

BlueQuill, the Creative Writing Club of Miranda House

IN BLOOM

A MIXTAPE FOR YOUTH



BLUEQUILL ANTHOLOGY | ISSUE 2



Published 2023 by BlueQuill
Miranda House, University of Delhi
GC Narang Road, University Enclave
New Delhi, Delhi 110007
India

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Cover by Shubha Bhatt
Ideated by Mehak Bakhshi

Foreword

BlueQuill, the Creative Writing Club of Miranda House, has been with us since its inception in 2017, and gone on to carve a little blue spot in all our hearts. This Founder's Day when Miranda House celebrates its 75th Anniversary, we rejoice in the legacy our alma mater has built through the eras. We are proud to carry forward this inheritance of inclusivity, brilliance and compassion cultivated in this sanctuary for the arts and the sciences.

Our anthology's theme for this year is an ode to 'youth', aiming to look at this period in our lives through various angles, exploring what all makes up our youth, how we choose to remember it, how it really was, and what we eventually decide to keep with us as we grow older. Like a mixtape, the anthology too is made with love, patience, and painstaking details with several artists coming together. It is unpolished, vulnerable and hopeful with all its cracks, and seams much like youth itself.

With this, we give you 'In Bloom: A Mixtape for Youth'; from our blues to yours.

Love and Warmth,
Team BlueQuill

"Team BlueQuill approached me just when we were resuming our offline classes in February 2022. Those initial days of 'near normalcy' were no less uncertain, all of us were cautious and yet to come to terms with the shock of the pandemic. One was hesitant to accept anything that lacked strong foundation or meant constant struggle. Since BlueQuill is an independent club, I knew that the road ahead was not going to be smooth.

At the same time, I was confident that the zeal and commitment of the club members would act as an antidote to all kinds of obstacles – be it running the club with zero funds, be it organizing events without any collaboration or support!

Writing does not come naturally to everyone, and to keep a Creative Writing Club relevant in contemporary times requires a kind of grit and determination which have been the mainstay of all Mirandians for the last 75 years. True to the spirit of the red-bricked building, Team BlueQuill remained steadfast in their endeavor to make creative writing popular. Of course, there were moments of absolute gloom but that did not deter the team from dreaming.

'In Bloom: A Mixtape for Youth' is only a reflection of what BlueQuill values the most – the liberty to fearlessly express oneself without allowing anything to come between the writer and her imagination. This issue of BlueQuill's anthology truly reflects the hopes and aspirations of all those who wish to heal a despondent and ailing world.

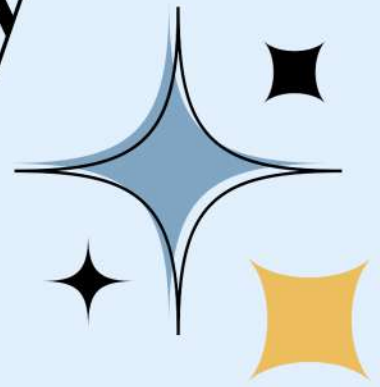
Signing off with the hope that as readers you will join in the celebration of youth and courage!"

- Dr. Devjani Ray
Club Supervisor, BlueQuill

Curated By

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Track 1

Bygone Treasures

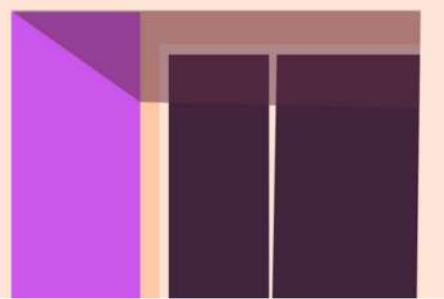
SUMMER OF '09



we sit in the balcony
as the bamboo curtains rolled down and
sprayed with water,
turn the heat wave
to a cool breeze.
i watch keenly as you
slice mangoes into
unbelievably thin slices while teaching me
the table of 21
in the process.

i ask how the slicing
works and you promise me
that you'd teach me someday.
but you tell me that a
a knife is but a sword.
that one must know of
responsibility before
being granted power,
that it's lethal otherwise.

two summers later,
you keep your promise
and smile playfully each time
i mess up the slicing.
you gently remind me
that good things take time but that shouldn't ever
mean i give up on them. you tell me that trying
makes all the difference.
caring makes the
difference.



between slicing mangoes and
repeating math tables, you
teach me about life in ways
only you could. you read me
Dinkar and Faiz, the verses in
Urdu rolling off your tongue
effortlessly. you tell me stories
from the refineries you
worked in. i don't understand
most of it but i still listen intently,
simply because i love
how your voice
softens at the end of sentences
whenever you talk to me,
almost like you're letting
me in on a really big secret,
like you trust me enough to
know that i shall keep it.

summers pass and
i learn to slice mangoes
exactly like you would.
over the years, we shift
to another house and
don't get to spend evenings
in the balcony anymore.

i slowly forget the
math table of 21 but
i remember the verses
of Dinkar and Faiz.
Alzheimer's makes you
forget your own name,
but you love me enough
to still remember mine.

summer comes back.
mangoes do too.
but you—
you don't.



By: Shreya Krishnan
Member, BlueQuill



Road by Lane 8, Artic Lake
By: Nandini
General Secretary, BlueQuill

Snow Globe

Grandmother fermented memories in a
pickle jar
Reality sedimenting at the bottom of an oil
lake
How it was
Immaterial to remember

Grandpa's dentures lie dipped
In orange soda
Aging alongside enthusiastic delusions.
Waning ears force him out of
conversations
He smiles when the others laugh

Share in common little but time
Converse in silence and grunts,
Except when they play cards, or argue,
Or reminisce a present no longer the
present
Fights short, already fought
Almost choreographed with practice

Monochrome came naturally to
their room
As if even with their smart phones
and TVs,
Their mundanity was eons old
Grandpa and grandma,
In their fossilized memories
Saved youth in a snow globe

It wasn't reality, and that was
reality
But on a Sunday evening
When they have an audience other
than each other
They tell stories with distant eyes
Shaking a glass globe the size of a
wrinkled palm
And it snows a magnificent white.

