

.... FOUR POEMS

by Rabiul Hasan

The Shadow Doe

I take my time to think of you.
I do not know how to spell your name.
You neither live up North nor down South.
Perhaps you live on the Continental Divide.
You do not have a telephone:
Yet know that you are with me,
pouring coffee, doing the dishes, and
moving softly about.
And all day the clouds swoop down to fly
past your hair.
You and I sit together under the hot tin sun.

I Know a Girl From South Dakota

I know a girl from South Dakota
who is a lovely, merry Lakota.
In winter she sleighs fast on ice,
in summer she rides a saddle horse and
looks very nice,
and her lips smack of exquisite spice.

Revision

The last place I wanted
to see you was in that bastard's lap.
I summed up our story
in a two-hundred page manuscript
that I wrote in longhand.
I tossed it into the fire
and started all over again.
This time I used a typewriter.

From a Train Window

I am riding in this train from Wisconsin bound for Mississippi.
It had been raining for hours. The rain has stopped now.
I slept all along to avoid boredom and monotony.
Now I am awake. From my window I see the full moon
somewhere over Illinois or Tennessee — the full moon,
ecstatic
and beautiful and as feminine as the Galatean face of yours.

Rabiul Hasan, writes and lives in Metairie, Louisiana. The above four poems first appeared in *The Griot*, published from Kentucky.

Travelling

by Gazi Sadeq

Justice, love,
honour and courtesy
are valid everywhere
in every society.

They may be variously moulded,
often differently handled,
even unrecognisable sometimes
when you meet them in a foreign land.

The art of learning
the common human values is
the greatest gain of travel.
And so
travelling is necessary
to understanding people.

Mandela

by Khan Azizur Rahman

One black fullstop
That is Mandela.
Starts from Kuntha-Kantha
Finished by Mandela.
Ho ho ho. La la la.
We are crossing the red sea
Don't have captain.
Can't you join the boat
Sail it to the shore —
We don't want you more.

Sheikh Mujib to Mandela,
die for the nation —
why you don't think for the
One world one nation?

auditorium was held within the restrictions of Martial Law.

With the withdrawal of restrictions on politics in 1962, politics and cultural movement started taking a new shape. With the old members of the Sangsad, new ones marched in. The prominent newcomers were Kamal Lohani, Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Ahmedur Rahman Vimir, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shamsul Alam Chowdhury, Rashed Khan Menon, Matia Obaidullah, Abdul Kashem Fazlul Huq, Asad Chowdhury, Farukh Alamgir, Bulbul Khan Mahboob and Waliul Islam. The programme of patriotic songs in the lawns of the Bangla Academy in 1963 and the programme of *Gao Gano Sangeet* of 1964 were worth remembering. In the later part of 1964, when Faiz Ahmed Faiz, a renowned Urdu poet, came to pay a visit to Dhaka, the Dhaka University unit of the Sangskriti Sangshad arranged a cordial reception.

In 1953-54, members of the Students League formed the 'East Pakistan Sahitya Sangsad' and maintained a lively salon at the offices of the Saogat. Dr Kazi Motahar Hossain was elected president. Among the visitors in the Saogat circle were: Abdul Ghani Hazari, Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Dr Alauddin al-Azad, Prof Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Fazle Lohani, Khaleel Chowdhury, Gaffar Chowdhury, Sayed Atiqullah, Al-Mahmud, Omar Ali, Shahid Quadri, Fazal Shahabuddin, Murtaza Bashir, Rafiqul Islam, Zia Hyder. Po-

ems, stories and essays were discussed in the salon. A bit later, differences of opinion on write-ups arose and some preferred to sit separately. In 1954-55 they began to assemble at the Beauty Boarding and Restaurant at Bangla Bazar with poet Shamsur Rahman as the main figure. Some of the members of this salon were Sahid Quadri, Al-Mahmud, Syed Shamsul Huq and Sadeq Khan. Their literary trend was fresh romanticism. Although ideologically literatures were divided in different stages yet it is evident that they had a sense of unity, at least for the national cause. In 1954, the 21-point programme of the Jukta Front entered the literary structure.

