

Expressions '24

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

DAULAT RAM COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI



1st Year



CRs: Karuna Gautam (Section A) and **Pritika Kaushal** (Section B)

2nd Year



CRs: Divya Deo (Section A) and **Soumya Saxena** (Section B)

3rd Year



CRs: Section A: Anindita Mohanty **and** Devanti
Section B: Ritika **and** Swati Nehra.

It is already that time of the year and I am not ready to say goodbye as yet. It feels like I hardly got to know you, especially the Sec. B students. I usually do not teach first years, but by the time I get to teach third year students I really enjoy the bond we develop. As luck would have it, I have been teaching the Sec. A students since their very first semester and it was wonderful getting to know each and every one of you. Especially after the three years of online classes, meeting your class in college felt like learning to be in a classroom completely anew and I am glad I got to do it with you all. I hope after three years with us you have learned to look at everything with a critical lens and be vocal when needed. Remember not to lose yourselves while pleasing others. Hope you will remember the classes with me fondly, as will I. You all are the sweetest.

Love,
Violina Ma'am



Cover Page Design

This cover page is designed by Divyanshi Kumar, a 3rd year student of B.A. (Hons.) English. It draws inspiration from women who have dedicated themselves to illuminating paths to liberation and self-expression for future generations. It symbolizes their guiding light and also the empowering journey women embark on as they navigate their own narratives within a forest of possibilities.

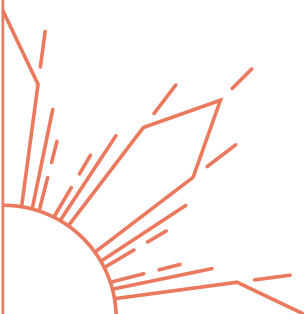




EXPRESSIONS

2023-24

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
DAULAT RAM COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI



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From the Principal's Desk



With great satisfaction, I applaud the English Department, Literati, at Daulat Ram College for their academically stimulating efforts over the years and especially this session, with inventive workshops, intellectual lecture series, and other academic endeavours to shape a liberal and approachable mind.

We need our students to develop their abilities and instill in them a sense of responsibility. It fills me with immense joy to see that the Department of English is making considerable efforts in that area. The Department of English has emerged to further entertain the cause of advancement in both individual and collective manners through its numerous pursuits in the 2023-24 session.

As I peruse Expressions 2024, I'm struck by how much creativity has been combined with a meaningful objective and vision. The magazine has presented poetry, stories and graphic narratives in a unique way. I praise the entire team for this exquisite curation and feel excited in considering these contributors for our future!

PROF. SAVITA ROY,
Chief Patron, Literati, the Department of English
And
Principal,
Daulat Ram College,
University of Delhi



From the Teacher-in-Charge



"What are you reading, my Lord?"
"Words, words, words."
(Hamlet, II. ii.)

We largely live in a world of words – spoken, interpreted or misinterpreted, heard or unheard. Words entwine us, words shape the way we perceive the world around us, or the way the world perceives us.

The Department of English has always been offering a space for academic exploration of words in all the hermeneutic dimensions, by unleashing the creativity of the students through its annual departmental publication, *Expressions*. Over the years, the magazine has changed its nomenclature from *Renaissance* to *Literati* to *Expressions* – highlighting the flexibility of the title as well as the space, keeping alive the dynamic nature of the very existence of the department.



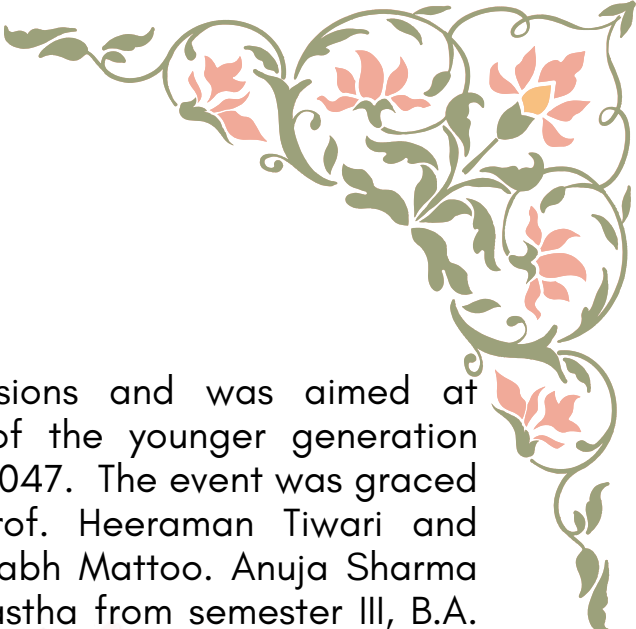
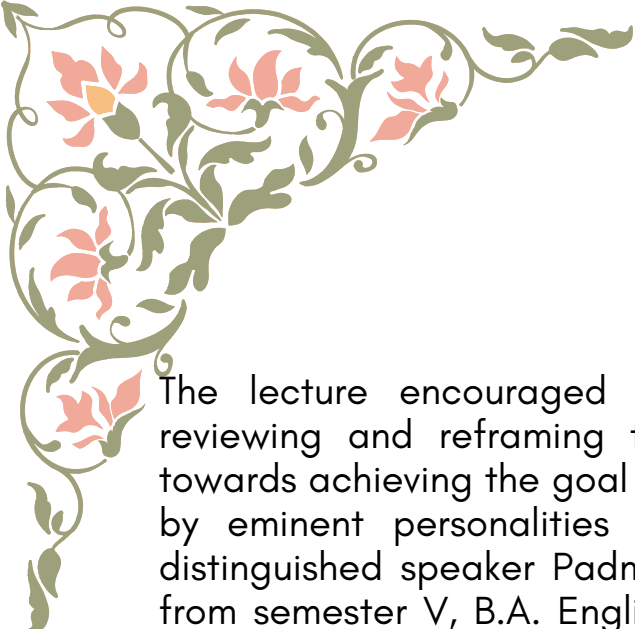
The year 2023-24 was memorable for several reasons. We organised the first Two-Day International Conference of the department on “Modernism, India and the Colonial Gaze” on 1st-2nd February 2024 with a galaxy of distinguished academicians as guests, plenary speakers or chairs – Prof. Dhananjay Singh, Prof. Balaram Pani, Prof. Shormisththa Panja, Prof. Christel Rashmi Devadawson, Prof. Saugata Bhaduri, Dr. Leslie de Bont, Dr. Tom Walker, Prof. Anamika, Prof. Anjana Niera Dev, to name a few. The conference led to extremely engaging discussions on various aspects of the broad general topic.

The department organised a two day “Editing and Publishing Workshop” under the aegis of IQAC, DRC, on 5th and 6th October 2023. The Panel Discussion was graced by Ms. Rimina Mohapatra from Taylor & Francis, Ms. Amrita Mukerji from Harper Collins, and Ms. Saniya Puri from the Cambridge University Press.

The hugely successful session was co-ordinated by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly. The Resource Person for the First Session of the second day was Dr. Swetha Antony from the Department of English, University of Delhi who conducted a comprehensive session on “Book(s), Text(s) and Context(s): Towards and understanding of the “Academic” in “Writing”. On both the days, activity sessions on various aspects of academic writing, editing and publishing were conducted by Ms. Nishtha Kishore, Dr. Violina Borah, Ms. Priyanka Arora, Dr. Pawan Kumar, Dr. Shweta Kumari and Ms. Shilpa Vashisht. The workshop received an overwhelming response with participants from various departments.



In association with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), we organised a lecture titled “G20 Presidency and its Global Impact” on the theme “Amrit Kaal Vimarsh: Viksit Bharate@2047” on 11th October 2023.



The lecture encouraged academic discussions and was aimed at reviewing and reframing the imagination of the younger generation towards achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat@2047. The event was graced by eminent personalities - chief guest Prof. Heeraman Tiwari and distinguished speaker Padma Shri Prof. Amitabh Mattoo. Anuja Sharma from semester V, B.A. English (Hons.) and Aastha from semester III, B.A. Philosophy (Hons.) were adjudged and awarded the Best Interjectors by Prof. Mattoo for their thought-provoking questions.

To expand the aesthetic boundaries of the students by making them aware of the nuances of the stylistic, aesthetic, historical and symbolic dimensions of trends in paintings, sculpture, historical monuments, manuscripts, and other exquisite treasure troves available for a research enthusiast in the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), 45 students of the department were taken for the educational trip.

The departmental annual fest, Novella was a grand success, with a remarkably large response from participants of various institutions for events such as Open Mic, Fan Fiction, Lit Quiz, among others.

An Alumni Meet was organised on the occasion of the Fest, which brought back many previous students, who relived through memory lane and enlivened the moments with their experience.

The Department Union deserves applause - Anshika, Tammana, Somya Solanki, Kriti, Vaishnavi along with the Teacher-Convenor Dr. Violina Borah and Co-convenor Ms. Priyanka Arora for the successful completion of a distinctly productive year.

Expressions this year is compact with creativity, winged with succinct words, empowered with the apt stylistic devices, made memorable with the choice of themes and their perfect placing in the narrative contexts.

Happy Reading!

DEEPSHIKHA MAHANTA-BORTAMULY, PhD

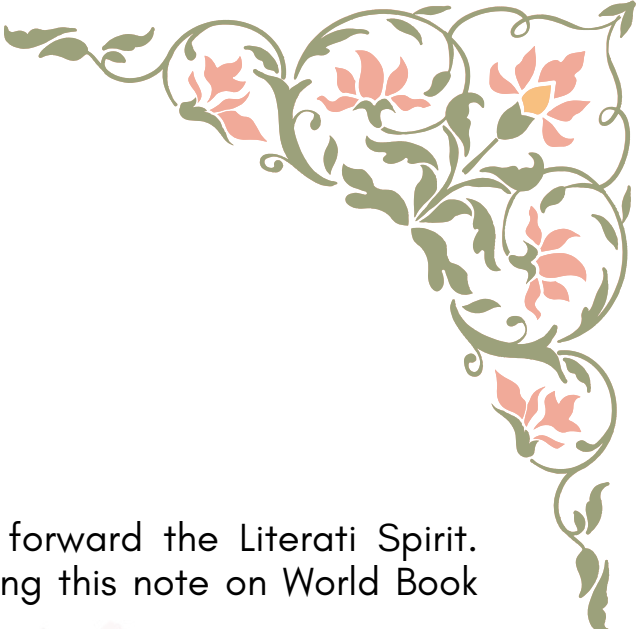
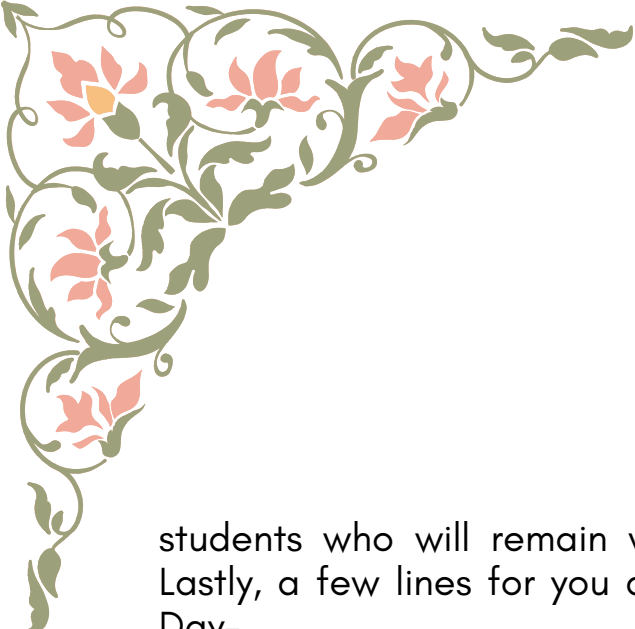
Teacher in Charge, 2023-24,
Department of English,
Daulat Ram College,
University of Delhi

From the Convenor



Expressions is a little window to peek inside the room of our own- Literati. It has given the students of our department a platform to hone their uniqueness through contributing in it as writers, editors, and illustrators. It gives the students across all three years an opportunity to bond and learn from each other. The hard work extended by each member of the Expressions team is much appreciated. I have been particularly fortunate to be at the core of Literati, the Department of English, and by extension a part of Expressions several times over since I joined the college. Every year I am in awe of the talent our students harbour. This year is no less in terms of gaining new perspectives while working with a new team. While handling too many things at the same time, this year had been particularly challenging for me. I am glad to have supportive student teams as the Union and the Editorial team. It is likely that disagreements, differences of opinion and discontentment may arise while we work together. However, learning to maintain cordiality and professionalism is what one needs to take forward.

We got a beautiful new logo designed by our students, we organised various events throughout the academic year and worked twice as hard for the NAAC visit. I hope by the end of it you will have only wonderful memories to carry forward when you graduate and the

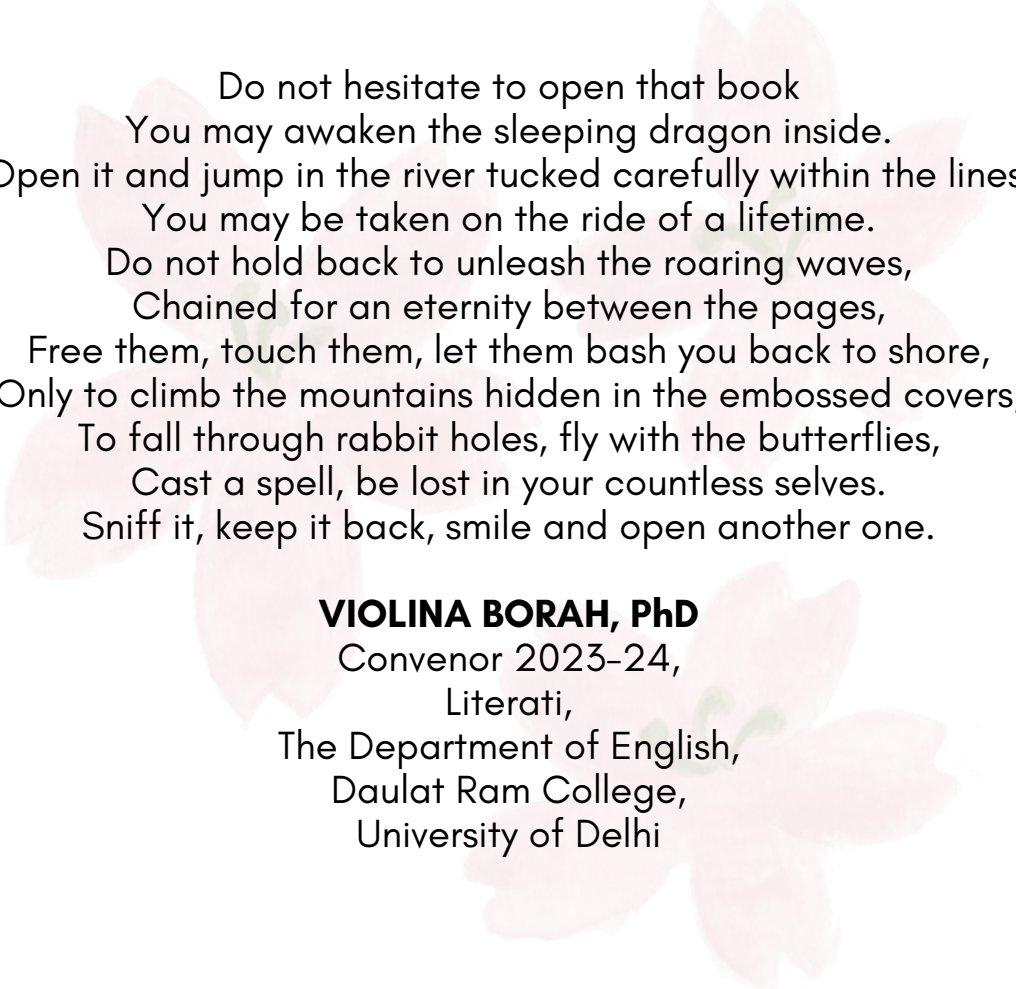


students who will remain with us will carry forward the Literati Spirit. Lastly, a few lines for you all since I am writing this note on World Book Day-

Do not hesitate to open that book
You may awaken the sleeping dragon inside.
Open it and jump in the river tucked carefully within the lines,
You may be taken on the ride of a lifetime.
Do not hold back to unleash the roaring waves,
Chained for an eternity between the pages,
Free them, touch them, let them bash you back to shore,
Only to climb the mountains hidden in the embossed covers,
To fall through rabbit holes, fly with the butterflies,
Cast a spell, be lost in your countless selves.
Sniff it, keep it back, smile and open another one.

VIOLINA BORAH, PhD

Convenor 2023-24,
Literati,
The Department of English,
Daulat Ram College,
University of Delhi



From the Co-Convenor



The academic year 2023-24, with the Expressions team, has been an enriching and memorable experience. Our ardent students from the editorial team have worked tirelessly to ensure that the alumni as well as existing student community of DRC collaborate to bring forth artistic expression in its varied forms: art that helps explore newer ways of engaging with the world around us, and “art [that] washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life” (Pablo Picasso).

This year, we introduced the Social Media Team that worked in tandem with the Union of English Department and increased our digital outreach and engagement with the help of literary quizzes, literary news, and asked the audience to suggest event topics, and even take up adjudication for a few events like the logo making competition for Literati. I, Ms Priyanka Arora, as the Co-Convenor of Literati for 2023-24, invite you to come dive into the world of literature and promise that you would come out of it a transformed individual.

MS. PRIYANKA ARORA,
Co-Convenor 2023-24,
Literati,
The Department of English,
Daulat Ram College,
University of Delhi



From the Editorial Team

“Literature is the language of the imagination, and the only true homeland of the mind.”

- Isaac Bashevis Singer

Literature is omnipresent and all-permeating. It is something that we are always surrounded with, and as the members of Literati, we are believers and followers of this very sentiment. This magazine is nothing but a testament of this fact. Expressions 2024 is a collection of tales intricately spun, poems spontaneously woven, graphics beautifully narrated. It is a tapestry of young minds put together creating their own art and literature as they are being introduced into the world of those whose legacies we follow. The editorial board for Expressions looks at this time, knowing we will always remember the experience fondly. We ourselves believe in the power of art and literature to shape minds and hearts in a way that makes the world a better place to exist in. This magazine encompasses the several exercises of Literati in the session 2023-24, along with a gallery of the best of its artists; fictional and non-fictional writers, and digital and traditional illustrators.

Expressions 2024 has been a collective effort, with traditional illustrators **Iffat, Kajal** and **Swati**; digital illustrator **Divyanshi** working along with the editorial board consisting of **Kalpita (Cuddle)**, **Darshayata**, **Bhumika (Archer)** and **Avani**. We hope the readers will enjoy reading it as much as we did working on it!

EDITORIAL TEAM 2023-24,
Expressions '24,
The Annual Magazine,
Literati,
The Department of English,
Daulat Ram College,
University of Delhi

Editorial Team 2023-24



Editor
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3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



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3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



Editor
BHUMIKA AGGARWAL (ARCHER)
2nd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



Editor
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1st Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



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Illustrator (Traditional)
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Illustrator (Traditional)
KAJAL CHAUDHURY
3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



Illustrator (Traditional)
SWATI NEHRA
3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English

From the President

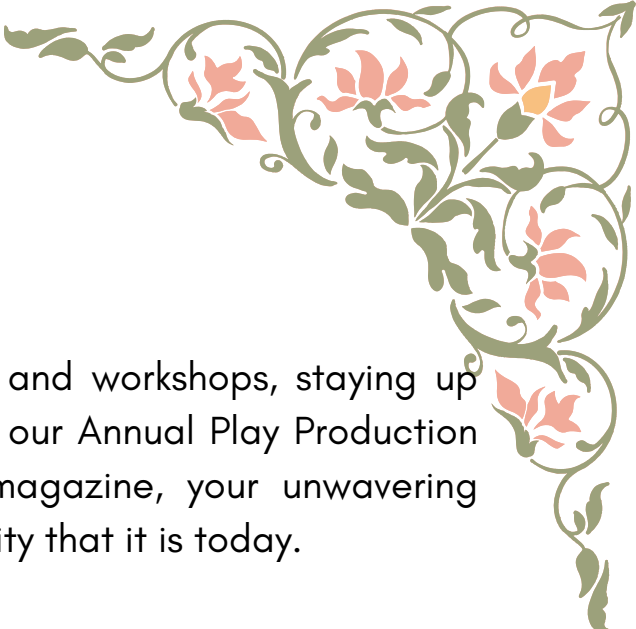
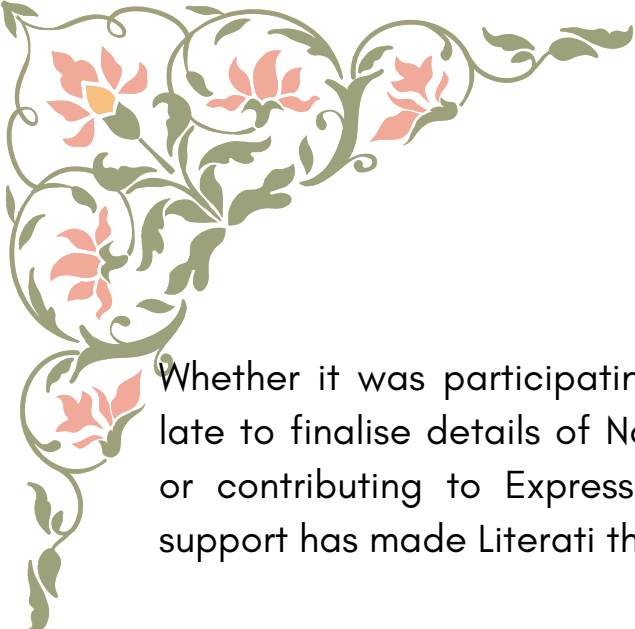


"If the wind turns, if I hit a squall
Allow the ground to find its brutal way to me
If I should fall, on that day
I only pray, don't fall away from me"
- I, Carrion (Icarian) by Andrew Hozier Byrne

I have always found it easier to live in the future, extensively planning out every single detail, making lists, charting it all out; but now nearing the end of my bachelor's degree as I sit to write this message down, I realise I've come to appreciate the present. Merely attending lectures and indulging myself in discussions with my classmates brings me so much joy, it all points to the very human need to understand and be understood.

I'm extremely grateful to have such incredible people in my life, most of whom I met in this college. I can safely say that I would not be where I am without the amazing set of friends and classmates who have been my biggest cheerleaders and have stuck by my side through thick and thin. No matter how hard I try, I can never thank them enough.

Being the President of Literati this time around, I got to do so much with the incredible volunteers and union members who have been nothing but supportive throughout the entire year- your enthusiasm and love for literature have been the driving force behind everything we have accomplished.



Whether it was participating in conferences and workshops, staying up late to finalise details of Novella, working on our Annual Play Production or contributing to Expressions—our literary magazine, your unwavering support has made Literati the vibrant community that it is today.

To the dearest teachers— In the classrooms where we laughed, struggled, and learned, you were there, offering patience, wisdom, and a listening ear. Your dedication to our growth went beyond the texts; you invested in our dreams and celebrated our successes as if they were your own. Thank you for believing in us, challenging us, and inspiring us to be better versions of ourselves.

To my lovely union members – as I reflect on our time together, I am overwhelmed by the memories we have created – the laughter shared during planning events, the tears shed over poignant passages, and the beautiful bonds formed. You have not only been fellow members of the union; you have been my dearest friends, confidants, and kindred spirits who have made my time as President truly unforgettable.

It has been an extraordinary journey serving as your President, one filled with unforgettable moments, deep connections, and a shared love for literature that has touched my heart in ways I never imagined. Each event, each discussion, and each shared passion for words has been a testament to the magic of literature and the power it holds to bring us together. Now perhaps as the final expression of our literary collaboration, the editorial team brings to you Expressions, they have worked exceptionally hard on this issue and I hope you admire this as much as I do.

ANSHIKA SHARMA,
President 2023-24,
Literati,
The Department of English,
Daulat Ram College,
University of Delhi



Literati Teams



Union 2023-24



(Top, L-to-R) IFFAT MARIYAM ANSARI (Social Media Manager), TAMANNA SETH (Vice-President), ANSHIKA SHARMA (President), SOMYA SOLANKI (Treasurer), KRITI SAXENA (Joint Secretary).
(Bottom, L-to-R) DR. DEEPSHIKHA MAHANTA-BORTAMULY (Teacher-in-Charge), DR. VIOLINA BORAH (Convenor).

Extended Union 2023-24



(Top to Bottom, L-to-R)

Row 1: Dr. R. Rajeshwari, Ms. Haritha P., Ms. Nivedita Sharma, Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta-Bortamuly.

Row 2: Ms. Prajna Tanwar, Dr. Sangeeta Gupta, Ms. Suman, Dr. Shweta Kumari, , Dr. Violina Borah.

Row 3: ANINDITA MOHANTY (CR, 3rd Yr., Sec. A), RITIKA (CR, 3rd Yr., Sec. B), PRITIKA KAUSHAL (CR, 1st Yr., Sec. B)

Row 4: IFFAT MARIYAM ANSARI (Social Media Manager), TAMANNA SETH (Vice-President), ANSHIKA SHARMA (President), SOMYA SOLANKI (Treasurer), KRITI SAXENA (Joint Secretary).

Rapporteur Team 2023-24



(Top, L-to-R) Shivani G, Arunima Rao, Anushka Das.
(Bottom, L-to-R) Anindita Mohanty (REPORT HEAD), Somya Solanki.

Editorial Team 2023-24



(Top to Bottom, L-to-R)
Row 1: Iffat Mariyam Ansari, Darshayata Deka, Avani Kulshreshtha, Kajal Chaudhury.
Row 2: Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta-Bortamuly, Kalpita Ratnashree, Bhumika Aggarwal (Archer), Dr. Violina Borah.



Faculty



Dr. Sangeeta Gupta

Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta-Bortamuly (TIC)

Dr. R. Rajeshwari

Dr. Violina Borah (Convenor)

Dr. Vandana

Dr. Astha Saklani

Dr. Pawan Kumar

Dr. Shweta Kumari

Ms. Haritha P.

Ms. Saneya

Ms. Priyanka Arora (Co Convenor)

Ms. Nivedita Sharma

Ms. Nishtha Kishore

Ms. Prajna Tanwar

Ms. Shilpa Vashisht

Ms. Suman

A large, faint, light-colored illustration of various flowers and foliage, including a large peony-like flower and smaller clusters of blossoms, serving as a background for the central text.

Events 2023-24



Teachers' Day '23



On **5th September, 2023**, Literati, The Department of English of Daulat Ram College, organised **Teachers' Day** celebrations for the department's beloved professors, with **Room ZLT** as the venue. The event commenced with a **cake-cutting session** wherein all the professors cut a cake together. This was followed by varied **performances** by the department's students, including an acoustic song performance by 2nd year student, **Pragati Das**, and a Bollywood dance number by 3rd year student, **Radha**.

The talent round was followed by the games session, in which 3rd year students organised numerous fun games and challenges between the teachers. The first of this was a **Quiz Competition** to test the professors' knowledge on various literary figures and texts. The next one was a **'Guess The Quote'** game wherein they had to correctly match iconic literary quotes and musical lyrics with the right authors and singers respectively. The last game round was that of a **One-Act Play**, wherein teachers had to act out whichever literary character they'd been assigned, and the others had to try to guess who they were portraying.

Overall, it was a really fun day which brought us even closer to our beloved professors.



Litgo '23



On **13th September, 2023**, Literati, the Department of English, Daulat Ram College, organised **Litgo**, a logo-making competition. The competition was held in two parallel modes: **online** and **offline** (physical), with students from various departments of DRC participating in the competition. The judges for the competition were the Teacher-Members of Literati themselves.


Based on their decision, the hand-drawn logo by **Iffat Mariyam Ansari**, a 3rd year student of the department, was declared as the winner. It was subsequently digitalised by **Divyanshi Kumar**, a fellow 3rd year student of the department, and a member of its Illustrations (Digital Illustrations) team.

The winning design shows a book, encased inside an illuminated lantern, with butterflies around it. While the book represents knowledge, the butterfly represents beauty and aesthetics. The lantern represents Literati, our safe space, nurturing and arming us with our weapon of choice, the book. Like the caterpillar undergoing metamorphosis, the students of Literati shed their old selves, and soar to new heights as butterflies, free spirited and confident in our own skin and skill, liberated from the constraints of ignorance.

An alternate interpretation offered by Iffat sees the winged figures around the lantern as moths that are drawn to the light of literature and knowledge.

The winning logo replaced the old Literati logo of a quill inside a bottle of ink, and was liked by all because of its visual beauty and related meaning.





Parliament House Visit



On **20th September, 2023**, a total of **sixteen** students from all the three years of the department were selected to go on an official students' visit to the **Parliament House**, New Delhi. They were to accompany DRC students from other departments for this, with DRC being one out of only three DU colleges selected for this special purpose. Among the various professors accompanying the students on this visit was **Ms. Shilpa Vashisht** from the Department of English.

The students had a really fun and engaging time at the Parliament House, where they were informed in great detail about the Parliament House, its history and its workings. They were also filled with a sense of determination to work for the betterment of their country. They had a lot of fun, engaging in insightful discussion and light conversation with peers from various years, courses and even colleges.

This was a really wonderful educational trip, and Literati, the Department of English, definitely looks forward to more such events in the future.



Editing and Publishing Workshop

The Department of English, Daulat Ram College, organised an **Editing and Publishing Workshop** on **5th and 6th October, 2023**, with a range of panelists including **Ms. Rimina Mohapatra** from Taylor and Francis, **Ms. Amrita Mukerji** from Harper Collins and **Ms. Saniya Puri** from Cambridge University Press. The convenors of the workshop were **Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta** and **Ms. Priyanka Arora**.

Day one of the event had different activity sessions conducted by the faculty of the Department of English on Resume-Building, making Bio-Notes, Abstract-Writing, and, Editing and Proof-Reading.

The second day of the event was chaired by **Dr. Swetha Antony** from the Department of English, University of Delhi, who gave a comprehensive lecture on the topic, **“Book(s), Text(s) and Context(s): Towards an Understanding of the ‘Academic’ in Writing.”** The session ended with different exercises among the participants on the skills learned.

It was a highly enriching workshop that taught our students skills very much relevant to the field of publishing, which many English Honours students pursue as career. We were so thankful to all the industry experts, academicians and Literati professors for sharing their wisdom, experiences and insight.





Freshers '23



On **October 7, 2023**, the **Freshers '23** event was organised for students of the **Batch of 2026/2027**. The venue for the event was **Room ZLT**. It was a really fun and cosy event in which the professors and senior students of the department gathered together to give a warm welcome to the new students. Various singing and dance performances were put up by the 2nd and 3rd year students for the new 1st year pupils. The professors and union members shared their wisdom and insight with the new students.

Following the performance session, a **Talent Round** was held amongst the new 1st year students. During the event, they displayed their performative skills in a range of different fields, from music, to dance, to acting, to oratory. It was then followed by a **Q&A Round** where the participants were asked questions related to ethics and society. Both the rounds were judged by the Teacher-Members of Literati. Based on the contestants' performance, **Pritika Kaushal** was declared as '**Miss Fresher**', while **Jiya Sharma** was declared as '**Miss Popular**'.



G-20 Presidency and its Global Impact



The Department of English of Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), organised a lecture titled '**G20 Presidency and its Global Impact**' on the theme '**Amrit Kaal Vimarsh: Viksit Bharat@2047**' on **11th October, 2023**. The event took place in the Conference Hall of Daulat Ram College with over 200 students and faculty members. The event was graced by eminent personalities - Chief Guest, **Prof. Heeraman Tiwari**, and Distinguished Speaker, Padma Shri **Prof. Amitabh Mattoo**. The convenor for the event was **Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly**.

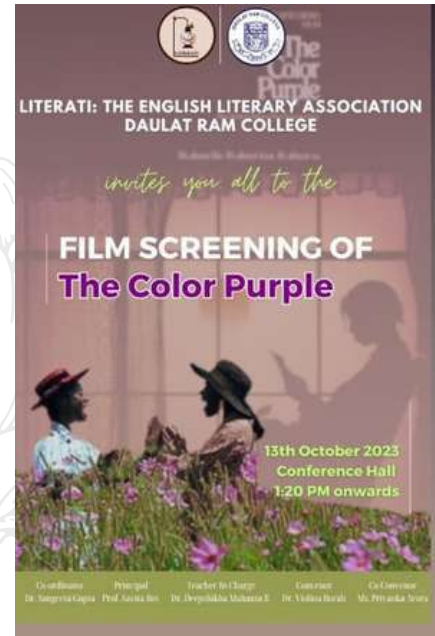
The event started with the lighting of the lamp, following which an invocation to the goddess Saraswati was sung by the talented students from **Alahyaa**, the Indian Classical Music Society, followed by an enthralling Bharatanatyam performance by **Anhad**, the Indian Classical Dance society of the college. The mic was then turned to the Chief Guest of the event, **Prof. Heeraman Tiwari**, who is the Associate Dean of the School of Social Sciences, and Chairman of the Centre of Historical Studies, JNU. The distinguished speaker, **Prof. Amitabh Mattoo**, a Padma Shri awardee, is currently a Professor of Disarmament Studies at the Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament (CIPOD), SIS and a Member of the National Knowledge Commission.

The event was a huge success covering expanding terrains of developmental programmes, issues, policies and themes that have made a substantial impact in the lives of common people. After an informative session, the floor was opened to questions allowing students to engage with the guests and delve deeper into the topics discussed during the event. The event came to a close after **Dr. R. Rajeshwari**, Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Daulat Ram College, delivered the **Vote of Thanks** and expressed deep gratitude to the guests. Students **Anuja Sharma** from B.A. English (Hons.), 3rd Year, and **Aastha** from B.A. Philosophy (Hons.), 2nd Year, were adjudged by Prof. Mattoo and awarded the best interjectors for their thought-provoking questions.

Film Screening

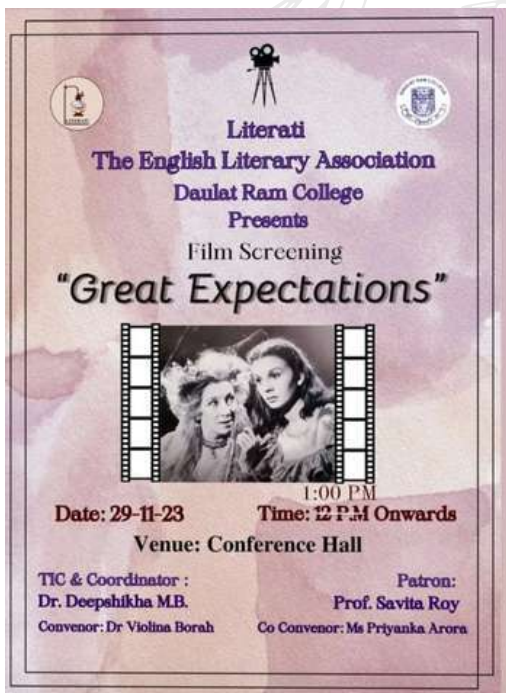
The Colour Purple

On **13th October, 2023**, the Department of English, Daulat Ram College, organised the movie screening of **'The Color Purple'** (1985), based on Alice Walker's award-winning 1982 novel of the same name. It was held in the Conference Hall of the college under the guidance of faculty member, **Dr. Sangeeta Gupta**, who later had an insightful discussion with the students of the department.



