

# MAGAZINE

2024

PERFECTION IN IMPERFECTION

# WABI SABI

LIKE A WELL-WORN BOOK, OUR IMPERFECTIONS TELL THE STORY  
OF A LIFE LIVED, LOVED, AND LEARNED;  
IN THE DANCE OF IMPERFECTION, WE FIND THE RHYTHM OF  
AUTHENTICITY.

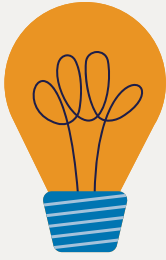
PERFECTION IN IMPERFECTION

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
UNIVERSITY OF CHAKWAL

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



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*To*

OUR WONDERFUL READERS,  
MAY YOU SHINE BRIGHTER THAN  
EVER.



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VICE CHANCELLOR,  
UNIVERSITY OF CHAKWAL

*"The Wabi-Sabi magazine is a commendable effort by the English department, serving as a catalyst for critical thinking and creative expression among students,"* Dr. Khan remarked.

## ABOUT WVC

In this insightful conversation with **Dr. Muhammad Bilal Khan**, the Vice Chancellor of the **University of Chakwal**, we delved into his educational journey, personal achievements, challenges faced during his tenure, and his vision for the future of the University. Dr. Khan recounted his educational odyssey, tracing his roots back to **Jhelum**, his hometown, where he received his early schooling before pursuing engineering at **Punjab University, Lahore**.

His academic pursuits led him to the United States for his master's degree at the University of Arizona and culminated in a Ph.D. from **Imperial College London**. Reflecting on his formative years, Dr. Khan credited his grandfather as his foremost inspiration, citing his unwavering support and guidance during his early education. He fondly recalled his passion for cricket in his youth, highlighting his role as the captain of his college team, while later embracing a dedication to reading research articles and staying abreast of global developments.

In offering recommendations to students, Dr. Khan extolled the virtues of the Quran for wisdom and direction, alongside Stephen Covey's seminal work, **"7 Habits of Highly Effective People,"** as essential reading for personal development. *"The Quran provides invaluable guidance for navigating life's complexities, while Covey's insights offer practical strategies for personal and professional success,"* Dr. Khan emphasized.

In his parting message, Dr. Khan urged students to cultivate emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical intelligence as essential tools for navigating life's challenges. He underscored the importance of emotional stability in overcoming stress, encouraging students to prioritize holistic well-being. *"Empowering oneself with a balanced approach to intelligence is key to thriving in an ever-changing world,"* Dr. Khan concluded. The dialogue with Dr. Muhammad Bilal Khan encapsulated a vision of academic excellence, innovation, and personal growth, reflective of his leadership and dedication to the University of Chakwal.

## INTERVIEW INSIGHTS

When questioned about the challenges he encountered as Vice Chancellor, Dr. Khan enumerated five significant hurdles, ranging from administrative deficiencies to staff shortages and procurement issues. However, he emphasized the successful navigation of these obstacles, underscoring the resilience and resourcefulness of the university. *"Challenges are inevitable in any leadership role, but with determination and strategic planning, we were able to overcome them,"* Dr. Khan remarked.

Looking ahead, Dr. Khan outlined ambitious goals for the University of Chakwal, emphasizing the expansion of infrastructure, recruitment of qualified staff *"Our vision is to position the University of Chakwal as a hub of academic excellence and innovation, contributing significantly to societal advancement,"* Dr. Khan asserted.

Dr. Khan also commended the initiative of the English department in launching the magazine Wabi-Sabi, recognizing its importance as a platform for intellectual discourse within the university community.



# REGISTRAR'S MESSAGE

**Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad**

Registrar , University of Chakwal

**“As the Registrar of this esteemed institution, it gives me great pleasure to see the next generation of bright minds embarking on their educational journey with us.”**

## *REMARK ON WABI SABI*

It brings me immense pride to witness the wealth of talent and creativity that our students consistently bring to the forefront. The dedication and passion exhibited by the students of the English Department in crafting these pieces are truly commendable. Each contribution adds a unique flavor to the magazine, contributing to the vibrant literary landscape of our institution. These works not only showcase the individual talents of our literary gems but also foster a sense of community and shared intellectual engagement.

The diverse range of literary works speaks volumes about the rich tapestry of skills and interests within our student community. It is evident that the University of Chakwal is not only a center for academic excellence but also a breeding ground for artistic expression and intellectual exploration.

As we continue to nurture and celebrate the literary talents within our University, I look forward to witnessing the continued growth and success of our literary magazine, WABI SABI.



# IN CONVERSATION WITH PROF SAJJAD HUSSAIN

Insights from our  
Head of Department

In the realm of literary exploration, there exists a vibrant tapestry of voices waiting to be heard; and within the pages of **Wabi Sabi**, these voices find their home. As an avenue for budding wordsmiths to unleash their creativity, the Department of English at University of Chakwal, proudly presents an anthology of thought-provoking prose, poetry, and everything in between, crafted by the talented students of creative writing.

Within these digital pages, you will encounter a mosaic of emotions, experiences, and imaginations brought to life through the power of language. Each piece is a testament to the boundless potential residing within our student contributors, whose dedication to their craft shines brightly with every word penned.

From the poignant verses that tug at the heartstrings to the immersive narratives that transport readers to distant realms, our magazine serves as a testament to the depth and breadth of creative expression. It is a celebration of individuality, where each writer's unique perspective adds a new layer of richness to the collective tapestry of human experience.

As an editor, I feel honored to curate this space where creativity knows no bounds and where the seeds of literary greatness are sown. I hope that these pages would invite you to immerse yourself in these; to explore, to ponder, and to be inspired by the raw talent and boundless imagination of our student contributors. In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to this endeavor. My gratitude to the Honorable Vice Chancellor, **Prof. Dr. Muhammad Bilal Khan** for his unmatched patronage and inspiration! Thanks to the Registrar and the faculty members of the Department of English for their support. I would also thank all the other members of the Editorial Board, particularly **Nida Syed**, the Student Editor and **Prof Tariq Mehmood** and **Prof Qasim** Abbas for their commitment, consistency and patience.

Let's hope and pray that we continue to champion the transformative power of words and nurture the next generation of literary voices.





# SECTION 1

## ARTICLES

WABI-SABI

2024

# ALJAMIADO TEXTS AND LITERARY MAUROPHILIA

BY PROF. MUBASHIR HASSAN

Spain is often looked upon as a site of a romantic, cheerful culture of "**Moorish**" **al Andalus**. After the fall of Granada In 1492 and the ensuing suppression of both Islam and Muslims at the hands of insensate Catholic monarchs, Moorish architecture, and literature, played a seminal role in our understanding of the nation that took the place of erstwhile al-Andalus.

Once Christian rulers had taken over Spain, they started the ruthless extermination of its former inhabitants namely Muslim Moors. In the first place, their language- was outlawed so that no one could speak, read or write Arabic. It was banned on the whole peninsula and if someone was found using Arabic, he was subject to extreme torture and long imprisonment. The burning of Arabic books was a public spectacle. There was also a massive mass expulsion of Moors who were forced to go back to their native country from where their ancestors had come centuries ago. There were also (failed) conversions on a large scale and those who would not convert were made to bear excruciating punishment. Muslims were given a choice either to become Christians or leave the peninsula. Even those Moriscos a term used for Moors who got converted, too, were not assimilated and were made to leave Spain. All sorts of pejorative appellations were pitched against Muslims and their divine religion Islam.

While all this violence was being perpetrated on Muslims, there was a bevy of people who tried to preserve their language and culture by writing Aljamiado texts. What are Aljamiado texts? These were the bulk of clandestine Arabic texts written by Muslim Moors in an attempt to save their language and culture from complete obliteration. These texts helped them save their language and religion from complete neglect. These texts bear witness to their writers' immense infatuation with the sect of **Muhammad (PBUH)** and the religion of Islam.

It is fascinating to note that these Aljamiado texts were written when there was a complete ban on the Arabic language. These texts were unique cultural expressions on the part of Moors who endeavoured to save their legacy from obliteration.

But there are quite a few intriguing paradoxes in the history of Muslim Spain. Isn't it strange that in Muslim Iberia, the very place which witnessed immense bloodshed and colossal dislocation of both Jews and Muslims, the latter's cultural icons were preserved and replicated? For example, the very **Queen Isabella** who dislocated and displaced Muslims from Spain and abhorred their culture and religion spent money from her purse for the better safety of **Alhambra palace**. Another telling example is Peter the Cruel's 14th-century palace in Seville.

Now I want to shed some light on literary Maurophilia. When these Moors were downright expelled from Spain, then, some, Spanish writers wrote some stories in which they romanticized and idealized those Moors. According to **Menéndez Pelayo**: *Maurophilia looks back to Idealize a defeated enemy, and proleptically memorializes the absence of the vanquished "race" from Spain*. Maurophilia was canonized as a literary genre in a series of articles published by the French Hispanist George Cirot in the Bulletin Hispanique in 1938-44.

Barbara Fuchs, one of the most formidable scholars on Anglo-Islamic literary encounter in the Mediterranean vis-à-vis Spain, in her conspicuous book **Exotic Nation (2009)**, informs us that "*Maurophilia is an unstable and often risky proclivity, which makes its embrace all the more intriguing for a cultural history of the encounters between East and West, and of Spain's development as a (quasi-) European nation and yet that history cannot be separated from Intra- European pressures, and from the discourses that enlist Moorishness to construct legends of national distinction*." She further holds that literary maurophilia's tremendous European popularity paradoxically contributed to the marginalization of Spain.

Maurophile texts, contrary to Aljamiado texts, were an attempt on the part of Spanish writers to engage with Moorishness. This erotic captivation which is often ascribed to Maurophilia Insinuates a yawning gap between the European/Christian self and the Oriental other. After Granada fell to Catholic Christians, cultural and literary infatuation with the Moors became much heightened. Maurophilia texts showcased immense sympathetic preoccupation with Moors. The most important and widely disseminated Maurophilia text is *Jorge de Montemayor's Diana (1561)* while the other two anonymous time-tested Maurophilia novellas are *The Abencerraje and Ozmin and Daraja*.

The anonymous novella, *The Abencerraje*, dilates upon the story of a Moorish knight, Abindarraez from the unlucky tribe Abencerrajes. After his family succumbed to their enemies in Granada, he was taken into exile by the governor of Cartama. He adores the governor's daughter whom he takes for his sister, *Jarifa*. Finally, when it comes to them they are not siblings. They intend to marry in secrecy. The text starts with *Abindarraez's quest* for Jarifa but he is taken as a captive by a virtuous *Christian Knight Rodrigo de Narvaez* in a gory skirmish in which Abindarraez displays his temerity and kills a few of them. After he is taken as a captive, in retrospect, he narrates his story and moves his captor into liberating him till the consummation of his love. He is asked to pledge to come back after he fulfils his nuptial bindings. When he is freed, he resumes his journey and unites with Jarifa.



After the fulfilment of his love, he confides with his beloved about the vow he has made to his captors. His wife is adamant to accompany him back. Upon their return, they are liberated by Narvaez without any ransom.

Maurophile texts enjoyed massive popularity during the Early Modern Period in Europe. The *Abencerraje* and other texts of its ilk tried to represent Muslims and Moors in a positive light. These texts, also, tried to prove Christian characters' virtuosity in the face of Muslim danger. One of the most redoubtable philologists *Marcelino Menendez Pelayo* holds that Maurophile literature included recognizably Spanish customs such as bullfighting and games on horseback, as well as an atmosphere of gallantry because Nasrid Granada had been penetrated by "**Castilian culture,**" without stopping to consider the reverse phenomenon. Even more problematically, he established the idea that Maurophilia was a "*generous idealization on the part of the conquering people of its old masters, precisely when the last relics of that race were about to disappear from Spanish soil*".



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# AN ELEGY ON AGING

BY QASIM ABBAS

Birth, growth, ageing, decaying and passing away are as natural as life. In other words, every living thing that grows gets aged with every passing second. Ageing snatches our permanence, our immortality and our belonging to this world. By making us mortal, ageing drags us to the threshold of our identity, our existence and our sense of no belonging. As human beings, the love for growth and energy makes us blind to the fact that where there is life, there is decay and death. One day, all living creatures e.g. animals, human beings, birds, reptiles and plants reach the threshold of old age and face a tragic end. Ageing seems a euphemistic phenomenon for many who have not seen growing old from a reciprocal perspective. In reality, its associations in the minds are decay, decline, degeneration, deterioration, fading and collapse. These horrifying images affirm the bitter fact that the most pathetic and painful moment of life is to see someone growing old. It is not just an emotional TV show, a debate or a bookish matter. Our common observations testify to this universally acknowledged truth that growing old is inevitable as well as a horrifying phenomenon.

Since my childhood, I have been observing my dear and near ones in my hometown, getting old. Many elegant faces these days are being seen with wrinkles all over their bodies. It is scary to see how time has trodden the coliseums of beauty and grandeur into ruins and dust. Even looking at this harsh reality of weakened bodies along with rose-tinted glasses makes one feel that the beauty of beauty is that it is transient. But this bitter reality is not as simple as it seems.

For me, it has been a heart-rending spectacle to be an eyewitness to as many as five generations i.e. the aged at the threshold of their grave, the middle-aged with greying hair, the men full of energy and zenith, the youth eyeing for manhood and lastly, children of my age, watching the aforementioned with awe, respect and admiration. The first lot of the white-haired old men and women who had been seen with their walking sticks and bent forms, decayed, eroded and journeyed to the grave. Their passing age and their funerals are the early sensations of my childhood. Orally transmitted stories of supernatural witchcraft, of devils, of demons, their hand-made articles and a stock of traditions remind us of their presence. Forgotten and decayed graves of those aged ancestors speak to us in the words of *P.B. Shelley*:

*Nothing besides remains round and colossal wreck  
Boundless and bare the lone sand stretches far away  
The second lot of the middle-aged, the graying-haired  
elders, who were sliding towards the fifties in my  
childhood, had been lying buried underneath for  
decades. The remaining few are on their bed, inactive,  
passionless only to die and unburden their offspring.  
Their ageing has deprived them of their worth, value  
and stake in this disloyal world. Their eroded bodies  
make them living corpses. It is tragic to see the aged  
losing their worth in the eyes of those offspring whose  
existence owes much to them. The same undeserved  
treatment makes ageing a tragic experience for those  
whom their dears and nears keep at arm's length,  
considering them as white elephants.*

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The third group of early childhood sensations consists of those men and women who were, once, at the peak of their life. Mostly, they were newly-wed couples or soon-to-be-married men and women. Optimism, manual energy, and a sense of perceived immortality were supposed to be characteristics of their age group. Mere two or more decades have dragged them all to a stage where *Shakespeare's* words echo as, “*sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.*” Their present ageing stage is more haunting than that of the previous generations because we are supposed to be the successors. Seeing our turn imminent is one of tragic sensations. Being successors to the aged is an awful feeling.

Last of all, in the entire drama of lived experience, we have never been the exception. Faced with greying hair along with several mental and physical disorders, we stand at the sliding end of our life's peak. Looking back on the yore days, it is painful to recall the blessed moments of the bygone past when everything was intact. One feels inspired by the kids, the children, the teens and the youths who are blessed with everything that nature offers to every healthy body and soul.



Hence, it is painful to watch ourselves creeping towards being a white-haired aged man in the years to come. This fearsome idea is followed by mortality which is an inescapable reality. Ageing is insidious; it strengthens weak babyhood into strong manhood; however, reversal of fortune starts, dragging strong-bodied men and women on the middle-aged route to the pre-decided destination of weak, meek and forgetful old man or woman, ready to perish. This is the reality of life and aging stands the mortal enemy of man. From this perspective, man stands as the most tragic character. His sudden death tears the world; his aged body is as horrifying as his sudden and accidental death.

The following poetic lines are enough to sum up the elegiac fate of man:

میں تو منیر آئینے میں خود کو تک کر حیران ہوا  
یہ چہرہ کچھ اور طرح تھا پہلے کسی زمانے میں

*Muneer Nayazi*

And:

دل فسردہ تو ہوا دیکھ کے اس کو لیکن  
عمر بھر کون جوان کون حسیں ربتا ہے

*Ahmed Mushtaq*

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# LIFE CHANGING MINDSET

BY PROF. MUMTAZ ALI

## Event+Response=Outcome

**"I do not control events. I do control myself and my response."**

Education is not the mere acquisition of book knowledge or a pedantry one can flaunt to impress one's fellowmen. Real education is a process by which one latent capability physical, mental, moral, ethical, spiritual, religious, social, cultural, political, intellectual, emotional and thoroughly personal – is evoked, nursed and cultivated to fashion out an ideal human individual, capable and willing to play his part for the betterment of his self-image in particular and of humanity. In general, this all, being a way of life is only possible if one learns the E+R=O mindset to change a life.

***Event + Response = Outcome.***

Simply this means an outcome, positive or negative – results in how someone Reacts or Responds to an Event. This formula is for every individual in the universe who exists physically here, there and everywhere. One can not change the event, however, one can change one's Response to an Event, which then changes the Outcome.

The E+R=O Mindset is built on three Simple and direct understandings:

- I can not Control Events.
- I do control my Response.
- I create Outcomes

Three things happen when one sees situations through E+R=O Mindset:

1. One feels more in control because one is.
2. One sees better opportunities because one can.
3. One does not waste time and energy trying to control things one can never control.

The event can be anything or everything that is outside of one's control to change or set. It is not the events of our lives that shape us, but the meaning we attach to these events because life is a collage of events. Life is all about a sequence of events, although every event is a successor as well as a predecessor or another one. In simple words what is happening outside one's brain is called an Event

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The response is a choice point. One can choose how one is going to Respond. In Response's domain, one is in the driver's seat and has the freedom to Choose. Three components of response are thoughts, emotions and behaviour.

Response to an Event is more important than the Event itself. One cannot change the Event, one can change the Response. Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose a response. In our responses lie our growth and freedom. Remember, Reaction is a negative attitude response is positive behavior.

The outcome gives us a better opportunity to help shape and mould it to what we want. Sensible people approach Events differently.

By simply changing Response to an Event, they get the outcomes they want. In the long run, we shape our lives and shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our responsibilities, and so is the outcome.



**E+R=O**

**“You do not control your outcomes, you own them”.**



The E+R+O method message changed my life.

By introducing myself to this essence of **E+R=O** I recognized a pattern of life. I shaped the Outcomes. I experienced by taking ownership of my responses in an existential manner. Instead of being a victim I always choose to be response ABLE. Events are always happening. I always choose how to respond. My response says always create outcomes. Man's greatest possession is life, it is given to him but once, and he must live it to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past, so live that dying, he might say—all my life, all my strength was given to the first cause of R-factor—response to events for the best outcomes in the world— here lies a vibrant mindset adhered to Event+ Response=Outcome and this makes life worth living.

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# LITERATURE, THE SPIRIT OF CONTEMPORARY AGES

BY IQRA NAYAB

Literature in factual aspects highlights the deepest meaning of every single emotion and idea of humans. The prominent and superior literature reflects the uncovered realities of our existence in a relevant and precise manner. Literature is like a mirror that is melted with sparks of truth and sincere interpretation of the human quest for the embodiment of the loftiest form of understanding.

The word literature reflects the meaning of written works, especially those considered of exceptional or eternal artistic superiority. The substantial purpose of literature is to entertain and to provide aesthetic pleasure to the audience, readers, thinkers, and writers themselves as well.

Literature, in the modern day, is the spirit of the time. Without literature, no awareness and proficiency about the globe can penetrate society. Literature can also be called “Zeitgeist” or the “Time-Spirit”. If the yore of the human race and ethnicity is its biography, then literature can be called an autobiography. Literature heightens the spirit and the soul and this has the power to ignite and encourage the reader, to over the suggested morals or lessons of the different literary genres. Literature enlightens humans’ standpoints and beliefs about themselves and others over and beyond.

The real beauty of literature lies in the way the plot of the story is written using the simplest yet appealing phrases that influence the reader on how they may live their lives following the moral of the story.

According to *T.S. Eliot*, the privileged literary Man,

*“The soul of a nation the true ideals of its civilization, the real message of the people’s inner self, is expressed in its literature; that the author is the legislators through unacknowledged of mankind the men of literature, the poets, dramatists, and novelists-form a spiritual community, binding together-living and the dead; the good, the brave and the wise of all ages”.*

In today’s world, where the burst of activities are playing with an individual’s life and one has time to direct his/herself, literature helps people to reduce the friction and pressure on their senses. Through poetry and prose, the hive of anthologies, and the stockpile of chapbooks, people find harmony and serenity in their notions and sentiments. It helps to agitate unique and fundamental ideas.

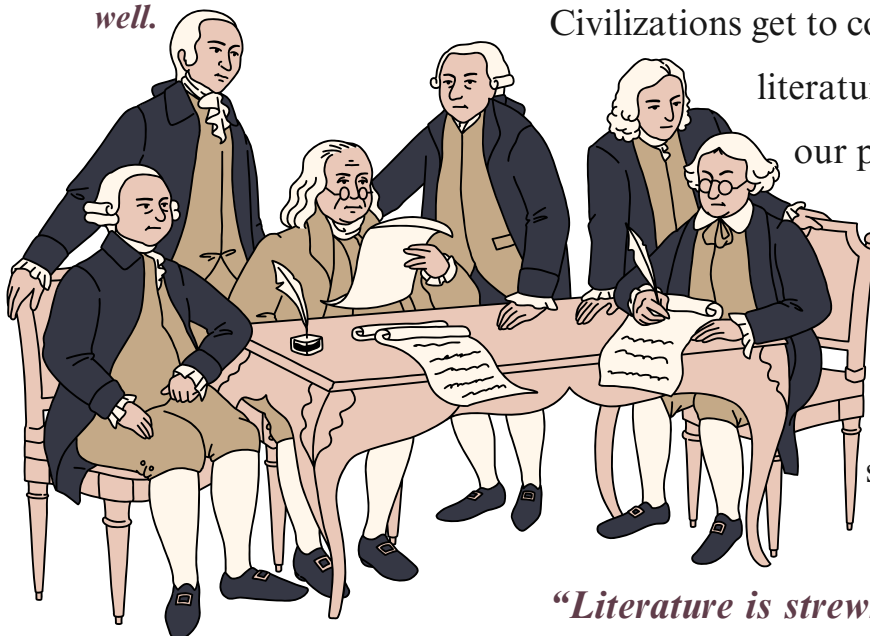
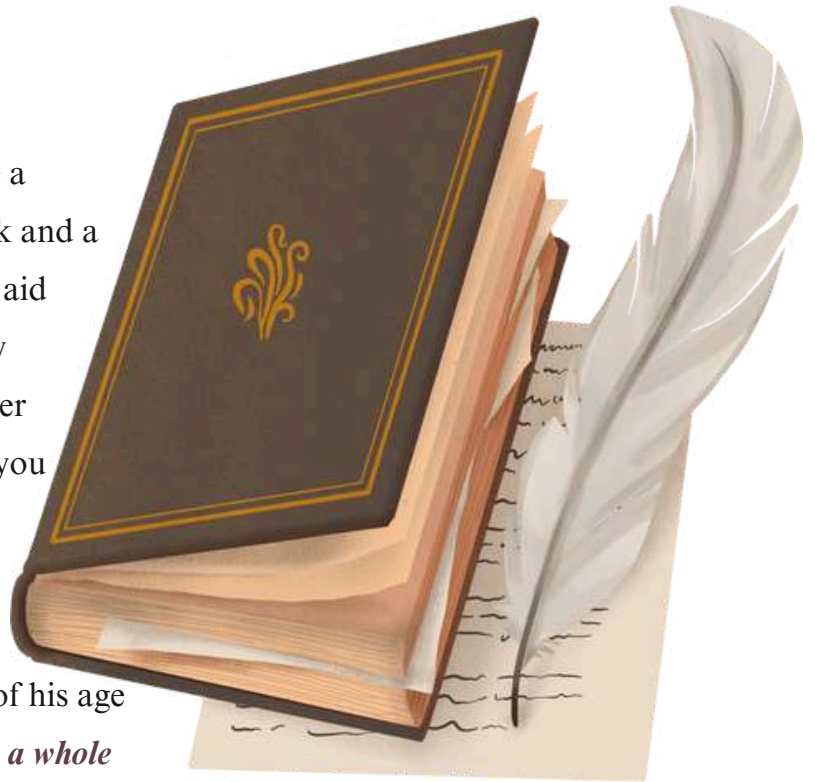
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Sometimes one's reading can generate a striking indication of a favorable track and a therapy for the tangled mind with the aid of others' expressions. Reading widely doesn't prevent you from copying other writers' ideas. More often, it leads to you having more interesting ideas of your own .

Every individual, in conformity with *Goethe's statement*, is a resident of his age as well as of his country. *Literature as a whole*

*grows and shifts from generation to generation and undoubtedly there is the peak, expansion, and decay of ideas, standards, and morals of the society and the individual as well.*



Civilizations get to comprehend themselves and literature assists all of us to relate our perceptions and sensitivities with the writer's stance.

As the pearl is the crop of the oyster shell, literature is the crop of contemporary society.

*“Literature is strewn with the wreckage of men who have minded beyond reason the opinions of others.” - Virginia Woolf*

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# BEGGARY: A MOMENTOUS ISSUE

BY NIDA BARKAT

Beggars are often considered to be among the most destitute individuals on earth. When they beg, their eyes are often moist with tears. In some countries, such as India, West Bengal, and South America, particularly Pakistan, the number of beggars has reached an alarming level. As a Pakistani citizen, talk about the ratio of beggars in Pakistan, according to the **Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)**, there are five to *25 million beggars in Pakistan*, which is approximately 2.5 to 11 per cent of the total population. Additionally, an estimated 1.2 million children are living on the streets of major urban cities in Pakistan.

If we set aside the reasons and effects of begging in society for a moment and consider why these millions of children are being abused, why they remain trapped in a cycle of poverty, and why their future is bleak and uncertain, we will see that their feelings, emotions, and desires are suppressed because they have had few opportunities to strive for survival. Among all the evils in society, begging is the most complex and demoralizing, and no society is free from this curse.

The money we give to beggars to fulfil our sense of religious duty is not very much.

The pennies we give to children who beg from us are often misused because these children are mentally and physically disturbed.

They often use the money to buy drugs. If we set child beggars aside, we must acknowledge that begging is an organized business in Pakistan. Pakistani mafia groups take advantage of parents' poverty and urge them to beg, and in turn, handlers provide them with two meals a day. Why don't we take serious steps against them?

Negative and bad ideas often emerge from our nation's mindset. People are often masterminds in doing wrong, because doing a wrong act requires no effort, and begging is easier for them than working hard. However, the one who is exploited in this wrong act is always the child. There has been no visible change in the number of young beggars. Despite several anti-beggary drives by citizens and advertising efforts of the **1121** helpline, there has been no change in the number of child beggars seen in different cities of Pakistan.

Parents urge and exploit their children to beg because they also want to have a two-time meal without struggle.

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They became used to this easy way, and at the end of the day, they collected more than **6,000**. If our social sectors and government are not good enough, then how can citizens become responsible? Aristotle rightly said, "***A good citizen is only possible in a good state, and a bad state makes a bad citizen.***" If a country is concerned with man as a man, then such wrong acts will not happen.

The law is clear: *If mafia and handlers are identified, they should be punished, and the ratio of beggars should be controlled to a great extent. It is the government's responsibility to provide protection and support to the parents of child beggars. Every child in a country has an equal right to get an education and live their life.*



**Look at beggars in the eyes; It's the least you can do. I am amazed why we can't look at them in the face. Are they not human? It's alright if you cannot offer them something like money, food, clothing, and all the good stuff.**

I'll admit that sometimes looking away seems easier than looking them in the eyes and not being able to help them. But looking at them in the face rather than looking away without a word is more valuable than any money you can offer them. When you look into their eyes, show love and acceptance with a broad smile, the same smile you used to pass when you met with your loved ones.

If everyone invested a little of their time to focus on others

other than themselves, then we can increase the net happiness in the world. As responsible citizens, stop giving them benefaction. Provide them with educational opportunities, healthcare, food, and shelter, and keep them away from begging.



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# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SELF-DEFENSE

BY AQSA KHALID

In today's society, women are self-sufficient and often work outside of their homes. However, they also face challenges such as stalking, molestation, harassment, and more. To address these issues, every woman must be proficient in basic self-defence techniques so that they can venture out without fear. Acquiring knowledge on how to physically protect oneself is valuable. Instead of being physically active, we should be mindful of our surroundings and the people around us. We ought to learn about dangerous situations, how to avoid them, and what to do if we find ourselves in one.

As a woman and self-defence instructor, let me elaborate on why women may feel reluctant to take self-defence classes. One of the prominent reasons is the "*Impossibility*" cultural narrative. Many women are not encouraged to partake in self-defence classes or are forbidden from doing so when they inquire. They are taught to believe that they are powerless to engage in such activities and are frequently discouraged by phrases such as "*Women can't fight men.*"

I believe that self-defence training can be advantageous for women as It can help them identify danger accurately and defend themselves in threatening situations. Consistent practice is essential since it takes time to develop the necessary skills. Physical force should be utilized only as a last resort when someone is trapped in a dangerous situation.



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Instead, we should be willing to do whatever we can to avoid danger. Although it's not advisable, we can resort to shoving our fingers into someone's eyes, crushing their throat, or hitting their nose or temple to impale them if necessary.

As *Bruce Lee* once said, "*Defense is attacked, attack is defence; each is the cause and result of the other.*"

I would advise against becoming overly confident in our self-defence abilities.

Learning self-defence alone will not make us superheroes. It is important to keep in mind that our priority should be to escape the situation rather than trying to overpower the attacker. Our goal should be to raise awareness in society about the importance of self-defence for the betterment of our nation.

From my own experience, my father trained me to defend myself against a wide range of attacks. His training instilled in me the confidence to defend myself against anyone.

I then had the opportunity to train several girls in different provinces, and they too felt more self-assured in their

abilities. Unfortunately, we have to resort to violence, but fear and silence only perpetuate it. I train myself so that I can choose how to respond, and I train others so that they too can have that choice.

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# SECTION 2

# BOOK REVIEWS

## REVIEWS

WABI-SABI

2024



## REVIEW OF THE SHORT STORY

# IN THE HOUSE OF ELYSIAN

by Nida Syed



In *The House of Elysian* is a short story written by *Farah Afzal*, an undergraduate student at the *University of Chakwal*. Being a novice in English literature, she has written some other short stories, sonnets, and poetry/verse too. She has a natural affinity for nature, but this story is a vivid depiction of the devastating and tragic effects of war, witnessed by the protagonist of the story.

The title, contradictory to the story's plot and sketch, signifies the ecstatic and enchanting land since the word Elysian alludes to the *Greek ideal mythological place—a place near heaven*. While the story pictures the lives of naive occupants and soldiers who have to battle, endure, and bite the dust rather than those who initiate the war and live soundly in their safe houses.

