



EMBRACING ADVERSITY

NUKRAT JANNATUN NOWAZ

I used to watch the sun emerge from within the hills, its scenery still etched into my mind. That orb of rich, decadent orange resided somewhere behind the barren snowcapped giants. I never knew anyone in my village who overcame those summits, but the land beyond intimidated me. The sun would peak through the crevices between the hills, its light teasing the villagers, urging them to wake up and finally it would let itself show with its mighty rays of gold.

My sister always reminded me how she was my mother's favorite child. I let her console herself, after all, it was me who mother trusted and shared the homely responsibilities with. There was a serene contentment that I had found in the tranquility of this place and my family. Something that gave me pride. My father too had felt the same, but he soon had to part for the greater good.

I left the house early one morning, giving into the temptation of hiking the hills. I paddled into the rocky, rough terrain with my bicycle. Every time I thought I was near, those snowy giants seemed further away. The sun was beginning to emerge, the orange hues became more visible. Suddenly, there was a bright streak in the sky, like a fireball. It came with a horrible noise and landed right where the village was. The force had blown me off.

I woke up to the sound of a distress alarm, something that the village had set up to alert people about bandits. My cycle lay a feet away from me and the

spokes were displaced. I ran into the village confused and frightened. Dust seemed to shroud everything, as if it were protecting me from the horror that was about to unleash. The place was pulverized to bricks, it lay in a puddle of debris. In the frantic heat of panic, I started moving around stones to find my family. Instead, I came up with a singular, blood drenched arm. I had then regurgitated.

I do not remember the events that had followed. I vaguely remember a medical camp, foreign doctors promising my health and dealers that had made my life their business. But my mind was flooded with too much. It was not my family that I had grieved over. It was the uninvited guest, adversity and how it had the power to take away all.

What had truly happened? What had I done to deserve this? Why was I snatched of my life, my home, my family, my pride?

As I still try and answer these questions, there are millions like me, displaced and too shocked to comprehend. Perhaps they are trying to answer their own set of questions. Perhaps they too are losing faith in hope. I look around and find myself floating on a raft with an unknown destination. There are others with and like me too, unwanted by nations and neglected by the world. The orange orb, now spreading its hues in the horizon as a reminder of how I am alive yet unable to live. Ungrasping hope, I embrace it all.

The writer is a grade 11 student of the Aga

NEW GIRL

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Yesterday was just another day,
 Forgotten and moved on to a
 New brighter day,
 Waltzing into the summer bliss
 Hoping this time, I won't miss
 The second chances that life
 Was kind enough to give me.
 I have been given some thrilling threats
 By my mum
 She wants me to chase perfection,
 Little does she know that I can
 Barely fight my own reflection
 In the mirror.
 I am still clinging to my flaws,
 I can't escape their ghastly jaws.
 I like to dream out loud
 And then go after them.
 Drown into my wanderlust,
 All on my own.
 I am just like you
 I cut and I bleed and I blush easily.
 I'm an open book, easy to read, so paper thin.
 Tomorrow will come
 Words will be said and done,
 I am willing to give up
 If I get to be immortal
 If not,
 I just hope that when I take that jump,
 I don't feel the fall.
 I can't outgrow life, can I?
 I just have to move on
 Fight harder until I get
 What I want from life.

Keep fighting until the very end.

The writer is a grade 12 student of Sunnydale School.

