

# Where are you taking me?

MUSTASHFI MUSTAKIM

Where are you taking me, oh Lord of the universe?  
 This vermilion coloured sky of twilight; clouds like the ice-covered peaks of the Himalayas,  
 Through this narrow bucolic road covered by the cool shades of dense rows of trees,  
 Sitting on the lonesome quay beneath this primitive *Bakul* tree,  
 Through green fields covered with the yellowish coating of mustard flowers,  
 These tin shed houses as isolated as islands,  
 Walking through the pallid yards of rural homesteads,  
 Through these bamboo thickets on the bank of the Padma,  
 Dancing at the ostentatious gathering of the *Baul-akhra*,  
 Overwhelming me by the rhythmicity of *Sufi* poetry,  
 Where are you taking me, oh Lord of the universe?

I do not know.  
 I don't want to either.  
 I only know this much  
 That my heart, mind and soul are delivered unto You.  
 My heart is only a hollow wooden instrument.  
 It only becomes a *Veena* by Your unblemished touch  
 And wherever you shall carry the *Veena* of my heart,  
 I will follow, fascinatedly.

*The writer is a twelfth grader at Notre Dame College, Dhaka*



# CRAYONS

UPOMA AZIZ

Perhaps it was forever scrunched into a few moments, or a few moments stretched to infinity; which one was true I didn't know, neither did it matter, all that mattered was now, or at least what seemed like the present – the vast endlessness laid out in front of me.

Of me, and Nasheed.

It didn't occur to me to ask her about where she was for the past six years, if her family was alive and well – I didn't even find myself overwhelmed to meet her, for all that mattered at the moment was the fact that she was there in front of me, we were, once again walking together, even if in a completely unexplained manner. We walked towards a destination that was yet unexplored, and it awaited us eagerly.

I felt like I was out on a mission, an important one, just like six years back; fighting imaginary pirates, or out to save a castle from an angry vicious dragon. I knew whatever the secret was, I held it in between my fingers, my palms carefully enclosed around it. I felt the urge to sneak a peek, but that would break the secret, so I simply didn't.

After moments, hours, or an eternity of walking through a stray path amidst an empty, yet labyrinthine somehow, like if I left the path I won't be able to find my way back, we reach a broken down house.

No, hold on, it's too large and uncomplicated to be a house. I look closely, and decide that it's a warehouse, that looks eerily familiar. A bit haunted as well, but Nasheed walks straight in, and so do I.

Inside I see more familiar faces, children from all around my neighbourhood. There's Jabeela, Jamira and Samira, the triplets, and there stands Iqbal with his brother Iqraam... *Iqraam?* But he died, he died the night of the air raid years ago,

while we were hiding, cramped inside the...

The warehouse.

Suddenly, I want to run away, flee as far away from this place as possible, but Nasheed stops me. "Now, we dig." She calmly declares.

Dazed, I do as I am told. My nails dig deep, probing the dark, humid soil, throwing handfuls aside. All the children soon join in.

Nasheed opens her fist, revealing a few broken bright yellow crayons, the colour of sunshine. I look into mine and find a similar set of crayons, bright yellow as well.

She sets them in, almost reverently, and I follow. The other children drop in their own set of crayons, some deep blue, some as green as a sapling, some a fiery red.

Nasheed takes a handful of loose dirt and tosses it in.

Then I wake with a jolt, and am drowning in confusion. I look overhead, where the last of the stars are now fading away, and a soft red glow is slowly declaring the arrival of the sun.

I run a hand through my hair absent mindedly. It all felt so real and yet it was not. But was it only just a dream? Somewhere hidden in the prairie ahead, lay buried the crayons that I and Nasheed had buried, for they were the most precious things that we owned. Her brother had presented a whole set on her birthday.

Yellow was her favorite colour, too.

Somewhere in this land, this barren piece of land that this war had ravaged so callously, lay buried our dreams, our sunshines. Our childhood.

I rise and sling my satchel over my shoulder.

It was all out there, the treasure, waiting to be dug out again.

*Upoma Aziz is a walking, talking, ticking time bomb, going off at versatile detonators. Poke her to watch her explode at [fb.com/upoma.aziz](https://fb.com/upoma.aziz)*

