

OLFACTORY

PARTHIB MAHMUD

I saw her again on a chilly January evening, standing under a raintree, waiting for a ride, perhaps. That magnificent raintree at the junction where the University Road met the Colonel Street, with its colossal branches hugging the air and hiding its face in the broad hazy chest of the winter sky.

I saw her, in a grey parka and a pair of sneakers. They were dark pink, reminiscing the evening sky above her. A maroon muffler – maybe a shed or two darker than the postbox she was standing next to, wrapped around her neck. So much like the raintree she stood under and the winter she breathed in. She took out her phone and tapped a few buttons, smiled at the screen while doing so, then put it back in her bag. Her reddish curls shimmered under the faint sodium lamps.

I could smell her hair from where I was standing, although not sure whether it was the northern breeze that contoured around her before reaching my face, or just the memories evoking in my head, deceiving my olfactory nerves. How mysterious the brain can become at times! It can make you see things that are never there, or hear sounds that never originated. Or may even make you forget your surroundings on a cold evening and think about a tiny brownish mole that some girl has, right underneath her parka, a couple inches below the collar; something that I haven't seen in a long time.

Ah, she has found her ride I see.

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FIRST SNOW

NUJHAT ASLAM

The North wind blows past,
Turning pages to unveil the end.
A blurred skyline –
Through the frosty window pane.
Unsure of what waits ahead.

The weary legs follow the wind
Not to ignore its beckoning
The mirage of warmth –
Provokes further steps.

At the farthest end lies a barricade –
Made of enticing ice
Encaged stays all earthly life.

The flakes fall as to reign over –
Abating the warmth of beating hearts
Exhaling sullen, misty breath
Covering the eyelids –
Of the owners of the last breath.

PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