The story begins in an intense and gloomy climate on the battleground. It narrates the soldier who is scared to death, getting across the dead bodies of those he once knew, while the war lingers. The same place where the narrator used to cherish the bounties and perks of life with his friends and pet, is currently being obliterated and demolished by contaminating smoke, grenades, fire, and bullets. The narrator, with tears in his eyes, ventures forward, watching the letters to loved ones of the dead spread on the land while he thinks of the barbarity and terror of war, hoping that he may survive.

While reading the title, one might envision a blissful land while the story carries the reader to a completely reversed panic scenario of war. Throughout the story, the writer portrays the feelings of fear and loneliness among the victims so clearly that one can feel abandoned amid the battleground fighting with fear and memories. The author in the fifth paragraph depicts the state of innocent people, who have nothing to do with war except for compensation, as *"who knows neither the war nor his presence on this merciless front"* and in the third paragraph, she quotes the bitter reality of fierce authority as *"The one who hides behind their words can never know the terror and the reality of war"*. The contradictions of thoughts throughout the plot, the action rising within clusters of grenades, the survival of the narrator and the cries of an adult boy at the climax, and the ceaseless destructions during war till the end of the story raise questions in the reader's mind.



Also mentioned in the second last paragraph, what has this war done to us? Then the progression of the story is so apt when the writer herself answers the pondering minds that it only brings sorrows and grief and regrets and the silence of suicides.

Taking literary devices into account, similes-*"like a monster"* and metaphors-*"Icy fingers"* and *"like a lump of coal"* are there. I must say that the writer has successfully illustrated the dark sides of war. The story reminds me of the book *Some Other War* by *Linda Newbery* when Stephen says, on the verge of tears, *"Oh, Jesus Christ, this isn't war, it's a bloody massacre."*

In the fourth paragraph, the author writes, *"They attack us without knowing the reason behind it"* and defines the war in the second last passage, *"a three-letter short word is capable of destroying everything in the blink of an eye."* All the elements, i.e., plot, characters, and so forth, of the story are legitimate and appropriate. Afterwards, the central idea that could be cited from the text is that *"One who fights can know the certitude of what war is."*

The story evokes the reality of life that the innocent has to endure and suffer while the authorities who have power just play the games of words. No words and no sympathies can make up for what is lost. History speaks out loud that the **First and Second World Wars** caused worse chaos and bloodshed. Millions of people have died, with estimates ranging from **50 to 80 million**. Awaiting the eyes of families, they kept sobbing in despair.

The merciless and inept authorities launch a war without regard for the consequences, or, more accurately, without regard for those who must fight and sacrifice. War is not the answer to any conflict, it does not bring any peace, and it is never going to fix the thing falling apart. It will rather mess things up to hell. Today, the whole world itself has witnessed the genocide that's being carried out in **Palestine**. The writer has rightly said, *"It's a brutal death and like monsters, it gnaws at every part of your body"*.



## BOOK REVIEW

# THE LAST WHITE MAN

by Tahira Jabeen

The fictional novel **The Last White Man** was published on August 2, 2022, by the author of best selling “Exit West”, **Mohsin Hamid**. He is a British Pakistani novelist and one of the most multifaceted geniuses we have. It is a highly anticipated novel that primarily focuses on racism and also touches on the themes of love, loss, change, family dynamics, and identity crisis. The text has a unique and gripping blend of these different themes.

The atmospheric setting of the novel mirrors the tumultuous nature of human beings. **Mohsin Hamid** unfolds the event and introduces the readers to **Anders** who is distressed to the degree of finding that his skin colour has changed into deep unmistakable brown. He is overtaken by the emotion of anger and rage. Anders decides to confine himself within the four walls of his house but hunger brings him back into the company of others. He notices that people are reluctant to make eye contact with him. His girlfriend **Oona** unexpectedly stops responding to his calls and messages at the onset but later on, she contacts him. The most candid reaction to *Anders's darker skin* comes from his boss who says, **“I would have killed myself”**. When he ventures back to his work he finds white people viewed him differently. He feels restless and doubts his own identity.

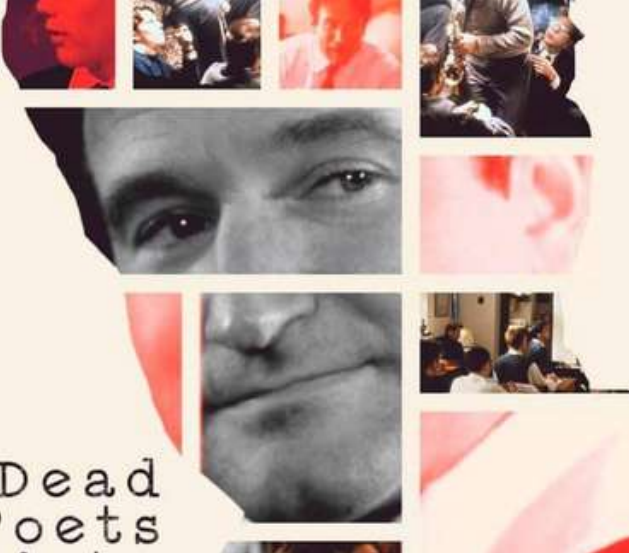
More and more people start losing their whiteness in that unnamed town. Violence flares up causing the law and order to collapse in the whole town.

Wherever **pale-skinned extremists encounter the blacks, they kill them**. Everyone deals with that change differently. Some change people in despair and prefer death over despondency.

Meantime, Anders visits his sick old father, who at first glance feels hesitation to face his son with pigmented skin. He pushes his heart to hold his son. Anders spends the last days of his father's life with him.

In this novel, the writer insists that seeing people in terms of black and white creates immense complexity in human races. Character and modesty should be prioritized over colour, creed, and race as marks of identification. Making the people by whom Anders was familiar, the author reminds us about our limited vision of each other. This is the time to close the casket on the whole horrific construct of racial hierarchies. People should never be judged on how they look but on what they are. *The Last White Man* is not an easy read. Its description is deep and dense. Some of the dialogues are written in the dialect which can be difficult to follow. Nevertheless, the pointed and clear-cut theme makes this novel a memorable read. But the question is **even if the protagonist lost his skin color then who is the last white man referred to in the title?** Well, for that you will have to give a read to this novel.





## A MOVIE REVIEW

# DEAD POETS SOCIETY

by Farah Afzal



*"I went to the woods because I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life! To put to rout all that was not life. And not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."* **Dead Poets Society** is a 1989 American drama film directed by **Peter Weir**, written by **Tom Schulman**, and starring **William Robins**.

It tells the story of **Mr. Keating**, a new teacher at **"The Welton Academy Vermont"** who tries to inspire his students to follow their hearts. At first, his unorthodox method of teaching amazed all the students because the rules of **Welton Academy** are very strict and everyone is bound to follow them rigorously. Students call it **"Hell-ton Academy"** as the boys don't have any kind of freedom there.

On the very first day, they get stuffed with taxing assignments and they want to yell but can't. These students are future doctors and engineers per their parent's will and they try hard not to let them down till Mr. Keating shows up. Despite Welton's strict rules, he encouraged them to do what they wanted. In his first class, Mr. Keating enters the class from one door, whistling which is a very unconventional way, and leaves the class from the back door and asks the students to follow him. He takes them to another room and makes one of the students read the following verses of Robert Herrick's poem;

*Gather ye rosebuds  
while ye may,*

*Old time is still flying :*

*And this same flower that smiles today,  
Tomorrow will be dying*

He shows them a picture hanging on the wall presenting a group of boys who look like them with the same haircuts. He asks them to lean forward and to listen to their voice which is clearly saying *"Carpe Diem, Seize the day boys! Make your lives extraordinary."* He does unusual activities such as making them stand on tables one by one to show things from different perspectives and ripping the poetry introduction page out of a book because according to him, poetry shouldn't be bound in rhymes and meters.

*"We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, and engineering, are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for."* says **Keating**.

The movie mainly focuses on the two boys. One is **Todd Anderson** who is very reticent and the other one is **Neil**, the brightest student at Welton's Academy. His father wants him to become a doctor. The motivation that they get from Keating, helps them to find their interest in their lives. For the first time, Neil realizes that he wants to be an actor so he applies and gets a part in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Meantime, **Todd Anderson** is reluctant to utter a single word in front of anyone, Keating makes him stand in front of the class and lets him compose a whole poem just by looking at a picture which helps him to come out of his shell.

*"I hold in my hand a crystal ball. In it, I see great things for Todd Anderson"* says Keating. This helps him to build confidence. later, the boys find out about **"The Dead Poets Society"** and they ask about it to Keating. He tells them that It's sucking the marrow out of life. To live life to its full potential and grab every opportunity is what Thoreau calls, *"sucking the marrow out of it."* He further tells them that in his times, they had this group **DPS** and they used to go to the cave secretly where they recite poems to each other by different poets and of their own. This idea fascinates Neil and he revivals the group again.

Throughout the period, we see how Keating helps the boys to listen to their hearts and speak for themselves. He endeavors to let their brain ponder upon things differently and to make them free thinkers. *"He was their inspiration. He made their lives extraordinary."*

The movie is a breath of fresh air with its outstanding cast such as **William Robins** as Mr. Keating, **Ethan Hawke** as Todd Anderson, and Robert Sean Leonard. The young cast made this movie more enchanting and heartfelt.

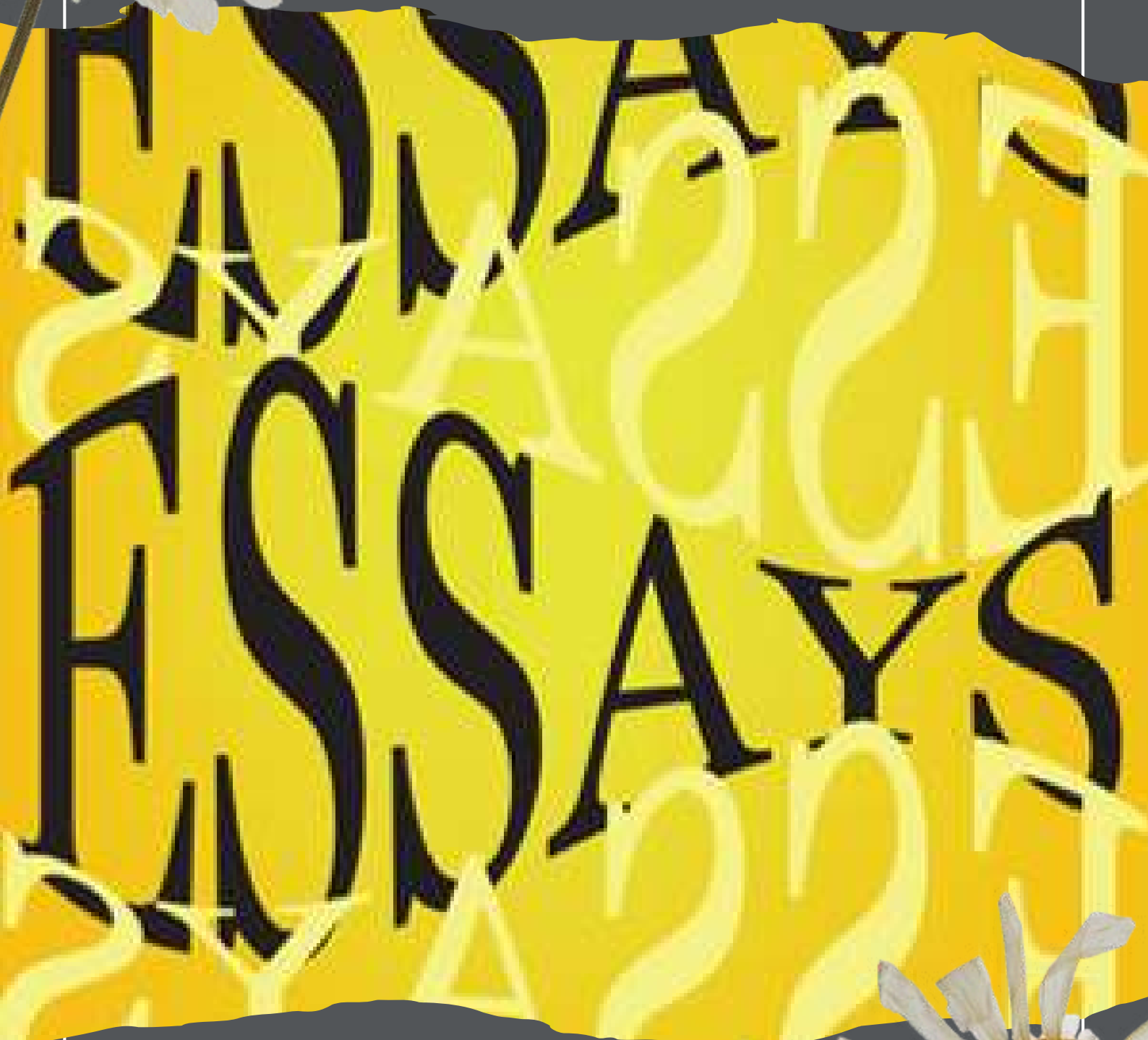
The movie is rife with references to great poets such as Walt Whitman, Alfred Tennyson, Lord Byron, Robert Frost, Robert Herrick, William Shakespeare, etc. The beauty of poetry and the importance of personal literature in one's life is what makes it worth watching. Talking about the title **Dead Poets Society** which is quite intriguing. It can be simply **"Poets Society"** but what's with the word **"Dead"** at the start? In the beginning scene, Keating shows the boys a picture of Squad who had been the members of the former **Dead Poets Society**. Because they used to recite poems by great poets and the boys got inspiration from the words and verses of those **Dead Poets**, the title is quite appropriate.

**Dead Poets Society** has many themes but one of the most prominent themes is **"Carpe Diem"** which means to *Seize The Day*. *While we only live once, we should grab every opportunity that comes our way and what's the point of living if you just only exist?* To leave a mark behind, to have a belief in ourselves, and to silence the intrusive thoughts that relentlessly try to control us, is what the movie trying to present through *Carpe Diem*.

In this hectic life and the world of chaos, it's difficult to find one's voice. It's easy to become a part of any group and believe what others say but keeping oneself firm on his/her beliefs and ideas is the real deal. **Dead Poets Society** beautifully illustrates the meaning of life and helps to find one's voice. There are many teachers in this world. Some we met just see us but few see what's within us and they try to make us aware of those hidden selves. One must have Mr. Keating in his/her life. As a whole, the movie is inspirational and hopeful presenting a beautiful vision of life. If you find yourself aimless, bored, and without any purpose, **Dead Poets Society** is what you need to watch.



# SECTION 3



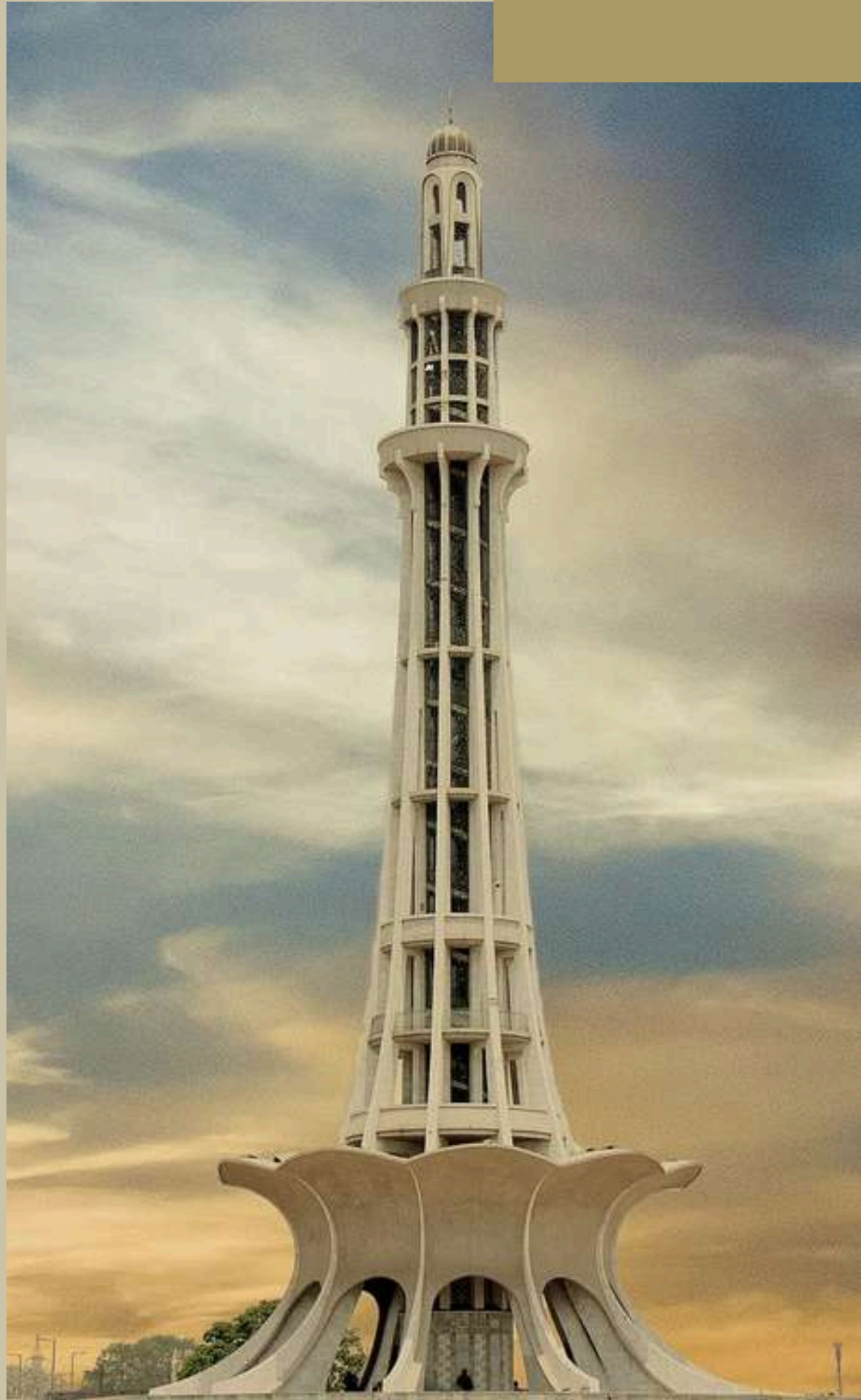
WABI-SABI

2024



PAKISTAN AT 2047 - NATIONAL  
YOUTH ASPIRATIONS

ESSA BY  
MOATTAR  
NIDA



*In twenty-forty-seven  
We'll see a brand-new  
heaven*

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# PAKISTAN AT 2047- NATIONAL YOUTH ASPIRATIONS

Our souls lie in the star that dwells in the heavenly curve of the crescent. Our hearts produce the same beat. Circulating a unified blood of green and white, they vibrate on the same rhythm. With every passing day, our ambitions, toil, and strength raise their reverence and repute. Legacy is the immortality of us mortals. It is the eternal link that connects parents and progeny. Today we are the future; tomorrow we will be the past. And we shall make it worthwhile for our ancestors with their heritage to their heirs taught us that history never dies. The soil of this land is bestowed with resources, guts, and dexterity. With the appropriate amount of timely moisture, it's feasible to foresee an **Eden** sprouting out as we score a century of freedom springs in 2047. Let's dive into that paradise and make the miracles happen.

It's all within the head. Education is the key that opens an empty mind and fills it with thoughts. But, to be educated or to be accommodated, that is the question. For the future, we need to sort out our priorities. Our learning and skill polishing should be the first and foremost. Instead of indoctrinated intellect, we need critical and cultivated minds. For that, we ought to alter our approach toward the concept unanimously. The discrimination between the private and the governmental education sectors should be wholly wiped out. Every student should be treated the same and granted equal chances and choices. Institutes should rather be student-oriented than business-oriented. We need to merge advanced techno-friendly and digitalized learning with the method of teaching. An in-depth study of international systems and cultures brings a lot to the cause. We issue tons of paper piles as degrees from our educational institutions annually, but only a handful of those stones get chiselled to become gems of their crowns. It is potentially possible to see a school, college, university and training centers in each village and city. It is attainable to get those twenty million deprived children admitted to schools and offered free elementary education.

It is conceivable to nip away illiteracy from its roots. It is achievable to spread education, especially in the forlorn tribal areas of the country. It is practicable to make female students free and independent regarding their education and conveyance. The point is, that education is inevitable, both academic and moral, for both nearer and farther future.

***“Education is the movement from darkness to light”***

***Allan Bloom***

The successors of Avicenna can dig a lot out of the field of medicine. The current lot is industrious enough to break new grounds for research medical inventions and healthcare. Dealing with pandemics like **COVID-19** along with finding their antidotes has given medical specialists a wake-up call. The experimentations during the process opened new avenues to cope with such perils in the future. Taking baby steps, **Pakistan** will progress on a huge scale. Health is the wealth for which one can give all he has. If Pakistan is to become a public-centred state, it has to tailor its system by stitching it properly and distributing this wealth for free. In this prospering world, I hope Pakistanis serve humanity in the time to come by discovering a cure for the things uncured, like the intense ailment of AIDS and the curse of Polio. ***“Medicine is the science of uncertainty and the art of probability”***

***William Osler***

The IT experts and the engineers have engineered this global village to perfection. The imaginations and dreams of the predecessors have become tangible. Now, it's our turn to add to this. With our hopes high, we shall scrape the sky, with our professional planes in its lanes; we will once again be great people to fly with. An upcoming fuel crisis looms over the world. The power sector is already under pressure. Necessities explore new opportunities. At the high time, we should lay down magnetic railway tracks and introduce bullet trains. As for automobiles, electric cars are already in towns. Apply the same tactics to heavy machinery.

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They can cause a massive decrease in the air as well as noise pollution. The idea of rechargeable batteries has turned out to reserve many natural resources. It would be great to use solar panels on a large scale to produce electricity. Wind energy is already being used. A new window might be the five deserts of Pakistan. The heat from the sand can also be preserved which can later be used for several temperature-dependent processes. Tons of coal are being used in energy production. This can easily be replaced by the heaps of garbage and rubbish lying uselessly on the roads, in the streets, and at the dump stations. This will deduct a huge ratio of coal and water consumption.

It's not only economical but also environmentally friendly. Implementing these strategies will surely make the country self-reliant in the power sector.

Mechanical engineers with their inventions can invent a whole new lifestyle for humans. The architecture mingling the old archetypes with the new state-of-the-art ideas and infrastructure can reintroduce and reinvent the Mughal legacy.

Planning more space with less ground and implementing it to perfection is the way to go toward the future of real estate. Along with that, land reforms are necessary. The developments in the tribal areas are indispensable. Helium balloons can be used to send internet signals there shortly.

***“Engineering is an art of directing the great sources of power in nature for the use and convenience of man”***

***Thomas Tredgold***

Natural intelligence should not be hesitant to do tricks with artificial intelligence. Our experts are visionary and full of potential. They are very much capable of giving the country its search engine. A huge majority needs to know about the employment hopes to glitter in the web world. The land is crowded with web designers and app developers. There is and can be a lot achieved in this spectrum. One can already see the robots and humans as colleagues and family members. Also, we would need to be vigilant to keep in check its pros and cons. Eventually, artificiality cannot surpass nature.

***“The advance of technology is based on making it fit in so that you don't even notice it, so it's part of everyday life”.***

***Bill Gates***

Speaking of the moon and beyond, **SPARCO** can aim at waving our flag at the lunar land and in the solar system. This universe is adorned with infinite multiverses. This brings infinite gateways of space exploration to the table. Artificial satellites were the first step and now the world has its eyes on Mars. You never know, we might be travelling on space roads jumping from one planet to the other, gauging their conditions, making them habitable, settling there maybe, just like the communities already built on the moon. We may discover new species and creatures in outer space. It might sound all barmy today, But, a quarter of a century later, I fancy these chances. It is all about the drive in the limitless realms.

***There are more worlds ahead of stars,***

***There are still more tests in love to surpass***

***Allama Muhammad Iqbal***

A strong past gives power to the future. The recent happenings as well as the fables we hear of the won wars, give us the green signal for the guaranteed safety, security, and sovereignty of the state. The defence and the armed forces of Pakistan pay the price of its protection through their lives. On September 6th, May 28th, and February 27th, we celebrate the bravery and devotion of our martyrs and patriots. Pakistan being the only nuclear power in the Islamic world will not stop on just that. Our top-ranked ISI will add to its powers. Keeping the imminent dangers in view, the forces shall prepare themselves for any sort of difficulty. Keeping up with the needs of the time, they shall inject more into their skills and assets. When the stealth of the ammunition collides with the waves of courage, our home will become invincible. The waters, soil, and land of the country shall forever remain safe and sound by the power of faith and loyalty.

***“No power on earth can undo Pakistan”.***

***Muhammad Ali Jinnah***

Industrial development is an integral unit for the development of a country. Without this, any sort of production is of no use. This is a time-consuming, but worthwhile prospect. We can revive our mills and brighten up the diminishing chances of our fiscal survival. This shall create room for new jobs. First, we need to work on what we have mismanaged in the past and lay the cornerstones for the future.

It is about time that we consider our Steel Mill seriously and put our efforts into building it again. Every city more or less has the potential to become Faisalabad. Sports products of uncompromised quality can span over the whole country rather than just Sialkot. Every carpenter can use Chinyoti techniques. Instead of recklessly shaving off the skins and hides of the animals for the leather industry it is better to use the 3R strategy. Plastic bags and wrappers can be recycled, reused, and reproduced into accessories like bags and clothes. Not to mention the role of the spinning mills. Our cultural attires and their fine textures have the charm to become a universal phenomenon in the fashion industry. Not only at the large scale but also the small scale and domestic industries can spread their roots. Taking these measures will bring room for employment in society and help erase poverty.

*“The Industrial Revolution was another of those extraordinary jumps forward in the story of civilization”.*

**Stephen Gardiner**

This land is the golden sparrow of the world. The peasant waters it with his sweat and it hatches gold. Unfortunately, of late, the gold diggers have either changed either their paths or their ways. This is mainly because there are more comfort seekers than treasure seekers. Adding burn to the wound, the treasure seekers are not provided with the tools to work with. The need of the hour is the surgery of our economic backbone. This will make our crops sway and stand with their heads high on their land. If we pay heed to the agricultural research centres we can find a replacement for urea, just like urea replaced the muck. Through this, we can deal with the shortage of fertilizers. Experimenting with the seeds might make them more productive. Grafting of different fruits shall not only take less farming space but will also bring new species and kinds to the market. The ever-changing seasons at this clime throughout the year and different climates at different regions will yield a bumper and a wholesome variety of eatables and goods. Even if the weather is not convenient at times, the greenhouses can fulfil at least domestic needs. Our farmers will have to be a lot more modern in their approach. For that, they need the government to educate and support them. In that case, Pakistan will have sufficient indigenous production to fulfil the needs of its people. If the structure is built on this blueprint, it will have a progressive impact on imports and exports and consequently, on the economy.

It will be better to let the golden sparrow hatch its golden eggs as it is capable of than letting the trooping foreign birds make her wither away in her own nest.

*“Agriculture is a fundamental source of national prosperity”.*

**J.J. Mapes**

Sadly, the green colour that embellishes our flag does not reflect on the ground. We have heartlessly cut down the lush greenery for our posh housing societies. The sky is no more bright. The water is no more sheen. Air pollution is at its hype. The earth is no cleaner. This is the current dilemma, not necessarily the prophecy. Nature takes its time. So, this is the right time to get back to it. We need Pakistan clean and green. For that we need to plant an environment with trees, to fill the globe with water and seal the deal for the future. This needs both objective and subjective initiatives.

Trees can be the saviour of both human life and wildlife. A global water crisis is showing up its signs. Dams and water preservers ought to be built at a fast pace. These steps will save water and save us from the water of urban flooding. People can build a water tank in their homes for rainwater. A lot of rainwater gets drained into the sea. Therefore, Desalination plants can be picture-perfect at the beaches. Using the technology we can also have artificial rain if needed.

*“The environment is where we all meet, where we all have a mutual interest, it is the one thing all of us share”.*

**Lady Bird Johnson**

Tourism and the cuisines of Pakistan can help the economy grow by leaps and bounds. This piece of Earth has a special entice that it casts through its ornamented sceneries. Access to this magic also needs to get simpler and easier. The northern and the interior city parts need nothing but development and endorsements. If we develop these areas from point zero and make them secure and state-of-the-art, they can be the hotspots of international tourists and undoubtedly the top-ranked visiting points of the world. The local food stalls with a little fiscal investment can be transformed into restaurants and cafes. Till that time robocooks and Robo-waiters might be there at your service. Every city and every village in this country is rich in culture. This just needs proper handling. These little things will highlight the hues of our foreign image and tell the world what we are as a nation.

*“To travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries”.*

Sports and games are another way of image building in the international arena. Formerly Pakistan has done wonders in the Olympic Games, squash, cricket, and hockey. But the agony is that good times too get passed. Times have changed and so have the rules of the game. We failed badly to keep up with the world in most of the games. Even in these pauper and non-professional sports board oysters, pearls like *Arshad Nadeem* and *Nooh Dastageer* shine out. In the time to come, history needs to repeat itself. We need to find new Jahangir Khans, Babar Azam, and Hassan Sardars. We need to make them champs through proper training. We should focus on indoor games and promote them. Not only that, but we also need to discover E-Gamers, for the coming era is theirs.

Every state is hollow without laws, justice, duties, and rights. To get rid of this hollowness, first, we need to reform ourselves. To change a system of a society, you need to change its parts which are none other than the citizens themselves. We need to hold ourselves accountable, first to our moralities and then to our institutions. Before rights, come citizenship duties. We need to raise the standard of our ethics. If we want the statesmen to do their duties, we need to fulfil our duties first. Everyone needs to pay his share of tax and be morally loyal to the system.

*“No one is born a good citizen or a good democrat or a good leader; it takes time and education”.*

*Kofi Annan*

Rights are the moral privileges humans are bound to have. The need for future generations is to have a Pakistan where justice is neither delayed nor denied but rather served immediately. Which has the freedom of speech but no hate speech. An Islamic state that provides safeguards to all religious minorities. Where no child is abused or laboured. Where no one dares to deprive the woman of her rights or dishonour her. Where there is no one above the law and those more equals are equally answerable for their actions. Where merit prevails and corruption dismantles. Where the populace is provided with all life sustainable. Where old homes do not exist. We wish for a Pak-land which can retrieve its city of lights and gardens from the ashes of devastation.

*“To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity”.*

*Nelson Mandela*

In 2047 we shall see the green standard raised high in the blue. The world will witness the Moon and the star where it belongs. I firmly believe that if we can visualize something, no matter through words or dreams, we can materialize it. Theories can be practised. Dreams are to be dreamed until we give them a masterstroke of reality. All that we need is the will, the will to wander in the obscure holes of possibilities. Pakistan will become the **Asian tiger**. It just needs to learn and toil, until its idols become its rivals.

