

Return



TAHSIN CHOWDHURY

"In an envelope made of sleepless nights,
 in a bag made of daydreams,
 I send this letter to the sky for you."

Under lonely streetlights with forlorn memory,
 in the torn pages of unwritten history,
 and amidst all the melancholy,
 our names will echo with glory.
 Tonight I will sing a song
 known only to us two.
 Tonight I will write a poem
 for me and you.

Flames engulf my mind's haze;
 my words mourn, bridges burn,
 and towards you I pace.
 With broken feet and heavy sighs,
 I wait for you under ripped skies,
 with empty bottles and sleepless eyes.

In windy rooftops with twilight essence,
 in every breeze that brings me your presence,
 in the letters of hope with invisible ink,
 and in memories of sunsets with our
 happiness in sync,
 I will return.

In a desert filled with your ruins,
 I will find myself in your abandoned poems.
 Fluttering hair through the summer breeze,
 untold stories engraved on dying trees.
 A love poem about an anchor
 that drowned the entire ship.
 With screams of terror,
 whispers of horror,
 wisps of nostalgia,
 and cries of ardor,
 I will return.

In songs of chasing cars and
 ten million fireflies,
 I will wait for you under starless nights
 and search for you in my constellations.

And if I were to burst at my seams
 as a shooting star in your
 stratosphere
 will you still remember me
 when I return?

SHIPS AND THE ANCHOR

RASHEED KHAN

Ting.
 She groaned wearily and shut her eyes,
 pretending she'd never heard it.

Ting. Ting.
 She waited with bated breath. Nothing
 broke the silence, and she sighed in relief;
 relief that lasted for a tranquil twenty
 seconds before cracking up from the
 hammerblows of guilt. She groaned wearily
 again, lifted her head from the cosiness of
 her pillow and looked at her phone with a
 drop of venom. Another nail slammed into
 a coffin of guilt broke the trance, and she
 reached for it, tired.

Three texts, and from three different
 people. *Holy hell, what's up with people
 tonight?* If she hadn't known better, she'd
 have asked herself why she stayed awake
 beyond midnight. After all, everyone is still
 scared of the monsters; they're just not
 under the bed anymore.

She braced herself to tackle their
 monsters now as the screen lit up.

'Are you there?'
'Dude, I don't know what to do.'
'I feel sick.'

A part of her wanted to coldly reply,
 'Yeah, and what do you want me to do
 about it?' After all, she was just another
 person; why should she give a damn? Why
 did they keep coming to her for help?
 Another nail in the coffin; she crushed the
 involuntary thoughts, squinted against the
 light of the phone and replied accordingly
 to them. Quick and deft, her fingers
 moved, making sure to reply fast, not
 wanting them to feel as alone as she was.

'Yeah, I'm here, you good?'

'What's up? You wanna talk about it?'
*'Hah, you mean you feel SICC ayyy alright
 I'm sorry don't hate me please.'*

Warmth, compassion, an ear kept open
 for listening and terrible humour executed
 correctly seemed to have a startling way of
 tethering people to what didn't feel like a
 terrible reality, even if it was temporary. It
 gave them hope in what, deep down, they
 knew was probably not such a horrible
 ordeal as they all make it sound; she knew
 that, and made use of it well.

She held out for a whole hour, cycling
 through each chathead, replying. By the
 end of it, she had more or less successfully
 finished tethering their ships in a storm
 that was now passing.

'Thanks so much. You're amazing.'
'I wish people listened as much as you did.'
*'Haha, I guess in the end, you're the sicc
 one. Thanks for staying; you don't know how
 much I needed it.'*

She watched and waved as the ships set
 sail once more as she turned off the phone.
 She groaned wearily and laid her head
 against a pillow that had been damp with
 quietly shed tears and closed her eyes. She
 took some comfort in the dead silence of
 the night, a change in auditory scenery. The
 only ghosts in this room right now were
 phantom screams of arguments and pain
 from outside her room door.

With no ship to hold it up, the anchor
 sunk back into the water. Tired though she
 was, sleep was late in coming.

*Rasheed Khan is a hug monster making good
 music but terrible puns and jokes where he's
 probably the only one laughing. Ask him how
 to pronounce his name at aarcvard@gmail.com*

