

The Love Letter

By Sabreena Ahmed

"Bhalo achee bhalo theko,
Akasher thikanai chithi likho."

We write letters to many people. Some of them are our loved ones, some of them are our elders/youngers/friends. A letter can help you very much in saying the words that you can't say directly. I see many young lovers using me as the media of reaching their lovers. They write on my chest and send me to the lovers. I am very glad that I can help them express their feelings. But it also makes me very angry when a person writes wrong spellings in his message. I can't scold them. Cause I can't speak. Once a guy made his girlfriend angry for some reason. And he wrote a letter to ask for her forgiveness. The letter was something like this:

Dear Umii,
I'm vary vary sorry that I couldn't come to meet you that day. I had to go with my younger sister to her skool. Please don't get angry on me. Please."
-With love, Tinku.

In that message of 3 lines, the stupid guy had 5 spelling mistakes. Now imagine how angry I was! I thought that the girl would also get angry to read it. But astonishingly, she laughed aloud. They were back to normal again. So far so good.

Another guy sent message through me to his girlfriend. But unfortunately I got caught by the girl's father. And the dad got very mad at the guy. He tore me apart. You wouldn't believe how painful it was. But my humiliation was much more than that pain.

My colour is blue. And I have a little pink heart on the left corner of my body. I look quite handsome you know! That's why people use me mostly to send love messages. Some girls spray perfume on me and dress me in patel of roses. The girls are really cute compared to the guys. Some guys send the same message to all the girls. Those flirts don't know the real meaning of love. But some of the people also use me to send message to their relatives or friends. I would never forget the letter written by a sweet 8-year-old girl. Her father lived in U.S.A. She missed him very much. She wanted him to come home soon. And in

every letter, she sent his daddy a big hug or a sweet kiss. She drew nice pictures of houses, trees and birds in the letter.

I help others to express their feelings. But nobody knows that I also need someone as my life partner. Sometimes I feel very lonely. But no one cares to hear my sorrows. Cause I'm a mere writing pad to them!

Yesterday all my sorrows melted away. My present master left me by the open window. Only the last page of mine was left and it was flapping about vigorously by the wind from the window. Suddenly I got loose and followed the blowing wind. I went through a window of another building across the street. And I found a pink writing pad lying on the bed. She had a pink heart on her left corner just like me. At once I fell in love with that beautiful writing pad. Her name was Pinky. She got shy and I was sure that she also liked me very much. Then the door of the room opened and her mistress came in. She saw me lying beside Pinky. Perhaps she liked me and she picked both of us up and put in a drawer. Now I'm very happy. I've found my perfect mate. I pray that every person who is still single would find someone special really soon. Cause as I'm experiencing this, I know how great it is to be in love. So good luck to you all of you!

The Royal Australian Air Force

By Tashdique Mannan

By the standards of military aviation, the Royal Australian Air Force has an unusually long history. It is one of the world's oldest independent air forces, having been established in 1921 and three years after the first, the (British) Royal Air Force. Military aviation first took wing in Australia when the Central Flying School was formed at Point Cook in 1912, only nine years after Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first successful controlled, powered flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Central Flying School grew quickly into the Australian Flying Corps. By 1914, Australian pilots had been dispatched on active service to New Guinea to help seize German colonies.

One year later, the Australian Flying Corps were fighting in Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq); and by the end of World War I, four Australian squadrons were in action on the Western Front in France. While officially the Australian Flying Corps' main role was army co-operation, its squadrons inevitably became involved in air to air combat and bombing attacks, as the full potential of the air weapon became apparent. Australian fighter pilot A.H. Cobby, for example, was credited with 29 kills, making him one of the war's leading aces.

It was partly because of the manifest potential of air power that the RAAF was established as an independent service in 1921. Nevertheless the period between the first and second world wars was a difficult one for Australia's airmen. For example, Australia's first Chief of the Air Staff, Wing Commander (later Air Marshal Sir) Richard Williams, found himself repeatedly under attack from his army and navy counterparts who persistently argued that there was no place for independent air power, that air forces would always exist only to support armies and navies.

