



FICTION

Tears of Unmet Love

NASHRA ZAMAN

Once upon a decade, a lost soul had fallen in love with the flaws of another one. He saw beauty in the eccentricity of her grey skin, which was covered in dark spots; he found her cold darkness to be riveting. He smiled when she looked at him, and glowed a little brighter when she spoke to him. However, he could never feel the aura of his one true love, let alone grasp the sensation of touch. Thus, he gifted her with the only affection he could afford, the most attractive attribute he possessed—his everlasting light.

The two lovers were, in fact, the Sun and the Moon. They resembled fire and ice. The sun was fierce and filled with unholy rage; he used his power and his undying hunger to fulfil his wishes. The moon, on the other hand, was majestic and full of life. Even the most relentless beings would succumb to her presence and worship her like the goddess she was.

The Sun gave the Moon his brightest light so that she'd never have to live in the dark or ever feel lonely. Though she appreciated the love and attachment of the Sun, the Moon had her eyes for someone else—Earth!

The Moon found Earth alluring. It roamed around it every day and begged for its attention, which Earth refused to give. Earth found the Moon to be boring, since it offered nothing but darkness to him. So with the help of the Sun's light, the Moon managed to look ravishing, hoping one day that Earth would love her back.

Earth, however, was too full of himself to care either about the Moon or the Sun. He carried himself with pride, showing off his royal blue skin, so full of beauty. His green erratic parts, being immensely striking, caught the eyes of even the most difficult-to-please creatures. Earth was also proud of the one thing that no one in the entire Universe had—life. Earth had water, oxygen and food, but most importantly, it had people. People, animals, fish, insects and so many other different forms of life—Earth had it all. He cared for his people, providing them with fresh water and clean air. Everyone, including the Sun, was jealous of him. The Moon, however, never stopped loving Earth's astonishing beauty.

It was the tenth of April. The Sun was particularly excited about the day, since it was the day when he could finally meet the one he loved from a distance. Every six months, the Moon came around the Earth to offer some of her time to the Sun. He liked to call it the Solar Eclipse. It was also the day Earth feared, as its people would experience nothing but gloom and unpleasantness that day.

"How've you been?" the Sun exclaimed excitedly, as soon as the Moon came into view. "As always and today is just a different day," was the Moon's laconic reply. "I have a lot to tell you about the past six months, Moon," the Sun said, warmth radiating off him. But the Moon became bored with his presence as always.

Politely, the Moon said, "Do tell." And so the Sun started blabbering about everything—about the new stars he had met when he was orbiting the Milky Way and about how much new hydrogen it had burnt and how the Sun was just a few billion years closer to death by this time.

When he was done, he asked the Moon, "Enough about me; how was your day?" But by that time, the Moon had left, rushing to Earth, who was weeping at the darkness the Moon had cast on him.

Every day, the Sun was getting more and more frustrated at how the Moon craved the Earth. He wanted to warn her of her naivety and scold her for her innocence, but alas, it was also one of the reasons he had fallen for her in the first place.

The Sun grew angrier at Earth with every passing moment. Unaware of the Sun's hatred, or the love emitting from the Moon, Earth got busier and busier everyday providing for his people, whose population was increasing rapidly.

The Sun wanted to hurt Earth in any way possible, his jealousy swimming through his body like fast and tiny fishes. So he took his revenge and started to dry up Earth's water bodies with his heat. He wanted Earth to suffer and be sorry for being beautiful. Soon, rivers in some areas dried up, and it stopped raining. The green plants of the earth, unable to make food without the water, started to die, until there was no more of them left. It was the first cycle of misery Earth had to experience, as his people now had nothing to feed on and no water to drink. It thus started to die as well.

The Sun had no clue that Earth had no interest in the Moon anymore. He kept assuming Earth was leading the Moon on, when Earth had no idea about her love. All he wanted was to live in pride and provide for the People he adored.

