



The Sky Moves Sideways

RASHEED KHAN

They asked me what I believed,
I told them to look at the skies.
But they couldn't see what I saw,
Despite the blindness in my eyes.

They told me I was a fool
For the skies were never there.
I laughed as they gazed upon stars;
Enraptured, entranced, ensnared.

I knew it was all made for me,
Despite all the nonchalant clouds.
A drop of doubt in a cask of belief,
I paused for a moment, wondering aloud,

"Are you there? Can you hear me?
Will you ever answer my call?"
The skies held no answers for me
But were there any answers at all?

The sun shone brighter on days
And the rains stormed through.
The sky moved sideways,
I paused as empty winds blew,

"Are you there? Don't you hear me?
Do you care to answer my call?"
But the sky moved sideways,
Never caring at all.

Longing meaning, I saw the stars
Past a sky that seemed an illusion.
In fear, I shut off the sight
Even though that was the solution.

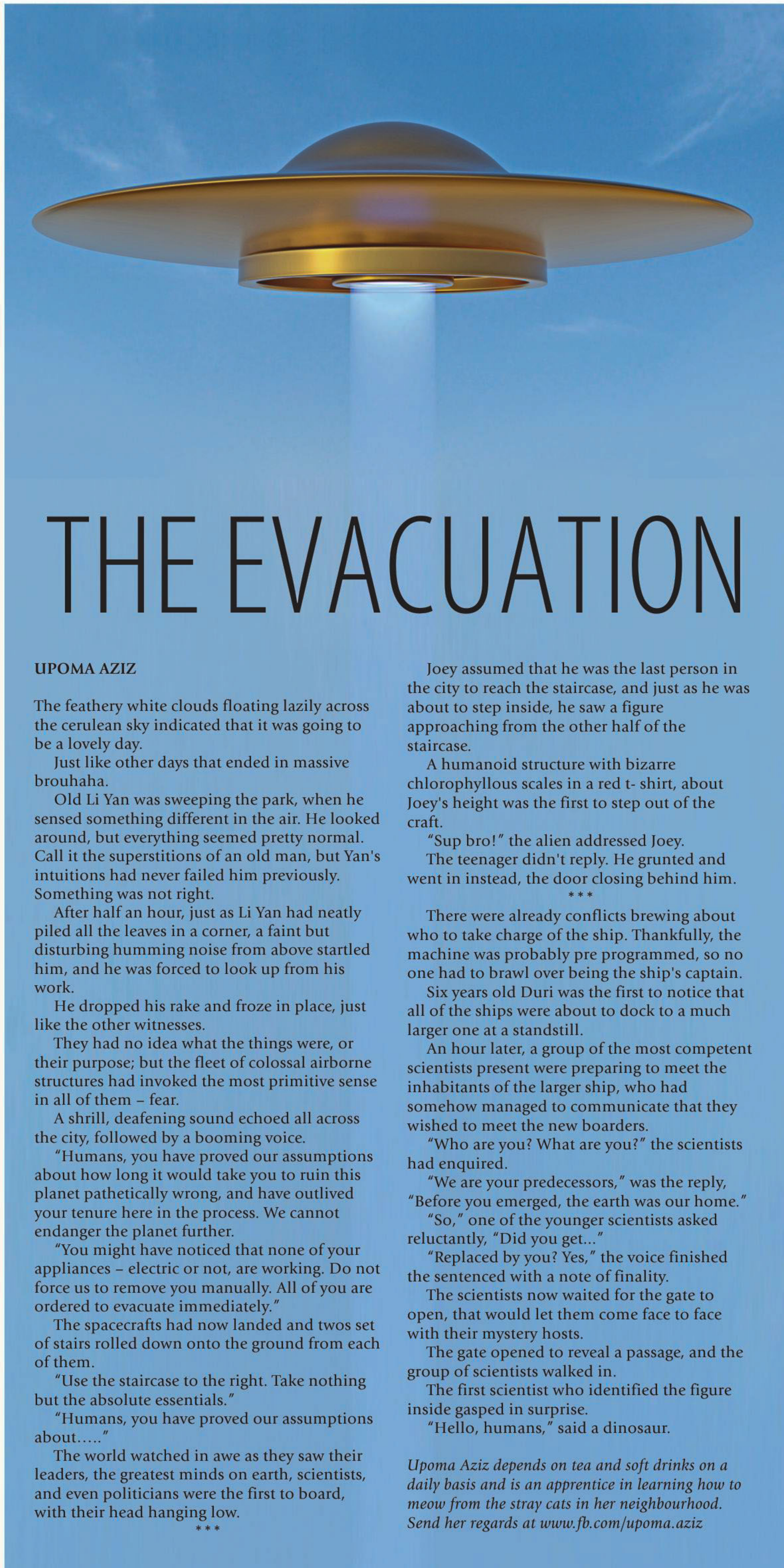
And the sun shone bright on days,
The rains just stormed through.
The skies offered no reason,
I began to wonder if I could choose.

