



My Queer Friends

by Shahreen Munir



She will either become a model or a fashion designer (we become partners in case you become the latter!) Maybe she will spend the rest of her life doing crazy stuff!

Now, let's move on to Body Builder/Scientist/Obsessed One (did I say too much?). Always finding problems out of solutions, he is surely to deal with computer, science and technology (Yawn! How boring!).

Please welcome the Ex-Tomboy, who has lately changed her appearance (you still need that makeover which we are working with!). Over the past six years she has come to be my best friend besides Miss Famous Model! She's full of jokes and is always ready to create the most extraordinary funny faces (does it make sense?). She is an excellent basketball player and will hopefully succeed in becoming a pilot. My advice to her would be: Learn to protest otherwise justice will never be served! Stop being so afraid or else there will be no place for you in this cruel world!

First the embarrassment at the party, then her mom seeing her jump and run like madcaps, ticket problem at the concert, dumping by the rickshawpuller (shit!) biggest thing in common (top secret) and so many others.

Oh I hate to mention about him Miss Trying To Be Popular (high hopes, cheap skates!). In the near future, Miss Laughing Kukulurra is surely to be seen in all the khat toothpaste's advertisements. She loves to have fun and backbite (+find fault+drool over+criticize+gossip+think too much of herself). She is a good basketball player and her theory is — make all dance, choose not one but all!

I almost forgot about Miss Little White Rabbit. She's quiet and since I don't know much about her, I'll skip her. Next comes Miss Loyal Friend, a girl with a distinctive laughter. She's never seen backbiting about her friends. She enjoys exchanging glances in the physics (yawn) classes and is going to be a housewife (in my opinion). But she can be a singer because of her nice voice.

Now coming to Mr. Troublesome (no guesses) whose smile even gets on the teachers' nerves. Whenever I try to think about his future, I can see him behind bars (did I mention any

thing about the Central Jail?). Our class introduces the Musician who has got many prizes for her talent. She is simple (indeed too simple) for our class. She is very intelligent and her face reflects shades of Indian actresses. I'm happy to now introduce The Class Clown who is not serious even after getting scolded by the strictest teacher. He is a tall guy and no one can imagine how much he eats; (he means it when he says, 'I can eat an elephant!') seeing his thin physique. Finally, his future will be running after. no. I mean probably joining the circus (O.K. I'm sorry!).

Spotty loves to say her name with emphasis and lately she has fortunately gotten rid of all the characteristics her friend owns. She is nice although she just can't accept my victory. She is good in basketball and has other talents, she's going to build up a great career as she's very ambitious.

He is said to be the best sportsman and he's nice except when he teases me by calling me Moga! (what does that mean

anyway???) He is going to be a well-known athlete in future. She has set her position in the first place and is surely to succeed in life with all that knowledge. She is very nice and knows what is right and does the right thing too. Let's move on to Miss Boat. She is known for her um... clothes (sorry Siamese) and she is going to be a model (???) if she carries on sending around her photographs to people (get it??). Lately, she had changed her friends as she thinks those three have more in common (what is this common thing we three share?). New Sally Pally is still mad at his old friend because of the stupidest reason. Grow up Sally! He's going to be a Chartered Accountant if he goes on doing all his sums correctly and completely in Accounting class.

I almost forgot (no, I did not), the genuine British gentleman! He is very nice and he is going to take over his father's business. Tabby Cat is queer in the sense that she does not know what she wants. She is going to become a well-known writer in future. Then is a girl who is quite nice and can make her future bright if she continues working hard. Now please welcome our one and only(?) Patriot (well, not really; he is the only one who expresses it). He is a chatter-box and cannot stop fooling everyone by saying that he is a girl (not a woman) hater. (Mr. patriot, where does Ms. Famous Model go?) Join the army, boy.

Then there is this boy who is so quiet that you won't even know he is present in class. I can see his future — giving an interview, sitting in front of the boss, remaining silent and making that all-time dumb face. Applause for our Dilton Doyle!! He is small and is going to be Einstein. Oh! please say 'hi to cutie pie, tock-tock-baby' little guy. Future?? And last but not the least, the Perfect Housewife. Guess who?? Lately, she is very upset that her plan for becoming popular has gone down the drain.

Now, you want to know anything about the 26th extraordinary student in our class? Well, I am (the unique one) on the track of becoming a model/fashion designer/business woman/choreographer/photographer/and let's see what more I can manage!! So this is our class, and promises of a fantastic future.

