



SABRINA SAMREEN

Your calls have become redundant now.
 No hope of condensing. Lost steam.
 We start with the usual, "Have you taken your meal?"
 "Yes," you answer as if a reflex, then ask me the same.
 I am still optimistic as I launch my day.
 I bicker excitedly for some more time.
 I know you're a dime,
 Less interested. You listen out of politeness.
 You drift, inch by inch,
 Away from my anecdote; preoccupied with something
 from your world.
 I do not ask. I daren't trespass. I don't want to.
 After all this time; you've kept me out.
 Your walls are too high, mister.
 I am indifferent; after all this time.
 You ask something trivial, irrelevant.
 My flow is broken; I answer in the affirmative.
 I wish there were more tales at our disposal.
 Silence: I am in no hurry to break it.

You're perfectly at ease, some topic brews in my mind.
 You remind me you love me,
 Out of habit, I do not doubt, I spill out the same three
 words.
 No, four. I love you too.
 You yawn audibly.
 Or is it some cheery siren I was desperately
 Hoping for; an excuse I was betting upon.
 On another day, I'd spurn myself for never trying.
 "You're sleepy" I confront.
 You say nothing and I press on:
 "You've had a long day...Must rest"
 We both know you've hardly left you apartment.
 "Okay". You resign. Accustomed. Fine,
 With the art we use every day, to get away.
 My sigh is lost in transmission.
 We hang up after blowing three good night kisses,
 Customary and absolutely redundant.

*The writer is a student of
 North South University.*

Taciturn Thoughts

NUSHRAT NAIMA ISLAM

Not everyone deserves to know
 Of all the places where the poison
 Burrowed itself in your soul
 Deserve is such an intrepid word, no?
 You deserve happiness
 You deserve love
 You deserve peace
 Do you, however, deserve anyone's thoughts?
 Do they fall into the grey area of human rights and
 moral compasses?
 Petty injustice, they claimed.
 Why was it always you they blamed?
 You wished you could tell them
 The pen at your fingertips
 The words never escape your lips
 I never wanted the poison
 Surely, who ever did?
 But it made its way in-
 Slowly, creeping, silently killing
 As it does
 I couldn't feel anything at first
 Yet, when I did
 It was as if someone set my lungs on fire.
 My lungs are fine, I told myself.
 My heart is fine, I told myself.
 My life is fine, I told myself.
 Everything is fine.

*The writer is a Computer Science and Engineering
 student of AIUB.*



WONDERS, LOST

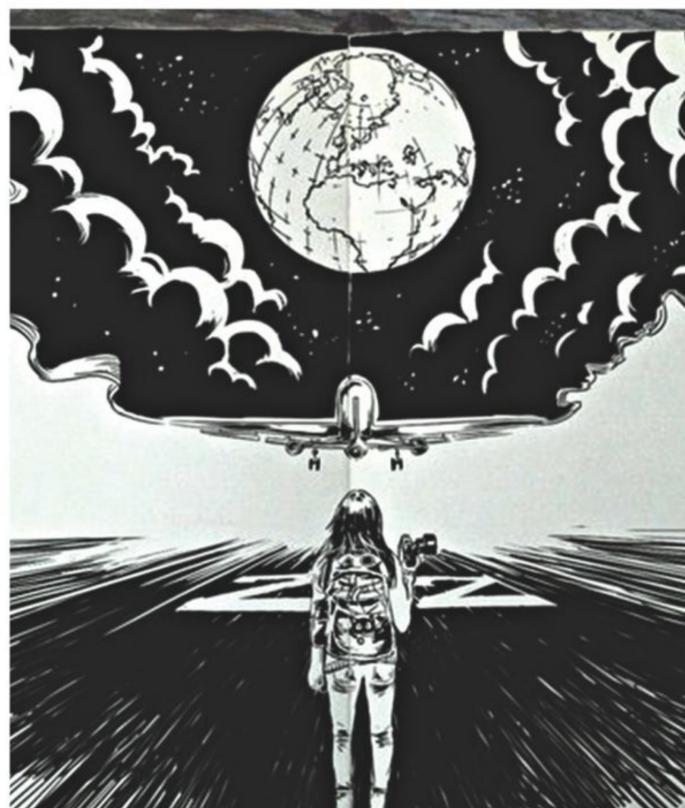
ZARIN REZWANA

While getting out of the house at 7.39 am every day,
 thoughts of moving to a faraway land ran through her
 mind. Winnie, as everyone called her, was already tired
 of her life. The atrocity of college did not seem to end.
 And with the burden of books, the nerd stepped onto
 the roaring city streets. The bus would arrive soon, she
 thought. Putting off the idea of getting a perfect cup of
 roadside tea, she started fighting sleep off under the
 station shed.

The bus had arrived, and like every other day, she
 tumbled into the putrid, still air of the vehicle. Luckily,
 as a minimal form of comfort, she found a window seat.
 As battered as it was, she thanked her lucky stars. Funny
 how once she used to wish for adventures. She remem-
 bered that as a child, she wanted to go to France and see
 the Eiffel tower in all its glory.

'I can go anytime I want.' She thought to herself. But
 Wordsworth had told her the reality long ago – the
 lovely woods of adventure were surpassed by the prom-
 ises that needed to be kept. Staring at the wheel of a
 passing rickshaw, she tried to understand how her life
 had been trapped into a vicious cycle. Moving on with-
 out answers, she focused on jaywalkers rushing against
 time to avoid being hit. A small rabbit-like man that
 caught her eye reminded Winnie about her grand-
 mother.

To the little Winnie, grandma told her about a little
 girl who would spend her time by the river, following a
 white rabbit in her garden. It was a special rabbit, she



used to say, that had an immaculate idea of time. It had
 a pocket watch and just like this man on the road, it
 would hop its way into the bushes whenever the clock
 struck. She also said that the rabbit had brown fur
 around its eyes, making it look bespectacled. Ever since,

Winnie would look out for one such rabbit every time
 her car passed the pet shops of *Katabon*. To her disap-
 pointment, as a child she never could find one like that.
 And it was long before she understood that the girl was
 from the gardens of Mr. Caroll.

She looked at the time. There was no point in fidget-
 ing — she knew that no carpet was going to fly her over
 the traffic that awaited her. And as she felt the wheel of
 her life going through another one of its vicious revolu-
 tions, there was a loud bang on the street. A car had run
 into a rickshaw right in front of her. In the crowd that
 was quick to gather, Winnie was non-existent.

Witnessing the chaos, she saw how calm the old
 rickshaw puller remained. As he pedalled away and the
 traffic cleared, he had already showed Winnie where to
 go.

Just like every other Saturday, the old age home let
 visitors in. The young lady walking into the empty guest
 lounge saw her grandmother's face light up. Looking at
 the wrinkles on her face, she wondered how old her
 Alice had gotten. And as grandma told her the story of
 the rabbit once more, Winnie wandered off to the words
 of the old rickshaw puller.

Pedalling away, he had muttered, 'If I never stop, my
 wheels will not go anywhere new.'

She smiled. Winnie remembered then that her
 favourite fairy tale tunnel always had a wonderland
 waiting.

*Zarin Rezwana is a weird potato trying to be a French fry.
 Send help or send ketchup at riditah4@gmail.com*