Debuda was standing outside and puffing away an one cigarette after another in quick succession and staring at the setting sun. Soon *bhabi* died. Debuda never went back to his teaching job in Chittagong University. Rashid Chowdhury and Murtaja Baseer retired a few years later. Rashid Chowdhury died soon. The department of Fine Arts of Chittagong University somehow lost its touch of excellence. I did not know that it was Debuda who had drawn the famous poster during our War of Liberation which literally translated says 'Hindus of Bengal, Muslims of Bengal, Buddhist of Bengal, Christians of Bengal, we are all Bangali.' When Chittagong University was celebrating 25 years of Independence in 1997, the University Museum put up an impressive exhibition on our Liberation War. What better testimony could one give about one's belief and commitment to Bangali nationalism!

Debuda had been bedridden since about the last 12 years. The last time I went to visit him in his residence was in 1998. He was lying in his bed, unable to move but very much conscious. We spent some time together. Debuda tried to remember the good old days of Chittagong University. He wanted to know if the Burma Raju Hotel was still there. I had no idea. Till the last day he was under constant care of Sumona Sharmin, his daughter-in -law, Gautam's wife. For the last few years we were neighbours in Uttara but I never had the heart to go to and see the adorable fairy tale prince I knew in such a debilitated state of health.

This winter saw the demise of some great souls of the country. First to go was Mahbubul Alam Chowdhury followed by Justice K M Sobhan, Selim al Deen and lastly Devdas Chakraborty. Every time I went to the Central Shaheed Minar to pay respect to a departed soul I prayed that I will not have to come again in the same place for a final farewell of another great soul of the country. On that Thursday when I stood in silence next to the coffin of Debuda I wondered whether it was time to say a final farewell to the winter of 2008. This has been a sad winter. May Debuda's soul rest in peace.

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