The Tale of a Tail

by Kazi K Arafat

"Riders on the storm
Riders on the storm
Into this house we're born
Into this world we're thrown
Like a dog without a bone
An actor out on loan."

—The Doors

EVERYBODY considered him a low-class animal. Monkeys sniggered and said "Look at the way humans are always monkeying around with us — and we never showed them so much as a moment of decent behaviour. See how they respect us — they say we're their great, great, multiplied-by-great grandfathers. But even though they're our cousins, we don't give a damn."

Lions and tigers roared predatorily and iterated with majesty. "These cretins have the audacity to point their pea-shooters at us — but look at them tremble at a growl, even when we are caged in the 200, and their snarling faces are out of our reach!" And they let their vocal chords wage war, giving an excellent idea just what it was humans were so scared about.

Horses just raised themselves on their hind legs and neighed. Of course, he couldn't understand what they said. Even then, it seemed that they were gracefully condescending enough to brag about how these scary hominids worshipped their beauty. Even the crows seemed to joke about how humans have been favoured by guano toppings to go with the gel in their hair.

And of course, he couldn't, wouldn't be able to do a thing in retaliation.

The object of this last defamatory remark was not man. It was a dog that lived in Dhamondi, Dhaka, in a home with a small child. He was the kid's pet. He would rack his brains trying to save his face among the other animals, and finally came across an old TV series, and a recycled saying. "But they love me!" he would say. "I'm their best friend — look at Lassie!"

"Look at the Planet of the Apes then!" retorted an equally oldfied gorilla who looked like he would very much like Muttley answer, so that he could bash his face. Muttley bit his tongue and his lip. "Besides, what did they name you after? A dog in a cartoon that's always getting kicked around. If they couldn't find any better names, they could always find a better epithet from their talking pictures. Snowy or Hot Dog, for instance. Or Dogmatix. G'night, even Scoobie Doo or Dynomutt for that matter. It's not like the kid doesn't know these. In all probability he knows of a dozen more better names for a dog. But you had to be Muttley."

"Where's your sense of humour?" "It's there it's just that I would never like my name to be the object of someone's sense of humour. Would you, Muttley? Would you? Tell me the truth. Of course, you may not even know. Look at you — you're so pathetic! Even your tail isn't straight!"

This last remark seemed in his ears in the middle of the night until he could stand it no more and would start howling in anguish. He would be told to shut up, and finally he resolved to do something about his tail. The rest would follow.

The funny thing is, none of these remarks were true. Muttley just translated these from all the cartoons and comics his little master was hooked on.

Muttley grew a habit of sitting on a balcony, or by a window all day, trying to divine what the coded chirps and caws and moos really meant. Spring was an especially hard time, what with all the birds flying about and his tail still in existence. He had tried to burn it by sticking it in his gas burner, and gotten a scolding from his master's ammu, the All-Powerful Queen Mother who thought that he was giving her cooking the benefit of his excretion.

He had laid that appendage on the road, hoping that a bulldozer would run over it and he

would be free of his tail forever. Instead, he had been rudely kicked away after nearly being killed. After these and lots of similar experiences, he devised a foolproof plan. "I'll show them," he thought. "The nerds. After I tie my tail to one of my hind legs, for a couple of days, I'll be as good as any of those self-assured geekoid sons of mutant feets." And, with the part-telepathic, part-pantomime, self-expression of an abject mongrel to his master, he got his owner to tie his tail to one of his right angles, as a game.

It wasn't all that inconvenient for him, since the leg it was tied to was kept raised half the time anyway. Muttley was on cloud 81 (cloud 9 squared), high on the hope that he would finally be accepted as a peer. "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." Wasn't that what George Orwell said? Well, Muttley would prove to the animal kingdom that he wasn't any equaler than the best of them.

The knot stayed knotted for a long time — Muttley's owners had gone for a trip, and while his temporary guardian provided him with food and drink Muttley got little in the way of company or love. May be that guardian didn't have the time or energy to ex-



pend a few units of heart to this doggerel dog. However, they got on well together, since Muttley was the ward of a human Muttley.

Anyway, after a long period of hopeful waiting, Muttley's real owners returned and sacked their dawning for not taking proper care of Muttley. Finally, the time came when Muttley's Gordian knot was cut through, and all knowledge of grime and pretended divinity shone forth. Muttley was overjoyed, and with his shoulder straight and head high, he looked backwards at the place that had been itching for so long for satisfaction as well as claws.

There was a slight problem. A catastrophe, in fact, for Muttley.

