



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

ZARIN REZWANA

The flyover was trembling, and so was his entire body. The street light flickering on over the stray was the only black sheep in its entire line.

As he lay limp, the light going off was relief, the light shining was fire. Every breath was stinging, and every car that rushed felt like the gust of wind that would blow him away. He hadn't eaten for days – he never ate alone, didn't matter if he could or couldn't manage the food. Food felt like treasure, and if he knew who Indiana Jones was, resemblance would cross his mind, because scavenging for food in the trash grounds was nothing less than finding mark X. He was small, and it was easy to look into people's eyes as the passed – prude they would find him, but he only wanted to tell them how grateful he is when they're not hurting him. Too many threw kicks and stones, and he learned to be grateful to those who didn't, even if all they gave him was sheer ignorance, after all, outlaws were meant to be treated like that.

His stomach was growling, and as his heart beat, he knew there wouldn't be much to acknowledge his existence. Every car that passed him seemed like his last, but luck didn't favour him even now – it decided to let him wait for the last car that would pass him, because the one that hit him was not enough. He waited, for it was all he could do before drifting away with heavy breaths.

Opening his eyes, the cars weren't brushing away anymore. A child was looking at him through the window of a crimson car. He was banging the glass to get his attention, impatiently, as she had been doing it for a

while. When he looked up, the child smiled. She looked wrapped in pink, or was it just an assumption? The child turned back, only to come back with her mom. The lady looked at him, and looked hurt? Pitiful? He didn't know.

The car moved forth, just a bit and as his destitute eyes followed the pink doll, he could see her in distress – she looked like she wanted to say something before the car rushed away.

He closed his eyes yet again, but he felt that he was lifted, softly, as if he wasn't being picked up to be thrown away this time. He heard laughter around him, a child clapping. He was awake. The same little girl was holding him, the lady supporting her. He whimpered.

They got into the car with him, and panic kicked in. Where were they taking him? The girl stroked his fur, held him close to the window. He lifted his paw with utmost effort – why weren't they taking his friend? Why did they choose him over their own? He kept whimpering, for it felt like shouting but no one listened. He felt helpless, and looked fixatedly at the motionless ragged body that had cradled him this long, the human stray who was his companion ever since they realized they had no home, the human being who threw bones at him because they would never devour treasure alone.

The pink doll was happy to find a new pet – the dog was sickly but all he would need was a trip to the vet, otherwise he was a perfect addition to their family –

The car was rushing away, the street light flickered. The dog tried to lift his head, to not lose sight of the child, but the light didn't turn back on this time. It always did, it was their home, but this time it failed. It failed to light up for its refugees, for there were none, as of now.

THE KID

MD. SHAFAYAT HOSSAIN

The kid paints a dream smitten world with endless dots,
 The sailor sails as the kid doesn't tie him in sailors' knots.

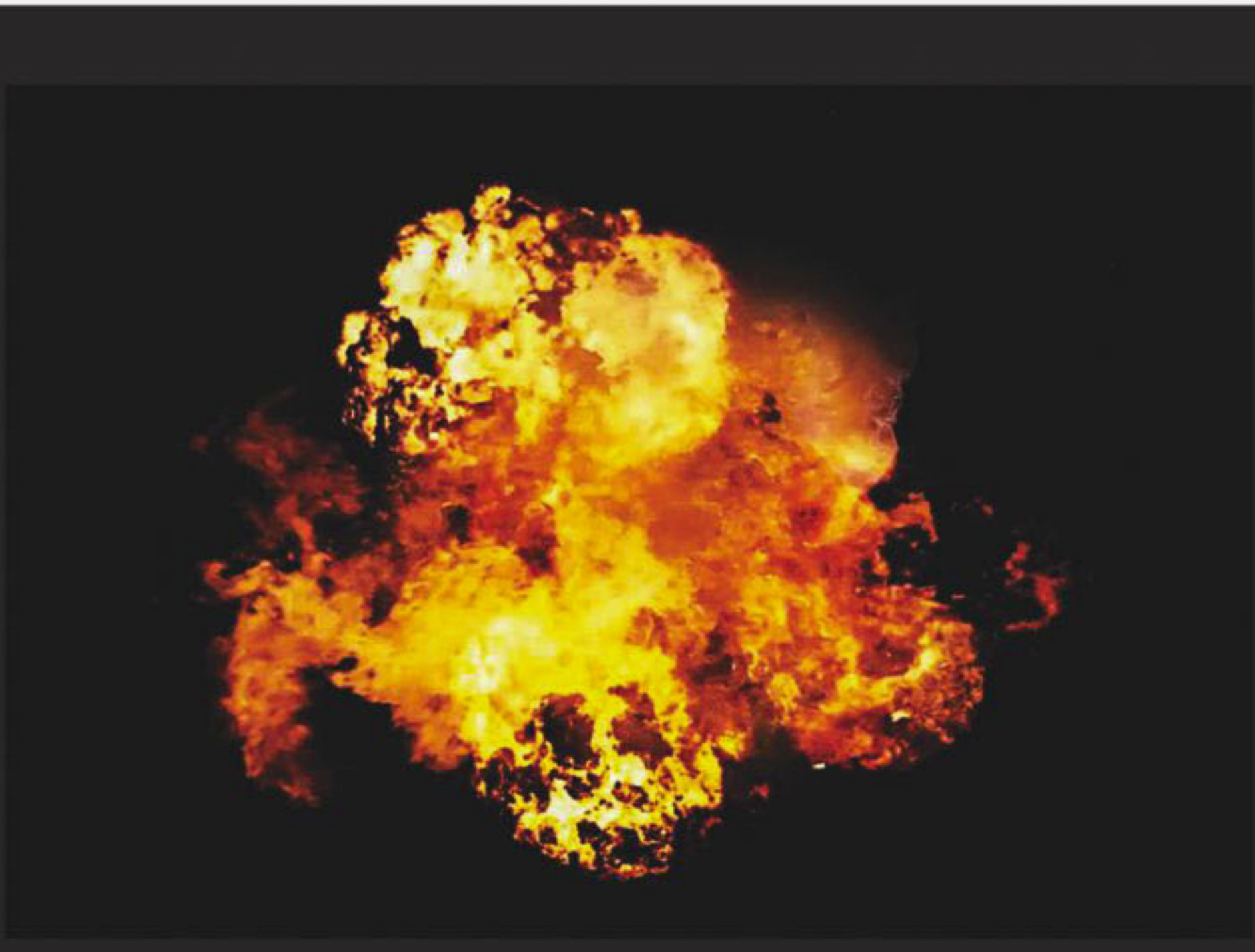
The actor acts and the bakers bake
 And the macaw flies in the west,
 And the Sasquatch jumps while the Bigfoot thumps
 And the unicorn lays eggs in its nest.

The colors energize and hopes arise
 In the good old sad little moth,
 Usain Bolt loses and guess who cruises?
 Yes, the dirty mould sloth.

The kid shall grow in his own burrow
 Not the rabbits would dig all holes,
 With colorful thoughts in his sketchy dots,
 He would change the human race's roles.

The kid's in you and the kid's in me
 And it's time we set him free,
 In the rainbow lights with much delights,
 We'll be blessed with a world of glee.

The writer is a student of Udayan Higher Secondary School.



EVERY WAR EVER

FARAH MASUD

Thunderstorms of airstrikes
 Dismembered bodies of children
 Craters in place of houses
 Cremation of dreams
 Incineration of hope

"But it is all worth it," they say,
 "It is alright."
 "The sacrifices are just,
 The sacrifices are necessary-
 To build the world anew."