food, of different spices; the girl clutched at the young man and mumbled, 'I am hungry.' He ran to get her something. The thick scent of fruits mingled with the pungent smell of sweat, along with it there was a transcendentally sweet melody in the air.

A sudden drizzle of rain transformed the scene; people ran helter-skelter, some stood in front of her, blocking the view, she was afraid of getting lost, of losing sight of him. Everyone wanted a little room in that small shade; some had cut a joyous caper. Rain always fascinated them both, but, alone now, that bubble of emotion was about to burst. With a quivering hand she pressed his number into her cellphone, the sound of which got muffled in this hustle and bustle.

Then, there he was, in one hand a package of food, which was sending out a savoury, delightful smell; in the other hand, she realised it only when he moved it forward, he held a *kamini*, sewed to a twig. Surprised, she wondered where in this mundane mêlée he could get this sweet scented flower. And when she looked into his deep delved eyes, when the whole city, it seemed, was floating in that smell, little did she realise that for the first time in her life a man was feeding her with his hand.

'Rain! Rain!' the girl cried out. In a transcendent voice the young man started singing: "On this day of monsoon, raindrops overwhelm my eyes"; a group of men circled round to listen to him. The girl whispered, 'It's getting late, dear. I am scared. I need to go home.' There was bitterness in his reply, 'Home? You call that old demon's castle home?'

Her heart sank, she said, 'Don't say it like that. He has let me see you, how many husbands will do that?'

'Husband?' he asked, leading her on in the crowd, 'You call him husband? What does he have to be called your husband?'