In 1956-57, a salon grew in the office of the 'Shaptahik Kafela' at Sadarghat, becoming a centre for the new writers. Among others, there were Fazal Sahabuddin, Al-Mahmud, Omar Ali, Shahid Quadri, Abul Kalam Manzur Murshid. In 1957-58, another lively salon was found in 'Samakal' centering around Sikander Abu Zafar. In 1958, a salon grew at the Rankin's Street residence of Subroto Chowdhury, which later shifted its venue at a local restaurant. Among others, Debabrata Chowdhury, Shubhabrata Chowdhury, Al-Mahmud, Hayat Mahmood, Manzoor-e-Maula attended here. Saptak came out of this salon.

The Madhur Canteen was always lively barring for a little

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long time." Tarabibi pounced upon the matter of Dipali's passport. "O, the paskoat was there, eh? In the name of paskoat didn't she sit in your room for two hours? Don't I understand all this?"

Dipali had come to this house only once. To untangle the problems of her passport, she needed Golzar to make some contacts for her. That was almost four years ago. When Dipali came, Tarabibi herself took her to Golzar's room. "O Golzar, look, it's Binoy's sister!" She even brought a chair for Dipali from her own room. Then saying, "You two talk, I'll be back," she went to the kitchen and did not return. When, after fifteen or twenty minutes, Dipali stepped out on the veranda preparing to leave, Tarabibi saw her from the kitchen and said, "Why not stay for a while more? I'll make tea." After Dipali had sat for another half an hour in Golzar's room, Tarabibi called him and sent tea. Golzar chatted with Dipali for an hour about her husband, about Binoy and Binoy and Golzar's boyhood. The memory of that hour's chat with Dipali often evoked pleasant sensations in Golzar, but he never had to spend sleepless nights over it.

Whether to control her anger or to take time to choose her words, Tarabibi was silent for some time and then spoke slowly, "How could you stay outside until three in the morning fooling with some lowly woman? You have a wife at home, and she, big with child. You should be ashamed of yourself! Because of your infernal actions, no angel will ever set foot in this house. When children commit sins, does God accept the worship and prayers of parents?"

Tarabibi's Virile Son

Second and concluding instalment—continued from last week

A short story by Akhtaruzzaman Elias
Translated from the Bengali by Parveen K Elias



This reproachful tone of Tarabibi failed to intimidate Golzar. Rather, her quiet tone strengthened him. Gazing at Ramzan's rusty pair of eyes, he sucked vitality from the core of the dying old man with the fallen head. Thus, gaining strength from his father's nourishment and mother's moderation, Golzar said, "Amma, no mother ever says such things to her son. You've given me a wife, if there's anything wrong in my character, she'll see to it. She doesn't know a thing, and you've fitted a radar, and every minute your radar stirs and creates a meaningless fuss!"

"O Allah, O Allah! All my fate! I've married my son to a country girl, a simpleton. If only she could understand, then I would not have to suffer like this." Tarabibi was gradually losing fervor. After pausing a while, she began with renewed zeal, "If Bou had that much intelligence, wouldn't she have discovered your flirtations with the maid long ago?" How can such a question be answered?

Since that day Tarabibi had decided that the part-time maid was really Golzar's main attraction. It did not matter how long during the day Golzar saw Suruj's mother. She came early in the morning before six and left by nine of nine-thirty. She came again at one in the afternoon and worked until two-thirty or three. Golzar saw her after he awoke for about an hour in the morning and then again for an hour in the afternoon. Because she worked hard in different houses, the maid did have a strong and well-shaped body. Well, why keep a girl with such an attractive figure? Ramzan has also remarked on this matter one day, "If you're suspicious, why not dismiss the maid?"

"Why? Why should I dismiss her? Won't I need to hire another one? Will your son spare any of em?"

