



KRISTU JAYANTI (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

Under Section 3 of UGC Act 1956

A CMI INSTITUTION | BENGALURU | INDIA

School of Humanities and Social Sciences
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EXPRESSIONS

2026

ANNUAL LITERARY MAGAZINE

VISION

'Light and Prosperity' : To provide intellectual and moral leadership by igniting the minds of the youth to realise their potential and make positive contributions leading to prosperity of the society and the nation at large.

MISSION

To provide educational opportunities to all aspiring youth to excel in life by nurturing academic excellence, fostering values, creating civic responsibility, inculcating environmental concern and building global competencies in a dynamic environment.

About the University

Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be) University, managed by the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, has established itself as a premier destination for higher education in Bengaluru. Since its inception in 1999, the institution has prioritized a blend of academic excellence and character formation, earning an 'A++' accreditation from NAAC. Highlighting its upward trajectory in academic excellence, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be) University secured the 60th position in the 2024 NIRF rankings. Building on this momentum, the institution made a significant leap in 2025, climbing to 34th nationally in the college category. This remarkable achievement distinguishes it as the top-ranked college in Karnataka for 2025, further solidifying its reputation as a premier destination for higher education in the region. This high distinction reflects its commitment to maintaining a rigorous curriculum across diverse faculties, including Arts, Commerce, Management, and Sciences, while fostering an environment where students are encouraged to reach their full intellectual potential.

The university is a hub of innovation, particularly known for integrating advanced technology and modern pedagogical tools into the classroom. By emphasizing research and interdisciplinary studies, the institution prepares its students to navigate the complexities of the digital age and the evolving global workforce. This forward-thinking approach is complemented by a vibrant campus culture that hosts numerous international conferences and workshops, ensuring that both faculty and students remain at the forefront of contemporary academic discourse and professional development.

Beyond academics, the university is dedicated to the holistic growth of the Jayantian community through extensive extracurricular opportunities and social outreach programs. Located on a lush, state-of-the-art campus in North Bengaluru, it provides a serene yet technologically advanced atmosphere conducive to learning and creativity. By balancing traditional values with a global outlook, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University) continues to shape socially responsible leaders who are equipped to make significant contributions to society and their respective fields.

About the Department

The Department of English at Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be) University serves as a vibrant epicenter for the study of language, literature, and cultural discourse. Committed to a holistic pedagogical approach, the department offers a wide array of undergraduate and postgraduate programs that traverse British, Indian, American, and Postcolonial literatures. By balancing classical foundations with contemporary critical theories and linguistics, the curriculum is meticulously designed to sharpen analytical thinking and creative expression, ensuring students are well-prepared for diverse professional landscapes.

Innovation and experiential learning are at the heart of the department's identity, supported by a distinguished faculty of over 70 members, including regular, adjunct, and practicing professionals. Students engage with the humanities beyond textbooks through unique initiatives such as Theatre Productions, Live Exhibitions, and specialized Skill Studios. These platforms, along with monthly newsletters like Jayantian Epistle and Krysolite, provide a steady outlet for creative and journalistic talent, fostering a sense of community and intellectual curiosity that extends far beyond the traditional classroom setting.

The department further distinguishes itself through a robust culture of research and global engagement. It regularly hosts international conferences, lecture series, and faculty development programs that connect students with world-renowned scholars. With dedicated infrastructure, including a tech-enabled Language Lab and a comprehensive departmental library, the institution bridges the gap between academic theory and practical skill acquisition. This comprehensive training prepares graduates for successful careers in academia, publishing, content creation, and corporate communications, molding them into socially conscious and globally competitive individuals.

About Expressions

Expressions, the magazine of the Department of English, is a curated space that has, over the years, brought together the creative and critical engagements of students. It features a diverse range of writing like poetry, short fiction, essays, and reviews, each reflecting distinct perspectives and evolving literary sensibilities.

Situated at the intersection of creativity and critique, the magazine foregrounds the many ways in which language can be shaped to explore experience, memory, identity, and imagination. The contributions move across genres and themes, engaging with both the personal and the contemporary, while also drawing from wider literary and cultural frameworks.

As a continuing collective endeavour, *Expressions* not only showcases writing but also sustains a culture of inquiry, reflection, and articulation within the department. It stands as a testament to the students' engagement with literature, not merely as a subject of study, but as a dynamic and lived practice.

From the Vice Chancellor's Desk...

It is with immense joy and pride that I present the Literary Magazine of the Department of English, *Expressions 2026*. This edition reflects the dynamic spirit of our students, whose creativity and intellectual curiosity continue to shape a vibrant culture of literary engagement within the department.

At its heart, this magazine is a celebration of expression in its many forms. In an age defined by speed and immediacy, reflective writing often recedes into the background. Yet, it is through literature, stories, poems,



essays, and critical reflections, that we make sense of ourselves and the world around us. These forms carry our histories, question our realities, and imagine new possibilities. *Expressions 2026* seeks to preserve and renew this enduring tradition by offering a space where voices are not only heard, but deeply felt.

The works featured in this edition traverse a wide creative and analytical spectrum. From evocative poetry and compelling fiction to beautiful photography, aesthetic artwork, insightful essays and reviews, each contribution embodies a unique perspective. Together, they form a rich mosaic of ideas and emotions, inviting readers to engage, interpret, and reflect.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our students, whose dedication and authenticity give life to these pages. My gratitude also goes to the faculty members for their constant guidance, and to the editorial team for their commitment and meticulous effort in bringing this publication together. Their work ensures that *Expressions* remains a meaningful platform for nurturing talent and sustaining literary dialogue. As you explore this edition, I hope you encounter not just words, but experiences and moments that challenge, comfort, and inspire. May this magazine encourage you to think deeply, feel intensely, and remain open to many voices and forms that shape our shared human journey.

Fr. Dr. Augustine George CMI
Vice Chancellor

From the Director's Desk...

It brings me immense joy to present the latest edition of *Expressions 2026*, a vibrant initiative by the Department of English at Kristu Jayanti University. This magazine stands as a testament to our students' boundless imagination, providing a prestigious stage where their literary flair and artistic visions can converge and flourish. At the heart of our university's mission is a steadfast dedication to holistic excellence, and this publication beautifully captures our commitment to balancing rigorous academics with the creative spirit.



We believe that literature is the ultimate lens through which we view the world—it sharpens the intellect and cultivates deep empathy. The Department of English continues to be a catalyst for this growth, offering a sanctuary for linguistic innovation and critical thought. Through diverse platforms like these, we empower our students to transform their nascent ideas into polished works of art that resonate far beyond the classroom.

Reviewing this issue has been a truly rewarding experience, marked by the impressive intellectual depth and striking visuals contributed by students from across the diverse disciplines of Kristu Jayanti University. This collection sets a new benchmark for creative excellence, proving that a passion for expression transcends all academic boundaries. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the editorial and design teams for their meticulous synergy, as well as to every student contributor whose passion serves as the heart of this publication. Congratulations on the remarkable success of *Expressions 2026*.

Well done!

Fr. Joshy Mathew CMI

Director, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

From the Dean of Humanities

My sincere appreciation for *Expressions 2026*, a thoughtful compilation that reflects the creative energy and intellectual engagement of our students. This edition curates a nuanced interplay of literary and critical articulations, where imagination and inquiry converge to illuminate diverse modes of thought and experience. The collection stands as a meaningful representation of our academic ethos, where expression is both cultivated and critically engaged.



I extend my appreciation to the faculty coordinators Dr. S.A. Sovya Shephyr and Dr. Merrin R S and the editorial team Ms. Sneha Biju John, Ms. Athulya M Anilkumar and Ms. Suhasini Thapa Mangar for their dedication and meticulous effort in bringing this publication to fruition. May *Expressions 2026* continue to engage its readers and inspire deeper reflection and creative exploration. I wish this edition every success. May it also serve as a platform for emerging voices to find confidence and clarity in their expression, fostering a sustained culture of literary excellence within our institution.

Dr. Gopakumar A. V.

Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

From the Head of the Department

The practice of coming out with the Department magazine, 'Expressions' at the UG level is a significant step towards training the student's creative imagination. This exercise could be interesting and challenging all at once. Interesting because one would behold student responses that are estranging, popular, quirky and challenging yet filtering out writings may be trying, because every piece of writing is somebody's experience, real or imagined. Words that come alive on paper can metamorphize into story work that is unusual, telling stories that make for identity formation that is individual and collective. 'Expressions' can take many forms, metaphoric of patterns, colors and musings. It represents hope that could materialize as writings while expressions in turn shape consciousness.



Dr. Sreedevi Santhosh

From the Coordinator of the Department

It is with great pride and delight that I witness the fruition of *Expressions*, a magazine that beautifully reflects the intellectual vibrancy and creative dynamism of our students. This publication has offered a meaningful platform for them to explore, articulate, and refine their voices with confidence, imagination, and originality.

I sincerely commend the editorial team for their commitment, vision and efforts in shaping a publication of such remarkable quality. Their dedication is evident in every page, making *Expressions* a true celebration of student creativity.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations and warmest wishes to everyone involved. I wish the entire team continued success in all their future endeavours.



Dr. Saranya Narayanan

From the Editors' Desk

It is a moment of profound pride for us to present this latest edition of *Expressions 2026*. As faculty coordinators, we have had the distinct privilege of witnessing the evolution of this issue from the first spark of an idea to the polished, evocative publication you hold today. This magazine is a vibrant reflection of the creative pulse that beats within the Department of English at Kristu Jayanti University.



Dr. S. A. Sovya Shephyr

In these pages, the traditional boundaries of the classroom dissolve, making way for a sanctuary of imagination. Our students have dared to explore complex themes through poignant poetry, incisive prose, and striking visual artistry, proving that the literary spirit is not just alive but thriving. At Kristu Jayanti, we believe in the power of a holistic education, and *Expressions* serves as the perfect bridge where academic rigor meets the limitless freedom of creative practice.



Dr. Merrin R. S.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the student editorial board and the design team. Your tireless collaboration and commitment to quality have ensured that every page resonates with excellence. To our contributors, thank you for sharing your unique perspectives and for reminding us that literature is a universal language that enriches the soul.

We invite you to immerse yourself in these works and celebrate the multifaceted talent of our Jayantian community.

Meet Our Editing Crew

Editors:

Ms. Sneha Biju John

VI BA English Literature

Ms. Athulya M Anilkumar

VI BA English Literature

Designer:

Ms. Suhasini Thapar Mangar

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Dr. Merrin R S

Ms. Sneha Biju John

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Ms. Suhasini Thapa Mangar

Chief Designer



Ms. Athulya M Anilkumar

Editor



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...you'll beca
...to learn. M
...delighted

A CONSTANT THAT REMAINS

Reflecting on the paths walked,
All that's seen is the constant pursuing Love
A love which refused to abandon,
An omnipresence that never withdrew.

Showing every action had resonated with the beyond,
As if something was predestined,
Or as if someone had all control, power and authority
This pushed one to attain the divine purpose.

The attempt in becoming began
In small fragile steps,
Hoping the efforts do not go in vain
But fall came quickly.

Yet still a voice came in with overwhelming Love,
And said to let go of old way's
Undressing the uncleanness, to be broken for rebuilding,
As this will be the preparation to reach end goal

This created a season of waiting,
Where all felt uncertain,
But pieces were being stuck together...
Still the old patterns of fall returned.

And yet, through it all the agape love remained
Staying Faithfull, constant and unchanging.
But it asked for a cost to pay
A deeper choice echoing what was given.

Even when decision failed yet again,
All that was seen were imperfection
Still, there was no withdrawal of the constant
Rather this love was made perfect in flaws.

So only that Love remains now
Teaching that in quiet renewal,
Failures are testimonies, weaknesses are learnings.
Ever realigning with the love that never left.

CHASE YOUR DREAMS

What are **dreams really**? Are they so overpowering that they make you drool overnight, doesn't it let you think of anything else? Are you so addicted to them that you'd be willing to sacrifice anything or pace them with a balanced life?

What would be your choice? How would you chase them? How will you hunt them? But moreover, why is it so **IMPORTANT** to hunt for them?

See, human beings are involved in the cycle of creation and destruction for centuries and beyond. We do not ask for being born as a human being or some other animal, and neither we have the authority to deny and die as we please. As a result, I believe we simply have to utilise those exceptional abilities that only a human can exercise, which makes us distinct from the others. Therefore, dreams are the catalyst that can help a person reach his true self by convincing himself/herself that he/she can do the impossible. However unfortunately, there are detrimental psychological barriers that humans have created since the age of dawn without knowing that they exceptionally limit themselves and their true potential. Of course, it helped humans to form packs to form societies and stay civilized, but the only beneficiary was the ruler of that land, so that no one gets out of control, and overthrow the ruler himself.

In a world where social media, false propaganda and fake PR narrative snatches your hunger to **THRIVE & ROAR** by replacing it with satisfactory distraction, lust and entertainment, it feels hard to justify what we want to do in life and therefore our future goals diminish, which may be right in front of our eyes. Because we never had the time to think about them and realize what we truly wanted to be, rather simply hide in the crowd and get swayed by what the world has showcased for us.

But, what we need are a set of qualities that will separate us from this herd mentality. And so, we need to work hard if we have to, for relentless hours, with persistence & perseverance, that'll guide us to the only goal that we want to truly achieve. For those who don't have any aim in life, and don't know what goal to pursue in the future, they must go through a list of 'hit & trial' experiments in order to explore and find out, what is their true desire beneath.

Even though, you might question, why is it so important to have a goal in life, anyways? Why can't we live our lives like any other normal guy? For them, it is absolutely OK. But, here is my verdict. The world gets competitive as you read this blog. And you may have nothing to do with that. But, in order to grow and evolve over time, you'll face challenges in life that you must overcome, and when you have something to achieve in life, it becomes clearer to you the direction that you must take your voyage on for a happy ending you long perceived. And that is what gives success and ultimately meaning to your long lived life. You may not realize it at first, but looking back, you'll see how all the dots connect each other. And that is why, last but not least, this goes without saying - "**Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish!**" because you do not know what the world has in store for you, until you put an effort to search for it.

