

Penstation

Memories of a School I Love

By Chowdhury Abd-Allah Raed

One fine day, when I was just 3 years and a few months old only, after a session of my usual rhymes, collage, crayons and building blocks, my mom hugged and told me that it was time to start school. Obviously overwhelmed at my 'skills', at that age, the word 'school' for me meant an enjoyable outing.

After completing all the necessary preparations of applying and filling forms I was asked to be taken for an interview.

It was a wonderful sunny afternoon. I was dressed up in a red T-shirt and white shorts. Every little baby has some cute pronunciations, and I had mine too at that age! At that time I would pronounce the letter 'R' as 'Y'. So when I sat between my parents facing Mrs. Manzoor (the Principal of the school) and Mrs. Lakhani (the Vice Principal) and was asked my name I promptly replied "Yaed". Next I was asked to name the color of my tee shirt - out came "Yed", making everyone smile. I kind of feel a bit shy to think back about it though. It still makes me happy to hear that I could answer to all the little queries like how many brothers and sisters I had. To which I had shown three fingers and said only brothers and I am "Mithille".

After a week or so while I was playing with my brother, the phone rang and I heard my mom speak happily to someone and then held the receiver at my ears. A soft friendly voice said, "Hello Raed, I am happy to tell you that from next Sunday you will be coming to school." It listened quietly and watched my brother play - Lucky you, I thought. I was neither sad or excited. Prompted by my mom I replied to the soft voice as good morning and thank you. I did not know who she was, it was like talking to a stranger.

There is no uniform in playgroup. So I was dressed in a pale blue shirt, black silk necktie, navy blue blazer, gray trousers and black shoes the first day that I went to school. Holding my mom's hand I entered the school gate of Sunbeams. We were greeted by a lady teacher who showed us the room I was to be in. As I entered the room, a kind faced lady with nice big eyes and the same soft voice of the telephone shook my hand and greeted me. "Good morning Raed, welcome to Sunbeams. You are in school now so say bye to Mom." I could feel a gentle, but firm hand lead me away from Mom who blew me a kiss, waved and turned to leave. I went back could feel my eyes blur and a lump rise in my throat. I wondered if I should run to her and go back to the blissful happy home I am used to. Sensing my inner thoughts, the lady holding my hand whispered tenderly, "In school I am your Mom and will always be here for you as she is at home. This is your second home. I looked up at her kind eyes and that's how school began for me.

I trust her to this very day and wish that every child had a teacher like Mrs. Lakhkhani. I keep wondering how she manages to remember all the children, past and present by their name.

She led me to a low square red table with small red chairs and made me sit on one of them. Guess in which group I was in? Yes it was "Yed". As I looked around I saw small children about my age who were crying and holding on to their mother. Looking at the strange room, I wanted to cry too but instead I concentrated on the blocks and toys on the table. The hours rolled with rhymes, songs, soft drinks and snacks.

Finally the bell rang for it was time to go home. We were led out in a line and handed over to our parents and guardians who were waiting anxiously for us. That's how I had started my first day at school.

Gradually the years passed by with moments of happiness specially

when I had received honors certificate for all round performance, specially the merit certificate which I received in the Annual Prize Distribution ceremony of the school which had been held at the Osmani Memorial Hall. There were also moments of tension for the subjects I'm not so strong in.

I'm basically a quiet person, so my teachers didn't have much to complain about. I had always found my teachers kind, understanding, helpful and very approachable, marking our copies with stars and happy faces. I always feel at home at school as was assured by my very first teacher on my very first day.

The office staff was also very kind and loving, so when the day had come to say goodbye to the Junior Section, I once again felt a lump at my throat. I recalled the days of my early childhood. When I used to take flowers for my teachers how sweetly they smiled, thanked and patted me. There were days when the 'Bayshakhi Mela' were held in the school premises and all our Bangladeshi traditional wares were on display and traditional food items for sale. And there were merry go rounds, and other rides set into the grounds as well. Oh those were the days of merriment! Now that I am in the Senior Section and feel so responsible and grown up, I often find myself worrying more about studies and about trying to keep good grades.

This year my little brother, Umeeed joined me here at the senior section. He has the same nostalgic feeling about the Junior Section. Besides receiving various honors and merits certificates, he was also involved in lot of volunteer work with the school functions, parents meetings and helping teachers with playgroup orientation and so on. He had acted in three small plays as a child, so when he helped the new comers onto the stage and say their lines, it reminded him of his own days and the special care he received from Mrs. Lakhani.

