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BoxAditi Saksena

Ever seen that black standardised box with your name on it in white Ariel 12 font? That box is where the journey started. With that box comes memories some complete some half some unsure. I remember my mum telling me what to pack and me with my dad packing it. I remember it reaching the mighty gates of the academy and then living with it. This box was ever so quietly living under my bed in the barracks. It would come out on and off and would add on things and would remove things. I have slept over my box like any other person of my profession and somehow it doesn't seem uncomfortable even after years and years of lugging it around. People around us on a busy railway platform pop their eyes and see us, some confused but they can never understand that unspoken attachment with that black box. It carries some of life's most beautiful some most trusting some of the most powerful vocals of love, some letter from family some feelings that will never be realised, some clothes with that familiar body smell and it keeps it so fresh that it feels that the person has just taken off the sweaty shirt and bundled it right in. Paint it again with your rank and it is joined by another box and do it again and again and again. Boxes become more in number and that particular box gets pushed right at the last. But when you sit down in yet another room or a house to be called a home, that box has the best of the things coming out of it. That expensive vase, that old t shirt of a boyfriend, that sock a pair of which you never found but you kept it nonetheless and what not. Maybe a letter of a long lost friend. And one Sunday you sit down with that letter and start looking for that person through your contact list in the phone or through some other people you have worked with and someone tells you where that person is now. That box is sitting throughout this time in the living room still messed up from decorating and filling shelves with clothes and uniforms. An inadvertent smile crosses your face. You look at the box and as if the box understands the tiny happiness you feel when you get the number. Whether or not to call is a different dilemma altogether. Every person has some embarrassing or some sad feeling attached to other friends that at a point in time they end up in the box. But the box tells you exactly what you want to hear and see. Only the happy memory. As if contemplating to call your friend, you look at the box and your fingers dial the number and rest as they say is history. Some stick by then and some vanish again. But the box remains.

Ever wondered how that box becomes a little world in your family, when you get married, when you have kids or separate or fall in love with someone or meet new friends or realise you have feelings for someone other than your spouse or how much you miss your wife or husband or your parents or your dog or how that box forces you to call them and just say Hi when you have been angry and sad or when it simply offers an old comic book to read one after the other sitting on the window with a cup of tea or

when reading those letters puts a mixed smile on your face!!! It goes on and on. That box became your shadow when you stood at the mighty gates for training. It handled your bandages and gifts for your parents alike. The blood soaked uniform or a broken spectacle or some new watch or a new book were also packed neatly and that box came back to be a part of the family who lost the owner. That box slowly kept the son alive by keeping the fragrance intact so that a mother could cry hugging the uniform or a father could still touch the stars on the shoulder just as proudly. The box remained and family would be at peace.

Ever wondered that the box really never left!!!

FAILING

I can't catch up, I can't really catch up. Just stop. Will you please just stop. I need to catch up on my breath. You need to stop. I lost my agility sometime back I need to regain it. How many times will I tell you this? I know you will say I need to practise every morning. Oh those bloody mornings!!! You keep me awake...I don't like leaving you alone in bed. Some extra minutes before you run off to work is always the best!! I don't know if you understand. I don't like catching up with you when we run. I like catching up with you when I am yours, at home, all vulnerable and all failed.

BREATHING

It's one bullet that carries your name and mine. That will end life when it has to. That it will slow the breathing when it has to. Till it hits then we must make the most of it because it will never warn before it stops it all. Your breathing is the same as it is when you don your uniform as it is when lay in bed with me. It's all the same when I feel your breathing on my ears, your hands on my face and your lips stealing warm kisses off my skin. You drift and so do I. But I wake up just to see that you are breathing still and that bullet has not called. Not yet and all this time your breathing is mine.

TIC-TOC

Tic- toc tic- toc time flies. At times the clock is lazy. Instead of spending hours together, it plays with minutes and seconds. I know it's slow. It's time for me to see you. I wait pacing up and down and lo' it's just minutes and seconds. Time is dragging its heels. It's just dragging. Foolish time. I know it does it because it know I am waiting for you. Waiting to see you. To swirl in your eyes and your arms. When I see your big grin and your big smile and that love in your eyes. And this tic-toc tic-toc just makes me wait. Foolish time, it doesn't know that I can!!!! Tic-toc tic-toc....

BIO-NOTE

Aditi Saksena is a 31-year-old serving Indian Army officer and will soon be completing a decade in the glorious service. She is an honours graduate in English Literature from University of Delhi and she joined the Army in 2009. Her habits include reading and writing along with some amateur photography. She likes to travel and her work has shown her some of the most amazing and beautiful places in the country. She has been writing since a very early age and has shared the same with only her close friends till now. She hopes her readers will enjoy reading the little stories she writes since it's something that all personnel in services will connect with!

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