One of my most favourite books that I read during high school is Paper Towns by John Green. It’s been almost 4 years since I read the book and understood the characters much more deeply than I do now, but from my vague memories of it, I think I can write in a few words about the novel.

Paper Towns tells the story of the mysterious disappearance of Margo Roth Spiegelman, a now-popular girl who has not interacted much with Quentin Jacobsen, the novel’s narrator and protagonist since they were nine. When they were nine years old, riding their bicycle together one morning, they discovered the body of a man named Robert Joyner, who have committed suicide, lying beneath a tree. This experience is formative for Quentin and Margo, but it forges a long-lasting bond between them throughout the novel. Before her disappearance, Margo left a few vague clues, through which Quentin, with the help of his friends Ben, Radar and Lacey were able to find her in the end. Throughout the novel, Quentin sets out to discover Margo as a person he saw throughout the years, to the person she grew up to be.

What interested me most are the characters in the novel, and their transitioning from high school to adult life - at least to me personally. I think when you are growing up, you realize one day that you have to make all the choices from that point, and those choices will, in turn, reflect who you are as a person, as an individual, because until that happens, you put yourself in this box, like everyone else. Margo, who is popular amongst her peers for her incredible adventures and elaborate schemes, knew herself before anyone did. Margo felt that she might be living a life like everyone else, making the choices like everyone else, and just being another person in the hallway. Maybe this is the reason it got so unbearable for her that she decided to escape.

“It's a paper town, with paper houses and paper people, everything is uglier up close.”

But is it that unbearable to live like a paper person living in a paper house and going about your life? Maybe it does get unbearable when you know it. I have had the same feeling when I just finished high school back in Bangladesh. I decided to move out somewhere else, contrary to the choices most of my friends made. I am not sure if reading this book has, in any way, encouraged me to do so, but maybe the least it did was help me weighing in my options.