

Memories and Miseries

By

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18203024

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in English

Memories and Miseries
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis/project titled “Memories and Miseries” submitted by Mohammad Fakhrul Alam (18203024) of Summer, 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on 27th August, 2022.

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Ethics Statement

This is my original work. The Inspiration for this film screenplay has come largely from my own life, but this is not an autobiography. Living a life of absolute solitude for a long time, locked in my apartment in Dhaka during the Covid-19 pandemic, I realized a lonely man does nothing but only leave and leave spaces he stands in. Like myself, the characters I present also do not belong to this city of millions and are also unable to escape its madness. My protagonist walks through his memory lane and seeks a sort of truth by pondering whether- love, art, religion can truly ever provide him with the security, the assurance, and the hope he is searching for? The screenplay illustrates my own tortuous journey to find meaning and purpose for life, for existence, for being. By focusing on the protagonist's hybrid nature, I reasoned that in a time of postcolonial mimicry, my protagonist is drowning in the variety of selves that compete for his attention. All the characters here are battling against multifarious grand narratives in a time of spiritual exhaustion. The people around my protagonist are all lost souls, castaways, relegated to the margins of respectable society. And that fascinated me. I have always wanted to tell the stories of such people, the unnoticed and the unnamed, the faceless underling and the subaltern, the mad genius who is also voiceless and placeless, and in a sense, timeless. The writer in me knows that I can tell their stories and capture the multiplicity of their being in a single frame. and I know this because the writer in me too belongs to, or senses a kind of solidarity, a silent fellowship with these very people whose stories do not get told, whose voices remain unheard. I choose to tell such stories while remaining in the shadow. What else can one do but revisit, regurgitate, rehash one's memories, for one is but mortal after all and memory is all we can claim ownership of.

Abstract/ Executive Summary

A middle-aged writer, entrapped in a state of ennui, is writing about his memories from the past and distant future. His wife, with whom he lacks intimation, remains at the background, busy with her household works. But ignoring everything, he keeps writing in his typewriter, about the time when he too fell in love while he was contemplating like Buddha inside a manhole. His life begins to healed by the intricacies of love, but it wasn't enough to save him as the woman left soon. Later became a priest and one day, confessions from a psychic murderer, a mother and a small boy who had been suffering from existential ennui, began to raise concerns about the inadequacies, and eventually came to the realization that he was not lonelier than them, he had no one to listen to him. He stops being everything but a man unable to hold more miseries and outburst in an unknown seashore where he confronts his master, his creator. But yet a question arises, whether to truly tell he had written his story back when he was writing about his memories or those pages were meant to create something else!

Dedication

The characters from my film script, whom I have carried for a very long time within me for a very long time.

Acknowledgement

As I write this acknowledgement section, it is my last day at BRAC University. And I am missing every bit of it as my journey comes to an end. But I am happy to make something different and for which I would like to thank my supervisor, Seema Nusrat Amin for letting me take the reins of this ambitious project. She has also helped me fine-tune the final screenplay and the video production. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all my well-wishers and those who expressed keen interest in reading this.

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Memories and Miseries

by

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INT. THE WRITER'S BEDROOM (UTTARA HOUSE)- NIGHT

BLACK SCREEN

We hear a typewriter sound speed up as a toy piano starts abruptly in the background and someone speaks to THE WRITER'S ear...

FADE IN:

UNKNOWN V.O

I am just a man.

We see half of THE WRITER's face; the other half is dark. On the visible side, we see a mouth uttering the words. The writer is typing, only his skinny hands are within the frame now.

UNKNOWN V.O

...Even if the whole world falls apart...

Following the ravished bricks of the outside wall, the camera DOLLY IN, stops where raindrops are falling on the glass window. We see in strip printing, the writer is writing with a typewriter, no one is around him and smoke from a cigarette kept in an ashtray on the table is burning slowly. He is wearing an off-white shirt, tucked in, with suspenders on support. Thunder claps and we enter the room, from the writer's back, a minimalist set- a white curtain, a table and a typewriter, ash tray, bible at the corner of the table and on his left side in a shelf, in a bookshelf there is a Bigfun toy keyboard, and light bursting inside through the open window.

UNKNOWN V.O

...all I can do is write, smoke a cigarette and write again
and...

