



Sensation

SARA KABIR

Did you hear about the latest sensation in town?
I heard she beat up a dozen men on her own.
No, I heard she's part of the mafia.
My friend told me she robbed a bank and got away with it.
Worse, I heard she sold her soul to the devil.

Horried whispers,
Scandalised lies.
Muted half-truths,
Schadenfreude.

Are we talking about the same person?
There's no way a girl did all that.
You're pulling my leg.
You're just saying so.

She sits in her corner and hears them speak.
Hears them spew horrific lies like diabolic fiends.
She listens and she wonders.
How could it be?

That of all the things they claim she's done
Not a single is about who she's been.
Not a single mention of the nights she lied awake wondering
what could be?

A life lived in shadows,
A life lived in lies.
Treachery consumes her until she can't rhyme.
So speak your piece or forever be undone.

After all, she's just a creature of time,
A penniless mime.
A heart of darkness,
Of yours and my design.

For all the things they say,
They had one thing right.
She did sell her soul to the devil.
Just not the one they had in mind.

As I think about the insects

AYRA AREEBA ABID

The time I clapped my hands to kill the bothersome mosquito, I began to ponder on life.

The flowers bloom. Bees sting but they dribble the nectar of flowers indulging in the sheer sweetness and produce sweet honey. People are like bees. They sting. They leave scars. Sometimes, illness conquers our entire body. At times, sweetness pours. But at what cost?

Do humans steal honey? Or is this our birth right? Bees lose their home and jet away to a destination far, far away from their lost abode. We indulge in honey while the bees provide labour. Their rightful production, it was. After all, honey would not ever benefit them. We pour honey on pancakes. Bees buzz around our ears. What are they trying to say? When I was a little girl, I learned from television that bees have five eyes. The two large eyes acting as a compound for the smaller lens residing inside. They are silent till they relentlessly buzz around our ears. Yet, we can never comprehend them.

What does a mosquito see when we clap our hands to crush them? Do they sense a shadow lingering over them? Insects are perceived to be insignificant creatures; birthed to smash, flick, and degrade. Bigger

figures stomp on smaller ones proposing sheer blindness mercilessly. Suffocated by the weight, insects soon die out surrendering to their eventual fate called demise. Their acceleration of mobility becomes overpowered by those who are overhead.

I have seen men stomping over the small abode crafted by the ants. I have also seen a line of ants picking up a crystal of sugar in unison. When something succulent, saccharine, and saturated announces occupation of an area, cockroaches, ants, and their battalion join in devouring the small space of delicacy. They might seem greedy but their desperation exceeds their greed.

Sometimes, men are afraid of insects, particularly flying insects. You hear a screech and you become baffled when they freeze in terror of a flying cockroach. Yet, the insect is killed with indifference. It is as if they were fated to be killed by those superior to them.

Life is a battle among the insects and the swatters. If the insects do not escape within a blink, that is, if they are not quick enough, they absolutely will meet their death. Survival of the fittest: this is what life is in practical rapports.

Ayra Areeba Abid's favourite word is 'serendipity' and she's a sociology geek. Connect with her at areeba.ayra@gmail.com

