

# Slumber of Intoxication

**NUJHAT ASLAM**

A strange incense fills in,  
Stars veiled by the cluster of clouds.  
The roads that were to be taken,  
Gradually gets cramped and dark.

A puff – to forget the past,  
To erase all regrets  
As it is slowly discharged.

A puff – ode to forgiveness  
To forgive but to never forget,  
A slight crack of sense.

A puff – to dream anew  
As the foot lights up  
A tiny firecracker falling apart.

A puff – held in gentry  
To fathom why the tears roll down,  
Ashes lingering in the heart must've been out.

A puff – to trade in  
The slumber of intoxication,  
A slice of life falls apart.



ILLUSTRATION: **RIDWAN NOOR NAFIS**

# WHAT IS *OOMPH*?

**TASNIM ODRIKA**

Purple dyed sky lay bare as it slowly faded towards a muted ink. The whole neighbourhood lights arose from their deep slumber and trudged along the whole road. Through the cold hard metal, the voice spoke again. It was as though the transition of the sky was lending its iciness to the voice. It spoke again; this time, deeper and more slowly, repeating the same words to ensure it exerted its full effect on the listener.

"I just don't think there is any 'oomph' between us, you know?"

He didn't know. But he listened intently for more. After a minute of listening to the sounds of the passing rickshaws, he realised it was actually his turn to speak.

"I... yes. I understand. I get it," came out the distracted reply.

The conversation had started an hour before. The sky was bright then and the chirp of the birds returning to their nests had been an annoyance. He took one look around the murk now trying to find the right questions to ask. What is an "oomph"? How do you know it is there? And he was not looking for an "Oh, it's just something you feel" because if it's something you feel inside surely you should be able to describe it.

"Are you still there?"

"Yes."

"So, what is on your mind then? You seem awfully quiet. Is there anything you would like to

tell me?"

As his mind raced to take hold of that one perfect question which would be able to answer all his queries, his hands began to ache. They had been in that same position for a while now. Then, somehow, this hand ache became the most overcoming sensation that his body and mind could feel. He could feel the small beads of sweat forming on his palm even though it was a dry and crispy autumn night. The phone would lose its grip soon.

"No... yeah. I completely understand what you are saying."

"Okay, good. We'll talk later then. Goodbye."

The hand was finally allowed to rest. He let the phone down on the mosaics in hopes that the floor returns some of its coldness back. He had not noticed it before but the air was surrounded by an earthy smell. There was a name for it and although that word was right at the tip of his tongue, he could not recall it. There was also a word for this phenomenon where you could not recall words that seemed to be at the tip of your tongue. But, he could not recall that word either. Then from deep underneath the murkiness, fat droplets began to spill and clear out some of the void. As they fell against the steel of the balcony rails, they seemed to crash with a noise that sounded like the word "oomph".

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