

After page 16

The curtain of liberalism has been ripped, and behind it we see the Black Lives Matter activists being lynched, the schoolchildren being shot, the fences being raised to keep refugees out. The things we now see being openly, proudly talked about, are things that disparate groups the world over have always known. Latin Americans have always known what North American firms have done to their environment, their politics, their communities. Muslims the world have over always known that the House of Saud can do anything because the USA will not stop it—and then visit retribution on them for the things the Saudis have done. African Americans have always known that their country's police are a threat to their very lives. European minorities—French Africans, British Poles, Hungarian Roma, German Turks—have always known the spectre of racial fascism.

Nothing has changed in the character of the liberal West. It has always been a hypocritical monolith—made up of internal divisions and contradictions, in denial of it all, suppressing it all, lashing out at the world for its own ends. To not know this is a mark of having been coddled, of never having had to deal with the consequences of the policies of the West's former 'liberal' regimes.

What interrupts the schadenfreude, the feeling of vindication watching the liberal self-image crumble, is the awareness that the lip service to liberalism and human rights has always had a vital symbolic role. What happens when the most materially power nations of Earth no longer even pretend to care about these values? China and Russia have been powerful pariahs in this world order, but the USA and the UK and the EU are being magnetically pulled towards the far right. We must not forget the power these countries have over all of us—this is the entirety of the permanent United Nations Security Council, after all. Once these powers are divorced from even nominal respect for human rights, it can only be a Pandora's Box opening.

What horrors had the liberal mask kept us from witnessing?

Six thousand US troops are being stationed at the Mexican border, with one-and-half times that number promised in addition. Their objective: to prevent the entry of asylum-seekers. Their leader, the most powerful man in the world, has openly advocated deadly force. He has already been quoted by Nigerian armed forces in defense of their firing at Muslim protestors.

It is pithy to quote Nietzsche, but as we gaze into the true face of the West, we must wonder what will become of us as well.

Zoheb Mashiur is an artist and an MA candidate in International Migration at the University of Kent. Read more of this sort of thing in *Disconnect: Collected Short Fiction*.

ABOUT TOWN

BY SALZAR RAHMAN



DHAKA LIT FEST 2018

Organiser: Jatrik Productions Ltd.
Venue: Bangla Academy
Date: November 8-10
Time: 9 am – 7.30 pm



WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE 2018

Organiser: Women in Leadership – WIL
Venue: Le Méridien Dhaka, 79/A Commercial Area, Airport Road Nikunja 2, Khilkhet
Date: November 10
Time: 9 am – 6 pm



EXCERPTS—SOLO EXHIBITION BY ALIA KAMAL

Organiser: Jatra Biroti and Alia Kamal Art
Venue: Jatra Biroti, 60 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani
Date: November 10-24