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DU Vidha

डीयू विधा

THE DELHI UNIVERSITY JOURNAL
OF CREATIVE WRITING

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय की सृजनात्मक लेखन पत्रिका

Editor

Sukrita Paul Kumar

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DU Vidha : Pooling Creativity at DU ...

This issue of DU Vidha brings to you your own imaginative journeys of fantasy and freedom. From the students across departments, courses, colleges and different centres the responses received have been enthralling. "What if?" is the question that each creative piece asks and answers it by ushering the reader into an imaginative world full of new possibilities.

The inventive potential of fantasy is laid bare in many a creative piece selected for this issue. The first section includes works that offer expressions of imaginative wonderlands that boldly re-characterize the epic heroes and reclaim the fairytales of distant childhood days. The reader may face tense moments as well as immense exhilaration in some pieces when one stands on the threshold of the other world...a world which enables one to question, compare, change and rewrite everything that is known and understood. Reality is challenged, expectations are frustrated and stereotypes are dislodged as the old woman in the woods offering fruits to young forlorn children is anything but a witch. The mirror of fantasy is turned upon reality so that the world of muggles is shaken up and begins to feel outlandish. Imagination is given a freeway as stories and tales are read into otherwise inarticulate bird songs. Coincidences lead to beautiful discoveries while the imaginative drive lasts. This is what many of these pieces seem to suggest.

Fantasies serve as a haven for unfulfilled dreams and inspiring alternatives. The second section of this issue brings together pieces that project fulfilment and emphasise upon the importance of positive faith. Strung on the wings of fancy these pieces celebrate freedom from pressing social expectations, from inner turmoil, from greed and from outrage. These pieces look towards the fantasy world for answers to questions that may be silenced and suppressed in the real world. Things concealed, overlooked and sometimes intentionally ignored in the mundane reality of day-to-day are brought to the forefront and allowed to breathe and grow.

In these pieces, the inventiveness of fantasy makes it not just a refuge from what is set and dictated but the birthplace of freedom, novelty and change.

Writing itself is a meditative and creative task. Nothing is more fantastic and yet real than engendering into existence an imagined space through one's writing. This innovative exercise that lets us create new characters and relate new tales in words of our choice can be painstaking. Yet, a creative piece of one's own making that gives one satisfaction is no less than a dream come true. In the final section therefore we have collected all the pieces that meditate upon the feeling of fulfillment that the creative exercise brings to an artist in any and all modes, whether it be through songs, poems, or photographs. Forever active, imagination has different ways of functioning, sometimes stormy at others balmy, always helping us to broaden our perspectives. These works demonstrate how one's imagination has the potential to bring forth wonder-worlds despite the darkest thoughts that may have captured one.

Imaginative and creative journeys cannot be dismissed as strategies to escape reality; in fact they give us an opportunity to grapple with our inner self and feelings, to engage with deeper reality and empower us to confront the challenges of life with renewed confidence. It is with this faith and conviction in creativity that we offer this rich selection of 84 original pieces (poems, imaginative prose writings and visuals) by students from nearly 50 institutions of the University of Delhi. Enjoy!

Sukrita Paul Kumar
Aruna Asaf Ali Chair
Cluster Innovation Centre
University of Delhi

Concept

Fantasy is not simply to be understood as a means of escape. It is in fact something that is deeply rooted in real life experiences. Writings that succeed in creating wonderlands too spring from reality. An imaginative writer uses the mundane world in an inventive and quixotic manner. Disbelief is suspended not to rashly lose track of reality but to bring it into a better perspective by positing it against the unpredictable, wonderful worlds of our own imagination.

The impossible becomes possible through a convincing depiction. In that, our deepest fears and truest aspirations find expression. Indeed, it is difficult to tell where fantasy ends and reality begins.

संकल्पना

डीयू विधा का अगला अंक आपको कल्पना की उड़ान भरने के लिए आमंत्रित करता है। आइए, अज्ञात की खोज कीजिए और फंतासी की दुनिया में साहसिक प्रवेश कीजिये! हिन्दी या अंग्रेजी में कल्पनाशील लेखन, कविताएँ, कहानियाँ लिखिए और भेजिए, जो आपको और पाठक को फंतासी और उसकी चमत्कारिक दुनिया में सैर करा सके।

फंतासी को महज पलायन का साधन नहीं समझा जाना चाहिए। सच तो यह है कि फंतासी का मूल वास्तविक जीवन के अनुभवों में निहित है। जो लेखन आश्चर्यलोक का सृजन करने में सफल होता है वो यथार्थ से ही उत्पन्न होता है। एक कल्पनाशील लेखक व्यहारिक जीवन का उपयोग सृजनात्मक और स्वप्नद्रष्टा के ढंग से करता है। अविश्वास का स्थगन इसलिए नहीं किया जाता है कि हम बेतहाशा यथार्थ का मार्ग खो दें, बल्कि इसलिए कि हम अपनी कल्पना के आश्चर्यजनक और अप्रत्याशित संसार को यथार्थ के साथ रखकर और बेहतर सन्दर्भ में लाएँ।

यदि चित्रण विश्वासप्रद हो तो असम्भव भी संभव लगता है। हमारे गहनतम डर और सच्ची आकांक्षाएँ उसी में अभिव्यक्त होती हैं। दरअसल, यह बताना मुश्किल है कि कल्पना कहाँ समाप्त होती है और कहाँ यथार्थ शुरू होता है।

CONTENTS

<i>VC's Note</i>	I
<i>Editorial</i>	II
<i>Concept / संकल्पना</i>	V / VI

Section I

FANTASY

फंतासी

01. मेरा सपना	सिद्धि जांगिड़ (लक्ष्मीबाई कॉलेज)	2
02. Micro-tale (Harry)	Bedotroyee Bhattacharjee (Daulat Ram College)	3
03. Self Esteem	Jasnosor Kaur (Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce)	4
04. The Night Before	Kritika Chawla (Department of English)	6
05. Maths Nightmare	Shubham Gop (Shaheed Bhagat Singh College)	10
06. पेड़ और पत्ते	सिद्धि जांगिड़ (लक्ष्मीबाई कॉलेज)	12
07. The Untold Tale of the Nightingale	Aishwarya Kumar (Shaheed Bhagat Singh College)	13
08. Untitled	Shreya Chatterjee (Miranda House)	14

09. Untitled	Prabhjot Kaur (Vivekananda College)	19
10. अगर औरत ना होती	नितिन कुमार (किरोड़ीमल कॉलेज)	20
11. Somnolence	Amit Kumar (Law Centre-II, Faculty of Law)	22
12. A Journey of Discovering the Self	N K Vinutha (Department of English)	23
13. Queen of the Night!	Aishwarya Kumar (Shaheed Bhagat Singh College)	25
14. एक संवाद लंकेश के साथ	निखिल अग्रवाल (राजनीतिक विज्ञान विभाग)	26
15. Twinkling Bird	N K Vinutha (Department of English)	28
16. Star in the Sky	Prerna Singh (LC-II Faculty of Law)	30
17. Fantasy and Reality	Abhinav Anand (Maharaja Agrasen College)	32
18. A Girl Named Love	Shrey Ahuja (Acharya Narendra Dev College)	34
19. Haunting Fantasies	Sanjeev (Shaheed Bhagat Singh College)	38
20. फिर भी कुछ कम है !	भावना चौहान (कालिंदी कॉलेज)	40
21. वो रात काश फिर आ जाए	अनुप्रिया (लेडी श्रीराम कॉलेज फॉर वुमेन)	41

Section II

OF FREEDOM

स्वतंत्रता की उड़ान

22. That Girl	Ananya Baruah (Shaheed Bhagat Singh College)	44
23. Who Am I?	Amit Kumar (Law Centre-II, Faculty of Law)	46
24. स्वतंत्रता	बिसमिल्ला मिसबा (जाकिर हुसैन दिल्ली कॉलेज)	47
25. बदलाव	नितिन कुमार (किरोड़ीमल कॉलेज)	49
26. The Fallen Star	Arijit Roy (Sri Venkateswara College)	51
27. Untitled	Chhavi Goyal (Kalindi College)	52
28. बचा हुआ है	विशेष नमन (एस. जी. टी. बी. खालसा कॉलेज)	53
29. A Facade that turned into a Dream	Rashi Bareja (Kalindi College)	54
30. माँ की डायरी	विशेष नमन (एस. जी. टी. बी. खालसा कॉलेज)	58
31. She!	Mehak Garg (Shaheed Bhagat Singh College)	60
32. पुकार	निशा तिवारी (आई. पी. कॉलेज)	63
33. आगे बढ़ना	नेहा राजपूत (आई. पी. कॉलेज)	64

35. When I Thought I Wasn't Strong	Dhara (Acharya Narendra Dev College)	65
36. ज़िंदगी	अविनाश कुमार (संगीत एवं ललित कला संकाय)	66
37. Hibernation	Manvi Singh (Department of English)	68
38. City Lights	Nitisha Vatsa (Daulat Ram College)	69
39. Outrage!	Rachit Gupta (Satyawati College)	70

Section III

ON THE GROUND

जमींतर

40. पिकनिक	श्रेष्ठा चोपड़ा (लक्ष्मीबाई कॉलेज)	72
41. लेखनी	निशा तिवारी (आई.पी.कॉलेज फ़ॉर वीमेन)	77
42. My Photographs Talk	Bedotroyee Bhattachajee (Daulat Ram College)	78
43. तुम बिन	पूजा सिंह (केन्द्रीय शिक्षण संस्थान)	80
44. Heaven?	Arushi Ahuja (Kamala Nehru College)	81
45. बारिश और तुम	अविनाश कुमार (संगीत एवं ललित कला संकाय)	82
46. The Sepia Morning	Amit Kumar (Faculty of Law)	83

47. Lost and Found	Kashish Koma (St Stephen's College)	84
48. टपकती दीवारें	सत्यम प्रियदर्शी (मोतीलाल नेहरू कॉलेज)	88
49. The Nights	Ankita Biswas (Shaheed Bhagat Singh College)	90
50. Endlessness	Chirayu Goyal (Deshbandhu College)	92
51. बेजुबानों को समझो	दीपक	94
52. Holocaust Journal	Bhavya Srivastava (Kalindi college)	96
53. काश मैं भी लड़का होती	आयुष शुक्ला (संकुल नवप्रवर्तन केंद्र)	101
54. Dilwaalon Ki Delhi	Arijit Roy (Sri Venkateswara College)	103
55. मैं:स्वयं की एक खोज	अनीश चंद्र प्रकाश (संकुल नवप्रवर्तन केंद्र)	105
56. The Hidden Truth	Shrutika Jha (Acharya Narendra Dev College)	106
57. Peace	N K Vinutha (Department of English)	109
58. Haunting Fantasies	Shrey Ahuja (Acharya Narendra Dev College)	111

Section IV

VISUALS

चित्रांकन

(116-143)

List of Reviewers

(144)

Submissions at a Glance

(146)

The book cover features a dark teal background with a large, circular, watercolor-style illustration in shades of blue and green. This illustration depicts a stylized, ornate face with intricate patterns. A fountain pen is shown writing on the face. In the upper left, a smaller circular inset shows a silhouette of a person holding a balloon against a light background.

Fantasy

Section I

फंतासी

खंड - १

मेरा सपना

— सिद्धि जांगिड़ —

काश में एक परी होती
पंखों में मेरे पूरा जहां होता
छू लेती आसमान को
सर पर मेरे हीरों का ताज होता
ख्वाहिशों को पूरा करती
सपनों का खजाना होता
नन्हें फरिश्तों को हंसाती
उनके लिए तारों को ज़मीं पर उतारा होता
चांदनी रात होती
सबके सपनों में जाना होता
सपनों में ही सही
पर सबसे मिल आना होता
बुराइयों को भी
धरती से मिटाना होता
सुबह होते ही
परी लोक में फिर लौट जाना होता
आकर वहाँ से फिर
भगवान के पास भी जाना होता
मुझे परी बनाने का
आभार उसे जताना होता
कितना अच्छा होता
पूरा होता अगर ये सपना
जग का कोना-कोना
बन जाता तब अपना
काश में एक परी होती ।



सिद्धि जांगिड़ लक्ष्मीबाई कॉलेज
में अंग्रेजी ऑनर्स (द्वितीय वर्ष) की छात्रा है ।

Micro-tale (Harry)

— *Bedotroyee Bhattacharjee* —

Blimey Harry,

Hermione went to the muggle library today, and Mate you would not believe what she came across. Someone has written books about us! There are about 8 books, well Hermione insists on calling them 7 books and a play. The last one talks about the future. I am not going to read them without you of course, Hermione is however halfway through it. You should come over as soon as you can. I know you want to flaunt your new Speedgracer 1000 too. I heard it has a power function that could make your nose bleed. Well enough of broomsticks, I would really like to see how they portray us. I guess we are a thing in the muggles world too. Apparently people are going nuts over the series. I could not understand much but something called films are being made out of them. Blimey Harry! I bet Rita Skeeter sold some of our journals we left at Hogwarts to some muggles writer! She has become one of the richest people in her country! I am hoping she is a better writer than Skeeter.

Still intrigued,
Ron



*Bedotroyee Bhattacharjee is pursuing M.A. English
from Daulat Ram College.*

Self Esteem

— Jasnoso Kaur —

Princess Layla lay on the floor of her room in front of the fireplace, silently crying and sniffing. She was thinking of all that had happened earlier the same day and about how she failed again.

“Layla, why are you sitting on the floor?” Her mother cried, standing at the door, holding a tray of food. “You are wearing such a beautiful silver laced blue gown, do you want it to get all grubby and wrinkled?”

“Mother, leave your good for nothing daughter alone.”

“Don’t say that princess. I know you are upset because after days of practice, today you were not able to ride a horse in front of your father. But girl, you will learn it in due time.”

“No, I won’t. I tried a thousand times; it’s not going to happen.”

“You are good at baking, writing poems and sketching. These are the qualities a girl should possess. Your brother can ride you to any place you wish.”

“Mother, you won’t understand, I wanted to prove myself and be good at something which needs courage. Forget it. I am not hungry.”

Layla ran out of the room.

“Layla, stop!”

But she didn’t listen.

After running for half an hour in the woods, Layla stooped to catch her breath. There she saw an old lady in her eighties, sitting on a rock and weaving a robe of white colour which was so long that the whole city could fit into it.

“For whom are you weaving such a long and huge robe?” asked the princess.

“Anyone who wishes to wear it.”

Princess couldn’t understand what the old lady meant.

“Girl, what are you doing alone here? Where’s your horse?”

"Princess you have several men to teach you how to ride a horse."

"I am too afraid of everything. They have tried but were not able to teach me. Wait how do you know that I am a princess?"

"Your attire, girl. I can help you learn horse riding."

"How in the world can you teach me horse riding."

"I have a magical fruit, if you will eat it, you will ride any horse perfectly."

The princess was amazed. "Are you a witch?"

"You can call me that, princess."

The old lady handed her the fruit and cried, "Just remember that this fruit won't work if you have fear inside you. For the fruit to work, you have to believe in yourself."

"Okay, Thanks lady."

The next day, princess ate the magical fruit and sat on the back of the horse, full of confidence and zeal.

She rode the horse just fine.

"My dear daughter, that was quite an improvement. Practice more and you will be perfect" exclaimed her father.

The princess was elated; she rode to the woods to thank the old lady.

She found her weaving a new white robe from scratch. Layla didn't bother to ask why.

"Your magical fruit has worked very well. Thanks old lady."

"Why are you thanking me, I have not done anything princess and that fruit was not magical."

"What are you saying?"

"I plucked the fruits from those trees," she said pointing in the north direction.

The princess couldn't understand a word she said.

"Then aren't you a witch?"

"No."

"What is your full name, old lady?"

"Princess, you can call me Self Esteem."



*Jasnoor Kaur is a student of B.A. (Hons) Economics, Second Year at
Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce.*

The Night Before

————— *Kritika Chawla* —————

I try to estimate how much time it is before the Sun rises and we go to war. Everyone is prepared, Bhishma Pitamah will be the commander in chief and the brothers will go to war against one another. I have never confessed it to anyone, but I secretly wonder if I'm responsible for the impending disaster. I have already lost my kavach and kundal, it's just a matter of a few days before my other curses come to play. I can hear the echo of all the curses in my ears. All my knowledge and years of practice will be invalidated when I need them the most. The words of Mother Kunti, I can't seem to get rid of them. I still want to fight Arjuna, that urge to defeat him will never go away, but all else, all the destruction, all the hatred, is it worth it? I have never encouraged Duryodhana to fight with his brothers, but could I have tried harder to stop him? Should I have? I heave a deep sigh. I seem to only have questions tonight, no answers. And I don't think I'll ever have them now. I would have gone to Krishna for advice but I know he'll say what he already tried to convince me to do. There is no way I want to join the Pandavas. My mother is Radha, and that's what I will believe till I die. Why this restlessness then? I have pledged to kill Arjuna and that will be the end, either of his life or mine. I am not scared of fighting with him. I have full faith in my abilities. I'm scared because- because I feel guilty that my pledge will indirectly be the cause of loss of so many lives, from both the sides. I haven't even told Duryodhana the truth of my birth that I recently learnt. I don't know how he'll react to it.

I see movement outside my camp and step out. It's Duryodhana pacing up and down. I go to him and ask what's wrong. He looks at me but doesn't say anything for a long moment. I can see my tension reflected in his eyes. I know that deep down, he realises the truth too.

