



Puppets of time

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

Time is a puppeteer with glasses—
Round, squeaky clean, and gold rimmed.

The strings of yesterday and tomorrow
Are attached to my limbs.
He pulls at the strings and I nod.
He pulls at the strings and I clap.

The theatre before me comes to life
Breathing like an engine.
Is it a universe
For me to discover and bring smiles to?

Time is a puppeteer with glasses—
Round, squeaky clean, and gold rimmed.

The art of puppetry is lodged in the crevices
Of his wrinkled hands.

I entertain the living theatre—
Each seat tossing its view at me,
A static leather animal,
Breathing and laughing.
Like I entertain the people around me,
Nodding and clapping,
With the invisible strings attached to my limbs.

Time is a puppeteer with glasses—
Round, squeaky clean, and gold rimmed.

Aren't we all puppets
Of the old puppeteer?

THE INVISIBLE ROCKET

ARISHA TABASSUM ISLAM

I pointed the telescope to the sky. There was nothing unusual. Sighing, I set the telescope back and looked up at the sky. There was nothing unusual but it wasn't exactly a simple black sky either, it was a magical moonless night. The glittering starry sky extended across the heavens, littered with a thousand twinkling diamond-like stars. They all flashed the brightest white against the deep blue and black void, trailing a wild rhythm the eye could not catch but was yet marvelous to behold.

Certainly you don't see a sight like that every night. But where was the sign that would explain where the sound came from every night? It had almost been a week since we first heard the noise.

Almost a week ago, we were sitting down for supper when there came the most tremendous noise – something huge travelling through the air at an immense speed. It made the whole neighbourhood open their shutters curiously and look at the calm heavens which showed not the slightest sign of active movement.

However the loud reverberating sound did not cease its surprise just there. It did even more by appearing again and again for the whole week. The "Invisible Rocket" as it was named, had caused a great shuffle in the neighbourhood. Apparently, the sound did not reach any other area besides ours. Even though the others didn't hear it, all came to know of the incident as the word spread. People talked and as each night brought the same noise, they began to embellish it even further.

Soon, superstition overtook all and tales of monsters became a subject of belief. I, however, doubted all rumours. Yet curiosity led me to wonder, and find this Invisible Rocket.

So there I was, standing on my rooftop with a small yellow telescope, hoping to solve the mystery. Yes, that particular night I was doing what I did best, taking a giant leap of faith and simply waiting for luck to come. Dreaming of a dream, but with nothing to make it come true.

Doubt crept up, and patience began to wear thin, I did not give up. But when the mist began to set and the sky became hazy from my view, I decided that even if the sound came that night, there wouldn't be much to see due to the mist and fog. Or should I wait? The sound might come again and seeing little is always better than seeing nothing. It may be a tiny thing to argue about but my heart and my brain could not agree with each other. The silent quarrel went on, the heart telling me to stay, the brain taking a wiser turn.

Just as my brain was about to win, the heart seized control in a zealous act when the already familiar sound vibrated dangerously inside my ears but I saw nothing.

Disappointment seeped through me – sharp and painful, as the sound stopped and the cold night air was calm again, for childish though my efforts were, unmasking the invisible rocket was of great importance to my expectant spirit.

Heaving a sigh I got up and turned to leave. My last involuntary gaze upon the sky was when I saw it.

The distant triangular object was of same shade of the sky, making it quite difficult to see. The strange shaped craft drifted through the mist, opposing the haze, and blending momentarily with the night air itself.

In a matter of seconds, it was gone, and I was left standing alone, out in the cold, lost in my own thoughts and as confused as ever.

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