*In twenty-forty-seven  
We'll see a brand-new heaven  
The system is now Distopic  
Will turn into Utopic*

*We shall catch the stars  
The health of wealth will be ours  
Science and tech will put  
All problems behind the bars*

*The soil will feed us fully  
Atmosphere, good as gold Citizens will be valued  
Like the stories we've been told*

*Waters will quench our thirsts  
Shall see industries buzzed  
A haven for tourists Shall put the skilful first  
We'll set records and milestones In sports and other lanes  
We'll live the dreams we have  
Turning perils in steppingstones*

*We'll die for the life of the land  
We'll be a united clan  
With toil and will and strive  
One day we'll reach our plans*

*In twenty-forty-seven  
We'll see a brand-new heaven*

# SECTION 4

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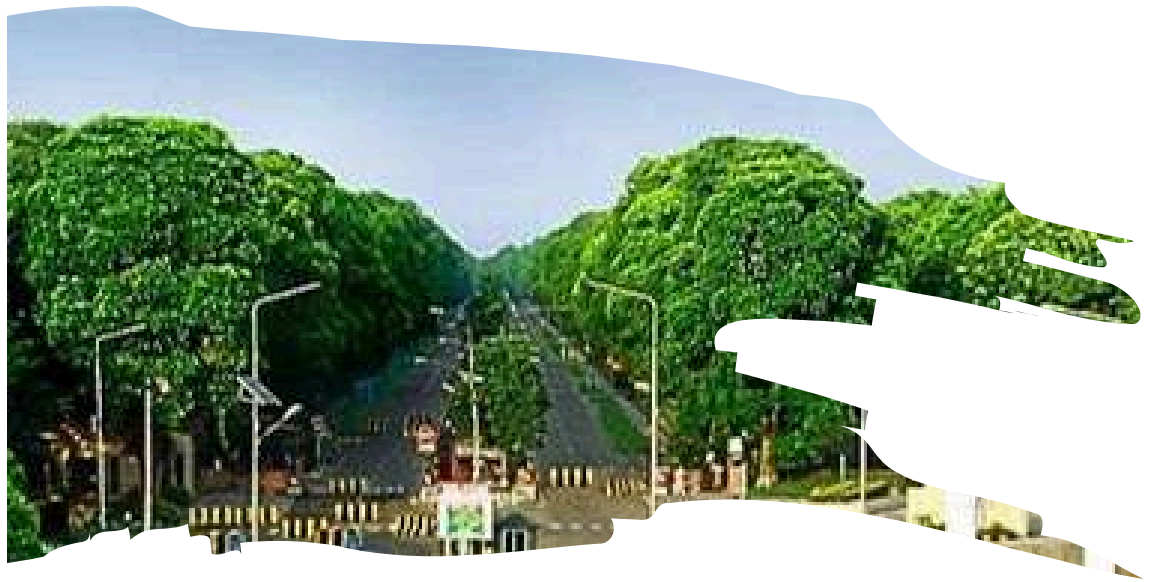
## TRAVEL BLOG

16TH MARCH  
2022

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### KHARIAN ARMY CANTONMENT

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# TRIP TO KHARIAN

BY:TAHIRA JABEEN



# Travel Blog



## *Towards Khariyan Army Cantoment*

No matter where others go for their trip, no matter what others do to amuse themselves, the trip that was arranged by the **Department of English** was the most unique trip. **Head of Department Professor Sajjad Hussain** arranged the trip for the students to the **Kharian Army Cantonment**. It was a beautiful but not usual morning on **March 16, 2022**. Dawn was falling, and I arrived at the university, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at **6:30 am**. Everyone was on cloud nine when we set our journey towards Kharian at **9:00 am**.

On the way through **Jehlum**, we arrived there at **10:35 am**.

Students from a school and college were also invited there. They started the day with a recitation of the **Holy Quran**, **Naat** and an **energetic parade**. School students laid floral wreaths at the memorial.

We did a lot of activities including shooting, boating and archery. We rode on tanks, saw different military equipment and we ended up with an appetizing lunch.

Here I must admit a fact that our soldiers are equally good at cooking.

Unfortunately, the day turned out to be sunny, but even then, it was not affecting our excitement over there. It was just because of the whole ambience, friendly and comfortable environment created by the Pak army captains, cadets and guides. They were enthusiastic and warm toward us. We left the cant at **3 O'clock**. On our way back to **Chakwal** our last stop was **Tulip Riverside Restaurant**, where we also had some refreshments, took pictures at the shore of **Jehlum River** and some students again went for boating. At **6** of the evening, we were all home safe and sound.

The whole day was gratifying and adventurous, which left a permanent mark on our memories. We can never forget the spirit we enjoyed that day. Last but not least, it was not only the place that made the journey remarkable but also the friends with whom we made it to the end.





# SECTION 5

# Hayh fictionary

**FLASH FICTIONS**

WABI-SABI

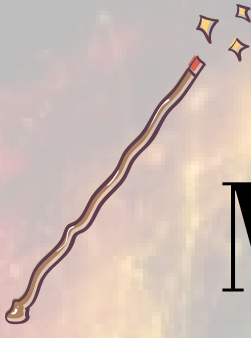
2024



# A FEATHER WAS ON HIS WAY

The sounds of the bombs were piercing his ears while he was thinking about his family. He was shaking and his words were scattered on his page. **“Alia, you are the apple of my eye, daughter! I have brought your favorite toys and I will give them to you when I return home. Pray for your dad because he does not know whether he will see you or not”**. He put that letter in the pocket of his uniform and took the rifle to aim at his enemies. He was fighting like a warrior and shot more than fifteen men. But suddenly a grenade was thrown into his barricade and before he could run away, the grenade pierced his body and the tank rolled over him.

*By Sana Zahra*



# KEY TO THE MAGIC SHOP

02

Entering into the eerie silence, as I descended the deserted street on a misty December evening at 7 o'clock, with my knee-length shoe-covered feet, I stepped upon a buckling concrete road and tripped stumbled upon an insignificant rock and tumbled onto my knees. However, my attention was quickly drawn to a small silver object lying on the sidewalk, which I picked up and examined. The enigmatic anagram carved into it with English alphabets, "**C I G A M P O H S,**" piqued my curiosity, but I was more interested in finding the lock that the key belonged to. My search led me to a purple bannered shop in the middle of the road with "**Magic Shop**" written in gothic font at the center. I felt an inexplicable urge to enter, to seek refuge and healing, and to mend the shattered doors of my mind and the crooked corners of my heart. I tried the key in the lock, but the door remained shut. As I fidgeted with the key, I noticed a message etched on the door: "**In exchange for fears for a positive attitude.**" I took a deep breath, inhaling the scent emanating from the other side of the door, and opened my keen gray eyes. The door swung open, sensing my serenity. I pushed past the greenish leaves hanging from above the door frame and stood at the threshold, only to be greeted by a crystal-clear blue sky and nothing beyond it, except for the murmurs of the flowing wind, ruffling my hair, and the fresh scent of it reaching my soul. I leapt down without hesitation, stretching my arms wide to embrace the balm of healing and the triumph of realized aspirations.

*( Magic Shop is a constructed room for tools used in performing tricks. Also, it is a conceptual place for people to relax, connect, and support one another, or a place or a refuge where dreamers might pursue something they wish to acquire or to give up. )*

*By Zainab Zubair*

# WHEN SILENCE SPEAKS

03

Her soul drifted from the body to satisfy her preference for wandering in stillness. This silence could bring stability to her core and soul. This silence could wall up all the anxiousness in it, to immune her of all unloved memories. She was pregnant with many thoughts but couldn't utter a single letter. She was feeling like a cloud filled with water that never chop down.

She was stepping onward to get solitary from the people and their bitterness with an aspiration of tilting the scenario of her life in her perception, she kept pushing herself. It was the shadiest night she could ever imagine, replenished with a faded crescent moon that emerged as a silver-smudged pearl from her picture.

Moving farther, she glanced at the reflection of her devastated outlook, her skimpy posture under the shade of an old tree. She interrupted her aimless stroll to mull over herself. It was the first thought that came to her mind "*Where was she going?*". It was the guiltiest feeling to strive for nothing. It was hurtful to keep on moving and running, without realizing the destination. All of the rapid, the urge of striding forward dropped like a bird coming to the bottom in suffering. The stillness in her soul was making this all agreeable until she saw the meadows and grass surrounding her after being burned with a start turning black like the straw flame. The smoke was serving her eyes with misery and sorrow.

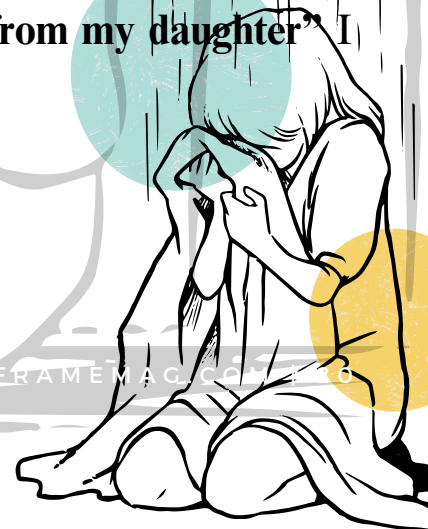
A few the moments ago, there was no one to be detected through her sight, but now, in a blink of a vision, a girl, who was slightly younger than her, was swinging and the twirling with all her might. Her swing was changing positions from the ground to the heights of sky and vice versa; In the pace of glow. She was wearing a blanket of gloom and darkness. Everything was pitch dark. She couldn't see her expression and the picture vanished from her spectacles. Her eyes unlocked and she was lying on an affluent and velvety mattress. But her entire body was drenched in sweat and her respiratory ratio was beyond originality. She was in a trance. It was a NIGHTMARE that ended.

*By Iqra Nayab*

# THE COST OF HAPPINESS

I stopped my car at the parking lot of the hotel and came out of the car. When I was locking the car I heard the sobbing sound of someone. I turned my head and saw a little girl weeping. For a moment, I observed her and stepped forward. I sat across from the little girl who didn't notice my presence because she was crying with her head down. I said, **“Hello little girl!”** She didn't respond. **“I know something worse has happened to you. I'm a stranger, But If you like to tell me the reason for your tears...”** A few moments later, the girl looked up and told me that she was starving and had nothing to eat. I patted her head and gave her a few rupees but the girl refused to take it. She said that money is not the only problem. Even If she possessed money, the workers of the restaurant would not allow her to enter and buy the food. I took the girl to the restaurant. We sat at the middle table and called the waiter. Every worker was giving us scrutinizing glares. One of them said (by pointing to the girl) **“Sir! These people are habitual of such practices, so please don't be so kind to her”**. **“She is my daughter,”** I told him. I had him ordered and after a few minutes, he came back with the meal. The girl ate blindly. After taking a meal, I took her to the beach. The girl ran here and there in exuberance. I looked at her and thought that her happiness was inexpensive, but the satisfaction that I got was much more expensive. We people just need to find this inexpensive way of getting satisfaction otherwise It will be a costly thing in the world. While I was in my thoughts, a person came and dragged her by the arm. He was shouting at her so I stepped forward to save the girl. He yelled at me and said, **“I am her father. Stay away from my daughter”** I stood still barely wondering at his warning.

*By Iqra Batool*





# THE DEATH NARRATED; FURTHERMORE

05

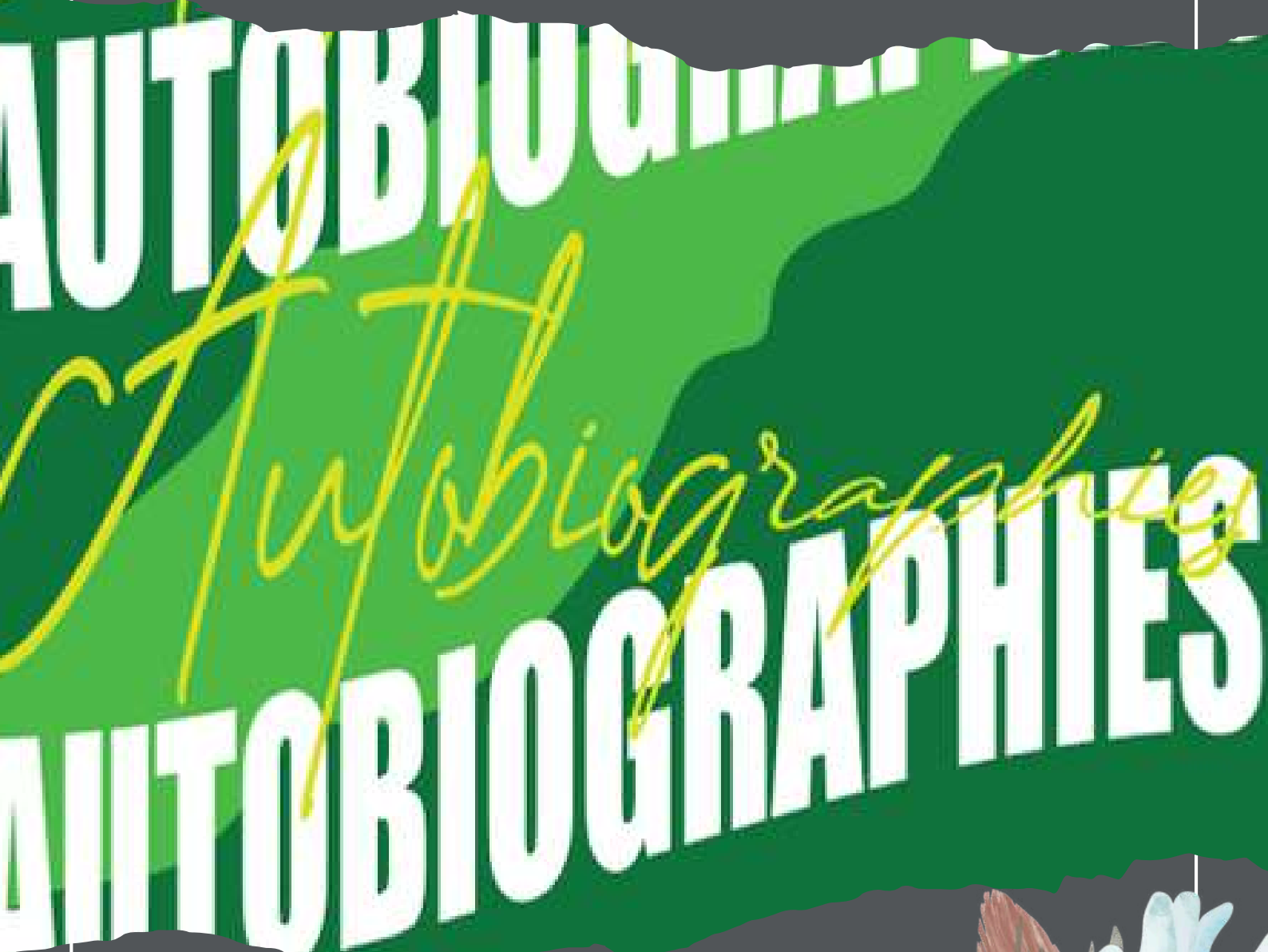
The cracking sounds of the bed woke me up at noon, barely able to regain my senses, overwhelmed by fear and curiosity, I checked under my bed, only to meet the gaze of glowing eyes. A cat perched on my bed startled me, and with a sudden shiver, I woke up. Then, someone knocked on the door, the sound echoing through the room. With a pounding heart and trembling feet, I approached the door, only to find a headless body lurking there. I ran in the opposite direction, toward the stairs. I stumbled and fell, and darkness consumed me before I could scream. I had no chance to gather my thoughts when I found myself back in bed, trapped in nightmares. Again, a knock from the wardrobe shattered my fragile sense of misty reality. My feet dragged me toward the wardrobe, each step heavy with dread, and my breath hitched in my throat. This time, I *screamed*. I screamed my lungs out as I was being pulled in. I wanted it to be a dream, but the searing pain in my chest told a different story. The creature tore my heart from my chest. My blood gushed out like a fountain. The room spun, and I struggled for air. I wondered how I could hear my cat meowing. It took me a moment to wake up, only to find my cat curled on my face, but why was she so big and menacing? *Was this also a dream? Were they figments of my imagination or something far more threatening? I questioned the boundaries of reality.* I tried to throw the cat away, but then I only saw a shocked and confused Eman, my neighbor, in front of me. She must be wondering why, all of a sudden, I was pushing her away. But she seemed pale like someone has sucked her blood out of her body. "*Why were her eyes red?*" My confusion deepened as she pulled me into a tight hug, but she felt icy against my warmth. I struggled to escape her tight hold as my skin met with her sharp teeth sinking into my skin. Weakness enveloped me, and blackness surrounded me. I knew I was at the mercy of that bloodthirsty figure before me. I could hear demons in my head reciting the poem for me:

*Slowly fading away, but I still feel  
Being consumed by a slow demise.  
They hunt me down when I sleep,  
Each night, their knives carve deeper.  
Unprotected by those meant to care,  
Their actions cut deep, wounds that won't heal.  
These nightmares have started reflecting realities,  
Should I spit three times over my shoulder,  
I would always believe, that it repels evil.  
When I wake up again, I'll write a poem  
To narrate the death stories, nightmares and furthermore...*

*By Nida Syed*



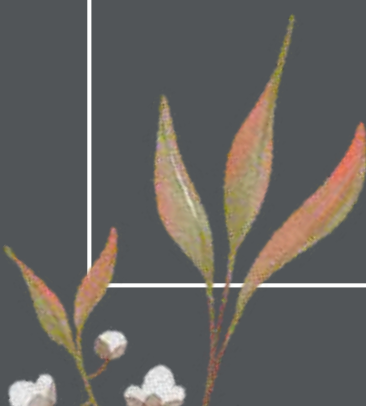
# SECTION 7



## AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

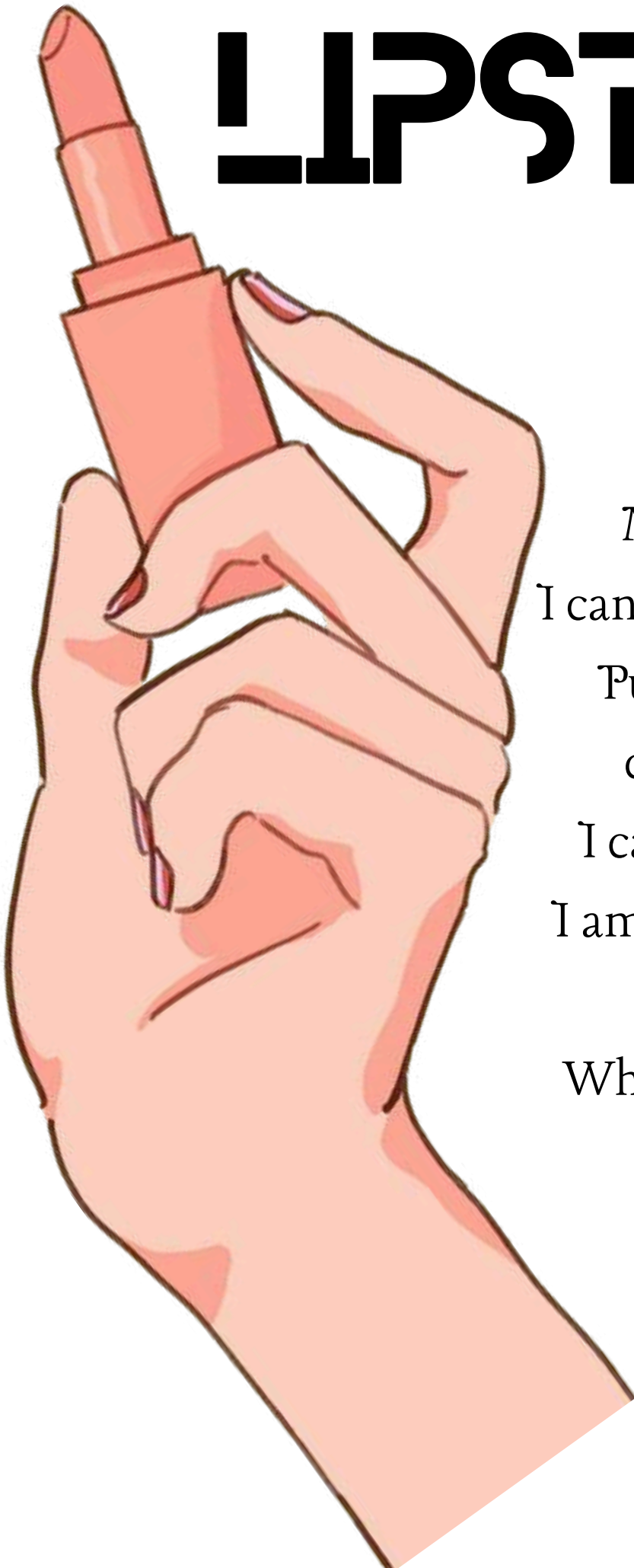
WABI-SABI

2024





# LIPSTICK



M for Medora, M for  
Maybelline, M for Mac  
I can show you 5 minutes hack  
Put me on lips, put me on  
cheeks, put me on eyes  
I can air world's largest lies  
I am a blessing in the world of  
dame  
What is your guess about my  
name?

By Tahira Jabeen



# GRAY WHITEBOARD

I'm a body with the wretched soul  
Not all white, though they call me whiteboard

Are you feeling bit bored?

Come, jote on me a little note

I'm messed up with black smudges  
Just like you with the rising urges  
I'm a body with the wretched soul  
Not all white, though they call me whiteboard

Write on me all your thoughts  
And I'll keep them in me all your faults

Listen! Clean me Up

And I'll give all of my love

I'm a body with wretched soul  
Not all white, though they call me whiteboard

By Farah Afzal



# THE CURIOUS MOUSE

I am a mouse named as Mike. I was living in a forest for two years. I was living with my two family members: “**Johan**” and “**Alpha**”, my younger brothers. We were living happily, one day alpha met his old friend. “**Zic**” who went to city two months ago. He came back to tell the beauty of the city and the luxurious life at a bakery. John and Alpha were interested in going to the city. I resisted. Because I was told about the curses of humans, but they both went to the city ignoring my threats. I was alone in the forest, though there were many other birds and animals, but still, I was alone. I lived there for two weeks in this condition. Loneliness is a condition which is next to death. I also decided to go to the city.

When I left the forest, there were many thoughts and negative emotions in my heart. On my way I met a cat who also came from the city. At First, I was scared from a cat, but she told me that she eats bakery items and fresh fruits. She will not eat me. I felt some relaxation. She told me about the kindness of humans, they used to take care of that cat. She was living happily with humans. I was very curious to meet those types of humans.

When I entered a city, the cat said, “**Goodbye**” and went to her house. At that time I was again alone, I do not know where I should go. There were many shops of different things, there were many houses as well. I liked the first house that was very beautiful and big house with a garden and a swimming pool there. There was a grand entrance of wood, there were three cars in front of the gate. As I entered the door, there were four people. I saw a man, a woman and two children. The man was continuously watching a laptop. Days were gone and gone. A month ago, I came here. I know the names of family members; “**Mr. Bilal**” and “**Mrs. Sara**” were living with their children “**Ali**” and “**Hassan**”. Mr. Bilal was a scientist.

He was very curious about the mysterious things of a world. He has also made me curious by telling unique news. His family was not interested, but I was very interested. Last week, he told about the “**pyramids**” that those are present in many countries, these pyramids were very ancient, he was very shocked to know that those Pyramids are similar to each other, even they are very much a part. And at that time, there were no airplanes or cars or any other vehicles. How those people created the same types of Pyramids. It sounds interesting.

Now I am his companion in all his knowledge or discoveries. He does not know about me. I am a sort of secret companion. Today, he told his family about the “**black hole**”. The black hole engulfs all the things around, even the big Galaxies. First time scientists are succeeded to see the black hole. They think, it is a gateway to the other world. I am very interested in these stories, I want to be with him for the rest of my life.

This morning I saw some gels or Mouse traps here. I am very upset and sad. I was thinking that I am his companion and will be with him. But that was just my thought, human nature changes. He is cruel by nature.



**By Faria Sabir**

# PENCIL



Hey no, no not there, I am here, yes here, no!!!! I am in the left pocket. Arghhhh!! You are driving me crazy. Oh, wait a minute, we have got some guests here. Let me greet them. Well, first of all, I am sorry for creating the disturbance, actually my current owner is a bit dumb. First he did not give me a separate room in this leather building which these giant creatures call bag pack, and now he can't find me. That's the drawback of not giving a beautiful creature like me a separate room, but there is a credit to it too. That you guys got a chance to meet such a busy being like me.

Without further ado, let me introduce myself. I am a 17 cm tall, slim and slender woody being and humans have named me "pencil". I am quite fine with this name because even humans don't get to name themselves. My lifespan is not like that of human beings. They are born small, and then they grew tall, whereas I am born tall and eventually grew smaller as I age with time. But I do have something in common with these giant creatures. Let me disclose a secret today. When a human being is born, he cries and that's the sign of his birth. In the same way, when I am being born, I mean when I am being sharpened I also feel excruciating pain, but my cries are left unheard. Oh! Are you feeling sorry? Well, no need to shed these crocodile tears now, you didn't shed any back then when you sharpened me. So where was I? Oh, yes I was talking about pain, sometimes pain is worth it. As they say, you cannot make a rainbow without a little rain.

I also have some golden moment in my life that I am proud of. For instance, eminent scholars, writers, and intellectuals all had the honor of holding me and by using me they paved their way towards success. Now when I come to think of it, there is another creature that is destined to meet me. Let me recall their name, oh yes, “students”. There is one category of them who loves to embrace me. The second category of them runs away from me like I am a brutal vampire trying to suck their blood, and then comes the final category, the miser students. Do you know why I have named them so? For they sharp me from both ends. Isn't it harassment? Using me in the way I was not supposed to be used. Oh! my poor little soul.

As the fashion changed, I also start wearing makeup and beautiful gowns of black and blue, red and orange, but let me tell you how my life changed. One day when I was deep into my sleep. I felt a fierce earthquake which shook my very roots. I thought I was going to die, so I started praying for forgiveness, but wait a minute I am not like you guys. So before I can figure out what was happening to me, my owner suddenly yelled on top of his lungs" Dad, your phone is buzzing.” So that's how my rival and the antagonist of the story stepped in.

Don't you dare to think that I have given my place to this rectangle mouthed creature-phone, I took pity on it, so I am sparing it for the time being, right now, I will rest, get recharged and will back stronger. Hey, be gentle, I am not your property, well, in a sense I am but let me say goodbye to my guests. Bye bye my friends, my owner has found me, so let's talk some other day. Let's go, Mr. Owner. Oh, no, wait a minute, I can't bear this anymore, just tell me today how many times will you sharp me? My friend, along with phones, please add sharpener in bold letters in my enemy list.

**By Fatima Zahra**

SECTION  
8A TRIBUTE TO THE  
UNSUNG HEROES OF  
OUR NATION

*“Of fragrance and color, beauty and goodness, the metaphors all began and ended in you.”*

*- Faiz Ahmed Faiz*



“Hero”, a golden word for golden people, encapsulates in itself a string of meanings. For some people, a hero might be a prince guarding his princess against the cruelties of life. For some people, they are the persons who are willing to sacrifice their desires, their happiness, and even their lives for the well-being of others, and for some people, their parents are their heroes. A hero is like a treasure, but not all treasures are recognized; some are left hidden, unbeknownst to others. Similarly, goodness is smothered in the darkness of evil; sometimes some efforts are left unheard, and sometimes some golden people are eclipsed by the gigantic monsters of despair and ferocities, and we call these golden people *“the unsung heroes of our nation”*.

When it comes to Pakistan, I am in a dilemma as to whether we call it fortunate or unfortunate. Fortunate in the way that the land of Pakistan is the land of preserving the blood, sweat, and tears of so many of our unsung heroes, and unfortunate in the sense that we are so busy that we don't have time, or maybe have too much time to waste, that we don't pay attention to their efforts or give any appreciation.

Today, this tiny effort of mine has only one purpose: the purpose of highlighting the efforts of some of the unsung heroes of Pakistan, if not all, and proving that we are not like dumb driven animals; we are the people who are living in the world, not just existing

*“Children should have pen and well-being, not tools.” - Iqbal Masih*

Out of so many heroes, the first person I have the honor to highlight is “**Iqbal Masih**”. When he was four years of age, he was sold by his parents to a carpet-weaving company. There, he became a victim of child labor. He worked for 12 hours daily, and to make escape impossible for him and other children like him, they were kept tied to chains. When he was **10 years old**, he managed to escape, but unfortunately, he was not successful in his attempt. He was caught by the police and handed back over to his employer. But that didn't shatter his hopes and determination, and one year later, he managed to escape successfully. After escaping, he did not attempt to hide; rather, he strived hard for the freedom of all those children like him who were caged in the cruel claws of dreadful beasts disguised in human bodies and were able to free over **3,000 children**. After returning from a campaign, he was shot dead by the Pakistani carpet mafia. Even though he lived for merely **12 years**, he accomplished the achievement that most of us cannot even try to achieve in our life of 60 years. He was, is, and will always be a hero in its true sense.

*“Whoever saves a single life, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind.” - Quran 5:32*

Being financially strong is not the only thing needed to become a hero; sometimes a kind heart, determined will, and love for mankind are more important for a hero, and this is proved by **Sanaullah**. He is not the CEO of a big NGO or a social activist but a simple man hailing from **Karoona village**. His efforts were witnessed in the massive flood of **2010** when hundreds and thousands of people became victims of the cruelty of nature. In a situation in which everyone was worried about their own lives, Sanaullah risked his life and saved the lives of up to **2,500** people in Karoona village and transported them in his boat to safe areas. His efforts are surely worth appreciating and admiring.

In this era of rising inflation, where survival has become difficult with each passing day, **Parveen Saeed** is the paragon of generosity and kindness. A down-to-earth woman who took the initiative to help people in need by providing them with food in the form of **Khana Ghar**. She started this after she heard the news of a mother killing her two innocent children because she had no food for them. In her words, *“My conscience did not allow me to ignore this reality, and I started Khana Ghar.”* She began this endeavor after hearing about a mother who, unable to feed her children, took their lives. Parveen Saeed recalled, *“My conscience wouldn't allow me to ignore this harsh reality, so I started Khana Ghar.”* What's remarkable about Parveen's initiative is that she doesn't provide food for free, instead charging a nominal fee of 3 rupees. She believes that by paying for their food, a poor person's dignity and self-respect remain intact, and this approach helps without creating a sense of superiority or inferiority. This exemplifies that heroes aren't born, but made through their attitudes, behavior, and thinking.