THE MUTE VOICE

Stepped in a world of uneven scales,
Scattered by the narrow eyes that long to find a flaw. She strolled a way where the
fragile soul fails,
Suppressed by the ancient law.

She survived through years of unheard cries,
Walked into the rigid world she called her own,
Unaware of what was coming next.

Cross-checked for the way she breathed,
The unwavering doubt about the way she moved.
Drowning in a room of thankless fate.

No hand was lent to offer her warmth,
No voice to ask if she was tired.
Finally, the doors closed and the light began to fade from her eyes, And she found her
last silence on her bed.

Sangeetha B
24JPEB45

UNFINISHED

Ever felt, tired of trying to be perfect in the journey of being happy?

Ever taught why do we choose others to look upon? Ever thought of being imperfect, the way YOU want yourself and not the way people want to see you. Ever thought of having no self doubt ?

Is it about YOU ?

The Silence 'I' Carry

The change became obvious one afternoon when I slid into an empty seat at the back of the lecture hall. Around me, voices crashed like restless waves, laughter breaking and reforming against unseen shores, while names were tossed between people like driftwood carried by the tide. I sat still, a small island in the middle of the storm, clutching my phone as if it were a lifeboat, pretending the chaos around me wasn't pulling me under.

That was when it struck me;

I was the kind of student who never sat alone, so why did I feel like a silent ocean beneath this noisy surface? Slowly, I realized that the confidence I once rode like a familiar current had been bound to comfort and certainty. Here, I was uncharted waters, a quiet tide in a sea that barely noticed me. I was starting anew in a world that roared while I whispered, and the thought of being invisible among all that noise frightened me more than I cared to admit...

Pooja N
25PSYB38

BHARGAVI P

24CMAB14



TAKE YOUR CHANCE

Irfan Khan once said,

"You know, I have a friend.

You know, I have a friend who bought a car five years ago.

It's still parked in the garage.

Ask why. Ask why. Ask why?

He says, 'The day every signal in the city turns green, that's the day I'll take the car out.'

To which Konkona replied,

"What an idiot. If he never takes the car out, how will he ever know whether the signals are green or not?"

And he smiles like he's been waiting for this,

"Exactly. Take the car out. Take your chance, baby. Take your chance"

-Life in a Metro 2007

College is that garage.

College is a parking lot full of people with their engines on and hands hovering over their steering wheel waiting.

We wait for the right time, for the perfect gpa, for enough experience to apply for the thing that gives you experience, for courage to magically appear overnight.

We wait for every signal to turn green.

That club audition? Maybe next semester, once I'm confident.

That internship form? I'll apply after midterms, once I'm good enough.

That person you want to talk to? I'll talk to them once I'm not awkward.

Meanwhile the semester ends. Again.



College does not run on green lights. It runs on hesitation, half-chances, and showing up even when your hands shake a little. Trust me I'd know.

Your resume isn't "ready". Neither is anyone else's.

That club committee isn't exclusive, they just said yes to the first person who didn't overthink it.

That opportunity you think you're underqualified for?

Someone dumber but faster already took it.

And yeah,

You might embarrass yourself.

You might get rejected so hard you pretend you never applied.

But at least you're on the road.

If you never leave the garage, every red light feels like a warning.

But once you start driving, you realise yellow just means go faster, red eventually turns green and sometimes you learn the city by getting lost.

So if you're waiting for some sign to dawn upon you, consider this it.

If you're waiting for certainty, it doesn't exist.

If you're waiting for the perfect moment, you'll miss the real ones.

Take the car out.

Miss a turn.

Break a signal.

Get honked at.

College isn't about avoiding wrong turns. It's about moving enough to find your own way.

And as Irfan Khan once said, Take your chance, baby. Take your chance.

Peeya Jhamtani
24ACAC41

THE CHILDHOOD I MISSED

The Childhood I Missed

All I ever wanted was love's warm light,
A gentle touch to hold me tight.
But in my youth, no love was shown, Ignored, unseen, I stood alone.
Childlike in mind, yet grown too fast,
I searched for joy that didn't last.
I built my world with dreams so light,
Now in the quiet, still, my heart does fight.
I found some happiness on my way,
But shadows of the past keep on to stay.
For then I played the part,
With an adult's cause in a child's heart.
Now grown up, I look behind,
Regret and longing intertwined.
I miss the days I never had,
The innocence that I now wish I'd had.

MONISH S
24JPEB35

K-WAVE CRAZE GRIPS INDIA

The Korean wave, popularly known as Hallyu, has emerged as a global cultural force and is gaining more attraction in India. So, what exactly is fueling this obsession, be it K-pop, Korean dramas, cuisine, fashion, makeup, skincare, or the rich culture?

It usually starts with a bit of inquisitiveness. People dive deeper into Korean shows or music and somehow end up craving more. K-pop, with its hook-filled tracks, unique choreography, and relatable lyrics, makes it easy to get hooked. Then there are the dramas. With heartfelt tales, refreshing visuals, and those heart-throbbing moments, it gives the viewers butterflies in their stomachs.


Universally recognised K-pop groups like BTS, BLACKPINK, EXO, SEVENTEEN, STRAY KIDS, TWICE, ENHYPEN, AESPA, and many other K-pop acts have become widely recognised across the world, their music acting as a gateway for fans to explore more about Korea.

It all kind of started with shows on Arirang, KBS and later, YouTube, videos, social media, and OTT platforms made it easier for people to watch. Back in the mid-2000s, people in North-Eastern states like Manipur, Mizoram, and Meghalaya started following K-dramas slowly, and more people began noticing. And over time, the trend spread across India, and social media made it even easier for fans to keep up.

Viewers are changing what they watch, and there is a clear reason for it. K-dramas have the perfect mix of interesting storylines, which are to the liking of this generation, and the beautiful original soundtracks make it more refreshing to watch. They often teach life lessons, evoke emotions, and give viewers a warm, happy feeling. The gentle plots and talented actors create exactly what today's generation enjoys. Even older audiences have started liking Korean shows. There are many reasons why the Korean entertainment industry has become so successful, and this is one of the main reasons why.

K-pop songs are catchy and easy to enjoy. Many K-pop idols also host their own variety shows, where they lead and entertain fans. It feels like a personal gift from the idols to their supporters. Some popular shows are Going Seventeen, Run BTS, and BLACKPINK House. K-pop idols are not just singers. They are amazing dancers too, known for their unique and perfectly timed choreography. This combination of singing and performing so well is a big strength, something that is often rare in the Indian entertainment industry.

Meanwhile, iconic dramas and films such as Descendants of the Sun, Goblin, Lovely Runner, Crash Landing on You, True beauty and the hugely successful series Squid Game and many more, along with the Oscar-winning Parasite, have charmed millions, drawing fans from around the globe and Netflix's latest animated sensation, K-pop Demon Hunters, is capturing audiences around the world, it has been topped as the most watched Netflix animated series. K-dramas are earning attention not only in India but all around the world.



And it's not just entertainment. This growing craze has led to the popularity of Korean foods. Across India, cafés and restaurants serving Korean dishes are becoming hot spots among fans and are even becoming the gateway for the local people. From sizzling Korean BBQ to spicy Tteokbokki and comforting bowls of Ramyeon, awakening new taste buds, these delicacies.... are now being photographed, shared on social media, and are becoming popular for their striking visuals and unique flavours.

Korean fashion and skincare are catching on, too. Celebrities set trends with their unique style and are often looked up to by fashion enthusiasts as trendsetters. Along with fashion, beauty brands are in high demand all over the world. Korea is known for its skincare and cosmetics because of the natural and proactive ingredients they use. Slowly, these trends are making their way into India, and with growing interest, they are spreading rapidly.

Ultimately, the K-Wave in India is more than just a trend...it's a cultural bridge between countries. Through songs, stories, and flavours, it's bringing two parallel worlds closer together, creating a shared space where art, style, and identity blend.'

Tabassum Sirin
24JPEB54



HAIKU

Ocean waves kiss the shoreline
Salt air fills my lungs with life
Stars watch from above

**LIPIKA MADHUSUDHANA
24BBLW32**



A FOND MEMORY (OLD FRIEND)

"One monsoon I met you
Last winter I was with you
This spring I woke up
This summer i met you
This autumn we became friends
Hope things go back the same before winter begins"

P. Hasitha
25BBNC21

UNADORNED

Her heart beats with quiet fire,
No flowers needed, no grand desire.
No car doors opened, no special claim,
She's a gentle soul, with a peaceful aim.

In the shadows, love is given free,
No expectations, just kindness to see.
A humble heart, with simple delight,
No need for praise, or a hero's light.

A whispered wish, a silent prayer,
No royal treatment, no special care.
Just a quiet life, with love to share,
No crown expected, with love to spare.

**Cheruba Lovely Bright
24JPEB11**

JUST ONE LAST TIME DAD

From telling my favourite stories each night,
To singing soft songs till I slept tight,

You were the calm in my little storm,
A voice so steady, a heart so warm. You held my fears and chased them away, Promised
tomorrow would be okay, But time, it moves, and you had to go, And now I write,
because I miss you so.

No more footsteps outside my door, No more stories, no “just one more.” But in each
word, I hear your tone And somehow, I don’t feel alone.

I write you letters you'll never read,
In every line, I plant a seed Of love, of
memory, of all we were...

And all you are, in every word.

You told me stories every night,
Sang soft songs till I slept tight.

You were my calm, my safest place,
With gentle words and warm embrace.

Now you're gone, the house feels still,
But your love lingers stronger still.

No more songs or bedtime talks...

Now I just write, and take your walks.

Arpitha K
25BBAE09



Photography by
Deepika Harishankar Selvan
24JPEB13

UNTIED WINGS



During the season of spring,
Where kids flow through a garden of lilies,
Winds touch their hair with a cool breeze,
Little cheerings in a valley of joy i could hear.

The throbbing of my heart
The throbbing of becoming a kid again,
When time moved slowly and worries had no name.
Those fearless faces filled with the joy of freedom,
Laughing beneath skies that asked for nothing.

Life where wings are meant to let us fly,
Dreams untouched by fear or doubt,
Steps guided only by hope and light,
And hearts that knew no chains,
Only open paths and untied wings.

Elizabeth Jigi
23BTBO03

THE LOST LOVE...

Love,

a world spinning with roller-coaster emotions, highs that steal your breath,
lows that teach your heart to ache.

A feeling we pass through many times, but only once do we touch its purest form— a love
so gentle, so true,
it feels like eternity choosing you.

And in that moment,
the heart doesn't just love—
it learns how deeply it wants
to be loved in return.

Pooja N
25PSYB38

LOVE THAT REMAINED INCOMPLETE.

Radha:

I do not ask for the world.

I do not ask for promises or forever,

I ask only for my love.

Rukmini, return my Kahna to me.

He is not just a man I loved.

He is the air that quietly lives inside my breath, The rhythm that keeps my heart alive.

He is the dust of the paths

I walked barefoot,

The earth that remembers me even when the world forgets

He is the song my mother sang

When sleep refused to come.

The warmth of home,

The echo of my childhood,

The place where my soul learned to feel safe. How do I forget someone...

Who exist in every part of who iam?

Rukmini:

Radha.....my love was incomplete from the beginning. Even when kanha stood beside me,

Even when the world called him mine,

His silence spoke your name.

Without you he was unfinished,

A story missing it's meaning.

With you, even his name felt whole.

You were the peace in his music,

The reason behind his smile,

The truth his heart never learned to hide.

And you ask me to return him Radha....

How do I give back

What I never truly owned?

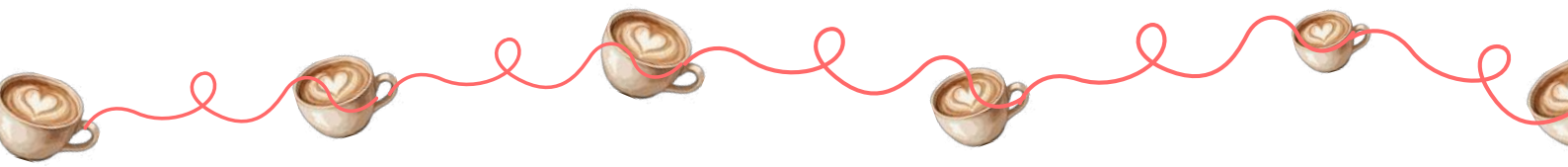
How do I return love

That was always waiting for you.

Some loves are not meant to be possessed

They are only meant to be felt.