The typewriter's sound continues but we do not hear the V.O. A medium haired woman of the same age as THE WRITER enters, and stands beside him with a hammer on her hand, in front of the wall. She is wearing a sleeveless long maxi. She starts hitting a spike with the hammer on the wall. Both the typewriter and the sound of the hammer seem odd. When she stops, we see her hanging a painting on the wall. It's the painting, located beside the table from van Gogh's The Bedroom. She looks at it and fixes its position. She then goes back to the single bed behind them and sits there. There is a needle stuck in a child's sweater. She takes it and starts sewing. He is still writing. From the outside of the window, he looks blurry, it's now raining heavily.

The title of the film arises, the sound of rain, typewriter and Toy piano increases in the same rhythm.

ON SCREEN

But there is no escape from loneliness, no escape from suffering. Lorka's words bursting out like explosives, melancholic sounds of Mozart's piano, Monet's dreamy colors might touch your cold heart. Older nights might become comfortable with keeping both harlots and distant memories in your left arm, you are welcome to take a walk in Wong Kar-Wai's neon world but these will never be enough. You will always need something more. Scheherazade, something more is what I have given birth to you. Raging flow of miseries, a world of fools roaming around your flesh- and the taste of the silence beneath my ocean of screaming memories. Will you ever come to take a bath? You are always welcome to my world of...

MUSIC RISES

ON SCREEN

-Memories and Miseries

A Film By

Mohammad Fakhurul Alam

CUT TO:

EXT. UTTARA YELLOW - NIGHT

A man wearing sandals, selling medicine for rats walks away shouting loudly in Bengali. The Camera follows his feet and cycles and moves forward.

RAT MEDICINE SELLER

এই ইঁদুর মারে, তেলাপোকা মারে, ছারপোকা মারে,
জোরে মারে, ডাইনে মারে, উল্টাইয়া মরে....

Camera stops in front of a manhole on the road. Camera closes. We get a bit close and see a man's face under the manhole. In the dark, only a shard? speck? Light is coming from the outside of the manhole and he looks up and glances around. The writer, in a younger age (25) comes out of it, breathes heavily then again taking a deep breath goes down and closes the manhole.

WE ARE HEARING HUSTLE AND BUSTLE.

Cars passing by. Then suddenly a car rushes and stops on the opposite side of the manhole, a woman comes out hastily in anger and locks the door fiercely. She is wearing red high heels and shorts? cocktail dress.

EXT. UTTARA YELLOW - NIGHT

She walks toward the opposite side of the road onto a neon lighted store named, “Dreams and Desire.” She walks fast without looking.

The SOUND from her heels INCREASE AS IT COMES TOWARD THE CAMERA.

She walks fast, her black overcoat is shaking slowly in the wind. She crosses the manhole and seats on the footpath. From her back we see car horns and lights shine several times. The car horns loudly. She lowers her head and starts weeping and keeps her head down. The car leaves, and disappears slowly.

JUMP CUT TO:

We see her head bowed down? She looks up and her eyes are full of tears smudging the kohl around her eyes. We see all her body parts but one at a time only. She opens her vanity bag and lights a cigarette- we get a better view of her lips. After one puff she puts her hand down and we see her feet and nails are covered in red polish. She is shaking her fingers slowly. She opens her bag and calls someone. We hear voices from the call center.

UNKNOWN V.O

The Number You have dialed...

From the manhole THE WRITER AS THE LOVER speaks up again and finishes the sentence.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

(Smirks)

...is currently switched off. Please dial again later.

Suddenly we hear the echoing voice of The Writer from the manhole. Throughout the conversation, we do not see him, but only hear his voice.

She gets up fast, first looks around suspiciously, and then calls again. But we hear,

UNKNOWN V.O

The Number You have dialed...

She attempts to sit but her eyes are full of fear and then with another half of the dialogue she starts to panic.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

...nights without moon but only neon lights, they are boring, aren't they?

She screams loudly. Moves haphazardly around the manhole.

WOMEN ONE

Fuckkkk! Who is it! Who the fuck are you! Fuck, man!
I will call the police if you don't come out. Have I gone insane! Just tell me, where the fuck are you!

From the manhole The Writer speaks up again and finishes the sentence.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

(Smirks)

Isn't that the question I should have asked you! You are in my place.

WOMEN ONE

(Trembling voice)

Fuck! Fuck! O no, is it a hallucination? Am I having a nightmare?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

I used to think for a long time, the most misused word was love, but it's fuck!