Moving on, it's time to highlight the heroes of the mountains, Gilgit Baltistan. **Aneeqa Bano** and her husband, **Afzal Rasool**, took the initiative to build the first school, **Nargis Khatoon Hearing Impairment School**, in their area, Skardu, for differently abled children. They were motivated to act when they couldn't find a suitable school for their own child, who suffered from hearing impairment. Rather than giving up or waiting for the right moment, they took charge and made it happen. Today, their school, the only one in the area, is a beacon of hope not just for their child but for many others as well.

Apart from the people that I have mentioned above, there are so many of our gems that are glistening with pure light making Pakistan proud. For instance, **Saba gull** ( the CEO of popinjay, an organization that provides education and employment to underprivileged girls in Pakistan), **Ayan Qureshi**, the youngest Microsoft certified professional ( at the age of 5 years and 11 months), **Maria Toor**, the Youngest squash champion in the world and **Samar Khan** the first woman cyclist in the world to ride **Biafo Glacier (45000 km)** on a cycle, all are the pride of Pakistan. These heroes are like a ladder bringing Pakistan closer to success and prosperity but so many of them are still unrecognized, now it's up to us to locate these hidden treasures, which will light our present as well as our future.

*You are that one ray of hope that lights up our darkest hour.*

*You are that brightest star in the sky, the way finder for every astray's eye.*

*You are our spring, the season of bloom that puts an end to every gloom.*

*Yes,*

*you are our fighting knights that amaze the world with their heightened flights.*



# SECTION 8



# MONOLOGUE



## MONOLOGUE

WABI-SABI

2024





# PAKISTAN SPEAKS ITS HEART OUT

*By Abdul Mueed Qazi*

**Pakistan:** Salam! My dear, I am Pakistan, your very own mother-land. I am here to speak my heart out! I want to tell you what I have kept in me for so long. The phenomenon I have felt over the years through the eyes of heart. My dear, Abdul Mueed [Suppose your name here as you are reading it] will you listen to me?

**Abdul Mueed:** For Sure! My sweet mother-land. I am all ears.

**Pakistan:** I am reaching my platinum jubilee means I am heading towards my 75th birthday this august. I will not going to take much of your time but I literally want to tell you all what I have in my heart.

**Abdul Mueed:** Dear mother-land, do not be anxious. I am here for you, count on my support.

**Pakistan:** It's a seventy five years extensive story but I will tell you about my childhood and my early young age some other time. This time around I will be telling you my heart felt scenes that are sort of agonizing burden on my body and soul. You know when I was growing up, I was flourishing, enjoying the wholesome time of my life, the transition from the master age to the young and adult. It was I think 71' when my right hand (East Pakistan) got parted from my body due to the internal war and betrayal of people, it felt to me like my whole soul for once had been squeezed out and put into place again, it was the time when I wept tears of blood. It felt to me like I was buried in a grave and kept my body without soul in a dark and horror grave. I am a body which is keeping 240 million people, that's a lot of burden but I love each and everyone of them as every mother does.

They make my soul that's why I referred to the parting of my right hand (East Pakistan) as the departure of my soul for once.

Well, I am not fully able of putting my feelings into proper words as you know I am growing older, I don't feel enough power or strength to put my notions into words how I want to.

It's sort of an uphill task for me, but I am here after a long time to tell you what I felt through different instances. Parting of East Pakistan was such a wound that took many years to heal up for me and the process of healing yet had its ramifications, and the cruel people did not even think of mine.

You know when I after every five years come to know that someone new, very capable who's going to take care of mine as I am their motherland, is taking the charge. Me, on every occasion hoped and still hope that now I will be taken care well by them. I always got betrayed for every five years and still suffering, look what they have done.

I am growing older, and they still don't even think of that. I will take you back to 80s and mid 80s, I was a middle aged young and was progressing so well, had so many good friends all around the world. The people of that time had taken care of me so well as they should be. It was the time everything seemed so rosy, despite the hiccups and challenges, felt myself in safe hands. Then going into the 90s and 2000s I started to sense that someone in fact not one but almost everyone was using me for their purposes. The betrayal of the highest degree was rising on the occasion and they were showing no mercy, had no shame and sympathy for me.

In 1998 blessed with a power, that I didn't like because of its destruction to humanity, but I know it's not totally wrong but the misuse have its destructive consequences. Then the array of horrendous events started to happen, wrong decisions of the upper class, put me in spot of bother, in terrible situation, in destruction, those didn't even had any feelings for me, feelings of neither empathy nor sympathy. They had no idea what was going to happen to me, what will be ramifications of all that , what effects it will bring to me. They thought nothing. What I will suffer from those horrendous decisions. The blasts and bloodshed of my soul, on every other occasion gave such pains and sorrows that are still on the account of healing. The rents are still bleeding, I every day and night shriek with utmost pain that my soul is going through. The unbearable affliction, agony my dear, you are listening to the story, heartfelt instances and you might be feeling the agony, the torture, the torment, the mental and physical discomfort I am in.

My dear! (Here, motherland was sighing with tears, she was sobbing).

I am suffering from contagious, cancerous ailment, which no one had tried to cure or still are not thinking of treating.

Every event, every blast, every killing jolted my soul into hundred of thousands of pieces. You can't imagine what sort of affliction you bear when your body and soul separate. Wept bitterly for the my soul, my people. How should I explain. I am short of words. My feelings are still not been presented in a right way. I am so broken. I am shattered. My story of grieves has no end, and still my heart is loaded with such stories of betrayal, destruction but I know you might be getting annoyed and bored as well. I know my dear I know! But one last message I want to convey. Suffering made me fragile!!!! Ahhhhh!!! My dear! Abdul Mueed are you still listening?

**Abdul Mueed:** (with emotions in eyes), I am here! Absolutely. My sweet mother-land. Carry on. (He was filled with empathy in his heart for the land and it's people.)

**Pakistan:** Then listen dear. On many instances had dreams where I met my father, Quaid e Azam, have told him my misery, dejection, sorrow, lament. My grieves. While I was explaining the tale of betrayal, dejection, I was sobbing in between. He had the following conversation with myself once.

**Quaid:** “ Look my dear, I have come to know what you are suffering from, what afflictions your body, your soul, your people have gone through. You and they are not living the life I dreamt for them. But.....”

**Me:** But? What? My father!

**Quaid:** “My dear! These ignorant, corrupt, devilish people don't know what they are doing. What horrific plot they are making to themselves. Putting your body and soul into trouble in this mortal, perishable world, they can't get all.”

Then he took a break for some moments and started to get emotional and sobbed while pointing towards the sky “**O ALLAH**” and said

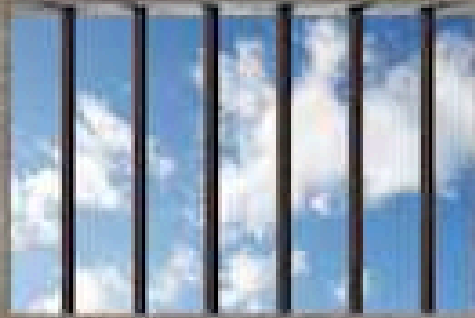
*“O my Lord! Whatever they are doing to my dream, my dear Pakistan, to it's body, to it's soul, you have the right place and day for everything to stand and be accountable to you. I am leaving the matter of my Pakistan, my dear to you.”*

SECTION 9

# ONE ACT

## PLAY

by Farah Afzal



### *Characters*

**Mahmood:** An old man

**Waleed:** A 20-year-old young man

**Police Officer**

*(The cell) Waleed, sitting on the floor with his legs crossed at the ankles, his head reclining against the wall. He has a rounded face and straight brow, and a few strands of hair are cascading, obscuring the cut right above his left eye. Across from him sits an old man with salt and pepper hair, bloodshot eyes, emanating melancholy, and tattered clothes with a few smudges. They are facing a policeman who is standing there observing them intermittently.*

*The two of them are silent, their shadows meeting at the centre of the room, and the snoring can be heard from neighbouring cells. The clanking of the steel bars breaks the silence as the officer, holding his black truncheon steps in and shuts the door behind him.*

**Police Officer:** (addressing the old man) You will be released tomorrow morning.

**Mahmood:** (maintaining a fixed gaze on the floor as if his voice doesn't bother him, makes no answer)

**Police Officer:** Remember the day you came here the first time? 25 years ago? What a handsome lad you must have been!

**Mehmood:** (unperturbed, silent)

**Police Officer:** Are you prepared to depart, Gramps? (He

Points towards him with his truncheon) (Waleed keeps gazing at them in silence)

**Mehmood:** Depart? (Inquires in bewilderment as if hearing the word for the first time)

**Police Officer:** Yes, depart, to your home.

**Mehmood:** But isn't this the place where I belong? Mehmood's home?

**Police Officer:** (Gives his cap a gentle touch) You don't seem to be happy, Gramps. Are you?

**Mehmood:** I don't know, but as far as I can recall, I've been content all of my life. (Comes to silence)

**Police Officer:** You've been waiting for this moment for a long time, Gramps! Haven't you? Now it's here.

**Mehmood:** A long time ago!

**Police Officer:** Tomorrow's dawn is going to bring a change in your life. Isn't it?

**Mehmood:** I don't understand. (Putting his hand on his head)

**Mehmood** isn't that intelligent.

**Police Officer:** You're finally going to get your freedom by tomorrow morning.

**Mehmood:** (Exchanges glare with Waleed, pointing his left hand to his side and then Officer's) I'll get my freedom. Do you hear it? I'll get my freedom!

(Police officer leaves)

(Talking to himself) Freedom? What do you call freedom? (Chuckles)

The way he is saying, it must be a big deal.

(Silence)

**Waleed:** I haven't seen you talk like that since I met you. I always tried to talk to you, but you don't answer.

**Mehmood:** (Low shoulders, head down.. silent)

**Waleed:** Won't you answer me now?

**Mehmood:** (Seems unbothered, looks at his feet, moves his wrinkled hands over his frail feet, and then slowly brushes the fungal nails)

**Waleed:** Seriously? Come on, Old man! Gramps! It's not like I want to be friends with you, and how much time do I have to make a friend anyway?

**Mehmood:** (His expressionless face looks up, turns his way, they exchange glares)

**Waleed:** I don't understand why you aren't happy.

**Mehmood:** (Sighing heavily) Happy? Is it a must-have thing? What is there to be happy about when one is confined to a cell, staring at the walls, and waiting to be freed?

**Waleed:** But now you're going to get freedom tomorrow. Isn't this something to be happy about?

**Mehmood:** Are you asking if I'm happy? I'm afraid my vocabulary is limited. As far as I know, Mehmood was born happy. (He finally speaks)

**Waleed:** Then why the long face? At least you're going home. It's not like me, who's facing the death penalty tomorrow morning.

**Mehmood:** What is home?

**Waleed:** Everyone has a place they belong to, that's their home. Don't you have one?

**Mehmood:** Look here! I turned the cold knife inside me trying to stay happy, and now I'm a wounded bird. Breathing, alive. All for what? This damn prospect of waiting and something to happen has kept me alive despite the absurdity of all.

These bold walls that stand, gazing back at me, but I'm good here. I'll gain my freedom someday, or never.

**Waleed:** Don't you have any memories? Your loved ones? Your wife? Your children?

**Mehmood:** Memories? Do you mean from yesterday? Yes, I recall. You came yesterday, didn't you?

**Waleed:** You don't understand, do you?

**Mehmood:** (scratching the scalp on his head) Are memories significant?

**Waleed:** Memories are like flashbacks you can look up, like photographs you can see. These are like small episodes of our existence. One should have memories, especially in a state where we're left with nothing but memories.

**Mehmood:** Why one must have one and above all, to think them over and over again.

Do you have any?

**Waleed:** Ahh! (Letting out a sigh!) Some memories are worse, but some feel like home – sweet and joyous. I do have memories. You can say they're sweet, or maybe that's what I need to recall.

(Pause)

**Waleed:** I never knew these were important. I never knew those stupid poets could be right when they say some memories keep you alive, like ones related to your beloved.

**(Pause)**

Since I won't see you from tomorrow on, and you won't see me either, why don't you tell me how you ended up here? You seem like a nice person! What did you do that you ended up like this?

**Mehmood:** I don't remember. Mehmood isn't so smart. But one thing I know is that I've spent years waiting behind these bars, waiting for that one door to open, but I no longer yearn for it.

**Waleed:** What do you mean? There has to be a reason you're here.

**Mehmood:** They obeyed, and were called loyal, I refused and they called me a rebel. I spoke the truth and they called me a troublemaker, I stayed silent and they called me complicit.

**(Pause)**

**Waleed:** What happened exactly?

**Mahmood:** (Continuing) They sold out my people and were declared heroes, and I spoke for my community and they named me a traitor.

**(Silence)**

**Waleed:** I killed my wife!

**Mehmood:** (Looks deadpanned)

**Waleed:** Well, I loved her too. I'm a man. Am I supposed to justify my every act? One night, when I came home drunk, I couldn't restrain myself, and I slapped her relentlessly and choked her until she was out of breath.

**(Silence again..)**

**Waleed:** But I loved her! I've never loved any other woman like her. I regret it, but it's too late. I want to get out of this cell and take my own life, but I'm unfortunate not to be able to take my own life. I'm miserable, lying at the mercy of them to give me death.

**Mehmood:** We won't be here tomorrow.

**Waleed:** Isn't it peculiar that you'll be free the very same day I'll be facing the death penalty?

**(The room falls silent again. Waleed looks around and yawns.)**

**Let's sleep peacefully (chuckles) as if there's no tomorrow.**

**Mehmood:** There's none!

**Waleed:** Strange!

**(Morning)**

**(Waleed slowly awakens and surveys his surroundings, yawning and rubbing his eyes. It's still dark, and he can hear a few prisoners snoring. The old man is still lying in his spot, eyes closed, his salt and pepper hair tangled. His right hand is on his knee, and he's sleeping peacefully.)**

**Waleed:** Gramps?

**Are you not going to do prayers today?**

**(No response from the old man, he stands up and shakes him) Waleed:** Gramps?

**(No response)**

**(Silence)**

**(Curtains)**

# SECTION 10



## SHORT STORIES

WABI-SABI

2024



# The Crown of Shadows

Author:

*Iqra Nayab*

It was a shady, misty, and cold night, presenting the view of the full moon, in Winter when Elora, after having the periodic nightmare since her childhood, strolled out of her little hut, leaving her best friends; Tallhart and Aldon; two tiny elves in the hut; behind, to a cold wonderland. Velvety snow falling as a sign of virtue at the top of her, from the sky; and deliberately increasing flickery light from the pit of fire enlightened her features marvellously. She found herself falling through space. She was standing near the pit of fire folding her arms around her chest. Over her head, the blackish-gray sky was struggling with twinkling Stars and smoky clouds, blocking the darkness between them. The pale crescent moon shone like a silvery claw in the cloudy sky. The moon, like a sly pearl enriched the loveliness of the night sky. It seemed a bewitching hour of the night, spreading all the magnificence, covering the world like a white feathered protector. The shower of glittery rays, with a sweet smell of fire, far, from the chimney inside her hut made the view breathtaking.

The night sky was blazing with colours. White hot flames shimmer through fierce yellow and into burnt orange as flames lick the trees. A blanket of smoke covered everything. Elora was standing still and all over the place made her flawlessly elegant and unblemished. All of a sudden, when Elora was dissolved into her thoughts, A huge phoenix, resembling an eagle but with rich red-gold and scarlet plumage, came from nowhere, flying over her head, screaming and cawing aloud like a wounded entity. Elora felt herself breathless and became frightened because she had never seen such a bird in her life. She took a few steps back in a great hurry, unknowingly. Phoenix was holding a magical talisman in one of its claws revolving around her head. Seemed like casting a spell on her. Slowly, the bird started alighting down close to her feet near the burning pit and threw that talisman into it. And disappeared in a beat. Elora was thoroughly perplexed and could not make any head or tail out of the matter.



When the talisman fell into the burning fire, it started transforming itself into a horrible giant creature out of nothing. It was growing vastly. The time seemed to be stopped by the eyesore of the existing entity. It had many hands, a terrible big mouth, and with foul smell arousing all around. The place where, a few minutes ago, the serenity and composure, of feelings and emotions were playing the leading function, was now, nowhere to be found. The scenario was now precisely opposite to before. The huge giant was demolishing everything and the snowy kingdom was getting transformed into a chaotic and hazardous outlook. It felt like, the giant was doing this on purpose, or it was a sign of something else, but Elora was clueless about the purpose and mastermind behind the devastation. The Phoenix, the Magical Talisman, and the formation of that Giant causing destruction all over the locale were unnerving Elora to a tremendous extent.

Because of the thunderous voice, Tallhart and Aldon came outside following the voice. From a farther view, the immensely huge creature looked dangerous. But there are some reasons for the beast to be the beast. When both elves watched this unknown creature from the back of the hut's door with the edge of their big shiny eyes, they started shivering, but still moved forward to save Elora; walking hastily side by side. Nothing would deviate them from the promise they made to Lady Tide. Both the elves always took care of Elora. They were with Elora since her childhood, when Lady Tide, her caretaker came under the spell of a werewolf for the sake of Elora's safety. Only Tallhart and Aldon knew about it, and they never told Elora about Lady Tide. Elora found only two of them near her ever since she gained consciousness.





Elora stood Rigid and motionless in the moonlight. The huge giant with insane bright bloody-red eyes came in front of Elora. The giant holds her neck firmly and raises her from the ground. Elora was watching the happening of the moment vulnerably. The giant watched in the eyes of Elora. Things started and threw her down with abomination. The giant turned its back to Elora and started moving away from her. He walked towards Tallhart and whispered to him, "I'll be back Tallhart, Wait for my comeback" The way it appeared from nowhere; magically, vamoosed in the instant of time, leaving Elora; bewildered and astonished. But there was something she remembered, His eyes.

As the giant disappeared, Aldon and Tallhart ran towards Elora and held her feet tightly to show affection. Elora was still shocked and unable to utter anything. She felt like she had encountered this happening once before in her life, but she was unable to recall what exactly happened. She was just thinking and analyzing the whole scenario. All of a sudden she felt a sudden change in her body. She screamed in agony as her knees reversed direction and her bones shifted inside of her. She felt an unbearable pain and shrieking pangs all over her body. She fell unconsciously. Tallhart and Aldon now understood that the appearance of the giant was not a mere happening of night But the indication of the entrance of Gonzolo. After twenty years, Back again Becoming more mightier and braver. They looked at each other hopelessly. Because the time had arrived when the promise was going to be fulfilled. The scene took a turn to few years back.



*20 years ago*



Lady Tide just came back to her home after the burial of Ms Amanda. She cried for the fate of this baby who was born a few days ago. She was with Ms. Amanda for a long period. But now, she was dead and never to be seen. This catastrophic failure of life made her extremely dreadful. She had no idea whether to mourn over her late lodger or the destiny of the little infant who just opened up her eyes to see the viciousness of this undying world. While looking at the small face of her,

“She is so weak. I do not know how she will bear this pain”

Lady Tide said to Tallhart.

“I am sure, she will gain her power within a few days” Tallhart replied hopefully.

Tallhart, in a grave tone, looking at the pendulum, replied, “Her weakness will enlighten her devastated present and her bright courageous future.”

Unaware of the future of this delicate baby with a rosy outlook.

“I hope that your prediction comes true.” An unknown voice arose from the back of the door. “But I will not let this happen.”



Their eyes start filling up with water. Tallhart and Lady Tide wanted to say something to him. But the pain on his face made them unable to speak. Collecting a power of few words, Lady Tide said politely, “She is not the reason for the end of your family. She was just born a few days ago. Her mother has gone to the eternal world. Her father is nowhere to be found. And the reason for this all to be happened was your father. He shattered the powers of an alpha werewolf in the covetousness and greed of authority. You can not punish her for the act she doesn’t even know about”

Lady Tide stopped speaking when she saw the ferocious face of Gonzalo squeezed with anger. He kicked off the plant vase and said with a serious tone, “Only she is the reason for everything, she is a major threat to me now. Her father destroyed my family and now she is here to take my powers. I hate her for her birth She has no value in her existence.”



Lady Tide looked at his face hopelessly and took a suspire.

Gonzolo resumed his words,

“Only Humans are tuned for relationships” looking at the broken pieces of the vase.

Nostalgic moments popped up into his mind and he wiped out his tears emotionlessly.



He whispered again, “ When you are dead.... All you see is, darkness.” He sighed and said, “But I do not think that she is supposed to see darkness.” He came near the baby laying down in the cradle. He peeped up into her eyes. Something stopped at the moment. Within a second the sudden ambivalence changed into absolute hate. Gonzolo destroyed everything in a second. Now he had to remember his true motive of being there. He has to wait until she is grown.

He put a magical charm into the neck of Lady Tide, as a sign of owing them all. As the charm fell into her, she disappeared. Tallhart is astonished when he finds out that he will never see Lady Tide again, but he is unable to resist this huge creature.

Gonzalo moved towards Tallhart and said in the lowest voice, “You will give her to me, and I will give you back, your Lady Tide” he promised.

Gonzolo considered her the reason for the fight between omega werewolves, to be an alpha male werewolf, their fathers. The father of Gonzolo and that baby Elora’, both died in the rivalry of being a major part of their stories. Neither Gonzolo nor Elora had anything to do with it. But someone who lived close to both was involved in plotting the whole devastation.

Now Gonzolo had to take revenge as the last wish of his father. He was unaware of the greed and avarice of his father. He was just following the path of his father to spread hostility and abhorrence.



# Present time



Elora felt a sudden change in her body. She screamed in agony as her knees reversed direction and her bones shifted inside of her. She felt an unbearable pain and shrieking pangs all over her body.

She fell unconsciously.

Aldon and Tallhart raised her and took her to the hut. When Elora woke up and gained consciousness, Tallhart decided to tell her the reality about Giant, Phoenix, and magical charm.

Two days had passed since the devastation.

Everything outside was devastated and completely ravaged. When Elora woke up, she felt severe pain in all her body. She was unable to be up straight. She laid down. Tallhart and Aldon came

back to the room when Elora started sobbing.

Aldon looked at Tallhart because he knew the real story of it. Elora looked Tallhart suspecting with her red bloodying eyes. Like she was asking him to tell the truth. Tallhart and Aldon, both were terrified of Gonzolo. They never wanted to say this to Elora. But now, circumstances were completely different. However, She eves-dropped everything when Tallhart was telling it to Aldon.

But Elora was their best friend. They always stayed together everywhere. They did not want to harm her. They always protected Elora and now they were wretched and distressed, so Elora did not tell them because she never wanted to hurt those little helpers.

As they both were thinking about telling Elora,

Gonzolo suddenly appeared horribly. “Now is the time of revenge baby Elora,” Gonzolo said in a tough tone.

Elora looked at him unknowingly. She never saw this man in her life.

Tallhart came in between and pleaded with Gonzolo to go away. But he punched at his little face and pushed him hard to the side wall. Elora was not feeling well and was traumatized because of the destruction and horror of that Giant. She did not know that the person in front of him was the same creature in disguise.

Gonzalo walked towards Tallhart and said quietly, “Do not you want to see your master, Lady Tide?..... You do not seem excited little creature. Aren’t you going to prove your loyalty to your master?”

In a few milliseconds, he rushed towards Elora held her tight from her head, and dragged her out of her little dwelling. She was screaming and crying. She was a delicate girl with no power to fight this huge man. She struggled with him but in no vain. It was all the anger and hatred towards her, that he didn’t focus on the fact that Elora was unaware of everything that happened 20 years ago.

He looked into her eyes, and again, his heart pounded harder. But he ignored the hubbub of his heart and slapped at her rosy cheeks. Her lips started bleeding from this sharp smash. She was watching Tallhart and Aldon with the hope that they would come to save her from this monster. But they went back to the hut ignoring the fact that Gonzolo was there to kill her. Now there were only two of them. Elora was crying bitterly and asked him to leave her. But he acted like a deaf with emotionless gestures. He threw her hard to the ground and kicked into her belly. Her eyes swelled with crying. She was lying on the floor crying at her misfortune. She heard everything and now she was waiting to close this chapter of her life where she had nothing to do with anyone’s death but still, she was ultimately the reason. Elora’s father was a werewolf but only Gonzolo and Lady Tide knew about this, so Elora was waiting for her death unaware of her power and its use. When Gonzolo carried her like a wounded animal, he threw a parrot to Tallhart wearing a magical talisman. As the bird was on the ground, it changed into a human being. It was the breakdown of Lady Tide’s spell.

On the other side of the time, Gonzolo threw her into a dungeon and beat her up for half an hour. She completely lost her mind. There were scars everywhere on her body. The torture was beyond her energy, but she was still alive.

Aldon and Tallhart seemed so happy and elated after watching Lady Tide back. But for Elora, their hearts were crying. They didn’t want to leave her in the hands of that cruel, but for the freedom of Lady Tide, they had to stay quiet. Later on, They kissed Lady’s hands as greetings. She asked about Elora because the most awaited moment of her life was to see her as a young beauty. She was nowhere to be found. Lady Tide groped for her. Her heart was alarmed. She asked brutally, then both elves told her the whole of some. They asked her to help Elora because only she was the one except for Gonzolo who knew the use of Elora’s powers. She wanted to save her. Because Elora was the last retention of Mrs. Amanda, her daughter.

When Lady Tide heard about this mishap, she left everything there and went for Elora. At Gonzolo' the condition of fragile Elora was miserable. Gonzalo came back again with some food after four hours. There was a magical scepter, that Lady Tide had with her to fight Gonzolo and save Elora. When she reached the point where Gonzalo kept Elora, she took the shape of a small rat to get inside the house. She passed in easily. There was no one in except these three, the one Gonzolo and Elora were unaware of the presence. She hid herself behind the ceiling of the room.

She took her wand and attacked Gonzolo with her full power. Due to the sudden smash, he felt incredible pain. He fell, while Lady Tide came forward and got her actual self. She came in front of Elora and tried to get her up. She was too weak and powerless to stand by herself. She looked astonishingly at her because Elora had never seen this woman in her life. Lady Tide, aware of her thoughts, said to her, "O! My little Elora, I'm sorry for this all. I was waiting for your growth so you may know what happened to your father and mother."

Elora was still looking at her unconsciously. Without stopping to listen, Elora, Lady Tide started, "You know, Gonzolo wants to kill you, but I don't want him to kill you." Because it's my chance to get your power, Elora, it's my authority that you're holding. Now I'm back and I'll take my powers from you. You're just like your mother... she always trusted me because of her innocence. But look, I got her magical and most powerful sceptre. Now I'll have your powers to be an immortal entity. You little poor soul....get ready to meet your brave and enthusiastic parents, just like you."

After saying this, she stabbed into her heart. There was complete silence. No... you will get nothing... mark my letters.... Lady Tide..... Stop.

Look here.... Get up..... Lady Tide laughed mischievously.

There was nothing but darkness. She was losing herself. After much suffering, it felt better to die...

Gonzolo strived to get up, but Lady Tide, at that time was sucking and smelling Elora's blood to expand her powers.

It was too late.... She got accomplished after yearning for forty years of her life. There was a point when evil won, because of unnecessary hate and wrath for an innocuous human. It leads to both towards dead ends.



Now, She is going to be immortal. The powerful wand of Elora's mother was so powerful that kept Gonzolo dazed for a long time. But his consciousness was of no windfall, now. Gonzolo was under her spell. She smiled at the dead Elora and helpless Gonzolo.

There was silence.... Complete stillness.

This was the worst pause. The silence had the power to break hearts, destroy peace, and the power to abolish all hopes of life.

Within the limited minutes..... a burst of laughter awakened, evil laughter... coming to be immortal... This was the kingdom of diverse shadows.

A shadow of the wicked lady who bridged every margin to get power.

A shadow of a hopeless human, who wanted to take revenge from the one who had neither seen bad nor did.

And a shadow...

Wonderful of all,

Unfortunate of all,

Terrible of all,

A shadow emissary for the dead body of a girl who saw nothing did nothing, felt nothing, and got lost in nothing.

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*The  
End!*





# The House of Elysian

Author:  
*Jarah Afzal*

It's a hazy, hot, and smoky day while the scintillating sun, a fine ball of burning fire spreading its scorching rays over the vast ineffable grey horizon tinted reddish all above us as I opened my eyes with wonderment over the epiphany of being survived by the last night. The thundering sounds of bullets pierced deep in my ears and I found my heart thumping loud against my chest in the musty air of gunpowder.

I made my way through the pile of dead bodies that once were buoyant and optimistic souls and were very passionate about fighting in the war. The one who hides behind his words can never know the terror and the reality of war. They tell boys to go and fight for the fatherland and portray it as a magnificent honour to be a part of it but the ones who fight can know the certitude of what war is. It is a brutal animal released from his cage watchful to slaughter his target before killing him.



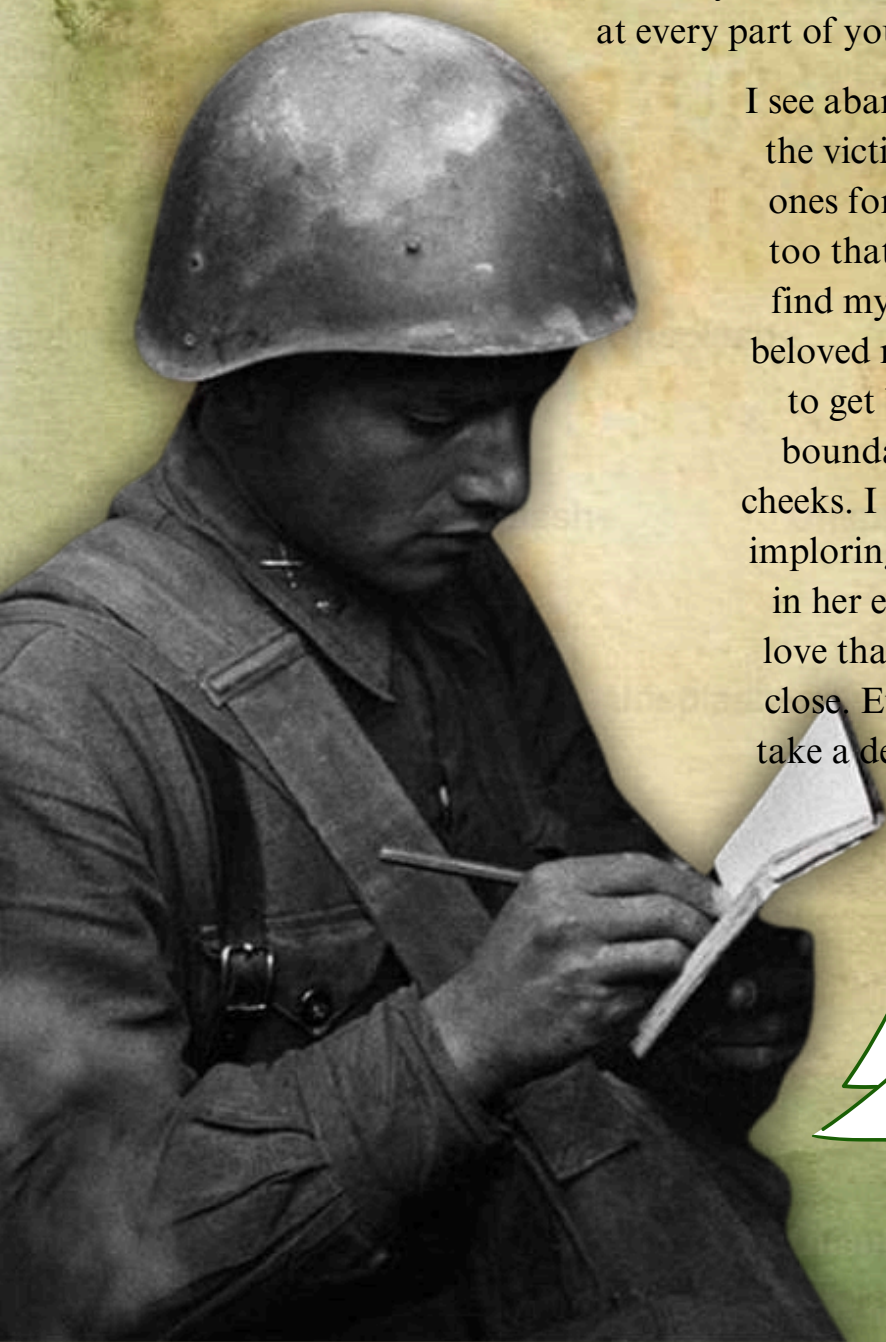




I cast an eye on the deserted souls of comrades, their heads shimmering down in the long queue of the decrepit trench. Their restless heart found no peace, beating louder than the firing of bullets. Tattered breaths, and bowed heads in disappointment and longing explaining the cheerful slogans of honourable war once we used to sing enthusiastically. Our bodies are masked with mud and dirt and scented with musty odor but we don't care. Why we should even care?

