

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

CONVERGENCE TO A 'JORA KODOM'

Kraaaakzzz! Bommmmm!! The drizzle suddenly burst into a shower outside of the 'Kola Bhaban' at DU. Oh, how sumptuously grey-darkened the sky were, already pulling me towards it, with raga "megh" playing at the back of my head. But alas! I was trapped in the market workings of some cows and goats and or fish perhaps, conjectured in weird combinations, trying to converge on some dynamic path! What cow or goat or fish ever does that? I dunno. After two hours – which certainly felt much longer – of staring at the piece of paper in front of me in a huge hall of a classroom, I was relieved by the grace of the 'time's up' bell.

Friendly faces all around were waving their hands, heads, eyebrows, and bags (!) pretty excitedly. Judging from their tones, we all had the same adventure through this LA LA Land and came out empty-handed. But it was still pouring outside, and I was looking for a particular pair of eyes in the crowd, a pair unusually big, droopy, dreamy, floaty, and silent. Suddenly, I caught a sight of them, albeit in the usual solitary despair. The rain wasn't helping either. I tracked



the pair down the stairs as usual. They shot one last glance at me and drove off in a chauffeur driven car.

Must do something, I thought. By then, I knew that a pair or 'jora' kodom could augment the clouds, cut through the sorrow of those eyes and bring down a light that brightens everything without burning. Just the thing I need, but how... Whoosh! I was already out in front of the Central Library at Dhaka University. There went a boy... "Hey boyo! Got any Kodom?" I asked. The half-naked brat laughed and said "Naikka, shash." Time's running out, need to calm those eyes with kodom—the 'pholer moto phool ar phooler moto phol'. I started walking towards the Suhrawardy Udyan, thinking in the rain. Damn those cows and goats and fishes!

The Udyan was naturally devoid of its usual midday crowd on account of the rain. "Sir, cha khaiben?" A sudden shout came from a boy from his stall nearby the tree I was resting underneath. I walked up to him and had a cuppa while babbling my sorrows to the captive kid for no good reason. "Oidai to kodom gachh," came the kid's only sage reply at the end of my saga. Hearing that, my Dhakaite soul, despite its inability to identify or climb trees, jumped with joy. And then I jumped, actually jumped, over and over again, until I victoriously pulled down two kodoms from the rain drenched boughs, for those eyes!

The next half hour was through more rain, ending in that warm dusk light, although it was only a watery noon yet. While I stood outside, the owner of those eyes that had me captive came out of her hollow, and at the sight of the 'Jora Kodom', broke out a blushed 'jora' dimpled laughter! May be that's how one buys one's way to heaven... A lot of rain and clouds have passed since then, but I remain forever a captive of those eyes that delight at the sight of 'Jora Kodom.'

Tahsin (Full name withheld)

Arts Faculty
Session 2007-08

THAT RAINY DAY

It was a rainy morning of 2008. We, the second-year students of Social Science Education department of Institute of Education and Research (IER), had some free time between classes. All the girls from our class decided to take a walk in the rain. I was super excited and led the parade. We walked down the stairs, enjoying the light rain. We continued walking and went out to Mol Chattar from IER.

When we were in the middle of the field, suddenly, it started to rain heavily and in the blink of an eye, most of our group ran back to shelter at the IER. It was only I and my best friend Nusrat. We looked at each other, and continued walking towards the Arts Faculty compound and Aparajeyo Bangla.

Rain-drenched and giggling like children,

we turned left towards Shadow (canteen). It felt great, until we looked around and saw everyone staring. Every. Single. Person. Every student taking shelter at Shadow, everyone from the opposite photocopy shops and every cha-wala mama. It was like they were watching a freak show!

In an instant, all our excitement faded and we started to feel self-conscious. But what's done is done, and so, we kept walking, just not as excited, and returned to our compound, running late for class. We entered the classroom from the back door, sat at the last bench, drenched and shivering, our friends laughing at us. Never again did my friend Nusrat agree to any of my adventure plans!

But the plethora of emotions felt in that single day, from joy, to a bit of carefree rebellion, ending with a little bit of self-conscious embarrassment, will remain a fond memory forever.

Iffat Naomee

Session 2006-07
Institute of Education and Research (IER)

MY DU BABY

My days at Dhaka University were cocooned in kindness and love, from my teachers and friends. We used to spend time behind the Arts Faculty, chitchatting with friends during the gaps between classes. The surrounding area was quite neat and tidy, clean, and covered in greenery. Today, there are a lot more buildings in the same area, and a much less open space, although many of the tall trees of Mol Chattar (open field in front of the Registrar Bhaban) still remind me of the greenery we had back then. The campus is still quite verdant, but to us, it felt less rushed and more peaceful. I cherish the friends I made there, and the times we spent sitting around the environs of the Arts Faculty. We also used to go to British Council to watch the movies screened by our department. I had so many revered teachers, including Dr Benazir Durdana, Dr Fakhru Alam and many more, from whom we gathered some wonderful insights and perspectives, and I'm lucky as a student

that some of them were very fond of me as well.

But my happiest day on campus was a bit unusual, unrelated to studies. After a few year's break, I had earlier restarted my education at the University's English department. By the day I speak of, I was a Master's student attending a class by Dr Kashinath Roy. Suddenly, I started to feel unwell, nauseated and such, my head spinning. I did not realise then, but that was the first indication that I had conceived my first child, after 8 years of being married!

Throughout my pregnancy, everybody around me at the university was very kind. I remember one of my friends brought a number of home cooked meals that I liked from far off Munshiganj, all the way to university! Others were always asking about how I felt or if I needed a break, or even accompany to the ladies' room. Their care and love has stayed with me.

My daughter was born at the then PG hospital in Shahbagh, near the university. On the day we were to bring her home, my mother picked up our tiny bundle of joy, and said, she wants to take her granddaughter around the university campus first! So before going home, we stopped off at Rokeya Hall, where my friend was staying as a student, and tarried on campus a while.

My mother said that day that her granddaughter will also study at the same university one day. Decades later, my daughter graduated as a fine student of her class from the Economics Department at DU. She is now married to another DU alum and faculty, and my husband is also a DU English alumnus. We, as a family of DU graduates, share a common love for the university and its campus from our shared but individual experiences of this university— seeped into the sweet memories of the different phases of all our lives.

Latifa Noor

Batch of 1984
Department of English

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed