



THOUGHT CRAFT

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The simpler things in life

I wake early. When I hear the call of the muezzin and the first soft sounds of birds chirping, I go to my window to see the sun rise. Soon the sky begins to lighten in the east, and changes gently from dark blue to pearl, with streaks of rose- pink and gold. When at last the sun appears, I am filled with wonder, as always.

Beauty is always by our side if we have the eyes to see. As a girl, I loved the massive flames of the forest trees (krishnachura), along with jacaranda and cassia, which grew along Shahbagh Avenue. Even now, the Dhaka University area has jacarandas with mauve blossoms that fill the air with a particular fragrance that brings back memories of the joy of driving through the quiet streets.

There are still trees in Dhaka, but now many of them are Asokas, which grow tall and thick over the years. White and red fragrant lilies planted along garden walls can be seen next to jasmine, sondha-maloti or nayantara – white, pink, and mauve. Vivid clusters of bougainvillea flourish in every hue and climb upwards to the sun.

Flamboyant or simple, large or



small, the colours and textures of nature nourish us in myriad ways. A lone buttercup in a sea of green grass, a solitary orchid clinging to a hillside, or a sprig of jasmine are as beautiful as any rose in the gardens of Versailles.

Out in the countryside, the monsoon is plush. There are few things as soothing as the drumming sounds of rain on thatched roofs, under which we

sit on airy verandas, watching the palm trees swaying in the wind against a grey sky.

As the fields and gardens are washed clean, and dusk approaches, the child in me hopes that perhaps one of the mythical witches, that we used to hear stories of in childhood, would appear from among the palms, and prove that there are indeed magical

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creatures that live on treetops.

It is a time to eat 'khichuri', hilsa or some other delicacies, and follow it with cups of hot, sweetened tea. I remember that one of the things I loved best in my childhood was drinking tea out of the saucer. My old ayah taught me to cool my tea in this way, and I taught my granddaughter. Now she loves our tea ceremony, where after a few hours of play, we rest and drink tea from our saucers with loud slurps and say, "Aaah!"

Life is beautiful for the simplest things - enjoying trees and flowers, playing with children, and watching the days pass peacefully.

In a world where work, bills, and taxes take up so much of our time, we tend to look downwards: down at our desks, computers, iPads and iPhones, papers, bills and taxes. When we find the time to look up, we find that twenty years, or fifty, have passed by and we did not even notice.

Our children are grown, and we pause and draw breath. What we see is ever-present, constant nature, in all its different forms, unchanged from the days of our childhood, and there for us to enjoy once again.

My mother once said, "This world is so beautiful, how can people bear to leave it?"

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