

TEENS and TWENTIES

A Woman of Substance

by Farhana Yusuf

I rarely talk about my grandmother's death. It is a topic that I not only avoid because it brings pain but something that reminds me of reality — of the most precious thing I've lost forever. I say reality, do I? But that's because I dread facing reality. Even now so many months after her death, there are times when I feel her presence amongst us and just cannot face up to the fact that she's not here any more. Yes, I live by her memories which, though painful, bring me from my sudden state of gloom and revives my saddened heart with a drop or two of sweet pleasure. She was a woman of such strength and vigour — an epitome of so much courage and dignity; funny though it may sound but even in her moments of serious sickness, the least possibility of her death never crossed my mind. I was somehow always confident that my strong grandmother would make it, she had to.

on those first. She kept track of her accounts in a way which made it impossible for the servants or anyone else for that matter to replace or remove anything. Her duty was not confined to home only — she undertook to do the monthly shoppings, things like going to the bank for drawing cash — in short everything that she could do by herself without having to depend on anyone. She would even travel alone to our village often to inspect the family

her village home, it naturally aroused a lot of attention. For one thing, most women in those days were either not let or did not feel free to come out of their houses, much less leave the city and that too with food and with veiled *borkhas* as attire.

But Gran's case was different as were her views of life. She believed that if a man can do something, so can a woman. A woman's responsibility is not

She was married to my grandfather, who was the first Muslim graduate (from Calcutta University) in our village. Being married to an educated man made her realise how important education is for both male and female members of a family. My great grandfathers, understandably so, in those days believed that education wasn't particularly necessary for their children. They possessed properties of such worth that all their children and grandchildren could live and eat free all their lives and would possibly be left with more after that.

The first thing that hit me hard when she died was that Gran, my grandmother, the person I've grown up watching, is dead. The person I always talked to, gave all my confidence was not alive. What was I to do now? Where would I turn to for a friend like her?

Some of you may wonder why it was such an unbelievable thing to me. Every human being must die one day — if not readily then gradually, ultimately. But you must believe me when I say that I've never imagined Gran's death. Granny was an example of strength and protection — so much so that even when she stayed in bed and talked rarely, she stood like a shadow of safety over all of us. My only regret is that I wasn't present to hear her last words. I haven't had a chance of talking to her for quite a long time. I couldn't talk to her before she died and now my heart bursts with agony when I realise I won't be able to talk to her anymore! I wanted to tell her so many things, wanted her to know how much I loved her, that if she had any last wishes whether I could fulfil it for her. I stood by her grave-side, said my last farewell to her and told her to forgive me for not being there by her side. I feel so light now because deep down I



One of my grandmother's handiworks done in the early 50's

property, to see that everything was going smoothly, to check on profits and losses if there were any! She was very communicative — socialised not only with neighbours and relatives in the city but also visited her village home and that of my grandfather's.

Being the eldest of the ten brothers and sisters, she was protective over all of them and everybody looked up to her and held her in respect. So, when the eldest daughter of the most wealthy, aristocratic and pious family visited

enclosed within the four walls of her home, it stretches and expands further to matters outside her boundary. Maybe, people were surprised at her boldness, her sense of independence, her carrying out a man's work. In my grandmother's life, love and duty came first. She was her own judge in putting these in the front line and she was happy. I really think that for a woman of her time, she had a very progressive and modern mind — a mind with a broader view of things.

know my grandmother has forgiven me.

The only consoling thing is that I have some very happy memories of my grandmother and me. When I am alone, I sometimes think of those times and it gives me both pleasure and pain to relive the past. Gran worried a lot about everything — she was always thinking about "What will happen in the near future." At such times, I would often try to console her by saying, "Gran, why do you worry so much, grandpa left you so many things, you'll never be in want of anything. You are quite a rich woman." And she would look at me and say, "You're right, I have everything I want, I should not worry so much.

You are the only person who really understands me." Gran was not well, I know, but the least thing she felt was contentment.

