostel mein bhoot hai.”

Nobody knew whether it was true or simply a rumour. But everyone became frightened. Some girls kept a picture of Hanuman Ji beside them, while some recited Hanuman Chalisa before sleeping.

Then came one particular night. It was around three in the morning when Bhoomi suddenly became frightened. After that night, every small sound seemed suspicious. Footsteps in the corridor and moving windows were enough to make everyone whisper, “Who is outside?”

Strangely, the same hostel that could become terrifying at 3 a.m. could become the happiest place at midnight.

Whenever someone's birthday came, the fear disappeared. At exactly 12 o'clock, everyone gathered together. Cake, laughter, photographs and excitement filled the hostel.

We were afraid together, and we celebrated together.

My College Journey

My hostel was around 10–12 kilometres away from the college. On my first day, I was nervous and, of course, late. I entered the classroom quietly, expecting to be scolded, but the teacher spoke to me kindly.

Because my admission had happened late, I didn't have all the notes. My teachers understood my situation and asked other students to share their notes with me. One of those students slowly became a friend.

I never had a huge friend circle, but I had a small group. And sometimes, a few genuine people are enough.

My teachers also became an important part of my journey. Shreya Ma'am, Vartika Ma'am, Pratishtha Ma'am, Aishwarya Sir and Pooja Ma'am each made my college experience special in their own way.

From a Confused Girl to a Senior

Years passed without me noticing.

The girl who once couldn't make a single friend in Gwalior had now become a senior at Mangalayatan University.

The girl who had once been scared of leaving home had learned to live away from it. The girl who couldn't make friends had found people she could laugh with. The introvert who once struggled to speak had slowly found her own voice.

Sometimes I think about that first college in Gwalior. What if I had stayed there? What if my father hadn't brought me back?

Maybe my life would have been completely different.

I thought I was simply changing my college. I didn't know I was changing my life.

Mangalayatan gave me more than a law degree. It gave me friendships, teachers, confidence, laughter, hostel memories, scary stories, birthday celebrations and countless moments that I will carry with me.

I came here as a confused girl who wasn't sure about her future. Today, I may still not have every answer, but I know something for sure—I found a place where I grew.

Perhaps that is what a journey is really about: not knowing exactly where you are going, but discovering who you become along the way.

“I thought I was choosing a college. I didn't know I was choosing the people, memories and version of myself that I would carry for life.”

The Person I Am on Ordinary Tuesdays

Pihu Goyal is a young poet and writer who finds meaning in ordinary moments, quiet thoughts, and the emotions that often go unnoticed. Her writing explores growing up, identity, memories, change, and the small experiences that shape who we become. She believes that even the most ordinary days can hold stories worth telling. Through her poetry, she hopes to create a space where readers can pause, feel, and find pieces of themselves in her words.

Pihu Goyal

I am not sure
who I am
on important days.

Those versions of me
are easy to recognize.

The one who tries harder
before an exam.

The one who smiles wider
when something good happens.

The one who becomes quiet
when something hurts.



But most of my life
doesn't happen
on important days.

It happens
on ordinary Tuesdays.

I wake up
after the alarm
has already gone off twice.

I look at the clock
and calculate
how much time
I can still waste.

I leave something
unfinished on my desk.

I choose a song
I have heard
a hundred times.

I complain about
something small.

I laugh at something
that probably
wasn't that funny.

I check my phone
without expecting
anything from it.

Someone asks,

“Are you ready?”

And I say,

“Almost.”

Even when I am not.

There are messages
I answer immediately.

Some I leave

for later.

Some I type

and delete.

Some I forget about

until the day

has already moved on.

Nothing about me

looks particularly

interesting then.

I am not becoming

someone new.

I am not leaving

someone behind.

I am not learning

some important lesson.

I am just there—

half awake,

slightly distracted,

thinking about things

I will probably

forget by tomorrow.

And maybe

that is the version

of me I understand

the least.

Because I have spent

so much time

trying to understand

who I am becoming

that I forget

there is a person

already living

in the middle of it.

The one who likes
certain songs
for no important reason.

Who remembers
small details.

Who changes her mind.

Who laughs too loudly
sometimes.

Who gets tired.

Who makes plans
and forgets them.

Who wants to be alone
and then wonders
why nobody called.

Who doesn't always
know what she feels.

Who is still figuring out
what she wants
without announcing it
to anyone.

Maybe she doesn't need
to become anything
right now.

Maybe she doesn't need
a lesson.

Or a purpose.

Or a beautifully written
reason for existing
on every ordinary day.

Maybe a Tuesday
can simply be a Tuesday.

A morning.

A few unfinished things.

A song.

A conversation.

A little laughter.

A little silence.

And me,

somewhere between

all of it,

quietly becoming

without noticing.

Perhaps

I have been looking

for myself

in all the moments

that changed me.

When maybe

I should have looked
at the days
that didn\'t.

The ordinary ones.

The forgettable ones.

The Tuesdays
I never thought
I would remember.

Because those days
were not empty.

They were my life too.

And maybe
the person I am
on ordinary Tuesdays

is the person
I have been
becoming all along.

CORRECTION

The Difference Between Being Known and Being Kept

Pihu Goyal is a young poet and writer who finds meaning in ordinary moments, quiet thoughts, and the emotions that often go unnoticed. Her writing explores growing up, identity, memories, change, and the small experiences that shape who we become. She believes that even the most ordinary days can hold stories worth telling. Through her poetry, she hopes to create a space where readers can pause, feel, and find pieces of themselves in her words.

Pihu Goyal

I used to think
being known
was enough.

To have someone
remember my favourite things,
notice when my voice changed,
understand the silence
behind my “I’m fine.”

I thought
being understood
meant being chosen.



But knowing someone
and keeping someone
are different things.

You can know
the stories they never tell,
and still leave
when the story becomes difficult.

You can remember
every little thing about them
and still forget
to stay.

Maybe that is
the quietest kind of goodbye—
when someone knows you completely
but never learns
how to remain.

And maybe growing up
is learning this:

I don't need to be

someone\'s favourite memory.

I need to be

someone\'s present.

Because eventually,

you stop begging

every closed door

to call itself home.

And you understand

that being known

is beautiful—

but being kept

is a choice.

It is what it is.

Bhaswati Pal

It was a rollercoaster knowing you,
But it was wonderful loving you.

You wanted me first;
You said you looked forward to talking to me,
You said my presence made everything feel lighter,
You said I made you feel understood highly,
You said that everyday you were trying to get better,
Then why were you the one to leave first?

You made me believe that you loved me ardently-
Said you stopped poisoning your lungs
Just 'cause I had complained that the smell was suffocating,
As if I was the salvation to your misery;
Yet I am the one now cast to
damnation, grieving.
Or Do you too, feel the same
grief?

The first time you were on your
knee- asking,

The second time you were on your knees- begging.



I warned you that I was a dog, starving and wounded-

Starving of affection,

Starving of devotion,

Starving of attention,

Starving of rapturous elation.

But that didn't seem to deter you, not at all,

You were rather confident in your enamour and stood tall

Pledging your allegiance to me, making me profoundly astounded.

And I loved how my name sounded from your lips-

As if you kissed each alphabet before they rolled out of your tongue;

So I lowered my defenses and let you in.

Took your hand and unmasked myself, leaving the masquerade with you,

As you showed up in my favourite colour-

Yet I'm the one now left feeling blue.

Or Do you too, feel blue ?

What we had was an utopia,

A secret rendezvous-

And stolen glances across rooms.

A sacred sanctuary-

Only we had access to and no soul was aware

\Cause it wasn't necessary.

A sweet bliss of our own-

Your hands under my clothes,

And my lipstick smeared across your mouth like an oath.

But that utopia burned to the ground too soon.

You succumbed to the mightiness of your desolation,

And we had to pay the price

As running away from our sanctuary was your best solution,

Yet I clung onto you with my utmost desperation.

So you resorted to ruthless lies.

You made me believe that your love was just an act,

You made me believe that it was never genuine to begin with,

You made me believe that I was just a jester in your court,

You made me believe that it was all part of a pact.

Your words pierced through my skin like arrows poisoned,

And each arrow made me stumble backward,

Till I reached the edge of a Cliff-

The very same cliff I had crawled out of not too long ago.

I winced as I peeked into the familiar abyss-

I pleaded, not wanting to fall back into it,

But the words wouldn't leave my lips

And you couldn't know as your back was turned.

So what happened next was inevitable-

I slipped off the cliff's edge

And fell into the depths,

My bones shattered as I hit the bottom-
Blood pooled around my head and seeped into my eyes,
Until all I could see was red,
Until all I could feel was unfathomable rage.

Blinded by my rage and haunted by the memory of you mocking my
affection,
I unleashed my hounds at you to take action.
They barked and snarled at you-
While I was still laying in the pool of my own blood,
Barely breathing as the poisoned arrow had pierced through my lungs too.
My hounds continued barking and snarling at you.
Until evoked a memory of yours being bitten by a wolf.
The knowledge of which made me nauseous,
So I knocked at your door out of my conscience.
You did unlock your door, heard me out and pulled me in;
I resisted as I was still enraged,
I snapped and bared my teeth at you like a dog wounded-
But you didn't mind and wrapped bandages on my wounds instead.
Holding me close, you apologized for your sin,
And that was enough to soothe the burns on my skin.

I was cold to you initially,
But I warmed up to the rekindled flame eventually,

As I saw a friend in you

And we saw each other more often than we used to.

Sometimes, you made me laugh till I couldn't breathe,

Sometimes, we would bicker like kids,

It was so much fun to me-

And thus My wounds started to heal gradually.

But alas, our newfound connection didn't last long either.

The flames we had rekindled flared up, scorching us both.

Misunderstandings shaped by actions so inadvertent,

We both lost our tempers and refused to communicate.

Arguments once playful-

Turned vicious and spiteful.

Against me you committed atrocities unforeseen,

Burning in my ire, I too said hurtful things I didn't mean.

Thus burned the bridge between us and all I could do for you was loathe.

It has been a while since

I had to let go of you twice:

As a lover the first time,

As a friend the second.

So now I sit upon the debris of what could've been.

I sit with a hollow void in my chest,

Wondering if I'm the only one feeling this way-

Or Do you too, feel bereft?

What we had was fleeting,

But it left me reeling;

\Cause it was a rollercoaster knowing you,

But it was wonderful loving you.

CORRECTION

DEATH'S EYES

Aliyah Jimba

It was all fine before the night
When I was a star, shining bright
Then I went to sleep
It wasn't a dream, It wasn't a fright

The peace in the room became a despair
As palm came swirling through my hair
Hands gagged my mouth
I struggled but it remained there

I became a victim
Of fear, lust and hate
I rose but it was too late
I had been raped!

For days my heart ached
I have been devoured, By the figures of the earth
A victim, of the shadows of the night
So which is right?
Justice accompanied by shame



Or Suicide followed by pain?

My dressing was questioned

My character, Flawed

By Friends, By Family , By foes, By blood

I wanted comfort, I wanted justice!

But I got judged

And my brain questioned “What did I do wrong?”

I have been raped in this so called world

I am ashamed

But it was never the monster’s fault.

I am awake!

In the midst of the chaos, I heard a voice.

Reluctantly, I purchased a rope and made a choice.

As I ended it all, I hoped maybe

Just maybe I wouldn’t be judged

From seeking attention

I found peace I never wished for

Not even in my wildest intentions

Then I saw the lust in Death’s eyes

I realised

Not a good way to end my life

CORRECTION

What We Never Named

Rishabh Srivastava

Kabhi hum dono ke beech koi vaada nahi tha,
phir bhi ek ajeeb sa bharosa tha jo aadha nahi tha.
Na roz milna zaroori tha, na har baat kehna zaroori,
bas ek doosre ko samajh lena hi lagta tha kaafi poori.

Humari kahani kisi ek din se shuru nahi hui,
na kisi ek pal mein apni poori baat kahi.

Woh dheere-dheere bani, jaise baarish se mitti ki
khushboo,

pehle kuch anjaan si, phir ban gayi roz ki aadat
khoobsurat si.

Kabhi humne ghanton baat ki, kabhi din bhar kuch kaha
nahi,

phir bhi ek doosre ki khamoshi kabhi ajnabi lagi nahi.

Kuch logon ko samajhne ke liye sawaalon ki zaroorat
hoti hai,

kuch rishton mein bas ek nazar hi poori baat keh deti hai.

Phir zindagi ne apne tareeke se humein badalna shuru kiya,
jo kal aasaan tha, aaj usne thoda mushkil hona chuna.

Naye log aaye, naye raaste mile, naye sapne saath chale,



aur hum dono bhi dheere-dheere apne-apne tareekon se badle.

Kabhi meri baat tumhe samajh nahi aayi, kabhi tumhari main padh na saka,

kabhi saamne sab kuch tha, phir bhi asli matlab pakad na saka.

Kuch misunderstandings waqt ke saath khud hi sulajh gayi,

aur kuch baatein bina jawaab ke hi kahin chup ho gayi.

Humne ek doosre ko har waqt sahi samjha ho, aisa bhi nahi,

kabhi meri zid thi zyada, kabhi tumhari baat sahi.

Kabhi main apni duniya mein tha, kabhi tum apni raah mein,

par ek ajeeb sa dhaaga tha jo bana raha humein ek hi chaah mein.

Humne ek doosre se sirf achhe din share nahi kiye,

kabhi thakan ke pal, kabhi boring afternoons bhi jiye.

Kabhi bina reason ke hasi, kabhi bina reason ke silence,

aur inhi chhoti cheezon ne bana diya humara connection priceless.

Aaj jab peeche dekhta hoon toh lagta hai,

humari kahani mein koi ek hero tha hi nahi.

Na koi villain, na koi perfect ending, na koi fixed role,

bas do ordinary log the, aur unke beech kuch extraordinary moments ka whole.

Kuch yaadein ab bhi bina permission ke laut aati hain,

kisi random jagah, kisi gaane, kisi line se yaad dilaati hain.

Main unhe rokta nahi, bas thodi der rehne deta hoon,

phir unke saath ek chhoti si smile lekar aage badh leta hoon.

Kyunki har purani cheez ko wapas paana zaroori nahi hota,

kuch cheezon ka sirf yaad reh jaana hi kaafi hota.

Har insaan ko zindagi bhar saath chalna zaroori nahi,

kabhi-kabhi kuch log sirf raasta samajhne ke liye milte hain, manzil ke liye nahi.

Hum dono ki kahani bhi shayad isi tarah likhi gayi,

kuch lines saaf thi, kuch jagah jaan-bujhkar khaali chhodi gayi.

Kuch pages par hasi thi, kuch par confusion ki lakeer,

kuch jagah hum bilkul paas the, kuch jagah the bahut door.

Aur agar kal koi mujhse pooche “Tum dono ke beech tha kya?”

main shayad muskura kar kahunga “Pata nahi, par kuch toh tha.”

Kyunki har connection ko ek naam dena zaroori nahi hota,

har kahani ka matlab sirf uska anjaam nahi hota.

Kuch kahaniyaan bas isiye khoobsurat hoti hain,

kyunki unmein har cheez explain nahi hoti.

Kuch baatein waqt ke saath samajh aati hain,

aur kuch baatein samajh aaye bina bhi

dil mein apni jagah banaati hain.

Humari story bhi shayad wahi thi
na poori tarah kahi, na poori tarah chhupi hui,
na perfect, na completely broken,
bas apne waqt mein bilkul asli hui.

Aur shayad saalon baad bhi,
jab hum dono apni-apni zindagi mein kahin aur honge,
kisi ek purani yaad par ruk kar sochenge
“Woh waqt ajeeb tha,
par achha tha.”

Phir shayad hum dono aage badh jaayenge,
apni-apni duniya mein naye panne jod jaayenge.
Par ek chhota sa page kahin andar reh jaayega,
jahan likha hoga

“Kuch log saath nahi rehte,
phir bhi kahani se kabhi nikalte nahi;
kuch raaste alag ho jaate hain,
par un par chale kadam
kabhi bilkul mitaate nahi.”

Story: Before We Become Strangers

Kanza Imran Mughal is an emerging Pakistani writer, researcher, and literature enthusiast with an academic background in English Literature. Her writing explores emotional complexity, identity, trauma, relationships, silence, and the hidden struggles of human experience. Drawing inspiration from psychoanalytic and feminist perspectives, she is particularly interested in the ways individuals navigate memory, loss, identity, and emotional resistance.

Kanza Imran Mughal

There are goodbyes that happen at railway stations, in crowded airports, beneath the cold light of hospital corridors.
And then there are the quieter ones.
The kind that happen while two people are still sitting across from each other, still smiling, still asking ordinary questions.
The kind no one recognizes until years later.
Elara learned this on an ordinary Tuesday in November.
Rain had been falling since morning, turning the city windows into blurred paintings of silver and grey. She was sitting alone in the corner of a small café, her hands wrapped around a cup of coffee she had forgotten to drink. Across the street, people hurried beneath umbrellas.
A woman laughed as she ran through the rain.
A man stood outside a bookstore, trying to protect a paper bag beneath his coat.
A little boy jumped into a puddle while his mother pretended to be angry.
Elara watched them without really seeing them.
She had always been good at watching.
It was speaking that had become difficult.
Her phone lay face down on the table.
She had received a message twenty minutes ago.
She had not opened it.
Not because she was afraid of what it said.
Because she already knew who had sent it.
Noah.
After six years.
Six years, three months, and eleven days.
She knew the number because, sometimes, the heart keeps records the mind pretends it has forgotten.
The message contained only seven words.