By: Heer Nimavat
Member, BlueQuill

From Moments to Memories

Youth casketed betwixt the hands of time
With an air of antiquity and speck of dust.
The young lady laden with languid moments
After days and weeks of blithe spirits and
blurred fantasies
Weaving the yarn of jocund fancies.
Oblivious to the jargon of obligations,
Younger self lies in a state of obliteration.



Treasure troves cherish the opulent
days of yore,
That which need lens of
remembrance,
Only to meet the inevitability of loss.
Embellished with sparkles of joy and
chiming chortles,
The unripened epoch savoured the
best!



By: Shree Vardhani
Member, BlueQuill

A Lost Child's Hymn

I always thought memories were like
that broken record
my grandfather kept in the drawers of
his nightstand,
in a hope that it would play his
favorite song
and he would dance with his love
again.

When I was five, he told me about life
and death
in the semantics of Keats and Ghalib.

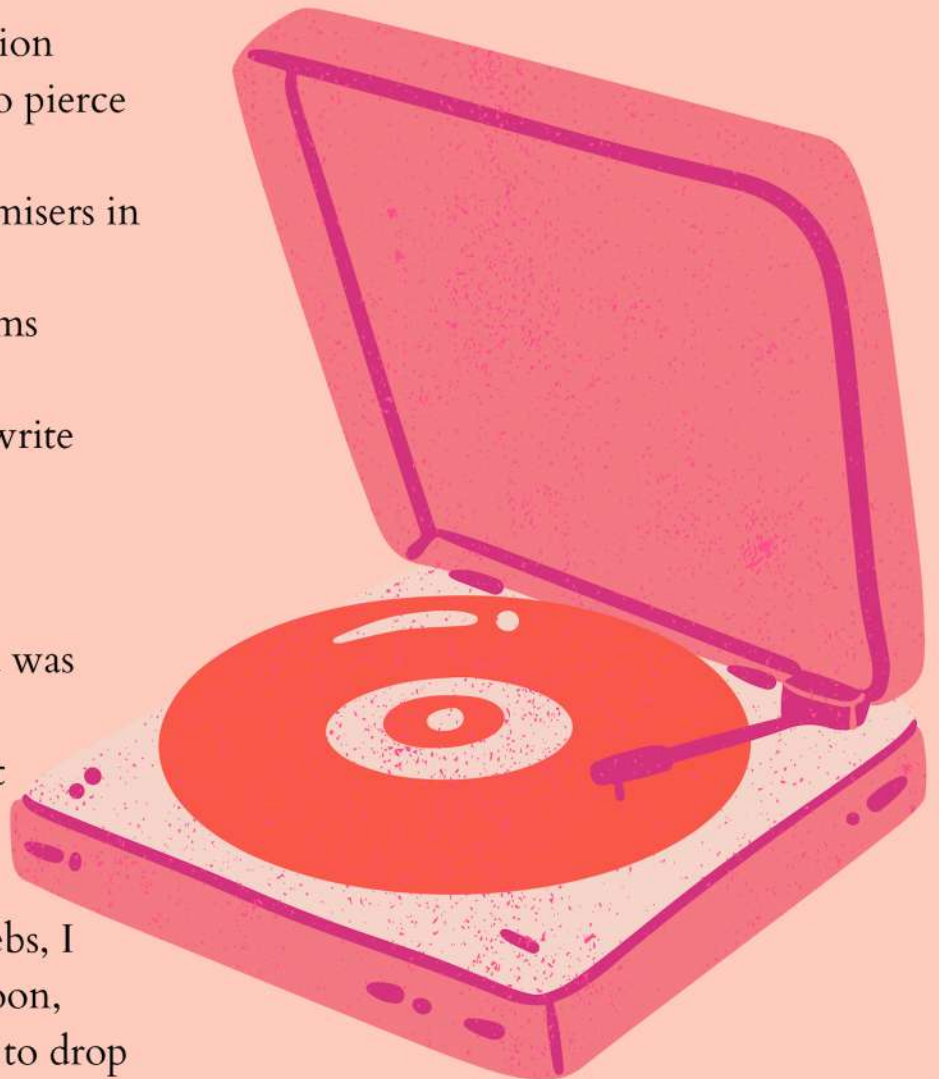
Those verses may have gone over my
head
or remained lost in the translation
but their passion never failed to pierce
my heart.

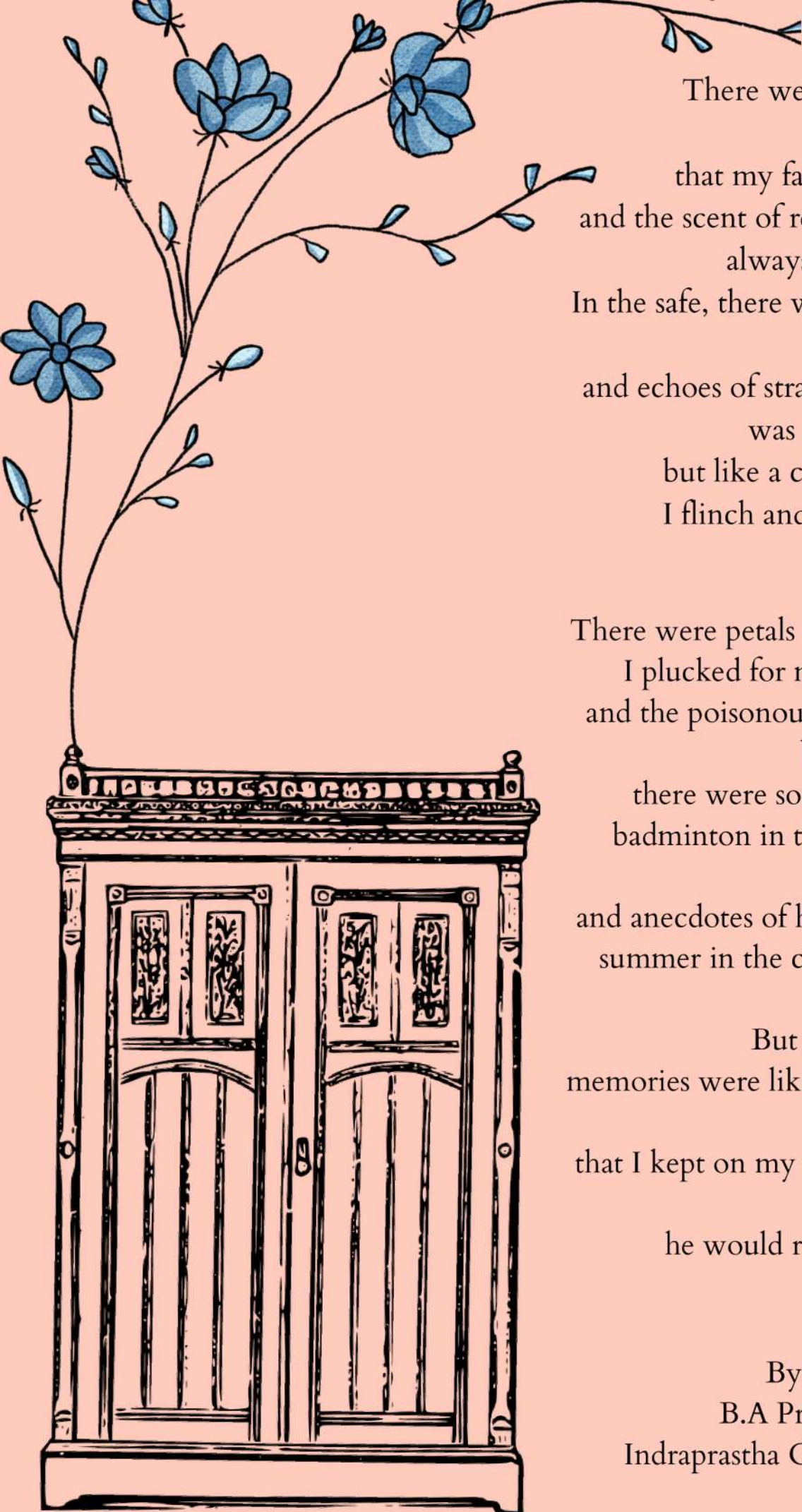
He was a poet and like all the misers in
the world, I was too.

But if he were to read my poems
today,
he would scoff and ask me to write
better.

So for him,
I would say that my childhood was
that closet in the store room,
where I shouldn't have gone at
midnight,
but couldn't help myself.

In the corners, with the cobwebs, I
could find the silvers of the moon,
that once followed me around to drop
me home safely
and the broken pieces of crayons, that
helped me in painting the walls of my
house.





There were cracked shells of
pistachios,
that my father peeled for me,
and the scent of red chili pickles that
always made him sneeze.
In the safe, there were the burdens of
my mother,
and echoes of strange places where I
was asked to stay quiet,
but like a child burnt in a fire,
I flinch and don't talk about it
anymore.

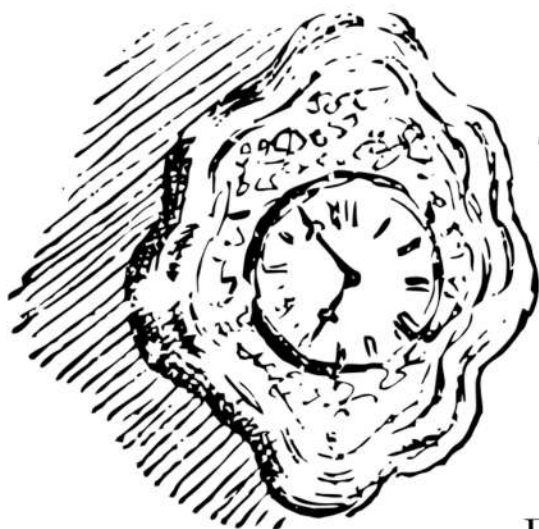
There were petals of that blue flower,
I plucked for my English teacher,
and the poisonous mushrooms that I
brought for myself,
there were sounds of me playing
badminton in the winter morning
light
and anecdotes of how I tried to catch
summer in the crevices of my nails.

But more often, for me
memories were like that tattered copy
of Keats' poetry,
that I kept on my nightstand, hoping
that one day,
he would recite it to me again

By: Shriyanshi Yadav,
B.A Program, IIIrd Year,
Indraprastha College for Women



Do you remember?



Do you remember?
The sliver of dirt under your shoes
The deep cut wound on the face of your knee
Wondering what pictures you drew
Or which Street you'll run to seek.

Do you remember?
The first time you kissed
Or how her hair smelled like
Tracing out the whole world on each other's wrists
And the first time you slept without a goodnight kiss.

Do you remember?
The picture frame... it was once a living thing
Now it's only as real as my heart
My invisible heart-
It aches for something stolen
Stolen by time.

