

KJ Wordsmiths

A Collection of Creative Minds

Vol. II

Editors

Ms. Anjumol Aby

Mr. Vishnudev S



Writers' Association, Kristu Jayanti
(Deemed To Be University), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

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Pacific Books International

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Message From The Vice Chancellor

A profound sense of academic distinction accompanies the release of *KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II*, the annual literary anthology of the Writers' Association of Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru.

In a time marked by rapid technological advancements and shifting paradigms of knowledge production, the written word continues to retain its enduring relevance as a site of reflection, creativity, and critical inquiry. Writing, in its truest sense, transcends mere expression; it becomes an act of meaning-making that shapes perspectives, questions certainties, and reimagines realities. This volume stands as a testament to such transformative engagement with language and thought.

What lends this publication its distinctive significance is that it brings together the creative and critical voices of our students who, as active members and representatives of the Writers' Association of our University, embody the spirit of intellectual curiosity and artistic exploration. *KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II* presents a rich and evocative tapestry of writings that traverse diverse genres, themes, and sensibilities. The contributions reveal a remarkable confluence of imagination and introspection, engaging thoughtfully with questions of identity, culture, society, and the evolving human condition.

I wish to place on record my sincere appreciation for

the Writers' Association, the editorial collective, faculty mentors, and all the student contributors whose dedication, creativity, and scholarly commitment have culminated in this commendable volume. Their collective endeavour exemplifies the ethos of excellence that the University seeks to uphold.

I am confident that *KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II* will not only inspire its readers but also continue to serve as a meaningful platform for our students to articulate their voices and engage with the dynamic possibilities of literature.

I extend my best wishes for the continued success of this initiative and look forward to many more such enriching contributions in the years to come.

Fr. Dr. Augustine George
Vice Chancellor
Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University)
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Message From The Director

The release of *KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II* signifies a vibrant continuum of literary engagement not only within the Writers' Association but also within the broader academic and cultural fabric of Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru—an engagement in which language becomes a site of imagination, inquiry, and intellectual resonance.

This anthology emerges as a compelling confluence of voices shaped by curiosity, reflection, and creative discipline. The contributions of our students, who represent the Writers' Association, move beyond mere expression to embody a thoughtful negotiation of ideas, identities, and experiences. The range of genres and thematic concerns captured in this volume reflects not only their literary sensibilities but also their capacity to engage meaningfully with the complexities of the contemporary world.

At its core, this publication is the outcome of collaborative scholarship and sustained creative endeavour. It is heartening to witness the commitment and originality demonstrated by our student contributors, whose writings lend both depth and vitality to this volume. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the editors of this anthology, Mr. Vishnudev S and Ms. Anjumol Aby, who, as the student secretaries of the Association, have exemplified remarkable editorial discernment and dedication in shaping this work

into its present form. I would also like to place on record my sincere appreciation for the guidance and support extended by Dr. L. Santhosh Kumar and Dr. Aryamol K. B., Faculty Coordinators of the Writers' Association, whose mentorship has been instrumental in bringing this publication to fruition.

The Writers' Association continues to function as an intellectual and creative space that nurtures dialogue, experimentation, and expression while also contributing meaningfully to the University's larger vision of holistic and transformative education. Such initiatives reaffirm the significance of literary culture within the academic sphere, fostering individuals who are not only articulate in thought but also responsive to the world around them.

It is my earnest hope that *KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II* will inspire readers, stimulate critical reflection, and encourage many more voices to emerge and contribute to this evolving literary landscape.

Fr. Joshy Mathew

Chief Human Resource Officer

Director, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Director, The Writers' Association

Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University),

Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Preface

KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II marks a significant moment in the ongoing literary journey of the Writers' Association of Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru. Envisioned as an annual space for creative and critical engagement, this volume brings together a diverse range of writings that reflect the intellectual vitality, imaginative depth, and expressive potential of our student contributors.

This anthology is more than a collection of literary pieces; it is a manifestation of voices in dialogue—voices that interrogate, imagine, and articulate the complexities of contemporary existence. Comprising eighty-seven creative writings and spanning multiple genres, including poetry, short fiction, essays, and reflective prose, the volume engages with themes that traverse the personal and the collective, the immediate and the enduring. Each piece stands as a testament to the evolving sensibilities of young writers who are attuned to both their inner landscapes and the world around them.

What distinguishes this volume is the authenticity and diversity of its contributions. The writers demonstrate a keen awareness of identity, culture, memory, and transformation while also experimenting with form, language, and perspective. Their works reveal not only creative dexterity but also a growing critical consciousness, positioning writing as both an aesthetic practice and an intellectual pursuit.

The making of this anthology reflects a sustained culture of literary engagement within the University, where writing is fostered as a mode of inquiry, reflection, and meaningful expression. As members of the Writers' Association, the contributors embody a deep commitment to exploring language as a dynamic and transformative medium.

It is hoped that *KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II* will resonate with its readers and serve as an enduring source of inspiration for future writers. As these voices continue to evolve, this volume stands as a reminder of the power of words to connect, challenge, and create.

Editors

**Mr. Vishnudev S
Ms. Anjumol Aby**

Acknowledgements

Every book carries within it not only words but also the quiet labour, encouragement, and goodwill of many individuals who make its coming into being possible. KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II is no exception; it stands as a collective expression shaped by guidance, support, and a shared belief in the power of literary imagination.

We express our profound gratitude to Fr. Dr. Augustine George, Vice Chancellor, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, whose visionary leadership continues to nurture an academic environment where creativity and critical inquiry are meaningfully valued.

We extend our deep sense of gratitude to Fr. Dr. Lijo P. Thomas, Pro Vice Chancellor, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, for his constant encouragement and for strengthening initiatives that integrate academic excellence with creative exploration.

We remain deeply grateful to Fr. Joshy Mathew, Chief Human Resource Officer, Director, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, and Director of the Writers' Association, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, whose guidance and support have been instrumental in fostering a vibrant literary culture within the University.

We convey our sincere regards to Dr. Aloysius Edward, Registrar, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, for his steadfast support in facilitating the

academic and administrative processes that enable such literary endeavours to be realised with clarity and coherence.

We express our respectful acknowledgement of Dr. Calistus Jude, Dean of Academics, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, for his encouragement of both scholarly inquiry and creative expression, which strengthens the intellectual environment within which such initiatives meaningfully evolve.

We place on record our deep sense of gratitude to Ms. Ramya B., Director, IQAC, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, whose commitment to academic quality, institutional excellence, and continuous enhancement significantly enriches and sustains initiatives of this nature.

We remain indebted to Dr. L. Santhosh Kumar and Dr. Aryamol K. B., Faculty Coordinators of the Writers' Association, Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, whose mentorship and encouragement have quietly shaped this endeavour.

Above all, this anthology belongs to the student contributors, whose voices give it life and meaning. Their willingness to reflect, imagine, and articulate has transformed these pages into a space of dialogue, creativity, and thoughtful engagement. Their words remind us that writing is not merely an act of expression but a way of understanding and connecting with the world.

We also acknowledge, with deep gratitude, all those who have contributed, directly or indirectly, to the completion of this volume. With humility and a sense of collective fulfilment, we present KJ Wordsmiths, Vol. II as a reflection of shared effort and enduring inspiration.

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A Blessing In Disguise

—Edita Shiphira S
25BTGB19

Oh, how blessed I am
To have a friend like her
Who cares deeply, like a mother.
Her gentle touch,
Her warm presence,
Her soothing voice,
Her motivating energy,
Her beautiful hair,
Her way of comforting,
Her way of seeing things from a different light,
Her unforgettable scent.

My love for her only grows stronger in Christ.
Even when the world around me is falling apart,
She holds me tightly in her arms,
Making me feel safe.

She stood by my side when everyone else left.
She saw me at my worst and still chose to stay.
She never judges me.
She sees the beauty in my flaws.
She's a strong woman.

I know she might sound like a fantasy
But she does exist.
My sweet lil baby girl,
She's my answered prayer,
My safe place,
My home.



A Violet Childhood

—Nikhisha Hari
23PSYA38

Prussian blue skirt and ribbons
Pale shirt ironed still
A crooked smile's innocence
Jingling marbles spill
Song of a leaf's rustle
Fall of a fruit's resonance

Stains the fresh fingers
One revengeful swipe,
Her pale shirt pains
Another fruit in time
Plays violet in her grins
A seed, the grin propels

The seed splattered purple
Soiled the shirts of many
Her thoughts in a fumble
For in the hue's vacancy
The little one's memory
Resides in abundance

A childhood sketched
In violet of plums

Finds its owner unscathed
Carrying glee in lumps
A lap so colorful now
Cradles seeds that bestow
Springs of memories anew
To the same young maiden
Whose violet stroked
Childhood the seeds once knew



Anchor In The Storm

—Shifa Walter
25BAVA53

A lot of things in my mind,
Lots of chaos within, confined.
How will it happen?
Will I even make it happen?
Thousands of questions surround,
with a bunch of responsibilities around.
The story of my soul seems to fall,
When nothing is working at all.
The boat of my life seems to be sinking down,
With the heaviness of life, I live around in this town.
The only thing that helps me keep going,
is my Christ's love, ever glowing?
Those thousand questions seem nothing,
When he says "I'm with you till the very ending".
The boat of my life also starts going still,
Knowing that it's always my God's will.
He is the anchor in the heavy storm,
The light in the darkest night, sure and warm.
When the waves of doubt crash over me,
His promises are the shore, I long to see.
A testament to His grace,
I am always found in his embrace.



And Scene!

—Anika S
24BBAB04

Welcome! Welcome!
The show is just about to start!
Everybody in my head groans
‘Ugh, here she goes again’
Everyone in their seats almost ten times a day, perhaps more?
It is free of cost! But not for her, no.

Some stand around for it is a sold-out show!
There are two men in the back row
I can hear them precisely-
“Here again? Didn’t we watch this play before?” says the
man with a drink in his hand
The other laughs dropping ice into his glass
“I’ve lost count of the times she’s worn that mask,
Played the same show for us to hear her cry”
Whiskey burns down his throat as he stifles a laugh
“The show of how pathetic and miserable she is”
The other rests his glass on the counter
“Every show-
New costumes, new props, new lines in the script but- “
He interrupts grinning, swirling the whiskey
“But the ending does not change”
Just like this whiskey-
No matter the number of many times you’ve taken a drink,

every sip burns the same”
The other smirks looking at his drink
“She is– a mess so perfected that her mind intoxicated”
The man laughs in the scent of his drink
“Some drink to drown the pain, but pain swims better than
you think”
Applause roars the scene as she takes the centre of the stage
Her little show begins
The man takes his final sip, he shouts
“Hey! Why is the ending always the same!
Every goddamn show! The ending is always the same!”
Everyone’s eyes on him, she flinches
“The ending? I do not write the story; I just play along.
A puppet in my own mind.
Ask it, why no different ending?
He laughs in mockery
“That’s not true! You can change the ending and you
know it!”
Her eyes wander in hesitation
“But the rope is around my throat, every step I take is a threat.
So yes, you’re right, I can change ending
But who will perform for you little thieves, if am gone”?
He lowers himself down to his seat
She smiles again almost. Scary
Applause applause! As the show ends
Everyone in their seats
“Welcome! Welcome!
The show is just about to start!
Everybody in my head groans
“Ugh, here she goes again”



Art Is Art

My Journey as an Artist

—Reet Baheti
25PSYB40

“What is Art?” Art can be anything, really. Trying to define it feels like trying to hold water in your hands– it keeps slipping through. For me, art is therapy. It is how I express what I feel when words fall short. Art is not only what I create or how I see the world, but a way of life.

I started out by recreating famous paintings and photographs, slowly finding my own rhythm and voice. Over time, I developed a style that feels real and emotional to me — something that speaks both to the heart and to the eye. Color theory and anatomy have always fascinated me, and I often find myself inspired by artists like Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun and Claude Monet.

Whenever a new idea comes to mind, I write it down or sketch it quickly, just to hold on to it before it fades. My sketchbook has become my space to experiment freely, to make mistakes, and to grow.

As I spent more time with art, I found myself drawn to themes like healing, self-love, and mental health. Around the same time, I began studying psychology, and that completely changed the way I viewed both people and my own creative process. Psychology helped me see how much emotion we

carry quietly within us, and how important it is to let those feelings out in some form. For me, art became that outlet— a space where I could process my emotions and help others do the same. I want my work to remind people that healing is possible, that life still holds hope, and that expressing what you feel is a strength, not a weakness. I want to convey the message of hope and the beauty of life. My passion is to help others who are struggling mentally to explore themselves and find freedom in expressing who they are.

I do not think failure truly exists in art. Sometimes a piece does not turn out the way I imagined, and it can feel frustrating, but every attempt teaches me something. Progress in art is about patience, consistency, and keeping your heart open. To push myself further, I started a 500-day portrait challenge. Each day, I draw one portrait in under an hour. I am now on Day 401, and I can see how much I have grown. It has taught me that discipline itself can be a form of creativity.

Over the past eight years, I have created more artworks than I can count. Some of my larger paintings have taken over 160 hours to finish. I am mostly self-taught, but I have also been guided by two teachers who helped me refine my technique. I put my whole heart into each piece because I believe art should make you feel something — even if that feeling is hard to name.

This year, inspired by my history project on the Vedic texts, I worked on a piece called *Kalinga Temple*. It is based on India's ancient history and traditions. I am also working on another oil painting that focuses on different cultures around the world and how their stories connect to nature and healing.

The pandemic had a huge impact on my relationship with art. Before, I was focused mostly on technique and perfection, but once it hit, I was forced to face my emotions. But when everything stopped, I had to sit with my emotions and face myself. Art became my way of coping, of understanding what I was feeling. I realized that I could talk to my canvas in a way I couldn't talk to people. It never judged or interrupted, it simply absorbed everything I needed to say.

One thing I've learned is that art should be approached with an open mind. Some artworks will move you deeply, others might not speak to you at all, and that is completely okay. Beauty lies in perspective. Many people hesitate around abstract art because they worry about "getting it wrong." But there is no wrong way to experience art. The meaning belongs to whoever is looking at it, and it changes with every pair of eyes. A lot of people get intimidated by art, especially abstract pieces. They worry they won't understand the "true meaning" of the work, when in reality, the interpretation depends entirely on the viewer and their feelings.

Exhibiting my work at Chitrakala Parishath recently was one of my favorite experiences so far- it gave me a fresh perspective and was really inspiring. I had so much fun meeting and talking to other art enthusiasts.

The feedback from visitors was truly fulfilling. Their stories and reactions reminded me how art connects people in ways words never can.

Each conversation sparked new ideas that I can't wait to bring to life.

If I could tell something to anyone starting out in art, it would be this: just enjoy it. Experiment, practice, and let go of the fear of doing it "wrong." There is no right way. There is no perfect piece. *Art is art.*

That phrase has always meant a lot to me. It comes from Gertrude Stein's line, "A rose is a rose is a rose." She meant that a thing is itself- it does not need to be explained or justified. Art is the same. It does not need validation from anyone. Whether it is a child's drawing, a quick sketch, or a masterpiece hanging in a gallery, each work is an expression of something real. That is what makes it art.

Art does not need to be pretty or logical to matter. It can be messy, confusing, painful, or simple. It can exist quietly or loudly. Each piece holds something from its creator- a thought, a memory, a heartbeat. When we create with honesty, it becomes art in its purest form.

So when I say *Art is Art*, I mean that it cannot be boxed in or compared. It exists because it needs to. It exists because we do. As someone who studies the mind and paints from the heart, I have seen how deeply art and psychology are connected. Both search for meaning, healing, and understanding. Both remind us that being human is not about being perfect, but about being real. Art should comfort those who are hurting and stir something in those who are too comfortable. Good art is something that clearly expresses what the artist is thinking. Art is quite fun, especially for those who are honest with themselves

So I'll end with a question I ask myself often- when was the last time you paused and created something just for yourself? Because the moment you do, you'll realize that no matter the form, no matter the skill, art is, and will always be, art.



At The End Of Eternity

—Tehillah Thomas
25PSYA52

At the end of eternity when the storm calms
We find each other
Standing at the end of the universe
Gripping our weapons, unable to charge at each other—
I see you without your armor
And you see me without my rage
Once destined to fight for eternity
We now stand at the end of it.

I take a step in hopes you take one too
If the darkness swallows what's left
We were never meant for the light.
Is it the end or am I the Fool?
All the battles, all the wars
All the storms inside you I learned by heart.
Call it my faith or my foolishness.

But you took your step,
I saw it as a vow.
In that single step, I saw a thousand futures rise.
I ran to you as if is no was dawn waiting
The thing that only lived in my imagination was now real
What once was a fantasy breathed before me—us.

Even when I hid, the universe kept folding me back into
your orbit.
Melting into each other as if carved from the same stone,
The once cold hard stone in our chest
Was finally beating warm, real heart.

It was you and me
Me and you who loved even after eternity.



Beyond Horizons: My Days In Paonta Sahib

—Shanmuk Yarlagadda
24BIBA58

Have you ever wanted to escape from everything imperfect — the people you disliked, the situations that broke you? Have you ever felt that the world has no kindness left? Have you ever been unseen, unheard, and unnoticed?

Whenever I feel broken, downhearted, or ignored, I travel.

I travel with the wind that leads my path.

I travel with the rushing rivers beside me.

I travel beneath the shafts of warm daylight and the gloomy moonlight.

After five years, I felt that same breeze again — the one I had felt during my solo trip to the northern Himalayas. My journey took me to Paonta Sahib, a valley town nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas along the banks of the river Yamuna. Whenever I feel that the world has forgotten kindness, I remember that small town — where people are pure, simple, and endlessly warm.

