

heard Moniba was also in Abbottabad, as was one of our teachers and another friend. Moniba and I had not spoken since our fight on the last day before becoming IDPs. We arranged to meet in a park, and I brought her Pepsi and biscuits. 'It was all your fault,' she told me. I agreed. I didn't mind; I just wanted to be friends.

Our week at the guesthouse soon ended and we went to Haripur, where one of my aunts lived. It was our fourth city in two months. I knew we were better off than those who lived in the camps, queuing for food and water for hours under the hot sun, but I missed my valley. It was there I spent my twelfth birthday. Nobody remembered. Even my father forgot, he was so busy hopping about. I was upset and recalled how different my eleventh birthday had been. I had shared a cake with my friends. There were balloons and I had made the same wish I was making on my twelfth birthday, but this time there was no cake and there were no candles to blow out. Once again I wished for peace in our valley.