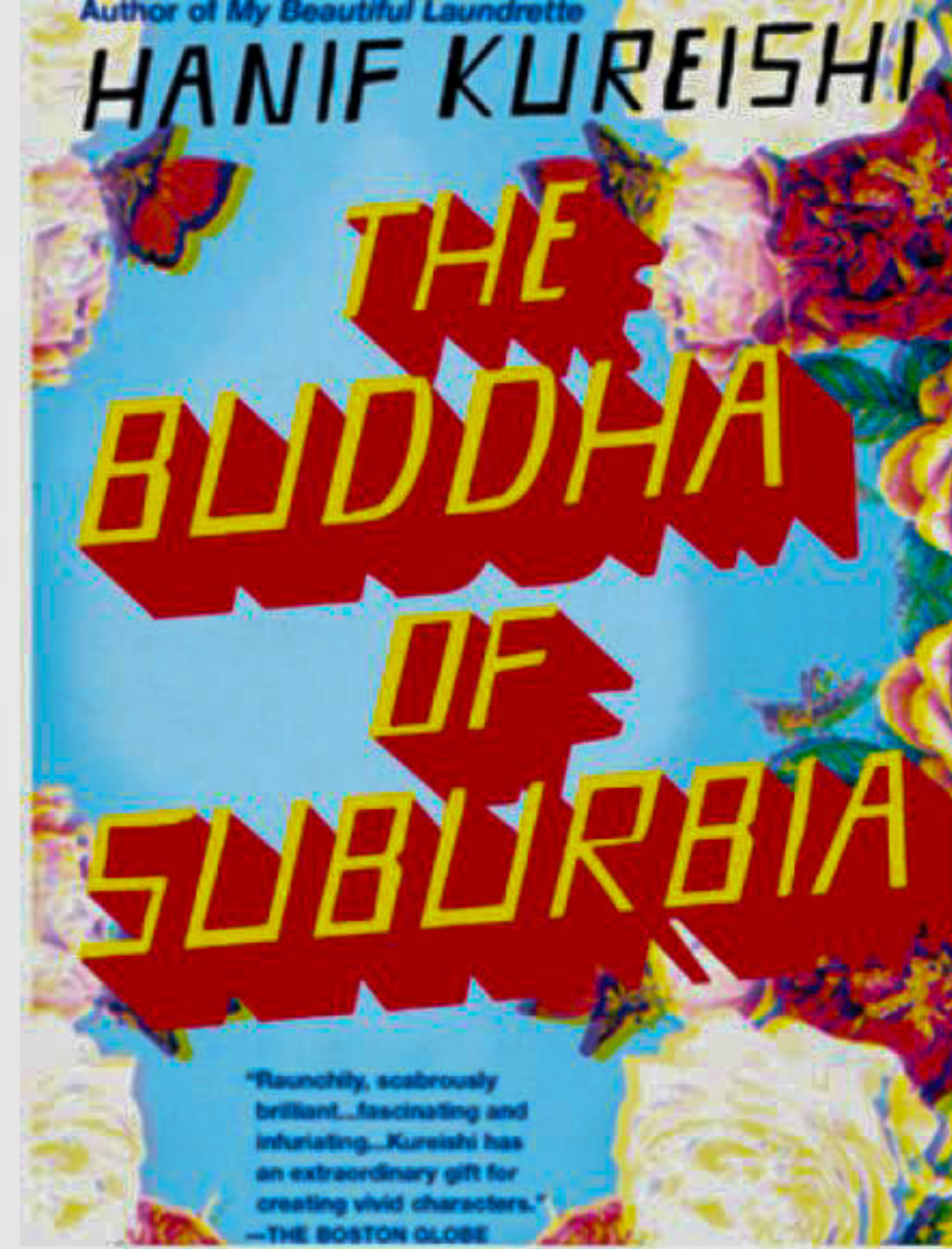


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She was thoroughly entertained by the series. The book's genre, reputation and even reading platform, in this case, leaked into the otherwise drab surrounding of its reader, rendering the journey more colourful. Hanif Kureishi's novel, meanwhile, accentuated my editor's surroundings by virtue of similarity, giving her a clearer understanding of both the novel and her vacation destination.