The silence of the night blows away all anger and ego. It's bare truth between my best friend and I. I stand there, not waiting for him to answer but just standing by his side. I would always stand by him, like he did, when I needed it the most.

"What are you thinking?" I finally ask. He takes a deep breath and looks far away. We can hear the faint chattering of the night birds.

"It's not just me, you know. Or us." He finally looks at me and replies. I beckon him with my eyes to continue. He looks away again. "There are hundreds of lives. I am responsible for each one of them. They are my people. All of you. And I am using everyone to fight my battle. I.. of course he would think that way, he is a wonderful King, a thoughtful husband and father, and the most loyal friend.

I should have told him that no, it's our battle too. It's our war. I should have told him that whatever decision he makes, I will always be with him. I should have told him then and there not to worry about anything but instead I'm myself surprised at what comes out of my mouth.

"I am the eldest Pandava."

Duryodhana looks at me perplexed. His eyes asking a hundred questions his lips can't form. I finally decide to tell him all. I tell him about my meeting with Krishna and Mother Kunti. I tell them what they said to me, word by word. I have no idea if he'll ever want to see my face again when I finish. I don't know if he'll consider me an enemy too.

"So I told her that that way, whoever dies, Arjuna or I, she will still have five sons." I finish and Duryodhana stares at me. I cannot gauge what his expression means.

"If I ask you for something, will you be kind enough to grant it?" he asks in a neutral voice. I nod vigorously. "Anything brother, anything." "We'll go to the Pandavas as soon as the Sun rises. Only you and I, and you'll tell them that if they give you all that you rightfully deserve as a Pandava, we don't want to fight."

"What?" I am confused beyond belief. He doesn't want to fight? Of all the things I expected from Duryodhana, this wasn't one of them. I take a moment trying to calculate, trying to figure if there's a hidden plan in his advice. "Don't think too hard brother. I know what I am saying. You think I won't do anything that doesn't profit me?" "No, that's not it. I'm just confused. Why would you not want to fight, Duryodhana? You mean there will be no war? But why?" "That's exactly what I mean" he smiles calmly. His smile only confuses me more. Is he really saying what I'm hearing? A faint voice in my head tells me not to doubt his goodness. I've always believed in his kindness, but in this moment I respect him a hundred times more.

"You think I'm fighting with Pandavas because I enjoy it? No, Karna, I was going to war because they're unfair. Because I never got what I rightfully deserved and I wanted to show to them that if they won't give me my whole right, I'll snatch it. But you're the one who deserves it more than anyone Karna. You're my best friend. You're the voice of reason in my times of rage. And no, I am not doing this for you. I am doing this because after what you told me, this war doesn't make sense. I know I was too blinded in my ego and Shakuni's plotting, but I have reason too my friend. And now's the time to let the brain do the talking, not my anger. No one enjoys war, Karna. If they agree to give you what you should have got long back, there will be no war on this land of Kurukshetra. Let's try to reach there as early as we can and talk to Krishna and Yudhishtira. Does Yudhishtira know?"

"I-I don't know. I don't think so." I seem to not comprehend my own words. Duryodhana smiles and puts an arm round my shoulder as he starts walking towards my camp. "Get some sleep. We'll wake up in some time and go meet your brothers, okay?"

"Okay, good night, Brother." The sentence is almost a whisper because my voice is clouded with emotions. There is so much to say, so much more to think. I stand there, outside my camp, watching Duroyodhana go towards his.

He looks up at the sky and takes a deep sigh before entering. I go inside and close my eyes, trying to calm my racing heart and wondering if this was all a dream or reality. I guess I'll find out when I wake up in a few hours.



*Kritika Chawla is a student of M.A English, First Year
at the Department of English.*

Maths Nightmare

————— *Shubham Gop* —————

A boy, in his teenage, dreaded mathematics;
Maths was a nightmare, he loathed even the basics.
But, he was having a mere wish
That he could vanish maths by a magical wand's swish.

On a moonless night, he was strolling around,
Until a stick fell on his head,
That made him grin and yell, 'Look, what I've found!'
It was a wand, a magical wand
That bore the message - "Just one wish and I'm gone."

The boy knew what his wish would be,
'Avada Kedavra! Remove maths from my life please!'
The moment the wish was fulfilled and the wand gone,
He sprinted to his room and realised that he's won.

No maths' textbooks and notebooks around,
He felt his heart with happiness and joy - abound.
He grabbed his phone to tell his friend this awesome news,
But to his surprise, there were no numbers on the phone to be
used.

Soon he realised, maths has vanished and so have numbers.
He hadn't thought his grim wish would create such blunders.
He ran to clutch his wallet and took out a coin
No number on it too and in disgust he thought -
What he had been doing....?

He cursed himself for what he had done.
Who on earth is going to spare him? ...None!
No maths meant - no speeding cars, aircrafts and stuff.
Without it, people's lives seemed tough.

He had maimed physics and chemistry, he thought,
What maniac problem, to the world, he has brought.
He wished he could reverse the time,
To undo the dangerous crime.

Suddenly he woke up in his bed and looked around,
To his relief, it was just a dream, he found.



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पेड़ और पत्ते

— सिद्धि जांगिड़ —

मैंने सुना है पेड़ों को रोते हुए
गिरते हुए पत्तों को अपना कहते हुए
पतझड़ के पत्ते पेड़ों से गिरते रहे जब
फिर वही पेड़ नए पल्लव से मिलने को तरसते रहे ।
हँसते रहे वह पल्लव जब तक संग रहे
अलग हुए तो पल भर में रोने लगे
गम में भीगी पलकें भी अब हंसने लगी
पेड़ को जब पत्तियाँ नई ढकने लगी ।
नई पत्ती नया रंग अब छाने लगा
वृक्ष जब आवरण नया पाने लगा
सूखा पेड़ फिर से लहलहाने लगा
पतझड़ के बाद जब वसंत फिर मुस्कराने लगा ।
यह देख मेरे मन में विचार नया आने लगा
हर ऋतु में कैसे मनुष्य नया वेश धरने लगा
अपनों को पराया और परायों को अपना बनने का
कुदरत का खेल मुझे समझ आने लगा ।



सिद्धि जांगिड़ लक्ष्मीबाई कॉलेज में अंग्रेजी ऑनर्स (द्वितीय वर्ष) की छात्रा है ।

The Untold Tale of the Nightingale

————— *Aishwarya Kumar* —————

She couldn't wait to meet her,
The warmth of her love, was what she craved for,
All she wanted now was to rest on her breast,
And let her lullabies calm the unrest,
"Maa" she exclaimed as she appeared to her sight,
And hugged her so very tight.
She was sent out to live her life, But 'midst her journey she
returned awhile,
One more time to feel the love, to feel alright,
To gain the strength for another flight.
At her return, she soon realized,
Things had changed, nothing was right,
She had never felt this broken,
She left, this time never to return.
Her heart was too heavy to fly,
She spread her wings and hit the sky,
Exhausted, she found an abandoned nest,
A twig hurt her, as she slept.
She awoke and her knees felt weak,
Cries of "Maa" "Maa" escaped her beak.
Her pained cries were mistaken for sweet melody at midnight
And the world enjoyed the Nightingale's song all night!



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Untitled

— Shreya Chatterjee —

She talked in her sleep for hours. This was a regular phenomenon with her. She awoke suddenly, sweaty and hot. "Is it happening again?" asked her Mom who had just entered unnoticed. "It never stopped as such" she replied. "Well you should see someone regarding what's going on Sarah. It isn't normal." Sarah sat on her bed and said nothing for a while. "Well I kind of like it. I know it isn't exactly in the normal category of dreams but I somehow don't want it to stop." "But why? Doesn't it bother you that you dream about random people's lives who don't even know about your existence, but you know everything about them? Every and each detail of their lives. How they live, eat, spend their Christmas or the tiniest detail, like where Maggie keeps her dolls." "Oh you remember the names in my story?" grinned Sarah. Her mom ignored her comment and continued, "Even if you happen to meet them, even in the slightest chance of that happening, do you think they will even acknowledge your so called "abilities" or even believe you for that matter? And if you don't ever meet them, what's the whole point of this?" "That is the thing mom. Some things just don't have a point. And of course I want to meet these people and find out more about their lives because that's literally like meeting the people of my dreams" She smiled to herself on that little pun, and continued, "But the fact of the matter is that this cant be stopped because its not even in my control. When it initially started, it bothered me a lot but now its just somehow a very important part of me, you know? Its like I know these people and all about their life, the present one plus their past life. Amusing, isn't it?" Her mother sighed and left the room. Her father, who had been eavesdropping on this conversation, sighed too after her mother exchanged a disappointed look with him. Meanwhile, Sarah started her day with a smile. Nobody fully understood why she even enjoyed having such dreams or how she could feel so close to people she didn't even know, but some things are always inexplicable right?

"When did it start?", asked the psychologist. "About five years ago" replied Sarah, angry with her mother who had tricked her into coming to the "dentist" for a "perfectly normal daily check-up." "Tell me what exactly did you see. Is it the same dream every time, or fragments of the same? Is it about some recurrent people or do you see different people? Plus, where do you see all this happening? Tell me every detail." "Well, its pretty descriptive, so it might take time and you might find it boring." "I'm a psychologist, honey. Every detail, please" she smiled. "Alright. So as I told you it started about five years ago. There is this constant environment that I see. It's a small little colony, embedded in a city with lakes and greenery. Its a constant group of people that I see. A little happy family, though I see a single father with his two kids. The dreams are nothing explicit, just that I see them doing normal chores and going about their daily lives. However I feel very connected to them in an unusual way. Like they affect me somehow. I have a feeling they know me you know? Also, you should know that I love to have these dreams. My mother thinks that's completely absurd but I don't even want them to stop. Its not even a problem for me. Its now a part of me and who I am. Its completely normal for me. I don't even think I need any help to "cure" this, as my mother likes to put it. Whether that's true or not is a question beyond my comprehension. Well that's just it. Guess that wasn't as explicit as I initially had imagined." The psychologist didn't say anything for a long time. She stared at the window situated exactly behind where Sarah was sitting. "Was it that boring?", exclaimed Sarah with a surprised laugh. The psychologist finally seemed to come back to her senses. She thought to herself, "Well being this lost after hearing a client's story does not exactly befit a psychologist's profile. "Mrs Mosby?" asked Sarah now completely puzzled with the psychologist's reaction. "I'm so sorry Sarah. I'll see you tomorrow then. Same time." She said with a blank, lost face. Before Sarah could say anything, Mrs Mosby requested her assistant to call in the next client. Sarah left the office, completely taken aback by her reaction.

"She didn't say anything. Nothing at all. Except that she'll see me tomorrow again, same time" Sarah narrated back home.

Her mother was now tensed. Was this beyond the repair of the psychologist? Will this continue forever? What were they going to do?

Mrs Mosby couldn't see how all this had happened. How could someone have the exact same dream for the exact same time that she had been having it? How could this happen? Coincidence? No, she knew better than that to happen. Her mind raced and recounted the events of the day. She had become a psychologist to deal exactly with this problem. This recurring dream that haunted her every night, yet she loved to have it, like Sarah. The dream that had been haunting her for five whole years. Yet, she didn't want it to stop. She wanted answers to the the unknown, of things reality couldn't explain. Thus she chose psychology, to delve into people's lives and minds, to know what they think and believe, to delve into the unknown. Well, she had found the exact unknown she had been looking for. Except the answer to that was still a mystery. This was a clue right? To discover what this was. To find answers to how this could happen. She had to see Sarah. Tonight.

The drive to Sarah's house was tense and brooding. It was raining, but that didn't bother Rachel. She drove on. This was a definite signal. A strong believer in destiny and miracles, she didn't exactly ever befit a psychologist's profile anyway. But she had to be one. She chose this path for answers. Was she going to find answers tonight? She really really hoped so.

"Who is it at 10 pm?" wondered Sarah's mom. She opened the door and was surprised to see Sarah's psychologist. She immediately imagined the worst. Before Rachel could say anything, she blurted out, "Its Sarah, isn't it? Something is terribly wrong right? Can it never be cured?" "Please calm down. I'm here for a completely different purpose. Sarah can I talk to you for a minute please? Alone, if possible."

"I thought this was an imaginary place. The people definitely seemed real, but I didn't think I would actually be travelling there." Sarah spoke, half to herself and half to Rachel. They were on the train.

They were going to visit the family. What was the name of the place or the station was completely unknown to them." But why don't we remember the part of the dream where the place might have been mentioned?", asked Sarah. "Well you know, I don't exactly know the answer to that but our brain remembers some events very very clearly, while completely blurs out others. Isn't it odd that both of us fail to remember the name of the place? Although I remember exactly how it looks. So we'll be able trace it down." "Yeah me too. I remember exactly how it looks. This is so exciting!" exclaimed Sarah with excitement.

"This is it. This is the station, isn't it?", asked Rachel. "Yes, exactly as I imagined" smiled Sarah. "What are we waiting for, then? Lets go!" said Rachel. Rachel then asked the cab driver to take them to a red brick house at the end of the lane on sector 4, Palm Springs drive.

They walked up the house, nervous yet excited. Everything seemed so familiar, as if they lived there. Those flowers, that chimney, that brick structure, everything. It was time. The answers lay beyond that door. They rang the bell. With a click, the door opened. An old man opened the door. He stared at them for what seemed like an eternity and started weeping. Rachel and Sarah had expected surprises, but they were rather taken aback by this. "This may sound really inappropriate, but do you know us?", Rachel asked. The man weeped a little more, and then pacified himself. "Come in and see for yourself" was all he could manage to say. His weeping had now been overpowered by awe and surprise. He couldn't stop staring at them. "Are you ghosts?", asked a small girl who seemed to be about five and had just entered the room along with her older brother, who gaped at the visitors with his mouth wide open. "Maggie!" exclaimed Rachel and Sarah in unison. She was exactly like in their dream. Well, everything was. Sarah wandered to the other room. It was the father's room, she guessed. What she saw there left her dumbfounded. Over the mantelpiece was picture. A picture of her and Rachel. Yes, it was a picture of them. She called Rachel, who was as surprised as she was. "I don't understand" Sarah finally exclaimed. "We don't either.

How are you back?”, said the father who had entered the room with his kids. “I am still at bay here. How do you have an exact photo of me and Sarah?”, asked Rachel. “Well this might sound absurd but Sarah was my eldest daughter Ginny, who died in a car crash twenty years ago. You, my wife were in the car with her. Both of you died that day.” Rachel and Sarah just stood there, unable to utter a word. No wonder they had dreamt of this family for five years. No wonder Sarah came to Rachel of all the psychologists in the city. No wonder they knew every tiny detail about this family. No wonder they knew everything about the lives of strangers who were now suddenly family. No wonder they had dreamt about their past lives for the past five years. “No wonder” They both exclaimed. Coincidence? No, they knew better. Some things had been answered and some hadn’t. But Sarah and Rachel were satisfied and were finally at peace. No wonder they both believed in miracles. No wonder.



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Untitled

————— *Prabhjot Kaur* —————

Where the moon was shy
Where all the what ifs deny
Those trees covering the sky
There stands a woman veiling her chest
There stands a woman with a single breast.
Was it the magic of her sweat or the fragrance of the wood,
Or may be it was the strong essence of her womanhood.
The glamour of her nature covering her anxiety,
Thinking about the doomed society,
All the hustle going on in her mind
About taboo of scars, bald skull and weight,
All the memories of romance and motherhood she rewinds,
After all the pain she carried, she still stands straight.
The beauty of her bald scalp still prevails,
She has the power still to collect the stars in her veil.
After the great pain and disdain,
The power of womanhood still remains



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अगर औरत ना होती

— नितिन कुमार —

सोचता हूँ

कैसा होता अगर औरत ना होती

ना होती खुशियाँ जीवन में
ना होता भावुकता का पुट
ना होती त्याग की परिभाषा
ना प्रेम की कोई होती भाषा
हर कदम की साथी पत्नी ना होती
कैसा होता अगर औरत ना होती

सौंदर्य का अमृत ना होता
ना होती कोमलता अपार
रह जाते मकान बस ईंटो के
ना बन पाते ये घर कभी
जीवन देने वाली माँ न होती
कैसा होता अगर औरत ना होती

ना होती साहस की शक्ति
ना होती जीवन अभिव्यक्ति
ना प्रेम कविता गाता कोई
ना इश्क गज़ल दोहराता कोई
प्रेम रहस्य समझाने वाली प्रेमिका ना होती
कैसा होता अगर औरत ना होती

ना होती मूर्ति गीता की
ना होती पवित्रता सीता की
ना होता स्नेह का आँचल कोई
ना होता संस्कार पालन कोई
अपने हिस्से की खुशियाँ देने वाली बहनें ना होती
कैसा होता अगर औरत ना होती

सच में
कुछ ना होता अगर औरत ना होती ।



नितिन कुमार किरोड़ीमल कॉलेज में
राजनीति शास्त्र (प्रथम वर्ष) के छात्र हैं ।

Somnolence

————— *Amit Kumar* —————

I live in a mystic delirium, I see circular dreams
Dreams whose beginnings and ends have melted
I live and relive the same spaces, same old times
Act and reenact the same roles, commit the same old crimes.

Restlessness and transience offer me wings
At once I fly to the sky for the weightless thrill
At once I drop to the bosom of earth for the joy it brings.