I had just finished my board examinations when I packed my new backpack, said my goodbyes to my family and to the narrow, noisy lanes of my hometown, and boarded a flight from Hyderabad to Chandigarh. From there, I continued by road into Himachal Pradesh.

I've always been the kind of person who gets excited the moment a new place appears on the horizon. The first glimpse of the valley town filled me with a strange peace. After reaching my cousin's home and freshening up, I stepped out to wander through the streets.

I soon noticed the difference in language — Pahadi Hindi sounded fluent, and quite distinct from the Hindi I was used to. I often went blank listening to the locals' conversations. I remember whispering to myself that one day, I would speak fluently with the old folks of the town — and by the time I left, I had done exactly that.

My early days passed exploring nearby places and spending my evenings watching the sun fade behind the Lesser Himalayan ranges. Paonta Sahib had little crowd, but a lot of calm. It was also a sacred pilgrimage site for Sikhs, known for the beautiful Gurudwara by the Yamuna's banks.

There were many small moments that made me call Paonta Sahib my second home. At first, I struggled to communicate with the locals, but they made every effort to make me feel understood. I found it hard to adapt to their food, their accent, and the cold climate — yet, like the town itself, I slowly adjusted, blending into their customs and rhythms of life.

Being the only person from southern India in the entire town, I became a bit of a curiosity. Neighbours often invited me for dinner, serving me soft rotis, spicy sabji, and traditional Himachali dishes. Their hospitality was simple but sincere — something you rarely find in cities.

Paonta Sahib lies about fifty kilometres from Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Many professionals and students travel there for work and education. One day, I decided to visit Robber's Cave, a narrow gorge where a stream runs between high

rock walls. At the end of the cave was a small waterfall — slippery, alive, and daring. Watching people climb it, I couldn't resist trying myself. Within minutes, I had scaled it, and the view from above was worth every struggle.

Beyond the waterfall was a stony plain covered with solid, colourful pebbles. It was quite painful to walk barefoot on them but I had no other choice as I've left my boots down the crest. I walked on, following the stream for miles. As I moved forward, fewer people appeared in sight until I met a fellow wanderer resting on a rock.

I asked him where the trek ended. He laughed and said, "You already passed it — this path leads to Mussoorie, the Queen of Hills, just two miles ahead." He offered me a bottle of fresh water and a packet of snacks. A small gesture for him, but a life-saver for me.

I decided to continue toward Mussoorie before dusk, though the temperature was dropping and I had no torch. After hours of walking, I reached a peak where I spent two quiet hours under a sky scattered with stars, sharing limited food with fellow wanderers. None of us complained about the weather or hunger — we simply sat by the bonfire, listening to stories carried by the wind. Grief that once weighed my heart seemed to drift away with the cold mountain air.

These days, people often call themselves travellers yet complain about the hardships of the journey. But to me, travel means adapting to the ways of nature — becoming a part of it rather than trying to conquer it.

That small town, those naive people, those calm riverbanks — they gave me memories I'll cherish forever. The momos I had by the banks of river Yamuna, the retro Punjabi songs echoing through the evening air, and the rotis made by my

kind neighbours still taste better than anything I've eaten in lavish restaurants.

Before I left, a few people even asked me to stay and continue my studies there. When I finally departed their vision got blurred by their sheer tears.

Years later, I still pen the small valley-town, Paonta Sahib as my Second Home. Whenever such questions of cruelty and imperfection triggers me, I flip through the pages of this short story, *Beyond Horizons: My Days in Paonta Sahib*.



Beyond The FULL STOP

—Ankita Ghosh
25BBAA07

Victory felt like a stranger I could never meet... until I realized I was fighting the wrong battle.

6 months ago...

What is victory? I questioned myself one fine evening, sitting on my balcony and looking all around myself.

People around me are so busy in their life, conquering their dreams. And here I was – someone, who couldn't seem to get anything right. I always dreamt of becoming a successful artist, but every time I reached the final step, I ended up losing.

My life was slowly turning into a FULL STOP. Things got worse. I have decided to leave my hobby behind and move forward. Maybe the dream of being an artist would remain just that—a dream.

After 6 months...

Now I am back—with my spirit of a winner. Victory doesn't always mean to get a medal or a trophy. Victory is fighting with yourself every day. It's about struggling to change your life, becoming a better version step by step, and staying motivated in tough situations. Victory is also about treating your life like a sentence with a comma (,) and not with a full stop (.)

[A comma pauses the sentence, then lets it continue. Life is the same.

If things aren't working well, pause. Reflect. Then keep going. If needed, take a full stop—but always try to turn it back into a comma.]

Those 6 months...

I was deeply depressed when my downfall seemed to grow every single day.

Hours passed, days passed, weeks passed but I couldn't figure out things happening in my life.

Then one fine day I was getting dressed for my office, and an email popped up on my phone.

The subject caught my eyes immediately.

It read.

Dear Mehek khanna.

Your paintings are truly artistic and eye-catching. We really appreciate your hard work, efforts and patience.

Congratulations for being selected to the world's most famous art exhibition 'Venice Biennale' 1st June 2026.

We heartily welcome you to our exhibition in Italy on 1st June 2026 from 11AM.

Thank you

Team of Art Exhibition.

Julia George

My phone dropped from my hand and I couldn't believe it was real. At that moment I was floating at cloud nine. I was overwhelmed with excitement. All the years of struggle, doubt, and sacrifice were finally turning into reality.

The day of the exhibition arrived.

My paintings were not only displayed but became the most liked and appreciated artworks at the event.

To my astonishment, I was awarded the Best Artist of the Year 2026 by Venice Biennale Art Exhibitions.

From that moment on, my life transformed completely.

~ these symbols of English grammar have so much meant beyond an ordinary English sentence of a few words.

My victory wasn't just a trophy—it was proof that every small step forward, every pause, and every effort I made led me closer to my dreams.



Blink Of An Eye

—Edita Shiphira S
25BTGB19

Ever since you were no more,
even breathing feels heavy,
like it's no longer
a natural part of my life
now it feels like a burden.
I can't even remember
the last time I was happy.

You were like an answered prayer,
and now you're a tragic story
with no clear reason,
just something that happened.
I saw it coming,
but I never thought it would be this close.

I looked radiant when I was with you —
glowing, shining like never before.
But now, I can barely find
the light left inside me.
Everything that kept me going
suddenly stopped
and began to move in slow motion,
like a scene from a sad movie.

With you, I learned optimism.
Now, I struggle to find a reason for it.
If I could go back in time,
I wouldn't change a thing,
because what I felt was real.
You showed me what it means to be loved —
and you also showed me
that nothing lasts forever.
It all happened in the blink of an eye.



Bloom

—Mirsana M M
24IOTA38

Whispers one buried, now find their place,
no shadows of doubt, no judging faces.

A voice once trembling, now strong, secure,
a space of kindness where hearts endure.

Not weighted by faults or by sins, but gently embraced,
here, every story is safely buried.

And here i'm, not silenced, nor broken, nor caged,
I'm heard, not lost, not bitterly judged.



Breakthrough

—M Kruthika
23BAVB34

Heaven was beside me watching
While I put myself through hell,
I buried myself within the fire
Burning through my ashes
Screaming through every wood that chipped off me.

I found no way or door to get out
I thought this was my permanence;
I was stuck in this vortex
Stagnant and feared, wrapped in my cocoon,
Blaming and grieving over something so ridiculous

But the rays of golden light hits me
It hits me through my tragedy.
Showing me how dramatic and miserable I was
The golden light brought me solace
It showed the path of love.

It took me to a place I never thought I could reach
My beliefs were delusional just like my anguish!
It was all a lie I held onto for a long time
It made me believe the false
Mind so naive thought this agony was real.

Just in instance for universe to grab a hold of me
Swooping in and dragging me out my delusions
Showing me the golden light
The light bringing my wings out of my cocoon
Sparkling and shining just like my name.



But Now

—Arul Immanuel Raj
25BCAF12

In the world of chaos
You were my only hope
But now it's replaced by your memories....
You were the one, among many
But now you are one among many.
Your voice was my lullaby
But now it disturbs, it hurts,
It destroys my nightly descent
Yet I long for you
Because I believe...
YOU ONLY YOU CAN MAKE ME COMPLETE...!!



Crowd

—Sakshi Virendra Yadav
25BBNB43

Lost is all I hear,
In the crowd of known faces.
Silent murmurs surround my ear
As I bend to tie my shoelaces
No sound is clear
As people around me are long gone ahead
Getting up, no endpoint is near
Only a long, lonely road to be led
As a dehydrated body and an insecure soul
Struggling to compete
With happy and confident
Population of people whole
I try and try and try
When all my mind wants is to cry
I lie and lie and lie
To be okay
But deep inside, I just wanna be gone
I wanna die.....



Cyberpunk

—Suzanne Borde
24FCBA66

You have no windows, you have no birds,
Not in the city of neon lights untold.
Hopeless stars,
Wandering the Neanderthal world,
Backwards toward the age of stone.
Decorate her with jewels and sophistication for all you'd like,
Nothing can hide her dead, mum eyes,
She fought like a reputed veteran alone,
Martyr's blood ran through our homes.

Hived cities are just a mere depiction,
Our towns and politics are worse,
Commercialized hearts of greed reside here,
Within the city of neon lights untold.

You see no footprints of the meek,
They're buried under the voter's blind.
Chastity to your own faith is now a belief,
In this polluted life of the city, I call home.

How pretty she shines under the mist of the sky,
Her skin gleaming with the glistening rain,
Robotic voices whispering around,
A binding blanket over the muffled pain.

You see no saplings,
You see no women,
You see no intricate childhood.
A Neon world rarely observes its own lack,
The future distracts the city with hope,
But how stupid can the irony be.

Dead men flood the eighth hour,
Bags, recycled, to carry along,
Ravenous creatures roam the drains
Everyone runs on the dim path alone.

Save yourself, we don't need to be this way,
Push the pigs off the pedestals around,
I mean it when I say!

It's not too late to practice due diligence,
It's not too late to deliver the righteous.

Roar the name of your motherland,
Chant the tunes of tribes,
Pass around the weapons of ancestors,
Prepare for battle, it is time.

As for me?
I shall hail unto the triad of crime,
Send them to eternal exile,
My mother's mighty voice paints my throat,
As I scream my rights until there's light.

I shall prepare our young with attributes of our kind,
Nurture creation of the divine,
Encapsulate all the knowledge bode unto civilization,
I am ready to protect my home.

Blue city shall be a myth,
The greed of mankind shall pass away,
Athena's sun shall beam upon us,
And the happiness shall be here to stay.



Dangerously Drunken

—Elisheba Sudhir
23ENGA10

I feel so completely consumed with the affection you
invoke in me
Your thoughts and wants are the definition of my love language
Whatever you desire is an image etched in my heart
Hankering to bring that wish to truth

Truly, I am drunken with your love
Drunken with the gentle flow of your palm onto mine
Could a person really be this obsessed with someone?
Have I come to lose all senses of my being in your company?

I have turned into an admirer, and not just in secret
Is this what they call true love?
Oh, how long have I yearned to make you mine
You have been my poetry long before you ever knew

I adore your presence and the fact that you just are,
I like everything you do and that makes me want to be
involved in every part of you
Whatever you have to say will always stay in me as a
secret love message
Let all you want be known to me so I can give you the best
of it all
Can I have every teardrop...as well as the caress of your
smile lines until our infinity?



Dark Side of the Moon

—Vishnudev.S
23PSYA55

Good deeds were buried with a headstone so grey
Swords and shields melted with less dignity than a corpse
They took my open casket, wreathed in lavenders and tulips
Even the desecrated ones, the forgotten sons, bathed in clay

There was a rumour of a twisted trickster, a banished deity
It stole dreams and drank nightmares, defecating false hope
The full moon was a calling, an omen for its arrival in malice
Wanderers buried, guts hung the trees, lack of corporeity

Trickster called out in a familiar tone, it mimicked my love
I ran to the woods with nothing but a sword and optimism
Leaves barricaded the route but my blazing passion pushed
Dead end was found but nothing else around, below or above

Sharp pain plunged my heart, the giggles drowning my cries
But m'lord oh cunning one, take me instead spare my love
Wailing as I fell to my knees, pleading as I kissed the ground
No answer except the cackle of the blade twisting till demise

As my eyes left the last light, my heart pumped toxic bile
I saw her, the mortal I called my half, there was no trickster
She wiped the blood from her hands and walked away, slowly
Crows gathered pecking my eyes, but the soul still in denial

Before my breath left, I saw the final trick, cold treachery
Saw the vultures waiting, wolfs growling and an eye watching
Every wink it came closer, void swirled in its iris, wicked smile
“Pity, I had a trick just for you, you lie a fool in misery”

“Make it stop” whimpered my soul, “take whatever’s left”
“Worthless souls fetch me nothing, still I’ll take your soul”
And for its last trick, the pain ceased, lavenders bloomed
Rose, sprouted between the eyes, love transcends, soul bereft



Darkness

—T Valarmathi

25ENGA31

I majestically rule... my throne is surrounded by dim shadows and flickering lights. Although one may feel apprehensive of me, they're bound to enter my presence and acknowledge me because I am a vital part of humanity... existing long before the world came to life.

I fill empty spaces, leaving it murky. I'm awake at the dead of night, and I am up before each dawn. I take great pleasure in sunrise and sunset. I bring fresh hope and new beginnings with each day, yet I'm referred to as 'a place' of uncertainty, doubt, and confusion.

I know undeniably that my countenance isn't exactly charming, it's rather frightful, but I am not intimidating. I get deeply acquainted with those who accept me into their lives, taking them on remarkable adventures and voyages. I don't ask for much, yet people are reluctant to befriend me.

People are often afraid of me, and they run and hide in terror at my confrontation. I don't have to be present in person for my presence to be felt. Evil, wickedness, ungodliness, and sin are my greatest forces. One cannot escape my grasp... time will bring them to me. Everyone on Earth will end up bowing to me, for in the end, when all is said and done, I'm the only one who remains... I go with them to the grave.



Depression...

—Chehak Kataria
25MGBA11

Depression is frequently thought to be the painful truth, but it is the exact opposite. A beautiful lie summoned by many. It is the pain behind that extravagant smile and the fake happiness.

We not able to express what's going right through our minds. The emotional breakdowns, endless tears, fakely smiles and overthinking in abundance. That's what depression is.

Commonly mistaken for loneliness and sadness, cornering yourself without talking to anyone, but depression is much more than just that.

Maybe I don't know much or maybe well, I do but I will never know what it feels like or maybe I am suffering from it. But the integrity of it all is that you never know whether you are a victim of it or not. You just..... never can know.



Diwali In Home, Away From Home

—Maanya Srivastava
24BFBA48

This Diwali, the first Diwali where you step out of your other house to return home, the place where we belong, the place that holds childhood memories for some of us and growth for others. The one where it holds trauma but also the same that holds unconditional love like you have never seen before. Such a word home is, isn't it? a box of memories where each packet filled with good and bad as if yin and yang. Oh how you want to leave your home and you're happy when you do it, but the real feel is when you visit home the first time after being away. The walls call to you, the kitchen reminisces, your mother's heart sighs with relief and your father proud. 'Country roads take me home, to the place I belong', my heart sings out as soon as I hear the thrumming engine of the flight spur, the moment I step in the airport there's a longing of my home calling me back for all the bad it has always compensated me with comfort and the good was how it made me feel loved. How my heart cries out to the streets that hold more memories than it has ever concrete, it wasn't a strong one ever yet it held my soul there forever. Diwali the festival of light that brings splendor and the colors of rangoli that makes our heart grow warm, is the same cold feeling when it's not at your home and while home is just a building with a name to it, it's the city that calls out to me, it's the school and its roads, the gali where I got lost or the

one where I pet a beautiful dog well how could I forget the one I roamed when I bunked my coaching and the one I love the momos from. It's the people I met, the people I wanna forget, it's the time I spent, the time I regret, its everything and nothing yet I believe I never want to leave. It seems natural as leaving is a part and parcel of our life, people leave all the time, things disappear over time, as humans we have become accustomed to and accepted or how my parents would say:

“ek time ke baad janna toh sabko hi hai manni”, as much as it holds true for pretty much everything, I wish yeh ghar, yeh gaaliyan, woh chowk wale pain ke batashe, woh aakash ke bahar ki ice cream, eng cllg ka burger king, un Sahara ki gaaliyon ko kaise bhulu aur aashiyana ki sadke, woh tunday ke kebab, aur ‘bhai Prakash ki kulfi hojaye?’, woh late night drives, woh idrees ki biryani, woh purane Lucknow ki hawa, woh 10/90 ka nasha, oh my beautiful city stay the same as ever for I wish to sit in burger king and tell my kids, this is where your mom and one of the best girls she ever made friends with used to hang out for just fries and coke and take them to the same dimmed lights, isolated roads of Sahara, the beautiful streets of Shalimar and how your mom and her bff would ogle all the dogs there, how she visited her bff for her dogs, that this was the road where your mom and her bff ran after I lied to my parents and how in every one of her lies and truths her bffs stood strong next to her. I would like to show them the place that gave me ‘my everything’ as all crossroads always led me to you.



Elements Of You

—Bhadra Viswanath
23PYEN79

Oh dear wind, could you tell my lover
How eagerly I wait for him to come over
To do nothing big or something out of the world
But to just have the calming presence of my lover

Oh dear rain, could you touch my man's face
And tell him how i miss being the victim of his gaze
Tell him how every time I see myself in those eyes
He brings this dizziness of love over me and makes my
heart rise

Oh dear sunlight, help me this one time
Tell that hidden beam of my life that I crave to call him mine
His name is surely magic and I could say it the whole day
But when he calls me made up names, I am in a lavender haze

Oh dear roads, take me to my destination, the one with
him at the end
So i could ask a lifetime of his to lend
I would sign him up for my journey till the end of time
And if the world calls me unjust for it, I would still happily
commit the crime

Oh dear universe, align everything of mine in his favor
Make sure my blessings reach him before me
Let me have his dark nights and bad weather
And if at all a bad time slips out of your hands
Then make sure that it is my love that reaches him even
before me...



Elysia Black Is Dead

—Nuha Khanam J
25ENGA22

It was raining when he finally went to bed. The dark clouds roared without mercy, as if the sky itself was mourning. Thunder crashed relentlessly, amidst the noise echoing inside his mind. His eyes were closed, but sleep eluded him; thoughts gnawed at his mind relentlessly.

A sudden strike of thunder jolted him. He flinched like a dying man, scared of the angel of death. Memories of the previous monsoon flooded back, replaying like a haunted film inside his head.

He rose slowly from the bed. With precise carefulness, he climbed the stairs and entered a dimly lit room. The room was dark; a strange smell surrounded the corners. He took hesitant steps inside and finally walked towards the last drawer.

Opening the last drawer, he took out a small framed photograph of a woman.

She was no ordinary woman.

Even in that still image, her stare made his heart race. Tears streamed down his face, falling as endlessly as the rain pouring outside. Tonight, the rain was not alone; his tears accompanied it in silence. He cried with the sky.

In a broken, hushed voice, he whispered, *“I loved you like rain... but you were the summer that never needed me.”*

Suddenly, his eyes turned bloodshot as his sobs grew harsher and louder, drowning even the sound of the storm outside. With still-broken sobs, he sang softly with pain, *“I loved you enough to let you die, now you watch me from the other side.”*

Then, just as abruptly, everything went silent. He lifted his gaze to the ceiling fan.

“I never wanted to hurt you, Elysia...” he said quietly. “But you never understood the depth of my love. You left me trapped in my own swamp of love, my love, and now... here I am.”

He stopped mid-sentence. The sorrow drained from his face, replaced by something unsettling. A slow, eerie smile crept onto his lips as he stared upward.

There she was.

Hanging from the ceiling fan, the same woman from the photograph. ***Elysia Black was dead.***

Her eyes bulged lifelessly from their sockets, her tongue protruding from her mouth, yet he looked at her as though she were the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Anyone in his place would have been scared to even stand in front of a half-decayed body, but he stood there with madness.

The window of the 30th floor was open, and suddenly a cold wind passed, making the cloth hanging on the mirror fall.

For the first time, his heart beat with fear as he looked directly at the mirror. He could see himself. He could see Elysia’s body there, and suddenly, he screamed as dark insects crawled out from her body.

“No... pills... illusions... pills... pills.” He screamed, running to a corner.

Before he could feel safe, he saw another jelly-like creature crawling out of the walls and directly attacking his eyes.

Without a second thought, he rushed to the window, and when he looked back, he saw the same insects filling the whole room. Like a man who had lost his sanity, he jumped out of the window from the 30th floor.

The rain was pouring down, and soon it mixed with his blood. His dead eyes were wide open with fear, and his tongue hung out from his mouth.

The next morning, the news of *Adrien Klien*, a renowned songwriter’s suicide shook the world.

When investigated, the cops found *nothing* in his house, but they did find *Risperidone*, a medicine used by schizophrenia patients. When asked, his psychiatrist revealed that he had stopped taking his pills and was disturbed after the suicide of his secretary, *Elysia Black*.



Essence Unveiled: A Poetic Reminder

—Sharanya Verma
24BFBA51

You are not your age
Nor the anger that you rage
You are not your weight
Not the troubles of your fate
You are not your height
Or the things that you fright
You are not your hair
Or the clothes that you wear
You are the words you speak
And all the books you read
You are the smile that you try to hide
And all those tears that you have ever cried
You are all the songs that you sing a bit too loud
You are home to the people you love
And a shelter to yourself when the days are tough
You are magic within yourself
But it seems that you forgot
You need not be defined by the things you are not



Eternal Gaze

The eyes that asked nothing, yet took everything.

—P Hari Haran
24MCAC28

Her eyes like arrows, swift and true,
Pierce through hearts without a clue.

Her brows the bow, curved with grace,
Draw the silence across her face.

She aims not with hands, but with a look,
And steals the breath the moment she took.

No battle fought, no war declared,
Yet here I stand, unarmed, trapped.

And though I fall, I feel no pain,
For I'd be struck by her gaze again.



Eternal Lovers

—Deekshitha Lal
23IBFB15

I think of you as my sunshine, and you say that the moon reminds you of me.

Can that be us? Is that us? The sun and the moon? Nevertheless, can the sun and moon be lovers? Can they converge underneath the same sky? For once is it possible for them to be perpendicular rather than be parallels?

It is sad that the lovers don't get to meet unless one is about to leave.

Only the long dull winters or scorching heat seem to bring them beneath the same sky.

It is the handful number of eclipses that allows the eternal lovers to have their shared eternity.

Only then do they passionately embrace each other and we as humans, think of the eternal lovers meeting as a cosmic pause and view them as a perpendicular and not as parallels.

Is that how we are going to be? Will we also withstand all the struggles because of our undying compassion to each other just like the sun and the moon? Will we finally end up in the same sky? Will we be able to finally meet without having to wait for the dull winters or the scorching heat? Will we be able to meet underneath the pink sky when the trees are naked and vulnerable?

Perhaps we will meet on an eclipse; if the sun and the moon align.

Perchance we will meet as the moon and the sun irrespective of the odds against us, as perpendicular and not as parallels.

I suppose you're my sunshine since I use your light to shine and the fact that you're always there for me.

Just like the sun and the moon.

Maybe we are the eternal lovers.

Maybe we are the sun and the moon.



Falling Still

—Fergal Fernandes
23BCNA27

The rain began speaking in half thoughts,
each drop pausing mid-air,
unsure whether to fall or dissolve.
I watched them hesitate
like me, afraid of endings that resemble beginnings.
The street sighed beneath its reflection.
I could almost hear my name dissolving
in the puddles
soft, unspoken,
like a prayer too weary to be answered.
Somewhere, a window coughed out light,
and I saw my face in it
not mine, not fully only the outline of someone
who lingered too long in yesterday.
The rain traced me as if remembering.
I spoke to myself in broken weather,
the kind that forgets its own season.
Every word rose like it came from underwater
slow, warped,
achingly pointless.
And then, I stopped pretending to wait for warmth.
The rain kept falling
not for mercy, not for cleansing,
but because I still don't know
how to stop falling either.



Familiar Ache

—Aastha Bhardwaj
23PYEN03

History repeats it self until it wounds you
and burns you to bones and ash.
my faith into abyss of nothingness
yet shamelessly heavy with meaning.
always a dilemma woven with paradox,
to hold me down with empty hands
and torn luggage of memories.
it's all just memories.

In the field of roses lies my comfort
surrounded by thorns.
oblivious of the red on my skin,
is it my comfort or my hurt?
it's so familiar and enchanting
like a spell.
i can't differentiate between the beauty and pain
with nothing to gain.

Perhaps there's some things you can't run from
it's hard to decide either live or you die,
with hopes into vain of destiny.
After all,
history repeats it self until it wounds you
and burns you to bones and ash.



For The Next Dawn

—Devika S
25MPLB14

Oh, the setting sun,
Take me along with thee.

Color my pale skin with thy healing hues.
Warm this sick soul with thy reviving rays.

Take me to thy holy horizon,
Bring me back for the next dawn.

Gift a new life to this deprived domicile,
With the immortal mercy of thy heart.



Forbidden Ambrosia

—Angelo Varghese
23PYEN11

God is a cruel butler.
He poured an irresistible nectar down my cup,
flashing a most innocent smile.
He fills it full and lets me sip
and truly exquisite is its taste

It was sweet, like words whispered while waking at dawn,
Like the gentle voice, tired yet wishing you morning,
Like dew on the chewed-up leaf, refreshing and
rejuvenating.
It was warm, just like her arms around mine,
Like the beaming smile that lined her face,
Like the fickle flame that yearned to burn inside.
It was soothing, it was calming,
Like a prayer sung from a desperate soul.
It was addicting.

But when I asked for seconds, none did he give.
He took the nectar, my nectar, yet he did not take the cup.
I asked him once more, and he declined again
He said I had my sip, that I should be grateful
But that taste, that exquisite taste
it refused to leave my senses be

So I begged, so I pleaded, for just another sip
But he gave me none

He watched me as I sobbed and wailed
He watched as I licked the cup dry
He kept watching as I stared at my once full cup
Dreaming of bygone pleasures
But no matter the tears shed
And no matter my voice sore
He would not fill my cup again
All I needed was one more sip.

My mind wandered through a forest of haze
Fogged and blinded by something I lost
I called out a name but no longer did it sound familiar
I yelled it, I screamed, but never once did it call back

The chair tumbled and fell
The table upturned, its sheets lie astray
Slipping from the edges
The shards of pristine plates lie in fractions
Strewn across a disheveled floor
And in this graveyard of dreams and hopes
Lays a cup, shining and polished
I crawled my way to it, my heartbeat rising
My mind flooding with what could be
I picked up the cup, only to stare into the empty cavern inside
Echoing waves of wails
And in this cavern polished reflection
I saw a silhouette
And he whispered
'You have had enough.'



Frustration

—Krupashree
25ACAC35

I dug my nails into my flesh
Desperate to pull the pain out
 You held my hand
 And cut my nails
 And kissed the pain away.
You washed my wounds and
 Bandaged them
 You held me as I slept.
 You took care, you spoke
 Like I'd break if you were any loud.
It was almost as though you loved me.
 It all happened so fast,
 that it felt like a dream.
 A fleeting one at that.
 How fast you showed love
 That fast it dried out.
 You left me rotting
 At the same pace you saved.
 I did not ask you to save me,
I didn't ask you to give me a taste of
 Being held.
My nails are growing out again
I do not know how to cut them.



Gloomy To Bloomy

—Swati R Phadke
24BGBB56

A flower bloomed one gentle day,
Her petals grew with sun's soft ray.
A time arrived to leave her place,
To start anew in open space.
Though sad to part, her heart was bright,
She laughed with friends in pure delight.
Evolved, she faced the world's wide call,
And found her place among them all.
She stepped into the boundless scene,
Mesmerized by wonders unforeseen.
Her journey sparked with joy and fun,
A vibrant life had just begun.
She learned her truths, her passions grew,
Her strengths emerged, both bold and true.
The world revealed what she could be,
A flower strong, yet wild and free.
Her victories brought a radiant glow,
Her heart with pride began to grow.
But fate then turned, she cursed her lot,
Her dreams with doubt were tightly caught.
She met new souls, like her, who shone,
Their brilliance made her feel alone.
The truth struck hard—each had their worth,

A spark unique upon this earth.
Her heart grew green with envious sting,
No joy could others' triumphs bring.
She sought out healers, kind and wise,
But jealousy still veiled her eyes.
Her friends drew back, her warmth grew cold,
She stood alone, her heart untold.
Clueless, loveless, lost in pain,
She wondered if she'd bloom again.
Yet slowly, change began to spark,
A light rekindled in the dark.
She reached for friends with open grace,
And bloomed anew in love's embrace.



Grave

—Shreya S Nair
25COME61

Between misunderstandings and fear of vulnerability- a lot remains unsaid.

dug a grave and buried them deep in my heart

Every time I bring out the shovel, I realize there's no more room to keep them concealed.

So, I start piling them, left uncovered.

Soon they overflow and try to explode out of my veins to breathe.

The pain gets caught in my chest trying to make its way to my tongue.

but when it finally reaches there, I forget the words- am left with the feelings alone.

But just feelings make no sense- isn't it?

So, I gulp it down again, adding to the burden.

And finally, I remain a graveyard of words at heart yearning for Someone to show up with flowers- but am the only one grieving.



The Graveyard of Memories

—Devika S
25MPLB14

I wait for time to slowly cover the Polaroid
with layers of dirt,
for the earth to engulf it,
devour it —
like the catastrophe that stole my innocence.
I count my breaths,
waiting for the tree roots
to strangle the smiling heads in the frame.
The ants will make their home above it.
The earthworms will crawl away,
muting hurtful hues into an innocuous brown.
Soon, the skyscrapers will form
a majestic tomb above them.
And we,
the smiling heads in the Polaroid,
will continue to walk,
carrying a graveyard of mournful memories.



Gudiya

—Harshitha R
24CBAB15

“Swing me all over, holding me dearly with your tiny little hands and the widest smile of joy spread across your face.”

You held one of my hands, swinging me around in all four directions. The way you looked at me past everything in your view was as if I’d given you the utmost happiness you could receive at that moment. It was because of me, wasn’t it?

The first time I saw her, all I heard was a sweet voice speaking to me. She was brimming with joy, looking at me. Was I really that pretty? Oh, maybe I might just be! I must’ve brought her so much joy. She must be grateful to have me, of course. She’d dress me up by wrapping me in a torn piece of white cotton fabric – a little dirtied, but she still put so much effort into it. I must have looked wonderful in this new outfit; it made her smile again!

She made me look in the mirror, and there I was! my shiny straws sticking out, the jute threads around my waist forming the belt of my existence, holding me tight and firm. That was me right there!

“I think I’ve woken up... but why is it so dark here?” I wondered, shifting slightly in place. I didn’t move anymore though there wasn’t enough space. My hands were blocked. on the right by something hard, on the left by something soft. So, I lay there in silence, staring into the darkness.

Soon, a strand of my body fell off my shoulder, and I felt proud. I was now superior to that single strand no longer part of me! Well, not everything gets the pleasure of being a part of me.

The darkness left me bored, so my mind began to wander reminiscing about the times she'd hide me away in that huge closet overflowing with darkness. I guess I'm back there again.

She would always put me inside while wearing that unsettled expression on her face. As the minutes passed, the doors would close, and the only thing I'd hear were loud noises. I never understood the need to scream so late at night. Maybe they were singing to her like she sang to me, but this sounded different.

When she'd finally come back after a long while, her face would be coloured purple, red, or puffed in some places. Yet she would still smile the moment she saw me.

I guess I brought her more than happiness. The way she clung to me felt like I was truly important. But it's not wrong though! After all, who wouldn't want to hold hands with the likes of me? I giggled internally.

There was another time when she played with me near the stable, on a pile of hay. The only thing that made me different from the hay were the jute threads tied across my body, holding me together. But of course! That's what made me special and unique. There was no other like me!

Oh, my bad! I got distracted again talking about my wonderful self. I just can't get enough of me. I feel special every moment! Anyway, back to what I was saying. While we were on top of the pile, she was suddenly dragged... down... by a man. A big one. He pulled her away.

She was made to sit in front of many people men and women all and there was one man, a little more dressed up, staring at her intensely. Everyone around her was smiling, I noticed... except her. She clutched me tightly, scared. They placed a red, sparkly cloth over her head, adorning her, and moved her beside the well-dressed man. Still, she held onto me. I didn't understand what that meant, but she looked upset the whole day. I remember it clearly because I couldn't make her smile. It bothers me! Why didn't she smile like she used to?

As days passed, she began to change.

One night, she was dressed in a red saree, she looked so beautiful! But her face looked sad. I didn't know why. Later, she sat in front of a huge fire beside that same man from before well dressed, as always. The night went on, and so did the days. But with each day, she changed more.

She didn't visit me for days at once. When she did though, I'd be held in her arms clutched so hard as though she wants something from me. I felt helpless looking at her. Tears would roll down her soft cheeks, curving along her coloured skin. She'd appear in different colours every day, sometimes blue, sometimes purple or red.

There is no more dressing up, no more playing house, no more swinging me in the air. She even used to oil me before once a week! Not anymore though... She does nothing with me. There was a time when she'd call out to me "Gudiyaa" in the sweetest tone. She just grew more tired and stays so stagnant and alert all the time. It is so visible when I look at her. Her voice cracks and I don't understand what she says! Furthermore, she does not even talk to me anymore. It's as though silence has consumed her whole. It is so weird! Was

I not fun anymore? I don't know. Her eyes looked hollow, and all I saw were her tears falling onto me warm, salty drops from her red, weary eyes.

I wonder what happened to her. Has she found something else that makes her happy? Is she bored of me? But how? Aren't I the best Gudiya!? Why isn't she happy anymore!? Something's wrong with her! She doesn't love me anymore! And here I am doing everything right, on my best behaviour! It's good I can't talk, or she'd know how angry I am inside!

Regardless, I think and push myself up. "I need to stay in shape even though she doesn't care about me anymore."

I can't see anything it's completely dark. I keep moving straight but bump into a wall. "Feels like wood." I keep moving, feeling around, until I bump into something soft. Skin? It's so cold. I feel along its surface- up, down, to the sides and climb over it, hitting my head against another wooden surface above. "What is this place? So uncomfortable!"

I keep feeling around until I recognize a face in front of me. This is... her face. Oh!! It's her! I'm on top of her! Relief floods me when I realize it's really her. I lay down on her chest and relax.

But wait... why doesn't her chest rise? It's so still.

Oh, well- she'll wake up soon. She'll be excited to see me here!

Hey...

It's been a bit too long.

Why doesn't she wake up?



His Eyes Never Held Mine

—Tsering Pema
25PSYC55

He said he knew me,
but knew nothing of my name,
its story, its essence, its flame.
He didn't know my favourite flower bloom,
or the books that make my heart resume.
He didn't know my favourite coffee, my cities,
my dreams, my passions, my everything.

He said he knew me,
but it was all just surface-deep.
He never chose to learn, to see,
the real me, inside and out, wild and free.
I was never really his sunshine
and he was never ever the one I could call mine.



