It was an ordinary morning in the city. Crowds surrounded us, with men, women, children and dogs rushing everywhere. There was a strange kind of fear during the ride, that left us bewildered. Soon enough, when we reached his workplace, his co-worker whispered something to my uncle, and we headed out. I wanted to see my father so badly. I wanted to hug him and know that he was okay. We walked for blocks and reached the emergency room at the hospital. It was the Cabrini Medical Center. I didn't understand. I didn't believe it. As we walked in, we were surrounded by sick people. Their loud breathing bothered me. And then the most unexpected came.

Something I never wished to see. Wrapped around innumerable wires, that went inside his nose, and ears, and mouth and chest, lay my father, unconscious of the world. I couldn't believe my eyes, and for a few seconds, forgot to breathe.

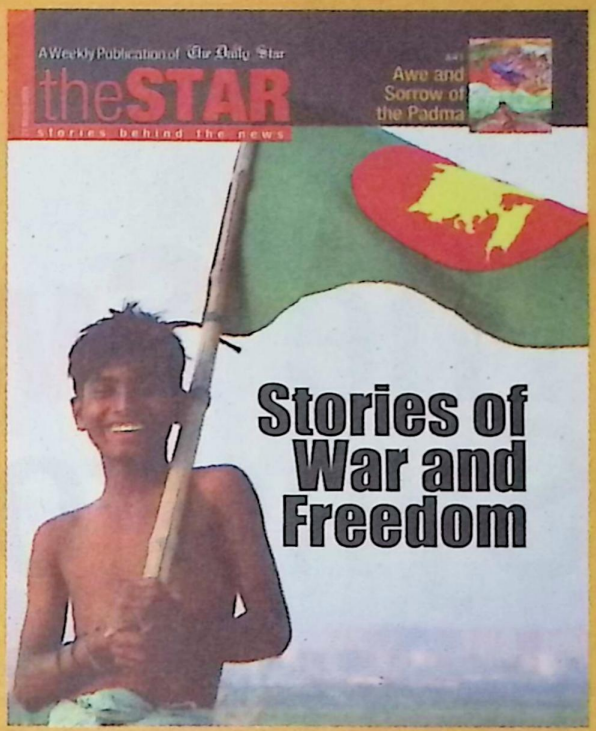
My father had had a stroke and brain haemorrhage that morning. His blood pressure had risen over 200 and that is what caused it. The physician was very kind, and explained how it was a miracle that he was still breathing. My mother, sister and I visited him everyday at the hospital for two months. It was painful leaving him at night. But I still remember that it was one of the happiest and saddest day of my life, when my father came back home. We were overjoyed, thankful but hurting inside. The sight was disturbing as we watched the once upon a time strong, active man, who never felt the need to take a painkiller and never suffered from a night's fever, or cough, or allergy, the same man was now confined to a wheel chair.

Thankfully he hadn't lost his memory, speech or balance. However, his left hand would not function anymore. Often, even now, he gets sad and I often wish if there was anything I could do, to make his left hand work again I would do it. Otherwise, he is doing very well today. He is healthy and sparkling.

We have overcome those dreadful days, and as I sit and write after six years today, we have only grown wiser and stronger. My father doesn't run these days, but when he walks next to me, the world feels safer. I feel protected. I can't imagine walking without him being next to me. He is just that special.

My father is a very kind and simple man. I haven't met another like him. He thinks and speaks in the most simplest way. Through his eyes, the world and its people are just normal without any complications. Almost every other day if my mother gets upset over a tiny quarrel or fight, I remind her how lucky she is to have a companion like him.

These days I couldn't feel happier. I have my whole family. Every night, before I go to sleep, I never forget to thank God for giving back my father on February 1, 2003. It is a miracle I have witnessed. ■



WRITE FOR theSTAR

The Star Magazine, which has just celebrated its 13th anniversary this year, is looking for young, energetic individuals who will be able to write on arts, culture, film and sports, and will also be able to write features on different events that the Editor might assign her or him to cover. To become a contributor you must be a Bangladeshi citizen residing in the country, at least 18 years old, fluent in both English and Bengali and will be able to work well in a team.

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Before you start sending in, remember that the sample article must be written in English in 700-1200 words. We do not publish poems and we are not expecting them as sample write-ups. Because of the huge volume of submissions we receive it will not be possible for us to acknowledge the receipt of your article. Please know that we strongly believe in the principle of equal opportunity; any attempt (other than your writing skill) to influence our decision will disqualify your submission.