I am in a drunken stupor, my senses are lulled
Just to stay on my feet I have ominously struggled.

My ears half shut, strain to hear
sibilant whispers, familiar sounds
My eyes half open, laboriously widen to discern
hazy faces lost in smoke and clouds.

Let me live, lost deep in my delirious trance
Allow me my fantasies minus any pragmatic this-worldly sub-
stance

Spare me a cruel awakening, spare me the real
For all that I reject in this world, I still hold in the ethereal.



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A Journey of Discovering the Self

————— *N K Vinutha* —————

I walk on this path
that's yet undiscovered,
Less wandered and distinct,
The fog of unknown fear and relentless doubt obscure my way,
Yet the gurgling sounds from the river of hope give solace to my soul.
The ice capped mountains stare at me, invincible and undeterred,
As they spark in me the strength
to endure all odds, I continue on this journey.
In search of the passions of my heart, I enter into the dense forest.
The sun peeps now and then
from the top,
The leaves and branches form new shadows, just as I see myself seeking meaning.
The crickets and cicadas sound as if heralding great opportunities for the future.
Singing along, I move on.
Ah! The sun dawns upon me!
And the darkness of ignorance begins
to fade away,
I come across new possibilities just as
a rainbow forms beside the silvery waterfall.
All the failure and success up until then, felt like ups and downs

of the valley.

And here I am...On the mountain top,
Enjoying the marvellous view of every dream
that was thought unreal by many,
Still unsure of the ways taken and risks involved,
I step back,
The cold winds blow all of a sudden,
And bring back the memories of the tireless efforts of the past.
I smile! For there is immense joy bursting from within,
Like pollen from the flowers of spring.
I arise at this dawn!



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Queen of the Night!

————— *Aishwarya Kumar* —————

Her touch was luminous,
Her charisma was ferocious,
She shined bright in the darkest of night,
Everything she touched danced in the midnight,
Crescent or full, no matter what she has been,
She ruled the night sky like a queen,
Her beauty left the world spellbound,
Nothing as beautiful as her was ever found,
The world cared way too much about her marks,
Yet she was seated firm in innumerable hearts,
She is the epitome of beauty,
The universe has never witnessed something so pretty!



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एक संवाद लंकेश के साथ

निखिल अग्रवाल

कल सुबह-सुबह रास्ते में एक दस सिर वाला हट्टा-कट्टा बंदा अचानक मेरी कार के आगे आ गया। जैसे-तैसे ब्रेक लगाई और पूछा- क्या अंकल 20-20 आँखें हैं, फिर भी दिखाई नहीं देता?

जवाब मिला- थोड़ा तमीज़ से बोलो, हम लंकेश्वर रावण हैं।

ओह अच्छा। तो आप ही हो श्रीमान रावण। एक बात बताओ, ये दस-दस मुंह संभालने थोड़े मुश्किल नहीं हो जाते? मेरा मतलब शैम्पू वगैरह करते टाइम, यू नो, और कभी सर दर्द शुरू हो जाए तो पता करना मुश्किल हो जाता होगा कि कौन से सर में दर्द हो रहा है?

रावण- पहले ये बताओ तुम लोग कैसे डील करते हो इतने सारे मुखौटों से? हर रोज चेहरे पर एक नया मुखौटा, उस पर एक और मुखौटा, उस पर एक और। यार एक ही मुंह पर इतने नकाब...थक नहीं जाते?

अरे-अरे आप तो सीरियसली ले गए। मैं तो वैसे ही...अच्छा ये बताओ मैंने सुना है आप कुछ ज्यादा ही अहंकारी हो?

रावण- हाहा...

“अब इसमें हँसने वाली क्या बात थी, कोई जोक मारा क्या मैंने?”

रावण- और नहीं तो क्या; एक ‘कलयुगी इंसान’ के मुंह से ये शब्द सुनकर हँसी नहीं आएगी तो और क्या होगा? तुम लोग साले एक छोटी-मोटी डिग्री क्या ले ली, अँग्रेजी के दो-पाँच अक्षर क्या सीख लिए, यूँ इतरा के चलते हो जैसे तुमसे बड़ा ज्ञानी कोई है ही नहीं इस धरती पर। एक तुम ही समझदार, बाकी सब गँवार। और मैंने चारों वेद पढ़ के उन पर टीका टिप्पणी तक कर दी। चंद्रमा की रोशनी से खाना पकवा लिया। इतने-इतने क्लोन बना डाले, दुनिया का पहला विमान और खरे सोने की लंका बना दी। तो थोड़ा बहुत घमंड कर भी लिया तो कौन सी आफत आ पड़ी है?

चलो ठीक है बॉस,ये तो जस्टिफ़ाई कर दिया आपने, लेकिन गुस्सा आने पर बदला चुकाने को किसी की बीवी ही उठा के ले गए। ससुरा मजाक है का? बीवी न हुई छोटी मोटी साइकिल हो गयी, दिल किया, उठा ले गए बताओ। (एक पल के लिए रावण महाशय तनिक सोच में पड़ गए, मेरे चेहरे पर एक विजयी मुस्कान आने ही वाली थी कि फिर वही इरिटेटिंग अट्टहास)

हाहाहा...

लुक हू इज सेइंग। अबे! मैंने श्री राम की बीवी को उठाया, मानता हूँ बहुत बड़ा पाप किया और उसका परिणाम भी भुगता, पर मेघनाद की कसम- कभी जबरदस्ती तो दूर, हाथ तक नहीं लगाया, उनकी गरिमा को रती भर भी ठेस नहीं पहुँचाई और तुम, तुम कलयुगी इंसान छोटी-छोटी बच्चियों तक को नहीं बखशते। अपनी हवस के लिए किसी भी लड़की को शिकार बना लेते हो, कभी जबरदस्ती तो कभी झूठे वादों, छलावों से। अरे तुम दरिदों के पास कोई नैतिक अधिकार बचा भी है मेरे चरित्र पर उंगली उठाने का? फोकट में ही।

इस बार शर्म से सर झुकाने की बारी मेरी थी। पर मैं भी ठहरा पक्का इंसान। मजाक उड़ाते हुए बोला- अरे जाओ-जाओ अंकल। दशहरा कल ही है, सारी हेकड़ी निकाल देंगे देखना।

और इस बार लंकेश्वर जी इतनी जोर से हँसे कि मैं गिरते-गिरते बचा। वह बोले- हर साल मेरा पुतला भर जला के खुश हो जाते हो और मैं कहीं ना कहीं तुम सब के अंदर ही मौजूद रहता हूँ। वैसे अब तो मुझे ही घुटन सी होने लगी है तुम लोगों के अंदर रह कर। मैं खुद ही चला जाऊंगा जल्द ही। डोंट वरी।



निखिल अग्रवाल राजनीतिक विज्ञान विभाग में शोध छात्र हैं ।

Twinkling Bird

— NK Vinutha —

"I saw a twinkling bird in the sky today, Maa", said Baby Ostrich to Mama Ostrich.

"In your dreams, baby! It's time to go to bed..", said Mama Ostrich. However, her baby was adamant but was put to sleep soon.

"Shyama!", a voice came and there was Shyamala, summoned by her friends to play tic-tac-toe. Leaving the book aside halfheartedly, she went downstairs. The courtyard, filled with the laughter and chirping of little girls, a witness to the daily routine of the Nair houses, which allowed their girls to gain an understanding of worldly affairs through books and social interaction. Shyamala, a girl of nine, with long hair, brightest among girls of her age, inquisitive about every new thing she came across.

Disturbed by the thought of the twinkling bird, her mind ran as fast as an antelope in the green plains. Sitting at her window, trying to find the twinkling bird, swimming through the sky.

A dark cloud with a sudden lightning appeared, shuddered the girl. A bird she could find, in that cloud.

Happy as she was, on discovering the much awaited sight, The next moment, noticed a small flickering light in the middle of the ocean.

It too seemed a bird to her with a long neck. A revolving head with shimmering eyes. Tired, she then slept.

Morning came with its brightness. And the sun too was far above and shiny.

The earthen lamps at the temple, headlights of the bicycles and buses, fireflies in the backyard at dusk, all shone and dazzled in front of her. Perturbed, the curious mind, finally, opened *Adventures of Baby Ostrich*, Hurriedly turning the pages and reading the black, rounded script she exclaimed, "Oh! It was a constellation of stars, after all! Poor, Baby Ostrich!" A sigh of relief she felt and a sense of pride glistened through her spectacled face...



*N K Vinutha is a student of M.A. English, Final Year
at the Department of English.*

Star in the Sky

————— *Prerna Singh* —————

Of the several stars in the sky,
I gazed at one, with my wide opened eyes.
It stared back at me and smiled,
I got confused yet was mesmerised.

It now pointed at me and laughed,
I got bewildered and petrified.
It held my hand and made me walk,
I followed like a baby by its mother's side.

We came to the worlds of stars,
I lost myself into it and felt no harm.
For the star was yet not me,
But still held me in parts.

The star was just one of the several stars.
But the only one who made me the most calm.
I felt its touch as if holding thin air,
In possession yet free.

I saw me in it and it in me
It smiled and waived.
I realised, the star was just me
..a simple me...

I myself was the star with my own light
But not that bright
Yet my personal and all mine.

Of the several stars in the sky,
I found the star within me,
at whom I gazed with my wide opened eyes.



*Prerna Singh is studying in LC-II, Third Year
at Faculty of Law.*

Fantasy and Reality

————— *Abhinav Anand* —————

Your reality is so dear to you
That you are afraid of something new
You impose, you dictate
You force me to accept
In the name of reality
In the name of fate
But I have these borrowed wings
That will take me beyond
'Your' reality, your scorn.
I will create my own world
And will never call it real
I will call it fantasy
So that you can also
Come to that world with me
You call 'this' world real
I just ask really?
And you brand me as a fool
You call me silly
I just want to have a say
And see things in my own way

'This' world can be a better place
If we can be so generous
As to look and see
How fantasy
Blends with what we call reality...



*Abhinav Anand is a student of B. A. (Hons) English ,
Second Year at Maharaja Agrasen College.*

A Girl Named Love

— Shrey Ahuja —

"Sir, sir," this man panting like he'd run a marathon poked me on the shoulder. He spoke as though certain I knew the answer to whatever he wanted to know.

"Yes," I said as I turned around. I looked at him and saw the man. He was wearing a black jeans and a T shirt. He was bent down, his hands on his knees and his back heaving up and down. He was catching his breath. I was initially just going to shout at him the instant I turned, but something about that man mellowed me.

"What, what is it my good man?" I asked him, concerned.

"Sir, I, just wanted, to know," he said panting, his words punctuated by deep breaths.

"Catch your breath first man. Take a second," I told him, concerned very much now for his well-being.

"No no, it's, it's fine," he said as he placed his left hand on my right shoulder. "I'm fine."

He said that, but his voice made it seem as though he was about to fall down if he didn't take in a gulp of air fast. I took him by the hand he had put on my shoulder and walked him to a chair close by and sat him down

"Deep breaths, deep breaths," I said in my calmest voice possible. And he did. I think he calmed down a bit and took in deep breaths. I didn't know I had such a voice in me.

“What happened? Why are you so tired and panting?” I asked him in a soft but firm voice.

He had finally relaxed a bit. The deep breaths had done their trick. “I’m, I’m looking for someone,” he said. He was calm but his voice was still fast, as though he was still running.

“Is that why you were running?” I asked him.

He calmly looked down at his clothes and realised they were all sweaty and dripping.

“Yeah, I guess that’s why I was running. I really wanted to catch her,” he said.

When he spoke, his voice sounded so good, so pure, so calm, yet so hollow. Broken and barren. Full of emptiness. He was like a beach. A beach where everything was perfectly calm. The sun wasn’t too harsh, the ocean was calm and not crashing into the beach loudly. The birds were chirping in the background concordantly. And a light breeze covered the beach. Yet despite all the calmness, the beach was empty. Bereft of people. Despite its calmness and seeming stillness, nobody set foot in it.

“Who were you seeking?” I asked him. My voice was rushed, fast and discordant. But, not as hollow. I was like the beach where there was everyone. It was full of people, where the sun was shining a bit too harshly and the waves were crashing in loudly. The people too were loud and chaotic and too self-engrossed with the beach’s imperfections. They whined and complained, rather than appreciating what they had. And all of them thinking how they will have to go back to their lives once this holiday is over, rather than enjoy being at the beach.

“There’s this girl I want to find,” he said. He looked right ahead, obsessed with the search. There was something about him I couldn’t yet pinpoint.

"Who's this girl you so desperately want to find?" I asked.

"See, this girl. She's named Love," he said.

"A girl, named love?" I asked him, a bit bewildered.

"Yes," he responded.

It was when he said this I figured out what seemed off. He wasn't looking at me, he was looking above my shoulder. He was looking beyond me. And he wasn't talking to me, he was talking to nobody in particular. He was just talking. Out in the open, to all those who could hear him.

"What, what happened to her?" I asked him, bewildered and a bit worried.

"She's lost. She's gone somewhere; I, I just can't seem to find her anywhere," he said.

"What does she look like?" I asked him.

He let out a huge sigh. "She, she's beautiful. She looks as though an angel came to Earth. She is as beautiful as Heer and Juliet and all of them. Her face is pure and innocent. And her words are beautiful like a brownie that melts in your mouth. Her scent is so pure, so clean and fresh like the fresh mountain air, high into the sky." As he spoke, I lay there mesmerised. His words captured me. He spoke with so much passion about her.

There were no hidden agendas with him. He had no grand plan as to why he wanted her or what he planned to do after he found her. He talked about her and wanted to find her as though it was his sole purpose in life.

I thought about the last time I felt like this about something, about anyone. I don't know how long it has been since I wanted something with all my heart, no strings attached. Only because I love it.

We trap ourselves in our little bubbles, doing what we love but for some bigger reason. To make money, to become popular. To be someone. But the things we love should be just that. The things we love. Not things we will in time try to monetise or show them off. They should be just for us, for ourselves, for our happiness. If something you love doesn't make you happy, what's the use of it?

It didn't feel long thinking about all this. But it was long enough for that man to go off again. Running somewhere probably, leaving me all alone to think on the beach, where the people had gotten up and the sun was setting and the moon was coming around. The day was ending on the beach, and hopefully, the next day might bring some change in the beach.



Shrey Ahuja is a student of B.Tech. Computer Science, Seventh Semester at Acharya Narendra Dev College.

Haunting Fantasies

Sanjeev

Recalling the dream of last night
Meadow in the moonlight
Breeze running through
A shadow came out of the woods
Sending a chill down my spine
I could barely move
Broken in cold sweat
I stood there helpless
Waiting for the worse to unfold
As the short round figure came near
My breath grew dear
I had dread this moment a thousand times in my child mind
A ghost from the unknown world coming to take me away
How in my growing up years
I believed this will never take place
For life was about practicality
Finding sense in morality
During the span of time
This fright was buried deep down in my mind
But now that I see the dreaded event
Unfolding before my eyes, I realised
Heart was always more sensible than mind
For it saw the future beyond conceivable notions
It saw the lightning which blinded the mind

My mind was confused in the theory of rain
While the heart was mesmerised in the beauty of dew
Mind was hailed for intellect
Heart was suppressed
Now I see death in the eye
Smiling at me for I am naive
Time running out
Life flashing before my eyes.



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फिर भी कुछ कम है

— भावना चौहान —

जीवन में बहुत कुछ है फिर भी कुछ कम है
भीड़ है यहाँ लोगों की फिर भी अकेलापन है
चारों ओर शोर-शराबा है माहौल भी प्रसन्न है
खुशियों का जमघट है फिर भी सन्नाटे में हम है
हम निकल पड़े अलग राह पर सोचा कि ये प्रसन्नता का नवजन्म है
किन्तु ना बदला रुख हवा का, यहाँ भी मिला केवल गम ही गम है
भावनाओं ने असहाय बना डाला मन में अनबन कायम है
फिर भी कदम चल रहे हैं, खुदा ये तेरा ही रहमो-करम है
हाथों में जोर है, बाजुओं में इतना दम है
चाहते हैं सब कुछ पाना, लगता है हम ही हम है
कभी लगता है शिखर पर पहुंच चुके हैं या शायद यह मन का वहम है
फिर भी प्रसन्नता जाती रही है, हर्ष भी दिल में सम है
सुख में दुःख, गम में उमंग- शायद यही जीवन है
लेकिन फिर भी अपूर्णता है, मन में अधूरापन है
होठों पर तैर रही हंसी है फिर भी आँखें नम है
जीवन में बहुत कुछ है फिर भी कुछ कम है !



भावना चौहान कालिंदी कॉलेज में पत्रकारिता ऑनर्स
(द्वितीय वर्ष) की छात्रा हैं ।

वो रात काश फिर आ जाए

— अनुप्रिया —

वो रात काश
फिर आ जाए ।
सारी दुनिया फिर
मुझमें सिमट जाए
तारों संग गुफ्तगू में करूँ
और आवाज़ तुझ तक पहुँच जाए ।
वो रात काश ...

हृदय की वे धड़कनें
जो शहनाइयाँ बनी थीं ।
तुझ संग मैं
प्रेम की परछाइयाँ बनी थी ।
काश वो बारात
फिर आ जाए ।
वो रात काश ...

कुछ तुमको,
मुझसे कहना था ।
कुछ मुझको
तुमसे सुनना था ।
उन क्षणों की एक बार
फिर से बहार आ जाए ।

वो रात काश ...

एक रात की दुल्हन थी मैं ।
उस रात का राजा था तू ।
दोनों थे खामोश मगर
कहती थी अश्रु की धारा तो ।
उन अश्रुओं की फिर से
बरसात हो जाए ।
वो रात काश ...

काश ! कहीं शब्दों में
तुम मेरे आ पाते ।
गीत हृदय का लिखती मैं
और तुम मेरे हो जाते ।
उस रात्रि के जज़्बात का
फिर से आभास आ जाए ।
वो रात काश फिर
एक बार आ जाए ।



अनुप्रिया लेडी श्रीराम कॉलेज फॉर वुमेन (दक्षिण परिसर)
में एम. ए. हिन्दी विभाग
में प्रथम सेमेस्टर की छात्रा हूँ।

Section II

Of Freedom

खंड - II

स्वतंत्रता की
उड़ान



That Girl

————— *Ananya Baruah* —————

Let there be no pain
Let there be no tears;
After everything that you braved
What do you really fear?
Shrewd were they who indented on your heart
Only to embezzle the seamliness and delight that was yours;
But look, oh look at you, you lionhearted damsel
How magnificently you spread your wings
And take flight with everything you repossessed;
How elegantly you fabricated and flaunt what you really are
Tearing the hearts of many
Who now wish you by their side;
Who not for once treasured your worth
Who thought you were a catastrophe, an evil eye;
So jubilant, so blissful, so elated, so content
And yet your eyes hold the truth
Of the strident life, that you once condemned;
Is it over? Is this the end?
Does this mean you'll no more be grief-stricken?
You know, and yet, how beautifully do you hide it
Hide your fears, behind that winsome smile of yours;
Like a drop of tear or a look of dismay
Might invite the worst of the woe;
And you want no more of the phoney solace
Or the dejected eyes following you;
But instead, an answer, a score to settle

For all that had befallen you;
Until then and until the very end
Fly till it's unimaginable to pull you down
Where the monstrosities of life and humans prevail
Fly till you know, your intendment of life is complete.



*Ananya Baruah is a student of B.A. (Hons) English,
First Year at Shaheed Bhagat Singh College.*

Who Am I ?

————— *Amit Kumar* —————

In the book of my life
like footnotes in small print
lie traces of another me.

Shying away from the casual reader
but visible to those who know
they tell what I was
and what am I going to be.

Between my yesterday and my morrow
amidst the bygones and forthcoming
they stand in my today
beckoning all those who want to see.

Seek them out
and follow where they lead
to unravel the puzzle
of my being me.



*Amit Kumar is currently a student
at Law Centre-II, Faculty of Law.*

स्वतंत्रता

बिसमिल्ला मिसबा

पंछियों के स्वतंत्र जीवन का
क्यों मनुष्य शत्रु होता है
स्वतंत्रता इनकी छीन कर
क्यों पिजरो में कैद कर देता है
जिनके पंख बने ही हैं
खुले आकाश में उड़ने को
क्यों इन्हीं पंखों को कूतर कर
इनके जीवन को छीन लेता है

प्रत्येक मनुष्य अपना जीवन तो
अपने अनुसार जीता जाता है
स्वतंत्र जीवन हर बार जीना चाहता है
फिर क्यों ये बुद्धिमान मनुष्य
पंछियों के स्वतंत्र जीवन का
अधिकार ही छीन लेता है
अपनी इच्छाओं के आगे
यह किसी को न चलने देता है
फिर क्यों इनकी इच्छाओं का
गला ही घोट देता है
मनुष्य क्यों पंछियों को
पिजरो में कैद कर देता है

उड़ने वाले इन पंछियों को
क्यों इनकी उड़ान से ही वंचित कर देता है

मनुष्य अपने आनंद के लिए
इनको यह दंड क्यों देता है
मृत्यु से भी जो अधिक
भयानक होती है इनके लिए

ये मनुष्यों ! इनको खुले नीले आकाश में उड़ने दो
जितनी ऊँची उड़ान उड़ना चाहे
इन्हें वो उड़ान उड़ने दो
जी लेने दो इनको इनके जीवन को
मत काँटो इनके सुंदर पंखों को
न तोड़ो उनके हौसलों को
जो इनकी उड़ान में स्पष्ट प्रतीत होते हैं

बस मनुष्यों !
रिहा कर दो इनको
उन कैदों से
जो इनके लिए बने ही नहीं ।



बिसमिल्ला मिसबा ज़ाकिर हुसैन दिल्ली कॉलेज (संध्या)
में राजनीतिक विज्ञान ऑनर्स (द्वितीय वर्ष) की छात्रा हैं।

बदलाव

— नितिन कुमार —

खामोशी टूटनी चाहिए
आवाज़ें उठनी चाहिए
यह सालों से हाथों में बंधी
जंजीर टूटनी चाहिए

हाथों को उठना चाहिए
सीनों को तनना चाहिए
कलयुग में रावण दहन हेतु
तुम्हें राम बनना चाहिए

एक दीप जलना चाहिए
एक कदम बढ़ना चाहिए
स्वर्णिम भविष्य हेतु
तुम्हें फलक को झुकाना चाहिए

आत्मा को उठाना चाहिए
चेतना को जगाना चाहिए
नल नील बनकर सागर पर
तुम्हें बाँध बनाना चाहिए

जो टूटे हैं उनके मन को

उम्मीद बँधानी चाहिए
तुम्हें हँसने और हँसाने की
नयी प्रथा चलानी चाहिए

तस्वीर बदलनी चाहिए
हर चीज़ बदलनी चाहिए
तुम्हें अपनी और इस देश की
तकदीर बदलनी चाहिए।

हाथों पर हाथ धरो ना अब
हताश हो बैठो ना अब
बदलाव धरा पे लाने को
तुम्हें उठ खड़ा होना चाहिए।



नितिन कुमार किरोड़ीमल कॉलेज में
राजनीति शास्त्र (प्रथम वर्ष) के छात्र हैं ।

The Fallen Star

————— *Arijit Roy* —————

You see the veins in your hands
you laugh to keep the pain at bay
I never saw the mirror scream
but it reflected all it had to say.
The shadows dance in your eyes
as you whisper your secrets into the air
and let them travel to a new land
away from sins and all prayer.

Each day you live
each day you die
for you were born
in the hour of sky.

But you burned your wings
you broke the dome
and embraced a land
which was never your home.

Still you will rise
Still you will shine
the sky will see you fly again
for even the desert
after a thousand years
is blessed with the joy of rain.



*Arijit Roy is a student of B.A. (Hons) English, First Year
at Sri Venkateswara College.*

Untitled

————— *Chhavi Goyal* —————

For I am the first and the last
I am the venerated and the despised.
I am the prostitute and the saint. I am the wife and the
virgin.

I am the mother and the daughter.
I am barren and my children are many.
I am the married woman and the spinster.
I am the woman who gives birth and she who never
procreated.

I am the consolation for the pain of birth.
I am the wife and the husband. And it was my man who
created me.

I am the mother of my father.
I am the sister of my husband. And he is my rejected son.
Always respect me.

For I am the shameful and the magnificent one.



*Chhavi Goyal is a student B.A. (Hons) Journalism
at Kalindi College.*

बचा हुआ है

विशेष नमन

जिन द्वंदों के भ्रमजाल में
यह जग तुमने छोड़ा साथी
राह ढूँढता यह जग तेरा
अब भी पथ पर खड़ा हुआ है
साथी, सब कुछ बचा हुआ है ।
क्या जाने क्या सोच अचानक
बुझा दिए तुमने वह दीपक
बाती भी जिसकी कच्ची है
और तेल भी बचा हुआ है
साथी, सब कुछ बचा हुआ है ।
क्यों व्याकुल हुए फिरते हो
आरंभ से ही परिणाम को मरते हो
पका फल अंत में मिलता है
देखो तुम, इस नई पौध में
अभी तो मंजर लगा हुआ है
साथी, सब कुछ बचा हुआ है ।



विशेष नमन एस. जी. टी. बी खालसा कॉलेज में गणित ऑनर्स
(द्वितीय वर्ष) के छात्र हैं ।

A Façade that Turned into a Dream

————— *Rashi Bareja* —————

From whining about love to whining about my kids, the difference was just small. The small difference being about the only emotion I felt in my soul vaguely: reciprocation. Being an 85- year old man, I always used to think whether I would be able to smile as bright as my name amidst the darkness my child has put me in.

I still remember the day when I was tapping furiously on my phone, trying to find out why my son's display picture on whatsapp showed no picture and why my messages didn't deliver. Being brought up in an era which lacked technology, I craved for having understood it that day. I was in a helpless state; I murmured my daily prayers to God, which usually centred on my son. I then went and sat on my defunct chair, still contemplating why my son hadn't called me after reaching US. I could sense a little awkwardness in my son's behaviour at the time he was leaving. I knew that he wasn't happy while living with me, because children at this age want freedom and an old man like me; acceptance. I remember how my daughter -in- law passed a forced smile at me and how my son didn't dare to look into my eyes at the time they were leaving. A voice in my heart told me that they are gone and I like every father, denied my inner voice and compelled myself to think positively.

Days passed and every single day I would constantly stare at my phone to check if he had called. But maybe, by then I should have realised that I was blocked and not any call of mine would ever reach him. Let me tell you, this blocking thing was the least that I had imagined. I thought that maybe, he was sick; but who stays sick for months?

I then called his only friend in a hope that he'd say that he was not sick. And yes, he wasn't. He had reached US and was doing just fine. And then, I did realise. I DID.

Tears were streaming down from my eyes, blurring every single object that was placed in front of me. The reality was indeed harsh, but like every other human I had to accept it. And when a year passed without having any contact with him, I was left with no other choice than to accept it. Those were days when I cried along with the sound of the rain because I was tired of crying beside solitude. There was something about rains that had always amazed me and made me smile along with the droplets. But on those days, they were just reduced to a background when I cried my heart out.

I remember how my lungs were filled from the smoke of the cigarettes that I had lit while missing my only source of existence, which was now lost to me. They say everything heals with time, but I just got more and more ruined. The scars on my hand were exposed every time I walked past people, and they would gaze at me with astonishment. I wish I could make them understand that their penetrating gaze will only worsen my situation. But I would not lie, when I would mention that these scars were the only source because of which I am now smiling as bright as my name.

I never knew that the abyss in my soul could be filled with a paper and pen. And that was marked as a turning point in my life. That was yet another day when I was watching the moonless sky, faintly smiling over my life, which was just like a night without a moon in its embrace. Suddenly, I felt the need to write about the starless night with every single metaphor that my mind could be capable of producing.

After I finished writing, I realized that instead of spilling my feelings about the deficient position of the sky, I had written about how my life was replete of the same bleakness that this night has.

That was perhaps the day when I had smiled from my heart for the first time after he had left. I was amazed as to how a pen and paper could ease off the pain, that nothing else in the world could.

I then promised myself to keep practicing writing; for only it had the ability to wash away the pain of my devastated heart. Within months, I was shocked to see, how that one page was converted into a pile of pages.

PRESENT-

I'm currently at a book launch and my phone is ringing. It's my turn to speak next after the chief guest is done bestowing wonderful words about me and the book. I am staring at my phone's screen and my eyes are widening with disbelief. I put the phone inside my pocket and drink some water as my eyes are almost wet. Suddenly I hear the chief guest saying, "Now let us welcome, Mr. Suraj Arya, the author of the book. I would also like him to share his experience while he was writing his first book."

There are at least a thousand people in front of me as I speak:

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen!

It's been a pleasure to be surrounded by such beautiful faces on this auspicious day. I would like to thank each and every one who has added beauty to this book by their contributions. Most importantly, I want to thank my readers for their love and support to a new author. I would like to tell you all that I never thought that I would be standing in front of you people and sharing my experience with you all, for I was never a writer, nor did I ever aspire to become one

They say everything happens for a reason and eventually all the dots connect. Most of the time, pain does not always lead you to the path of destruction. Sometimes, it helps you to prosper in life and do something which you never imagined.

This book is about the story of an old man, who thought that his life was over. It is also about those people who turn pain into their greatest weapon, instead of living the rest of their lives in constant sadness. It deals with the life of an old man who picked up a pen and paper and started writing when sharing his solitude with a paper was the only choice left. This book deals with my life.

So yes, you might face some situations in life which you may feel that you cannot deal with. You may feel like giving up, but don't, because that's when something magical happens and success is not afar. Thank you!"

That's when I heard the whole crowd clapping in an endearing way for me. That day, I found my purpose in life, to motivate people like me, to write self help books and make them realize that life is not always supposed to end up with despair . My phone is still ringing and I slip it back in my pocket, this time after blocking my son from everywhere. I still love him and I would never stop doing that. But maybe, now I don't want that someone in my life who hated me whilst I was weak and start loving me when I succeed.



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Second Year at Kalindi College.*

माँ की डायरी

— विशेष नमन —

आज जब मैं बैठकर
सोच रहा था रंगों के बारे में
कुछ लिखने के लिए
ज्यों ही एक कागज़ उठाया
अनायास ही,
माँ की डायरी का ख्याल आया
और एक चित्र सा
उतरता चला गया जेहन में;
याद आने लगी
अलमारी में रखी
वह सात-आठ डायरियाँ
जिनके ज़िल्दों का रंग
अब फ़ीका-फ़ीका सा है;
मुझे याद है-
जब मैं घर पर होता था
तो सिर्फ़ देखता था उन्हें
उनके पन्ने नहीं पलटे थे कभी ।
माँ बताती भी हैं
जब मेरे उम्र की थी
वह भी लिखती थी कविताएँ
दो-तीन डायरी तो सिर्फ़ कविताओं की हैं;

हालांकि अब कविता मौन हो चुकी है !
बस यही सोचता हूँ मैं
कि कितने रंगों में घुली होगी उनकी डायरी
कितने टीसों को समेटा होगा उन दायरों में
जब रात में डिबिया की रोशनी से
खींचती होगी हृदय रेखा अपनी
भोर के उजास के रंगों के साथ ।
उसमें छांव भरी उदासी का भी रंग होगा
उसमें धूप, धरती, आसमान का भी जिक्र होगा
वक्त का खुशनुमा टुकड़ा होगा उसमें
हथेलियों से निकले पसीनों का गंध होगा
सूखे फूल, जर्द पत्तों और कुछ कागज के टुकड़ों की गर्माहट होगी,
वह सब होगा उन पन्नों में
जिनमें उसका अतीत गूंजता होगा ।
आज भी जब माँ को लिखते देखता हूँ,
तो दिखती है मुझे उसमें, अतीत के भटकाव
कुछ टिमटिमाती उम्मीद, कुछ सपनों की तड़प ।



विशेष नमन एस. जी. टी. बी. खालसा कॉलेज में गणित ऑनर्स (द्वितीय वर्ष) के छात्र हैं ।

She !

————— *Mehak Garg* —————

She made another feeble attempt to alter the outlook of the judgmental eyes of the society who preposterously deem certain females promiscuous. She was expected to behave in a predefined manner, wear clothes sensibly because they apparently suggested her character. Be home before the sunset even if her day had just witnessed the sunrise. But who cares? Maybe it was merely the grass on the other side that seemed greener or the fascination of the unknown. But how could she have known if she had never dared to step into that world which was meant only for 'others'. All her brave childhood dreams of writing, dancing and becoming Dora the explorer were ironically put into a burial vault. The casket containing them kept sinking deeper, slowly and gradually, perfectly in sync with her transition from teenage to adulthood. The societal conventions, parental expectations, a cut throat competition with self, profound introspection, and somewhere down in her heart also the fear of failure of not being good enough; all these together had caused the casket to collapse and the soil above it to cement. Sadly enough she didn't realise this until...

One day the coffin emerged floating on a lake, surrounded by iridescent bubbles and above it were gleaming golden sun rays refracted by water. The successor of a series of previously futile attempts was an auspicious flight breaking loose the chains that had tied her up. She eloped with her love, her dreams.

The cutouts of places she had been dying to see in her yellowed frayed scrapbook converted into DSLR pictures with captions and photo essays after a first hand experience of immersing her soul into the never-tasted-before rejoice of unrestricted travel.

blogs and articles she uploaded and with every kilometre she drove.

There came days when the 'albatross' wanted to spread her wings as far as she could and fly ,and other lazy days when she wanted to just savour her emancipation in dolce farniente, sweet idleness.

Now she resides in a makeshift beach shack, interiors of which are designed by her own self. It seemed all very surreal during her old days but now she indeed resided in a self painted home. The corners had empty glass bottles filled with LED lighting strips, paper lantern balls (of all colors that exist in a rainbow) all over the place, illuminating every corner of the house and perfectly complementing the picturesque wallpapers, the starry night sky engraved on the ceiling and the quiet memories -of -people-i-miss section in the corner. Those gleaming lights have a jene sais quoi that attracted her and put her into a trance for a second, where she felt only one emotion which was plain euphoria and profound internal peace.

Every morning she woke up smiling from ear to ear. Even though deep down she was missing her loved ones, but her strong dreams outweighed her weak emotions. And she regained her composure, and embarked on a sprint, on the ramp of her lake house, not like an elegant show stopper but like Mowgli towards the end. She plunged herself into the lake every single morning .

The backdoor of her shack led into a beach with white sands on which she engaged in her daily barefooted night walk under the moon which was perennially full. The landscape and the night would in itself be so mesmerising that it soothed every single cell of the human body, shooting up the serotonin secretion.

Another activity that lifted her spirits up was cooking and she put her heart into the scrumptious food she prepared every Saturday in the open kitchen under the sky.

weekly rejoice in that night life she could never even witness before, engaged in shoeless dancing till the sunrise amidst a crowd of people that: does not judge and quite humorously permits you to embrace your real-self by shedding all of your masquerades during the ball dance of what we call life! She doesn't need a prince charming dancing with her in that ball. Nor does she require any saving from the knight in shining armour. All she needs to be is brave and courageous, love herself, love her flaws and not wait for someone else to come and teach her how to appreciate herself. The only person who could have helped her actually live her dreams was SHE.



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पुकार

निशा तिवारी

जीना है मुझे भी नाम पाने के लिए
अपनी विजय का परचम लहराने के लिए
आसमाँ है मेरा पंख फैलाने के लिए
सपने है मेरे उड़ जाने के लिए
दुनिया है मुझे प्यार दिखाने के लिए
पर शायद कोई नहीं अपनाने के लिए
माँ तेरा ही तो अंश हूँ मैं,
आना चाहती हूँ दुनिया में प्यार तेरा पाने के लिए
तुम्हें मुझको दुनिया में लाना ही होगा
अस्तित्व मुझको अपना दिखाना ही होगा
शायद दुनिया वीरान होगी
अगर मुझमें न जान होगी
इस सत्य को समाज को समझना ही होगा
और अपनी सोच को बदलना ही होगा
पुकार रही गर्भ से एक बेटा ये शब्द
फिर भी समाज क्यों बना हुआ है निस्तब्ध ?



निशा तिवारी आई. पी. कॉलेज फॉर वीमेन में बी.ए प्रोग्राम
(तृतीय वर्ष) की छात्रा हैं।

आगे बढ़ना

— नेहा राजपूत —

जीत की चाह रखने वालों ने
अँधेरे से लड़ना ही क्यों सीखा
मात देते-देते उन्होंने
हराना क्यों नहीं सीखा
मिट्टी की खुशबू को पाकर
उसे चूमना ही क्यों सीखा
रिश्तों की असीम गांठ को
मजबूत करना ही क्यों सीखा
नफ़रत की आँधी में उन्होंने
प्यार करना ही क्यों सीखा
पृथक्तावाद की धारा में
एकीकरण करना ही क्यों सीखा
काँटों की भूमि पर
फूल बरसाना ही क्यों सीखा
आग की गलियों को उन्होंने
ठंडा करना ही क्यों सीखा
मुसीबतों के समुद्रों को
खोजना ही क्यों सीखा
पंछियों को पिंजड़े से
मुक्त करना ही क्यों सीखा
भारत की जनता ने अब
आगे बढ़ना ही क्यों सीखा ।



नेहा राजपूत आई. पी. कॉलेज फ़ॉर वीमेन की छात्रा है ।

When I Thought I Wasn't Strong

————— *Dhara* —————

When I thought I wasn't strong
I stiffened up my chest with silence washing away the anger
When I thought I wasn't strong
I cleared up my shattered pieces of trust that were in danger
When I thought I wasn't strong
I faced the crisis of Times destroying my own pot of Hunger
When I thought I wasn't strong
I rushed up my life that was caught and kept moving on like a stringer
When I thought I wasn't strong
I overcame all the forms of fear hidden in the heart
When I thought I wasn't strong
I carried up my joy to blow away the ashes of hopes that were unanimously hurt
When I thought I wasn't strong
I learned to survive truth among the stones of all ages
When I thought I wasn't strong
I met a man of revolution and revoked all the races
When I thought I wasn't strong
I stumbled up to push the clouds of terror
When I thought I wasn't strong I stride to build a castle of Tolerance cuddling
around Anger
When I thought I wasn't strong
I moulded up my Sensation that had lost its echo in the vicinity of Fear
When I thought I wasn't strong
I portrayed an art that no one could feel , trace or hear
When I thought I wasn't strong
I hailed among the hills of knowledge and grew up stronger!!!



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at Acharya Narendra Dev College.*

ज़िंदगी

अविनाश कुमार

ज़िंदगी तुम बस रहती वहीं थी
स्कूल की पिछली बेंच पर
पतंगों की लड़ती पेंच पर
पापा की साइकिल के वादों में
हवा से तेज़ निकलने के इरादों में
कागज़ के हवाई जहाज पर
कॉपी के पिछले पन्नों के राज पर
गलतियाँ जो हमेशा सही थी
ज़िंदगी तुम बस रहती वहीं थी
दिल की किसी बंद तिजोरी में
कॉलेज की पहली लव स्टोरी में
इम्तिहान की पिछली रात की पढ़ाई में
दोस्तों से हुई बचकानी लड़ाई में
थक कर किताबों पर सोयी भी थी
ज़िंदगी कई बार अकेले रोयी भी थी
आँखों के कोने में जो हल्की नमी थी
ज़िंदगी तुम बस रहती वहीं थी
छोटी-छोटी खुशियों में, छोटी सी आस में
कटे फटे नोटों में, डीटीसी की पास में
बेतरतीब से पड़े कपड़ों के रैक में

सस्ते से फ़ोन के फ़्री मेसेज पैक में
अकड़ में हो अब झुकती नहीं तुम
थक गयी पर क्यूँ रुकती नहीं तुम
अब जैसी हो तब वैसी नहीं थी
ज़िंदगी तुम बस रहती वहीं थी...



अविनाश कुमार संगीत एवं ललित कला संकाय
में पीएचडी शोधार्थी हैं ।

Hibernation

————— *Manvi Singh* —————

In the world of selfie,
where portrayal is more important than self. In the world of Tinder,
where dating is more important than maturity. In the world of Facebook,
where likes are more important than lives. In the world of WhatsApp,
where emoji is more important than words. I search for a solitary space,

To let my imagination grow

To let my mind think

To let my body relax

To let my eyes close!



*Manvi Singh is currently pursuing her M.A. from
the Department of English.*

City Lights

————— *Nitisha Vatsa* —————

I am getting blind
In these shiny lights,
Somewhere losing my vision
In all this glamour and dazzle,
The hunger is increasing
For power,
The lust is getting stronger
For fame and name.
My glossy lipstick is fading
My tears ruining the make-up,
The dress has lost the shimmer
The heel has broken away,
But still holding up the glass of wine
Carrying the weight of a fake smile,
Is this really who I am?
The question has torn me apart.
Still..
Without hesitating a bit I am,
Getting drowned in the spark of
City lights!



*Nitisha Vatsa is a student of B.A. (Hons) Philosophy, First Year
at Daulat Ram College.*

Outrage!

————— *Rachit Gupta* —————

As I browse through Twitter,
I wonder in dismay.
Neither memes nor tweets could fill me with any outrage.
My mind wanders away,
To the corruption tales;
To the justified celeb bails;
To the petrol price hike,
To the inflation that beats down bright .
And yet could not reclaim the outrage it deserves the calm state of mind ,
perhaps keep it reserved.
I watched a comedy event, Only to be haunted
That the expletives
Don't open up my wounds. With a tranquil,
and a serene face,
The outrage remains untrue.
As I log out, I find
My outrage is only for few.
My social feed yearns for outrage But Saturn give it to the causes true.
Now, as I log into Twitter
This is the only question I find,
When did I become so tolerant
That the trending outrage is no longer mine?



*Rachit Gupta is currently pursuing B.A. (Hons) Economics
from Satyawati College.*

Section III

On the Ground

खंड - III

जमींतर



पिकनिक

श्रेष्ठा चोपड़ा

बात उन दिनों की है जब हेमा चौथी कक्षा में थी। हमेशा की तरह साल के आखिरी महीने में, सर्दियों की छुट्टियों से कुछ ही दिन पहले क्लास में सालाना पिकनिक प्रोग्राम का सर्कुलर डिस्ट्रीब्यूट होता था। जिसका इंग्लिश से हिंदी अनुवाद करके जैसे ही टीचर पिकनिक की सूचना बच्चों को देती, उसी वक़्त क्लास के सारे बच्चे उत्सुकता से उछलने, कूदने और नाचने लगते। टीचर व्यर्थ ही उन्हें चुप कराने और वापस पढ़ाई में उनका ध्यान लगाने की कोशिश करती क्योंकि उसके बाद बच्चों को काबू करना संभव ही नहीं होता था।

पीरियड खत्म होने की घंटी बजते ही सब ग्रुप बनाकर बातें करने लगे, सबने मिलकर सबसे पहला काम यही किया कि हेमा को उनके ग्रुप का लीडर चुना। इस वजह से नहीं कि उसके पापा स्कूल में क्लर्क थे, न ही इसलिए कि वह क्लास की मॉनिटर थी और न इसलिए कि वह क्लास में सबसे इंटेलीजेंट थी, जबकि यह सच तो था ही कि वह लगातार दो सालों से क्लास में अक्वल रह चुकी थी।

उन्होंने तो उसे लीडर चुना तो इसलिए क्योंकि उसका लंच सब दोस्तों में हमेशा सबसे स्पेशल होता था। और वह बिना किसी भेदभाव के अपना लंच सब के साथ शेयर भी करती थी। कभी किसी को इस मामले में शिकायत का मौका नहीं देती थी इसलिए बिना किसी के विरोध के सब की सहमति से वह ग्रुप की लीडर चुन ली गई थी।

रमा को तो अपनी हर क्लास की पिकनिक बहुत अच्छे से याद थी। पिछली बार वे पिकनिक में डॉल म्यूजियम गए थे, कितनी खूबसूरत डॉल्स थी वहाँ। विश्व में पाई जाने वाली हज़ारों किस्म की डॉल्स उन्होंने देखी, जिनमें उस देश के लोगों के पहनावे और संस्कृति की झलक भी दिखती थी। अकेले भारत में कितने अलग-अलग तरह के गुड्डे, गुड़ियों से बच्चे खेलते होंगे, ये उन सब को वहाँ जाकर ही पता चला था।

तभी विपुल बोल पड़ा, “लेकिन सबसे खूबसूरत तो वह कठपुतली डांस था, है न?” और सभी बच्चों ने सहमति में सर हिलाया। “और उससे पहली पिकनिक पर हम बाल भवन गए थे, भूल गए?” देव ने सबको याद दिलाया, “जहाँ हमने ऊंट की सवारी की थी और याद है मिस रीटा को अपने ऊपर बिठाने में ऊंट कितने नखरे कर रहा था, जैसे हमारी तरह उसकी भी पर्सनल दुश्मनी रही हो उससे”।

“हाँ, और रीटा मैम कितनी गुस्सा हो गई थी उसके बाद, मुझे तो लगा था, वह जैसे हमारे कान पकड़कर हमें रोज-रोज डांटती है उसी तरह ऊंट की पूँछ पकड़कर उसे भी वहीं डांटने लग जाती।”

इस के साथ ही लंबी बातचीत चली उनके बीच जिसमें सभी ने निशा को पिकनिक पर चिड़ियाघर जाना था तो रवि को वॉटर पार्क, समर को हुमायूँ के मकबरे और लाल किले के इतिहास को नजदीक से देखना समझना था तो ईशा को चिल्ड्रेन्स पार्क में तरह-तरह के झूले झूलने का मन था, लेकिन पिकनिक का स्थान उनमें से कोई भी जगह न होकर निकला तो एक अनजानी सी जगह, जिसके बारे में पहले किसी ने कुछ नहीं सुना था।

“हैपिनेस एन्क्लेव”, टीचर ने भी बच्चों से उस जगह के बारे में सिर्फ इतना कहा कि इस बार वह एक बेहद खास जगह घूमने जा रहे हैं, और यह पिकनिक सब के लिए एक नया अनुभव होगा।

पिकनिक स्पॉट जानकर बच्चों को निराशा हुई लेकिन हेमा ने ज़रा भी दिल छोटा न करते हुए सब दोस्तों को पिकनिक की तैयारी के लिए घर से कुछ न कुछ सामान लेने की जिम्मेदारी दी। ताकि सबकी पसंद का लंच में कुछ न कुछ होना चाहिए इसलिए उसका एक स्पेशल मेन्यू भी तय किया गया और डिस्पोजेबल प्लेट्स, स्पून्स और ग्लासेस, छोटे मोटे सामान कौन लाएगा, ये भी तय हो गया। रवि ने कैमरा लाने का जिम्मा लिया और नेहा ने सफर में सबको नए गाने सुनाने के लिए अपना नया आईपॉड लाने का वादा किया।

पिकनिक से एक दिन पहले तो इंतज़ार ही नहीं हो पा रहा था बच्चों से, पिकनिक के बारे में सोचते-सोचते हेमा देर रात तक करवटें बदलती रही। सुबह उसकी नींद माँ के आवाज़ देने से पहले ही खुल गयी, वह फटाफट तैयार होकर स्कूल बस के आने का इंतज़ार करने लगी।

स्कूल पहुँचकर टीचर ने पहले अटेंडेंस ली, कुछ ज़रूरी आदेश दिए फिर पिकनिक बस में बैठकर बच्चे सफर पर निकल गए ।

एन्क्लेव पहुँचकर बच्चों की जिज्ञासा बढ़ने लगी की आखिर पिकनिक स्पॉट इतनी साधारण-सी दिखने वाली जगह कैसे हो सकती है, दूर-दूर तक कुछ दिखाई नहीं दे रहा था सिवाय एक घर के जो देखने में बहुत ही पुराना और मामूली सा लग रहा था ।

तभी टीचर ने उनके आश्चर्य को समझते हुए कहा “देखो बच्चों, आज हम एक ओल्डएज होम आए हैं । यहाँ पर तुम्हारे दादा दादी की उम्र के बहुत सारे लोग रहते हैं ।

कभी-कभी अपने परिवारों के बिना रहते हुए, वे लोग बेहद अकेला महसूस करते हैं, इसलिए उनकी रूटीन जिन्दगी की बोरियत से आज हम उन्हें आज़ाद करेंगे ।

सब मिलकर उनके साथ ढेर सारा वक्त बिताएंगे, उनके साथ लंच करेंगे और उनसे बहुत सारी नई-नई बातें करेंगे । उनके अनुभवों को जानकर हमें बहुत कुछ सीखने का मौका भी मिलेगा, तो बच्चों सरप्राइज अच्छा लगा न तुम्हें ?”

“मैम, क्या उन्हें हमसे मिलकर खुशी होगी?” अतुल ने अपनी मासूम समझ से पूछा, तो टीचर ने मुस्कराकर कहा, “अब तुम लोगों के लिये सिर्फ एक ही इंस्ट्रक्शन है, उन लोगों से मिलने से हिचकिचाना मत, बिल्कुल मत घबराना, उन्हें थोड़ी देर के लिए ही सही, पर अपने ही परिवार का सदस्य मानकर उनसे प्यार से पेश आना ।”

न जाने टीचर की बातें बच्चे समझ भी पाए थे या नहीं ।

उस घर में प्रवेश करते ही बच्चों ने देखा की वह छोटा सा घर उनके आने की खुशी में कितनी खूबसूरती से सजाया गया था। घर के प्रवेश द्वार पर एक आंटी उनके स्वागत के लिए थाली लेकर खड़ी थी और उन्होंने हर बच्चे का तिलक करके उन्हें हैपिनेस एन्क्लेव का संक्षिप्त परिचय दिया ।

“गुड मॉर्निंग बच्चों! वेलकम टू आवर स्वीट होम! हैपिनेस एन्क्लेव में हमारी छोटी सी फैमिली आप सबसे मिलने के लिए बेकरार है क्योंकि आज आप सब हमारे मेहमान हैं।” उन्होंने सब बच्चों को घर के दूसरे सदस्यों से इंट्रोड्यूस किया और उनसे मिलकर घर के सब लोगों के चेहरे बिल्कुल उन बच्चों जैसे खिल गए, कब से आखिर उनकी ही राह देख रहे थे। कुछ देर माहौल में ज़रा हिचकिचाहट रही, लेकिन टीचर की कोशिश से धीरे-धीरे बच्चे घर के सदस्यों के साथ हँसने बोलने लगे।

अंकल हंस कुछ ही वक़्त में सबके फ़ेवरेट हो गए क्योंकि उनके पास था एक कलेक्शन अपने पोते के पुराने पज़ल्स और गेम्स का जिनमें बच्चे बेझिझक मशरूफ़ हो गए और अंकल के साथ सब प्रतियोगिता लड़ाने लगे की कौन पहले पहली बुझाएगा।

इस बीच सुधा आंटी कलेक्शन में डूबे उन बच्चों की खूब सारी फोटो खींचे जा रही थीं, सबसे छिपकर। फिर उनसे मिलने कब कौन आए, क्या पता? लेकिन उस दिन की एक-एक फोटो को हमेशा संजोकर रखेगी वह।

और कुछ बच्चे मिस्टर सिंह के साथ चैस की गेम को बेहद तल्लीनता से समझते दिखाई दे रहे थे। मिस्टर सिंह रिटायर्ड होकर अपनी पत्नी के साथ कई सालों से वहाँ रह रहे थे। किसी से ज़्यादा बोलते नहीं थे। आज उन्हें बच्चों के साथ यूँ उनका टीचर बने देखकर मिसेज सिंह भी हैरान थी और सोच रही थी कि तो क्या हुआ अगर उनके अपने बच्चे नहीं हैं, क्योंकि आज तो उन्हें इस बात का भी ग़म नहीं था।