Whatever, it is that disturbed her, efforts were not taken to improve her state of mind. Somehow, I feel that she has been made extremely unhappy and neglected and I think anybody who takes the responsibility of ailing patients must take their responsibility seriously. Better so, if everybody can share that responsibility equally. For all that she had done for so many people she at least deserved some concern, some care from everybody if not the attention and importance and the love she so rightly deserved. But how many of them had actually fulfilled her needs, her want for a little bit of love and attention? Gran needed a time for love, wanted unity — maybe by dying quietly she gave us a sign for peace, a sign to find a time for love that maybe she has been deprived of at the last moment. In death, she had a peaceful expression — an expression that said she was really at peace and happy because she was going to join my grandfather at last. She looked more radiant than ever. Truly, she was a woman of substance.

Everything about Addabazi — II

Gossiping at Madhu's Canteen

by Anam Mahmud

THE Madhu's Canteen of Dhaka University is an inseparable chapter in the glorious history of politics in our country. It is believed to be a rendezvous of meritorious student leaders of late fifties and sixties to the student-organisations and political leaders of present time. Apart from the tragedy associated with the canteen it is also the heart of student-politics centre. In that sense it may be regarded as the place of all the glorious movements of the country. Before turning into the famous canteen, Madhu's Canteen was once a dressing room for the Nawabs of Dhaka.

lar fellow at the canteen. Before being run over by a truck during the mass movement against the autocratic government, Mahan Raihan, a friend of his, wrote a poem on his honour.

"In the Madhu's canteen Sipping in the cup of Arun Basha, I remember you!"

The owner of the canteen, Arun, was also harassed several times even without being related to any political parties. On the 24th February of 1984, during the autocratic government period, Arun had been arrested. Serious police tortures had his right hand.

At present the canteen is situated inside the ancient yellow building near the M.B.A. institution just beside the central cafeteria of D.U. The walls of the canteen are coloured with political posters and statements. The animated youthfulness is characteristic of the canteen with cups of tea and cigarettes despite the shouts of Arun, the delay of the waiters, and the tired sound of the fan. Complicated political decisions, abuse of political leaders, the plans to slow-off the momentum of present government, answering posters, long processions, curfew-break or going in front of the irresistible police bullets — all take birth from this canteen.

Though there is a signboard written "Madhu's canteen" in front of the gate, but the solitude name "Madhu" is enough

Panna, Ajoy (Chhatra League), Mosharaf, Milton, Alam (Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal) and, Bahadur, Khakan (Chhatraunion) are usually seen chatting around the canteen between nine and twelve in the morning. General students of D.U. visit the place between one to three o'clock in the evening. In the evening the leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Btpori Chhatra Mottree, Chhatra Kendra come over this place to take help and phensydyl. They still believe in the change of power by an armed-revolution.

An English breakfast of butter, bread and eggs is popular in the morning. Samosas, shingaras, Guranadi curd cups of tea and the sensation of the menu. Various prominent leaders' (today are still listed among the *khata* of credit. Before the liberation war the specific *khata*s were hidden inside the lemon tree just beside the canteen, later destroyed by the bites of white ants. There is a rumour that Rashed Khan Menon owes Madhu Da sixty-thousand takas.

One of the most promising sides of the gossip-circle of Madhu's canteen is that gossipers do not get themselves involved in violence during the gossiping hours. "Rat-rat-rat sounds of bullets & cocktails cannot kill our spirit or scare us. Instead we happily sip our cups of tea. This is the usual picture of the canteen," a student leader expressed. Arun, the owner of the canteen plays



At Madhu's Canteen — *adda* that changes history

hot debates and processions. Later Madhu's daughter Pratiba Rani De ran the canteen for a few days. At present Arun Kumar De is in the charge of the canteen. Arun, worshipper of a deity, still carries on his effort to promote the canteen's condition.

to recognise the canteen. The rules of the canteen are different from other canteens. It opens up at seven past thirty in the morning closes at nine or ten o'clock at night. Those allergic to politics stay away from this canteen. Armed cadres have easy come and go in this place. Shamim,

a vital role in the mutual settlement among various political leaders by distributing sweets in free charge among the customers. Arun hopefully expressed, "I'm proud to run this canteen. I hope that in future, the gossip-circle will lead the mass movement for human rights

Bad Fortune — IV

by Sauah Shehabuddin

I have nothing to do right now, so I'll tell you about Hajra's arrival yesterday. Well, I was getting ready to go to bed when the door-bell rang. My heart beat started racing.

"Hajrah!.. I whispered to myself, I ran to the door, and I unbolted it. There, standing quietly smiling, was Hajra. I just stood there, staring at her. Looking at another human being was so strange. I opened my mouth to say something which turned out to be a simple 'Hi!...'. The word vibrated sweetly in my ears.