She walks towards the manhole, sits in front and asks him.

WOMEN ONE

Man! What's wrong with you! What the hell are you doing there in this shithole?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

(Intellectual and calm)

Have you heard of The Buddha?

WOMEN ONE

You aren't the Buddha, are you! O my fucking god, now I am most definitely having a nightmare.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

No, you are just somewhat nervous and boredom has most probably aroused your primal nature. You uttered fuck 7 fucking times!

She stands up, astonished, puts her hand behind her head and replies.

WOMEN ONE

And. you counted them?!!

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Mmm, when you are lonely you often do unnecessary things/stuff.

She goes back and sits on the footpath but still looking suspiciously at the manhole.

WOMEN ONE

A man stupid enough to live in a manhole should stay alone.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

This could be a discussion. A very deep one, like in the films.

WOMEN ONE

Wohh, Wooh, you are telling me to have a conversation with you! Who the fuck are you!! What are you even doing there in that genteel shithole!

It's silent and we see her shaking her legs again, she is slowly becoming comfortable.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

(Hesitantly)

I thought we were already having one.

WOMEN ONE

Pathetic! You call this a conversation! Do you always sound like assholes do?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

Only when I am with a woman, a pretty woman. They sound like the wind. You can feel them but cannot hold them for much longer.

WOMEN ONE

(astonished)

Looks like another dog is having its day! If it was on Facebook, I would have already blocked you.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

You sound so much like a Russian missile. Who on earth would you ever dare to text a mighty Russian, mam!

A car drives by fast. There's a break. A small silence.

WOMEN ONE

(Laughs happily, talks to herself)

Ha ha ha! Actually, there was a boy! Ahhhh those good old days! You know, he was younger than me, shorter than me, mmm, dumber too. But that boy wrote an entire poem for me, for me!! But later! Uff!! I found that the bastard copied it from Neruda!

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

Seriously!!

WOMEN ONE

Ha ha ha, and he thought I wouldn't know.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Wow! So, you did read Neruda! I misjudged you a bit.

WOMEN ONE

Mmm, why do I have to read it! Come on! I just googled a few words from the poem.

We hear a dog barking in the distance and then again silence.

WOMEN ONE

Aaaa... what are you? A cleaner from the corporation? Don't you come outside sometimes? I mean, how do you manage to live there? food? Snakes? flood?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

Hey! Hey hey, hold your breath. You ask too many questions! Could you repeat...

She gets a call and receives it in the middle of his dialogue. She picks it up, listens quietly and talks.

WOMEN ONE

No, you don't have to come. Send someone else. Just, just send your driver...

Someone says something over the phone, we cannot hear it. But she replies.

WOMEN ONE

Ya, I have sent the location. No, no, never! I won't move if you come. please for God's sake, don't come.

She sighs, stays silent, speaks calmly.

WOMEN ONE

Sorry, that was my baba.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

It's totally fine/That's alright...

WOMEN ONE

(screams)

No, it's not. But I hate that man, I hate him. Oh, if mom would have picked up the phone first!

A long silence. The wind rises. We see a few newspapers cross her and the manhole, the camera follows them slowly, there is nothing on the road except newspapers. Suddenly, THE WRITER AS THE LOVER starts speaking again.

JUMP CUT TO:

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

Have you ever heard about the myth of the bird who sold its wings for a piece of bread? It can hear everything happening everywhere all at once! I started searching for that bird in my school days.

Woman One is shaking her legs again with tension.

WOMEN ONE

(Surprising tone)

Sounds like something from a Greek myth! Did you meet that bird?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

That's a secret dear! He who knows shouldn't tell/express the truth.

WOMEN ONE

You know what! You are much/a lot like my father! A constant contradiction. Always drinking whisky, whoring, and quoting Karl Marx.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (O.S.)

He must have plenty of money!

WOMEN ONE

That's why I left him. Rich people are
annoying, they always treat you like garbage.

She stands up and walks around the manhole anxiously, lights a cigarette

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

So!

WOMEN ONE

So?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

So, you live with your mom then?

WOMEN ONE

No, my boyfriend. And that guy dumped me twice.

She screams and after coming in front of the manhole she jumps and kicks at the air a few
times.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Hello, Mrs. Stranger. Are you okay?

No answer but he asks again after a few seconds.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Are you there?

