

READER SUBMISSIONS

AN EPITOME OF IMMACULACY



NASHEETAH HOSSAIN

In this world where every man wore a mask,
She heroically wore her flaws out there in the open.

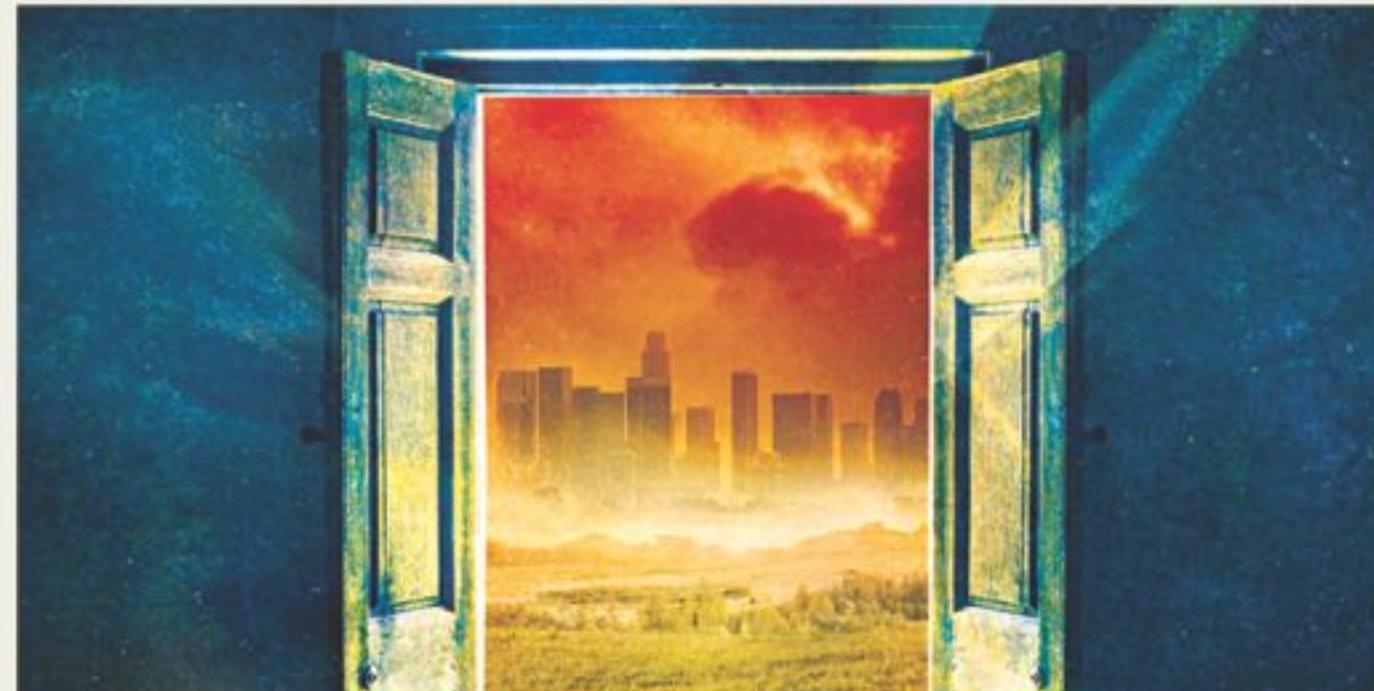
In this world of hypocrites

She pained herself in her own scrutiny instead.
She was a dancing inferno.
Her mind like a drop of free water
Her laugh like a crashing waterfall
Her tears carrying the weight of it all.
And if her thoughts were to be put into words
They would be the eye of a perfect hurricane;
Wild, void of sanity
All the while making perfect sense.

And she was beautiful,
In the way that when you hurt her, lightning struck her eyes
And when you loved her, there was fire.
But in all honesty,
They were always just stupendous.

The writer is a student of grade 7 in Sunbeams school.

LOVE'S FREED SLAVES



ARUBA ADIL

Hell has visitors.
I have been told
That the fire baptizes its survivors
That, after the retribution, comes the reward.
And that when you come out, your heart beats

A new beat

First the shackles made from
gold wedding bangles
Are broken.

Then you are bathed in honey and milk,
Draped in velvet and silk,
And crowned with branches carrying cherries.
Your teeth sink deep into ripe mulberries.
These earthly pleasures act as a salve
For the burning from your hellish rebirth.
And with that slight taste of paradise,
You are placed back on earth.



PREDICTIONS

ZARIN REZWANA

He pressed the numbers in, adding, subtracting and writing the result – seeing a surplus, he smiled. This month brought in more than the last, and the figures had been growing for some time now.

As he got out of the stall, and pulled down the shutters, the black night sky was lit by the light bulb that never ran out – and this night, it was at its full potential. Thinking of waiting for a cab, a thought ran across his mind about walking through the rain washed city, and his legs ran fast enough to catch it. The city had a soothing coolness to it and a humbling quietness which he found very familiar.

The thirty-five-year-old walked and whistled through the pavement, pangs of nostalgia stinging through his veins. Yearning for home-made food, and having someone to scold if he were too late at night. Kicking a stone and imagining it was a part of an emotional drama, he sighed to himself, as if life had not been enough dramatic for him.

Fifteen years since he had left home, 5475 days of his life spent to turn the bubble he had lived in, to a world he loved. Every single day, he had this new set of people, brought in by the older ones – he made sure a curious mind was never bid farewell with an empty heart, fulfilling what had been the dream ever since he knew what dreams were—the only the gate to a possible and probable reality.

He was always told that he was never going to be able to do anything, never have a family, never get a family because of his own if he continued

to flunk his board exams – the hours he spent on teaching young children were not going to help him unless he spent them on himself, learning the syllabus. The thoughts made his bones shudder now, just as they did years earlier.

He left home a few days before his results came out, and decided to never look back at it – nonetheless, he was back by the end of the day and made an excuse about crashing at a friend's place. The day his dad had been fuming like the breathing black dragon of one's nightmares, he kept his cool, and asked for some time to turn things around. It was only a growl that the dragon gave off, but he knew that he had won the most needed commodity of life.

Six months, and a few part time jobs later, he had a plane ticket, a scholarship and a smile on his face. There he was, sure to make his parents proud, trying to make their dreams, his dreams. He knew he was never going to be a good engineer unless engineering meant sculpting buildings from sponge cakes.

The door to the little house on the curb opened and he was attacked by a cheering child.

'How's my favourite student doing today?' He laughed, 'Let's have a take on tomorrow's specials, shall we?'

'Yes, chef!' said the child.

The toll of getting out of the painful bubble had taken him like the storm takes on the sea, until he came to the conclusion that, at the airport terminal, what he didn't have was a set of parents to see him off as he set flight to the one place he had always dreamt of going – a Parisian culinary school, and the road to the stars, however Michelin they may be.

SUNSHINE

FAISAL REZA

Sunshine and wake me up
Gentle whispers around me tell me your name
And me make me feel good
The winds that howling around me
So long as one can live,
So long as one can see,
Strange things just happened to me.

The writer is a student of Bangladesh Army University of Science and Technology.

