

# SPACE TURTLE

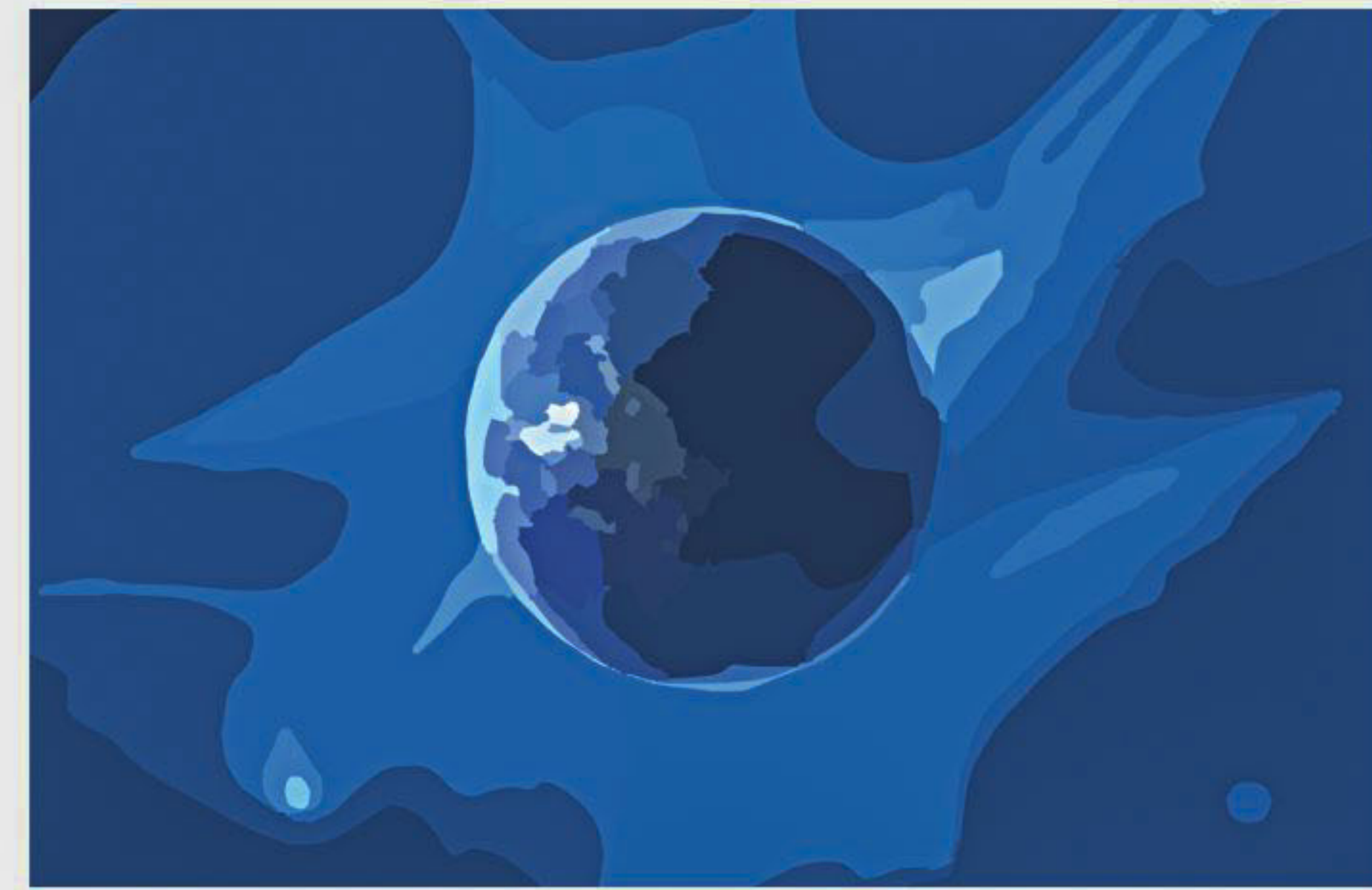


SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

The plastic bag was somehow separated from its diverse herd floating in the Caribbean. After the separation, it became a lone traveller, a sea nomad. Its pearly white, transparent skin blessed it with the feature of a jellyfish. A jellyfish with a brand name printed on its bell, bag handles for real tentacles. The actual sea creatures seemed to be repulsed by the idea of having names of their own with various fonts, sizes, and colours though. They often cruised in the sea kingdom with the ones (of their kind) with names printed on them. It was an act of accepting foreign things in familiar ones. It was an act of accepting anomalies in normalities. As for the lone traveller, it kept travelling alone as the ocean kept expanding with its arms and legs stretching out like elastic limbs. Its journey would soon end when it would reach the ocean depths, when it would be considered a jellyfish by a green sea turtle, when it would make its place into the turtle's digestive system. Under the water, the lone traveller bellowed and contracted, as per the wish of the deep sea currents. A green sea turtle did what it had to. Of course, it didn't know the consequences that would follow soon after — a blocked digestive system, starvation, and death. After the turtle died with the lone traveller still inside it, entangled

around its stomach, somewhat alive (because research says they decompose in around 450 years), its body floated up on the surface, looking like a floating coral, left to the useless mercy of the sea. Then its soul, without the lone traveller inside it, rose up like a turtle shaped smoke that had its phantom eyes fixated at the starry sky looming over the ocean. Instead of the ocean, now it drifted in the air, having smoke wings grow out of its shell and space helmet appear around its head. The front legs and hind legs attained half boomerang shapes. Like a flying rock, it crossed the troposphere, mesosphere, and all the other spheres with their shifting temperatures, messy amalgamations of harmful gases, air pressures (which didn't matter to its soul at all; they don't matter to any soul at all) that led to the other world. Here, in space, herds of stars that looked like decorated eyes and swirling winds welcomed the turtle instead of herds of plastic and unwelcomed things. It glided in space peacefully while the lone traveller still remained inside its body back in the ocean; a prisoner for 450 years, unless of course, its carcass was found.

*Shah Tazrian Ashrafi wants the perils of his life to be like stormtroopers: always missing easy kill shots. Send him prayers attazrian1234@gmail.com*



## Utopia

SHAIKH SABIH KAMAL

We took a train to stop at this place we never knew,  
We took a step ahead for an overview.  
We swallowed darkness to let the light shine,  
We wanted icicles over sweltering mines.

We shattered glasses to repair the lamps,  
We read stories to only tell the time,  
We deepened resolution for juvenile illusions,  
We only reached out hands to let it all fall.

But we hope, hope for a new dimension;  
A place untold, unaware of our pretention.  
Free of our lies, from where we can all emerge,  
For the modesty over our immodest urge.

We are pendulums in the hands of time,  
Let it be as it is, for we want to cross this line.  
Take a train to this place we never knew,  
To take a step ahead for the overview

Of our Utopia.

## The Evening Star

MASHIAT MUBASSHIRA

I rushed towards my little bed  
And lay down by the window pane.  
The wind was sharp, chilly and fresh,  
My eyes penetrating the vacancy of the night  
To have a glimpse of my friend up high  
My stories awaiting her —  
My oldest friend, the evening star.  
I poured my heart out to her,  
She stood there with a pale grace.  
We weaved stories together,  
Became the best of mates.  
The wind was blowing stronger, I was cozy in my bed,  
All the streetlights went out, she didn't fade.  
Some nights, it's just the Venus and me,  
Some days, someone who listens is all we seek.

*The writer is a first year student at Dhaka Medical College.*