Homecoming

—Aparupa Bhattacharjee
25BAVB10

Every time, I hear my classmates and friends getting excited for going back home, I don't relate. For me, the thought of returning to my city suffocates me and yet again, during the New Year break I had to return. Just before the Christmas break began, I boarded a two days train to Kolkata followed by the second train to North Bengal. With every hour slipping by, I could feel myself drowning in nothingness, just living on the edge of a breath.

EVERYTIME I COME BACK, I GET BACK TO MY REASONS OF WHY I WANTED TO LEAVE MY HOMETOWN IN THE FIRST PLACE.

I often heard of quotes that said "Home isn't a place, it's a person". Neither did I ever have a bonding with my place nor with the people of my place and maybe because of that Home never really felt like one. I set my foot on the city and along with the vacation, came back every minute incident, episodes of some not so readable chapters and details of unpleasant fragments of my years there. The faces in the city are so recognizable yet again I couldn't discover who they really are. I found myself walking on lanes that I had known once very closely, looking at spots that I had a close connection to and smiling at faces which have been a skeleton in the closet since then. I have not mastered my art in tackling

situations like these so far and it took me some time to react to the happenings around.

Back at home, I never really had a chance to say about my decisions and plans. Staying in one room all day has never been my choice and ever since I moved out for college, I realized what it is like to own freedom. Well, when I speak of freedom, I don't refer it to the bitter decisions or wrongs doings that I'll repent later. I refer it to getting exposure to new things, getting to know perspectives and then looking for its pros and cons and deciding if I should join in or just be an observer.

The stay of nine days felt like an eon. These nine days made me grow in ways that I didn't knew I needed. On hearing the boarding call on 1st of January, I breathed a sigh of relief. The thought of getting back to what I always manifested and prayed for lifted a weight off my shoulders. Because somehow, homecoming didn't ever turn out the way I envisioned it too, HOME never felt like one.



Honey, Don't Spill From Her Eyes

—Nandana Prem
24MPCL35

They say that eyes hold magic,
Oh Boy!
Even the greatest magician
Would surrender in front of her eyes.
Her eyes were filled with honey,
Making me wish I could be a bee,
Just to dive in there!
So that I won't be blamed
For staring so long at the prettiest sight!
Her eyes were a beautiful constellation,
Bound with love.

I love the way they shine for me,
Just like Sirius in the sky!

Even when these eyes of yours
Lose their spark for me someday,
Just know that my pair of eyes,
Will always be searching
For their favorite art gallery!



I - A Man/Woman/Others?

—Vidhyashree M
24FCBA77

The world is upside down, truly unknown
For I see in humans, freedom as given
not just a pronoun, or thrown.
It's a whirl of hue, a tad bit blue,
a man—a manmade?!
their imperfections, the only clue.

Free to fly, to fall, to feel,
free to dress and to stress under duress,
free to learn, to earn, to yearn,
Cause here is no division, only a vision:
To see the blood shine without seeing the blood,
To see people live, without the title
Of prey or the hunted.

I see it now; they're swimming in the sky!
Failing and flying in the oceans!
Away from the core, and crores of what I've been in!
They're... They're thinking freely...
But—But what about my God? Why can't I see him in
stones or scones, truly?

“Love is the law,” the display screams,
“If not, we'll learn how and why,” it cuts.

Me, it cuts me, I was taught, wasn't,
I wasn't taught to hate'n't.

A gasp, a sweat, rolling, falling.
'It's just a dream', 'It's just a dream',
I have to go and do mass scheming.
Cause a life is done, before the word "mom."
Yes, this, I was taught, I was taught.
Man and woman are the sole,
And love in other forms lacks soul.

What an absurd dream it was,
truly should never be my future.
Nature, body, Gods, religion, race
Remember them: thread of suture.



I Am Terrified

—Oriel Dsilva
24ACAB40

I am terrified of change,
And all that comes with it.
Or rather,
All that I cannot see,
Accompanied by an updraft in the
Loose, dry, wilting leaves of my life.

I am terrified of wind,
And all that's blown by it.
Or rather,
That I lack the ability to soar,
Weighed down by a stone of habit,
Sinking, drowning, anchored to the confines of my mind.

I am terrified of the great blue sea,
And the sharks that swim in it.
Or rather,
My deficiency in not knowing how to surf,
Tied to the trunk of a tree on the shore,
coarse, dry, old;
Yet rooted, in its perseverance to protect me.

I am terrified of change;
But my life wilts like a leaf and perseveres like a trunk,

Runs like the wind and blows through the loose sand of
the shore,
Swims like a hungry, carnivorous fish and docks like a
dainty paddle boat.

My life changes,
Seasonal, wild, drifting.
As terrified as it keeps me,
Change is electrifying.
It urges me to persevere through wind,
Run on water and
Stay rooted through autumn.
Change is a teacher to me,
And out of due respect,
I am terrified of change.



I Thought So...

—Sriparna Bag
23BTBO15

I built a home out of promises,
Thin walls made of whispered truths
But trust is fragile—
A glass word,
Easy to hold,
Easier to shatter.
I let someone in,
Believing honesty was a door that never closed.
Now I sit in the quiet
With only the pieces of what I believed.
I still reach out in the dark sometimes,
Forgetting there's no hand waiting back.
But the night reminds me gently:
Some lessons stay,
Some people don't.
So, I gather my silence,
Wrap it around myself,
And learn to stand without the promises.
And though I am alone,
I whisper to the cracks in my heart:
It's okay—
Even broken things
Can still learn the shape of light again.



I Want Forever

—Lukshnah Gritharan
25PSYC29

I want the love that romance novels preach.
Not the way Jack loved Rose,
No, not the kind where you'd die for me
But the kind that lives through eternity.
I don't need the world to spin for me,
I only wish to be the heart of your galaxy.

I don't want mansions
Nor do I want grand vacations.
I want handwritten love letters with a hint of your cologne
In your rawest handwriting and imperfect hearts drawn.

I don't want fancy bouquets that cost a pretty penny,
I want a flower you pick off the street that reminds you of me.

I don't want designers or cars,
I want to sit under the moonlight and gaze at the
twinkling stars
And how romantic would it be if you admired me while I
admired the stars.

I don't want a fancy candlelight
I want to cook our favorite meal together,

Slow dance in the kitchen through the night
As the food burns and time loses its track in your eyes.

I don't want a ring worth thousands,
I want to dance to the beats of the thunder,
Get drenched in the rain so tender
While we profess our undying love to each other.

I want soft kisses that melt my soul,
Gentle caresses that make me whole.
Sweet words that help me sleep,
Longing eyes that hold my dreams.

I want to grow old together,
Share simple chores till the end of forever.
I want the fun and the boring, your best and your worst,
through sickness and health, for richer or poorer.
I want forever with you, till death do us part.



I Will Be Your Pole Star

—Soniya Murmu
24BBAA58

It's true that moon is everyone's favorite
But my eyes admire the star standing next to him.
The one who glows and shines the brightest
But is overlooked because of the beauty beside him.

It's true that moon is the most beautiful
But I like the pole star more
Because I see his beauty that reflects in the dark.
Where there are billions of stars in the sky,
Only he, who stands out.

I am a person who can never be someone's moon.
No one would ignore my dark spots
And admire me from afar.
But trust me, instead I can be a pole star.

The one who shines the brightest
And spreads his light to everyone.
The star who shows the way
And leads people to their destination.

Though there are billions of stars
I promise, I will be the most beautiful one.
The one who will shine to light your dark world.
In this universe, I will be your pole star.



In the Piano Room

—Katha Boral
24BGBB27

The piano room reeked of nothing but old wood and paper. There were many pianos in the room, but only one stood in the middle — old and brave. She had seen many pianists, letting many fingers run across her ivory keys. She had seen them dwell on their emotions in front of her, which were sometimes sorrow, sometimes joy. Sometimes it was rage, sometimes it was nervousness. She had seen love grow in front of her, through the music she resonated with every press of her silver keys. She had seen heartbreak too, the lovers crying their eyes out in front of her, her wood soaking their tears in a form of consolation.

She had seen it all.

And she had seen Jihoon. Since he was six, running his little fingers through her. She had seen him grow, from a sweet little boy to a diligent teen to a sad adult. She had been there for him on his low days; on days when he let the tears slip while his fingers moved automatically through the ivory.

She had been there when a girl tucked a letter neatly among her keys, right before Jihoon came. She was there when Jihoon read the letter, his fingers running through the braille letters and a smile forming on his lips. She was there when Jihoon's cheeks became a pink hue and he looked happy after so long.

But she was not there when Jihoon went to the field by the auditorium, and waited for a minute before the girl joined him too. She was not there to see the shy smiles they shared, the hour long talks about stars and constellations. She was not there when the girl told Jihoon about the shooting stars, describing them to him in great detail so he could make a better image in his mind. She was not there to see the girl looking at Jihoon, so much love in her eyes. And Jihoon's smile, that sparkled like the stars above.

She was there again, when the girl's visit to the piano room became more frequent. She was there to see Jihoon's eyes become brighter and his days become happier. She was there when Jihoon played the girl one of his favourite pieces, a beautiful melody that was made to denote love and adoration. She was there to see them hold hands and talk for as long as time allowed.

The visit to the piano room lessened; the fields saw the two of them more now. The grass beneath them and the sky above saw them more, smiling with bright pink cheeks, intertwined hands and affectionate embraces.

But one day, they saw the girl standing alone, looking worried and disheartened. Jihoon was not with her. Her eyes were shining, but not with joy. She had tears in them. A few drops fell to the ground, bouncing on a single grass leaf. The piano room saw her next, as she walked to the big piano, sat down and wrote. On a piece of paper, she wrote in braille, a language she didn't need. But she learned it, diligently and with great care. So, she could write to him. To Jihoon.

The piano saw her write as tears streamed down her cheeks. A tear drop fell on the paper and she carefully dried it with her sleeve. The piano once again watched, as she folded the

letter and tucked it in her pocket, not among the keys, like the first day. And she left.

The piano room was not silent. It never really was. There were performances and pianos were needed. The older one was not moved much, because she was for the ones who loved her. Not just the tune she reverberated, but her worn out ivory keys and discoloured wood, her creaky legs and her smell. And Jihoon loved her like that.

But Jihoon was not here. He hasn't been coming for a week now. So, the nights at the piano room were quiet — save for the owl that would sit by the window sill or the nightingale who sang at a far distance.

He came. He came to the piano room, with his blind stick tucked under his arms. He knew his way in and to the old piano like he was born here.

He sat at the stool, taking in the sweet smell of old wood and paper. His fingers ran through the indented ivory keys, he pressed on a few making a sweet little tune.

“Did you miss me?” he asked, his voice low as if everything in the room would collapse if he raised his voice another decibel.

“I missed you too”, he said back. His cheeks were hollow and his eyes were dark. He looked tired and sad.

“This might be my last time”, he said. “So, I wanted to give you my last minutes.”

He pressed his finger to a single key, letting the sound sink in. His fingers then glided through the rest like it was muscle memory. The piano room remembered this piece. It was his favourite piece; a piece he has played a hundred times. The

walls remember the music and so does the piano. She remembers the joy in his eyes whenever he played it.

Jihoon was a lonely boy so the piano room loved him, like Jihoon loved it back. They were his company, his mates, his joy, his everything. But maybe someone else was too.

He ended the piece beautifully, as always. The tree leaves bristled outside as a form of applause. An owl hooted at a distance, giving its compliments to Jihoon. But Jihoon had noticed something else.

“You’re here”, he said.

“Always was”, she said, finally stepping into the piano room. She had been watching from the door, mesmerised at how well he played, despite having no light in his eyes.

He held out a hand for her to take, and she did; clasping it gently, wishing she never had to let it go. She sat on the stool beside him, hands still held in his.

“You’ve been crying”, Jihoon said. It was not a question, but a statement.

“No, I was not”, she lied.

He scoffed. “I may be blind but you’re no good liar”, he remarked, that pretty smile etched on his lips. “Your palm had tears when you wiped them.”

She let out a sob, clutching his hands tighter. She brought their hands closer to her lips for a kiss.

“I don’t want you to go”, she wept. “I don’t want a world where I don’t have you by my side, on the field, counting stars.”

“Who said you won’t have me?” Jihoon brought out the letter from his chest pocket. “Remember this?”

She stared at the letter, confused and at a loss of words.

“The day you gave this letter to me, we made an unsaid deal”, Jihoon said, opening the letter. “I would have your love and you would have my heart.”

“But Jihoon—”

“You don’t need braille. Why did you learn it?”

“For you. To write you letters.”

“And you have written so many beautiful things to me. How can I not give you, my heart?”

The piano watched as silence engulfed them; a silence full of sorrow and love. She watched the single tear run down Jihoon’s cheeks, contradicting the smile he had. And after so long, his eyes shined. With tears and happiness.

“You wrote that I reside in your heart. Not in a single corner, but the entirety of it. You wrote that I reside in every breath you take, every thought of yours. You wrote that I rule your dawns, your days, your dusks and your nights. You wrote that I’m your everything. You called me your everything. What else could be more beautiful, love?”

“You, Jihoon. You — your presence, your touch, your smile, your melody. Everything about you is so beautiful. How will I live without it?”

Silence engulfed them again. But this time, they were hugging. An embrace full of adoration and want. She cried onto his shoulder and Jihoon let her, as he stroked her hair, untangling the knots as he went.

The piano room was sad. The old piano was sad. And so was the tree outside and the owl in the distance, because no one uttered a sound. The only noise being her weeps.

“Let’s watch the stars”, he suggested. Her weeps slowed down as she pulled away to look at him. His eyes were sparkling, like the stars he wished to see. She did not need to go outside to see stars; Jihoon’s eyes had them already.

The fields saw them after so long, together and they’re hands intertwined. But they also saw them cry, silent tears leaving their eyes in muffled weeps.

The stars were out today, shining and twinkling, hanging from the sky like chandeliers. Jihoon loved the stars. He remembers watching them when he was little. He remembers his mother telling him about the burning stars far in the sky, he remembers dreaming about them, he remembers wanting to touch them. Silly little Jihoon. And he has held onto those memories dearly throughout his life after darkness came upon his eyes.

Until she came, to describe the stars to him. She told him that the Scorpio was on his left and that Ursa Major was on his right. She told him that one of the stars looked a little yellow, the other looked a little red. She told him that two stars had fallen from the sky, urging him to make a wish. He wished to love her till his last breath.

Even today she went on, telling him about the stars, the Ursa Major and the Cassiopeia. But her voice was not as lively, not as bright as before. It was wobbly and sad.

Jihoon rested his head on her shoulders, feeling immediate comfort. She did not turn, lest she cried even more. Her eyes stayed up, at the sky, at the stars and the moon. The fields watched as Jihoon closed his eyes, a soft smile curved on his lips. They heard him say, “I love you”. They heard her say, “I love you too, Jihoon.”

A star fell. The sky let it go, the way Jihoon let go of his last breath with a happy memory — Jihoon loved her.



Irony, And I

—Anju Aby
23D TSA11

Irony has always been the quiet companion of my existence. The irony of my life goes like...

"Always the artist, never the art". I am the one who lays out the colors to the world, sculpts meaning and paints the palette of emotion of others. Yet never became anyone's muse. My hands have crafted beauty that stirred souls, but never received the warmth and gaze of admiration. It is strange how the one who gives life to colors remains unseen in black and white. *"Always the lover, never been loved."* My soul pours out its heart, bleeds the love, and ready to worship... a divine form of unrequited love that feels almost sacred in its ache, a kind of holiness in loving, without being loved. To love deeply and yet remain untouched by love is a paradox I have come to accept, though it leaves me hollow in the end. *"Always the healer, never been healed."* As ever the one who soothes the wounds, mends the broken walls and takes away the pain, but when the silence falls... I find myself bleeding quietly from my wounds. The scars remain unhealed from the battles I fought alone. *"Always the prayer, never answered."* My words... whispered into the void, my hopes... laid bare, my questions... unanswered. Like a droplet falling from the sky, which never touched the ground. I exist in that eternal fall between desire and denial.

"Always the poet, never the poem." My mind and heart engrave verses which capture the unspoken, the unheard, the delicate threads of human experience. Yet my own life remains unread, uncelebrated and unwritten. I am the ink that stains the pages for others' beauty, but my own prose remains forgotten. *"Always the song, but never sung."* My melody lives... gentle and profound, yet it wanders unsung. A harmony that sinks into the deep ocean before it ever reaches the shore. *"Always the story, never told."* The story whose narrative is rich, textured, filled with lessons and longing... yet it's locked away in the vault unnoticed. Written long ago by my murmuring heart, but silenced for all time. *"Always the dance, never applauded."* The dance whose every movement, every effort to express joy, grief, or freedom is worth rubies. Yet the rhythm lives in silence and the applause never arrives.

"Always the observer, never been noticed." The eyes that see, the mind that understands, the heart that feels, yet remain in the periphery... invisible even in my presence. The observer remains a ghost within itself. Alive yet a Ghost. *"Always the light, never the glow."* I am the source of light that radiates energy, care and tenderness, yet it never reaches the recognition, it never illuminates in the eyes of others. A beam of light that never glows. *"Always the warmth, never been felt."* Being the comfort place to many, yet left unfelt. The hands that embrace others remain cold in return. *"Always the choice, never the chosen."* The one, people turn to when they are lost, but never when, they are sure. Desired in moments of doubt... forgotten in moments of decision. Being enough for everyone, yet never enough to be someone's one.

I have always been the *"almost"*. Always on the edge of

fulfillment, too close to completion, yet insufficient to claim to fully belong to someone's story. I was never *enough* to be the whole. My efforts, devotion, intention...they exist in abundance, yet never met the mark of totality. The pieces offered were never enough to make a lasting, complete one. I was never the "forever" in any fairytale. The promises, the hopes, and the dreams...they linger, but the story never meets its magical ending. The happily-ever-after is always just beyond the grasp.