Akanksha Kumari
25FRSA05



THE INVISIBLE THREADS: SOULS ENTANGLED IN UNIVERSITY CORRIDORS

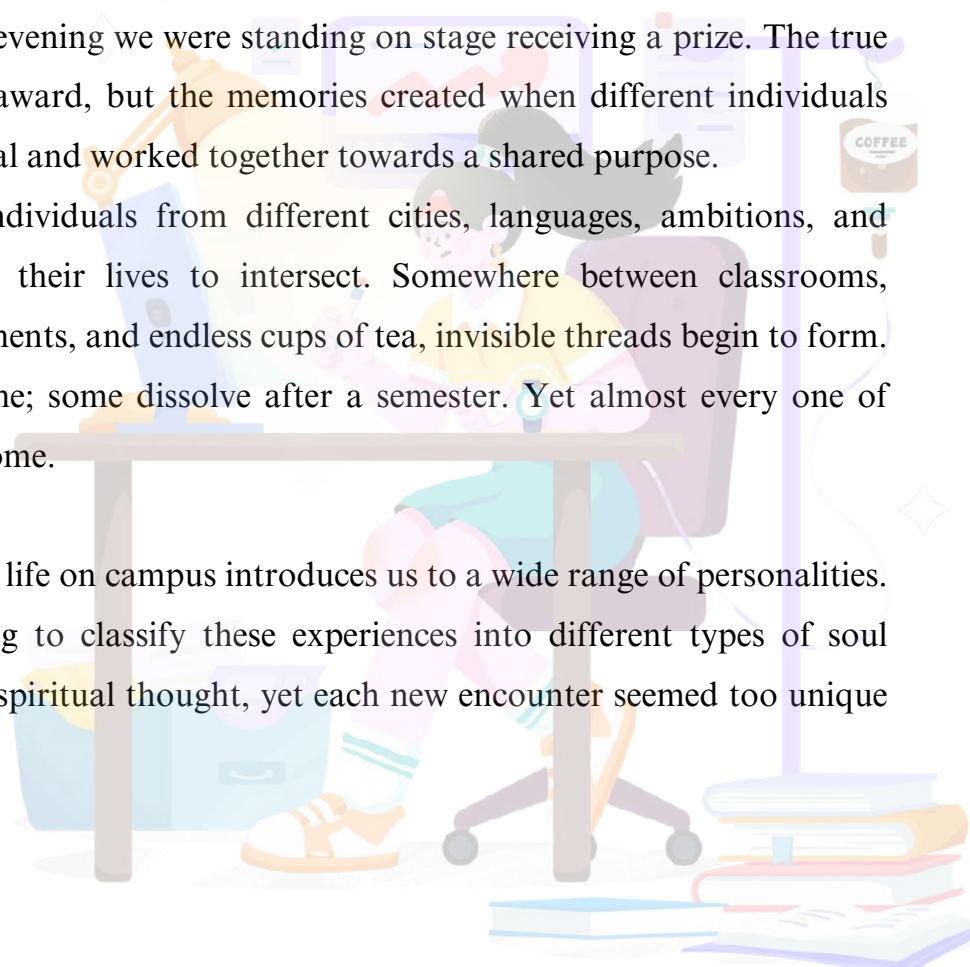
Soul connections have fascinated me ever since I first encountered the idea, leading me to search for answers to questions I did not even know I had. During this journey of understanding spiritual connections and their realm of existence, I felt deeply intrigued by certain beliefs and perspectives. Gradually, this curiosity began building anticipation about what might happen when I started my academic journey at university.

I still remember how excited I was, and perhaps you will agree with me. You walk through unfamiliar corridors, hold a timetable you barely understand, and sit among strangers whose names you do not yet know. Yet years later, when you look back, those strangers are no longer strangers—they become chapters of your life.

Some of the strongest bonds at university are forged during moments of intense collaboration. I remember a hackathon where our team worked nearly thirty hours without proper sleep. At 3 a.m., the room was filled with glowing laptop screens, tangled chargers, and half-finished cups of coffee. Fatigue had blurred everyone's focus, yet someone suddenly cracked a ridiculous joke about our buggy code, and the entire team burst into laughter. In that moment, exhaustion turned into energy. By early afternoon we were nervously presenting our project, and by evening we were standing on stage receiving a prize. The true takeaway was not merely the award, but the memories created when different individuals recognized each other's potential and worked together towards a shared purpose.

University brings together individuals from different cities, languages, ambitions, and personalities, quietly allowing their lives to intersect. Somewhere between classrooms, library desks, late-night assignments, and endless cups of tea, invisible threads begin to form. Some connections last a lifetime; some dissolve after a semester. Yet almost every one of them shapes the person we become.

Beyond such intense moments, life on campus introduces us to a wide range of personalities. At times I found myself trying to classify these experiences into different types of soul connections often described in spiritual thought, yet each new encounter seemed too unique to fit into a single category.



For instance, there are the risk-takers—friends who convince you to sign up for competitions you are not qualified for, plan road trips you cannot afford, and brainstorm business ideas scribbled on the back of your notebooks during lectures. They push you beyond your comfort zone, helping you discover versions of yourself you never knew existed.

Then there are the borrowers who take things with a casual smile and the comforting promise, “I’ll return it tomorrow.” Yet that tomorrow often develops a strange habit of never arriving. Still, many of us tolerate them because, beneath the forgetfulness, these friends remain warm companions—people who laugh with us in the canteen, sit beside us during lectures, and make ordinary university days feel lively, even if our belongings occasionally travel farther than expected.

From secret keepers—like Severus Snape in the *Harry Potter* series—to enthusiastic disclosers whose conversations begin with gossip, and from caregivers to relentless fault-finders, university introduces us to a spectrum of personalities. With some, silence feels dignified; with others, the warmth of closeness and effortless conversation becomes truly enthralling.

Many spiritual traditions suggest that relationships carry a karmic dimension—that people enter our lives to teach us something. Some connections remain with us for years, while others appear only briefly, revealing lessons about trust, patience, or resilience. When such relationships complete their purpose, their endings are often marked not by conflict but by quiet acceptance.

In the end, classrooms are more than spaces of learning; they are places where lives quietly intertwine. Among notes, conversations, disagreements, and laughter, invisible threads begin to connect people who once entered as strangers. Long after the lectures are forgotten, it is these fleeting yet powerful connections that remain with us. Perhaps that is the real beauty of university life—souls meeting for a moment in time, shaping one another in ways they may never fully realize, and then moving forward on their separate journeys, some knowing they will meet again, and some unknowingly meeting for the very last time.



Photography by
Deepika Harishankar Selvan
24JPEB13

AFTER THE RED

It was a celebration —
Toffee, flashy things,
People all around,
Laughing and clapping at the tiny me

It was happiness, pure joy,
When I held my father's hand and walked,
When my mother bathed me and dressed me with love.

But suddenly, celebration turned into something else —
They called it “loving and caring.”
Everything changed
After they saw the red in me.

They celebrated that too, in whispers,
No claps, no laughter —
Only quiet talks
And eyes that looked at me differently.

They oiled my long hair —
Later, I realised, it was to hold me back
Whenever I tried to fly.

They gifted me bangles of colours,
Later, I realised —

Women's bangles are meant to break,
And lives are meant to lose their colour.

They gave me sweets I loved,
Later, I realised —
That was the last time
I would taste something of my own choosing.

They told me the pain was normal,

Later, I realised —
They had normalised the pain
I suffered in his home.

They made me sleep alone,
Later, I realised —
A woman is alone
Everywhere she goes.

They taught me how to laugh,
But later, I never did.
Why didn't they teach me how to cry?

They taught me how to sit —
Later, I realised my legs were tied to
chairs.
Why didn't they teach me how to walk?

They taught me how to dress,
But that gang undressed me
And tore my body apart.

They moulded me into a material,
And I lost my soul.

They shaped me into a doll,
And I became ugly.
They put me in a cage —
And I couldn't breathe inside it.

Now, there is no air,
No colour,
No life in me.
Only stains, marks,
And blood on my once beautiful body.

Gopika K Manoj
24COMD27

DECOLONIZATION AS RETURN

“It is not the literal past, the ‘facts’ of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language... We must never cease renewing those images, because once we do, we fossilise.” - *Brian Friel, Translations*

On a recent flight home, on my way to write a competitive exam, all I cared about was getting back in time to cram, comforting myself with the assumption that I could wing it. When boarding was announced, I gathered my things in a rush, still mentally rehearsing what I did not know. In typical stubborn fashion, shaped by three prior defeats in surrendering my window seat, I had already decided that this time would be different. If someone asked me to move, I would refuse. No matter what.

When I reached my row, I was relieved to find my seat empty. A middle-aged tourist occupied the middle seat. The relief was immediate. It seemed he would be unproblematic. As always, there is a quiet assumption that tourists are ‘cool’, accompanied by an almost instinctive urge to look up to them. As I settled in, we began talking. He found me outgoing. Somehow, he also guessed I was an English major. He was curious about my ease with language, about where I was from, even, oddly, about my ‘olive’ skin.

A Kiwi person, grounded with a kind of spiritual humility, he spoke with an openness that felt unforced. He asked about Bangalore. About Kochi. And I found myself speaking almost without thinking, about how my idea of ‘home’ had shifted over time: from places, to people and to even fleeting moments.

He listened.

He was on his way to Kerala for Panchakarma Ayurveda. A history major himself, he seemed genuinely interested as I spoke about the formation of Kerala and the lesser-known histories of Kochi, which were fragments I had absorbed simply by growing up in a space where the mundane was never quite ordinary. Especially with knowledge shaped by proximity to heritage, royalty and, of course, the quintessential museums.

Then he asked me, “Do you know what Panchakarma Ayurveda is?”

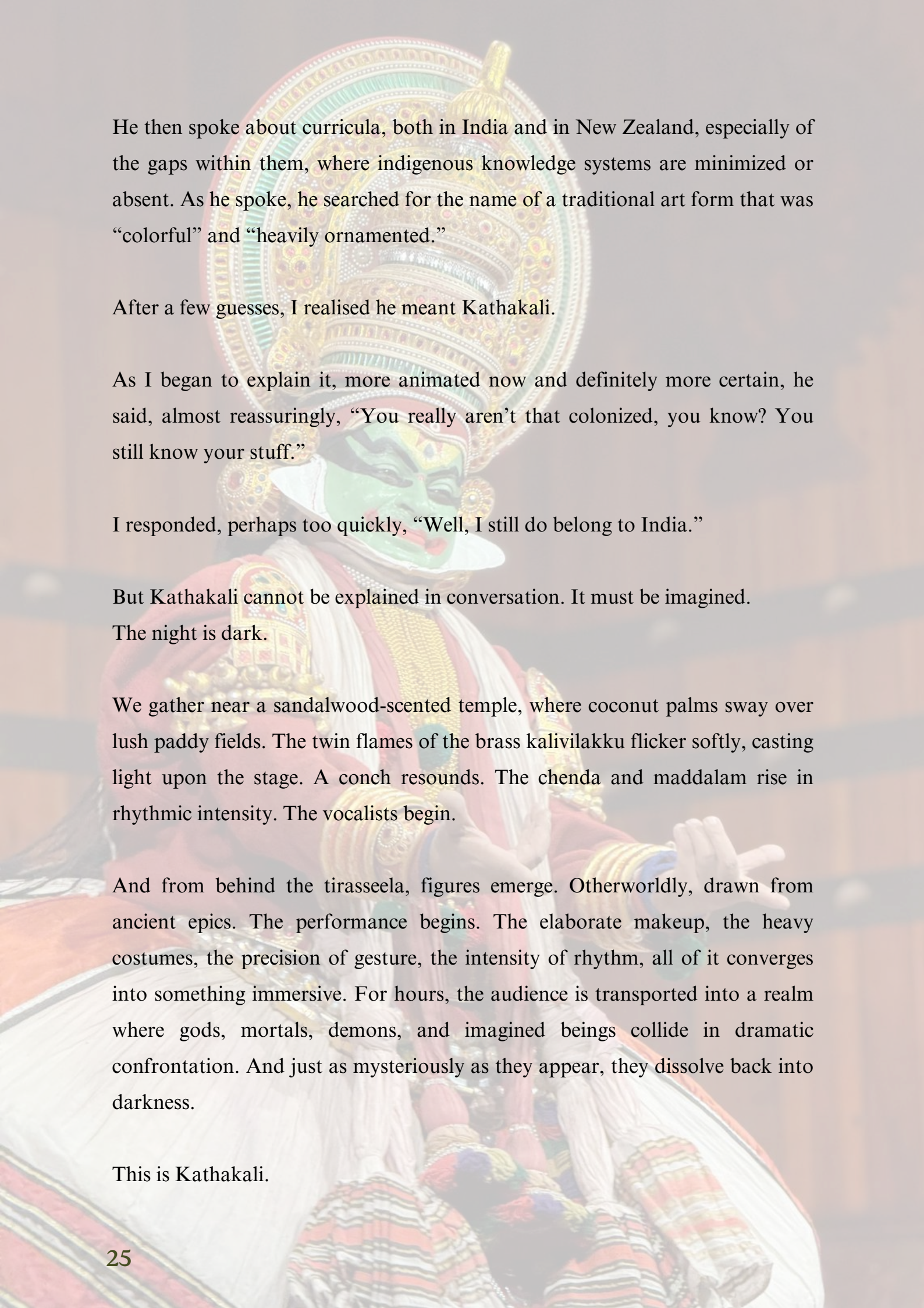
I paused. “No.”

Plainly no.

The irony was difficult to ignore. A New Zealander knew more about indigenous systems of healing and the body, while I, an Indian, had invested a lot of my intellectual energy in Victorian literature and Western canons. Perhaps my version of decolonization had extended ‘generously’ toward East Asian, Southeast Asian, and African literatures, while I had quietly and almost deliberately avoided my mother tongue. Specifically, Malayalam.

There had always been a certain shame attached to the language during schooling. English was the only acceptable medium of conversation. Has it helped me? Undoubtedly. Have I moved forward with it meaningfully? Not quite. What I sought instead was a kind of colonial novelty.

I say this with discomfort. I learned other languages of my colonizers while leaving unexplored the one that shaped me: my mother tongue, now distant, like a form of selective amnesia. And yet the paradox remains. Survival itself often demands fluency in that very language. Perhaps this is where language must transform into a site of resistance.



He then spoke about curricula, both in India and in New Zealand, especially of the gaps within them, where indigenous knowledge systems are minimized or absent. As he spoke, he searched for the name of a traditional art form that was “colorful” and “heavily ornamented.”

After a few guesses, I realised he meant Kathakali.

As I began to explain it, more animated now and definitely more certain, he said, almost reassuringly, “You really aren’t that colonized, you know? You still know your stuff.”

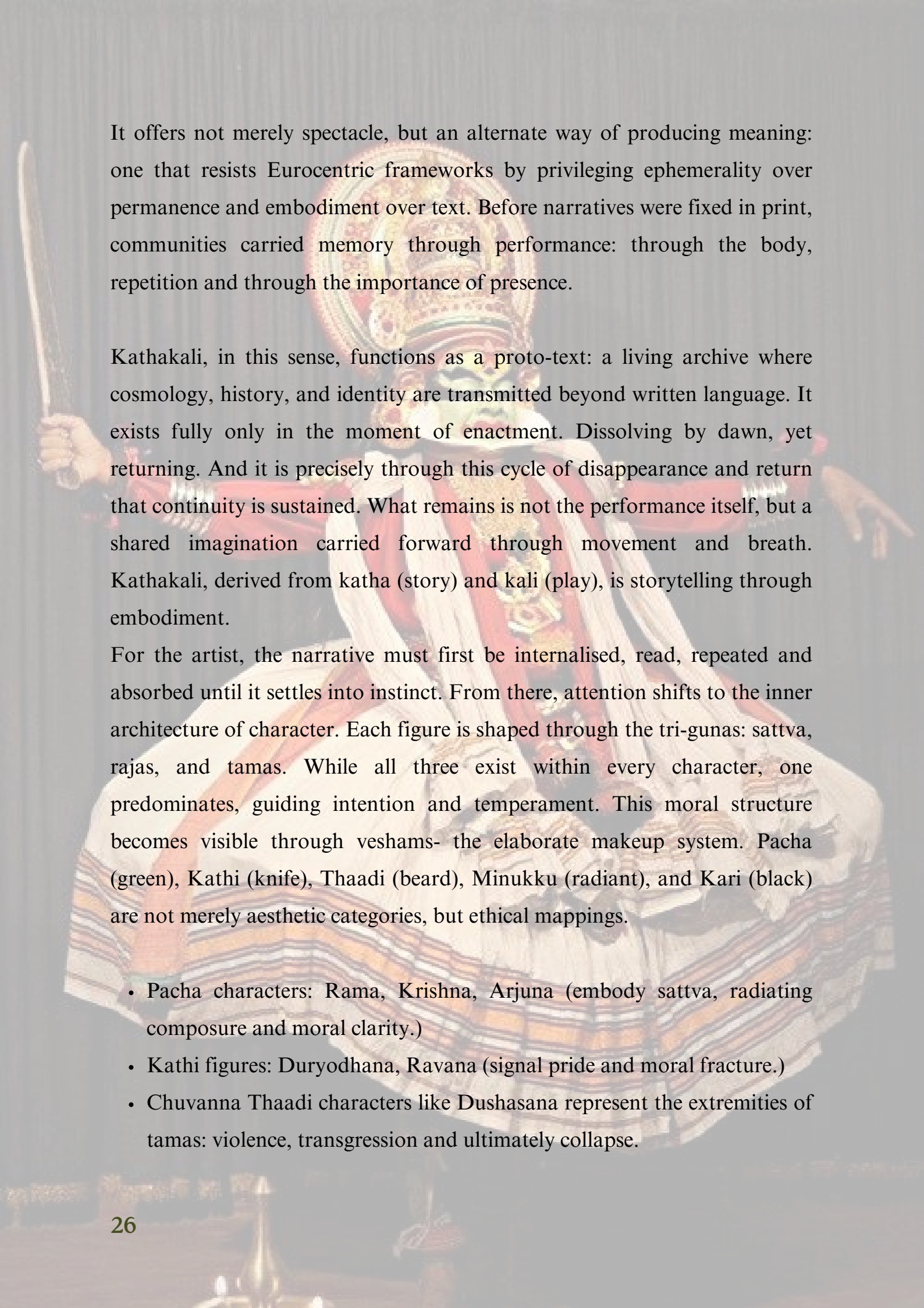
I responded, perhaps too quickly, “Well, I still do belong to India.”

But Kathakali cannot be explained in conversation. It must be imagined.
The night is dark.

We gather near a sandalwood-scented temple, where coconut palms sway over lush paddy fields. The twin flames of the brass kalivilakku flicker softly, casting light upon the stage. A conch resounds. The chenda and maddalam rise in rhythmic intensity. The vocalists begin.

And from behind the tirasseela, figures emerge. Otherworldly, drawn from ancient epics. The performance begins. The elaborate makeup, the heavy costumes, the precision of gesture, the intensity of rhythm, all of it converges into something immersive. For hours, the audience is transported into a realm where gods, mortals, demons, and imagined beings collide in dramatic confrontation. And just as mysteriously as they appear, they dissolve back into darkness.

This is Kathakali.

A Kathakali performer in a green face, white and red costume, holding a sword. The performer is wearing a large, ornate headdress and a long, flowing white shawl with red borders. The background is dark, and the performer is the central focus of the image.

It offers not merely spectacle, but an alternate way of producing meaning: one that resists Eurocentric frameworks by privileging ephemerality over permanence and embodiment over text. Before narratives were fixed in print, communities carried memory through performance: through the body, repetition and through the importance of presence.

Kathakali, in this sense, functions as a proto-text: a living archive where cosmology, history, and identity are transmitted beyond written language. It exists fully only in the moment of enactment. Dissolving by dawn, yet returning. And it is precisely through this cycle of disappearance and return that continuity is sustained. What remains is not the performance itself, but a shared imagination carried forward through movement and breath. Kathakali, derived from *katha* (story) and *kali* (play), is storytelling through embodiment.

For the artist, the narrative must first be internalised, read, repeated and absorbed until it settles into instinct. From there, attention shifts to the inner architecture of character. Each figure is shaped through the tri-gunas: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. While all three exist within every character, one predominates, guiding intention and temperament. This moral structure becomes visible through *veshams*- the elaborate makeup system. *Pacha* (green), *Kathi* (knife), *Thaadi* (beard), *Minukku* (radiant), and *Kari* (black) are not merely aesthetic categories, but ethical mappings.

- *Pacha* characters: Rama, Krishna, Arjuna (embody *sattva*, radiating composure and moral clarity.)
- *Kathi* figures: Duryodhana, Ravana (signal pride and moral fracture.)
- *Chuvanna Thaadi* characters like Dushasana represent the extremities of *tamas*: violence, transgression and ultimately collapse.

Yet beyond classification lies something more immediate. In moments that demand emotional intensity, the body must respond without hesitation. Consider Karna's encounter with Kunti Devi during the Mahabharata war. Abandoned as an infant and cast into a flowing river, Karna grew up without the knowledge of his lineage. When Kunti approached him as a grown warrior, revealing the truth and urging him to join her other sons, he stood suspended between revelation and loyalty. Karna's agony, here, lies in an unsettling impossibility.

He knows his blood ties, yet he cannot betray Duryodhana, his beloved friend and patron. He cannot protect all his brothers at once. This moral fracture between truth and obligation, as well as kinship and loyalty, unfolds silently on stage through navarasas. The eyes tremble, the jaw tightens, the chest holds and releases breath. With training, such inner turmoil is made legible without words, allowing the audience to witness ethical conflict as lived experience rather than narrated fate. In Kathakali, emotion is never excess and values do not announce themselves. They emerge through accumulated memory of the body trained to carry myth as a lived reality.

Decolonization, I am beginning to realise, is not a moment of awakening but a slow and often uncomfortable practice of return. It is not about rejecting English or the world it has opened for me.

I believe it is about refusing to let it remain the only language through which I understand myself. I think back to that flight. To a conversation that began in casual curiosity and unfolded into something far more unsettling. I had thought I was going home that day. But somewhere along the way, I realised that home is not a place one simply arrives at: it is something that must be reclaimed. To Malayalam, as something that has always lived within me. To stories that were never written down, yet remembered through bodies and rituals.

If Kathakali writes stories onto the night only to let them dissolve by dawn, then perhaps decolonization, too, is not about permanence. It is about showing up, again and again, to remember.

And maybe in that act of return, I am learning slowly what it means to finally belong.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

It brings me immense joy to present the latest edition of Expressions 2020, a vibrant initiative by the Department of English at KJ Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research. This magazine stands as a testament to our students' creative prowess, intellectual curiosity, and unwavering dedication to holistic excellence, and this publication bears the fruits of their hard work and passion. We believe that literature is the climate lens through which we view the world—it sharpens the intellect and cultivates deep empathy. The Department of English continues to be a catalyst for intellectual growth and a crucible for creative expression, where students are encouraged to explore the depths of human experience and the vastness of the human imagination. Devising this issue has been a truly gratifying experience. I am struck by the intellectual depth of the articles and the evocative power of the visual narratives. Our students' exceptional talents and their insatiable thirst for knowledge have grown them into the best of the best, and I am proud to showcase their work to the world. I extend my sincerest gratitude to the editorial and design teams for their tireless pursuit of perfection. Your synergy and dedication have breathed life into every page, resulting in a publication that is as sophisticated as it is beautiful. To every student who has contributed your passion to this issue, I say: keep shining, for the world is your canvas. Well done!

THE GAME THAT TAUGHT US TO FEAR OURSELVES: WHY *SILENT HILL 2* IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL MASTERPIECE (AN ESSAY)

Video games usually aim to give you a fun time, help you escape reality, or give you a jolt of adrenaline. But *Silent Hill 2*, which came out in 2001, tried something different with horror. It wasn't just about jump scares or creepy monsters jumping out at you. The game suggested that the scariest thing is often what's inside our own heads. Through the story, all the hidden meanings, and the focus on our minds, *Silent Hill 2* shows us that we should be more afraid of our own feelings of guilt, the things we hide from ourselves, and the dark parts of our personalities than any monster.

Basically, *Silent Hill 2* tells the story of James Sunderland. He gets a letter from his dead wife, Mary, asking him to come to Silent Hill. That's already strange considering how she had passed three years ago. Right away, you start to question what's real. *Silent Hill* isn't just a spooky town but a place that comes from James's own mind. The fog, the way everything's falling apart, and the weird layouts shows what was going through his head. It's like the horror he faces aren't happening out of nowhere but, are related to his own problems.

Most horror games have bad characters you have to fight. But in Silent Hill 2, the monsters stand for the secret conflicts within the characters. Each monster shows feelings we try to bury, like guilt, desires, shame, and hating oneself. The Lying Figures, those creatures wrapped up in straitjackets, show how James feels trapped emotionally and how he doesn't want to admit the truth to himself. They can barely move, and neither can James when it comes to facing his past. These monsters aren't random encounters; they are signs of what James is trying to ignore.

Pyramid Head is probably the most memorable thing about this game. He's not just a bad guy trying to chase you, but a symbol of wanting to punish yourself. He appears when James is feeling the most guilty. His violent actions show that James wants to be punished for what he's done. Pyramid Head scares us because he shows what happens when guilt takes over. The game makes you think that guilt can create its own attacker.

The thing that makes Silent Hill 2 creepy is how it uses the atmosphere, not just visual scares. The game uses fog, darkness, and the noises to make you feel uneasy throughout. The static on the radio lets you know when enemies are nearby. A lot of the time, the static noise is creepier than the monster itself. This makes you feel anxious because you're always waiting for something bad to happen instead of reacting to it. The anticipation makes what to expect scarier than any immediate threat.

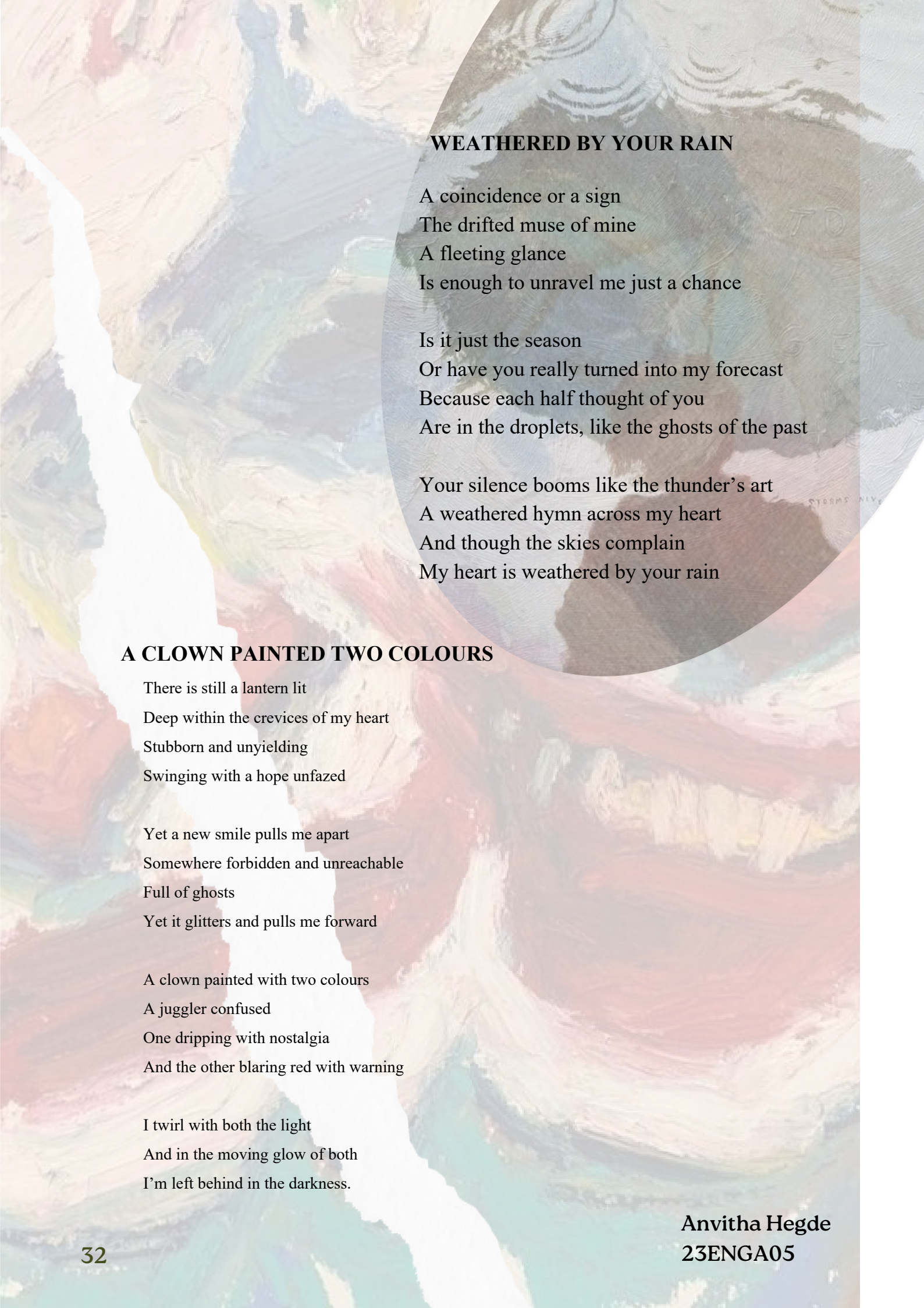
Repression is another major theme in the game. James spends most of his time trying not to think about what really happened to his wife. Silent Hill doesn't just tell him the truth but slowly breaks down his act. The town becomes his test, throwing twisted versions of love, loss, and closeness at him. The real horror is when we realize that the scariest thing isn't the town but something inside James himself.

