



## A WARRIOR'S FEELINGS

MUSHTASFI MUSTAKIM

I have had to go through pains and sorrows.  
Had to suffer hellish punishment.  
I have burned to ashes in the flames of torment- in and out.  
Have fallen like a dying creature a number of times.

But I have risen from those very ashes,  
Just like a phoenix  
Whose heart was a fire-pit  
And eyes the colour of flames.

I have won many a battle.  
Have broken innumerable forts like a house of cards.

I have fought with myself alone.  
I suddenly heard an unfamiliar and unknown sound one day.

After hearing that sound,  
A strange feeling arose in my mind  
Which started to bubble like the steaming hot lava of a volcano  
And fell down like a rain of flames.

In search of the origin of that unknown sound,  
I surprisingly realized that  
It was coming from nowhere but my heart.

*The writer is a student of class X at Bangladesh International School And College*



## CHANGE OF HEART

SABRINA SAMREEN

She had a change of heart,  
Little by little, slowly, day by day, piling away.  
Battling expectations, sinking disappointment.  
She felt it, that surge of his love, growing faint.  
She had a change of heart,  
Over lattes gone cold, and phone conversations sliding into silences.  
Apologies that never came, and intimacy that never grew.  
And she counted the hours he spent, so far spaced, so few.  
She shuddered every time as he drifted apart,  
She had a change of heart.  
Silent goodbyes, just a hug, words unspoken,  
She tried linking pieces, efforts gone down the drain.  
She looked his eye for compliments, for a word of love,  
The text messages he never replied at boys' stayover,  
Craving his attention, weeping beneath a smile she put for cover.  
Straining to see the future he pulled down the blinds over.  
Counting stars alone, over failed date plans.  
She had a change of heart,  
When he held her hands,  
She, crumbling in loneliness and he, oblivious.  
Things she had to say, thoughts he never shared,  
Sleepless nights, brooding whether he actually cared.  
Fearing, exhausted, trying, trying.  
Seeking love, stumped out passion, sighing.  
Seeking his love, approval, shrouded in insecurity,  
Chasing love, so elusive, a distant fantasy.  
The "iloveyou" gone cold, waiting for spark to reignite, magic to unfold,  
She soared above neglect, turned so bold.  
And she grew new wings to fly solo,  
Tralalalala, sing, sing, sing.  
'Cause hearts do change darling.

# POMPOM

MALIHA MUMTAJ

As Kuddus stared blankly at the walls for what seemed like decades to him, it suddenly struck him that Shabnur hadn't called. Or maybe she did. Where was his phone anyway? Was it on silent? He looked at his watch. It was 12:30 am. She usually calls him by 11.

What happened too her? Was she alright? Was she joking, trying to see how frantic he gets when she doesn't call? Did her father, Mr. Kamla find out about them? Did he seize her phone? Did he lock her up? Or was he going to forcefully get her married to someone richer? All these thoughts haunted the *Majnu* out of him.

Ananta Jalil's *What is Love* kept spinning in his head. He got inside his Corolla. As he wiped out a tear or two with his yellow and orange sleeve, he turned on the radio. *Magic Mamoni* was playing. This was his favourite song. But today, he just didn't feel like listening to it. The random thought of Shabnur playing *chinimini* with his heart scared the *Nirshartha Bhalobasha* out of him. So he turned off the radio and drove out of his garage.

Even at 12:30 am, the roads were packed with vehicles. Usually trucks are visible at this time. He could hear fireworks roaring in the sky. Kuddus lived beside the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla Stadium and the T-20 Asia Cup had just ended. Bangladesh versus India. Bangladesh had lost by eight wickets with seven balls to spare. "*Shob Dhoni'r dosh,*" he mumbled. He wanted to go for his beloved earlier but he decided to go after the

match ended. Cricket matches and food couldn't be compromised. Now, back to Shabnur. Wait, was she depressed about the match so much that she forgot to call him? That could be it but he wasn't going to sit at home and let it be. He was going to figure out. He had to see her face and calm his nerves no matter how long it took for him to cross the dreadful traffic. He waited in his car.

1 am.  
Half past one.  
2am.

He finally decided to walk. Procrastinating like this wasn't going to help anymore. Shabnur lived a few buildings after his. He didn't want to walk to it at first but now there was no choice. It would be a difficult task, but he was going to do it.

After walking for a meter and climbing the stairs to reach her house (at the second floor), he rang the bell, panting. He was still angry at the guard for not letting him through. It cost him two hundred bucks to sneak in.

The door finally opened with a creak. The lights were out. It was dark inside.

"Surprise! Happy Birthday! I can't believe you actually came. We weren't expecting you'd come. We were almost going to share the cake amongst us." Shabnur said cheerfully, holding a chocolate cake. Chocolate cakes. Yum. Then she faced some of my friends who were laughing, standing behind her. "See, I told you my little phone trick would work!" A group of hugs and kisses showered him for the next few minutes, with the snow spray and parts of his now deconstructed birthday cake blinding him.