

TEENS and TWENTIES

HOW can I express this lone word? Frankly speaking, I am no poet, or author of any sort. I am a simple man — almost unnoticeable, and a simple fellow would always express eyes as eyes, don't you agree?

Lets set eyes on the subject now. What can be the subject? Guess what? No wonder its EYES again!!

Alam, a friend of mine, was a romantic fellow, met a girl and fell in love. It could be told, that it is not the girl herself but her lustrous eyes which had really done the damage.

We suggested — 'Don't just waste time if you really feel that you are in love with that falling star, follow her like a fanatic and approach her in some fabulous way. May be some flat flattery would fall her flat.'

Our down to earth solution was a success. It worked as an eye-opener and took him to the forefront of the matter. Alam blinked his blooming eyes couple of times but in a sore voice admitted that deep down inside his heart he felt a craving urgency but found no way to propose to that girl.

'Ground her like that — is no easy job, you know! The moment I have a rare glimpse of that lonesome dove, her eyes spellbound me and I become so nervous and ultimately find myself suffocating, like there's no air around. Groaning is possible and that's the best thing I can do in front of her, I swear!!'

We encouraged him to carry on. 'Lets try it in another way. Why don't you say something with your eyes shut. Then you won't have to have eye contact and hopefully you can save yourself a heartbreak as well. You don't need to worry that lot, pal. Worrying won't help!'

It delighted us to see Alam's glossy eyes sparkle. We became somewhat inflated. Our dotting friend took the idea wholeheartedly. It seemed the idea had struck his head boldly.

After that therapy session, our good old friend seemed to vanish in the thin air. He wasn't at our regular *adda* and was nowhere to be found. Our thoughts went wild this time. We were now pretty sure that *Alaimma Shala* (please, excuse my language) must be in love with his fair lady by now and enjoying the ride to the moon. So on and so forth went the fuss. In any

'For Your Eyes Only'

by Mozammel Haque Ranju



case, it's natural that he would desert us and we were not surprised.

We went over to his residence to make a query but were utterly perplexed to see him like that. He mummified himself with bandages all over his body and it's hard really to recognize him. Feeling our presence beside him, Alam began to pipe his eyes violently.

'I am finished, Dos!!' Alam took sometime to settle himself down. Then in a weaker voice described his mission to us.

That day he went to his beloved's house, and he braved his finger to coax the door-bell to ring. He found her alone in the drawing-room. That cute little bee was lying in a couch before his very eyes. Alam eyed her on the sly but her eyes met. His heart leaped. It missed couple of beats watching her enjoying some mischievous smile. Yes, he could feel it!! He was suffocating all right and trembling like a cattle in front of a butcher's knife. He was absolutely distressed and suddenly began to experience bizarre things happening to him.

But you know Alam was so confident that day. He remembered us and of course our theory quite well. He

closed his eyes, took some time to calm down. He remembered the dialogues which he decided and had been revising every now and then and started with a deep breath.

'Sweetheart!!' Alam paused, so unsure of his vocal cords as they sounded strange. He, a poor little knight, tried everything to shake-off his nervousness and oh, while he was in the middle of this momentous occasion, the point of no return made him awfully vulnerable and dizzy. He could feel his world falling to ruin. He muttered to himself — 'NOW OR NEVER', took a long breath and fortunately this time his voice did not show any betrayal.

'Darling!! The very moment I saw you, I fell in love with you. I passed sleepless nights. Those pretty-pretty eyes of yours snatched away sleep from my eyes. I know I am worthless... don't have anything to offer... and I know that I am no match for you either but darling, I tell you that I love you and only you!! And you mean the whole world to me. I am never gonna live without you and believe me, I really mean that!!'

Alam was pleased with his performance and had some

quick breath as he was happy sensing everything is going right in his way. He was delighted to find no response from the other end, cause he knows it for sure that silence is the note of consent.

His joy knew no bounds and his closed eyes enamored with desire to glance at his princess but he checked his on rush of emotion and thought he didn't need to spoil the whole thing any way for he was going to be blessed in no time with that charming young lady to watch for his whole life. So, why hurry? He caught hold of the string of dialogues bubbling in his head and again began letting them out carefully.

'Honey! Just say you love me!! Say only once to this poor me that you are mine! Don't remain silent my love! Say anything or I won't open my eyes! NEVER! NEVER! NEVER!!'

Alam's agonized voice reached its saturation point. It wasn't unlikely that anything tearful might happen any time. He was unbearably sick with love and was obsessed with overwhelming passion but waken up soon as he felt some earthly pain popping up from so awkward a place that he could not help screaming.