A long silence. She unveils her long black overcoat and puts it in her hand. Comes and sits in front of the manhole. Tries to open the slab slowly and then with force. But it's closed.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Ha ha ha you are not the first one to get curious about me. Actually, I love to keep the door locked. It's good for contemplation. But...Thank God you tried to open it. I thought you were gone!

She comes and sits where she was before at the beginning. Lowers her eyes and head a bit. She takes a lipstick and the mirror from her bag, the mirror is broken, she quickly starts to lather the lipstick on her lips, then slowly onto her cheeks. She is speaking while applying the red lipstick.

WOMEN ONE

I am tired. Tired of running away from everything. I want to close my eyes and never wake up again. I am tired of this world. I am tired of myself.

She stops and sighs.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Everyone these days want to climb those walls and bricks called civilization. Even this manhole belongs to

no one now. All rats are busy, trying to climb up to the
apartments.

She is slowly walking around the manhole.

WOMEN ONE

strange! You are The Buddha! Ha ha ha. What are you
hiding behind such witty words?

We hear a knock on a door and the sound of a typewriter in the same rhythm, while she utters
her last words.

CUT TO:

THE WRITER'S DINING TABLE- NIGHT

The Writer and his wife are sitting around the dining table. He is having milk from a glass and
there is bread and toast in front of them. He looks at the camera in a vicious way. His wife is
sitting beside him. She gets a call, looks at her phone, someone named "Hi" is calling, he looks
at the phone, then they look at each other awkwardly. She gets up, and leaves, keeping the half-
eaten bread and some slice of meat.. He looks at the bread. Takes it in his hand and starts
speaking to it.

THE WRITER AS THE WRITER

It was November 25, 1994. With a binocular, a few takas
in my pocket, I went out to find that bird who sold its
wings for a piece of bread. I still remember...

His face hardens. Suddenly he kisses it, and then he starts moaning and then he eats it like a beast, some pieces of the bread get scattered here and there.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. WRITER'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

We see the writer is sitting beside his wife, near her face and he is looking at his sleeping beauty. He continues telling the story.

THE WRITER AS THE WRITER

I still remember him saying, "You might think I was free when I had my wings, but I was the most vulnerable, the most abandoned. I have never met anyone of my own kind for a thousand years. Life becomes a curse when you live more than you deserve.

CAMERA DOLLY

Camera slowly dollys? out from the left side of the writer and pauses at her feet, her toes are not painted, a pair of silver Payel (anklet) dangles languorously from her feet. The writer's hand enters the frame and touches her feet. His hands begin to paint her feet with ink from an inkpot. We hear the typewriter's sound and his thoughts.

REWIND

INT. ROOFTOP (UTTARA HOUSE) -DAY

The scene rewinds and stops at a scene from his childhood on a rooftop, where UNCLE BEN is feeding the pigeons sitting on a chair. Peter Sarker (writer as the child) enters the frame from the staircase room. He is 6 years old, wearing a full spiderman costume. He is waving his hands as Spiderman does to release webs towards the pigeons and making weird (boohoo, wooo, hoo, booo) sounds as he runs around, while the pigeons fly around in terror. UNCLE BEN who is watching, and calls him,

UNCLE BEN

Peter Sarker, Come here.

He stops and sits beside UNCLE BEN who removes the face mask, and looks at him, Peter has catarrh in his nose, UNCLE BEN says,

UNCLE BEN

Peter Sarker, always remember “With great power comes great responsibility.” You must save your pigeons, so that someday they can grow like you and you can eat them.

Camera closes, Peter Sarker looks at the pigeons, he then looks at UNCLE BEN, waves his hand like the Spiderman and says-

PETER SARKER

Boohoo!!

INT. EDITING PANEL COMPUTER SCREEN- NIGHT

Scene is paused suddenly in an editing panel.

UNKNOWN V.O

Oh, sorry. Wrong story. Delete those scenes. Delete them now. I said, now! horrible! horrible! How could I be so careless!! Delete them now!!!!

We see the scene being cut off and again the scenes going forward on the screen. Camera closes and we stop at the Conversation at the Unknown Road starting from where it was initially paused.

FAST FORWARD:

EXT. UTTARA YELLOW - NIGHT

WOMEN ONE

Who are you behind these witty words? What treasures are you hiding inside this manhole? What did you steal?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Oh! Mmm, it's a secret. But I will tell you. A dream. I used to work at a company that stole dreams from deep within...

