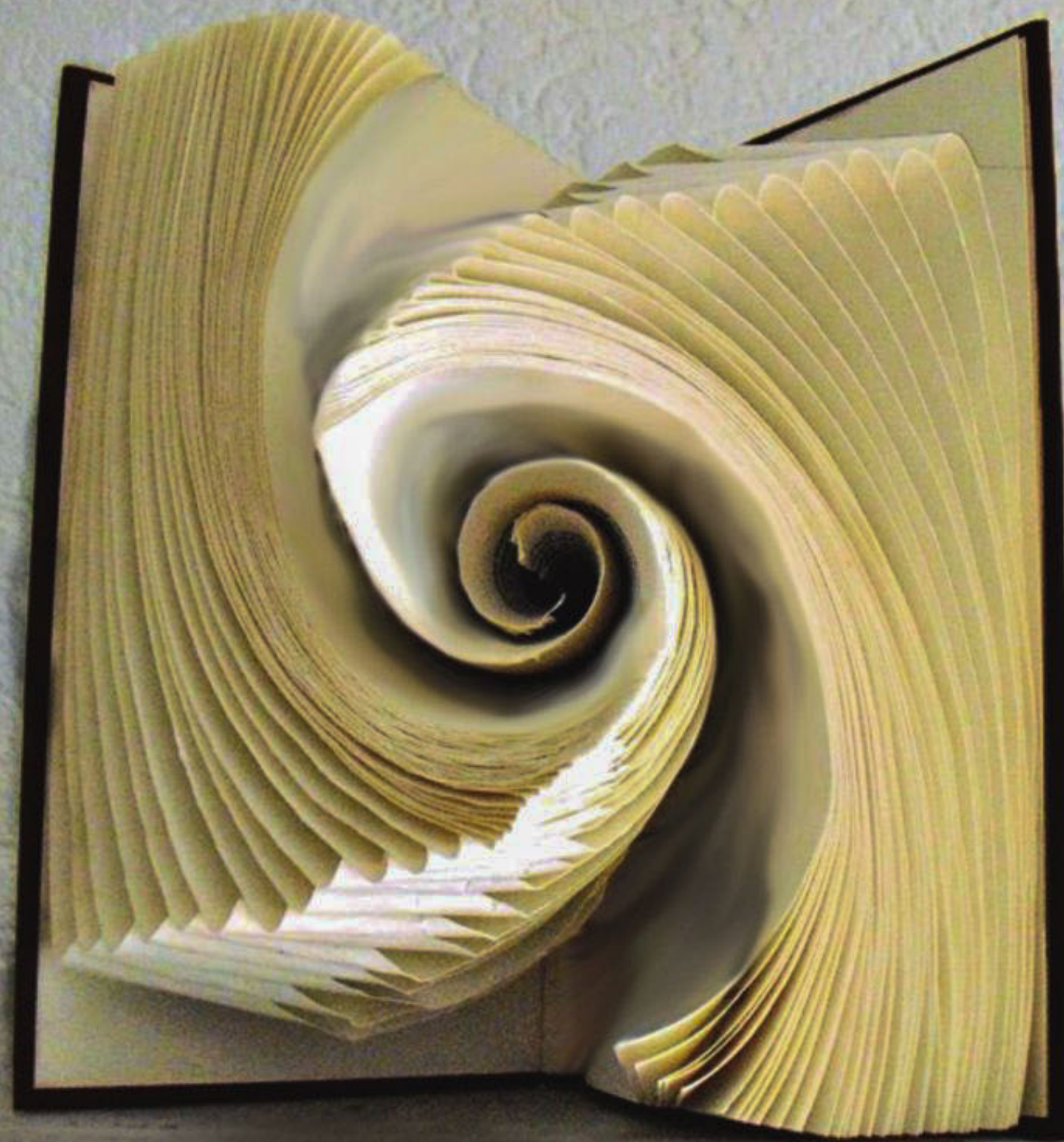


Black Book



SHAHRIKH IKHTEAR

There it is again —the pitch black void that I am so accustomed to.

How many times has it been? Sixty? Six hundred? I can't remember. But this all feels so familiar, almost like a part of my soul that's been with me since I was born. I could never tell what happened prior to this, only flashes of a wrecked boat on a stray rock and a violent storm. I can only imagine I was traversing the vast expanse of water only to be shipwrecked. The muffled thunder roars above me. The storm is raging on.

I can feel the crushing pressure of the depths. I am falling deeper now. The blue of the ocean turns to black and the water enters my lungs as I gasp for breath. It's

been like this every time. I will drown now and I will wake up in a pool of sweat.

Suddenly, I can feel a surge underneath my feet. The thunder stops and the black ocean turns a bright blue. Is that the sun? How can it be day time so quickly? As the upward force sends me rushing towards the surface, the blinding light gets brighter; I can barely see. I am flung out of the water and I land face first on a beach. The sound of the sea gulls proves to be a stark contrast to the whispers of the deep. I open my eyes to a blank white canvas. My vision adjusts to filter out the light and I begin to piece together my surroundings. The sand is white, not the usual off-white colour, but pure white. There are no trees around, no people, no gulls but I can still hear them calling. Dazed, I look to my

left, hoping to find a clue to my whereabouts. This has never happened before.

I spot a black object lying half-buried in the sand. I scurry towards it, hoping for respite from my predicament. It's a book. But it has no title. I see the faint glimmer of something barely pointing out of the sand next to it. I pull it up to find a black pen with a silver tip. I hastily open the book and what I saw shook me to my very core.

My heart rate elevated beyond measure as I read through the lines.

"How many times has it been? Sixty? Six Hundred?"

My eyes start shaking.

"I can feel the crushing pressure of the depths..."

My heart is bound to pound out of my

chest any moment.

"The sand is white, not the usual off-white colour..."

I realise what this book contains and I rip out the last page. But that was not the last page, another page magically appears from the spine. It's blank. I start writing as the sand around me begins to slowly form a dome. It wants to trap me. There is no escape.

Stop reading this right now, I beg of you. Whatever you're reading, no matter what it is, get rid of it. It's cursed.

No, keep reading.

Don't read this. That wasn't me, it was this cursed book. It's adding more lines to replace what I am doing. Please you have to...

Keep reading.

4 A.M.

AYMAN RAAKIN HAQUE

i lay awake at the dead of the night,
a time when the lovers lay asleep,
but the heartbroken reminisce their past lovers.
when the travellers are consumed by wanderlust,
dreaming of their next destination.
but 4 am isn't for the lovers or the dreamers.
it is for the lonely and weary.
it is for the unknown poets,
spilling out their feelings on ruffled pages.
it is for the ones, that desire love.
it is for the hardworking,

struggling to finish their final deeds.
it is the time for reminiscence,
to remember those last few happy moments.
it is for those,
who brood about being unable to grasp someone
who is ethereal.
it is for the depressed, constantly slitting their wrists
to relieve themselves from unending stress.
4 am isn't for everyone.
it is only for those who are truly broken,
and cannot fit into the quintessential clique.

The writer is a grade 7 student of Sunbeams School.

