

# LAST DANCE

AHMAD SALEH ABDULLAH

Embers smoulder.  
In the white smoke, like the jewellery.  
In a store, or the innumerable pearls  
By Eden's seashore, our memories glitter.  
With the same intensity as that of  
The oxygen-starved air, those memories –  
our friendship – wring our senses,  
Our hearts, our souls; Mnemosyne reappears.  
She hands me the past in stoppered bottles.  
The air becomes heavy with her chants,  
The past seeps through the lid,  
And settles on the environs,  
Enveloping us with an intoxicating scent.  
Time moves backwards,  
And the past is reborn.  
Ballrooms are embellished, new curtains are  
hung.  
Daffodils and forget-me-nots smile under the  
Autumn Sun.  
The chairs are burnished, the furniture in the  
room  
Are freed of their decade-long gloom.  
The windows refract light that breathes life  
Into the paintings on the wall.  
Ten lovers from my ten best years come  
Asking me to honour the promise of a last  
dance.  
But why does the sky still break into  
A violent cry, shearing the skin of the clouds,  
While we waltz among the stars?  
Gazing at the white rings of pigeons  
Do we dream of better days? No.  
What's best is already past, there's nothing  
More our hearts could ask for.  
O Insomniac Moon!  
Would you let me drink your blood  
And make me immortal as you?

*Abdullah gracefully drowns in the proses of  
Joyce, Dostoevsky, Faulkner. Call him ashore at  
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DESIGN: FATIMA JAHAN ENA



# The Last Waltz

MAISHA NAZIFA KAMAL

Chandelier glimmer and sculptures of ice,  
Gold banners and curtains of lace,  
Oh, there's a staircase now,  
And it only goes down.  
I see scattered pearls and footsteps left behind,  
Sense the warmth of hands on the banister,  
And I wonder who went down,  
And never came up.  
I hear violins and the piano play,  
I hear the sirens' promises ring in the air.  
The smell of some grand feast wafts up,  
And I'm bewitched.  
Oh, I'm waltzing down,  
Down this wicked set of spiraling stairs,  
That goes down and down,  
That feels eerily familiar.  
Oh, I'm waltzing down,  
Marvelous and alone in this careful dance,  
Nobody really bothers,  
Nobody sees me go down.  
Or they do,  
As they stand at the head of the stairs,  
Like I once did,  
Contemplating the search of peace and something  
nice.  
And maybe they too wonder,  
Like I once did,  
If anyone ever came back,  
From this magnificent spiral that only goes down.

*Maisha Nazifa Kamal has lost track of time and is  
living in a world where she never existed. Break her  
reverie at 01shreshtha7@gmail.com*

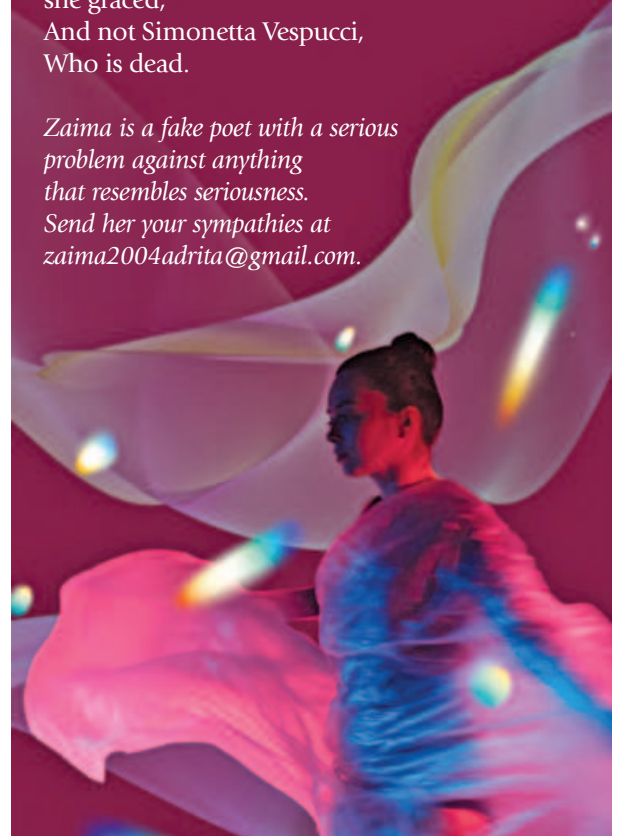
DESIGN: ABIR HOSSAIN

# Simonetta Vespucci, Dead

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

A vision in white,  
Rings out the collective tide.  
As the luminous coffin,  
Carved from the grieving bodies of a thousand  
magnificent ashes,  
Is shouldered by four men  
Who once loved her etherealness.  
The men are rugged,  
And their edges ever so slightly frayed  
As though temporarily worn away by the weight  
of the weightless spectre in her open prison –  
The prison that they are carrying through the  
streams of her wistful admirers,  
Across the streets of a city  
That she called her home.  
The sole man at the back of the procession  
watches bitterly as  
The sun lights his wife's hair,  
Stirring it up into ambers  
Almost as if it doesn't realise that its trials can  
no longer bring mirth to the face that now  
reads peace;  
But his bitterness will soon be forgotten  
As he falls into another's arms.  
The paupers and the painters,  
The addicts and the disillusioned  
All weep with the husband as their beauty  
makes her last circuit through her adopted  
land,  
But like him they will remember her complex-  
ion and her curls and the countless pieces that  
she graced,  
And not Simonetta Vespucci,  
Who is dead.

*Zaima is a fake poet with a serious  
problem against anything  
that resembles seriousness.  
Send her your sympathies at  
zaima2004adrita@gmail.com.*



DESIGN: FATIMA JAHAN ENA