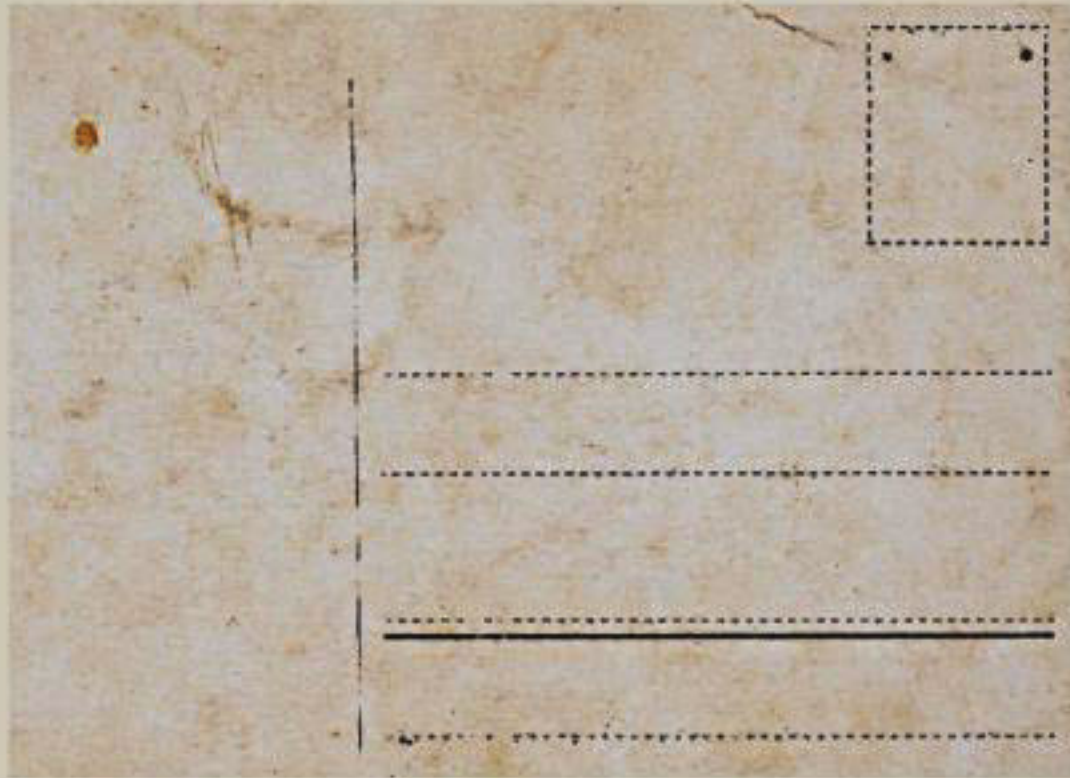


Letters to the past



FAISAL BIN IQBAL

There was a thought, a question,
 Perhaps a doubt somewhere in my
 mind.

What are those things and beliefs
 That I have left behind?
 Would you happen to know,
 How it all came down on me?
 How is it that I have become
 The things I said I will never be?

Do you remember the promise I
 made
 Back at the age of ten?
 When father scolded me for a wrong
 doing
 And I said I will never do it again?
 Mother took me by the arm,
 Made me promise for their sake.
 Isn't it funny how I broke
 Those vows I said I will never break?

There were things I always wanted to
 try,
 Things I was forbidden to do
 But as I kept watching from the side-
 lines,
 My curiosity only grew.
 Just once, maybe twice
 Thrice won't hurt either
 How could I end up going on and on
 And let my guilty pleasures last
 forever?

Told myself I would always tell the
 truth
 Yet here I stand today
 Falling into trouble every now and
 then,
 I spit out lies finding no other way.
 Plagued with irrational thoughts, I
 felt so lost
 Guess I never knew myself that well
 Can you tell me how much it might
 have cost
 For the honesty I said I'd never sell?

At times I keep asking myself
 How it all came to be?
 How is it that the things I once
 detested
 Are now part of my reality?
 Does it happen to everybody
 Or was fate only cruel to me?
 Dear past please tell me how I've
 become
 The things I said I'll never be.

Send the writer your feedback at
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LONG TIME, NO SEE

TASNIM ODRIKA

"Can you please press 10," said a petite
 young woman as she rushed into the
 elevator. Her hair was all over her face
 and it seemed liked she'd been running.
 She must be late for something.

"Excuse me, can you please press 10?"
 she repeated. This is embarrassing. I
 must have been staring at her so I
 quickly look away and press 10. She had
 a very familiar face but I couldn't place
 where I'd seen her.

"Oh no! What happened now?
 UGHH!" exclaimed the woman as the
 lift came to a sudden halt and the lights
 went out.

"Don't worry; I think the power just
 went out. But, our apartment has
 backup power. I'm sure it will be back in
 a few minutes." I said as I pressed the
 emergency button.

"Okay. I'm just a bit nervous. I actu-
 ally came here to meet someone very
 important." She was mostly talking to
 herself. "I was running on my way over
 here because it felt like if I had time to
 think about it I'll change my mind. And,

now here's me thinking about it. Maybe
 it's a sign that I should head back. What
 do you think?"

"Umm, I really don't think you
 should be asking a stranger such a ques-
 tion if it's an important matter." I think
 my reply came out curter than I wanted
 it to be because she turned to the other
 side and started looking down at her
 feet. It's just that I've never been very
 good at conversations with strangers.
 But, I wanted her to keep talking.

"What I meant was, I'm just a ran-
 dom guy and I wouldn't want what I say
 to change your mind about something
 which you've obviously put a lot of
 thought into. I mean, I don't even know
 what you came here to do. For all I
 know, you came here to hunt down
 your long lost enemy."

"You actually came pretty close at
 guessing. I came here to meet my "long
 lost" best friend."

"Shouldn't you be excited then? Why
 are you nervous?" I asked her.

"You see, when I was young, I was
 best friends with this boy in my neigh-
 bourhood. We used to play in the park

every day. But, one day he just stopped
 coming. His house was later found
 empty and a new family moved in there
 after a few weeks. I never saw him again
 and I never knew what happened to
 him. It's been nearly 15 years and I
 guess I'm nervous because he left with-
 out saying anything."

Thankfully, the lights came back
 on that instant and the elevator
 started going up. In the light, I could
 finally see her face clearly and it
 reminded me of the night my parents
 rushed me out of the house in the
 middle of the night. I don't remem-
 ber much from that night but I
 remember crying out "Elena would
 be waiting for me".

She was looking at my face as well
 but before she could say anything, the
 elevator door opened. It had reached
 our floor. I let her out first and then
 silently followed her to my apartment.

*Tasnim Odrika is having an existential
 crisis at the moment and doesn't really
 know who she is anymore. Send her compli-
 ments at odrika_02@yahoo.com*