Great Expectations

On **29th November, 2023**, Literati, the Department of English, organised a screening of the film, **'Great Expectations'**, based on the **1861** novel of the same name by English novelist, **Charles Dickens**, coordinated by **Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly**. 'Great Expectations', the text, is an important component of the syllabi of the B.A. (Hons.) English students, offering great insight into the norms and ethos of 19th century Victorian English society. Following the screening, not only the plot and socio-cultural contexts of the film, but also cinematography, mise-en-scene etc. were discussed.



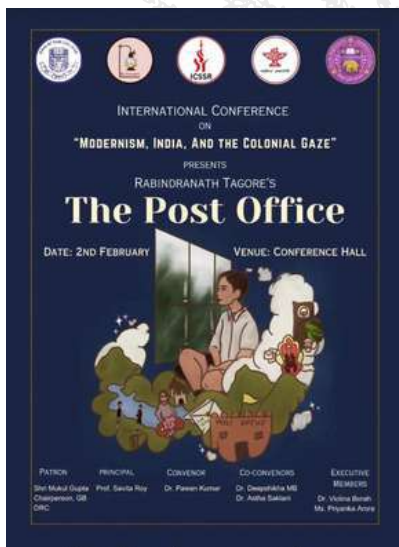


International Conference: Day I

A two-day International Conference on "**Modernism, India and the Colonial Gaze**" was conducted by the Department of English, Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, on **February 1st and 2nd, 2024**, at the Conference hall of the college. It was sponsored by the **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)** and supported by **Sahitya Akademi**. The convenor for the conference was **Dr. Pawan Kumar**, and the co-convenors were **Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly** and **Dr. Astha Saklani**. **Dr. Violina Borah** and **Ms Priyanka Arora** were the executive members.



The dignitaries of the event were **Prof. Balaram Pani**, **Prof. Shormishtha Panja** and Chief Guest, **Prof. Dhananjay Singh**. The first session titled "**Colonial Gaze and the Visual Arts**" aimed to bring together perspectives from cinema and paintings, the impact of British colonial presence on the production and consumption of visual arts in the Indian subcontinent, during and after the colonial period. The presenters, **Dr. Leslie De Bont** and **Dr. Shilpa Vashisht** presented in the first session.



The second technical session titled "**Modernism and Decolonising Narration**" was conducted, chaired by **Prof. Anjana Neira Dev** from the Department of English, Gargi College, University of Delhi. **Dr. Joita Dhar Rakshit** and **Dr. Hari Priya Pathak** presented their papers in this session.

the final special session happened virtually over a Zoom call and was chaired by **Prof. Anamika**, A Sahitya Akademi Award Winner from the University of Delhi. **Dr. Tom Walker** from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland presented his paper "**W.B. Yeats, Louis MacNeice and India**".





International Conference: Day 2



On **day-2**, session three commenced with **Dr. Swetha Antony** under the title, "**Preserving Modernism: History, Archives, And Museums**". **Prof. Nishant Singh, Dr. Laldinpui, and Prof. Lalit Kumar** presented their papers.

The second plenary address for the conference was given by **Christel R Devadawson**, Professor, Department of English, University of Delhi on the topic "**Incompleteness, Detective Fiction and the Early Twentieth Century**".

Session Four was chaired by **Dr. Bharti Arora**, Assistant Professor at the Department of English, University of Delhi having two presenters, **Dr. Jharana Rani Dhangadamajhi** from Kalahandi University, Odisha and **Dr. Vandana**, Assistant Professor at Department of English, Delhi University.

The third Plenary address of the session was given by **Prof. Saugata Bhaduri** who talked about the entangled history of polycoloniality and the multicultural modernism.

The next session was chaired by **Ms. Saneya**, Professor at Department of English, University of Delhi having two presenters, **Ms. Nahal Anjum** and Ms. **Anushka Hazra**. The last student session of the conference was chaired by **Dr. R. Rajeshwari**, Professor at the Department of English, University of Delhi with the presenters, **Siddhi Maya Santosh** and **Darshayata Deka**.





Visit to JNU



On **8th and 9th February, 2024**, students of Literati, the Department of English attended the conference, '**Narrative Matters**', organised by the **Centre of English Studies (CES), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)**, Delhi. They were accompanied by professors, **Ms. Haritha P**, and **Ms. Nivedita Sharma**.

One of the eminent speakers on Day 1 of the conference was **Amruta Patil**, India's first female graphic novelist, and the author of the graphic text, 'Kari', an integral part of the syllabus of the paper, 'Graphic Narratives.'

One of the esteemed speakers of Day 2, meanwhile, was **M. Madhava Prasad**, a Professor of Cultural Studies at EFLU, Hyderabad. He is an integral part of the discourse around '**Literature and Cinema**' that our students engage with.



Novella '24



Novella, the annual festival of Literati, The Department of English, themed "**Deedar-e-Dilli**," took place on **16th February, 2024**, bringing together students, faculty, and enthusiasts to celebrate the rich cultural heritage and literary traditions of Delhi. "Deedar-e-Dilli" served as a vibrant tribute to the city of Delhi, showcasing its historical significance, architectural marvels, and cultural diversity, encapsulated perfectly by the décor of the fest. The Chief Guest, **Vishwajyoti Ghosh**, who is an Indian graphic novelist and cartoonist, highlighted the diverse and multifaceted nature of Delhi, emphasizing how each individual's experience of the city is unique and deeply personal. His remarks resonated with the audience, prompting reflection on their own experiences of Delhi and how they have come to cherish and interpret the city in their own ways. Whereas, the Guest of Honour, **Prof. Arup K. Chatterjee** of O. P. Jindal Global University, located Delhi in the academic discourse. His remarks served to situate Delhi within the broader academic discourse, acknowledging its significance as both a subject of study and a source of intellectual inquiry. The inspiring speeches by our esteemed guests was followed by the investiture ceremony of the Union.

Novella '24 proved to be a dynamic showcase of literary talent and creative expression. Among the event's highlights were the play performance of **Tagore's "Post Office"** by Literati students, **Lit Quiz**, held in collaboration with **Tajagna**, the Quiz Society of DRC, where participants tested their knowledge of literature in a spirited competition. The **Open Mic** provided a platform for students to share their poetry, stories, and music with an appreciative audience, while the **Fan Fiction** Writing competition sparked imaginative reinterpretations of beloved literary worlds. **Mrs. Bennet's Workshop** offered a unique opportunity for like-minded individuals to connect and collaborate. The festival reached its crescendo with a captivating **Sufi Night**, filling the air with soulful melodies and leaving attendees enchanted.



Visit to NGMA



To expand the aesthetic boundaries of the students by making them aware of the nuances of the stylistic, aesthetic, historical and symbolic dimensions of trends in paintings, sculpture, historical monuments, manuscripts, and other exquisite treasure troves available for a research enthusiast in the **National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA)**, 45 students of the Department of English from the second and third year were taken on **1st March 2024**, accompanied by **Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly, Dr. Violina Borah, Dr. Shweta Kumari, and Ms Haritha P.**

During their visit, students were educated about the various paintings exhibited in the art gallery, along with information about the artists, and the eras and art movements to which they belonged. As literature students, the professors placed special emphasis on the relation between literature and art, particularly when concerned with texts and paintings of the Modernist era.

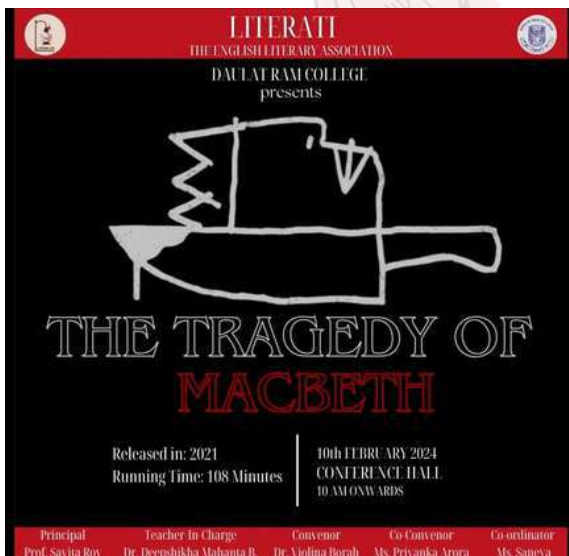
It was a highly enriching experience which made literature tangible through paintings and sculptures in front of the students, instilling in them a renewed sense of curiosity and investigation.



Film Screening

Macbeth

The Department of English, Daulat Ram College, conducted a screening on **10th February, 2024**, of **'The Tragedy of Macbeth'** (2021), directed by **Joel Coen**, and starring Denzel Washington and Frances McDormand in the lead roles. It is based on the tragic play, 'Macbeth', by William Shakespeare, which is a part of the syllabus of many of the department's students.



The screening was organised under the guidance of faculty member, **Ms. Saneya**. Significantly, she interspersed the screening of 'The Tragedy of Macbeth' with the screening of **'Maqbool'** (2003), the Indian film adaptation of the classic Western tragedy, directed by Vishal Bhardwaj and starring Irrfan Khan and Tabu in the lead. The crime drama film re-imagines **'Macbeth'** being set in an alternative setting of the contemporary mafia underworld of Mumbai.

The screening of both the films was followed by an enriching discussion not only on the visuality of the films themselves, but also on 'Macbeth' as a literary text.

It was a highly engaging session which enriched everyone's minds.



Adaptation

SHIVANI KUMARI,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
1st Year

A wren kept in cage,
asked not to show her rage.
enough of tolerance,
turned into grievance.
She become a living dead,
lying flat always on her bed.

The dead city felt pity,
when she was found witty.
Boundations of obligations,
triggered the worst implications.
When the culprits denied,
She hardly ever cried.

Then the dearest to her heart,
kept her alive and went apart.
When the city snatched the path,
She took a bath of tears and wrath.
The wren smashed the cage,
unleashed all her rage.



A Parent's Love

VAISHNAVI V. SISODIA,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
1st year

No gift on Earth is greater,
No treasure held above,
Than the joy that comes from knowing,
A parent's endless love.

They picked me up so many times,
When I was just a child,
They wept my tears when I was sad,
They kept me by their side.

They protected me like a bawn,
No matter if it's night or dawn.
They struggled to make me feel secured,
And took care of my wounds even after they were cured.

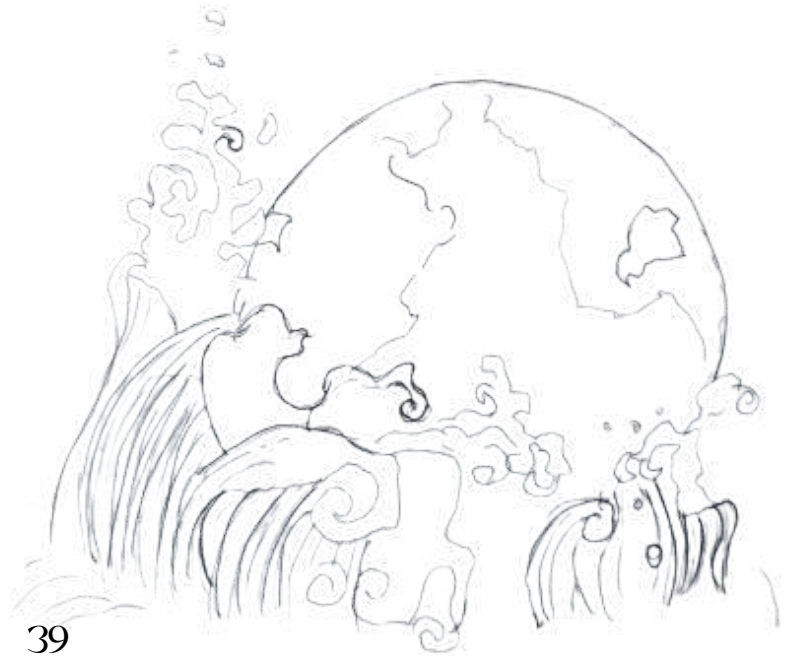
And when all things are measured
Not one shall rise above,
Or be compared in value
To a parent's endless love.....



An Island Rose From the Sea

GURSIMARDEEP KAUR,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
1st Year

An island rose from the sea,
Revelation burgeoned o'er the globe
Once veiled by the navy treasure of earth
Now revealed the obscure conundrums
That demanded much anticipated answers.
Now thou a foregone tale
Will be explored to unearth
Thy fatal devastation executed by
Thyself- exploitive, ignorant, imprudent.
Now thy remains, a tragic history
Of a climatic catastrophe, will be pondered upon,
And by no means shall it be restored, I hope.



By The Lake

GURSIMARDEEP KAUR,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
1st Year

He said, "By the lake, come wait for me"
I would run, but it started raining;
Hundred miles, I kept on walking,
But they closed the gates.
White mist, I thought I saw you,
Spikes on fence, should have been more
careful
I bled, but I reached out for you;
It was someone else.

I wanted you to see
The garland I made out of the jasmines you
gave me.
Last summer, I thought you were coming
back,
I mustered every single day I had
Wearing my cable-knit winter cape-
I kept waiting by the lake.

They said, "By the lake, don't wait for him"
"All the tragedies end here darling",
Every one of them shared enchanted rings
Now all fallen wreaths of wild celeries.

I wanted you to see
The painting I made out of the blue skies you
gave me.
Last summer, when I traced your prints alone
To the chalet, our secret mortal love,
Wearing my cable-knit winter cape-
I kept waiting by the lake.

Ashes coming to life,
Buried innocent lives,
We lovers can sense the darkness in your
minds.
Secrets spilling out,
Whispers of how you all
Dared to trick us into flames which kept us
warm
Just until today.

Last summer, when it hurt like never before,
Crimson rose and a letter on my door:
"I'll be on my way, don't lose hope
Till I come back, hold on to my rose".



Deceptive Dreams

RADHA,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
3rd Year

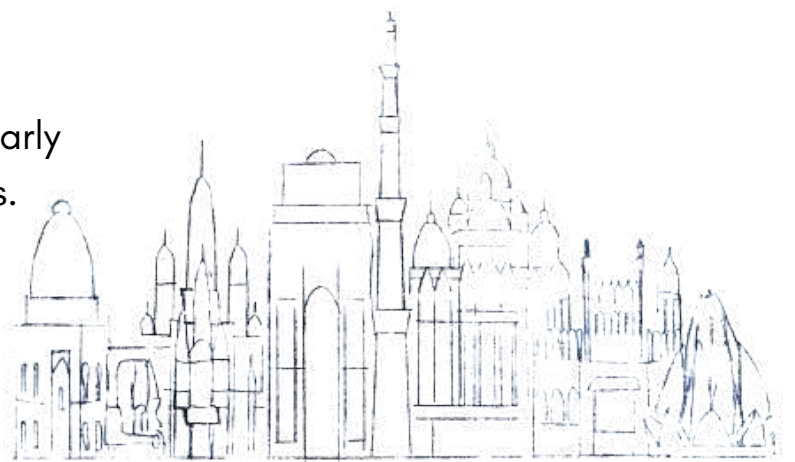
An impeccable canvas my subconscious did paint,
A fantasy metamorphosed into reality, I presumed.
All those much-anticipated ambitions,
I saw, put forth as a loop,
A loop of perpetual contentment.
But when it blinded me
I saw a speck of light,
Sun's rays caressing my black tresses,
Realisation demanded the acceptance
Of a poignant fact,
Seldom those dreams could be so deceptive.
Still, I would affirm myself,
I'll be guided to the much awaited loop
By the feeble light within me
That won't extinguish until eternity.



Delhi Lies

RADHA,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
3rd Year

Stranger city
I chose as I cut my ties.
Delhi's pretty.
Majestic! But it's full of lies.
Filthy air is not the greatest of my concerns,
Though it's not a choice for my pal with asthma.
The gruesome headlines make my head burn
While Connaught Place shines with its Georgian charisma.
I dragged all my strings and pens
From the land of swarming artists,
Too soon my lines reach their ends
Rubbing on my face the reality as it is.
What do I do when my winning costume
Looks so dull near the capes of queens?
I tripped over tombs and then I bloomed,
I wish I owned their royal means.
Sometimes I hide under a posh pretence,
Though if you know me, you know that's not me
Gorgeous might be the cafes and events
But without the maze of lanes, who'd go to MKT?
They say dilwalon ki hai yeh Dilli
But my dil is with the Siliguri skies
Someday this city may steal me dearly
For daydreams live where Delhi lies.



Dispersal

GURSIMARDEEP KAUR,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*
1st Year

Methodical
Rhythm extinguishes,
A fire, traces
Left behind as those
Ashes by the
Turbulently calm
Crests that carried
Me abruptly.
Now, I have studied
The waters that once
Were seemingly
Endless. The obscure
Conundrums did
Leave those faded scars,
Scars of wisdom,
That to one might seem,
At hand.



Eighteen or Eighty?

PRAGATI DAS,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
2nd Year

Ever thought of masters' favourite pearl?
Born when the soft oyster met a hurl.
Pelt boulders and she'd turn it to a jewel,
Strength of this small life has been too cruel.
This species nothing but mean,
She's good; but, oh!
Only the best can win.
I know, life is a never-ending quest
But please, she's just eighteen
Give her some rest.

She wonders how it'd be when she is old,
Alone? Or will she have someone to hold?
They say, "Young in blood, tough in bones
Go rush and take over the thrones!"
"Grow your seeds as they are sown
Broken arm or broken heart
There's no time to mourn."
I know, life has troughs and crests
But please, she's just eighteen
Give her some rest.

Charade of grades once came down
Got hoaxed, but she kept wearing her crown.
When no one stood, stood her mother
Not just a career, she created a life another.
Love is what we live for - where all art begins,
We spend life searching in a new body
When it's all just hidden deep within.
Strong as steel and bruised by quakes
Eighteen or eighty, please,
Give yourself a break.



Epiphany

AASTHA CHHABRA,
M.A. *English*,
Final Year

Wake a baby up from sleep
Crying will echo in your ears.
Wake a dog up from sleep
Might bite or bark at you.
Let them sleep and dream,
Let them be on their own.
For force does not always work
For there are things in life,
Which are best realised
When one is self-immersed
Into the deep murky waters
Of the probings of life and death,
When internal eyes try to open
Causing internal trepidations
Of sublime earthquakes
In your body and mind.
Perhaps, that's the epiphany
For your sleepwalking life
To wake up.



I'd Rather Trouble the Stars

PRAGATI DAS,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
2nd Year

Priceless is the look of love
Right before it's about to leave you.

Armoured we cherish it in our hearts
Gathering all the strength to not let it depart,
As if setting it free would push us miles apart.

Tying your tongue, chaining your desires
Is this really what love is supposed to be?

Drag me not behind the bars
All my existence craves to be yours
Scared I may be to lose it all
But I'd die troubling the stars.



Ink of Endings

DEVANTI,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
3rd Year

In solitude's chill, whispers of the frost,
A dance with shadows, a heart feeling lost.
It is winter's silent song, longing for embrace,
Stars witness my solitude, in their distant grace.

You were the fire, I was the moth,
I burned myself for you, then you loathe.
I carved the heart out, so you could breathe,
Yet, in your exhale, love met its spring heath.

You were the song, I was the ear,
Listening closely, your melody clear.
I danced to the rhythm, lost in your trance,
Yet, you faded away, leaving no chance.

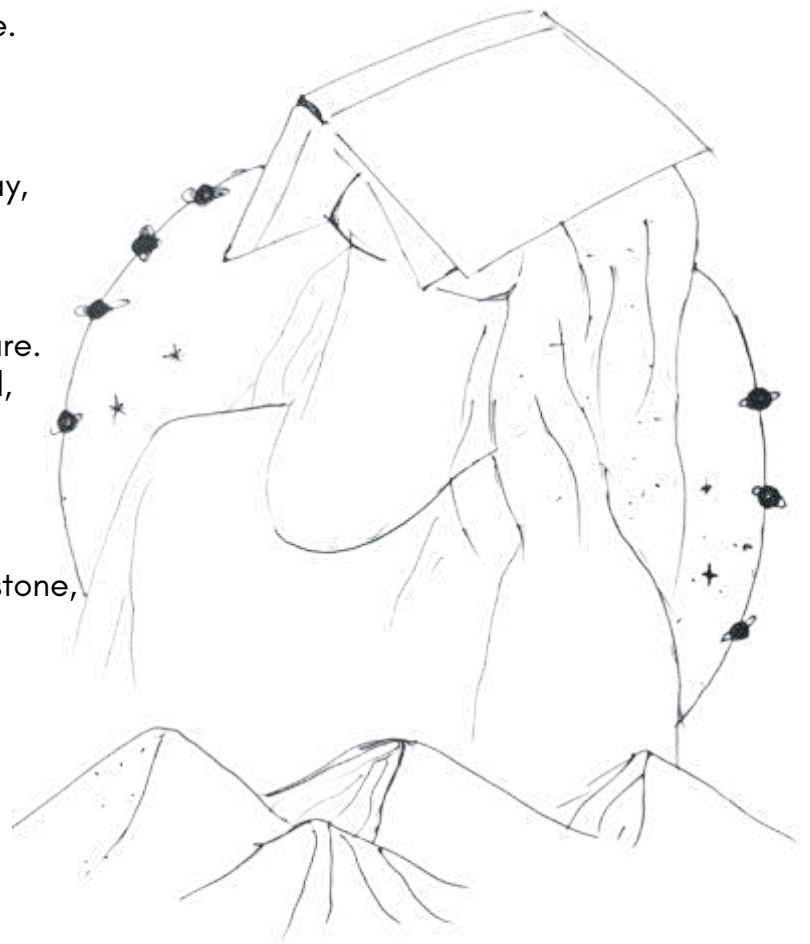
I painted the sky with hues so bright,
But shadows engulfed, dimming the light.
I offered my wings for you to soar,
Yet, in flight, you sought distant shore.

I planted a garden, blossoms so fair,
Nurtured with love, tender and rare.
You trampled the petals, walked away,
Leaving the garden in disarray.

I wrote our story with ink so pure,
Each page turned, a memory to endure.
You tore the script, words now untold,
Leaving a tale fragmented and cold.

I built a castle, strong and tall,
Hoping in its walls, we'd never fall.
You breached the fortress, stone by stone,
Leaving ruins, love overthrown.

Yet, in the ruins, amidst the decay,
I find strength to face the day.
For in every ending, a seed lies,
A chance for a new love to arise.



I Want to Bleed

DEVANTI,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
3rd Year

I want to bleed
Like everyone else,
Weird you say,
The RED,
it fascinates me
No, it calls to me.
The shard of glass lying on the ground,
I want to hold it,
My hand bleeds,
It used to be a piece of you,
Broken by too much greed.
But I won't let it go
Cause I've had you for so long,
That I don't know what to do without you,
Once you're finally gone.



Land of Sand? Or an Island?

RADHA,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
3rd Year

"I am the only one
who is alone in this place,
like a tiny mole
on a pretty face."

"So many coconut trees
bend like arcs,
And suddenly I saw a big fish
but really, it was a shark."

"Everything is
surrounded by water,
like the limits and boundaries
of a mother or a daughter."

"The temperature gets high during the day
and it's too cold at night,
Seems like latest news
and political fights."

"I walked all over
in this place,
Ahmmm....what should I call it?
Land of sand? Or An Island?"



Look at the Sky

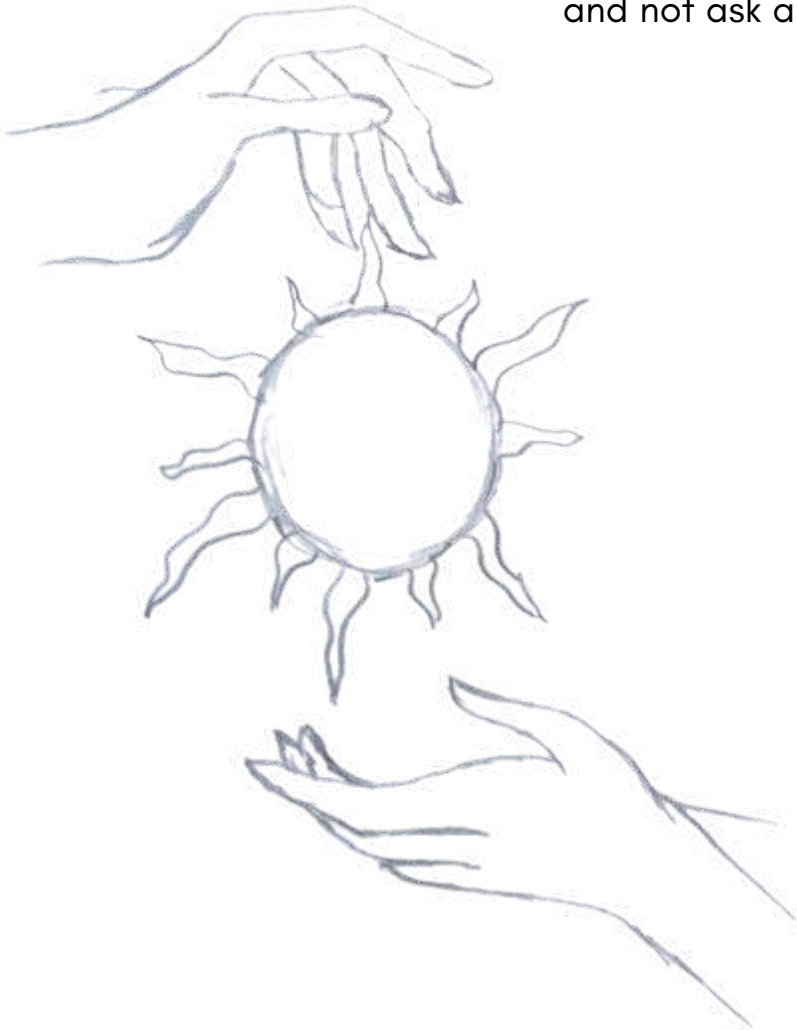
SANSKRITI JOSHI,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
1st Year

Look at the sky,
they also cry,
become cold and grey,
when you are wry.

Such a tender world that would be,
where people support during the hard times,
and not ask about it like a scene from a movie.

They won't understand,
Pain and suffering is nothing
until it happens to them.

But I hope you'll understand,
happiness will come,
the sun will shine again
with its charming rays.
You will smile again,
when you will,
look at that sky.



Love, Yet So Brave

DEVANTI,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
3rd Year

Love,
This word seems peculiar to me,
Have I ever felt it?
Why are you so optimistic?
You have cried the blood,
I have seen all the bruises,
You struggling through the black puddle of emotions,
Yet you're still so brave
You talk about the golden threads, red bashful faces,
Chuckles followed by fading of the great blue,
In a way, I am in dread,
what if time tarnishes this thread
And red disgusts me.
Is this love of yours
Is this amazing
Or am I just pessimistic?



My King, My Clown

PRAGATI DAS,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
2nd Year

My love for you is a deadly disease
A disease I don't intend to overcome
It is the only way to feel at ease
Except when I think of the outcome.

I'm well aware it's forbidden for me
I know a friend in need is a friend indeed
But just this once I want to be Eve
The air you breathe is the air I need.

I see no rhythm, rhyme or shine
Just writing our story is an honour of mine.

I pretend to distract myself
With silly men around in town
Only later for my heart to whisper ---
"You're my king, you're my clown."

Reader, I did confess my feelings
That made him write me sonnets more few
So when I praise him for who he is,
I skip the dreadful "I love you."

Never come to me for advices on love
To move to another I take a decade or two,
Avoid the tragedy if you can
Though I'll just keep on running towards you.



Mystical Foraging

RAJNANDANI SINGH,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
1st Year

Jaunting around the lane,
Going through the mystical ways,
Foraging in this world full of preys,
They say this world is a rather brutal arena,
But when did I decide to play?
Thoughts come by of a million types,
And I scrupulously look for the best,
Now I am jumbled again,
Trying to see through the translucent alley,
Messing it up and tearing it up again,
Proudly saying - not a moment in vain.



Summer Symphony

RAJNANDANI SINGH,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
1st Year

I looked at the glaring sun,
With my glaring eyes
And I could notice nothing but some dragonflies,
Giving us the sound of summer
And the cuckoos too giving its ayes .
The days are stretching themselves,
Knitting the equinox to relish its ties
And now the nights are cherished,
By the garrulous, some dull and some wise.



The Art of Turning Ecstasy into Ode

PRAGATI DAS,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

"M'lady, do you write of misery alone?
Live in a mansion, but you need a home."
Dear writers, teach me if you do know-
How do you turn ecstasy into ode?

Your minds explore matters that matter,
While I cry of things spent and shattered.
Politics and philosophy barely hold my heart,
I'd rather rant about hearts that tore mine apart.

Neither it brings me name and fame
Nor it charms my mind to the game.
But I fear poetry is the only projector
Which turns the poison I brew into sweet, sweet nectar.

Don't push me behind the bars of your elite yardsticks,
See a magician if all you seek are tricks.
Though sometimes I drown, often I swam,
As I write, I'm a river flooding over the dam.

When your smile lines deepen like gullies on a hill,
Sand will pour, the glass - filled.
But if the sun shines brighter and the grass is green,
Turn to Shakespeare's Sonnet 18.

And when life is set on constant chaos,
I might not save you from the underworld,
But for a minute, I hope you find a mirror
In my gloomy, ill-lit, sombre words.



Things to Live For

PRAGATI DAS,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

You think none of this matters?
Have you seen the way a dog wags its tail
When it catches your scent and runs to you?
Or the way the neighbourhood couple meets in secret
To snuggle up under the winter moon?
Or perhaps, my blushing eyes shying away
While I'm looking for you,
And your eyes looking for mine too?

"It doesn't matter", don't you dare say
If you can't find the little details,
Let me show you the way.
Look at the way the baby calms
As the mother cradles him and sways.
Do you remember? In September we met
Got entangled in the dreamiest rain
Stumbled upon your coat and hooked
As you tried to untangle it from my hair.

I get that all we are - its matter,
Atomic entities wrapped up in a shell.
But can you please not let that
Stop the magic the little things make?
Be it a random stranger's rant story
Or a familiar tale from a familiar face,
I could list a thousand things to live for
And thousands would still be left to tell.



Time

GURSIMARDEEP KAUR,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
1st Year

Amidst the mighty river,
There stood a rock that spoke
Of the scars that had been delivered
And carved by the majestic roar.
Its slowly falling prey,
The fragments being dispersed.
Its existence fading away
Of which no one would have heard.
Such are the mortal beings,
The fading, frail florets
With their conspicuous hues dripping
Until, they have all wilted.
I gazed end to end, surprised
Until I realised, it was Time.



Unbound

ANINDITA MOHANTY,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
3rd Year

From the clothes we wear to the person we marry, everything is decided by a man and they say women have equal rights. Faking a phone call, running through a secluded street, sharing our location, we have done it all, and they wonder what women are fighting for. The incessant catcalling, unnecessary eve teasing, random touches in a public transport and the dreadful male gaze, we survive it every day and they say women are not strong enough.

Choices stifled, dreams repressed,
For far too long have we been silenced.

We're done with being reduced to our bodies,
And being told we're just a sum of our oddities.

We're done with being objectified,
And being made to feel like we need to hide.

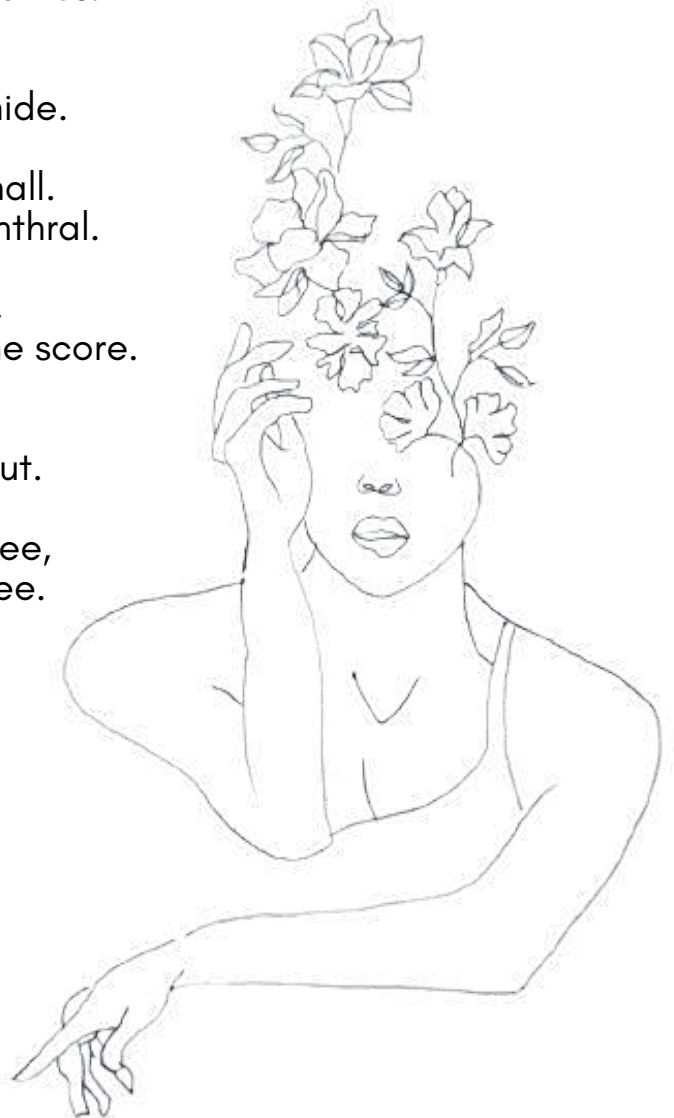
We've been told to sit, to be quiet and small.
To be seen and not heard, to obey and enthral.

But enough is enough, we'll take no more,
We'll break down the doors, we'll break the score.

We'll scream and shout, we'll let it all out,
We'll shatter the myths of what we're about.

We're strong and fierce, we're wild and free,
And we won't be bound by society's decree.

We'll rise up high, with fire in our eyes,
Our passion burning, and our spirits alive.



