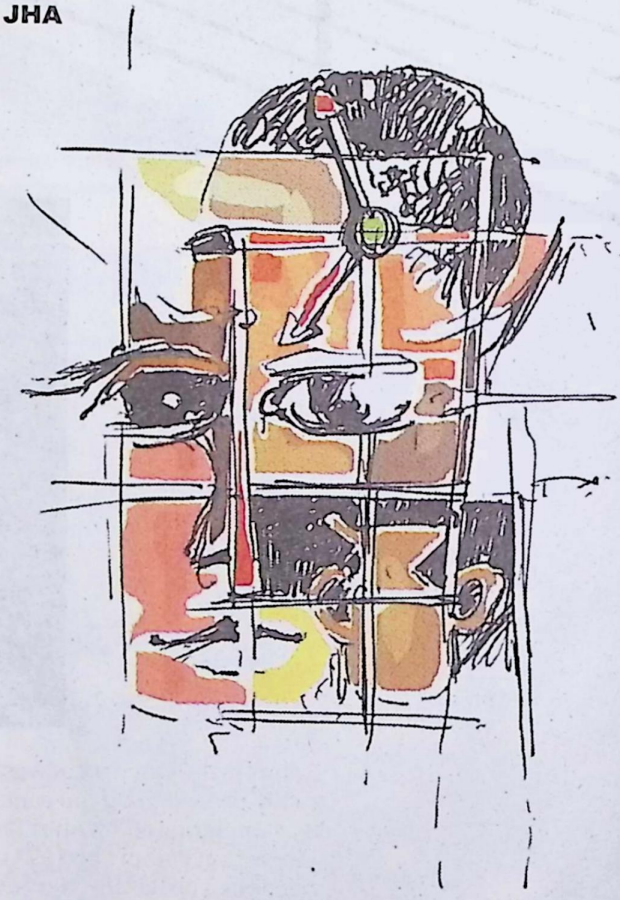
And then, There were More...

RICHA JHA



The bell rings one afternoon. A shabbily cellotaped packet addressed to The Hubby, sent from Hoshiarpur in Punjab, gets left behind by the courier man. To my knowledge, none in the last four generations in his family or his entire circle of friends' clans has anything to do with Hoshiarpur. New romantic interest for him, perhaps? Then again, The Hubby sitting in Calcutta, she thousands of miles away, that far, doesn't make sense. But then, virtual world, anything is possible. But then again, she'd be dumb sending him the packet home. Nah!

I try sizing up the parcel. Too small for a girlie magazine, too big and too light for a box of new golf balls. Or squash balls. Or ping pongs. Or whatever balls that are his current passion. Feather light balls, maybe? Nah nah, not possible. Reassured, that the content of the parcel cant possibly be a threat to either my existence, pride or position, I forget about the parcel and get on with my day.

When I return home in the evening, I find crumpled loose polybags from what till few minutes ago made up the mysterious parcel strewn all over, the Hubby already home with his back to me, standing in the most theatrical of poses, torso jutting out, one leg straight, the other bent, and head thrown back looking up at something in his raised left hand.

Even before I've announced my arrival, he swings around 180 degrees in the same hilarious posture with the flourish of a Victorian Governor in power.

"Ah, you've come my dear! I beseech you to behold the most exquisite piece of accessory yours truly has ever acquired."

I explode with mirth. To think that this man has not just lost it partially, given this sudden pretentiousness, but that his sanity-lapse is complete. He is actually holding, what looks like, a relic from circa 1850: a hideously shimmering garish golden pocket watch with the oyster shell cover around a white dial, and a loud chain that looks straight out of the Dubai Gold Souk, albeit fake.

"Prey, tell me madam. Isn't she a beauty?"

"Just stop this buffoonery, and tell me where on earth you've got this from!"

"Hoshiarpur"

But of course, how could I have forgotten the address on the parcel!

"Yes. And...?" I stand there waiting for him to go on.

"All the world's a retail outlet, and everything's within everyone's reach. e-bay Wifey, e-bay, your global shopper of a husband has arrived. Now you shall see what all acquire!"

"But must you? It's all junk. What the hell will you do