



# Her grave and the Amaranth

FARIHA MRINMOYEE HRIJUTEE

A butterfly sat on her grave,  
 "Where are you from?" she asked.  
 "Far, far away from the wonderland, where dreams come true"  
 The butterfly said, flapping its colorful wings.  
 "Dreams?" she asked again.  
 "Yes, the never-fading heavenly flower it is,  
 The Amaranth.  
 More colorful than the rainbow,  
 Brighter than the sun,  
 More loving than the moonlight."  
 Moving her little hands, she said-  
 "Then where's mine?  
 Why it is so dark around me?  
 I can't see any light,  
 I can't see feel any color..."  
 "Your Amaranth has not bloomed yet..."  
 Saying this, the butterfly flew away...  
 The wilted Amaranth on her grave tossed its head in the breeze.

# HOPSCOTCH

NAFIZA TABASSUM

The July sun heaved its rays of blazing light that reflected on the tin houses crumpled together and stung people nearby like needles of fire. The aged men sat at the side of the rail track, shooing children away every time a train rattled past.

Mala limped her way to the crowd of curious girls, as Rina shouted out the rules of the competition. "It's not a mere game of hopscotch. The participants will have to hop from one end to the other, of the entire ally, without stumbling once. And the winner will get my doll!" she said lifting a ragged doll with an air of superiority, while her teenage brother added "If you fall down, we get 10 taka."

Mala cringed imagining how furious her mother would be, if she wanted money for fooling around, when tons of debts were yet to be repaid. She looked down at her tattered pink dress and her slack crutch. Thousand thoughts juggled in her mind. She remembered, six years ago, she did not need that crutch. She had a doll with a pretty pink dress. It was her only priced possession which she had got from a charity programme. She remembered how her neighbour asked for the doll from her and the girl's elder brother snatched it from her when she refused. She chased the siblings until they were all breathless. The boy pulled his sister to the other side of the rail track, but Mala's foot caught

the metal edge. She fell. She remembered the ground quiver madly as she dragged her body off the cold metal. The rattling sound grew stronger. She saw the huge metal snake zoom past with her tear-laden misty eyes. She fell unconscious with a surge of excruciating pain and woke up, one-legged.

Mala felt beads of sweat race down her messy hair and her heart slammed against her ribs as she watched each girl tumble down half-way through, until she was the only one remaining. "My turn," she said limping forth. "Sure," sneered Rina and there was a huge burst of laughter. Mala threw aside the crutch for the first time in six years, like the time she let go of her mother's hand when she learned to walk for the first time. She began muttering rhymes, hopping with her only bare foot, eyes squinted in the light. She couldn't hear the snide remarks and whistles as she caught glimpses of her memory... 1-2-3 *sparkling plastic eyes...* 22-23-24 *she ran...* 58-59-60... *a huge train...* She was almost there, but she had no idea how. She felt angels carrying her... 99-100. Her foot staggered a little and she opened her eyes.

The sneers suddenly exploded into cheers. The old men applauded while Rina swore. Drenched in sweat, Mala took the doll. It wore a pink dress and had a leg missing. Scalding drops of tears oozed out of her eyes and ran down the dirty doll's cheek.

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# Dilemma!

AMINA JR

Tangled and twined in tag of war,  
 between heart and soul.  
 One reasons the other,  
 at times the heart and at times the soul.

They seek the void, they reason the reason.  
 Fighting, searching for answers not given.

Quest for lost soul.  
 Confused! In dilemma as time unfolds.  
 Neither seems to rejoice,  
 as they win the battle to their choice.

Is it the deep down void?

The ugly pain creeping through in vain,  
 Slowly conquering its space of reign,  
 The heart and soul locked up in tag of war  
 A never ending battle with inner do soar!