The RAAF entered World War II on 3 September 1939 and for the two years before Pearl Harbor sent thousands of young men to fight against the Axis powers in Europe, either in Australian squadrons or with the RAF. Following the Japanese attacks on 7-8 December 1941 against Pearl Harbor, Malaya and the Philippines, the RAAF's attention tended to shift to the war in the Southwest Pacific, especially as, during the first half of 1942, Japanese invasion of Australia seemed probable. It is now widely known that the Australian mainland was bombed more than 60 times by Japanese aircraft.

One of the major factors in reversing the Japanese advance through Southeast Asia was the productive alliance formed between American, Australian, New Zealand and Dutch forces. Probably the most notable action from

an Australian perspective was the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, fought over 50 years ago on 2-4 March 1943. In a brilliantly conceived and executed operation, American and Australian aircraft destroyed 12 of 16 ships in a Japanese convoy attempting a major reinforcement of New Guinea. That victory removed forever any likelihood that Japan would be able to regain the initiative in New Guinea, and so again threaten Australia.

At the start of World War II, the RAAF consisted of about 3000 personnel and 300 aircraft. By 1945 it had grown 50-fold, to a force of over 180,000 personnel operating more than 3000 aircraft. By 1948, however, its personnel numbered only 8000. When North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950, it was the RAAF's P-51 Mustangs from 77 Squadron (which had been on duty with the occupation forces in Japan) which initially provided much of the close air support for the beleaguered United Nations ground forces. Later re-equipped with the British-made Gloster Meteor jet fighter, 77 Squadron continued to operate in Korea as part of the United States Fifth Air Force. In the same month that the fighting in Korea started, RAAF Lincoln bombers and C-47 transports had begun active service with British Commonwealth forces in Malaya, in a war against communist insurgents which was to last 12 years.

The RAAF also contributed a fighter wing to a British Commonwealth garrison in the Middle East, based in Malta, from 1952 to 1954. Then came the Vietnam War, where the RAAF supported the U.S. effort from 1964 to 1972. RAAF Canberra bombers and Caribou transports contributed to the overall air effort, while Iroquois helicopters operated in support of an Australian Army task force. Neptune reconnaissance aircraft and C130 transports also participated in the war.

In addition to those flying units, a significant number of RAAF personnel served with USAF squadrons during the war, including F/RF-4 Phantom strike/reconnaissance pilots, Forward Air Control pilots, photographic interpreters and intelligence officers. While RAAF aircraft did not participate directly in the 1991 Gulf War, support was provided by intelligence officers, linguists and a medical team. A small number of aircrew saw active service with USAF, RAF and Royal Navy squadrons. Since then, the RAAF has been involved in numerous peacekeeping and other humanitarian operations including Somalia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Bougainville, Irian Jaya and Papua New Guinea. RAAF Boeing 707 tankers also provided airborne refuelling for US and British aircraft monitoring the "no-fly" zone in southern Iraq in the early months of 1998.

IMAGINATION

By Manizeh
Shahreen Sayeed



Sometimes I wonder
How would it be?
If the sky was green,
And blue a tree.
If the world was square
Instead of being round,
If the sky was for the fishes
In water birds were found.
If the Cinderella of the
fairytale
Had a tail and flippers
And the mermaid of the sea,
Danced in glass slippers.
How would it be?
If the night showed the sun
And the moon shone at day
If cows ate cream bun
Instead of hay?
How would it seem,
If boys played with dolls,
And girls were in the fields,
Kicking footballs?
How would you like it,
No school there was to be,
If you could play always
And watch T.V?
If in rainy days,
Fruit fell from the sky,
The river would turn into
juice
And hills into pie?
Wouldn't it be great
If the world was this mad?
And being naughty,
Was the fad?
All this may seem impossible
to you
But take some time for
reconsideration
This can become real
By the power of imagination

IN THE ZOO

By Saad Islam

A few days ago we went to the Mirpur Zoo. First we saw some monkeys there. We gave the monkeys some nuts. There was a baby monkey with her mother. My father and mother wanted to take a photo of the baby and her mother but they could not do so because both the mommy monkey and her baby ran away.

We went to the crocodile pond but failed to see any crocodile as they were under the water. Then we saw a lion. The king of the jungle looked very hungry. He was not sleeping but he was pretending to be asleep. When a child came near the lion's cage, the lion got up and starting roaring towards the child. We were scared and so we left the place.

Next we saw a tiger. The tiger also acted like the lion. Later we saw a otter in the water and three ostriches in the plain. The ostriches were eating leaves. Then we visited the sheep and wilder beasts. A sheep was eating grass but when I said va—va—va, the sheep replied with the same sound which made all of us laugh.