Alam opened his wet eyes and to his total disbelief found Auntie — his would-be mother-in-law frowning at him with her angry red eyes and it's her privileged hand that stretched to its full length to reach Alam's ear to cause him all that pain!! The fingers were busy performing gymnastics with his lone left ear.

Failed to find any means to escape from those rolling hawk-eyes, Alam simply had a mere chance to give her a break with an outside dodge and finally made his way through the door. It might be for his dim illusive vision, he climbed up the stairs to the fourth floor first instead of climbing down down-stairs. There a pet dog did the rest. It almost barked the love-lorn's trembling heart out. He was absolutely out of his mind. Panic seized him but with a vigorous attempt he somehow managed to escape the scene.

It's like adding salt to the injury. When he reached home he was found wearing a stocking in one foot and a shoe in another. His body was full with scars of bruises and scratches. He was in no position to socialize with friends!

The doctor mummified him well with realms of bandages. Alam's tormented eyes flickered and we saw a bitter disappointed mad look replacing those lovesick tiny eyes as we suggested not to lose heart.

His bewildered gaze made us speechless as we felt somewhat responsible for all that happened to him and its us really to blame for it's no more of the girl's eyes but her mother's which kept haunting him now.

For Alam, we only can look forward desperately to see a happy ending. Folks! Why don't we put things together ourselves!! Who knows it may be that tomorrow Alam would see his beloved lady, responding cheerfully to his sincere love, winking affectionately at him every single moment they share!! Would that be a sheer fantasy?

Innocently speaking, I think one should not just feel unhappy for all that has happened to Alam, cause he at least had the heart to express his feeling to the girl he madly fell in love with. There are so many of us who don't dare to. It's time we shared the courage with him, don't you agree guys? Hey guys, ... don't desert me on such a courageous mission guys.....?

Tutankhamen's Cursed Tomb

by Sajid

"THEY will find gold and death." A port dragoman said to his employer, the special correspondent of a London newspaper, pointing at the men who were to direct the excavation of Tutankhamen's tomb.

The startled newspaper man asked why? "Because," said the dragoman, "the old gods live. This man" — he pointed at the tomb — "was an unbeliever. He found the old gods too late; and he offended the God of all gods, Amen-Ra. Somebody told this to Lord Carnarvon, the archaeologists' team leader. He did not laugh at it. He was a very sane and an unemotional man, in all seriousness, he immediately said: "I recognize that possibility."

The curious fact is, the mummy which is supposed to be — by popular tradition — unlucky, is the mummy of the one who has defied the great gods.

Tutankhamen was buried in an elaborate ceremonial, manner but they made no image of Ra, the sun God, on the platform which carried the mummy. There were many gods worshipped in ancient Egypt. Among them the God of gods was Amen-Ra. He was believed to be the most powerful. But Tutankhamen did not believe in him. He destroyed almost all sculptures of Amen-Ra and tried to form another God.

This act raised a great anger among the gods. When Tutankhamen's corpse was buried they did not paint on suitable plaques the figure of the gods Tem, Shu, Tefnut, Seb, Mut, Osiris, Isis, Suti and Nephthys and anoint them with cedar oil. And the spell of peace did not go into the closed cavern where they laid the body of their young king.

