



Winter, Grief, and Glee

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

The sky was a sickly shade of sepia.
 It reminded one of flames strewn all over.
 As if the sun had given itself away
 To the blue canvas.

The trees were leafless and the winds grew teeth,
 Sinking them deep into one's skin
 Until the coldness held one captive.

Her name was Winter-
 The kind of name that dominates a family tree with no
 surname.
 She summoned grief to her embrace.

Grief drove a skyblue Plymouth,
 An invited traveller.

He snaked his way through the ridged roads
 Of the villages scattered like stars on earth.
 He climbed onto the living's eyes,
 Made love to their souls,
 Wrapped their happiness carefully in cotton clothes,
 Loaded them on the back of his Plymouth,
 And disappeared into the distance exploded with naked
 cedars and sepia fog,
 Sending dirt into the ocean eyes of a girl named Glee behind.

Huntingtown

BENJAMIN HASAN

Stacks and racks of cats
 Chasing for little rats
 Stink of pea and
 a drink of tea

Little
 by litter
 Grow bigger
 For the trigger

A small Spanish otter
 is cannon fodder
 for decades
 in blades

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MISSING

TAHSIN ABEDI

The yellow of the sodium streetlamps failed to cut through the foggy winter night as I paced towards my destination. I was probably going to be late again. Pulling my jacket tighter, I shivered as the cold wind blew against my already numb cheeks, rendering them a shade of dark red.

I looked at my Father's old watch on my wrist—it was almost eight o'clock. I looked up and it was then that I noticed her headed towards me; a beautiful smile playing on her pink tinted lips. Although we had interacted several times after she moved into the apartment next to mine recently, I suddenly felt conscious of my clumsy and awkward self. I could feel the blood rushing to my cheeks again, but this time not because of the cold. She looked almost angelic as she glided in my direction with the smoke from the chimney of the kebab house billowing behind her.

I don't remember what I had said when she approached me. I was too busy trying to figure out what shade of brown her eyes were. On a previous meeting during the day, they had been a dark shade of hazel when the gaudy sun shone on them. Today, however, they were this rich brown colour that reminded me of a chocolate advertisement I had once seen on the television as a child. She smelt of a flower that I couldn't particularly identify—perhaps jasmine or gardenia.

I couldn't believe that I had successfully passed the small talk stage with her and she was still talking to me. When she asked me if I was free for some coffee, I felt my head move in a distinct nod even though my brain was screaming internally about me already being late. It was almost as if she had drugged me with her ethereal charm. I was like a puppy on a leash as I followed her into the café and ordered a fancy style of coffee that I couldn't even pronounce properly.

I tried to steal fleeting glances at her. However, they suffered a severe case of inertia, turning into a stare rather than being fleeting. Her fluttery eyelashes set long shadows under her eyes and her nose crinkled at the top when she laughed at my lame jokes. I was mesmerised. I was drowning in her chocolate brown eyes. I wanted to live in her ecstasy, breathe in the raven hair cascading over her olive skin and smother her with my desperate love.

Or so I dreamed. When I woke up, what felt like a moment later, I was on a white bed, surrounded by white walls and the antiseptic smell characteristic of hospitals. Tubes spurted from my body, connected to a machine that showed my heart skip a beat every now and then, maybe because I was still thinking of her.

When I went home, the apartment next-door had been vacated, the occupier no longer to be found. My keys were no longer with me and neither were the valuables inside my room. But of all the things missing, I only missed my heart.