I wondered about the queering situations and disastrous happenings out there at the opponent's trenches as we attack them and in return, they attack us without knowing the reason behind it. Another cluster of grenades followed by gun machine fire let the group of comrades take the last bath in the dreadful flesh of themselves. My eyes opened wide at the ruthlessness as their bodies resided peacefully in front of me. An eerie silence flashes over me. I find my knees quivering, and my heart trembling as I crouch down while the machine gun fire evokes an awakening sound in the ground as it embraces and protects me like a mother's hug. I let my thoughts scramble on the hills of peace stretched vast against the lovely horizon where I used to count the number of birds passing by, the company of my favourite pet bringing me solace and joy, the appealing and cheerful evenings full of laughter and giggles with my friends. It seems as if the time has fled and now struck like a lump of coal in our throats and we keep on choking. I see a flock of grenades rising high above the sky followed by bullets pointing blindly at the pathetic human beings. I hear the shrieks and cries of a boy, merely sixteen years old, rounded-faced, pale skin with deep sunken eyes, sweat dripping from his face, petrified of terror who knows neither the war nor his presence on this merciless front. If only those who settle wars out of rage and selfish greed could know the feeling of emptiness and what it feels like being left all alone and deprived of every good, that is present in the world and haunted by demons that grows on larger in bodies.

I push myself off the ground and put my gas mask on as another thunder awakens and fills the air with poisoning smoke. War, a three-letter short word is capable of destroying everything in the blink of an eye. Like a viral disease, it sneaks around taking birth from within one's soul, touching its relentless and cold-blooded icy fingers from one person to another. It takes everything and returns nothing but destruction. What has this war done to us? War is power and egotistic greed for whom others pay. The greatest men among us have been enslaved by their thoughts and are being slaughtered for the ferocious authority. This supremacy has clouded the minds of creative boys. Those who claim that being a participant on the battlefield is an honour and that those who get to fight are lucky, are perpetuating hyperreality. Demystifying this myth has only led to sorrows and griefs, regrets and the devastating silence of suicides. That war is not a house of Elysian but a brutal death and like a monster, it gnaws at every part of your body.



I see abandoned letters scattered on the ground by the victims of honourable combat to their loved ones for reassurance, and there are those letters too that are written to die without being read. I find my breast pocket heavier, the photo of my beloved mother who is waiting desperately for me to get back home. Suddenly tears crossed the boundary of my patience and rolled down my cheeks. I remember the innocence of my childhood imploring her to read me a bedtime story. The joy in her eyes, the warmth of her embrace and the love that radiated from her pores as she held me close. Even now as the darkness of war looms, I take a deep breath stepping forward with the last hope, while the war lingers.



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*The End.*

# The Cursed Diaries



Author:  
*Moattar Nida*

She was lost in the frost of the forest. In the darkness of nothingness, Anaya saw a growing golden glimmer. As she edged nearer that, a cyclone busted out, throwing her yards away. It was an unseen incident as the fluttering pages and papers were swiftly circling in the dark pith of the whooping wind.

This darkness was now approaching Anaya in all its wrath. The advancing parchments were colliding and collaging into large volumes. But, just as they were at arm's length, the very thing exploded into seeds. The air spooned Anaya up. The particles pierced through her, and from her, penetrated out a dazzling luminosity.

A desperate gasp! As Anaya woke up and found herself soaked in sweat. "It's the third day", she pondered. "What's the matter Any? Another frosty dream at the hype of this heat?", Raima mocked. Anaya knew that her sister was right, but only partly. The sixteen-year-old knew that no matter frying in fever, she would not be allowed any more freebies from her aunt and it was her turn to collect herbs from that nightmare.

So, the poor girl with heart-heavy concerns headed toward the woods. In the scorching Salano, the under-theweather girl was ransacking for Aloe-Vera. It was a daily routine for Anaya, as these shrubs earned the ladies their living.

When she was plucking out of the green, some familiarly frightening seeds flowed out like a current and dispersed on the soil. Anaya trembled at the sight of them and with her basket, fought her way home.

When she entered the room after poking the basket in the kitchen, she was pale and cold. "Are you okay?", Raima inquired with elderly concern. Anaya had gone short of words and without a single utterance, slipped under the sheets. Before long, she fell asleep.



As dusk fell, both the sisters settled in the room.

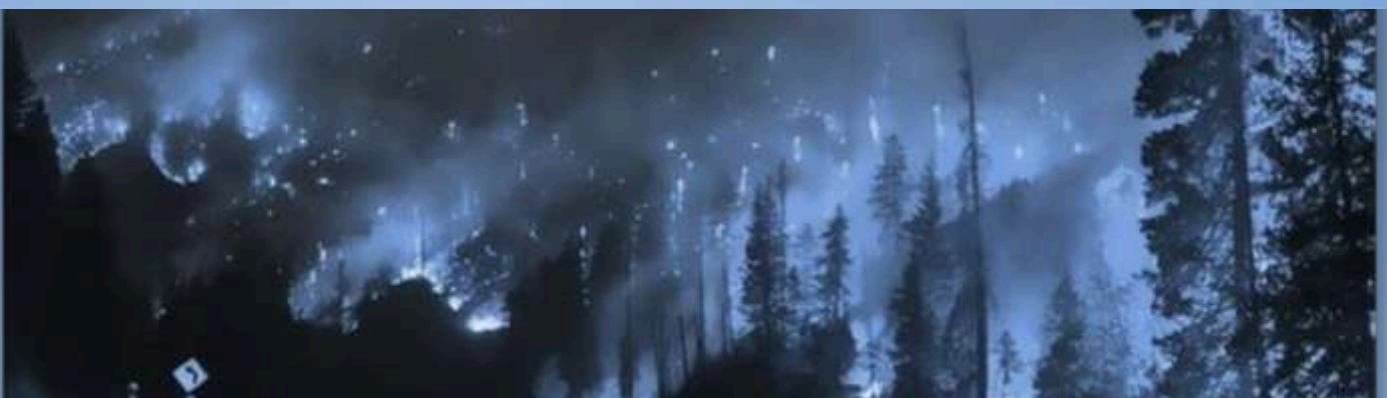
Raima insisted again “Look, I don’t know what you’re going through, but you can share it with me. I am your sister!” “Forget it, you don’t know for you won’t get it”, Anaya denied as she took her book from the rack on her left.

On opening it, she found a pressed paper rose, that popped up like a fountain, and instead of water, the same suspicious seeds dripped on the book, lining up into writing that said:

Show me when in thirst  
And the world will bow to you  
All the fame, success, and lust  
Will belong so to you  
If threaten me as I bloom  
You’ll get nothing but the gloom

With the glitter of suspense, surprise, and surpass, Anaya looked at the words as they crept back into the paper. She took it and slipped it under the pillow.

The next day, in the blaze, she hurried to the forest with the pot and blindly followed the unseen instructor. When the planting was done, there emerged a bubble bath of black pulp. The ooze then turned into a hard book cover and from that sprouted out the white pages.



It was magic or was it a dream again, Anaya knew not.  
The steam coming out of the pot grew taller and the book  
reached Anaya's hands. To add to the amazement, the  
book started writing itself:

I welcome you to this only company Where you and I  
would play.

An unheard symphony



She said Anaya felt a pinch of horror early on but the nerves settled down with time.  
It was a talking diary. A guide would be a better name. One day, she told Anaya where  
Raima's purse was, the one she looked for months. Also told Anaya the mysteries no one  
knew. When one book ended, Anaya plucked another one. While the previous ones  
turned clear as a crystal. Anaya was eventually captivated by the write-ups.  
Things went too far. Was too good for her aunt's liking as Anaya's foresight was helping  
her business grow.

But Raima had other concerns. Anaya heading to the woods daily without any  
reluctance was an unavoidable change. So, she searched her room, and in her trunk, she  
found those neat and empty diaries. Her heart leaped on seeing those mysterious beings  
and she reflected, "These have got nothing on them, how come she collected these and  
what on earth she keeps smiling at!", and she shivered.



In the next account, when Anaya was strolling to the forests, her sister secretly followed her lead and caught sight of the cryptic pot. As Anaya plucked out another diary, a shriek followed her that said, “Get away from that thing!”, as Raima slashed the pot with a wooden stick. But as she did so, Anaya’s dream repeated right before her eyes. When she got her senses back, the glow penetrated out dazzling her eyes and leaving her with nothing but the ashes of her sister.

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*The End.*



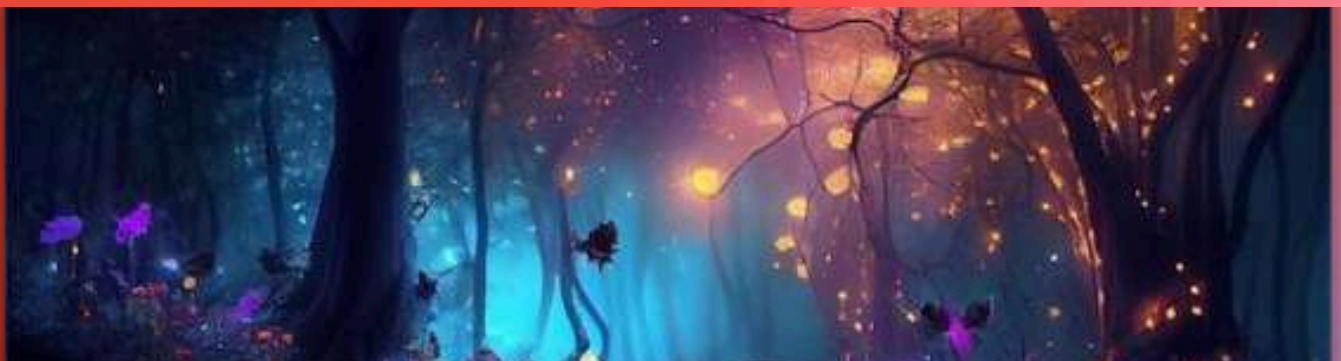
# Māngata

(.n) the reflection of the moon on the water.

Author:

*Zainab Zubair*

Ever since I descended upon this Earth, I've been relentlessly chased by bird-headed mortals who claim to be scientists and natural phenomena investigators. Their cynical energy is palpable as they attempt to ensnare me. Although I possess the power to incinerate them in a flash, I'm bound by the law not to use magic on mortals unless in dire circumstances. They pose a threat not only to other species but to themselves. While I was once captivated by the human world, I'm no longer infatuated with it. The suffocating atmosphere of negativity enveloping me is unbearable. I'm yearning to escape back to my realm. As I touched my stomach, I winced in agony, but I quickly healed myself with my magical touch. Their metal weapons are futile against me, but I abhor the thought of being riddled with mortal-made holes.



During my last visit to Earth, I was captivated by the nocturnal panorama that this city had to offer. The lights twinkled like a thousand fireflies, and it was as if I was gazing upon an oasis of light amidst the darkness. However, the brilliance that once dazzled me is now a mere blur, and the surroundings are so hazy and chromatic that my head is spinning. I searched for my fire opal, which was embedded in my locket, but it was nowhere to be found.

I cried like a madman.

"It's gone! I've lost my only way of returning to my realm." (Thump)

With a loud thud, I collapsed onto the slippery ground, tumbling down the hill. "Is this really where my crazy adventure to Earth has led me?" The thought of being stranded on this alien planet filled me with despair, and I couldn't help but feel a sense of loss. My opal was more than just a precious stone - it was a symbol of my identity and a connection to my home. As I lay there, I couldn't help but think about the journey that brought me here. The thrill of exploring new worlds and discovering new wonders was exhilarating, but it came with a price. I had taken too many risks, and now I was paying the price.

But then, as if in a moment of divine intervention, I saw a glimmer of light in the distance. It was faint, but it was there. Could it be? Was this my chance to find my way back home? With renewed vigour, I picked myself up but then again I fell. I didn't lose hope and began to crawl my way towards the light, hoping against hope that it would lead me to my salvation.



Riva sat on the shore, lost in thought. She gazed out at the endless expanse of water, feeling the cool breeze on her face. "The sea is so vast and mysterious," she murmured, "It's like a whole other world out there."

She looked down at the sand, feeling the grains slip through her fingers. "It's amazing to know that every grain of sand has its own story, its journey," she said.



Riva closed her eyes, breathing in the salty air. "I wish I could be like the sea, always moving, always changing," she said wishfully. She leaned back to see the crystalline reflection of the moon in the water. The night sky looked like a dark canvas freckled with a million droplets of white paint with an orb of magical delight at the center. She never noticed the way her brown orbs changed their color to sapphire whenever she was near the sea.

"Nobody believes me, when I say I formed a big water wave in the air 6 months ago, I know I sound stupid to them but still I'm not lying. Why would I?" she sighed squatting on the velvety shimmering ground of sand.



“Even Mira.... out of all being my childhood best friend, she should believe me”

As she sat there, lost in her thoughts, murmuring to herself like she was talking to another person. Riva felt a sense of peace wash over her. The sound of the waves, the salty air, and the cool breeze all combined to create a sense of calm. “I can do this”, Riva declared, extending her hands forward, mimicking a wave motion while standing on the beach, as if she was attempting to manipulate the water with her hands. Her actions may have seemed trivial, but they were indicative of her unwavering determination to succeed. She felt as if she still lacked something. She sat there pondering over her thoughts for quite a long until she huffed and reached the proximity,

"Maybe all of them are right; maybe I am hallucinating”

As Riva stood up, dusting the sand off her clothes, she felt a faint vibration in her pocket. She retrieved the unremarkable stone from her pocket, which she had collected earlier that day while on a field trip with her college peers. The stone shimmered like a prism in the moonlight, and then suddenly transformed from yellow to a blazing red, searing her fingertips. Startled by the sound emanating from the bushes near the shore where she had tossed the gem, wondering if she had disturbed an otherworldly entity.



She took hesitant steps towards the backwaters, and in the pitch-blackness, quickly turned on the flashlight on her mobile. The beam revealed a ghastly sight, making her freeze on the spot. Her eyes glinted from the reflection of flames. Her cheeks tinted red from the heat the prone body was emitting. The stone lay near the creature, glowing magnificently. The glow vanished when she immediately picked up the blazing stone and kept it in her pocket. She didn't know why she had done this, but she let her impulsive self win, despite the ominous feeling that something was awry with this being.



Riva was unable to bring herself to leave when the prone figure groaned in agony. Her benevolent nature had often led her into troublesome situations. She often got scolded by her mom for being too gullible and putting others before herself. But this was a matter of someone's life and death, If she were to aid this unknown being, she was uncertain of the consequences. Nonetheless, she resolved to assist whoever or whatever this creature was, regardless of the outcome.

Somehow, she managed to drag the unconscious creature back to her home. She couldn't take him to the hospital due to the glow emanating from his back. Although she had second thoughts about her mother, It was alright for now as she was on the night shift at the hospital. It was silly of her, but she couldn't help crying as she cleansed his wound.

She had always been this way since childhood, crying whenever she saw something sorrowful or someone hurt. Smart, innocent, and pure.

When she reached his scratched face, she traced the pores of her fingers on his face, enchanted by his beauty. This non-human creature was more perfect than most humans. He had fierce, manly facial features, a sharp jawline, a beautifully sculpted nose and dragon-shaped eyes ..... which shot open when she was about to touch them and he clutched her hand, stopping her movement. His honey orbs gleamed with a yellow, bright glow. He sprang up, twisting her arm while she groaned in pain and astonishment.



"You think you've got me?" he growled. "Now you're going to perform your ridiculous experiments on me, huh? Where are your tools? I'll destroy them!"

"Wait, what experiment are you talking about?" she asked, trying to break through his grip. "And let go, you freak! I saved your life, and you're trying to murder me here?"

"No, you petty mortals are all liars!" he said, trying to persuade himself more than anyone else. "I know this from experience, like when that jackass Sherlock became my friend and then tried to pluck my eyes out of their sockets."

"Pluck your eyes-!?! What?!" she asked, not too surprised as she continued to struggle to free herself from his iron grip. Her twisted arm started to throb with pain.

Suddenly, he remembered his fire opal and released her arm. "Where is it? I can sense it nearby!"

"Are you talking about this one?" Riva took out the shining stone from her pocket and immediately pulled back, clutching it tightly in her palm. "I won't give it to you unless you tell me who you are.

You're not a human being."

"Not this again," he muttered, trying to resist but unable to stop himself from revealing his identity.

He didn't even put up much of a fight. He told her everything, spilling the beans about himself.

Humans needed to know how great of a creature he was. Also, he wanted to get his means done by any possible solution. Dumb, Quirky, Proud.

"He introduced himself as Aiden Rhys, a member of the Imber clan of Fairyland. Weary of his magical training, he yearned to explore the human lifestyle on Earth. Upon discovering that his opal could serve as a gateway between worlds, he and a few of his companions made the journey here. However, Aiden had come alone this time to bask in the fresh air before his next training session. Unfortunately, he was pursued by humans after carelessly leaving his wings powered on, an oversight that he now regretted."

"Now that you've heard my story, kindly return my opal so that I may depart," he demanded, rising to his feet and rolling up his sleeves. She, however, appeared to be lost in thought and paid him no

heed. "Take me to your world," she demanded. "To my world? Where?" he inquired. "To

Fairyland," she replied. "I'm afraid that's impossible," he conceded, throwing up his hands in

surrender. "And why is that?" she challenged. "Because you don't belong to our world," he

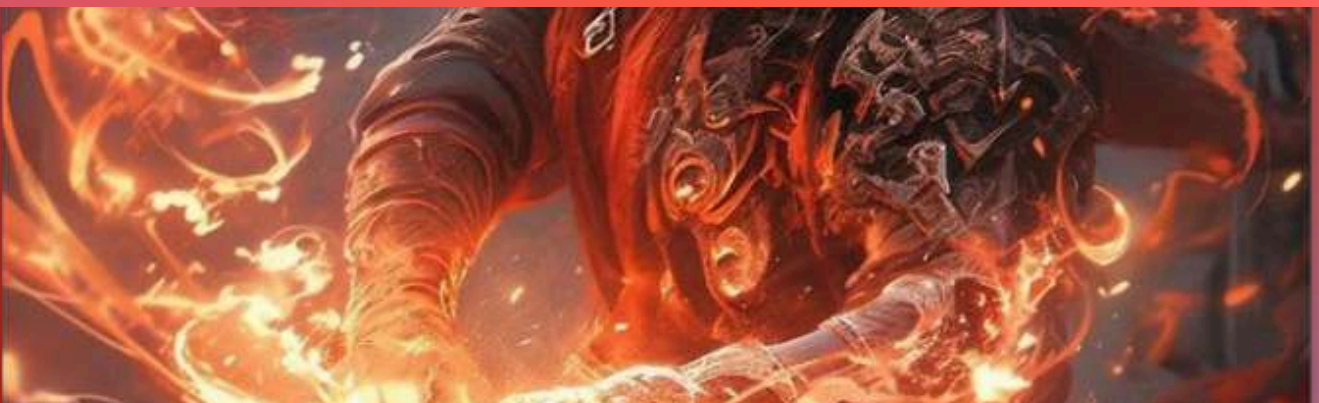
explained. "But neither do you belong to this world," she countered, raising an eyebrow. Aiden grew increasingly agitated and impatient, feeling as though he were being held captive by a

powerless mortal.

"Very well, if you don't wish to return, suit yourself. I'm going to bed," she said with a feigned yawn. However, before she could move, he grabbed her, and she was left stunned as she watched him transform, his fiery wings bursting forth in a blaze of light, illuminating the room with their brilliance.

She stumbled back a few steps as he lifted her, soaring out of the house and into the night sky. He held her upside down by her feet, leaving the rest of her body dangling in the air. She was terrified by the sight below her, and her face began to flush as the blood rushed to her head, threatening to make her sick. They flew towards the same beach they had visited before. The moon cast a dim light on the deserted shore. As soon as they landed, he threw her onto the sand like a discarded stone. "You still refuse to return it?" he growled, his voice deeper and more menacing than before. She crawled backwards, gazing up at him, and shook her head.

Then, standing up to him, she defiantly declared, "No, I won't. You can go donate your eyeballs to humans or whatever." Despite her stubbornness, her curiosity had overtaken her rational thoughts.



Rage consumed Aiden, and he was prepared to defy all the laws of his world to protect his wounded ego. It was the first time anyone had ever resisted him so strongly, and he was not about to let her take what was his. Even in their realm, where fire fairies were known for their representation of rage, pride and passion, everyone tried their best to avoid getting on their bad side. However, he was not going to let her get away with what she had done.

As Riva rose to her feet, Aiden gazed unflinchingly into the depths of her soul, igniting an Inferno in her eyes that coursed through her body like molten lava. Though she could have broken the gaze, an inexplicable force held her captive, a monstrous, perilous presence that sought to dominate her every limb and thought, compelling her to maintain the unwavering connection."



The iridescent yellow-red hue that flickered in his eyes was not what Riva perceived. Instead, she glimpsed sapphire-blue orbs that mirrored the turbulent tides of the ocean, threatening to engulf him in a watery abyss. Despite his attempts to resist the external force that laid siege to his mind, Riva wailed in excruciating agony, not from burns, but from the torment of overpowering oneself. With a great exertion of power, she raised her hands, channelling a mighty force that coalesced into a colossal tidal wave, which she held in place as it swelled into a larger, more perilous form. Meanwhile, Aiden, who faced the ocean, broke eye contact, observing the enchanting powers that he had once witnessed in the water fairies.



Riva continued her motion when, suddenly, she was lifted into the air. Her heart was racing with fear, but her mind was overpowering her emotions. After ascending to a certain height, she felt something on her shoulders. They were wings. She had transformed into the water fairy she had been since birth. Perhaps now, she had finally discovered her true identity. The blue wings shone with chastity, innocence, and artistry. She was too amazed to see the water oozing from her body, and she spun happily in the air. An adrenaline rush surged through her whole body, and she felt as though she had found herself losing belief in life and her meaning of life. As she playfully soared above the ocean waves, she accidentally created a powerful water tide that drenched an unsuspecting boy standing nearby, leaving him sputtering and soaked.

As Riva laughed at him to his face, she landed gracefully at his feet. She cleared her throat before saying, "Now take me to our world. I don't belong here either." With that, she held the fire opal up to Aiden's face. He was still grumpy from getting drenched, but his mood lightened when Riva flashed him a boxy smile.

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*The End.*





Author:

*Kashaf Shafique*

Every sunrise offers a new beginning, a chance to start over, and a new day to appreciate. After the darkness of night, a beautiful yellow ball peeked through the horizon, spreading crimson rays everywhere. The golden light caressed the land and ignited the birds into a chorus of melody. Like every other day, the rays of sunlight knocked on windows, just like naughty kids running after ringing their neighbours' doorbells.

On a king-sized bed, a sleeping beauty lay peacefully like a newborn without care about her surroundings and without giving a damn about the world. But everything in this world is temporary,

So the piercing sound of the alarm clock brought beauty back from the dead of sleep. She fluttered, opened her eyes with so much annoyance, and started to wriggle and stretch within her cosy, warm heaven, her only asset being her bed. She sat up on her bed rubbed her eyes and went into a valley of thoughts, or more likely, "daydreaming"!



Every morning when one wakes up, they have to roll out of bed in an attempt to kill their alarm clocks. They would jump into the shower and then they would decide which outfit to wear. Now, for some people, this might be a fairly easy piece of cake. But for "The Great Alisha," it is a painstaking, mind-boggling, headache-causing ordeal that she is forced to go through every day of her existence.

Sadly, there are so many decisions that need to be made by each one of us every day, and some are harder than others. Like the decision of whether to kill your best friend or let somebody else do it. Or how to dodge rebuking and punishment after causing trouble. Stealing sweets, but nothing from Mama's kitchen without them noticing, is also an art and a talent. It may sound absurd, but it is what it is. Skipping school is...

"Get up from your bed in two minutes, Alisha. If not, then you are going to receive a beating from me!" A sudden, thunderous, and shrill voice resonated in the house in a way that all the birds flew away from their nests, leaving all the living members of the house in a shudder. Alisha snapped out of her thoughts when she heard her mother's voice calling her. "I'm up, Mom," she replied, her voice still groggy from sleep. "I wish I could just stay in bed all day," she muttered to herself. However, it's important to think before speaking or acting. After completing her morning routine, she hurriedly went downstairs to grab her breakfast. She was already running late, which was not unusual. As she entered the kitchen, the first thing her eyes landed on was a glass of milk sitting on the counter like a king on his throne.

"Have it!" her mother exclaimed with a stern look. "Maa, can I please have an Americano? I'm running late for school," Alisha whined.

"Drinking caffeine daily is seriously unhealthy," her mother lectured her with a serious expression. "You never listen to me," she added, frustrated.

Alisha ignored her mother's lecture and sneaked out of the house like a cat. "Finally, I'm safe," she sighed.



As she was running down the street, she noticed a white, furry cat yowling in pain with a splinter stuck in its paw.

"Aww, poor little soul, let me help you," she muttered, feeling sad for the cat.

"Where is it? Where is it? Ah, here you are!" she said, smiling after finding a pair of tweezers in her bag.

Using a clean pair of tweezers, she gripped the splinter close to the skin and gently pulled it out at the same angle it appeared to have entered.

"Done! Here you go, baby," she said proudly, patting her shoulder.





“You’re not as dumb as they say, but come on, we’re already late. You don’t want a second detention in the same week, right?” her best friend teased her in a sarcastic voice. “Shut up,” she strolled her eyes in a sassy way and dragged her friend towards their final destination, completely forgetting about the cat. The cat prayed to the Lord to make this girl’s wish come true because of her kind behaviour.

Because a simple act of kindness can have a tremendous impact on a person’s life, it can change someone’s entire day.”



Time flies so fast, right? Here Alisha found herself at her study table studying for her upcoming exams. Today was as dull as any other day: missing a bus, getting detention, having boring history lectures, seeing the same old faces of students, and then a ton of assignments with a surprise quiz.

“I wish I was a rock,” she said in a tired voice and went towards her bed, so the queen could continue to rule her territory – the territory of dreams. The thing is, we should always ponder our statements before speaking and measure the effects of the words we’re going to say because there are certain times when it’s an hour of acceptance, and you can’t turn back time!



Once again, the golden rays of the sun gave a bright colour to the clouds and meadows, lighting up every being on Earth. Everything was great in its place, but Alisha's life took an unexpected turn.

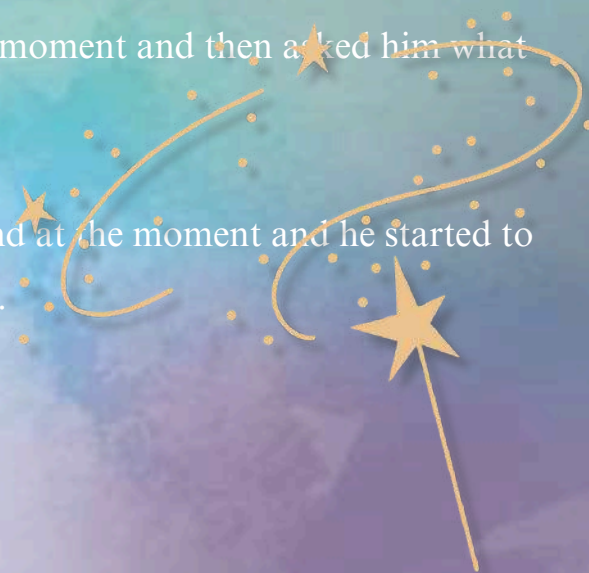
As she opened her eyes, she found herself in a very different place and situation. Her only wish had come true; she had turned into a rock. No movement, no work, just staying in one place like a statue.

“What in the name of the Lord is this? How? When? Why?” she stuttered in shock. After two seconds of silence, she said, boringly with a fed-up sigh, “What can I do? It's not a big deal. I asked for it, now let's enjoy the view.”

As the calm and cool breeze whistled softly, and the sun shone brightly with all its might, a gentle breeze stirred the leaves. One could easily feel the breath of spring in the air. As she was enjoying the quiet scene, she heard the voice of someone whimpering near her. There sat a tall, dramatic man crying out loud without giving a care about others' peace.

The man was sobbing his eyes out. She looked at him for a moment and then asked him what was wrong.

He was shocked after hearing her voice as no one was around at the moment and he started to find the source of the voice.



“Here, here on your left!” she said.

At first, his expression stopped working, but then without giving a second thought, he started blabbering.

“I have a gorgeous and caring wife waiting for me back at home. She always wakes up early and makes me pancakes with maple syrup, fresh juice, cereals, and freshly ground coffee,” the man told her dramatically.

“Well, then why are you crying? She asked.

“She makes me homemade soup for lunch, my favourite biscuits, cleans the house, and then watches sports, TV with me for the rest of the afternoon.”

“Well, why are you crying—” but he cut her off. “For dinner, she makes me a five-course meal with my favourite dessert,”

Her curiosity roused, “Well then, why in the world would you be crying?”

Innocently, he replied, “I can’t remember where I Live.”

At first, she was dumbfounded, then she wanted to cry at his innocence or lack of common sense.

His crying voice was irritating her like hell.

“Stop, stop, stop crying. You’re making my ears bleed,” she said in an annoyed voice.

“For heaven’s sake, man! You better sob if you want to keep mourning, but get away from me,” she whined in a crying voice.

