



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

Leafhopper

under the vast purple sky

A.M. FAHAD

It was 3 AM in the morning. A leafhopper jumped onto the next blade of grass, looking for one that isn't shrivelled. Grass had been in abundance then. It's been years, no, centuries, actually. Hubris and concrete have melted into smithereens of dust. Metal that held bridges and landscapes has turned into rust and decayed into nothingness. Although, the world is very much alive. And truth be told, it has never been this alive before. Quietude looms over the clouds beyond the horizon as the skyline displays a magnificent work of colours.

A city stood here once. Rosy-cheeked children would run after each other as the seconds passed, and adults would yell at them with their eyebrows curled into small fits of rage. In that world, ignorance amassed like water near the roots of a cypress tree. And with every tree that was cut down, a city fell on its hind legs, like a dog with a tumour on its flesh, or a bird with salmonella. It came to them slowly. They were giants. And their children were fruits of violence who were being raised to hurt, pillage, and destroy everything that stood under this giant plastic dome.

The leafhopper looked up to the sky. It was purple and full of whites scattered across the canvas. A sense of calm settled in its exoskeleton like a song on a radio from across a tin house by the road, reverberating in its bones like a cure for the loneliness this world shrouded itself with.

But that was all just a dream. They didn't exist anymore, and even if they did, under some moss-covered basement, we no longer had anyone capable of using one. Of course, we were talking about radios. Or anything else the earth swallowed whole. In reality, doom was inevitable. And all of them knew of it. Some chose to collect plastic after school, while others chose to indulge themselves with the vastness this world had to offer. The same vastness that swallowed them whole and gave birth to flowers prettier than their greed-filled brains could comprehend.

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"Are you doing your best?" the minuscule bug asked itself. There is no way to tell, really. After all, we are small, insignificant, feeble creatures. We exist under a bug catcher's microlens, tiny specks in comparison to the brilliance of creation and destruction.

"The best you can do is good enough," the leafhopper muttered under its breath, like a gentle reminder of a mother. It stood still for a moment before using its gears to launch itself to the next blade of grass. We didn't know the future. We existed underneath the process of its creation. As the night slowly neared its end, the sky changed its shade to a mixture of orange, blue, and bronze. And made room for sunlight to shine on the dead city.

Grass had been in abundance then.

A.M. Fahad is a student of St. Joseph Higher Secondary School.

Intrusive

DIHAAN KHAN

My mind works in strange ways.
The cogs turning endlessly, repeating
time over itself –
Linking screws in a ceaseless attempt
To fuse together the past and present.
Memories melting together, shattering
to shreds
Only to be glued together again
By the tears of countless entities.
I'd be lying if I said I wasn't delusional.
I'm losing my mind
To hate what millions have,
In my nine to five job, I'm overworked
And overwhelmed with the beef I cause
Between my conscience and my
impulses.
Ranting on forever, an eternal Karen –
But then who is the manager, and who,
the worker?
All fused together by the past and the
present,
And perhaps the future plays a part too.
Melting on my tongue like a bitter pill,
All I know is that I know nothing,
I am nothing.
Nothing in the rotation of the Great
Perhaps

*Dihaan Khan
is a student
of Mapleleaf
Intl. School.*



DESIGN:
FAISAL BIN IQBAL