

This is Not a Love Poem

RAISA SALMIN PURBA

I hate being nineteen, I thought to myself
 Tracing my palm over the cheap globe resting beside the Dan Browns
 And chick magazines on a café table,
 The night your plane took off after a three hour delay for the storm.

The construction workers, in their King Kong laze, didn't bat an eye
 When I measured you would only be a finger and a half away
 -And my fingers aren't even long, I sighed-
 Wishing they could dissolve the ocean that would be between us
 From now.

In my last letter, I had attached a stray feather of the sparrow
 That made its nest inside the fan of your balcony last July
 So you would recall a home, if not yours, and think about visiting
 If ever you dare to look back.

It's 3:45 am at your place now and too late
 To type you my words;
 So I send a photo of the city's monsoon sky you miss
 And deny this to be the love poem
 Of a nineteen year old escapist, constrained;

I only wish it were.



REDUCED TO ASHES

SABRINA SAMREEN

While memories simmer gently and you creep upon my thoughts on the coldest of November nights,
 Random days,
 And your thoughts catch me by surprise.
 Does it ache? Should it matter?
 Not anymore, maybe very mildly.
 Resurface, as thoughts from frozen parts of the brain.
 You and I, we couldn't be.
 The elusive forever, the endless possibility.
 You and I, we're words that never blotted paper, the ceaseless dots.
 And I'd begin to wonder, if you really did happen.
 The fairytale you promised, the happy couple we used to be?
 Were we together?
 And the sound of your laughter, I might forget.
 The sweat on your blue t shirt, your hands on mine,
 You would resurface, floating perilously, then dive, maybe rise again.
 Some day.
 And I'd halt, recall, wonder where you are, if you found love,
 I might wonder why I'm wondering,
 And wonder if you ever wonder, if you ever wish upon my company.
 You'd still rise, suddenly, catch me off guard.
 You will live on, as once happy thoughts, far away, beyond grasp,
 Luring me, assuring me, and never quite there.
 Until a mild remembrance dawns over, to be taken over, vanquished, when duties of life calls.
 Yet ever present, the idea of your existence.
 A grand fantasy, a deep sigh, a lingering thought.
 But never lingering long enough.
 Something tranquil, liberating, rising, then disappearing,
 Something I once had, and never really had.
 I might struggle to picture you, pink in the face, smiling.
 I may cringe in remembrance, try to recall.
 The days we drove, half burn cakes I baked, how you made me fall,
 In love.
 The letters, roses, birthday cards, burn on day 49 after you left,
 We walked apart, to meet or never meet, perfectly known strangers.
 But thoughts my dear can't be reduced to ashes.
 One day I might be finger your old watch, music CDs, gathering dust,
 Stacked away at some bottom drawer, or the ruby ring, half used perfume, dried red flower,
 No longer on priority list,
 But your memories would remain, lurk, and hover in mist.
 Today I'm with him and you're just forgotten detail.
 Yet you live on; always will, in streets we'd walked, in junk mail.
 Minute being, your existence, nebulous and distant.
 So vivid, the warmth from yesterday, strangely vacant.
 But you'll live, out of the burnt reminiscent,
 Like a phoenix, reduced to ashes, burning, never burning,
 Darling,
 A day fifty years from today,
 You might just be a name, a careless thought, a face shrouded in mystery,
 But you'd live surely...

The writer is a student of North South University.