कुछ बच्चे घर की लेडीज के साथ किचन में अपना लंच शेयर करते दिखाई दिए, हर कोई अपने टिफिन से कुछ-कुछ उन्हें टेस्ट करा रहा था, उन लोगों ने कभी बर्गर और पास्ता नहीं चखा था, बच्चे यह जानकर हैरान थे। वह उन्हें नई-नई तरह की डिश के बारे में बता रहे थे, ऐसा लग रहा था मानो उनमें से हर कोई बच्चों से काफी कुछ नया सीख रहा था।

एन्क्लेव के छोटे से किचन गार्डन में अंकल आंटी के साथ गार्डनिंग करते हुए देव ने तो अपने जोक्स से उन लोगों का दिल ही जीत लिया, रीटा मैम और ऊंट वाला किस्सा तो उन सब को बहुत फनी लगा। टीचर सब बच्चों को यूँ उन बुजुर्गों से घुल मिलते देखकर बहुत खुश हुई पर हेमा तो कहीं दिखाई ही नहीं दे रही थी, उन्होंने सब जगह नज़रें दौड़ाई लेकिन हेमा कहीं नज़र नहीं आई।

वह घर के दूसरे कमरों में उसे तलाशने लगी कि तभी उनकी नज़र एक छोटे से कमरे में पड़े बिस्तर पर गई, जहाँ कोई बीमार सी लगने वाली औरत लेटी हुई थी और कमरे की खिड़की से ही सब बच्चों को हंसते-खेलते हुए गौर से देख रही थी ।

वह औरत मिसेस बखशी थीं । वह लकवाग्रस्त थी इसलिए अपने कमरे से ही उस त्यौहार जैसे दिन को अपनी आँखों में कैद कर रही थी । उनके बारे में कोई कुछ नहीं जानता था सिवाय इसके कि एक हादसे में घायल होकर उनकी आज यह हालत थी । उनसे मिलने आजतक कभी कोई नहीं आया था उस घर में ।

हेमा ने उन्हें खिड़की से सब को झाँकते हुए देखा तो वह समझ गई कि अम्मा भी उनसे बातें करना चाहती होगी । हेमा उन्हीं के पास अपने और अपने दोस्तों के बारे में उन्हें कुछ-कुछ बता रही थी और टीचर को ऐसा लग रहा था कि वह औरत अपने होंठों की उस हल्की सी मुस्कान से जैसे उस नन्ही परी को अपना कृतज्ञता भरा आशीर्वाद दे रही थी।

और फिर शुरू हुआ स्टोरी-टेलिंग सेशन, आखिर दादा दादी की शिक्षाप्रद कहानियों के बिना वह पिकनिक अधूरी रह जाती । बच्चे कहानियों को सुनते वक़्त कितने क्यूट लग रहे थे, उनकी कौतूहल से भरी आँखें अपने आप में न जाने कितनी कहानियाँ कह रही थी उन नए दोस्तों से मिलकर । अलविदा कहते वक़्त बच्चों ने उस घर के सभी सदस्यों को अपने स्कूल आने को कहा और उनसे वापस जल्द लौटने का वादा भी किया ।

बच्चे समझ नहीं सके कि उन लोगों की आँखें क्यों भीग आयीं थी उस पल।



श्रेष्ठा चोपड़ा लक्ष्मीबाई कॉलेज में अंग्रेजी ऑनर्स (द्वितीय वर्ष) की छात्रा हैं ।

लेखनी

निशा तिवारी

लेखनी तू चले जा
न रुक तू कहीं
बस बढ़े जा बढ़े जा ।
न कर प्रवाह निंदा की
न देख राह प्रशंसा की
लीन होकर अपने काम में
बस चले जा, चले जा ।
हो प्रयास निष्फल हजार
फिर भी नित नये प्रयास
बस किये जा किये जा ।
आर्येंगे राह में पत्थर अनेक
भले ही मिले असफलताएँ अनेक
पर सफलता के पथ पर
निरंतर तू बढ़े जा बढ़े जा ।



निशा तिवारी आई. पी. कॉलेज फॉर वीमेन में
बी.ए प्रोग्राम (तृतीय वर्ष) की छात्रा हैं ।

My Photographs Talk

————— *Bedotroyee Bhattacharjee* —————

My room was full of them
Photographs.
Colourful and black and white
Sepia and tinted.

I loved talking to them
about the time they were born.

Some wink at me, some complain
of the long moments they had to stiff themselves

Some subtly express their discomfort
about the people next to them,
they are no longer friends anymore.

A few thank me
to catch them off guard
in their beauty

Some ask me
how we look different
older than before

Some seek for a companion
from the same place
to be stranded next to them

Some don't talk
perhaps they are old now
or maybe waiting for their replacement
anytime soon

Some can't get over laughing
the moment was memorable
They make me giggle
even when I am teary.

Some of them weep
out of nostalgia
and keep reminding me that time doesn't return
There are a few more,

some in albums, they are happy when I visit them
Some in phones, they are flipped often
Some in the hard disc, waiting to populate my room.

They talk, of the time they were born,
of the time I silently revisited them,
of what I miss from time to time.

Oh yes, they talk
out loud, but
only for me to hear.



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तुम बिन

पूजा सिंह

निर्झर खो जाते सरिता में
सरिता सागर से जा मिलती
चंचल मदभरी हवाएँ भी सब
आपस में मिलजुल बहती ।

कोई न अकेला दुनिया में
उसने भेजा सबका साथी
फिर तुम क्यों मेरे साथ नहीं
में दीपक जैसे बिन बाती ।

देखो ये पर्वतमालाएँ हैं
आसमान को चूम रहीं
उठती गिरती जल की लहरें
मदमस्त प्यार में झूम रहीं ।

यह कली फूल से मिलकर
डाली पर कैसे इठलाती है
सूरज की किरणों नित आकर
धरती को गले लगाती हैं ।

धवल चाँदनी आतुर, सागर
का आलिंगन करती हैं
पर व्यर्थ सभी आलिंगन
तुम बिन, दुनिया सूनी-सूनी लगती है ।



पूजा सिंह केन्द्रीय शिक्षण संस्थान
दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय (प्रथम वर्ष) की छात्रा हैं ।

Heaven?

Arushi Ahuja

She asked me about heaven;
Said how it's subjective and personal,
Puppies or rainbows or unicorns,
Or flowers,
Or thorns;
To each his own.

She asked me about heaven;
Pointed towards the cloudy skies,
With the sun peeking out from behind its fluffy veil,
Illuminating the sky with its magnificent light,
And said that's where heaven would be,
Where you could just float,
finally free,
Detached from your body, your world, your reality.

She asked me about heaven;
Where was mine?
Without hesitation,
Without thinking twice,
I pointed to her,
Because if there is a heaven,
It must be in her ocean blue eyes.



*Arushi Ahuja is a student of
B. A. (Hons) Psychology, Third Year at Kamala Nehru College.*

बारिश और तुम

— अविनाश कुमार —

अच्छी लगती है बारिश तब और भी
कभी हँसती कभी गुमसुम हो जब
झुमके हों पायल की रुनझुन हो जब
ज़रा-ज़रा से गीले ज़रा-ज़रा से सूखे
एक छतरी के नीचे हम तुम हों जब
अच्छी लगती है बारिश तब और भी
बूंदों की आवाज़ आती हो
घटाएँ मेघ मल्हार सुनाती हों
तानपुरे के तार से मिलकर
साथ मेरे तुम भी गाती हो
अच्छी लगती है बारिश तब और भी
चुप- चुप सी रात हो अगर
खामोशी से बात हो अगर
चाँद सितारे खुशबू हवाएँ हों
तुम मेरे साथ हो अगर
अच्छी लगती है बारिश तब और भी
झूमती हुई फूलों की डाली हो
हाथों में हमारे चाय की प्याली हो
हवाओं ने तुम्हारे बाल बिखेरे हों
तुमने बस अपनी लटें संभाली हों
अच्छी लगती है बारिश तब और भी



अविनाश कुमार संगीत एवं ललित कला संकाय
में पीएचडी शोधार्थी हैं ।

The Sepia Morning

————— *Amit Kumar* —————

The sepia morning nestles
between carbon darkness and golden light
When the early bird sings
and takes flight.

The dew still spread on grass,
the mist hung on trees
the mesmerising calm broken quietly
by leaves rustling in the gentle breeze.

As I open my somnolent eyes
and look at the eastern skies
The sun is still in the womb of the distant horizon
that has just begun to turn a faint crimson.

This is the hour
When the serene and the surreal converge
Into the realm of light
The demons of darkness merge.

As new hope surges
And despondency withers away
The sepia morning rises
And shows the day.



*Amit Kumar is a student of Law
at Faculty of Law.*

Lost and Found

————— *Kashish Koma* —————

"Think again Sara. Is this the right thing to do?", said Nikhil, frowning. I've thought about this already, Nikhil. I have to do this." "Rahul needs you, Sara. How do you expect a 3 year old to survive in an orphanage without his mother?" "How do you expect him to survive with me? I'm a shattered damaged woman, Nikhil. I've got nothing to give him. Not care, not even money. I'm doing this only for him. He will not suffer without me." "I can take care of him, Sara. Of both of you. Don't do this to the poor child or to yourself. Please let me. Sara, is this the future Sameer would have wanted for his son?" Nikhil said quietly. Sara averted her eyes and dropped her head. The tears she had been fighting came spilling over all at once.

Sameer Malhotra, her husband had died in a tragic car accident a month ago. The very same accident that had claimed her eyesight. The accident that had taken everything away from her. Even her ability to be a good mother. With her husband and her eyesight, she had lost her job and was now giving up her son. She loved him enough to let him go. She knew he would never be able to lead a happy life with her. She would cripple him. Be the thorn in his side that he would long to be rid of. How would she sustain him? Or arrange for money to feed him, clothe him, educate him? The decision had been excruciating but she had steeled herself. Her son would never have to endure the shame of having a blind, helpless, jobless mother. He would not live in the poverty she was sure was going to befall her.

No.

Never.

She could not save her husband. But she wasn't going to let her son die too. She would not falter in her resolve. She sensed Nikhil waiting for an answer and replied, "Sameer wanted Rahul to be happy. I won't let my selfishness deprive my son of his right to be happy. I have to protect him." "A son does not need to be protected from his own mother. You can't see anything but not even this simple truth?" Sara did not say anything. Being brought up in an orphanage herself, she knew what was awaiting Rahul, but she knew she had no other choice. Nikhil sighed audibly. "If this is what you really want" he said in a choked voice. Sara could imagine what he would look like right now- his face contorted with pain, his striking blue eyes glistening with unshed tears. How many times had she admired those eyes? The colour of the sun-kissed sky on a clear winter morning.

Nikhil took a step forward to lift the sleeping Rahul from his mother's lap. Sara felt Rahul's fingers tighten around her instinctively. Fighting back tears, she twisted her hand free of his grip and handed him over to Nikhil. Without a word, Nikhil stepped out of the room and out of the house. He heard the engine of the car roar and instantly found herself hoping that the noise had not woken Rahul. She then set about groping for her things to pack, in preparation for vacating the house. The government quarter was no longer allotted to them after Sameer's death.

Days passed.

Weeks passed.

Sara was now living alone in a tiny single bedroom apartment she had managed to procure on rent by selling her remaining valuables. Not a day passed when she did not think of Rahul. She wondered if he had been adopted by someone yet. If that someone was able to give him the same love she had given him. Did he miss her? Did he remember her? Did he still sing his favourite teddy bear to sleep? Did he still cry at night? Was his hair the same mess it used to be?

She yearned for an answer but was afraid that the answers might make her go back on her word. Any knowledge of Rahul, any information about him, any mention of him might break the walls of tolerance and self control she had so carefully built, with so much effort. She had forbidden Nikhil from telling her anything about Rahul. So, she buried her son in a far corner of her mind, along with her questions and his memories.

Nikhil came to visit her regularly. He had offered to let her stay at his house but she had refused. Already, she felt weighed down by the debt she thought she owed him. Nikhil had been her best friend since childhood. He had done a lot for her- providing them with financial aid, helping them get married, being Rahul's 'ideal' uncle and being a pillar of strength for her after the accident. She could not let herself become a burden for him.

Three months after the accident, Nikhil entered her house excitedly one day, saying, "Sara! I've found you an eye donor. You will be able to see again. You can bring Rahul back. You can be happy""Are you serious?", she asked not daring to believe her ears. All her problems could be solved if she could be cured. She could bring Rahul back home! Back to where he belonged. Back to his mother. She would give him a wonderful life. She would fulfil all the dreams they had ever had for him.

The next day, Sara was at the hospital, escorted by Nikhil. He wheeled her to the ward, squeezed her hand lightly and said, "All the best Sara. Have a good life." Before she could respond to this, he was gone. She wondered about his abrupt departure but her excitement drowned any apprehension. She could hear doctors and nurses buzzing anxiously. Her last thought was about Rahul before the darkness succeeded by the prick in her arm pulled her under.

-X-X-X-

Sara Malhotra opened her eyes to the world. She could see a doctor bent over her anxiously.

She had her sight back! She let the moisture flow from her eyes while listening to the doctor explain about the surgery. Suddenly she asked, "Where is Nikhil? I want to see him." "Oh yes, Maám. Sir has left you a letter of sorts. Here it is.", the doctor said handing her a sheet of paper. Sara unfolded it, puzzled. It read,

"Dearest Sara,

I'm sorry I had to leave suddenly. There is a confession I seek to make. I did not take Rahul to any orphanage. He was, and still is, at my house. Please retrieve him from there.

I will never be able to see you again. Believe me, it is for the best.

Yours sincerely,
Nikhil"

After the shock of discovering that Rahul had been with Nikhil all along had worn off, bewilderment took its place. She was confused. She did not know what to make of her best friend's abrupt departure, seemingly from her life. At that moment, the doctor brought her a mirror to glance into. She took it in her shaking hands and distractedly looked at her reflection. Her face seemed familiar, and yet not her own. It was a while before she realised that the eyes which stared back at her were blue. Blue as the sun kissed sky on a clear winter morning.



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टपकती दीवारें

— सत्यम प्रियदशी —

मैं उस समय महज पाँच साल का था । सब साथ में ही सोते थे । मैं माँ के बगल में सोता था और माँ दीवार से सटे सोती थी । दीवार पर दुर्गा माँ की तस्वीर को फ्रेम करा कर लगाया गया था । जब कभी मैं माँ के साथ रहता कभी उस दुर्गा माँ के चेहरे को देखता और फिर माँ के तरफ देखता और सूरत में समानताएँ ढूँढता । माँ मेरी इस हरकत को देख मुस्कराती और फिर मैं शरमाते हुए उनके सीने से लिपट जाता ।

मुझे ठीक से याद है, बरसात का मौसम था । लगभग रोज़ रात को उस समय बारिश हुआ करती थी । पापा जब भी उन दिनों दुकान से आते तो बरसाती पहन कर ही आते । रोज़ की भाँति उस रात भी जब हम खाने के बाद बिछावन पर सोने गए । मैंने माँ से पूछा कि माँ तू रोज़ दीवार के तरफ क्यों सोती है ।

माँ का जवाब था “ताकि तुम्हें देख सकूँ, सामने से” । मैं भी ठहरा नादान, माँ की बात मान ली । उस समय उतनी बुद्धि कहाँ थी कि ये पूछ सकूँ कि अगर मैं भी दीवार से सटे सोता तो भी वो मुझे देख ही सकती थी वो भी सामने से । खैर एक दो रोज़ बाद हम ननिहाल जाने वाले थे, गए भी; और एक सप्ताह बाद लौटे । कमरे का दरवाज़ा खुला तो हमने पाया, माँ दुर्गा की वो तस्वीर बिछावन पर गिरी पड़ी है और पूरा बिछावन गीला । दीवार पर दरारें थी जो पहले उस फ़ोटो फ्रेम से ढका पड़ा था । चूँकि दरार फ्रेम के पीछे था और उसी दरार से पानी रीस कर सारा बिछावन गीला हो गया था और पलंग के किनारे से टप-टप कर पानी नीचे गिर रहा था । पाँच साल का अबोध बालक ही सही पर तत्काल तो सबकुछ समझ में आ ही गया था और मैं जाकर माँ के सीने से लिपट कर रोने लगा । शायद माँ भी समझ गयी थी और कहने लगी- अरे ! रोओ नहीं बेटा, पापा से बोलकर ठीक करवा लेंगे ।

आज समझ में आता है कि माँ उस समय तो मुझे चुप करने में तो सफल रही पर मैंने उसी दिन ठान लिया था; एक घर बनाऊंगा जिसमें एक भी दरार न होगी और मेरी माँ दीवार से सट कर भी सोएगी तो चैन से सोएगी ।

माँ दुर्गा की तस्वीर भी लगेंगी दीवार पर लेकिन इसलिए नहीं की वो दरार को ढक सके बल्कि इसलिए कि हम उनकी पूजा कर सकें । इस तरह से वो “टपकती दीवारे” मुझे जीवन में आगे बढ़ते रहने का पैगाम दे गई । आज भी जब कभी खुद से हार कर बैठने लगता हूँ तो वो वादा जो हाल ही में लिखी मेरी एक कविता में भी अभिव्यक्त हुआ है- मैंने माँ से वादा किया है कि/ मैं अपना वादा पूरा करूँगा... स्मरण हो आता है । मुझे फिर से खड़ा होने का हौसला देता है और कहता है कि सत्यम अपने आप को इतना मजबूत बनाओ कि चाहे कितनी भी मुश्किलें सामने क्यों न आए तुम बस उसका सामना करते जाओ । बस इतना खयाल रहे की तुम्हें लक्ष्य को भेदना है । मुश्किलें तुम्हें न भेद सके, नहीं तो जिस तरह दीवार में दरार के कारण पानी टपकने लगता है और धीरे-धीरे कमजोर हो होकर एक दिन दीवार गिर जाती है उसी तरह तुम भी गिर जाओगे । और तब मैं फिर से खड़ा हो जाता हूँ ।



सत्यम प्रियदर्शी मोतीलाल नेहरु कॉलेज में राजनीति शास्त्र के छात्र हैं ।

The Nights

— *Ankita Biswas* —

There's something about the night
Something Dark, something Silent
That brings out the dark deep secrets of the beings.
Not just of beings, but of things too
Things that matter and those that don't.
Is it because the Dark self finds solace in the Dark Night?
Or because not everyone comes to know of it?
Just a few, just the weird ones,
Who love to taste the storms of minds.

