

The Fortress

SHOUNAK REZA

The fortress has walls made of
 Little specks of loneliness-
 I am trapped within its walls.
 I do not know where to go.
 Outside these walls, birds sing
 Soon, they too will fly away-
 In search of food-
 I cannot see them now-
 They hide themselves well.

My heart longs for the day
 I walked into a garden of love
 And heard someone call me.
 It was a dream, a speck of dream,
 For I looked behind and found him gone.
 The fortress is a million miles away
 From the garden that perhaps exists
 No more, no more.
 The garden is gone. It will never reappear.

Counting my days,
 I keep breathing the air of this fortress.
 I am trapped here. I cannot escape.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



DOUBLE SHOT ESPRESSO

TASNIM ODRIKA

I hadn't slept for days and I could feel my body finally giving in and drifting away. It felt like I was in a dream when I heard the phone ring. I patiently waited for the ringing to stop then closed my eyes. It hurt to even keep them open at this point. But, there it was again. Reluctantly, I got my phone from under my pillow and saw the familiar name flash across the screen.

"Hey."

"Hi."

"So, I know we ended things on quite a bad note but I've been thinking about us a lot. I'm leaving today and things are going to be difficult for us in the future but I'm not ready to let this go yet."

"I don't know what to say to this."

"Don't say anything now. Meet me at Bistro in 30 minutes. My flight

leaves in two hours. If I don't see you there then I'll know your answer and we will never have to talk about this."

But, before I could say anything she cut the phone. I ran downstairs in my shorts half wondering if I had dreamt the whole thing or not but I had no time to waste. Bistro was 20 minutes away from my home. I got into the nearest CNG and finally started breathing easily. I'll get to see her. Half way along a heavy down-pour started to slow us down until the CNG came to a standstill. It was one of those summer downpours when the weather is all sticky and humid despite the clouds. I was still 10 minutes away and I knew at this point I wouldn't make it even if the traffic let go. Without thinking, I jumped out of the CNG and ran along the flood of vehicles covering the road.

I'm not sure how long it took me

to get there but I walked into the coffee shop with my shorts dripping rain water onto the floor. I felt people looking at me but I looked straight at our spot. Yes, we had our own spot. I felt a little relief to see a steaming cup of coffee on the empty table. I went over to the table and saw that she had ordered my favourite. A double shot espresso. But, I couldn't see her anywhere. I probably looked quite helpless because a waitress started walking towards me with a smile on her face.

"Hi, is there anyone sitting on this table?"

"The ma'am sitting here left 5 minutes ago but she left this coffee here."

Tasnim Odrika likes pineapple on pizza and is willing to fight anyone who opposes her on this. Reach her at odrika_02@yahoo.com