

To Save Oneself

SAFA AHMED

Why must the sunlight on my skin always be scorching?
The waves, forever drowning?
The sirens roar at the highest pitch, obscenities.
Feet first I push off the edge, into my infinities.
Paying time and time again in blood and shards of gore,
What you don't understand, my absolute paramour
Is that, like you, I too am beyond a soul.

Under my breath, I cast upon myself this curse to never become whole,
Never with the scraps and bits they toss my way,
Never with the ulterior glances and phrases twisted to sway.
Exhausted, I promise to the holy pillar my revived intentions,
It's about time I became my own salvation.

This week's stories and poems are the winning entries of Word Capsules '21, an online writing competition organised by the North South University Communications Club (NSUCC).

SHOUT was the media partner of the event.

Disaster

SAADAT SHADMAN HOSSAIN

As he came from the other room with a heavy heart, I knew what had happened. All my memories started flashing before my eyes. I wanted to cry, feel the pain, but it was as if I was numb. Still holding onto those broken bangles, the silence has slowly shadowed my sight.

I rested my head on the pillow for a while, and then it happened. I was in the car, "Santa Monica Dream" was playing on the radio, and there she was, alive and nodding to the song. I never thought I'd have to relive my worst memory. It was happening all over again. The same broken signs, the lighthouse near the cliff, and the growling thunder. However, this time it was different. The storm seemed to have changed its mind and let us go unharmed.

We stopped in front of the lighthouse and sat on the bench near the cliff. Our eyes gazed at the red sky, and the wind did the talking. The sun was setting over the horizon, all the while the wind was rising. She held my hand, and I felt free; the sirens inside me were waiting to step forward. As I opened my eyes, I felt the same wind. I leaned towards the window to feel the rain and play with the shape of the clouds. Because I know, one day you'll be back and you'll be proud of the person you see.

Befriending My Ghosts

NAFURA HOSSAIN

It casts a shadow upon my frame
Dragging itself wherever I go.
People tell me to stand up straighter
But they don't know of the sharp claws digging into my shoulder
Of the ghost of my would bes and could've beens and what was.

It whispers to me, of my glory days and of what I lost.
It reminds me of how I did this to myself.
I made myself fall. I messed up.
I lost. I did, I chose, I failed, I, I, I, I, ME. ME.
I lost my path to my dreams.
And the ghost is here to make sure I know.

I have denied its words a million times.

But today, I will concur.
Today I will befriend my ghost.
Take it's clawed hands off of my shoulders and into mine,
Hoping to learn something more.
Yes, it is I who ruined me.
But it is also I who made it here.
So, I will befriend my ghost
And walk side by side into the future.

Only path out

SAFA AHMED

This version of you that runs rampant
through the halls of my mind all night,
Isn't the person you are now,
isn't the person you'll ever be again.
And yes at first, it felt like I was splitting my head in two,
while my heart climbed up my throat and suffocated me,
But I think I've found some clarity through it now.

I fell in love with a version of you that,
like the flames of our fleeting love,
simply dissipated into thin air.
If I could make the world spin backwards
I know I would be forever stuck in those moments
but I am not God and You are not my hero.

Phoenix

NOVERA MOYEEN

I thought about ending you. Well, no. I am too squeamish about violence in even my imagination. So, no violence for you. How about dismantling? Like those Lego figurines. Makes a neater picture. Just pop the parts off. Then place them in a heavy-duty hydraulic crusher to turn them into fine powder. Dust those off and throw them in an incinerator to ensure complete and utter destruction. Cool, right? But then, I felt empty. You see, you took some of my colours with you. So I came up with another plan. You were resurrected by me. I tried to scrape the colours off the figurine. But I kept at it, and it became more of a polishing job. My colours looked brighter on you, and I was using my remaining colours to correct little imperfections. I even painted you a new bow. My days and nights were blended by this project. As I reached the bottom of my paint barrel, I came to my senses. It was time to end you again.

But that didn't work the last time, did it? Killing you each time means resurrecting you after. Keep my colours; maybe, they were yours to keep. I can replenish my stock, create new ones; there are so many possibilities! And, it's time to resurrect myself, don't you think so?