POETRY Empty buckets

HASAN MARUF

Strolling through a concrete jungle Of no particular latitude or longitude Kicking empty cans that should have Been recycled a long time ago I guess, it was inevitable ---I stumbled!

Falling into somebody's worn out Sandbox, I came across several Rusted out buckets. These buckets were filled with dreams. Left behind in legerity to escape A decline of suburban rote living ---

Why do we leave our dreams behind? Is it because we are afraid? Afraid of dying? Wary of being unshut?

I see it all the time, People not really in love Nestling down to the very life They fled from - only now Their buckets are made of plastic Filled with empty dreams Or ineffectual prayers!

The Author teaches English in DPS STS School, Dhaka.



In spirit

TARA SATTAR

Wake up, girl! That song wasn't sung for you. You're not Snow White but everyone wants to poison you. You're not the Sleeping Beauty, not a Prince is crossing the forest looking for

He is but asleep and sound in the castles. He will not find you and kiss you awake. Wake up, little girl!

That poem wasn't written on you. You are not Rapunzel. Nonetheless, your hair is in tangles, overworked.

You aren't caged in a tower, but your own thoughts.

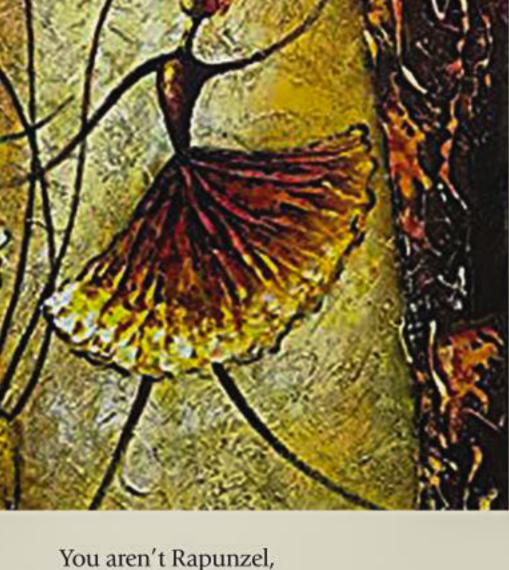
but you work for others all day! The ball that you had to go to, to find your Prince, never happened. Twelve at midnight, is your ideal bedtime. Wake up, silly girl! That violin wasn't played for you. The Prince that you dreamt of never crossed your path. You're not a Princess. You couldn't be.

You are not Cinderella,

and become the Queen. You won every war, and conquered the throne! Wake up, brave girl! You're not Snow White, but you saved yourself from all the vicious beings.

You're not Sleeping Beauty, but you woke up every morning loving yourself.

You shared your happiness and made others love and smile too.



but you have the shiniest hair in the world, and stars wrapped around you. You aren't Cinderella,

but you have your own glass shoes. And you made every Prince on that DJ night, desire a dance with you.

You aren't a Princess after all, and you didn't need a Prince. You are but Her Majesty, looking for her King.

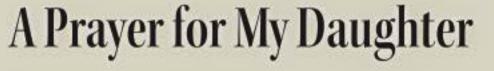
Tara Sattar is a poet and blogger based in Dhaka.

in order that she can fight four-five hyenas on a running bus or when they will attempt to set her on fire

so that as a father I don't have to endure dirty mockeries of the constables.

Once more the storm is howling, let's pray for the safety of our daughter!

Md. Mehedi Hasan is a poet whose works have been published in The Daily Star, The Daily Observer, The Independent, The Wagon Magazine (Chennai, India), Arts & Letters- Dhaka Tribune.



MD. MEHEDI HASAN

So you had to brace yourself,

(With due respect to W. B. Yeats)

Dear Shyamoli, Mere prayer won't do. Act.

Send our child to a martial arts academy along with that, send her to school, when she's five:

so that rickshaw pullers, hawkers, shopkeepers, teachers can't get away teasing or assaulting.



Teach her how to react and share it amongst the family.

