

THE WATERSHED MOMENT

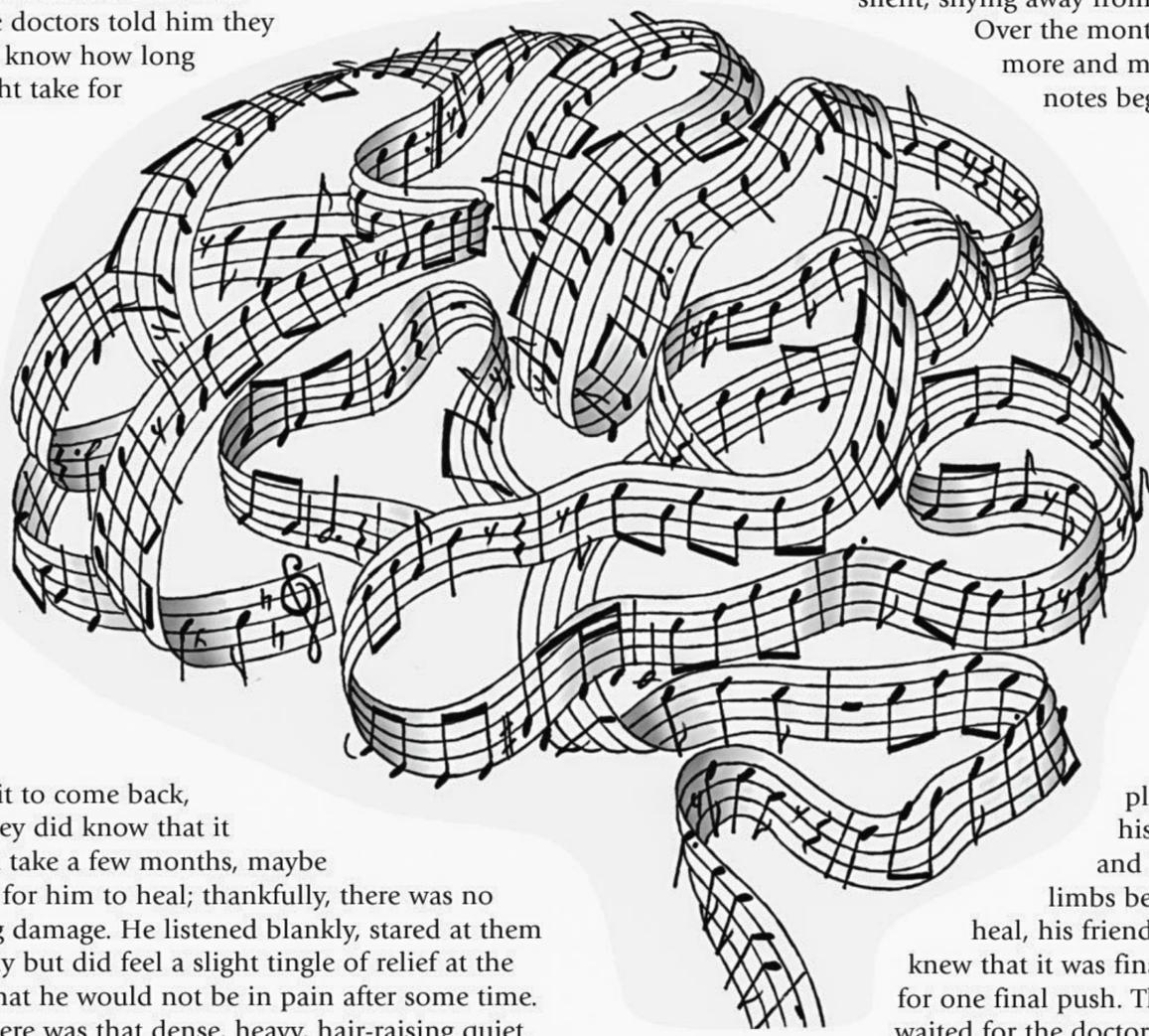
RASHEED KHAN

He woke up and remembered nothing but the pain in his limbs.
 When the doctors told him he had been involved in a car accident, it struck only a chord in his mind, a blaring of horns, squealing of tires. Other than that, the music of memory had fallen silent.
 The two people claiming to be his parents rushed up to him when he was out of the operating room, embracing him gently and stroking his hair, his mother kissing his cheeks with tears streaming down hers; and he felt no joy in it. No relief. For the music had fallen silent.

understand were his real friends from that ridiculously large crowd who initially visited him – began to be revealed as the slow months went by. They presented him with bits and pieces of his old self: favourite storybooks, some TV series, movies, pictures of themselves and most of all, music. According to them, his favourite style was rap music. They turned on some of what they knew were his favourite songs, even showed him the music videos on the Internet. Despite having heard these for the second first time, he took joy in the rough, lilting style of rap, an elegant landslide of words. For the first time since the accident, he heard a note play in his mind, but quickly fall

