



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

## POETRY

# There is a point to this, I think

FAIZA RAMIM

Here are a few things I learned in the one month we haven't spoken.

Metamorphosis, as you're aware, is a common occurrence in the entomological world. And I've been watching time lapses of insects, growing and dying.

Like how ladybugs go from little yellow buds on the tree to an empty shell to a natural death if they are lucky; or to a meal if they are not.

Changing so much and so eloquently, it's hard not to be envious.

When you can see the part of you, your old self discarded once and for all and never look back again,

don't you wish you could change like that? In their final form, the bright red color they finally assume makes it less appetizing to predators. (Much like humans)

The lacewings are tiny little bugs that drape the carcasses of their prey over them like a cape to camouflage themselves from larger insects.

The desert locusts when well-fed are solitary creatures. However, in case of scarce food, they bunch up together to search for leaves to survive.

There's a point to this. I think.

I think that you and I are too similar. And this kind of similarity shouldn't come so naturally.

I think we've met before. In a grocery line, or maybe our shoulders brushed while we got on a bus, maybe you helped me up with a change.

I'm bad with faces. But maybe we met, we touched, and through some form of psychometric miracle that I know nothing about, we exchanged parts of our souls.

Or maybe you found one of my old selves, shed off like dried skin and decided to keep it because you liked how it looked on you.

Maybe I killed you because you reminded me too much of myself and I am not too fond of myself.

And now I wear you, draped onto me like an omnipresent silhouette, for it still terrifies me to be seen.

I know there's a way of leaving without one of the two being dead, but I can't seem to figure it out.

In inanimate objects, in memories, the sea of the people I've lost looks like a war zone.

I thought I had learnt to tame this beast of solitude and be fine with the blood on my hands but it kept turning on me.

I had become so touch-starved that I clung onto every stranger with a kind smile like driftwood. And you were the only one this far away from the shore.

But you messed up, you got too comfortable.

To think that I wouldn't much rather swallow this log whole, and drown with its weight than to reach out to someone who isn't reaching back just as desperately.

I'm not sorry.

I'm not sorry that I only had room for tenderness in my life and I owed myself to not tolerate anything else. Not even once.

Don't you know why I owe myself that?

In a dream, God asked me What did I ever do, in this world, of love?

And I replied that I had, for the most part, not been cruel to anybody.

"That is not the answer to my question."

I remember waking up with wet around my eyes.

What was I talking about again? There was a point to this, I swear.

Anyway, what are you up to? Nowadays?

Don't answer that.

**Faiza Ramim** is in her final semester at IBA, University of Dhaka. When she's not increasing her Spotify minutes listening to *Car Seat Headrest*, she likes to write sad poems; or sometimes both simultaneously. Her new book *New Beginnings and Other Terrible Things* is out now.

## POETRY Titled 'Loss'

SNATA BASU

you pass by an old tree,  
an orb dislocates,  
the treasure of time has folded  
and joined hands with loss.  
no part is left to mourn in the sun of this  
madness;  
you look up and the root takes you by the  
shoulders,  
god is frozen in the lip of a fruit  
the tail of a leaf,  
malignant in the freeze is your terrible  
tragedy;  
you don't love anymore.  
you are frightened,  
your fear is slow.  
in the years of your becoming of you,  
nothing outlives the memory of what has  
been.  
you don't recognise yourself,  
everything is lost like a fish in Lethen  
space.  
you have mistaken truth for love again  
and given yourself up forever.

**Snata Basu** is a writer based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her poetry has appeared on numerous literary platforms including *The Opiate*, *Visual Verse: An Online Anthology of Art and Words*, and *Small World City*.

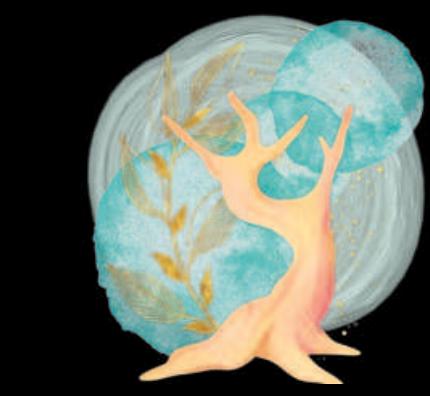


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**The lacewings are tiny little bugs that drape the carcasses of their prey over them like a cape to camouflage themselves from larger insects.**

## POETRY

# This world is full of paper

RAIAN ABEDIN

After Stationery

Agha Shahid Ali, one day, through his words, filled this world with paper/write to me/so I resemble a dog with a neck like a question mark/striking through pages/writing to you/turning you into a god with every wreath made out of white sheets/at night I look past my window/moon like a bruise hoisted on the shoulder of onlookers/as they draw their curtains/resembling a poem/every poem resembles another/I spent years writing to you/I am 24 now/trying to grow hair on my face/the absurdity of it is that I admire my skin a little bit more/my heart lives inside the vanity of remembering the names of flowers/I could write them down for you/weave them together/it might resemble a poem/or it might be a desert, with large swathes of glass/and an oasis where they will sew our sternums together/and it will rain/do you remember the rain/I am still trying to find ways to describe its smell/my mother says it smells like my father/both of us cling on to words like they were humans/the entirety of a song is a small village/I do not belong there, in those songs/I create with reams of dark ink/I am the night sky/give me words, moon/write to me.