Unchained

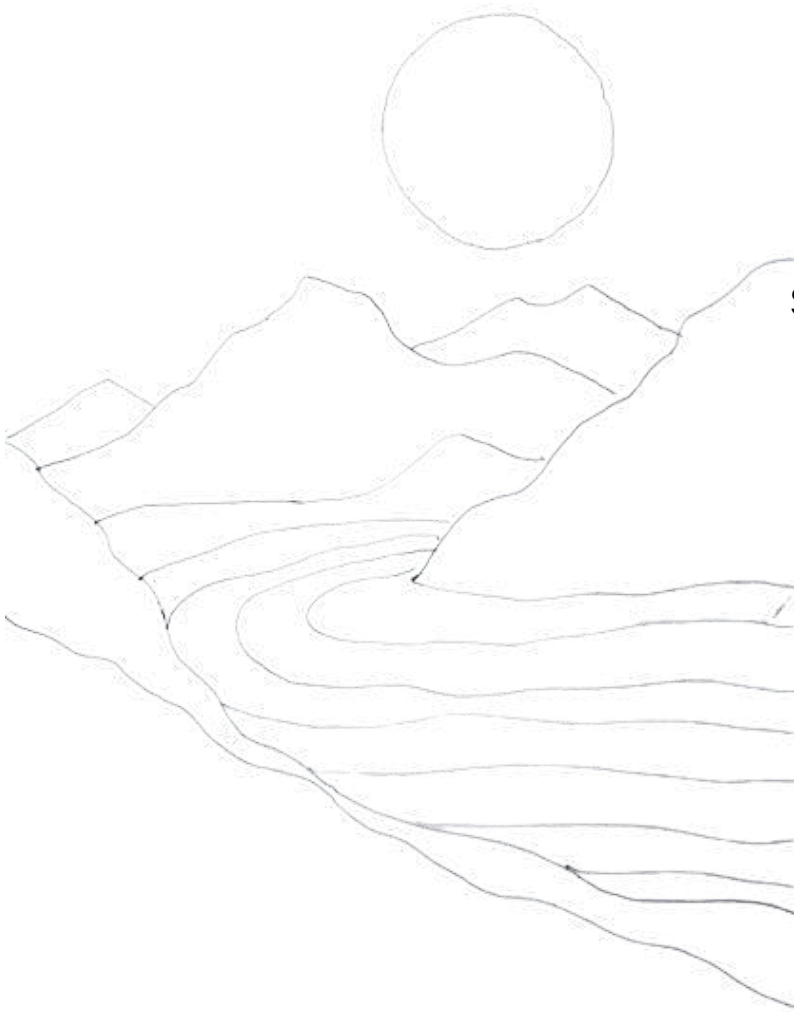
ANINDITA MOHANTY,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
3rd Year

Where all seems lost and hollow
And nightmares haunt every sleep,
Where there is no hope of tomorrow
And the cliff to climb stands so steep.

Where the light of day has passed
And the nights are long and dark,
Where the world seems pitiful and dead
And time stands frozen in its ruthless air.

Where people's hope are like poison
And life has given its goodbye kiss,
Where lost is the sparkle of dawn
And death's grip is a welcome bliss.

Somewhere there he stands hopeless
Waiting for all this to end,
So broken and yet so full of grace
So lost and lonely but still mighty,
And still unchained.



Whispers of Autumn

RAJNANDANI SINGH,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
1st Year

Some have fallen
And the rest are waiting,
Waiting for the wind to blow,
And take them flying
The days are getting shorter
And the evenings are passing by stargazing.
The heat of summer,
Is passing by wind - cold, chilling,
The evening talks have changed
Because of the smell of bonfires burning,
Leaves - yellow, brown and red
All falling just to keep us teasing.



Why Only the Bows and Ties

PRAGATI DAS,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
2nd Year

I always believed in soulmates
Believed more when I found you
Don't care if it takes us to heaven's gates
I'd fight demons in hell if you'd like me to.

You held my hands in comforting silence
When I asked you to let go
Pulled me closer into cosy violets
Which in your almond eyes you own.

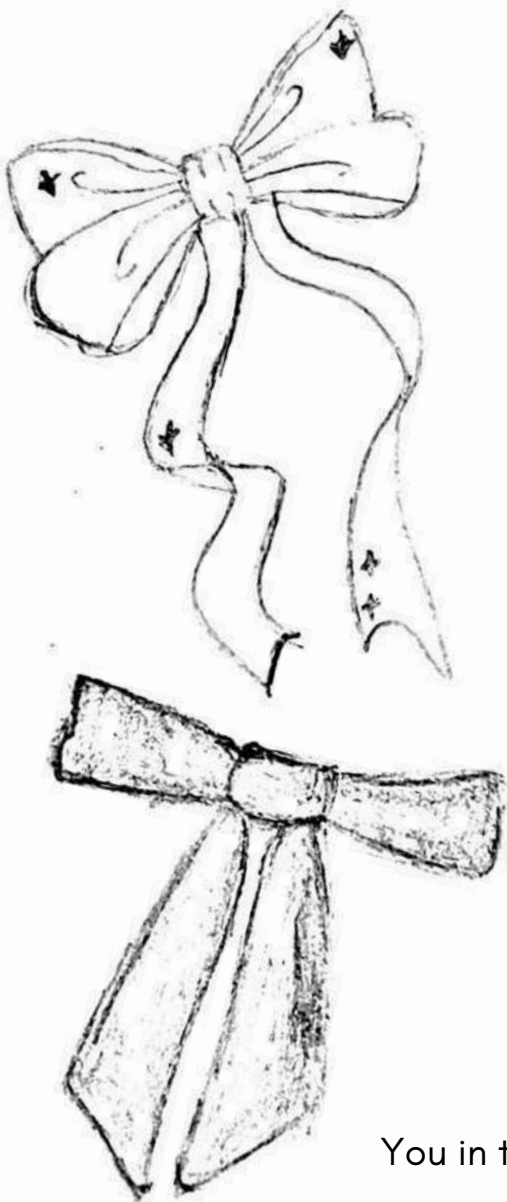
By nature, I empathise and forgive
The traitors who once made me doubt,
But vengeance is all I have up my sleeves
For the men who maimed you throughout.

I'd write you fancy poetry more often
If only I could fathom the awe in my heart
Your skin of cotton, I touch with caution
With the delicacy Van Gogh put in his art.

Not just the cute girl you met anymore
I need you to see me as a woman.
Those bow-shaped lips on you I adore
As pulpy and soft as Cupid's cushion.

Every time you look in the mirror
You shall see a tulip forever in bloom.
Diving back into my memory, I get queerer
You in that little white dress looked prettier than the moon.

All my life, I drew black and white sketches
Until you painted them to pretty skies
Occasionally I love scarves and laces
Why choose only the bows and ties?



[*Untitled*]

MUSKAN,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
2nd Year

As soon as she opened that door
It was clear that she was going not alone
She took her right step there inside
Feels like she knew what was there beside.
She came alone on this path all along
It was hard but she didn't stop.
She promised herself not to look behind
And at last it was her who moved on with a prettiest smile.



[Untitled]

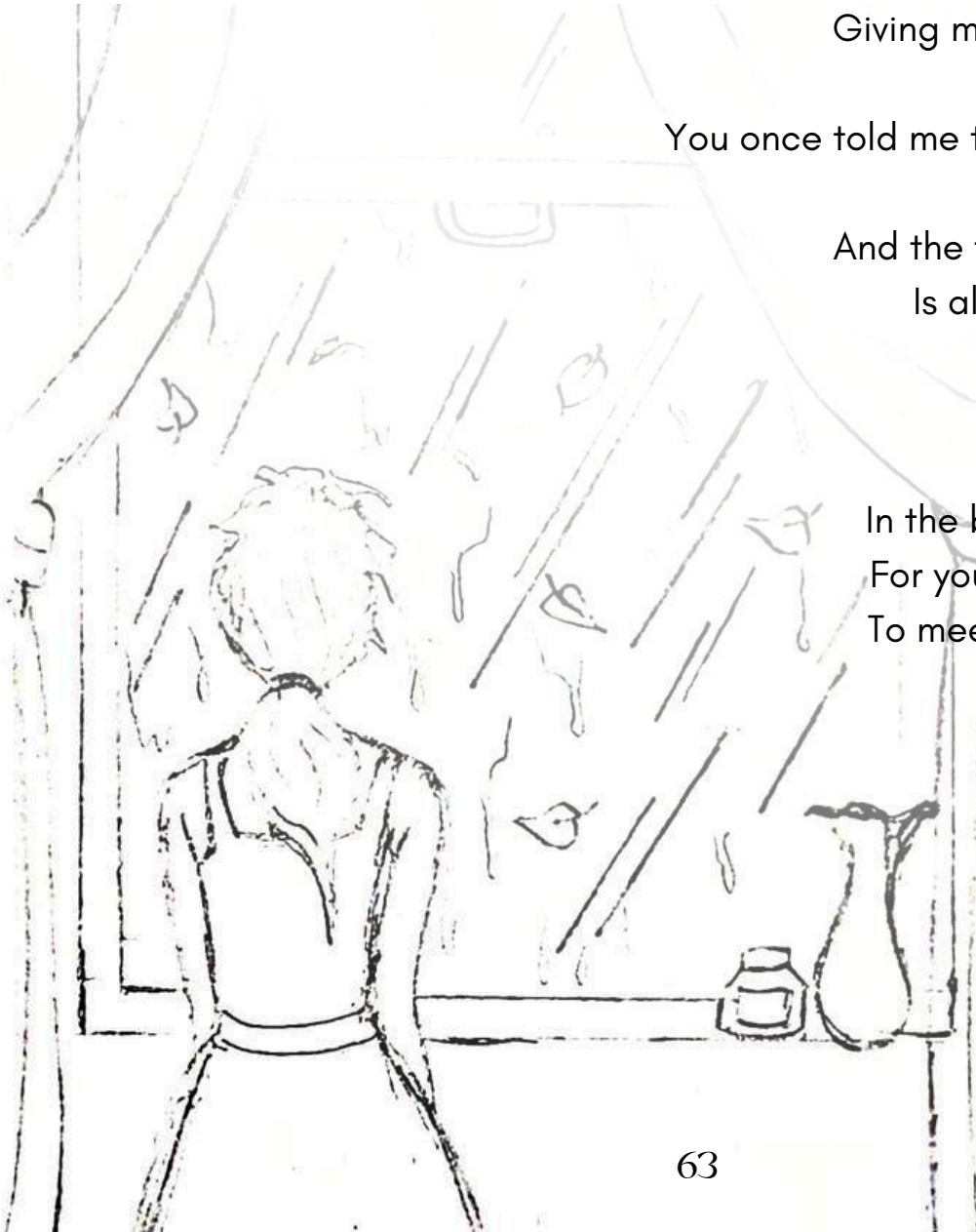
ANNANYA KHATTAR

I could no longer find you
As the drops of rain poured on my windowsill
I was thinking of you my beloved all until,
The rustling of leaves left me thinking
You're so beautiful, the world could be sinking.
For if Shakespeare had earlier met you,
He'd write a thousand sonnets to pursue.

I imagine us holding onto each other with affection,
And the sense of your tender touch
Giving me a flush complexion.

You once told me that you wanted us to
Dance in the rain,
And the thought of holding on
Is all that keeps me sane.

But oh my darling,
I search for you
In the buried remains of life.
For you transforming as rain
To meet me is the only thing
That does suffice.



[Untitled]

Sr,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
1st Year

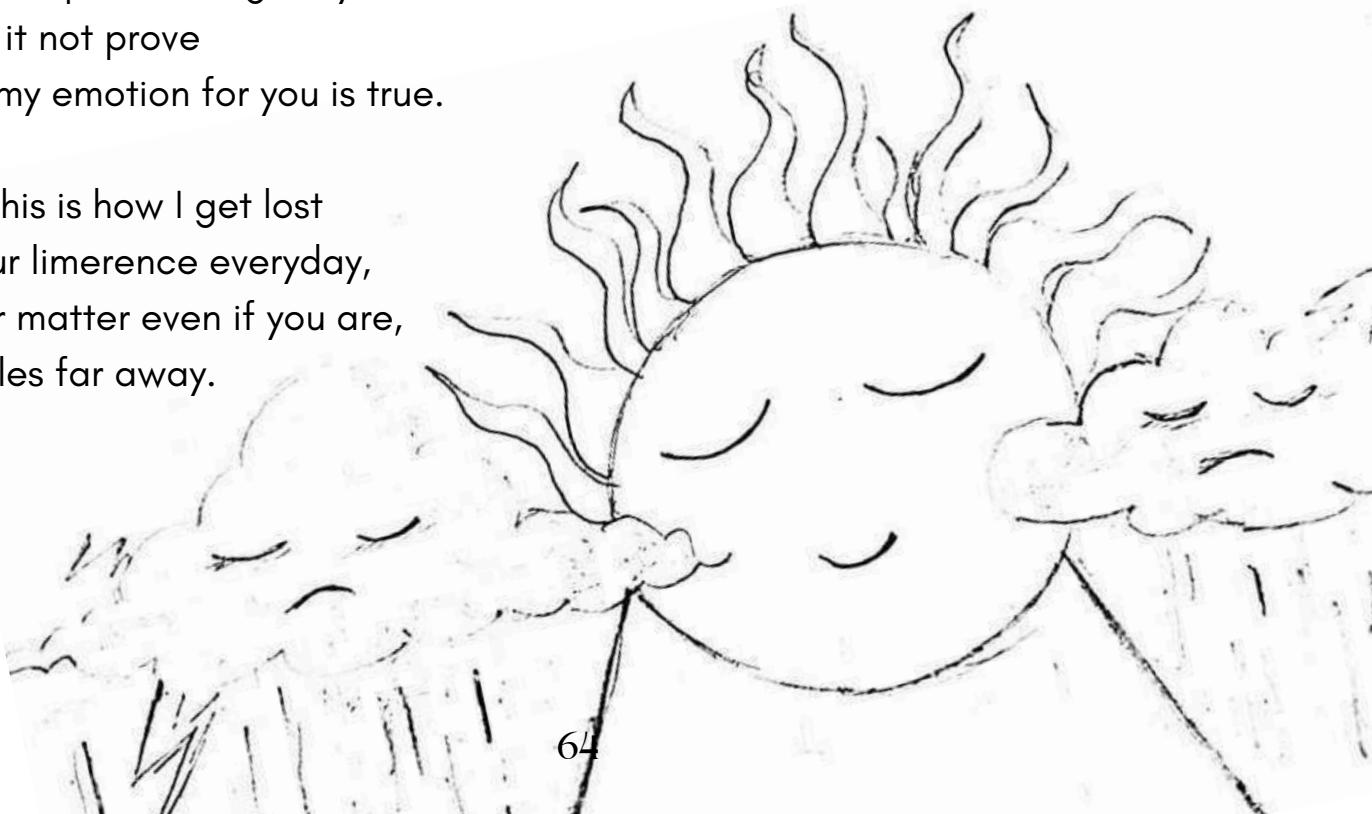
Today I remembered your love,
Which is eternal and forever
These memories in my heart
Will be kept far from fervour.

Thank you for being
The reason for my smile in pain.
Thank you for being my sunshine
In the gloomy rain.

May destiny make us make
More memories together.
If not today or tomorrow,
Then maybe further.

Even the distance between us
Can't stop me falling for you.
Does it not prove
That my emotion for you is true.

And this is how I get lost
In your limerence everyday,
Never matter even if you are,
By miles far away.



Mentorship*

The Canterbury Tales

MUSKAN,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

Today I remembered your love,
Which is eternal and forever
These memories in my heart
Will be kept far from fervour.

Thank you for being
The reason for my smile in pain.
Thank you for being my sunshine
In the gloomy rain.

May destiny make us make
More memories together.
If not today or tomorrow,
Then maybe further.

Even the distance between us
Can't stop me falling for you.
Does it not prove
That my emotion for you is true.

And this is how I get lost
In your limerence everyday,
Never matter even if you are,
By miles far away.



* Mentored by Dr. Astha Saklani

Mentorship*

The Canterbury Tales

JIYA MAITHANI,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

Good morning my favourite sinners!
Your pardoner says hi,
How many of my sermons
Would you like to buy?

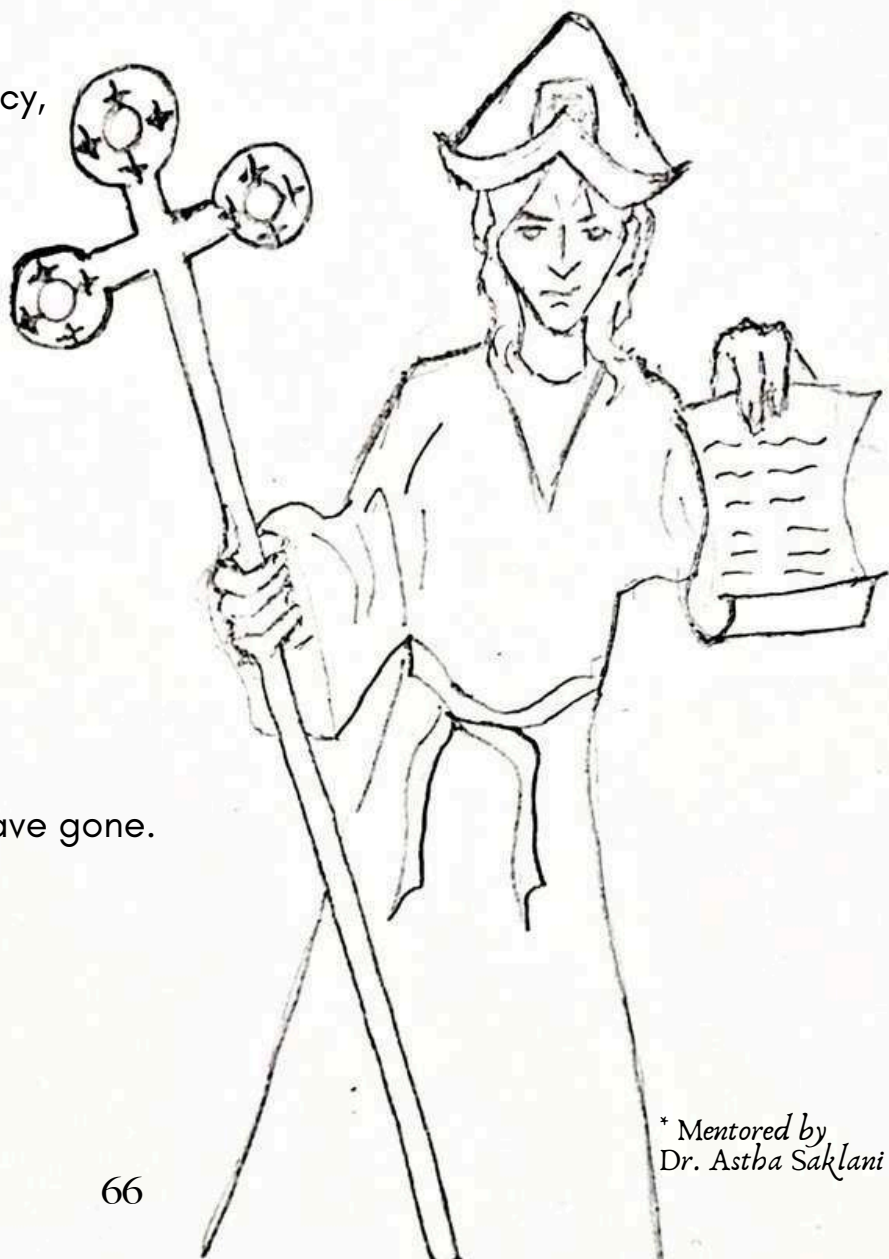
Regularly do I preach against avarice,
lust and desire,
But while lining my pockets,
I'd never tire.

My appearance is kind of fancy,
A sweet sight to behold,
With flowing locks of hair,
Like bright strands of gold.

But in my heart,
Does great greed dwell.
I'd take your money.
Oh, I'd do it well.

And if 600 years later
Would I've been born,
With my secret lover,
to parades of pride would I have gone.

And now that I've overshared,
I'd bid you guys adieu.
Buy my pardons lest
hell awaits you.



* Mentored by
Dr. Astha Saklani

Mentorship*

The Canterbury Tales

ANJALI KUKREJA,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
2nd Year

I come from the town of Bath,
Of profession a weaver
Five husbands I hath,
In affairs of heart I call myself an achiever.

I like to visit places that are touristy
And money I'm fond of giving for charity.
Although gap-toothed and partially deaf,
To Canterbury I go, courtesy of Geoff.

To find 'nother husband is my aim
Hence, my title I proclaim.

Undoubtedly for clothes I have a knack,
For as bold as I am, people would have a heart attack.

My style is rather flashy and I enjoy being dolled
Not only 'Wife of Bath' but also Alisoun I am called.

* Mentored by Dr. Astha Saklani



Mentorship*

The Canterbury Tales

BHUMIKA AGGARWAL (ARCHER),
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

Hello, welcome all pilgrims!
Welcome to my Tabbard Inn,
All welcome aboard,
All on to my humble abode!
My eyes are bright
I serve food that hits the spot right
Wine so good you know you need it.
People might say that I'm deceptive
But hey, it's just my entrepreneurial wit.
I bring to the table, games and everything.
Let's play and have fun with some storytelling.
I want entertainment,
Just be a little patient.
And I want morality,
Straying further from carnality.
Lastly let me just say
Let's all move towards Canterbury,
Lest the Reeve and the Miller
Turn once again bitter
And I shall have to play peacemaker.

* Mentored by Dr. Astha Saklani



Mentorship*

Victorian Literature: Jane Eyre

MUSKAN,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

In dark Gateshead, Jane resides
From her aunt and cousins, she would hide.

John Reed a 14-year-old bully
With dingy skin and limbs heavy.
With a selfish heart devoid of kindness,
Tormented Jane with such harshness.

In the face of innocence, he was an experienced Tyger
Always looking for reasons to shame her.

He flung a book at her one day,
Taunted that she had no say.
Jane who's so strong and bold
Stood with resilience against the Reed's rude and cold
A fire of passion burned bright
And from Gateshead took a flight.

John Reed with his mother as a shield
Through Jane his identity was revealed.

Not John Reed but oppression should be his name,
In Charlotte Bronte's tale.



* Mentored by
Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta-Bortamuly

Mentorship*

Victorian Literature: Jane Eyre

JIYA,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

Charlotte Bronte's men of varied kinds,
In Jane Eyre's pages had their paths intertwined.
In Thornfield halls, lived a brooding soul so fair,
Mr. Rochester who had his burdens hard to bear.
A mansion of secrets and choices morally grey,
Jane's heart he captured, yet deceit held sway.
A dark deception always shadowed his life;
None could have guessed, his attic contained a secret wife.
St John Rivers, a man of faith so pure,
of noble creed and righteousness lived a life demure.
With a heart devoid of world's wildest desires,
To spread light in distant lands he'd often aspire.
Loyal to his duties, his feelings put on hold,
an offer of a loveless union, to Jane he proposed.
But in his ardour for duty he must've forgot
Jane possessed a fire that was fierce, wild and free,
And his self sacrificing missionary wife, she'd never be.

* Mentored by
Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta-Bortamuly



Mentorship*

Victorian Literature: *The Mill on the Floss*

MEDHA BHARDWAJ,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

Tom's Sister

Tulliver's heir from St.Oggs
Presents himself to you, with his flowing locks.
"I bow before thee, I greet thee all.
Ladies, beautiful or kind; men, short or tall.
I bow before the queen, who owns our lands.
And I bow to thee, who herefore stands.
I am Tom Tulliver, my sister Maggie you may know,
Disliked by some, a darling to my father though.
I love her no less, for she is part of the family,
But sometimes she can stick to her decisions a bit too clammyly.
Do I admire her for that? Or do I despise?
I know not of answers that would suffice.

Studied Latin and scholarly subjects like my father had told,
It doesn't make any sense, yet I fold.
To be ready to share the burden, as mother had expected.
Norms of speaking English are not to be neglected.
A mould I walked through
A mould made out of love
And what exactly is so wrong about it?
What about it is so tough?

But Maggie.. she just thinks too much about things
A mind of her own and no usual norms of engagement rings.
Sometimes, I just don't get why she can't be like other girls?
Look at them, sitting prettily with their blonde curls.
They stitch, and mop, and then they cook,
And they don't learn witchcraft by reading some book.



* Mentored by Dr. Violina Borah

What are you saying uncle Deane?
This industry doesn't need such a degree.
Oh what? Maggie has fallen prey to Philip's friendship trickery?
What is it now? What more do you have to say?
No! Why would Maggie elope with Lucy's fiancé?
Good lord! This girl! Selfishly ignoring her duty and filial piety,
Has left behind all traditions, customs and society.

And lo behold, for now she returns!
When the raging wave in the Floss churns.
Oh, say it again! What you just did say.
Your innocence was untainted and you didn't betray?
In life, I would have found it hard to believe,
But now in face of death...I wish to retrieve,
All our forgotten vows, all our love and care.
We may have reached here separated, but let's return as a pair."

Mentorship*

Victorian Literature: *The Mill on the Floss*

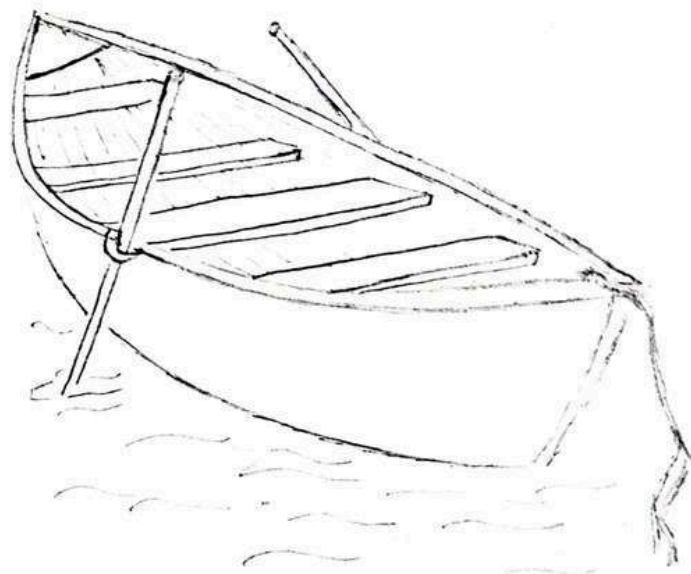
LAVANYA NAIR,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

FAILED RESCUE

I hoped against all my reasons,
'gainst all my worst fears
As I rowed as fast as I could
While Floss unleashed its terror.
My arms protested against the exercise,
My legs all shaking with the terrible, terrible fright.
Ironically, Mozart's *Nachtmusik* was playing in my mind,
The cheerful music, a sad friend to my plight.
There have been awful many times I had wished for something better,
Yet right now, when Floss seemed so feral,
I prayed desperately to all the Gods I read but never bowed to,
Please let her be alive! Please let her be well!
Please let her be alive! Please let her be well!
For I couldn't imagine a world wherein she never dwelled...

Fates sure must be laughing with that old man Oggs,
Sipping their tea merrily while my brain's filled with fog.
My arms gave up,
The moment I reached,
All I could see was a bonnet and upturned Little ferry.
The Gods are cruel for refusing me yet again,
They had refused me once when I wasn't whole, this isn't fair!
My spirit numbed
My body prone to cold,
I lay looking at the stars,
Imagining her and him becoming once again,
Two parts of their whole.

* Mentored by Dr. Violina Borah



Mentorship*

Victorian Literature: My Last Duchess

BHUMIKA AGGARWAL (ARCHER),
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

I watch floating from above,
The fire that caught my home,
The painting that started it all.
The menacing laugh piercing through the hall.
For every one of her smiles that I tried to shut down.
The fateful night I picked up the knife
The day I took her life.
Today fate stands confronting me
Every day I boasted and warned
Of my deed
To the rest of the world.
She haunted my dreams
I knew it was coming, for I earned this.
Fra Pandolf immortalised
What I had tried to erase
The sweet smile I tried to monopolise
The blush I tried to claim for mine
But losing everything I had
Is how my tale would end.



* Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha
Mabanta-Bortamuly

Mentorship*

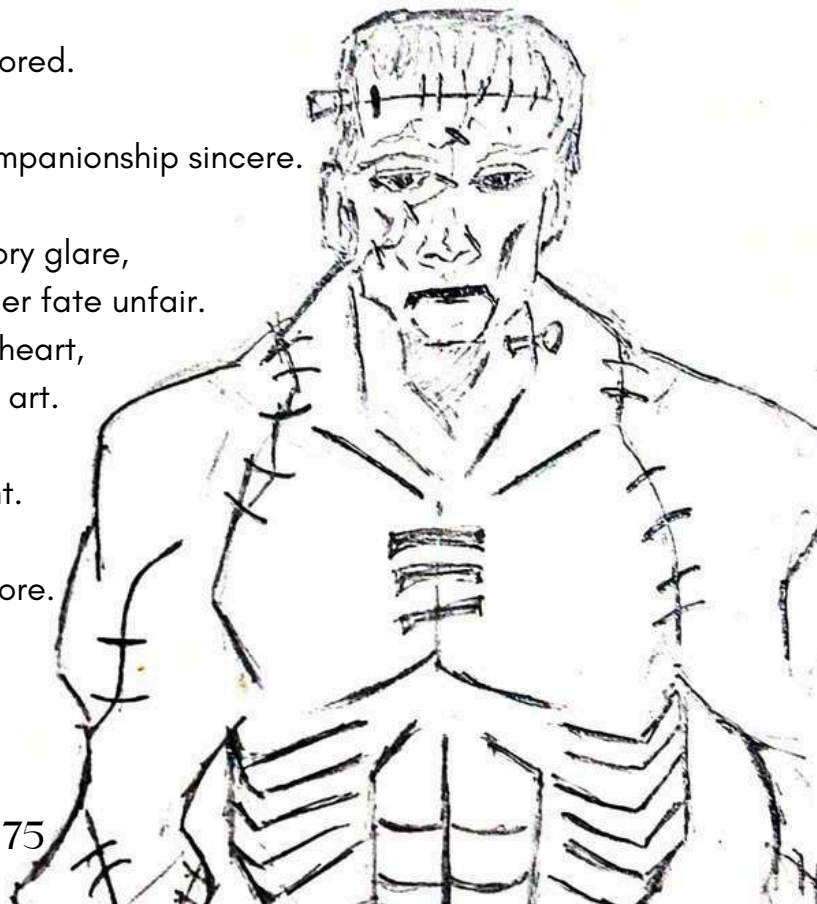
Frankenstein

JIYA MAITHANI,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

In letters to you sweet Margaret dear,
A tale unfolds, one tinged with fear.
In icy realms, as I sailed,
Seeking knowledge, my ambition trailed.
Through treacherous seas, my ship did roam,
Until I found a man alone.
Frankenstein, his tale he told,
Of a creation bold and hearts turned cold.
His ambition, a flame way too bright,
Brought forth a monster, a dreadful sight.
Regret and sorrow filled his heart,
While his creation tore his world apart.
Rejected by his creator's sight,
Victor's monster wandered through the darkest night.
Stitched together, a patchwork of parts,
Yearned for acceptance, with a heavy heart.
Fair Elizabeth with her heart so pure,
Was Victor's beloved whom he deeply adored.
Henry Clerval was a character so dear,
Offered to his best friend loyalty, and companionship sincere.

And in the courtroom's cold and accusatory glare,
Justine stood heartbroken, burdened by her fate unfair.
Alphonse the patriarch, with a burdened heart,
Was a father who witnessed his kin's dark art.
So here I scribe, in the frozen night,
A testament to horrors, to wrong and right.
A cautionary tale, a chilling lore,
Of Promethean deeds and much much more.

* Mentored by Ms. Priyanka Arora



Mentorship^{*} Frankenstein

MEDHA BHARDWAJ,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

I am Mary Shelley with a Gothic gaze.
Born to writers in England's embrace
Eloped with my lover which was considered a disgrace.

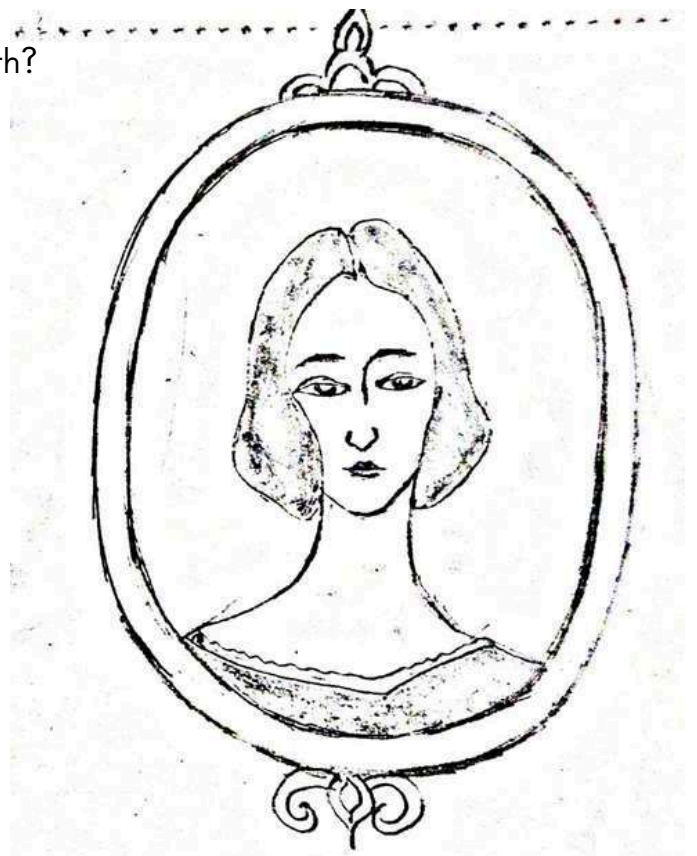
With a mind both fierce and keen,
Joined hands with Byron and wove a gothic dream.

Life was filled with sorrow
When my children failed to see the morrow.
With ink-stained hands and a bleeding heart,
Created a monster that will give you a panic attack.

A monster born of lightning's spark,
Who was ugly and dark.

Critics say it represents my depth,
But did Victor consider him a human with breath?
Through storms and fate's cruel art,
I agree it symbolises my Heart.

** Mentored by Ms. Priyanka Arora*



Mentorship^{*} Frankenstein

BHUMIKA AGGARWAL (ARCHER),
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

Hi I'm Victor,
Named so I could win the world.
I know many languages,
They say my flaw is hubris.
Well my downfall was fated
Since the day this monster was created.
Abandoning him wasn't my qualm,
It was all I could do when everything had gone wrong.
What I had done led me to this
How could I take such a risk?
Man is born free
But what does a monster deserve, tell me
Blame me not Mary, O wretched one
It's me who created the devil's spawn.
Humankind is doomed, I agree
who can't save themselves can't save humanity.
I can't answer your questions,
I'm not one fated for the Heavens.
Maybe it's me, maybe I'm the monster
I am Frankenstein,
But when I look, I see you in the mirror.