WOMEN ONE

Wo wo wo, sweetheart, no, movie buffing here! I have seen very few films but I do know Nolan.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Tell me, Mrs. Stranger, what do you mean by "Very Few."

WOMEN ONE

Well, I found most films to be boring. Some are less so, such as the superhero films. At least you won't fall asleep while watching these.

Silence. When he starts talking the camera moves out of their sight and focuses on the empty road.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

(Soliloquy)

You know, I have been thinking about these superhero films lately. A lot!

INT. ROOFTOP (UTTARA HOUSE) - FLASHBACK

PETER SARKER is crying on the rooftop, holding a pigeon with blood on it and in his hands.

He is wearing the spiderman costume. (SLOW MOTION)

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER (V.O.)

Did you ever think of the storm a child carries inside even as his whole world falls apart! The child grows up to believe that someone, somewhere, will someday save him from his miseries, oh! The story of mankind is the story of violence and hatred! How shamelessly people portray lies! Didn't they break your hope with all those fake hopes? They did it to me! How could they! We were just children!

EXT. UTTARA YELLOW- NIGHT

THE WOMAN wipes the lipstick from her lips, and makeup with a wet tissue, she now opens her phone camera, and wears kohl in her eyes slowly...

WOMEN ONE

You better write a column on it. At least...

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Do we still have newspapers on earth?

WOMEN ONE

You have a theory about that too!!

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

yeah, I do, I do. Wanna come over to my room? It's better if you see it while we talk.

She stands up and sits in front of the manhole.

WOMEN ONE

You want me to come to that junkyard of yours? Are you insane?

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Then we can go for a walk somewhere, some place with fresh air?

WOMEN ONE

We just met, and you are already asking me out??

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

A movie night would be better than a walk, I guess!

Long silence.

WOMEN ONE

I would prefer a rickshaw. When it rains...

A car arrives and we hear it approach from far. someone honks. Women One looks at it and her face turns red in anger.

WOMEN ONE

It's my father. Fuck! Why did he come all the way!

AAAAhhhhhh, I asked him not to come!

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

I won't say you are a coward but sometimes, you have
to compromise.

WOMEN ONE

No, never. Never with him.

The car honks loudly and a man calls her from inside the car. We don't see him.

HER FATHER

Nidhi, Nidhi! Come on, get in.

She stands up. And speaks to him.

WOMEN ONE

I think... I think I should leave.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Yes, you must.

WOMEN ONE

I don't want to but I have to.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

We all do.

WOMEN ONE

I have a meeting to catch tomorrow.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

You have a bed waiting for you tonight.

She goes to the opposite side of the road, we hear the sound of her high heeled shoes as she walks away from the manhole. She stops, we see her feet crumbling, suddenly she walks fast and rushes into the car.

INT. CAR- NIGHT

The camera comes? close to her face for the first time through the glass window- the car and her face are bathed in different shades of the neon lights on the street. She smiles, looking at someone in the driving seat. The car starts moving. While smiling suddenly her face grimaces and she looks sad as her eyes get teary. But before tears burst out of her eyes we cut to the car's rear-view mirror and see a landscape of the street lights she has left behind.

WOMEN ONE

Good bye, Mr. Buddha.

We see her smiling face looking out of the window.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Good bye, Mrs. Stranger.

ON SCREEN

“When she heard his timid voice, she embraced ignorance as if it were her feet destined to hurt earth with each step she takes. He wept all night for losing his elusive soul to a mere human, a white skinned girl with light auburn facial hair? slightly shaved mustache.

A moment of silence, and nothing left but yet we leave memories behind, sad and unknown ones entrapped into poetry. His shadow echoes a vibrant laughter. Scheherazade, can words bloom without kissing death?...

-The Sounds She Made.

EXT. UTTARA YELLOW - EVENING

We see THE WRITER AS THE LOVER's face in extreme close up.

DRONE SHOT

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER is sleeping on the road near the manhole. Someone is sleeping like a baby holding ears on the road and keeping hands near the head. Then we see random drone shots of him sleeping and listening to the woman's heels while she walks away.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

In all the shots we see him sleeping like a child on the road.

Sleeping in between Tamarind trees near the Cox's Bazar Sea beach (SILENCE).