By: Ishaan Grover,
II nd Year, MSIT





Familiar Terrain
By: Shreya Krishnan
Member, BlueQuill

Burnt Meadows

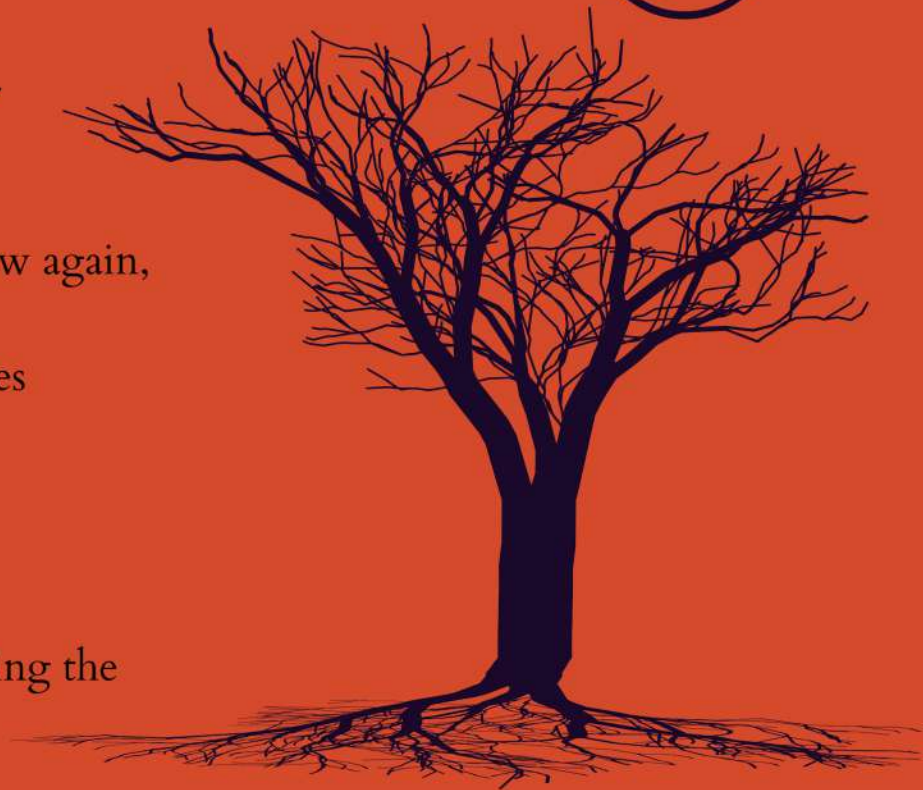
The giants wrapping their greatness-
sweeping the sky of blue,
coloured grey-
More of a curse than a prophecy.

Through the lens of childish wonder
The dandelions illuminated under the
radiant sun
glittering dew-lined petals,
An ode to the forgotten stars-
Destined dreamy novelty.

Hesitantly visiting the meadow again,
Flickering gold rays.
Carcasses of summer memories
Their hollowed-out hearts
All screaming-
“Did it catch up to you yet?”

Hints of melancholy embalming the
scene.
Pangs of resentment-
acceptance.
In turn, a mundane world
devoid of imagination,
seemingly lacking innocent bliss
The final passage- transcendence.

By: Simran Singh
Member, BlueQuill



A letter to a forgotten summer, and you.

My youth started out somewhere beyond the crumbling blue
walls of an old, dying home.

all that i can remember of it are hot days spent running among the
tall trees with you— hand in hand, our throats hoarse from
shouting, the smallest of leaves tangled in our hair. make-shift
homes built out of newspapers and old sheets, how we would
quiet down to watch snakes slither through the sand, long and
golden. the highs we would attempt to reach— sweaty hands
clinging onto swings, high walls, guava trees, how we never
thought of the fall that might follow, just as any other child, in the
face of happiness, in the absence of fear. (it is the highest i've ever
been, even now, the closest i could ever possibly go, to God, to
the sun and stars— with you, one step away). you showing me
night skies filled with stars as you named them after your best
friends (you had two), a grey Sunday morning spent running in
cold rain, how it could have only been two hours but i still
remember how it felt, like the day would never end, as if the rain
would never stop.

my youth could only ever be so, for naïve, oblivious ten year old
me: summer days that began and ended with my hellos and
goodbyes to you, and the thousand memories that we made in
between. a youth that i believed would never run out, that would
always be as bright and infinite, as the stars you named, as the
echoes of our laughter, reverberating through the streets we
cycled through on rainy Sundays, a youth so seemingly without
an end.

I don't really know where you are now, or who your best friends are. I have no way of knowing if you still like running through the rain, or if your hand would fit in mine, as perfectly as it used to. I feel like I've forgotten the sound of your laugh, and I don't know what new heights you have reached, or if you have someone holding onto your hand, to make you forget of the fall.

I know the youth I remember ended somewhere ultimately, but it began with you. in a deep warm corner of my being it exists and it lives, this forgotten forever summer of ours— a jumble of memories that I find myself holding onto, more often than not.

for in those years, in the memory of our youth, they remain forever.

we remain forever.

By: Adithi S R
Member, BlueQuill



Colours of summer

The colours of summer are childhood hues
With rainbow ice creams and brain freeze blues.
Honeycomb stars, paperplane skies,
Stickmen dancing on kitchen tiles.

Mango-stained shirts climbing trees,
Sweating bliss in tropical breeze.
Proud brown tans on midday runs
Gulping lemon sherbets and watermelons.

Dirt-struck elbows and bandaged knees
Which sprinkler showers render clean.
Porch stories inciting golden laughs
Sweetmeats shared in (un)equal halves.

Green coconuts and technicolour straws
With never-ending who-first wars.
Nights of sunken spaceship tales
And insufferably pretty alpha males.

The colours of summer are lassi whites
And sweeter shades of rasgulla bites.
Honeycomb stars, paperplane skies,
That disappeared without unsaid goodbyes.

By: Surabhi Chhikara,
Graphics Associate, BlueQuill

By : Niranjana Rau,
B.A. (Hons) Economics, 3rd Year,
Miranda House



THIS IS A SONG



REWIND ◀

PAUSE ||

PLAY ▶

This is a song
I wrote for you
It's from the time
when we were free
Sitting on a bench
perched up on trees
When 'falling' meant
scraping our knees
We'd laugh so hard
our lips would bleed

London Statue Stop!
And we'd freeze
Tank tops, blue shorts
and faded jeans
No Gucci belts
no branded tees
No clubs, no bars
rooftop parties
Be it noon
or minus degrees
Smacking butts with bats
wasn't unholy
Teasing stupid boys
no dignity



Twinning skirts
and twinning bees
So oblivious
to reality
Just dancing with
our chosen family.