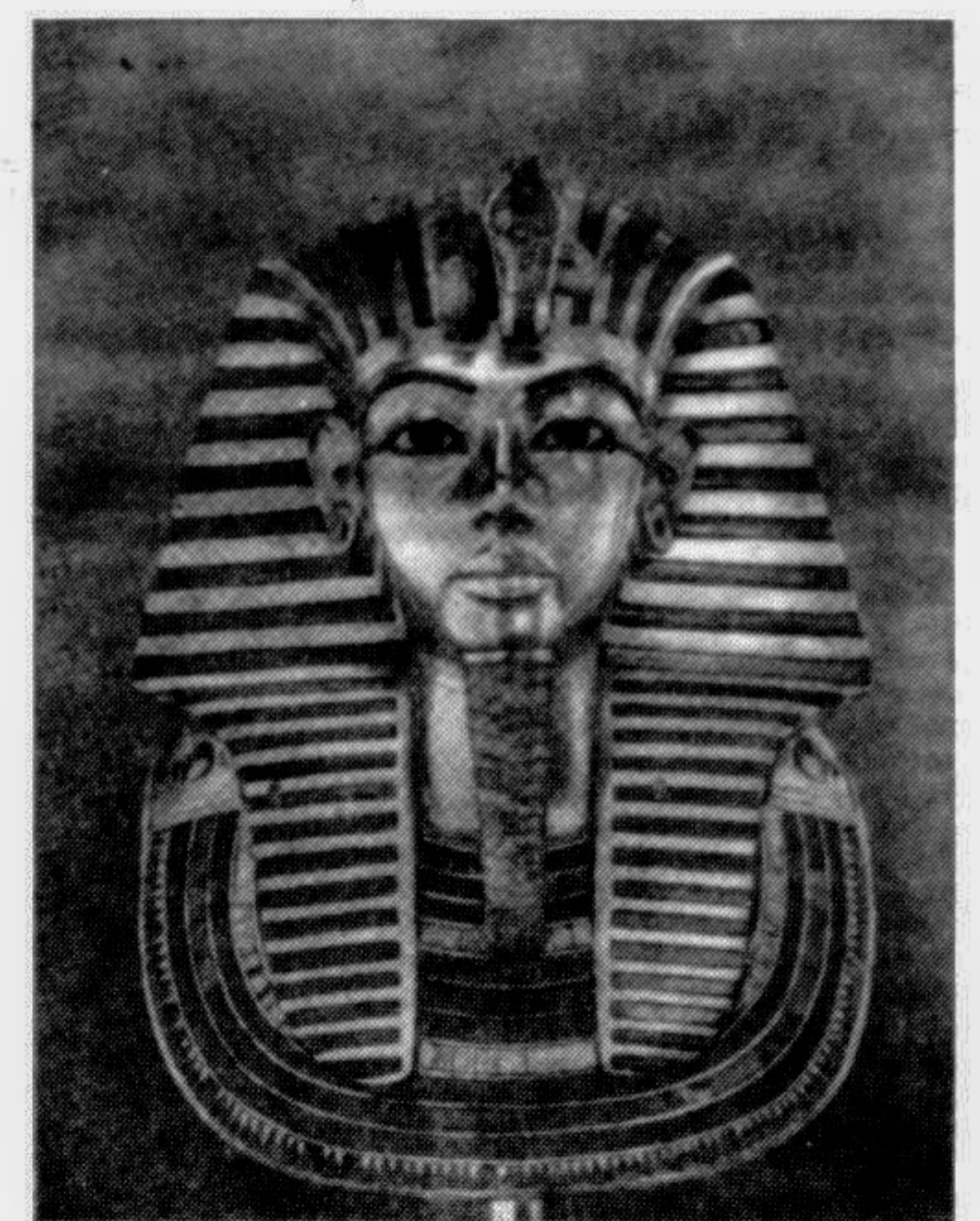
The gods who sat on the parapets of hell were not with him, and their wrath dwelt in the pitch dark chamber which contained the embalmed shell of the unbeliever.

Very clear headed scientists viewed the excavations with uneasiness. Such men do not believe in ghosts; but they do not preclude the possibilities of psychic phenomena. There are ordinary people who carry with them an aura of disaster or fortune. The x which produces such phenomena is mystery yet unsolved. In Tutankhamen's tomb was the supreme x, which meant death.

In the excavating team with Lord Carnarvon were Howard Carter and his secretary, Dick Bethell; M Benedite, the French archaeologist in charge of the department of Antiquities at Cairo; and M Pasanova. Of those men only one remained alive for a few years. All others died within some months.

Other notables entered. One was Colonel Marryn Herbert, Carnarvon's half brother, the other was HG Evelyn-White. When Herbert entered the cavern he shivered and stopped, reluctant to go on. "I wish Carnarvon hadn't found this tomb. Something dreadful is going to happen to our family." Before the year was out he was dead.

When the door was forced Carnarvon walked into the tomb with a smile and a jest. "I wish he hadn't laughed — he will be dead in six weeks," said Arthur Weigal, the writer. Something stung Lord Carnarvon on the cheek. He was a dead man before the



The king who defied all gods.

wonders of the tomb were fully revealed.

Evelyn-White, Egyptologist and scholar, became a changed man after the tomb was opened. It was as though he were haunted by some unseen and dreadful presence. Within a year he had committed suicide. "There was a curse upon me," he wrote in the letter he left behind him. The Egyptian authorities brought Sir Archibald Douglas Reed, a great radiologist, to X-ray the mummy. Within a year he was a dead man too. Professor Laffleur of McGill University was the first American scientist to examine the chamber of death. He did not leave Luxor alive. Young men, old men, men in the prime of life, men for whose lives any insurance office would have exacted the minimum premium, died, mysteriously, tragically. Only Howard Carter remained and survived until 1939. The tomb was opened in 1922. Almost every workman who entered the tomb has passed into the shadows.