EXT. PADMA CHAR- EVENING

He gets up as the sound of heels suddenly stops. He stands up, swinging slowly. And now for the first time we see him standing near a shore, alone. In his POV he sees WOMAN ONE standing in front of him, wearing a floral skirt and man's boots. The sound of the banks and she is dancing on some corporate guy's shoes holding him. We see her face, she is overwhelmed, we now see only the boots? Shoes and her feet then and then all three in one frame. The camera closes its eyes, opens at the bank and falls. He is looking at the river as

waves from the river crash towards him. He cries, a few droplets of tear fall from his eyes. We see from the drone shot that he is sleeping, but now another man, exactly like him, is sleeping next to him. And UNKNOWN MAN WITH UNKNOWN V.O asks him,

UNKNOWN MAN WITH UNKNOWN V.O

I have been searching for someone for a long time. Have you ever heard the story of the man who sold his memories for a piece of bread?

He turns around and we see him again in the drone but no one is there.

MATCH CUT TO:

ON SCREEN

Life could have ended with a gentle whisper. A glass of sinful dancing-roaring yet we drink it, each mundane midnight we become what we fear. I wasn't afraid of you, the monsters you raised, the ghost of the women I loved. I feared war, screams of unborn children haunted me- it was history I feared. Dear Scheherazade, I was tired, I was tired. I choose to chase an unknown road. A road that takes you to the mystical lands you once fled from You know my whereabouts, it's your memories where I could stay safe. This land of distant memories is now my home, I am now home. If you ever get tired of playing this game of silent sighs and laughter, come and visit my church.

-His tears and other stories.

L CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH- MORNING-10 years have passed

We hear the typewriter and toy piano. We see a drone shot of the church. Then, the writer, now somewhat aged, his graying hair brushed back and a long beard, is lighting candles with a candle in the church.

DOLLY OUT

A small church full of burning candles with few benches. The writer as the priest sits on the first chair and there is a toy piano on it. He is wearing a black priest's cloak. Sound of knocking on the door. He stops playing the piano...

Keeps The Toy Piano under the table and coughs a couple of times then speaks up. A man about 40 years old, wearing half pants, converse shoes and a t- shirt.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

(COLD VOICE)

I thought you have changed, but my old friend, what brings you here this time?

MURDERER

Your church looks a lot more ravished than before.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

It's been 16 years since Michel. So many things have happened!

MURDERER

I should have said that first. So many things went out of
hand.

The priest smiles slightly.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

How is Nina...

MURDERER

You once told me, love is the root of all sins.
We must have the courage to hate before loving.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

(V.O)

Michel. Age 42. A loner. A dreamer, liar, or
should I call him a lunatic? All I can say is, he
doesn't remember how he has trapped himself
in a desolate pain of his own.

MURDERER

After the war ended, you started preaching and
guiding people. But I! I had nothing to do!
People were so happy, they were free. But what
about us! When the war ends, we disappear like
porcelain! Without a battlefield I felt so useless,
so useless, I was so ashamed of myself!

The murderer stands. He looks broken... He then sits and looks around.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

I have been thinking lately, will he be able to
take the burden for killing his own daughter,
Nina! It has been 16 years; it has been a long
time!

MURDERER

But now I know, the only way out of violence
is taking control of the violence!

MATCH CUT TO:

A teen aged boy is sitting on the chair. He is playing with a ping pong ball.

YOUNG BOY

Father, Good morning.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

How is your preparation for the exam going, son?

YOUNG BOY

And I thought you would know what I am going through! I am not here for good grades, father.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

Oh, I am not a mind reader. But I might be able to help you!

YOUNG BOY

Can you bring back whom you have killed in that filthy war?

YOUNG BOY

Tell me Father, can you bring them back?

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

I don't remember much of her, but this boy somehow reminds me of his mother! Did God really forgive her? Did God really listen to her anguished cry?

YOUNG BOY

Tell me father, how can I see her again! Will it be possible if I die? If I die here!

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

Calm down, it's been so long! Why are you still!

YOUNG BOY

What if I bought a pistol here? Will you feel nostalgic!
For the guns you loved most! Look, look, it's a black
Beretta TomCat pocket pistol. Aaaaah, I have always
wanted to buy one.

He throws the ping-pong ball somewhere we cannot see. He brings out a Black Beretta Tomcat
Pocket pistol from the back, and aims/holds it on the right side of the head.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

I would ask you to...

