



WORDPLAY

Words danced on her finger-nails
As she gracefully inked them in;
Scratches lay reminiscent of our lust
Enshrouded in a love yet to ensnare.
She bit my left ear in a reclusive art
Like strokes painting my earlobe;
Her whispers moaned like the bellowing moon
Her voice, like fireflies crowded my sight.
As her eyelashes rifted against the blur of my eyes
I saw repentance of another's love;
I pressed her tight like a whale on water
Ushering her memories to wade into mine.

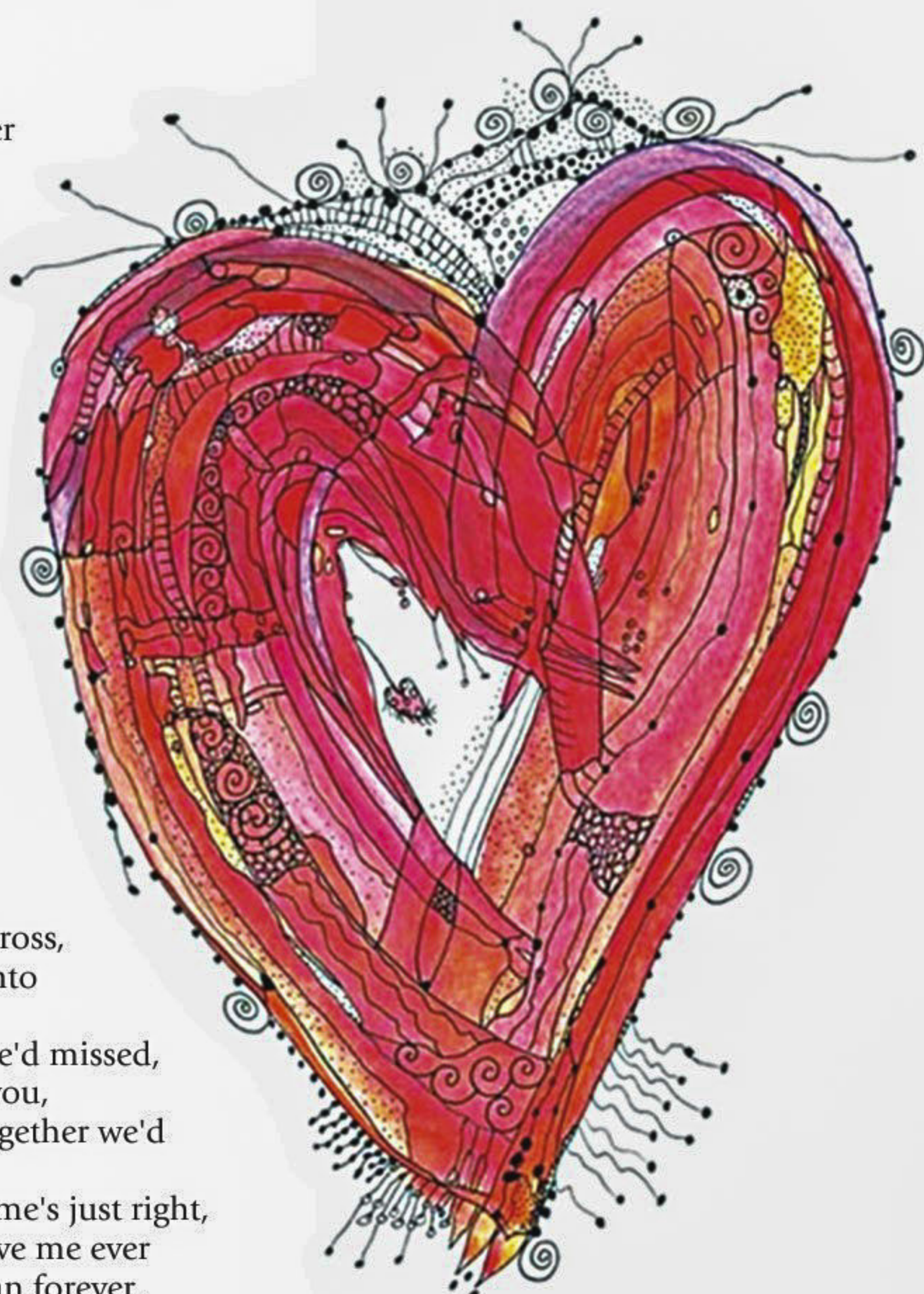
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ONE DAY