Nowadays Tarabibi would not raise these matters in front of Golzar. But she would begin as soon as he would leave the house. Today, since he returned a little late after the movie, she immediately grabbed the opportunity to

hound him. Sakina now sat quietly. The piercing thorns targeted a little while ago at Golzar's heart had now been overlaid by the meal of rice and curry, and he felt very sleepy. But if he slept now, he could not share Sakina's humiliations. Golzar sat beside Sakina and said, "Let me write to your Mia Bhai. When he comes you can go to Mirkadem. Let me see if I can find a house, and once the rent and all's fixed, I'll come and get you." This kind of proposal always worked.

Lying on the bed, Golzar felt like sprawling full length all over the bed, but he had to share the bed with another person.

The next day around two-thirty as Golzar returned and entered his room, he heard that both Tarabibi and Sakina had gone out. This afternoon was his cousin's *gaye holiday* and his uncle had come himself and taken both of them. Ramzan said, "Go and get them back after Magreb." Tarabibi was not in the kitchen, nor was Sakina in their room. Humming a popular melody in a slightly distorted tune, Golzar stretched leisurely without changing his clothes.

Suruj's mother came into the room. "Why are you lying at this time? Shall I bring lunch?" He paused his humming but the tune still enveloped his being. "You want to bring lunch? Why don't you let me rest a while."

"No, get up, once you eat I need to wash the dishes and eat myself." Saying this Suruj's mother adjusted the sari over her bosom. As his eyes fell on that gesture, all traces of the tune from his eyes, mouth, and voice vanished completely. Instead, independent of any desire, a whirring sound stifled his heart and

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blood from all over rushed towards it at a dangerously high speed. Holding the bed-post, Suruj's mother stood by. As his olive-colored medium-size body went beyond his control, Golzar jumped down from the bed onto the floor in one leap. Suruj's mother watched him with knitted eye-brows. Before her frown could disappear, Golzar had grabbed her right hand and pulled her in front of him. Against his chest now was her head with reddish-black hair and its odour of stale coconut oil. Suruj's mother whispered, "Let go of my hand."

Immediately Golzar let go and moved back. After standing for another moment, Suruj's mother suddenly walked away rapidly through the veranda into the kitchen. The sound of an aluminum pitcher falling from the veranda made Golzar realise that it was three-thirty. He gathered his lungis and gamcha from another corner of his room.

After his bath, Golzar returned to find the torn mat spread on the floor and his covered lunch served on it. After eating, he picked his underwear and trousers from the rack, but put them back again. About fifteen minutes later, Suruj's mother entered the room.

"I'm leaving. Won't you go to the shop?" Golzar answered as he lay on the bed, "You can go, I'll go after a while." Trying to erase the effects of the hand-grabbing incident, he added brightly, "I'll go and get Amma and everybody."

"They won't be back so soon."

"Huh!" Suruj's mother stood again holding the bed-post. Listening to the slow rhythmic snoring of Ramzan Ali in the next room, Golzar began to lose control of his body again.

"Will you lend me ten taka? Don't tell Amma, I've to take my son to the doctor. Will you?"

Silently, Golzar Ali brought out two five-taka bills from under his pillow and extended his right hand. Suruj's mother stood just beside his bed now. With his very right hand holding

Literary Salon in Dhaka

by Salahuddin Ahmed

literary environment in the Sir Salimullah Muslim Hall in 1948, mainly created by the Tamuddun Majlis. The office of the Tamuddun Majlis was at Rashid Building at that time. A bit later the office was shifted to 19, Azimpur Road, Dhaka. The Sainik and the Duti were being published from that house for sometime. During 1948-49 the group again started shifting its gathering to

It comes up from the general situation that without salon no group can be well-organised, without gathering no organisation can be formed, without such accumulated effort no publication can be brought into light.