By: Ashlesha, IInd Year
Indraprastha College for
Women



Images of Memories

I live in the past
I laughed back then
I loved in the past and
Now I smile for the past

A place which once was my home
No longer exists
Brought to ruins by the flow of time
Vanished from memory by the
ever-changing selves

It was a place full joy
Where everyone came to empty their sorrows
But what now exists is just a memory
That I am too weak to forget

Everything we went through was together
Every tear we shed was shared
A place where they accepted me
Where they loved me

But that abode was taken away
By the infidel souls that kept longing
For validation to quench their never-ending thirst
To fill the empty shelves left in their souls

It was a home built by many
To ease the unruly pain
There hope was omnipresent
And kindness was never in doubt

But all it took were a few disjointed logs
And it all came crashing down
So weak were the bonds
That even the foundation of
trust couldn't survive

It was my everything, it still is
Still I try to remold that broken adobe
My heart gave up a long time back
But my hands keep going on

Such is the power of past
Even the weakest find the will to rebuild
Maybe it would be better to give up
But how can I without a fight

How can I forget that place
So vital to me, precious to me
Whose memory is still so fresh
A place I will give everything for

The dreams of past can never be forgotten
These feelings will never fade
Even if I have to question Janus
I will not abandon my home

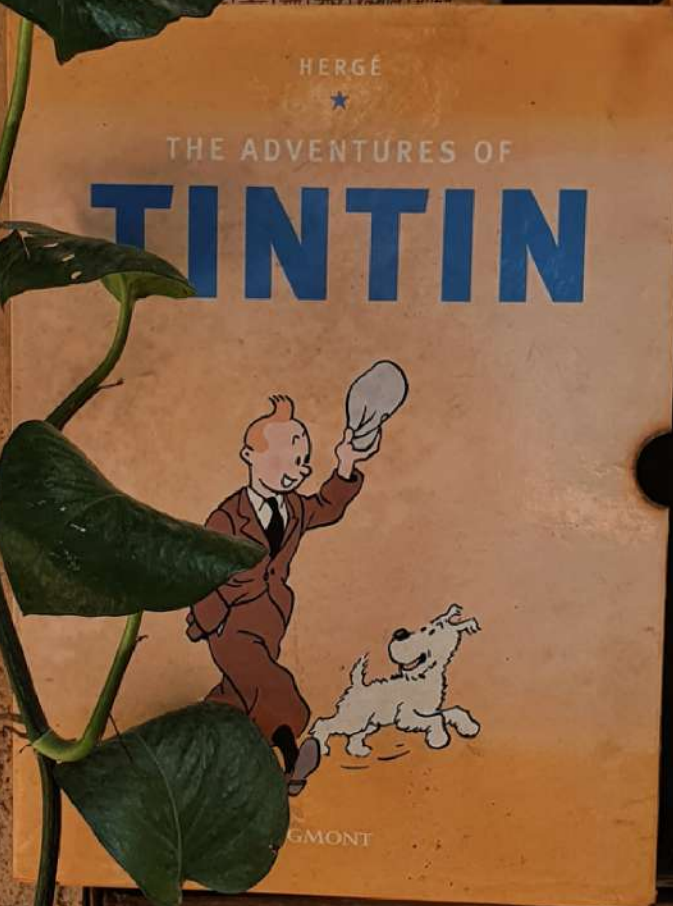
By: Thakur Parth,
B.Tech, Year III,
Manipal University Jaipur



Track 2

of senses in sepia

By: Ramsha Matin
President, BlueQuill



I BOUGHT A BALLOON TONIGHT

I bought a balloon tonight;
Talks that lasted for long nights,
Friends whom I gained back after a fight,
Photographs of memories and everything bright.
Ice creams and spoons, tickles to the moon;
Back in the rikshaw, through the shades of trees,
Behind the road lines, as we rode below the
streetlight.

The breeze that flipped our hair back,
The thoughts that slipped our mind racks.
Fantasizing bike rides with the people sitting beside
me,

Friendships I feel like forever seas.
As the shift of houses never felt,
As the smile on my face never left,
As we transitioned through midnight shift,
As our every step was towards the mist,
As we revise the day, the moment, the talk,
The happy day turns happier with every walk.

I bought a balloon tonight,
And behind me the faded lights,
And within me the smallest happiness last.
I bought a balloon tonight.

By: Aparna S Rajiv,
B. A (Hons) Sociology,
3rd Year, Miranda House

When did you grow up?

In India, there is no autumn.

At least in the India I have known all my years. But there is no dearth of literature and media about the season that marks the earth's transition into winter, when green leaves fade into soft umber, burgundy and red, only to cascade onto sidewalks and render the trees barren. Unfortunately for me, who has never experienced such an unearthly makeover, depictions in books and shots in movies are all I have. Because in India, there is no autumn. But that one day in February came very close.

It was the precise moment after January's wintry winds but before March's summer blues. The weather gave me leverage to strip from layers of wool until a jacket remained, heaters were stacked back into the attic and water from the taps wasn't ice cold anymore. The leaves on trees were a brilliant, warm yellow – halfway between green and red, a little lost, unsure. They mirrored how I felt.

Is seventeen too young an age to grieve the loss of childhood? You're months past the technically-still-a-child restraints of sixteen and tiptoeing the line of the much-awaited, much-glorified eighteen. But perhaps it is very humane of my generation to shoulder its burdens way in advance, climb up mountains that can as well be meandered around, just to receive societal praise and maintain the façade of an "ambitious youth who dreams big". Perhaps it is only the angst driven creator in me looking for a cathartic outlet, or the overthinker in me viewing the world through a sheer curtain of cynicism. Perhaps it is none of the above; perhaps it is a mere observation.

There are a few things that provide me with a useful account of the ways in which I have changed. Like my notebook of poems. Fourteen-year-old me was a rather odd creature. She wrote about trees that sacrificed their apples and shaded the very men who would later chop them down. She wrote about stars that stitched constellations in the sky and dewdrops that bathed the leaves every morning. About the warmth of winter and the immortality of friendship.

My works from before contain a frolicking naivety and a guileless wonder to them that I have to search hard for within me these days. When I could once write sonnets on the fiery passion with which the sun burns, why am I now blinded by its brightness? When I could once weave unbecoming metaphors about my curiosity bubbling like a springtime waterfall, why do I now lament my phases of burnout? When I could once rejoice in the knowledge that thorny bushes have roses, why am I now afraid of bleeding?

