

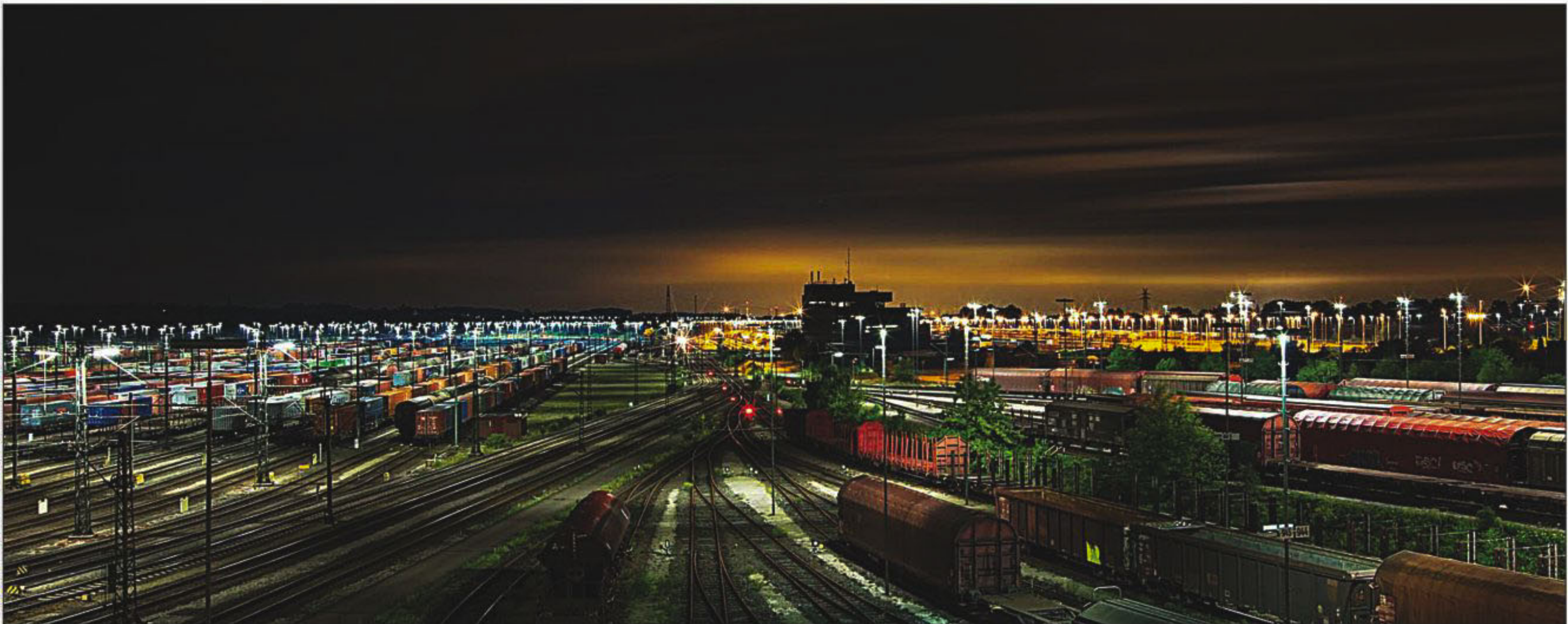
# ON A TRAIN

TULIP CHOWDHURY

Sue and Glen, standing on the moving train, stood facing each other as they held a steel pole for support. Crowded with office goers, there were no empty seats on the Red Line train bound for Harvard Square in Boston.

A tall blonde, Sue looked at Glen who was holding the same pole as her. She took in his dark eyes and hair, noting a rugged handsomeness about the man. Glen too noted the young woman with a business like look on her face. He wondered if she was thinking of her office like some other passengers going to work. Sandwiched between other commuters, their bodies were close, the eyes taking in the other. Glen's dark eyes looked into Sue's sky blue ones, like night sky reflecting in the sea. It was as if destiny was willing them to meet. They stared at each other and countless stars suddenly broke across the sky. Both were smiling with dawning of recognition, an inner voice saying, *this is it*. Glen's wide generous mouth quivered as the eyes took in her rosy, painted lips. With the closeness of their bodies, their breaths came faster. And each could feel the the delicious warmth of the other drawing them like magnets. It was as if they had been together for ages, though in reality they were strangers. At those moments, only the shiny steel pole held them back from melting into the other's embrace.

When the train stopped at the next station, more passengers boarded and Sue and Glen found it impossible even to move their hands or feet. They stood, sandwiched like sardines. Momentary



uncomfortableness vanished, none wanted to move away, in fact liking every bit of the closeness of their bodies. Glen felt the firmness of Sue's body against his chest, he took her left hand and laid it on his waist, offering more support on moving train. To on lookers they looked like some touchy-filly lovers. She could feel the cologne on him and then felt him lightly bury his nose in her hair. His right arm went around her and in the rhythm of the train their bodies were balancing each other so as not to tumble and fall. Eyes

closed, taking deep breaths, Sue and Glen had two hearts beating as if unable to believe the miraculous find. How come this long waited meeting was so unexpectedly there? An immense sense of amiability flooded two hearts.

Both wanted to let go of the steel pole between them and be in each other's embrace. But the train would not stop, the next station seemed so far. Sue and Glen wondered how their attractions could be defined, love at first sight or lust? There was no doubt,

they desired each other, physically and emotionally. Both bodies were set on a fire and they had no clue as to what would happen once they were alone. Sue felt Glen's hand draw her closer and closer, as if fearful she would move away. Her own arm around his waist tightened.