SABRINA SAMREEN

Maybe we'll meet again one day
When the time's right,
And our love's spark might burn lurid
bright.
You'd be so right for me,
Past your flaws I'd see,
And you'd choose me over
every pretty face,
Love may then follow its
due pace.
Maybe.
We'd be done fighting
battles, won and lost.
We'd look the future in
the eye, bury down the
past.
One day, we'd hug, I'll
hold you tight.
That day, when time's
just right,
I would have walked
long enough and you'd
be done fighting your
demons,
And if that tiny spark of
love still remains,
That would be so perfect.
One day, our paths may cross,
And everything will fall into
place.
While we wonder what we'd missed,
I'd slip my arms around you,
Silent, happy, at peace, together we'd
stare out at the blue.
And one day, when the time's just right,
Tell me, you wouldn't leave me ever
Darling, I'll tell you I mean forever.



MY KINGDOM AWAITS

ARMAN R. KHAN

Aaraf stood at the door hesitating for moment. On any other day, he'd enter without any reluctance. He had seen it this morning, but it slipped out of his mind. Five more seconds, and he'd be embarrassed.

He was about to enter a different world, to join thousands other to do what they loved the most. He moved over to the side, allowing space for others to pass through, pulled out his right foot off the shoe and feigned trying to untie his shoelaces. One by one, his friends took off their own shoes, jettisoned them near the shoe-rack, and entered the world. To make it seem a tad more realistic, Aaraf deliberately pulled the wrong end of the shoelace on his left foot, knotted it up and pretended to struggle with it.

A friend of Aaraf's, Saadi, snorted and said "Jerk!"

"Get in and reserve me a seat beside you, moron," Aaraf called out, trying to sound intimidating.

There was commotion from within, as Saadi disappeared through the door. But more people were going in, and Aaraf just couldn't catch the break he needed so badly. *Darn.* All he really wanted was to get this over with and go in, to enter the world that he was addicted to. This was where he belonged, he thought. *The one place where I'm the master of the trade, where everybody loves me, respects me, and even fears me.*

Everyone in this particular gaming zone, deep in the alleyways of Lalmatia, knew Aaraf as *Æön_đ@®|<_7*. Scratch that; in the cyberspace, his screen name was one to be reckoned with by thousands. And that pulled him back here every day, skipping classes, and coming here with his friends to play for hours at a stretch.

After an impatient minute, all had passed. Aaraf found himself alone in the corridor. Quickly pulling off his left

shoe, he stared down at his feet. The big toe on his left leg poked out of the sock. *Thank God!*

Regardless of his stature as a gamer, his friends found it amusing to make fun of him. He knew that if they had as much as a glimpse at his torn sock, it'd be a big deal, including his family and its financial condition. Aaraf hated it when that happened, maybe because it was partially true. He didn't come from a well off family, and he knew how much his parents struggled to keep the family running. At times, Aaraf felt like a delinquent for bunking school to visit the gaming zone. But what could he do? He had to feed his addiction, be that using his lunch money. The respect he got in the cyberspace made him feel better, however ephemeral, about his position in society. Once he entered the room, he knew, even his friends would fear him and respect him, if not worshipping his celestial gaming skills.

Aaraf quickly took off both his socks and tucked them into his shoes. As he opened the door and entered his realm barefoot, he felt like a messiah. His team needed his expertise. His world needed saving today.

And all it would require was the last 25 takas in his pocket.

