



# Three Stars in a Diagonal

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I had a habit of looking up at the sky every now and then whenever I walked back to my dorm at night. Granted it did not make for a very smooth walk but it had become almost an impulsive thing to do. I would look for three stars in a diagonal. Once I found the three stars, the rest of Orion was easy to decipher. My father used to show me Orion and other constellations in the Dhaka night sky back at home. I hadn't paid much attention when he did until one breezy February night, when I was sitting outside on the staircases of my dormitory, miserable after a long day of boring lectures and mind bogging assignments, I noticed the three stars that looked like what my father used to call "Orion's belt". I remembered feeling a little less lonely then. Perhaps if my father was looking up through the iron railings of our balcony six thousand miles away, he could see Orion too. Perhaps he was thinking of me as well.

I considered writing about the constellation. But I had already written about

constellations before and I figured I couldn't write any better due to my lack of practice. I also did not know much about the topic to write something I myself would consider reading worthwhile. Then I thought I would write about my parents, but the more I thought about them, the more I missed home. The more I scoured my memory for ideas, the more I realised there was not much I could write about without feeling too much and too strongly and I knew it would never lead to a good piece. The only consequences could be teary video calls that would be difficult and emotionally draining for both ends.

So I stopped looking for ideas. I figured that they would come to me like they did before. After all, I was living amid people from all the corners of the world and they would certainly make interesting characters. For example, I often ran into this guy in the stuffy hallways of my dorm who I found quite intriguing. He always wore a taekwondo suit (or he did every time I ran into him) and carried with him a plastic sword. We never communicated but that was okay

because it left a lot of things up to imagination. There were so many things I could write about him but then again, the ideas were too fleeting and didn't actually have any substance to them. They could easily be regarded as vague thoughts that barely deserved to be jotted down in a notebook. Even if they did, I was always either too caught up with schoolwork or too tired because of schoolwork to actually do so.

Eventually, I stopped thinking about writing. I was starting to get comfortable with the idea that perhaps it was a phase. I wrote some things, got a little recognition which was nice and humbling, and now that chapter had ended. I guess I was okay with that too. Sure, I missed it, but I had become a completely different person and maybe new me was not as creative as old me. I however found it funny that the new me was a lot more miserable than old me, and when I thought about it, a lot of my creative motivation used to stem from teenage sadness, so it would make sense if I was writing a novel now. I guess when life really hits you with all its might, you stop making art out of the

bruises.

I stopped thinking about writing until I found myself in my balcony again a year later during winter vacation. I was home for a few weeks and was definitely not planning on getting in touch with my creative side which I was almost sure was dead by now. But on a breezy December night, I was standing with my father against the railings of our balcony and I saw him look up at the sky while taking a drag from his electric cigarette. "Look, there's Orion's belt," he said once he had blown the smoke off into the night, and there they were- three stars in a diagonal. It felt oddly comforting, the reminder that even on my loneliest nights, there was always going to be something looking over me. And at that moment, it didn't seem like such a bad idea to write about constellations again anymore.

Shreyosi Endow is a 20-year-old, majoring in computer engineering at The University of Texas at Arlington. When she is not programming, she likes to research and add to her collection of memes for every possible scenario.