**Raian Abedin** is a poet, a student of Biochemistry, and a contributor to The Daily Star.

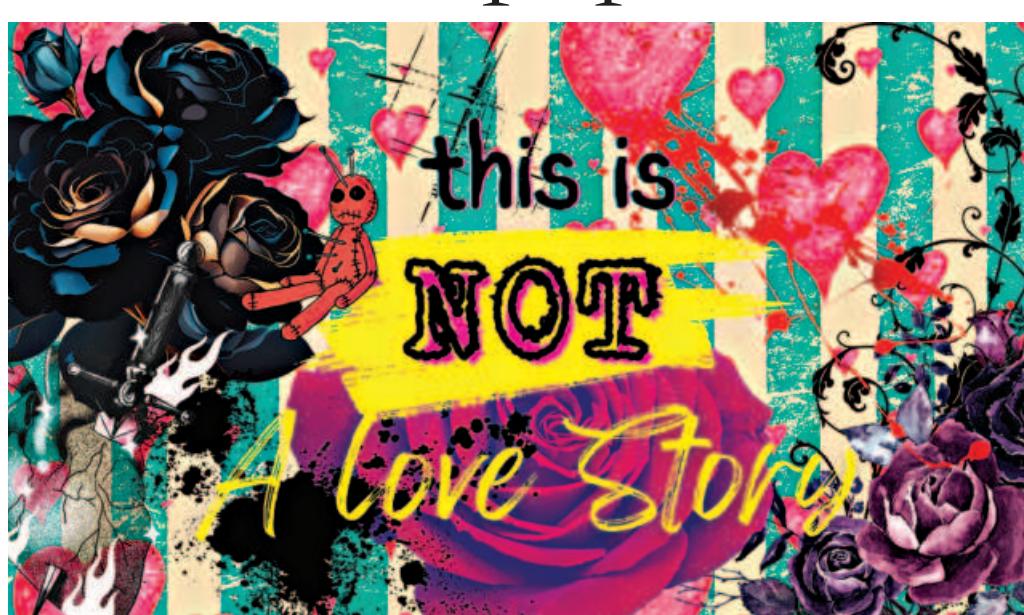


ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

## POETRY

# broken bridges don't burn

ree

when love ends where do we go, when your footprints are no longer flowers- but tar-and i leave poems unwritten-do not tell me about silver linings, i am made of rain-and i stop, i stop writing *hey how has it been* my love where do we go, when the path ahead is blocked - three buses face to face, 20 taka in my pocket and this keyless map do you think love ever ends? i box up my emotions in containers too small, spilling from my bag like bombs and i keep myself from looking back *i haven't*

*thought of you in days*  
i choose each turn with  
a  
careless flair, passing  
mirages  
each one sweeter than  
the last  
yet still missing the  
shade i search  
how do you grow a  
tree-when  
the only thing  
beneath is sand  
slippery and slowing  
it burns my feet  
i stopped writing long ago, the words  
like the sand, my  
thoughts-slipping  
through my fingers,  
disregarding  
any effort to grab  
onto something  
that save me

one grain could save me  
or break me  
out of this loveless stupor  
undo-  
undo?  
how shall i undo this? i never prepared  
for lightning to hit, my tree wasn't  
tall-i kept it pruned  
yet it burned  
i carry the coal with me, dropping  
pieces, like memory  
the hourglass trickles on  
i stopped writing long ago  
my surroundings bounded by the vast blank  
not even a rest stop, i have to  
move  
for reasons no longer clear to me  
my feet still carry on  
i haven't thought of you in days  
and maybe i have walked far enough

*ree* hates love stories bc things only work out in  
fiction, and never for them. their therapist thinks  
it's bc of anxiety but *ree* is just plain jealous.



## POETRY Moving forward

SHAERAH SHAMAEL SIDDIQUI

January, unbearably long and tiring.

But days will pass and blend with one another,

Swamped with work and sometimes wishing there was more to do,

Maybe it's an act, maybe it's true.

One day and it's February, not that soul crushing.

You are doing better.

You'd want to see what's next moving forward.

I hope you fight with your mother when you have a migraine,

I hope there's a holi ceremony playing item songs right beside your building.

When you look for the tufnif, you remember it stayed with me.

I hope you wonder if time has even passed yet.

**Shaerah Shamael Siddiqui** is a poet hoping to find the right words for her pretty journals and ugly feelings.

## Sighs, ember and lies.

SAFAYAT SUMON

Pebbles strewn pavement  
Keep drawing me back,  
Like the putrid smell of Love and Dead  
That has been reeking like a never-ending proletariat loop,  
Whistle like a wheeze of rustic chest  
Which left back thousand nights of sleepless sighs,  
Now mooring a deep-seated ember and lies,  
And bellowing those sighs  
Around the neck  
Before the dawn  
At the dusk  
And during the long stretching journey  
From my door to bed.  
Poetry: Sighs, ember and lies.

**Safayat Sumon** is a security professional guarding his fantasy world made up with poetry, pun, and fiction.



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