“Someone put their hands over my ears. Somebody comfort him, please. Ughhh, I want my legs back to run away, back home. Mom’s scolding is far better than this person’s. I don’t want to be a rock. I’m okay being a human,” she said while gulping hard.

**STOP!!!**

Before she could wish to die, she woke up, creating a loud voice thrilling enough to make her mom rush into the room.

“What’s wrong with you? There are guests in the house. Behave yourself,” her mother said in a scolding manner with her famous death glare.

“You,” Alisha mumbled, but her mom cut her off, saying, “No arguments!”

“You are so sweet, Maa. Do you need my help?” she asked while batting her eyelashes cutely.

“Will you put your lazy hands to doing the dishes?” her mom said with suspicion.



“Of course, my beautiful and gorgeous Maa,” she jumped out of her bed, adoring her foot.  
“Alisha? Are you okay? I mean, you are just impossible,” her mother said with utter shock.

“Nothing, honey.” Her mother stared at her with an incredulous expression.

“I mean, my sweet Maa, Isn’t being human better than being a rock?” she said with a foolish smile on her lips, which left her mother completely flabbergasted.



# The End.





Author:

*Abdul Muneed Qazi*

“Morning, Harry!” said Sam.

“Good Morning, Man!” replied Harry.

“How are you feeling right now? After the flight, yesterday, did you sleep well?” Sam Inquired.

“Yeah! Man, I was jet lagged, But now after a long sleep. I am buzzing and raring to go, and want to explore the city.” Harry answered with a lot of zeal.

“what are your plans for today, can we visit together? Asked Sam.

“Um. No particular schedule, but I just want to wander in the streets and bump into things. This time around, I am here to experience, something that I had never felt before, So, do not get offended by this. I want to be free as an airwave.”

Sam, listened to him quietly, He did not express his anger in front of him, and after saying “OK, no biggie, do whatever you want to do, and have a nice time.” He left the room, murmured while making an angry, mawkish face. “Huh! I want to be free ...go to hell,” He felt that he had been given a cold shoulder.

Harry shouted from the room, “Where is my backpack? I want my T-shirt, I want to leave as early as possible. So, I can spend more time enjoying myself.”

Sam heard him but did not answer intentionally, Harry shouted, came out of the room, and started to look for his backpack.

Sam was pressing his shirt blue checked one as he was about to get ready to go outside with his friend Pope, who called him 15 minutes ago for lunch.

Ivana was preparing breakfast for Harry, his brother, who was visiting them. Sam, Ivana’s son shouted to his mother “Mum, I am getting late. Pope will get annoyed. It’s already noon what’s this hell, Give me my coffee.”

Ivana replied, “What’s your problem, Sam, I am not going to do anything for you, come and prepare your coffee.”



“Sam, you damn. I told you to keep my backpack in place. I had all my accessories in that, where are you coming here, Where are you? Come here, Sam.” He was fuming. Sam, did not give any attention to him, took his coffee, and left the home for his meet-up with Pope.

Harry rushed towards the kitchen, and in a fuming state, Asked Ivana, “Where is he? The bloody evil, Bloody nonsense, He is ill-mannered.”

“Hold your horses! Harry What’s the fuss, Tell me. Why are you in such anguish?” Ivana asked in an Investigating manner.

“My backpack is missing. Last night, I asked Sam to keep it in the right place, I had all the essentials in that.” He told her.

“Oh, Harry, you angry man, He handed that over to me, I had kept that in my storeroom, wait, let me bring that for you.”

Harry was feeling a bit ashamed, his behaviour was a bit harsh he realized that he passed on a dull smile to her comma to wrap up the matter

“Take your backpack, Harry,” she called Harry, handed him over his backpack, and said, “Breakfast is ready to come over to the dining table.”

She had the breakfast table adorned with a huge and scrumptious menu. The French bread, sausages, French omelette, butter, berries, jam, eggs, and whatnot.

“Have it, Harry, I have made a special omelette for you, It’s the speciality of French, eggs cooked with broccoli and herbs, you will love it.” Ivana evoked him to taste the omelette. They had breakfast in a very pleasant mood. Harry enjoyed the omelette and said. “Mmm, it’s finger-licking good, appetizing. Thanks, Ivana for such a lovely and appealing breakfast. Now, I think I should get ready and go outside to bump into the different places of the city. The lovely Cannes. I have heard a lot of good things about Its culture, its food, and its cafes. Last time you were in Avignon when I visited France, I had the plan to visit Cannes that time around but for quite some reason, I did not manage. Look, How the faith has changed, now you people have shifted here”

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“Yeah, lovely it is indeed, such stupendous places are here, the culture is so different, you won’t find a quiet spot here, there is a lot of hustle and bustle, the streets, the allays all buzz every single second. The dining cafes, the restaurant with people rushing in, everything is worth it, I love being here, and you will have a great time. Go and enjoy.”



Harry left the house and bumped into the street leading to a hub of cafes.

The hustle and bustle, of Pell Mel, was worth seeing, people were rushing into the streets, people from different parts of the world. The culture of Cannes was colourful, and the ambience and vibes of the streets gave a festive feel.

The drummers and guitarists were playing their instruments. People were enjoying their performance. Harry stood there and captured the moments. He also danced a few steps. Vibes were quite festive.

He also had a few meet-ups with locals and had chats about what to look at and try. One of the men suggested he should visit “Café de Aimer”

“Hey, What’s up? Man,” Harry inquired to a stranger. I am good, how are you mate?” The stranger replied “I am visiting Cannes for the first time, heard a lot of it, what would you recommend me to try as far as food is concerned, any spot?” Harry conversed further.

“Mmm. Yeah, there are a lot of places you can go to, but Café de Aimer has a good reputation here, a must-visit spot with lovely vibes and ambience.”

“Oh! Intriguing, well, I am obliged to you for the suggestion. I will visit on the first hand.” He passed a smile to the local and moved ahead.



Harry opened the online maps searched out the location and started his journey toward the café. The streets leading to the café were fluttering with the public, The cacophony of cabs, and the dining of local music made a stunning vibe.

He was searching for the café and eventually reached there. Standing outside, he read the name, “Mmm Café de Aimer, sounded interesting.” The exterior of the café looked quite antique, blended with modern patterns, and had a stall of French bread outside with a few pots of lilies.



Harry opened the glass door., and entered the café. As he set foot in, the smell and the aroma, the ambience, and the interior had given him the utmost pleasure and tranquillity.

The Interior of the café had modern vibes with an amber and brownish theme, The wooden floor and dark brown wooden furniture complemented the whole aura.

The whiff of French hearts, and Belgian coffee, evoked hunger in Harry, and he had water in his Mouth.



In bewilderment and exuberance, he took a seat on the left corner of the café, right beside the window which was exhibiting the picturesque views of the Street adorned with flamboyant coloured buildings.

“Waiter, please,” Harry requested. “Yes, Sir, welcome to Café de Aimer. What we can do for you?” The waiter asked in service.

Harry took a glance at the menu and ordered the Victorian cake, Enchiladas, French toast, and Cappuccino.

After he ordered his meal, he was grazing at the café with serenity, he was feeling special and had a feeling of something different, distinct for which he was looking after. The café was famous for its service, ambience, and vibrations, but also for the meet-up of lovers. The love birds used to rush into the café named rightly as Café de Aimer- Café of Love.

A large number of couples were having a nice time dating there. While grazing, Harry spotted a lady who was sketching a boy, the orchestra was also operating there. In that spacious café, creating an ambience of intimacy and warmth.



Harry was astonished to see the flare, aptitude and skill of the lady, and with wonderment, he stood up and went near that Lady and wanted to strike up a conversation.

He sat a meter away from the lady. Initially, he did not feel the strength to start the conversation.

Angeline, the artistic, skilful, belle lady was doing her art with a lot of dedication. She had an angelic look. Long blonde hair, hazel eyed, pretty and attractive.



Harry went a bit closer and gathered some strength to say. “Ahm, Hello Lady, excuse me, I want to talk to you.”

Angeline could not respond as she was very dedicated towards the sketch. Harry tried again to divert her attention towards him saying. “Hello, Madam! Listen I want to talk to you.”

This time, Angeline, stopped her hand and turned a wee bit towards Harry. As she turned her glowing, charming and pretty face to him, Harry had his eyes stunned and he had his face awestruck. He was feeling the intimacy and attraction towards her, the feeling of love at first sight, feeling the delight, He was relishing that moment and was feeling that had caught his tongue there.

Yeah, Mr. tell me. What? You wanted to talk to me, Angeline inquired with respect and politeness.

Harry got into an attractive personality that he was not able to speak up, grazing at her.

“Oh, Mr. what happened to you? Hello! Tell me. What’s the matter?” Angeline asked a second time.

Harry shook his head and came out of the Wizardy Angeline’s beauty had created upon him. He was not in his pure senses after that moment, he stood up and left the café with a lot in his heart and mind.



That night, he could not sleep a wink. Harry thinking of her, had the moment reappearing in his memory of his face turned towards him and what he felt there at that moment. He thought he would go tomorrow morning to the café again and would propose to her.

The dawn broke, All night he was anxious, It was very early morning, He left home wearing a dull black suit with a dark reddish bow. He went to a nearby jewellery shop to buy a ring for Angeline. He was just thinking of her at every step. He went to the jewellery shop., and bought a stunning emerald stoned ring.

He was In such wonderment, amazement, intimacy, and fondness of Angeline, that he was not holding his horses to meet her again and express his feelings about her.

He took a cab and went on his way to the café. It was nearly 10 AM when he reached there. The streets and surroundings were very tranquil at that time of the morning. He rushed into the café and looked for Angeline, Inquired at reception about her and asked, “Can you give me the contact of Miss Angeline, who was there yesterday? Sketching.”

He pointed towards the place where he saw her sketching. “When she is going to come here?”. The receptionist said. “Sir, whom you are talking about?”

No one like you are describing came here neither yesterday nor before. Even though we do not permit anyone to do such activities or anything like that, we do have just our orchestra, which plays here for our lovely and respected customers.

After listening to this, Harry got aghast, and dismayed, and he was down in the mouth.

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*The End.*





# Claire De Lune

(moonlight)

Author:

*Jarah Afzal*

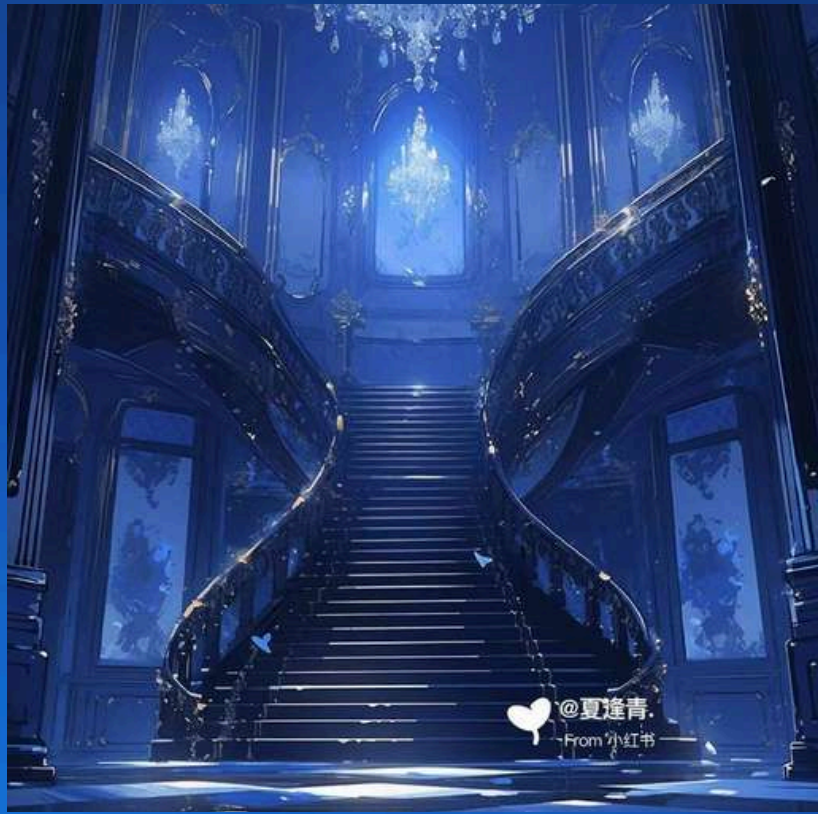
It was midnight, and the room was softly lit by the moon as clouds drifted past. A few photographs lay on the table, while the laptop screen glowed, displaying a weeping willow and a group of trees. Atlas rolled over, his eyes barely open, and the room was filled with the sound of the ticking clock. He turned to face the wall, on which a giant painting hung, a gift from his father, Atticus.

Mr. Atticus Finch was the wealthiest of all the Finches and loved to paint, but he rarely had visitors. He neither visited anyone in town nor encouraged his son to leave the house.

Atlas witnessed a colossal shadow passing over the painting, creating a ghastly figure. The palace was shrouded in darkness, with a brilliant center where the moon hung, surrounded by ice. The silhouette of a man trudging upstairs, attempting to reach the door. Anyone encountering the painting would've said, "What an exquisite piece of art!"

Atlas tried to divert his attention, his eyes darted to the table on which over the stack of books, the pendant was glowing in the dark. It was a crescent moon pendant below which the pear-shaped diamond was dangling. The black cat bought this pendant to him which he kept with himself as there was something bewitching about it that fascinated Atlas. The shadow grew larger and he saw a figure of a girl over the painting trying to free herself. Suddenly he heard a thumping sound at the window as the owl swept past the house. He pulled himself up, swung his feet to the ground, and marched toward the window. He hunched over it and saw a letter lying on the windowsill. He picked it up and quickly glanced over it which was written in a language he couldn't comprehend except a line saying, "The World Outside"





"What does the world outside mean?" he asked himself.

He had heard his father say, "We must keep our boy away from the world outside." "You need not worry, honey, but do you believe those black-cloaked weirdos?" asked Mrs.

Atticus.

"We must take every measure," replied Atticus.

"Could it have anything to do with him?" he wondered. "Something intriguing crossed Atlas's mind."

It was a smoky evening when Atlas creaked open the door carrying moon shaped pendant, sneaked around the hall, down the stairs, and tiptoed outside of the house. Outside the weather was cold. His eyes darted from one place to another. He caught sight of a black cat reading a paper, the same cat that bought him that pendant.

"Finally, you're here," he heard a deep voice, but it was a desolate street.

"Was he imagining things? Had he gone mad?" he spoke to himself with bewilderment. The cat didn't move and gave him a cold look. He remembered it was the same cat that he spotted every day in his home. It was the cat who talked to him.

"What do you mean I'm here?" he frowned. "The letter? Do I have anything to do with that?" "Listen Atlas!" the cat spoke, "The earth is going to squeeze, and we must leave this planet. There's someone out there waiting for you."

"What a nice jest!" grinned Atlas while his hazel eyes gazed at her.

"The people on earth are more sardonic, aren't they?" she gave him a stern look.

"But aren't you part of this world too?" "

You haven't experienced the beauty yet," the cat said while her tail moved playfully in the air.

"Don't talk rot! This wishy-washy approach won't work on me," Atlas frowned. She turned into a goblin, smaller in stature than Atlas, with protruding eyes, bat-like ears, and pretty ugly fingers. "Just follow my lead, but if you dare not, I'll chop off your head right away."



It wasn't until the goblin jolted him that he found himself in a wholly different place. But that goblin had changed. It wasn't like what he saw on earth, with green skin and long nails. Instead, it was more like a human in physical characteristics, but unlike a human, he wasn't fully dressed. His big rounded eyes peering at him were less ghastly than those on earth. The universe turned foggy and fluffy. He groped for a familiar figure but couldn't find any. He remained deadpanned until he found more goblins busy with their work.

The weather was cool and humid, and he found his skin color changing, turning fair and resembling those of the goblins. He was stunned when he saw that he wasn't dressed normally; instead, he was wearing a royal dress, violet in color, adorned with gold lacework and embroidery, shining jewels, belts holding the trousers, and a moon-shaped pendant dangling across his neck. A ray of hope flashed past his soul as soon as he saw the pendant. "Maybe something good is yet to come," he thought. He looked at that familiar goblin with bewilderment.

"Life is beautiful on clouds. Isn't it?" said the goblin while looking at his royal dress. "But beware of the lies," he added. Atlas, who was still stupefied, couldn't get a word out, but instead, he gazed at him groggily. "How come you changed your skin color and look so fine?" Atlas asked. "Apollo is the reflection of you, so don't judge me," he introduced himself. "We goblins work for fairies who turned us into someone nice." The gate opened, and the two dwarfs rushed in as if they were hoping to see someone. They were of short stature, white-skinned, and wearing blue cloaks. "Queen Isabella is calling for you," they told Atlas. He wore his boots, carried his sword, and trod amidst them. There were pictures of a palace, fairies with smiling faces, fairies living on the earth, fairies fighting with the goblins and the witches, the warlocks, and wizards. The pictures were giving him a bizarre view. His eyes wide opened, struck at one of the paintings, the same painting gifted by his father. "You're one of them," Apollo whispered behind him.

He chased them to the front hall, embellished with precious gems, gargantuan pillars holding the roof, black curtains hanging freely, and a soft light slanting through the window. By touching the walls, he shimmered the roof and glimmered the hall in an enchanting way. The dwarfs, whom he found well-mannered, went back as he got presented before the queen. She was blonde-headed, wearing a blue-colored long dress wrought with gold lacework, a crown embellished with emeralds and precious stones, resting on her head, and a magical wand. Her jade-green eyes gave a somber look.

"Welcome to the Moonlit Palace, gentleman!" said Queen Isabella. "I want you to know why I called you." The Queen peered at him. "There is this palace, the moonlit palace known for its purity, and there is that castle, the dark grey in which the fairy, Lily Caitlin, is incarcerated, fended by a dragon. You must find her," cried Isabella with agony.

"But why an ordinary man like me will find her safely?" "Here, you are mistaken. You are a born wizard, and you have the power to break the shackle as we are forbidden to step in the Shadowfen reflection, the castle of evils." "Why did they cage her?" asked Atlas.

"She has that beauty in her wings that can make someone blind and magic in her eyes that can freeze you to death. They needed her wings to gain back their power, the power that we snatched from them ages ago, but because she had been frozen and stiff to the ground, they couldn't make use of her yet. The wand will help to melt the ice," replied Isabella, handling the wand.

"And remember, the dragon is blind in one eye. You have to put his left eye out," added Isabella. She handed him a magical sword that was sharp enough to chop off one's head with a single swing and a bottle of liquid glittering tangerine. "Make the fairy drink it and bring her wings back to me." She made him learn some spells which he learned by heart.

"Amoranda will lead you to reach the Shadowfen reflection," said Isabella while pointing towards the white-winged horse who was giving the sense of majesty. "It will be her sixteenth birthday, so make sure to get this work done before the moonlight falls on her. But if you fail to do this, you'll pay the price."

He bid farewell to her and embarked on his journey towards Shadowfen Reflection. The sky was aglow with resplendent rays that danced with the swaying leaves of the trees. The dappled sunlight bathed the clouds that shimmered indolently. He had never witnessed such a magnificent day.



Gliding through the air with his head held high and his eyes peering between Amoranda's ears while gliding past the gusts of wind, he felt completely immersed in this enchanting world. Despite feeling like he was about to plummet from the ride, Atlas fixed his gaze ahead, gazing intently at the small dragons of various hues and the graceful flamingos adorned with their pink feathers.

"The lovely clouds in this bewitching universe!" exclaimed Atlas, as he exhaled deeply. "I wish you could talk," he added after a brief pause. Amoranda, who had just flown down, said, "The universe is always like this, enthralling and captivating." Atlas was struck with awe and gazed at him intently as he could see him more clearly. His sapphire blue eyes under the fine lashes were just like hers, gentle and pure. The evening set in as they sat under the canopy of long, tangerine-reddish mushrooms. Atlas was happy to cover such a long distance. There was a complete silence.

"Let me tell you a story while nature spares us a little time," Amoranda spoke, breaking the silence. "Ages ago, there were two kingdoms: the Kingdom of Fairies and the Kingdom of Witches, and in between them was the land inhabited by humans. The humans, enslaved by their greed, were partners of the witches. Once a fairy, not listening to her parents, fell in love with a man and lost her powers. When they had a child, the Queen Fairy cursed the infant during the christening ceremony.

May you endow with the charismatic wings  
And endearing eyes scream and do not sing  
May this little fairy be not made for the sky  
May this cast spell, never let you fly



"The curse worked, and the infant froze to the ground," Amoranda said. "Be the true version of yourself, as mankind is supposed to be." There was a soft glint in his sapphire blue eyes. Atlas listened to him with astonishment, unable to decide what to say, and his hazel eyes only gazed and gazed at this creature whose presence provided him with a shelter-like home that comforted him. Sliding past the entwined branches of the mysterious trees, encountering small ponds, beetles, and squirrels, they stood in front of the Shadowfen Reflection. To his surprise, the palace was iced, reminding him of his painting that was hanging in his bedroom.

He looked at Amoranda with contentment, but there were traces of gloominess in his eyes that he couldn't comprehend. The gates were ice-cold, and the palace walls touched the sky. The silhouette of the Brobdingnagian Shadowfen Reflection was stretched against the dark blue horizon. He moved his wand in the air, and the gates swung open with a crackling noise. The white blanket of ice lay down. He moved forward, flicking his wand, putting every creature to death. He looked around at the debris caused by his disastrous spell, which gave a horrible figure in the dark veil of night. He touched the main hall door and, by flipping his wand, cast the spell that Isabella had taught him.

"Encanto, Oh Encanto !" The door opened with a jerk.



Kicking away the thoughts that were constantly looming over him, he led Amoranda to enter the hall in which the fairy was kept. He looked around and saw darkness all around as if the moon was hidden far behind. Suddenly, an indescribable giant resembling a large reptile with bat-like wings appeared a golden dragon with black smudges, one eye peering outside while the other was burning like a ball of fire. The dragon's dark black scales covered its whole body. Its growling sound echoed through the hall. He turned around as if he knew what would happen. He held his breath, not wanting the dragon to incinerate him.

Atlas looked at Amoranda, who was silent, disappointment in her eyes. He fought and fought until he pierced his sword into the dragon's left eye. A great thumping sound was produced when the dragon fell to the ground. The soft light began to glisten on the dragon's face, coming from the pendant lying on the ground. Then he marched towards Lily, who gave him a shiver down his spine. He gazed at her as if he had to acknowledge something, jolted back his thoughts, and scurried to flip his wand but stopped.

"Be the true version of yourself as mankind is supposed to be," Amoranda's words began to speak relentlessly in his ears. Something felt heavier on his bleeding heart, as if a mountain had fallen on him. "What was it?" he thought. He picked up the pendant and dangled it around her neck while the moonlight gleamed brightly on her. Lily, who was frosty cold, lifted her eyelids as the ice began to melt from her body.

"Clair de lune," Said Amoranda with contentment. Tender moonlight bathed her jasmine-white fairy dress, and the crescent moon pendant gave a purple spark while he was gorgonized by her glacier-blue eyes. He knew he had lost the battle, the battle he wasn't made to be a part of. He heard someone trudging up the stairs. The door opened with a thud, and he saw Isabella coming forward in a full black cloak. Her texture changed, and she converted into a hideous creatures. Atlas was dumbstruck as he saw her monstrous face and irregularly increased repugnant nails. "You betrayed me. You should have killed her," she said. She flipped her wand and lashed out at him, which made him stumble and topple over. Lily's magical eyes struck at her wand and made her deadfreeze mice. Atlas's body was lying on the crystal marble, struggling to breathe. He smiled at Amoranda with a tender glint in his eyes.



Lily Caitlin, who was as pure and innocuous as the lily flower, her rainbow-hued wings that were like a shadow for seeking eyes. He looked at her as if he was dissolving in those galaxy holding eyes that were blue, limitless like the sky and like the ocean, deep and quiet, and silent as twilight.

The moonlight shone daintily on the pendant and her beguiling beauty made him bury his heart in that enchanted moment.

“E-N-C-A-N-T-O” he murmured while his lashes drooped down letting him fall into a long slumber.



*The End.*



# The Emerald Pendant

Author:  
*Tahira Jabeen*

Streets were aglow with fairy lights, even on the cold, freezing nights of December. The view of the hilly Jordan Bay was intoxicating and breathtaking. King Leakov Bay announced local holidays in honour of his marriage to Queen Jasmine. The Queen of Jordan Bay was a gem of beauty. Her expressive eyes sparkled under the shadow of velvety eyelashes. Her gaze could freeze anyone to death, and her electrifying smile could jolt anyone's heart.



Lucifer was the king's most trustworthy maiden, and he had given her the charge of taking care of the queen. Lucifer bore bitter feelings of resentment towards the queen because of her exceptional beauty. She used to look at her with covetous eyes. When Queen Jasmine was to make her very first public appearance, there was a general air of festivity in the whole town. That day, she wore a fairy-like dress that fell on the floor like rose petals. She asked Lucifer to bring her favourite crown, which was adorned with precious diamonds and rare stones. Unfortunately, it was broken by Lucifer. The Queen called her out in front of the other maidservants. This drove Lucifer crazy, and she decided to take revenge on the queen.



After the celebration in Jordan Bay had ended, Lucifer visited Britney, renowned in town as a witch lady and an expert in black magic. She used to work for the king, but now they were at odds with each other. Britney lived in a haunted house near the old graveyard, where the tinted moon cast its dim light over the melancholic features of the house. A pathway lined with broken stones led to the old house, where the front yard was overgrown with sycamore, and spiderwebs stretched across the branches of the trees. As Lucifer stepped onto the sagging front porch, the door opened by itself, which horrified her. However, she summoned her courage to enter the house, and the door slammed shut.

Inside the house, Lucifer saw Bretney, a lady with a spooky appearance, talking to a strange metal orb. After telling Bretney her story, she promised to help. They hatched a plan for Lucifer to steal the king's most precious emerald pendant, which was under the custody of the queen and kept inside a magical box. When the pendant is misplaced, the king will insult the queen.

To open the box, Bretney warned Lucifer that she would have to say, “O magic is arca iubeothee aperture,” otherwise the pendant would go back to the magical box because of its enigmatic force.

Lucifer was very excited to take revenge for the insult she had received. Being a personal maiden, she knew about a secret place where Queen Jasmine used to keep her precious things.

When night fell, she executed her plan. Lucifer obtained the emerald pendant so easily because of that miraculous statement. When she went to Bretney’s place to give her the pendant, Bretney was not there. Lucifer saw that same orb on the floor shining slightly. She was very fascinated to see that strange thing there. She came near it and took it in her hands.

Suddenly, a bright beam of light flashed out of the orb, it started vibrating, and the king’s pendant from her hand fell on the floor. She was very much afraid to witness that and threw it away. She was going to leave the room, but she heard a strange voice coming from the orb.

When she came near the orb, she saw a scene where Princess Jasmine scolded her for breaking the crown. The orb was showing a recap of her whole life. She also saw how Bretney and King Leakov were good friends and then became enemies because Bretney betrayed him. Britney, with her evil tricks, had captured the soul of the king in that emerald pendant and tried to get the pendant in the greed of making herself immortal. That was why they became enemies. Lucifer also saw the moment she took the pendant out of the box, she unknowingly killed the king. She was berating herself in her heart as she was blinded by her revenge and stained her hands with the blood of the king. All of a sudden, Britney appeared in the orb and the room. She picked up the emerald pendant from the floor and killed Lucifer with a single stroke of her sword, making herself immortal.

---



*The End.*





# The Cursed Candle

Author:  
*Nida Syed*

"H... How could it be possible?" she muttered under her breath while sobbing and recoiling in disbelief. Her terror-stricken eyes fell upon her husband's lifeless body lying on the floor. Just moments ago, he was singing her a birthday song. Those who appeared inseparable were now separated. It seemed as though fate had shattered their dreams. She flinched, on the verge of tears, as the flames of the candle grew larger and larger, and the room filled with devilish laughter, as if some wicked demon was cackling out loud. She screamed at the top of her lungs and faded into the darkness.



Hours, days, years, or centuries passed, and she opened her eyes in an unfamiliar place, which appeared to be an ancient castle. Her head was so heavy she could barely remember anything, except for a few scattered flashbacks. She stumbled through the dark, narrow passageways of the castle. She walked into a large hall that was bigger than any she had ever seen. The darkness was slightly alleviated by the blown candles. She walked into the hall and climbed up the stairs. She couldn't help but cry out of fear. Suddenly, a sound made her turn back, and her heart went numb at the sight of thousands of candles. She remembered what had happened before, and now she was on her knees, crying her heart out. What had happened? We shall hear what happened.

Jack and Herry had recently tied the knot, and Jack was enamoured by her otherworldly beauty. It was Herry's special day, and the couple decided to commemorate her birthday with a long drive and a visit to a five-star café. Despite the heavy rain and thunderstorm, the couple remained undeterred by the possibility of harm and set out on their journey.

After purchasing the cake, they decided to head back home.

On their way, they came across a young girl with yellow eyes and a withered face who implored them to buy a candle. "Oh Herry, we ought to light a candle as well," Jack exclaimed, and they purchased one from the girl. Jack waited for the clock to strike twelve while Herry gazed at the candle. "Isn't it an unusual candle? I mean, it's uncertain," Herry inquired while still staring at the candle. "Precious things are unique, like you," Jack replied with a smile, causing Herry to giggle at his compliment.



"IT'S midnight," the wall clock chimed, and Jack lit the candle with a lighter. He sang the birthday song for her while Herry closed her eyes and crossed her fingers with a broad smile to make a wish. "Blow out the candle now," Jack said, extending the cake towards her. Herry pursed her lips and blew, but the flame grew even wider. She attempted to blow many times but to no avail. "Never mind, tell me what you wished for," Jack said, attempting to divert her attention.

"I made a wish that you may live long," she had just uttered the words, and the stab in the dish went straight into the chest of Jack. He gasped. His eyes widened when he felt the sting of the stab in his heart at once, and he died at that moment.





Herry remembered the terrible and haunted death of her husband, and this time she screamed, "How could it be possible?" Her screams echoed in the haunted castle. What would she do now? What could she do? Was this the irony of fate? Nothing seemed calm. Herry again saw the same little girl they had encountered on the road. She was now standing before her, holding that candle with both her hands. Her wings were wrecked and bleeding. "YOU BEFOOLED US. IT WAS YOUR CANDLE. YOU BETRAYED ME!" Herry cried and crawled back. "I'll be the death of yours. I will follow you till your death. I am the curse for you." Saying this in a horrible voice, the girl rushed towards Herry. Herry yelled, "Get off you evil," but she was already on the bed. Was it a nightmare?



