

# Sleeplessness

*by* Gyanban

I don't know how I got in here. My innate curiosity would've brought me here. Though there were many people in the room, no one seemed bothered to get out. How strange? I saw some distorted, disfigured faces beside me. The one on my left was particularly abstract. The cranium was part open, pink and blue flesh hung loosely. The punctured jaw had glass embedded on one side. The spine poked out from the shoulder. Or was it the collarbone? I couldn't tell. He was hurting, it, was hurting.

I could stand & keep looking but I had work to do. I had to get out of there. I started walking towards the exit, but the door was locked from outside. I screamed, but no one came, no one heard. I tried climbing up the ceiling vent. Fell down and hurt myself again. I tried breaking the window, that didn't work either.

Tried calling Jemma, shouted, but she couldn't hear. I promised I'd be home soon, I promised I'd finish work early, I promised I'd pick up the grocery on the way, I'd promised I'd spend time with her. She must be waiting, expecting. And here I was unable to get out of this room. Claustrophobic I was.

The retina was burning, the liquid had dried up, and the veins bursting. My eyes bled. But I kept them open. The sound was like nails on glass, screeching endlessly. Coming close to me louder, harder, faster. The odor was choking, ripe raisins, rum, peaty, wood fire, all shaken and stirred. It tasted salty, just like sweat, with a hint of blood or wine. My lips had dried, throat parched and that's all I remember.

And then I found a tag attached to my wrist.  
It read, dead on arrival.

I couldn't sleep that night.

