

The Messenger

Volume 2014
Issue 1 *The Messenger*, 2014

Article 14

2014

2, 3 and 5

Sabrina Islam

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger>



Part of the [Nonfiction Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Islam, Sabrina (2014) "2, 3 and 5," *The Messenger*: Vol. 2014: Iss. 1, Article 14.
Available at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol2014/iss1/14>

This Non-fiction is brought to you for free and open access by UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Messenger by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

The Mother

On her second day in labor, she was wondering when the colossal pain would come out of her body. She had been here before. This place, this pain—she knew it all. The white and brown curtains were dull to a normal eye, someone who didn't have to give birth to a stillborn for the second time. To her, the curtains represented an ominous terror that suffocated her but did not kill her entirely.

It had seemed strange the first time around. While the usual pregnancy was associated with new life, joy and happiness, she had had a dead creature existing in her body for a week. The creature was like a piece of furniture—motionless matter that was real only because the observer knew it took up space. Her dead baby took space in her. When it was living it took space too, but it was different then. It had life.

She understood and she accepted it the first time, as difficult as it was. But it was heartbreaking to lose someone she didn't know, again. Someone she had anticipated to know for so long. It was simply unfair, she thought.

This time, her belly had become hard while she slept at night. She woke up in shock the next day because she knew what had happened. It was the worst *déjà vu*. Her baby had died two days before the delivery date. Again. She knew what was wrong, but her child was already dead.

Lying on the hospital bed, she thought of a name. She was running out of pretty ones so she started, quite ironically, giving her children strong names. According to her, a strong name echoed the strength of the person who previously carried it. She thought that a rose called by any other name would be quite different, and she believed that the mere pronunciation of a name created waves that vibrated through the body and touched the soul, directing the person to become what the name had gathered in its meaning. Her baby girls were never going to become anything.

The Father

Hour 26. The contractions were nowhere strong enough for a delivery. He was sitting on the floor outside the room in which his wife was struggling. He was forcing himself to think of his work, but the efforts were futile. It was as if he were pushing clouds to block a spear.

He could see the day he had softly placed the child into a hole. He could taste his dry mouth yearning for a cigarette. He could hear the prayers, and he could hear the shovels scooping dirt. And he could feel the path on which the warm water rolled down his face. He didn't remember smelling anything. His nose was congested.

A fortune-teller once told him that he'd bury three of his children before they could learn to breathe. Numbers 2, 3 and 5. This was number 3 and she was second in line.

It will happen again, he thought.