



# The Lonely Scientist

SADIA TASNIM TUBA

The shattered jar; inherits a few broken cookies.  
Half glass of discarded wine.  
And some torn equations!  
The scientist feels mid-night evocation from them.  
He sits in front of the window.

It's 4 am; the light wave of bright moon sprinkles at his teary shiny eyes.  
Maple trees stare at him, like the queue of giants, as if near to engulf.  
Yet, they abide by the frantic wind and vow to the scientist.  
He remembers the last night conversation with dead souls.  
About the equation they once composed.

Tries to solve his own.  
And finds nothing but some lost verses of God and hears His stubborn echoes.  
Love was for him, like a flying fox when it gets immersed in the dark.  
He felt just the vague point where two fingers once coalesced.  
He used to draw some colorful arcs around his heavenly amour.

They were so blazed;  
their aggrandizement formed right at ambiguity core.  
Darkness finally apprises him of the mellow ray of sun.  
Deep agony surrounds his lonely premises again.  
Still the lonely scientist chooses to take shelter under the shadow of blue rain!

# Evening Lights

WASIF HASAN

The lone crow watched the two siblings as they stumbled their way through the park. She sat atop a lamp post as the horizon turned crimson under the setting sun. A flock of birds flew across the park, maybe towards home, to their families. But the crow stood where she was.

Her beady eyes surveyed the surroundings. She flew to a better perch on a tree branch just opposite. And that's when she saw them. Both of them were walking side by side. Their hands intertwined with each others. Both of them were barefoot. In the dying light, the bird could just barely make out their figures. She flew to a tree a few meters in front of them. As the light slowly faded to darkness, the lamp posts all along the path lit up, bathing the surroundings in a wash of brilliant blue and yellow light. Now she could see the boy was talking to his sister.

"I wanted to show you this, Mariam," gesturing to the mixture of lights around them, "I used to come here with mother almost every day. I loved seeing all the colors. Sometimes, I imagined there was a rainbow in every one of them." He leaned down and tapped his sister on the nose. The skin on his arm had shrunk to the bone. His face had nearly taken the shape of his skull, his jaw stuck out to the sides. Eyes that were hidden deep into his face, only his sister looked a little better. It was obvious he gave almost everything to her. Almost.

Mariam looked up at his brother. "So why did you stop coming, bhaiya?" Her beautiful blue eyes looked deep into his; it was as if she knew the answer. Aaraf hesitated.

Mariam said, "It was because of me, right? Because mother had me, because I was the reason she became ill, and..." she was shouting now, the words couldn't stop, "Because she died, right?" Her eyes glistened with tears. Aaraf knelt down and cupped his hand over her face.

"Don't say that! You're a blessing to me, to our

mother. It wasn't your fault she died." Mariam started crying.

"I'm sorry; I caused you so much pain, bhaiya. I'm so sorry." She choked between tears. He held her close to him.

"No, Mariam. I tried everything. But..." Aaraf trailed off.

Mariam placed a hand to his cheek.

"There was nothing you could've done. The doctor gave me just a day. I'm surprised I..." and she started coughing. Blood leeching down the sides of her mouth, Aaraf knelt down to wipe it.

"No, no, please. I can't lose you, too. Please..." Mariam curled up into a ball as a fit of coughing overtook her. Aaraf could only hold her and wait. The crow watched all of this in silence. She noticed a man walking towards them. A tall figure covered in black.

Aaraf held her to his chest. He was crying now. All of the pain he had buried for so many years, all of the suffering he had endured, he let it out all at once.

*But the happiness? It was still there. Tucked away in the deepest recesses of his mind, except...*

"Aaraf bhaiya..."

*...he couldn't remember them now.*

It was the first time she had called him by his name.

"Will you please tuck me in the way you do before I go to sleep?"

Aaraf nodded. He tried his best to wipe away the blood, and kissed her gently on the forehead. Mariam's breathing started to slow.

The crow cawed softly as the tall figure stood over them, a shadow blocking out all the light.

Aaraf's head was resting against his sister's while he had his arm over her.

*I won't let you go, Mariam. I promise.*

Death stood and gazed at them for just a little while longer.

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