

FABLE FACTORY



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

[You stand here again]

RAIAN ABEDIN

You stand where you always have –
You are five, you are seven;
You are as many years as you’ve ever been.
And something about the night and the way
The tree bends in the fields where
The blowers lift everything
But you – because you have smoothed your creases over –
Is reminiscent of how all loose threads belong to the same web,
You listen to hushed conversations
You shouldn’t, nor should the trees listen to you
But they do, because what is living if not
Defiance against absolution. You think of running
Away, and the tree understands, because the tree knows.
But living is defying, and you are living.
Or so you tell yourself.

Raian aims to be a poet of great renown someday.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Curtain call

SARA KABIR

The curtain rises,
Silence engulfs the theatre,
All eyes fixed on her.

A lone figure stands,
Centre stage with bated breath,
Heart pounding, shaking.

A sea of faces,
In anticipation held,
For the grand debut.

A soft drumming beat,
From the orchestra below,
Sets the stage aglow.

Words churn the play,
A world of make-believe spun,
Enrapturing all.

Tension builds and ebbs,
Emotions raw, bittersweet,
The story unfolds.

The performer glides,
Across the boards with such grace,
Transfixed, the crowd stares.

The plot thickens fast,
A drama of love and loss,
And twisted kismet.

A grand finale.
Audience too stunned to speak,
A magic spell cast.

She takes a last bow,
The curtains fall to applause,
The show ends in bliss.

BLUE CLAY

SYEDA ERUM NOOR

The blue model of clay vices
That sits in a house of glass
Will shrink about three sizes
As it waits for the moon to pass.

With her hair moulded perfectly,
and her eyes shaped to cry,
Her blue clay turns to burgundy
As darkness drains the sky.

She sits in the clear palace –
Picture perfect in her place,
Unaware of the mould and its malice
Inching into her embrace.

Like promises made in secrecy,
It tells her sweet, green lies
While spreading through her sheepishly
Like poison does to flies.

She’s frozen in her state of being
A model built to die
With smooth skin that is for pleasing
But a heart built to deny.

So, the mould extends its ugly tendrils
Of deceit that it will preach.
While she stays set on her lovely end trail
Where she’s never meant to reach

So doomed the blue clay princess

Her skin now turns grey
Too lost to even witness
The crime that was at play.

Her hand perched atop her side,
Her head turned to the sky,
She looks to darkness to confide
But the moon passes her by.

Her eyes frozen in memory
And skin broken in plea
She begs, but not for mercy
But only for her fee.

The one she’d earned for holding
The impossible serenity
That had the glass house going
While she lost her sanity.

But alas the mould is rigid
As it crawls into her ears
While she stands still and she listens
She sheds not one stray tear.

And while her colour slowly fades
And her blue clay turns to dark stone
No part of her is jaded
And no part of her, her own.

*Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious
and has no sense of time. Send help at
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ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

Send your short stories, poetry and illustrations to shoutfablefactory@gmail.com