Are you still afraid of goodbyes?

Elara read it again.

Then again.

Outside, the rain became heavier.

She finally turned her phone over and typed:

No.

She stared at the word.

It looked too small for six years of silence.

She deleted it.

Typed:

I don't think so.

Deleted that too.

Then, after a long pause, she wrote:

Why are you asking?

She pressed send before she could change her mind.

The reply came almost immediately.

Because I'm leaving tomorrow.

Elara stopped breathing for a moment.

Not because Noah was leaving.

He had always been leaving.

Even when he stayed.

She remembered the first time she had met him.

It was in a library on a winter afternoon, when the heating had stopped working and everyone was wearing coats indoors.

Noah had been sitting beside the window with a book open in front of him.

He wasn't reading.

He was writing something in the margins.

Elara had noticed because she hated people who wrote in books.

"You know that's not your book," she had said.

He looked up.

There had been something strangely calm about his eyes.

"I know."

"Then why are you writing in it?"

He closed the book.

"Because some things don't belong to the person who owns them."

She had frowned.

"That makes absolutely no sense."

He smiled.

"Maybe not yet."

She should have walked away.

Instead, she sat down opposite him.

That was how it began.

Not with love.

Not with friendship.

Not even with a proper introduction.

Just a disagreement over a book.

The evening was cold.

Cars moved slowly through the wet streets.
Noah held his train ticket between two fingers.
“One year isn’t long,” he said.
Elara nodded.
“Of course not.”
“You’ll visit.”
“Of course.”
“You’ll call.”
“Obviously.”
He smiled.
She smiled back.
Neither of them said what they were actually thinking.
Don’t go.
Ask me to stay.
Tell me I matter.
Tell me this means something.
The train arrived.
Noah hugged her.
She remembered how long he held her.
Long enough to become a confession.
Short enough to remain deniable.
Then he left.
A year became two.
Two became three.
Calls became messages.
Messages became occasional birthdays.
Birthdays became silence.
And somewhere between one unanswered message and another, they
became strangers.
Or so Elara had convinced herself.
Her phone vibrated again.
Another message.
I found something that belongs to you.
Then another.
Can I see you tonight?
Elara looked through the café window.
The rain had stopped.
For the first time that evening, the city looked clear.
She picked up her coat.
And for reasons she could not explain, she whispered to herself:
“Before we become strangers again.”
Then she walked out into the cold.
Noah was waiting outside the bookstore.
For a moment, Elara didn’t recognize him.
Not because he had changed dramatically.
Because memory had preserved him differently.

Her mind had kept the younger version—the man with untidy hair, worn sneakers, and a habit of smiling whenever he was trying not to say something.

The man standing before her wore a dark coat.

His hair was shorter.

There were faint lines beside his eyes.

But his hands were the same.

Especially the left one.

He still touched his watch when he was nervous.

Elara almost smiled.

“You still do that.”

His hand immediately dropped.

“Do what?”

“Touch your watch.”

He looked at it.

Then back at her.

“Some things don’t change.”

She wanted to say that she knew.

Instead, she asked, “Why did you call me?”

He looked at the bookstore behind him.

“Because I found something.”

“You said that.”

“I know.”

He reached into his coat.

For a moment, Elara thought he was going to take out a letter.

Instead, he held up a book.

Her heart stopped.

It was old.

The corners were worn.

The cover had faded.

But she knew it.

She knew every scratch on it.

The library book.

The one from the day they met.

She stared at it.

“I thought it was lost.”

“So did I.”

“How did you get it?”

Noah smiled faintly.

“That’s the strange part.”

He opened it.

The margins were still filled with his handwriting.

But beside his old notes were Elara’s.

She remembered.

After they became friends, she had borrowed the book from him.

She had written a reply beside one of his arguments.

Then he had written another.
And she had answered again.
Over time, the margins had become a private conversation.
A conversation neither of them had ever had aloud.
Elara ran her fingers over the pages.
“You kept it.”
“I tried not to.”
She looked up.
“What does that mean?”
Noah was quiet.
Then he said, “I left it behind when I moved.”
“And?”
“I found it last week.”
“Where?”
“In my mother’s house.”
Something shifted inside her.
“You went back?”
“Yes.”
“Why?”
He looked away.
“My mother died three months ago.”
The world became very quiet.
Elara’s fingers tightened around the book.
“Noah...”
“It’s all right.”
“It isn’t.”
He smiled sadly.
“I know.”
She didn’t know what to say.
There were condolences that belonged to strangers.
There were others that felt inadequate between people who had once known
each other’s entire lives.
So she did the only thing that seemed honest.
She stepped closer.
And hugged him.
Noah froze.
Then slowly, carefully, his arms came around her.
For six years, Elara had imagined what it would feel like to hold him again.
She had imagined anger.
Relief.
Longing.
Perhaps tears.
She had not imagined how familiar it would feel.
As if six years were not years at all.
As if they had simply misplaced an afternoon.
They went inside the bookstore.

It was almost empty.
Noah ordered coffee.
Elara ordered tea.
He remembered.
“You still don’t drink coffee when you’re upset.”
She looked at him.
“You remember that?”
“I remember everything.”
The words frightened her.
“Then why did you disappear?”
He looked down.
There it was.
The question she had carried for six years.
The question that had grown heavier with every year.
Noah didn’t answer immediately.
Instead, he opened the book.
Between two pages was a folded piece of paper.
He placed it on the table.
Elara looked at it.
“What is that?”
“I wrote it the night before I left.”
She unfolded it.
The handwriting was younger.
Less careful.
There were only a few lines.
Elara,
If I tell you I love you, you’ll ask me to stay.
If I ask you to wait, I’ll be asking you to put your life on hold.
So I’m leaving without saying either.
Maybe one day you’ll understand.
Maybe one day I’ll be brave enough to tell you the truth.
Her vision blurred.
She read it again.
Then looked at him.
“You loved me?”
Noah gave a quiet laugh.
“I thought that was obvious.”
“No.”
“It wasn’t?”
“Noah, you spent six years making me believe I imagined everything.”
His expression changed.
“I never wanted that.”
“Then why didn’t you tell me?”
He leaned back.
“Because my father had debts. My mother was ill. My younger sister was still studying. That job was the first real chance I had to change everything.”

"You could have told me."

"I could have."

"Why didn't you?"

"Because I was afraid."

"Of what?"

He looked directly at her.

"Of needing you."

The answer was so simple that it hurt.

"I thought if I let myself love you properly, leaving would become impossible."

Elara swallowed.

"So you chose to leave."

"Yes."

"And then you stopped calling."

His eyes lowered.

"I called."

"What?"

"I called you many times."

"I never received them."

"I know."

She stared at him.

"What do you mean, you know?"

"I spoke to your brother once."

Elara's face changed.

"My brother?"

"He told me you were getting married."

The words hung between them.

"I was never getting married."

Noah looked stunned.

"He told me you were engaged."

"I wasn't."

"Then why would he say that?"

"I don't know."

Elara's mind raced.

Then she remembered.

Years ago, after Noah had left, her family had begun talking about marriage.

She had told her brother that she wasn't ready.

Perhaps he had misunderstood.

Perhaps he had wanted Noah to stay away.

Perhaps there had been a thousand small assumptions, each one harmless on its own, that together had built six years of silence.

Elara closed her eyes.

"We both thought the other person had moved on."

Noah nodded.

"Apparently."

She laughed.

It wasn't a happy laugh.
It was the kind that comes when the truth is so absurd it becomes painful.
"Six years."
"I know."
"All because neither of us asked."
"I know."
She looked at him.
"That's cruel."
"What is?"
"That we were brave enough to love each other but not brave enough to ask."
Noah smiled sadly.
"Maybe that's what growing up is."
"No."
She shook her head.
"Growing up should teach us to ask."
They stayed at the bookstore until closing.
They talked about everything they had missed.
Noah told her about the city he had moved to.
The work.
The loneliness.
His mother's illness.
The years of sending messages he eventually stopped sending.
Elara told him about her writing.
The small apartment she had rented.
The books she had collected.
The evenings she had spent wondering whether some people were meant to remain unfinished chapters.
Neither asked the question they were both thinking.
What now?
Eventually, Noah stood.
"I have to go."
Elara's chest tightened.
"Tomorrow?"
He nodded.
"Where?"
"Another country."
She looked at him.
"How long?"
"I don't know."
She laughed softly.
"Of course."
He smiled.
"I didn't come back to ask you to wait."
"Good."

"I came back because I didn't want to leave again without telling you the truth."

Elara looked at the book.

"And now you've told me."

"Yes."

"So that's it?"

"No."

The answer came quickly.

"No?"

"I don't know what happens next."

She nodded.

For once, uncertainty didn't frighten her.

"Neither do I."

They walked outside.

The streets were almost empty.

The rain had stopped completely.

Noah looked at her.

"Do you remember what you said the first day we met?"

"That you were destroying a library book?"

He laughed.

"No. After that."

She thought.

"I said you made no sense."

"You did."

"And you said, 'Maybe not yet.'"

He smiled.

"Exactly."

Elara looked at the old book in her hands.

"Maybe I understand now."

"What?"

"Some things don't belong to the person who owns them."

He waited.

She continued.

"Some things belong to the people who change them."

Noah looked at her for a long moment.

Then he nodded.

"Maybe."

The next morning, Elara went to the railway station.

She didn't know why.

Perhaps she had spent six years regretting one goodbye.

She wasn't going to repeat it.

Noah was standing near the platform.

When he saw her, surprise crossed his face.

"You came."

"Yes."

He smiled.

“Why?”

She handed him the old book.

“You forgot something.”

He took it.

“No. This belongs to you.”

“Maybe.”

He looked at her.

Then she said the words she should have said six years ago.

“I don’t want you to stay because you’re afraid of leaving.”

He was silent.

“And I don’t want you to leave because you’re afraid of needing me.”

His eyes softened.

“What do you want?”

Elara breathed deeply.

“I want the truth.”

“You have it.”

“No.”

She smiled.

“I want the truth from now on.”

The train announcement echoed across the platform.

Noah looked toward the tracks.

Then back at her.

“What if the distance is still too much?”

“Then we’ll learn how to cross it.”

“What if we fail?”

“Then at least we’ll fail knowing what we were trying to save.”

He smiled.

“You’ve changed.”

“So have you.”

“Are you still afraid of goodbyes?”

Elara looked at him.

“Yes.”

He raised an eyebrow.

She smiled.

“But I’m more afraid of the things we never say.”

For a moment, neither moved.

Then Noah stepped closer.

He touched her cheek.

“Can I kiss you?”

She smiled.

“You’re asking now?”

“I learned.”

She nodded.

“Yes.”

Their kiss was quiet.

Not dramatic.

Not the kind found in stories where everything suddenly becomes perfect. It was simply a promise that neither of them would mistake silence for certainty again.

When they pulled away, the train was waiting.

Noah took her hand.

"I'll call you."

"Don't promise."

"Why?"

"Just do it."

He smiled.

"I'll do it."

The conductor called for passengers.

Noah picked up his bag.

Then he stopped.

"Elara?"

"Yes?"

"If I come back..."

She smiled.

"Don't ask if I'm still here."

"What should I ask?"

She looked at him.

"Ask me where we're going."

He smiled.

Then he boarded the train.

Elara stood on the platform until it disappeared.

She expected the old ache.

The terrible emptiness.

The feeling of something being taken away.

But it wasn't there.

For the first time, goodbye did not feel like an ending.

It felt like a sentence with another page waiting.

Three months later, Elara was sitting in the same café.

The same corner.

The same window.

A cup of coffee sat untouched before her.

Her phone vibrated.

She smiled before reading the message.

I found something else.

She typed:

What?

The reply came.

A reason to come home.

She stared at the screen.

Then another message appeared.

Actually, I think I found several.

She laughed.
Outside, rain began to fall.
People hurried beneath umbrellas.
A woman ran across the street.
A man stood outside the bookstore.
A little boy jumped into a puddle while his mother pretended to be angry.
Elara watched them.
This time, she really saw them.
She understood something then.
Strangers are not always people who have never known us.
Sometimes strangers are the people who knew us once but were too afraid
to keep asking questions.
Sometimes love does not disappear.
It simply becomes buried beneath assumptions, silence, distance, and time.
And sometimes the smallest act of courage is not staying.
It is asking someone to stay in your life without asking them to stop living
their own.
Elara picked up her coffee.
Her phone vibrated again.
I'll be home Friday.
She smiled.
Then she typed:
I'll see you Friday.
She paused.
Deleted it.
Typed again.
I'll be there.
She pressed send.
Outside, the rain continued.
But she no longer thought of it as something that blurred the world.
Some things had to become unclear before they could finally be seen.
And some goodbyes were not meant to separate people.
They were meant to teach them how to return.
Before we become strangers.
Before silence becomes a language.
Before years become excuses.
Sometimes, all it takes is one person finally asking:
Are you still there?
And another person finally being brave enough to answer:
Yes.

""The journey from love to poet""

Asia khatoon

This is the story of a girl named Naina.

Naina a simple girl, went with her father to the wedding of his friend's daughter.

Where people from various religious backgrounds were present.

Naina's gaze fell upon a young man who was very handsome and a few years older than her.

Naina falls in love with him at first sight.

She didn't know whether the boy was religious or not; she simply fell in love with him. Even after returning from the party, she kept thinking about that boy for years.

A long time passed, and that boy never crossed her path again.

She began to love that boy without ever meeting or speaking to him.

Naina passed her matriculation exam and was subsequently admitted to Netaji Subhash University. Jamshedpur

"And one day, a major change came into Naina's life."

After finishing her classes, she went to the university campus to head back home.

And just then, Naina's eyes fell upon the boy she had fallen in love with when she saw him at the party.



She kept looking at him for a few minutes. Naina couldn't believe her luck.

The next day, Naina found out about that boy's background.

And Naina found out that he was the son of her father's friend, and that the boy had also been invited to that party.

Naina started contacting that boy without delay.

After being friends for a few days, Naina revealed her feelings to him.

The boy replied, "I value your love."

But that didn't mean he had started liking Naina.

That boy wanted to stay away from love,
romance, and emotional attachments.

And then, naina believing her love to be one-
sided, kept it confined within herself.

It was one-sided; it turned a girl into a poet.

And then, Naina wrote her first poem.

The other day, I ran into someone I had lost long ago. Fearing I might lose them again, I poured out my heart to them. Their reply was, "I value your love." After that, I never saw that person in my future again.

"Asia khatoon"

This is not the story it's my autobiography.

O'my little things around me...

Shreyansh Rastogi is an aspiring author and poet... someone who finds stories in emotions, imagination, and the quiet moments of everyday life...

Shreyansh Rastogi

O'my little bench beneath the tree,
you hold my weight and history.
I sit with ghosts you cannot see,
my hands are full of memory.
The night bends close, the stars look bright,
yet none of them can name my fight.

O'my little sky of spinning blue,
you whirl like thoughts I once outgrew.
Each golden star reminds me of
the parts of me I lost to love.
You shine so loud, you shine so far,
yet never ask how broken hearts are.

O'my little tree so tall and kind,
you listen better than my mind.
Your roots know loss, your branches too,
they've seen the seasons people move.



If grief were leaves, I'd shed them slow,
the way you do when cold winds blow.

O\my little phone held in my hand,
silent like things I never planned.

I wait for words that will not come,
from names now fading, one by one.

You glow, but warmth is not the same
as hearing someone say my name.

O\my little night, don't rush away,
sit with me till the edge of day.

If sorrow needs a place to rest,
let it lie here on my chest.

I'll stay awhile, I'll breathe, I'll see
that grief too wants some company.

A while

Dipti sangra

It's been a while since I caught a sight of that flower, The one I used to cherish the most.

It's petals had gone a little quiet, But I wish I had taken it as a sign That it wasn't alright. Already fighting a battle That took place inside.

I remember your those days, When you used to smile and laugh. When You looked like a blooming flower

But by the time I understood your silence, You had already withered beneath the weight of those storms, all alone.



The Vow of a Lifetime

Vhey

It was a bright, sunny day.

Today was the day of Laurel and Jemmy's wedding, a day they had been waiting for for a very long time.

Laurel was a teacher at a nursery school. She loved working with young children and was known for her kindness and patience. Jemmy, meanwhile, was an electrical engineer who had built a wonderful career for himself.

After years of being together, the day they had dreamed of had finally arrived. Their families and friends gathered to celebrate as Laurel and Jemmy prepared to begin a new chapter of their lives together.

"You look so pretty, Laurel," her best friend, Violet, said to her.

Laurel stood in front of the mirror, staring at her reflection. She could hardly believe that it was finally happening. After all the waiting and planning, she was only moments away from marrying the man she loved.

"Thank you, Violet," Laurel replied with a nervous smile. "I can't wait to be his wife."

She was nervous and excited at the same time. Her palms were sweaty, and her heart was beating faster than usual, but she couldn't stop smiling.

One by one, some of her relatives came into the room to see her before the ceremony. They complimented her over and over again, telling her how beautiful she looked in her wedding dress.



Laurel smiled at each of them, but every passing minute made her more nervous. Soon, she would walk down the aisle and see Jemmy waiting for her at the altar.

