

**FABLE FACTORY**

# GREY PALETTE

**NUJHAT ASLAM NIEON**

A palette of sensation I take,  
 Smearred with shades of cool and grey  
 Portraying her in an unperceived canvas.

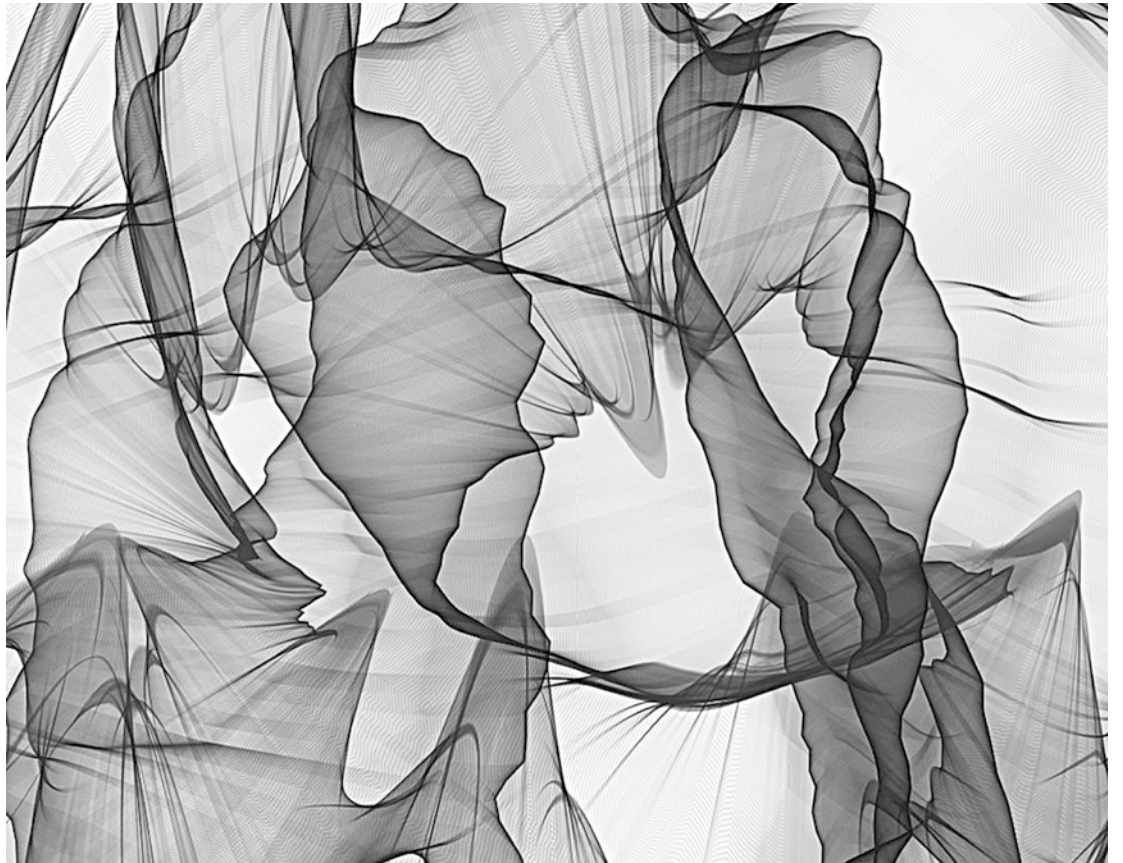
I count all the shades of grey,  
 In a world of black and white they stay  
 Blended with ambiguous truth, enshrouded.

Glad her eyes can't be deciphered,  
 Dark like the shadows that prowl  
 In the realms of my monochromatic world.

A world where seasons have no colour  
 Ocean and sky embrace each other  
 Leaves live and wither, reflecting the same shade.

I paint all and sundry devoid of colour,  
 The world unfolds the shade coral  
 To be most favoured for her lips.

As I fail to see her true colours,  
 I paint her with my grey palette  
 With a coral stain subtly left for the lips.



# 3 Degrees

**AAQIB HASIB**

*They didn't see it coming. Or at least, that's what they wanted you to believe. After all, does it really matter, if it isn't going to be your world that drowns?*



June 2042. That's the first day the floods came but never left. For over a decade, politicians and billionaires had told the world it would be alright. Things were under control.

Every village that suffered from an increasingly devastating flash flood each year, would be taken care of. That funds would be provided, by both the authorities and the rich.

*Can't you see that every year we donate \$10 million to climate change?*

*Without our factories, where would we get the money to do such incredible acts of charity?*

*It's not as simple as you think. Without money coming in first, we'll never be able to solve the crisis.*

I don't know where they are now. I don't know where anyone is anymore. It's been four years since the first floods, and now, I cannot even find myself.

October 9, 2044. That's the day I had to leave my mother behind. Her body had grown too weak from the dense toxic air in Dhaka. In her final moments, she asked me not to go looking for a doctor, as medical facilities had long since stopped existing. Instead, she begged me to go find my sister in Dinajpur.

We had a long journey together. Spanning almost two years, as we made it from Koyra to Khulna, where we were able to take refuge in my paternal grandparent's home for nearly a year, before the waves once again came and crashed our dreams down to nothing.

From Khulna, we had to fight our way to Dhaka. We lost all our money in the process. But what value does paper notes carry in a world that's slowly burning everything to a crisp, while simultaneously

drowning it?

The world was drowning. But my world drowned the day I had to leave my mother behind.

I didn't want to. But my mother told me that good sons listen to their mother, and her last wish was for me to find my sister, and hopefully weather out the storm.

When I hear my mother's last words over and over again in my head, on sleepless nights and afternoons where I collapse crying, all I could think is that this storm would not end.

Somewhere down the line, we all decided that things would be fine. That the numbers weren't that bad, and the planet would just reset, and save itself. That a few extra coal plants and brick kilns were fine, as long as they boosted the GDP by a few extra points.

Maybe some miraculous power would save us from the ticking time bomb.

*Surely one more year of endless consumerism and increasing profits wouldn't end the world?*

???? ??, 2045. As I drag myself through Balurghat, I know I won't make it. My sister is too far and my body is much too weak. I've lost track of dates. Travelling at night is my only option, as during the day, the red hot sun will burn anything in sight.

There's nothing left in my body to give. Nothing to push me forward. I collapse on my back, staring up at the night sky one last time. My mother's whisper to me to go find my sister.

*I'm sorry, ma.*

*Aaqib will someday finish writing all of his pending stories. But not today. Write to him at [aaqib.hasib@thedailystar.net](mailto:aaqib.hasib@thedailystar.net)*