The train whistled as if to acknowledge the strange meeting of a man and a woman. Sue and Glen felt helpless at the inability to stop the train, to get down and be on their own. Their ears strained for the sound of the

train's engine to screech to a halt, for the announcement of a station. Train stations had never been so far and if there was one, they did not know. Their lips were sealed on each other's and ears shut to every sound except the beating of their hearts. Sue and Glen had no clue that, after years of searching for soulmates on Internet, they would meet on two sides of the pole on a train.

Tulip Chowdhury writes from Massachusetts, USA.

# The Colour of Season

FARUK KADER

(Concluding part)

Whenever, I had come over to Sydney to spend time with my family, we met most of the times on road or cottage fence and spent some time between us talking. She used to say jokingly to me sometimes, "I hope Salma is giving you enough time and feeding you with all good foods". Once she said, "Run fast home to gorge on the food platters set by Salma."

Carrol would wax her love for flowers, particularly of her garden. Sometime she would talk to me about different kinds of flower in her front and back-yard and tried to make me familiar about her favourite flowers. Once she took me to her back-yard. She organised her flower plant beds and a seating arrangement lighted by the morning sun so beautifully, I simply craved for spending time in her back-yard every morning when it is sunny. Once when she heard about my wife Salma's sickness, she sent her a flower bouquet gathered from his back-yard garden.

So far we never visited each other's home, we have engaged in talking on the road or fence side or myself taken by Carrol for a look around of her garden. I couldn't venture out to invite her to our home for a coffee. We were careful not to go beyond our comfort zone. Perhaps we didn't understand each other well enough.

After five years' of life in Brisbane, I moved back to Sydney. I saw her once than standing in her rose garden wrapped in over coat warming herself in the sunshine. I found her little bit wrought with wrinkles on her face visible enough. I approached her, "How are you Carrol?"

"The weather is changing and flue is bothering me a lot", she said. "You know my antibiotic dose is running third time. I feel as if this flue would drag me to my grave. Every year, I take vaccine, they hardly make me immune, and I had to gulp down loads of antibiotics".

I enquired, "Is somebody besides you?" "My son Bob came to see me from Mittagong. I sent him back from my front yard warning not to be with me now, I told him, this flue could be contagious, so better not come in my contact, rather keep in touch with me over phone. You know, he wanted me live with him, but I am not ready to leave my Ruby Rose Cottage that bears the loving memory of my mother. Many people are moving out from this place and I would not. I would rather straight away go to my grave than take shelter in an old home".

I thought Carrol was unhappy, made worse by the flue; therefore, I didn't venture to spend more time with her. "Goodbye Carrol" said to her and come back home.

The winter days were progressing sometime bringing severe cold mornings. One day I was travelling by train to the city. While in the train, I found the golf course adjacent

to the railway track shrouded with thick layer of mist. I felt as if I saw the water

droplets of the mist with my eyesight lost its way through the mist. While I was walking to our local rail station Ingleburn to catch the train to the city, I found frost flakes accumulated on the grass-cover by the side of footpath. I loved watching dewdrops crowning the green grass pricks, that glittered brilliantly with the first sunlight of the morning. But the icy frost denied me of that pleasure.

I didn't see Carrol for quite some time; she usually would not come out, when it is very cold in the morning. Sometime she did in late morning, when it is warm enough outside. I could imagine she was either watching TV in her drawing room or trimming her rose garden in her back-yard. Or perhaps lost in her inner world, reminiscing her life spent.

The short Magnolia tree near the fence of Ruby Rose Cottage has bared itself of all the leaves and stood like a shameless naked a maiden. A few buds adored one or two branches as if they had woken up from slumber and warming up for a glorious winter blossom. It would soon create a bonanza of pinkish Magnolia flowers.

After some days all on a sudden, I found

the Magnolia tree fronting the fenced Ruby Rose Cottage in full bloom with purple flowers adorning the bare branches of the tree. The roses in the front yard garden of Carrol were still smiling, defying the cold morning. In the streaming brilliant sunlight the blue sky seemed to stretch for eternity. The whole world seemed to be drunk with the sunlight from heaven. All around I could listen to boundless silent music rippled across the earth and air.

I came out of home with the faintest hope of seeing Carrol in her front-yard garden. It didn't happen. Then I went across the road to have a closer look at the Magnolia tree in full bloom. I touched petals of a few roses with a soft hand, taking care they don't fall off. From my heart I wished Carrol well and mumbled, "Have a good day Carrol". I wish she could hear me from the inside of her home.

I saw a flock of pigeons in flight that was rhythmically changing direction all the time in the brilliantly lit sunny sky. A pair of doves on the electric line were breaking into each other. I started walking under the lovely sun, as if I was on a perpetual journey, like the eternal life.



## Threshold

AINON M



An everyday face  
that belongs to vibrancy  
Yet goes unnoticed

The lips artfully curved  
To speak in abundance  
Needing no explanation

A second look  
And in those eyes  
one sees  
a hint of surprise  
As if on the edge  
Of something anew  
There lay  
A meticulous intent of  
frankness

A lyrical face  
Not of captive art  
But of Longing  
To Live...

“ব্যঙ্গ-সৃষ্টিতে অসাধারণ প্রতিভার প্রয়োজন। ... বন্ধু আবুল মনসুরের হাত-সাফাই দেখে বিস্মিত হলাম। ভাষার কান মলে রস সৃষ্টির ক্ষমতা আবুল মনসুরের অসাধারণ। এ যেন পাকা ওস্তাদী হাত।”

-কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম



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কাটাবন: প্রকৃতি (০১৭২৭৩২৮৭২৩), বেইলি রোড: সাগর পাবলিশার্স (৯৩৫৮৯৪৪)  
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কুষ্টিয়া: বইমেলা (০১৭১১ ৫৭৫৬০৬)।

চট্টগ্রাম: বাতিঘর (০১৭১৩৩০৪৩৪৪), প্রথমা (০১৭১১৬৪৯৪২২)