A few minutes passed, and Laurel continued talking with her relatives while waiting for the ceremony to begin while she's at the white car. Suddenly, Violet's phone rang.

Violet answered the call in the corner. Laurel noticed the worried expression that slowly appeared in her bestfriend's face.

"What happened?" Laurel asked the second she came back to her.

Violet hesitated. "Laurel... They can't find Jemmy."

Laurel's smile immediately vanished upon hearing those words.

"What do you mean they can't find him?"

"He hasn't arrived yet. They've been calling him, but he's not answering his phone."

For a moment, Laurel said nothing. Her heart, which had been beating with excitement just minutes ago, now pounded with fear.

"That can't be right," she whispered. "He told me he would be here early."

She quickly reached for her phone and called Jemmy herself.

Once.

Twice.

Three times.

No answer.

The room suddenly felt too quiet.

Her relatives began exchanging worried looks, while Violet stayed beside her.

"Laurel, maybe he's just stuck somewhere," Violet said, trying to reassure her.

But Laurel could feel tears forming in her eyes.

What if something had happened to him?

Or worse what if Jemmy had decided not to come?

Laurel continued staring at her phone, hoping that Jemmy would call her back.

“Try calling him again,” she told Violet.

Violet nodded and dialed his number, but once again, no one answered.

By now, the ceremony was supposed to have started at this time. The guests outside were becoming restless, whispering among themselves and wondering why the groom had not arrived.

Then, someone suddenly knocked on the door.

Violet quickly opened it. Standing outside was Daniel, Jemmy’s best friend and best man. He was breathing heavily, as if he have run for too long.

“Daniel!” Laurel immediately stood up. “Where is Jemmy?”

Daniel looked at Violet before turning back to Laurel.

“I went to his house,” he said. “His car wasn’t there, so I asked his neighbor if they had seen him.”

“And?” she impatiently asked him.

“The neighbor said Jemmy left early this morning. But he was already dressed for the wedding.”

She then felt confused.

“Then where is he?”

Daniel hesitated.

“I don’t know. But I found something else.”

Laurel’s heart began to pound.

“What?”

“Someone saw his car on the side of the highway.”

Laurel froze.

“What happened to him?”

“I don’t know yet,” Daniel replied. “But I’m going there now.”

“I’m coming with you,” Laurel said.

Violet stared at her. “Laurel, you’re still wearing your wedding dress.”

“I don’t care.”

Laurel lifted the bottom of her dress and headed toward the door.

At that moment, getting married was no longer the first thing on her mind.

She just needed to know that her beloved is safe and doing okay.

Daniel drove as quickly as he could while Laurel and Violet sat anxiously in the back seat.

Laurel kept calling Jemmy, hoping that this time he would finally answer.

Still, there was nothing.

“Please be okay,” she whispered, holding her phone tightly.

After several minutes, Daniel slowed down.

“There,” he said, pointing ahead.

On the side of the road was Jemmy’s car.

“Jemmy!” Laurel cried.

Before Daniel could stop the car, Laurel opened the door in the front seat and rushed toward Jemmy’s vehicle. While Violet quickly followed her.

The car was empty.

Laurel looked through the windows, but there was no sign of him.

“Jemmy!” she shouted.

No answer.

Daniel walked around the car and noticed that one of the front tires was completely flat.

"It looks like he had a flat tire," Daniel said.

"Then where is he?" Laurel asked, her voice trembling.

Violet then suddenly noticed something on the ground near the car.

"Laurel... look."

It was Jemmy's phone, the screen was cracked.

Laurel picked it up with shaking hands.

"Why would he leave his phone here?"

Daniel looked farther down the road. "Maybe he was trying to look for help."

Then the three of them began walking along the roadside, calling Jemmy's name over and over again.

After a few minutes, Laurel suddenly heard someone shouting in the distance.

"Hey!"

She stopped.

She knew that voice.

"Jemmy?"

"Laurel?!"

A man appeared farther down the road, running toward them.

It was Jemmy.

Laurel didn't think twice. She lifted her wedding dress and ran toward him.

"Jemmy!"

When she finally reached him, she wrapped her arms around him tightly like she was longing for him for so many years.

“Where have you been?” she cried. “I thought something terrible happened to you!”

“I’m sorry,” Jemmy said, trying to catch his breath. “My tire blew out, and when I got out of the car, I dropped my phone. The screen broke, and I couldn’t call anyone. I walked to the nearest place I could find to ask for help.”

Laurel pulled away and looked at him. His suit was dusty, his hair was messy, and he looked nothing like the perfectly prepared groom she had imagined seeing at the altar.

For a few seconds, she simply stared at him.

Then she started laughing through her tears.

Jemmy looked confused. “Why are you laughing?”

“You look terrible.”

Jemmy laughed too. “And you’re standing on the side of the road in a wedding dress.”

Laurel looked down at her once-beautiful white dress. The bottom was now covered in dirt.

“I guess neither of us looks ready for a wedding anymore.”

Jemmy gently took her hands.

“Laurel, I’ve been ready to marry you for years.”

Her smile slowly returned.

“Then what are we waiting for?” Jemmy smiled.

“Let’s get married Laurel... I can’t wait to spend my life without you,” Jemmy said.

When they finally arrived back at the church, Laurel looked through the car window and saw their families and friends waiting outside. Some looked worried, while others sighed with relief when they saw Laurel and Jemmy.

The moment the car stopped, Laurel’s mother hurried toward them.

“Laurel! Jemmy! Thank goodness you’re both safe!” she cried.

“We’re okay, Mom,” Laurel said as she hugged her.

Jemmy stepped out of the car. His suit was dusty, his hair was messy, and he looked nothing like the perfectly prepared groom he had hoped to be.

“I’m sorry for making everyone worry,” he said.

Daniel placed a hand on his shoulder. “You made it. That’s what matters.”

Violet looked at Laurel’s wedding dress. The bottom was covered in dirt from the roadside.

“It isn’t ruined,” Violet said with a smile. “Now it just has a story.”

Laurel smiled.

Soon, everyone returned inside the church. Jemmy went ahead with Daniel while Laurel stayed outside with Violet and her family.

Inside, Jemmy stood at the altar and looked toward the large church doors.

His heart was pounding.

Then the music began.

The doors slowly opened, and everyone stood.

There was Laurel.

The moment Jemmy saw her, he smiled.

Laurel looked down the aisle and saw the man she had feared she might not see again that day. Tears filled her eyes, but she smiled and began walking toward him.

When she finally reached the altar, Jemmy held out his hand.

“You made it,” Laurel whispered.

“So did you,” Jemmy replied.

The ceremony began. After the prayers and blessings, the officiant smiled at the couple.

“And now, Laurel and Jemmy will exchange their vows.”

Jemmy turned toward Laurel and held both of her hands.

“Jemmy, you may begin.”

Jemmy took a deep breath.

“Laurel, I’ve imagined this moment more times than I can count. I imagined myself standing here, waiting for you to walk down the aisle. I imagined the music, the flowers, our families, and the way you would look in your wedding dress.”

He smiled.

“But I never imagined that I would arrive with a broken phone, a dusty suit, and a flat tire.”

Everyone laughed softly.

Jemmy looked into Laurel’s eyes.

“But today made me realize something. None of those things matter. Our wedding didn’t need to be perfect. All I needed was to stand here in front of you and finally have the chance to call you my wife.”

Laurel smiled as tears formed in her eyes.

“You have been beside me through so many moments in my life. You believed in me when I doubted myself. You celebrated with me when I succeeded and stayed beside me when things became difficult.”

His voice softened.

“I love your kindness. I love how patient you are with the children you teach. I love your smile, your laugh, and the way you care so deeply about the people around you. But most of all, I love the person I have become because you are part of my life.”

Jemmy squeezed her hands.

“So today, I promise to choose you every day. I will choose you when life is beautiful and when life becomes difficult. I will stand beside you when we agree and stay beside you when we don’t.”

“I promise to listen to you, respect you, encourage your dreams, and remind you of how strong you are whenever you forget.”

His eyes began to fill with tears.

“I cannot promise that our life will always be perfect. There will be problems we cannot predict, plans that will change, and roads that will lead us somewhere we never expected.”

He smiled.

“Today certainly proved that.”

Laurel laughed through her tears.

“But whatever happens, I promise you will never have to face it alone.”

Jemmy gently lifted her hand.

“I want to grow old with you. I want to wake up beside you on ordinary mornings. I want to celebrate our happiest moments and hold you through our hardest ones. I want to build a home with you filled with laughter, patience, understanding, and love.”

A tear rolled down his cheek.

“And if there ever comes a day when the road between us feels long, I promise I will keep walking until I find my way back to you.”

Laurel wiped her tears.

“I loved you yesterday. I love you today. And for every tomorrow I am lucky enough to have, I promise I will love you then too.”

Jemmy smiled.

“You are my best friend, my greatest love, and from this day forward, my family. I choose you, Laurel. Today, tomorrow, and for the rest of my life.”

The church became quiet.

The officiant turned toward Laurel.

“Laurel, you may now say your vows.”

Laurel took a deep breath and looked at Jemmy.

“Jemmy, this morning I stood in front of a mirror wearing this dress, thinking about how lucky I was. I was nervous and excited because, after waiting for so long, I was finally going to become your wife.”

Her voice began to tremble.

“Then they told me they couldn’t find you.”

Jemmy’s expression softened.

“When you didn’t answer your phone, I was terrified. For those few moments, the wedding didn’t matter anymore. The flowers didn’t matter. My dress didn’t matter. I didn’t care about the ceremony or how many people were waiting for us.”

Laurel squeezed his hands.

“I only wanted to know that you were safe.”

She smiled through her tears.

“And when I finally saw you running toward me on that road, I realized something.”

She paused.

“I wasn’t running toward my wedding anymore.”

“I was running toward my home.”

Jemmy’s eyes filled with tears.

“You are my home, Jemmy. Not a house or a place. You. Wherever life takes us, wherever we end up, I know I will be home as long as you are beside me.”

Laurel wiped a tear from her cheek.

“I promise to love you when you are at your best and when you feel like you have nothing left to give. I promise to celebrate your dreams and stand beside you through every disappointment.”

“I promise to listen when you need to talk, comfort you when you are hurting, laugh with you when you are happy, and hold your hand when words are not enough.”

She smiled.

“And after today, I also promise to remind you to charge your phone before every important occasion.”

Everyone laughed, including Jemmy.

“I promise to grow with you. Life will change us, and we won’t always be the same people we are today. But I promise that I will keep learning who you are and keep falling in love with every new version of you.”

Her voice softened.

“I want the big moments with you, but I also want the ordinary ones. I want sleepy mornings, late-night conversations, dinners after long days at work, silly arguments, unexpected adventures, laughter that makes our stomachs hurt, and quiet evenings when we simply sit beside each other.”

“I want all of it.”

Laurel looked deeply into his eyes.

“Not because I believe every day will be easy, but because I believe every day with you will be worth choosing.”

Jemmy gently wiped a tear from her cheek.

“So, in front of our families, our friends, and everyone who has watched our love grow, I choose you.”

“I choose you today.”

“I will choose you tomorrow.”

“And when we are old and our hair has turned gray, I hope I can still hold your hand, look at you the way I’m looking at you now, and tell you that if I had the chance to live my life all over again...”

Laurel smiled through her tears.

“...I would still find you.”

“And I would still choose you.”

She gently touched Jemmy’s cheek.

“I love you, Jemmy. You were worth every moment of waiting.”

Jemmy smiled through his tears.

“And Laurel, I promise you—I’m not going anywhere.”

The church filled with laughter and applause.

The officiant smiled as Laurel and Jemmy continued holding each other’s hands.

“May you always remember the promises you have made to each other today. May you carry these promises through every joy, every challenge, and every unexpected road you encounter together.”

The officiant then asked for the rings.

Jemmy carefully placed the ring on Laurel’s finger, and Laurel did the same for him.

Finally, the officiant smiled.

“By the promises you have made before your families, your friends, and one another, it is my joy to pronounce you husband and wife.”

He looked at Jemmy.

“You may now kiss your bride.”

Jemmy looked at Laurel and smiled.

“Finally.”

Laurel laughed.

Jemmy gently pulled her closer and kissed her.

The entire church erupted in cheers and applause.

After everything that had happened that day, Laurel and Jemmy were finally husband and wife.

CORRECTION

EK NAGMA LIKHA HAI

I'm Khushi Kumari, a commerce student, an NCC cadet, and someone who finds a little poetry in everyday life. I love turning fleeting thoughts, quiet emotions, and simple moments into words. For me, writing is a way of holding on to the feelings that words sometimes struggle to express.

Khushi Kumari

Unke andaaz ki azaan hai,
Unse ye nazdikiyaan bhi ek gumnaam armaan hai,
Ek saath hokar bhi,
Dooriyaan humari ek alag hi chsaas hai.

Unke saath ka intezaar hai,
Har lamha ek anokha ikraar hai,
Unki nazarandaaji ko nazarandaaz kar
Iss ek tarfa ishq pe bhi deedar hai.
Unko kisi aur ke paas dekh dil jalate hai,
Haste haste khwaahishon ko chupate hai,
Mohabbat ko bayaan karne se behtar,
Isse ab khamosh rehna sikhate hai.

Sach kahu,
Uske sang duniya basane ka khwaab hai



Mere ishq ke saawalo ka ek woh hi jawaab hai,

Par kya kiya jaaye,

Is janam meh mai parastar aur woh nawab hai.

CORRECTION

A Place Made of Names

G. VARSHIKA

We arrived as strangers,
each carrying a different world
inside a little screen.

No handshakes,
no shared streets-
just a blinking cursor
and a "join."
Somehow,
the messages became memories,
the usernames became familiar,
and the crowded chat
started feeling like home.
Funny,
how a place that doesn't exist
can still hold
so many people.



Opposite Attracts..

Janhavi Asha Dattatraya Lodhe

An Alpha to the world,
While she was his blue,
He liked her at his worst,
And she loved him too...

She was a quite sea,
He was a massive fire,
Who found his peace in bended knees,
While she was his intense desire..

His hands were warm,
Her hands were cold,
Both carried intense physical charm,
Whenever they met each other...

Watching her smile so elegantly,
His intense gaze melted away,
Replaced by love and certainty,
Beneath The fading light,
Of the day...



She dreamed with open eyes,
He built his truth on imagery lies,
The destination was same,
Yet worlds apart,
One being practical,
And other made up of art..!

CORRECTION

Only you

Sai Suravi is a poetess living in New Delhi. Their work frequently explores themes of (Love , longing and admiration) . Working and observing more topics and themes to write more

Sai Suravi

I haven't seen anyone

After seeing you

I haven't thought of anyone

After meeting you

You are the only one

Since my childhood

You have the decent nature

That will never fade

You talk less

But express more

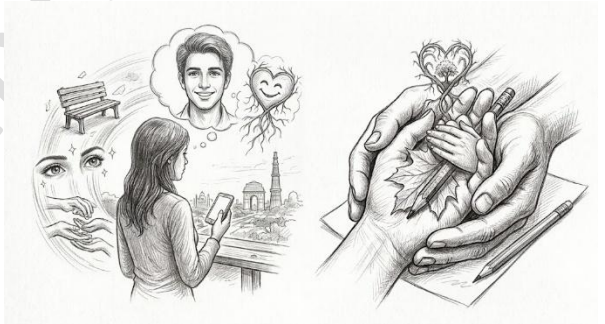
With your bright eyes

And it makes you even more nice

You have a good height

But you never make anyone down

You always have smiley face



I had never seen you frown

Whenever I see you

I lost my sense

Couldn't utter a single word

Which makes me more tense

You have a good heart

Which makes you more smart

Your kindness towards others

Is a beautiful art

Handle With Care

Arianna writes poetry about the things she should probably have moved on from, paints the feelings she can't put into words, and turns minor inconveniences into full-blown literary tragedies. Her hobbies include art, overthinking, and trying to convince cats that she deserves their respect.

Arianna Saha

They break with the slightest touch.

Shattered with a single breath.

Even promises don't break that easily.

Was it ever fragile,

Or just fragile in my hands?

They always looked sturdy.

Glass usually does.

A little nudge.

A careless hand.

A single spark.



Is all it takes for our brittle devotions

To crash right before our eyes.

I keep pushing it.

I keep breaking it.

I keep finding new ways to.

And I try to fix the glass,

The shards surround me,

Trapping me in a glass cage of guilt.

The remnants of the broken glass

Become my new mirror.

The shards cut deep.

Blood stains what shouldn't be able to stain.

There's blood on our glass.

I wish I could say it isn't mine.

The Smallest Cracks

Arianna is a poet and artist who collects stories, metaphors, unfinished ideas, and an unreasonable amount of emotional baggage. Somewhere between school deadlines, creative projects, anime, and attempting to earn the respect of her cats, she occasionally finds time to make something beautiful.

Arianna Saha

It's happening again.

Just not in the way I thought it would go.

Another home crumbled,

Not worn down through time,

Not wiped away through a tidal wave,

Not destroyed from the inside.

It's the smallest cracks,

Within those sturdy walls.

The slightest fading of colours,

A frozen peace frosting the air.

For the first time,

It wasn't me.

But I did try to fix it,



But it only broke further.

I stand in the middle of
Dusty furniture,
Hollow memories,
And a spiral of cracking tiles.

Holding my head,
There's nothing else I can hold on to.

I didn't start it,
But I started the end,
When I tried to help.