** Mentored by Ms. Priyanka Arora*



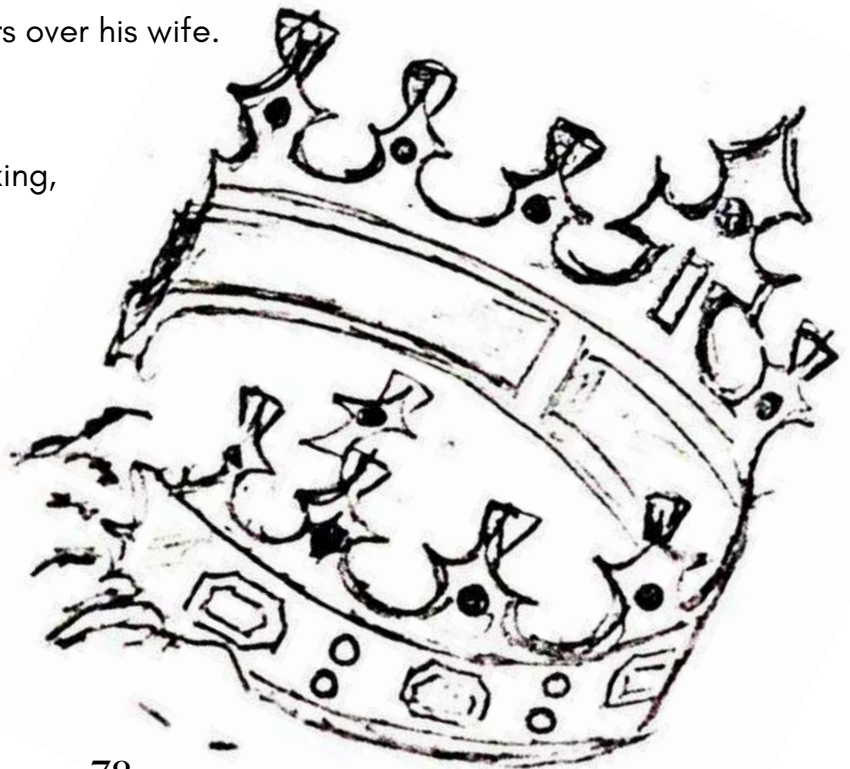
Mentorship^{*}

Macbeth

BHUMIKA AGGARWAL (ARCHER),
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

And here comes the end to Macbeth's tale
Everything he planned, in the end to fail.
His losses far outweigh anything he could ever gain,
All his valour and strength, all in vain.
It's his own folly
That leads to his fall.
Going against his better judgement,
He becomes a puppet,
To his fragile masculinity.
And to his fears,
He's held captive,
And there's no free will.
The credulous king
Dies a painless death sleeping,
While Macbeth murders his peace.
The lady who instigates
It all takes her own life,
Only to have Macbeth shed no tears over his wife.
He kills and he kills,
The tragic hero Macbeth,
One who could've been a virtuous king,
Goes on the path of gore and sin.

** Mentored by Ms. Priyanka Arora*



Mentorship*

My Comfort Zone

JAGRITI CHAUDHARY,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

When I go back to my memories,
I remember the good old memories of my comfort zone
When she raised me, trusted me,
and how she still pampers me the way she did in my childhood.
Whenever she calls me, she says haan mere raja,
When I come back home,
the hug she gives me soothes my soul.

You are a Wonder Woman
Gentle, caring, and yet like no other one
I feel lucky to be your granddaughter.
The strength of our family lies in you
Lessons on manners, advice, and politeness from you are priceless
I love you more than I can ever express in words
You are the link of past and future for me.

Her denying the odds of age
Her heavenly smile behind her wrinkles is just a sight to behold
Her eagerly waiting for me to come home back is a gesture of love
She is like an ocean of love, faith, and spirituality for me
But I am your culprit too, whenever I depart I leave a dearth in your heart
I am sorry I wish I could be with you more
But you don't complain too
Such an angel, my grandmother.

* Mentored by Dr. Sangeeta Gupta



Mentorship*

My Grandmother's House

ANSHIKA RAGHUVANSHI,

B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

"When I lost her,
I sat there still
Oh! She left!!
Just in front of me....
Everything I had
Was all the memories
Which are now,
Just left in ruins
for me to ponder upon.

That hallway seems silent
Even when I scream your name
The walls echo my childhood memories
And remind me of every moment!

The food doesn't taste the same
Why?
Because the spices you used are
now in vain!

I wish I had called you
I wish I had heard from you
For the one last time
Before you said Goodbye!"

* Mentored by Dr. Sangeeta Gupta



Mentorship*

My Comfort Zone

BHUMIKA AGGARWAL (ARCHER),
B.A. (Hons.) *English*,
2nd Year

I can't seem to forget
The morning you left the house.
That reluctance I wasn't there to witness
When I should've been downstairs
If I only wasn't so scared.

Now your house,
I have left too
And nothing will hurt
Like knowing I'll be leaving
Every last trace of you behind.

If you could come back
One last time
To cure my stomach aches,
To one last time
Hold me to sleep.
I think it would all be okay
If you could come one last time
To say my nickname in front of my friends
And make me grunt.
To ask questions you won't understand the answers to,
But cared enough to ask anyway.
To make a home that smells like pickles
Of this house that reeks of pain.
I think it would be okay
If I could just see you again.

* *Mentored by Dr. Sangeeta Gupta*



Mentorship*

My Thunderwoman

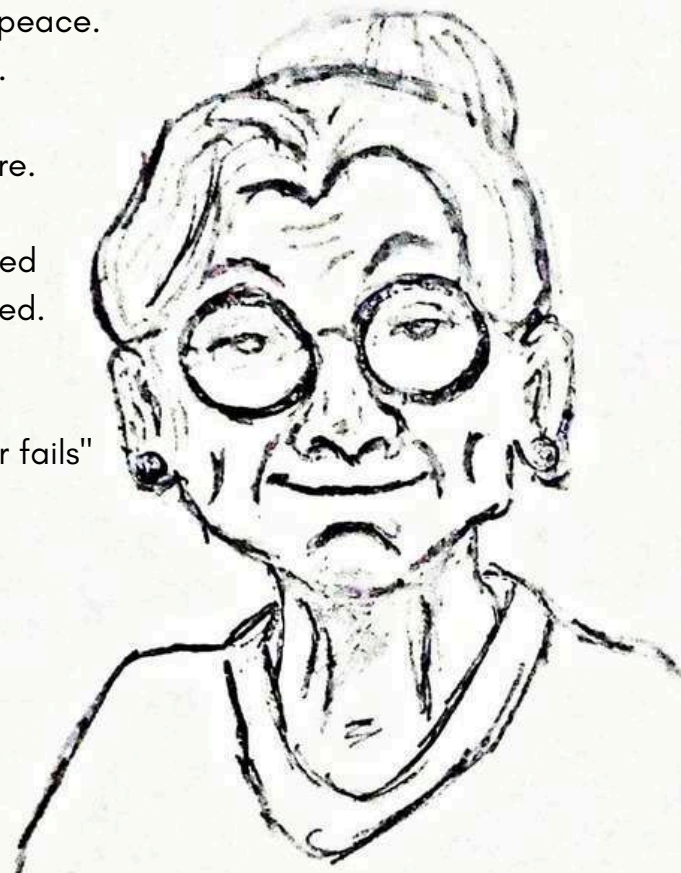
MEDHA BHARDWAJ,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

My grandma - a tale of horrors and wonders
A lady - unleashing and undoing the thunders
A woman - so different and diverse
Even her personalities have their own multiverse.
One, who raised us sisters
One, who was blessed with a romeo as her mister
One, who is a drama queen
And one, embodying my mother's trauma unseen.

I love her for the champis I got
For bribing the gods to fulfil my desire's lot
And for the nights she cradled me next to her
And for my sickly days when her concern stir
But also I hate her for the tears my mom shed
I hate her for the motherhood unfed
For the moments Shanti Niwas couldn't hold on to peace.
For the mementos broken up with a painful crease.

The stories are filled with topics I don't wish to share.
The stories are far too deep for me to not care.
They laugh and they cry and they stand still confused
They leave me amazed and they leave me unamused.
So I turn to my mother and she repeats me
the ending to all such tales
"Despite all that happened, her love for YOU never fails"
And I think to myself in horror and wonder
How could this happen with a lady
who unleashes and undos the thunder.

* Mentored by Dr. Sangeeta Gupta



Mentorship*

Two Women I Resemble the Most


LAVANYA NAIR,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

Pearl (ratna) and ponnu (gold),
My grandmas were named luxuriously,
Perhaps the forlorn wish of their parents
Or just a prediction of how their life would turn out to be.

Ratna ammachi,
Gave me her face
Her eyes, her lips and her very smile
The resemblance is so profound,
That my dearest hope is to not open any closed wounds.
She left her children alone, early to rest
A pain they carry close to their breast
Disease claimed her,
Even before me knowing
I am just a shadow of a mother bereaving.



Ponnu ammachi,
Well, we only met twice,
Once when I was too small to care
And once when I was too saddened to dare
Dare, to get close to her
Afterall she knew all of my cousins
Just except poor old me
Who messed up and got confused
Whether to call her amma or ammachi
She gave me her tenacity and her stubbornness
But there are no talks of us resembling each other that well.



My vacations were spent
Within my four walls
But I carried hope that one of you could see
Me up from heaven
And one up from their photographs
I never had champis,
Nor any fun tales of my parents entrusted to me
I was just a dumb little monster,
An unfeeling zombie
Empty of care, empty of love.

Ponnu and Ratna both are a distant memory to the world,
A mixture of ashes and dry grass and wet earth
Up there in the abode of celestials
Ponnu and Ratna perhaps see me,
A little human who resembles them so eerily.

** Mentored by Dr. Sangeeta Gupta*

Mentorship*

The Grandmother I Never Had

MEGHA KANDARI,
B.A. (Hons.) English,
2nd Year

She loves and bestows her caring smile
Her face full of adoration
with uncountable wrinkles, while
her beauty remained perennial.
If only I had a grandmother
I would've cognate these feelings
Feelings I've heard, seen and pictured
But never once felt in person.
On that white board while my eyes closed
They say I'm her twin
They see her in me
But I don't recognise her, never did.
Trapped inside the Pandora box of uncertainty
I can't feel anything but lost
Lost that I never met her
Lost, never held her in my arms.
Maybe someday or in some other life
She will love and bestow her caring smile
Her face full of adoration
She'll unleash me from that Pandora box
And we'll reunite....

* Mentored by Dr. Sangeeta Gupta



A large, faint, light-colored illustration of various flowers and foliage, including a large peony, a tulip, and a cluster of small flowers, serving as a background for the title.

Short Stories





A Sunset

KALPITA RATNASHREE (*a.k.a.* CUDDLE), 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English
(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borab as a LCYA assignment)

I stood up from the sofa and walked a few steps to meet him, to share a glance or maybe a gaze, a deep gaze, with his eyes – trying to soak in the whispers that they emitted. We stared at each other, at each other's endurance. I was mesmerised by his power to hold back his vulnerability. I'm sure he was astonished by mine, too. You know, I can read him and maybe he can and he was doing the same to me, too.

Softly, I pushed my hand into the hold of his' and rested my head on his shoulder. He smelled of faint cigarettes and vigorous sweating but of course, it was his body odour, that warm familiar robust fragrance of somebody's presence, somebody you know and you are glad of. However, that also meant he smoked in the bathroom again before coming to me. I loathe cigarettes and hate his idiosyncratic smoking – dragging long puffs with eyes closed to wish death and solace while (exhaling the smoke with a snort and realising) none of it is that easy to achieve – but today, I was fine with it. Today, I, too, fancied death and solace. However, no cigarettes were my metaphor, though of course, life itself snorted at my awareness of the ironies.

I never thought turning 18 would be like this. Looking back to a few days ago, I was giggling and bouncing all around and over them – over him and her. Now, suddenly my consciousness of being a grown-up teen hits me like a truck at my core as I feel dizzy and nauseous with all the familiarity with death, loss, void and grief. I didn't choose to grow up.

We did not speak a single word and after about a minute or two of eternity, we simply dragged ourselves forward, still hand-in-hand, to the reception. His heart was thumping fast and then faster with every step we took. I was holding him close enough to hear those frantic heartbeats. Finally, after a heavy walk of what seemed like forever, he uttered in a grave yet trembling voice, "Div... Diva..." he choked, cleared his throat and started again, "Mrs. Diva...".



I "Mrs. Diva Purohit. We are here to collect her last remains and her death proof," I completed him. I said it all in a single breath, in one simple single stretch, and I was empty. My lungs felt devoid of oxygen. They were panting to grab every inch of air that was present around them.



Diva, day or daylight is its literal meaning in Sanskrit. She, too, was the daylight to our lives, the sunshine that poured in all love and radiated happiness all around. As if Imtiaz Ali painted her on a Rajkumar Hirani canvas, she was life herself.



"You are..?" came a low whisper, making my eardrums vibrate and breaking my spree of sensing the void, the oblivion that I so desired would engulf me.



"Well, I'm Mr. Nishant Awasthi, her husband", he spoke, this time, firmly.



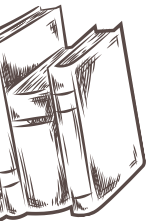
"We're sorry to hear about your loss, sir. You can collect your things from counter no. 729 after filling in the documents. Also, I apologise again but can you please show me your ID card."



"Sure."



He pulled his Driving Licence out from his wallet while his eyes tried hard not to look at the family picture he had in it. The manager checked our IDs and let us in.



After another perennial walk, we reached counter no. 729. He handed me the certificate registration form and a pen. I quietly wobbled around the corner, grabbed a seat, filled in the form and returned to him in a minute or less. The counter attendant received the form from me and handed Baba the last remains and the death proof of Mama, my mother, Mrs. Diva Purohit.



A single look at her clothes, bangles, her favourite watch- and the clouds downpoured. Baba pulled me into his embrace and we were squeezing each other tight enough as if to never let go, or maybe to reassure each other to never let go. We were wailing – and suddenly my lungs felt some oxygen back in them.



My Mama was a COVID-19 patient who died of breathlessness last night. We were not even informed about her cremation as families of Coronavirus patients were not allowed to attend the ceremony. We saw her last evening, smiling like a beam of sunlight, fighting to get through the curtains of life and light. Alas! The curtains fell but to the dark. We got a call from the hospital at three in the morning, asking us to come and collect her remains.



I Guilt, anger, frustration, dilemma, grief, everything dissolved. The void was all that I was left with.



Crying felt good. I felt real. We held one another's back and plodded out of the hospital. We went straight to my Mama's favourite dhaba and had our breakfast. Paratha and chutney. I chewed a green chilli. Out of habit, Baba mimicked Mama, "This girl, I tell you, she eats so much of chillies na, she'll just grow into a chilli plant herself one day, Nish, you'll see!" We broke into a bundle of laughter, followed by a stream of tears.

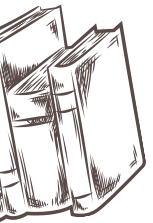


"Happy 18th birthday, baby!" Baba's lips fumbled to my forehead which was now wet from his silent weeping.

"I'll miss her. We were birthday twins."



I looked up to the blazing sun gradually setting in the saffron sky and mumbled, "I love you, Mama. Happy Birthday!"






Braid of the Light and the Dark

PRAGATI DAS, *2nd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English*


Young girls often tend to plan out their whole life - especially, their wedding. The husband almost plays a dumb role in this fantasy. It's all about the dress, the make-up, the guests, the décor, the theme and so on. I think of all these as I open a wedding invitation that I got in my mailbox. "I wish Adira was here. She'd be so excited to attend this pastel-themed wedding", I spoke to myself as I thought of our old conversations from when we were 13. I was never a fan of the idea of spending lakhs on a wedding for people whom I probably didn't even want to invite in the first place. But Adira disagreed. She dreamt of the perfect, big, fat Indian wedding. Her favourite colour was pastel pink. She wanted her wedding lehenga to be pastel pink. I know it sounds very cliché at this point as Bollywood has been overdoing it recently. But, this was way before Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma decided to bring on this trend of having pastel-themed weddings in the celebrity world in 2017. It was 2013 when Adira planned her own wedding. We were still 13 and obsessed with *Aashiqui 2*. We knew our middle-class families would never allow her to wear pastel in a Hindu wedding but dreaming does not hurt, does it? I convinced myself that someone overheard our conversation and gave the celebrities this idea. Strangely, the one who came up with this idea originally did not get to have her dream wedding.

It was the spring of 2016. It was hot enough to not shower with warm water anymore. But I was the only one who still kept using a blanket. It was the second worst year of my life. My life was falling apart from every single direction and I was too tiny to protect myself. It was around 3 PM and I was still sleeping that afternoon. I did not care to have breakfast or even brush my teeth. Adira barged into my bedroom door waking me up with a scream, "Inaya! Come on now, get up! Our class teacher is about to complain about you to the principal about you not attending class for over a week without prior information. I somehow convinced him that you're not well and that I'll ask you to talk to him. You can't keep doing this, Naya. What's happening? Tell me everything. You know I'm here for you, right?" I knew. But that didn't make it any easier for me to talk about the demons that kept me awake at night and asleep during the day so that I don't have to face the




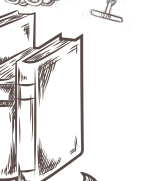



world. Everyone knew I was going through something. But every time my mom or dad or brother came up to me to ask politely about my problem, I panicked, hid under the blanket and cried till they'd leave me alone. But when Adira came to me that day, I didn't hide. "You don't know how it feels like to be me, Adira", I started crying. "Then make me understand", she demanded. "You're my best friend, you know me the best. But there are not enough words in any language that I can use to make you or anyone understand what's happening inside me".

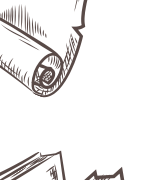

There was this pause of a moment where it was mutually understood that I was to continue speaking and she - to listen. And so I continued as if the words were sitting just on my lips, waiting to be set free from the chaotic hell that was burning inside, "I failed, Adira. I failed for the first time in my life. I knew I was bad at physics but I didn't realise the extent. It's not like I didn't try. I swear I tried my best. But turns out, it was not even enough for me to pass. I used to be in the top five till class X, you know that. I even remember commenting on someone secretly that how could someone not study enough to get just the pass marks at least. I even thought that no matter how worse things get, I would never fail. But here I am. And I don't know how to process it. I-" Adira interrupted me as my voice cracked and I started to lose control of my thoughts and tears. She started to caress my hair and said, "I'll help you, Naya. It's okay, trust me. It really is. Your parents already know and they understand it, too. It's just...life, you know. Sometimes we are on top of the world and sometimes, somewhere deeper and darker than the Mariana Trench. But I'm not going to give you a bunch of advice now. I just want you to believe even if blindly, for a moment, that everything will get better. I don't know how but I know it will." "Adi, I would believe you if this was my only problem right now. But I don't even know who I am anymore. My body aches all day, every day. But my heart aches more. My mind seems to be stuck somewhere and I can't unhook it because I don't know where it is stuck. I cannot differentiate between day and night. For every second I breathe, both are equally torturous to me. Sam getting annoyed with me and threatening to break up with me does not help the situation either. And even if I spare some energy after spending it all on convincing myself every day that I must not give up, I don't have the motivation to start somewhere. The truth is, Adi, that I don't care anymore. I don't give a damn about anything and anyone anymore. I can't bring myself to care. I hate to admit it but all I wish before I go to sleep is to not wake up the next day." "Stop! Stop- What are you saying- Stop. Naya, I swear to God I will make it a point to annoy you even as a ghost if you say or think about that one more time, EVER AGAIN!" - she sighed after making me smile with this cute threat. The conversation after this is blurry in my






memories but I remember binge watching Twilight with her and having the best day of that month.



Adira was right after all. Things did change for me and they did for the better. My mom came up with the suggestion that I could change my stream to Humanities from Science if I wanted to because my academics was a major factor that made me depressed. After Class X, I had gone to Kota to prepare for NEET and I could not stay there for more than three months. That's where it all started. My family has always been very supportive and understanding. They never uttered a word of disappointment. But I knew how much fifty thousand rupees meant to a middle class family. I felt like I wasted my parents' hard earned money and I did not deserve to be their daughter. Anyway, all that is in the past now. Life suddenly started to get better after I swapped to Humanities. I did feel like I fell behind my classmates as I had to start from Class XI-level Humanities Studies again. But when I looked at the bigger picture, everything made sense. It turned out that Humanities actually suited my personality more. Apart from my family, Adira was a major angel in my life at that point of time. She really was the Enid to my Wednesday. Whenever my black clouds started pouring, she danced into it like a rainbow with the sun. She taught me the art of being optimistic even when there was not the slightest ray of hope. She kept repeating with the sweetest smile, "Trust the light even when you can't see it."



How much I miss her smile! She used to smile a lot. She was the most joyful person I knew. But my whole belief system fell apart when I received that call on 21st August, 2018. It was the worst day of my life. One of Adira's cousins called me and said something which I wish could unhear. Adi was dead. She was the one who inflicted it on herself. I ran to her house as soon as I received that call at 7:03 AM. I was praying for it to be a prank. But it was not. The police had come, her parents were crying their heart out and I stood as still as Adi was lying on her bed. We had planned to go shopping that day for her birthday which was on the next day. She wanted a white dress. I watched her burn on the pyre while she was wrapped in a white shroud.



Everything else that happened in between is a blur now. I remember hugging her pale body and crying like a dam had broken inside my eyes. They had to drag me away as they took away her body for post-mortem. It was informed later that she had taken a bunch of sleeping pills the night before. But it was to be investigated further about where she got those pills from. Pharmacies don't give them out without a proper prescription. No one wanted to tell me the name of those pills but I found out later. I double checked before I could come to a conclusion. A strip was missing from my old medicine box. She knew where I kept it because she was the one who



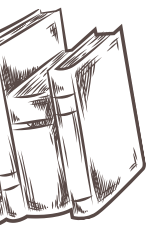
made sure I had my dose everyday. So, they were mine. My whole world broke down again, not that there was much left in it to begin with. My negligence was the reason my best friend died. I killed my best friend.



It took me over a year to process everything that happened and accept it. I needed extra help from my therapist that year because I blamed it all on myself. "I was her best friend. How could I not see how she was really doing in life? Why did she never talk to me about what she was going through? Did she not feel comfortable enough with me after all these years? I must have been the worst friend. If only I had not been absorbed in my problems alone, maybe I could have recognized hers. I assumed she's fine just because everything in her life seemed to be fine. I should have enquired more when she claimed that the cuts on different parts of her body were from bumping into the door lock as she's clumsy. I should have given her company on the random days she took leaves to have a self-care day as she felt burnt out. I did tell her not to push herself so hard but I should have done more. I was never enough. Not for myself. Not for her. I was enough for nothing."



For months, I kept on looking for the reason why she could not bear her life anymore. After a lot of research, I understood that sometimes depression comes with no reason. Sometimes, you lose yourself because you're losing control of your life. And sometimes, your life is filled with every possible good thing that can exist but there appears a hole in your heart which can't be filled with any of those worldly pleasures. Mental health is so less discussed in schools and even in the average adult's life that most people have no clue about what to do when they are struggling or someone they know is struggling. It is a matter of shame and comes with a tag of insanity in most Indian families when someone finds the courage to seek help. I wish I understood things more when I was a kid. But we both were just kids. If I would have been a psychologist in 2018, like I am now, maybe she would still be around. She would have had her dream pastel-themed wedding. She would attend my perfect, fat Indian wedding, tell my husband herself that she would always be my first love and she would babysit my 3 years old daughter on my busy days. But it's okay. I don't really know how to move on from the fact that someone I loved so dearly no longer breathes anymore, but I'm trying my best. "Trust the light even when you can't see it", I keep telling myself.



Break Loose

IPSA, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English

(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)

When the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia peaked, I was just fourteen years old. I'm Aghavni, and each day felt like a struggle to survive. Our once calm neighbourhood had transformed into a stressful battlefield, with shooting and artillery booms eroding our quality of life.

Azerbaijan captured the territory around Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2020 but the worst came later. The Lachin corridor that connects us to Armenia was blocked in December 2022 and we were left with nothing.

One chilling evening, I found myself alone on the streets, desperately seeking food for my family. As I hurried back home with a small bag of provisions, I heard footsteps echoing behind me. I quickened my pace, trying to ignore the fear creeping up my spine.

The shadows of two armed guys seemed to go deeper into the dimly lit lane. My pulse raced because I was stuck between the thin walls and my quivering fingers were not holding the bag. The men, dressed in military fatigues, gave me a suspicious look. Their features were worn down and hardened by battle. One of them growled at me in an unfamiliar tongue. I froze, finding it difficult to understand anything they were saying.

With what little bravery I still had, I stumbled and mumbled, "I'm just going home. Please understand that I mean no harm." I prayed that my trembling voice would be heard and that they would see the humanity in me. A man who appeared to be the leader spoke harshly and demanded to know what I was doing outside this late.

I told them I was out looking for food, figuring they would get the sense of desperation that had become our way of life. I could feel their critical eyes evaluating my remarks against the scepticism that pervaded the atmosphere of war-torn destruction. The tension in the room was obvious.

The impasse was broken abruptly by the distant sound of an explosion. For an instant, their focus shifted, and I took advantage of the chance. I made the snap choice to run as quickly as I could, feeling the adrenaline propelling me to get away while my feet pounded the uneven ground.



I dodged down side streets, attempting to outrun those pursuing me. My heart was pounding violently in my chest, and my breathing was laboured. I was motivated by fear, which gave me the stamina to make my way through the maze-like passages I was familiar with. The run felt like it would never finish, but I fought back against the fear.



My foot snagged on a loose stone as I turned a bend, sending me tumbling to the ground. I felt excruciating anguish, but I dared not give up. I ignored the burn in my knees and the scrape on my palms as I climbed back up. The yells of the men were getting louder and closer, telling me to stop.



I pressed forward, praying to whatever higher authority could be listening, mustering all of my strength. I reached a familiar building, an old bakery with a hidden back entrance that led to a series of interconnected alleys.



My heart thumping in my ears, I dashed into the small opening. My breath caught when I realised it was a dead end as I pushed through the entrance. I felt the want to give up, but then I saw a loose board on the wall.



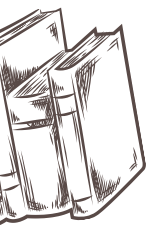
I pushed the board out of the way and squeezed through the narrow gap to enter a different alley. My entire attention was on getting to safety, and I dared not turn around.



I finally made it to the safety of my house, gasping for air and with tears running down my face. Shaken but pleased to be back in our home's safety, I fell to the ground.



I stayed close to my family that evening and told them about the horrible experience, feeling lucky to have escaped. It served as a reminder of the dangerous world in which we had to live every day and where there was always a chance of not surviving. But that night, I became aware of the fortitude and resiliency that sat dormant within me, waiting to be roused when faced with hardship.



Twenty years after that incident, I'm publishing this story to let everyone know that I didn't deserve that life and that all I've done since leaving that region of the world has only been done to protect others who, like me, refused to accept anything less.





Colourful Nights

ANJALI, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English

(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)

As usual, the rise of the sun does its work to detach Raghav from the night full of fascinating dreams. The top voices of mommy detached him from appreciating the imaginative world confined to himself. His obsession with actualising the dreams was getting so powerful that one day, he sat to paint the dream he saw last night on his painting book, when the deafening voice of the mother shook him to the extent that the brush fell off his hands.

The mother exclaimed with a note of anger, "What exactly are you doing? You are already late for school. Leave this stuff right now and let me give you a bath today."

Raghav rushed to the bathroom to get fresh but his mind was all occupied with the dreams he saw the previous night when again the mother's voice made him come to the real world which appeared to him so tedious and off.

After getting ready, his mother kissed his forehead and said, "Dear, your elder brother has already left for school. You need to be a little punctual like him. Now go, the driver is waiting for you outside."

As he reached school, in the first period itself, the class needed to take the test of Number System and he was not prepared as he was not interested in studies at all. As his teacher distributed the question paper to everyone, a sheet of paper, as it seemed to him, reached his desk too, but the numbers written on the page appeared to him moving like a wave. He made an endeavour to attempt the questions but all went in vain and so he slipped into his imaginative world and started making calculations using his fanciful tools. He hardly solved a single question when the time for the test was over and the answer sheet was taken from him. He felt appeased and confident after having applied his own tools to solve a question and asked his classmates with a laugh, "So, how was the exam? Alright? Mine went a bit too well." He generally remained alone as nobody wanted to be his friend on account of his absurd manners and everyone considered him as an alien in the entire school.

Next day, the teacher distributed the answer sheets and asked Raghav to bring his parents' signature over the test paper. He was afraid to do so as he



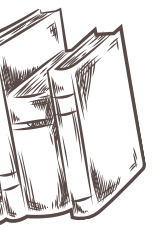
got zero marks in the test and knew that his father was very strict. He did not intend to have his parents' signature but his mother discovered his lies and beat him badly for such results. "Why don't you study? Your brother is super intelligent and rational but you do not want to be like him, why?"



After a long silence, the mother said, "I will not sign over this result of yours. Your dad would do it. He would better make you understand the value of education. Wait for your father to come in the evening." Raghav could detect the sarcasm in his mother's talk. He slipped into his room and resumed his painting. He felt a kind of satisfaction in painting as he loved doing it. He painted his dreams on the cardboard which he filled with vibrant colours. He thought that the more vibrant his dreams were in his imaginative world, the more bland and colourless was the real world. When he finished his painting, his brother arrived. Completely stunned at his work, the latter said, "Brother, you did an amazing job. How elegantly you painted this picture!" His brother was very nice and supportive towards him but his parents did not want to appreciate the fine arts. They wanted him to understand and pursue the course of formal education. As his father said later that day, "This result? What kind of result is this? What do you do if not study? Your career would lead to nowhere if you do not focus on your studies."




Raghav felt demotivated and rushed to his room crying. He did not have dinner that day. The next day, he again woke up with a sense of appreciation for his dreams. This time, he got up early so as to paint his dreams on the cardboard without being delayed for school. It had become his daily routine now to actualise his dreams by painting them with vibrant colours. Doing so gave him immense happiness and satisfaction. He wanted to live in this imaginative world forever. It was more joyful and charming than the real world.



That day, he was nervous and afraid as his parents were determined to go and meet his school's Principal and teachers. Throughout the entire journey to his school, however, he couldn't help but introspect on how he could paint his dreams, while also simultaneously reflecting upon the unmemorable part of the dreams in his paintings. All this while, his parents were really anxious about him. When they reached, the Principal exclaimed, "Good morning, Mr. and Mrs. Mehra. Please have a seat. And you, Raghav, I hope you have not forgotten your 'basic' manners, have you? To greet one's elders?" Raghav passively responded, "Good morning, Principal," even though he was still busy thinking about his paintings. After a few moments of silence, the Principal said, "Your dear son is getting out of control. His mind does not seem to be







stable. He keeps thinking about a world of his own even when the teachers are delivering lectures. And when it comes to him answering any question, he becomes numb and at last responds with nothing but ridiculous answers. I have been getting complaints about him for a month or so on a regular basis from virtually every teacher. He is casting a negative influence on other students, too."

Mr. Mehra impatiently said, "What do you mean by him casting negative effects on others? You mean he is..." The Principal interrupted, "You have got to know what I mean, Mr. Mehra. Our teachers will not bear his weird manners when he does not know how to even read a sentence. On top of that, he does not want to learn anything. He just wants to be inside his own world, a world which is unacknowledged by normal people." Even now, Raghav was occupied by the thoughts over painting his dreams.

In the evening, Raghav was called out of his room to the terrace where his parents and his brother were sitting anxiously. The father said angrily, "What do you want from us? Why are you fixated on insulting us? Your very parents were degraded in your school today. You are a blot on our family."

The mother rushed to embrace Raghav as she did not consider her child to be 'unstable', and knew how difficult it was for him to understand the educational values. In the meanwhile, the father slipped into Raghav's room and tore apart the beautiful paintings hung all over the walls. Raghav felt scattered on the inside when he saw his paintings all torn apart. It was as if his dreams, and his very life, had stopped to exist. He was disheartened and could not stop crying. This time, even the embrace of his mother could not serve to soothe his heart.

Even months later, the charm on his face continued to remain absent. Raghav was forced not to touch the painting brushes from that day onwards, which further contributed towards taking away the charm and enthusiasm from his life. Now Raghav was living but without his soul. This went on until the day when a painting competition was to be organised in his school. He was strictly prohibited to take part in it as the father considered his obsession for painting as an imaginative web which was separating Raghav from reality. But that day, his mother and the brother supported Raghav covertly as they could not tolerate him living a dull, sad life where there were no colours. Raghav was appeased to be a part of that competition and he drew his dream which was left to be painted the day when the brushes were taken away from



im by this father. To the amazement of the teachers, the painting was nothing but his dream about adding multiple and vibrant colours to the loopholes that were quite visible in his reality. He made a painting of his family where there was no space for a space, and he filled the space with multiple colours so as to eradicate the distance existing between him and his father. He gave his painting a dark shade and thought that it would not fade with time. He wrote above the painting, "Imagination and reality, how beautifully it is merged!" He said to himself in appeasement, "At last, my dream to make my father understand how the medium of painting stimulated me, has been fulfilled. The night of dreams is coloured at last!"

It was the time for the results to be announced and the winner of the competition turned out to be Raghav. He was stunned. He was happy not for winning the competition, but for actualising his dreams through paintings. The eyes of the parents were filled with tears and the father was feeling remorseful and embarrassed for the situation he had created for his child. His parents were called up to the stage and the Principal with pride gave an award to Raghav and congratulated him and his parents over the grand success.

Raghav had struggled to colour his nights so as to add colour to his days.

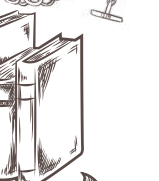


Cranky Cactus





ARUNIMA RAO, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)



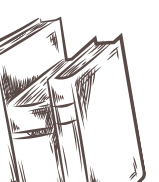

Living in the city that is filled with jam-packed buildings and hustling vehicles, I fancied the idea of having a small garden for my respite. I take care of them like my very own as they are like a family to me, I water them once before heading for school and once in the evening after my return, I spend my time with them telling them about my day and everything else and to be honest they are the best listeners one could ever find and it is very peaceful with them, it soothes my heart watching them flourish from their small pots. I am getting another plant to add to my garden as my mom is impressed by how well I look after them.





I don't think it fits in the place, instead of having green leaves it has thorns, one wouldn't find it beautiful and neither does it bloom flowers, it seems odd with my rose, jasmine, hibiscus, and above all, it doesn't look much friendly or inviting, I find this cactus cranky. Mom said to give it time, sometimes we grow to love a thing we might not like at first.





As the weeks passed, I saw the life in the cranky cactus fading and I let my mom know about it right away. She came and had a look at it, I explained how I took care of it equally as my other plants and she giggled after hearing that. She said not to water it for a few days. I couldn't understand her but I chose to listen to her anyway.




After some days, the cactus regained its life to my surprise. I watered it daily and spent time with it like the rest of my plants, I treated it equally like the others but it did not work for it. As I pondered upon that thought, my mom told me with a warm smile that not every plant grows and flourishes under the same surroundings, requirements and circumstances. They might have different needs to grow in full capacity. Just like humans, not every plant is the same. They all are different and unique in their own ways.



I sat in the garden for a while to stare at the mellow yellow flower that bloomed on the head of the cactus, ethereal, vibrant like no other I had ever seen, shining, beautiful in its own way.



I smiled seeing that. Such a lifelong lesson I had learned from a cactus I found cranky. Nature never fails to inspire and teach us. The cactus perfectly fit in the garden, spreading its uniqueness and beauty in its own ways.





Dream in Heart

CHANDNI, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)

I have always had the dream of writing and putting my thoughts on paper. I have always felt words to be beautiful and mesmerising. However, this alone isn't enough. In today's world, there is the need to showcase the capability and skills that you possess towards your passion. Most importantly, there is the need to build confidence in order to showcase the same. In the case of me, Karan, this meant winning the 'Best Novelist' competition. The competition in question is a small annual tournament organised by my school which selects the best novelist from amongst its students on the basis of the demonstration of their creative writing skills and imaginative power. Since I had a burning passion for writing ever since I was a kid, I decided to test myself and see if I was able to win the competition. When I win, I will be able to prove to my parents that writing is not a waste of time. They are the stereotypical parents who want their children to have 'safe' professional careers like that of lawyers or doctors. So of course someone having more skills and passions for the field of the Arts is met with scepticism, "Wait, is that even a real job these days?"