Things hadn't really worked out the way he thought they would — his tail wasn't straight. His leg, however, had curled up, like a "Don't worry, be happy" smile — or an inverted scowl, whichever way you look at it. Even the shape of Muttley's bones had changed, and he realized with a sigh the truth of another sentence Orwell wrote:

"Who controls the past controls the future — who controls the present controls the past."

Sadly, Muttley didn't control the present. He was too buried in his own misery, as we walked slinkingly away, to notice another dog, not as handsome or as healthy as himself, but walking by like a king, proud of the marvellous gift Nature had bestowed upon him in the form of a unique tail — different from and above all the rest.

Fool, Look at thy Heart and Write

by Shamsad Mortuza

"RUNNING short of ideas," said my Muse to me. I nodded yes. A female voice roared (thunder cracked, black cat jumped vamp stared bla bla bla): Fool, look at thy heart and write!"

Easy for you to say, you deity of creativity, inspiration, and memory — one of the G9. But what is there in this foolish heart to write about. "FOOOOOL do I have to tell you every thing. I told this to Sir Philip Sidney and he wrote the sonnet sequence — Astrophel and Stella. Take an ECG test of your heart then, and write."

How genius of you! But the hi-tech prescription of my Muse could only receive a cardiographic image of my caricatured past self. The first instance of irregularities involve a minor attack, an attack from a minor one.

I recalled my first encounter with my student Osama. On the first day of my tuition, aunty (That's what I called my student's mom) literally dragged her child from the game and presented a five-year old standard sized darling before me. We were introduced with a salamalekum and an alaikumusalam. Still gasping from its chhutachhut, Osama gave me a not-again look. But my thoughts were engaged elsewhere: there was nothing I could make out of the skinny kid's dress or silky bob-cut hair. As a result, a relationship began with one vital information missing: the gender of my student.

We started with Biology. Osama was reading the lifecycle of frogs and I was reading his/her look. I heard: First the he frog croaks, then the she frog lays eggs. Then there was a pause, followed by a "I don't get it!"

"What?" I responded in a helping voice. "It doesn't make sense. The he frog makes noises and the she frog lays eggs. How?"

"HOW?" I echoed. A chill

sweat swept my spine. Osama gave me a mischievous got-ya look. Suddenly I felt angry about the whole thing. "Come on. Tell this little Denis the Menace, this it-knows-what about the tale of frog and froggy," the Bad Angel in me whispered. But when this advice passed through my lips, I heard a strange voice, probably mine, saying, "I don't know."

"What do you mean by you don't know? A teacher is supposed to know." Ya, ya, tell that to the writer of the book who designed such an issue for a KG-1 student. I swelled within. I promised my student I would look into it and clarify later.

Then came the brilliant idea (without the outcry of Eureka!). It struck me like a lightning. I told Osama to write 10 lines about itself. When the paragraph was over, the writer turned out to be a boy, a real good one. I sighed with a relief.

In course of time, we became

real friends. We understood each other more than anything. I was not at all surprised to find the new game and watch at the study table on a certain day. I picked it up, knowing Osama was not ready with my homeworks. Or, when he was ready with a series of questions like "Big Bang," "UFO or ET," I knew he had flunked in his class tests.

One fine afternoon, Osama, without any pretext told me: Bhaia, don't tell my mom. I love you more than her. Time and again I was flooded with flatteries (which I received as compliments). But the height of these involve one home-task. He told me that he was in a dilemma. "I am told to write about my favourite person. But I have two favourite persons. I don't want to deprive any of them." "Well, who are they?" "One is Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and the second one is you." Osama sounded very calm, almost untouched by the anti-climax. As for me I was dumbstruck. Well, democracy is sometimes too much.



What are X-rays?

X-RAYS were discovered in Germany in 1895 by Wilhelm Roentgen, and thus are sometimes called "Roentgen rays."

They are penetrating rays similar to light rays. They differ from light rays in the length of their waves and in their energy. The shortest wave length from an X-ray tube may be one fifteen-thousandth to one-millionth of the wave length of green light. X-rays can pass through materials which light will not pass through because of their very short wave length. The shorter the wave length, the more penetrating the waves become.

X-rays are produced in an X-ray tube. The air is pumped from this tube until less than one hundred-millionth of the original amount is left. In the tube, which is usually made of glass, there are two electrodes. One of these is called "the cathode." This has a negative charge. In it is a coil of tungsten wire which can be heated by an electric current so that electrons are given off. The other electrode is "the target," or "anode."

The electrons travel from the cathode to the target at very great speeds because of the difference between the cathode and the target. They strike the target at speeds that may vary from 60,000 to 175,000 miles per second.

