



# MY ETERNAL SLEEP

**MEHRAB RAHMAN MRITTIK**

I got drowned; drowned, in the serene ocean waves of my eternal sleep.  
The water, so dark and so deep;  
Bearing the engraved marks of my forever sleep.

So many deaths, in just one life;  
Drowned I was, in the large tides of time.  
Dust to earth; again, earth to dust.  
Who cares about the stained marks, even if one day, they turn to rust?

Don't let the stone break, don't let the waterfalls fall.  
We all are just a visitor of time, with a gift to breathe so long.

I died and died, before I finally died forever;  
Underneath the garden full of flickering stars; above the sky full of sweet white flowers.

I was just a lost traveler who forgot all his ways.  
I breathed my last breath; and suddenly all of you fell in love with me that day!

I got buried, buried in the everlasting earth which I can never escape from.  
Tear drops kept following me like a shadow, from the womb to the tomb.  
Alone I came, alone I was to return.  
Forgive me for all those promises that I left undone.

Garden over now; garden underneath then.  
I might not return now, but I may return again.

*The writer is a first year student of Finance at the University of Dhaka.*

# The Greatest Showman on Earth

**HASIB UR RASHID IFTI**

Around 15 minutes before midnight, Mr. Altaf went to his room after a tiring day of pretence. His daughter, her husband and their two kids decided to stay over. His son, though, felt he had done his part and caught the next flight back. It didn't quite hurt Mr. Altaf; he was his father's blood after all.

Mr. Altaf took off his white Panjabi and stared at the mirror for a while, at his costume. He played his part perfectly. Wrinkles all over his face, white hair on his chest looked like layers of green on the slanted slopes of Dighinala. His belly was enormous, almost hideous and his breasts saggy. He stared at his hairy hands and his bald head, his weary skin looked like flesh dripping off bones. It didn't bother him though; he could take it off anytime he wanted.

He stared at the grimy walls; 24 years of sighs, 24 years of anguish. He knew the scent by heart, hated it even more. Jobaida had painted the entire room sea-green, her favourite colour. He hated the shade but kept it to himself. He had been a good son, a good husband and a decent father. When his dying old man begged him to take care of the family, he obliged. He obliged when his ageing mother said she wanted to watch her grandchildren play before she died. And he obliged when his newlywed wife came closer than ever that cold winter night.

He did all the things fathers are supposed to do – played with his children, made sure they got good marks in their exams and married them off to reputed households. He kept quiet when the fanatics rose, when democracy fell and when the voices died. He took his fair share of bribes like others. He even took his family on vacation once in a while, stared at the vast ocean from the top of the mountain. And he waited.

He retired with a healthy pension and bought a new house. When his wife got older and more infuriating than ever, when her morbid soul aged faster than her skin, when everything that came out of that betel-leaf filled mouth were curses and profanity – he waited. All those sleepless nights when she'd cry and blame him for ruining her life and driving their son away, Mr. Altaf kept quiet. And he kept quiet when she died last week.

And now in his old room, with a decaying peel covering his rusty bones, he opened his trousers and stared at his naked self. Each muscle, tired of its own weight. Mr. Altaf pinched himself on the back of his neck, hard enough to make himself bleed.

He pulled with all his effort until his skin started to come off. He pulled and pulled until it was just flesh plopping off his bones. With his costume lying on the ground in a pool of dark red, his final act was over.

The audience clapped louder than ever. As tears rolled down his glistening cheek, Mr. Altaf raised his hand and bowed one last time. The curtains closed and the show was over.

For the first time in 81 years, it was all quiet and numb. Mr. Altaf could sleep now.

*Hasib Ur Rashid Ifti reads books, idolizes Osamu Dazai and plans to check his email any day now. Send him book suggestions at: [hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com](mailto:hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com)*