We often sit and talk of our memorable days in the Junior Section.

How we wish and pray that after our O'Levels we leave the Senior Section with the same kind of feelings or maybe even better. When I say pray, I again have to mention the good and patient teacher, who taught us the Salah and the ways of Islam. We have our deepest regards for all the teachers who taught us English, Bangla, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Art, Music and P.E in different grades. We don't get to see most of them often now, but will always remember and cherish our childhood memories with them.

Our principal Mrs. Nillufar Manzoor is really a very hardworking and good-natured person. Everyone respects her a lot and tries to do their best so that she can be proud of us all. I am sure that with someone like that heading our school, everyone of us will succeed in doing well Insha Allah not just in school but once we go beyond it as well. The outstanding results of the O'Levels speak for the school itself.

So as I stand here today and look forward to the days that lie ahead. All I can say is that I really consider myself and my younger brother lucky to have been able to have Sunbeams for our school. I just hope and pray that this can be just as or even more wonderful an experience for all the students at present and those who will come in the future as it was for us. May Allah bless us; all the Sunbeams!

Lamentations of an AIDS patient

A Tear on the Cheek of Time

By Farah Mehreen Ahmad

The tear rolls down - pure and serene,
My heart is in depression's demesne.
I wish I could scream;
Hiding, even from a beam,
The desire of survival seems to oppress,
Are all my dreams to be suppressed?
Alone I beweeep my outcast state,
I look at myself; and curse my fate.
No one would lend me a shoulder to cry on
The days of joy with the wind had gone.
My shattered feelings seem to hover
Such a big world; and not a single lover!
There is no one to wipe off my tears;
Or sit with me and drive away my fears.
My life I deserted - lonely and bare,
I've been left alone in the middle of nowhere.
I want freedom from this sullen life,
With nature so cruel, I have no desire to survive.
I know nothing about the arrival of death,
I lie thinking, aimlessly on my bed.
It will arrive; and will arrive haply
But until that moment, terror will bully.
The moisture in my eyes is so pure and sublime,
The tear on my cheek is like a tear on the cheek of time.

The lady was a vampire

By Nuzhat Tabassum Mithun

The setting sun disappeared below the horizon
No one was there I was home alone
In a distance the thunder rumbled
Then suddenly I felt panic stricken
I glanced all over the house
A cat was creeping silently towards a mouse
I sat on a creaky chair.
Then I could feel someone was my near
I felt someone right beside
And I was awfully mystified
To see a shape of a lady materialized
When I saw that I really felt terrified
The lady was a vampire
Who was dingly dressed in old attire?
Her teeth were gigantic
Blood trickled slowly down her cheeks
I didn't know what to do with that brusque
I tried to hide without any fuss.
But where to hide I didn't know
Actually I was acting like a loco.
The brute began to come my near
Then swiftly I ran to the door, which was quite ajar
Then something happened which was amusing
I saw a light, which was sparkling, and I heard
something boisterous
And then happened something humorous
Oh it was a nightmare
Where I saw that vampire
Then I really felt dunwit
Why didn't I maul that evil spirit?
I am such a coward
I must develop forward.

SUNSET IN THE HORIZON

By Ifrad Islam

So many colours - red, green and blue,
The orange glow of the sunset, too.
Half of the sun eaten by the field,
Blocking the wind like an immovable shield.
Slowly setting, disappearing down the horizon,
The sky turning red and slowly turning crimson.
At last the sky cannot be seen any more,
Only the sky a colourful dress it wore.
So the sun sets like a big ball rolling down,
Left is the field with the sun as its crown.

Chaos

By Asif Mahmood

Once in grassland lived two rabbits, three
gofers and a grasshopper. They were herbivorous.
One day a lion came close to their grassland. He
was a terrestrial lion. He found a horse. He said to
himself, "I am hungry. And when I will find a
rabbit, I will eat it." He started walking through the
woods. He went close to the grassland. He
thought he was the only lion in his territory. He
went close to a rabbit hole. A rabbit began running
into the woods. He went to catch it. The rabbit
went to another place to take shelter. Soon a
group of deer came across him. A lion came before
him. Already they were confused. They came
close. Soon they started a fight and they all died.