When the Plum Blossoms Bloom

Kashaf Ul Eman is a writer, poet, and translator whose work explores emotions, hope, resilience, relationships, and everyday human experiences. She is the author of *Heartfelt Verses* and *From Dust to Clouds*, and has translated children's stories from English into Urdu. Her writing is known for its simplicity, emotional depth, and heartfelt expression.

Kashaf Ul Eman

Five years ago, they were strangers.

Today, Lin Yue and Gu Chen stood together on the top of Fubo Hill in Guilin, watching the Li River shimmer beneath the winter sky.

The city had changed.
They had changed even more.

Beside them, the cold breeze carried the faint fragrance of plum blossoms. Lin Yue pulled her coat closer around herself and glanced at the man standing beside her.

Gu Chen was still as composed as ever—the sole heir of the Gu family of Changsha, the man whose name appeared regularly in business magazines, the man people described as distant, disciplined, and impossible to approach.

But she knew the man behind that reputation.

The man who remembered exactly how she liked her tea.

The man who secretly bought her favourite pastries whenever he travelled.

The man who could negotiate a multimillion-yuan business deal without blinking but became completely helpless whenever their little daughter, Gu Nian'an, asked him for one more bedtime story.
Their daughter was spending the week with her grandparents in Changsha.

Tonight, it was just the two of them.
Five years together.
And they had returned to where everything began.

Lin Yue smiled.
\"Do you remember?\"
Gu Chen looked at her.
\"I remember everything.\"

Five years earlier...

Five Years Ago

Lin Yue had never expected Guilin to change her life.

She had come from Guangzhou with her
best friend, Bai Xinyi, for nothing more than
a short winter getaway.

No work.

No family meetings.

No business dinners.

Just two girls, warm coats, endless street
food, and two days of freedom.

\"Yue! Look!\"

Bai Xinyi pointed excitedly toward a street
stall.

\"Those lamb skewers!\"

Lin Yue laughed.

\"You've eaten three already.\"

\"Four.\"

\"That's worse.\"



The narrow street was crowded with tourists. Steam rose from food stalls,
lanterns swayed gently above them, and the smell of grilled meat, roasted
chestnuts and sweet rice cakes filled the cold air.

Lin Yue was laughing at something Xinyi had said when her shoe slipped.

\"Ah—!\"

Before she could fall, a hand caught her firmly around the waist.

Everything stopped.

Lin Yue looked up.

A stranger was standing in front of her.

Tall.

Calm.

Wearing a dark coat.

His expression was unreadable, but his hand remained around her waist for
one second longer than necessary.

Their eyes met.

Neither spoke.

For a moment, the noise of the street disappeared.

There was only the cold winter breeze, the smell of lamb skewers, and two
strangers staring at each other as though they had somehow met before.

Then...

\ "Ahem.\ "
Bai Xinyi cleared her throat.
The spell broke.
Lin Yue immediately stepped back.
\ "I'm so sorry!\ "
The stranger glanced down.
A little splash of slush had landed on his expensive coat.
Her face turned crimson.
\ "Oh my goodness. I'm really sorry. I'll pay for the cleaning.\ "
\ "It's fine.\ "
His voice was low and surprisingly gentle.
\ "But thank you for catching me.\ "
He nodded.
\ "You're welcome.\ "
Lin Yue hurried away with Xinyi.
She didn't look back.
Gu Chen did.

The following afternoon, Lin Yue and Bai Xinyi attended an auction held at one of Guilin's most prestigious auction houses.
They had no idea that the stranger from the night before would be there.
Gu Chen was the guest of honour.
More importantly, he was one of the principal shareholders of the auction house.
When Lin Yue saw him, she froze.
He recognized her immediately.
\ "You.\ "
She blinked.
\ "You remember me?\ "
\ "The girl who nearly fell into the street.\ "
Her cheeks warmed.
\ "I did not nearly fall.\ "
\ "You did.\ "
Bai Xinyi covered her smile.
\ "Nice to meet you. I'm Bai Xinyi.\ "
\ "Gu Chen.\ "
And that was how they properly met.

The auction began.
One item after another appeared.
Paintings.
Antiques.
Jewellery.
Lin Yue wasn't interested in most of them.
Until the final lot appeared.
A sapphire necklace and matching earrings.

Her eyes immediately lit up.
"It's beautiful," she whispered.
Xinyi noticed.
"You like it?"
Lin Yue nodded.
The bidding began.
"One million."
"One point two."
"One point five."
Lin Yue hesitated.
She could afford it.
She was the Lin family's heiress, after all.
But before she raised her paddle;
"Two million."
Gu Chen's voice came from the other side of the room.
Lin Yue lowered her paddle.
She looked at him.
He wasn't even looking at her.
The bidding continued.
"Two point five million."
No one challenged him.
The auctioneer raised his hammer.
"Sold."
Lin Yue smiled politely.
Of course.
She had no idea why she felt disappointed.

That evening, Gu Chen found Bai Xinyi outside the hotel.
"I need your help."
She crossed her arms.
"With what?"
"I want to see Lin Yue again."
Xinyi stared at him.
Then smiled.
"So the cold and serious Gu Chen does know how to fall in love."
"I'm not in love."
"Of course."
She laughed.
"But I have one condition."
"What?"
"I get to tell her this story when you're both old and embarrassing."
Gu Chen actually smiled.
"Deal."

The next afternoon, Bai Xinyi convinced Lin Yue to visit Fubo Hill.
"Why are we coming here?"

"You'll see."
When Lin Yue reached the top, she stopped.
Hundreds of small lights illuminated the pathway.
Plum blossoms decorated the area.
And in the centre was a simple arrangement of flowers.
Behind it stood Gu Chen.
Lin Yue stared at him.
"What is this?"
He walked toward her.
"The sapphire set."
She blinked.
"You bought it."
"I did."
"Why?"
"Because you wanted it."
She looked at him, confused.
"Then why didn't you give it to me?"
"Because I didn't want you to remember me as the man who bought you jewellery."
He paused.
"I wanted you to remember me as the man who met you here."
He took a small box from his pocket.
"I know we've only known each other for two days."
Lin Yue laughed nervously.
"Exactly."
"I know."
He opened the box.
Inside was a delicate ring.
"But sometimes two days can change the rest of your life."
He looked directly into her eyes.
"Lin Yue, will you give me the chance to spend the rest of mine with you?"
For once, the confident heiress had no answer.
Her eyes filled with tears.
"You barely know me."
"Then I'll spend my whole life learning."
She smiled through her tears.
"Gu Chen..."
"Yes?"
"You're very confident."
"I am."
"Annoyingly confident."
"I know."
She laughed.
Then finally nodded.
"Yes."
The plum blossoms swayed gently in the winter wind.

And somewhere below them, Guilin continued to shine.

But their story was not as easy as that moment made it seem.

When Lin Yue returned to Guangzhou, her family discovered that she was engaged to a man they barely knew.

The Lin family opposed the marriage.

The Gu family wasn't much different.

Two powerful families.

Two heirs.

Two companies with competing interests.

And suddenly their beautiful two-day romance became a battlefield.

There were arguments.

Misunderstandings.

A business partnership that collapsed.

Rumours that Gu Chen had approached Lin Yue only because of the Lin family's influence.

Lin Yue believed him when he denied it.

But then she found documents suggesting that Gu Chen had been negotiating a business deal with her father before they met.

She confronted him.

"Was I part of your plan?"

Gu Chen's face changed.

"No."

"Then why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I was afraid you'd think everything between us was calculated."

"You should have told me anyway."

For the first time, Gu Chen had no answer.

They separated.

Not because they stopped loving each other.

But because sometimes love wasn't enough to silence fear.

Months passed.

Lin Yue buried herself in the Lin family's business.

Gu Chen returned to Changsha.

Neither dated anyone else.

Nor truly moved on.

Then came the night Gu Chen arrived in Guangzhou during a heavy winter rain.

He stood outside the Lin residence for hours.

When Lin Yue finally appeared, she stopped beneath the doorway.

"You shouldn't be here."

"I know."

"Then why did you come?"

"Because five years from now, I don't want to regret letting you walk away."

She looked away.

"I was hurt."
"I know."
"You made me feel like I couldn't trust you."
"I know."
He took a breath.
"But I never stopped loving you."
Her eyes filled with tears.
"I never stopped either."
That was the beginning of their second chance.
Not perfect.
Not effortless.
But real.
They learned how to communicate.
They learned when to compromise.
And slowly, their families began to accept that their marriage was not a business alliance.
It was theirs.

They married beneath a sky filled with lanterns.
A year later, Lin Yue held a tiny newborn in her arms.
Gu Chen stood beside her, staring at their daughter as though the entire world had suddenly become smaller and more precious.
"What should we name her?" Lin Yue whispered.
He looked at their daughter.
"Gu Nian'an."
"Nian'an?"
"Peaceful thoughts. A peaceful life."
Lin Yue smiled.
"Our little Nian'an."
And their family was complete.

Five years later, on Fubo Hill, Lin Yue leaned against Gu Chen's shoulder.
"Do you still remember the first thing you said to me?"
He thought for a moment.
"You're welcome."
She laughed.
"And I thought you were arrogant."
"You still do."
"Sometimes."
He smiled.
She looked toward the plum blossoms.
"Would you do it all again?"
Gu Chen took her hand.
"Every awkward moment."
"Even the slush?"
"Especially the slush."

She laughed.
Then he leaned closer.
\"Although I'd probably catch you faster this time.\
Lin Yue smiled.
Below them, Guilin glittered beneath the winter moon.

Five years ago, two strangers met by chance.
Five years later, they stood together as husband and wife, parents, and best friends.
Their love had not been perfect.
It had been tested by distance, family expectations, misunderstandings, pride, and fear.
But they had chosen each other through all of it.
Because some stories are written in books.
Some are written beneath the lights of a city.
And some;
are written when the plum blossoms bloom.

People and Paper

Ovviya Pandian

Just like tissue paper!
the more I'm white,
the more I'm treated light.
They use and throw me without spite,
yet I'm unbothered to fight.
Just like tissue paper!

I wipe their tears
for many years.
But when I'm stuck in fear,
they disappear.
I helped them shine and twinkle,
but they threw me
when I get wrinkle...
Just like tissue paper.....
After their demands win,
I'm sent to the dustbin.

My efforts fade like vapours,
while they search for new papers.
Being too pleasing is an issue,
people might start using you as tissue.



The spark

A shitty poet

I thought it was all over
Everything was burned down to ashes
but then, one random Monday,
I saw the ashes glow.

There, hidden beneath that golden glow
I found something
That I thought I had lost forever
"Hope"

And then
I started noticing little things again
The big beautiful blue sky
The smell of my books
The love deep inside every creature

And mayhaps for the first time in a while
I noticed myself too
And found that I am enough.



We

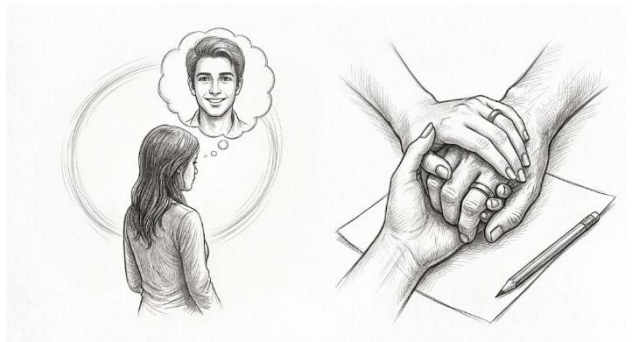
A shitty poet

You know me
And I know you,
Like something
There's no need to prove.

We both know our silence
We both know our pain,
But we don't know when to laugh
So we laugh through all the same.

We are both a lil crazy
And a lil bit sane,
But when we are together
We go insane.

You know me
And I know you
Maybe That's all
What we need to do.



Racing into the night

Aratrika Adhikary

I couldn't understand the light,
So, I was afraid of the dark.
Little did I hesitate
When love gripped my heart.
Little did I know
That wasn't just a messy start.
Day in, day out,
You were subtle and sweet.
Night in, night out,
You made me tired and weak.
Some words were left unspoken,
Yet, some words tore the wound open.
A thread woven so clean,
Left with cuts we couldn't heal.
Yet, what could I have done
To make those ends meet?
I stopped being afraid of the night
As I learned of things
more fearsome than it.



THE SHACKLE

Itumeleng mokoya

Are you for real?

Do you even exist?

I am tired.

All day I cook, mop,
clean baby\'s diapers.

For me, you think chores suit me more.

Not allowed to smell the air outside.

My hands are patterned with kitchen spices.

A nose used to dust and dumpling smell.

I want to break through this shackle.

You think being pregnant is my daily work.

You can\'t understand, as you have never experienced labor pain.

I too have got rights.

Marriage does not tie me to chores,
but it unites two hearts.

I deserve to work like you.

I deserve to be free.

We are equal.

Chores is not my husband.



MY LIFE

Itumeleng mokoya

Blinded by a veil

Trapped body

Untold stories

Unseen face

Unspoken words

Silent tears

A broken mind

CORRECTION

Behind the Spotlight

Khushii Oswal

They see the sparkles on the velvet, the polish on the floor,
They hear the rising music through a closed performance door.
"It's just a simple hobby," they whisper with a grin,
"A phase that lasts a little while, an easy game to win."
They see three minutes on a stage, seamless, soft, and bright,
And think our life is easy under glowing yellow light.
They do not know the 5 AM alarm, the biting morning air,
The sore and trembling muscles, the knots of matted hair.
Our lives are not in hours—they are measured out in beats,
In missed family dinners, empty chairs, and silent, dark return streets.
While others rest or dream away, we stand before the glass,
Counting "Five, six, seven, eight" until
the hours pass.
Our toes are taped in quiet pain, our
knees are purple-bruised,
Our ankles carry swelling from the
floors that we've abused.
There is blood inside our ballet flats,
sweat dripping down the spine,
Yet we repeat the turn again until the
count is fine.
And oh, the eyes that watch us—not to feel, but just to scan,



To reduce a sacred art form to the judgment of a man.
They critique the cut of costumes, the tightness of the cloth,
Drawn to the flame of youth, just like a careless moth.
They measure our integrity by where the hemline sits,
Ignorant of how much strength it takes to do the splits.
If we wear a fitting top, they call it "seeking eyes,"
If we wear a flowing ghagra, they claim it's a disguise.
They stare at bare-skinned waists and miss the core that holds us tall,
They call a fluid movement "vulgar" when it breaks their wall.
They fail to see the discipline, the power, and the grace,
Redefining devotion as a scandal on our face.
They judge the way our bodies speak, the stories that we weave:
They laugh at modern floorwork because they choose not to believe.
They call our hip-hop "rebellious," classical "out of date,"
And ask us, "What's your real plan? Dance won't put food on your plate."
They look at boys with judgment, call them "far too delicate,"
Not knowing it takes iron nerves to bear that heavy weight.
They do not see the quiet tears behind the studio mirror,
The fear that one wrong landing brings a career-ending terror.
The constant self-doubt creeping in: Am I good enough today?
While society dismisses every price we had to pay.
So let them talk. Let them judge the costume and the pace,
They will never understand the magic of this sacred space.
When the house lights dim to darkness, and the bass drops raw and deep,

We dance because the silence is a promise we can't keep.
We are not just entertainers made for easy eyes to see—
We are storm, and sweat, and sacrifice, bound to be set free.
Every scar upon our ankles, every hour in the dark,
Is the quiet, burning passion that leaves an unextinguished mark.

Silence Between Us

Vivek vats

I have been calling your name since eternity,
And still, I hear a long-felt silence in this room.
Where words once belonged to my heart,
Your soul has quietly departed from mine.
Still lingering on you,
Searching for answers that feel so right,
Yet wondering if they could ever
Correct the mistakes of a forgotten time.
You know, my heart still beats your name,
Yearning endlessly for your smile.



And I hope I am never looked down upon by your eyes,
Whether we are together or apart,
Even if fate separates us a million times.
And I shall still look upon you, with love flowing through my eyes.

You Don't Know This Story, But You're in Every Chapter

Akanksha is a teenage writer from odisha. who turns ordinary moments, unspoken feelings, and little memories into stories. She writes with a simple hope—to make someone feel seen between her lines. Grateful to her parents and Happy Club, who make a special part of her journey. ✍️ ❤️

D Akanksha Rao

You don't know this story.

And honestly, maybe you never will.

You don't know about the little moments I remember for no particular reason. You don't know about the conversations I replay when I'm alone. You don't know how many ordinary days became memories simply because you happened to be there.

You probably don't even remember half of them.

But you're in every chapter.

Not always as the main character.

Sometimes, you're just a name mentioned in a sentence.

Sometimes, you're a face in the background of a memory.

Sometimes, you're just a reason behind a smile that nobody understood.

And sometimes, you're the person I never actually talked to enough, yet somehow managed to leave a whole chapter behind.



It's strange how people become part of our stories without ever asking for a place in them.

It doesn't always happen through grand moments.

Sometimes it happens quietly.

A seat beside you.

A shared laugh.

A random conversation on an ordinary afternoon.

A look that lasted a second longer than expected.

A message that arrived exactly when you needed one.

A stupid joke that wasn't even that funny, but somehow you still remember it years later.

We don't realise we're collecting memories while we're living them.

We only realise later.

When everything has changed.

There was a time when seeing you was just normal.

