

Purple

By Aurvi Sharma

I sit and marvel at my inability to write as people go on poetizing about cold November afternoons. I read about love, longing, against a backdrop of sea and rain. Days go on in a whirlwind of sleeps and forgettings, my purple skies abandoning me.

I practice blowing smoke rings alone and watch the grey smoke undulate against a greyer landscape. I think about the way you had silently taken my hand, and offered me a cigarette.

You had rested only your index finger on my cheek that day and looked at me intently. We were caught in the rush hour of traffic. I had looked back at you and suddenly, wildly, thought this was what I wanted. No profound aspirations, only this banal moment in a faded evening in December. This time of dusk, the unending trail of cars on the road, the endless purple sky overhead. The way the red taillights flickered at your face, the way we jerked ahead in traffic, the angle of your hand resting on the steering wheel.

I had desperately wanted to preserve that moment, freeze it in time, stretch it till forever. I had tried explaining to you what I felt. I could only smile foolishly and shake my head.

Everywhere I could see the unending horizon in the distance marked abruptly by the yellow lights. These horizons were what I was leaving behind. Straight wide level roads at right angles, flat roofed houses, smell-ridden memories, unending horizons, the unbound sky overhead. I had breathed in the crisp cold air and had sighed and vaguely wondered what the big fucking deal about the flat Fens in Waterland was about.

We were both very quiet that last evening together, only the glowing tips of our cigarettes searing the dark. A white neon light flickered on somewhere, killing a million sparks, extinguishing a million possibilities. I left the next morning.