The doctors told him they didn't know how long it might take for

silent, shying away from him. Over the months, as more and more notes began to



all of it to come back, but they did know that it would take a few months, maybe more, for him to heal; thankfully, there was no lasting damage. He listened blankly, stared at them blankly but did feel a slight tingle of relief at the idea that he would not be in pain after some time. But there was that dense, heavy, hair-raising quiet.
 He met his friends next and felt strange at the fact that he knew none of them and yet they all knew him. The people who claimed to be his friends. They hugged him, one by one, careful not to hurt him, a surprisingly large group of people, asking if he remembered something, ANYTHING. Something told him that they never checked up on him, never or barely cared to keep contact, before the music stilled.

play in his head and his limbs began to heal, his friends knew that it was final time for one final push. They waited for the doctor's approval that their lost friend

The months passed in agonising slowness, as if time were moving through water rather than the medium it always flowed in. Nothing of great incident took place. His parents visited him every single day, talking to him, hoping to spark something that would make him remember; sometimes his mother would stay with him for the night and when she would think he wasn't looking, she would let the tears come out. He felt a pang of remorse as he would notice that; he might not currently feel any real affection for the stranger responsible for his being, but melancholy was infectious.
 His real friends – at least, what he began to

would be allowed out of bed again, allowed to walk at least a little.
 Their hearts fluttered nervously as they led him to the rooftop of the hospital, which they had specifically asked the hospital staff to leave open just for this occasion. They took him to the railed edge, careful to walk with him in case his legs should give up the strength they had worked meticulously to gain back. They reached their goal and the others said nothing, bracing themselves for the watershed moment.

He looked down and around at the sprawling landscape: an old town with the greenery of trees dominating over the man-made in multiple places. He looked up at clear blue skies, stretching for what felt like eternity. He looked around, and finally, the music began to play again.
 And he whispered, "Is that ma city?"
 Suddenly, his friends all started dancing around him while yelling, "DAS YO CITY, UHH, DAS YO CITY, UHH, IT'S THE FARIDPUR CITY-"

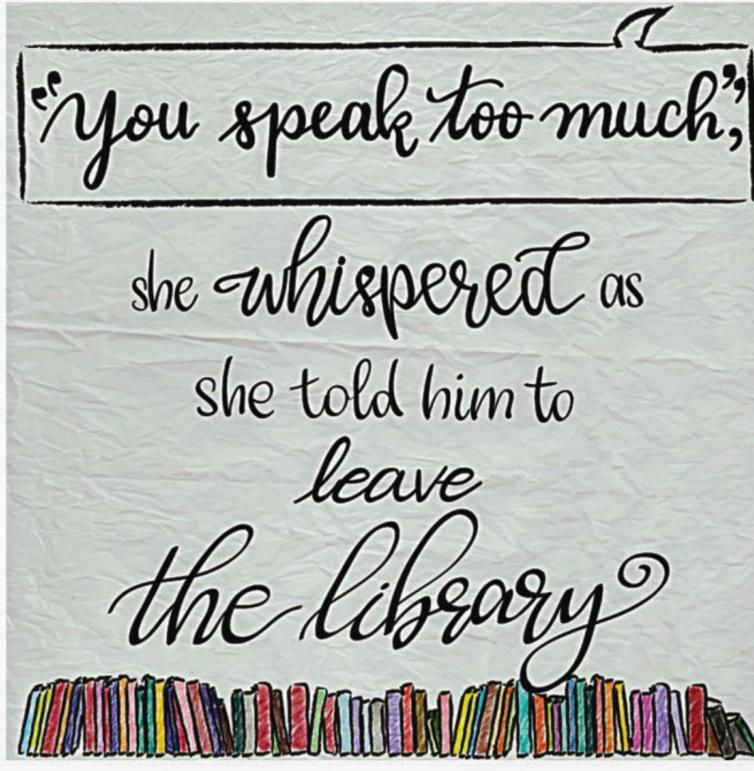


ILLUSTRATION: AANILA KISHWAR

DREAM AGAIN

NASHEETAH HOSSAIN

I would say that I grew up in this city
 But rather, I've spent my life in a concrete box
 For the cars on the streets just seem to be stuck in an unending mannequin challenge.
 All the heartlessly challenging schedules and loneliness
 Concocted with all the hidden regrets mixed with the pitch black smoke that takes over our skies
 Is enough to make you lose your mind
 And make you so cold, like the feeling of fresh snow on your skin.
 Lost in blue, you helplessly attempt to hide it
 With expensive cars, jewelry and make-up
 But honey, you're still empty on the inside.
 Is this the sound of a heart breaking?
 Because I'm not even sure if I've still got one.
 But in peace, I shall learn to shed tears, once again
 And perhaps learn to dream again.

In this city,
 Come what may,
 But we must never lose faith in ourselves
 And let others take over our actions and decisions.

The writer is a grade 7 student of Sunbeams School.