Nothing special.

You were simply there.

And because you were there so often, I never thought I would someday miss the smallest things.

The way you said certain words.

The way you laughed when something caught you off guard.

The way you walked into a room without knowing someone had been waiting for you to appear.

The way one ordinary day could suddenly feel less ordinary.

I never wrote any of it down.

I didn't think I needed to.

I thought memories stayed where we left them.

I was wrong.

They move.

They hide in songs.

In old photographs.

In places we haven't visited in years.

In random dates on calendars.

In conversations where someone accidentally says a phrase you used to say.

And suddenly, without warning, you're there again.

Not physically.

Just in my head.

You don't know about the conversations I've had with you without you being there.

The ones that happened while I was staring at the ceiling at two in the morning.

The ones where I finally said everything I was too scared to say in real life.

Sometimes I imagined telling you things.

Sometimes I imagined asking questions.

Sometimes I imagined what you would say.

And sometimes, I changed the ending completely.

Because that's the funny thing about imaginary conversations.

You can finally say everything there.

No hesitation.

No awkward silence.

No wondering whether the other person cares.
No typing something and deleting it five times.
No staring at a message before deciding not to send it.
In my head, I was always brave.
Reality was different.
Reality had too many what ifs.
What if I say it and things become awkward?
What if you don't feel the same?
What if you laugh?
What if you don't understand?
What if saying something changes something that was perfectly fine before?
So I stayed quiet.
And silence slowly became its own language.
Maybe that's why this story has so many unfinished sentences.
Because some stories aren't unfinished because they weren't important.
They're unfinished because we were scared of finding out how they would end.
There are people we never properly say goodbye to.
Not because they leave dramatically.
Sometimes, life simply moves them somewhere else.
Different classrooms.
Different cities.
Different routines.
Different people.

Different versions of themselves.

And one day, you realise you haven't spoken in weeks.

Then months.

And eventually, you don't even know what their life looks like anymore.

But somehow, you still remember who they were when they were part of yours.

That's the strange thing about growing up.

People don't always disappear.

Sometimes, they simply become memories.

I used to think that every important person had to stay.

Now I think some people are meant to be chapters.

Not because they were temporary.

But because chapters can be important without being the entire book.

Some people teach you how to laugh again.

Some teach you how to trust.

Some teach you that friendship can feel like home.

Some teach you how much you can care without saying it.

And some teach you how to let go.

Not all of them know what they taught you.

Maybe that's okay.

Because impact doesn't always need permission.

You can change someone's day without knowing it.

You can make someone feel seen without realising they needed it.

You can become someone's favourite memory while thinking it was just another Tuesday.

And maybe that is the most beautiful thing about being human.

We leave pieces of ourselves in people without ever knowing where they end up.

You don't know that there are certain songs I can't hear without remembering a particular time.

You don't know that some places feel different because I remember standing there with you.

You don't know that sometimes I see something funny and still have the instinct to tell you.

Then I remember.

Things are different now.

And I put my phone away.

You don't know about the photographs I never deleted.

Not because I'm stuck in the past.

But because deleting a photograph doesn't delete what it meant.

You don't know how many times I've looked back and thought,

We had no idea we were living a memory.

Maybe that's what memories really are.

Ordinary moments that become extraordinary only after they've passed.

And maybe, somewhere in your story, I'm there too.

Maybe I'm just a small mention.

Maybe I'm someone you remember when a certain song plays.

Maybe I'm the person from a particular year you occasionally think about.

Maybe you don't remember me at all.

And that's okay too.

Because this isn't a story about being remembered.

It's about being grateful that something happened at all.

For a while, our lives crossed.

And that was enough.

If I could tell you this story, I wouldn't ask you to feel anything.

I wouldn't ask you to come back.

I wouldn't ask you to remember every little detail the way I do.

I wouldn't even ask you to understand.

I'd just tell you:

Thank you.

Thank you for being part of days you probably thought were ordinary.

Thank you for the laughs you probably forgot.

Thank you for the conversations that meant more to me than you knew.

Thank you for existing in a chapter of my life that I didn't realise I would one day miss.

And most importantly—

thank you for reminding me that not every meaningful story needs a perfect ending.

Some stories end with distance.

Some with silence.

Some with a simple take care.

And some don't really end at all.

They just stop being written.

Maybe one day, years from now, I'll come across your name somewhere.

Maybe I'll smile.

Maybe I'll wonder how you're doing.

Maybe I'll remember everything for a few seconds and then continue with my day.

And maybe, for that tiny moment, I'll realise something:

You were never supposed to know this story.

It was never yours to carry.

It was mine.

A collection of moments, feelings, almos, conversations, memories and things I never said.

A story I quietly wrote while life was happening around me.

And if you ever happen to read it someday, I hope you don't search for yourself in every line.

Because you won't find yourself as one person.

You'll find yourself in pieces.

In a laugh.

In a memory.

In a sentence I couldn't finish.

In a song.

In a place.

In a version of me that existed because you were there.

You won't know which chapter you're in.

You probably won't know how many times your name almost appeared.

You won't know which moments I kept.

You won't know which ordinary day became a favourite memory.

And that's okay.

Because you don't need to know.

Some stories are written to be shared.

Some are written to be understood.

And some are written simply because there are feelings that need somewhere to go.

So this is mine.

My little collection of things I never said.

My chapter of what ifs.

My collection of almoses.

My proof that sometimes a person doesn't have to stay forever to matter.

You don't know this story.

You don't know how it began.

You don't know how many chapters you're in.

You don't know how much of it was never spoken.

But somehow—

you're in every chapter.

The Last Petal

Aratrika Adhikary

Few petals that hit a wind cime,
Resting defeated on your pane.
Not knowing how far these feelings lie,
Could they ask for a name?

Flowers swayed in sweet hope,
As spring asked for a dance.
For seasons bailed in hasty envelopes,
Was my love just your nuance?

Autumn sun scorces my breath,
That got used to saying one name.
For a heart that learned your rhythm,
Was it enough to understand your game?

So, I ask for this winter to be kind,
For I know it wasn't our time.
As the last petal fell at your doorstep,
What was left wasn't mine.



Mohabbat

I'm a paramedic student at AMU, writing is my hobby or we can say a way to let out my emotions, my thoughts, my creativity. I always urge to have the career about creativity like painting or author or poet or model, but sometimes we can't make them true. May I not completely indulge in this but poetry is the way to let go all the stressed out.

Arbena

Kya hoti hai Mohabbat?

Kisi ko bepanah chahna ya vo na mile to pagal sa ho jana

Kya hota hai pagal ho jana ?

Uski talqhiyon k baad bhii baar baar uske dar pe Jana

Ya uski mohabbat m fakeer ho jana

Kya hota hai fakeer ho jana?

Usko har jagha bewajah dhoondhna uski talash m
khud ko bhool Jaana

Ya nakam hokr talashne m usko ... Myoos dil liye luat
aana

Kya hota hai laut aana ?

Mbht m fakeer hokr bhi Bhala koi laut ta hai aakhir

Fanah krta h khud ko aashiq inta kon sochta hai aakhir !!



CORRECTION

Forgotten memory

Hi, I'm Sreja Basak, from Kolkata. I'm currently studying in Class 11. That's all I'll reveal for now... the rest is a story waiting to unfold.



Rishikesh

Despite the nature

Despite the cold,

Huddling by the sea without ever getting bored, just waiting for your face a face that could never be forgotten, no matter the case.....

That's the freaking courage of my life, a courage that will never die as long as i'm alive.

The Distance Between Us

Tejashri Ramesh

Samrita and Shahana met on the first day of school.

They were both standing outside their new classroom, surrounded by unfamiliar faces. Samrita held her schoolbag tightly and looked around nervously. Shahana was sitting quietly on a bench, reading a book.

“Is this Class 6-B?” Samrita asked.

Shahana looked up and smiled. “Yes. You can sit here if you want.”

That simple sentence was the beginning of a friendship that neither of them knew would become so important.

At first, they were just classmates. Soon, they became bench partners, then lunch partners, and finally best friends.

They shared everything.

They shared pencils when one of them forgot to bring one. They helped each other with homework. They laughed during boring classes and whispered jokes when the teacher wasn't looking. During lunch breaks, they would sit under the same tree and divide their food between them.

“Your lunch is always better than mine,” Shahana would complain.

Samrita would laugh. “Then bring something better tomorrow!”



Their school days became filled with little memories.

They celebrated birthdays together, prepared for exams together, and cheered for each other during school competitions. Whenever Samrita was nervous, Shahana would tell her, “Don't worry. I'm right here.”

And whenever Shahana felt sad, Samrita would sit beside her without asking too many questions.

Years passed quickly.

By the time they reached Class 10, everyone at school knew them as the inseparable pair—Samrita and Shahana.

They often talked about the future.

“One day, we’ll go to the same college,” Samrita said.

“Promise?” Shahana asked.

“Promise.”

They believed nothing could separate them.

But life had other plans.

One afternoon, Samrita came to school unusually quiet.

“What happened?” Shahana asked.

Samrita looked down at her hands.

“My father got transferred,” she finally said. “We’re moving to another city.”

Shahana stared at her.

“For how long?”

“I don’t know.”

For a moment, neither of them spoke.

The news felt impossible. How could the person who had been beside her almost every day suddenly become someone she would have to miss?

That evening, they sat beneath their favourite tree.

Neither of them joked.

Neither of them talked about homework.

They simply sat together.

"I'm going to miss you," Shahana whispered.

Samrita tried to smile, but tears filled her eyes.

"I'll miss you too."

The next few weeks passed too quickly.

They took photographs together. They exchanged small gifts. Samrita gave Shahana a friendship bracelet.

"Whenever you look at this, remember me," she said.

Shahana hugged her tightly.

"I could never forget you."

Finally, the last day arrived.

The school bell rang for the final time that year.

Students ran through the corridors, excited about the holidays. But Samrita and Shahana stood near the school gate, holding back tears.

"Don't forget to call me," Shahana said.

"I won't."

"Don't make new best friends and forget me."

Samrita laughed through her tears.

"Never."

Then they hugged.

It was the kind of hug that said everything they couldn't put into words.

The next morning, Samrita left the city.

At first, they called each other every day.

They talked about their new schools, teachers, classmates, homework, and everything else.

But slowly, life became busy.

Calls became less frequent.

Messages became shorter.

Days became weeks.

Weeks became months.

The distance between them grew—not only in kilometres, but also in their daily lives.

Shahana sometimes opened their old photographs and wondered whether Samrita still remembered all those little moments.

Samrita did the same.

Both missed each other, but neither knew how to say it.

One day, several years later, Shahana returned to her old school for an alumni event.

Walking through the familiar corridors brought back memories.

The classroom where they had first met.

The bench where they had shared countless secrets.

The tree where they had promised to remain friends forever.

Shahana stood beneath that tree, smiling sadly.

Then she heard a familiar voice.

“Still standing in the same place?”

Shahana froze.

She turned around.

Samrita was standing there.

For a few seconds, neither of them moved.

Then Shahana ran toward her.

“You came!”

Samrita laughed and hugged her.

“I told you I'd come back.”

They spent the entire afternoon walking around their old school and remembering everything.

They laughed about their silly arguments.

They talked about their favourite teachers.

They remembered the lunches they had shared and the secrets they had promised never to tell anyone.

At one point, Shahana became quiet.

“I thought we had lost our friendship,” she admitted.

Samrita looked at her.

“So did I.”

“Then why does it still feel the same?”

Samrita smiled.

“Because some friendships don't disappear just because people become distant.”

Shahana looked at the old friendship bracelet still tied around Samrita's wrist.

“You kept it?”

“Of course.”

Shahana smiled through tears.

“So did I.”

They stood beneath the same tree where they had once said goodbye.

They had changed.

They had grown older.

Their lives had taken different paths.

But the friendship they had built as schoolchildren was still there.

The distance between them had been real.

But so was the bond that had survived it.

And that day, Samrita and Shahana made another promise.

No matter how far life took them, they would never let distance silence their friendship again.

Because sometimes, the strongest friendships are not the ones where two people are always together.

They are the ones that survive the distance.

And Samrita and Shahana's friendship was one of them.

Stamen and Stripe

Jivisha Joshi

Fellow, *a love story* it is.

Far beyond from any drastic play it is.

They *kiss* passionately, not under the moonlight but under the midst of the whole day.

The lingering eyes are *piercing*, though they don't care.

They do cuddle, not in physical to each others *embrace* ...but rather with their loved ones.

"How can you say **love** isn't an **embrace**?"

Their story is much more interesting! .

"**The society of fragrances**" *adore* their *relationship*.

"**The colony of work**" *respect* their *choice*.

Such of them are now in common sight. Even the human barriers *accept* them.

"He stays still while the other comes to him, and takes all long words to tell him about his days."

He went *buzzing* and *buzzing*, though it was the sweetest to never stop. While the aroma stayed blissful to never fly away from.



Quiet love

Arushi Yadav

Love is not always loud or grand, sometime it's simply meant holding hands;

Remembering the little things, the comfort that another heart brings,
finding that one person in this whole world who came home for you;

The one who makes your heart skip a beat just by his presence,
Quiet love in shadow that makes your life bright;

Those unspoken words, the gentle care,
The silent promise of always being there,
No need to give flowers, no need to show;

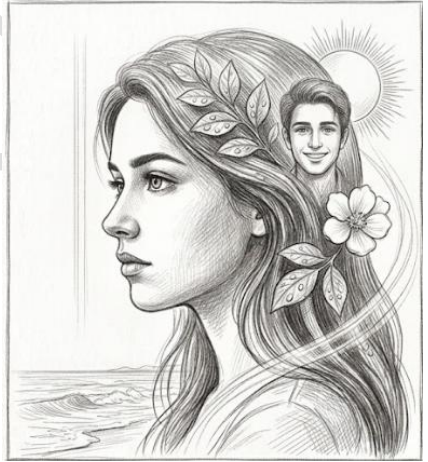
One of the deepest love are the ones that quietly show.



Him & I

Deepshita Yadav

When the rain falls,
All I think is you;
When the flower blooms,
All I see is your enchanting smile;
When the sun shines,
All I feel is your unbothered kindness;
When the ocean shore,
All I see is your simple innocence;
Looking back at this world,
All I want is to feel your presence,
just this once for one more time;
In any scent,
All I want to smell is your smell,
just for once more.



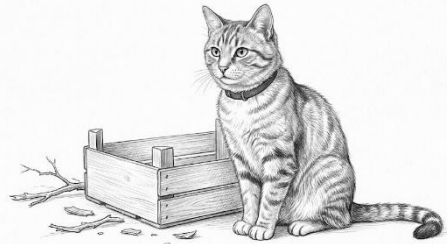
"I failed as your owner, but I hope you had a great time with me - You are my friend, my child, my first love, my everything"

It was dark - I could feel the rush of humans vibrating my crate, which I think was previously used as a fruit basket - it was too congested for me. I felt sad for my friend who was in the upper crate; poor guy couldn't even turn around to change position. Not like my situation was any better. I don't know how long we both were in the dark, but it was terrifying, and my skin was burning from being bitten by the fleas - my collar was too harsh for my skin, and I wanted to stretch- God, I wanted to stretch myself.

Hours went by - until I saw speckles of light shining. A girl's face appears, frowning at me - who is she? She pulls me out, cuddling me. I look around - it's a small space.

I need to hide. I run - my paws barely touching the ground before I hide behind the bed.

"Coco." I hear her calling my name - she peeks behind the bed to look at me. She seems nice - but they were nice to me before throwing me in the cage with nothing but a dirty water bowl and litter. Simba - my cage mate seems to be comfortable with her, but again, that old guy has seen too much in his life.



I hear a few voices: "Let me get the carrier," the girl says to the other human.

Suddenly, I am being pulled by my front legs - No! I don't want to go. Once again, I am cramped in a tight, dark place with Simba. I try to run out of the box, but she locks it in place. I cry and cry for help.

“Shh, baby girl, this is all going to be over.” I hear her over these horrendous voices. I crawl back to the back of the box, trying to hide myself.

We are hauled outside by two large men. I think we are at a vet - one of them places me on a table; I want to get out, **I WANT TO LEAVE!**

Two hands grab me.

Thump...Thump. I can hear myself; I wiggle to get out and run - run from this nightmare. My eyes caught her - the girl. She is looking at me; is that worry I see in her eyes? She walks up to me, petting me - I don't want her pets; I want to get out. I meow at her - maybe she will feel any mercy for me and let me go?

“Shh, it's all gonna be over soon. I promise I'll give you so many treats when we get home.” No! I thrash again - screeching, biting her.

Those two hands leave my body - I can stand again. But I can't leave - the girl is holding me still. I look up at her. She is asking questions about Simba, who is in the other room.

I climb onto her, extending my front claws to cling to her shirt. Her hand runs along the length of my body. She grabs my face tenderly and starts kissing me on my head. It feels nice - maybe she is not like them? Then again, I am carried to another room. I can smell Simba - But he is nowhere to be seen.

A high buzzing sound fills the room, and suddenly it's going through my fur. I calm down a bit. The feeling of being burned alive subsides as my fur gets clipped off me. A strange smell fills the room as something wet sprays upon me.

“That's it,” the guy who was clipping my fur says before putting me back into the darkness with Simba.

Once again, we are back in the room - I run back to my hiding place. I think I heard the girl leave.