The target is either a block of tungsten or a tungsten wheel, and it stops the electrons suddenly. Most of the energy of these electrons is changed into heat, but some of it becomes X-radiation, and emerges from a window at the bottom as X-rays.

Have you ever wondered how X-ray pictures are taken of bones in your body? The X-ray "picture" is a shadowgraph or shadow picture. X-rays pass through the part of the body being X-rayed and cast shadows on the film. The film is coated with a sensitive emulsion on both sides. After it is exposed, it is developed like ordinary photographic film. The bones and other objects the X-rays do not pass through easily cast denser shadows and so show up as light areas on the film.

Today, X-rays play an important part in medicine, science, and industry, and are one of man's most helpful tools.

What are Cosmic Rays?

YOU have read, of course, that when a satellite is sent up into the air it carries all kinds of instruments and measuring devices. Did you notice that in almost every case there is some detecting or measuring instrument for cosmic rays? These rays are still as exciting and mysterious as anything you might find in science fiction!

About 60 years ago, scientists noticed a strange occurrence. They found that a sample of air in a close container showed a small amount of electrical conductivity. Even when they surrounded the container with thick shields, this was still true. It meant that some kind of radiation was entering the container, radiation more penetrating than any known before!

Where was this mysterious radiation coming from? All kinds of experiments were made to get the answer. First, they proved that it wasn't coming from land, because it was over the sea, too. Since it was the same night and day, it wasn't coming from the sun. And by going up in a balloon to great altitudes, it was shown to be everywhere in space, or "cosmic" — which means "universal".

What actually are cosmic rays? They are atomic particles. They travel in space outside the earth's atmosphere at speeds nearly equal to that of light. Some of them happen to approach the earth and enter our atmosphere.

These atomic particles, called "primary cosmic rays," collide with atoms in the air. These collisions create new particles which also travel at great speeds and in the same direction as the primary particles. These new particles are called "secondary cosmic rays." They in turn collide with other atoms and create more new particles. Thus, a great shower of radiation bombards the earth. One proton coming from outer space may create enough radiation in this way to cover 90 square metres.

As far as we know, this bombardment of cosmic rays is harmless when it reaches the earth, because, after all, it has been going on for billions of years and has not affected life on earth.

Science still cannot explain where cosmic rays originate, though now that we are penetrating outer space, the mystery may eventually be solved.

My Dream

by Maisha Chowdhury

I once dreamt that I was on top of Mount Everest In a country called Never-rest. I climbed down And went round and round In the river on a boat I lost my expensive coat I swam the Pacific ocean And drank some magic potion. I suddenly opened a door And found myself on the floor.

I
by Fardeen Chowdhury

I am one.
I am one.
I am one soul
Trying to control
Whatever I can hold.
I am one man.
That's the basic plan.
How much longer can I stand...you?
I am one.
Breathe a sigh.
But I don't know why
I guess it's just a lie.
I am one.
I am alone.
Told what to behold.
My life is still untold...to me.
I am one.
But don't tell anyone.
About the song I've sung.
I am one.
I am free.
And on my knees.
With my pleas.
So sweet...and tender
I am one.
I am dumb.
Comes of being numb.
I am one.
For I am one.
And you have won.

Departed soldier

by Ahmed Ishtiaque

WHY think of tomorrow?
When you know won't be there.
Why waste your life in war?
Why do you stand in the front line
fearing your mad gun?
When you know one bullet.
Might strike you as well.
Why think of your family
When you have already departed?
Why think of your love
When you have already
Kissed her good-bye?
Why amongst other soldiers
You hesitate to vow your destiny?
Why not like the others.
You think, this might well be the end.

competition bet your Imagination!



The Rising Stars bets various things over the readers' imagination about the future of Dhaka city in 2015. What will the city look like? Will there be more traffic jams? Or sub ways and high tech commuting systems would replace the jams? Will there be playing grounds or will the roof tops be considered as only playing grounds. Will the city dwellers see sun light from inside the crowded jungle of concrete or will the city be more planned. Shall we be rich or poorer? Will the politicians become sner and honest? Will there be more fights on the streets.... IMAGINE! Its high time for you to think how do you see Dhaka on 2015.

RS Editor's Note:

On our November 1st issue, readers must have had noticed this little column and wondered what this was all about. For your clarification, this is our usual competition of the month where you are welcome to let go of your imagination and write for us 800 to 1000 words about how you visualise your favourite city in the years to come.

May be your composition would open the eyes of the city planners (if there is any). Send your piece by 30 th of November latest. Good luck!

