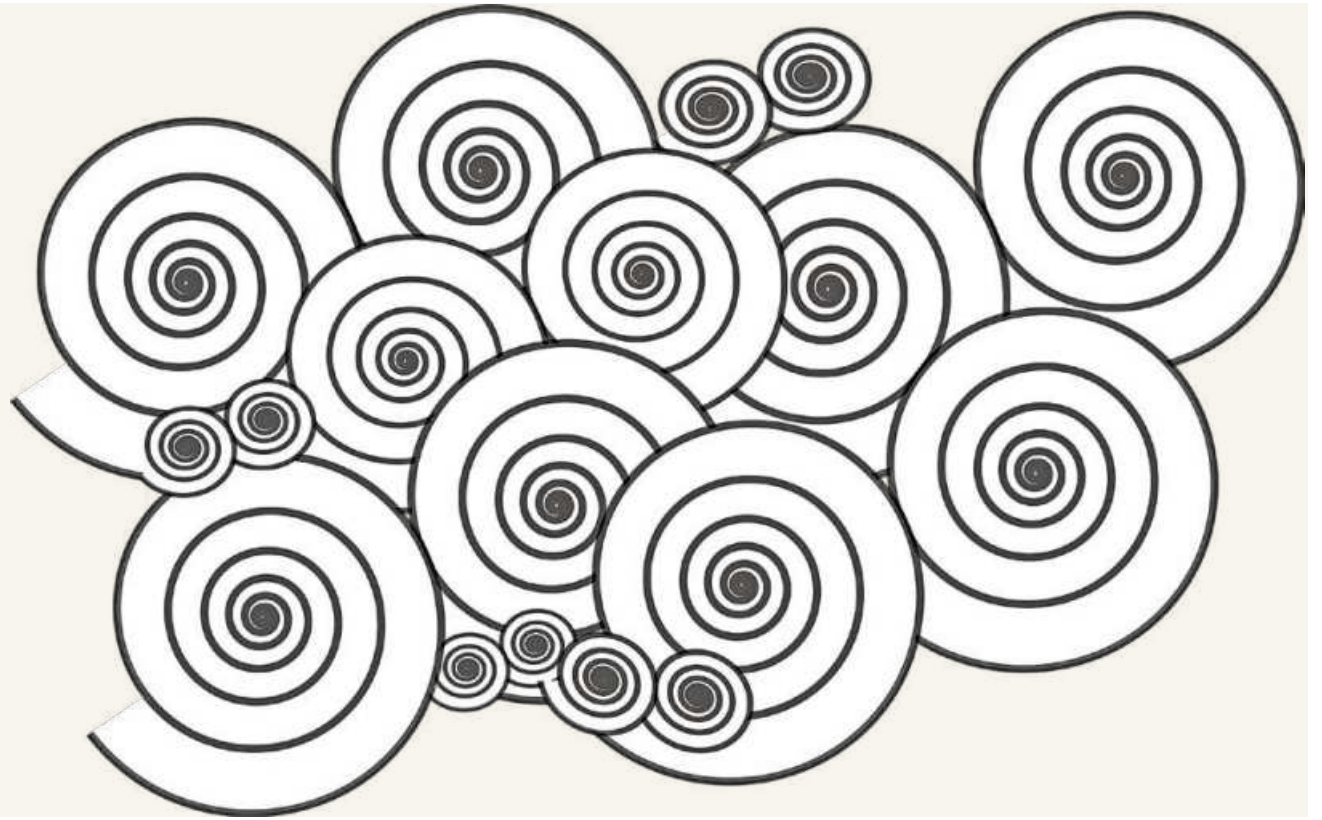


Wintertide

RIFAT ISLAM

Arrival perpetual yet unforeseen;
Embraced wholeheartedly.
Your cold-blooded drought on my skin.
You stay silent and speak;
We create souvenirs while you stay.

Heaven in the long dark,
Colours missed.
Bittersweet wind through red lips;
I've latched onto you.
I sing to you quietly;
"I love you."



MAGIC

BUSHRA ZAMAN

Abstract paintings are fascinating for many reasons, one of them being the many different opinions various people have about their true meaning.

It was these differing opinions that I carefully, but unnoticeably, listened to as I stood by the juice bar a few feet away from the main exhibit of my painting.

"I bet the ear being spoken into is symbolic of opinions being forcefully fed to people. You know how society is nowadays, full of people wanting to express their own opinions, but a surprisingly limited number of people to actually listen to other's opinions on the same issues," expressed a young girl with seemingly much disdain for the human race.

She glanced at her dewy-eyed companion for a sympathetic reply, only to hear a snarky one instead, "I bet that interpretation has nothing to do with you being told you have poor taste in clothes?"

I smiled, but only briefly, for my gaze was caught by a child and his mother slowly walking up to my painting and staring in confusion.

"Mom, why do people make abstracts that are so hard to understand?"

The mother replied, equally perplexed, "Maybe because it is fun to see others try to guess what is going on in the painting?" I gasped at the accuracy. My eyes darted to the child for an entertaining response, and I was not disappointed, for he said, "I think artists make abstracts when they want to express something but get tired of adding in details, like I do with my book reports."

I would have said that I giggled, but I practically snorted and nearly choked on the pineapple juice I'd been trying, owing to how far off yet how close the child's interpretation was to the truth. I could not help but wonder how unrelated the name of my painting, "magic" seemed compared to its content. Maybe I did get tired of trying to perfect the details of a magical person on canvas, and hence ended up with an abstract instead of a portrait.

To be fair though, who wouldn't be tired from trying to paint magic? If magic itself is the subject of a painting, nothing seems to do it justice. You try your very best to portray this gem of a human being and the admirable, genuine joy they spread, trying to figure out what colour would match their radiant goodness best.

I have heard for the longest time that the best art stems out of having felt pain. But the paintings that result from trying to show the world the adoration and admiration you feel towards those you love can be just as priceless. Even if solely due to the effort you put in.

And so, with such excuses, I tried to reason with myself for trying to paint my uncle, someone who spreads joy everywhere he goes and has a kind ear to lend to even those unaware of needing to be listened to. This continued for as long as I waited for his arrival, which was shortly after the exhibit filled completely with people.

The arrival was easy to notice, despite the huge crowd. I just had to look for the person beaming from a mile away, having understood what I painted at first glance.

Bushra Zaman likes books, art, and only being contacted by email. Contact her at bushrazaman31@yahoo.com