

The Phoenix

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

I'll be nestled into the oak's crown.
 Its wood hands will caress me as her child.

The moon will shoot a glance at me
 From the dark sky poked with uncountable stars.
 The calm breeze will make its leaves dance,
 And my tired skin will come back to life.

Then I'll see a bird emerging from the landscape;
 Ablaze,
 Fluttering her wings-
 Like unfurling a truth,
 And she will sit on one of the oak's hands beside me
 Glowing with fire in the dark.

Then I'll say,
 "I've waited for your fire all this while,"
 Then her fire will take a powerful shade of orange.
 "I'll never let you go, my beloved,"
 I'll say as my cave eyes will glow watching her flame.
 She will embrace me with her wings, and I'll not be
 an ordinary owl then.
 I'll be a burning one- burning with the fire of requited
 love.

"I'll never let you go," I'll say again,
 And the oak tree will witness our union
 While she will repeat the same.

But now I'm only an owl that dwells in the dark
 Awaiting the phoenix's arrival.
 A day passes like a year
 Yet no fire lights up my eyes.

*The writer is a grade 11 student of Birshreshtha Noor
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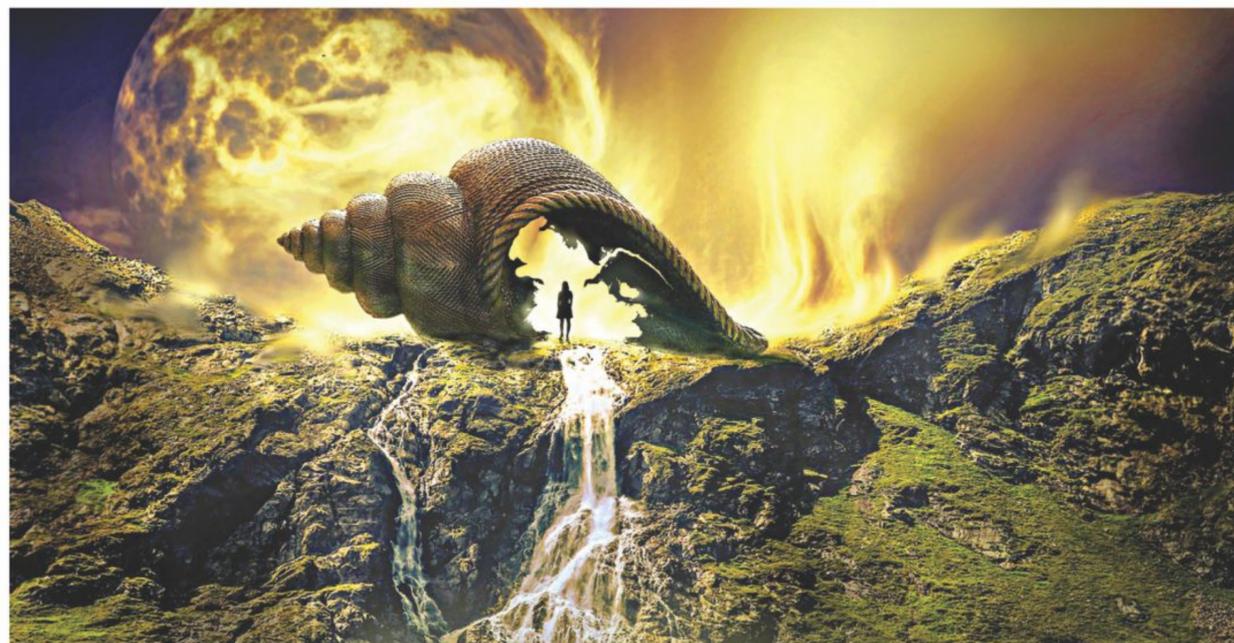


A NEW BRIGHT DAY

ASHIANA REAZ

Raindrops, bus stops,
 Filled in crowds, sound so loud,
 Clear sky, bye-bye,
 Muddy puddles, butterfly cuddles,
 Splash, splash, clash, clash,
 Twinkling stars become blur
 As if a subtle scar.
 In the meantime, forecast occur -
 With the news of good weather not so far
 Smile on face, shiny gaze.
 Raincoat, umbrella out of way
 In a new bright day.

The writer is an A level student.



The Tomorrow at Your Door

RAITA AMREEN RIDITA

She looks through the window to see a broken world. The fumes spiral the skyscrapers, drones announce the onset of the second hurricane within the last ten hours. She wears her government issued protective's despite the late hour. The gray of the sky blends with the gray of the world around her. Her room has a hard bed at the middle. Her gas masks and her ration of dry food are stashed against a corner. Her drawers contain passkeys and info-cards. Most of her wardrobe contains government issued protectives identical to the ones she's wearing now.

Three pairs of boots stand desolately collecting dust. Just essentials, she thinks. The thought raises a wound buried deep within the crevices of her heart. She remembers that day her mother rushed around the house saying, "Just the essentials! Pack what you absolutely need."

Her father hadn't moved a muscle, his face ashen. She thought she could imagine the ripples of a thousand emotions on his face. The ripples swirling in the air, creating water monsters. They were leaving the country. The news said that the whole country would sink within the hour. She remembers herself thinking how fun it would be to play with the jellyfish.

Why was her momma like this? She never knew to have fun. She started to bury the memory again only to realise that she would like to keep these memories with her today. She summons other memories too, happy ones. She warms her heart against the cold that seeps through her protectives.

The Order executed the Bardugos last month. Their crime being the hoarding of extra milk for their one year old baby Selene. A lot of good that did, she thinks as she laughs a mirthless laugh, the sound foreign to her own ears. The world was still ending, the calm spreading around her being proof enough. Instead of dwelling on the gray world in front of her, she closes her eyes and sits on her bed. She takes herself to the place of her dreams. There she sees herself standing on an edge. Mountains line the horizon. In front of her is an almighty waterfall. Small rainbows form and reform as the thrashing water catches the sunlight. Birds fly in formation with the exception of blue kingfishers hunting their prey. The ground beneath her bare feet is covered with soft green grass with wild flowers and lilies growing on it. She warms her heart with memories of her parents and warms her body with the rays of this sun as she jumps to the water flowing below. While in her gray, gray reality the first of the storms bathes her body.