

Djinn City

1.

— Sleepless nights – the blast – long walks – the first kiss —

Dev got up. Sweat flowed down his face like drains that traversed the dingy gallis of Delhi. Outside the narrow window, life – stacked in layers of daily banality.

He walked through the basement. Rows and rows of dull, flickering tubelights – like hospital corridors – glued together. Sounds – of tools, people, dripping water and vibrations — rhythm.

I will trace them to death. His revenge for Malki had just begun.

Drains flow down again – like blood from tall buildings, seeping into deep mulchy multi-layers of underground garbage dump.

2.

Staggering facades of Nehru Place plagued with advertisement boards – the insides longing for fresh air. In these in-between spaces lived the informality that Delhi had become. Garbage pipes dropped down from the sky. *The underclass.*

A loud ‘pop’ sound. A man, gasping, sputtering, twitching, and then laying still.

Dev runs. It starts raining in his eyes. Black, brackish water infected with love, pain and chemicals.

3.

Loud shrieks. Frail, trembling body. Malki sits right beside him. How was it like, them both?

Peace, once again in his one-window apartment.

The garbage pipes kept dropping treasures from skies unknown to ground.

4.

Fading images. Eyes open.

The narrow window pane showed no memory of their reflection. He runs down. Hundreds of steps, each one reminding him of her. He jumps over garbage piles, runs faster than ever.

Maaaaaalkiiiiii.....!

Miniature vehicles slowly criss-cross bridges on the nth floor.

5.

With every faulty phone, and every blast that killed a life, he rationed in days with Malki.

The under-city — a layer of red. Which splashed onto the dirty black walls every time a collector vehicle passed by. The vehicle — that roamed around the city, parcelling in death. Did it have a driver? One never noticed. Monitors, mobile parts — all electronic samples. Fuel that served the under-market.

6.

Tubelights flickered even more. The hypnotic rhythm that fed the cryptic world. He had become a machine himself.

With every passing blast, she stayed for lesser days. He killed more. Collector vehicles rushed through blood-stained roads.

Men above never saw the dirt below.

7.

'1000 for 2 – 850 for 2 – 1350 for 3!'

The Nehru Place market.

The violent wave hit the overclass. Material, currency and bridges connect to meet the ground. The underclass had taken over for once. Flickering halls and blood stained pavements rejoiced.

She never came back.

8.

It was easy to lock him, working, beneath the violently flickering light. The black-wave thus ceased.

Never here together again my dear Momo. What if I come to you and lives here are given up?

The last thing he ever spoke.

Blood stained roads get covered by lifeless bodies. Them deciding to give up their own lives. The confused city added another pipe to feed the new layer. Bodies disintegrated; liquids yet again dripping — this time, a new rhythm.

How? It all started with a WhatsApp message that read 'Hi, I'm Momo. Let's play a game?'