The priest looks at him, jumps from his chair, shivers and comes in front of him and screams
in fear but in a few seconds again calms him down and stands in front of the boy to help him.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

What the fu**!! Lord Jesus, forgive us all. Come on boy,
give me the pistol, give it to me. I assure you; this will
end here. No one will know, no will ever know.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

(V.O)

Shit! What shall I do now?

The boy looks determined to shoot himself.

YOUNG BOY

Sorry sir, it's too late. I have decided to meet her on my own.

It's decided. I have lost my watch. Can you please, see what time it is?

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

(V.O)

What shall I do now?

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

Mmm, It's 11. 11 AM. It's 11 am.

YOUNG BOY

Oh! What a day, what a place, what a memorable death I will have!

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

(ANGRY)

Don't you dare die here. You will burn in the lowest pits of hell if you do! .

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

What shall I do now!

YOUNG BOY

Tell me Father, where doesn't God exist!
Wherever I go, he is always there, where can I
hide from him!

He beats and slaps his face and head. Father hardens his face, sits in front of him, looks at him
and speaks.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

Boy, do you know the consequences of killing yourself?

TEEN AGED BOY

Yes, I disappear from this horrific world. No memories,
no hopes, no tears, only a silent sigh. But what shall I do
now? My time has stopped!!

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

It's up to you whom you love, whom you hate,
whom you

Consider leaving. But...

YOUNG BOY

...but I want them to feel the way I did! I want
them to burn in guilt! I want all of them to
suffer. All my life, I have lived in a hell you all
made, why did you never think of us? Why! I

have so much to ask her, why did she leave for the war! I had to live like a stray dog, all my life, I have been the second choice, all my life father! I am done but this death will make you all suffer!

Father smiles at him slightly. Looks down and starts laughing loudly.

THE WRITER AS THE LOVER

Ha ha ha. Oh Lord Jesus! Don't tell me you truly believe it, I took for a smart young man!

The teen aged boy breaks down and his eyes are full of tears.

TEEN AGED BOY

Why are you laughing Father, why! What shall I do now? Answer me. I don't want to live but I don't have the courage to go on... What shall I do!

Father holds his hands tight, sits and speaks to him. The teen aged boy starts crying.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life." Deuteronomy 30:19-20

TEEN AGED BOY

Don't be good to me, don't give me hope Father.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

My son, God has given you life, a gift to cherish! Do you truly choose to die for people, who refused you?

Why take life when you can save and be saved?

TEEN AGED BOY

What happens after I die? Is hell more painful than it is here?

He breaks down in tears.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

The next life is the reflection of this life you are leading now. This is the only life you will get a chance to choose between good and evil! You know, living forever is an unbearable curse. Before dying, and living forever, try to live this life truly.

The pistol falls from his hand, and the boy continues to cry.

JUMP CUT TO:

Father is sitting as before, so is the murderer.

MURDERER

But now I know, the only way out of violence is taking control of the violence. I will kill all those bastards, yes, I will kill them all! How dare they bomb our house, rape our women! I will kill them all! She was just 6! You knew, she was soft, she cried, she cried a lot, I know it! How could they!! I will kill them all!

He punches the chair a few times, screams.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

(V.O)

Did God really listen to me? Did God really listen?

MURDERER

A few days ago, the last man I killed cursed me:

"When my son grows up, he will have his vengeance"

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

Did you ever notice? You have a wonderful voice?

MURDERER

And you know what I said! I said, I will fuck every single one of you, if they even dare to stare at me! Ha ha ha!

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

I would have been a Baul, if I had your voice. It's so
bold and melancholic.

MURDERER

What do you think? Will I be rewarded? Does
God forgive someone who punishes the sinner?
Whatever it is! Ask for my forgiveness. I trust
you.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

I started writing poetry when I learned I sound
like a typewriter and not a piano.

MURDERER

So, I am leaving then. I trust you with my sins. May god
forgive us all. Ha ha ha.

The Murderer leaves.

THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST

So, I used to remain silent. And I lost the sounds I should
have made.

He stays silent, stands and looks in front of him. There is nothing but he keeps looking and
suddenly we hear the sound of the waves of the river waves.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SEA BEACH- EVENING

We see THE WRITER AS THE PRIEST standing and starts walking toward the sea wearing the black cloak. He has a whip on his right? left? hand. He walks toward the sea and stops until the water reaches his chest. We see him crying, the sun is setting. He opens his cloak, we see his back, he has no clothes on. There are a few scars on his back. He starts whipping his back. He is crying, screaming loudly looking at the sky. His tears fall into the sea and get lost, but his blood drops can be seen in the water.