*Or the irony of the curse?*

Jack rushed into the room with a sense of urgency. A great calm descended upon her upon seeing Jack standing alive before her, but her eyes followed the cake he was holding. Terrible dread filled her heart, and she felt a sudden surge of anxiety. Her face flushed red, and she pushed the cake away, saying, "Nobody is going to celebrate the birthday here." "What about a long drive?" asked Jack. "No," she shouted furiously, feeling a sense of frustration. "Alright, you have got a guest today. Come down and meet her," said Jack. She came down the stairs, but terrible as it was to have even thought of her, what did she see? She saw a little girl with pale eyes, holding a candle in her hands, wearing a smirk on her face. She stumbled, and the last thoughts she had were the words of a curse. What could be the curse? Her final thoughts were about the murder she had committed two years earlier when she had tricked the Little Fairy who lived in a fairy castle. To attain her beauty, she had to kill the fairy and steal her magical candle. She did so out of jealousy and lust for the same beauty that the fairy had. That day, while the fairy was breathing her last, she cursed her, saying,

*"May this candle be the curse for you!"*



*The End*

# SECTION 11

## POEMS & PROSE

WABI-SABI

2024

# The Divine Embrace

Mine could be limited  
But, YOURS is infinite  
For love is from You, the Most High  
If I'm good I'm Yours  
If I'm bad I'm still Yours  
For You are my Shelter ,wherever I am  
And within my heart, there is a hope  
that Your mercy is bigger than my sins

what it is to be at Your doorstep; refugee I am  
asking for entering through the open doors; forgetful I am  
Ever since I sinned, my soul begged for refuge  
Ever since I born, my heart yearned for You  
What it is that a sinful person seeks Your love  
this is only You, my Beloved, Who casted the love glance

Nothing in the horizons of the Heavens and the Earth  
Could or would ever meet Your mercy  
What in this universe could ever compete Your love?  
You say Come and we rush towards You  
In Your embrace, everything is fine  
With Your love in my heart,  
this is my forte; I am Your servant

Without You, I am not I  
With You it's only You, who am I?  
They say, "Seek Divine in the humanity"  
For God lives in the heart of believers  
Very first Essence of You is comfort and home  
And I tell my heart to be at Ease with You  
That is the path, that's the destiny

I try not to be a hypocrite  
But, my heart is yearning, and my soul begging  
My eyes are dry wanting to meet Yours  
What it would be to see You someday  
On the day You will call upon us  
Maybe the day when towards the heaven we depart  
It is always fine to fall in love with You  
It is , every single time, a union once again

For all the secrets I have whispered to You  
I have never been disappointed in my prayers to You  
It is okay to feel at home with You  
It is always fine to come back to You  
Your love in so infinite and Beyond  
In Your remembrance, I found solace

Since I am from You, within You ,  
And to You is my Return  
What else, even more beautiful, could be The destiny of Love; reunion  
I have witnessed the eternal love of Yours  
Greatest You are , The Most High  
Poor I am , embraced by You

Nida Syed

# Song of A Sinner

*My Dear Allah Almighty! This opaque modest preamble from your creation  
Someone who is faded off, of what to deference. Oblivious of what to be adored of.  
Blank of what to be a tenant Dear Allah Almighty!*

*I have impoverished via this fake  
I have perished, adoring these allurements. Vanity of the impertinent Iron race, distracting my presence.  
Those sordid penchants day-by-day engulfing.*

*Oh, My dear Allah Almighty!  
In this temporary abode with plenty of despise  
It's not a tumult, but a share of volder  
Knowing the opaqueness of these knickknacks.  
Ashamed to ask, How can you keep me? Knowing of, I have made you sad, yet, I ask to be forgiven*

*Knowing the life, I have been living  
And yes, I know it's too late, but not for you to bless.  
Cause on the day of judgment, you will close  
The doors of mercy and Heaven  
On me, on me, on me, on me  
A beneficent! A sinner left to face hell alone*

*My dear Allah Almighty!  
Forgive my soul and my evil body  
Yes! Forgive your sinner lost soul, my lord  
Who else would rocks cry out to worship whose glory taught the stars to shine  
Perhaps creations long to have the words to sing  
But this joy is mine, We magnify your name  
You alone deserve the glory the honor and the praise~~*

Arjumand Rameen

# *Isn't He my Lord?*

Who is He? And, Who am I?

In the dark cloak of the night,  
In the patterns created by the light,  
In the flame that my soul ignites,  
In the verses that my heart recites,  
I find myself searching for a reply,

That, who is He?  
And who am I?  
I call Him a Friend

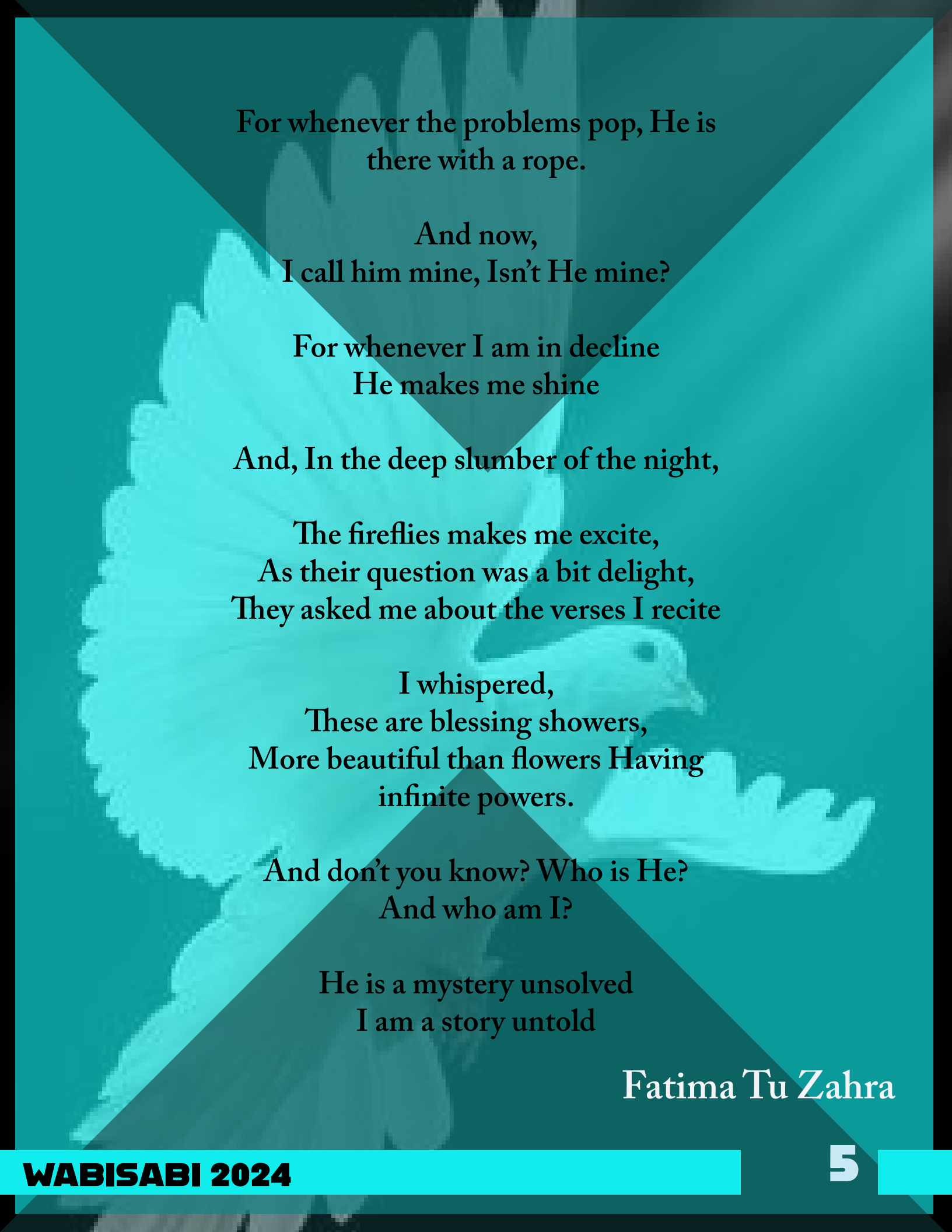
Isn't He a Friend?

For whenever I am bend,  
He makes my sufferings end  
I call Him my Guide

Isn't He a Guide?

For whenever I cried  
I feel him beside  
I call him my hope

Isn't He my hope?



For whenever the problems pop, He is  
there with a rope.

And now,  
I call him mine, Isn't He mine?

For whenever I am in decline  
He makes me shine

And, In the deep slumber of the night,

The fireflies makes me excite,  
As their question was a bit delight,  
They asked me about the verses I recite

I whispered,  
These are blessing showers,  
More beautiful than flowers Having  
infinite powers.

And don't you know? Who is He?  
And who am I?

He is a mystery unsolved  
I am a story untold

Fatima Tu Zahra

## SHAKING HANDS WITH NOVEMBER

Shaking hands with November, hugging December  
Hitting nostalgic feeds in brain's chambers

Archaic feelings of chilly November nights  
That midnight silence that frights

Stepping in, taking us to the last ride  
December calling November with pride

O' my old successor, let's mingle one more time  
Ending on sweetest note, memories of year's time

Abdul Mueed Qazi



# *Here is my Lord*

*Like a bird with broken wings  
Inside me a ray of hope swings*

*In the library of my wondering mind  
Thoughts come like stout wind*

*When the lightning flashes here  
Blazing thunders give me fear*

*The dark clouds then make me aware  
He is my Lord, Who is everywhere*

*When I awake in the middle of night  
Intimidating darkness take over my sight*

*I close my eyes in order to find  
I feel connection, His and mine*

*When the world jades me a lot  
His merciful sight catches me close*

*I hear a whisper in my soul  
Deep in my heart, here is my Lord*

Shumail Aabi

# FOR A LITTLE TOO LONG

I've dwelt amidst all the seasons,  
Yet , I stayed in autumn for a little too long.  
As leaves began to fall , a ballet of amber and gold ,  
When the gentle breeze caressed my cheeks ,  
I lingered in that moment as memories unfold.

A whisper from my soul, as the sun began to set  
“We'll stay awhile”, it murmured  
As dusk stretched its melancholic embrace,  
My life scattered, pigmented yet adorned with grace  
The tincture of sorrow is fused this season,  
Surpassed the agony of Heart and confusion  
I stayed there for a little too long

A tomb of broken dreams , a gardenesque graveyard  
My dwelling place I found in shadows, where autumn's whisperers roam  
Carrying within me that town , which I once called home  
In that garden , memories always bloom  
I have buried my passion beneath time's dust  
As night descended , inhaling all within it's darkness  
In it's somber silence, I found solace in nothingness.  
“what am I doing here,” I ponder in the night,  
Standing there ,forgotten and forlorn .  
Longing for what once was , everything left to mourn  
I stayed in my longing for them , for a little too long .

My reflection in water , mirroring withered roses in the flask, a faded pen,  
Yet, I found solace in remnants of where and when.  
In the echoes of the past , my heart beats,  
It has become an enigma, an impossibility.  
The season within me resembles autumn the most ,  
Walking past reflections of what's left within me.  
Yearning to linger longer, to dive into memories ,  
Upon the amity , gulping the sips of venom,  
I mourned over what's gone , for a little too long.

Knowing I must go ,  
And let go at last.

“Let go,” I whisper softly, to the memories that bind ,  
An ode to the wreckage, left scattered in my mind .  
With the sadness of tired and dead horses, yet not giving up ,  
With a million cries unspoken, stuck in the throat,  
With burning eyes and a heavy heart, I take my leave.  
With each step back , I bid farewell to what I have been,  
Standing there for a moment, after fading into what has been,  
I've relived that season, for a little too long

Nida Syed

# ACCEPTANCE

I asked myself a thoughtful question that day  
Why my prayers are always left astray?

Where I fallibly leave a loophole?  
Replied conscience, the voice of my soul

“It is not action that matters to God  
But the intention hidden in your heart”

I realized why our prayers are not accepted mostly  
Because the thoughts in our head and heart are ghastly

We all have forgotten our Deity  
In the voracity of making our lives more mighty

Tahira Jabeen

# AM I A MISANTHROPE?

Yesterday I was the moon,  
Full of tranquility and stability  
Enlightened soul; gorgeous stroll  
Exquisite smudges with tearing thoughts

Today I'm the Sun

Shining brighter with extensive blisters  
I'm a Misanthrope feeling like a twister  
And I finally understood, that  
My mind is full of rosy outlook

Iqra Nayab

# *It's Up To You*

One song can spark a moment  
One flower can wake the dream One tree can start a forest  
One bird can herald a spring  
One smile begins a friendship  
One handclasp lifts a soul  
One star can guide a ship at sea One word can frame the goal  
One step must start each journey  
One word must start each prayer  
One hope will raise our spirits  
One touch can show you care  
One voice can speak with wisdom  
One heart can know what's true  
One life can make the difference

You see, It's up to you z

Aliza Rubab

# THE DESPERATE MENDINGS

For all the words I didn't utter,  
For all the truth I didn't reveal,  
For all the mysteries I didn't disclose,  
For all the pain I didn't complain,

Is a burial today!

For all the lies slipped past my lips,  
For all the fears leaning on my shoulder,  
For all the tears I held in my eyes,  
For all the dreams I once held dear,

Is a funeral today!

Nida Syed

# *Lofty Thoughts*

The sound of birds chirping around  
That serenity, never found  
Tall trees, lush and green  
Enriching this wonderful scene

Within sturdy timberland, without stress  
Away from the world's materialistic mess  
Having lofty thoughts playing chess  
Turn out to be an unresolved mess

Flowers, fields, oceans and seas  
Gentle breeze flowing through trees  
To rapacious world, paying no heed  
Mortals' eyes covered with greed

Nature, an integral part of life  
An actual heaven and a paradise

Eman Rukhsar



# LONELINESS

*In the world full of life  
Why is this loneliness and all the sighs?*

*In the freezing nights of December  
I've a lot of things to remember*

*Wandering in the lanes  
Staring everywhere, all in vain*

*Whom shall I tell this baffling anguish?  
Pleasure of blessings, agony of sufferings*

*Like a star in space  
I'm alone in my place*

*Everyday stress is driving me insane  
Fretfulness in body, morbid thoughts in brain*

*Words are the language of heart  
Sketching the pain, as a fine art*

Asim Nawaz

# Lives Bathed In Blood

*Have you ever experienced something more than brutal  
When races get destroyed with one bullet gun  
When powers attempt suicide within some eyes  
When a call for rights gets a response of shelling  
When dead get raped within their graves*

*When one had the life span in the elite class  
While another man is born poor  
When one lives healthy and wealthy  
While the another one starves for the two*

*When one is free to vibe with freedom  
While the other had lives in "Death and Torture cells"  
Where one finds the justice by means of some pennies  
Where one gets the title "Terrorist" but "Freedom fighter"*

*In this*

*Let's find them something to believe in  
To give them some values to have faith in To give them something to  
hold on to  
To tell them who they really belong to*

**Arjumand Rameen**

# WORLD OF HATE

I am wandering in the world of hate  
Where everyone is just scolding the fate

Hustle and bustle is all around  
All are fighting on the ground

Some are strong and some are weak  
But they have to conquer a peak

Empty souls are living in the room  
Why everyone is just lacking the bloom?

Everyone is uncovering the flaws of the nation  
No body is working hard in the situation

How may we accomplish in the world of hate  
Where all are running against the fate

Samman Zia

# 365 DAYS

365 days ending with lessons taught  
Starting from stracth very next dawn

January spent with jiggles and joy  
February showed true faces of lies

March set the tone light  
Tension brought the April flight

May was the testing time  
June fetched some new heights

Holy Moly hot was July  
Me lived August fully fried

September showed some settle site  
OMG was overly hectic October

November started with lots of plans  
Events of loved ones started then

December climaxed with anxiety  
Of the next 365 days that stand

Abdul Mueed Qazi

# That Reminds Me

*Opening your aged diary,  
Is like living again those centuries*

*Feeling again all the little happiness,  
And laughing at all those stupid worries*

*With tears in eyes and smile on face,  
Wondering how fast time flies*

*Refreshing all those memories of infancy,  
Missing all those best buddies*

*That smell of old pages of life,  
When your clock moves anticlockwise*

*Excavating the life to find your buried remaining  
The moment I run from today to years ago and hide*

*Happy and sad at the same time,  
I wrote it, thank God I was wise*

Kumail Fatima

# Pleas

*Oh! Thumping beats  
Calm down to pleas*

*Pursue the dreams  
Move on and gleam*

*Life on a short leash  
Nothing but wasting breathe*

*Nature is serving  
Replica you delivering*

*Wars with your sanity  
Is driving your immunity*

*Finding the ipseity  
Is the real destiny*

*Oh! Thumping beats  
Calm down to pleas*

Laraib Zahra

# THE IRON RACE

*O' the man of iron race  
No love is left in your space*

*Your days are laden with grief  
No time to relax and relief*

*In the craze of liberation  
You ruined your tradition*

*You disturbed the order of nature  
Destroyed the life of its creatures*

*I wish I was in the golden age  
Fear of sorrow nor ravage*

*No use of weapons was there  
Affection and kindness everywhere*

*O' the man of iron age  
Get away of your cage*

Asim Nawaz

# OFF TO ADVENTURE

On very last day of Mids.  
Gang of ours, wandering in different climes,

Like flock of birds, up in the sky,  
Dreams in their adorable eyes,

Stashing them with exquisite smiles,  
Abandoning all their thoughts aside,

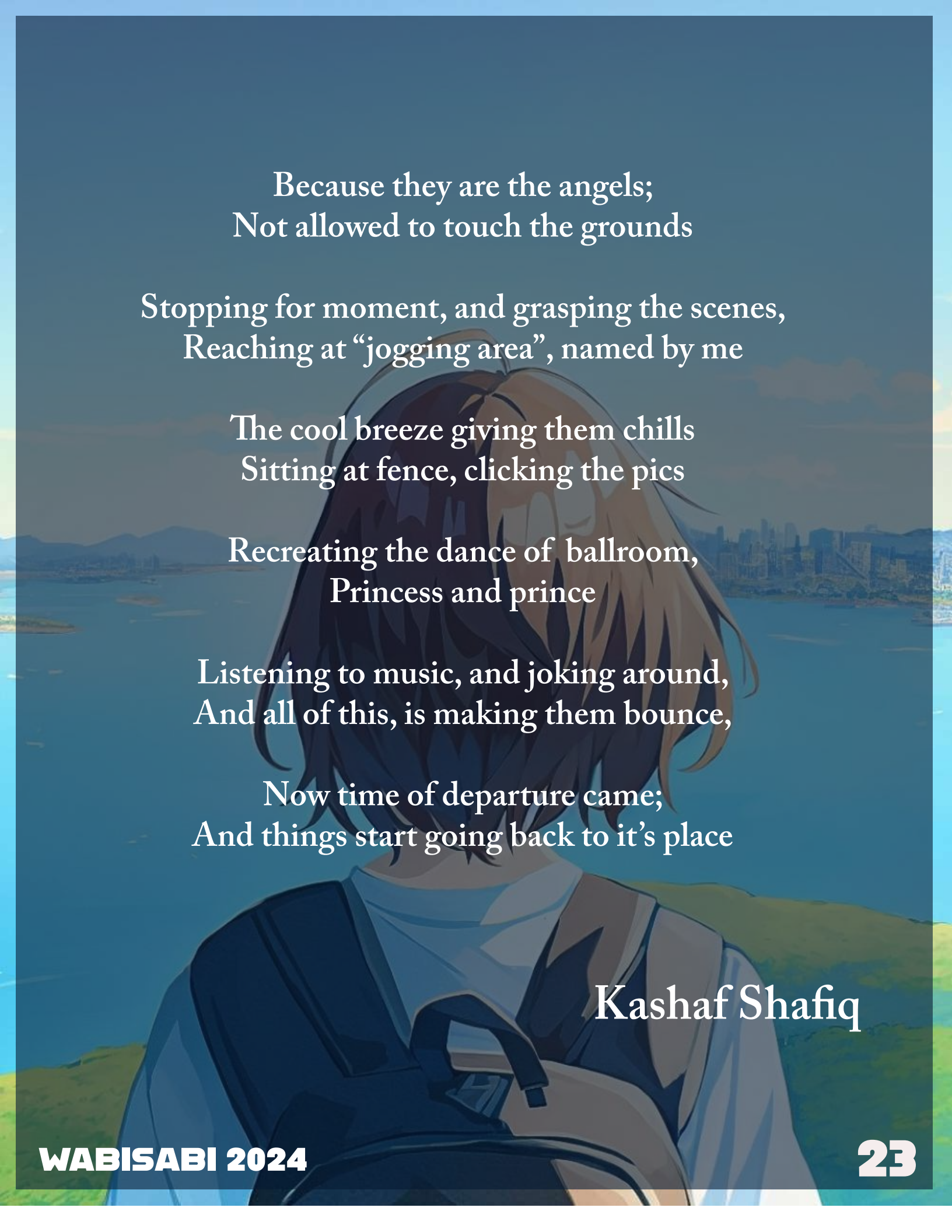
And relishing their quality time,  
BS block to construction site,

With cloudy weather and rays peeking from behind,  
Chattering and ambling with clasping hands,

Capturing the moments with flower;  
Which was lying on the land,

Happy tears start coming from clouds,  
Savouring little freedom, with new hope





Because they are the angels;  
Not allowed to touch the grounds

Stopping for moment, and grasping the scenes,  
Reaching at “jogging area”, named by me

The cool breeze giving them chills  
Sitting at fence, clicking the pics

Recreating the dance of ballroom,  
Princess and prince

Listening to music, and joking around,  
And all of this, is making them bounce,

Now time of departure came;  
And things start going back to it's place

Kashaf Shafiq

# The Rain

Squashy trickle of the rain droplets,  
In the courtyard of my homestead

When everything was hunching for splashes,  
The rainfall fabricated the wimped scenario.

Obstacle in the orb of my eyes,  
That kept me away from the artistry of nature;

The hindrance was the wall of my dwelling.  
Moon behind the dark clouds seemed like,

A massive pearl, with dark smudges.  
Awashed in the moonlight, my heart pounded

Iqra Nayab

# Madly Hazel Eyes

Am I dreaming?  
Or is it true?

I tried to hold but still falling  
All day long, I keep on baffling

Sleepless nights while you keep telling me lies  
Bewildered me, and those madly hazel eyes

I travelled through the dark  
I ventured out of the forest  
Now the pain ain't healing  
The cuts still bleeding

Ain't letting me see, the broad daylight  
Because I'm lost in those frosty hazel eyes

You keep darting your stares  
Focused in your every glare  
So what If you're the killer?  
So what if I'm the victim?

Lend me a little more, and this sight  
Don't take away those dreamy hazel eyes

Orchestra , setting thoughts astray  
While me chilling outside the café  
Amidst wild night, it's getting late  
Now I shouldn't let my latte on the wait

Let those memories slide pass on the cold lanes  
Go on, stop being gorgonized by those hazel eyes

Farah Afzal

# O' Lap Of Nature

*O' flower of Jasmine, your ivory glare  
And the riveting scent that you bear,  
Scares away the beast of despair,  
For there is a magic in your velvety wear.*

*O' leaf of Maple, the wisest of all,  
Who hides in itself the mysteries of fall  
Your brittle n' brickle with siskin's call,  
Creates a melody sweetest of all.*

*O' king of flowers, the glorious Rose,  
Nobody knows the stories you enclose  
Ruling with decency is the way you chose,  
Stumbling and crumbling, yet once again arose.*

*O' Watch of nightingales, who paint the tales,  
Of unrequited love with mournful wails  
A jailbird caged in Rose's red veil,  
With no chances of an early bail.*

*O' lantern of Sky, the Moon so bright  
A sign of hope in the darkness of night,  
Are you aware of the flame you ignite,  
In the heart of those fighting knights?*

*O' celestial star, the souvenirs of each night,  
How far you are! But still in sight,  
Pairing with moonlight, hide n' seek with  
twilight,  
Looks like you are a lover of the light.*

*O' lap of nature, a comfort of mine,  
Heal my wounds with all your shine  
Design me in a way so Divine,  
That I shall rise and will never decline.*

**Fatima Tu Zahra**

# IT'S COMING, IT'S COMING ✨

*Counting the twinkling stars  
Sitting on the wooden bars*

*In a moonlit night  
Thinking of something bright*

*It's coming, It's coming  
I heard from my right*

*I took a glance to it  
It was my future*

*That came with all it's might  
Well! the journey wasn't short*

*I counted the twinkling stars  
Sitting on the wooden bars*

*Praying to the lord of lords  
On peak of every night*

Abdul Mueed Qazi

# WITHERED BLOSSOM

*Something within my rib cage hurts so bad  
Something from my eyes slides down  
Something on my face fades away  
Something in my skull, hiatuses somewhere*

*Something sends shivers down my spine  
Something makes it difficult for me to breathe  
Something on the sky screams out loud  
Something in the air speaks to me*

*Petal by petal, in the Spring  
Leaf after leaf, in the Autumn  
Crystals like snow, in the Winter  
Sweats and sighs, in the Summer*

*Something running through my veins  
Something hidden behind my soul  
Something in the dreams when I sleep  
Something I mourn in silent sobbing*

*Something that I've for that I fear  
Something that is still beyond to forbear  
Something that I've left so far  
Something I still carry as a scar*



*Everything round the clock is mysterious to me*

*From the dawn of despairs  
Following the days of doubts  
By the noon of nuisance  
Owing to eves of shouts  
Through the nights of delusions  
Till the midnight's chaos*

*Anything couldn't be left unresolved forever*

*Someday the heart will find its cure  
Someday the tears will turn into glitters  
Someday I'll restore my giggles  
Someday mind will solve the riddles*

*Someday hopes will get together to fight  
Someday I will be free to take my flight  
Someday the thunderstorms will sound melodious to me  
Someday the rain will bring healing to me*

*Since the wounds them self designate  
There must be something that relieves the pain  
Since, after fall followers are to bloom anyway  
Since dreams are to ornate the possible pathway*

*Since all that endurance had to brace my roots  
Since the fears I've will have to bring me fruits  
So, I will gain better than what I have lost  
So, all the scars are to make me a star*

**Nida Syed**

# To Autumn

O' Autumn breeze calms me down  
The wildness in me keeping me down  
Tell these amber leaves, not to seethe  
I can hear that silent hymn in my every breath

O' Autumn rain drench me soft  
So that bewildering waves can gently float  
The time elapsing with a quiet shrill  
But here I'm standing still

O' Autumn moon, sunsets, and daybreaks  
Shimmer the world under this dark lake  
Clenched soul with the dreamy eyes  
Following the lead of the ocean tides

O' Autumn dawn, be my home, my healing potion  
While perching thoughts running wild my imagination  
A vintage heart is quiescent at those fancy flights  
And enchanted feet dance in the bonfire nights

Farah Afzal

# *Embellished with thorns, I'm a Rose*

You hate those painted scales  
For making your pores turn pale

You hate those emerald, hump leaves  
For making you look like veiled creep

For making your appearance rough  
For making you furious enough

But..!

But tell me, tell me you velvety blush  
Would you be loved without your pretty

Glow?

Would you be even Rose without thorns

Below?

You should know your protectors dear  
You should distinguish actors dear

And she was going to pluck your life  
And telling you chunks of lovely lies

You think them imperfection to your perfection  
And cause of your hideousness and redirection

But listen..!

Listen to me you velvety blush

They indeed protected you  
They indeed collected you

And

They Indeed punished who bisected you  
Those thorns, those hurting thorns

Indeed Saved you, made you

Zainab Zubair

# Treasure Of Nature

Lets be oblivious from the world  
Feel the peace in chirping of birds

Sitting beside the running river  
Observing my shadow in wavy mirror

Sensing the soothing blows of wind  
Sloughing the burden from my hind

Seeing the twinkling stars on sky  
Fills my heart with pleasure and joy

Musing to explore the beauty of nature  
Its winsome to have this sublime treasure

Maheen Ahmed

# HOPE

Hope is light  
When nothing goes right

Let the sun of your dreams be bright  
Let the moon of your strength shine

Just believe in yourself  
It's okay, you will be fine

Saleha Aqeel



# Lessons And Resolutions

The year was full of treasures  
Pleasures of arrivals, sufferings of departure

Going through tribulations and trials  
I have learnt the art of smile

I have learnt through rejections  
Nobody is important, It's a mere misperception

Come out of your illusions  
Here are some resolutions

Need to be more realistic  
Straight forward and simplistic

The year ended with many lessons  
Leaving behind many questions

Asim Nawaz

# To Life

O' life! O mate!  
Should I call you just my fate  
You're green now, then you're blue Still wonder,  
what are you?