[A sound from notifications] "Wait, is that what I am thinking about?" I quickly looked around the room to see where I had left my phone and after finding it, I jumped off my bed and started frantically scrolling through my emails until I found the mail from the organising body.

[Closing the eyes and thinking in mind] "Okay, this is the moment, the spot is yours, so just open your eyes, quickly read that email and scream your heart out."

[Opening the eyes] As I opened the email, my eyes wandered, searching for the line, "Congratulations. It is our great pleasure to inform you that..." But, to my utter dismay, there was no such thing in the email. I was not able to accept it; I had over-estimated my abilities. Even more difficult would be to inform my parents that I lost the contest. Before telling them, I decided to first find out who the winner was. I had a sleepless night in which many names were running through my mind and I kept on asking myself the question repeatedly, "Who is better than I am?" I thought no one could beat me in what I loved to do. Well, I was clearly wrong. In school, I tried to be invisible because I didn't want to be perceived in the eyes of the other students as a failure. But I didn't know anyone else who had been as interested as me to win the competition. Accidentally, my eyes met those of Krish, my class rival since the very first grade.



[Thinking] "Could he be the one who won the tournament?" I started walking quickly because I wasn't fond of the idea of letting him see me in this condition. As I walked, I accidentally heard something that Krish's best friend, Ansh, said, "I knew you would win this." After hearing the sentence, I couldn't bear to listen to anything any longer. In my geography class, I was just randomly looking around. On looking out of the window at the dark clouds, I felt them to be a reflection of my soul. I straightened my head to look at the lesson being taught. My eyes met those of the teacher and I averted my gaze, looking down at my desk. However, when I did so, my pen was gone and I couldn't read a single line from the textbook...and then I opened my eyes. At first, I remembered dreaming about something, but my head was a mess and I had a headache. My alarm was still ringing, so I turned it off and went to the bathroom to wash my face and brush my teeth. After that, I went back to my room and when I spotted my phone, everything came into place. The e-mail. If this was a dream, then I still didn't know if I had actually lost the competition. But wasn't this nightmare a sign painting out that I wasn't going to be accepted? The earlier version of me guessed (or rather, firmly believed) that I would win. But now, I don't care anymore.

I am not going to let a competition decide my future. I am going to do it myself because I know even if I don't win, it doesn't matter. I can win the next one or even a better one. The only important thing that I have to focus on is to straighten my head and face my challenge without losing hope even when everything seems hopeless.




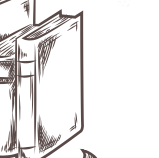





Dreaming with Dickinson




PRAGATI DAS, 2nd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English


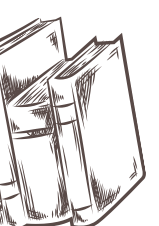


"Can you please NOT ask me to write your Facebook captions every single time, Ma?" - I slam my bedroom door as I scream and sigh. I'm tired of feeling like that main character in movies who had it all when they were kids but then life happened and nothing seems to work out anymore. Maybe a jack of all trades ends up losing all trades after all. I throw myself at my not-so-soft-anymore mattress before I start my regular spiralling session and am instantly reminded of the fact that I am not a Barbie girl in a Barbie world; my desi handmade mattress has shrunk to its half from my little brother peeing on it when he was even littler and my middle-class brain won't let me use (aesthetic) spotless white bedsheets all the time because they wouldn't be spotless anymore then. So, I need to save my head from hitting too hard and losing the leftover creative talent I seem to have now. I pick up my gorgeous collection of Emily Dickinson's poetry from my bedside table and flip the pages to the bookmarked one. It is titled 'Hope'


in cursive -



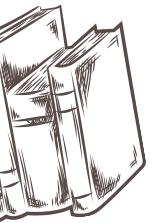
"Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all, ..."



I close the book, already sighing, and stare at the dreamcatcher hanging on my wall with disappointment. Where did all my dreams go? I am just 20. I should be overflowing with dreams and ambitions at this point of time. Is it not too early to feel content with the simplest achievements in life? Wait, no...it's not that I am content with my un-chaotic life. It's just that I can't seem to find the never-satisfying hunger which is supposed to eat me alive until relished. I guess my dreamcatcher could not hold all the tiny million dreams that I've been having ever since I discovered the concept of dreams and ambitions. Somewhere along these lines, with Emily's words upside down on my calmly breathing chest, I lose track of thoughts and time and fall into sleep. Or...that's what I thought at least.



"No!" I woke up with a hypnic jerk as I dreamt of a little girl (who looked a lot like me) pushing me off a cliff. I will never get used to these silly dreams which don't make any sense and just give me a heart attack for absolutely no reason at all. But that changed to be the least of my concerns at the moment. Why does my room look so pale and dead? It looks...old. I don't remember giving my room a vintage




makeover. And why is it so damn cold? I'm in my shorts obviously because it's July and unfortunately, summers in India don't make you want to write sweet poetry on a fine 38C day. I look out the window and it's snowing. "Woah! Am I still dreaming? At least I can play with snow in my dreams!" I guess my skill of lucid dreaming just reached the next level. "I'm going to have my sweet Inception moment and see how long I can consciously control this dream."

After investigating the entirety of my home's doppelganger, I realise that there's no one and no food in the house. "Great! So I have to go out in the snow in my shorts and ask for food and shelter from a complete stranger who will possibly turn out to be my lover at the end." The hopeless romantic in me stepped out and knocked on the first door my eyes could trace as I shiver rigorously. Just because it's a dream does not mean the cold hurts less. The house did seem creepy and unusual. But I could see the fireplace from outside the window and that was enough motivation for me to try my luck.

Thankfully, the host did not look anything like a serial killer. She was breathtakingly beautiful. An English woman in her mid-50s, dressed in a white satin dress opened the door to me with a warm smile. Her features were all plain. But something about it stood out to me. One would think of her as a ghost from the description. But I trust my intuitions. Something about her aura made me feel very safe. "Ma'am, can I please get a cup of anything hot and some space before your bright fireplace, please? I seem to have lost my way. My house does not look like mine and there's no fire or food inside those cold walls."

She stood closer to me and said, "I'm Emily. And you?" "Inaya...my roots lie in India", I clarified, reading the confusion on her face. "Hello Inaya. Feel free to go through the newspaper if you can read while I set the dinner for both of us. Stay here tonight. We can arrange for your further accommodation tomorrow." Of course, I can read. But I hate newspapers. I grabbed the notebook which lay open on the table and started reading what seemed to me like a poem. Maybe she's secretly a poet like me but does not like to show it to the world and thus, she chooses to grow old alone in this huge house. Makes sense. "Hope is the thing with feathers" - I've read these words before. I look for the newspaper with disbelief as I start remembering where I read them. I was looking for the date...it says - November 21st, 1882. Just then, Emily walked in exclaiming cheerfully, "Dinner's ready!" I follow her to the dining table silently and start eating my portion. "Emily, if you don't mind me asking, what is your family name?" She traced the strange expression on

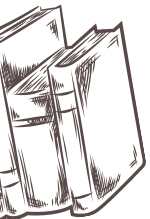




spent hours reading your words to find a friend in you even if you don't exist anymore. You understand what I'm saying, right? I -" She interrupts me and pats my head before I have a mental breakdown right there, "Oh dear, calm down. Have some water. I don't quite understand what you said just now but you must be still in shock from losing your way." I take a couple of minutes to process what's happening, rearrange my thoughts and start speaking normally again, "I'm sorry. Perhaps, I'm still in shock. It's just that... I read your verse earlier, the one on the table. It reminded me of how my dreams are dead, how I gave up on them, how I can't write as many verses as I used to once. I'm not sure what brought it but I'm annoyed about losing my dreams out of the blue. What am I without my dreams? Who am I without the songs I sing, the verses I write, and the canvas I paint? I'm mourning myself. I'm sorry." She released a deep sigh and spoke gently, "Inaya, you sweet young lady, why do you mourn? For all that I see, your cheeks are flushing with life. You seemed the most alive while you spoke about your supposedly dead dreams. But you must know, child, you are more than the art you create. You don't have to give life to your thoughts to be counted as living yourself. Your sheer existence is art itself. And so is mine and everybody else's. And about death...I have lost most of my people to death already. After spending a lifetime trying to understand death and immortality, this is what I conclude - We lose people to death, yes, but don't you think the ones dying are winning that way? Life is chaos. Death is peace. Would we care about what we do with our limited time in life if there was no death? You understand days less if you don't have nights. My dear, don't mourn the living. Recognise the life within you and accept death only when it truly arrives."

It's as if she calmed all my storms with just a pat on my head. She's right about everything. It's high time now that I embrace life in the present more than I dread death in the future. I nod my head and smile gently at her as an affirmation of me understanding her perspective. "Is there anything you dream for the world to have a century from now or more?" - I blurted out randomly. "Mmm...I hope the world will be as green as now, if not more. I hope women like us can write with more honour. And...I hope the world will understand and accept love better. That is it, I suppose." She must be talking about Susan. I've read Emily's biography enough times to understand that whatever Emily and Susan, Emily's sister-in-law, had could not be just platonic. It was more. It was way more than what the world at that time would accept. I forget to filter my words and say, "You know you should publish your poems already. Susan would appreciate it too."



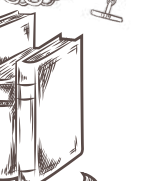
"Wait...how do you know about Sue?"



I smirked like an omniscient, "I just do." "You're a strange little woman." "I know." We both burst out of laughter and she pulled me for a hug. But as I turn back to my chair - "Inaya! Careful! The soup-"

"Oww! Oww!" I wake up with sweat all over me. I woke up for real this time. That was certainly the most vivid dream I've ever had. Suddenly, mom turns up to my door screaming and crying, "Naya! Thank god you're okay! Where the hell were you? How many times do I have to tell you not to leave home in the dark without informing me?! We were almost on our way to the police to lodge a missing complaint." "Ma, will you please calm down? I was just taking a nap. What are you talking about?" "Don't try to fool your mother now, Naya. Do you become invisible while taking a nap? We've been looking for you for the past three hours. Just admit that you snuck out." "What- But-" I stumble up to the book I was holding and flip the page to the bookmark. A note in black fountain ink read - "Our dreams are not dead, dear. They live as you do."





Echoes of Forgiveness: A Tale of Redemption

HEEBA BASHIR, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English
(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)

Chapter 1: The Unforgivable Act

Daniel, a talented artist, younger than most in his field, lived a life many envied. His paintings were a testament to his genius, and his art gallery exhibitions drew acclaim and awe. However, one dark night, the unforgivable happened. Drunk and consumed by anger, he got behind the wheel, leading to a fatal car accident that took the life of Sarah, a young girl with dreams as vibrant as his own. In an instant, his world crumbled, and the weight of guilt bore down on him. He had taken a life, and nothing could undo it.

As the legal consequences of the accident played out, Daniel's internal torment grew. He withdrew from the art world, unable to paint, unable to create beauty in a world he had marred. His marriage disintegrated, and he lost contact with family and friends, unable to share the burden he carried.

Chapter 2: A Life in Ruins

In the years that followed, Daniel's life spiraled into a dark abyss of self-loathing and depression. Guilt was his constant companion, an ever-present shadow that refused to dissipate. He could not find solace or forgiveness within himself. Isolation became his coping mechanism, a self-imposed exile from any form of human connection.

Daniel [Whispering to himself]: "What have I done? How can I ever make amends for this?"

His once-joyful art studio, bathed in natural light, became a gloomy prison. Every brushstroke felt like a reminder of the life he had taken, each canvas bearing witness to his terrible mistake. Unable to confront the canvas, he locked himself away, his studio a mausoleum of creativity that had died with Sarah.

Chapter 3: The Stranger's Letter

One ordinary day, as the weight of guilt continued to bear down on Daniel, he heard the familiar sound of something being inserted into his metal mailbox. He retrieved the letter addressed to him, but the name on it was unfamiliar. His hands trembled as he carefully unfolded the pages.



you know Emily [Written words]: "Mr. Daniel, I am Emily, Sarah's sister. You may not know me, but I've come to understand the pain my family has endured. It's been years, and I've discovered a way to forgive. I don't see you as a villain but as a fellow human consumed by remorse. I wish to meet you, not to accuse you, but to offer you the gift of forgiveness."



Tears welled up in Daniel's eyes as he read Emily's words. Compassion and understanding flowed from the page, unlike anything he expected. He saw in her words a glimmer of hope, a path towards redemption.



Chapter 4: A Journey to Redemption

Days turned into weeks as Daniel contemplated Emily's letter. He agreed to meet her, and the space they met in was filled with palpable tension.



Emily [Tears in her eyes]: I miss her every day. But I also understand your pain, Daniel.



Daniel [Voice quivering]: I don't deserve forgiveness. I took her life.



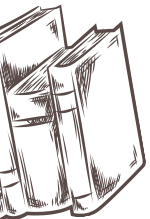
Their conversation was marked by moments of anger, tears, and ultimately, an extraordinary exchange of forgiveness.

Emily [With empathy]: Daniel, we've both been prisoners of this tragedy for far too long. It's time to break free.



Daniel [Overwhelmed with emotion]: I don't know how to thank you.

Emily's act of empathy and compassion opened a door within Daniel. For the first time in years, he began to believe that maybe, just maybe, he could forgive himself. The process was slow and fraught with moments of self-loathing and despair, but he took his first steps on a journey towards redemption.



Chapter 5: The Art of Redemption

Inspired by the transformative power of forgiveness, Daniel slowly returned to his art. His paintings were no longer mere strokes of colour on canvas; they became profound expressions of the complexity of the human experience.



Daniel [As he paints]: Each stroke tells a story, a story of sorrow and redemption.

His work, once confined to galleries, now reached into the hearts of those who gazed upon it. He used his art as a medium to convey the transformative power of forgiveness and redemption.





Chapter 6: Legacy of Forgiveness

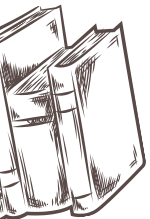
As years passed, Daniel became an advocate for restorative justice and reconciliation. He sought opportunities to help others find their own paths to redemption.



Daniel [Speaking to a group]: Forgiveness is not just an act of mercy; it's a profound journey of self-discovery. It's a path towards healing.



The story of Daniel and Emily became a testament to the far-reaching impact of forgiveness, demonstrating that even in the darkest of circumstances, the human spirit could find a way to heal and redeem itself. It was a legacy of forgiveness that extended beyond them, touching the lives of many who yearned for reconciliation.




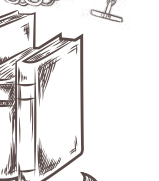



Escaped






JANVI RANJAN, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English


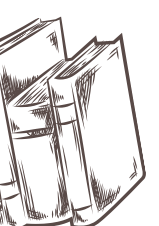
(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)





That was a day when she was going to college all alone, without anyone's company. Was she looking for something interesting or exciting there? In the world of this short story, she was like a forgotten bag, carried by everyone but truly understood by no one. Her presence blended into the background, unnoticed and unappreciated. But beneath her seemingly ordinary exterior, there was a depth and complexity waiting to be discovered. She carried within her a universe of emotions, dreams and untold stories. It was only when someone took the time to truly see her, to delve into the depths of her being, that they would uncover the extraordinary hidden within.




Sara, a spirited soul with a penchant for adventure, found herself yearning for excitement in the mundane rhythm of her days. In a serendipitous moment, she stumbled upon an app called Binge, its digital allure promising a flavour of the unexpected. With a flicker of hesitation dancing in her eyes, Sara, adorned in curiosity, tapped the download button. It was a step towards embracing her curiosity, discovering new perspectives, and embracing the diversity of human connections. Who knows what exciting encounters and meaningful experiences awaited her on this journey of self-discovery? The app unfolded like a mystical tome, inviting her to inscribe chapters of spontaneity into the script of her life. As Sara traversed the digital landscape, her inner turmoil played the role of a silent companion, whispering doubts like a mischievous breeze. Amidst the sea of profiles, each pixel holding the promise of a new connection, she found herself lingering over the virtual silhouette of a boy named Ethan.



Sara, fueled by the warmth of virtual whispers and the symphony of shared calls, decided to step beyond the confines of the digital cocoon. The reality beckoned like an uncharted landscape, and she embraced it with the courage of a flower unfurling its petals to the morning sun. Their conversations, once ethereal threads of voice in the digital ether, now became the melody that guided Sara to the tangible world. The decision to meet Ethan was akin to a butterfly daring to emerge from its chrysalis, anticipating the vibrant hues of a new reality.



In the bloom of their college days, Sara and Ethan decided to converge their worlds, like two stars drawn by the irresistible gravity of connection. Ethan, extending an invitation to his realm, invited Sara to the sanctum of his space—a place where the symphony of their shared moments would compose its own unique melody.



As their voices intertwined in a call, it was as if they were orchestrating a harmonious duet, weaving dreams and aspirations into the fabric of their shared desires. The conversation, a melody in the making, resonated with the chords of longing and the sweet anticipation of a shared journey. Ethan's invitation became a portal, a threshold where the abstract notes of their digital connection were poised to materialise into the tangible score of reality. Their desire to be beloved echoed in the background, a crescendo building as they approached the rendezvous, where the notes of affection and understanding would find their perfect harmony.

In the intimate ambiance of Ethan's haven, Sara and he delved into the art of connection. Their words, like a delicate dance, twirled around the room, and amidst the whispers of vulnerability, Ethan proposed a journey to another room—a sanctum where the symphony of shared secrets could unfold. In the embrace of deeper conversations, their lips met in a crescendo of passion—a moment painted in the hues of shared intimacy. Their connection, now a sonnet of intertwining souls, echoed in the quietude of that sacred space where two hearts found a rhythm uniquely their own. Ethan, with a gentle suggestion, embarked on a tactile symphony, his hands anointing each moment with the soothing cadence of massage oil. Sara, consenting to the shared vulnerability, surrendered to the artful dance of touch. In the afterglow of the massage, a sudden call pierced the tranquil air, summoning Sara to the realm of urgency. Her friend's voice carried the weight of a personal emergency, demanding her immediate presence. With regret in her eyes, Sara expressed apologies to Ethan, a fleeting acknowledgment of the abrupt departure that circumstances demanded. Like a passing storm disrupting a serene landscape, she left, promising to return the unfinished chapter of their shared moment when the tempest of exigency had subsided.

The aftermath of the massage revealed an unexpected discomfort for Sara. The lingering itching on her back, persisting even after self-medication, prompted a visit to the doctor's sanctum after a week of enduring the mysterious unease. A disconcerting truth emerged — the oil, designed to soften skin, carried a macabre purpose. It was a revelation that transcended the boundaries of a simple massage. The revelation struck Sara like a thunderbolt—the sinister motive behind the oil application, the potential danger lurking in the shadows. As the pieces fell into place, she grasped the gravity of the situation, realising that the threat she faced had a digital origin.

The police investigation unfolded a nightmarish tableau within Ethan's abode, revealing a gruesome truth that transcended the bounds of fiction. In the macabre aftermath, fragments of human flesh testified to the horrors that had unfolded behind closed doors.



As the puzzle pieces aligned, a chilling reality emerged—Ethan, the once-charming connection formed through the app, was not only a psychopath but a cannibal with a sinister history. The shadows of his deeds cast a haunting pall over the lives of seven other girls who had crossed his path, leaving an indelible mark on the digital tapestry that connected them all. Sara’s complaint had not only unveiled a personal threat but had potentially spared others from a fate as dark as the twisted corridors of Ethan’s mind.



Sara, burdened by the weight of the sinister revelation, chose to confide in only two trusted allies—her mother and the friend who inadvertently became her saviour. The trauma of realising she narrowly escaped a fate shared by others gripped her, casting shadows of fear and vulnerability over her days.



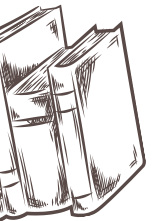
Haunted by the thought of being one of the hidden victims, Sara grappled with the aftermath of a brush with darkness. The echoes of what could have been lingered in her mind, a silent symphony of the unseen horrors narrowly averted. In the quiet corners of her consciousness, the spectre of the psychopath’s deeds continued to cast a long shadow, leaving Sara to navigate the delicate landscape of healing and resilience.



Sara emerged from the ordeal, her resilience shining through the shadows of trauma. The incident, a harrowing chapter in her life, left her with a lingering wariness, making trust a fragile commodity. Gradually, through the slow cadence of recovery, she found her footing and, after completing her graduation, a newfound strength blossomed.



While the scars of mistrust lingered, Sara defied the shackles of her past. Socialising became a beacon of healing, a testament to her courage in the face of darkness. The experience, though one of her most miserable, became a catalyst for growth, transforming her into a person of resilience and depth, navigating the complexities of human connection with newfound wisdom.





Got Myself a Walnut Casket

CORDIA GHOSH, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English
(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)

"Can I have six crackers"? I can hear my brother ask.

"If you have six, then Sharu only has four. Help me get the walnut butter." screamed mom.

The common scene for 10 years of my life- the nut chaos, and going nuts surrounding the fragile wooden kitchen table, the three of us counting crackers to dip in skippy walnut butter while getting ready for the day.

I am 21 now. It sometimes feels like it was all a dream. A faded memory but what remains unchanged is I still hate nuts, I hate walnut butter yet somehow I always save 5 nuts a day. In the summer, when the temperature is high enough like the walnut tree beside my house to make people leave their houses and visit the ocean and lie in shade, my room turns into a melting pot of wax just like the coax walnut butter. The room that was supposed to be comfortable turned into something unbearable. The season changes along with me and I wonder why. I wonder why I am turning into a walking air of anger and frustration. The only window inside my room is small, old and rusty. It doesn't open up just like me, and whenever I try to let the wind in, it creaks and wouldn't budge. I think it has already given up. I hope the act of giving up is as easy as how my window did. I hope fewer people will be bothered.

I feel like I'm drowning in a jar of thick walnut butter floating only via the support of a resilient walnut. I always disregarded walnuts as small nutty brain like no brain beans with no relevance, the time I was more afraid of drowning my paper boats in the rain than knowing I was running out of time growing up.

Until one day my grandfather narrated a story "The Walnut Tree and the Swine". The walnuts no longer were insignificant for me. I would see it shaking through the strong winds and tornado season. I would see it covered in white snow even though we didn't get much of it. I would see it without leaves. I watched it fall and wither and worship the ground. It taught me two things: patience and the pursuit of passion. With its withering seeking death but seeking life.



My haven and stronghold had been this walnut tree, which fronted the rear of our old rancher. It would be so pliable in the summer that I could spend hours, and sometimes even the entire day, hiding among the branches and leaves. Through that tree, I experienced so many events. So many emotions. My best friend, shield it was but things changed as it grew tall I became distant from it.

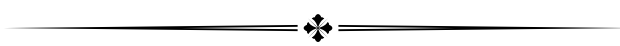
It was also behind its thickest trunk that I hid being scared of the clash between mom and dad, its trunk caressed me like a mother, leaves wiped my tears away.

This is the first time in twenty years of being here. I tried to reflect on my past and went down near the tree recollecting the memories that shattered me.

I very well remember the day when a fight broke between mum and dad and being scared of their argument I climbed all the way up the walnut tree and I can still see them fighting, the eight-year-old me with curly auburn hair, I can still see them through the broken kitchen window of the abandoned ranch, moving around swaying and throwing away bottles and glasses- the grotesque scene. I was miserable, alone, and all of a sudden, I saw dad walking away. I called him thrice but the trunks were too tall and my voice softer blowing with the summer wind. I tried to get down but the trunks were too tall to let me get down at ease. All of sudden I fell off the trunk, broke my knees and woke up only to realise dad already left us.


It was only a few minutes before I gained consciousness only to realise mother's unconscious. She took arsenic and gave up just like my window at ease as if it was so easy and just pure unadulterated silence crept in between. I walked through the broken skippy walnut butter jar and its fragrance just in a second became so distant to me. Only if I wouldn't have climbed up the tree being a coward would the memories I once had of mom making breakfast not become more and more distant to me.

Now I try to reflect on my past. Were there any lessons to be learned? Not really. Just the acknowledgment of a broken family. Throughout I blamed the tree for the loss of my family. Only to realise it was the only companion that watched me grow and was there while everybody left for their selfishness. Now I feel like a grand molecular decomposer of nature, where death is a friend and never a foe, lay me where my feet touch the ground and bury me in the piles of the walnut wood. I just want to be something other than human. I WANT TO BE A WALNUT.








Hope





KHUMUKCHAM ARINA DEVI, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English
(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)



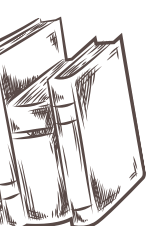
As a Manipuri, I grew up with memories of conflict, protests and resistance. However, what had happened in the previous few days felt very different. It all happened overnight. The internet was flooded with frightening visuals from both sides of the violence that had broken out in the state. A college friend from Delhi was the first one to text me. She was concerned about the situation but I could not reply to her. My silence was not because of the internet but because I was at a loss of words. At our last meeting, I had told her how beautiful Manipur is. Perhaps she needed to know more than that now.




However, on the morning of May 3, all hell broke loose. I had previously talked with my friend Lily over the phone, planning our summer holiday.




Lily and I met in high school and very soon became close friends, as did our families subsequently. Lily is Kuki and I am Meitei but we didn't even care about the fact that we're from different communities during our school-days. I still remember when Lily and our other classmates fought because of me. As a gesture of support, Lily would hold my hand everyday after school and we would walk back together to the hostel. However, after graduating from school, we went our separate ways for college.



Distance can't separate us. Lily and I used to talk with each other regularly, and we had even planned a sleepover at my place when I would go back home to Imphal from Delhi for the summer break. However, now, everything has changed.



It all happened so fast. Reports of a peace march turning violent. Videos of burning villages were widely circulated. The same videos were shared with different narratives. Each community blamed the other. The hatred spread like wildfire. In the past, our politicians had successfully stopped wildfires. This time, they could not.



In the matter of just a few hours, Imphal, the state's capital, was burning. Manipur's air was filled with cries, police sirens, tear gas and the sounds of ambulances and guns. Many people were rendered homeless overnight. The common people, particularly women and children, were the most-affected victims of this violence. Amidst all this, the silence of our MLAs and ministers was the loudest.



Lily was in her college's hostel in Imphal when everything unfolded. Nothing was safe, not even educational institutions. My parents asked her to stay with us until things calmed down but Lily knew better. This was no summer break. She shifted to a relief camp some streets away from our home. That night, we heard the same cries.



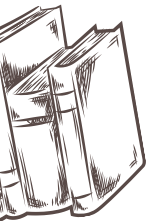
I kept in touch with Lily throughout. The camp in which she was lodged was at a police battalion ground. They all slept in what looked like an abandoned garage. Lily had to wait in long queues to use the toilet. They were instructed not to wash their hands and legs due to lack of water. Lily only had a single backpack, and that, too, with no extra clothes. This went on for three days. There was no news of how they would be transported to their homes in Churachandpur because the tensions had not yet subsided. I finally convinced my father to do something for Lily.



So, we packed a few clothes, food and drinks, and decided to bring them to Lily on our family scooter. As short as the journey was, it was not a comfortable ride. At the camp, the police asked us to wait at the gate for Lily to come out. "Do you have water?" asked a person standing inside the gate. I gave him a bottle. Lily finally came out. We met for a brief moment before the police dispersed us.



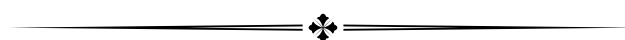
I believe our lives are defined by such moments. I was told many people have flown away from Imphal carrying their own versions of this unfortunate event. It has been repeated on the news. The recent clash was never about religion. There are many layers to the issues of violence.



On the fifth day, the government started transporting the affected families to designated camps and the stranded people to their hometowns. Later, on that afternoon, I got a call from Lily. She was finally on a bus on her way to Churachandpur, a route that passes by my house. I smiled and rushed outside to bid goodbye to Lily.



A few minutes later, a huge convoy of armoured vehicles rumbled past. Lily told me that she was on a small bus, second in line among the vehicles transporting civilians. As the bus approached, I waved my hand as if I was consoling Lily that everything would be alright and we would be spending the next summer break together. Lily waved back like she believed it, too.





Horrors of the Banyan Tree



BHAVINI DEWAN, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English
(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)



A banyan tree stood in the middle of a far-flung town, nestled deep within an untamed forest. The roots of this unusual tree twisted like the writhing limbs of malevolent ghosts, and its gnarled branches appeared to stretch out like skeleton fingers clawing at the very essence of life. It was an old monster.



According to legend, the tree previously served as a place of worship for a group of heretical cultists who performed unlawful rites beneath its broad canopy. The cult was well renowned for its occult rituals, which included animal sacrifice and the invocation of demons. Their acts ultimately brought about their own destruction as the villagers united to put a stop to their evil practices after being repulsed by them.



Their sacred banyan tree was doused with holy water and set on fire, and the cultists were tracked down and put to death. To everyone's horror, however, the tree resisted burning. It appeared to be mocking the villagers' attempts to destroy it as it remained unaffected by the flames. They eventually gave up, and the tree continued to cast a shadow over the community with its ominous presence.



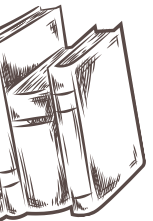
The tree had long been shunned by the people, who gave it a sinister air. The Banyan Tree of Desolation was rumoured to be cursed and a home to evil spirits, according to whispered legends. No one dared approach it after dark because of its infamous and dreaded reputation.



The locals had been reporting odd happenings close to the tree for years. It was claimed to talk in the dark, drawing curious wanderers closer with spectral sounds. The region was shunned by animals, and the tree's ominous reputation spread.



A bustling marketplace, with vendors peddling their goods and a strong scent of spices permeating the air, surrounded the town. One of the numerous traders was a prosperous businessman called Raman, who frequently took his young son Arjun to the market to learn the family trade. Despite the bustling ambiance of the marketplace, Arjun had always been drawn to the enigmatic banyan tree. Arjun's inquisitiveness remained in spite of his father's severe cautions and the rumours circulated among the traders regarding the tree's ill fate. He was eager to discover the mysteries concealed in the tree's old roots.





Arjun was an inquisitive youngster who always wanted to go outside the town's marketplaces and mansions, even with the cautions. He had heard stories from the other kids in the town about ghosts, lost souls, and curses that followed anybody who dared to approach the banyan tree. His curiosity overcame him one night when there was no moon.



A tremendous storm blasted across the village one tragic evening. The sky was lit up by lightning, and thunder rumbled menacingly. The residents hurried inside to find shelter from the constant downpour. But Arjun waited until everyone in the house was quite asleep before slipping out of his cosy bed and changing into his black attire. He made the decision to learn the truth about the tree that had troubled him since he was a little boy. He headed for the banyan tree with a little knapsack and a lantern in hand.



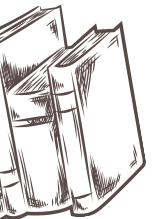
In the dim light of the lantern, the massive branches of the banyan tree loomed large before him, casting unsettling shadows. Though a chill went down his spine, he persisted since he thought the legends were just myths. He searched the area for any strange activity but didn't find anything.



He was about to turn around when a hushed, melancholy voice suddenly rang out. "Who disturbs my eternal rest?" Looking around, he tried to find the voice's origin while his pulse beat quickly. The tree itself appeared to be the source of it.



Arjun saw a dim glow coming from the tree's base as he got closer. He noticed a shimmering necklace set with priceless diamonds perched above the roots in the faint light.



Arjun eagerly stretched out to touch the prize, wanting to claim it as his own. But the air around him altered as his fingertips touched the chilly metal. The icy air that seemed to be coming from the tree's depths whispered through the branches as the night became progressively colder. The breeze also carried a melancholy lament.



Abruptly, the necklace started to squirm and wriggle, turning into a ghostly apparition with sunken eyes that stared deep into Arjun's soul. It told the tragic stories of people who had dared to crave the offerings of the tree in a voice that seemed as though it were echoing from another realm.



"You, young trader, seek that which is not yours to take. You have entered a place of worship, and you will now have to deal with the repercussions," the ethereal woman remarked, her words tinged with a real threat.



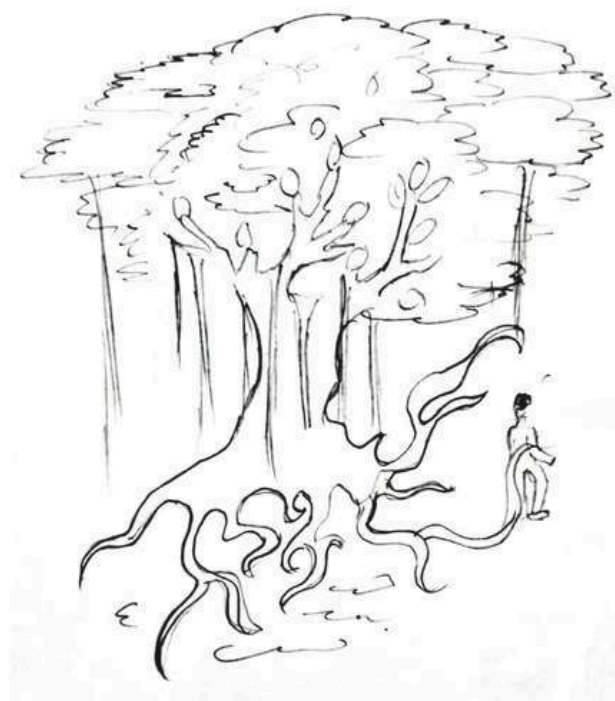
The roots of the banyan tree sprang out before Arjun could blink, coiling like snakes around his limbs. They pulled him toward the stem of the tree, entangling him firmly. Arjun tried to free himself from the tree's hold, but to no avail.

In a fit of desperation, Arjun was able to grab the lamp and raise it. With an unearthly scream, the ghostly creature vanished into the darkness, releasing Arjun from the grip of the roots.

Shaken and gasping for air, Arjun made his way back to his house and vowed never to go near the banyan tree again. That night, he had gained important insight into two things: the temptation of money may frequently lead to a dangerous end, and certain treasures are best kept undiscovered. Arjun helped his father in the market the next day, but he never forgot the terrors that lurked inside the cursed banyan tree.

Arjun was forever changed by his almost-encounter with the banyan tree's horrors. He grew to value the security and comfort of his life as a merchant and realised that certain mysteries were better left unsolved.

The Banyan Tree of Desolation continued to have a sinister reputation and remained a terrifying, cursed location. To this day, the banyan tree serves as a sobering warning of the dangers of unsettling the natural world's restless souls. It serves as a sobering reminder that certain stories should never be put to the test, that the unknown might contain horrors beyond comprehension, and that the ghosts of the dead can return to take their revenge on the living.







Light





ANSHIKA SHARMA, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English

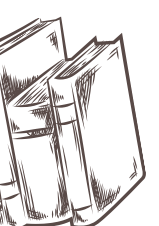
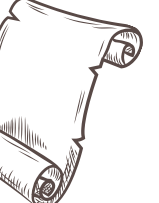
(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borab as a LCYA assignment)




Baba never taught me how to ride a bicycle, he said there are other things in life which are far more important. I don't understand what he means by that, but then, I don't understand most things he occupies himself with or the company he keeps. People that surround him always look at me with a sympathetic gaze. "Bin maa ka beta hai," they say. It is true that I've never known Amma but in nights as tumultuous as tonight, I remember. I remember a gentle hand over my head, I remember a soothing lullaby, I remember her voice calling my name out, I remember but I don't know.