And finally, a more interesting perspective came up when another friend told me he swears by poetry and short story collections while travelling. The breaks he can take in between each poem or short story allows him to both appreciate his surroundings, and to use that time away from the page to ponder over the text he's just read. "A tighter, singular plot would've pulled me towards the next page. But these breaks mean that I'm not angry to be distracted from my book. And because my mind is more at ease while on vacation, I can process the text better," he tells me. It seems as if more respect is somehow accorded to the vacation space with this kind of reading. The space thus becomes a part of the process of absorbing the text. And this magic happens in



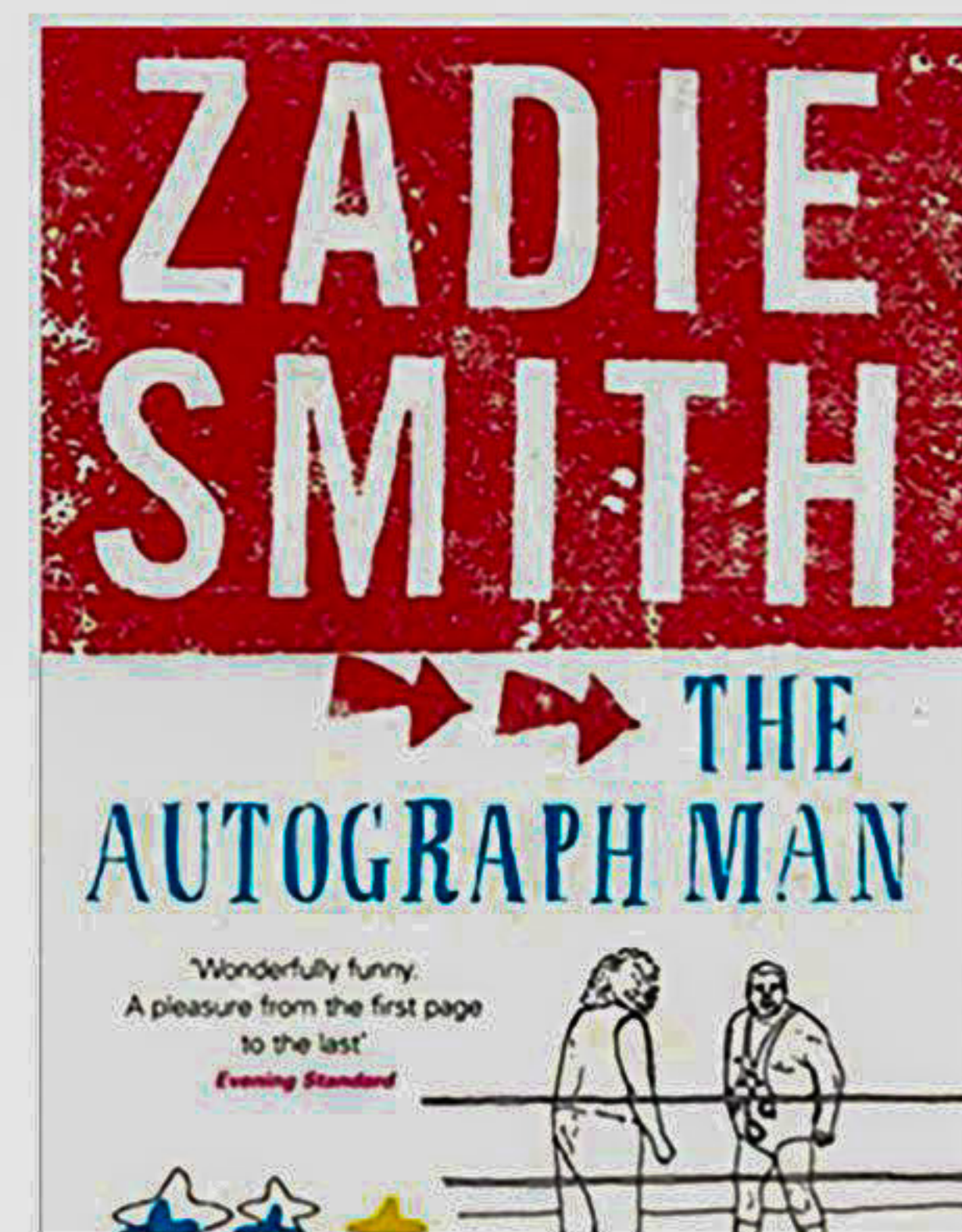
the spaces left untouched by the act of reading. Rightfully so, because why even travel if you aren't paying attention to your surroundings?