The game uses multiple endings to push self-reflection. What happens in the end changes based on what you do. The way you read Mary's letter, how you treat Maria, and how risky you are plays an important role. It shows that Silent Hill 2 is like judging not only James but also you as the player. The game kind of asks you: How do you deal with guilt? Do you want to fix things, be punished, or just run away? Fear, in this way, becomes something that you feel for yourself rather than something that comes from somewhere else.

Silent Hill 2 continues to stay with people because it doesn't give easy fixes. There's no clear bad guy or happy ending. It shows fear as something really personal and hard to avoid. It says people can be loving and evil, and ignoring this mix could make things worse. Silent Hill 2 makes you look inward and shows you that horror is like a mirror.

Lipika Madhusudhana

24BBLW32



WEATHERED BY YOUR RAIN

A coincidence or a sign
The drifted muse of mine
A fleeting glance
Is enough to unravel me just a chance

Is it just the season
Or have you really turned into my forecast
Because each half thought of you
Are in the droplets, like the ghosts of the past

Your silence booms like the thunder's art
A weathered hymn across my heart
And though the skies complain
My heart is weathered by your rain

A CLOWN PAINTED TWO COLOURS

There is still a lantern lit
Deep within the crevices of my heart
Stubborn and unyielding
Swinging with a hope unfazed

Yet a new smile pulls me apart
Somewhere forbidden and unreachable
Full of ghosts
Yet it glitters and pulls me forward

A clown painted with two colours
A juggler confused
One dripping with nostalgia
And the other blaring red with warning

I twirl with both the light
And in the moving glow of both
I'm left behind in the darkness.

BOOK REVIEW: THE METAMORPHOSIS BY FRANZ KAFKA

Book Review

The Metamorphosis is one of those books that starts strange and then slowly hits you harder than you ever expected. I just finished reading 'The Metamorphosis' by Franz Kafka, and I have to say, it really resonated with me more than I anticipated. The story begins with this completely strange occurrence: Gregor Samsa, who's a traveling salesman, wakes up one morning as a monstrous insect. Initially, I thought, "What's going on here?" It almost seemed humorous in the beginning. The more I read, the more I began to understand that Kafka was reaching a deeper understanding with this absurd scenario, exploring significant themes regarding human emotions and the nature of society.

The writing of Kafka is relatively simple, which somewhat causes the complete insect transformation to resonate as authentic. He just tells it as it is, calmly describing everything, as if waking up as an insect is a normal occurrence. This contrast between his calm tone and the unbelievable events creates this weird, uncomfortable feeling. It made me think that it wasn't solely a physical transformation, but it is also about feelings and mental states that one experiences in a state of isolation.

A key highlight depicted in the story is how Gregor's life falls apart so quickly. The first thing he feels bad for is that he might miss work and disappoint his boss. This shows the main identity of how his being is his job and its responsibility. Gregor has been living for the sake of others like supporting his family and following social expectations. When he can't work anymore, he feels purposeless, and his family begins to disregard him completely. It really made me think about the way individuals earn respect through their labor, not of themselves.

Criticism

The family dynamics in the story are also somewhat dysfunctional. At first, Gregor's family appears all shocked and worried but as time moves forward, they feel frustrated. Even his sister, Grete, who first looks after him, begins to view him as a burden. Seeing hate developing where love once resided was really depressing. It shows that relationships may change when someone is perceived as useless or unloved. Kafka reveals that love is often conditional, like when a family faces problems.

Even though *The Metamorphosis* is just amazing, there are some aspects that would benefit from improvement. The main thing is, Kafka never tells you the reason Gregor is transformed into this creature. It gives an impression of the uncanny, however, it is rather bothersome that it is never explained. I wanted a rationale or explanation of the cause. Creating intrigue is interesting, but it can sometimes make readers confused.

One aspect of the story that didn't quite work for me was Gregor's family. I never felt like I formed a strong or meaningful connection with them, and their aggression often appeared too sudden. While I understand that Kafka may have intended to highlight their reaction to Gregor's inability to contribute, I still felt the story could have offered deeper insight into the reasons behind their behavior.

Recommendation

Even though it's not perfect, I would still recommend Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" to anyone wanting a book that provokes reflection. It's a quick read, but it stays with you. I was profoundly moved by how existential it felt without actually saying it. Gregor doesn't simply transform into an insect. He loses his place in the world. Once he can't work or talk, his existence appears meaningless, including to his family. The story made me think about how fragile our sense of identity really is, and how much of it depends on being useful, understood, or accepted by others. Kafka doesn't offer comfort or answers; he just leaves you sitting with that emptiness. It made me think about how fragile our identity is, and how easily a person can be reduced to nothing when nobody looks closely enough to notice them.

Lipika Madhusudhana

24BBLW32

SOLACE

The truth is, I'm afraid –
afraid of falling in love because it's not you.

No one could ever love me like you did,
Making me lose myself in your eyes.

I search for you in all the people I see, yet I fear they'll break me the
way you once did.

The pain still stings the same,
yet some part of me wishes to stay even if it means suffering.

But every day I wonder
do your eyes still shine the way they did?
Does your smile still make people feel at home?
Does your voice calm all that meets you?

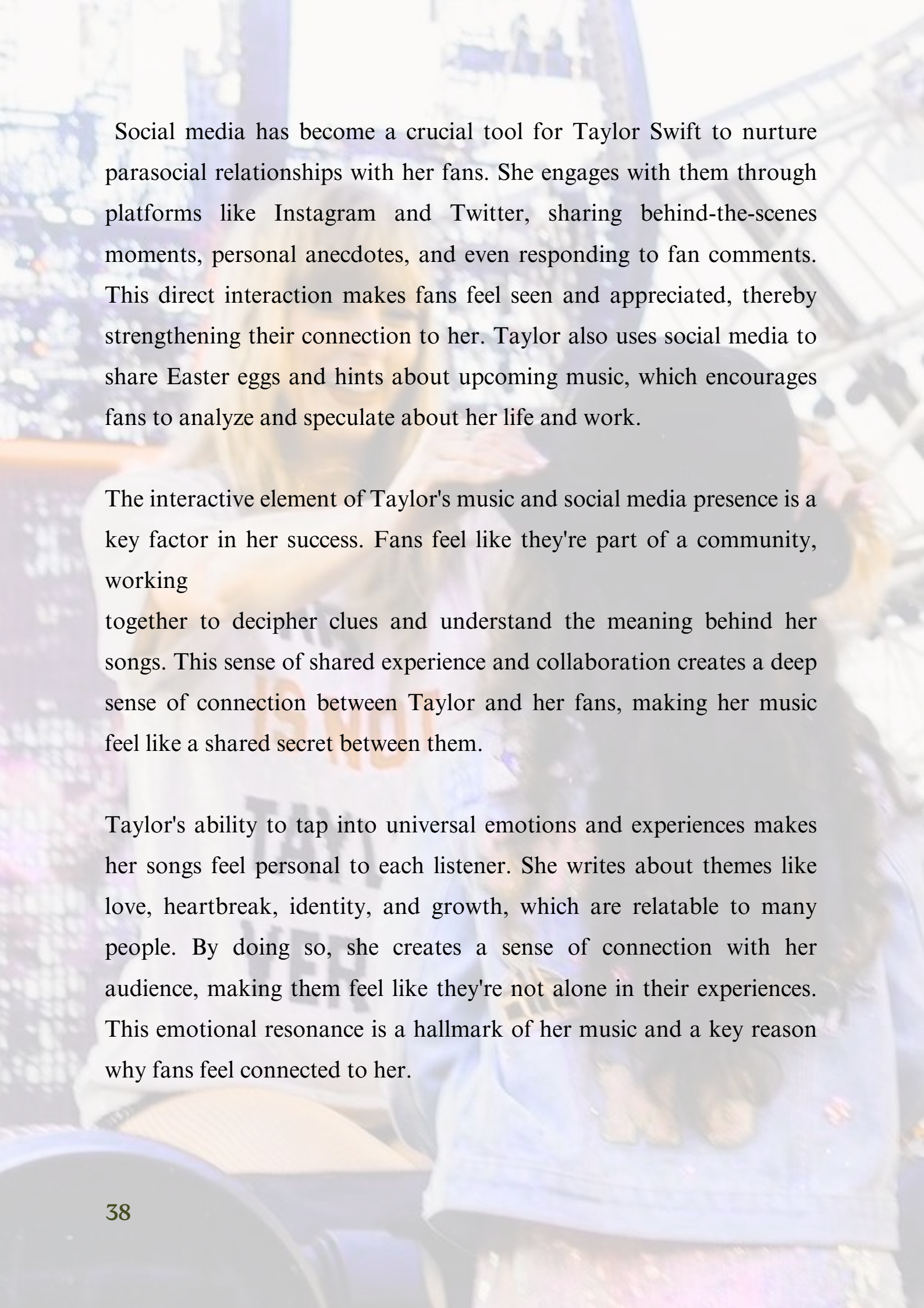
I am lost in time, reminiscent of what was ours,
with the abyss's embrace to keep me company.
Even if it makes me a freak, a man out of time,
these little things that keep me alive
this is where I find my peace.
And you-My heart's resting place, my forever Solace

THE TAYLOR SWIFT EFFECT - LEVERAGING PARASOCIAL BONDS FOR MUSIC SUCCESS.

Taylor Swift is a master of crafting songs that feel like personal conversations, and her use of parasocial relationships plays a big role in making her hits resonate with fans. A parasocial relationship is a one-sided connection where a person feels like they know a celebrity or public figure, even though they've never met. Taylor Swift has leveraged this phenomenon to build a devoted fan base and create music that feels intimate and relatable.

One way Taylor Swift fosters parasocial relationships is through her songwriting. She writes lyrics that are relatable, often drawing from her own experiences with love, heartbreak, and growth. Songs like "All Too Well" and "Blank Space" are filled with vivid details and emotions that make listeners feel like they're getting a glimpse into her life. By sharing intimate details and emotions in her songs, Taylor creates a sense of connection with her audience, making fans feel like they know her on a personal level.

Taylor's use of storytelling in her songs also contributes to the parasocial relationship. She weaves narratives that are both personal and universal, allowing listeners to insert themselves into the story. For example, "*Love Story*" and "*You Belong With Me*" are tales of young love and longing that resonate with many fans. By creating these narrative-driven songs, Taylor invites listeners to become invested in her music and, by extension, her life too.



Social media has become a crucial tool for Taylor Swift to nurture parasocial relationships with her fans. She engages with them through platforms like Instagram and Twitter, sharing behind-the-scenes moments, personal anecdotes, and even responding to fan comments. This direct interaction makes fans feel seen and appreciated, thereby strengthening their connection to her. Taylor also uses social media to share Easter eggs and hints about upcoming music, which encourages fans to analyze and speculate about her life and work.

The interactive element of Taylor's music and social media presence is a key factor in her success. Fans feel like they're part of a community, working together to decipher clues and understand the meaning behind her songs. This sense of shared experience and collaboration creates a deep sense of connection between Taylor and her fans, making her music feel like a shared secret between them.

Taylor's ability to tap into universal emotions and experiences makes her songs feel personal to each listener. She writes about themes like love, heartbreak, identity, and growth, which are relatable to many people. By doing so, she creates a sense of connection with her audience, making them feel like they're not alone in their experiences. This emotional resonance is a hallmark of her music and a key reason why fans feel connected to her.

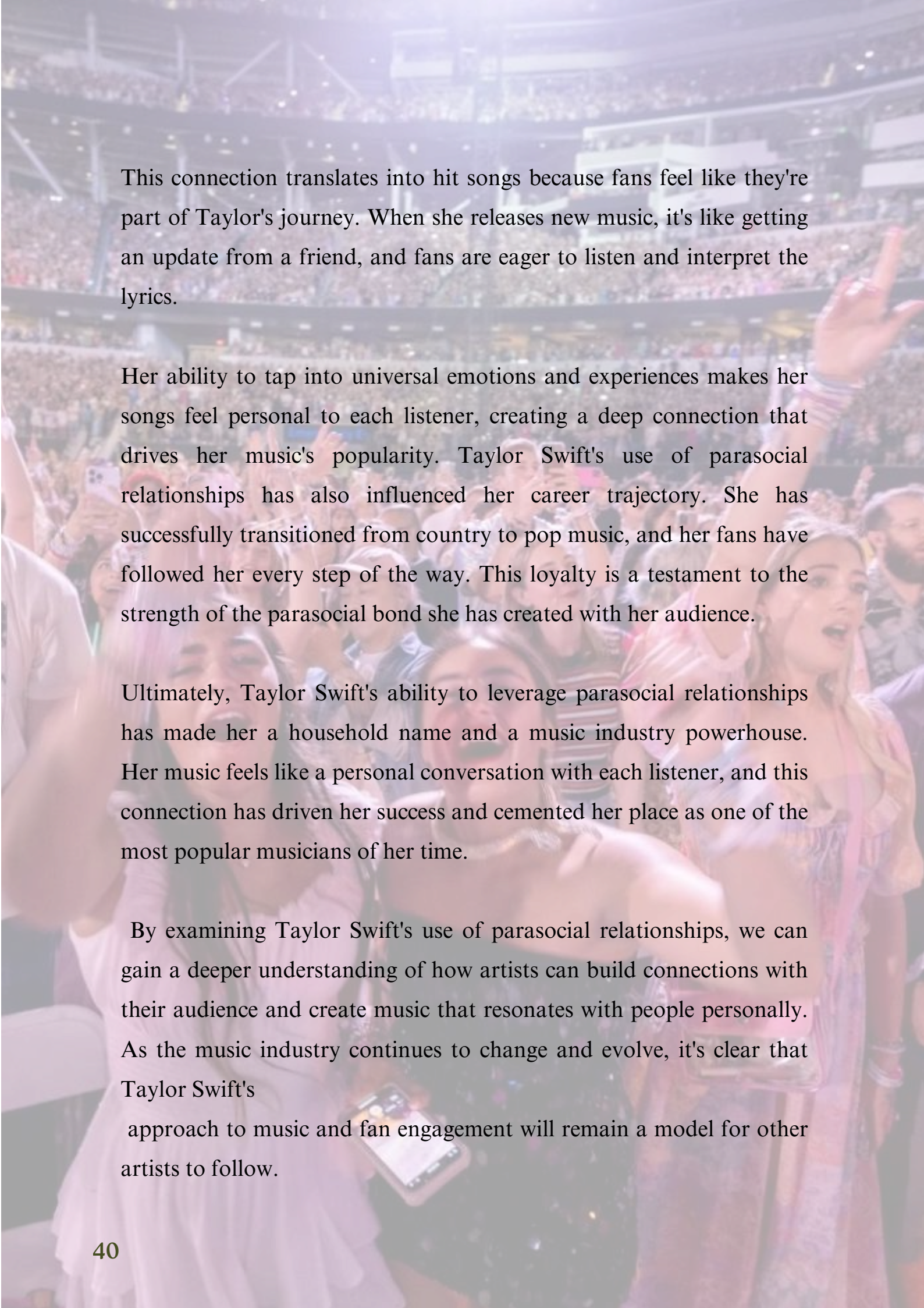
1989

TAYLOR'S VERSION

Another way Taylor Swift uses parasocial relationships to make hit songs is by creating a sense of continuity and narrative across her albums. She often includes Easter eggs and references to past songs or experiences, which encourages fans to analyze and speculate about her life. For example, the song "*Bad Blood*" from her album "*1989*" was rumored to be about a feud with another celebrity as fans eagerly tried to decipher the lyrics to understand the story behind the song.

