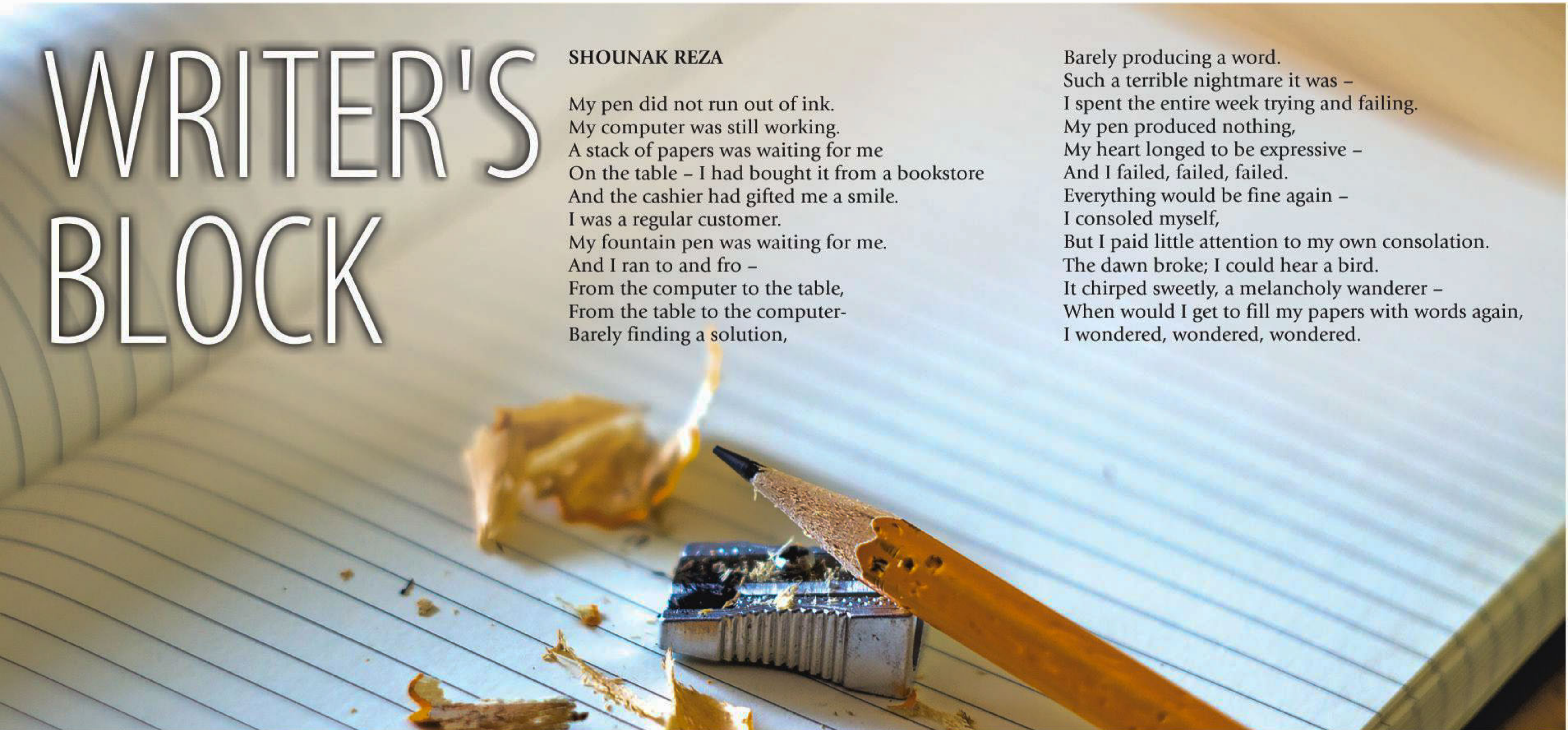


WRITER'S BLOCK

SHOUNAK REZA

My pen did not run out of ink.
My computer was still working.
A stack of papers was waiting for me
On the table – I had bought it from a bookstore
And the cashier had gifted me a smile.
I was a regular customer.
My fountain pen was waiting for me.
And I ran to and fro –
From the computer to the table,
From the table to the computer-
Barely finding a solution,

Barely producing a word.
Such a terrible nightmare it was –
I spent the entire week trying and failing.
My pen produced nothing,
My heart longed to be expressive –
And I failed, failed, failed.
Everything would be fine again –
I consoled myself,
But I paid little attention to my own consolation.
The dawn broke; I could hear a bird.
It chirped sweetly, a melancholy wanderer –
When would I get to fill my papers with words again,
I wondered, wondered, wondered.



The monster under the bed

TASNIM ODRIKA

Every day that I wake up, I thank God for the daylight. Because daylight means that he will finally leave and I'll be able to roam around the room freely. First, I like to bask in the sunlight by standing in front of the huge bay window in the room. Despite the popular beliefs surrounding us, I tend to quite enjoy the sunlight. At 9:30 AM, they all leave and I get to walk around in my house. I relish that time by walking to every nook and cranny of the house. This is what infuriates me. You see, this was my house first. They barge into my house and then I'm expected to keep myself hidden.

Things were not always like this. This house used to be empty. It was just me living here and I've lived here for the past 15 years. Apparently, this house exuded a chilling aura and nobody ever bought it. But, what do they know about chilling auras? The house is perfectly fine. It's this new family exuding the chilling aura with the wife always smiling and the husband constantly

singing songs to their toddler. And, don't even get me started on the toddler. I only had one look at him on the day they moved in and I haven't been able to get over the nightmares yet. That small head with big, round eyes and chubby cheeks will forever haunt me.

What do they really know about chilling auras? Chills are what I get down my spine when I hear the footsteps at the porch at 7 PM. It's always exactly at 7. It's not the footsteps that I fear the most. It's the sound of the crawling. He would crawl through the foyer and into my room. Then, there I would be underneath my bed, knowing full well the horror that lies above.

I would stay there, concealed next to a broken doll and a teddy, the rest of the night hoping to not get caught during the searches of the monster under the bed when the real monster is the child sleeping above.

Tasnim Odrika likes pineapple on pizza and is willing to fight anyone who opposes her on this. Reach her at odrika_02@yahoo.com



FLIGHT

SUZANA MASUD

What if I had a ticket
But not to board a plane,
To soar to the endless blanket of stars,
With nothing but freedom to gain.

Like the deafening silence all around
Broken only by the calls of birds,
I'll ignite the sky with bright colours
An empty canvas lit by fireworks.

But before setting off into the horizon
I must build wings, like Daedalus the inventor,
Escaping the chains in the tower that holds me.
Like Rupunzel, I'll flee to seek my adventure.

A fighter set out for battle
I'll challenge those walking by,
"You say all beings are equal,
So if a bird can fly, why can't I?"

The writer is a Grade V student at The Aga Khan School, Dhaka