

In a Chord

Written by Hasan Abir

I

Sometime in a lap, the coming of a cold winter midnight brought about an impulse within a scrupulous heart to unravel. And that heart belonged to Mazhar Haque, a brown-tanned, coarse-haired, slightly stout-cheeked, plump-mouthed, wide-nosed, and seldom-closed-eyed man, who believed his ears were in salvation under the power of music. The cobalt blue bike that he rode came with a broken bell, a yellow basket that he stuffed with music sheets, a downtube with the spray paint of the word ZERO, a neon green flashlight that he attached to it as headlights, bearings that he freshly greased, and seats for two. He pedaled again and again into the cold, stirred-in-with-manhole-gas fog, and each time he left the haze, it condensed on his skin. A tune that amazed him, a long-time favorite of his, went by the name *Where or When* by *Johnny Smith*. And uncalled for, it began playing in his head. There wasn't a reason to not be swaying. His and his bike's rhythmically precise swinging to the instrumental kept him amused and distracted. In his city, New York, he was content. A crowd walked in, and a crowd faded out, but never in one color. On wheels or on feet, one could hardly ever make a crumbling move in a land that equated both the need for climbing higher stories and the need for writing even higher stories. Both men, one from the street and one sipping coffee and looking down from the 20th floor, knew what it took to swap their positions. And at every junction, there was always a way forward. With the mind of the breathing city wrapped in the present, time ceased to matter for the past. Just the right place for him, at last. Across the grid, he and his bike journeyed through streets that were dark, abandoned, and lifeless, as he turned at every crossroad, running into loops every now and then. With time passing by, he kept losing one thought after another; most importantly, he was losing himself.

*...The rest of this story should be published elsewhere
(This note is not part of the story)*