

Wanna build a martian?

MAHEJABEEN HOSSAIN NIDHI

Omitab was going to grow up to be a Martian. Trapped in his human flesh suit, he had worked 40 hour weeks for a community club for privileges to soak in their pool whenever he pleased after hours—whenever “people” weren't there. In the sun, the water was almost always just the right combination of chlorine and urine for his skin tone to contort into strange hues with dark orange splotches. Omitab intended to fit in that Red Planet.

On one such swim, while he floated like wooden debris on the pale green water, he found his stomach to have bloated to be embarrassingly noticeable. In a way, he was glad he wasn't going to be a teenage girl's dream version of an alien. If Omitab was going to be immortalised as a fictional character, he'd rather go out as a ghoul in the pages of an obscure magazine than as some fancy hotshot millionaire alien in a love triangle that unfortunately sells a million copies. More horrifyingly, being immortalised, he



couldn't even die of humiliation if the latter were to occur.

He poked at his great bloat that so gloriously prevented him from being a pathetic heartthrob. It jiggled ever so slightly. Buoyancy is good. It might not be great because there might not be too much water in Mars, but it's not, by any means, bad.

His now wrinkled finger tips reminded

him of his sixth grade biology teacher. With a subconscious smirk, he allowed a memory to play at the back of his head like an ill projected movie. The teacher spoke more through her nose than her mouth and our little Martian wrote it off as a biology thing. Buzzing through boring details about cells, the only thing that really caught the Martian's attention was how animal cells burst in fresh water.

Maybe that's why they keep the pools filthy, he mused. The smirk stretched into a conscious action. The idea that really intrigued him from that memory was how he, despite being a collection of cells, didn't spontaneously explode yet. From the years of biology knowledge he gathered since then, he knew it would kind of almost work if he was below the surface and took up enough water into his lungs that his alveoli would pop. Exploding tiny cherries in his chest.

Omitab closed his eyes at the comforting thought of the possibility of that outcome. He was tired. Sleeping was the most productive part of his day, in human terms at least, because awake he looked for ways for self-destruction which were simply just misunderstood steps to achieving his goal of becoming a Martian.

With a keen eye and a broken brain to mouth filter, Mahejabeen Hossain Nidhi has a habit of throwing obscure insults from classic novels at random people who may or may not have done anything to warrant them. Drop a line at mahejabeen.nidhi@gmail.com



MANGLED MILES OF BELEAGUERED BACK-ROADS

AURCHI TASNUVA

Out tumbled one heavy chain
 Groaning with the weight peculiar to regret,
 Borne low by a gnawing pain
 Accompanied by ample malaise:
 One snared in a self-made net.
 A staunch feeling woven of facts,
 Old, new and incorrigible,
 Hoarded to build looming stacks
 That may quiver and waver but stand
 "Because the Will is too feeble."
 So the chain sloughs away, clanking
 Like the abrasive sound of this feeling,
 Creaking of those days of shirking
 Of all the things that Mustn't be shirked;
 Ergo, they haunt the gloom till come gloaming.
 So the moon emerges while also lurking
 Behind regrets, inherently persistent
 Of which folly is the setting
 And we are stupider today than tomorrow,
 Today being merely yesterday's glazed dent.
 And so turns the riddled wheel of wheels
 Time and time and time again,
 Forging new links at tomorrow's heels,
 Forming while fuming away, singing
 Resentment at self in sweet refrain.



WELCOME

SABAH S. RAHMAN

Almost gone. I was almost gone. I could still make out the lights then. The lights of the bright white room. I was a prisoner there. Held captive against my own will. All the wires connected to every vein and nerve ending. Tubes in every orifice. There were liquids and solids alike chugging into my failing body. I remember it as being quite unpleasant. The beeps and whirs of the machines all around my bed. The IV trying to catch up to the levels that the morphine should be released in. It was all fading. My mind started to become unclear at that point. Clouded over like getting lost in the fog. I wanted to move but all mobility had left me by then. I wanted to speak but my voice had gone too. I didn't want to be there. Yet, I had to stay. Now there were faint sounds that my brain identified as human footsteps. A door creak. Then more footsteps close to me. Two or three people. Here to see

me off on my journey into the unknown. A journey I never wished to take. The blips in one of the monitors sounded as if they were flailing around trying to escape. As if they knew what horrible misfortune might fall upon them once they fell in a straight line. I could only see shadows of people. Dimming images of what I remembered them to look like. I was too far gone now. I had no chance. At that moment, a spasm went through me, knocking the IV with its tubes to the ground. It must have scared the people because they did nothing to restore my morphine flow. Now I was going. Going. The beeps fell flat on the screen. Gone. Then I woke up. My family crowded around my bed at home with pointed party hats on their heads. They held a large cake with writing in bright red icing...

"Welcome to Purgatory."

The writer is a grade 6 student of Sunbeams School.