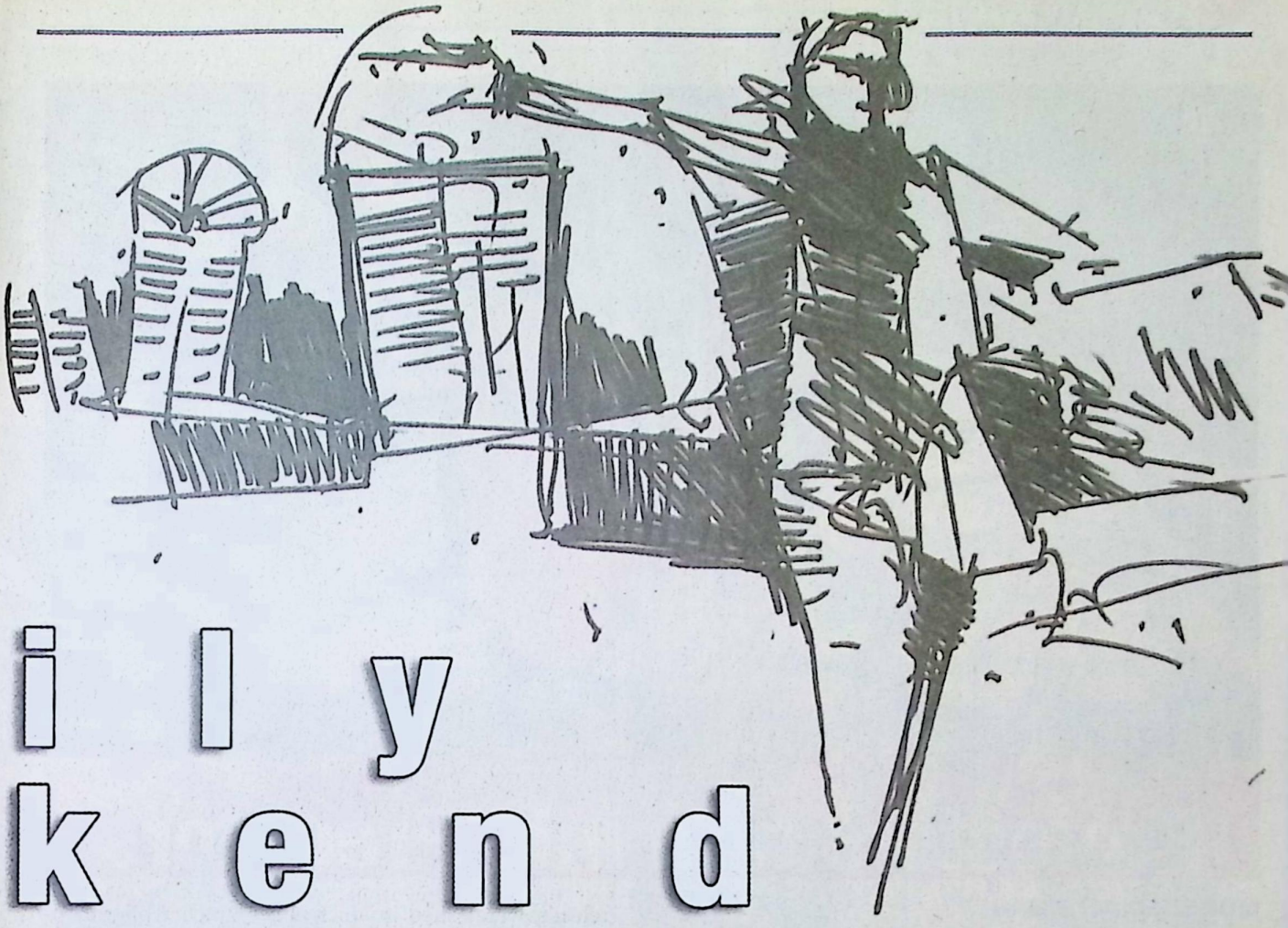


i l y
k e n d

who would wrap himself around my arm when he slept at night? He went to America with all our dreams and hopes. But now the only dream that he wants to fulfill is his own.

That's why when I see Shariar feverishly working on his USA college applications, my heart trembles. Will I lose this son too? Will he want to return to his home? To me? Or will he, like his brother, only visit when I am very ill? Or perhaps they will return only to bury me. Like Shahzad did with you. What a wasted ticket! Why come to see a dead body when you couldn't have been bothered to see the live person?

I sound like a bitter old woman. Well, I guess I am. But not in the way others think. I'm bitter because I hate that I should be dependent on anyone. I hate that anyone should think of me as needy. My body is getting weaker but the heart still has strength to feel. Remember our pact that we would depend only on each other? That we would need just each other? I still need you.

These were supposed to be our golden days when we would do all the things we never had time to do. We were supposed to roam the country together. Instead I roam the rooms at night.

And I sit in your study and wonder what you would think of today's news. How you would smile upon seeing new flowers growing in our garden.

On Friday lunches with Shariar, Shaheen, her husband and the children, your chair seems particularly bereft. We laugh and joke and have a nice time. But amongst all that laughter, my ears still miss your laugh.

And then they leave and I'm alone, tidying up the cushions the children have thrown helter-skelter. And my eyes will fall on that photo of us. And I'll miss seeing you snooze in front of the television. Your after-Friday lunch-snooze.

For me, all the noise in the world can't supersede the echo of your presence.

All the silence in the world can't erase the resonance of your existence.

Thus, on weekends, when every family should be together, I keep returning to you in my mind. I think of all the days we had together. And all the days we should have had but never did. On weekends, I too spend time with my family. Near and far.