I transfixed my gaze on the fan as it rotated, trying to count the number of spins; it was not enough to distract me from the storm brewing outside. The wind seemed to have picked up its pace and there was a loud bang which I alluded to the thunderstorm; the clouds and the glorious moon were busy playing a game of hide and seek. I've always envied them; at least they have someone to play with. I have always been alien to company, the more you let people close the harder it becomes when they leave, so my master-plan is to avoid it altogether. Tonight, just like nights before and the nights after, shall pass- it always does.




Just as I stood up to pace across the room, my feet collided with something, as I bent down to take a closer look, I was stopped in my tracks by a sound, a grunt coming from the balcony side, and then I saw a few fingers gripping the railing. I should have listened to Baba, he always told me to shut the balcony door before night; I huddled beneath the bed-frame, scared but curious to see what would unfold. Upon closer inspection, I realised that it was a ball, a cricket ball to be specific, right in my eyeline, and then small but careful steps made their way towards it. I knew better than to make a sound, I simply observed.



The hesitant feet crouched down and picked up the ball, this person could not be much older, I figured, my sheepish emergence was interrupted with a loud thud as I hit my head.



"Amma!" I exclaimed; my voice seems to have stopped the intruder, who now watched me with innocent curiosity.



"Are you okay?" the sweetest voice hit my ears and for a moment everything seemed alright, the storm quietened, the throbbing in my head ceased to exist; the only thing that did exist was an unspoken understanding that the girl meant no harm.



"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you," I muttered my apology which eased the girl, and then added, "You play cricket, too?"



"No, actually, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have snuck into your room like this, I could have obviously waited till morning to get my ball back. It's just...I'm not supposed to play, Ammi says that cricket is a boys' sport"



"And you believe that?"



"Yes, but I also like to play, so I play at night."



"Alone?" She nodded her head. "I like cricket, too, but Baba thinks I can utilise my time in a better manner."



"We can play together, it gets tiring throwing the ball up in the air and quickly picking the bat to hit it in time; sometimes it hits my head, just like you hit yours," she chuckled.



"That's the smartest idea I've ever heard."



And so it began, a long saga of our midnight getaways. I got to know the girl; she was not a nameless intruder now; she had a name- Ifsa, we are only a year apart; me being eleven and her ten, but then again, how does it matter? We were happy and I daresay I got her to improve her catching skills. I'm just grateful Baba does not know of it, it's just that the company he keeps has been getting weirdly aggressive lately, first they were unarmed but now I see men with huge rifles on their backs dressed in carmine kurtas; they go in and out of the house at any time they please. I once heard them talking about butchering and I was so confused because we're vegetarians, we don't eat meat, I told one of them, "*Bhaiya*, please don't butcher the animals," and he just laughed as if I had made the funniest joke. Ifsa says I'm not that funny but then again, she's ten, when she is eleven, she'll *know* better.



I found myself pacing in my room again, Ifsa is late but Ifsa is never late, curiosity got the best of me as I tried to sneak out of the house but I was stopped by the sound of laughter. Laughter has been as alien to our house as I to company but it appears things have changed, *Baba* was happy, looks like he is celebrating something. It was too risky to go out of the house now considering the gathering, so I decided to postpone and give *Baba* one stress-free evening. He has been working very hard lately, I should not add to his worry by going out, what if he finds out? *He will not like that I disobeyed him. He never likes when people disobey him.*



So, I did the only thing I thought was ideal- I waited.





And waited some more

And then I got tired of it.

The other night, I saw Ifsa from my terrace but when I called her name, she rushed inside. I did not like that; we are friends and friends do not act that way. She would not talk, she would not look at me; why was she treating her only friend like this? She doesn't even come to play cricket anymore now that her catching skills are at par. I suspect the problem is that I'm not funny enough for her; she once told me my jokes were not as funny as I presumed them to be. But I miss her, I miss my only friend.

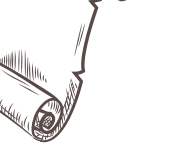
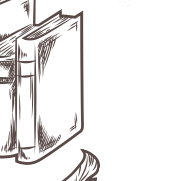
The city is alive and vibrant. The hues of yellow and orange have decked the streets- festive season is the best. The lanes are busier and noisier than usual but one does expect that during Dussehra. However tonight it is also very warm and not dark at all. They were burning the effigies today so I assume it must be that. I learnt that in my science class that light emits heat; it is nice to finally see that happening practically. Baba always says theories must be exercised in real life.

But after a little later, the noises became louder and the room warmer. I found it incredibly difficult to sleep in such an atmosphere and I have school tomorrow which means I need to be up by 6 am. I finally got off and tried to see what was happening; was I missing all the festive fun? Baba wouldn't mind if I don't go to school tomorrow, I can always fake a stomach ache, he would have to let me stay. Fully convinced with my reasoning, I looked out of the window. The effigies were burning in the distance, but why were people in crimson clothes running across streets? Is the marathon a part of the rituals? I love marathons. I wanted to join them myself so I decided to go out, it is 3 am and baba should be fast asleep by now.

For the second time in life, I got to experience what freedom tastes like, something about running wildly in the streets gave me a sense of belonging. I was a part of something bigger than my own self, I was the part of a crowd. A nameless crowd. After running for about five minutes, I realised we were all going to see the burning effigies up close. I was not as tall or as old compared to the rest of the crowd, so I had to push my way through to get in the front.

It was not Ravan's effigy.

It was a house. I knew that house, Ifsa had told me about it.





It was her house.

I tried to force my way into the house but a hand on my shoulder stopped it. I looked up. The grip became tighter. It was Baba. Without thinking anything, I started running aimlessly to a secluded space. I had lied to Baba and now he knows. Baba knows. Scared, I ran towards a dark alley as I rested my back on the wall. Something poked me, it was an old cycle. I sat on its seat for a few minutes to compose myself.

And then I heard a few hushes, but I could recognize that voice from anywhere. My heart knew it was her before my eyes confirmed my suspicion.

"Ifsa, is that you?"

"Parth?" relief flooded my body as I walked towards her, I held her and told her that she was safe and that there are many people around the house and they'll help. She shook her head vehemently.

And before she could say anything more, she stopped. The crowd was approaching.

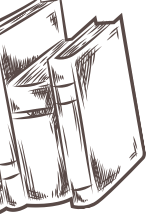
"Ammi told me to reach the railway station," she whispered. I gave her my promise that I'll do whatever I can to make sure she reaches there. The crowd kept getting closer but I told her that it must be the people celebrating. Then we heard fireworks. She insisted we had to leave, so we quickly made our way to the end of the alleyway.

"Parth, ruko," I heard Baba say, except he was leading the crowd and they were furiously approaching our direction.

I grabbed the cycle and urged Ifsa to sit in front of me. I tried to focus equally on maintaining the balance and the pace.

The crowd was getting closer and I failed.

The ground found its brutal way to us.









The Secret Lily


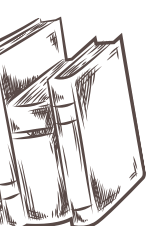



ANUSHKA DAS, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English



(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)




Away from the chaos, nestled in a rich, green valley between transcending mountains, a little fellow named Imran tracked down comfort in the hug of nature. He had always been attracted to the valley's magnificence, its wildflowers moving in the breeze, the babbling stream and the thick meadows that murmured mysteries to the people who walked across them. Imran was an introvert who found his true self in moments like this. A total dreamer, figuring out all the colours of life. He would go through his days investigating the valley, learning the names of each plant and creature, supporting something specific that held his heart hostage one summer – a hidden, white lily. This lily, the most flawless in the whole valley, grew close to the stream. Imran really focused on it with a commitment that gradually grew into a habit. He was sustaining it as if he was supporting an unseen part of his own soul. Each day, he would visit the lily, guaranteeing it had a perfectly measured proportion of daylight and water. He would murmur uplifting, kind words of love, as though the plant could figure out his dedication. The lily thrived under his consideration, and its petals appeared to shine with a powerful brilliance.



The White Lily, a sensitive and ethereal magnificence, possessed an innate femininity that drew the eye and captured the heart of all who beheld her. Her slim, smooth stem rose from the ripe earth like an artist's thin leg, enhanced with an outfit of immaculate white petals. The lily's appeal was something other than physical; it was in her attitude. Her tastefulness was not the consequence of self-importance but instead an indication of her inborn femininity. Imran, the young boy who really focused on her, frequently saw her as a delicate, supporting presence in the valley. Her female elegance reflected the affection he felt for her. Her troublesome destruction made him extremely upset, leaving him with a void no one but she could fill.



In any case, nature is a whimsical companion, and misfortune frequently hides in its shadows. One night, a wild tempest plummeted upon the valley, with thunder shaking the earth and downpour pelting. Nature fought an unsettling combat like those of human hearts. There was simply chaos and no peace. Rain poured down like tears from the sky. Imran hurried to safeguard his lily, covering it with his own body, however, it was no counterpart for the constant ongoing storm. Once a dynamic bloom, now it has shrivelled, leaving Imran lost and devastated. Imran's anguish reflected



the valley's destruction directly following the tempest. His companions and neighbours conditions' were greatly affected, while he, too, became blurred like a shadow. However, amidst their own pain, they couldn't understand the depth of his grief, the way he had tied his existence to the life of a single flower. The valley kept on prospering with each passing season. Imran's soul dwindled. He shut his eyes and let go, similar to what the White Lily had done in the tempest, and the valley sobbed peacefully for its lost overseer.

All that remained in the valley was the echo of a metaphor, a story of love and loss, and the tragedy of a boy who had given everything for something as delicate as a fragile lily. But even in the depths of despair, there was a glimmer of hope. The valley hung tight for the arrival of that companion who held the commitment of a fresh start, in the midst of the misfortune that had occurred for them all. Soon summer chimed in again, making a Pink Lily sprout beside the stream, echoing the message of Love, Femininity and Admiration to the valley.





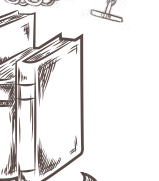
The Unfulfilled Pursuit: A Footballer's Journey

HEEBA BASHIR, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English


(Submitted under the mentorship of Dr. Violina Borah as a LCYA assignment)




Chapter 1: The Prodigy Unveiled



In the world of professional football, Alex Sanderson emerged as a prodigious talent during his late teens, still a young adult grappling with the complexities of the sport. He found himself at Mavericks, a club with a storied past but a distant connection to recent glory.




Coach Thompson, a sage figure at Mavericks, observed the budding talent play and said, "Alex, you've got the skills, no doubt. But remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. It takes time to achieve greatness."



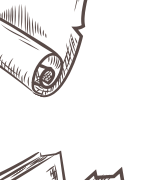
In response, a youthful Alex, brimming with exuberance, declared, "Coach, my ambition is unwavering; I aspire to conquer the Champions League, and I yearn for it now!"




Chapter 2: The Impatient Pursuit



We observe that Alex, despite his on-field prowess, exhibited an inherent impatience and a yearning for immediate gratification. The allure of success at rival clubs with recent Champions League victories proved irresistible. Consequently, Alex embarked on a perpetual journey of club-hopping, abandoning the Mavericks at the cusp of their potential ascent.




Chapter Two delves into the under-current of impatience that steadily gnaws at the core of Alex's ambition. We explore his yearning for instant success and the resultant impulsive decisions that marked his journey. His departure from Mavericks, driven by the allure of recent Champions League triumphs at rival clubs, sets the stage for the ensuing narrative.



Intriguingly, his departure from Mavericks left an indelible mark on the club, which had invested faith in him as their chosen one. This chapter serves as a pivotal point in the narrative, highlighting the juxtaposition of his relentless aspirations with the club's patient, albeit waning, optimism.



Chapter 3: The Illusory Victory



This chapter marks the zenith of Alex's impulsive journey, as he joins Warriors, a club basking in the glory of a historic treble. Here, we explore the striking contrast between his fervent aspirations and the club's inability to replicate their previous triumph, leading to an enigmatic twist in the tale.



The decision to join Warriors, a club that had clinched a historic treble—encompassing the elusive Champions League title— suggested the zenith of Alex's ambition. Driven by a relentless ambition to claim this coveted prize, Alex cast aside his loyalty to Mavericks, gravitating towards Warriors. However, fate, as capricious as ever, conspired against him as Warriors faltered the subsequent season, rendering his decision devoid of the anticipated triumph. Astonishingly, Mavericks, his forsaken alma mater, surged to glory, clinching the Champions League title that he had so fervently desired.



This chapter encapsulates the paradox of Alex's journey. His yearning for instant success, a trait that led him to abandon Mavericks, culminated in an outcome contrary to his desires. The illusions of immediate success were laid bare, and the abrupt reversal of fortunes shaped the narrative in a thought-provoking manner.



Chapter 4: Maverick's Triumph

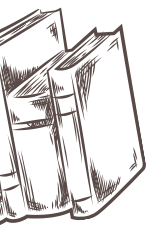
We witness a remarkable turn of events as Mavericks, the club Alex had left behind, ascends to the zenith of European football by securing the coveted Champions League trophy. The ironies of loyalty and commitment are starkly illuminated in this section.



During the season that Alex had left Mavericks, the club embarked on a journey characterized by patience, unity and trust in the process. Their unwavering commitment to these principles ultimately led them to the summit of European football. Their triumph in securing the elusive Champions League trophy served as a stark contrast to Alex's journey of impatience and impulsive decision-making.



This chapter serves to underline the profound significance of loyalty and faith in the process, as Maverick's success stands as a testament to the enduring virtues that Alex had forsaken in his quest for instant gratification. It is a chapter filled with poignant irony that would shape the trajectory of Alex's career.



Chapter 5: The Peripatetic Odyssey

Here we delve into the perpetual restlessness that characterized Alex's journey through various clubs, each marked by transient ambitions and a lack of permanence. His continuous shift from one club to another served to illustrate the consequences of his nomadic career.



The narrative takes a reflective turn as we observe Alex's continuous journey through different clubs, each transition driven by the desire to secure that elusive Champions League trophy. The allure of quick success and the inability to trust the process led to a peripatetic career marked by impermanence.





We observe that Alex's insatiable thirst for success manifested in his transitory allegiance to various clubs. His impatience led him to seek refuge in quick fixes, sacrificing the merits of continuity and commitment that underpin sustained success in professional football. His pursuit devolved into a disarray of transient affiliations, each marked by transient ambition and an absence of permanence, ultimately resulting in a dearth of silverware.



This chapter reveals the nature of Alex's ambition, which appeared to supersede the commitment to a single club. It underscores the consequences of his impulsive decisions and serves as a stage where the recurring theme of patience and trust in the process comes to the fore.



Chapter 6: The Twilight of Ambition

As Alex Sanderson's illustrious career neared its twilight, the weight of his impulsive choices and the consequences of his impatient pursuit of glory became increasingly apparent. This chapter delves into the profound realisation that washed over him, serving as a sobering revelation of the price he had paid for his haste. It sheds light on his growing awareness of the price he paid for his impulsive choices and the consequences of an impatient pursuit of glory. His career concluded with a hollow trophy cabinet, a testimony to his lack of faith in the enduring virtues of loyalty, teamwork and continuity.



In the waning days of his career, Alex grappled with the hollowness of his trophy cabinet, a stark testament to his lack of faith in the enduring virtues of loyalty, teamwork, and continuity. The allure of immediate success that had once captivated him now revealed itself as a fleeting mirage, vanishing just as swiftly as it had appeared.



In a candid conversation with Coach Thompson, he revealed, "Coach, I've been chasing trophies, but I failed to trust the process. I've been impatient."



Thompson, ever the sage, responded with a nod of understanding, "Success in football is not about the destination alone. It's about the journey and the enduring commitment."



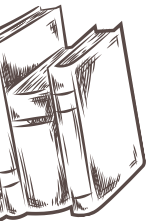
Chapter 7: The Legacy of Impatience

The final chapter of Alex's career is marked by retirement, a chapter that encapsulates the culmination of his journey. It serves as a retrospective view of the cost of impatience and a reflection on the lessons learned.

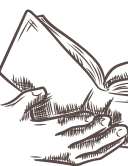
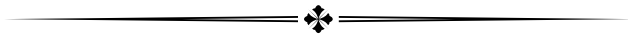


With a trophyless career, Alex retired, contemplating the lessons learned and the cost of impulsive decisions. "I've chased the Champions League like a fleeting dream," he mused, "Always moving, never staying. But I failed to trust the process, to be patient. Success is in the journey, not just the destination."





In retrospect, the narrative of Alex Sanderson emerges as a poignant reminder of the virtues of patience and the profound importance of trust in the process within the realm of professional football. His journey epitomizes the significance of unwavering commitment, the nurturing of teamwork and the profound belief in the power of continuity. It is a narrative that speaks to the essence of success, where the journey, rather than the destination, often unveils the true keys to lasting triumph.





The Unyielding Symphony of Creation

DEVANTI, 3rd Year, B.A. (Hons.) English

In this desolate expanse, an icy chill pervades the air, sapping warmth from every corner. The atmosphere, though not overtly sombre, carries an unsettling weight, a cold that seeps into the marrow. I find myself amidst the barren landscape, my weary frame pressed against the unforgiving surface.

I, worn and exhausted, sit as a mere silhouette against the bleak canvas. My eyes, once vibrant portals to the soul, now hold no glimmer of life, surrounded by my failed relentless pursuits to capture what I cannot. They reflect the desolation around me, a mirror to a spirit weathered by the relentless gusts of time. No hopeful ember dances within these hollow orbs; instead, they mirror the frigid vastness that stretches endlessly.

My mind racing with a mix of excitement and trepidation to create something, I boggled my mind to find the ways to. The colours and shapes that danced in my imagination seemed to mock me, daring me to bring them to life on the canvas. I dipped my brush into the paint, but my hand hesitated, unsure of where to begin. Anxiety gnawed at my chest, and my frustration mounted.

My mind was a flurry of doubt and self-criticism. What if I couldn't capture the image in my mind's eye? What if my brushstrokes fell short of my vision? The weight of expectations, both external and internal, bore down on me like a mountain crushing me underneath, intensifying my unease as my knees pushed right through to the very core of the earth.

With each stroke, I felt a tangle of emotions: elation when the colours mingled harmoniously, doubt when a line seemed crooked, frustration when the hues didn't blend as I had envisioned. I tried to push through, determined to express my creativity, but the struggle was palpable but it seemed eternal.

The process of creation, which others might see as joyful and fulfilling, felt like a battleground to me. The enemy— my own alter-ego, relentlessly launching attacks on me, reminding me of my endeavours and wrecking the havoc in the soul. I tried to wrestle with my own perfectionism, striving for an unattainable ideal. I longed for the freedom of uninhibited expression, yet was constantly held back by my own self-imposed limitations.



Time seemed to blur as I delved deeper into the state of struggling to mix the hues, my mind became a maelstrom of emotions. I painted furiously, trying to pour my soul onto the canvas, but the anxiety and frustration lingered, taunting me with each unfinished stroke. As I fell into a slumber, numbed and paralyzed by all the emotions, a memory gushed into my head.



I looked blatantly out of place there. I vividly remember the first day of my art class, for which I constantly pestered my parents. Sensing some nervousness in the class, the Professor gave us a pep talk.



“An artist is like a walnut the sweet nut inside the hard shell is talent that is innate in all of us. We just need to keep grinding the skills of the little artist who is inside of us. Don’t let him fall prey into the storms of self-doubt and anxiety... it's inevitable, you need to break the hard shell through perseverance to get the sweet nut. The sweet nut is the testament of that perseverance, use these storms as a catalyst for your creative inspiration...” The Professor was circling around the class and observing the atmosphere.



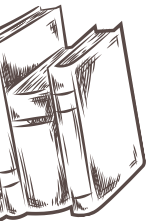
To break the awkwardness, he assigned us the unexpected task of painting a creative piece from our imagination. I gathered each piece of creative imagination from every cell of my body and poured all that onto the canvas. The Professor reviewed the piece on my canvas.



“You have talent...You've got a talent for painting,” I was surprised as I didn't anticipate the compliment. Deep inside, I wasn't satisfied with my work.



The turmoil of the anxiety and frustration was still ravaging inside of me. I exclaimed, “Talent! Me? For Painting?!” Now, furiously stroking the brush on the canvas, I feared what if there wasn't a ‘sweet’ nut in me? I'm just a spoiled, rotten nut who is an imposter in a crowd of sweet nuts.



Despite the turmoil, I pulled myself to continue to work, trying to push through the anxiety and frustration, determined to bring my creation to life. I took deep breaths, allowing my intuition to guide my hand, trying to find solace in the act of creation itself.




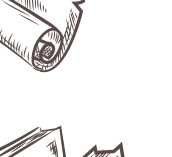




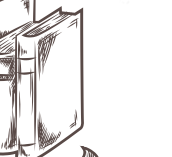




As the final touches were made, the artist in me stepped back to view the work. I saw my piece of art and the heavy clouds of tears burst through my eyes. For the moment, time stopped, silence engulfed the atmosphere creeping through my body and chilled my bones.




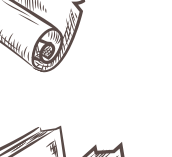




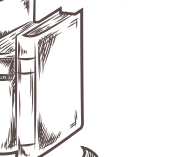


Anxiety, doubt, frustration, dissatisfaction, everything evaporated into thin air.





The process was a catharsis, a release of pent-up emotions, and the artist in me found solace in the very act of creation. I realised that while my anxiety and frustration had been ever-present companions throughout the process, they had also been catalysts for growth. The struggle had fueled my determination to overcome obstacles, and the imperfections in my artwork were a reflection of my own humanity.



I understood the persistence of going through ravaging storms to produce the sweet nut. The perseverance to go through the trials and tribulation of nature and reaping the fruitful outcome from the grinding. I understood what it meant in having a hand in imparting nutrition to the nuts and contributing to its sweetness as well. The anxiety and frustration, though challenging, had been an inevitable part of the creative journey. I have learned to embrace the discomfort, to use it as a driving force, and to appreciate the beauty in imperfections. In the end, the artwork stood as a testament to my perseverance, resilience, and the complex emotions that go hand in hand with the artistic process.








Blake's Contraries

ANJALI KUKREJA,
2nd Year,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*

Born in disturbed political times of the 18th century, was a painter and poet called William Blake. He was a radical and a revolutionist. He was often called a madman for his beliefs against the institutionalisation of the Church, slavery, racism and child labour; but also for how his values were non-conformist in nature. He is most famous for his collection of poetry titled "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" published in 1794. The poet released "The Songs of Innocence" in 1789 and then later combined them. 1789 was also the year of the French Revolution, demanding for equality, liberty and fraternity and the overthrow of monarchy. In England the trend of industrialisation was picking up pace and the society was divided into the Bourgeoisie - the aristocrats and the Proletariats - the working class. The bourgeoisie controlled the proletariat in all spheres of life. The sooty effects of industrialisation gave momentum to focus on emotion and imagination. Hence, the neoclassical period was dethroned by the Romantic movement. Jean Jacques Rousseau, the Father of Romanticism, proposed the idea that "men are born free, yet everywhere are in chains" and society corrupts humans. This led to man's return to nature in order to escape the reality of soot and chains. This accelerated the artistic movement of Romanticism; its foundations being nature, imagination and emotion. The tussle between the neo-classicist and the romantics led to the emergence of the juxtaposition of paradoxes - beautiful v/s ugly, village v/s rural and so on. Naturally, Blake too was pregnant by the idea of contraries and gave birth to "The Songs of Innocence and of Experience".

Contraries and paradoxes are a crucial part of Blake's philosophy. He believed that "without contraries there is no progression." A lot of Miltonic influence can be observed in the Romantics because they looked back at their glorious past for inspiration. John Milton wrote "Paradise Lost" which echoed the idea of "paradise" and the "fall", both being antonyms. Just like Milton, Blake too assumed the role of a bard or a prophet who educates his audience which is humanity. For Blake, imagination was the essence of humanity and his "fall" was lack of imaginative freedom because of the rational empiricism which the neo-classicist had imposed. His philosophy comprises of four stages - Ohio, Generation, Beulah and Eden. In Ohio, there is no work done and ego governs. The differences are acknowledged in Generation, the world of objects and subjects. The third level Beulah is the world of the lover and beloved; both appreciate each other. Lastly, Eden is perfection where all contraries dissolve. In his songs, he has highlighted the importance of traversing through innocence and experience in order to



attain higher innocence. Both childhood and adulthood are necessary for the development of humans and mostly, their imagination. It can be inferred that contraries do not exist in silos but in the same sphere and are complementary. In "Auguries of Innocence", Blake writes "To see a World in a Grain of Sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower/ Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand/ And Eternity in an hour" This is proof that imagination is the highest form of innocence one can achieve. We expand our consciousness by bringing the unconscious into the real world which Blake does too. He brings down his visions from God to the common masses.

His "Songs of Innocence" can be identified by the repetition of some words, the question and answer pattern, pastoral landscape and feelings of joy. The reasons for these hallmarks could be children's limited vocabulary and how Blake is trying to drill certain things into the minds of people since he is the one answering questions. Considering he was a painter, he engraved his own poems on copper plates. The paints that he used for the innocence poems were light, bright and airy just how he described innocence. In contrast to this, in "Songs of Experience" he used complexer words and a more mature approach to the poems. The paintings for these are also coloured in dark and mysterious colours. In "The Tyger" which was written as a parallel to "The Lamb", he poses a rhetorical question to the tiger "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" Blake here is questioning the authority of God because why would he make something as meek and gentle as the lamb and something so daring and ferocious as the tiger? By doing this he introduces the concept of dualism to his work. God is capable of creating both the Lamb and the Tiger. He can be punitive and forgiving both. In Milton's "Paradise Lost" Satan exists in order to create problems for God to solve and save humanity. He survives so God can be the messiah, the saviour and the preserver. If Lucifer did not exist, God would not have to exercise his power and people would not believe in him. Similarly, if the "The Chimney Sweepers" were saved, they would "never want joy" because they would be in a constant state of delight. However, when they come out of their misery and get joy, they would appreciate it more and this ensures development. Blake also uses the contrast of dark and light in his poems which is more apparent in both versions of "The Chimney Sweepers". In the innocence version of it he says things like, "You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."; "Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black" and "And by came an Angel who had a bright key" (italics my own). In the experience version he says, "A little black thing among the snow" (italics my own). He does this deliberately to draw distinction between the antithesis.

Blake was called an "unfortunate lunatic" by Robert Hunt. He had visions to share with the world which were not welcomed in the society. Poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge used to make an intentional journey to the sublime for inspiration; but imagination was engraved in Blake. The very fact that mankind oscillates to and fro between reason and emotion is proof that polars exist in the same realm to guarantee progress and result.



Denver: A Character Sketch

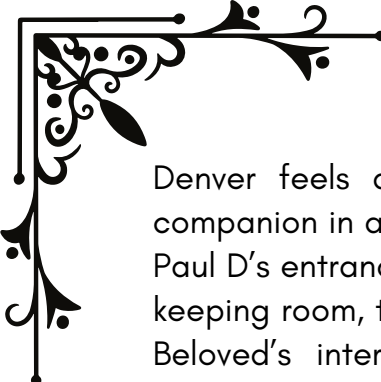
BHUMIKA AGGARWAL (ARCHER),
2nd Year,
B.A. (Hons.) *English*

'Beloved' by Toni Morrison was published in 1987, and is the first novel in the 'Beloved' Trilogy. It is set after the American Civil War and the Abolition of Slavery. The novel revolves around the story of a family that is thrown into dysfunction due to the shared and intergenerational trauma owing to the history of "sixty million and more". One such character affected by the inheritance of this past is Denver, Sethe's youngest child.

Denver's birth represents the first time that Sethe was no longer a slave, and could raise her child away from the life that she had known until that point. She is named after the whitegirl, Amy Denver, who had helped Sethe in surviving and giving birth to Denver after escaping from Sweet Home. She is the youngest child, and later becomes the only one that stays with Sethe. Howard and Buglar run away at the signs of their baby sister's ghost, while Denver stays in 124 Bluestone Road despite everything. Due to the loss of all her siblings and her grandmother Baby Suggs, Denver grows up as an extremely lonely child. Moreover, she is unable to make friends since the entire community shunned the people of 124 due to Beloved's murder by Sethe. She tells Sethe, "Nobody speaks to us. Nobody comes by. Boys don't like me. Girls don't either." Her only source of validation is her mother who also gets busier when Paul D, a man she shares a past with, shows up.

Denver struggled with the idea of ownership, as was a question for slaves for generations. She does not seem to own her father's absence as only Sethe and Paul D are allowed to grieve him due to their familiarity. Her mother is not her own since the appearance of Paul D, and even Beloved, who had always been her secret companion, is removed by Paul D. Denver "prefer[s] the venomous baby to him any day." The only time Denver is happy is when Beloved pays attention to her. She would choose Beloved over Sethe if need be, as she knew it was her older sister who had come back.

Denver finds herself in a weird limbo of sorts where she has not experienced the horrors of slavery first hand, however, it would all be awaiting her in the rememory if she ever chose to visit the site of those crimes. She is suffering not through her own experiences but through the conscious awareness of what has been inflicted on her community. This makes her feel all the more isolated as there was no one who understood what she was going through and as if her pain was not as important as that of her mother, Paul D or Beloved. Due to this, her "loneliness wore her out."



Denver feels a very strong connection with Beloved since she was her constant companion in a very lonely life. Beloved and Denver have a solidarity in their response to Paul D's entrance into 124. When Beloved had made 124 tremble, "Denver burst from the keeping room, terror in her eyes, a vague smile on her lips." This marks the first time that Beloved's interjection is appreciated by Denver. Morrison explores this sense of sisterhood for the validation of a black woman's identity in her novel "Sula" as well through the relationship between Nel and Sula. On this subject, critic Su-lin Yu says, "Morrison helps us to see the richness and complexity of sister relationships in ways that few texts have shown. Among these novels, the most complicated sibling relation is the sororal bond between Denver and Beloved." Moreover, Barbara Schapiro talks about how "the nursing dynamic also characterises Denver and Beloved's relationship: "so intent was her (Denver's) nursing" of Beloved, "she forgot to eat"..."

Denver lives in constant fear of her mother after learning about her actions against Beloved. She is resentful about Paul D's arrival, and instead dreams about Halle coming to live with them. Morrison uses the character of Denver to explore the running theme of womanhood in the text. Denver gradually becomes more independent and feels herself becoming a woman. Towards the end of the novel, she prepares to go to college and looks for a job when Beloved is exorcised and driven out of 124. Denver reaches out to her community that she had always been isolated from in order to achieve independence and remove Beloved who was now harming her and her mother. She looks to Lady Jones and the Bodwins to help her accomplish these tasks.

The closing interactions between Denver and Paul D shown in part three of the novel convey to the reader and to Paul D how much Denver had grown since the first time Paul D had arrived at 124. She is much more self-sufficient and takes care of her mother. Denver, then, becomes representative of the idea of reclaiming yourself and your past in order to become empowered rather than falling prey to the evils of your history.

Through the character of Denver, Morrison depicts the ideas of intergenerational trauma that is passed down through the remembrance of the harm caused to a community by those who did not experience it directly. She is also the symbol of growth and breaking the cycle that would otherwise have kept her secluded and dependent. In the way that Beloved represents the "sixty million and more", Denver represents a generation of their descendants.





Graphic Narratives

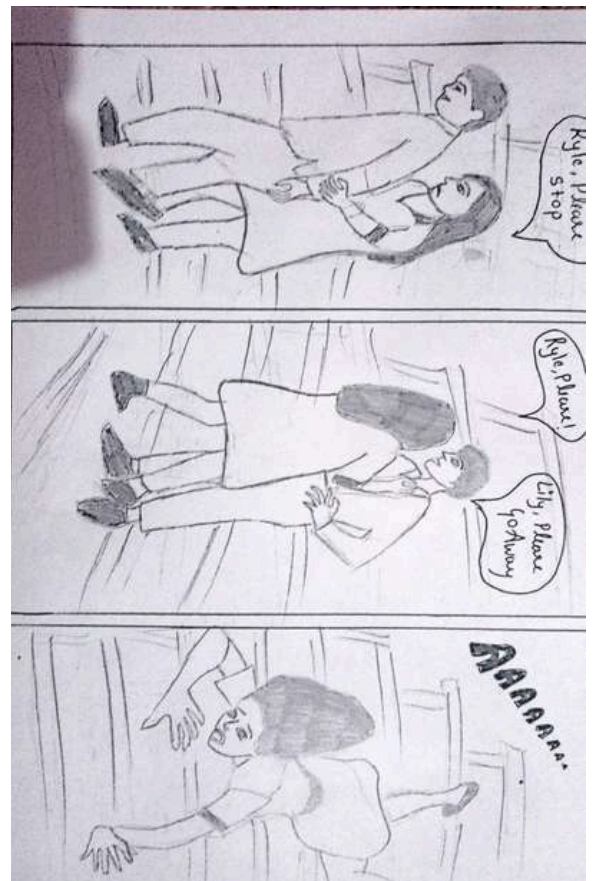
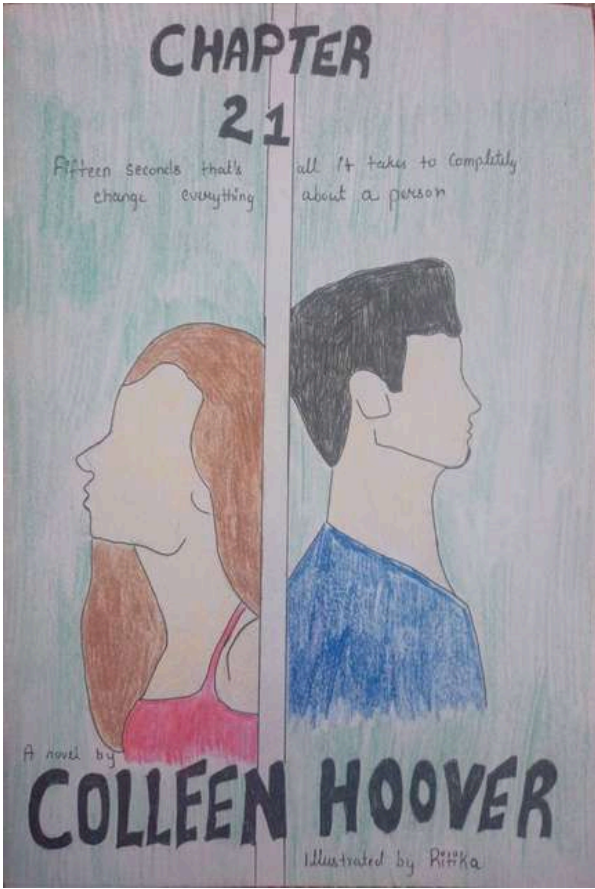
*GN and LCYA assignments submitted to Ms. Haritha P and
Dr. Violina Borah respectively.*



CHAPTER 21

RITIKA,

B.A. (Hons.) English, 3rd Year




CHAPTER 21

Lily, be sHll Please
 You have to be sHll unHll
 I'm finished Lily
 Finished with what?
 you fell down the stairs,
 you're hurt.