Looking back, years later, I doubt if I will ever be able to write like that again.

This awareness pummels me down in the cruellest of ways – that at some point, we all grow up. I look at my ten-year-old brother and notice how he repeats the dialogues from cartoons on TV. How he questions everything like he isn't fearful of the wrath of God. How he laughs in situations when he shouldn't. How he draws his people with rectangular faces and triangular bodies and paints his skies in red. How he sings and dances like he has no reputation to lose. How he smiles. The world has yet to dim his smile.

It makes me want to protect him from the responsibilities that will soon slump his enthusiastic shoulders, the volley of harsh truths that will inevitably rain down on him and cloud his colourful world in shadows of blue and grey. He will go through everything I did and maybe more, maybe less – and something about this knowledge makes me guilty. Like I am a spectator allowing crime to unfold while watching silently from the sidelines. There are times I want to step in and do the work, make things easy for him, but I know I shouldn't. Did my parents feel this way too, when they watched me grow? I'll never know, just as my brother never will.

I'm technically an adult already, but I make the most of whatever remains of my childhood as though any day now, I will become someone else. As though half the leeway allowed to me now will no longer be affordable when adulthood catches up. But do all good things really have to end? They say you can remain a child at heart forever, but can you really? Do the realities of the world ever let you?





Photo albums (both printed film and digital; we are children of many eras) help me wade through such despondency. They are filled with snippets of my life over the years – baby me wailing in my walker (is it really time to walk already?), a mirror shot after chopping my own bangs in 3rd grade (#InstantRegret), holding my baby brother for the first time (unsmiling, because what is this intruder doing on my home turf), posing awkwardly amidst a crowd of gowns and tuxedos on school prom night (hurry up mom this is so embarrassing) – and other things.

I'm not too fond of indulging in every sudden bout of nostalgia and looking at these pictures. More often than not I wonder why there is a need to revisit, recall, relive – who is it for? Are we our deeds, or the footprints we leave behind?

Although I try focusing on the present, on what I have built and become, there are some days. On some days it appears as if all my time on earth thus far has gone by like a blurred, inconsequential scene rushing past the window of a moving train. On some days, my photographs slow me down, return me to places in my childhood, give those places names and meaning. Maybe that is why I keep going back.

The question – when did I grow up? – is always there. Abyss-like, unanswerable, and utterly vexing. But I don't seem to be able to stop looking for the answer, be it in vestiges of the past, in children growing up around me, or in my own art. Perhaps this piece of writing is just another attempt at answering it.

Have I been successful? Maybe you can tell.

By: Arya Mallik,
B.A. (H) Applied Psychology,
2nd Year, Gargi College



Her fingertips



Her fingertips
The surfaces they touched,
Told stories of their own.
On a harsh winter morning, clutched,
Under the window sill,
A frozen droplet, stranded alone.

A slight wisp of their warmth,
Waking up the snow white,
The glass drops slid and went forth,
A thawed life flew to the light.



Drumming across, on a muggy summer noon,
On the parched land with a lone flower,
Blooming to its fullest, for the life could end soon,
A story flavoured with gallantry, an aftertaste of sour.

Feeling the wrinkled sheen of a passed morrow,
The hooded eyes, in a past memory, astray,
A walk from those dying legs to borrow,
To at least see the road home way.

Ah my grandmother, living this dotage,
A smile plastered; painful memories hidden in crisps,
She tells stories of the many surfaces,
She remembers still,
From her fingertips.

By: Reeya Joshi,
BA Programme Economics-Mathematics,
2nd Year, Jesus and Mary College



'Home'

By: Ramsha Martin
President, Blue Quill

RE-WOUNDING THE LOOSENEED THREADS OF NOSTALGIA

Experiencing the intertwining of past and present with the broken fragments recollected in faded nostalgia, the conscious mind feels the sudden weight of disquietude. Abruptly the reminiscence of what has already withered away is being thrown back without an admonition. Some bits remain in the conscious realm of the otherwise so-occupied human mind. While other bits are waiting— yet to be acknowledged. With this everlasting toil between present and past, and anticipating its repercussions in the future, where do we situate ourselves? Is really the child within us, who was always entrapped within the uncontrollable desire of wanting chocolate or a lollipop, lost forever? Has it been rotten, sitting beside our current self that is too occupied with the worldly aspects of the so-called life itself? Or has it been consciously or perhaps forcibly shovelled aside because it did not correspond to the World's needs?

At that moment, however, my mind felt the enduring pressure of the instant need to learn the tricks of the world, moulding my desires according to the wills of everyone around me, yet, my self didn't completely agree. I tried fighting with my own desires and choices, screaming in my mind, "why can't I be like others? Why can't my life be pre-planned like others?" This thinking, as I now realise, was far too superficially constructed and limited, focussing on the surface layer of appearances, rather than understanding what was far too deep within. I spent my entire youth comparing myself with others, with THEIR goals, with THEIR reality, while destroying MY OWN yet-being-constructed self in the process. In this course of comparison with the uncountable THEM, I somehow lost my 'I'. Yet, I found my respite elsewhere. In music. I felt playing a musical instrument was not just a distraction from the blaring noise of the world with their own self-centrally constructed reality, but also it made me realise that even a small note in music has a purpose in the overall development of a song and perhaps this view mirrored in my experiences thereon. My ears started feeling numb to the outside clamour.

They stayed silently pleased with the abrupt staccato noises that were sometimes too submerged in the inaudible echoes that would come to me just as mere whispers that I unconsciously overlooked. However, sometimes, I had to consciously shut my ears to the noises of the all-too-clear whispers that were commenting as if to be seen and unseen at the same time. At other moments, I wanted to speak out, but my voice turned muffled, overpowered by the screams of the pre-constructed societal voice that was acceptable and unquestionable. Reflecting upon it, I understand that even though my memories of youth are not as ideal as I would have wanted them to be, something to look back with fondness; they somehow performed the role of a catalyst to initiate the construction of my own version of reality, where nobody else but myself has to play the protagonist.