48 Kaptan Bazar. Prof Jyotirmoy Guha Thakurta had been a frequent visitor of this circle.

During this time, the Marxbandi Shahitya Shangho was formed. Prof Ajit Guha, Prof Munier Chowdhury, Sanaul Huq, Abdul Gani Hazari, Sardar Joinuddin were prominent members here. At one time, they arranged a grand literary meet at the present Bangladesh Observer building. Dr Kazi Motahar Hossain presided over the meeting. Another notable gathering is found during this time at a Nawabpur Road house, just opposite to the Manoshi cinema hall.

In 1950, the Agatya group was formed. Among others,

practical shape to Islamic ideology.

Another literary group was formed at that time. This was the East Pakistan Lekhak Sangho. The gathering continued at the Wari residence of Kazi Nazmul Huq, a local businessman.

The contemporary literary trend at this stage was moving in three directions. First, there was a move to create a renaissance of Islamic culture in Pakistan. Poet Farrukh Ahmed, Poet Talim Hossain, Shahed Ali fell into this group. The second move was to spread left-oriented thoughts. The third was to nourish aesthetic or humanistic attitudes in society. Some members of

Rahman Khan completed his course in the university during this time, yet he was a great personality of this circle. He was called Dr Johnson in the circle which arranged a number of cultural functions.

In 1951, some enthusiastic students of Dhaka University formed the 'Sanskriti Sangshad'. Gradually, this platform was turned into a platform of the 'East Pakistan Students Union'. The active time span of the 'Sanskriti Sangsad' can be counted from 1951 to 1966 with a little break in the middle for Martial Law. Some mentionable names in the earlier part of the Sangsad are: Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam, Dr

Alauddin al-Azad, Abu Zafar Obaidullah, Rafiqul Islam, Sakhawat Hossain, Zahir Rahman, Mominul Huq, Khandaker Asaduzzaman; Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Enayetullah Khan, Mohammad Hossain, Enamul Huq, Rafiqul Huq, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Akhlaqur Rahman and Mohammad Muhaddes.

They arranged many cultural functions. In 1951, Ja-

A salon, generally speaking, is an assemblage of persons in the home of a socially prominent person to discuss matters of various interest.

The literary trend in France in the 19th century grew out of salons. Such is also the example of Dr Johnson's circle of the 18th century. Lytton Streachey's and Virginia Woolf's group of England. In the time of Imrul Kayesh such salons played a vital role in the strengthening of Arabic literature. Even the literary trend of Calcutta, like the Kollol Group in both its developing and developed stages, owed a lot to such literary circles.

It comes up from the general situation that without a salon no group can be well-organised, without gathering no organisation can be formed, without such accumulated effort no publication can be brought into light and without consistent effort no movement could proceed. Let us see what Dhaka has in store for us.

With the birth of Pakistan, the litterateurs whose spare was so long in Calcutta returned to Dhaka. The tradition of Calcutta literature that was brought to Dhaka by the migrating group was mixed up with the sector whose main stage for working was in Dhaka. Most of the members in the literary group of Dhaka were younger to the members of the migrated group.

Principal Dewan Mohamad Azof, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, poet Ahsan Habib,

Sarder Joinuddin and Dr Ashraf Siddiqui, among others, were in the migrated group while Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Dr Alauddin al-Azad, Shamsur Rahman and Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, among others, were in the Dhaka stage. These two tides met at a central point in Dhaka and forged a way for a new movement.

In October 1947, the Tamuddun Majlis was formed. It was a lively gathering. Since the inception of this group, Principal Abul Kashem, Prof Nurul Haq Bhuiyan, Syed Nazrul Islam, Abdul Wahab, among others, began to play an active part. Gradually, the Weekly Sainik and the monthly Duti were brought out by the group.

The Weekly Sainik was a combination of journalism and literature and the monthly Duti was a purely literary magazine. Among those who practised their writing habits in their early stages were Badruddin Omar, Sanaullah Nuri, Askar Ibne Shaikh, Mohammad Mahfuzullah and Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury.

There was a very notable