A Trip to Kashmir

By Maria Matin

LAST summer, we flew to Delhi on a vacation. From Delhi, we rented a car and started our journey to Kashmir. We traveled through flat land the whole day. We reached Jammu before sunset. The land started to become hilly from Jammu. The hills grew bigger as we went near them. At night, we reached Patni Top, which is the highest point between Jammu and Srinagar. The driver was tired and so were we. So, we stopped at a hotel for the night. Next morning, we again started our journey. The land grew more mountainous. We went up a mountain and then came down. Again we went up another mountain and came down. This continued for almost eight hours! Soon, we reached a tunnel. At the end of the tunnel, the land became flat again.

That was where Kashmir valleys began. A few hours later we reached Srinagar. Still the land was flat. There are many lakes in Srinagar, like Dull Lake, Nagin Lake etc. We stayed in a houseboat in the Nagin Lake. Our houseboat was very nice. It was decorated with

beautiful woodcarvings. There was one living room, one dining room and three bedrooms with attached bathrooms, which had hot, and cold water. There was a balcony at the rear end of the boat. Small boats called "shikara" came there to sell things, like food, drinks, jewelry etc. Next day, before sunset, we went to see the Shalimar Garden and the Moghul Garden. First we went to the Shalimar Garden. It was not as beautiful as the Moghul Garden. The Moghul Garden had very nice waterfalls, fountains, many kinds of flowers and trees etc. Later, we did some shopping and came back to our houseboat. Next morning, we went to Gulmarg, which is almost 9000 ft above sea level. We had a ride on the cable cars called Gondolas, there. I could see some mountains and tall evergreen trees from our cable car. My father took some beautiful photos of the mountains. Later, we had our lunch at the nearly golf club. My sister and I rode on a horse after we finished our lunch. Then, we went back to our houseboat. Next day we started on our journey back to Delhi.

The Mystery of the Diamond Necklace

By Faisal Rezwan

Jason Rogers was smoking his pipe. He was a young detective. It was his habit to smoke and read books. He became famous for solving mysteries. There were no cases on his hands now, so he was a bit bored.

Suddenly, the doorbell rang. Jason's maid came and told him that a woman had come to see him. He told his maid to let her in. The woman was looking very pale. The woman told that her name was Lucie.

Miss Lucie told Jason that her diamond necklace had been stolen. It was midnight when she had come from a party. She was very sleepy, so she opened her necklace and kept it on her dressing table. In the morning, when she remembered about the necklace, went up to keep it inside her own safe, but she could not find it on her dressing table. She became horrified and came straight to Jason. This was her story. Jason asked her if she was suspecting anyone. She told that her brother was in need of a lot of money.

Miss Lucie gave him her address and went away. Jason called his friend Harrow if he was going with him. His answer was 'Yes.' So Jason and his friend Harrow set off for Miss Lucie's house. After reaching Miss Lucie's house, they examined the house carefully. Then Jason questioned everybody carefully. He observed everyone including her brother and her secretary Miss Mary. He was amazed to see mud in Miss Mary's sleeping slippers. He opened the backdoor and was astonished to see footprints of Miss Mary's slippers and another man's boots. He closed the door and asked Miss Lucie about Miss Mary's friend. She told the names and among them was Edward Randolph.

He heard of him being a gambler and having an evil reputation among woman. He dressed as a loafer went to Edward's attendant and gave her £100. Then Jason asked if Edward had gone out on 7th November 1991, which was the day when the necklace had been stolen. Her answer was 'Yes'. He also asked if Edward wore boots that day. She said Yes. Then Jason went to Edward's house dressed as a loafer. He asked Edward to give him the necklace for £1000.

Edward became furious but as he was terribly in need of money he sold it. As Jason was a private detective he could not arrest Edward. The next day Edward and Mary escaped. Jason took his charge and extra money for the necklace.

A Teenager's Woe

By Emerald Veronica Clump

Oh how I wish I was still little,
A teenager's life is indeed terrible.
All work and no play,
And they say a teenager's life is joy
everyday
Just look at all the troubles we have
to face
And all the time gone to waste
In studying for those awful tests
On which we have to do our best.
Oh I'm sure my head will crack,
And my poor brain, it will wrack
To find a solution for the sums
Sometimes from 21 stories I'd like to
jump
I'm sure all you teenagers are with
me
For all I said you would agree.
Same here, I'm sure we will live to
regret
The life of a teenager of worry and
fret
Those adults sure are dumb.
To wish for teenage days which
They think are fun.