"Hi!.. Hajra replied. Suddenly, a single tear ran down Hajra's cheek. I could feel what she felt-happiness of reunion — the feeling neither she nor I had felt before — nothing casual, something special.

"Oh, Hajrah!.. I said as the same time as she said, 'Oh Sarah!.. We hugged each other

and at the same time shouted. I missed you! We laughed. Then I said, Jinx P.S. touch wood first! I hit the wooden door. Then I ran to a chair and standing on it, proclaimed, 'You have the permission to speak, now. O inferior one! Hajra bowed and said, 'Oh gee, thanks your most wired Majesty'. I got down from the chair and told her to go unpack while I got dinner ready.

Ever since the Gasometre stopped beeping, I've been using tinned food.

As we ate, Hajra said, 'It is so good to be back!'

'Hey, aren't you going to tell me about your journey?'

'Of course I am. After gorging myself, that is. Oh, I meant to ask — why'd you lock the

door? I mean, you were the only person in this entire city for Christmas!'

'Habit, I guess..'

Finished eating, we settled down comfortably in the TV room and Hajra began her story.

'Well, I started out with the map you'd given me. I went North. By the time I got to a town, I was quarter of my way home and the sun was setting. And to think that with the shuttle train it used to take me fifteen minutes to get home. I was surprised to see that there were people in the town. I later learnt that town was out of the radiation's way. Anyway, I decided to spend the night there. I went to the nearest abode I saw, and, gathering up

all my courage, I rang the bell.

A tall, elegant lady opened the door, seeing me, she smiled. Umm... est-ce-que tu parles Anglais? asked the lady in a doubtful voice. I replied to this question which means 'Do you speak English?' with, 'Yes, I do.'

The lady held out her hand and beaming, introduced herself. 'Angie Sheldon pleased to meet you. Please come in.'

'My name's Hajra Ilahi.'

By her accent I could tell she was American. I followed her to the living room, where Ms Sheldon asked me to sit down.

'What can I do for you, Hajrah? She asked.

'Well, you see, I'm on my

way home from Paris, where I was stranded. I was wondering if I could spend the night here.' I explained briefly.

The lady smiled. Of course, you may. Free of charge too. I live in this big house with my three elder sisters, two elder brothers and my parents who are always busy, and so, I'll be glad of your company, even if it's only for one night.

The pleasure is all mine. Come on I'll show you my room where you can spend the night.

I got up to follow her. The house was elegantly furnished. She led me up the stairs and then, 'Hajra stopped. She looked at me and said, 'Sarah, can I have a glass of water, please?'

I'll write down the rest of Hajra's story later as I'm gonna go shopping with Hajra now. See ya!

Jim Morrison : Dead or Alive?