Earth, suddenly aware of Sun's unexpected hatred, built a protective shield around himself, calling it the ozone layer. The Sun tried to harm Earth, giving out his strongest and most dangerous rays, but as Earth was far away, and with the help of his new protective shield, it all seemed to bounce away.

The people of Earth, however, were one of the most selfish people you could meet anywhere in space. Though Earth provided them with all their resources, and took care of them since day one, not once did they think about Earth's feelings and health. They first started destroying his beauty, cutting down tree after tree to make things for their own benefit. Soon the elaborate green skin of Earth started disappearing until all you could see were ugly bits of brown.

The people of Earth also started replacing the

trees by building large metal buildings they called factories. Thousands and thousands of goods were being produced everyday for the benefit of the people. However, it also produced different types of gases, including carbon-dioxide, which was like poison to Earth, and which slowly started eating away and decaying the ozone layer.

Earth wept silently, unable to do anything to save himself, or its people. The Moon, however, took no time in coming to Earth's aid.

"It pains me to see you suffering, dear Earth!" said the Moon. Earth confided in the Moon as well. Both were unable to figure out what their next step could be.

The Moon was desperate to find a solution to please Earth. But, alas, the Moon was not strong at all; it was even weaker than Earth. But it offered Earth gravity—something that created tides, a renewable source of energy, hoping that the People

was time for him to concede its mistake. The mistake of kindness...

Oxygen was getting harder to find for lack of trees; clean water was not available at all due to the waste being thrown away into rivers. People suffered, but nothing stopped them from continuing with their facade of a better world.

The Sun was happy. He knew that if Earth died, the Moon would come to him, as the Sun was the only friend she had. He dreamt of the moon circling him one day, and his intention of killing Earth grew. Little did he know that jealousy had its own cost.

Slowly, Earth's land started separating, crumbling beneath his People's feet. There were roars of anguish every night, and wails of panic in the day, but Earth remained silent. He bore the pain and remained quiet when parts of him were falling off. Soon, Earth started breaking apart. His



of Earth would stop burning fossil fuels and not harm Earth any further.

The Sun, however, took full advantage of People's egoism. He started attacking Earth with strong Ultraviolet radiation and Infrared Radiation, the rays entering earth from the small holes created by People on the protective shield Earth had built.

Eventually, life on Earth began to deteriorate. People started to become ill, but only due to the greed they carried on with their cloudy intentions. Soon, People started dying from a disease called skin cancer. Their skin started burning, harming their bodies. The weather became unbearably hot. The ice in the northern and southern hemispheres started melting in the extreme heat, increasing the water level of the oceans and seas. The Sun continued to create havoc on Earth, slowly sucking the life out of him.

Earth knew that if the Sun continued with such mischief, he would soon die, along with the people it still loved. Every day, his people continued to destroy the ozone layer, unaware of the cost they would have to face at the end.

"Why are you doing this to me?" Earth wailed one day, powerless to stay strong anymore.

"The only thing I ever loved, the only soul I had devoted mine to, had eyes set for someone else. For someone who didn't even realise your true beauty. All it cared about was its people" the Sun exclaimed.

Earth was catching onto the equation and realised that he was the "someone else". He now knew the reason for the Sun's outburst.

But Earth failed to see what his mistake was; he was bearing the consequences for the Moon. Dying for her in fact. Soon, he started to distance himself from her.

The Moon, unaware of the Earth's sudden distance, got sadder and sadder every day. The Sun took the opportunity then, and offered Moon a shoulder to cry on, though the Moon was completely oblivious of Sun's intentions.

Earth continued dying, his blue skin turning black day by day, and his green parts diminishing. Every day he wept, as the water in the oceans kept rising up, until it engulfed the small lands, and flooded others. The air became hotter and hotter. People were dying of suffocation. Ultraviolet rays scalded the skins of the People. Infrared rays kept toasting their beings. Earth was helpless. He wanted to rebuild the shield, but that was in no way possible, as pollution kept increasing inexorably. Earth finally realised that there would only be one conclusion to the catastrophic phenomenon that had been taking place, and it

green lands, drowned in the depth of his agonising blue water, which never remained calm, as if grieving for its own pain.