"Always the always, never the ME" I think this is the greatest irony among all. I am present in every story, every gesture, every unspoken need... yet my own story goes unread. This realm knows my existence, but not my name. It feels my warmth, but never turns toward my light. I am the breath before every song, the silence behind every prayer, the shadow beneath every light. Yes, the world knows me, but never who I am.

And I wonder... if that too, is a kind of beauty...the beauty of existing, but never seen.



It Was Raining Hard When I Went To Bed....

—T Valarmathi
25ENGA31

It was raining hard when I went to bed,
Hundreds of thoughts flashed across my head.
I had a nerve-racking experience that day,
And had met a dead man on my way.

A few months back, I had gone to a funeral,
The experience was strange yet radical.
The motionless corpse came back to life,
I couldn't believe it... I thought it was a lie.
And now I had seen a man dressed in linen,
But I didn't know the man's face because it was hidden.

Lightning struck, Thunder roared,
In the silence, whispers were heard.
Suddenly, the lights went out,
I felt hands around me, and now I was caught.



Learnings At Our Lowest

—Ananya Singh
23BTFS05

We often joke that Jethalal Gada's life is a never-ending loop of misunderstandings and unearned judgment but he isn't just a character; he is a mirror. Many of us live in that same loop, where society decides our guilt before hearing our defense. Over time, as I read, observe, and live a little more, I realise something uncomfortable yet true. **everyone's life is tough**. The difference is not who suffers, but who survives without losing themselves. Maybe humans fight back because we are strong and capable or maybe because we have no other option.

What begins as a familiar, almost laughable cycle of everyday friction slowly reveals something heavier because beneath daily annoyances lie the ultimate stakes of dignity, survival, trust and betrayal by the "social contract". The unfairness I witness sometimes makes me cry myself to sleep. It is a bitter pill to swallow seeing how those who do wrong often escape peacefully, while someone else's smallest mistake is stretched, magnified, and used to define their entire character ignoring everything they did right before and after. It feels like the world owns a microscope only for honest mistakes, never for deliberate harm.

Parents, too, seem to fall into two kinds. One type supports their child blindly-right or wrong.

The other trusts society more than their own blood. Even if the child spoke the same truth earlier, the moment society repeats it, it becomes believable. Otherwise, the child is accused of making excuses or throwing tantrums, because society is always right. Is this the future we are walking into?

We are told that we are on our own—and maybe that part is true. But what hurts more is the pain of watching people you spent years trying to earn respect, turn away from your truth. Not because you lied but because believing you would be inconvenient.

If everyone deserves a chance in the eyes of law and God, why don't we try to understand each other empathetically? Why is it so hard to say, *"It's okay. Life doesn't end here."*

This is the strange duality of our existence: we live in a world that is simultaneously a sitcom and a tragedy. One moment we are navigating the petty, absurd misunderstandings of a Jethalal episode, and the next, we are hit by the staggering weight of real-world loss.

The sudden death of Wing Commander Namansh Syal gave me strength and also shattered my heart. It reminded me that everyone is fighting silently, living bravely despite circumstances we may never fully know. But it also broke me to realise that it took a death, a fractured family, and tragic, irreversible loss for me to understand the true value of life and valour.

I may never fully put into words the mental torture I have witnessed. And strangely, as time passes, I feel almost foolish calling it "mental torture" because I am still breathing, still moving, still living. Maybe it wasn't the end of the world after all. Maybe survival itself is proof of strength we underestimate.

When **Martin Niemöller** said:

*“First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out...
Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak
for me.”*

He wasn't just talking about history. He was talking about silence, about the cost of not standing up. This raises a difficult question:

Should we speak up, even if it means being called a snitch?

It's a social reality. When I stood in the line of fire, nobody spoke for me. Instead, I watched people mock me with impressive creativity and almost euphoric cruelty. Maybe it was the universe's way of showing me my place. Teaching me that being a people-pleaser, a helpful friend, a dependable shoulder often only gives others a comfortable seat to watch you when you fall. When did we become a society where help is not given even when requested? Where unfair comparisons are made between completely different situations just to justify someone else's repercussion as fair fate.

The most disheartening moment wasn't the struggle itself, but the day I traded ambition for “comfort and compassion.” I realized that comfort destroys people slowly, and compassion, without boundaries, simply lets others witness your destruction from the front row.

Was this a failure? No. It was a brutal, necessary lesson.

A lesson that silence enables cruelty.

A lesson that support matters more than opinions.

A lesson that kindness without boundaries can hurt.

And a lesson that even when no one stands with you, you still stand.

If life insists on treating us like Jethalal on his worst day, the least we can do is laugh through the absurdity and cry when we must. Life doesn't end at our lowest point; it just teaches us harder. And those of us who survive? We don't just live, we finally understand why.

Now is your story a failure or a lesson?

Survival answers that for us.



Left Out....

—Sriparna Bag
23BTBO15

In circles drawn, I stand aside,
Where laughter blooms and voices glide.
But silence too can shape a song,
A quiet strength where hearts belong.
A shadow cast where light should be,
An echo searching endlessly.
To be unseen, yet standing near,
Is a silence heavier than fear?
And so, I fade, without a sound,
A ghost that lingers—never found.
Their laughter rises, sharp and clear,
While I dissolve—unnoticed here.



Let Her Fly

The metaphorical essence of letting go

—Kailash R

23PRFB19

The day was nice which I couldn't lie
cause there was a beautiful Butterfly.
Which sat next to my presence
thus, sealed as a special remembrance.
These moments were timeless
and wanted it to be endless.
Surprisingly it sung her name
and I mistook it as a game.
She flew around and over me
believing that you meant WE
I jumped to catch her higher and higher
and she flee further and further
I fell down terribly gasping
yet she kept on passing

Finally learned the lesson
that she had visioned

“Even though you may crave Enchantment
Yet the true beauty lies in Detachment”

This is not about butterfly



Limited Offer For Futuristic Products

—Vidhyashree M
24FCBA77

Fifty percent offer,
Limited edition products.

Get the girls, lose their voice,
“realistic human appearance”
Made of “frubber” is to be synthesized.
Put a shell, remove their will,
Limited edition products.

There can be coition,
and of course the conception.
Solar charging option!
Oh, look! A pretty little crier.
Fifty percent off!

The intel is in the flesh,
the body of a teen, so fresh.
Free battery for the trails.
Yes, her mouth is round,
And in it you can execute,
using only a *pound*.

Humans are attracted to flaws,
She can resist, She can even bawl.

Cause luscious is
the one who doesn't want.

His favorite doe.
"Sofia, the first!"

No prison, not punished,
Limited edition products,
fifty percent offer.



Memories

—Jemima Jim Mathew
24ENGA04

Memory is like a deep flesh wound I try to erase. Little did I know, wounds cannot be erased. One must nurture and sterilize them, dress them with love and time will then wave his magic wand. At the appointed hour the clot falls off, the new skin is firm and the wound is sealed, shut and healed. No one came to warn me about this nor did they teach me any such lessons, so, when my memories cut deep into my flesh and blood splattered like a beautiful pattern across my living room, I tried to wash away any trace of it, forgetting that it was me who was bleeding out. So, like Lady Macbeth I wash and scrub because despite what this memory did to me, I was meant to be sweet and forgive willingly. Isn't that what a lady must be? Gracious and oh, so sweet, that I spend the entirety of my life bending to convenience you into loving me. Because time won't wait for me yet somehow, he has the heart to stand still and wait for you. And what have you done to earn such mercy from him? Does he wait because my burning flesh smells no less than the incense offered to the Gods? For I burn with my love for you and therefore I am consumed. Each time I remember you, my bruised skin yearns for a taste of you forgetting it was you who made me bleed. I shall take my leave now for I believe you are calling and to see you I must take heed. Sadly, for my survival, you now have become a need.



Memories

—T Valarmathi
25ENGA31

You are the sweetest of all companions, and your friendship never ends. You have proven yourself to be faithful in making every life count. What would human existence do without you? It's through you that we have the power to contain the most treasured moments of our life... be it sorrow or joy, you hold our past.

Though you are invisible, you are very close. I just need to think of you, and you become a living picture in my mind's eye. You've been the wisest teacher throughout the past years, and through you, we've learnt the most important lessons and values no textbook can ever teach.

Sometimes you are hard to comprehend... Your expanse is far too great for a human mind to completely understand. Yet your diversity is what makes you admirable. You are an extended home to all our emotions and an intangible book on which our story is written. You hold the very heart of us, and you know everything about us.

Parting with you would be like losing life itself. Nothing in all the world combined can measure up to your worth. You are priceless! When all is said and done, you are the only thing that remains! People move on, feelings fade, and seasons change... Everything has the possibility of one day moving away from view, except you! We can always have you close.

You never falter from the truth, even if the things you bring to remembrance sometimes bring tears. You're there irrespective of the place or country...What would life be like without you... I cannot imagine!



The Mole On Your Chin

—Sweety Jha
25MGBA40

It is not a mole upon your chin—
It is my heart,
Disguised as a mark of beauty,
Hiding where the world cannot reach.

Whenever your face appears in a mirror,
I disappear into it,
Folded quietly inside your reflection,
Breathing where your silence lives.

On nights torn apart by distance,
When your eyes overflow with unspoken pain,
I kiss that small dark universe beneath your lips,
And all my feelings—
My thoughts, my prayers, my aching love—
Spill out like a confession.

I close my eyes,
And your smile becomes my shelter.
That mole beneath your lips
Is not skin, not fate, not chance—
It is my heart,
Beating softly
Against your breath.



More Like My Mother

—Aparupa Bhattacharjee
25BAVB10

From the “GIRL” she was, to the “WOMAN” life has taught her to become a long journey.

She wasn’t this rude when she entered this house some 20 years ago. She too was like any young beautiful woman who had little big dreams of a “Happily Ever After”. But the nooks and corners of this home after tearing and stitching her over and over again made her this heartless.

Despite the fact that she faced numerous humiliations, insults and taunts from her so-called family, she could never turn her back to them. The house being a hub of around ten to fifteen members, no one came up to give her a hand when she needed it the most.

I was way too young to understand these little yet big things then.

She would keep on giving a ten or sometimes even a fourteen-hour FREE service and yet that wasn’t enough to satisfy the joint empire. Not abruptly, rather by degrees she lost her innocent beautiful attire of a woman and molded herself to a rock like brutal woman. The smile from the lips transformed into slow sobs. The blush from the cheeks turned to redness of anger. The shine from her eyes became slow

sobs and shower just mild gleams of sorrow. Yet she smiled, putting the best her face could afford.

And each time when I questioned her why she cried, seeing her wipe off a tear right from the lower eyelid, she would tell me that it was probably some dust particle.

Slowly with time I realized that the dust particles had been tormenting her for decades and she kept numb forever. The “FOREVER HAPPILY EVER AFTER” dream got lost somewhere in the middle in those years.

There were incidents I remember vividly when I saw my mother dash against the walls with loads of insults on her chest that made her fall. And I couldn’t afford any help than to stand there blinking.

In childhood, I would say I am more like my mother, but with growing up I realized how difficult it is to be like my mother.

She now often tells me how I have become her best friend now and stories of how she wanted to study further but then she was married off. She doesn’t tell me to accomplish her dreams, she rather tells me to reach heights and achieve my own dreams.

But somewhere while I peep down the memory lane, it makes me desire to reach and accomplish her dreams as they have turned as my own. And maybe that day, when I’ll finally touch our dream and my independence, I’ll again be able to see that innocent happy young woman within her once again who has been lost while walking in the party of molding me and to keep this family intact.

~From the daughter who wishes to give her mother all the happiness of the world.



My Father's Wisdom

—Sonam Dema Ngoimu
25ECO23

I came from my country's faraway state,
Where the sunlight comes in a beautiful way,
Through fields, mountains, and waterfalls,
A place so peaceful and full of grace
My Father always told me,
“ Don't trust anyone in this world
Everyone only thinks about their own work,
So walk your path with strength”
This world is full of jealousy,
Full of manipulation and hatred.
Don't expect anything from others to survive
Stay strong, don't get lost in this fake world.
Now I live in a crowded city,
Where people are smart, skilled, and compete every day.
Everyone is busy in their own world,
Even shiny cars rush past, not giving time to those who
cross the road.
People surround you only when you show them notes,
People respect you only when you have cars, houses, and money.
My Father told me, people only value you when you have money.



My Heart Revived

—Deedar M
25BBAE17

Each person I had to leave
is a piece of me I deeply grieve.
I tried to mend a broken heart,
believing I was crafting art
from a life that never played its part.

Masking truths in silent night,
hiding pain from fading light.
If only someone held me tight,
Whispered “it’s okay, you’ll be alright”.

A calm to steady the storm inside,
so, I wouldn’t let myself drown in the tide.
Perhaps this is a mystery
which led to my own misery.

Learning loss led to a revelation—
attachment was, hence,
just practice in detachment.

I am just a soul,
trying to be whole.

In this new chapter
I have healed my scars
which no longer mark, everything that was.
My soul feels lighter,
Burning like a star in the endless night.
My heart revived,
when I look back on all I have survived.



My Tiny Spark

—Simeon Hanesh Das
25MFOR45

There's no fixing that you need.
Who am I to tamper with God's work of art?
I'm no potter,
but with adoration, I stare.

As my pupils dilate, I say,
You're not broken, this is how you are, and it's beautiful.

Those broken pieces of you, they shine under the sun.
I burn my eyes as I stare into you.
I'd be glad if it's the last thing I ever saw.

I love that glimmer, that flickering spark of yours.
I don't think these hands are capable of holding it.
I know for sure I'll burn my hands if I do.

So, I'll cradle the spark in my palms, shielding it from the
wind.

I'll keep at it until I see a flame,
a flame so immense that the wind only makes it stronger.
That flame, I know for sure, would keep me warm,
would be my lamp when the dark tries to strangle me.

The clouds might hide the moon, the stars, and the sun,
but they'll grow envious for sure
as they watch a tiny spark glowing,
shining brighter than ever.



One Month To Live

—Tehillah Thomas
25PSYA52

Evelyn was the kind of girl who sat in the front row of every class, highlighted her textbooks like sacred scripture, and never missed a deadline. Her room was neatly stacked with color-coded notes and her calendar was marked months in advance. While others scrolled endlessly on social media, Evelyn watched old sci-fi movies. Her favorite? Terminator. There was something strangely comforting about machines and time travel—it all seemed simpler than real life.

One cloudy afternoon, as Evelyn was leaving the library, she noticed a man in a black coat leaning against a lamppost, staring directly at her. Not in a creepy way—more like he knew her. When she passed by, he stepped in front of her.

“Evelyn Clarke?”

“Yes?”

“I’ve come from the future. I’m here to kill you... in 30 days.”

She blinked. “What the hell kind of joke is this? Is this some new kind of a scam??”

But he didn’t smile. He looked... sincere. Almost sad. His expression didn’t change — it was too controlled, too still.

“It’s not a joke,” he said. “Your name appears in my mission log under Termination Protocol 47-B. No reason. Just a timestamp: thirty days. My purpose is to fulfill it.”

Her mouth went dry. “You’re serious?”

He nodded once. “Completely.”

“Why?” she demanded.

“I don’t have that information. My database is restricted.” He tilted his head slightly, almost apologetic. “But my directive is clear.”

Her heart pounded. He sounded so clinical, like he was reading from a manual — which somehow made it even worse.

“The good news,” he said, “is that I won’t hurt you until then. In fact, I’ve been programmed to help you complete any wish you have. Think of it as a final month pass.”

Evelyn stared at him. “You’re crazy. You think you’re the Terminator or something?”

The man, whose name he later told her was K, looked at her with a smirk. “Funny you say that. You’re a fan.”

At first, Evelyn thought it was a prank. Maybe a reality show. But over the next few days, K showed her things she couldn’t explain—how he could predict a car crash seconds before it happened, how he knew her ATM pin even though she’d just changed it that morning, and how he could drive anything with wheels like he was born doing it.

But nothing convinced her like the crash. They were crossing a downtown street late one evening when a delivery truck ran a red light, speeding straight toward her. There wasn’t time to scream. But K moved like lightning. One moment

they were talking, the next he shoved her hard to the sidewalk and planted himself between her and the oncoming vehicle.

The truck slammed into him with a horrifying crunch of metal on metal.

But K didn't move. The truck stopped—completely deformed—its front crumpled around his body like foil. The driver jumped out, panicked, unharmed but in shock.

Evelyn just stared.

K turned to her calmly, his left arm hanging awkwardly. With his right hand, he gripped the edge of his jacket, pulled it aside, and—without flinching—dragged a blade across the skin of his forearm. The synthetic flesh peeled back like wax paper, revealing gleaming steel and twitching servos underneath.

He looked her dead in the eyes and quoted in a flat voice, “I am not human.”

Her breath caught. “You... you're actually...”

“Cybernetic organism,” he said. “Living tissue over a metal endoskeleton.”

She sank to her knees, trembling—not from fear anymore, but from awe.

When she finally believed him, she asked, “If I only have 30 days, why not go out with a bang?”

“So, tell me what do you want to do?” K said with a smirk.

That was the beginning of her wildest month.

They started small—coffee at a place she'd always walked past but never entered. He ordered a black espresso with the curiosity of a tourist, studying the foam like it held secrets.

She laughed when he said it was “statistically bitter.” Turns out in the future, robots can taste food. They sat for hours, talking about things that didn’t seem to matter but felt like everything. The weight she carried started to melt.

Then they hit the road.

