



THE GREY CLOUD

NUZHAT HASSAN CHOWDHURY

The grey cloud over my head
 Accompanied me like a guardian.
 One that didn't protect, but instead,
 Rained all over my parade.

When my mind stopped being my friend,
 I forgot what sunshine felt like.
 Sometimes it rained,
 And sometimes it felt like I was trapped in a snowstorm.

Yes, I felt warmth now and then,
 But its fleeting nature made sure
 To bring the rain and the cold back into my life
 As soon as the moment had passed.

This warmth felt like snowflakes.
 So beautiful as long as it lasted,
 Only to melt into nothing moments after it appeared,
 As if it never existed.

However, it's different now.
 Today, the sun shines in my life brighter than ever before
 And my mind is finally my friend.
 There are times when it's dim, but never fully dark.
 The seasons change like they're supposed to
 And I know no monsoon rain will overstay its welcome.
 Even when the grey cloud reappears,
 I know the skies will eventually clear.

Nuzhat has finally fixed her sleeping schedule. Congratulate her at nuzhatchowdhury07@gmail.com

Descent to Rise

FAIRUZ FAIZA

Eyes groggy from the cold wind,
 Prophecies of your past stare into oblivion.
 You knew the body was a vessel of frailty
 Bones merely the rock candy of the ground.

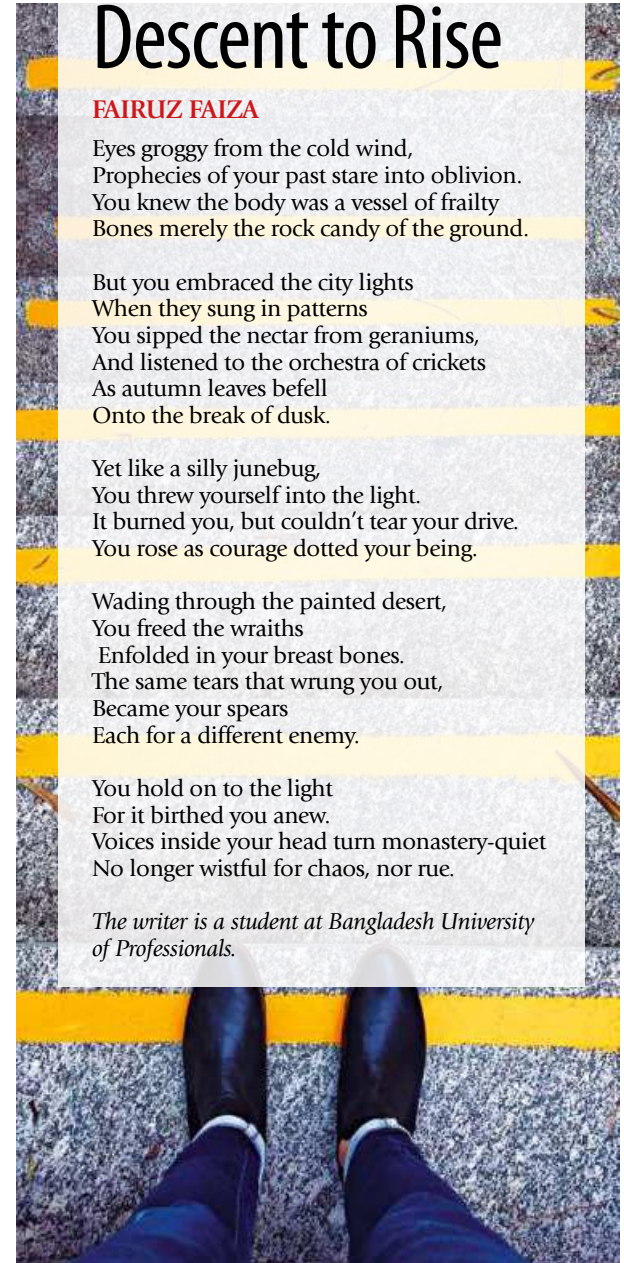
But you embraced the city lights
 When they sung in patterns
 You sipped the nectar from geraniums,
 And listened to the orchestra of crickets
 As autumn leaves befell
 Onto the break of dusk.

