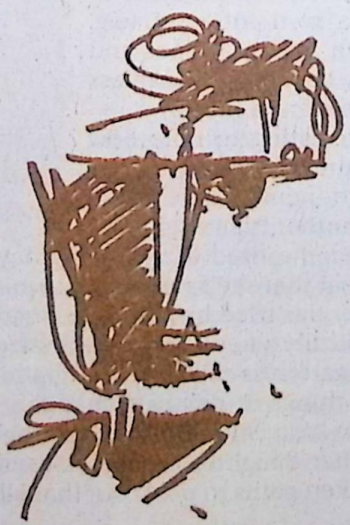




Fam Wee

MUNIZE M KHASRU



NOT a weekend goes by that I don't remember you. Why are weekends always this hard? You'd think after 8 years, I would be used to your absence. But then, I did spend 52 of my 80 years with you. So what is 8 years of absence after 52 years of presence? Blink of an eye.

People think now that I am an octogenarian I must spend all my free time reminiscing of the past. But they're wrong. I spend most of my free time thinking of the present and wanting, so badly, to share the moments with you.

I see our daughter Shaheen running circles around her children. You only saw the birth of the first one Nadia. She had a second child three years ago. A real '*bombai morich*' of a girl named Mahia. Sometimes when she smiles, a small dimple sets into her left cheek. So much like your dimple. You would have loved this little one. Full of questions. Most of which she answers herself, by the way! Can't get a word in edgewise. When she sits on her little mora in the veranda with me and chatters away, I can almost see you next to me in your reclining chair, saying "Oh really? Tai naki?" at intervals to her.

But as it is, today it's me alone in the veranda trying to keep pace with this little one's mind.

Our son Shahzad is still living in America. Pursuing the golden dream, whatever that may be. He finally married that American girlfriend of his, after much *dhanai panai*. Am I disappointed? I was initially. Which mother wouldn't like a nice bangali bouma? But then I thought of you. And I realised if you were around, you would have said "Let it be. It's his life. We've had our turn. Let him have his." So I didn't say anything. They came to Dhaka right after they got married. I hosted a modest reception for them. Actually, I liked Diane. She's pleasant company. And she seems to have a good head on her shoulders, which is something Shehzad could learn about. Him, with all his get-rich-quick schemes.

He's been after me to sell our home. "Give it to the developers Amma. Be practical, Amma. You can live in one of the flats and have an income from the rent of the other flats." Right. And of course the next move would be to get the property divided up between him and his siblings. Can you imagine he had the gall to suggest I tear down the house where he grew up? Is this really the boy