



MD Sharif Uddin's memoir *Stranger to Myself: Diary of a Bangladeshi in Singapore* was awarded best non-fiction at the Singapore Book Awards in 2018.

A Worker's Journey

The longing of a sleepless brain
For a golden morning
For a break in the rhythm
For the beginning of the race
In the dry season or monsoon
I have to run, to keep running.

From tiredness and misery
The heart erodes in lament
And in the game of war begins
And so begins the flood
Sometimes for a moment
Sometimes for a day
I have to run, keep running

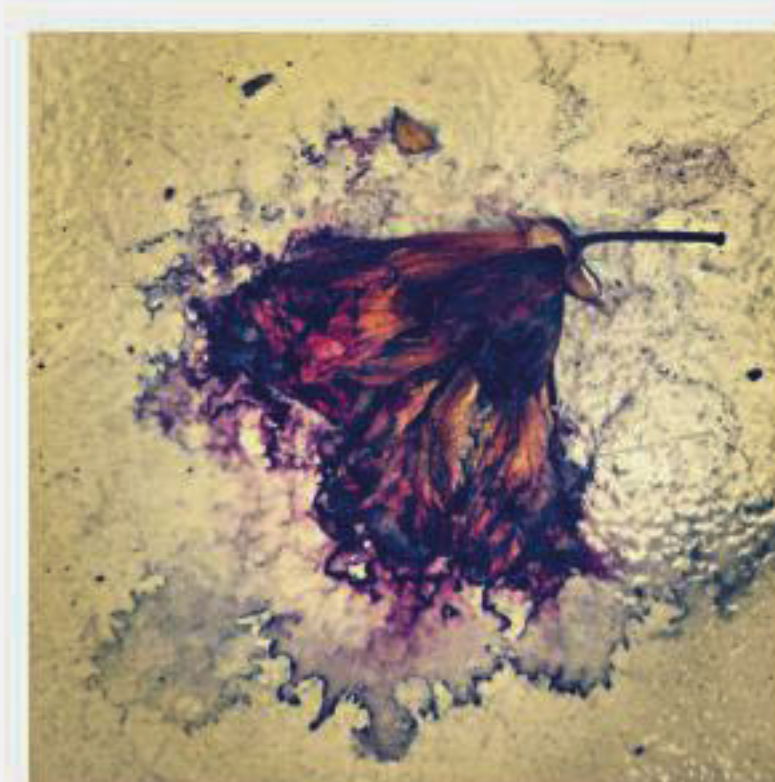


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Deep inside the heart
With a mournful cry disguised as valour
I return to this hellpit
The realization of dreams begins
The journey begins

At times I belong to this country
At times to that
I run, I have to run.

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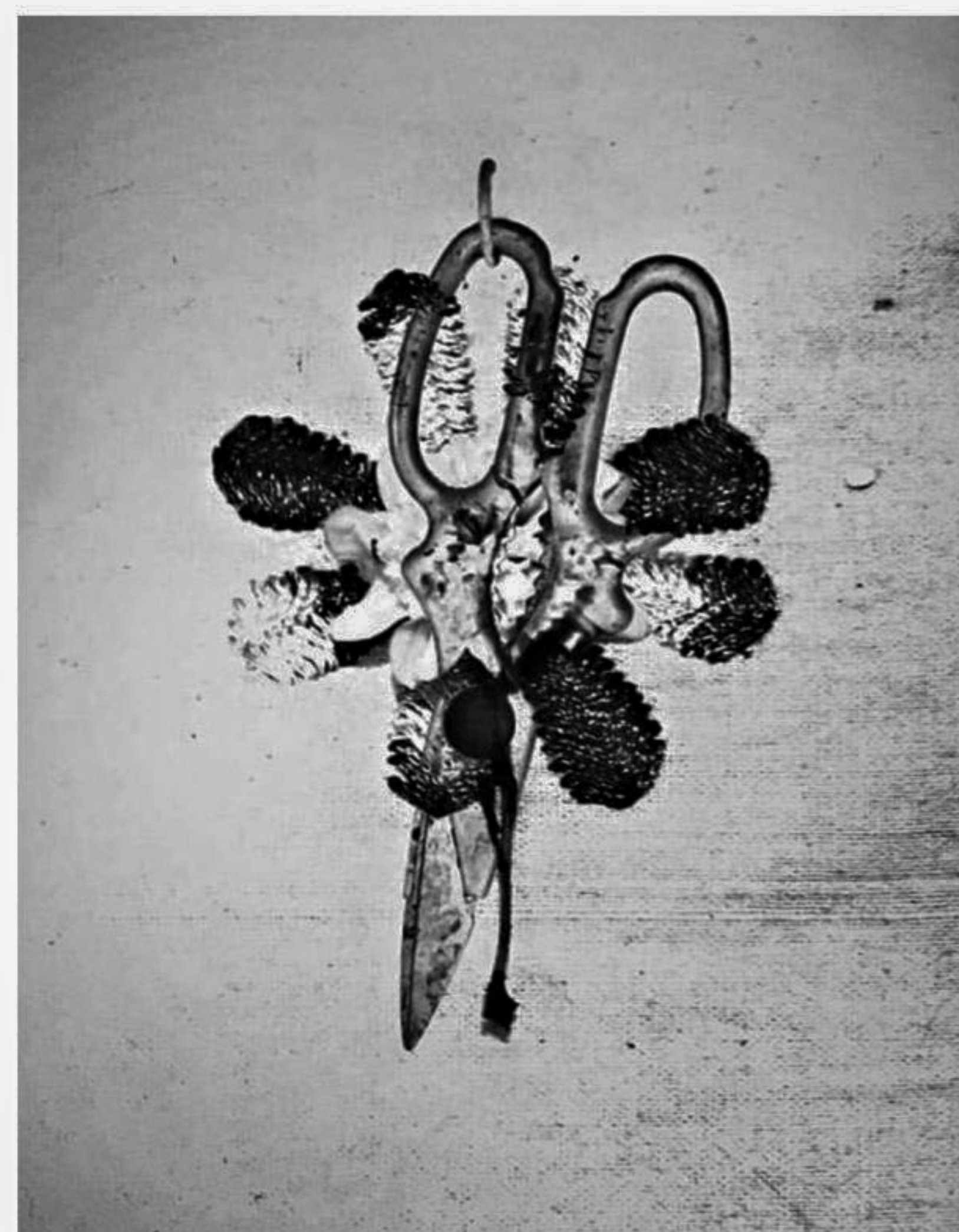


Exiled Heart

Who cares about the pain of those removed
working under the soil in this city of always Spring?
How many wails make this earth tremble?

Let me tell my tale,
a tale of exiles from the land of flames-
I am an exile lost
in the hot womb of soil.
Solitude holds me,
makes my heart weep and drills a hole;
every moment accumulates eternities.

Everyday, when dusk ceases,
my existence is obscured in the darkness of the deep.
I can hardly remember that I belong to this earth.
Once had chores, had Springs,
had a childhood on the wings of dreams,
an urge to love and be loved by someone,
a home of happiness, blessings from my mother.



Now, exiled,
I am under the earth of this city
trapped by many layers of dust,
nourished by the smell of grief in my breath.
Loveless moments turn me silent,
pain clothes this fatigue-torn body,
but in the hope of light beyond darkness
this exiled heart still floats
from the bottomless tunnel.

From *Stranger to Myself, Diary of a Bangladeshi in Singapore* by MD Sharif Uddin, Landmark Books, 2017.
The book is available for purchase from
<http://www.selectbooks.com.sg> and
<https://singapore.kinokuniya.com>.