My Phone
 Alysa's number
 The stairwell
 I grabbed his shirt
 He pushed me away
 "you fell down the stairs"
 But I didn't fall
 He pushed me. Again
 That's twice.
 you pushed me, Ryle.

He sounds just
 like a doctor or
 nothing like a
 husband
 you Pushed
 Me

"You fell", About five
 minutes ago. Right After
 I found out what a
 fucking liar I
 married.
 If you need
 anything, I'm sure
 you can call
 this number."



"I forgot his number
 was even there".
 The day after the fight
 in the restaurant...
 he came to the
 stove - you can ask
 Alysa. He was
 only there for five
 minutes. He took my
 phone from me and
 he put his number
 inside of it, because
 he didn't believe I
 was safe with you.
 I forgot his number
 was even there. Ryle.
 I've never even looked
 at it

you swear, Lily?
 you swear on our
 marriage and our lives
 and on everything that
 you aren't seeing
 him?

I swear, Ryle. you overreacted
 before giving me the chance to
 explain. Now get the
 fuck out of my apartment

you fell
 down the
 stairs

I can't tell
 if he is trying to
 convince me
 or himself

I run back to my bedroom and fall onto
 my bed. The same bed I share with my
 husband. The same bed he makes love to
 me on... The same bed he lays me on
 when it's time for
 him to clean
 up his messes.








A I'm not asking you to forgive him,
 because I have no idea what
 happened last night. But just
 please, as my sister-in-law
 and my best friend, give
 my brother a chance to
 talk to you 6:00 AM
 Message

Lily do you remember the night we had
 How angry I was? Do you remember
 my naked truth? what I told you
 about the night and what caused
 me to be angry?
 Lily I knew it would destroy
 him. I knew exactly what that
 little boy was feeling... because
 that's what happened to me. To
 Alysa's and my older brother...

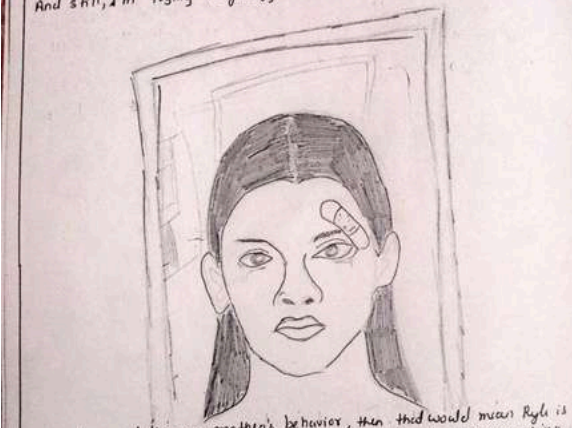
"I shot him, Lily. My best friend. My big brother.
 I was only six years old. My big brother.
 I was only playing with him. I didn't even
 know I was holding a real gun"
 She was only five when it happened.
 Emerson was seven. we were in the
 garage, so no one heard our screams
 for a long time. And I just sat there,
 and... I was trying to put everything
 back inside his head. I thought I could
 fix him, Lily"

I would never tell you this because I want it to
 excuse my behavior, "you have to believe that.
 Alysa wanted me to tell you all of this
 because since that happened, there are things
 I can't control. I get angry. I black out.
 I have been in therapy since I was six years
 old. But it is not my excuse. It is my reality
 when you ran after me last night, I swear
 I had no intention of hurting you. I was upset
 and angry. And something inside of me just
 snaps. I don't remember the moment I pushed
 you. But know I did. I did. All I was
 thinking when you were screaming after me
 was how I needed to get away
 from you. I wanted you out of my
 memory. I didn't process that there were
 stairs around us. I didn't process that there were
 strength compared to yours. I fucked
 up, Lily. I fucked up"

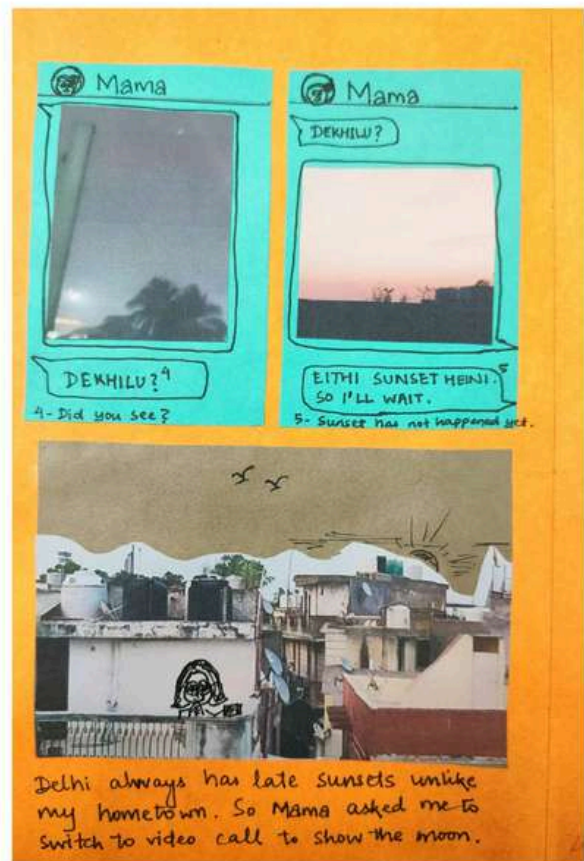
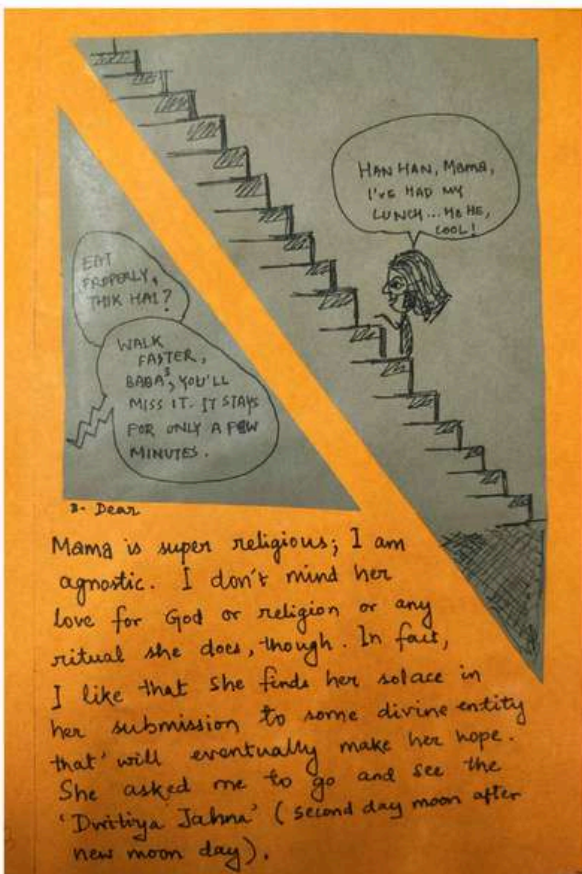
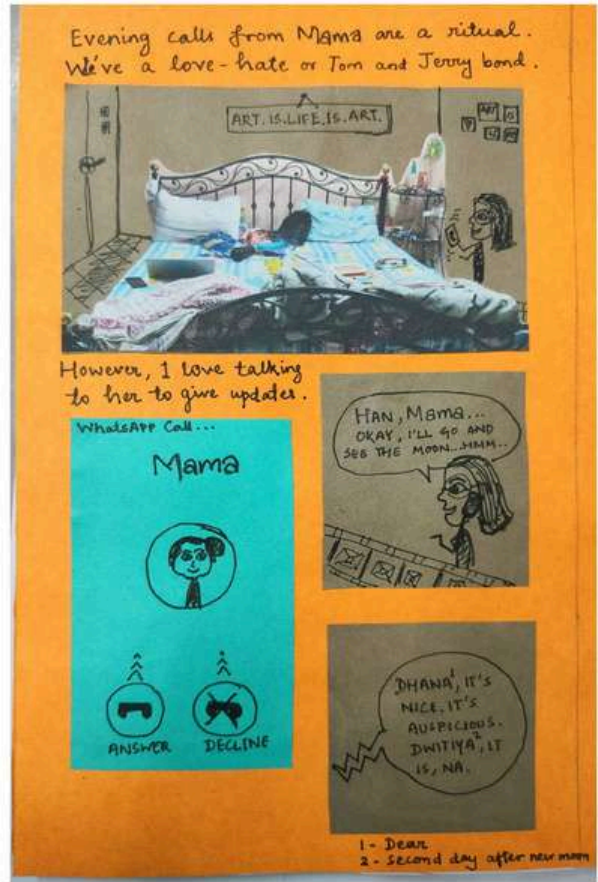
This isn't how this was supposed to be. My whole life. I knew exactly
 what I'd do if a man ever treated me the way my father treated
 my mother. It was simple. I would leave and it would
 never happen again. But I didn't. And now, here I am with
 bruises and cuts on my body at the hands of the man who is
 supposed to love me. At the hands of my own husband.
 And still, I'm trying to justify what happened.

But if I'm emulating my mother's behavior, then this would mean Ryle is
 emulating my father's behavior. But he isn't. I have to stop comparing
 us to them. We're our own individuals in an entirely different
 situation. My father never had an excuse for his anger, nor he was
 immediately apologetic. The way he treated my mother was even
 much worse than what's happened between Ryle and me.
 But even with everything he just told me, I'm still
 fighting my own forgiveness. I swore I wouldn't let it
 happen again. I swore to him and I swore to myself that
 if he ever hurt me again, I would leave.



DWITIYA JAHNA

KALPITA RATNASHREE (a.k.a. CUDDLE),
B.A. (Hons.) English, 3rd Year



DWITIYA JAHNA

Incoming Video Call...

The moon really looked pretty but the wi-fi network was not that helpful. Even though, Mama believed in the luck of the moon, I admired the piece of art that nature is.

We swiftly shifted to Mama's recent favourite hot topic of discussion — my career; my future. We talked about my schedule for the semester examinations, CUET PG and other things when I admitted to Mama that I forgot to fill the form for GATE 2024.

If I plan to go abroad, I'll face subtle racism. In places like Delhi, I face politely structured casteism. Discrimination never leaves no one.

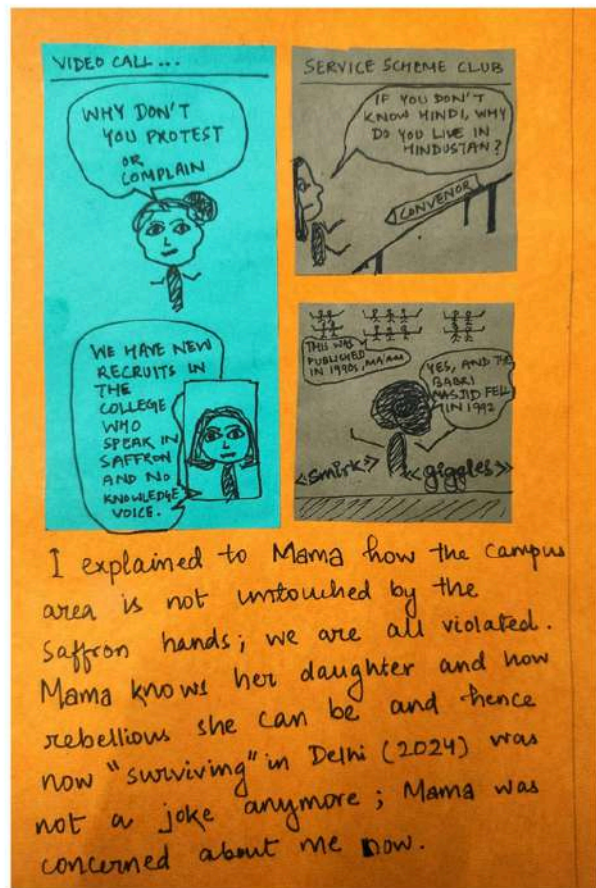
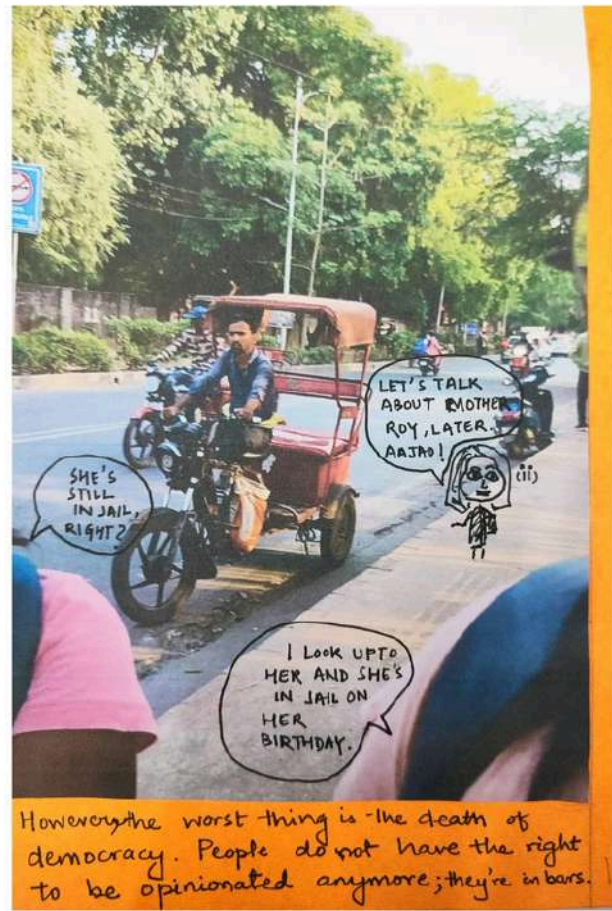
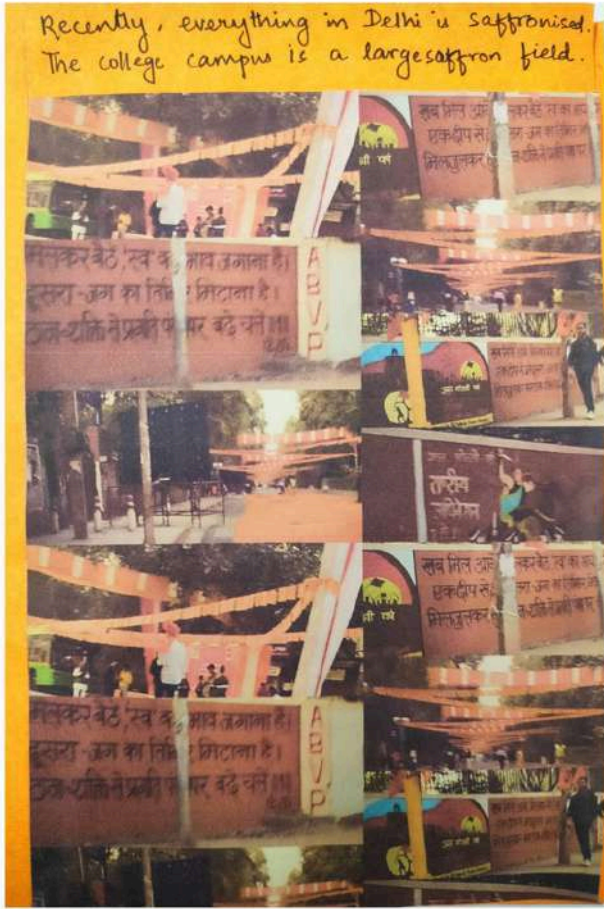
I poked my eye in excitement and removed my glasses to finally look up and turn the camera towards the sky for Mama to see the 'dwitiya jahna'.

The moon was indeed calming. I don't know about it being lucky or not but it sure settled my chaotic heart. Mama again initiated the conversation on a new topic now (or sub-topic)

The 2024 elections are going to be the driver of a lot of happenings in Delhi and I might not like them all.

Most importantly, I fear my life is at stake because I'm vocal; I would not shut my mouth if I see triggering acts.

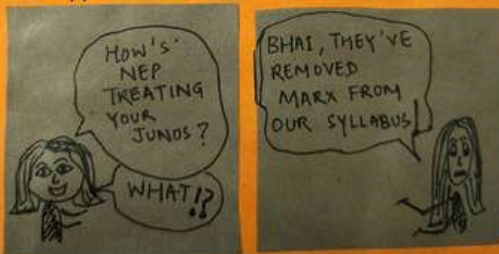
DWITIYA JAHNA



DWITIYA JAHNA



Education and media suffer the aftermath of a holy bath in the Saffron wave and influence the masses.

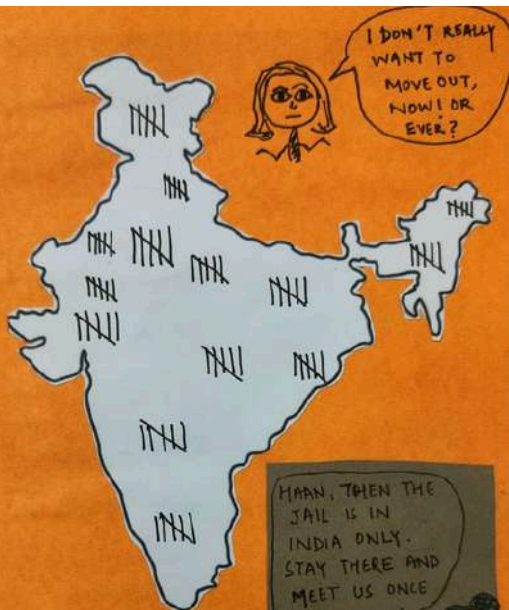


We live in a pseudo sense of democracy now; we are in bars too.

Mama has always wished for her daughters to be simple and independent, with a good job, decent income and kind attitude but she never thought that being simple is complex.



I tell her how if I become a writer or professor or research scholar or a journalist or a film maker or a poet or a publisher or an editor, I'll continue speaking and I'll continue to be under the threat of getting arrested or abducted, irrespective of the profession I choose.



For me, to stay out of jail, I might have to stay shut or stay out of my country. Honestly, I don't wish to move out but where am I free!? WILL I EVER BE? FREE!?

NOTES -


- (i) IP college annual fest and Media Department's teacher case.
- (ii) Amundhati Roy; many students of English Literature in India call her their (contemporary) mother.

*
The 'Dwitiya Jahna' brings an orange hue that could be read as a metaphor for saffronisation (of the sky as that of the country). However, the moon also brings a sense of hope after new moon.

The question of freedom and safety being binary to the masses plays at large in the narrative with a warmth-touch of familial understanding.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

DARSHAYATA DEKA,
B.A. (Hons.) English, 3rd Year




Food for Thought
A Graphic Text

Submitted by -
Student's Name: DARSHAYATA DEKA
2nd Sem. (3rd Year)
B.A. (Hons.) English
Paper: Literature for Children & Young Adults (LCYA)
University Enrollment Number: Z1DARQBHEND00001E

Submitted to - DR. VIOLINA BORAH,
Lecturer, LCYA

Date of Submission -



It is June. The end-of-semester summer break has begun and our protagonist, JOON GOGOL, is back in her hometown in Assam from college.

Today is a big day for her - after three whole years, she is finally meeting one of her oldest classmates from school, PADMINI SARMAH!

Finally! After three whole years of not being able to coordinate our meet-up, we're here. Meeting JOON in June!

Ha-ha! Ah-and meeting you, PADMINI, at The Lotus Hotel.

Gosh, so many new establishments have opened in our little town in the mere six months that we haven't been here, haven't they?

Totally! And this place is so pretty at that.

I know, we're going to be chatting for a long time here; why don't we order first?

Um, I think I'll have a strawberry milkshake and some peri-peri chicken pizza. You?

I guess I'll have a cola and some carbonara with bacon. I've heard it's one of their signature dishes.

That sounds amazing! But, I, uh, I never expected this out of you.

Why? I mean, what are you talking about?

①

What? Don't worry. Tell me everything. I'm too curious now. I absolutely have to hear it.

Don't you remember we were in class 1 and you, uh, you-

Oh, well, I guess you have forgotten this because it's been so long. That's okay. Let me tell you the story...

"... It's been almost 25 years but I still remember the day very clearly. It's perhaps because it was my first day in class 1, my first day in a 'Big Child's School' and I was really excited."

"By a stroke of luck, you and I were sitting together."

"I remember having felt HAPPY with you."

"We talked about our favourite kids' shows on the Pego channel..."

"... and played 'Stone, Paper, Scissors' with each other..."

"... even shared and ate the chocolates our respective parents had given us since it was our first day in school."

"I-no, we were klappy."




"Sister Antonia was taking the first class of the day. Probably because she could sense that many students were nervous on their first day, she decided that before beginning with book lessons, she'd ask us some ice-breaker questions."


"What's your name?"

"What's your age?"

"What's your favourite colour?"

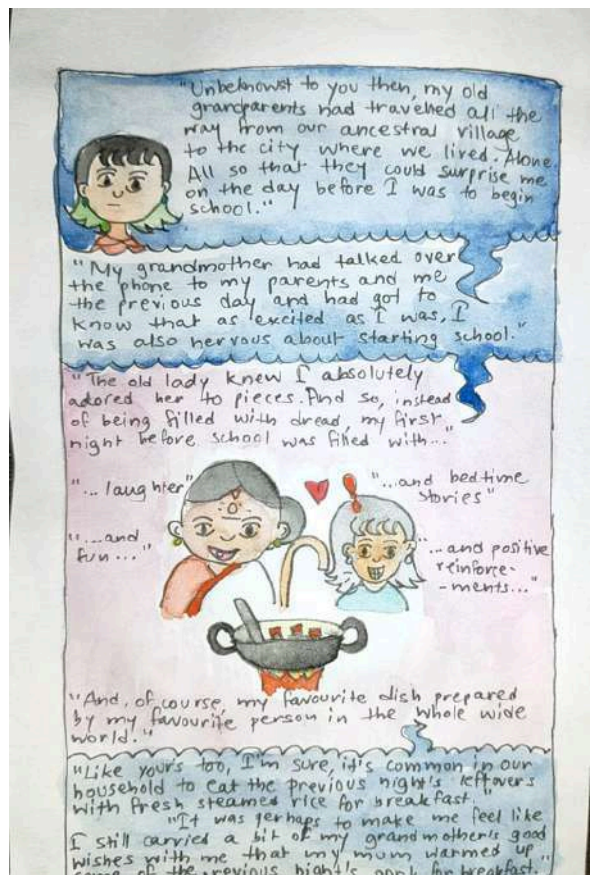
"What's your favourite cartoon, shot?"

"What yummy food did you have for breakfast today?"



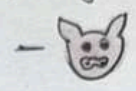
②

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

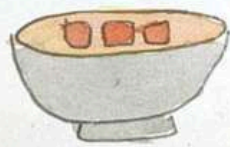




"And thus, after having sorted out their stuff,
Joon and Padmini lived happily ever after."

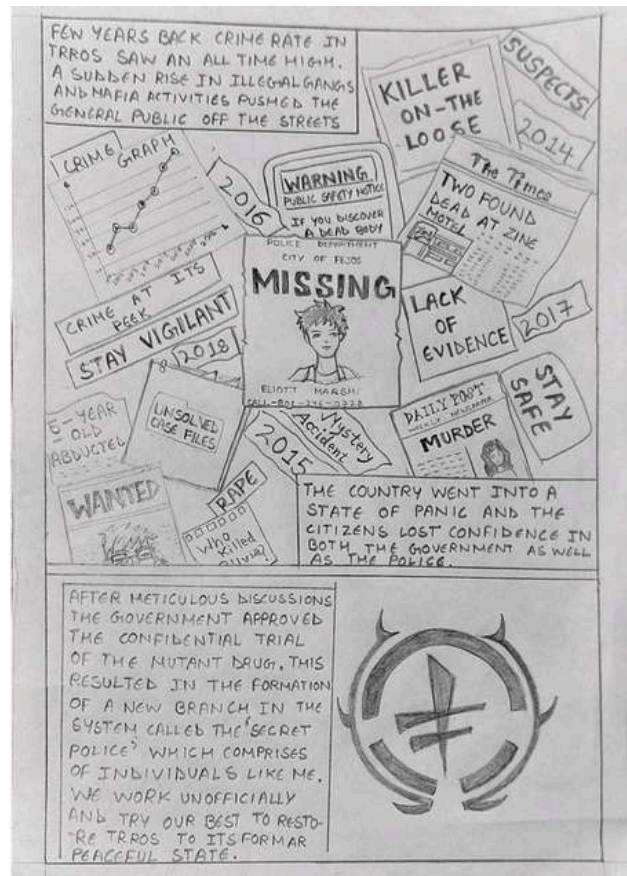
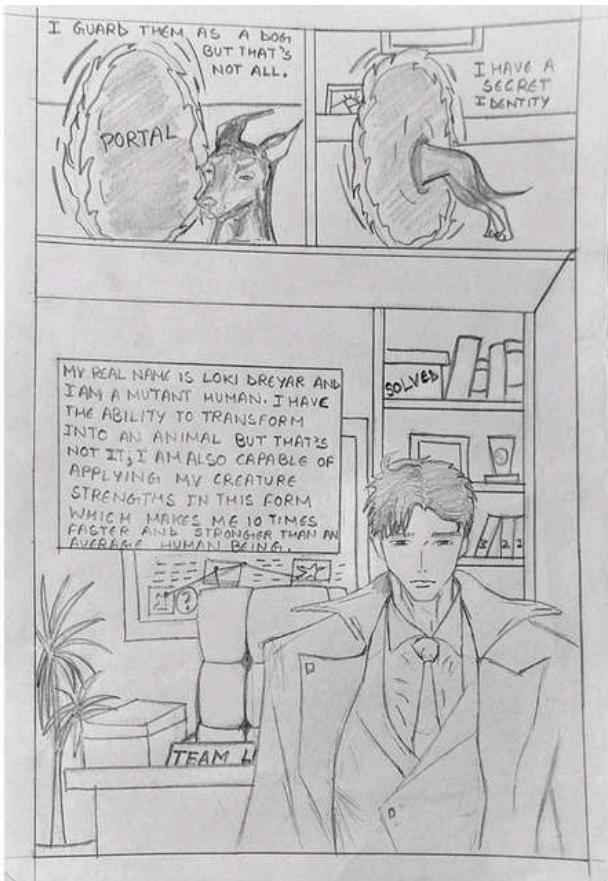
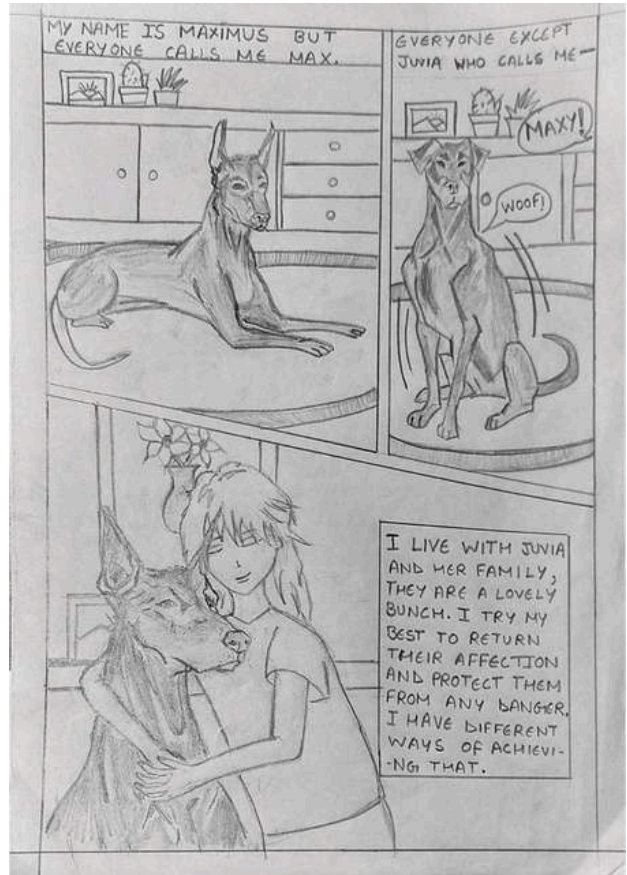
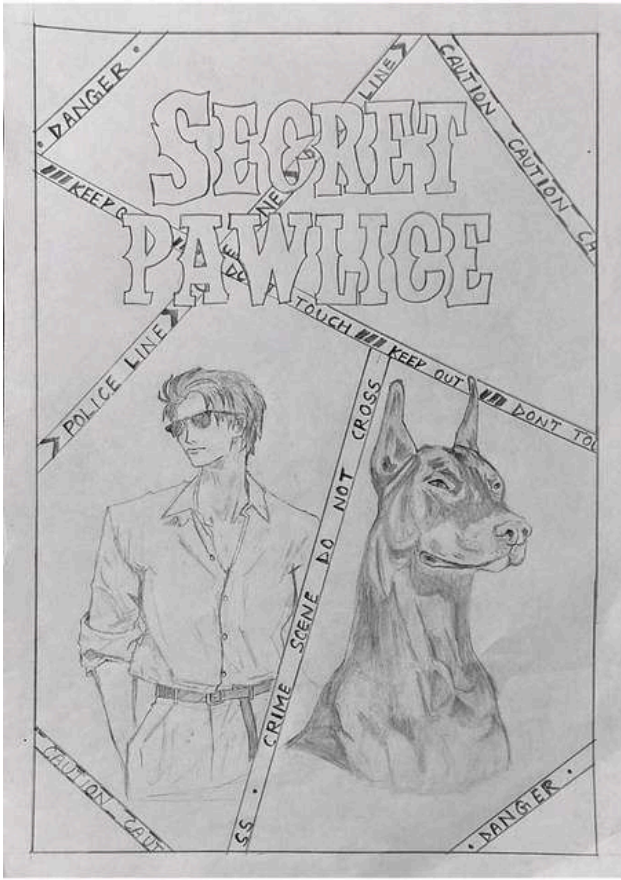


THE
end.



SECRET PAWLICE

KAJAL CHAUDHARY,
B.A. (Hons.) English, 3rd Year





TO BE CONTINUED

AUTHOR'S NOTE

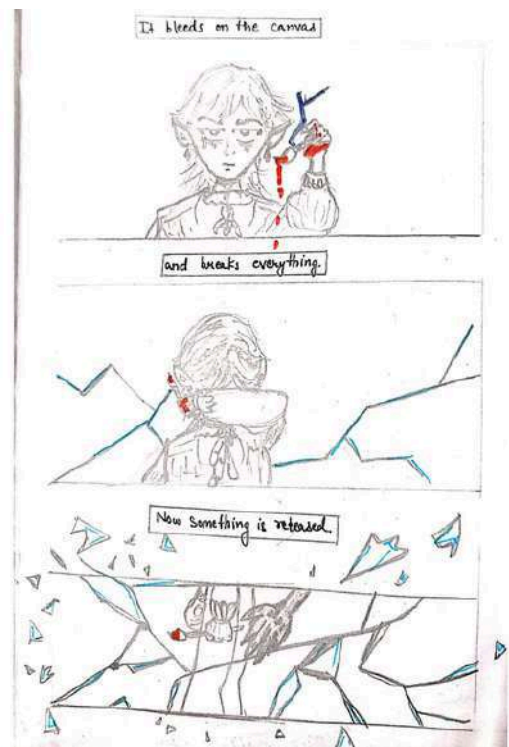
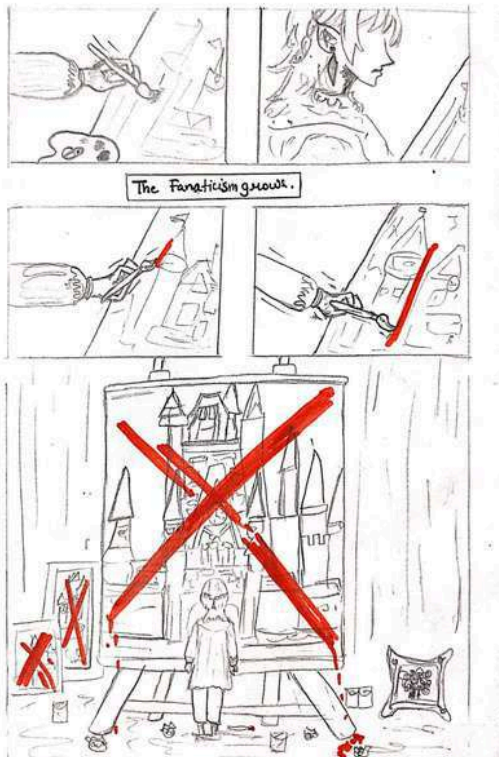
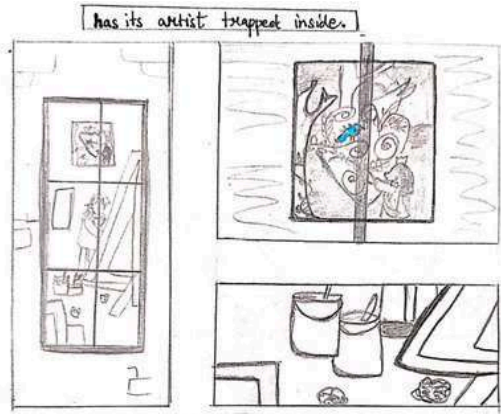
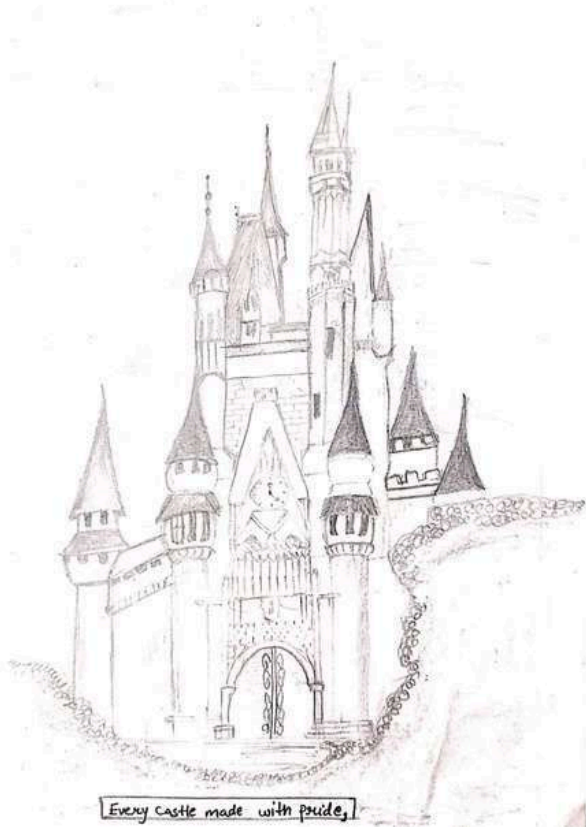


Thank you for
reading this work.
Chapter 2 is coming
out soon. so see you
guys next time. 😊😊



