

Dormant

ZARIN RAYHANA

Dawson props the guitar carefully on his lap, and starts playing a tune he has never played before. It is one of those windy days of fall that indicates the arrival of an impending winter. As if almost on cue, the stifle of chilly air stirs the atmosphere and group of familiar looking young boys arrives with their guitars. For weeks now, these boys have been visiting the little bistro to listen to Dawson tune his guitar and attempted to copy some of his melodies. Even though they never initiated a conversation with him, which was rude, he never minded the fact that they were trying to learn something new from him. Homeless, Dawson earns his living by being the human jukebox at the only restaurant in his small town. He plays the music of some very famous songs but never sings them, allowing the customers themselves to hum along. They often mistake him for a bad singer because of his quiet reserve, but the only people who know the bona fide reason are the staff of the restaurant.

Today, the boys are doing something different. They do not try to match their chords with him as he plays, but rather watches him intently while sipping from the steaming mugs of coffee they have ordered. An elderly woman winces at the adolescents and finishes her lasagna quite early in order to escape the tobacco-smelling ambience. The rest of the clients don't seem to pay any heed. Dawson

stops playing and skips to another tune which does not belong to any famous song, just something he had made up himself over the years.

Then the boys do something unexpected. They rise up and amble to Dawson; one of them introduces himself as Finn. The he names the rest. Eric, Ali, Peter and Heng. He nods as he stares at them, trying to memorize the faces that belong to each name. Finn has these almond shaped eyes and curly red hair that reminds him of his younger brother who had died in a car crash. Ali, on the other hand, has these large eyes with thick lashes that were somewhere similar to the eyes of his alcoholic father. Without going through another emotional breakdown, he drops his long glance and continues playing the tunes that lacked any lyrics. Actually, he was planning to write down some lyrics. Maybe these boys could be his inspiration.

"So what is your name?" Finn asks him. Dawson pulls out his phone and types down his name.

They glance at him and ask, "Can't you speak?"

Dawson shakes his head. Trying his best not to break down and expose his vulnerable state to these youngsters, he furiously types on his phone. Then, he lets them read the text.

The laryngeal cancer took away my voice forever. And the cost of the treatment took away my dreams.

Stars

MD. SHAFAYAT HOSSAIN

To the stars that do not shine
 Not a lot of stars are seen in the sky,
 Not a lot of stars we know.
 But they shine being light years away.

The lights travel and travel afar,
 Betrothed to a darkness inside,
 Anticipation in the eyes overrides aloof
 Till the star desolates his glide.

Now the star is gone but the yearning not,
 Last few droplets of light it shades.
 Bearing no name nor a number
 The celestial stranger fades.

Not a lot of stars are seen in the sky,
 Not a lot of star that lives.
 But their light (dark and little it may be)
 finishes the journey and awe it leaves.

