



## TRAVELOGUE

# NIGHT BY THE SEA

**T**HE tranquility of the sea overwhelms the auditory faculty, tuned to the cacophony of our urban dwelling, with only the sounds of the waves crashing on the sandy shores of the beach, punctuating the stillness of the place. As the foaming tides hit the desolate shores, the phosphor-tagged water dances in a streak of flashing, silver lightning running across the breadth of the waves. It was like sea was radiating a perpetual spark of electricity. The waves... only to succumb to a premature death, bowing down in might, crushing over on the sand under the moonlit night. As the water recedes, sharp conch shells brought by the roaring waves accumulate on the gravel.

The salty air of the moonlit night, with the stars in the sky brighter than that in the urban skyline, creates a serene, pictur-

esque setting that humbles the human experience. With a stretch of water body as far as the horizons extend, and as wide as the eyes can see, our perception of life takes a turn for those who care to reflect. Yet, the trawlers neatly 'parked' on the sandy beaches, a respite from the rigours of early morning traffic of seafarers, reaping the bounty of the sea, speak of the valour of the fishermen, whose livelihoods depend on battling nature – day in and day out.

These marine giants float into the depths of the ocean, in an eternal struggle against nature. In the stillness of the night, the trawlers present a ghostly image. Their enormous forms suiting the magnificence of the waters, which they storm. Despite their sheer size, they remain harnessed by a sole anchor,

deeply rooted in the shore.

Breaking the silence of the moment, the laughter and a song waves in the air. The melody of the fisherman singing in solitude seems like a ballad that heralds the brave folklore of men and the waters.

As I stood before the mighty waters, I felt the cold water splash on me, and as the water retracted, the sand recede beneath my feet. Careful not to cut myself, I picked the larger shells radiating a sea green or ivory white shade; storing them in a make-shift tent I had made with the hem of my shirt.

I felt like venturing out in the ocean and cast nets to gather fish. I wanted to put on flippers and dive in the deepest depths of the water and reap pearls out of oysters. But I did not know how to cast nets, I do not know how to swim. Yet, I felt

like swimming to the silver moon.

I returned to the same spot on the rock beach where I had watched the sun set earlier, that very day. As the foaming waves crashed against the rock-solid beach I looked up at the sky. Despite the sounds of the waves the silence floated in the air. Had it not been for sounds of the water, I felt as if I could hear the sounds made by the boats and trawlers manoeuvring in the distance.

And I knew.

On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. Tempest roams in the pathless sky, ships are wrecked in the trackless water, death is abroad and children play. On the seashore of endless worlds is the great meeting of children.

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**Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel**