"You will have a painful death like I am having," Earth bellowed, "a more agonising one than mine I pray."

The Sun just laughed in joy with a grin so wide, it touched his ears. The Moon on the other hand was shocked. She had no idea about the Sun's evil plan and started sobbing loudly again.

"How could you?" she cried to the Sun, "you knew I loved him; how could you?" she repeatedly screamed as Earth took his last breathe and swayed away into nothingness. Rocks were all that remained and there was no life in them.

"I did it for your own good," the Sun finally replied. "He was poisoning your innocent soul and was offering you nothing but endless pain."

"You had no right," She whispered. "I can't bear seeing your face anymore."

"Come to me, oh my dear Moon. Orbit me; I will give you endless light and make you beautiful. You will never be lonely. I will give you strength."

"I want nothing from you," she spit out her words. "You do nothing, but disgust me."

Outraged by the Moon's words, the Sun had enough. However, as he saw the Moon sobbing next to the dying earth he realised his mistake. All this time, the sun had wanted to be with the one to whom his heart belonged. He had tried achieving this by destroying the earth, to which his beloved's heart belonged. It was too late though.

Meanwhile, the Moon needed to find a new place to stay, away from the Sun. Grieving her loss, she swerved to another galaxy, hoping to run away from her past and start a new beginning. She found solace in orbiting around another star.

The Sun on the other side, wept, till all of eternity, until one day, he stopped shining, and lost his light.

He would never be the same again!

Nashra Zaman is a student of International Turkish Hope School. This story was awarded a gold medal and cash award in the Genius Olympiad, organized by the State University of New York in Oswego. The theme of the competition was the environment.

CORRIGENDUM

We are sorry that in the Jane Austen issue we confused her birthday with the day of her death. She died on 18 July, 1817.

-- The DS Literary Team



POETRY

Beyond the Shadows of Life

SYED IBRAHIM SAAJID



She kept on walking.
The distance between them grew with every passing moment,
The hustle and bustle of busy streets came to a halt—
It was as if time stood still.
A few seconds became eternity.
And in that eternity he hoped,
The way winter hopes for spring,
Or a sailor hopes for the sight of land,
He hoped that she would look back,
For one last time!