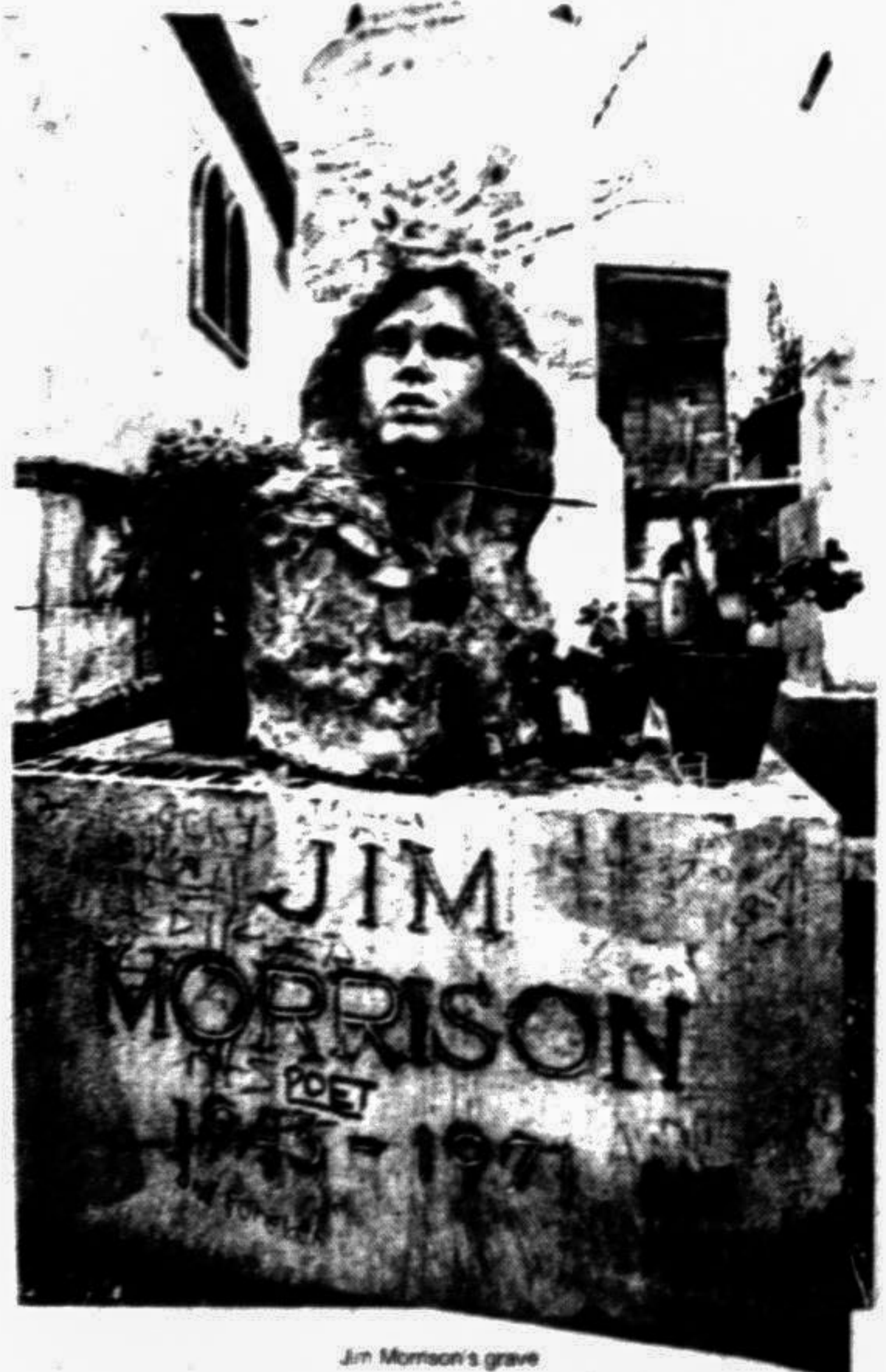
by Ariful Islam

If he is alive, he is 41 years old today. The only one who could have solved the mystery of whether he is dead or alive, is dead and no longer in a position to do so.

James Douglas Morrison, a poet in a bluesy, gutsy rock group, a melodramatic performer, an idol of the young generation was born on 8th December 1943, in Florida. Young Jim, a hyperactive, intelligent child, used to thrill his school teachers by quoting extensively from Joyce, Kerouac and Nietzsche and engage in verbal duels with his English teacher. A keen writer himself, he believed that the true poet must risk personal ruin on every level in order to stand a realistic chance of seeing the unknown, the mad, and the beautiful.

At UCLA, where he was studying cinematography, Morrison turned on to rock music, by friends and started to set his words to music. His meeting with organist Ray Manzarek propelled his serious rock career. Along with guitarist Robbie Krieger and young drummer John Densmore they formed the legendary, psychedelic-rock band, 'The Doors'. In 1965 the doors began to play in public, the rest of story is known to every psych-rock fan.

Morrison with his unique, seductive voice and his poetic image became the focal point of the Doors. The Doors were building around his lyrics. His



Jim Morrison's grave

obsessions with sex, fire, love, violence, drugs, reptiles were pretty articulate for one so possessed. Like Janis Joplin what he was screaming had meaning. His popularity was growing tremendously. Along with Dylan, Lennon, Hendrix, Baez, Joplin and few other rock legends he was one of the architects of 60's movement. Like all the best legends Morrison was unique in his appeal and in his message. According to him, "There is the known. And there is the unknown. And what separates them is the door, and that is what I want to be. I want to be the door." Without any doubt one can say that he was, is and will be the door, the messiah, the lizard king, the unknown soldier who managed to break on through to the other side. Morrison's psychedelic career was over by a shocking, dramatic end. On 5th July 1971 the rock-world was shocked by the news of the death of Jim Morrison, only 28 years old then. According to the death-certificate he died in a bath tub in his flat in Paris where he was hibernating, turning his back on America's rock life. The only person who saw Morrison's dead-body was his girl friend (who was with him at that time), Pamela before the coffin was sealed and a death certificate attributing the death of James Douglas Morrison to a heart attack was signed. The doctor who signed the certificate could not be found afterwards. The coffin was interred the following day in Paris. Immediately stories began to circulate that Morrison was alive and was enjoying his isolation from the civilized world, which he had