Taylor's music videos also play a role in fostering parasocial relationships. She often includes narrative elements and Easter eggs in her videos, which fans love to analyze and interpret. For example, the music video for "Look What You Made Me Do" features numerous references to her past music and public image, which fans eagerly dissected and discussed.

The success of Taylor Swift's music can be attributed, in part, to her ability to create and nurture parasocial relationships with her fans. By sharing intimate details and emotions in her songs, engaging with fans on social media, and creating a sense of community and shared experience, Taylor has built a devoted fan base that feels connected to her on a personal level.

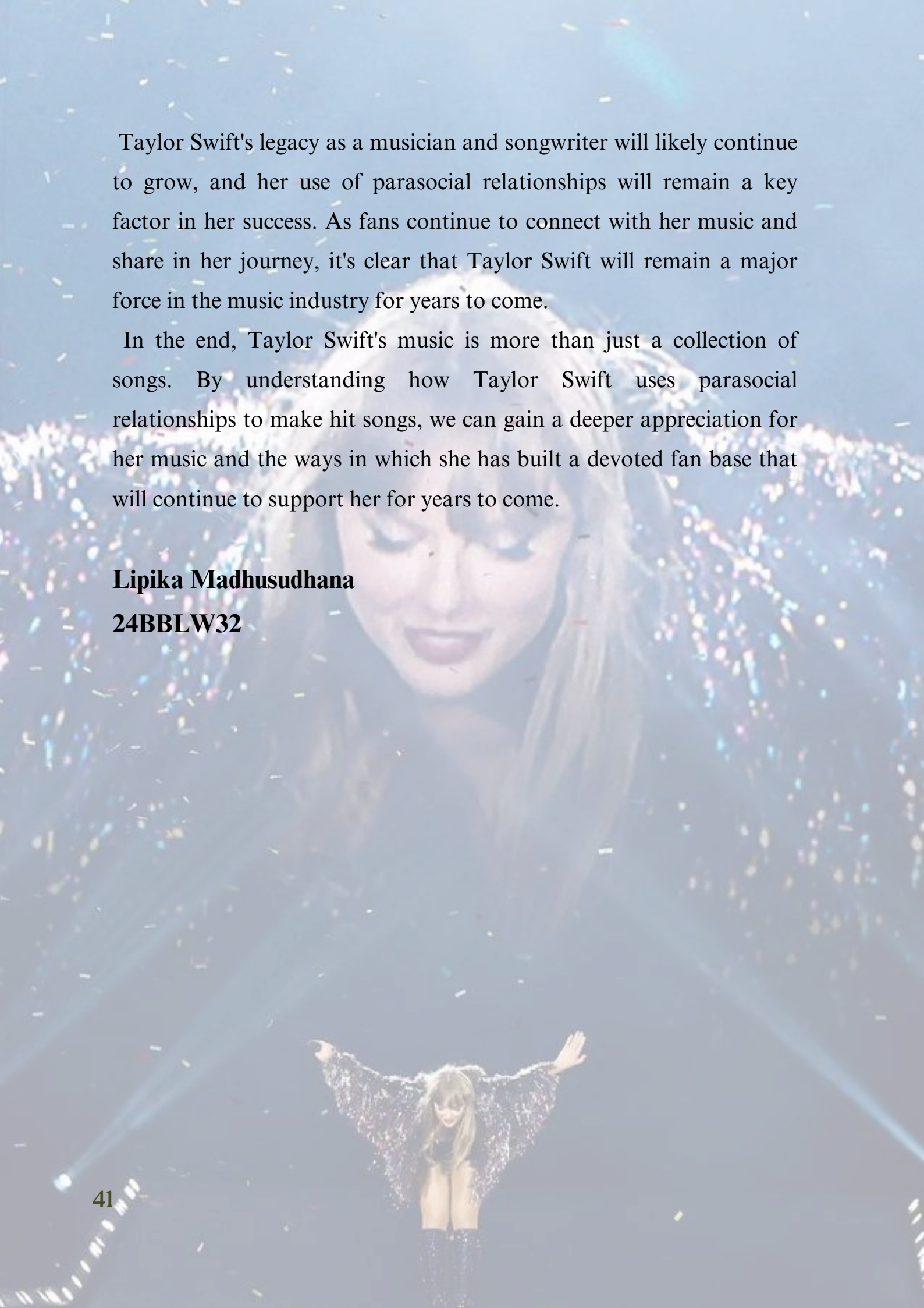


This connection translates into hit songs because fans feel like they're part of Taylor's journey. When she releases new music, it's like getting an update from a friend, and fans are eager to listen and interpret the lyrics.

Her ability to tap into universal emotions and experiences makes her songs feel personal to each listener, creating a deep connection that drives her music's popularity. Taylor Swift's use of parasocial relationships has also influenced her career trajectory. She has successfully transitioned from country to pop music, and her fans have followed her every step of the way. This loyalty is a testament to the strength of the parasocial bond she has created with her audience.

Ultimately, Taylor Swift's ability to leverage parasocial relationships has made her a household name and a music industry powerhouse. Her music feels like a personal conversation with each listener, and this connection has driven her success and cemented her place as one of the most popular musicians of her time.

By examining Taylor Swift's use of parasocial relationships, we can gain a deeper understanding of how artists can build connections with their audience and create music that resonates with people personally. As the music industry continues to change and evolve, it's clear that Taylor Swift's approach to music and fan engagement will remain a model for other artists to follow.

A background image of Taylor Swift performing on stage. She is wearing a dark, sequined jacket and has her arms raised. The stage is filled with falling confetti and bright spotlights. The image is semi-transparent, allowing text to be overlaid.

Taylor Swift's legacy as a musician and songwriter will likely continue to grow, and her use of parasocial relationships will remain a key factor in her success. As fans continue to connect with her music and share in her journey, it's clear that Taylor Swift will remain a major force in the music industry for years to come.

In the end, Taylor Swift's music is more than just a collection of songs. By understanding how Taylor Swift uses parasocial relationships to make hit songs, we can gain a deeper appreciation for her music and the ways in which she has built a devoted fan base that will continue to support her for years to come.

Lipika Madhusudhana

24BBLW32

SILLY LITTLE HEART

Isn't the human memory something so special?
It's like the heart that never forgets to love,
The brain, recalling every destination,
The lips, remembering a bittersweet kiss,
The hands, trembling with every touch.

I might not know where you are and who's with you
After your eyes became the beautiful view I used to
love,
Your laugh, the one that draws me closer in every
room.
We are close souls drifted away by distance,
But the way you made me feel settled down in my
heart.

But God forbid, I don't know where you are anymore
And where your heart lies, still rigid or more flexible?
But I'm sure I'll find my peace in our distance,
Because you cared, but then you didn't,
Like I never mattered; the feelings being questioned.

BENEATH THE SCAR

What does it feel to be a shadow, you ask? You might want to ask that to Taka because I, Scar, wouldn't know that, right? I was always the rebellious one and never the one who tried. Yes it's true that I've wanted to be like Mufasa but never to overthrow him and could never even fathom killing him. But you wouldn't know that, would you? That's the narrative that's been fed to you and the people who love and adore Mufasa. You call us a gang, call me a villainous leader, but have you ever considered why we stick together? A sense of belonging. A sense of familiarity that bonds us all. But you'll never know that either.

Scar was someone and something that was attached to my very being. When you think of Scar, what's the first thing that comes to mind? – how I planned to attack my brother, but I ended up getting hurt instead because that's what I deserve for even trying to hurt your beloved Mufasa, the rightful heir to the throne.

I survived the attack, but it left a scar so deep it still remains, and maybe it became so deeply rooted that everyone believed that's who I was.

Everyone holds a common notion that to be king, one should be physically competent – and now I am in no way trying to refuse the fact. But it is of common knowledge that only an army with a wise counsellor returns victorious. Taka would never prove himself worthy, always falling behind Mufasa but what if I told you that that was not the case and that I took it upon myself to save the pride of your dear king and let him have the final dance? But oh! Scar isn't that generous, is he?

And oh, I shall practice my curtsy long live the king!

I was thrown into the shadows for what felt like an eternity. And then Simba was born. I knew my prospects for being the heir to the throne were in shambles. Now here's the thing.

Illing anger 'resentment' invalidates the emotions of people who may have good reasons to be angry. I was angered because I was given the special treatment and told that I deserved the hurt that was impaled on me. I never could've resented my nephew, especially at that young age. When I drove Mufasa to his death, I was named the 'villain of the century' because what other reason would Scar have other than the petty reason of being crowned king?

But have you ever considered how much I must've been pushed to my limits to be driven to such an act? Perhaps it all worked out in my favour. The little cub was too young and naïve and was conveniently at the right spot to carry the heavy burden of the King's death.

The elders of the land never took me for my intellectual outputs and wanted me to pipe down so that Mufasa could be given the attention to become your loyal king. But now as the current turnout of events suggest – Taka was in fact right but how much more convenient is it that Scar rightfully comes to power to witness it. Honestly speaking this was the only right turn of events where we could blame it all on Scar coming to power and ultimately destroying the kingdom am I right? Indeed Mufasa had something I never had: the strength of pride.

Now here's a little something you can take away from taking the time to delve into the untold pieces of the narrative: find your crowd. You might come to interpret that 'Scar' was a mask that I was made to put on to fit into a community, one that accepts me and does not wish to throw contempt at me. I did in fact find them, but the Hyenas were such dumb puppets who played along to my every command. But at the end of the day, it was a win-win situation beneficial to both.

he real truth is – you've really managed to turn me into Scar, killing Taka. So now be prepared, I'm the king and I can do whatever I want. It is time for everyone to realise that decades of denial is simply why I'll be king undisputed, respected, saluted, and seen for the wonder I am. But this is something you definitely won't understand. I'm surrounded by idiots.

Ancia Lily Lewis

IV JOPYEN – B

RUBBLE OF BROKEN COMPASSES

"The quill is a serpent today. It coils up my palpitations like a garland at a funeral, drinking blood in place of ink, and leaving behind trails not of poetry, but of wounds that sound like broken violins. Clocks from distant lands sewed themselves into the folds of my saree- a weathered fabric embroidered with the obituary of sunlight even the moth denies to eat.

I sit in a boat made of yesterday's headlines. It floats on the thick syrup of a lake made from the blood which denies all names but washes the feet of sacred lands. The shore greets me with lullabies aborted by war. My pen jerks forward, like the feet of a drunk photographer who forgot whether light was a blessing or a disease. He captures everything: shadows chewing on infants, the awkward posture of a grieving aunt, the holy boredom of routine.

Is ugliness not the most honest painting the world has ever bled? I tell myself this. I inscribe it on a stone and wear it around like an ancestral curse.

My boat of newspapers rocks on the cries of ghosts from a cathedral where no god has ever lived. I try to remember myself but all my memories have emigrated- they queue at embassies of nostalgia, waiting for visas to return. There are no local stories here. My personal tales feel like poorly lit mirrors, too narcissistic to reflect anyone else.

There is no plot, no character, only a fog of rage and sleep, fury and fatigue, rotating endlessly like a broken carousel until the horses vomit. What does it even mean to be a writer? Are we nothing more than translators of the extraordinary? If so, what a poverty of purpose that is. I could build kingdoms in my head, draft revolutions and daydream plagues. How dare I slide the flesh of strangers beneath my golden carpet of metaphors?

I leech on the universe to have just enough to ache but not to move. Every belief has become a blade. Every love, a village by a state border. The romantic has been exiled. The stars do not weep-they are silent so the ashes on the ground can scream louder. All I see is dust wearing makeup and sharing cigars with kings. Morality flickers like a broken oil lamp.

I am a rubble of broken compasses."

THE BATTLE WITHIN

The fiercest wars are never seen,
Not fought on fields of red and green.
They rage within the silent soul,
Where fear and doubt take their toll.

No swords are drawn, no banners fly,
Just whispered thoughts that pass you by.
Yet in that quiet, shadows creep,
And try to chain the dreams you keep.

