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Short Stories & Poetry

January 22, 2019

My Dear Baby...

I took the first dose at 5am today, Baby. Sometimes, the doctor had said, the "products" exited on ingestion of the first tablet itself.



Nivedita Ramesh



TAGS: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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2019 is the year in which our beloved writing contest, Muse of the Month gets bigger and better (**find out how here**) and also takes the cue from the words of women who inspire with their poetry. The writing cue for January 2019 is these lines from the inspiring African-American writer Maya Angelou, taken from her poem, **Phenomenal Woman**.

"Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed"

The third winner of our January 2019 Muse of the Month contest is ***Nivedita Ramesh.***

My Dear Baby...

Friday, 17 Oct 2014

11.30am

"What, you don't have children? Haven't you been married for five years?" I am saved from responding by a screaming bundle of joy that collides bodily with my school friend, eliciting an "oomph" from her.

"Listen, it was .." a punishment, "... nice to meet you. We should catch up again soon." Not even if I am offered a first class plane ticket to go around the world, but what the heck.

Roma is distracted now, thank God. "Yes, yes," she nods, bending down to carry her toddler son. The screaming stops as abruptly as a button pressed, leaving my ears ringing. On the drive back home, I recall why I had stopped attending weddings. Too many questions and assumptions to have reasonable conversation. I shouldn't care, but I do. I married Aditya because I wanted to be with him, not for societal approval. We had met in IIT and had married within a year of our graduation so that I could apply for a transfer at my consulting company to London, where his investment banking firm had placed him.

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counts, but I am lonely.

My company gives a day off for wedding anniversaries but I am in no mood to celebrate. I spent my morning in bed. Adi looked in on me before leaving for work, touching my forehead to check for fever. I murmured that I was "tired" and he looked relieved. We didn't wish each other. We are strangers now, the move taking its toll, and other baggage. Idle scrolling on WhatsApp threw up this wedding. A change of scene to get my mind off the loop, I had thought. Only to be bamboozled.

Never miss real stories from India's women.

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At home, I sit on my bed cross legged and cry, finally letting loose a tightly wound coil in my chest. A pose reminiscent of a year back, to the date.

–

Monday, 28 Oct 2013
7.30pm

Dear Baby

Has it only been 2 days since you left me?

I remember the day I found out about you. I was at the entrance of the bathroom, staring at the pregnancy test in my hand. Adi was standing too far away, as if afraid of me.

He came to me when I was sitting cross legged on the bed an hour later, crying silently, pen in hand, my daily diary in my lap half filled with questions, abuses and a single sentence in caps – I HATE HIM. I felt his warm hand on my shoulder and looked up, defiantly pushing it away and dislodging my diary closed in the process. He had made his stand clear, and now all that had to happen was for me to fall in line. Again.

For a moment he had looked defeated, shoulders slumping, gaze on the floor. Then the ruthless investment banker, the brilliant mind that calculated risks and benefits for a living, came back.

"This cannot go on. We must do something about it honey."

For him you were just one item in the many compartments of his mind, Baby. But you always had my love. Even before we knew each other, I loved you.

The two bars, one below each other, neat and tidy, on the home pregnancy kit float in front of my watery eyes. It was you Baby. You were there, shining, calling out to me. And I had responded by dumping you in the nearest toilet.

–

Saturday, 26 Oct 2013
Written on Sunday, 27 Oct 2013, 3am

Dear Baby

Today began as a bright and sunny day. I had been looking forward to being on the mend. A friend was celebrating his daughter's first year birthday party. Adi and I basked in haphazardly placed plastic chairs on his lawn, the mid-morning winter sun pleasantly warm. Babies of all sizes and ages ran around, bumping into things and into each other, adding sparkle to a ritualistic event. My darkness melted a little there. But it was too soon, because for the past 14 hours I had watched as you disintegrated and left me, Baby, muscle by muscle, drop by bleeding drop.

We returned home by 3pm, and gloom crept back on me like a forgotten injury. When Adi murmured something about a work party and left at 7pm, I was glad. The weekdays were bearable because I worked from home while he toiled in office. On other days, we are under the same roof Baby, but our lives are separate. I am on the other side, I am not the same person I was yesterday, when you were still with me.

There are so many things I should have done. I should have drummed up some support from my parents and his to keep you Baby. I should have thrown his threats back at his face, along with a few of my own.

I woke up in the middle of the night with an overpowering urge to pee. A big, red part of you fell out, Baby. I cried out in pain just before I heard a splash in the commode and Adi's voice along with banging on the bathroom door. After, he helped me back to bed. I think he called Emergency and gave me the painkiller they prescribed, but I am not sure. I also think he cleaned up, Baby, wiped off your remains.

–

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Dear Baby

Today my mind was a raging storm. I want you Baby, I know that now. It might be too late, but I know you're still there. I was called "plucky" at IIT. Always up for a challenge, never backed down or took a no for an answer. I shouldn't be in bed, changing thick sanitary napkins overflowing with dark red blood and strings of muscle every 45 minutes. How did I end up here, a pawn in an egotistical, arrogant man's life? He was the only guy who had asked me out, to kiss me, who told me he had loved me, and in a bored voice that expressed his impatience with all things mundane and non-Adi related, had pronounced that things will work out, because they always did for him.

I am in pain Baby, because I took the second dose today morning. This feels like my regular period multiplied by 50 or something, I don't know. My heart is hurting too, and my head. I am angry. I have been angry all this time, but was too focussed on you to realise it.

The next time I will decide Baby and I will decide right. I will not let even a breath of air, let alone pathetic predictions of tragedy shake me. You should know, I see things through.

At 7pm, as I reheated our dinner in the microwave, I felt a warm wetness in my panties, and the pungent smell of blood hit my nostrils.