Although now I stand at the pedestal again, making some decisions that will either assemble or dismantle the mould of my future, I can be rest assured that no matter what the consequences, it will be MY decision. With this assurance, I look back at the memories and experiences of my youth with a wide smile and a tear in my eye.

By: Shefali Kohli
B.A English, SGTB Khalsa College, DU



GROWING UP

I went off far away from home,
Hoping to grow up a bit.
I've learnt a lot in the few months,
Did things for the first time,
All the while absolutely terrified;
But not much managed to make me cry.

That was until I went back.
Back home where my mom saved for me
The biggest prawns,
And dad once again let me have
His share of kebabs.
And she saw me scrape my knee,
At once rushing to check on me.
And when we crossed a narrow road,
He grabbed my hand on instinct.
She took custody of my bag ,
So that I could play around freely.
And he walked around multiple airports,
Looking for the chocolate I mentioned...
I did my best to hold back then.

But back alone again?
I cried. I cried like a baby.

I'll learn to hide my tears eventually forever,
But they don't need to know now.
That I'm still the same little girl,
Crying over silly little things.

By: Aratrika Mukherjee
Member, BlueQuill

FIND ME



in paper-cuts
and flowers that grow
under library-dusts

(find me)

in lonely apartments
and chai leftovers that
feel like a home you never had

(find me)

in torn calendars
blindly running a marathon
over the months I lost myself in

(find me)

in blue roses wrapped in vine
about to lose themselves
and turn into thorns

(find me)

in grandfather-radios
and the blank noises
they make when you play our
sangeet



(find me)

in forehead massages
and hallway marbles
that shine only at 2:56 am



(find me)

in thick brown walls
under layers of skin
hiding

(find me)

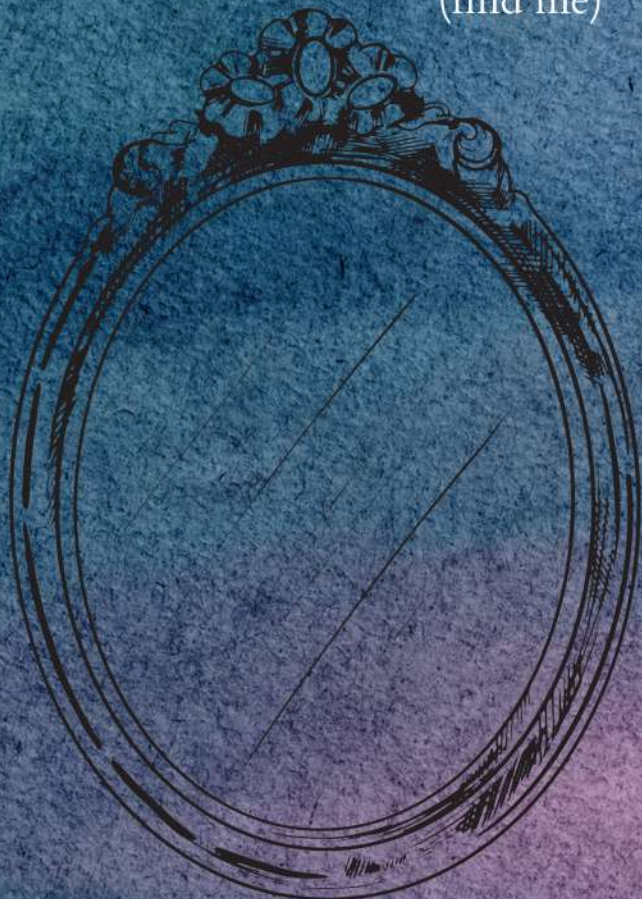
in steel closets
hanging like clothes
waiting for you to wear them

(find me)

in shadow-silhouettes
walking behind someone
i claimed to be

find me

in small mirror holes
escaping the "me"
you just found...



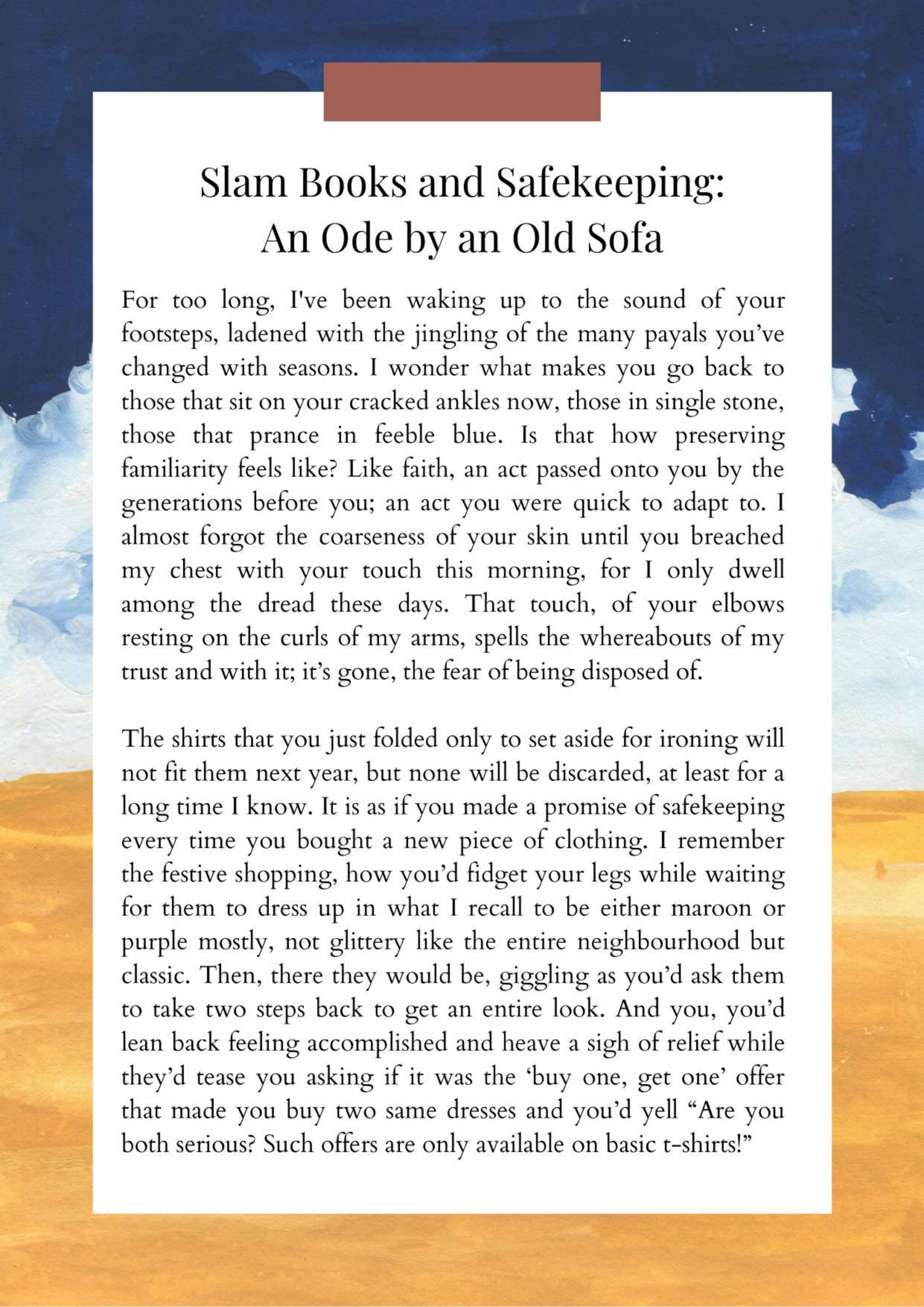
By: Abhisha Gulati
B.A (Hons) Psychology,
Indraprastha College for Women