Yet like a silly junebug,
 You threw yourself into the light.
 It burned you, but couldn't tear your drive.
 You rose as courage dotted your being.

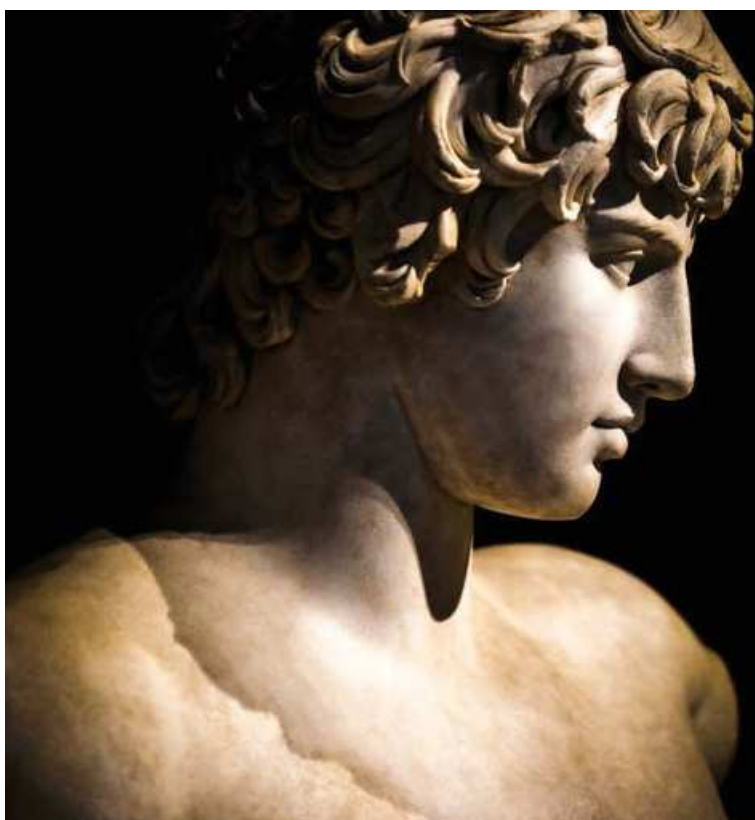
Wading through the painted desert,
 You freed the wraiths
 Enfolded in your breast bones.
 The same tears that wrung you out,
 Became your spears
 Each for a different enemy.

You hold on to the light
 For it birthed you anew.
 Voices inside your head turn monastery-quiet
 No longer wistful for chaos, nor rue.

The writer is a student at Bangladesh University of Professionals.



Encountering a modern Greek god



NUJHAT ASLAM

Last spring, I came across a guy who was sculpted out of the same marble stones that were used to sculpt the Greek gods back in the 5th century. He didn't have the aura of an idle, wine-loving, lavish god. Instead, he had a slender, modern structure with a depressed face. What actually related him to the sculpture of a Greek god was his cold-toned skin, sky-high ego and an ancient stone heart.

I called him "Labyrinth", as he always chased me in the maze of my messed up emotions with his never expiring, sculpted youth. To avoid the crisis, I tactfully locked him away in the dewy orbs of memories, at the deepest recess of my mind and kept those unattended. However, every now and then, those caught my attention like spotlights.

Back in the 5th century, I wonder if the faithful hearts would stop short and cease to pace in front of the enormous sculpted gods, the way I felt an overwhelmed exhilaration every time I neared him. It was the same way anyone would feel if they tried to hold a conversation with a streetlight, standing in front of its pole. A one-sided conversation with pure submission.

Some Greek gods were musical as far as I know. He was no different. He sang sweetly while the shattering sound of heartbreaks resonated as a background melody. He had an innate ability to be selfish like the nature of any other typical Greek god. A worthy descendant who hardly cared before throwing away any sweetness intended to be offered.

Fools and devotees worshipping Greek gods understood ages ago that it was impossible to keep pace with their idols. Unlike the Greek gods, they had reasons to focus on, rather than emotions. So, they slowly wiped their existence. However, as a sensible mere mortal, I decided to step down from the Parthenon and went pagan instead.