She is back again, but this time I smell something - something that makes my body react before I can stop myself. I run to her, circling her feet. She smiles at me, or maybe at both of us.

And I dive in as soon as she puts the food bowls down - not caring when this mysterious girl squats down, gently rubbing some kind of cold, weird-smelling substance on my sore skin. I flinch a little bit when she rubs a bit hard but I don't stop eating, though it makes her stop rubbing that weird, thick liquid on that painful spot.

She does the same with Simba, pets him, and heads towards me - I flinch back into my hiding spot. She stops and smiles at me, dimming the lights while leaving.

After some time, when I am sure that the whole house is asleep, I walk out of my hiding spot and start exploring.

Strangely, I feel safe in this place. Simba is fast asleep in the corner. I walk past him - taking in every nook and corner of this room. I stop in front of the food and water that have been left by the girl - When was the last time I had clean food, water, and a place to do my business? I don't remember, but the feeling of fresh litter under my paws feels strange - but strange in a good way. I head back to my hiding spot, and in many years I sleep contentedly.

My days pass by with the same routine. The girl comes and feeds us and cleans our litter box - pets us, tries to play with us, and forcefully feeds us some disgusting and sticky liquid. Other than that, all is fine, though I do wonder what is on the other side of the door.

One day, she comes in and sits on the ground like always - but today she has something with her- a strange smell. A smell of another cat. I walk up to her, smelling her. Hmm, not too bad. I have lived with other cats. She kept doing this for a few more days - the scent kept getting stronger day by day, but I got used to it, and so did Simba. Then one day she opened the door, and I walked outside. It is a cozy house - with a lot of places to climb, too. Something touches my tail - I jump back, hissing at it. It's another cat - I know that smell. He is younger than me and arrogant too. He is going to be a problem for me in the future. The girl is sitting on the floor, not too far away, fixating on our greetings. She smiles. I head off to explore the house.

Some months later.... I am running from him - Milo. The more I got used to my surroundings, the more he started to bully me. The girl left for a few days - Milo was chasing me - I don't know what happened, but I fell.

THUD... The pain is unbearable - my body is on fire; I can't feel my legs. I think I passed out. I don't know who picked me up and took me back to my home. But all I know is that I want her back. I want my human back. I passed out again.

A hand on my head wakes me up. She is back - I meow at her. She starts to sob, hard. "Oh, my sweet, sweet girl." She is crying as she gently pets me as if I might break. But it hurts - God, it hurts so much. I want to talk back to her, but I can barely lift my head. I close my eyes - breathing hard. She picks me up; pain explodes in my body. I can hardly breathe. We are in a car rushing from one vet to another. The next week goes by in pain, but at least I have her. She barely leaves the room.

I see her beside me on the bed, crying - why is she crying? I am lying on my side - my pain is better but I can't move my legs. She offers me food - I want to eat, but I have no power to get up to eat. She brings the food to my lips; I start licking the food from the position I am currently in. Next thing I know, I am getting up with her support and eating from her hand. Days pass by; I feel better, stronger. I don't know if it's my will to live, but it's definitely something to do with her.

I might not be able to walk again or use the litter again, but I know that she would take care of me - *No Matter What*.

My Human.

Tum puchti ho...

MusafirMn

Tum puchti ho tumhare na hone se kya hi
ho jayega me kahta hu
kya hoga agar barsat k mosam me
barish na aaye,
Suraj k sath roshni na aaye,
chand k sath Chandni na aaye,
Nadi me pani na aaye,
Samandar me leher na aaye,
Or muje tumhari yaad na aaye
Bs aasa hi kuch hoga ... (T)

Edge of the hill

Ayesha Rahman Ilma

My sweetheart, You will never know
how my eyes longed to meet you.
Look at those hills— they never lied.
They know you so deeply, so highly.
If one day you really lose my poems—
My hills will recall your name so primely.
As I taught them to praise you.
So when you finally meet those hills
never try to find me again.
Never ask them where I have gone.
Just remember, perhaps I disappeared,
my love has never ended.



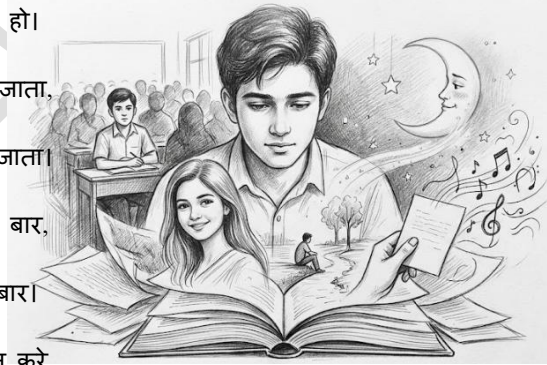
मेरी अधूरी चाहत

Kishan Kishor

क्लास की भीड़ में एक चेहरा जो खास था,
मेरी हर धड़कन को जिसका एहसास था।
वो मेरी किताब की सबसे प्यारी कहानी थी,
मेरे सपनों को पुरा करने वाली वो रानी थी।

मेरी राहों में जब तुम नज़र आ जाती हो,
मेरी सूनी सी दुनिया भी मुस्कुरा जाती हो।
जब भी बातें करती वो वक्त ठहर सा जाता,
उसकी मीठी आवाज़ में दिल मेरा खो जाता।
तुझको जब भी देखूँ मुझे ऐसा लगे हर बार,
जैसे चाँद भी शर्मा जाए तुझे देख हर बार।
उसकी चेहरे की चमक सितारों को मात करे,
मेरा बेचैन दिल बस न जाने क्या बात करे।

तेरी आँखों में जैसे सपनों का जहान था,
मेरे हर एक अंदाज़ में अलग सा मान था।



तेरी मुस्कान दिल को सुकून दे जाती थी,
तेरी हर एक अदा मुझे दीवाना बनाती थी।
आखिर तुम बताओ इतनी अच्छी क्यों हो,
हर एहसास में बसने वाली सच्ची क्यों हो।
इतनी सुंदर हो कि शब्द कम पड़ जाते हैं,
तुझे देखकर दिल में गीत उतर आते हैं।

चाहा था कभी तुझे अपना बना लूँ मैं,
तेरे नाम से अपनी दुनिया सजा लूँ मैं।
पर ख्वाहिशें दिल की दिल में ही रह गईं,
और ये चाहत बस खामोश सी कह गई।

राखी का धागा

Neeraj Durgapal

कलाई पर बँधा यह राखी का कच्चा धागा

सिर्फ एक धागा नहीं है,

यह पहचान है एक ऐसे रिश्ते की,

एक ऐसे रिश्ते की जहाँ प्रेम है,

मिठास है, दोस्ती है, अपनापन है,

अधिकार है, चिंता है, सम्मान है, विश्वास है,

कभी-कभी अनबन है

और थोड़ी-बहुत नोकझोंक है।

यह एक ऐसा रिश्ता है जहाँ

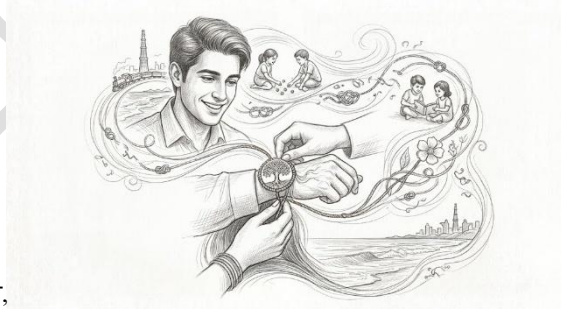
एक-दूसरे को चिढ़ाना अच्छा लगता है,

कभी छोटी-सी बात पर रुठ जाना अच्छा लगता है

और फिर बिना कुछ कहे

एक-दूसरे के पास आ जाना अच्छा लगता है।

यह राखी के धागे भले ही छोटे हैं,



लेकिन अपने भीतर एक बहुत बड़े रिश्ते को समेटे हुए हैं।

यह एक ऐसे रिश्ते की पहचान है,

जिसको समझ पाना किसी खोज करने से कम नहीं है।

इस रिश्ते की सीमाओं का कोई अंत नहीं है।

इस रिश्ते को शब्दों में बयाँ कर पाना आसान नहीं है,

क्योंकि कुछ रिश्ते समझे कम

और महसूस ज़्यादा किए जाते हैं।

भले ही भाइयों की कलाई पर बँधी राखी

कच्चे धागों से बँधी होती है,

लेकिन इन कच्चे धागों में बँधा होता है

पूरा का पूरा बचपन।

बचपन की वो यादें जिन्हें भुलाया नहीं जा सकता,

बहन का वो प्यार जिसे बयाँ नहीं किया जा सकता।

भले ही कुछ दिनों बाद ये धागे टूट जाते हैं,

लेकिन इन धागों में छुपा हुआ प्रेम कभी खत्म नहीं होता।

धागे तो समय के साथ टूट जाते हैं,
मगर उनसे जुड़ी भावनाएँ नहीं टूटतीं।

भाई और बहन का रिश्ता
दुनिया के अनोखे रिश्तों में से एक है,
अनमोल रिश्तों में से एक है।

यह एक ऐसा रिश्ता है
जहाँ शिकायतों में भी अपनापन होता है
और खामोशी में भी एक-दूसरे की चिंता होती है।

समय के साथ इस रिश्ते में दूरियाँ आने लगती हैं,
कभी ज़िम्मेदारियाँ बढ़ जाती हैं,
कभी रास्ते अलग हो जाते हैं,
कभी शहर अलग हो जाते हैं,
लेकिन रिश्तों की डोर वही रहती है।

राखी का त्योहार इन दूरियों को ही खत्म करता है।

रक्षाबंधन का त्योहार

भाई-बहन के रिश्तों का वो प्रतिबिंब है,

जिसका कोई अंत नहीं है।

CORRECTION

क्या लिखूँ मैं कृष्ण पर

Neeraj Durgapal

दिल कहता है कि कुछ लिख दूँ
अपने आराध्य कृष्ण पर,
लेकिन प्रेम कहता है-
क्या लिखूँ मैं उन पर,
जिनमें मेरा सारा संसार है,
क्या लिखूँ मैं उन पर,
जिनमें मेरे जीवन का संपूर्ण सार है।

क्या लिखूँ मैं उन पर,
जिनसे ये सारा संसार है,
जिनकी एक मनमोहक मुस्कान से
मेरे जीवन में आनंद की बहार है,
जिनकी खूबसूरत आँखों में
प्रेम की गहराई अपार है,
जिनके मुखमंडल पर शांति का निखार है,
जिनके मुकुट पर मोरपंख का अद्भुत शृंगार है।



जिनकी मुरली की धुन पर
मंत्रमुग्ध सारा संसार है,
जिनके गीता के ज्ञान में
जीवन का संपूर्ण सार है,

जिनके मार्गदर्शन से जीवन का
हर मार्ग उज्ज्वल और साकार है,
जिनका साथ मिल जाने पर
युद्ध में विजय भी अपार है,
जिनकी प्रेमभरी दृष्टि पड़ जाए तो
भवसागर की नैया भी पार है,
जिनके स्पर्श मात्र से
जीवात्मा का उद्धार है।

जिनके लिए कम पड़ जाए
शब्दकोश का सारा ज्ञान,
जिनके साथ से प्राप्त होता
श्रीजी का भी साथ,

जिनसे प्राप्त होता
प्रेम का गहरा ज्ञान,
जिनकी झलक पाने को
देवगण भी ललायित हैं।

क्या लिखूँ मैं उन पर,
जिनसे प्राप्त है मुझे
लिखने का ये ज्ञान।

\"मौन की स्वीकृति \"

Miss Shalini

शब्दों का सिलसिला खत्म हुआ,
मौन की स्वीकृति दोनों ओर हुई।

कुछ दिन, महीने जब बीते,
एक तरफा कुछ हलचल हुई।

छलक गया सब्र का पैमाना,
फिर कोशिश, मनाने की शुरू हुई।

न आया वो, न आहट कोई,
रब जाने उसके जीवन में, क्या घटना घटित हुई।

चला गया यूँ अचानक, प्रेम के धागे तोड़कर,
जो कहता था मर जाऊँ, गया तुम्हें जो छोड़कर।

दिन बदले, ऋतुएं बदलीं,
मौसम फिर, सुहाना हुआ।

मेरे लिए सब दिन एक से,
मेरा दोस्त, बेगाना हुआ।

कशमकश में आज भी, शामें बीत जाती हैं,
पर उसकी ओर से, मिसकॉल भी न आती है।

काश कोई संकेत, मन के बता देता जाने से पहले,
रोक लेती मैं उसे फिर, जाने नहीं देती अकेले।



आज भी दिल को इंतजार उसका रहता है,
शब्द न रहे हमारे बीच, फिर भी वो दिल में रहता है।

CORRECTION

वो लड़की अब पहले जैसी नहीं रही

Maneesa Mishra

वो लड़की अब पहले जैसी नहीं रही,
जो हर बात पर चुप हो जाती थी,
अपने हिस्से का दर्द भी
हँसकर पी जाती थी।

अब उनकी खामोशी में
एक जवाब रहता है,
और उसकी आँखों में
अपने लिए खड़े होने का साहस।



कभी किसी की एक बात से
वो पूरी रात सोचती थी,
अब किसी के शब्द
उसकी कीमत तय नहीं करते।

वो अब पलटकर जवाब देती है,

गुस्सा भी करती है,
कभी कभी लहजा भी बदल जाता है-
मगर उसके भीतर की नरमी
आज भी वही है।

फर्क बस इतना है,
वो रिश्ते बचाने के लिए
खुद को खो देती थी,
अब रिश्ते निभाते हुए भी
खुद को बचाना जानती है।

उसे अब हर बात पर
समझौता करना मंजूर नहीं,
हर इल्जाम चुपचाप सहना मंजूर नहीं।
क्योंकि उसे देर से ही सही,
ये बात समझ ली है-
अपने सम्मान की हिफाजत करना
किसी कि बेअदबी नहीं है।

लोग कहते हैं,

"वो बहुत बदल गयी है"।

हाँ बदल गयी है-

मगर बुरी नहीं हुई।

बस अब उनकी मुस्कान के पिछे

दबी हुई चीख नहीं,

एक साफ आवाज है।

वो अब किसी से लडना नहीं चाहती,

बस अपने हिस्से की जगह

खुद से छिनना नहीं चाहती।

वो लड़की अब पहले जैसी नहीं रही,

क्योंकि अब उसे

सबसे ज्यादा जरूरत

किसी और की मंजूरी की नहीं,

अपने ही दिल के सामने

सही बने रहने की है।

और शायद यही उसका

सबसे खूबसूरत बदलाव है-

वो अब सबकी होकर नहीं,

थोड़ी सी खुद की होकर जीती है-

हाँ वो लड़की अब बदल गयी है।

कहानी जो तुम्हारे नाम से शुरू हुई

I am Udit Pathak, professionally known as SR Udit Pathak, an Indian author, poet, shayar, lyricist, songwriter, singer, pianist, editor, publisher, storyteller, and creative entrepreneur. My creative journey brings together literature, music, publishing, and artistic community-building, with a central focus on authentic emotions, meaningful storytelling, and creating opportunities for emerging talent.

Udit Pathak

वो एक शाम थी, महफिल थी, और तुमसे पहली मुलाकात हुई,
लोगों के बीच थी भीड़, मगर मेरी नज़र सिर्फ़ तुम पर ठहर गई।

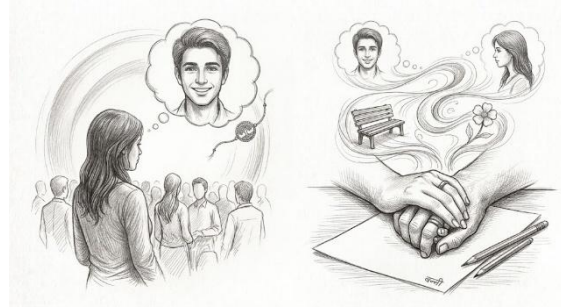
तुम्हारी मुस्कान में कुछ ऐसा था, जिसे शब्दों में कह न सका,
तुम्हारी वो मासूमियत देखी, और दिल फिर मेरा रह न सका।

तुम्हारा वो बचपना, वो बेफ़िक्र-सी
अदा,

जैसे किसी दुआ ने अचानक, मुझे
तुमसे मिला दिया।

उस पल वक़्त थम गया था, जैसे
हवा ने चलना छोड़ दिया,

रब ने शायद मेरे कानों में धीरे से कहा—



“यही है वो...”

