

A NIGHTLY RENDEZVOUS

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*What is it that I long for?
Is it just happiness or something unearthly?
Why have I turned into a long-lost notebook?
Which had every story carved in all the colours you
could find.
Which also had my name written with such pride.
A long-lost notebook is what I am,
Which you look for in your wardrobe even now,
When you try to remember how innocence looked on you.
If only the notebook could place itself
Inside the crevice of my heart-shaped space!
And I wouldn't feel so lost.
Life has taken its turn again.
Life tells me that it writes letters to my name,
Which I keep looking and looking, but only in vain.
I'm a long-lost notebook that can't find its way.
So, here I am with an unlit soul.
If anybody's listening to my echoes through the holes,
If you see it scattered around,
Let the long-lost notebook know
And let it find its way back to my home.*

He looked at me when he finished reading it. I waited with my heart beating fast to listen to what he had to say. He seemed lost in deep thought. When I couldn't be patient anymore, I gasped. He under-

stood my urge and spoke finally.

"I won't tell you how I felt."

It was so unanticipated that I just stared at him blankly.

Then I said, "You know that whatever I write, I show it to you first. What you think is very important to me."

"I know that very well. It's just that it's making me dig up something from inside me and I, I don't think I can put it out there without sounding irrational."

When he finished speaking, I noticed a sadness in his eyes that I hardly ever saw. I made him sit in front of me. I thought for a while and asked him, "Are you feeling lost?"

He looked at the ceiling as he spoke, "I don't know. I don't know how I've been feeling for quite some time and that's what's bothering me. I wasn't like this before. I used to be very clear about my feelings and everything surrounding me. When I read your poem, I couldn't help but think it was about me, although I know it's not. The term long-lost notebook hit me. What if this feeling stays with me all my life? What if I'm lost in every situation I come across in the future? The worst of all is losing myself in everything. Maybe I won't be able to be happy with how I am."

I held his hand in mine and I said to him,

"When I wrote it, I wasn't even planning to write it. Someone had given me this precious piece of advice to write it all out whenever I was feeling lost, it was you. So I did just that. The point of telling this now to you is to show you who you are. Who you've been and who you'll always be. The way you listen and show me the way, I want you to remember the kindness you give as sunlight which is essential for the plants to grow. Not for just me or others, but for yourself too. I want you to keep the belief in your heart so that your light reaches you too when everything seems dark. You will find yourself every time you get lost. And please, never let yourself deal with the difficulties or pain you feel inside till the last stop. I am here and I will be here when you do call my name. You can share everything even if it doesn't make sense. Just like I don't make sense most of the time."

We both laughed at this. Then he asked, "Even when we are apart?"

"Especially when we're apart." I said. Then we looked at each other until he disappeared. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes. I let myself soak up his presence till sleep would make me give in.

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