They drove until the GPS lost signal. First to the coast, where they stood barefoot at midnight on wet sand, the sea wind tangling her hair as he told her about the world she hadn’t lived to see—oceans rising, cities collapsing, the brief beauty of humanity surviving itself. They stood under a lighthouse beam; their silhouettes framed in flickering light like a scene out of one of her old movies.

In the desert, they chased a meteor shower. K calculated its trajectory within seconds, led her to the perfect spot, and they lay on a blanket staring up. Evelyn made wishes on every falling star, knowing full well her time was slipping. She still made them anyway.

She got a tattoo—something small on her wrist: a simple circle with a dot in the center. “Solar core,” she told him. “My new reminder: burn, don’t fade.”

They got arrested once for breaking into a private botanical garden after hours. K hotwired the gate like he’d done it a thousand times, and they danced beneath hanging lanterns in the moonlight, surrounded by orchids and silence. When the police came, K charmed them with fake IDs and perfectly forged credentials. Evelyn, breathless with laughter, asked if he was sure he wasn’t a magician.

“I’m whatever you need me to be,” he replied.

At a rundown drive-in theater, they watched *The Terminator* from the back of a convertible with a broken roof. K quoted

lines before they were spoken. Evelyn threw popcorn at him. He caught every piece mid-air.

They sang karaoke in a Nashville dive bar—Evelyn sang “I Will Survive” off-key, and K joined in, harmonizing flawlessly. People clapped. Someone bought them drinks. Evelyn got drunk for the first time in years and cried-laughed in the parking lot.

They stood near a small water fall, Evelyn was afraid to jump when K held her hand, he looked at her with unblinking eyes and said, “This is your chance to fall... and trust something will catch you.” She jumped.

And on one quiet night, they lay in a field of wildflowers. No words, just breath, and the sound of crickets and distant trains. She rested her head on his chest—metal beneath skin, but still warm. He didn’t need to sleep. But he stayed still, just for her.

On the last day, they sat on the hood of the car watching the sunrise. Evelyn looked at him and smiled softly.

“So... this is it?”

K turned to her. “Yes. But not how you think.”

She furrowed her brows.

“You don’t die today,” he said.

“You were going to die years from now. Cancer. The regret that haunted you was that you never really lived. Your husband... he couldn’t bear to watch you fade with that pain in your eyes.”

“My... husband?”

K nodded. “He’s a scientist. In your future. You both created me—a machine meant to time-jump. When you died, he

reprogrammed me with one mission: go back and give you what you never gave yourself. A better month. A better goodbye.”

Evelyn stared at him, speechless.

“The 30 days?” he added.

“That’s all the battery life I had left. He gave it to you.”

Silence fell between them. She felt a mix of heartbreak and gratitude swirling inside her.

“I thought you were here to kill me,” she whispered.

K gave a soft smile. “No, Evelyn. I was here to help you live.”

As the sun rose, K’s systems began to shut down. His eyes dimmed; his voice slowed.

“Thank you,” Evelyn whispered, her eyes full.

“For what?” he asked.

“For giving me the life, I didn’t know I deserved.”

And just like that, he was still. A statue under the morning sky.

Evelyn placed a hand over his metallic heart, now silent, and whispered, “Goodbye.”

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. .

Eight years later, in a quiet laboratory, a woman...older, wiser...stood over a blueprint titled Project K. She wore a wedding ring and a new smile.

This time, she was building the future.



O Kanhaiya

—Sakshi
25ENGA27

O Kanhaiya,
To your melody dance the gopas and gopis.
O Kanhaiya,
Within your mouth this whole world resides.
O Kanhaiya,
Even while scolding, mother showers you with love.
O Kanhaiya,
Within your mouth this whole world resides.

Nandalal, the apple of every eye,
Dearer than life to Mother Yashoda.
What fear can touch that village
Which has Lord Hari's own protection?
Mother, make the butter,
Hide it wherever you may—
Lala will find it and eat it all.
With a face so full of love, how can a mother scold?
She forgets everything when Kanhaiya smiles.

How Balaram and Kanha revel in mischief—
Sometimes he plays the flute, sometimes he breaks the pots.
Kanha steals butter from every home,
And when caught, he puts on an innocent face.

The ones he loves are the ones who make his world;
With a single touch he turns iron into gold—
That wondrous Gopal.

From childhood you perform your divine play,
Removing sorrow, easing every pain.
On one finger you lift Govardhan,
With a single touch you show the Yamuna her path.
You slay Kansa and wipe away sin, O Kanha;
You speak the wisdom of the Gita to Arjuna, O Kanha.

To protect a friend's honor, you come, O Kanha;
With the tune of your flute, you enchant the gopis' hearts.
In the Madhu forest, the Lord dances the Raas with Radha,
Songs are sung, love overflows.
The deeds of the Playful One
Become immortal in Vrindavan.

O Kanhaiya,
To your melody dance all the gopis.
O Kanhaiya,
Within your mouth this whole world resides.
O Kanhaiya,
Even while scolding, mother showers you with love.
O Kanhaiya,
Within your mouth this whole world resides.

Sardar Udham Singh

There is a saga of an unheard lion
I must tell you today—
Listen, this is an old tale.
Those walls stained red with blood,

Those walls of Jallianwala Bagh—
Hear their story and even today
The heart swells, heavy and full.

They had come to share festive joy,
Beloved ones gathered in plenty.
Fate was cruel to us that day—
India trapped beneath British rule.
Without knowing, without listening,
Without knowing, without listening,
And without understanding,
They believed that behind these celebrations
A rebellion was being prepared.
At a single signal from General Dyer,
Without a single warning given,
Thousands—hundreds upon hundreds—
Bullets were fired.

Panic erupted, a terrible stampede,
All ran here and there to save their lives.
Their fate shattered—the gates were all shut.
Begging for life on that ground,
Our own people died, one and all.

India shut down the very next day,
Delaying the treatment of the wounded.
Some lucky souls were saved,
Their precious lives spared—
But what of those who left
Their entire lives behind?

From this massacre rose the lion of Punjab—
Sardar Udham Singh, that brave name.

His family, all slain in the Bagh,
Left him drenched in despair and rage.
Then came his meeting with Bhagat Singh—
A dawn he took as new.
A beloved ray of light reached him,
Thoughts and visions aligned, as if
Preparations had begun.
Now was the time
To drive the British from India.

By mistake, by cruel misfortune,
Our brave Bhagat Singh was hanged.
The one they wished to expel
Placed the noose around his neck.

Once more, our brave Sardar Udham Singh broke—
Blood surged to his head.
He swore upon the soil of India.
He would kill Dyer in Dyer's own land,
And never let a single stain
Touch Mother India's veil.

The lion moved toward America first,
Surveyed everything, watched and learned.
Then he met a woman—Lupe Hernandez—
Fighting for her own rights.
Their bond was rare, their coin newly minted;
When she learned Singh's true intent,
She still stood by him—
That courageous woman.

At last the hour Singh awaited arrived.
Caxton Hall, London—Dyer was coming.

He hid the bullets inside a book,
Walked in with chest held high.
Not striking like a coward,
He fired two fresh shots
In a crowded hall.
Dyer fell, dead on the spot.
Seeing this, the weight on the heart lifted—
The burden our Sardar had carried so long.

He made no attempt to flee,
He walked calmly away.
A warrior among British soldiers,
For now he feared death no more.

The British hurled a thousand questions:
From where? By whom? Why?
Their words half-filled with fury.
But the brave Sardar stood silent.
They tried a thousand times to make him speak—
The lion endured every blow, every torture,
Yet our Sardar did not open his mouth.

At last,
His turn came.
The noose embraced him too, my friend.
In 1940 he climbed the gallows—
But he planted deep in British hearts
A lasting fear
Of the Indian.

Such was that Sardar—
One you must know about,
My friend.

Radha Rani

Listen, listen—an ancient tale,
This is the story of Radha Rani.

In the swift currents of the Yamuna River,
In a lotus-filled, blossoming boat,
V[ocabhânu's destiny was heard by fate—
Lakshmi herself took form as Radha came,
And joy spread across Barsana's name.

Listen, listen—an ancient tale,
This is the story of Radha Rani.

Eleven months slowly passed,
Radha's eyes did not open—fear held all fast.
Waiting for Krishna's sacred arrival, ah!
Without her beloved, how could her eyes open—say how?

At last, that blessed day arrived,
Touched by Nanda's son divine.
Her wondrous eyes opened wide—
Mistaking Krishna's beauty for a dream,
The gentle beloved remained silent, serene.

Listen, listen—an ancient tale,
This is the story of Radha Rani.

Radha, the beloved, stole the heart of the Enchanter,
She alone was our bewitching Radha Rani.
Now Vrindavan itself turned rare and wondrous—
Forests swayed, gardens danced, the breeze grew fragrant;
Hearing Krishna's flute, Radha lost herself in bliss.

Listen, listen—an ancient tale,
This is the story of Radha Rani.

Radha has surrendered her all to Krishna—
Whether in dreadful depths or endless skies.
However many sorrows, however many trials may come,
Radha remains absorbed in Krishna's melody;
Even in separation, her love stays pure and simple.
Is this unique love story incomplete?

It is the definition of divine love—
The immortal saga of Radha and Krishna.



Penumbra

—Shalin Ann George
25MGBA30

One random day rolled on fates dice,
A notification appeared and from that moment u became
my world
A soul teeing connection, like the red sting that attached us
Untangled thro time until r hands touched

My eyes your soul's dear anchor,
you declared your dearest praise
the mirror of your care;
The only part u promised to spare,
A single tear, or loss of light, threw u into rage
Reclaiming the stars that were plundered,
Returning the celestial jewels to the muse

The part u promised to keep safe,
Now faded, colourless and broken,
The world moves slow, calculated and distant
Foggy like the smoke, clouds protecting the beauty of the
stars.

U made them glow brightly, though the world was dark
her eyes shown with hope
Until you lost sight of her and caused the clouds to form

Red and swollen, skin gleaming from tears,
The countless nights crying until finally,
The stars blown out, fall out of the sky
Numbness takes over n pain feels good, her chest empty n
cold
The only time she feels is when smoke n mint burns her eyes.

death is not sudden, but a slow, calculated and a gentle kiss.
They are dead, not from a wound, but from the chill of
unlove's dearth,
A graveyard where your promises now settle under layers
of pain.
They mean nothing because the meaning was the light you
shone inside them,
And when you dimmed the source, you simultaneously
buried them like a corpse

The only part of me you promised you would spare.
But the keeper turned away. The vigil ceased to hold.
You forgot the sacred waters that nourish green and gold.
U protected them from withering, like a forgotten garden,
Until u forgot it and finally set fire to it, clearing out the
garden to build your ivory citadel of self

Not honest gold, but cheap, brassy sheen, armour covers u
from head to toe

Every stab to the heart leaving her cold,
Baptised in scarlet,
Her soul numbs, her mind seeks revenge,
A pain that's greater than heartbreak,
Soul shattering experience, where you realize what's
become of her.

Now connection is a red zone,
friendship is meaning, she chooses herself and no longer
A beacon of light, she knows people but no one knows her,
misunderstood, she walks further into the abyss.
Covered in smoke and ash, the gentle glow to peace
beckons her,
Adrenaline coursing through her veins, the only thing she
can feel.



Phases Of Life

—Yazhini AV
25BBBA18

A child is born, eyes wide and bright,
Chasing butterflies, laughing in light.
The world's a wonder, pure and new,
Every colour, every sound, every hue.

Dreams are painted in skies so high,
Innocence dances, time drifts by.

Then youth arrive, fierce and free,
Hearts on fire, wild as the sea.
Chasing stars with restless feet,
Every fall feels bittersweet.

Love blooms fast, and friendships stay,
As nights turn into golden day.

Adulthood comes with its heavy crown,
Dreams once high start settling down.
Between work and worry, time slips away,
Responsibilities steal the play.

Yet in the rush, a spark remains,
A whisper of those childhood lanes.

Then parenthood — a tender turn,
Through sleepless nights, new lessons burn.
 Tiny hands, soft voices call,
And once again, the heart gives all.

Life repeats in smaller eyes,
The past reborn, the present wise.

Midlife follows, calm yet deep,
With memories one longs to keep.
The mirror shows both loss and grace,
 Lines of wisdom trace the face.

We learn that peace is not a race,
But found in time's gentle embrace.
 And when old age softly nears,
We smile through fading years.

Stories linger, laughter stays,
Love outlives our numbered days.
From first breath till the final sigh,
Life blooms, fades, yet never dies.



Poetry ...

—Akanksha Kumari
25FRSA05

While joining and mending, we broke apart,
Broken again and again, yet we rose.
When we rose, we saw—
So much time had passed,
Even the path had turned its face away.
Yet, with a smile upon our face,
We kept searching for hope.
We saw the ladder of success,
And we began to climb.
At every step, a world of thorns appeared,
A heart filled with pain,
And the spread of wounds all around—
Still, we searched for a way between them.
In the darkness, a radiant light appeared,
And we began to walk toward that glow,
Where hope held our hand,
And struggle made us strong.



Portrait Of Terror That Puts God To Shame

—Yanna Sharma
25JPEA51

Does the Creator of all at times feel powerless, when He sees the terror and destruction created by his very own creation? Man, who has considered himself to be God's greatest creation, now strives for his Creator's power.

At times I wonder, what makes a man the greatest creation of God; of how so easily has man given himself the authority to be superior to God's other creations and somehow, considered themselves to be superior to Nature itself. However, over the years, these questions have only given rise to several more questions, like a knot refusing to uncoil itself. And questions unanswered only leads a man to the path of bewilderment and terror. A terror which would either result in a beautiful creation or an ugly creature.

Religion, a sacred place that once bloomed with the wise teachings of God, has now been turned into a battlefield painted in crimson red. The words which were once written to protect the peace of the people, now has been taken out, twisted and turned into weapons to behead the very people. And what is to be blamed for all the destructions brought: the power or the mind that deals with this power?

Faith has always been a common belief among humans ever

since the creation of time. We as humans have been taught and have shared, since the beginning of time, values, beliefs and faith, even while belonging to different religious backgrounds. Our paths may be different, however they all lead to the same destination. Why is it then, that humans try to gain authority over the faith that was granted to us by our creator; why is power being given more importance than peace; why are we in need of division when the purpose of our faith has always been connection?

Barriers are created between religions when power comes into play. The need for being right, superior and all the while, trying to gain authority creates destruction and brings terror. We still live in a world where politicians play the ugly old game of merging religion with politics to achieve victory. The innocents are brainwashed into thinking that we are divided by faith while the corrupt make profit by misleading the way; the way of thoughts and beliefs. We live in a world where many people will take the word of a man who worships power and money over the word of God himself. How does this affect us humans as whole? We lose. We lose ourselves, we lose our identity, we lose our honour, we lose our values, beliefs and opinions. And above all, lose ourselves completely to a corrupt world. However, are we at fault for any of this? I believe we certainly are.

The world has been divided and been divided into several sorts. There are those who declare war and those who fight in the war. There are those who create division using religion as a shield and also those who build a connection with the world around them, all the while safely carrying their values and beliefs. There exist corrupted beings who worship power for authority, while others live by their virtue and honesty. There exists terror, but so are their people who want to create peace out of this terror.

Although, when exactly can peace be attained? For the war is immortal, like traveller from the past. It has lived in the past and is now living in the present and certainly, it will find its way to the future. A war of all kind. One can only but wonder if the war will ever see an end. It seems to be merely a dream, to have a world without war.

War however, can never be as powerful against the sum of all creations of God, including man himself. The War will never see an end until and unless humans stop considering themselves superior; superior to their own beings, superior to Nature, superior to the Universe. If only the desire for power and ruling ever ends, can this world truly attain its real peace. A peace that God once created.

And above all the questions that has been piled up in my mind over the years, one which fills me with utmost curiosity and a want for an answer follows: When God created man, did He ever wonder what His creation would lead to? He surely did create man to do great things, wonderful things even. However, did He know that some of the greatest things that man will ever do will only create terror in the pages of History? Truly, even God must wonder at times.



Self-Love This Valentine

—Chehak kataria
25MGBA11

Once when I was running
from all that haunted me;
to the dark I was succumbing,
to what hurt unbearably.

Searching that one thing that
would set my sad soul free.

In the time I stumbled upon it,
an inner calm and peace;
and now I am beginning,
to see and to believe,
in who I am becoming
and all I've yet to be.

And some days I forget
what it is to be gentle with myself
how to look at myself with kind eyes
and speak to myself with soft words.
forget that I am my home
and a temple worthy of worship.



Slumber

—Karanjit Irom
23ENGA30

In my deep slumber
You talked to me
Resting with the meadows
In my dream
The iris of the spring
Harbours me
Your lovely petals rest
in my sanctuary

The soft sky dissolves into you
The cloud sings a song, for my baby blue

The stars,
passing by
Strings aligned
I've been sanctified by your sight

Fetching
Fireflies
Euphoric sign
Upon the canvas of the sky

The gentle wind brushes your hair
And the distant dawn whispers your name somewhere.



Soul Forged In Courage

—Evelyn Kunnel Varughese
25JPEA16

From an endless abyss of nothingness,
Courage and valor shapes into a soul.
They will overcome their fears and their weakness,
And to many souls, they will console.

With hearts that work against the tide,
They will not crouch or cower,
People will in them, confide.
They stand as epitome of power.

In sacrifice, they find their creed.
Through trials, they stand strong.
They are not afraid to bleed.
Or with all, get along.

In everyone, may heroism be,
For it will set your heart free.



The Day We Eet

—Sneha Raj
25BBAA54

The day we meet...
I wonder how the day will be;
I wish it to be as long as the sea
Though we don't know the place or time,
Whether it will be a moonlight or sunshine?