What happens at night, dies at night.
But the spirits of the dead, the silent dead
stay alive in the remote corners of the mind.
Changing the looking glass of the weird eyes.

There's something about the night
That spreads the stink of piled up feelings;
Pushes thoughts and emotions long dead
up the graves of hearts.
Feelings, thoughts and emotions taking birth;
Dying, changing, reviving, struggling
Struggling to live or struggling to die.

The world is at peace,
the minds of the night hawkers
at war.
Silence hears it all.
Some random being hears it all.
Passes it on ahead, to some other being in distress.
Thoughts and beliefs and thoughts and feelings keep moving on.
Travel in silence.
All at night and only in the night.



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Third Year at Shaheed Bhagat Singh College.*

Endlessness

————— *Chirayu Goyal* —————

It is all dark and watery. Water ensuing like a constant, thin layer of plaster form the edge between where the wall and the ceiling meet gives the wall a moaning and distressed face. A man is lying, half in water. He knows he shouldn't be lying like this and must get up, but the awareness that he might lie here forever if only he thought of doing it, if he continued doing it, that his limbs would become stone and so will his mind, doesn't let him get up. Instead, he chooses to dream about the dream he just had, or is he still half in it? At least that is what seems to be true to him right now, but of course it could be the shameful and embarrassing stupidity that dreams induce on waking that makes him think this. He will dream of a pathetic, lonely man, who will wriggle and squirm around like an illegitimate serpent, deformity, dragging his kipple-ized feet, since they cannot be told apart from the squelchy, nausea-inducing kipple, without end, without destination, without reason through a horrific and haunted hell. He is afraid of such a fate, of the pain and consternation of it, of never being able to stop. Never a rest. He will stab this person through the heart, rip out his entrails and throw them deep into the womb of the ancient water to end the possibility of the grave, dreary fate the snake brings to life.

He had killed a man today. His corpse lays with him, as if his undead lover, unforgiving, mocking eternal lover, lying with him in their eternal tomb.

A man walks, kissing, groping lustfully the watery curtain of the lacerated, lesioned, drooping walls of the devouring house of the stalking night. He will walk, endlessly without destination, through the water in the hallway where every door is doom, and the floor pulls you down with its half opened mouth, filled half with water, its teeth showing like mouldering, distorted stone, only because he believes that he can indeed walk forever, making love to the mould, the sick water, something which cannot be done, only if he thought of doing it forever, and he will do it.

His limbs would never stop, his mind would be fixated, his neck transfixed, straining on its moving stump.

He finds a disgusting, grotesque human form half drunk, half sunk in streaking, gleaming, shining water, even though the water's heart is the vilest black. He will kill this man, with utter and arrant hatred and disgust and barbarity, because this man's presence meant that he was not alone. He could end him for being a languishing anomaly, the undead manifestation of a possibility of never moving, never moving a limb. Being with this someone, seeing him filled him with inhuman repulsion. He imagines this hateful figure rising, water stretching, rising to pull him back into its strangling embrace, and with dripping madness, reeking hate, kill him. He raises his hands, already half water, half decaying, unfaithful mortal skin, and pushes the head of the figure into the water, inside the twisting mouth of the sentient, evil water. In the asphyxiating hide of the water, the despicable man starts to dissolve, half mud, half water, and his remains are indistinguishable from the rest- the night that seems to fall on your head, enveloping you with its sightless skin; the nightmarish house that seems to rise from its grave with every sigh of the living; the crying walls wailing with the pain of being; and the water. He is same as the ubiquitous breath of the water.

Water pulls him in. It runs its nails through his hair, fills his ears with its distasteful gurgling confession, and fills in his mouth its slimy tongue.

He now lies with the man he killed, like his undying lover, and with every passing moment knowing him more, learning the niches and crevices of his mind. Never moving a limb, not blinking an eye, knowing that this could remain forever if he continued, if he only came up with the thought, he switches his paramour, from the indefinite trepidation of the feet, to the timeless hypnagogic, soporific embrace of the water.



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बेज़ुबानों को समझो

दीपक

चिड़ियों का चहकना
जीव-जन्तु का चिहाड़ना
अग्नि का दहकना
झरनों का कुछ गाना
हमारे मन को भा जाना
ऐसा हिंदुस्तान है हम सब ने माना ।
पेड़-पेड़ डाली-डाली चिड़ियों का उड़ना
अपनी भाषा में हमसे कुछ कहना
फिर भी समझ न पाई हमारी प्यारी बहना
हमारी तरह न बोलना जानते हैं, न लिखना
फिर भी समझते है हमारा कहना
ऊँचे-ऊँचे अम्बर में नील-गगन में घूमते हैं
नीचे थल में, जल में राज करती हैं
अम्बर में चिड़िया रहती है
और धरती पर हम
सुन लेते हैं उनकी आवाज
समझ लेते हैं उनकी बात
पर क्या ऐसा भारत है हमारा आज ?
क्यों करते हैं हम इंसान
इन बेज़ुबान प्राणियों की हत्या
किसी के घर में अँधेरा करके
क्यों जलाते है ऐसा दीया

मांगते है वो इंसानों से दया
इंसानों में न शर्म है न हया
अब कहती है बेचारी चिड़िया,
गौरैया और हमारी प्यारी मैया
हम निरीह प्राणियों को
मत मारो और प्यारे भईया ।



दीपक

Holocaust Journal

————— *Bhavya Srivastava* —————

NOTICE

All the non-Germans are ordered to wear a Yellow Star of David, segregating themselves from the pure race. They are forbidden to use buses, trams, cars or transport, public or personal, of any kind. They are forbidden to form groups, to attend any kind of social or religious events. Furthermore, they are ordered to restrict their actions, and for the greater good of the purer race, all their basic rights and amenities are curtailed.

Any non-German found breaking any laws will be executed immediately. All of them are ordered to register themselves and their families for further measures and treatment.

Date: 01st Januar 1941
(signed: Herr Nicholas Tvalsky)
burgermeister

I sighed. Already getting the ration was difficult now. With the release of these new prohibitions, it would be tougher obtaining anything to eat at all. Already the air around was filled with hostility, reproaching eyes followed everywhere I went. As if the First World War was our fault, as if we ruined the country.....

Non-Germans, that's what they called us, now, I thought bitterly. After suffering through the Great War, heaving the penance of the great Depression, we all, the Jewish, the Polish, the Hispanics, were anti-nationals, traitors.

We are now forced to lift the heavy cross, of segregation and guilt, just because "Führer" had decided to lead us to progress and development, only if "anti-nationals like us have been taken care of." Like we never suffered as they did, like we never cried the same tears as they did, like we never lost our loved ones to clutches of war as they did, like we never lost our everything as they did.....

Reaching home, I carefully placed the loaf of bread and some minced meat. It was a small house, just one room, the dining room in morning, the study room in afternoon, the kitchen in evening and for bedroom at night. Glancing upon from her dirty toils, my mother gave me a crinkly, weak smile, and said, "sehone tochter, I knew you will get something for us, your dad would be so happy, when he comes back. These are enough for all of us, enough for feast, and to save for....." Glazing over, she left that poignant note, hanging in the air. She knew what was coming, like everyone, our inevitable doom. Maybe, the only saving grace was having an only child, therefore, having to fill a small number of always-hungry stomachs. After staring into space for few minutes, she resumes her work. I grab my favorite book, which once costed our entire ration for the day, and began reading it.

After the cold dinner, we join our hands, thanking our god in gratitude, for another safe and gracious day, as safe and gracious it could be. "It's not we are suffering that we forget to thank Him, we thank Him for every breath we take, every deed we commit, every bite we eat and every scrap we wear." My dad is not very religious, but he deeply revered the Rabbi, who lived next door, and believed that my birth signified a good omen; He shall be there for me, His hand always over my head. Some things are beyond my explanations and reasoning, but I never crossed beliefs with my father for this.

Later that night, very late I think, I was jerked awake and forcefully pulled out of my house. Chaos was everywhere, my dad was bleeding from his one side of forehead, and my mum was closely clutching her saved items.

They casted a long, forlorn look at each other, before giving me a weak smile. Even though things were too messy for a twelve-year old, I perfectly understood it all. I just watched my neighborhood being burned to ashes, most with people inside them. Some of my friends didn't make out, neither did their families. Inevitable is here, Gestapo showed up, we were being relocated.

We walked, in long lines, shuffling and groaning, but not stopping. My mum clutched my hand, my dad kept his arm around my mum's waist. We were tired, from walking four, maybe five hours, but didn't stop. The sun had lit the horizon but did nothing to dispel the darkness. Those who stopped were whipped, beaten. Few even died. My mum told me that they just sleeping, a long, deep sleep, but I knew better. My childhood was already lost, now innocence was slipping out of my grasp. Only five hundred of us made it to the "RELOCATION AREA." I didn't know what it was called, I was hungry and thirsty, but dare not ask anyone. I was afraid of beating, afraid to get away from mom and dad. Herr Nicholas Tvalskey was there, whip in one hand, cold expression-ed. Clutching my mother's hand, I shivered, from cold, fear or exhaustion, I don't know, maybe all of them. She pulled me between herself and dad, but it didn't make me feel any safer. Herr ordered us to remove our clothes and ordered to hand over everything we had. Being one of the last persons, mum made us eat some meat and bread, before she had to surrender everything. I was still thirsty, but scared to ask, more than ever. Few of us protested, but it didn't matter; it was ripped away from them. Many of them were shot dead. Either way, we were standing there helpless and naked. My mum was weeping silently, my dad kept gazing at the sky, as if asking Him that what we did wrong to endure this fate. They say "Fuhrer" is going to reign in peace over here, is this how will he do it, when half of his people are helpless, and other half is the one inflicting helplessness? How will he do it, when half of us are naked, and other half is the reason behind it? How will he do it, when half of us are dying, and other half is murdering us? Is this how will he do it?

We stood there, hungry, thirsty, naked, helpless, under sweltering morning heat and biting nightly cold.

We tried huddling, to keep us warm, but what could bunch of cold bodies do? At the crack of dawn, we were pushed towards the train. Our feet were numbed from standing all day, so we tripped. Those who fell were killed. Many fell, many died. Freight Trains arrived, where we were pushed in towards a journey, which promised nothing but long, torturous death. I wanted to sleep, to forget all my troubles, but mom kept jolting me, kept me awake. "Snowy sleep, welcoming death", that's what she told me when I was small, but right now, death was an old, welcomed friend.

After what felt like eternity, Freights stopped. We got down, at least those who were alive. Auschwitz, the concentration camp. Someone tallied us, we were only two hundred and forty-six now, six children and two infants included. All of us felt naked and helpless; I could feel guard's disgusted eyes raking over us. I had never felt so lowly, I wanted the ground to rein justice and swallow me whole. I couldn't bear to look at the defeated and slouched. I wanted all of this to end. We were queued for the medical check-up. Except for me, all the children, infants, the old and sick were deemed medically unfit, and made to go in the room. My mom grabbed me, pressing me to her, blocking my view. Dad covered my ears. But nothing could be done about my nose. I smelled it, something burning, burning human flesh.....

We were subjected intense physical labor, given some old uniforms, uniforms of those who had been killed, to wear, with two-time meals-soup and bread. Working like animals, I saw humans turn into one. Someone, once, spilled their soup. Everyone rushed, scooping up more dirt, less soup, but nevertheless some extra soup. Wooden planks were our sleeping pyres, in deathly night. It was nothing, but a never ending cycle of weariness, exhaustion and helplessness. Brawls were common, but guards did nothing, we were entertainment to them, dogs fighting over food. It was hell; making me convinced god didn't exist, because if he did, I would have been warm in my bed, asleep, my mum reading me stories, and dad kissing me god-night, not slaving away here.

After some forever, a man, sick or desperate for freedom, maybe, tried to tackle the guards, and tried scaling the walls, soon followed by others. However, the electrified wire killed him and the others, stench of burned flesh whizzing through the air. Electricity was shut-off to get the bodies off. Suddenly, my dad pushed me through the wires, getting me grazed all over my body. "Run," he shouted, "run away from here, schone tochter. This is your omen, our omen. Survive this, for all of us." I ran as fast as I could. Last thing I saw was my mum sobbing and desperation of my father.

I got on the first thing I saw, and hid myself, in what I saw later, was a train. My world broke apart, as I just sat there, watching it crumble down. Tears couldn't force into my eyes, not even when I ripped-off my Yellow Star, not even when I discarded my religion, my identity, the cause of my suffering, cause of my childhood's death, the cause of my separation from my parents. Desolation over-powered me, and I longed for my mommy. I needed her, her warm hugs, daddy's brilliant hugs, and safety of their embrace. Nobody came, as I wailed. Grief took over me, as I fell asleep; I knew that my faith had abandoned me. I stayed like that, for many days hiding in utility room, stealing food, crying myself to sleep, cursing my destiny, lamenting my destiny. Then one day, train stopped, reaching its destination. I stepped out, and looked around to see where I was. I was safe, finally. I had survived it, gotten out of there. I fulfilled my promise, to my mom and dad. I had no faith left in me, I had no trust in me, nothing to love, nothing to live for. I didn't trust Him, he was selfish enough to rip my parents away from me. But, I wanted to hold on, because I knew that mom and dad will never lose hope, they will fight this. They will come back to me, because they love me. They are not like Him who abandoned all of us, they will return for me. And if they don't, they will wait for me to come back. We will be a family once again, when we meet, and that is the only thing I look forward to. That's the only thing that kept me alive. Faith is nothing, all I had is just them, and surely, god can't be so cruel, right?



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काश मै भी लड़का होती

आयुष शुक्ला

हर बात मुलाकात पर वो कह ही देती थी
की काश मै भी लड़का होती
कोई न फब्तियां कसता
कोई न उरोजों को घूरता
आधा पहनती या पूरा
कोई बात-बात पर न टोकता
काश मै भी लड़का होती.....

मेरी हिफाजत के लिए
माँ परेशान न होती
चार साल के छोटू को
मेरे साथ बार-बार न भेजती
काश मै भी लड़का होती

लेकिन फिर मै सोचती हूँ
की आखिर मै लड़का क्यूँ होती
क्या लड़की होना गुनाह है?
नहीं है
गुनहगार है वो सोच जिसने
समझा है औरत को सिर्फ एक सामान
इस गुनहगार को अब सूली पर चढ़ाना है
इसलिए अब मै नहीं कहती की

काश मैं लड़का होती
मैं लड़की हूँ और काश
मैं लड़की ही बनूँ ...



आयुष शुक्ला संकुल नवप्रवर्तन केंद्र में बी. ए ऑनर्स (मानविकी और सामाजिक विज्ञान)
में द्वितीय वर्ष के छात्र हैं।

Dilwaalon Ki Delhi

————— Arijit Roy —————

"Hey Arijit! You are from Delhi right ? So what do you like in Delhi ? What is Delhi ?" I look at her and wonder, why the hell did I say I was from Delhi. I look at her face again, I know she is determined, so I start searching for answers. It's ok, it's ok, I got this, I tell myself as I go back to my class 3 G.K. textbooks and recall some names like The Lotus Temple, Jantar Mantar, Qutub Minar. I tell all these pompous names in all my pompous fashion, saying to myself "Wow Arijit ! You have a good memory"

She looks at me , still wondering and says "Oh that's great , but What is Delhi ?" Now I am a proud Delhite , I accept the challenge. "So have you been to Chandni Chowk , Jama Masjid , GK2 , I give her all my romantic answers for Delhi. She listens carefully, she nods her head, but still isn't quite satisfied. "But Arijit What is Delhi?" Now I go back to my class 8th history lessons, I tell her that Delhi has been ruled by the Mughals, the British, so it's a hybrid of culture "I hope you understand that right?" My pride about my memory increases. Thankfully I had studied History, to impress that girl in my class with whom I am no longer in touch today. She says "Exactly, but then does Delhi even have a culture of it's own ?" Now that hurt. I look at her again, she knows she has a point. I wonder does Delhi really have a culture of it's own. I sigh. How can I explain a city that works day and night to breathe life, but all it achieves is death? How can I cover up for a city where thousands take to the streets, but the streets are always unclean? How can I explain my city which makes the most Raksha bandhan sales , but is the rape capital of the world? Yes we have scars, we are flawed we have cried and those tears haven't dried yet. Nope, not yet. Yes there's been rain, I know there's mud sticking on our shoes, but come with me I'll show you the rainbow. It's time we realised that we are much more than the sand, slipping away like time so she is right and she is wrong. Yes Delhi is weak , but Delhi is strong.