Raise her strong—

Truth, or Dare

MARZIA RAHMAN

of the house and took a bus to the After finishing college, I wanted to stay city. To ask Daniel to choose-truth, or dare. job, read more books, hang out with

The Truth

The Dare

back home.

asked.

wouldn't dare.

in the city a bit longer, to look for a

my friends. But most importantly, I

I could do nothing. I was called

My parents informed me that

they had fixed my wedding. As they

had said they would do as soon as

my turn to fulfill the promise. I met

the boy of their choice: Akram, an

Friday. What else to wish for? They

I wanted to tell them about the

eighteen years old, tall, fair, funny,

loves going to parties, hates going

boy of my choice: Daniel, a Christian,

for prayers. I had little idea about his

family. Things I could never tell them. I

What should I do? I asked myself

again and again. I felt like screaming

out and every time one name would

our house where hundreds of trees

At night, I went to the backyard of

greeted me. When I was young, I often

came here to hide, to play the part of a

captive princess, waiting for someone

Should I tell my parents about

Marrying a boy of another religion

would be a sin in their eyes. I needed

to talk to Daniel. I needed to ask him

how far he was willing to go for the

sake of our love. I needed to know if

he loved me enough to go against his

A cool wind blew, and the scent of

some unknown flower drifted in and I

suddenly felt calm, happy. Yes, I knew

truth or dare, he had always chosen to

dare. He was the most daring person I

The next morning, I sneaked out

what Daniel would do. In a game of

family. I knew that I would.

had ever known.

Daniel? They would never agree.

throb in my mind: Daniel.

to come and save me.

electronic engineer from a well-reputed

family. Twenty-four years old, average

height, dark, lean, went to prayer every

I finished my studies. Now it was

ready to take the next step.

wanted to find out whether Daniel was

I knocked on the door of house 13, flat A, Southern Street. It was like knocking at the door of freedom. Daniel opened the door and the moment I saw his smile, I knew everything would be fine. We would live happily ever after. The fairy tale world was not all silly and fake.

"Where have you been? I was looking for you like a madman," he said with a look of concern.

I felt joyous. He truly loved me. I couldn't stop grinning, blushing. "Can I come in?" I mumbled.

"Oh, yes, of course. My parents are

out." "Let's go to your room."

He looked at me, amused. I had never been to his room before, he had never asked me to. We always hung out with other friends in the living room.

He escorted me to his room, upstairs. It was a big room with posters of football players, a few actors all over the walls, a reading table by the window, and a single bed with books and magazines on it. It was not tidy at all, but looked vibrant, colourful. I couldn't help but think it would soon be my room, too. The thought made me blush again.

"I have some good news to tell you," he said. He looked happy. "What?"

"No, you go first? Why did you come here again?"

"I left my home," I said abruptly and now as I uttered it, it sounded foolish to my own ears. "You did what?" he almost shouted.

I felt nervous, unsure. "My parents fixed my marriage. I could do ... " I couldn't say the rest. My eyes filled with tears, my voice choked.

"Calm down. Tell me again what

happened." I sat on the chair, he on his bed, facing me. I told him everything. He laughed and said, "You are quite a

rebel. But what would you do now?" I looked at him. Wasn't he supposed to tell me that? "Shouldn't you go to one of your

relatives?" I stared at him blankly. Was it

a prank? He would laugh at any moment, saying he was just kidding. I waited and waited. He stayed silent. After a while, I said, "I don't want to

marry that boy. I want to ..." He cut in and said, "Go and tell your parents that. You shouldn't have

run away." Why was he missing the point? Why didn't he get it? Or, was there nothing

to grasp? Was it all in my head only? "My application has been accepted, I am going to Brown," he said

suddenly, proudly. "Wow! Congratulations! I am happy for you," I said. "When are you going?"

He said this fall, it'd take some time, to complete all the paperwork. He went on but I had stopped listening. What would I do now? Where would I go?

After a while, I stood up, taking the bag in my hand.

"What will you do now?" he asked casually.

"Go back." "That's the right thing to do," he

smiling.

said, patting my shoulder. "Will you miss me?" I asked,

looking into his eyes. "Of course, I'll miss you. You are one of my best friends," he said,

Coming out of his house, I stood on the road for a while. Which way was the bus station? I could barely remember. I felt so scared suddenly. I even thought of going back to his house, knocking on the closed door, once again.

In a game of truth or dare, the person who chooses dare is not necessarily the winner. That is the truth I realised that day on my way back home.

Marzia Rahman is a fiction writer and translator based in Dhaka