Seven French authors and journalists visited the tomb and six were dead within two years. When they unveiled Tutankhamen they found a mark upon his face — the same mark left on Lord Carnarvon's cheek and exactly in the same position. On the day the tomb was opened, a cobra, which was the sacred snake of Egypt, went into Howard Carter's house and destroyed his favourite pet, a canary, that the explorer took with him wherever he went; the cobra is the rarest

snake in Egypt. Without any exception, whoever has visited the tomb, misfortune fell upon them.

The most skeptical admit, that there is something more than coincidence in the fatalities which have followed in association even with minor articles taken from the tomb. Pieces which have been placed in the Cairo Museum have been "working." Attendants whose duty was to look after those exhibits became sick and died for no known reason at all.

The famous Dr Mardus was convinced that the opening of Tutankhamen's tomb would bring death. "The Egyptians for seven thousand years possessed the secret of surrounding their mummies with some dynamic force of which we have only the faintest idea," he said.

IT doesn't make any sense. While western outfits are a norm for our city's male population, they are still a taboo for us females.

Tell me, how many guys do you spot out there wearing *pajama-panjabi* or *lungi*? Not too many, even if you're counting on an Eid-day. It is unthinkable to find *pajama-panjabi*-clad males dominating Dhaka streets. It is equally unimaginable to see Dhaka boom with females wearing jeans or skirt.

We can say *lungi* is the counterpart of *saree*. But though *saree* is gorgeously and flashily worn at offices, homes and parties, its counterpart tolerates the strict confinement of the wearer's home boundaries. The female second secretary to the ambassador working abroad has to wear *saree* to work, as a rule. Can you imagine the male one wearing *lungi* to the embassy? Even the thought is abominable.

One Dressy Argument

by Sanjida Shaheed

Won't you blush in embarrassment if your father wears a *lungi* to a party, no matter how gorgeously the garment is embroidered or how expensive the fabric is? The point I want to make clear here is, though for girls traditional dress is all the rage, it is simply an object of no status in the case of men.

I hap'n to be maverick in my ways. Once I wore jeans somewhere and a lady exclaimed to my mom how she could, as a mom, allow me to wear jeans. She questioned whether my mom didn't know it is a sin for girls to wear boy's wear?

For her kind information, jeans is no more only boys' wear. She only has to gaze at one of the channels of the TV to come to that evident fact. I had a good mind to counter-attack her. She was wearing her *saree* below the belly-

button.

Who wanted to see the awesome band of fat around her waist that she was shamelessly displaying? Wasn't there any sin in her "bare is beautiful (especially when fat)" act? I could easily bombard her with questions, but didn't. Just a waste of breath, y'see.

I really don't understand it, no matter how lewdly *saree* is worn, it is okayed. Why? Only 'cos it's a *saree*. The way some ladies wear it, really an eyesore. As a rule, the blouse has to be skin-tight (I wonder how they can stand it). Some ladies wear sleeveless blouses with so narrow a back that it almost resembles a ribbon. And the top front of some ladies are covered (covered?) by one careless layer of an almost transparent *saree*. The neck of some blouses are so big that you really begin to wonder whether Bangladesh is

really a so-called conservative country.

And after all this, all this, they have the nerve to be horn-mad at you (thank God, they have no horns), only 'cos you dare to commit the crime of wearing jeans in public. Even rickshawpullers tease you, uttering "Baap re, jeans!" street boys inevitably whistle harder at you than at a *kameez*-clad damsel. Those immoral, ignoble men will try harder to intentionally rub their bodies against yours. Ugh! what can I say, it's a crazy world, and the people it produces are even crazier.

When Bata's Sidney Casual ads hit the idiot-box, it was high time for me to hit the Bata stores. I was simply craving for a pair of nifty shoes. Well, things never go smooth, you know. One shoe clerk looked at me superciliously, when I asked him to show me some. And then told me, or rather, taught me that those are men's footwear. He certainly

had no fashion sense, well, who'd argue. Another shoe clerk at another Bata store didn't teach me so directly, when I showed a genuine interest, he just smiled. And that derisive smile said it all. I could clearly hear, "do you really mean to wear men's shoes?"

My maxim is simple — I wear what I like, you wear what you like. What you wear is none of my business. And jus' 'cos I dress up in the western way, you don't have the right to dress me down.