You liar! You cheat!  
That's how you sometimes treat

An innocent fleet and freed  
Or a cannon ball coated sweet

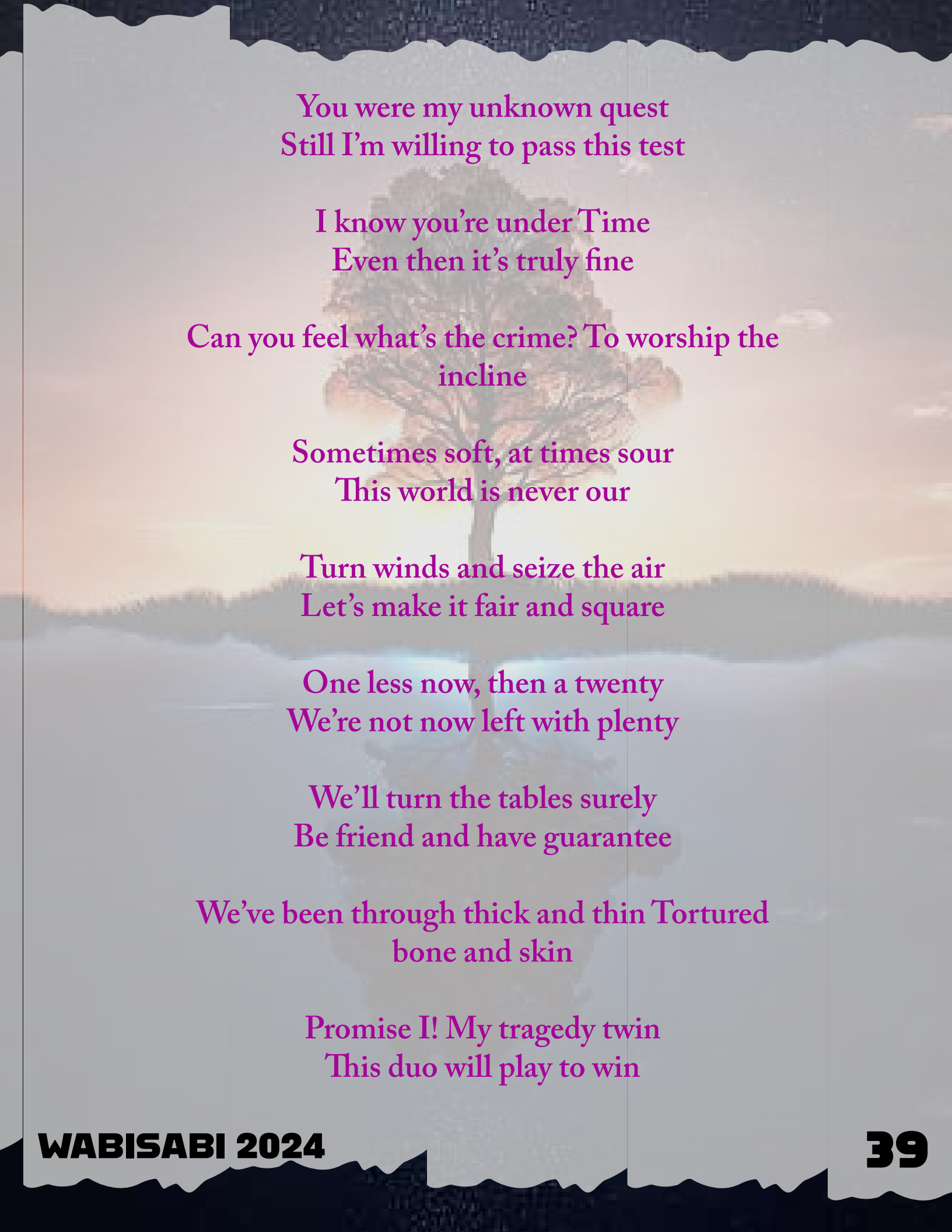
At times you keep me dearer  
My ways start getting clearer

Then massive as a creature queerer  
You horrify the poor fearer

You're not cruel

Nor am I oppressed  
But situation needs to be addressed





You were my unknown quest  
Still I'm willing to pass this test

I know you're under Time  
Even then it's truly fine

Can you feel what's the crime? To worship the  
incline

Sometimes soft, at times sour  
This world is never our

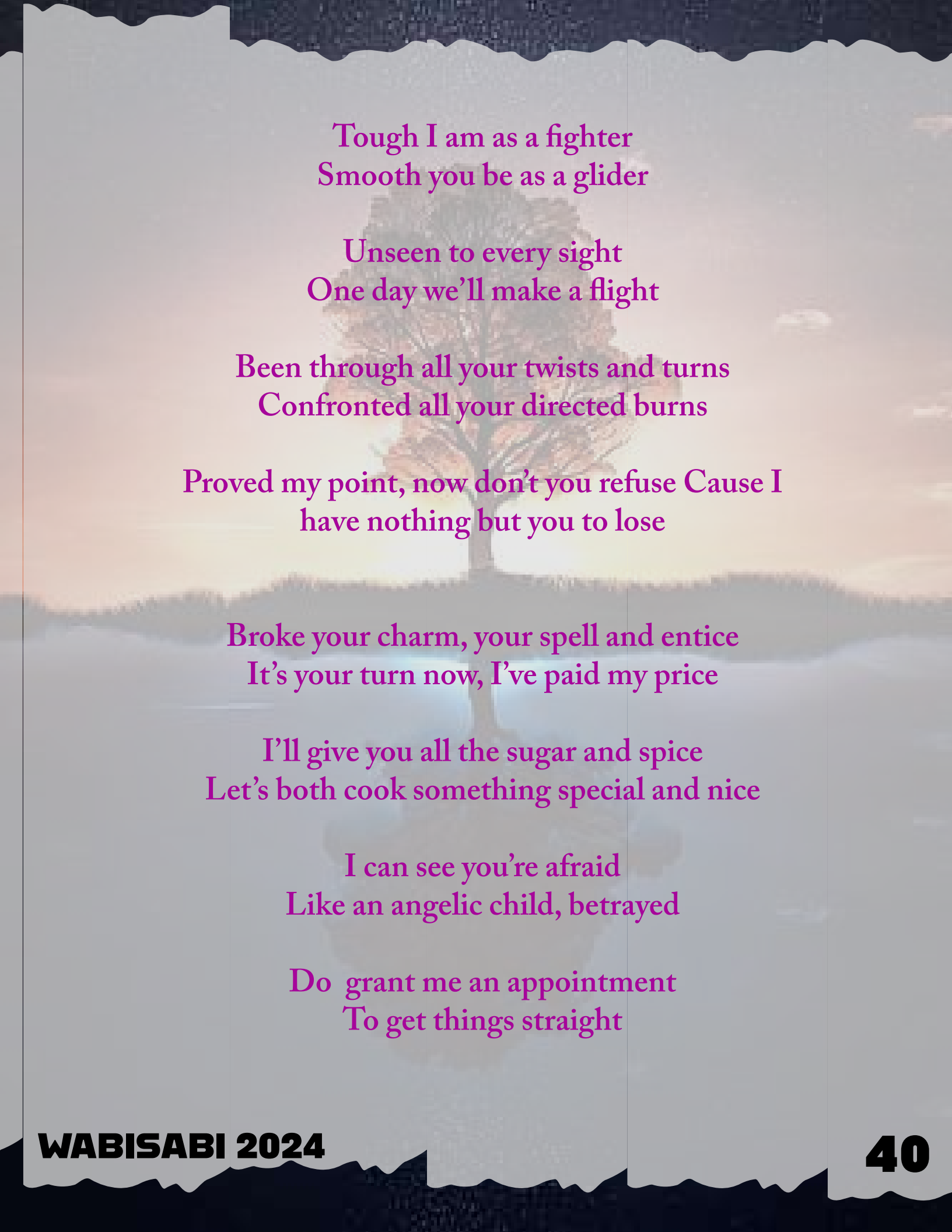
Turn winds and seize the air  
Let's make it fair and square

One less now, then a twenty  
We're not now left with plenty

We'll turn the tables surely  
Be friend and have guarantee

We've been through thick and thin Tortured  
bone and skin

Promise I! My tragedy twin  
This duo will play to win



Tough I am as a fighter  
Smooth you be as a glider

Unseen to every sight  
One day we'll make a flight

Been through all your twists and turns  
Confronted all your directed burns

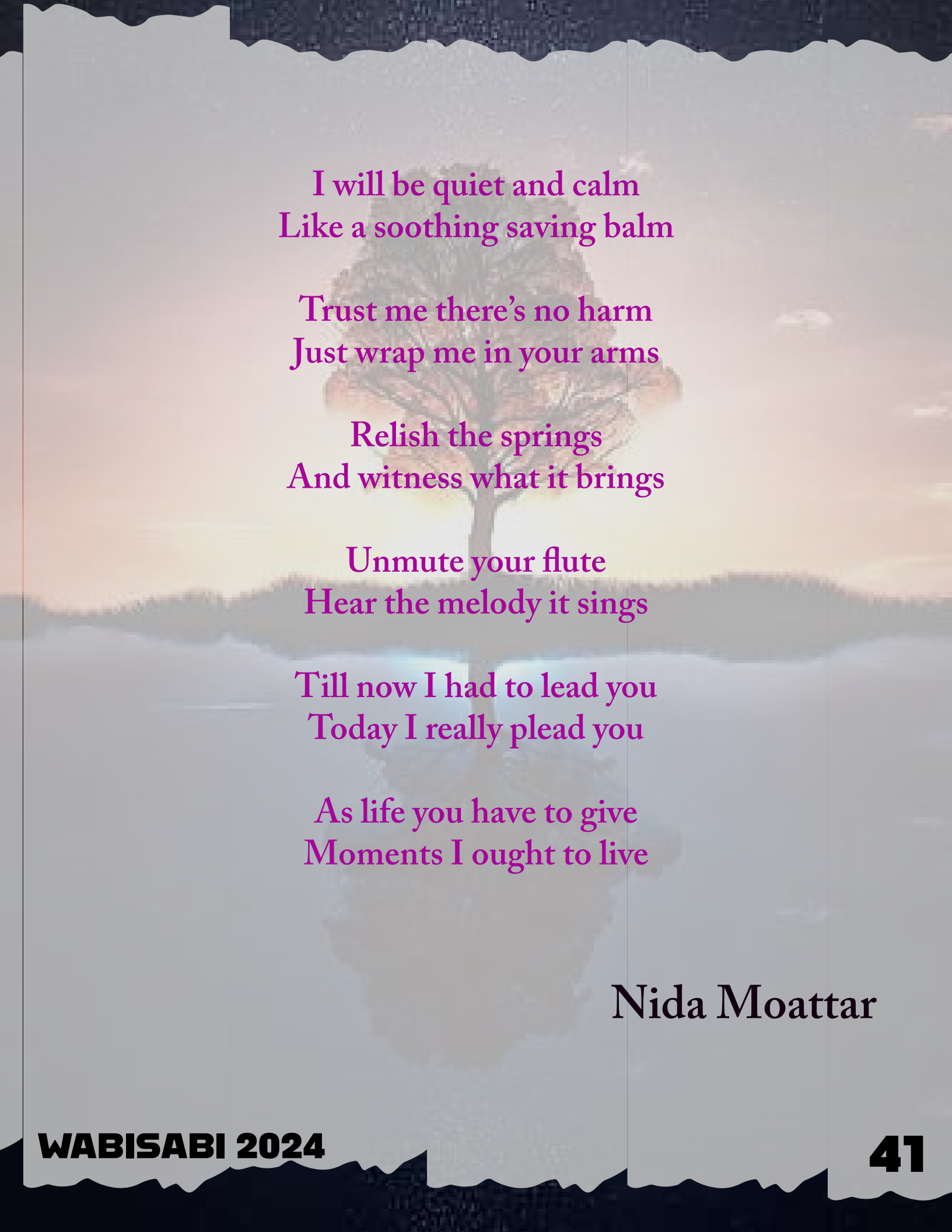
Proved my point, now don't you refuse Cause I  
have nothing but you to lose

Broke your charm, your spell and entice  
It's your turn now, I've paid my price

I'll give you all the sugar and spice  
Let's both cook something special and nice

I can see you're afraid  
Like an angelic child, betrayed

Do grant me an appointment  
To get things straight

A tree with autumn leaves is reflected in a body of water. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on this background.

I will be quiet and calm  
Like a soothing saving balm

Trust me there's no harm  
Just wrap me in your arms

Relish the springs  
And witness what it brings

Unmute your flute  
Hear the melody it sings

Till now I had to lead you  
Today I really plead you

As life you have to give  
Moments I ought to live

Nida Moattar

# *I Wonder*

When I started?

Why I ended?

What is important?

Who to leave?

I always wonder

Some unheard scenes

Some unseen voices

Situations go around Crushing us all the way

I always wonder

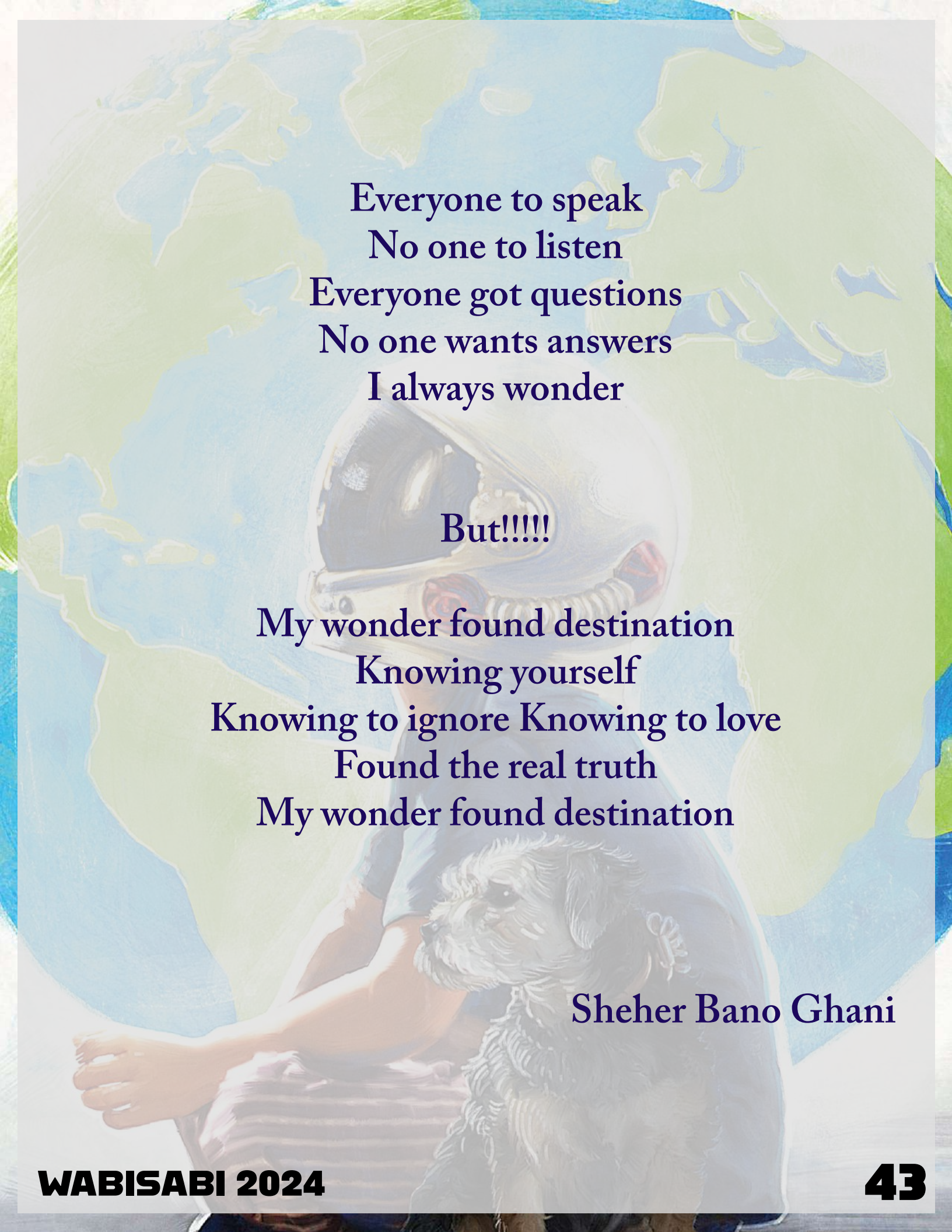
Blames were thrown

“You” were pointed out

Answers were required

Audience not found

I always wonder

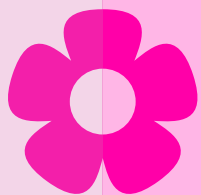


Everyone to speak  
No one to listen  
Everyone got questions  
No one wants answers  
I always wonder

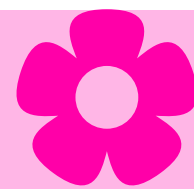
But!!!!

My wonder found destination  
Knowing yourself  
Knowing to ignore Knowing to love  
Found the real truth  
My wonder found destination

Sheher Bano Ghani



# 🌸 DAUGHTER



The Innocent Creature Of Almighty



Precious and incomparable  
Sweet and adorable

A relation out of this world  
Makes life heaven in this world




Blessing from God  
Cuteness overload

She makes you smile  
With her cute style

Her innocent little questions  
Takes you out of tensions

A pure and loving soul  
Makes you give yours all



For whom you live and try  
She never dreams high

Always thinks of her parents  
Her heart is transparent

She carries lots of emotions  
Each emotion has notion

Notion of love and love  
For her parents she loves

**Abdul Mueed Qazi**

# *Lingering Life*

Enduring years I have lived  
Each was brimful of memories  
I yearn to hold them eternally  
But the clock is ticking rebelliously  
My beloved are getting white and grey  
Like a train disappearing far and away  
This feeling is shattering me day by day  
And I don't know how to make it stay  
O God! hold me strong  
I'm drowning in ocean of these thoughts

Ajlah Kashaf

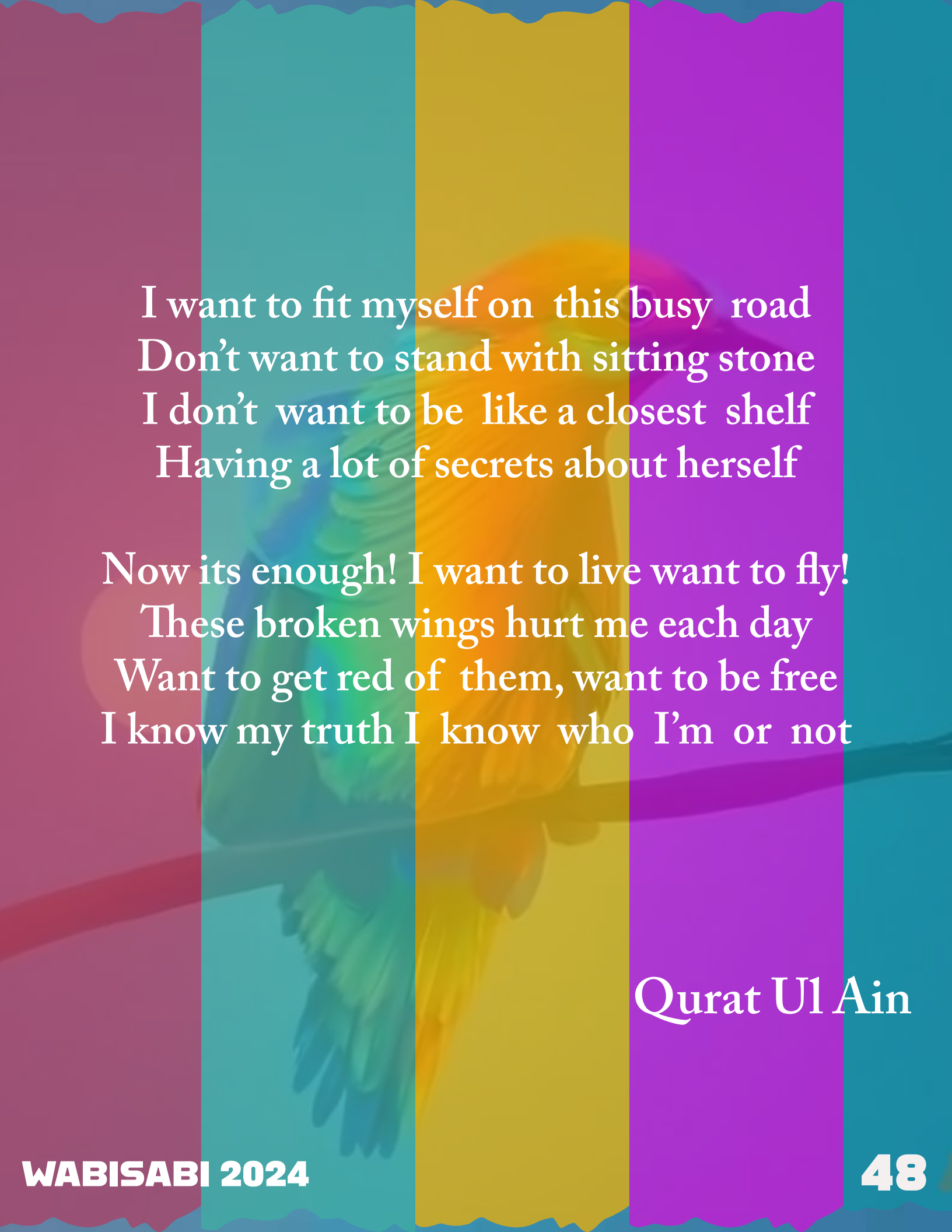


# A BROKEN WINGED BIRD

I know my truth I know who I am  
I look for beauty to thank each day  
My power of thoughts opens new doors  
A broken winged bird that cannot fly

I'm like the rain patting the rooftop  
I close the eyes and my imagination flies  
Live the life and love the life I live  
Gotten things I wish never had

Everything falling I forget my face  
People ask why I try why I care  
How could I not share or care  
I have to live with myself to know



I want to fit myself on this busy road  
Don't want to stand with sitting stone  
I don't want to be like a closet shelf  
Having a lot of secrets about herself

Now its enough! I want to live want to fly!  
These broken wings hurt me each day  
Want to get red of them, want to be free  
I know my truth I know who I'm or not

Qurat Ul Ain

# FOR LITTLE TOO LONG

I've dwelt amidst all the seasons,  
Yet , I stayed in autumn for a little too long.  
As leaves began to fall , a ballet of amber and gold ,  
When the gentle breeze caressed my cheeks ,  
I lingered in that moment as memories unfold.

A whisper from my soul, as the sun began to set  
“We'll stay awhile”, it murmured  
As dusk stretched its melancholic embrace,  
My life scattered, pigmented yet adorned with grace  
The tincture of sorrow is fused this season,  
Surpassed the agony of Heart and confusion  
I stayed there for a little too long

A tomb of broken dreams , a gardenesque graveyard  
My dwelling place I found in shadows, where autumn's whisperers roam  
Carrying within me that town , which I once called home  
In that garden , memories always bloom  
I have buried my passion beneath time's dust  
As night descended , inhaling all within it's darkness  
In it's somber silence, I found solace in nothingness.  
“what am I doing here,” I ponder in the night,  
Standing there ,forgotten and forlorn .  
Longing for what once was , everything left to mourn  
I stayed in my longing for them , for a little too long .

My reflection in water , mirroring withered roses in the flask, a faded pen,  
Yet, I found solace in remnants of where and when.  
In the echoes of the past , my heart beats,  
It has become an enigma, an impossibility.  
The season within me resembles autumn the most ,  
Walking past reflections of what's left within me.  
Yearning to linger longer, to dive into memories ,  
Upon the amity , gulping the sips of venom,  
I mourned over what's gone , for a little too long.

Knowing I must go ,  
And let go at last.

“Let go,” I whisper softly, to the memories that bind ,  
An ode to the wreckage, left scattered in my mind .  
With the sadness of tired and dead horses, yet not giving up ,  
With a million cries unspoken, stuck in the throat,  
With burning eyes and a heavy heart, I take my leave.  
With each step back , I bid farewell to what I have been,  
Standing there for a moment, after fading into what has been,  
I've relived that season, for a little too long

**Nida Syed**

# BACK TO THE BELONGINGS

*The bell rings  
And this time brings  
The end to situation*

*Without any notion  
Wants me to motion*

*To the days back  
Which I call*

*For some days  
Having the rays*

*Of joy and bliss  
Which I'm going to miss*

*But these days have to go  
And I have to follow*

*With them to journey  
Which never brings harmony*

*With my thoughts  
But I have to lose*

*All the rest days  
To get the best days*

*Packing up for a routine  
A day to start with full  
esteem*

*It's time to go back  
To the university to earn  
which I lack*

*It's the bell of ending  
vacation*

*It's not a time for celebration*

*But I have to go through it  
Became its time to end up  
The rest days the best days*

Sana Zahra

# Memories In Disguise

Chaste as a full moon  
Bright as a sun of June  
Safe as a pearl in oyster  
Momentous moments, that matter

Short as a shot  
Long as a life  
Found in happy tears  
And fits, of frightening fears

Times of homely feasts  
With friends in city streets  
Cold as sleet and hails  
Warm, for a sinner veiled

Some soothing as tranquilizer  
Some pinching as terrorizer  
Some smooth as an improviser  
Some harsh as a criticizer

Like sweets for a child  
Aggressive and mild  
A culprit, innocent filed  
Or a gentle, gone wild

Like a muggle who's hexed  
A loser dumped and pressed  
In the mirror of erised  
I saw myself priced

I travel back in time  
I wanted then, to shine  
What I aimed at, wasn't mine  
But I went for the crime

Sketches imprinted on mind  
Some made sense, others art abstract  
Like a sacred valuable pact  
Feels like a precious find

Successes not successful  
Failures always dreadful  
Chase and trace my feet  
As assassin sore and vengeful

In trips of highs and lows  
In poetic lines and prose  
In paths and ways we chose  
In image, wider and close

Flowers in the garden green  
In deserts, an unheard scream  
Thoughts in conscious streams  
Shadows of wildest dreams

In help from the troubled  
In face that doubled  
In hands of a clown we juggled  
Busting our all's well bubble



An injury with a lesson  
Or praise in all hate  
Sometimes bloomed and blossomed  
At times dismal fate

Some loud shout-outs  
For making family proud  
Then trotted over by a mob  
Of an absence filled crowd

As silly as a fun  
As witty as a pun  
As cool as a stunt As old as time  
As scary as a gun  
As straight as a maize  
As clear as haze  
As stealth as a bug  
As honest as a thug  
As fragrant as dung  
As royal as a queen  
As cute as a gleam  
Mute as a siren  
Hot as an iron  
Like film on the screen  
Is life of my teen

From smile of a baby  
To vigilance of a wise  
It's not the age old  
But memories in disguise

Nida Moattar

# YOU WANT SOME POETRY?

You want some poetry?  
Let's try this "art" Shortly  
It's difficult to mold thoughts in one's writing,  
But let me try this heartily,

Art is for enjoyment and fun  
But Sylvia's writings are making my stomach churn,  
Nature, Society, Religion and Love,  
Artists like Wordsworth, Dickens and Milton,

Are somewhere up above,  
But their "art" is still in somewhere and someone's heart.

You want some poetry?  
Let's try this "Craft" broadly

In the sparkling water of creativity,  
The story of writers in their festivity  
As art is for rebirth and extension;  
Artists like Mark Twain and Jane Austen,

Making my thoughts turned out firmly  
Shy but rebellious, the writings of Emily  
In the themes of substantial and realistic;  
The "ART" brings out the side that is fantastic

And when writing becomes the passion,  
It turns out in the form of "Fashion"

Kashaf Shafiq X Iqra Nayab

# Sparkling Spirit

The body without soul  
Is like you don't have a goal

Your passion is like a train  
It's your destiny which you gain

Everything you do is a chance  
That turns a black heart in a glance

Purity and dignity is a mark  
But you must have a spark

The spark that raises you  
That defines who you are

Lit up the ways with ecstasy  
Your soul reached it's destiny

Maheen Ahmed X Saleha Aqeel

# Dreaming Out Loud

I've come to a conclusion  
This all whimsical script,  
Is nothing but mere Hallucination  
Hauling me into Tantalizing Delusion

Surmise this it's beyond to forbear  
Upstairs to fantasy reality flares  
Halted by oceans, distant apart  
Bleak dreams pouring into tears

In cosmic meadows with a gentle breeze  
Gush of reality makes me freeze  
Courtier in castle, Loner at a Beach  
Oh, My Dainty Illusions- which I dream

Beautiful Illusions turning into fears  
Running reality round stuck like mares  
One never gasped could ever get depart?  
Melancholic delusions of you, ground despairs

Nida Syed X Kashaf Shafiq

# WHY IS IT SO?

It's getting darker, why is it so?  
Ohh sun is setting! Dont let it go

Me sinking with the drowning sun  
Heart is trembling thinking of someone

Eyes have shed tears and lost glow  
Don't end up the day! Let it be slow

Reminds me seeing it sink  
When you left me in a wink

Neither have friends, Nor any foe  
Deprived of hope! I'm feeling low

You are the culprit, for what I'm going through  
You were the hope I had to live true

Sensation of pain and sorrounding of grieves  
Have shed tears like autumn leaves

It's looking like I'm breathing steams  
Might be last, with the downing beams

Abdul Mueed Qazi X Tariq Abbas

# BACKBENCHERS

*Mysterious yet so much mischievous,  
One word that suits them is “ambitious”*

*Horse-play of them got me debating,  
Their impact on class is everlasting*

*I don't know how to portray this art,  
Hidden gems, passionate thoughts.  
Not a teacher's dearie, but feisty brats.*

*Buzzy behavior like a pretty Rosanne,  
They are also known as jester squads  
Head of frontiers, legends of throne*

*They know how to make last bench;  
Movie theater, bed and a food mart*

*Far from the front, leaning towards last  
Some chewing. Bubbles, nuts with playful smiles*

*Irritating the ones, who are on the both sides mafias of the class,  
Always on limelight having special “PhD” in fights*

*No connection with studies, boredom is their pulpit  
Inactivity is their possession, and saying no like bullet  
Memories of them going to last forever in our heart*

*Yesss! They are “the backbenchers”  
from the English Morning Fourth craft*

by GIRLS BS ENGLISH  
IV Morning

# REDEMPTION

Stuck within my own self  
Dreadful thoughts, Remorseful sense

A carefree dirge on Love's death  
Free bird took one last breath

Heart like broken shards of glass  
Wistful smile and strikingly astounded past

Those prisoned butterflies and their seething voice  
I couldn't stop to hear relentless noise

That din inside my head is begging me to repent  
Resentment with my own self couldn't be vent

Reach for me a shaky hand  
My bare feet on abounded land

Holding onto it for my dear life  
String of hope flashed in front of my eyes

Decaying trees by the forlorn tarn  
Like a tear of regret had been worn

Farah Afzal X Kashaf Shafiq



# *Garden Of* **FLOWERS**

*Mellow touch, hundred colors  
Scents enthrall every lover*

*Walking in the scenty tunnel  
Enchants my eyes upto binal*

*Lovely Lillies, Red Roses  
Striking my heart to make poses*

*Jasmine, Lotus creating hurdles  
Difficult to choose in bundles*

*Sunflower Facing towards it's mate  
Daffodils dancing dissapperaing hate*

*O' my friend, don't be shy  
Pluck flowers and have joy*

*Plucking from garden of flowers  
Lifts my joy up to Eifel Tower*

Abdul Mueed Qazi **X** Maheen Ahmed

# BACKBENCHERS



**by Boys BS IV M**

Backbenchers and firstbenchers are as different as day and night. Average marks, lots of fun, and tons of memories make them different from the rest. First benchers are only the teacher's favorites, but backbenchers are everyone's favorites. Backbenchers do not focus on scoring high marks; they mainly focus on creating everlasting memories. True backbenchers never reach the class on time. Listening to the whole lecture becomes arduous for them.

Backbenchers are the real artists of the class. They always try to entertain the whole class with their idiotic mischief. Backbenchers sacrifice their self-respect to bring some peals of laughter to the class. Quipping a joke in the middle of a boring lecture is one of their prime features. If a backbencher answers a difficult question correctly, it earns him a hero-worship and the whole class praises him.

Backbenchers enjoy the advantages of their territory. A fine span from the teacher's reach provides them with a sense of safety and satisfaction. They can take a nap and eat snacks without fear of being caught. Backbenchers can enter and leave the class without any interruption. If the teacher starts checking assignments, one can complete their assignment during the process. Sitting on the last benches also widens one's outlook on the class. A backbencher can easily observe all the activities happening in the class.

Backbenchers are the soul of the class. Backbenchers may not be able to score the highest marks, yet they leave an everlasting impact on the hearts of teachers and other fellows. Backbenchers not only rule the last benches, but they are also the emperors of their territory and are remembered for their awesomeness.



# OUR INCREDIBLE JOURNEY COMES TO AN END NOW,

*Any piece of literature, be it by writers or poets, remains incomplete until it is read. It is the reader who brings it to life and completes it. Thank you for taking the time to read this magazine and, in doing so, bestowing perfection upon this imperfect expression of thoughts.*



W A B I S A B I 2 0 2 4

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# THERE IS MUCH MORE YET TO BE TOLD...

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