Others told me to believe
In a sky that had been given.
"Lightning will strike from heaven,"
Claiming that if I didn't.

And others pointed to the stars
Beyond the sky I had chosen,
"Don't you see the universe?
The sky eats the beauty you live in."

The sun shines bleak today,
The storm cascades on a dark eve.
My clouds hide away sinful stars
And I make my sky answer me.

They asked me what I believed,
I told them about my skies.
But they'll never see what I've seen
Despite the blindness in my eyes.



THE EVACUATION

UPOMA AZIZ

The feathery white clouds floating lazily across the cerulean sky indicated that it was going to be a lovely day.

Just like other days that ended in massive brouhaha.

Old Li Yan was sweeping the park, when he sensed something different in the air. He looked around, but everything seemed pretty normal. Call it the superstitions of an old man, but Yan's intuitions had never failed him previously. Something was not right.

After half an hour, just as Li Yan had neatly piled all the leaves in a corner, a faint but disturbing humming noise from above startled him, and he was forced to look up from his work.

He dropped his rake and froze in place, just like the other witnesses.

They had no idea what the things were, or their purpose; but the fleet of colossal airborne structures had invoked the most primitive sense in all of them – fear.

A shrill, deafening sound echoed all across the city, followed by a booming voice.

"Humans, you have proved our assumptions about how long it would take you to ruin this planet pathetically wrong, and have outlived your tenure here in the process. We cannot endanger the planet further.

"You might have noticed that none of your appliances – electric or not, are working. Do not force us to remove you manually. All of you are ordered to evacuate immediately."

The spacecrafts had now landed and two sets of stairs rolled down onto the ground from each of them.

"Use the staircase to the right. Take nothing but the absolute essentials."

"Humans, you have proved our assumptions about....."

The world watched in awe as they saw their leaders, the greatest minds on earth, scientists, and even politicians were the first to board, with their head hanging low.

Joey assumed that he was the last person in the city to reach the staircase, and just as he was about to step inside, he saw a figure approaching from the other half of the staircase.

A humanoid structure with bizarre chlorophyllous scales in a red t-shirt, about Joey's height was the first to step out of the craft.

"Sup bro!" the alien addressed Joey.

The teenager didn't reply. He grunted and went in instead, the door closing behind him.

There were already conflicts brewing about who to take charge of the ship. Thankfully, the machine was probably pre-programmed, so no one had to brawl over being the ship's captain.

Six years old Duri was the first to notice that all of the ships were about to dock to a much larger one at a standstill.

An hour later, a group of the most competent scientists present were preparing to meet the inhabitants of the larger ship, who had somehow managed to communicate that they wished to meet the new boarders.

"Who are you? What are you?" the scientists had enquired.

"We are your predecessors," was the reply, "Before you emerged, the earth was our home."

"So," one of the younger scientists asked reluctantly, "Did you get..."

"Replaced by you? Yes," the voice finished the sentence with a note of finality.

The scientists now waited for the gate to open, that would let them come face to face with their mystery hosts.

The gate opened to reveal a passage, and the group of scientists walked in.

The first scientist who identified the figure inside gasped in surprise.

"Hello, humans," said a dinosaur.

Upoma Aziz depends on tea and soft drinks on a daily basis and is an apprentice in learning how to meow from the stray cats in her neighbourhood. Send her regards at www.fb.com/upoma.aziz