wanted so badly during his last days. Pamela, the only one who could have settled the madness once and for all died in 1974. Even after 23 years fans still love to believe that Morrison, the king snake is crawling somewhere on a low street and that the music is not over yet. They think that strange days will be over soon and on a blue Sunday Mr Mojo Risin (an anagram of Jim Morrison) will be back with his roadhouse blues. As far as I am concerned, dead or alive, you will be always in my soul-kitchen, Mr Mojo Risin!

A Fleeting Fad

by Sushleen

THE novelty of having a dish antennae installed on the roof of one's home, has now worn off. The owners no longer get a kick out of displaying their 'dishes' to the rest of the world, as almost anybody who's anybody, now has cable. A new craze has swept the very rich and famous off their feet — Mobile phones.

The mobile phone gives one a chance to flaunt one's wealth. At parties, mobile phone owners cannot resist their urge to show-off. Just when they are sure that a fairly large crowd is watching, the owner makes a grand show of taking out his mobile phone and then calling someone for the most ridiculous reasons: This gesture, much to the owner's dismay is met with angry and annoyed glares, rather than jealous looks.

Mobile phone owners have made themselves a nuisance in various public places. Mobile

Looking Beyond The Ivy League

by Zaki Wahhaj An A-Level student

ON Sunday, November 13, the article 'Looking Beyond the Ivy League' in the section 'Teens and Twenties' caught my attention. The writer, Nadim Hossain, who is a student of Cornell University suggested that it is often more rewarding for Bangladeshi students planning to attend US colleges to study at a small Liberal Arts College

rather than at an Ivy League institution. However, since I plan to attend a US college next year, I have learned about the advantages and drawbacks of attending various kinds of colleges. And this enables me discern the flaws in his arguments.

Nadim believes that the Ivy Leagues attract Bangladeshi students because of their fame, which, he insists, in the long run will serve no purpose. But we have to understand what made the Ivy Leagues famous in the first place. Harvard, Yale, Princeton and the others are unique because it offers the undergraduate the opportunity for a varied range of extracurricular activities as well as an extensive curriculum. In case of small liberal arts colleges, such as Oberlin and Wooster, which Nadim seems to prefer, the curriculum is limited to the arts and the pure sciences. Surely, therefore, they offer less flexibility.

I cannot understand why Nadim feels it is easy to choose one's major at a liberal arts institute. The option of changing one's major after enrolling into a university, rather, is the essential characteristic of an Ivy League institute. Cornell's curriculum is so diverse, that a student who originally intended to study Anthropology can graduate with a degree in Hotel Management. At PENN, students are not even required to choose a major during their freshmen years. By contrast, simply by enrolling into a liberal arts college, a student abandons the option of specialising

in the Applied Sciences.

Another unique feature of Ivy League institutes is their ethnic diversity. At Harvard, more than 10% of the students are foreign. This may not seem like an important characteristic, but it means one is likely to meet people from his own part of the world at the college. As a PENN alumni recently said, students from Bangladesh who enroll in US colleges often feel alienated from their new environment. Under these circumstances finding someone who actually shares one's views and background can be quite a relief. Liberal Arts colleges rarely provide such an opportunity — as they are quite small, classes are often made up almost entirely of local students.

Nadim discusses the relation between a student's undergraduate school and his opportunity to find work. He points out that the former rarely affects the latter since interviewers can usually assess a prospective employee's character through an interview. But seriously, could a fifteen to twenty minute interview really enable a firm to identify the person they want to hire from a pool of say twenty candidates? More likely, the firm would find more than one candidate preferable during an interview. Under such circumstances, wouldn't they be more likely to choose the Ivy League graduate than the Liberal Arts graduate?

I am certainly not opposed to a liberal arts education but one has to admit that Ivy League diploma counts much more, not just because of the fame of Ivy League institutions but also because of the kind of experience they can provide a student.