

Flower Poem

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

She breaks forth from the depths of the soil
 And rises above the earth.
 She wears petals like crown,
 Grows nectar for a heart,
 Leaves for hands- as if many,
 And a stem for a spine.

In your dreams,
 She will walk with you,
 And spill her fragrance
 Over the million miles you will cross.

When the sun will peep through the clouds,
 She will hold her head up and gaze at it.
 Just like how she will gaze at you
 And let you float in her beauty
 When your heart will droop low
 Under the weight of your sorrow.

*The writer is a grade 11 student of Birshreshtha Noor
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Biased Memory

SADIA TASNIM TUBA

Just a few hours left!
 I will forget everything.
 Some mind-dissolving melodies;
 Sound of the silence or
 The smell of some old nights,
 I will forget everything.

My lashes are becoming heavy like-
 someone has put stones on them.
 Tear drops are rolling down from the corner of my eyes.
 Like a long-promised responsibility,
 I slowly wrap up all my aches.

Craving for some lost discussions,
 I just look at the starry sky.
 Cold breeze touches my ailing skin, embraces my sighs.
 And I carve my vague imaginations on the galvanized surface-
 Something I never want to forget.

Still, I wait for the light of darkness,
 I pray for my biased memory,
 But, they say, only few hours left!
 I am going to forget everything!

The writer is a student of BRAC University.



Shepherd

ZOHEB MASHIUR

In the midst of storm, I have prayed to the
 Salt to calm his waters.
 In times of danger I have prayed to the
 Home, to dry shores that I yearn to see
 again.

We have beseeched the twingods of our
 faith time and again, and though we have
 sailed through terrors that have felled
 many of us, our floating congregation has
 endured.

I have sailed and tasted the brine of the
 seas from the north to south. I have
 escaped the clutches of oraks in frozen
 waters, I have climbed aboard boats that
 have speared the great whales, I have been
 tempted by the golden beauties of the
 southern coasts, and I have done battle
 with the dog women of the West. My arms
 and chest bear the marks of Salt as its
 angry waves have lashed me worse than
 any bo'sun's whip. I have worn my neck-
 lace of shark's teeth and carried the dry
 root I took years ago from my family's
 garden. I have been a lay-priest of
 Zoltundheim, of Salt and Home, for
 decades. I have endured, for the gods have
 smiled on the crews I have shepherded
 through their waters.

It has been a good life. A pious life. And
 adventurous life. I thank the twingods for
 everything. And all things must come to
 an end.

My ship now is seized by the kraken. I
 have prayed. I have eaten the holy foods.
 The crew have beseeched our gods to
 come to our aid, but in the tentacles of the
 kraken we are in the clutches of the name-
 less god: the god of teeth, of the horrible
 things below the water, the one who
 brings us death. The twingods have pre-
 served me from his grasp so many times, I

cannot begrudge them their failure now. I
 forgive you, Salt, whose waters are these to
 command. I forgive you, Home, for letting
 me die away from you. We are faced with a
 foe beyond our power.

The captain has directed the crew fire
 every cannon into the kraken's shell, but it
 is an armoured devil. Its eyes, pure black
 and stupid, gleam with hunger. I alone can
 stop it. I am the lay-priest of Zoltundheim.
 I call up the lookout, who clammers
 towards me as the ship rocks in the mon-
 ster's violence. He is after me the most
 devout man. He sees the wide wastes of
 the ocean every day as we sail, and up on
 his perch undisturbed he feels the power
 of the twingods the best. He will make a
 worthy replacement, for a ship must
 always have a lay-priest.

He understands what I mean to do, for
 of course all eyes have been on me from
 the moment the beast revealed itself. I give
 him the shark's tooth necklace: it did not
 turn aside the nameless god today, but it
 had served me for decades. It is powerful
 still, but not perfect.

The root from my home he takes as
 well. The pillar of salt from my pocket: a
 reminder of the god whose waters these
 are. He takes it. I kiss his brow, and it is
 done. He is lay-priest now, and I have but
 one task before my retirement.

I bid goodbye to my crew, who cheer and
 salute as I run. I run to the smashed
 wooden railing of the deck and hurl
 myself into the beast's thousand arms. I
 sacrifice myself to the nameless god. I
 surrender to the Teeth. I trade my life for
 that of my flock's, for I am their shepherd.
 It seizes me and drags me down. It lets the
 ship go and drags me down. Salt fills my
 lungs and the end is dark. My duty is
 done. The gods will find me.