It's been a long time, we've embraced this city, it's pace, it's passion, but it's time we fall in love again. There's this something special in getting a selfie at the India Gate or travelling in the metro if it's not Rajiv Chowk or shopping with your girlfriend at Sarojini or even having a quiet time with yourself at the Lotus Temple and the list goes on and on. But "What is Delhi?" Honestly, I don't know, yes it's been 19 years, 19 good years, but I still don't know. It's a feeling maybe or passion, or a child who runs unbound with great freedom on the map of the world, who stumbles, who falls, who cries, who smiles, who picks himself/herself up and dares to fly again. Delhi is a little happiness, tons of energy, some clouds, a little rain but yes there's light at the end of the tunnel. I hope this answers it and I know this will not. But yes, Delhi is contagious. She will come to you. Oh! trust me she will and when she does, just embrace her. She is flawed but trust me she is very beautiful.



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मैं:स्वयं की एक खोज

अनीश चंद्र प्रकाश

कभी-कभी मैं सोचता हूँ
मैं कौन हूँ?
और, जब मैं सोचता हूँ
तब 'मैं' होता हूँ
वरना कोई और होता है
तो, वह जो कोई और है
उसकी ही तलाश मेरी तलाश है
इसलिए मैं कभी-कभार सोच लेता हूँ
वह हमेशा उपस्थित होता है
मैं कभी-कभार
इसलिए मेरा सोचना कभी-कभार है
एक मयान में एक ही तलवार होंगी न
इसलिए जब मैं आता हूँ
वह कहीं दूर चला जाता है
जबकि मैं उसे ही ढूँढ रहा होता हूँ।



अनीश चंद्र प्रकाश संकुल नवप्रवर्तन केंद्र में बी.ए ऑनर्स
(मानविकी और सामाजिक विज्ञान)
में द्वितीय वर्ष के छात्र हैं।

The Hidden Truth

————— *Shrutika Jha* —————

Looks can be deceptive
What is visible might not be true
There may be hidden feelings
Some might not feel what we think they do.

Who are we to judge?
Who are we to comment?
It's better to keep our mouths shut.
Than to later lament.

We can't see all,
We don't know everything
There are hidden truths
There are links within links.

Human nature is to criticise,
Human nature is to blame
We love to prove ourselves right
We love to put others to shame.

A person might appear something
And be something else
We admire pearls
But who looks inside the shells?

Pearls are beautiful to look at,
But do you know how they are made?
They are formed out of irritation,

They are formed when dust is overlaid.

We admire diamonds,
But who likes coal?
We worship snakes,
Who goes inside their hole?

Nobody is perfect,
No one is sans fault
No one is what they seem to be,
Everyone has a secret vault.

She might appear confident
And seem to consider herself above all.
Yet she might want to be loved
She might want affection after all.

She might appear to be haughty,
She might seem to be a brat.
But she might be soft on the inside
Did you ever consider that?

We are quick to judge
We think we are always right
This tampers with our judgment
This narrows our sight.

Just because she appears over confident
It doesn't mean she is!
For all you know, inside she might be broken
But that's a fact we miss.

She could be the lowest on self esteem
And just be putting on a brave face

She might appear focused
And actually be in a daze.

But do we ever bother to try?
Do we bother to really know her?
No, too busy making judgments
We have no time to understand her.

And by the time we realise our mistake,
She will have gone too far
We will lose the opportunity to know her
Coz she will have ventured afar.

Fed up of our uncaring attitude,
She will withdraw herself from us
Upset that we never bothered
She will up and leave without a fuss.



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at Acharya Narendra Dev College.*

Peace

— NK Vinutha —

I was there,
But nobody noticed.
I had my presence
in every nook and cranny,
But, none bothered.
I whispered in the eerie silences,
Sung my sweet lullaby in the lives of many, but was hushed and kept
mum.
I didn't give up.
Eavesdropping now and then, I persevered. However, there were no ears
to listen.
Why?
You took me as a desire that's unending,
a thirst that's unquenchable,
a fantasy, a utopia...
I shrieked out loud when you became violent, shutting the door of your
conscience,
Shrivelling your heart which was forced to match the dumb logics of your
mind,
When you acted worse than the beasts...
I still breathed.
Why?
Because I believe in the good
that you possess,
I clasp you with unbound compassion,
With all my might, I gather myself
each time I am broke,

I hold you tighter, embrace you with all that I have when you tear me
apart.

Only to make you realise that you are human enough. You do have a
heart that loves and cares
for many others like you,
I gasp with pain
each day with the hope that you'll think
beyond yourself.

Peace as I am called,
A nightmare for those who take pleasure in hatred, revenge and anger,
A willo'thewisp for those who just imagine,
But
A reality for those who bring me alive in their thoughts, words and
deeds!



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at the Department of English, North Campus.*

Chats: The Speeder and the Policeman

————— *Shrey Ahuja* —————

"Sir," the policeman said as he stopped the speeding car and reached its window, "Where are you going?"

"Home," the man replied.

"And where is that?" the policeman continued.

"Wherever it might be," the man responded.

"Sir, I'm going to have to ask you get out of your car and give me your license and registration." The policeman said, irate at the man's response.

The man, calm and nonchalant stepped out of the car and handed the documents to the policeman and stepped aside and shut the car door.

The policeman let out a sigh, regretful at stopping this particular over-speeding car at one in the morning. "Sir, your home address is about two hundred kilometres from here," the policeman exclaimed in anger.

"I know," the man went on, as though oblivious to the police man's ire and fatigue.

"Then what the hell are you doing here?" the policeman said, finally snapping at the attitude of the man.

"Finding home," the man replied in his usual casualness.

"You keep on with that attitude and I'll lock you up for the night." the policeman continued, frustrated and annoyed at the perceived casualness and general waywardness of the man.

"Nothing will happen to the car right?" the man responded, turning a bit more serious.

"Yeah, wait, what?" the policeman shocked at the man's query. "I'm this close to locking you up with homicidal maniacs and psychopaths, and that's all you can think about? Whether your car will be okay or not?"

"Yeah. It's my father's," the man responded, his casualness fading away for his serious demeanour.

The policeman stopped checking the documents and stared at the man. He was unpleasantly shocked at the man's indifference in his voice and his blank expression while saying it.

"Man, you're crazy," the policeman stated. "I've locked up paedophiles, guys who did hit and run, a few homicidal maniacs too, but they don't hold anything when compared to you," he continued filled with equal parts of amazement and bafflement at this extremely bizarre incident in his life.

"What, why?" the man responded in light humor, surprised at the acquisition.

"Seriously. I catch you speeding at one in the night, you're all damn chill about it. Then I tell you I'll lock you up and you're concerned about your car rather than yourself," the policeman spoke in a fast but high pitched voice. "What's up with that," the policeman ended his tirade against the man's attitude and the man, smiling, burst out laughing,

"What? What?" the policeman responded, his hands thrown in the air, curious at the man's laughter, but also not very pleased at the same time.

"Well," the man continued laughing, even more loudly than before, now breaking the silence that shrouded the area. "Well, I've never seen a police officer say words like chill or what's up or even act like that," the man continued, throwing his hands in the air like the police officer, and eventually falling on his car's hood.

"Man, I tell you. You're crazy," the policeman said, tired at trying to figure out the man's unusual behaviour.

"No, no," the man continued, controlling his laughter to give a more coherent and audible response. "No," finally ending his laughter, "how often do you look at a police officer use words like chill and act like a normal person. I mean, you all act so tough all the time that we forget you're just like us. I mean, we get so muddled in the stereotypes, we forget to look at the people underneath."

The policeman stood surprised by what he had just heard. He understood why the man laughed and realised that the man was as smart as he was crazy.

"Yeah, that's because not a lot of people over speed at one in the morning."
"True," the man nodded. "Or you know, cross paths with me," the man laughed.

"Yeah," the policeman joined the man in his laughter.

The laughter soon subsided into the silence and both the men rested on the hood of the car and the policeman closed the documents and handed them over to the man.

"So, what brings you here, oh great wise wizard man of two hundred kilometres away," the policeman asked, waving his arms in the air, trying to make mystical hand signs.

The man chuckled a bit. "You never thought you'd see a police man do that, did you?" the policeman continued and the man burst out laughing again. The policeman joined him as well.

"You here to meet some extended family or something," the policeman asked.

"No, no. Just passing by. Just exploring," the man replied.

"To where," the policeman asked,

"I don't know, I just took the car out of the garage for a drive and next thing you know, I get back home, pack a bag and head out."

"All of a sudden? Just like that?" the policeman enquired.

"Just like that," the man responded. "The car had been in the garage ever since it came back from servicing a couple weeks ago and I just took her out for a spin. And while driving, I realised I needed to unburden myself," the man continues, "of all earthly and mundane affairs," he spoke, imitating a wizard in speech and action.

Both of them chuckled a bit.

"Unburden yourself? You sound like you're carrying a lot of burden on those weak arms," the policeman said, patting the man's bicep.

"I was," the man's tone was now serious. "My family died when I was what, seven. Ever since then, I've been living with my extended joint family. So, all my other relatives looked after me," the man continued. "But they always had this feeling in their heart. They would feel bad for me and somewhere, I felt they always treated me differently. And I always felt grateful and so, in my head, I started to become what I think they would

appreciate. And I started becoming this boy who restrained himself from so much because of small things only he could see and burdened himself with this particular way to live and behave that he forgot who he truly was. Beneath all those self-imposed restrictions," the man ended, taking a deep breath.

"You know they would have loved it had you been yourself," the policeman said.

"Yeah, I know. I always thought that I could be one way in front of them but always know who I was in my head and it would be all right. But that just doesn't work out."

"Yeah. You can't wear one face to the world and another to yourself without eventually becoming confused as to which one is actually true," the policeman added on.

"And that's the issue, isn't it? We all think that if we know who we are and are secure about it, we can change ourselves according to people's needs without it affecting who we really are," the man spoke with pain and passion in his voice regarding the human condition. "It just doesn't work."

"It can't work," the policeman added. "The human brain and heart, even though used for deception are not made for it. They falter when they know they're doing something wrong," the policeman equally passionate and irate about the human condition.

"That actually makes so much sense. You can't fool yourself into believing what you don't believe in. I mean, that's why heroes and villains go so far. Because in their heart of hearts, they are doing what they truly believe in. Unhindered, unrestrained by anything," the man continued.

"Because when you believe, you aren't scared by things that scare you. You work hard to overcome adversities and succeed," the policeman added further.

"Because only a strong immovable belief forms the willpower to never give up," the man said, even faster, stimulated by the conversation they were having.

"I've never talked like that without having two beers in me," the policeman exclaimed even faster and both men chuckled a bit.

"Seems like a scene out of a Woody Allen movie," the man said once he finished his laughter. "Two strangers meet and out of nowhere start talking about life and the human condition and the problems we all face."

The policeman checked. "Yeah. Rightly said. Had it been longer, we could have called it a scene from My Dinner With Andre."

"Yeah, but in My Dinner With Andre, the two know each other. We're more Allen characters. Strangers who are mysteriously empathise with each other even though they've known each other only a short time."

"You sure can talk for about one thirty in the night," the policeman said.

"It's a gift," the man said with a slight hint of narcissism."

"Aaaaahhhh," the policeman yawned, tired after this brief but enlightening experience. "I'd love to continue, but I'm tired and no matter how much I don't want to, I need to finish with my duty here." The policeman said as he got of the hood of the man's car and raised his arm for a handshake.

"Yeah," the man responded, jumping off the hood with his documents in hand and grabbed the policeman's hand.

The policeman walked away and the man looked at his documents. "Wait, aren't you going to give me a ticket?" the man screamed."

"Nah. I have a feeling you'll be back here."

The man nodded his head as the policeman entered his car and started it and drive away, his hand out to wave good bye and he soon drove towards the moon. The man too then entered his car and revved his engine and took off as well, a smile on his face, driving towards the moon as well, but taking a different path.



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Section IV

Visuals

खंड IV

चित्रांकन

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— *Shaheed Sukhdev College Of Business Studies* —



N K Vinutha

— MA Department of English —



Kunal Bharti

— *Shaheed Sukhdev College Of Business Studies* —



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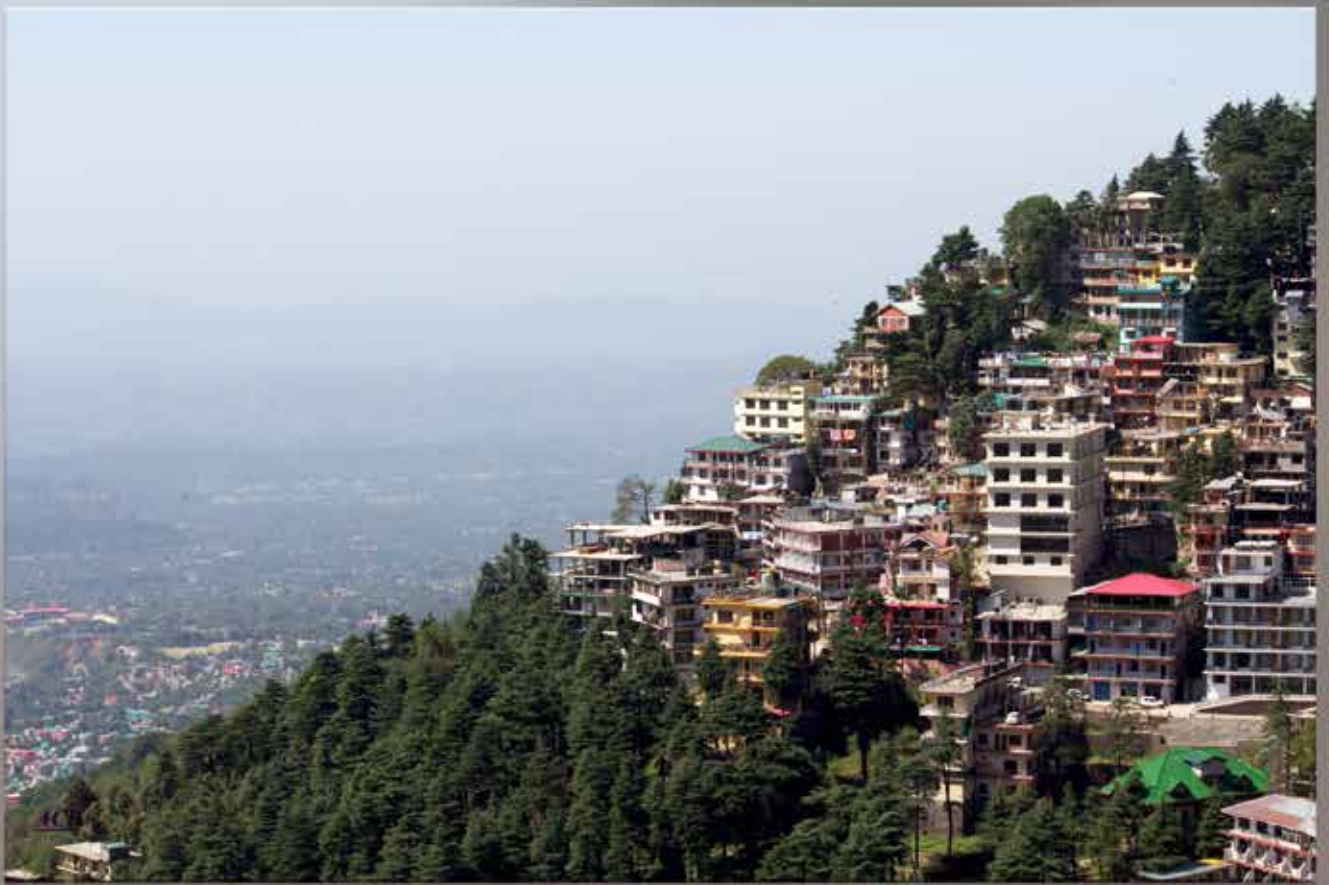
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Rupali kumar

— *Shaheed Bhagat Singh College* —



Nibedita Roy

— Shivaji College —



Aarchi Chaturvedi

Shaheed Bhagat Singh College



Shikha Rana

— Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College —



Alisha Panwar

— Shaheed Bhagat Singh College —



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Lakshmbai College



Shambhavi Shree

— *Shaheed Bhagat Singh College* —



Riddhi Jangid

— *Lakshmibai College* —



Sushant Sapra

— *Shaheed Bhagat Singh College* —



Rashi Sharma

— *Vivekanand college* —



Devyansh Dodeja

— *Shaheed Bhagat Singh College* —



Venny badarwal

— Shaheed Bhagat Singh College —



Venny badarwal

— *Shaheed Bhagat Singh College* —



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Submissions for DU Vidha Vol.IV at a Glance

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRIES RECEIVED	250	
NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS	50	
STUDENTS PARTICIPATION	BOYS 47 GIRLS 60	TOTAL 107
NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN HINDI	PROSE 10 POEMS 58	TOTAL 68
NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN ENGLISH	PROSE 47 POEMS 47	TOTAL 94
NUMBER OF ENTRIES FOR VISUALS	PHOTOS 36 PAINTINGS 56	TOTAL 92
NUMBER OF ENTRIES SELECTED FOR PUBLICATION	ENGLISH 43 HINDI 15 VISUALS 27	TOTAL 85