

Radio Hearts

MAISHA NAZIFA KAMAL

When did we end up with such radio hearts:
A heart that only tunes to what it likes,
Which ignores the pleas of help and despair
And listens to the stale words without a care?

Eyes open and wide, but we live in delusions.
Screams cut through the air, yet we stay silent.
Fire across my heart, still yours have no smoke.
Blood masks your face, yet mine have no tears.

Running thoughtlessly after stagnant things,
Our stolen crown mocks us of its fragility.
Fear is all we have, hope's a wasted dream,

In our own land do we live as the banished.

Don't lament for me when I'm gone;
You write my epitaph before I die.
I won't offer flimsy love to your ailing hands,
Only to snatch it back when there's no spotlight.

For broken or tuned radio hearts must stay quiet,
Even if there's a signal keen on betraying.
They must switch to another channel of thoughts,
Even if they know that's not called living.

*Maisha Nazifa Kamal is on a mission to defeat all
Muggles in procrastination. Join forces with her at
01shreshtha7@gmail.com*

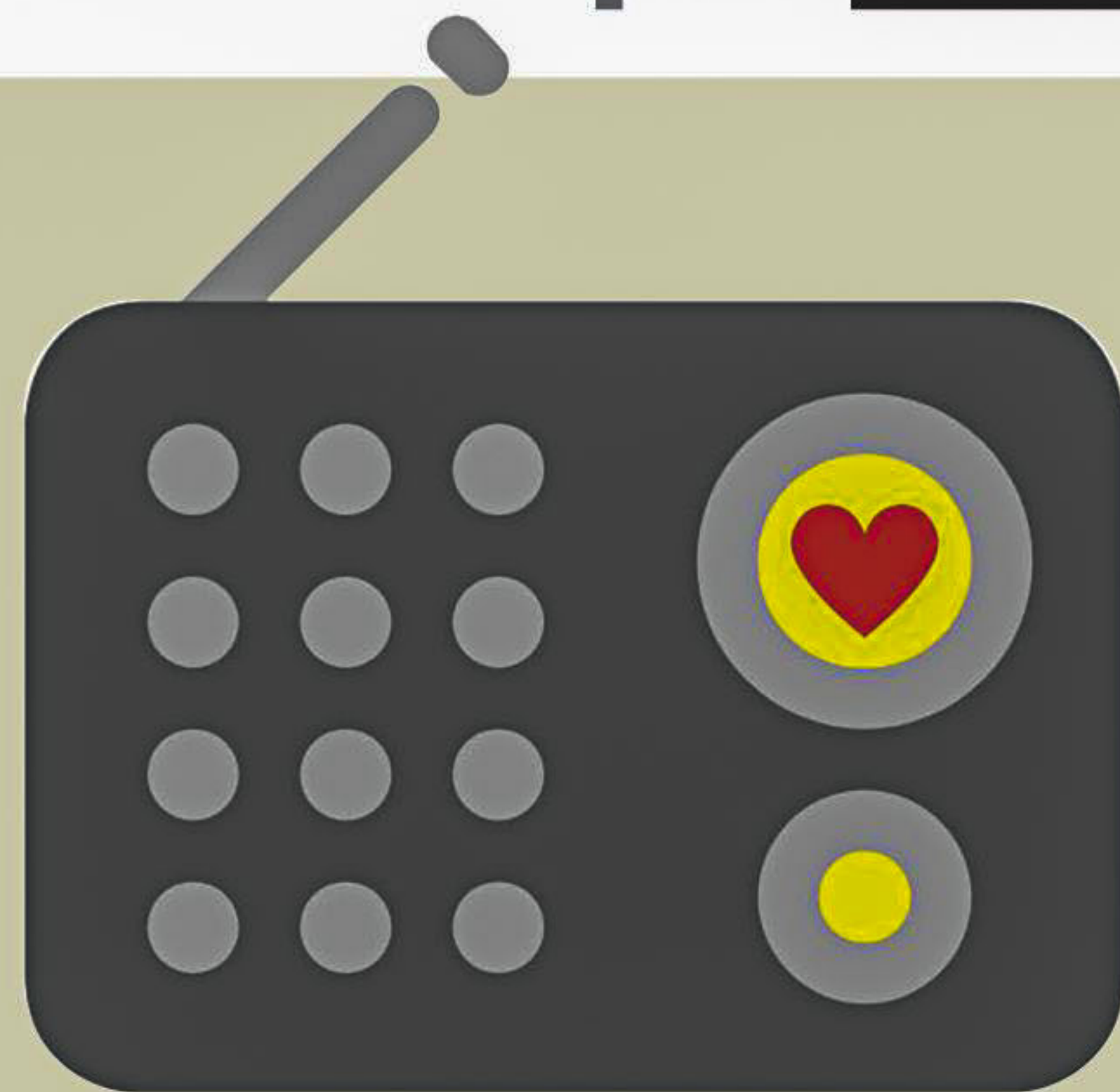


ILLUSTRATION: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

IF ONLY

SHAMMA

He laid there in bed. Motionless and numb. His eyes stared at the ceiling, but his mind was elsewhere. How long might he have been lying there? A few minutes? A couple of hours? Days? No it couldn't have been days, but why does it feel like he has been there for days?

His eyes dearly longed for her sight. His ears begged to hear her soft, lovely voice say 'Shamim' again. He yearned for her warm, tender touch full of love. But it was not to be. At least now it wasn't.

He wondered what may have gone wrong. She assured him several times that it was never his fault that they parted ways. It was her past that kept coming back to haunt her. Her horrid, agonising past. But he could not settle down. He just couldn't stop blaming himself that his love for her was not enough to get her through all of her sore scars.

He remembered the happiest moment of his life. No, it wasn't the moment when his team qualified for the final round of a renowned case competition in Indonesia. Nor was it the fact that he managed

to get into a well-renowned public university. In fact, that moment would seem insignificant to anyone but him: It was the day when she rested her head on his chest in that coffee house, telling him, 'I love you' for the very first time. That was when his heart was locked into hers. He even remembers the date and time, December 27, 2016, 10:47 in the morning.

Things were peachy between them. Everything was perfect. They found solace in each other, had healthy arguments to sort their differences, made promises to each other on so many things, planned a future ahead. Yet, all of a sudden...

Shamim still laid there on his bed. No sleep in his eyes, no hunger in his gut, no feelings in his heart. He couldn't get himself to get up. He knew she still had love for him in her. Yet he didn't dare call her. "It's for her best," he told himself. But he could feel something eating him up from the inside.

Nowadays he finds peace in his guitar. No, not because strumming a few tunes would free his mind. It's because whenever he plays it, he gets to imagine her sitting right beside him by the bed,

listening to him play with all her enthusiasm; her face with the smile Shamim always loved and will continue to love; her shy smile beaming with pure bliss.

If only the reason of them splitting up was one of those typical reasons. He wished that either of them cheated, was dishonest, or manipulated each other in any way possible. But it wasn't. They parted ways with immense love for each other in their hearts. And that was what made it unbearable.

If only he could understand her situation earlier, he would've done everything in his power to bring back life in her again.

If only he had looked back when he left her standing on the street after their last fight. He would have seen the dejected face of a defeated woman he loves with all his heart. Maybe he would have ran towards her. Maybe things would have been different today.

If only she'd have seen the things Shamim has done to change himself, the things that made him a better man, all thanks to her.

If only...