



# IN CONVERSATION

ALVIRA SUHA

"Eva, tell me something?"

"Yes," I breathed.

We were sitting in this popular coffee shop and I have been fortunate enough to find a comrade in this fellow. The kind of friend who listens to you narrating your darkest emotions and then asks if you'd like to have a latte.

And, I'm always up for a latte.

"If you were to see him, the one who broke your heart, for one last time what would you do?"

I watched Jordan enunciate the words

and he didn't look at me - he was looking intently at the foam on the brim of the cup.

I thought about the question for a while.

Being a romantic is not easy. I find love whenever I look for it and I have always tried to keep it despite knowing full well that the upcoming loss was inevitable.

But to be truly honest to myself, I have loved only one person beyond any human norm. And of course, I could not keep it.

"Eva?"

"Yes, yes!" I sipped on the creamy latte.

"I never actually thought about it, Jor-

dan. Until you asked me right now."

"And?" He looked at me.

"Well, I think I would look at him for a couple of minutes. You know, to memorise him..." I paused.

I felt my eyes welling up. I waited until the water dried and said, "Well, I would hug him. Really hold him and whisper in his ear. 'It's okay. It's okay that we lost each other. It's okay that the damage is irreversible. It's all okay.'"

Jordan sighed.

"What about you?" I asked.

"I have had that planned, kid." He smiled and finally looked at me. But it

didn't really feel like he was looking at me - it was as if his gaze was drifting far into a future only he knew about.

"Okay?" I nudged.

"I want to sit across her. And I want her to see me cry. I want her to see me shatter because I want to know if she will shatter too. Because if she does cry, she has loved me. And my sorrow was never in vain."

I nodded.

We sat across from each other. In that dimly lit café, we were two broken people matured with damage and despair. We sipped on our coffees together and didn't say a word.

# THE OCEAN

SHOUNAK REZA

The ocean roars and the sky above  
Breaks open and reveals the birds  
That stayed hidden in its many layers.  
Squeaking, screeching, calling us names -  
They hid behind a mass of blue foam,  
And now they are venturing out of the clouds  
In easy, measured flights,

I have forgotten how to swim,  
The ocean is getting wilder  
And I get lost in its roaring waves.  
The birds above screech -  
There isn't land nearby.  
My feet struggle against the stubborn waters  
And I look around, look around, look around.

What is left of the world can be viewed  
Through the corners of my eyes.  
There is the roaring, stubborn ocean  
And above that, a huge sky.  
And dotted on it are birds  
I cannot tell apart.

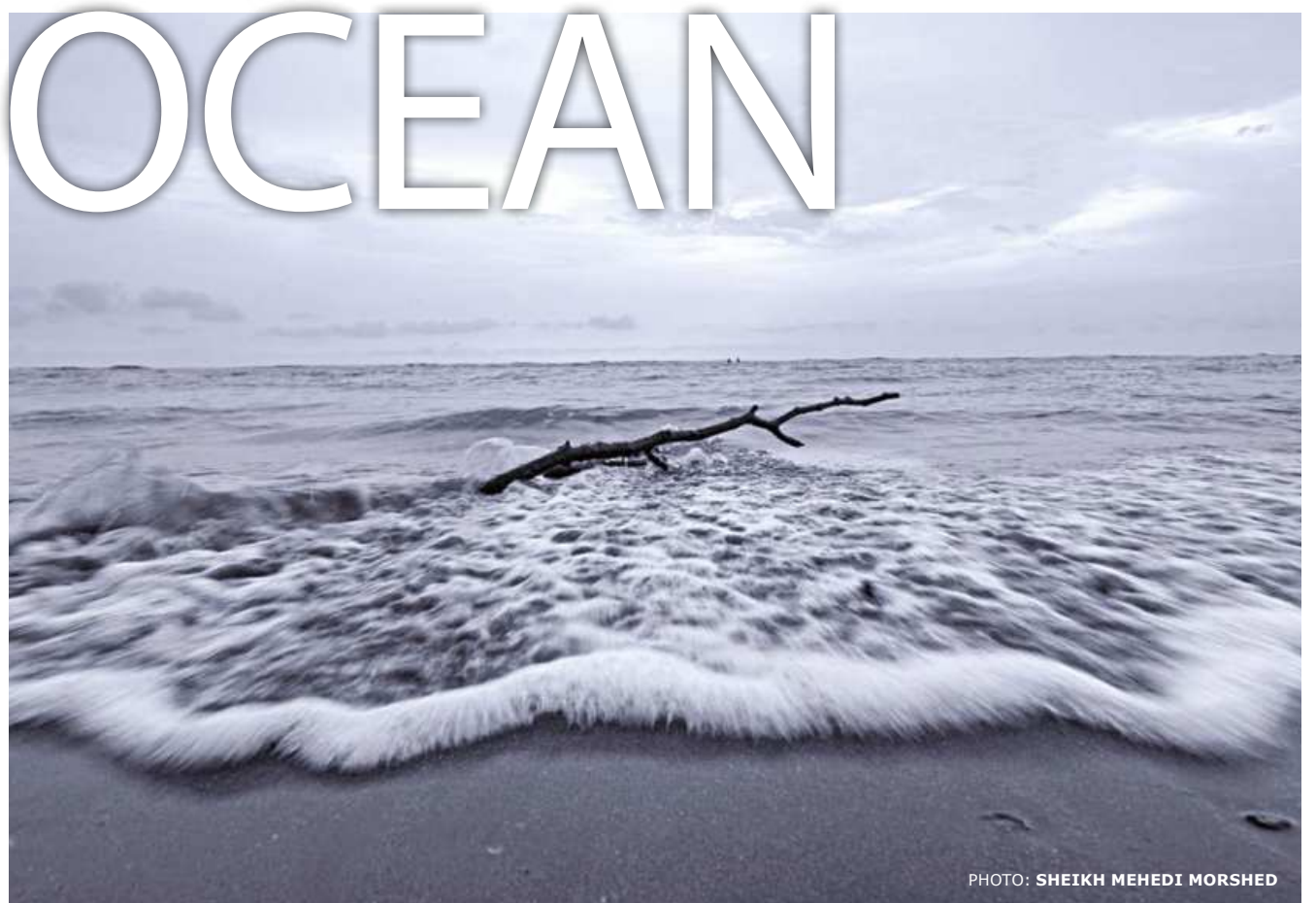


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