I sat on the commode and stared at the intertwined bunch of what looked like deep red, elastic threads on the blood soaked panty. That was you, Baby. A part of me and a part of you. I rinsed and washed both my pyjamas and the panty with soap. I pulled out fresh underwear, wore a sanitary napkin, changed clothes and climbed into bed.

Prostrate and in pain, I am confronting my utter lack of spine, Baby. I will make him pay. For all that he did to you.

–

Thursday, 24 Oct 2013
10.45pm

Dear Baby

I took the first dose at 5am today, Baby. Sometimes, the doctor had said, the "products" exited on ingestion of the first tablet itself.

I hope that everything happens like clockwork Baby. Now that there is no going back, I want it to be over already. Have I told you how sorry I am Baby? I am sorry. I am so sorry. Please.

–

Tuesday, 22 Oct 2013
7pm

Dear Baby

The grainy black and white images on the monitor were a world unto itself, Baby. The radiologist pointed to the tiny speck that is you on the screen, Baby, and the sac in which you are growing. She finished the scan with a chirpy, "All seems well as of now. So see you next time! And, oh, congratulations!"

Adi and I didn't speak while waiting to meet the doctor. This is the cloak we wear nowadays. Silence. When I messaged him about the doctor's appointment he offered to come with me. I did not refuse.

I recognise the expression on his face. This was him when I asked how we were going to be together with careers that would take us in two opposite directions of the world. Or why I should move to London with him, why we should move back to India. It was always him, or nothing. His way of life or a torrid, barren desert.

The doctor asked if I really wanted this abortion. I think Adi came with me to make sure I went through with it. Since I am approximately 6 weeks along, two doses of oral tablets were prescribed.

–

Saturday, 19 Oct 2013
6.20pm

Congratulatory messages are pouring in Baby. Thursday was our first wedding anniversary. Adi had planned a surprise weekend at a star resort in Kabini. Then you pinged. The resort agreed to postpone our booking by a month, which Adi has already agreed to because he's so confident about what is going to happen.

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I have not replied to the messages and now the pile has become monstrous. I sprinkled "Thank you so much!!! :))))" all over WhatsApp and Facebook, tears running down my face.

We tried talking about you many times Baby. For the first time ever, we are not enjoying each other's company, and the weekend has hemmed us in. He is a decent man, not going out drinking with his friends tonight. So we have each staked out a bedroom, prisoners of our own minds. You see, his only condition to talk was that I should not cry. He was patient, but every time I wanted to say something I remembered his earlier comments and sobbed.

I tried telling him that you would elevate us, make us complete. He dismissed it, "How many couples have reasoned such and suffered? I have no wish to join that club. We are not suited to be parents, honey, and our children will be.. miserable. I am not ready to take this responsibility, and neither are you."

–

Thursday, 17 Oct 2013
11.50pm

Dear Baby

Adi and I have finally adjourned to sleep, in separate bedrooms. He is agitated and upset, but trying hard to hide it. He was always the unflappable mast to my billowing sail. Tonight, he is as shaken as me. I want to hope, but am scared to. The battle has just started, Baby, and I am already tired. He does not want you, Baby, and that breaks my heart.

I was not the perfect picture of the expecting mother, Baby. Struck dumb, I relayed the news to Adi in a matter-of-fact, what's-on-TV-tonight way. He refused to come over to see for himself, instead asking me repeatedly, "Are you really pregnant, Honey? Really?" I nodded till my neck hurt. Then he said that we must abort, of course. I told him that it was not so simple. We should think about it carefully. His brow puckered, "Why not? There are ways to terminate safely. Just do it and we can get on with life."

I have always won my battles, Baby, because I have only picked the ones I knew I would win.

Till we meet again.

Nivedita Ramesh wins a Rs 500 Amazon voucher from Women's Web. Congratulations!

Image source: *pixabay*

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violence against women

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Soumya Bharathi

Extremely moving and powerfully penned...great job..

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Tanvi Sinha

Wow... this is so touching. Your writing has amazing connect.

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About the Author

Nivedita Ramesh

I asked so many questions that I stopped getting answers. Then I started writing. **read more...**

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Pop Culture

July 8, 2022

10 Knockout Moments In Koffee With Karan Season 7 Episode 1... Do You Agree?

Koffee With Karan Season 7 Episode 1 was Ranveer Singh all the way! A crackling episode that has all fans sit up and take notice.

Tina Sequeira

For me, the 'Koffee With Karan' was getting insufferably predictable, boring, and even borderline mean in the last few seasons. There were a few exceptional guests on the show though like Twinkle Khanna and Nargis Fakhri, who lend some originality and wit on it.

So, I had zero expectations when the latest season was out last night. In fact, I was prepared for the worst. I mean, it's Alia Bhatt in the introductory episode, who is intolerable to watch offscreen with her gross immaturity, and lack of intellect on the whole. I don't mind her emoting on-screen, though. She's an excellent actress, no doubt.

Read Full Article

Books

July 11, 2022

And I Realised How I've Fallen For Gender Stereotypes Despite Huge Support For My Career

Equal, yet Different, a book that helped me become aware of the unconscious biases I had accepted in my professional journey and never realized to date!

Anusha Singh

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When I began **reading Anita Bhogle's book** *Equal, yet Different*, for the first half an hour, I felt, "Ah! I know all this....hmmm...all too familiar...old wine in a new bottle" – only to be delightfully proven wrong.

Am I glad I relented and kept turning one page after another?

Authored by **Anita Bhogle**, Partner Prosearch Consultants, Founder BizPundits, and Co-author of the bestseller **The Winning Way** with her celebrity cricket commentator husband Harsha Bhogle, I found *Equal, Yet Different* to be a cut above the rest for a big reason:

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