Perhaps the sky will blush in red
Or may be the sky will soften blue,
As if it blends to welcome you...
Maybe we'll smile, maybe we'll stare...

Lost in a moment hanging there,
I wonder how the words will find their way
Or may be our hearts will speak better...
And lips won't need to say

I want your brown eyes to keep staring at mine
The moment to be filled with joy and shine
No rush, no fear, just something true—
When we meet...
Your smile will greet me like a song
A melody I've known so long...



The Debt I Owe

—Lianne Elsa Thomas
24ACAB36

I stole her dreams,
I stole who she wanted to be.
I'm a shadow of the life she lived,
I'm half the woman she was, I agree.
The day I ripped her womb to breathe,
I was the robber of the achiever in her.
Her sighs go unheard, her deep breaths muffled,
She silences her grief with the weight of responsibility.
How quiet grief becomes when it's gone unnoticed,
It does not weep, it hums, patient, and unresolved.
Is this life I lead worth the tears she shed?
Is the air I borrowed worth the breath she lost?
-Lianne Elsa Thomas



The Devil's Fruit

—C. Saideepshika
23PYEN18

“I’ve had a taste, there’s nothing sweeter,
On my lips, I’ve kissed the reaper.”
The sip of salvation burns like wine,
Dripping down my throat with his promises.

His smile, so enchanting yet haunting,
But I know the devil doesn’t love me,
No, he feeds on my hollow heart.

He craves my yearning eyes,
As guides me, blinded,
Into the forest of tombs i called home.

I don’t feel the thorns that pierced me.
Not when his voice hums through the trees.

The ground is soft to touch,
Almost addicting,
And the kiss of the water on my feet,
Cold and sweet,
Pulls me under before I can feel it.

The trees around me weren’t breathing,
They weren’t green like i thought they were.

They hung like dead corpses,
Lifeless and skeletal, as they held on to me,
Their roots piercing, and my blood dripping in his wine.

The stench of the rot is covered,
By his scent of sin and smoke,
As he deceives me further.
And I keep walking, drunk on his promises,
And drowning further.

It's not like there isn't an escape,
I'm not tied down by him, but the need,
The desire, the mere taste... of what I had,
That was enough for me to be trapped.
Like a mouse in a cage.

The door is wide open,
The devil himself holds it open,
With a knowing smile,
Because what can a blind mouse do,
When she can't see the door wide open for her?

How can she escape when she doesn't know,
That he holds it open for her?
Because the serpent, as deceiving as he may be,
Is more alluring, than the Angel that challenges me.

The Angel calls from afar,
Her voice sharper than the thorns,
More painful than the roots around my neck,
The path she wants me to walk burned me more.

But why must I climb the mountain, for holy water?
When the devil's river floods my throat with ease?

He doesn't bind me, I do.
It's not the chains that held me,
But the warm embrace of empty promises.
It's the salvation and the taste of sweetness that makes me
crawl back to him.

It's the desire and temptation,
And I, the Eve that dances,
Into the black river of sins,
While he, my forbidden fruit watches,
Smiling that all it took to take my soul,
Was one sip of what I yearned for most.



The Last Game

—Aparna S
24FCBA06

The retirement home always grew eerily still after dinner. The nurses' shoes squeaked faintly as they walked, televisions mumbled behind half-closed doors, and the fluorescent lights hummed like tired insects.

But in Room 27, something different waited each night, a small wooden chessboard, the same one that had followed Mr. Dev through nearly his whole life.

The board was scratched and uneven, one pawn chipped at the head, the black knight missing an ear. Yet to Dev, it was priceless. Mira had given it to him on their first wedding anniversary. "You will never win against me," she had said, laughter dancing in her eyes. And yes, she had won every single time. For sixty happy, warm years.

Dev leaned forward in his armchair now, his thin, frail fingers hovering over the white pawn. He always played white. Mira always played black. The rules had been set a long time ago.

"Are you ready?" he whispered, a small smile playing on his lips. His voice is unsteady with age, and his fingers tremble due to all the years of work it had been through.

He had memorized her smile, the way she'd push a strand of hair from her face when she was thinking about her next

move. She was all her fond memories in a person, at his old age.

He moved the pawn forward. The game began.

Dev loved looking back to their first game of chess. It had been the night of their engagement. Even after staying by her side for years, he loved the idea of impressing her.

She had leaned across the table that day, eyes sharp and mischievous. “Checkmate in five.” He had laughed then, thinking she was bluffing. She wasn’t.

It slowly became their ritual. Every Sunday, no matter how busy, no matter how tired, the chessboard came out. Over the years, games unfolded between crying babies, boiling curries, unpaid bills, and broken fans in hot summers. The board witnessed everything, their arguments, their reconciliations, their ordinary silences. The board turned into a part of them.

Dev never won. Not once. Mira’s mind worked wonders in seconds, she had a way of seeing the whole game long before he did. When he grew frustrated, she would take his hand and say, “Oh Dev, you don’t need to win. You’ve already won my heart, Isn’t that enough?”

The pieces clicked softly as he moved them across the board now, replaying their fondest memories. He knew her patterns by heart: the bold queen, the daring bishop sacrifices, the quiet traps she’d set without him noticing until it was too late.

The game stretched on. His breaths grew shallow, his hands became unsteadier, and more sweaty. The home was silent except for the distant murmur of a television. More nurses walked back and forth, a final round before calling it a day.

At one point, he paused, staring at the black queen. A memory surged, Mira across the table in their kitchen, the children asleep, a candle burning low because the power had gone out. She had looked at him then, eyes soft, and whispered, "Promise me something, Dev. Promise me when I'm gone, you'll still play. For me."

At the time, he had laughed it off. "Don't be dramatic. You'll outlive us all." But she hadn't. She had passed away, just a week ago.

And so he played. Every night, for her. To keep the promise, that he hoped to never go through. Now and then, he would talk to the empty worn out chair in front of him, pretending she was still here.

Tonight, though, something was different. His moves felt sharper, more decisive. His white rook cornered her knight. His queen swooped where hers usually dominated.

For the first time in his life, Dev saw it. The sequence. The way forward. His heart hammered in his chest as he moved the pieces, faster now, desperate. The game was closing.

And then, it happened. Checkmate.

His trembling fingers tipped the black king onto its side. The piece rolled softly, its fall almost inaudible.

Dev leaned back, a tear slipping down his wrinkled cheek. His chest ached with something he couldn't name, joy tangled with sorrow. A pain so deep, it felt almost comforting. After all these years, he had beaten Mira.

But the victory felt hollow without her laughter, without her sigh of "Well done, Dev."

Still, as he stared at the fallen king, warmth spread through him. It wasn't about winning. It had never been about

winning. It was about her. About sixty years of Sundays.
About love stitched into every pawn and bishop and rook.

He pressed his lips together, then whispered into the empty
room, his voice quivering but certain.

“I shall revel in the symphony of my glorious victory.”

For just a moment, Just a heartbeat, he felt it. a hand slipping
into his own, soft and familiar, as if she had never left at all.
And that night, Dev breathed his last.



The Memories

—Y Namritha Chowdary
24ACAB64

Naina was unduly happy that day. She was over the clouds, packing her stuff in a yellow suitcase and dancing untroubled. The reason being her trip to her grandma's place. Naina was nine years old. She was a bright kid who loved her family and enjoyed being nonchalant and tolerant. But the thing she loved the most was her grandma's house, probably because of her grandma. She was awfully fond of her grandma and loved her to the sky.

Every summer vacation she visited her grandma and had lots of fun. She was sure that this time was going to be fun too, but everything was strange. Because she visited only during summers, and it was the month of January now. And moreover, she was missing her school and going, which was even more weird but fun for her. Also, her parents were quiet. They didn't nag her to pack her things or scold her for being too wild. Rather, they calmly reminded her of her work and gently hugged her. Everything was weird, but she found it astonishing.

Soon they boarded the train. Naina, being a carefree girl, loved traveling by train. She loved the window seat through which she could see the world outside changing each hour. She loved the cozy seats and the ridiculously delicious food of the train. Her mom often quoted the food as unhygienic, but regardless, she loved that "unhygienic food." As time went

by, she glanced through the window, amazed at the views and sights of the world outside. She always recognized the station that came before her grandma's village. As soon as that station came by, she would signal her dad, and he would pack their things and start pulling out the suitcases to get down to the next station. As a part of her travel ritual, she did that this time too. And her dad, with an unexplained gloominess, followed his ritual as well.

She was very excited. She knew that her grandma always came to the station to pick her up. She made up her mind that as soon as the train stopped, she would get down and run towards her grandma, giving her a tight hug. She even planned to give her a kiss on the cheek to show how much she missed her. But Naina was disappointed when she arrived. She saw her uncle but not her grandma at the station. Her dad could see the disappointment on her face but didn't explain anything to her. Her uncle helped carry the luggage, and they all went to grandma's house.

It was all very strange to her. The street down to her grandma's house, which was once bright, warm, inviting, was now cold. There was no one wandering in the streets. The shopkeepers who wished her well, the neighbours who greeted her, the old uncle who hugged her and the joyful kids were all missing. She sensed something that felt heavy and dark to her. No sooner did she reach her grandma's house than she saw something traumatic. Her grandma was not welcoming. She was cold, dark, and freezing. She lay cold in her coffin. She did not smile, hug, kiss, or cuddle with Naina. Naina saw everyone shedding tears- all her cousins, uncles, aunts, her mom, and even her dad, whom she never saw with tears in his eyes. She became speechless. She couldn't understand what was happening. All she

thought was why her grandma didn't smile at her or hug her. She wondered why her grandma was sleeping. She didn't shed a single drop of tear even though everyone was filled with tears. She kept staring at her cold grandma's face, confused and frustrated.

Ten years passed. Naina was now grown up. Growing up, she heard her relatives say that she looked just like her grandma and was as kind as her. Naina had no memory of her grandma, but whenever she looked at her grandma's picture, hung up in their drawing room with a garland, a pleasant unknown feeling came to her. Not only that, but whenever Naina was sad, she looked at that same picture and cried. She kept asking her parents, pressuring her brain and trying every possible means to get back those lost memories. But she simply couldn't recall anything.

Nevertheless, she never stopped sharing her happy and sad moments with that dry picture on the wall. Maybe the memories went away, but the love and affection that Naina had towards her grandma was still residing in her heart. Not only residing, but it kept growing with each happy and sad moment within her. She doesn't chase those memories now but unknowingly adores the love for her grandma.



The Night I Spoke to My Past

—Syed Nouman
24BPMG47

The past crept upon me
on a dark night,
while the moon was so bright
its reflection embraced my eyes.

My nightmares were the shadows I concealed;
my heart would not admit them,
and my mind could not silence them.

While the moon completed its phases,
my shadows grew darker and darker.
My eyes would not rest, afraid of the dark,
and my heart wished to silence the echoes of the past.

The heart felt the fear of the eyes,
for it did not know the answer.
The restless mind had surrendered to the shadows;
their shade had intruded the heart.

Fear walked through every inch of me.
My thoughts burned in the flame of fear;
my heart drowned in regret,
and it prayed for light.

Then a ray of light unfolded in love.
My eyes screamed in glee,
for the light embraced the shadows
they shared the same bond.

The flame of fear was devoured by frost.
The shadows faded in the light.
The realm of gleam grew in my heart,
and the concealed shadows were now free—
free in the garden of light.



The Pause We Need

—Nandini Mishra
24BCNA37

Have you ever thought about how harsh you are with yourself and how easily you forgive others? How when someone else does some mistake you let it go thinking “oh everyone has their reasons “and when it comes to you suddenly the world is ending.

I speak to myself in ways I would never speak to a child, I would like to call it discipline and honesty but deep down even I know I would call it cruelty. For once in your life be honest and say: would you let your daughter go to college without breakfast? would you let your daughter be afraid of you and not ask for help? would you want your daughter to have a messed-up sleep schedule? would you let your daughter not eat properly and skipping meals and not taking care of herself?? NO right!! Then why when it comes to you, you let it slide? Aren't you your mother's daughter as well?

Forget your daughter, let's not even go there Imagine little you!!

Imagine you are meeting little you for a cup of coffee and she walks through the door with so much energy and eyes full of sparks and dreams which you yes YOU drained out of them. Imagine her looking at your hopeless eyes with the faded spark. can you even imagine what she must be feeling?

Honestly, little me would be disgusted for what I have

become. But that doesn't mean we cannot go back to being that person. we can get the spark back because we were literally that person.

Heal yourself. The way you were raised was not your fault. The passed-on trauma was something you couldn't deny but now that you are grown up its your responsibility to heal yourself. Reparent yourself so your daughter doesn't have to go through what you went through. Be the person little you always wished for.

One of the most effective ways to break the cycle is to put up a childhood picture of yourself on the mirror or as your wallpaper so next time whenever you are being harsh to yourself and letting others treat you badly think would you let little you go through it?? Every time you show yourself kindness, your inner child feels a little safer. Healing is not becoming someone new but becoming safer for who I already am. I am not yet gentle but before saying or doing something, I imagine a small hand in mine and I pause, and this pause is everything.

Forgive yourself for whatever you let yourself go through and this forgiveness don't have to be conditional. Protect your softness and defend your sensitivity. Create an inner home, a safe space.



The Sound Of Raindrops

—B. Nikhilesh

24BBNB16

The sound of the rain drops, the thunder claps and the coldness of the breeze makes tomozaki not wanting to go to school but rather went to Kagoshima Park where he finds a young lady sitting by herself sipping beer and chocolates (A weird combo right) and on their first meeting there was a blanket of silence and when the rain had stopped, tomozaki started to wrap his stationaries that's when the lady pointing out in the still blurry and upset cloud says

“A faint of thunder
Clouded skies
Perhaps rains come,
If so, will you stay here with me”

The next few visits were filled with blanket of conversations and both did leave in their own worlds but still could understand each other and did pray for rain to show its appear and on sunny days it felt like something was off, and one fine day the lady gets surprised to see that tomozaki was interested in making shoes and yet he was not sure for whom he was making it even though he did know that it was a women's shoes and not lately does the young lady lays her feet on the bench making tomozaki take measures and on the same evening the young lady in her house of scattered clothes and beer cans with a talk with her ex-husband whipping about her loss of taste and that lately she could

only taste beer and chocolates makes her quit it for good. And that Mr Inoue comforted her even after they both split away, makes the young lady burst into tears that she couldn't walk and that she is living with a life with full of lies. And looking at the sun setting wishes for the rain to arrive.

To her fate, the rain isn't there but rather the summer vacations are on and tomozaki to support his further studies goes on to doing part time job his whole summer break but in all the time he sees the sky reminds him of the Kagoshima Park and particularly the young lady.

After the summer holidays, tomozaki visits his friends and in his surprise crosses path with the same young lady who turns out to be his teacher "miss Kitsune ", and all the students gather around her since she showed up out of the blue and upon Mr Inoue announcing that it's her last day before quitting makes everyone burst into tears but particularly makes tomozaki feel a hollow in his heart. And upon investigating about the situation turns out that miss kitsune had a bad time with the 3rd years since a boy from there feel for her and had caused a terrible time for her to the fact that she was scared and traumatized, and on the sound of the last bell and tomozaki glancing at miss kitsune from the window watches all the students rushing to her knowing that this is their last chance seeing her.

The next day, both decide to meet at the park knowing that even though they were pretty close but though felt distant, and tomozaki looking at the blur and an angry cloud says,

"A faint clap of thunder,
Even if rain comes or not, I will stay here
Together with you....."

And the angry cloud lets out his anger and both of them rush back to the place where they usually sit and enjoys the

strong breeze and the heavy rain as if the cloud was on its peak today, and later with a sneeze decide to go to kitsune's house and the chopping of meat and chunky onions and the aroma of the stock makes the room an igloo and the steam of the iron box makes it lively and both in their mind feel that this is the happiest moment of their life and on a sudden moment tomozaki gets a flashback of his memories wherein on his mom's birthday the dad, brother and tomozaki present a pair of shiny violet heels and unfortunately tomozaki is safe and clear leaving behind flowers on the pictures of his parents and brother..... in the present out of the fear of missing the opportunities confesses his feeling to miss kitsune and upon hearing this, a strange wind of silence appears and kitsune san breaks the silence by thanking tomozaki for everything and upon hearing tomozaki takes a leave even though it's still raining and kitsune rushes to meet tomozaki forgetting how to walk and walking like a child finally meets tomozaki in the stairs both watching the rain, tomozaki tells her that he hates her and she is the person who he wishes to be like and that " you are a person who doesn't say anything about Yourself and skips work sipping beer and chocolates and do not ask for work even though you are alone", kitsune gets drenched in tears and hugs tomozaki saying that , " I am alone and couldn't walk on myself and everything I put my suit to go for school I felt scared not knowing what I will face....".

Later miss kitsune goes back to her downtown where she is a teacher and tomozaki got into a designing university but when both of them look at the sky reminds them of the good rainy days. One fine day tomozaki goes to the park reading a letter from miss kitsune and places a pair of beautiful elegant shiny heels and leave from there and both continue their own path.....



To Be Born

—Istuti Sharma
25BCYA31

They say I was born into light—
A moon after many suns,
A silver echo in a room
Already warmed
By years of fire.

They call it freedom—
These spaces were footsteps
Are already mapped,
Where doors swing open
Just before I arrive.
They forget
That a well-worn path
Leaves no room
For new footprints.

They call me “unburdened,”
But hand me storms
And expect me to hold the sky
Without trembling.
After all—
They’ve seen others hold it longer,
Straighter, stronger.

They think I speak second-hand winds,
Words borrowed
From older weathers—
As if thought has an age,
And mine has yet
To be born.

They think space is mercy,
But they've never stood
In a quiet so wide
It swallowed its own echo.