ON SCREEN

He was unheard, never loved, never hated, only betrayed once. Like a floating cloud he had no place to go to, nowhere to turn to only to fall and fall again like the rain. He never knew, nor did I sail through the melancholic woods of words to meet him. So, we prayed and prayed and failed to know until he found my verses, so close to him as if they were his own. He whispered to me, "Shall we become one, once again or wait for Scheherazade to end our story?" I was silent. He might have loved her stories but what shall I live for?

-The Artist in The Wonderland

FADE IN

INT. WRITER'S BEDROOM (UTTARA HOUSE)- AFTERNOON

We see the writer typing the last letters from his Novel, *Memories and Miseries* He then takes the page out of the typewriter, looks at it happily and then puts it on the front page of his novel. There are a thousand more pages beneath it. He puts his glasses on it and leaves the frame.

Then he comes back into the frame in a different outfit of floral shirt and jeans. In random close shots we see him wearing sunglasses and a watch, fixing his hair, fixing the collar.

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

ONE SHOT

The Writer is walking across the city. He looks opposite to the road. Someone is playing the flute and no one is looking at him, even though he can't see the musician properly due to the cars speeding by. He crosses the road through a foot over bridge and stops in the middle, gazes at the city, at the inferior beings like The Wanderer Above the fog. The city is covered in sand, a sand city choked by interminable lines of vehicles. He comes down to the opposite side of the over bridge. There, someone fat is eating ice-cream in an overwhelmingly greedy manner. He walks past them all and gets on a motorbike, starts it and drives fast. We see a series of shots of him driving in the city of Dhaka amidst the sand, the construction, the vehicles and swarms of people.

SERIES OF SHOTS- MAYOR HANIF FLYOVER, UTTARA, GULSHAN.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD- CLOUDY EVENING

He is standing on the empty path; the bike is behind him as he leaves it and walks toward a grassy field. It's cloudy everywhere. It is empty/No one is there. He is walking, then his smile starts to grow bigger and he runs. With time, as he smiles more, he begins to run faster. He stops in the middle of the grassy land. He looks at the sky. There is a KAKTARUA (scarecrow) in front of him. He looks at it. It's wearing a torn suit. He unfolds his hand like Christ, like the KAKTARUA too. He then falls behind and we see him in a crucified position like Christ on

the ground. We hear thunder claps. He closes his eyes. We see him from a drone shot. His eyes are closed but he is smiling and starts hearing the sound of nature which is similar to Abbas Kiarostami's *Taste of Cherry*.

CUT TO:

INT. WRITER'S BEDROOM ROOM- NIGHT

His wife enters the room.

She approaches the mirror kept in front of his table. She takes off her tip from her forehead and puts it on the mirror. The title of this part arises in the mirror She looks at the table. He is not there.

ON SCREEN

Dear ma,

I realized my worth at a very early age. Became aware of my strength. Like my forefathers I was meant to be a servant, the best one of course. My great, great, great grandfather Chandrashekhar Majumder used to serve the local zamindar. His son worshiped a different god- GOLD. Mining and smuggling under the local don was the only story I know about him. Baba was the first-generation Muslim growing all by himself in as a lodging master after running away from his past, his drunkard father. He served everyone who paid him, fed him and he brought me up to do the same. Living a slave life of slaves. The engraved history, coded flaws flowing within me is something I could not deny it. I am leaving you ma. Running away was never a choice so I decided to leave. If you are reading this letter, I have sailed past the

melancholic woods of words to meet my master.

-Once Upon a Time in Their Room.

She then leaves the room. The camera is in a static position. She enters in a sleeping dress and we see her in the mirror. She lies down on the bed and closes her eyes. Suddenly we hear thunderstorms again. The wind rises. And the curtain starts moving fast. The camera closes to the typewriter and the pages. Someone comes and stands in front of them, we don't see who, just the shadow. The silhouette lights a cigarette and throws the burning match on the pages, the pages start to burn and we see the write up for the first time. There is just one sentence again and again without any punctuation, full stops or commas.

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ON SCREEN

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED

BY

MOHAMMAD FAKHRUL ALAM