

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



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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."



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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.



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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.



Amit Kumar is currently studying at Law Centre-II, Faculty of Law.

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!



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

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 किरोड़ीमल कॉलेज में राजनीति शास्त्र (प्रथम वर्ष) के 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...



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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.



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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...



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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.



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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 हैं।