

# Note

**I**would be amiss if I didn't mention at the beginning that this particular Eid supplement of The Daily Star's Literature Page owes its existence to the paper's editor Mahfuz Anam. Year after year, on every Eid, he would unfailingly remind me that a literary Eid supplement would be a welcome addition to the general Eid issue. And every Eid, until now, I would reply that there were not enough Bangladeshi-English writers to make for a quality literary Eid supplement.

This year things changed. When Mahfuz bhai asked me, again, I said I'd give it a shot. The literature page of The Daily Star over the last few years has published English translations of short stories by modern Bangladeshi writers. Having begun it almost accidentally, over the years I could not help noticing several things: one, that some of the short stories were of high quality, that there were Bengali writers out there who undoubtedly needed to be translated more widely, brought into our English-language universe in a more complete way. The last process, I noted, was helped by publication in a newspaper with its wider, instant coverage and higher impact. Another was that, sadly, competent translators were few and far between. Furthermore, translations here, compared to West Bengal, were of comparatively poor quality, as well as confined to the 'classical' authors, resulting in not only repetitive output, but in the absence of contemporary Bangladesh life from our English translations. This, I felt, given the quality of some of the writers, was a shame. A Tagore story may reflect timeless Bengali values, but it cannot portray the concrete materiality of our lives today. Modern Bengali/Bangladeshi authors, writers whose works memorably capture the pace, rhythm and preoccupations of our present-day lives, should get more airtime!

Translations of Bengali fiction, therefore, I thought, needed a boost. What better way to do it than to give it a go in an Eid supplement? The result is what you now hold in your hands. Some of the stories were chosen by me, and some by the translators themselves. My stories were taken from sources where current, modern-day fiction, stories and writers abound - the literary pages of Bengali dailies, which display, week after week, an effervescent, complicated life of their own. I contacted the translators, in a few instances cajoling them to undertake the effort. To a wo/man, they responded magnificently, working hard and meeting deadlines, sending in later corrections and fussing over details, as all proper translators do. I take this opportunity to thank them all. I would be nowhere without them. So too I thank the various artists who provided the illustrations, who on a very short notice produced an astonishing array of conjoined lines and areas of light and dark to go with the text. I had published a notice in the literature page asking for translations from readers. Their collective response left me humbled. Translations came in, via post and email, from faraway towns. I have to admit, though, that barring the single exception from Sylhet, I couldn't use any of their efforts. Translating requires at a minimum a high degree of mastery of the target language, and if I wanted to publish any of the material sent to me by readers I'd have to edit them to an extent where they no longer could be honestly credited to the original translator. But by no means should they suspend their translation efforts. Readers of our literature page should continue to translate and send their efforts to us. We need more English translations.

This Eid supplement undoubtedly has its shortcomings. We hope that you will charitably overlook them and concentrate instead on its virtues. We hope our readers will enjoy reading the stories, and that they'll provide us feedback on how to fashion such supplements in the future. We wish our readers a happy and festive Eid!

-- The Literary Editor

## Contents

- Every Day, One Handkerchief — 3  
Mahmudul Haque
- Blood At Sundown — 6  
Jafar Talukdar
- The Journey — 7  
Rezaur Rahman
- The Story of Sharfuddin And His Powerful Relative — 9  
Rashida Sultana
- Man Without His Tongue — 12  
Syed Manzurul Islam
- The Days Go By — 14  
Rana Zaman
- Nostalgia For The Dodo Bird — 16  
Shahaduzzaman
- What Do You Have On The Menu That's Totally Tasteless? — 17  
Syed Mujtaba Ali
- The Girl Who Sold Incense Sticks — 18  
Delwar Hasan
- Story Of A Cold Draught — 20  
Mainul Ahsan Saber
- The Fowler In Him — 23  
Hasan Azizul Huq
- 1971 — 24  
Tamiz Uddin Lodi
- Beast — 26  
Sumanta Aslam
- A Life Like A Story — 28  
Syed Shamsul Huq

## Credits

- Editor*  
Mahfuz Anam
- Literary Editor*  
Khademul Islam
- Layout Design*  
Shamim Chowdhury
- Cover Artist*  
Sabyasachi Hazra
- Contributing artists*  
Dhrubo Eash  
Anisuzzaman Sohel  
Sanjiv Das  
Apurba Das  
Mahbubur Rahman  
Mohammad Nazmul Alam
- Production Manager*  
Selim S.H. Chowdhury
- Advertisement Manager*  
Sher Ali

Published by the Editor from Transcraft Ltd., 229  
Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka on behalf of  
Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel CA, Dhaka-1000