

Love is an abstract noun

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for SAP

What is love? Ask any ten-year old, she'll say
 Love is an abstract noun wafting
 Flawlessly on the page of a grammar book.
Noun. Abstract. That which cannot be touched.
 But between holding hands and silent sobs
 on wet shoulders,
 Withered and faded petals in fragrant
 letters,
 Blood slowly soaks the page, flames slowly
 turn
 The pages yellow; the edges crumple.
 Emotions gallop in through the sluice gates
 of the sky.
 And what remains is the memory of a lost
 innocence,
 The promise of eternity in your ring
 With the past carved as diamond on top
 of it.
 When clouds array themselves in white
 ribbons

And the dawn wraps itself around you,
 Waves rise in the sea of time
 And the abstract tide stops, falters, spills
 Filling the room with a mercurial gloom.
 The distance is what binds us. The emptiness.
 Why are we as immiscible as the oceans?
 Touching
 At the borders yet never becoming one?
 The tunnel stretches further the closer we
 reach the light.
 But *love* is an abstract noun, its ways
 Unknown to our mere mortal hearts,
 And through many a fateful turn
 We become just another Troy ready to
 burn.
 Yet in its name we become martyrs.
 And in words I dream
 Of one kiss on one dying star.

Abdullah lives in a world as Finnegans Wake and talks with Dostoyevsky. Tell him Ça suffit at asabdullah.ag@gmail.com



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Dr Aslan's Husband during a Telephone Call

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"Hello, Dr Aslan speaking... Oh! My dear Margot, whatever's the matter?"

Dr Aslan's husband carefully tucked away the sigh that was about to escape him as he watched his wife answer her patient. Giving her a small smile, he went back to his dinner. He was aware of the joy she derived from helping these troubled individuals. He could not begrudge her that.

"No, no, there is nothing for you to be sorry about, it's nothing... First, tell me what happened."

The daughter of working-class parents, his wife had struggled teeth and bone to acquire the position of a practising psychiatrist. He really was very proud of her. The late-night conversations about her patients they had in bed, both carrying a welcome exhaustion from their respective days – hers spent in her clinic and his running after their two girls – was one of the highlights of his humble life.

"I need you to take a few deep breaths. In and out, just like that."

If Dr Aslan's husband was asked what was the one quality of his wife that he admired the most, he would say it was her kindness. Day after day, she spent countless hours listening to the sufferings of her beloved dears.

"You are having a panic attack... No, there is nothing wrong with you."

The few instances that he had seen her staring off into space, a strangely

blank expression on her face, could only be attributed to the burden she carried from her patients. This was also true for that one incident when he had found Dr Aslan in their dressing room, muttering *monsters* under her breath as she sobbed like he had never seen her sob before. Shocked, he had not known what to think of her sudden bitterness. But now he understood, it was only the rambling of a poor woman feeling sorry for the horrors her patients endured.

"I understand how you are feeling, my dear. You are overwhelmed, your

senses are overstimulated."

Yes, Dr Aslan's husband was married to an exceptional woman. Not only was she to be lauded in her professional sphere, her personal accomplishments were also great. Dr Aslan was, after all, a devoted wife and a caring mother.

"While I can't say the knife was a good idea... Oh no, believe me I am only trying to help."

Despite the fatigue she unquestionably felt after her hours spent at work, she never failed to spend time with her family at night – the night time

belonged to her family alone. Except for the occasional after-hours call she got from her patients. Like now.

"I suggest you not take any hasty steps and wait for the morning."

But her husband couldn't very well tell her not to take those calls. He didn't have any wish of doing so either.

"I really do hope you are sure."

It was true that in the afternoons, while standing in the kitchen preparing lunch for their children, Dr Aslan's husband sometimes let himself wonder what his life could have been like if he hadn't met her. He would probably have been unmarried, employed in a nine-to-five job working towards a retirement plan. But just as he thought he could hear the bustle of unsatisfied employees going about their day, he broke himself out of the reverie.

"Alright, I'll see you tomorrow."

Dr Aslan's husband looked towards his wife as she wrapped up her call and let lose the sigh that he had suppressed at the beginning. But he sighed not for her, nor her unfortunate dear. But for himself. Alas, he thought, Annushka has already spilled the oil.

Zaima wrote this as a nod to Mark Twain's 'A Telephonic Conversation' and Mikhail Bulgakov's 'The Master and Margarita'. Write to her at zaima2004adrita@gmail.com

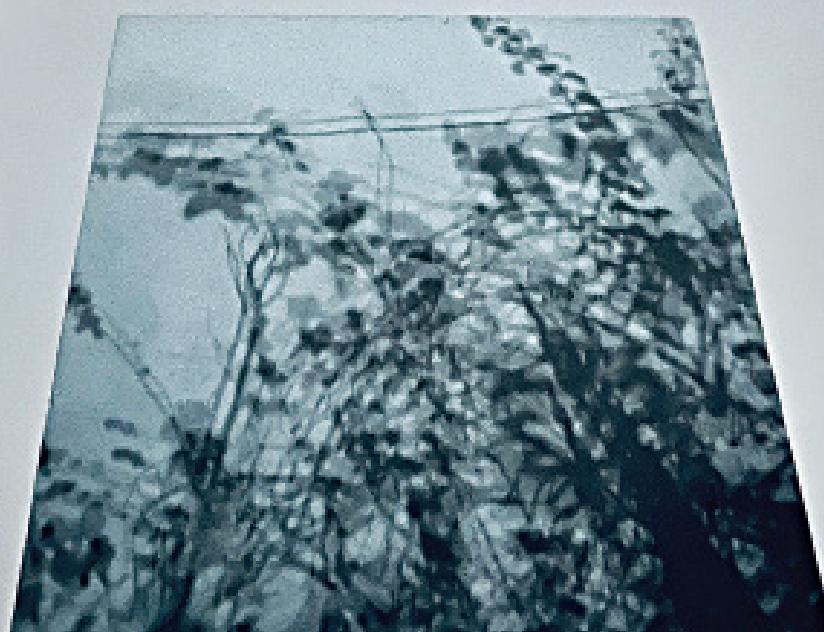


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