We saw two leopards walking inside their cage. We saw some turtles and deer next before we took a break to have some chips and biscuits. After the break, we saw Zebra, foxes, sub-continental chickens. Oh, I forgot to mention about porcupine. It was resting in a big hole in the ground. Finally we saw some peacocks and I collected three peacock's feather before we left the zoo.

HOME

By Syeda Khadija
(Zeenat)

Home is a small
world
But wonderful it
seems
With room for
friends and
neighbours
It is a world of
peace.
Home is like a valley
of flowers
Wherever it is
it's always home
If love is there.

MY BROTHER

By Uzma Zaman Iram

My brother and I fight,
Over watching T.V. at night.
I always get my way
because he thinks
I am a child any way.
My brother loves me a lot;
got me a dress with polka dot.
He brings me home
from school,
and always acts pretty cool.
My brother is very nice;
helps me do my sums often.
but for any favour
he asks for a price,
And only chocolate
makes his heart soften.

BEGINNING OF THE END

By Marphen Maruf

It was time to go to bed after another long and weary day at work. I was so tired that I could barely move my body towards my bed. Eventually, I had lain on my bed. It seemed that it took me a long endless walk just to arrive at my bed. Wasn't I supposed to fall asleep, as soon as I hit the sack? No sooner I had lain-sleep kissed me good-bye. I turned left and right, trying in vain to sleep. Finally I slept. The night seemed short, as it was soon time to get up and go to class. I looked at my table clock; it clearly indicated that I was already half an hour late.

I prepared a swift breakfast, locked up the place and rushed towards my car. But then I realised that I left my wallet on the table in my room. Talk about bad luck. I had to go back, open up all the locks and get it. I locked up again and got towards my car; then, I found out that in all that haste I had left the car keys exactly where my wallet had been. I was on the verge of pulling my hair out.

Since I was already running late, I decided that another half-hour wouldn't do much harm. I made up my mind to take a rickshaw to class. Unfortunately, as soon as I hit the road, a speeding car crashed into my rickshaw.

That was all I remember. After that every thing was blank-complete blank and eternal silence. Total darkness of doom engulfed my mind. Few moments later, I woke up. I had throbbing pain in my head. A glimpse of bright light hit my sight. I started walking towards it. It seemed that as I was getting to it, it was getting farther away from me. But at last, I reached it. I saw a cute-looking girl waiting behind a counter. She gave me a genial smile, and said something that made my stomach heave. I found out that I was dead - still I was alive after death. Ironic, isn't it? Hey, I'm too young to die. I could not say goodbye to my beloved ones or enjoy the finer things in life.

Things looked pretty bad, as she interrogated me. She informed me that I bunked many classes as I am doing now; then two-timed my girl friend for another girl and many times lied to my parents. I'm grounded. My days are numbered for sure.

The scale was getting heavier towards the sin. Is it hell for me? I pictured myself being skinned alive by devils. I shivered at the mere thought. How could this happen to me? A few days ago, I gave a taka to a beggar. Doesn't that count at all? They should at least let me have a lawyer or let me make a call. This is sure discrimination against me.

The cute girl showed pity. Maybe, my pale-stricken face did the trick. She told me that I will be kept on probation and handed me a ticket to a liner. Well, at least when I was alive, I could not afford the expense of travelling by cruise. Now, I'm getting it for free.

On the side of the liner in big letters, 'PROBATION OR HELL' was written. I went on board. After a long tiresome journey, we arrived at the 'City of Probe'. A recruit officer was waiting for us. He wrote our name, age and other necessities in a big copy. We were then sent off to the field for work. I don't get it. How can we improve our character by working in the field? The authorities told us that we have to limber up, just to free our mind, soul and sin. Weren't our soul already gone? I worked under the flesh-turning-roast sun for long gruesome hours. I couldn't take it anymore. I fell asleep. Someone is shaking me to wake up. I rubbed my sleepy eyes. I found myself lying on my bed, in my loving room. Phew! I am not dead after all. It was only a nightmare. But who was the person trying to wake me up? I looked around for the person. The very look of the person sank my heart. The person is no one than my beloved friend Lekhini, who died in a hit and run case a few years ago. I was dead after all; I've travelled the eternal journey of no return.

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