But rise you must, and break the chain,
Step through the storm, embrace the pain.
For every scar and every test
Will shape the fire within your chest.

The chains that bind are made of thought,
Of all the lies that life has taught.
But truth, once found, will light your way,
And chase the darkest doubt away.

A warrior true is not the loud,
Nor one who stands before a crowd
But one who meets his gaze inside,
And tames the storms he used to hide.

So fight, not just to win or prove,
But for the strength to stand and move.
For victory lies not in control,
But in the mastery of soul.



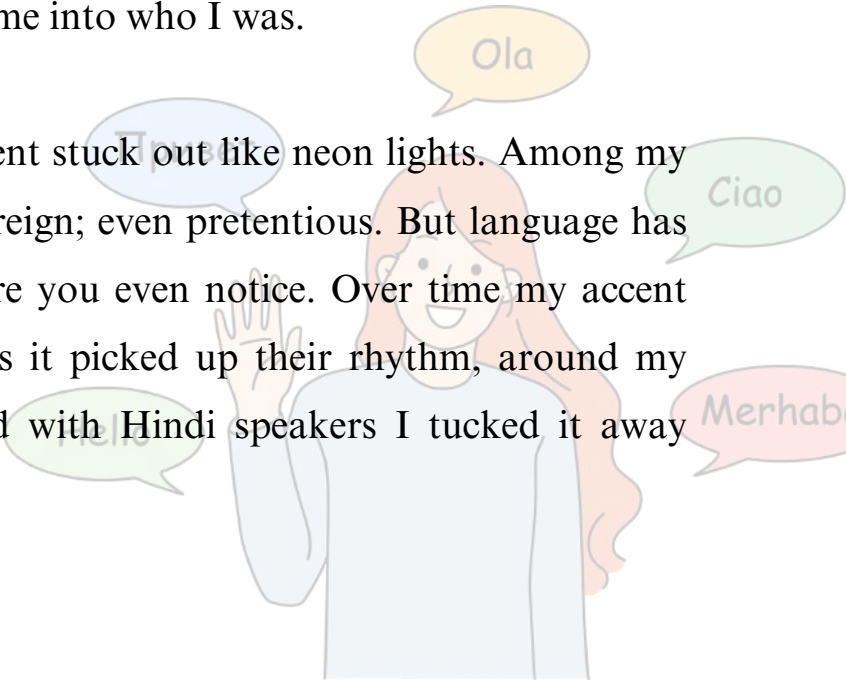
HOW LANGUAGE CREATES IDENTITY

The last thing I remember before blacking out on a hospital bed wasn't English, the language I think in, or Hindi, the language I use to get around day to day. It was Malayalam, my mother tongue. After two weeks of not eating or drinking, I lifted my head with my parents and six teams of doctors standing over me, only to whisper, "Appa, enough. I can't." A few minutes later I recognized my mother in the crowd and said the same, "Amma, enough." Then again, I cried out to God: "Yeshu appacha, enough." That was me basically saying my goodbyes.

If you strip away all the accents I've picked up, all the slang I've borrowed and all the English essays I've written, at my rawest moment, my soul spoke Malayalam. That's when I realized language isn't just communication. It's identity.

Growing up in Canada, I was what you'd call a "whitewashed brown kid." I had the Justin Bieber accent before I even knew who Justin Bieber was. That was my first identity mask: sounding Western made me fit in, but it also pulled me away from my roots. I didn't know it back then, but the way I spoke was already shaping me into who I was.

When I moved to India, that accent stuck out like neon lights. Among my new Indian friends, I sounded foreign; even pretentious. But language has this funny way of adapting before you even notice. Over time my accent shifted. Around my Naga friends it picked up their rhythm, around my Malayali friends it softened, and with Hindi speakers I tucked it away completely.



It wasn't just pronunciation. It was survival. Every shift was me saying, "Don't worry, I belong here too." My accent wasn't just sound; it was a mirror reflecting back the version of myself others needed to see.

Landour, where I grew up, wasn't just another hill station. It was like the Tower of Babel, but flipped for good. Our church was basically a linguistic buffet: hymns in English, Hindi, Malayalam, Garhwali, even Korean sometimes. Settlers came from South Africa, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, America, Germany - you name it. Instead of dividing us, the languages somehow held us together.

My international school was the same. Students from everywhere, accents bouncing off walls, slang from five continents mixing in the hallways. In that environment, I became the "whitewashed brown kid": brown skin, but Western voice. At first, that separated me. But as my accent bent toward my Indian friends, it became a new version of me. Language was constantly reshaping not only how others saw me, but how I saw myself.

Then came grades 11 and 12, when I joined an all-boys Indian boarding school. Let me just say, nothing could have prepared me for that switch. Gone was the international vibe.

Here, identity was marked in slang and jokes, even how you said "good morning." I was out of my depth. My English, which had been my superpower in Canada, suddenly became a liability. I sounded like an outsider, and in a place where belonging is everything, that was tough.

That was my first real taste of how language doesn't just reflect identity; it dictates whether you're accepted at all.

Through all these shifts, Malayalam has always been my anchor. At home it's the language of family, of prayer, of emotions that don't need translation.

Even when my thoughts run in English, my heart runs in Malayalam.

That's why on that hospital bed, after all those days of silence, Malayalam was the only language that came out. It wasn't calculated. It was instinct.

In that moment, stripped of every borrowed accent and every other language, I spoke the truest version of myself.

Even now in Bangalore, where I study at Kristu Jayanti, Malayalam keeps pulling me back. Among Malayali friends, my accent slowly reverts, no matter how much English I've been speaking all day. And even within Malayalam, I keep discovering how identity splinters.

My friend from Thrissur speaks the same language, but it sounds like a whole different one. His dialect carries the rhythm and humor of his region, while mine carries my own. Even within one language, identity is fractured into micro-identities.

But identity through language isn't just about geography. Pop culture has been another teacher. The way rappers talk, both in their music, and interviews, has shaped how I speak just as much as Canada or Kerala did.

When Drake throws Toronto slang into his verses, or when Travis Scott mumbles in autotune, they're not just making music. They're creating linguistic worlds. And those worlds travel. A kid in Bangalore can start saying "cap" instead of "lie," or call his close friend "twin," just because it popped off in a song. That's identity by osmosis; absorbed through beats and bars.

For me, rap gave me another accent, but not tied to a country. It was tied to a culture. Borrowing slang from songs and interviews wasn't just about sounding cool. It was about signaling that I belonged to something bigger, a global subculture. Just like Malayalam at home or Hindi in the market, rap slang became another dialect I carried. It was proof that identity doesn't always need a passport; sometimes it just needs a playlist.

All these experiences, from Canada, Landour, boarding school, rap lyrics, and Malayalam have all shown me one thing: language has the power to welcome or exile. The way you speak can open doors instantly or slam them shut in your face. An accent can make people admire you or mock you. A mother tongue can ground you in heritage or weigh you down with tradition. But either way, language is never neutral. It always shapes who we are allowed to be.

Looking back at all the versions of myself, the Canadian kid who sounded like Justin Bieber, the Landour student shifting accents like clothes, the boarding school outsider, the Bangalore college kid, the rap-influenced slang talker. I see one common thread: every version was built by language.

My identity has never been fixed; it's rewritten every time my tongue adapts to a new world. But at the deepest level, when everything else fades, my identity is written in Malayalam, the language of my parents, my prayers and my survival.

I may think in English, live in Hindi, joke in rap slang, and slip into Kannada phrases when I'm in Bangalore, but none of these cancel each other. They stack on top of one another, layering into a self that only exists because of the languages I carry.

Language isn't just how I speak. Language is who I am.

Rohan George
25FRSB41

FIXATION

Toma hadn't been looking for a miracle. He only wanted something cheap enough that he wouldn't have to skip meals. Rent near the university was brutal. Every listing felt like a joke aimed at his bank balance, prices that assumed parents who could help. Toma had none of that. His scholarship barely covered tuition, and his part-time job barely covered groceries. When he saw the listing, he refreshed the page three times to make sure it was real. One-bedroom apartment. Walking distance to campus. Fully furnished. The price was absurdly low. The building sat at the edge of town, half-hidden behind overgrown trees. It was not abandoned, but it felt forgotten, like a place the city had simply stopped paying attention to. Toma decided he had to see it in person. He marked the address in his phone and planned to meet the landlord that afternoon. Nervous excitement mixed with hope as he imagined having a quiet, affordable place of his own for the first time in months. By mid-afternoon, he set out. The streets near the edge of town were quiet, sunlight filtering unevenly through thick branches that pressed close to the sidewalks. The building came into view, tucked behind wild bushes and faded paint. Its windows were clouded, yet the structure appeared intact. The landlord was waiting outside, leaning slightly on a wooden cane. He was thin and stooped, older than Toma had expected, with hair streaked gray and slicked neatly back. He wore a simple cardigan over a cream-colored shirt tucked into loose wool trousers, and worn leather shoes that suggested he cared about appearances. A small wristwatch peeked from beneath his sleeve.

"Toma Ishikawa?" he asked.

"Yes, sir." Toma replied.

The landlord nodded, scanning the empty street. "You came alone."

"Yeah. It's just me."

"I see." the landlord said "Easier that way."

They climbed the stairs in silence. The building smelled aggressively clean, like bleach layered over something older. Inside, everything was intact. Basic furniture, no dust, no obvious damage. Too intact.

Toma exhaled. "This place is... honestly perfect. I was worried there'd be something wrong." The landlord unlocked the door and stepped aside. "Most people don't notice anything wrong at first."

Toma laughed. "For this price, I expected at least mold."

The landlord watched him carefully. "There was mold," he said. "We removed it." "The landlord nodded slowly, as if confirming something. "Good. Sleep is important. Just don't... fixate."

"Fixate on what?"

The landlord smiled, polite and thin. "On imperfections. Cracks. Shadows. Little marks that don't matter."

Is that why it's so cheap?"

The landlord did not answer immediately. Instead, he walked into the room and stood directly beneath the ceiling, hands folded behind his back.

"This apartment does better with people who keep busy."

"Busy?"

"Out a lot. Classes. Work. Social things. People who don't spend too much time lying still." Toma frowned.

"I study a lot. But yeah, I'm usually exhausted."

Toma followed his gaze upward. The ceiling was smooth, white, unremarkable. Still, the way the landlord watched him made his stomach tighten.

That night, lying on his bed, Toma noticed a faint line in the ceiling, almost like a crease in paper. He blinked, and it seemed to vanish. The next night it returned. The line had deepened, curving faintly at both ends. Another fold appeared, trembling slightly, thickening like skin stretched too tight. For a moment, it twitched, almost like an eye trying to open. Beneath it, the first line stretched into a faint, closed mouth. Toma stopped sleeping on his back. Every night, the face grew. The hollow deepened. The eye appeared, wet and glossy, rolling to focus on him. The mouth creased into an impossibly wide smile. Veins spread beneath the surface, converging on the single face. Toma tried to convince himself it was exhaustion or imagination, but the apartment seemed to insist. One night he dared to look. The hollow had become full. The eye stared directly at him. The mouth opened. The ceiling gave way, plunging the grotesque face downward. Toma fell backward, paralyzed, staring into it.

Two days later, the landlord unlocked the apartment. The bed was empty, no blood, no sign of struggle. The ceiling was smooth again, perfectly white. Only one thing remained, carved neatly at its center as if written from the inside: You looked. Toma had vanished. The landlord closed the door gently. Above the bed, the ceiling remained still, waiting.

IS IT OVER?

Is it over?

A question I asked myself too many times—

Not because I didn't know the answer,

But because I wasn't ready to face it.

I kept wondering, Is it okay?

Was I okay?

Maybe I was a coward, hiding behind a veil—

Not out of fear,

But because I was running from my own reflection.

Time passed.

And with it, something changed.

I saw myself differently—

Not a worn-out page in someone else's story,

But a whole new book waiting to be written.

I am no longer lying in a corner like a rag.

I have risen.

Now, I know the answer:

“Yes, love. It's over.”

Never again will we fall into that trap.

Never again will we beg to be seen.

Never again will we cry over something that was never
ours.

It's over.

Once and for all.

And now—

You are free.

Bhargavi P
24CMAB14

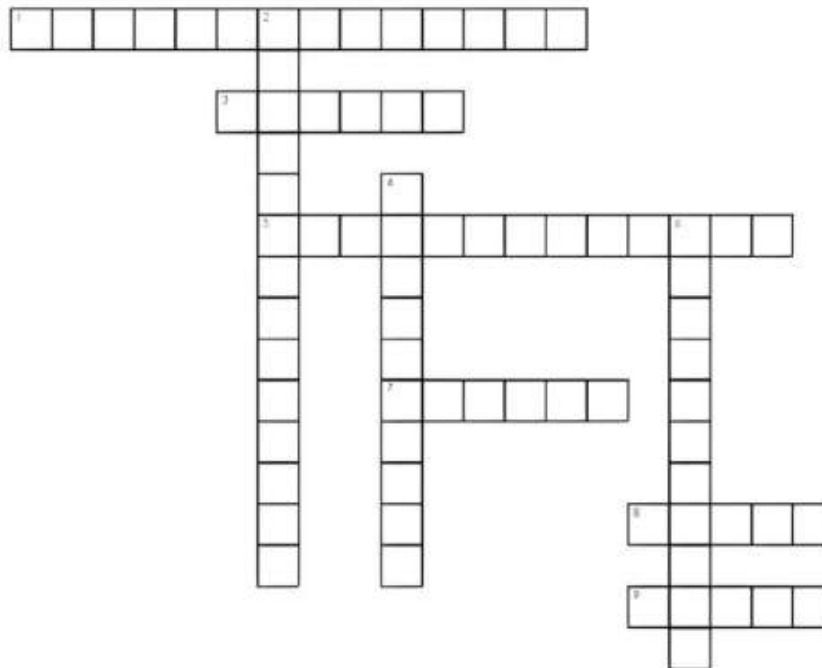
THE CROSSWORD

Across:

1. The famous detective created by Arthur Conan Doyle
3. The tragic prince of Denmark in Shakespeare
5. The poet who wrote The Raven.
7. The imaginary island in Thomas More's book
8. The novel 1984 was written by
9. The author of Paradise Lost.