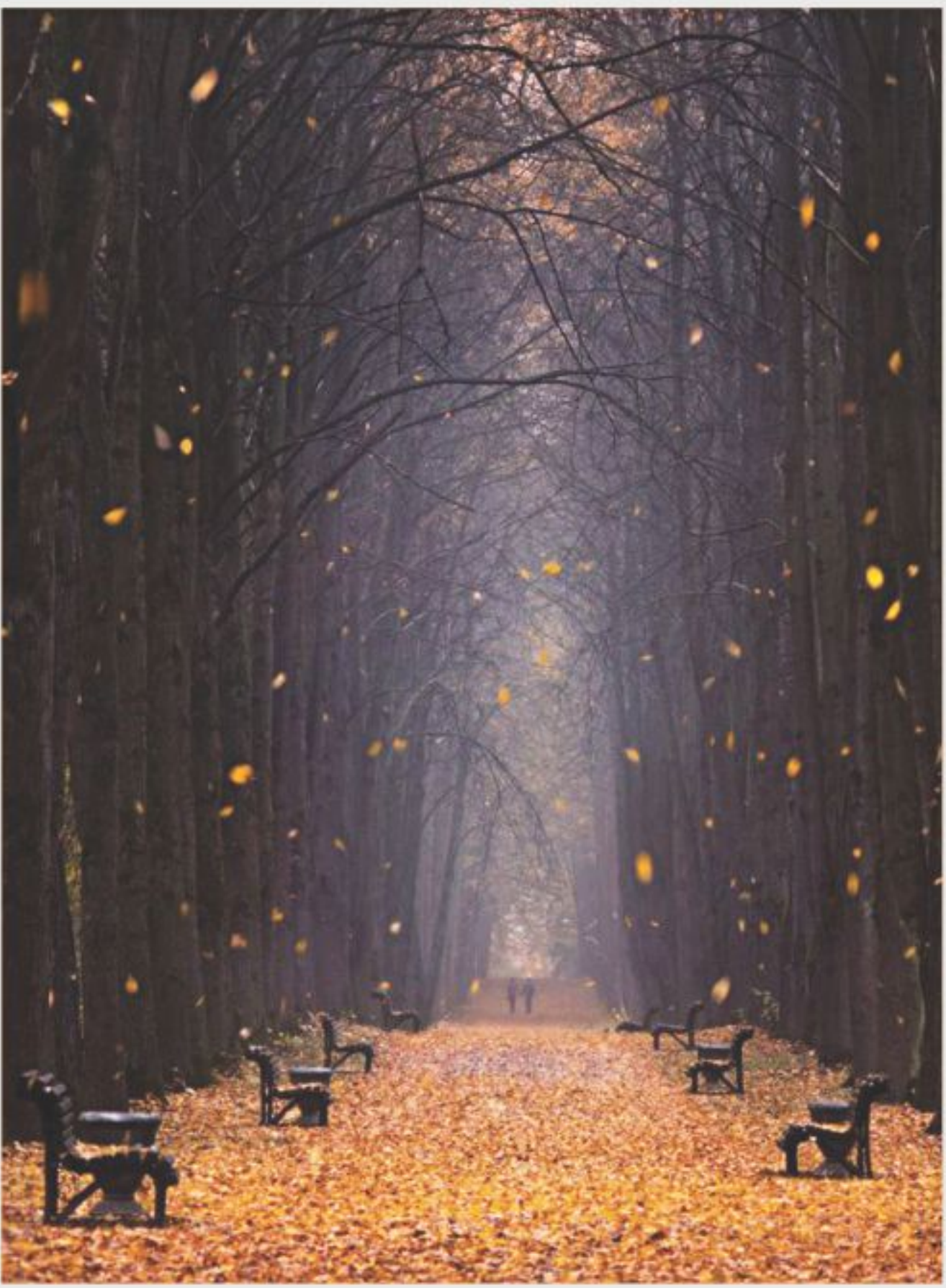
At that instant nothing else in the universe mattered.
Oh what couldn't he give for one glimpse of her!
Just one glance!
Just one glimpse!
He could sell his soul for one last smile.
Every ounce of his existence prayed for her to look back,
But she kept on walking,
Defying all the willpower of his love,
Crashing the last bit of light in his heart.

Suddenly her silhouette disappeared in the horizon.
Emptiness engulfed his heart within moments,
It was like the eerie darkness right after dusk.
The sharp stabs of numbness ensued,
And thus began his eternal winter,
Beyond the shadows of life!

Syed Ibrahim Saajid is an occasional contributor to this page.

The Lights of Love

HASAN MARUF



The universe has a way of tossing us into the winds of time
And whirling us about like fallen leaves on invisible currents.
But we like to believe that we control our own destiny
And chase our fate, sealing it with decisions we make

The world batters us relentlessly with change
And circumstance, but sometimes I wonder.
I wonder why some of us settle down in treacherous places,
Teetering dangerously on a precipice at the edge of the sea,
Waiting for the slightest breeze to send us tumbling
To the breaking point, while others rest comfortably
Nestled amidst protective roots of blossoming fruit trees.

Only destiny determines why the loneliest souls
Shine so brightly at night. And why once in a thousand lifetimes
Two are chosen to collide in beautiful catastrophes like shooting stars
And to passion that glows at night with the light of love.

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