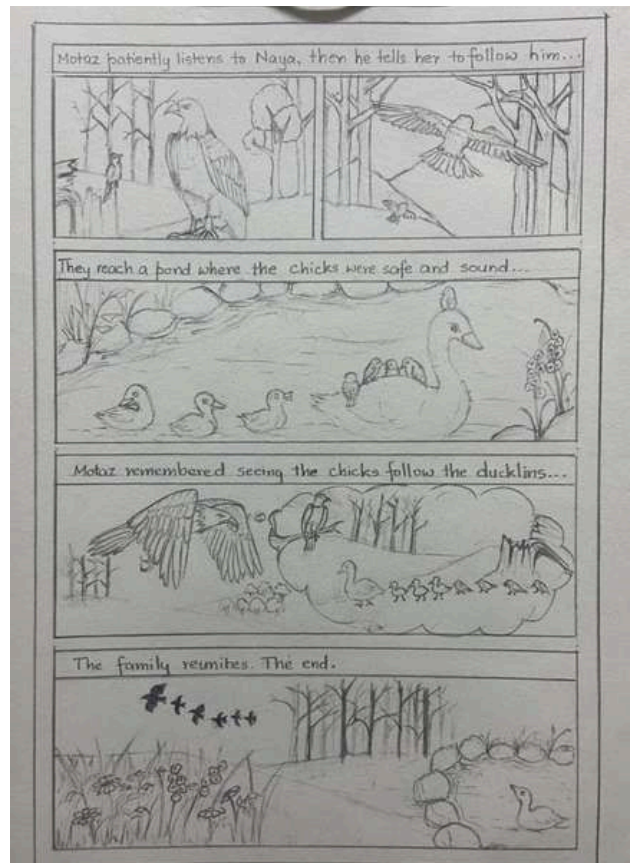
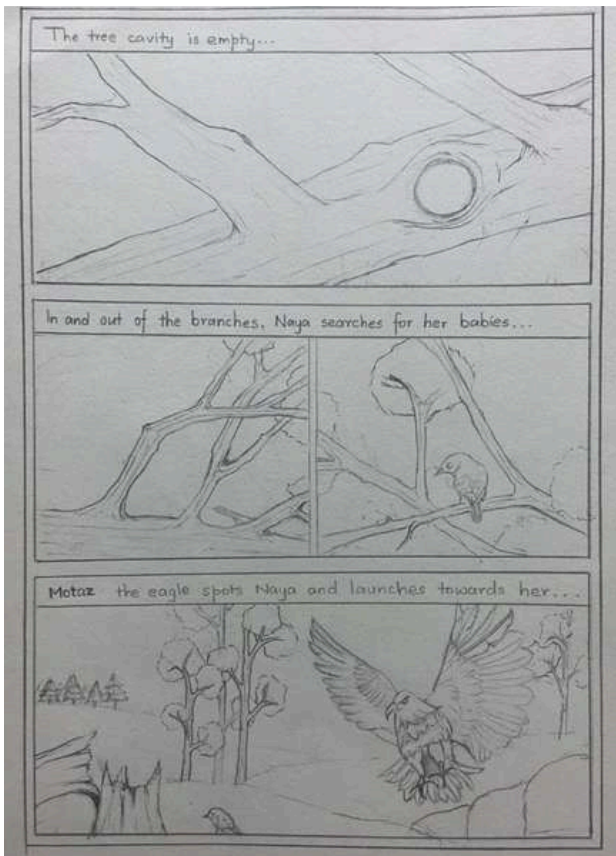
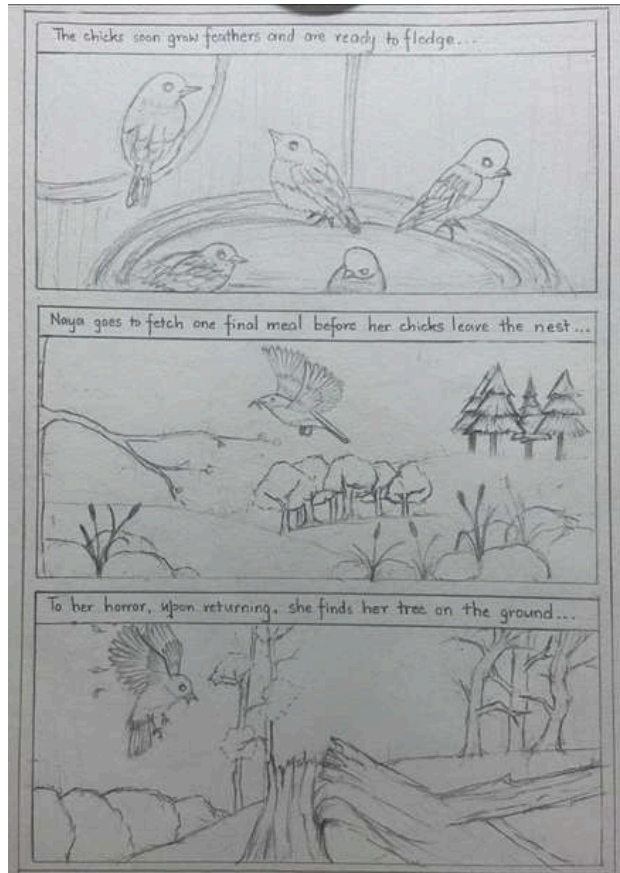
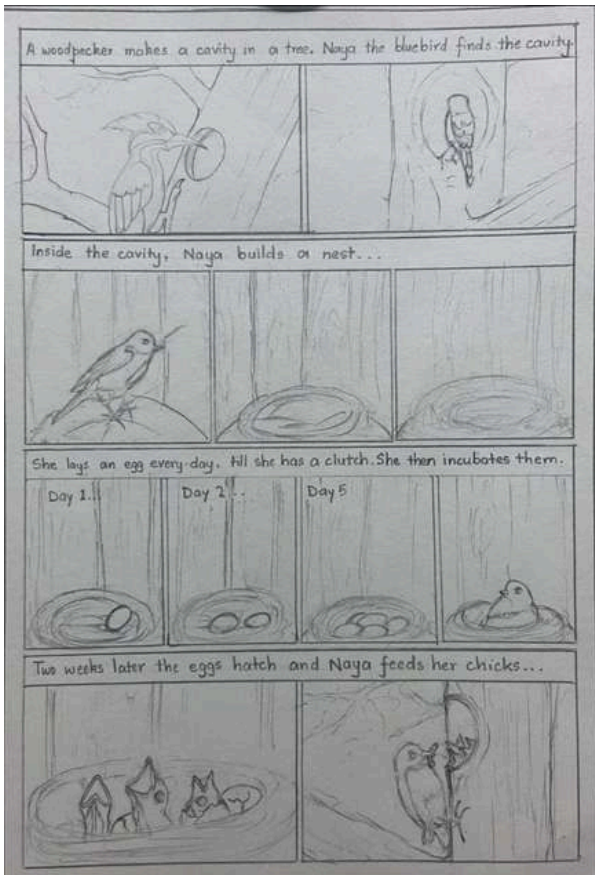
THE ART

DEVANTI,
B.A. (Hons.) English, 3rd Year



THE ART

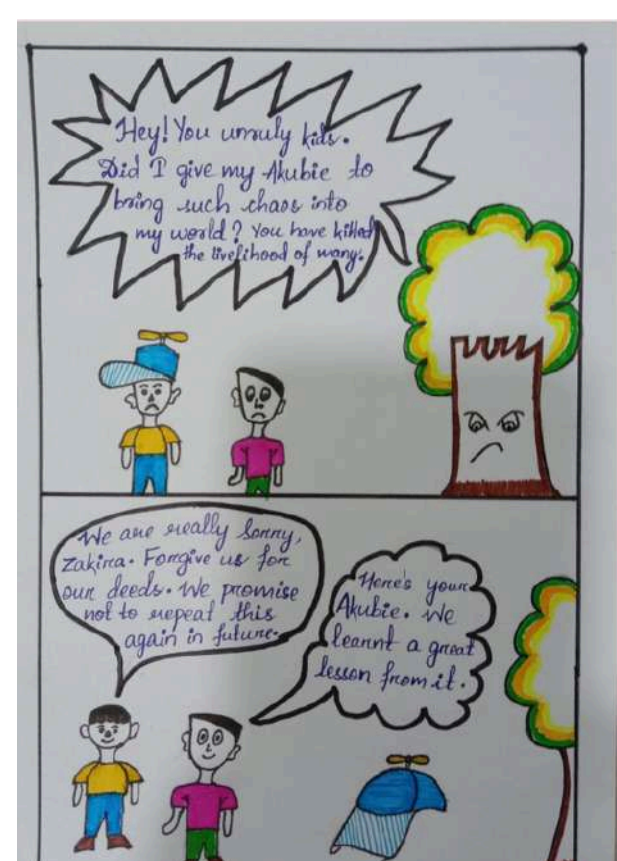
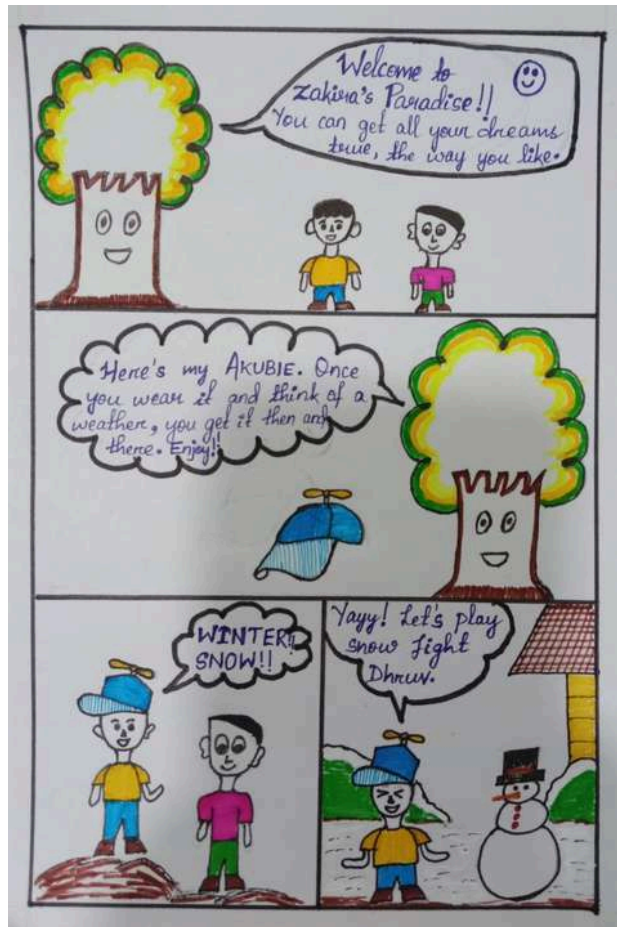




AKUBIE'S WONDERS

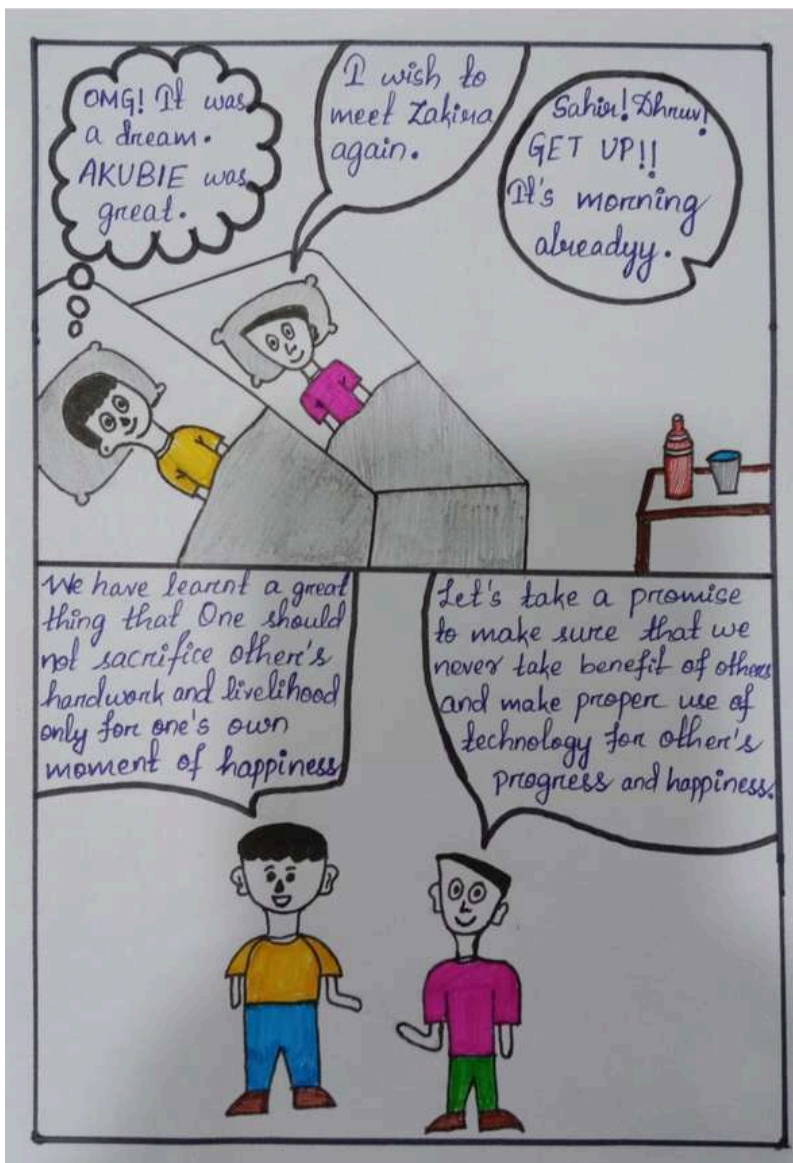
ANINDITA MOHANTY

B.A. (Hons.) English, 3rd Year





AKUBIE'S WONDERS





Art Gallery

ILS assignments submitted to Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly





"Summer"

KRITI SAXENA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



"New York"

ANUBHA MITTAL, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



"Pink Hues"

AVANI KULSHRESHTHA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



"Light through the Woods"

KRITI SAXENA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



"Paris"

ANUBHA MITTAL, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



"Over the Horizon"

KRITI SAXENA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



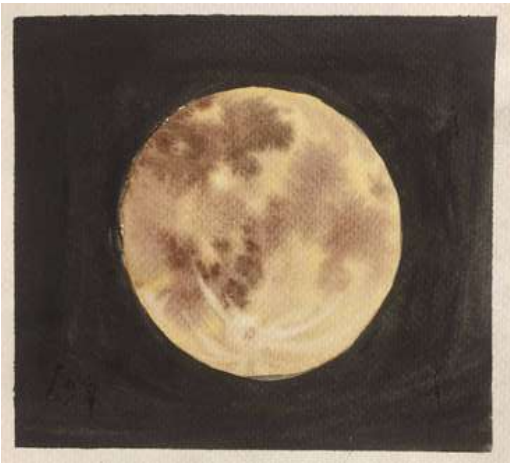
"Midnight"

AVANI KULSHRESHTHA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



"Monochrome"

AVANI KULSHRESHTHA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



"The Moon"

AVANI KULSHRESHTHA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



[Untitled]

AVANI KULSHRESHTHA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English



[Untitled]

KOMALDEEP, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
 * Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



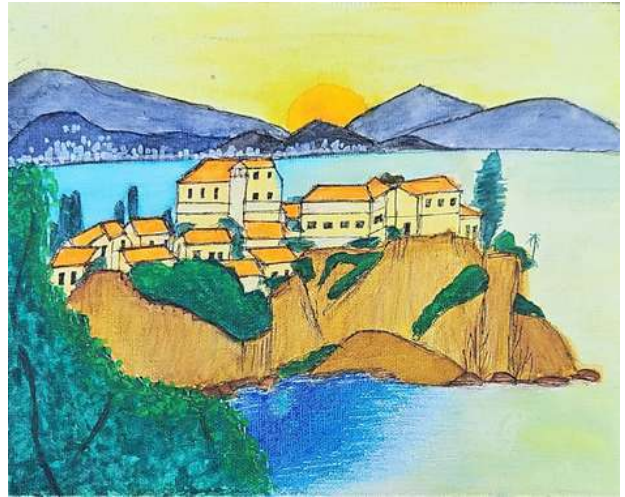
[Untitled]

KANIKA BHARDWAJ, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
 * Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



[Untitled]

KHUSHBU, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
* Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



[Untitled]

KHUSHI AGGARWAL, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
* Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



[Untitled]

JYOTI KUMARI, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
* Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



[Untitled]

HARSHITA KANOJIA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
* Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



[Untitled]

DAKSHITA RAI, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
* Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



[Untitled]

ASHWARYA, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
* Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



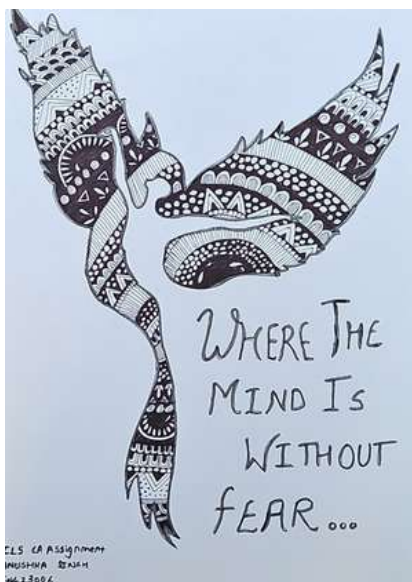
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ARCHITA SINGH, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
 * Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



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ANVI NARANG, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
 * Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



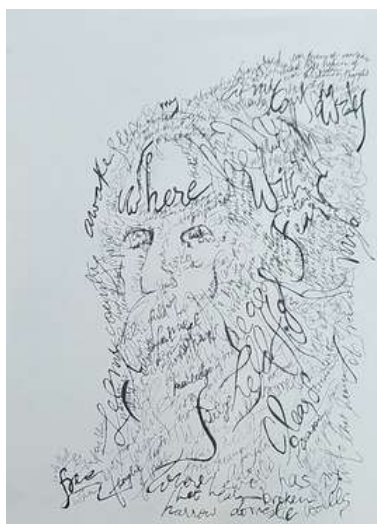
[Untitled]

ANUSHKA SINGH, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
 * Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



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ANUBHA MITTAL, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
 * Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly



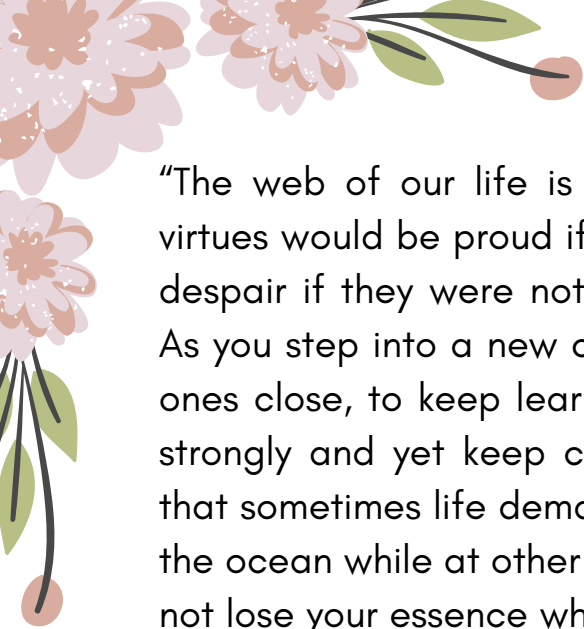
[Untitled]

AKSHARA JAIN, 1st Yr., B.A. (Hons.) English
 * Mentored by Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly

A large, faint, light-colored illustration of various flowers and foliage, including a large peony-like flower, smaller blossoms, and green leaves, serving as a background for the title.

Teachers' Notes





“The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together. Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipt them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherish’d by our virtues” (William Shakespeare). As you step into a new chapter of your life, remember to hold your loved ones close, to keep learning at every stage of life, to hold onto yourself strongly and yet keep changing who you are constantly, to understand that sometimes life demands to be lived with extreme passion as deep as the ocean while at other times we need to tread as lightly as a feather, to not lose your essence when everything and everyone around you might be changing, and to love and forgive yourself over and over and over again. We will wait for you to come visit us and join our esteemed Alumni. Sending lots of love and best wishes to each one of you!

- **Ms. Priyanka Arora**

Dear students your batch is so special to me since I am also retiring in July and will not be in College anymore. I will always carry the memory of the time we spent together very close to my heart. You made me feel special and together we had long discussions on life and literature. It was a great experience for me as I hope it would have been for you. Go out into the world confident and compassionate....fulfil your dreams and always value yourself. Lastly, whenever you see the color purple hope you think of me!

-**Dr. Sangeeta Gupta**

I am confident that you will leave a significant mark wherever life takes you. May your path ahead be illuminated with boundless opportunities and endless potential.


-**Ms. Suman**

Wishing you all the best on your journey ahead. I hope you continue to chase your dreams, and never give up. May you all become sensitive, empathetic, resilient and financially independent women. Lots of love!

-**Dr. Vandana Lal**

Dear students, Congratulations! Embrace the power of words and keep writing your own story. Best wishes for your future endeavours!

-**Ms. Shilpa Vashisht**



Heartiest congratulations to the graduating batch. As you embark upon a new journey, my best wishes for you. Keep up the spirit. May your hard work and determination take you to greater heights.

-Ms. Prajna Tanwar

It was an absolute delight to be around your batch - you all are a joy in the classroom and have so much to offer as individuals. I will cherish the memory of feeling so remarkably uplifted after meeting your class for the first time for a lecture on Mary Shelley. I hope you keep that spirit intact against the world and continue to let the ideas you learn, shape you. This line from a Vivian Gornick book I am reading has stuck with me and seems fitting to quote on this occasion - "What happened to the writer is not what matters; what matters is the large sense that the writer is able to make of what happened". Go on, be the writer of the world you want for yourself and others.

-Ms. Nivedita Sharma

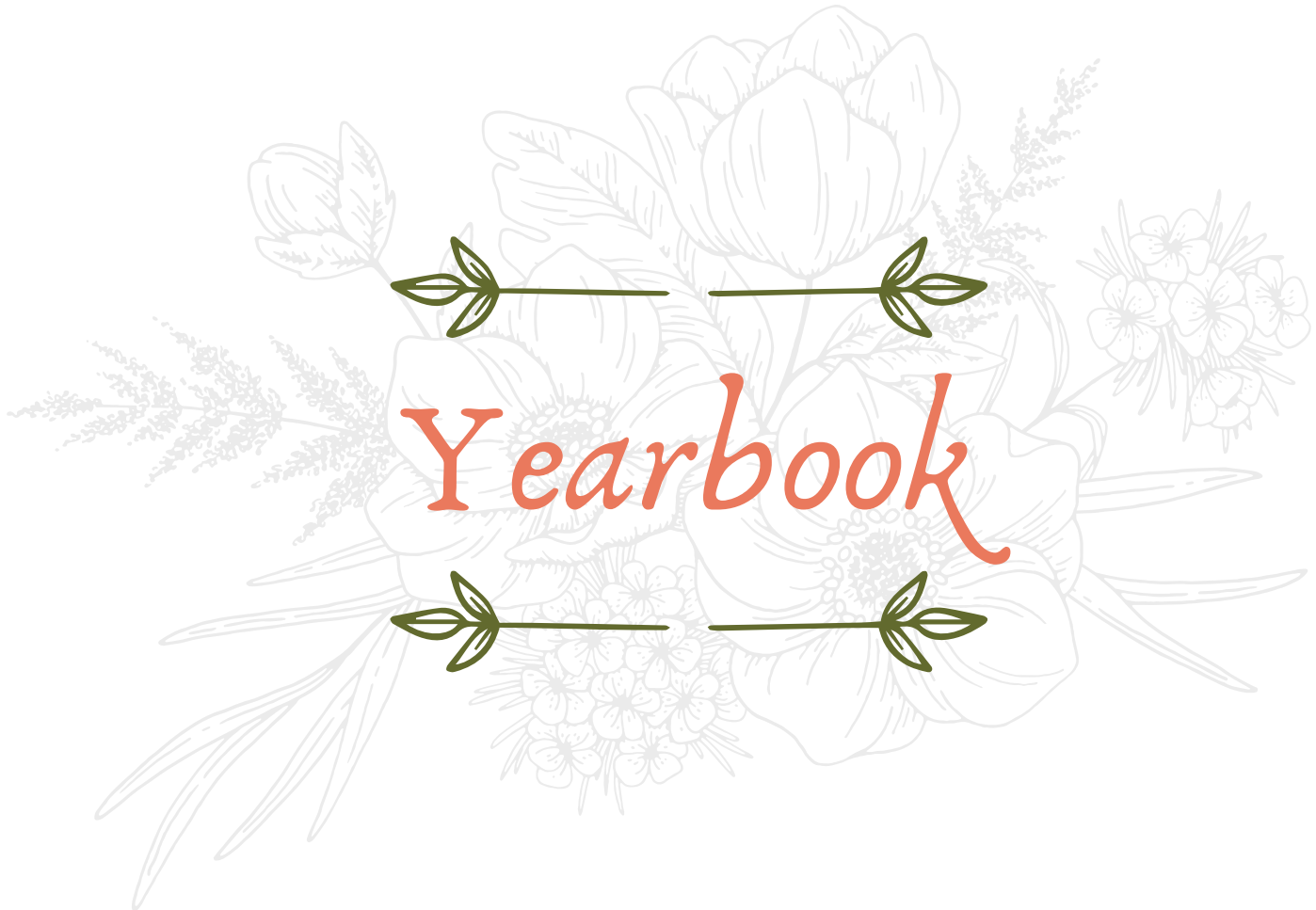
Dearies,

A wise person once said "Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open." May you always keep your hearts and minds open. May you find more than you seek. May adventure awaits you. May you always know the right path to take; and if there's none in the view, may you have the courage to carve out a new path for yourself! You are end of an era, the last batch before NEP! You shall be dearly missed.💖

-Ms. Saneya

As you walk out of this tiny space called DRC to the wide open world, always remember that you will carry a bit of us with you; we too will cherish moments of togetherness, happy or sad, frustrating or jubilant. Try to be true to yourself in face of all adversities and enjoy every moment of your life.

-Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta-Bortamuly



Yearbook



CLASS OF 2024



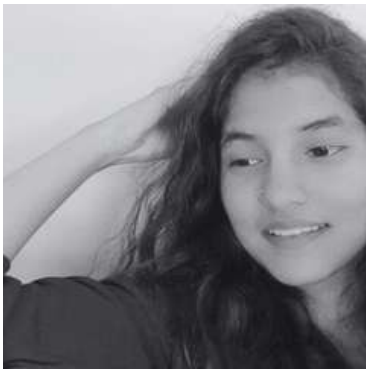
ADISHA KUNDAN
*"Never let others choose your
Destiny, Let Destiny choose you."*



AKANSHA
*College does not only teach you
academics but it makes an
individual more polished and a
better human being.*



ANINDITA MOHANTY
*Three magical years at this college
and never knew that this puzzle
piece could fit into Literature and
fall in love with it.*



ANJALI
*"Life shrinks or expands in
proportion to one's courage."*



ANJALI KUMARI
*I have started to see things from a
different perspective.*



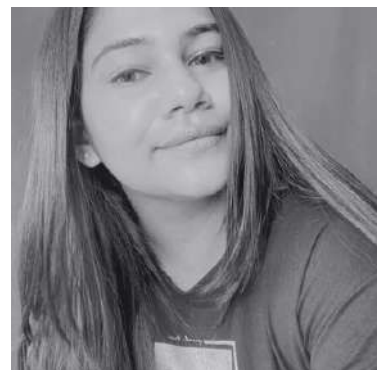
ANSHIKA SHARMA
*"And though I burn, How could
I fall? When I am lifted by
every word you say to me."
- Hozier*



ANUSHKA DAS
*"We are best friends if you have
tea to spill."*



ARUNIMA RAO
*You cannot change 'the world' but
you can change 'your world'.*



BHAWINI DEWAN
*Survived final year, now onto the
real boss level!*

CLASS OF 2024



CHANDNI

Clarity is the best thing we get from something or someone. Whether it hurts you or makes you happy. Also, it's not about getting clarity but rather, we should also learn to give clarity to people in every way we can instead of holding them in the cage of confusion.



CORDIA GHOSH

*Emotionally Unavailable Legend
Coming For World Domination.*



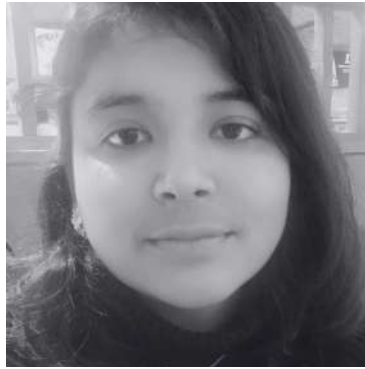
DARSHAYATA DEKA

The primordial urge to pull a Rancho-from-3-Idiots thing and go completely incognito after graduation >>>>



DEVANTI

I solemnly swear that I am up to no good... but in the most mischievously delightful way possible. (ಠ_ಠ)



DIKSHA

College 🎓 memories will always hold a special part in my heart. A time full of experience and learning new things. Got friends who are always there for me. ❤️



DIKSHA RAJPUT

I didn't need attendance, I absorbed knowledge through Osmosis!



DIVYANSHI KUMARI

Long story short, I survived.



FAGUNI PANDA

Be careful of the yellow wallpaper, I'm just saying



HEEBA BASHIR SHAH

This degree was my first but the torture felt like a third.

CLASS OF 2024



IFFAT MARIYAM ANSARI
*I hate the person that I can be
But lately I've gotten quite fond of
me.*



IPSA
I am actually a very nice person.



JANVI RANJAN
*13 reasons why I'm twinkling here:
1. COVID*



KAJAL CHAUDHARY
*Living in my Geto Suguru timeline and
desperately waiting for it to transition
into a chaotic Gojo phase but I'm fully
aware that I'll be entertaining Nanami
Kentō's lifestyle pretty soon.*



KALPITA RATNASHREE
*Got in as a confused, sensitive,
rebellious artist under
construction, will exit all the more
so!*



**KHUMUKCHAM ARINA
DEVI**
*With freedom, books, flowers,
and the moon who could not be
happy? - OSCAR WILDE*



KHUSHI GAUTAM
*If my book is open 📖 Your
mouth should be closed 😬🤫*



KHUSHI NAGAR
*"Survivors have scars. Victims
have graves."*



KRITIKA MAURYA
*I'm gonna attend classes from next
week.*

CLASS OF 2024



**KUENSEL DOLMA
BHUTIA**
*"Love is the most twisted curse of
all." - Satoru Gojo*



LAWANYA AARYAN
*Thousand riveting things I say,
not a single quote? Yet. And "yet is
good".*



MERCY VAHNEILAM
*"All that we see or seem is but a
dream within a dream." - Poe*



MONIKA MORWAL
*"Your behavior is a reflection of
your character, not your
circumstances."*



MUSKAN KUMARI
*Sick girl maintaining 75%
attendance.*



NANCY PANWAR
*"Listen to me, all of you... You've got
the right to wages and holidays and
proper clothes, you don't have to do
everything you're told."
- Hermione Granger*



PARAS

1. There's no story to a poem. There are
only emotions.
2. "Being bored is all right. Being busy is
all right. Everything is all right."



PRATIMA YADAV
*Romance is fleeting. Reality endures.
Beauty is futile, but ugliness is a fact of
life. Happiness seems imaginary, while
sadness knows no bounds. That's why I
wanted us to stay young forever.*



PRIYANSHU YADAV
*The pain which doesn't kills you
makes you stronger.*

CLASS OF 2024



RADHA

You can't control the future, but you can be wisely present in present, and make your future presentable!



RASHI GOSWAMI

Make yourself proud.



RASHMI SINGH

She is art... "ME" The type you stare at the museum.



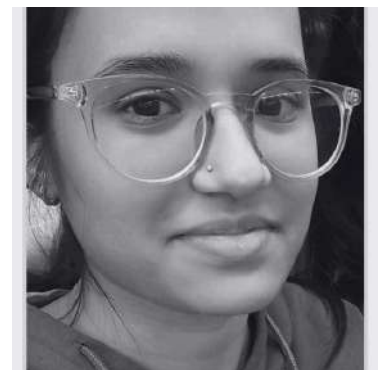
RIDHI BANSAL

You have to expect things from yourself before you can do them.



SIMRAN DHYANI

It's hard to build a case against a dream. "Tis but a scratch" moment? Being or seeming? "I guess, we'll never know!"



SNEH SEMALTI

*I exist.
PS: I've planted a bomb in DRC to make sure you don't. 🤩*



SOUMYA TAK

Well this wasn't like K-Jo's set college life, but I am sure he will find great content here too ;)



SUMAIYA NAZIR

"They think my name is Sumaiya :3"



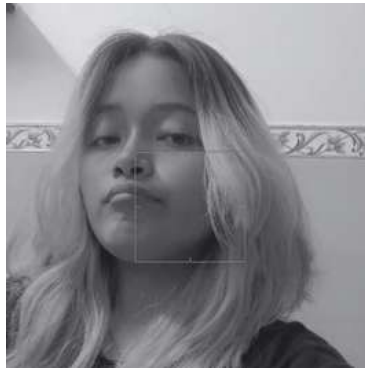
SWATI NEHRA

Miles to walk before I sleep...

CLASS OF 2024



TENZIN DHESAL
*"Do not let the behaviour of others
destroy your inner peace."
- The 14th Dalai Lama*



TENZIN TSETEN
*If you can't blow them away with
your brilliance, then baffle them
with your BS ;)*



VILILA THONGTSAR
*This almost feels like the last chapter of a
book that I don't want to put down. I
present to you (in true Lit student
fashion), a quote by Robert Frost, "In
three words, I can sum up everything I've
learned about life: it goes on." Goodbye
dosto, may the days to come be kind to all
of us.*



VRINDA SHARMA
Hope.



MAHAK BHAWNA
*Every day is a new page in your
story. Make it a great one.*



RITIKA
*So when I'm all choked up
And I can't find the words
Every time we say goodbye
Baby, it hurts
When the sun goes down
And the band won't play
I'll always remember us this way ♡*



CONNECT WITH US THROUGH OUR

E-Mail ID: *expressions.literati@gmail.com*

Instagram: *@literati.drc*

Facebook: *Literati: The Department of English, DRC*



Dear batch of 2024,

Congratulations on your graduation! Congratulations on achieving this milestone and completing one of the most beautiful, yet most terrifying phases of life. I hope you enjoyed the time we had together, even though we only had a few semesters together. I hope these three years have changed you in incredible ways and helped you find a version of yourself, more evolved, more empathetic and more sensible. As education is the first step to liberation, I hope your literature classes taught you to identify the systems of oppression which exist around you, and within you, and equipped you to fight against oppression. I hope you take the values of camaraderie, community, and sisterhood to the world outside to create meaningful bonds and comfortable spaces for all.

In a world that is becoming more intolerant and inconsiderate, I hope literature keeps you grounded and sensible. In a world where words are used for manipulation, hatred, betrayal, and bigotry, keep creating narratives of love, honesty, transparency, and tolerance. In a world which makes people self-doubt and alienate themselves, be the one who makes them feel that they belong here, and they deserve to be here.

Thank you for all the memories and for all the love you have shown us. I'm especially grateful to the ones who turned up for classes and waited to listen to us; you brought joy to the classrooms, the joy of shared spaces and shared knowledge.

Even though we are bidding goodbye to each other for now, our bond is forever. And you belong here forever!

I wish you the best in everything. And I wish you the courage and privilege to be patient and kind to yourself and others!

With Love,

HP