There are many advantages of wearing western dresses, you know. First of all, you don't have any difficulty get'n it around your body. Your outfit has little chance of getting tangled up with the rick's wheel (and so, you don't get to hear shouts like "aapner dupatta" or "aapner saree" from commuters). And last, but most important of all the reasons for me is, I can get western outfits at unusually puny prices. Yes, you don't find rejected *saree* or *shalwar-kameez* at Bangabazaar. But you do get a whole dynasty of chic western garments and exclaim euphorically: what a bargain!

Well, what do you know, western dresses are being a bit popular with girls now-a-days. You do encounter jeans-clad or midi-clad maidens more often than before. Yes, change is inevitable. Who knows, maybe ladies' western out-fits will achieve the status of men's western out-fits in the near future. Even so, *sarees* will never be as decrepit as *lungis*.

After all, guess what, a *saree* is a *saree* — indomitable and eternal. And that's 'cos nothing but *saree* quite makes a Bengalee woman look feminine. And who doesn't know our obvious penchant for unsurpassed femininity. Perhaps we should give way a little to convenience too. Why just *saree*? Why not change with time?

Why didn't we advance in the fashion sense as our male counterparts?

Perhaps we should try to catch up. Never hurts to think twice.

'About Time'

by Aliya

Bangladesh is rich in culture and tradition. Its size may be small, but it possesses all the ingredients which can help it to make it a wonderful country. I am not saying that Bangladesh is perfect, nor am I going to turn a blind eye to all its problems. But what all of us have failed to realize is that the fault does not lie in the country, rather in the people. The people have built up this country, they represent it and do whatever they want to do in it.

It is the people of Bangladesh who have erected barriers against all the things which would have enabled Bangladesh to become a great country. The influential minority spends thousands and millions of money on trivial things, while the poor people have hardly anything to eat. Religion is being used as a weapon to dominate women, subdue the younger generation and stop any improvements in the field of culture. Islam is such a flexible and wonderful religion and yet certain people exploit it to gain advantages in society. Despite the clamour for liberalisation, women are still being treated as objects men can use and abuse for their own amusement.

Bangladesh was once a country filled with greenery. It had calm and beautiful rivers, lakes whose water would ripple and produce a tickling noise, birds which would chirp merrily; but now nothing of this exists. And

even if it does it has deteriorated so much from its past glory that it is almost pathetic. As I pass the Dhanmondi lake each morning, I cannot help but feel sad, the stench all around the area; the dirty water and the unhygienic atmosphere makes one feel ill.

People seem to spend more time quarreling about silly things, such as the banning of star TV, the negative aspects of 'Miss Bangladesh' and so on. When far more pressing matters remain unresolved, will any steps be taken to enhance the living conditions of poverty stricken children? What about the problem of unemployment and lack of educational facilities? What is going to be done to improve the medical sector? Hasty, not leastly, what is going to be done about pollution and the hazards it causes to health?

With these questions still pressing, how can anyone rest at ease. Bangladesh has so much potential and yet we are unable to do anything to improve its state, class differences, religious differences, educational differences. These have caused so much barrier among the people themselves, that now we wander how we can think to resolve other problems when we have such differences among ourselves!

Sometimes I wish I could do something for this country. Do something to make everyone realize how our atti-

tude and work affects the future of this country. More and more people are leaving and those who are leaving will probably never come back. All the skilled and well-educated ones live this country and you can't really blame them; you can't really blame anyone specifically. The high rate of population makes it almost impossible for the government sector to do anything. Corruption, and illegal things have increased so much that it is virtually unsafe to go out in the streets alone.

When I think of our future, all I see is darkness, but I am sure that there is a light somewhere out there. Our duty is to find that light and the only way we can do that is by working together side by side. There can be nothing more fulfilling than to be able to stand up and tell the entire world how great your own country is. Bangladesh is our homeland, nothing can change that. Its about time we started being a little more broad minded, a little more understanding and a little more compassionate. Instead of blaming the western society, the lack of capital, the moral degeneration, we should just concentrate on how we can improve our country. I'm sure that its former glory can be restored but if the people don't change there ways then there is no point in hoping that it will ever change, is there?

Beueps

by Kazi Khaled Arafat

I heard of you in a fairy tale
In an optimist's dream
You were what I lived for
Where are you now?

Where's your shoulder of support
For my tears
and for lightening my load

Now I've reached
my broken stairway
Give me your ladder
I didn't ask for your umbrella
on a sunny day
Now it's starting to pour
And you've taken it away
Leaving me alone mind astray
Where are you now?

I gave you all I could bleed
'A friend in need
is a friend indeed'
Where's the holy hope
of my lost creed?

You were the nomad's promised land
You were the one to understand
Now I'm lost I want your hand
So tell me
Where are you now?