At the time of writing this article, the editor of this magazine was running around the airport frantically looking for a bookstore before embarking on a flight. After pondering over her definition of vacation reads with me for the most part of the past week—not too long, tight plot, not too Faulkner-esque—she'd left the book she'd meant to read on her trip at home. And so began another adventure

as she hunted something that would last her through immigration, through the flight, and through the journey to another continent and back. Whatever she got her hands on would've coloured her trip.

We're still waiting to hear back.

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Consuming those products which have such high volume of microbes can cause a wide range of liver and kidney diseases. Instead of threatening me for the study, the industries could easily minimise the contamination by improving their pasteurisation plant as such contamination is caused by nothing but sheer negligence.

However, the presence of antibiotics in milk indicates to a more serious crisis. According to the current regulations, cattle cannot be milked or slaughtered for consumption within 21 days of applying antibiotics. Presence of antibiotics prove that milk collectors of big companies and the farmers as well are probably not following this regulation. Antibiotics are also used in producing cattle fodder. The most alarming fact is, due to its availability, farmers and fodder manufacturers are using antibiotics that are meant for human consumption. And, our livestock officials are permitting these cattle feeds. We found excessive amount of these antibiotics such as enrofloxacin and ciprofloxacin which can reduce efficiency of these antibiotics and can make our body fatally vulnerable to bacterial and viral infections. We must enforce the law that prohibits selling of antibiotic without registered doctor's prescription. We should also make our farmers and cattle food producers aware of the harmful impacts of such unrestricted use of antibiotics.

**Instead of revealing your findings in press conference, why didn't you publish those in peer-reviewed journals?** Publishing research results that are important for public safety can be published in press conference and it is a common practice throughout the world. When researchers found carcinogenic elements in Johnson and Johnson's products, they revealed it through a press

*Our studies prove that we are on the brink of a public health catastrophe.*

*Many consumers drink pasteurised or flavoured milk without boiling it.*

conference. Even in 2011, researchers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research found Bird Flu viruses in several poultry samples and they warned about bird flu outbreak thorough a press conference which led to culling chickens. In fact, we conducted this research due to our concern for public health. Testing milk for harmful elements is not a fundamental academic research which has to be published in peer reviewed journal. Also, publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals sometimes take six months to one year and we could not afford such delay in this case. However, we are in the process of sending our reports to several peer-reviewed journals.

**Did you receive any support from the Dhaka University authority?**

University of Dhaka has been supporting our activities from the very beginning. We have conducted our tests at DU's Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS) which is one of the most technologically advanced laboratories of our country. Various researches done in this laboratory got international patents. So, there cannot

be any question regarding the quality of our research. Our honourable vice chancellor has also been supporting and encouraging us from the very beginning. When we were being threatened by various quarters, DU administration stood by us and encouraged us to continue our research.

**As the former director of DU's Biomedical Research Centre, what are the challenges you have faced to conduct your researches?**

The most impeding challenge we have been facing is lack of fund and patronage. Many biomedical researches are highly expensive and industry oriented. In most of the countries, industries support universities to conduct such researches. It is an act of mutual benefit because students and teachers can learn through researches and industries can benefit from the study without recruiting an army of professionals. For instance, through our research on milk, we have actually rendered a great service to the industry. We unearthed their shortcomings on our own expenditure which will help them to produce healthier products and can become more consumer friendly companies. Unfortunately, instead of correcting themselves, they threatened me with extremely offensive words. This sort of culture actually discourages researchers. If such reactions go unchecked, very few researchers will take the risk of conducting research on public health and safety issues.

**What are your future plans?**

Thanks to support from most of my colleagues and the university administration, I will continue with my research work. My students and colleagues are taking up new research projects and I would love to guide them in all of their future endeavor. And, whenever I shall find results that are injurious to public health, I shall warn my fellow citizens. I will not back down in face of threats.