They call me "soft"—
So, I never tell them
That softness is a blade.
They don't hear,
Until it cuts.

Let them talk of freedom.
Let them think the night is kind
Just because the stars
Don't scream.
I carry weight,
In ways that don't make noise.

And still,
I stay.



To Humour Self

—Abhirbhav Katwal

24FRSBO4

Every bloom needs time
Why think much and wither yourself
When the time comes, you'll hear a chime.
You'll start appreciating yourself.

But before let in the water to grow
Do not curse yourself and forget to glow
Not all roses are red
But all are fragrant, and they still grow!



To The One I Haven't Met Yet

—Namitha Achar S N

25FRSB33

It feels strange,
To find myself thinking of you
When I have never met you at all.
Not your face, not your voice—
Just the calm of knowing you exist somewhere
Brings a smile on my face.
I know you're somewhere out there
Living your life, piecing things together
unaware you've already become a part of my thoughts.
It's a *secret joy*—
And that flutters my heart,
And gently settles it down.
I don't know,
but it's the most tender, pure thing
I have ever known.
It gives me warmth,
A sense of calm motivation,
And soft kind of faith
That I've needed all along.
When I *finally meet you*,
I'll tell you how I thought of you
Long before I knew your name—
How your silent presence
Gave me hope and helped me keep sailing.

I don't know how I'll recognize you,
But I believe I will,
When the right time comes
For, the red thread of destiny always keeps us connected.
Until, *fate brings us together*,
I'll hold on to this precious feeling
And love you *secretly*.



Today's Dream

—Preksha
23BBAC41

Moments of memory –
Envious of other's glory
The protagonist of your own story
Shatter the glass mentality of your misery

Sounds of the rude world disappear
Starlight's and dewdrops wait here
Seasons past now years in run
I never knew everything I had could change

The heart that hurdles the memory of togetherness
Feeling nostalgic
Vanished in a nick of time
For a winner, yet again

Regrets being a waste of time
You've always feared the hurdles
Seasons past now years in run
I never knew everything I had could change



Too Much Heart

—Chehak Kataria
25MGBA11

I have a big heart, and sometimes
I hate it; I overthink, apologize
too much, forgive too easily, worry
too much about people who don't
care about me. I feel guilty for
things I have no control over, and
I feel lonely because I'm afraid
I won't find anyone who loves me
as deeply and whole-heartedly as I do.
love...



Trigger Warning: Domestic Violence, Rape

—Mercita Isebell Selvaraj
24MPLC32

Love under our roof has always been about anklets,
The sound of them as Ammi runs to open the door for Abbu
at 6:05,
And the ringing of them against the bed by 10:05.
Every other week, he brings home new anklets for her, some
golden and some silver. He says, “tumhare liye” and she slowly
stretches her palm forward and smiles.
Love under our roof has always been about silent smiles,
The way Ammi’s eyes go down, when someone asks why
she’s always covered up, and Abbu says “Meri amanat ko,
duniya ki nazron see bacha raha hoon” and smiles.
So, on the day I fell in love with a girl,
I bought an anklet for her and wrapped it with silent smiles.
“Zainab naam hai uska” I tell ammi.
“Dukhana mat usse” she replies.
I show her the anklet, but she doesn’t smile.
“Ye kyun?”
“Abbu bhi toh pyaar se apke liye taufe mein yahi laate hai” I
reply.

She then takes off the patterned golden anklet off her feet, and shows the blue- black tied rope mark patterns underneath.

“Abbu ke taufe” she says and silently smiles.



Truth, Dare, And The Girl In Blue

—Souradeep Dey

24BFBA57

Do you remember our first game??
It was a boring lecture,
and chemistry was its name.
You chose to sit behind,
With every desk very close confined.
In blue and black your jacket's grace,
While I was simple in that common place.
I asked you for the game,
And you said yes without knowing my name.

That day you were open like a diary,
And when you saw me, it became little scary.
That time I asked you a question,
And my mind was caught in your dimension.
You chose to tell the truth,
And your words were a honeyed booth.
Now it was my turn and I chose dare,
You dared me to dance as it was a fair.

Five minutes later it was your turn again,
And you chose to share your heart which was in pain,
A moment passed, my turn again.
And you asked me whom I like there???
And I took your name without any care.

Your cheeks were red, a rose in full bloom,
I watched you as a mouse,
lost in your beauty room.
For you it's just a casual game,
But for me it was the only reason to remember your name.



Venalicium

—Priyanka Kannoly
23STEC14

Clouded vision, shivers uncontrolled
fingers unsettling,
wave of heat around,
muffled breathing.

I see men,
Two of high houses,
sword like words,
a game of business.

I see men,
Racing thoughts,
loss, a shame unbearable,
price setting, a party.

I see men,
A ringing so deafening,
Bidding over, bigger pocketed wins,
The colosseum cheers and him I belong.

My tied hands rest,
I follow the guard, my walk askew
dignity sold, a new name I hold.
Cloudiness fades, mechanic breathing resumes.



War Will Prevail

—Niveditha Sreejith

24JPEA41

The gunshots echoed and the yells of terror rang in his ears. Face to face with innocent eyes, pleas that drown out the poison of revenge that was fed in his ears, “Do it for your country” he told himself, but he was not sure if he wanted to serve a country which had the blood of innocents on its fingertips. Does it till you don’t have too anymore? Do it so you can go back to her. Do it so you get to see the home you built with your sweat and tears once again. Does it till it’s over?

He fired the bullet; as it pierced through the heart of the enemy soldier, he wondered why he was the enemy. That trembling young man’s fearful eyes did not seem to hold animosity as much as it did helplessness. As the soldier’s screams came to an end, he imagined a life where all this never happened, and the brown eyed young man lived out his life as it was meant to be, without any external body declaring innocent lives sacrificial. His hands started to shiver and tears started rolling down his cheeks. He did not want to end the young man’s life. He did not want any of this. He craved a mundane life. He prayed every night for the simplicity of a life where one had the privilege to be bored. He did not want guilt and grief to follow through every footstep he takes, he did not want to see the sunrise and feel anything but joy. But in this life, he would not get any of the

things he wished for. Though that seemed unfair to him, fairness was not something that he believed existed. He stopped believing in it the day he watched the little girl, wailing out for someone to pick her up, blow up in flames among the raging nationalists. That was the day he stopped believing in God too.

He tried to run away but he knew it wasn't possible. He knew he was bound to be part of this bloodshed; he had no escape. When he enlisted himself for the war the first time, he knew it was a decision that would break apart the walls of his life. He knew he wasn't suited for this. But what could he do? He was only 17. He needed to feed his dying mother; he could not bear to look at the empty grain sacks for one more minute. So he signed up. He fought his first war. He saw horrors that ripped his sanity to shreds, he was sure he would never be the same again; nothing would ever be the same as it was. He knew he would never be able to stomach this life. But it proved to be much worse than he thought it would be. For five years, he had never felt peace for even a second. He hated himself for taking this up. He should have thought about it more, he should have considered how grave this was, how the extent of atrocities would be beyond earthly comprehension. How this would be never ending. He should have considered the fine print, restrained himself from making the decision that would be the reason he watches himself crumble, straying more and more away from the possibility of happiness, every passing second. He decided to return. But he thought about Ma. How for once in his life he was able to help her. The grain sacks were not empty anymore. She could eat. And that was worth every moment of torture he endured. And that was why he could stop himself from putting a bullet through his head.

His eyes watered every morning thinking of the state of the people across borders who were suffering the torment of war, caused by officials in tailored suits who called for war from their luxurious rooms, heading home at the end of the night, sleeping peacefully. They did not have to know how children slept in fear every night and how their parents never slept, watching over their babies, looking up at the sky and pleading for mercy. They did not know that when the soldiers bled out all they prayed for was the well-being of their family. They did not know that every day, his mother looked into their doorway, hoping her darling would come back to her. They never knew that. They did not need to. Getting even was more important to them. So he continued to wake up every morning to pick up the gun, and he would walk around. When he hesitates, his captain would make sure he went through with the killings. Compassion was something so alien now, the country where one is from was the determinant of peace. But he could see the hardships on both sides, innocent civilians paying the price of deep-rooted conflict. Murder, he thought. Murder is the tool for justice. A slap in the face of humanity, war would never lead to anything worthwhile. War would destroy anybody that comes in its way, empathy is nothing but a forgotten ghost, lingering in pathways, hoping that somebody would know that it was something that once existed, a trail that is now no more, war would prevail. Humans will perish and every hint of beauty in the world would be destroyed and war would prevail. Evil is disguised as strength and humanity is fading into obscurity but war will prevail. Love will be nothing but a myth, a nonexistent tale of weakness; and war will prevail. The world will burn down in the fire of humans' fury. War will prevail.



What I Held In 2025

—Sweety Jha
25MGBA40

I held hope quietly,
so, it wouldn't get scared and leave, I held a feeling
that never knew where to sit—
half hope,
half ache,
resting somewhere between almost and maybe.

I smiled through days
that asked too many questions,
laughed in rooms
where my heart stayed a little behind,
still tying its shoelaces,
still catching up.

I learned how to wait—
not for people,
not for promises,
but for myself
to feel ready
in a world that kept rushing me.

Some nights,
I felt too much.
Some mornings,
I felt nothing at all.

And in between,
I learned the art of carrying feelings
without letting them spill.

I held fear gently,
like it was fragile—
afraid that if I dropped it,
I'd have to admit
how brave I was being.

so it could grow
without the pressure
of being named too soon.

And I held myself—
on days when no one else could,
on nights when silence was loud,
on moments when giving up
felt easier than believing.

2025 didn't break me.
It taught me how to stay soft
without becoming weak,
how to ache
without becoming empty,
how to move forward
even while looking back.

What I held in 2025
was not pain,
not confusion,
not loneliness.

It was becoming.
And I never let it go.



What Remains

—Farha Nez

24ACAB21

“I do not know who I am anymore.” He quietly reveals in the darkness and safety of our bedroom. I touch the callus on his finger from years of writing manuscripts. We watch papers shuffling around the room from the wind coming in through the window we left open. “Sometimes,” He continues, “when I step out into the sun, I relish the warmness. But even a miniscule amount of happiness scares me. I can only think of the impending cold and doom waiting for me in the next room.” His sighs echo across our small room. I think back to the Sunday, 1989 of our lives. A stranger, who joined me on a bench in an empty railway station. His eyes were light and brimming with life. Whose existence and persona filled a room and who people attached themselves onto like moths attracted to light. He once was the light of our lives. “Then I come home to you and think of the time we established green as our color. But you don’t know that I only loved green because of you. It is because of your eyes. Your eyes are a dusky, quiet, warm green that not even God could recreate. It puts an end to my helplessness.” He falters. “But you should know that it is also my ruin. It stops me from doing what I truly need and crave. It lies to me and reminds me of only the beautiful moments we once lived and not the poor excuse of a human that I find myself to be now. It acts as a curtain to what truly remains.” I brace myself

for his next words. "So, please, help me put an end to it all. Find me my peace."

It is 2002 now, fifteen years since. I am back at our railway station, and the bench is cold now. The trains do not wait nor does the bench remember us anymore. But as one train departs, I catch my reflection in one of the dark windows for a mere second. Tinted green by a passing signal light and suddenly gone.



When Silence Watches

—Sweety Jha
25MGBA40

Sometimes, when silence stands as a witness,
Even mirrors learn to look away.
The face the world once failed to notice—
Today, within it, I discovered myself.

Every scar carries its own story,
Every smile hides a quiet truth.
And yet, this face, these eyes,
Still choose to speak—
Softly,
With the world.



Whispers Of An Unfinished Story

—Kritee Maurya

25PSYC28

Meet the storm that learned to whisper,
Meet the calm that trembles with hidden thunder,
Meet the girl whose silence has its own heartbeat,
the girl who speaks in soft smiles
and sketches whole stories in the air
when words feel too heavy to lift.

She's an introvert, yes,
but her silence is a warm place,
a door she opens only for the hearts
that feel safe in the dark with her.

Once, she dreamed boldly
so sure, she could leave home,
stand on her own,
build a life that tasted like freedom.
She carried confidence like sunlight,
believing independence meant she'd finally be whole.

But now...
that life feels hollow in places she never expected,
echoes where she thought joy would live,
weight where hope used to sit lightly.
And even though she's surrounded by laughter,

by crowds of friends who call her "one of us,"
the emptiness still lingers
soft, silent, settling inside her
like a room no one else can enter.

Still, she doesn't give up.
She wakes, she tries,
she holds herself together
even on days she feels like she's quietly
breaking a little at the edges.

She's hurting
not dramatically, not loudly
just bit by bit,
in ways she doesn't know how to speak aloud.

Because how do you tell someone you're drowning when
you once fought so hard
to prove you could swim?
How do you say "something's wrong"?
when you're afraid they'll think differently of you,
afraid they'll misunderstand,
afraid they'll say you're ungrateful
for the very life you fought to have?

So, she stays silent
listening more than she speaks,
loving harder than she should,
giving pieces of herself
she desperately needs to keep.

Yet even in her lowest moments,
she shows up with that same gentle smile

just to make sure you're okay.
Because that's who she is
kind-hearted,
too selfless,
a quiet storm with a loyal soul
and a heart that refuses to stop loving.
Cause that's who she is, that's how her parents raised her,
Even though they themselves at times misunderstood
her....

She is a dreamer with paint-stained fingers,
a girl stitched together with courage and softness.
broken in places, yes,
but never defeated.

Get to know her, truly know her,
and you'll understand.
some hurricanes don't destroy
they carve new paths.
And you will never forget
the girl who carries galaxies
even while trying to remember
how to carry herself.



Yellove

—Madhumita M
25AIMA32

Yellow isn't just a colour, it's such a beautiful feeling.

It's the kind of warmth that stays when the world turns cold.
The kind that understands you without asking for
explanations. Yellow is presence. Quiet, steady, and true.

For me, yellow was someone who stood beside me through
childhood and through my hardest days. Someone who didn't
question my silence or my pain, but simply stayed. In that
staying, I found comfort. I found safety.

And then there's another kind of yellove small, innocent,
and pure. A child who loves without reason. Every "I love
you" from her feels like a reminder of what really matters.
Because sometimes, love that simple is all a person needs.
The kind of yellove you never knew you need it. So let this
be a reminder to give your yellove's the tightest hugs.

Yellove is not loud.

It doesn't try to prove itself.

It just feels like home.

So, tell me,

who's your yellove?



Yore Physis

—Nia Joshy
24BBAE40

The blotter walks into a store,
Didn't carry much of a list with him.
Eaton's Corrasable Bond and a Waterman
A rather stupendous choice taken
With no intention. None except ...
That all is vain.
The ink stains and bleeds on the paper
Blurring his coordinated scribbles
Like waves washing over, leaving behind just remnants.
Would you jump from the edge?
Or wait out for the predators by the hedge?
It doesn't matter anyway.
The paper-stainer gets struck by a thought.
Why mustn't he twirl in the streets or
Wear a funny hat?
He must for he mustn't.
Yore sheer beauty is what drives me,
Yore curves and yore roots.
You make me twirl, you make me smile,
Oh how I love you divine.
I don't need apothecary's potions,
Oh how well yore beauty heals.
Why must I gaze into the crystal,
When I could gaze upon you and yore creation.

I carry you with me
Like a vow
And I swear to make yore morrows glorious and nurse
yore roots
For love is a promise
And I promise to worship you and yore creations till my
eventual end.
All is not vain when love exists
All matters when love is here and now
Being captured by yore eternal grace
When the wave washes over me,
I hope it spares my love for thee,
To live beyond the dial,
For yore essence stirs my soul.
Yield, I shall to yore grace
For you have shown the Waterman how to sway
A whole garden to water and fill
Yore glory is what my papers are stained with
For you are what I bleed for.
Why mustn't I twirl in the streets or
Wear a funny hat?
I must.



KRISTU JAYANTI

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

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The Writers' Association at Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be) University, Bengaluru, India is an esteemed platform dedicated to the cultivation of creative and critical literary expressions, positioned at the intersection of intellectual inquiry and artistic innovation. In commemoration of the institution's Silver Jubilee, the association provides an academic and creative refuge for students across disciplines, inviting them to engage deeply with the complexities of language and narrative form. This initiative fosters a rigorous yet inclusive environment where students can refine their writing skills, challenge the boundaries of their creativity, and contribute to an evolving discourse on the role of literature in shaping the human experience.

With a focus on scholarly development, the association offers a diverse range of workshops, mentorship opportunities, and peer critiques designed to hone the intellectual and artistic faculties of its members. These activities not only encourage technical proficiency in various genres—poetry, fiction, and critical writing—but also foster a deeper appreciation for the ethical and empathetic dimensions of storytelling.

Members are provided a distinguished platform to present and publish their work through a monthly newsletter and blog, facilitating engagement with a wider community of writers and scholars. Through these channels, the association serves as a nexus for intellectual exchange, where the written word becomes a tool for exploring, reflecting on, and articulating complex ideas and universal human values.

A cornerstone of the association's commitment to literary excellence is its annual book publication, *KJ Wordsmiths*. This prestigious collection stands as a testament to the creativity and scholarly prowess of the university's student body. Each year, *KJ Wordsmiths* brings together a diverse array of works—ranging from poetry and short stories to critical essays—that exemplify the intellectual rigor and artistic depth of the association's members. Through this publication, students not only gain the invaluable experience of contributing to a collective literary effort, but also have the opportunity to showcase their work to a broader audience, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose.

Ultimately, the Writers' Association at Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be) University, Bengaluru aspires to nurture a generation of writers who approach language not only as a medium of self-expression but also as a powerful vehicle for fostering understanding, cultivating empathy, and promoting social and ethical responsibility in a global context.



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