

**Yuti Das**

Age: 16, Grade: 11

School Name: James Clemens High School, Madison, AL

Educator: Elizabeth Vaughn

Category: Flash Fiction

---

## Adjectives

He was a rowdy twat, I said when I first saw him. He was wrangling someone into the mud. He looked up, his face splattered with dirt, noticed my pristine clothes, and decided “spoiled princess” was a phrase that befitted me. I hated him then.

I told him that once. He splattered me with dirt, and I retaliated, much to his surprise. We laid there, laughing. He conceded that I was more like Mulan than a spoiled princess, and I decided that he wasn't so bad after all.

He became my best friend somehow, our countless words forming a dominant, entangling fortress. Nothing could tear us down. Nothing could force us apart or silence the arbitrary words we always seemed to have for each other.

And somewhere in the middle of the infinite descriptions, perhaps when he told me that I had a clumsy soul after tripping over nothing, or maybe when he struck the most ridiculous poses while modeling for me, I realized that random adjectives and nouns weren't enough to describe him. I wanted the word “my” before them, wanted his words to convey that I was his too.

But I didn't want one word to possibly ruin millions more. I didn't want one moment to destroy all our possible future histories. So I stayed silent. I loved him then, though. The confession threatened to burst out of me every time I talked to him - it was a trapped bird desperately begging to be free. But still, I stayed silent.

And one day, he paused in the middle of his laughter and looked into my eyes. I wasn't sure of what to do with the silence, wasn't sure of what to do with my suddenly pounding heart, and still wasn't sure of what to do when he leaned in and brushed his lips against mine, whispering that he always loved me, whispering that I would always be his love. It was okay, though. He knew.

College passed in a blur, always the world against him and me.

And years later, when he had knelt down on one knee, and all I could whisper was yes, he had tweaked my nose, murmuring “my stubby beautiful fiancée,” laughing about how he had finally surprised me into ditching my adjectives. He carried me off into the night, and still, all I said was “I love you,” for my heart was in a new state of shock, my nicknames and adjectives laid forgotten in the inescapable joy I felt.

During our wedding vows, he promised to never go a day without calling me his in a different way every day, in different languages. He promised to never let me forget how much he loved me.

It was a lie. Because after we got married, he stopped using random words to describe me. And after we got married, there was only one adjective I could use to describe him, only one word I could put before “husband” and after “my”.

Late.