



# EVERYDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

MARIAM JYOTI

What am I losing so much sleep for?  
 Is it for the life I was promised?  
 Or is it to make up for  
 The love I missed out on?  
 What am I losing so much sleep for?  
 To make the world a better place?  
 But is it for you, or is it for me,  
 For haven't we made the two to be different?  
 What am I losing so much sleep for?  
 Is it so I don't have to sleep  
 And dream of things of the past,  
 Only to wake up into a hollow future?  
 What am I losing so much sleep for?  
 Is it so I don't have to look  
 For a place to hide from blinding lights?  
 A vacation I can't get back from?  
 What am I losing so much sleep for?  
 It's because sleep is for those  
 Who aren't afraid of waking up.



# RAINY DAY MUSING

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

I am standing on the edge of the window as usual. It is the only humongous window without any grillwork in the house. The sunlight always falls on me without any shape, with its arms and legs stretched out. As of now, the sun is not visible. The clouds are guarding the sky, grumbling with unequal intervals. Some are static, some are floating slowly but surely, like ghost ships. I want to be up there among the grey explosions bleeding into each other for as long as they are there. I want to ride one of the clouds, and lose my direction marvelling over the cityscape.

The heavens have opened up. It amazes me how quickly a sunny afternoon could turn into a sunless evening whenever the clouds gather over the region, preparing to drive the playful children inside their homes. The air has grown teeth. It smells of wet soil and grass as though the floor is being replaced by grass rolling like a carpet all over the house with trees sprouting from it, and creepers are climbing up the walls, turning the whole house into a little forest swollen with cricket calls.

The house is under the clutches of this certain feeling of calmness. It appears whenever the sky is gunmetal and the winds are pleasant. I assume it's grey in colour and shapeless. It has lodged itself everywhere in the house. In the white walls, the metal bars, the mosaic floor, the universe inside the oil paintings, the people. I don't think the heavy sounds from the heavens will ever stop as long as the sky's gaping. They will keep ringing in everyone's ears. They will keep reminding everyone of their presence from above.

Raindrops are trickling down the window pane and

ramming into the base wooden framework. Outside the window, there's a flurry of umbrella holding civilians carefully passing by. I feel like I'm on a ship's deck, on the tear-filled eye of the house, peering into whatever's going on outside. Tea puddles have bloomed on the roads, some are in the process of blooming. The tree leaves and branches are drooping low as the cavalry of raindrops are crashing on them. The surfaces of the fallen leaves are gleaming. Two drenched swallows have taken refuge under an air conditioner vent. I don't think they'll be flying anytime soon. I can see the smell of earth rising like smoke with the increasing intensity of the rain and growing many branches before speeding into separate directions with its roots uprooted, doing itself the justice of being called a flying plant. It's out on a venture like an aerial creature, only to become one with the air.

It's still raining. The boat moon is static in the sky. The distant city lights have gathered on the window pane, reflecting off the raindrops, trickling down the glass to meet their tragic end disturbing the other droplets. The grumbling is over, but the calmness is still there. Though I hope it crystallises itself on this earth and becomes something omnipresent, the wish would be sinful. Because it's the rarity that opens our eyes to the beauty of it and makes us long for it. Once the clouds are cleared and the heavens close, I shall wait for the frogs to croak, and hope it rains again. I will always wait for the earthy smell to lift off the earth and seep into the atmosphere.

With regards,  
 A houseplant.

*Shah Tazrian Ashrafi wants his life to be like stormtroopers: always missing easy kill shots. Send him prayers at tazrian1234@gmail.com*

# Petals of a black rose

NUJHAT ASLAM

On the first night of spring,  
 My petals begin to dream  
 Like an ornate orb— the full  
 moon shines.

As I bloom, I fear  
 For my fragrance shall  
 near  
 An awaited enchantress— her  
 concern for years.

People fear her black tear,  
 Her cold gaze, scarlet lips,  
 Ebony black hair— against

her ivory skin.  
 When lobelia sleeps, her  
 blood slowly drips  
 From her grimy black nails;  
 My petals shiver— abated by  
 blood droplets.

The world darkens, the moon  
 turns blood red  
 My petals fall apart  
 Swaying with the melody of a  
 sad death.

*The writer is a class 11 student  
 in Bir Shreshtha Noor  
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