और मैंने बिना सवाल किए, उस एहसास को अपना लिया।

न कोई वादा था, न कोई रिश्ता, न कोई इकरार था,

बस पहली नज़र का वो जादू था, और दिल बेकरार था।

मैंने तुम्हें चाहा, बिना तुम्हें अपना कहे,

तुम्हें याद किया, बिना तुम्हें कभी मेरा कहे।

तुमसे बात हुई तो लगा, जैसे दिन को वजह मिल गई,

तुम्हारी एक मुस्कान से मेरी उदासियों को जगह मिल गई।

तुम्हारी आवाज़ में जाने कैसा सुकून बसा था,

जिसे सुनने के बाद भी दिल तुम्हें सुनता ही रहा।

शायद तुम्हें मेरे दिल की खबर कभी पूरी न हुई,

शायद मेरी आँखों में छुपी मोहब्बत तुमसे पढ़ी न गई।

मैं कह सकता था—मगर डर था, कहीं तुम दूर न हो जाओ,

इसलिए इश्क को लफ़्ज़ न दिया, कहीं तुम खामोशी से भी रूठ न जाओ।

और अब ये कहानी, एकतरफ़ा होकर भी अधूरी नहीं,

क्योंकि मेरी मोहब्बत तुम्हारे जवाब की मोहताज नहीं।

तुम मिलो या न मिलो, ये दिल तुम्हें चाहता रहेगा,

वक्त बदलेगा, दुनिया बदलेगी—पर मेरा इश्क वही रहेगा।

बन्नी, अगर कभी तुम मेरी ये कविता पढ़ो,

तो शब्दों के बीच मेरा वो दिल देखना—

जो पहली नज़र में तुम्हारा हुआ था,

और आज भी तुम्हारे लौट आने की राह देखता है।

मैं नहीं जानता किस्मत में तुम्हारा साथ लिखा है या नहीं,

मगर इतना जानता हूँ—

तुम मेरी पहली नज़र का प्यार हो,

मेरी खामोशी का इकरार हो,

और अगर इंतज़ार भी प्रेम की कोई भाषा है,

तो मैं उम्रभर तुम्हारा इंतज़ार करूँगा।

सुहानी यादें

Simran is a young poet who finds stories in the quiet language of nature. She writes about love, memories, dreams, silence, and the emotions hidden between ordinary moments. To her, the rustling of leaves, the softness of rain, the fading colours of sunset, and the calmness of the moon can all become poetry. Her words grow from feelings that are often difficult to say aloud. She believes poetry is like a small garden—every word is a seed, every feeling a flower, and every reader brings it to life. Through her poems, she hopes to leave behind a little warmth, peace, and something to feel.

Simran Kaur

वो साथ बिताए पल प्यारे,
जैसे आसमान में चमकते तारे।
हर बात पे तेरा यूँ मुस्कुराना,
और मेरा बिना बात शरमाना।

चाय की वो प्याली और बातें हजार,
छत पर बैठना और ठंडी फुहार।
हाथों में हाथ डालकर वो चलना,
दुनिया से बेफिक्र होकर मचलना।

वो छोटी-छोटी सी मीठी लड़ाई,



फिर प्यार से गले लगकर सफाई।

तेरा वो मुझे हर बात पे टोकना,

और मेरा प्यार से तुझे रोकना।

याद आते हैं वो सारे हसीन लम्हे,

जो आँखों में नमी और दिल में हैं मरहम से।

भले ही रास्ते अब अलग हो गए हैं,

पर वो पल मेरी ज़िंदगी का सबसे खूबसूरत भ्रम हैं।

दो लोगों के बीच जो बचा रहा

Krishnkant Dhakar

उसने कभी नहीं पूछा—

“तुम मुझसे प्रेम करते हो?”

और मैंने कभी कहा भी नहीं।

हमारे बीच प्रेम शायद उन चीज़ों में से था

जिन्हें नाम दे दिया जाए, तो वे छोटी लगने लगती हैं।

वह जब मिलती, तो अपने साथ कोई बड़ी बात नहीं लाती थी।

कभी रास्ते से तोड़ा हुआ कोई फूल,

कभी आधी पढ़ी हुई किताब,

कभी दिन भर की कोई

मामूली-सी शिकायत।

मैं भी उसके सामने

अपनी कोई असाधारण

कहानी नहीं रखता था।

हम बस बैठे रहते, और

धीरे-धीरे दिन को शाम

होते देखते।



मुझे तब नहीं मालूम था कि किसी मनुष्य के साथ बिताया हुआ

एक साधारण-सा समय, आने वाले वर्षों में
जीवन की सबसे दुर्लभ वस्तु बन सकता है।
फिर एक दिन हमारे बीच कोई झगड़ा नहीं हुआ।
कोई आरोप नहीं लगा, किसी ने किसी को धोखा नहीं दिया।
बस रास्ते अलग हो गए।
अजीब है—कुछ रिश्ते टूटते नहीं,
वे बस अपनी मंज़िल से पहले एक-दूसरे से उतर जाते हैं।
उसके बाद बहुत कुछ वैसा ही रहा।
शहर वही था, बारिश उसी मौसम में आती थी,
सड़क के किनारे वही पेड़ हर वर्ष अपनी पुरानी पतियाँ छोड़ देते थे।
केवल मैं बदल गया था।
पहले बारिश होती थी, तो मैं खिड़की खोल देता था;
अब बारिश होती है, तो खिड़की बंद कर देता हूँ।
क्योंकि कुछ मौसम बाहर नहीं बरसते... वे भीतर उतरते हैं।
कई वर्षों बाद एक पुराने संदूक में मुझे उसका दिया हुआ एक कागज़
मिला।
उस पर कुछ लिखा नहीं था; सिर्फ एक सूखा हुआ पत्ता रखा था।
मैं बहुत देर तक उसे देखता रहा।
फिर समझ आया—हमने जीवन में कितनी ही चीज़ों को संभालकर रखा,

और कितनी ही चीज़ों को बिना जाने स्मृति बना दिया।

वह पता शायद उसके लिए सिर्फ़ एक पता था,

मेरे लिए—एक पूरा मौसम।

उस रात पहली बार मुझे उसके जाने का दुःख नहीं हुआ।

मुझे उस समय का दुःख हुआ जो हमारे पास था,

और हमें पता ही नहीं था कि वह एक दिन हमारी स्मृति का सबसे कीमती हिस्सा बन जाएगा।

शायद प्रेम का यही सबसे शांत रूप है—

किसी का आपके जीवन में बने रहना नहीं,

बल्कि उसके चले जाने के बाद भी आपके भीतर कुछ ऐसा छूट जाना,

जिसे दुनिया की कोई दूरी आपसे अलग न कर सके।

मैंने वह पता वापस संदूक में रख दिया।

इस बार संभालकर नहीं,

बस इसलिए कि कुछ चीज़ों को बचाकर रखने की ज़रूरत नहीं होती;

वे जहाँ भी रखी जाएँ, अपने अर्थ के साथ जीवित रहती हैं।

और शायद 'हम' की कहानी भी ऐसी ही थी।

वह पूरी होकर भी अधूरी रही, अधूरी होकर भी व्यर्थ नहीं हुई।

क्योंकि हर कहानी का अंत दो लोगों का साथ रह जाना नहीं होता;

कुछ कहानियाँ इसलिए जन्म लेती हैं,

ताकि उनके समाप्त हो जाने के बाद मनुष्य पहले जैसा न रह सके।

हमारी कहानी में तुम नहीं बचीं, मैं भी नहीं बचा—

बस वह आदमी बचा रहा, जो तुम्हारे साथ रहते हुए

पहली बार अपने भीतर एक घर की आवाज़ सुन पाया था।

और आज तक सोचता हूँ—

शायद यही थी हमारे बीच की वह अनकही दास्तान,

'The Story Between Us'

दो लोगों के बीच जो कहा गया, उससे कहीं अधिक वह था—

जो कभी कहा ही नहीं गया।

महाकाल की रहमत: एक अटूट ऐतबार

∴महाकाल की अनन्य भक्त और एक जिज्ञासु छात्रा, कल्याणी शंकर दुधबडे, अपनी लेखनी से दिलों में सकारात्मकता जगाने का प्रयास करती हैं। उनकी इस रचना का मुख्य संदेश यही है कि संकट चाहे कैसा भी हो, अगर हमारा भरोसा और अटूट विश्वास महाकाल पर है, तो जीत निश्चित है। कल्याणी की रचनाएं श्रद्धा, उम्मीद और सकारात्मक सोच का एक खूबसूरत संगम हैं।

Kalyani shanlar dudhbade

जब भी हालात के काले साये मुझे डराने आते हैं,
जिंदगी के कठिन रास्ते जब मन को भरमाने आते हैं,
तब हे महाकाल! आपका पावन नाम मेरी ढाल बन जाता है,
आपके नाम का सुमिरन ही मेरी हर मुश्किल का हल बन जाता है।

घोर अँधेरा हो डरावना या चक्रवात हो तूफानों का,
सामना करना पड़े मुझे चाहे कितने भी कड़े इम्तिहानों का,
जैसे ही लेती हूँ शरण आपकी, यह व्याकुल मन शांत हो जाता है,
सामने खड़ा बड़ा से बड़ा तूफान भी घुटने टेक कर भाग जाता है।

हाँ, माना कि इस मतलबी दुनिया में थोड़ी कमज़ोर मैं हूँ,
संसार के इस शोर-शराबे में घिरी एक तन्हा भोर हूँ,
मगर मेरा महाकाल कमज़ोर नहीं, वो तो त्रिलोक का तारणहार है,
उन्हीं की दी हुई शक्ति और आशीष मेरी हर जीत का आधार है।

छोड़ेंगे नहीं वो साथ मेरा, मुझे राहों में तन्हा भटकने नहीं देंगे,
हाथ थामा है जिसने ब्रह्मांड का, वो मेरा आँचल फटने नहीं देंगे,
उनकी अटूट दया और रहमत पर मुझे खुद से ज़्यादा ऐतबार है,
शिव के चरणों में शीश झुका, अब तो यह जीवन ही उनके नाम अर्पण है।

भवसागर की लहरें चाहें कितनी भी उग्र और विशाल हो जाएँ,

दुनिया के सारे

रिश्ते और झूठे

नाते भले ही

समय के साथ

बदल जाएँ,

डमरू वाले की

भस्म और कृपा

ही इस दासी का

सच्चा शृंगार है,

'शिवभक्त कल्याणी' के इस जीवन का बस यही एक मात्र सार है।



ಮಧುರ ಪ್ರೀತಿ ಅಮರ

Razeena Ps

ಮಂಗಾರು ಮಳೆಯ ದಿನಗಳು. ಆಕಾಶ ಕಪ್ಪು ಮೋಡಗಳಿಂದ ತುಂಬಿತ್ತು. ನಗರದ ರಸ್ತೆಗಳೆಲ್ಲ ಮಳೆಯಿಂದ ತೋಯ್ದು ಹೋಗಿದ್ದವು. ಜನರು ಮಳೆಯಿಂದ ತಪ್ಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಆತುರದಿಂದ ಓಡಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು.

ಆ ದಿನ ಆಶಿಷ್ ತನ್ನ ಆಫೀಸ್‌ನಿಂದ ಹೊರಬಂದು ಕಾರಿನತ್ತ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದ. ನಗರದ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಿತ ಕಂಪನಿಯೊಂದರ ಎಂ.ಡಿ. ಆಗಿದ್ದ ಅವನಿಗೆ ಕೆಲಸದ ಒತ್ತಡ ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಹಣ, ಅಧಿಕಾರ, ಗೌರವ—ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಅವನ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದವು. ಆದರೆ ಅವನ ಹೃದಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಒಂದು ಖಾಲಿತನ ಇತ್ತು. ಏನೋ ಒಂದು ಕಳೆದುಕೊಂಡಂತೆ ಆಗಾಗ ಅವನಿಗೆ ಅನಿಸುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಆದರೆ ಏನು ಕಳೆದುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾನೆ ಎಂಬುದು ಅವನಿಗೇ ಗೊತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ.

ಆ ದಿನ ಮಳೆಯ ನಡುವೆ ಅವನ ಕಣ್ಣುಗಳು ಹಠಾತ್ತನೆ ಒಬ್ಬ ಯುವತಿಯ ಮೇಲೆ ನಿಂತವು.

ಅವಳ ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೂಡೆಯಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಮಳೆಯ ಹನಿಗಳಿಂದ ಅವಳ ಕೂದಲು ಒದ್ದೆಯಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಸಣ್ಣ ಕಾಗದದ ತುಂಡನ್ನು ಹಿಡಿದುಕೊಂಡು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಗುಂಪಿನ ಮಧ್ಯೆ ನಿಂತಿದ್ದಳು. ಮುಖದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಕೃತಕತೆ ಇರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಮಕ್ಕಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಮಾತನಾಡುತ್ತಾ, ಅವರ ಅಗತ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ವಿಚಾರಿಸುತ್ತಾ, ತನ್ನ ಕೈಲಾದಷ್ಟು ಸಹಾಯ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಳು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಕೆಲವು ಕ್ಷಣ ಅವಳನ್ನೇ ನೋಡುತ್ತ ನಿಂತ.

“ಇವಳು ಯಾರು?”

ಅವನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆ ಮೂಡಿತು.

ಅವಳ ಸೌಂದರ್ಯ ಅವನಿಗೆ ಅಪ್ಪರೆಯಂತೆ ಕಂಡರೂ, ಅವನನ್ನು ಸೆಳೆದದ್ದು ಕೇವಲ ಅವಳ ರೂಪವಲ್ಲ. ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಮೇಲಿನ ಅವಳ ಕಾಳಜಿ, ಮುಖದಲ್ಲಿನ ಸರಳತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾತಿನಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ಮಮತೆ ಅವನ ಮನಸ್ಸನ್ನು ಮುಟ್ಟಿತ್ತು.

ಅದು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಆಯೋಜಿಸಿದ್ದ ಒಂದು ಸೇವಾ ಶಿಬಿರವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಬಡ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಪುಸ್ತಕ, ಬಟ್ಟೆ, ಆಹಾರ ಮತ್ತು ಶಾಲೆಗೆ ಬೇಕಾದ ಸಾಮಗ್ರಿಗಳನ್ನು ವಿತರಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು.

ಆ ಯುವತಿ ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಉತ್ಸಾಹದಿಂದ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಳು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ತನ್ನ ಸಹಾಯಕನನ್ನು ಕರೆದು,

“ಅವಳು ಯಾರು?” ಎಂದು ಕೇಳಿದ.

“ಸರ್, ಗೊತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಶಿಬಿರಕ್ಕೆ ಸ್ವಯಂಸೇವಕಿಯಾಗಿ ಬಂದಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಅನಿಸುತ್ತದೆ,” ಎಂದ ಸಹಾಯಕ.

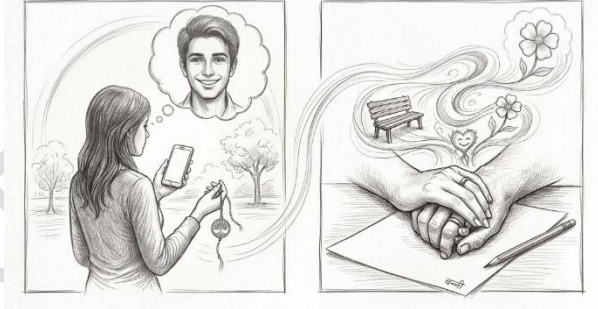
ಆಶಿಷ್ ಮತ್ತೆ ಅವಳ ಕಡೆ ನೋಡಿದ.

ಅವನ ಹೃದಯದಲ್ಲಿ ವಿಚಿತ್ರವಾದ ಕಂಪನ.

ಆ ದಿನ ಮನೆಗೆ ಹೋದ ನಂತರವೂ ಅವನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಿಂದ ಆ ಮುಖ ದೂರವಾಗಲಿಲ್ಲ.

ಮರುದಿನ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ ಎದ್ದಾಗಲೂ ಅವಳ ನೆನಪೇ.

“ನಾನು ಅವಳನ್ನು ಯಾಕೆ ಇಷ್ಟು ನೆನಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇನೆ?” ಎಂದು ಆತ ತನ್ನನ್ನೇ ಪ್ರಶ್ನಿಸಿಕೊಂಡ.



ಕೆಲಸದ ಮಧ್ಯೆಯೂ ಅವಳ ಮುಖ ಕಣ್ಣು ಮುಂದೆ ಬರುತ್ತಿತ್ತು.

ಕೊನೆಗೆ ಮತ್ತೊಮ್ಮೆ ಆ ಶಿಬಿರಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋಗಬೇಕೆಂದು ನಿರ್ಧರಿಸಿದ.

ಮರುದಿನ ಶಿಬಿರಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋದಾಗ ಆಕೆ ಅಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಳು.

ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದ ತಕ್ಷಣ ಅವಳ ಮುಖದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂತೋಷ ಮೂಡಿತು.

“ಸರ್, ನೀವು ಮತ್ತೆ ಬಂದಿದ್ದೀರಾ?”

“ಹೌದು,” ಎಂದು ಆಶಿಷ್ ನಗುತ್ತಾ ಹೇಳಿದ.

“ನಮ್ಮ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗಾಗಿ ನೀವು ಇಷ್ಟು ಸಹಾಯ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ತುಂಬಾ ದೊಡ್ಡ ವಿಷಯ.”

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಅವಳನ್ನು ನೋಡುತ್ತಾ,

“ನಿಮ್ಮ ಹೆಸರು ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದೇ?” ಎಂದು ಕೇಳಿದ.

ಅವಳು ಸಣ್ಣ ನಗುವಿನೊಂದಿಗೆ,

“ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ,” ಎಂದಳು.

ಆ ಒಂದು ಹೆಸರು ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಶಾಶ್ವತವಾಗಿ ಉಳಿಯಿತು.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಹುಡುಗಿಯಲ್ಲ. ಅವಳು ಅನಾಥಾಶ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಳೆದಿದ್ದಳು.

ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನೇಕ ಕಷ್ಟಗಳನ್ನು ಎದುರಿಸಿದ್ದರೂ, ತನ್ನ ನೋವನ್ನು ಯಾರಿಗೂ

ತೋರಿಸದೆ ಇತರರ ನೋವನ್ನು ಕಡಿಮೆ ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಳು.

ಅವಳಿಗೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಅಪಾರ ಪ್ರೀತಿ.

“ನನಗೆ ಬಾಲ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿಗದ ಪ್ರೀತಿಯನ್ನು ಈ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಕೊಡಬೇಕು,” ಎಂದು ಅವಳು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದಳು.

ಆ ಮಾತು ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ ಹೃದಯವನ್ನು ಇನ್ನಷ್ಟು ಮುಟ್ಟಿತು.

ದಿನಗಳು ಕಳೆದವು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಶಿಬಿರಕ್ಕೆ ಆಗಾಗ್ಗೆ ಬರತೊಡಗಿದ.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಮಾತನಾಡಲು ಅವನಿಗೆ ಒಂದು ಕಾರಣ ಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಕೆಲವೊಮ್ಮೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳನ್ನು ತರುತ್ತಿದ್ದ. ಕೆಲವೊಮ್ಮೆ ಆಹಾರ. ಇನ್ನೊಮ್ಮೆ ಶಿಬಿರದ ಖರ್ಚಿಗೆ ಹಣ ಕೊಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ.

ಆದರೆ ನಿಜವಾಗಿ ಅವನು ಹುಡುಕುತ್ತಿದ್ದದ್ದು ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯ ಒಂದು ನಗು.

ಅವರ ಸ್ನೇಹ ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಪ್ರೀತಿಯಾಗಿ ಬದಲಾಯಿತು.

ಒಂದು ಸಂಜೆ ಮಳೆ ಬರುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಶಿಬಿರ ಮುಗಿದ ನಂತರ ಇಬ್ಬರೂ ಒಂದೇ ಭಾವನೆಯ ಕೆಳಗೆ ನಿಂತಿದ್ದರು.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಕೇಳಿದಳು,

“ನಿಮಗೆ ಮಳೆ ಇಷ್ಟವೇ?”

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಅವಳನ್ನು ನೋಡುತ್ತಾ,

“ಈಗ ಇಷ್ಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ,” ಎಂದ.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ನಾಚಿಕೊಂಡು ತಲೆ ತಗ್ಗಿಸಿದಳು.

ಅವರ ಪ್ರೀತಿ ದಿನದಿಂದ ದಿನಕ್ಕೆ ಗಾಢವಾಯಿತು.

ಆದರೆ ವಿಧಿ ಅವರಿಗಾಗಿ ಬೇರೆ ಕಥೆಯನ್ನು ಬರೆದಿತ್ತು.

ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ ತಂದೆ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಉದ್ಯಮಿ. ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಗೌರವ, ಹಣ, ಸ್ಥಾನಮಾನ—ಇವೆಲ್ಲ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಬಹಳ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿತ್ತು.

ತನ್ನ ಮಗ ಒಬ್ಬ ಅನಾಥ ಹುಡುಗಿಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರೀತಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಾದಾಗ ಅವರು ಕೋಪಗೊಂಡರು.

“ಈ ಸಂಬಂಧವನ್ನು ನಾನು ಒಪ್ಪುವುದಿಲ್ಲ,” ಎಂದು ಅವರು ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟವಾಗಿ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ತನ್ನ ಪ್ರೀತಿಗಾಗಿ ತಂದೆಯ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ನಿಲ್ಲಲು ಸಿದ್ಧನಾದ.

ಆದರೆ ತಂದೆ ಒಂದು ಭಯಾನಕ ನಿರ್ಧಾರ ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಂಡರು.

ಆಶಿಷ್‌ಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಒಂದು ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ, ಅವನ ನೆನಪುಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಬೀರುವಂತಹ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆಯನ್ನು ವೈದ್ಯರ ಸಲಹೆಯ ಮೇರೆಗೆ ಮುಂದುವರಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಆದರೆ ಪರಿಣಾಮವಾಗಿ ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕಳೆದ ದಿನಗಳ ನೆನಪುಗಳು ಅವನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಸುಕಾದವು.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಅವನನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಲು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸಿದಳು.

ಆದರೆ ಅವಳಿಗೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕ ಉತ್ತರ ಒಂದೇ—

“ಆಶಿಷ್‌ಗೆ ನಿಮ್ಮ ನೆನಪಿಲ್ಲ.”

ಅವಳ ಹೃದಯ ಒಡೆದುಹೋಯಿತು.

ತಾನು ಪ್ರೀತಿಸಿದ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ತನ್ನನ್ನೇ ಮರೆತಿದ್ದಾನೆ ಎಂಬ ಸತ್ಯವನ್ನು ಒಪ್ಪಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಅವಳಿಗೆ ಅಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗಿತ್ತು.

ಇತ್ತ ಆಶಿಷ್‌ಗೆ ಏನೋ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದೇನೆ ಎಂಬ ಭಾವನೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಉಳಿದಿತ್ತು.

ವರ್ಷಗಳು ಕಳೆದವು.

ಒಂದು ದಿನ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಶಿಬಿರಕ್ಕೆ ಆಶಿಷ್ ಮತ್ತೆ ಬಂದ.

ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಳು.

ಅವನನ್ನು ಕಂಡ ಕೂಡಲೇ ಅವಳು ಬೆಚ್ಚಿಬಿದ್ದಳು.

“ಸರ್... ನೀವು ಇಲ್ಲಿ?”

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಅವಳನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದ.

ಆ ಮುಖ ಪರಿಚಿತವಾಗಿತ್ತು.

ಆದರೆ ನೆನಪಾಗುತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯ ಕಣ್ಣುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರು ತುಂಬಿತು.

ಅವಳು ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಕೇಳಿದಳು,

“ಸರ್, ಈಗ ಹೇಗಿದ್ದೀರಾ? ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಗೆ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆಗೆ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದೀರಾ?”

ಆಶಿಷ್ ನಗುತ್ತಾ,

“ನಾನು ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಆದರೆ...”

ಅವನು ಕ್ಷಣಕಾಲ ನಿಂತ.

“ನಿಮ್ಮನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದಾಗ ನನಗೆ ಏನೋ ವಿಚಿತ್ರವಾದ ಭಾವನೆ ಬರುತ್ತದೆ. ನಾನು ನಿಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಮೊದಲೇ ಎಲ್ಲೋ ನೋಡಿದ್ದೇನೆ ಅನ್ನಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.”

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯ ಕಣ್ಣುಗಳಿಂದ ಕಣ್ಣೀರು ಜಾರಿತು.

ಅವಳು ನಗುವಂತೆ ನಟಿಸಿದಳು.

“ಬಹುಶಃ ನಾವು ಎಲ್ಲೋ ಭೇಟಿಯಾಗಿರಬಹುದು.”

ಆದರೆ ಅವಳ ಹೃದಯ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿತ್ತು—

“ನೀನು ನನ್ನನ್ನು ಮರೆತಿದ್ದರೂ, ನಾನು ನಿನ್ನನ್ನು ಎಂದಿಗೂ ಮರೆತಿಲ್ಲ.”

ಕೆಲವು ದಿನಗಳ ನಂತರ ಶಿಬಿರದಲ್ಲಿ ಆಶಿಷ್ ಹಠಾತ್ತನೆ ಅಸ್ವಸ್ಥನಾಗಿ ಕುಸಿದುಬಿದ್ದ.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಗಾಬರಿಗೊಂಡಳು.

ಅವಳು ತಕ್ಷಣ ವೈದ್ಯರನ್ನು ಕರೆಸಿದಳು.

ವೈದ್ಯರು ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ್ನು ಪರೀಕ್ಷಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾಗ ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯ ಕಡೆ ನೋಡಿದರು.

ಅವರ ಮುಖದಲ್ಲಿ ಗಂಭೀರತೆ ಇತ್ತು.

“ನೀವು ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯೇನಾ?”

ಅವಳು ಆಶ್ಚರ್ಯದಿಂದ ನೋಡಿದಳು.

“ಹೌದು.”

ವೈದ್ಯರು ದೀರ್ಘ ಉಸಿರಳೆದರು.

“ನಿಮಗೆ ತಿಳಿಯದ ಒಂದು ವಿಷಯವಿದೆ.”

ನಂತರ ಅವರು ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಮುಚ್ಚಿಟ್ಟಿದ್ದ ರಹಸ್ಯವನ್ನು ಬಹಿರಂಗಪಡಿಸಿದರು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯ ಪ್ರೀತಿ ಹೊಸದಾಗಿದ್ದಾಗಲೇ ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ ತಂದೆ ಈ ಸಂಬಂಧವನ್ನು ವಿರೋಧಿಸಿದ್ದರು. ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ ನೆನಪುಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಬೀರಿದ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆಯ ಹಿಂದೆ ಅವರ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ನಿರ್ಧಾರವೂ ಇತ್ತು.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಕೇಳುತ್ತಾ ನಿಂತಳು.

ಅವಳ ಕಣ್ಣೀರು ನಿಲ್ಲಲಿಲ್ಲ.

“ಹಾಗಾದರೆ... ಅವನು ನನ್ನನ್ನು ಮರೆತದ್ದು...”

ವೈದ್ಯರು ಮೌನವಾಗಿದ್ದರು.

ಆದರೆ ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಸತ್ಯವೂ ಇತ್ತು.

ಆಶಿಷ್‌ನ ತಂದೆ ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯನ್ನು ದೂರವಿಡಲು, ಆಕೆಗೆ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಕಾಯಿಲೆ ಇದೆ ಎಂಬ ಸುಳ್ಳನ್ನೂ ಹರಡಿಸಿದ್ದರು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಆ ಸುಳ್ಳನ್ನು ನಂಬಿದ್ದ.

ಆದರೂ ಅವನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನ ಆಳದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯ ನೆನಪಿನ ಒಂದು ತುಣುಕು ಉಳಿದಿತ್ತು.

ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿಯೇ ಅವನು ಮತ್ತೆ ಮತ್ತೆ ಶಿಬಿರಕ್ಕೆ ಬರುತ್ತಿದ್ದ.

ಕೆಲವು ದಿನಗಳ ನಂತರ ಆಶಿಷ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಒಬ್ಬರನ್ನೊಬ್ಬರು ಎದುರಿಸಿದರು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಹೇಳಿದ,

“ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ... ನನಗೆ ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ನೆನಪಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ.”

ಅವಳು ಕಣ್ಣೀರಿನಿಂದ ಅವನನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದಳು.

“ನಿಜವೇ?”

“ಹೌದು. ಮಳೆ... ಈ ಶಿಬಿರ... ನೀನು... ನಮ್ಮ ಮೊದಲ ಭೇಟಿ... ಎಲ್ಲವೂ.”

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಅತ್ತಳು.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಅವಳ ಕೈ ಹಿಡಿದ.

“ನನ್ನ ನೆನಪು ಕಳೆದುಹೋಗಿತ್ತು. ಆದರೆ ನನ್ನ ಹೃದಯ ನಿನ್ನನ್ನು ಎಂದಿಗೂ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಂಡಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ.”

ಆ ದಿನ ಇಬ್ಬರೂ ಮತ್ತೆ ಒಂದಾದರು.

ಅವರ ಪ್ರೀತಿಗೆ ಎದುರಾದ ಎಲ್ಲ ಅಡೆತಡೆಗಳು ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ದೂರವಾದವು.

ಎರಡು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ನಂತರ, ಆಶಿಷ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ವಿವಾಹವಾದರು.

ಅದು ಕೇವಲ ಇಬ್ಬರ ಮದುವೆಯಾಗಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ.

ಅದು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ನೋವಿನ ನಂತರ ಎರಡು ಹೃದಯಗಳು ಮತ್ತೆ ಒಂದಾದ ದಿನವಾಗಿತ್ತು.

ಕಾಲ ಕಳೆದಿತು.

ಅವರ ಮನೆಗೆ ಪುಟ್ಟ ಮಗುವೊಂದು ಜನಿಸಿತು.

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಆ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಪ್ರೀತಿಯ ಪಾತ್ರಳಾದಳು.

ಒಮ್ಮೆ ಅವಳನ್ನು ಒಪ್ಪಿಕೊಳ್ಳದವರೇ ಈಗ ಅವಳನ್ನು ತಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯ ಮಗಳಂತೆ ನೋಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು.

ಒಂದು ಸಂಜೆ ಆಶಿಷ್ ತನ್ನ ಮಗುವನ್ನು ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಡಿದುಕೊಂಡು ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದ.

“ನಮ್ಮ ಕಥೆ ಇಷ್ಟು ದೂರ ಬರುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂದು ಎಂದಾದರೂ ಉಹಿಸಿದ್ದೀಯಾ?”

ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ನಗುತ್ತಾ ಹೇಳಿದಳು,

“ನಮ್ಮ ಕಥೆಯನ್ನು ನಾವು ಬರೆಯಲಿಲ್ಲ ಆಶಿಷ್... ಬಹುಶಃ ದೇವರೇ ಬರೆದಿದ್ದ.”

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಅವಳ ಕೈ ಹಿಡಿದ.

ಹೊರಗೆ ಮತ್ತೆ ಮಳೆ ಸುರಿಯುತ್ತಿತ್ತು.

ಅದೇ ಮಳೆ...

ಒಮ್ಮೆ ಅವರ ಪ್ರೀತಿಗೆ ಸಾಕ್ಷಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದ ಮಳೆ.

ಅದೇ ಮಳೆಯ ನಡುವೆ ಒಮ್ಮೆ ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಡೆಯಿಲ್ಲದೆ ನಿಂತಿದ್ದ ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ...

ಇಂದು ತನ್ನ ಪಕ್ಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಜೀವನ ಸಂಗಾತಿಯಾಗಿ ನಿಂತಿದ್ದಳು.

ಕೆಲವು ಪ್ರೀತಿಗಳು ದೂರವಾಗುತ್ತವೆ.

ಕೆಲವು ಪ್ರೀತಿಗಳು ಮರೆತುಹೋಗುತ್ತವೆ.

ಆದರೆ ನಿಜವಾದ ಪ್ರೀತಿ ಹೃದಯದಿಂದ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಅಳಿದುಹೋಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಕಾಲ ಅದನ್ನು ಪರೀಕ್ಷಿಸಬಹುದು.

ವಿಧಿ ಅದನ್ನು ದೂರ ಮಾಡಬಹುದು.

ನೆನಪುಗಳು ಅದನ್ನು ಮರೆಮಾಡಬಹುದು.

ಆದರೆ ನಿಜವಾದ ಪ್ರೀತಿ ಮತ್ತೆ ತನ್ನ ದಾರಿಯನ್ನು ಹುಡುಕಿಕೊಂಡು ಬರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಆಶಿಷ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅಶ್ವಿನಿಯ ಪ್ರೀತಿ ಕೂಡ ಹಾಗೆಯೇ.

ಅವರ ಜೀವನದ ನೋವು, ಕಷ್ಟೀರು, ಬೇರ್ಪಡುವಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಪುನರ್ಮಿಲನ-ಇವೆಲ್ಲ ಸೇರಿ
ಒಂದು ಸುಂದರ ಕಥೆಯಾಯಿತು.

ಅದು ಕೇವಲ ಪ್ರೇಮಕಥೆಯಲ್ಲ...

ಅದು ಕಾಯುವಿಕೆಯ ಕಥೆ.

ನಂಬಿಕೆಯ ಕಥೆ.

ಮತ್ತೆ ಒಂದಾದ ಎರಡು ಹೃದಯಗಳ ಕಥೆ.

ಮಧುರ ಪ್ರೀತಿ ಅಮರ.

ভালোবেসে সখী

Deepnava Ghoshal

সাব্বাতির উজ্জ্বলতায় ম্লান হওয়া অন্ধকার হঠাৎ করেই আরও
যেন আষ্টেপৃষ্ঠে ধরছে
আখড়ে কেড়ে নিয়েছে মনের অন্তরের কিছু অনুভূতির আমেজ
কিছু সংবেদনশীল আকাঙ্ক্ষা
বনহিজালার বিদারি ভাবনা আজ স্থগিত
এক অদৃশ্য দেওয়ালে
প্রতিফলিত আর্তনাদ আজ যেন বন্ধুত্ব করতে চায়
নিজের করে আকড়ে ধরে অনুভব করা যন্ত্রণা কে একটু মোমের
আচ্ছাদন দিতে চায়
রাখতে চায় কোমল স্পর্শের অন্তরীক্ষে,
অভিমাণে ভুল করে চলা একটু বিহ্বলতার লক্ষণ মাত্র
কিন্তু কখনও হয়তো
সেই বিহ্বলতাই বিদারী
কন্টকে পরিণত হয়ে
বিধতে থাকে ক্ষণেক্ষণে
হাতের উপরে হাত
রেখে, দিয়ে যাওয়া কথা
গুলো শুধু মানসিক
প্রশান্তির চেষ্টায় লিপ্ত
ভবন্তরিত আবেগী মন
আজ রুদ্ধ
শুধু তোমার ফিরে আসার আশায়



মনোরম মধূৰ্ঘময় সুবাস আবার আগের মতো গ্রহণের
ভরসায়।।

CORRECTION