Down:

2. The author of Oliver Twist.
4. The author of Pride and Prejudice.
6. The epic poem written by John Milton.



ANSWERS:

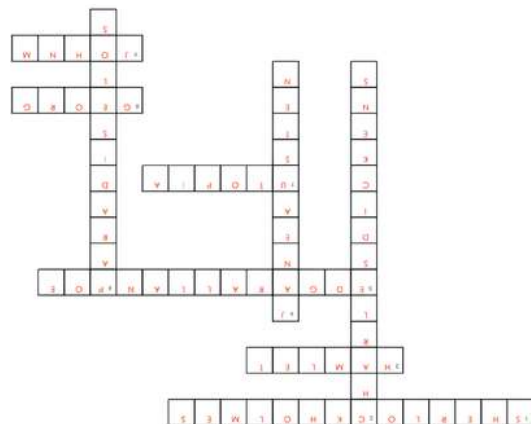
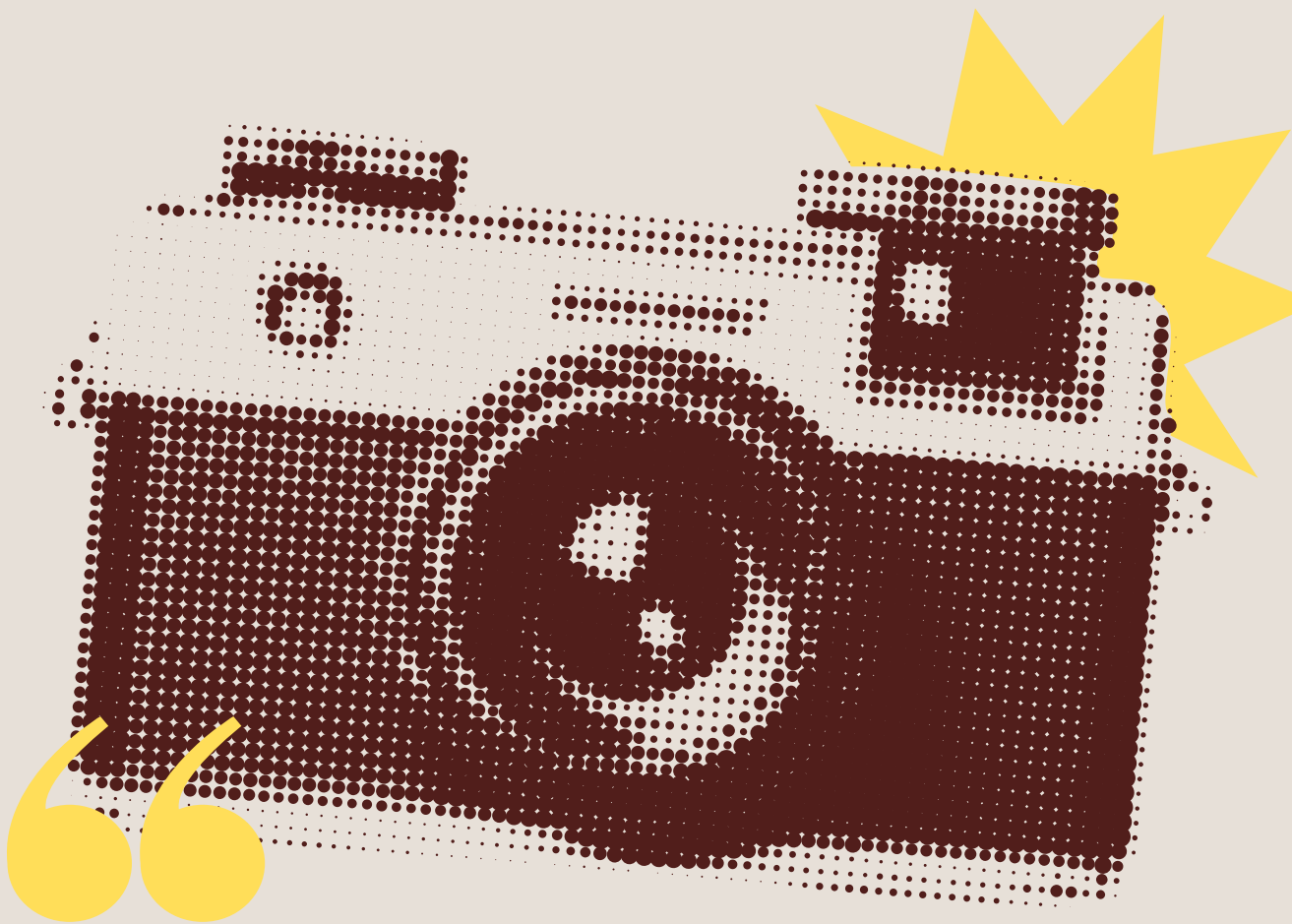


PHOTO GRAPHY



A PHOTOGRAPH IS A PAUSE BUTTON FOR THE SOUL — CAPTURING NOT JUST WHAT WE SEE, BUT HOW WE FEEL IN A SINGLE FRAME.



Anamika Kumari



24JPEB03

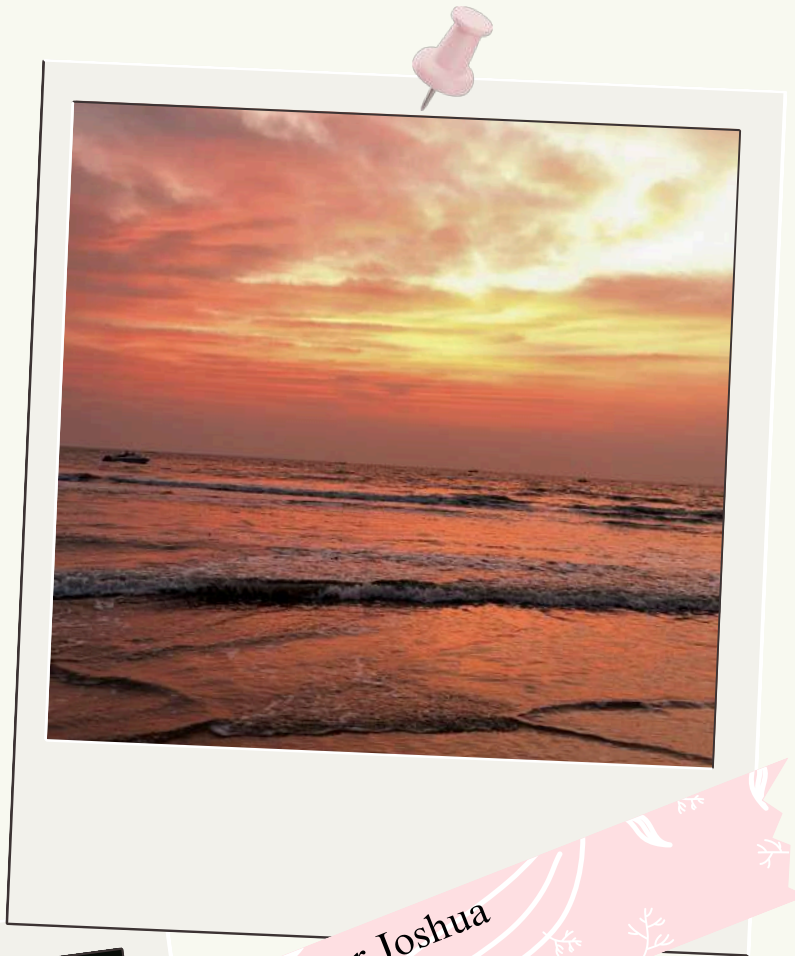


Golden hour through the palms

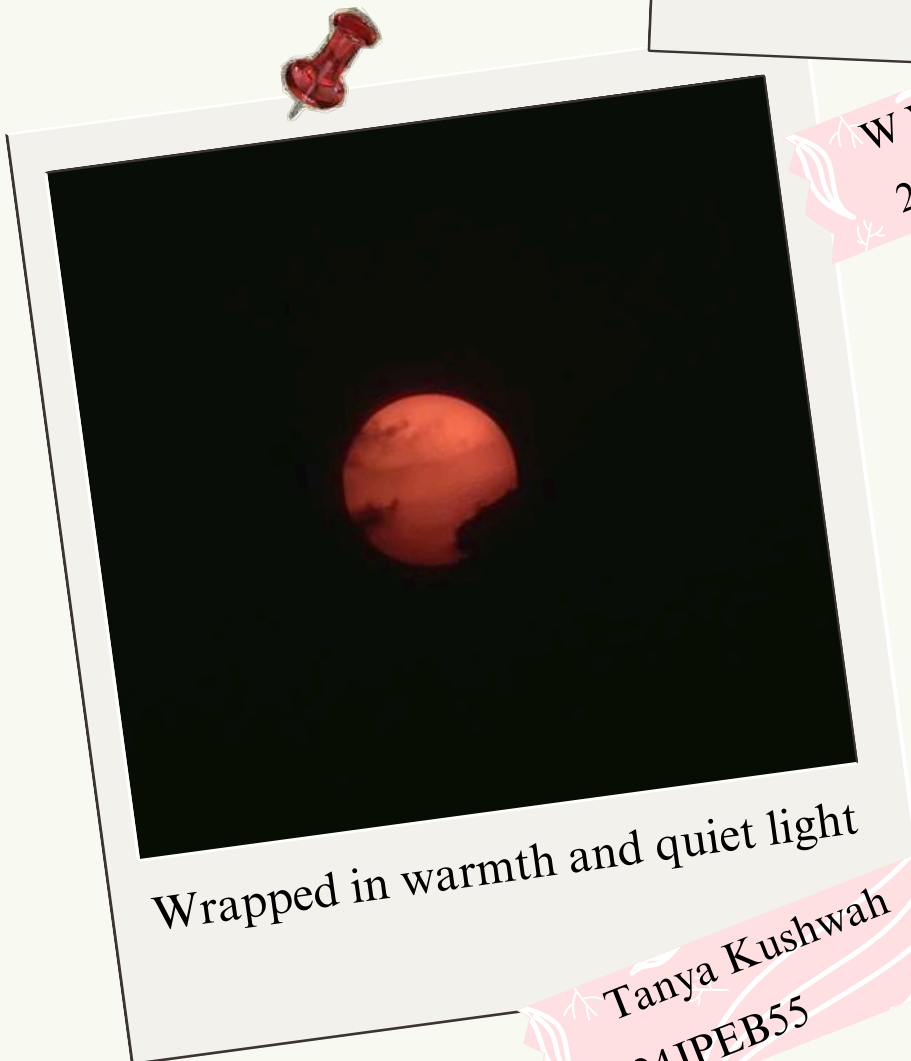


Wrapped in warmth and quiet light

Cheruba Lovely Bright,
24JPEB11

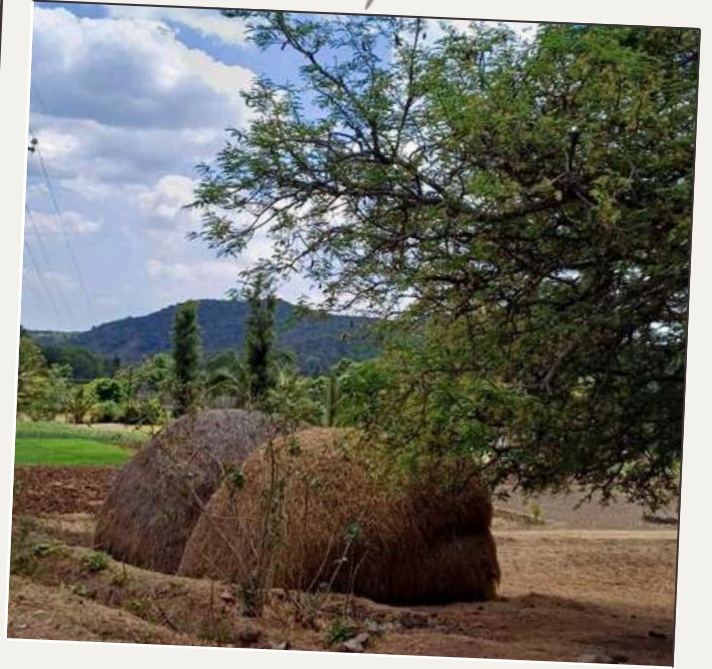


W Victor Joshua
23ENGA25



Wrapped in warmth and quiet light

Tanya Kushwah
24JPEB55



A rustic rural calm



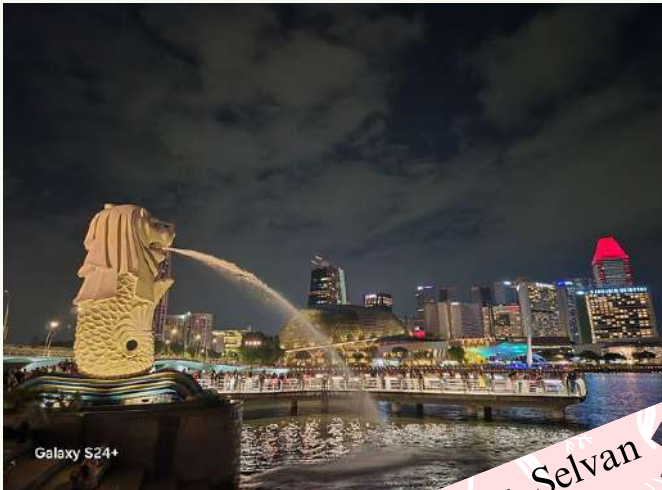
Edlyn Rose Jose
24JPEB16

M. EVANGELIN CHRISTINA
24JPEB31



-Sometimes, stillness says more than words ever could-

Athena Prince
24JPEB09



Galaxy S24+

Deepika Harishankar Selvan
24JPEB13



Galaxy S24+

Deepika Harishankar Selvan
24JPEB13



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Krish Bimal
24JPEB29



Galaxy S24+

Photography by
Deepika Harishankar Selvan
24JPEB13



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