Sweet nothings you enjoyed and bitter endings you didn't realise

By: Sumedha Gupta

B.A. Programme, 3rd Year, Miranda House



Slam Books and Safekeeping: An Ode by an Old Sofa

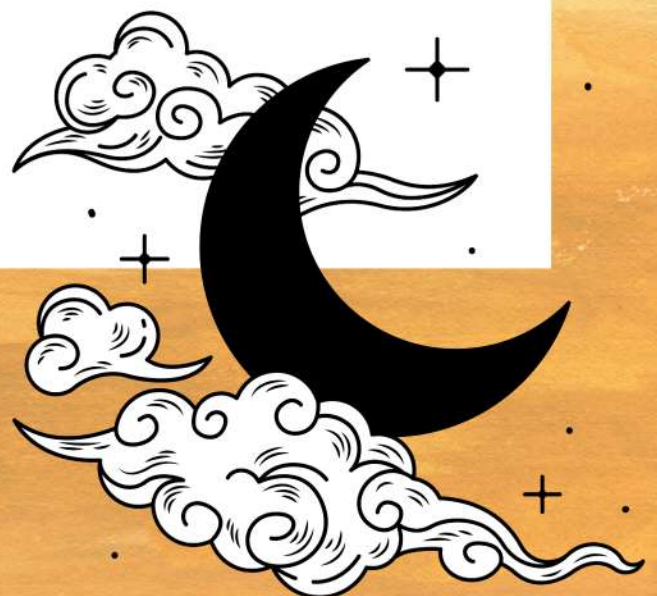
For too long, I've been waking up to the sound of your footsteps, ladened with the jingling of the many payals you've changed with seasons. I wonder what makes you go back to those that sit on your cracked ankles now, those in single stone, those that prance in feeble blue. Is that how preserving familiarity feels like? Like faith, an act passed onto you by the generations before you; an act you were quick to adapt to. I almost forgot the coarseness of your skin until you breached my chest with your touch this morning, for I only dwell among the dread these days. That touch, of your elbows resting on the curls of my arms, spells the whereabouts of my trust and with it; it's gone, the fear of being disposed of.

The shirts that you just folded only to set aside for ironing will not fit them next year, but none will be discarded, at least for a long time I know. It is as if you made a promise of safekeeping every time you bought a new piece of clothing. I remember the festive shopping, how you'd fidget your legs while waiting for them to dress up in what I recall to be either maroon or purple mostly, not glittery like the entire neighbourhood but classic. Then, there they would be, giggling as you'd ask them to take two steps back to get an entire look. And you, you'd lean back feeling accomplished and heave a sigh of relief while they'd tease you asking if it was the 'buy one, get one' offer that made you buy two same dresses and you'd yell "Are you both serious? Such offers are only available on basic t-shirts!"

Did they grow up when the giggles turned into hushed whispers or was it that year when they managed to complete the rangoli all by themselves, without your aid?

Once dressed in burgundy in a hall which shared the chortles echoing our evenings, yours and mine combined, I now lie naked in the company of cat fur most nights. You know, when around, they reciprocate the comfort we once exchanged when they used to read slam books in my laps. In those moments, I feel relieved of still being in action. The smell of your sweat, bundled up in sighs (though, of relief or not, I'm uncertain this time) is still the same, no change, not even in bits. It's not peculiar, not to me at least, for doesn't love and labour feel the same, and so does the sound of lies and tears?

By: Shubha Bhatt
Member, BlueQuill



Marigold laughter and summer blues



And this is how you feel after growing up,
your rushed coffee holds no sugar,
your scattered breakfast half sits and half jumps inside your stomach, and the
sun tastes a little like the burnt brown edge of the tiffin you forgot to carry.
I wonder if time was like the dial of my telephone, only so I can sink into the
voices I've no longer heard,
traversing through the spaces I still carry on my back.
Childhood tastes like the aloo puri my mother makes every Sunday morning,
and my father's marigold laughter when I could almost touch the summer
blues from his shoulders.

I gulp the clouds and float into a dream, as the colors of my first rainbow
tumble down my throat.

The chocolate cake from my birthdays is smeared on my nose and the top of
my cheeks,
my hair is still knotted from the first breeze of March as I lie in my mother's
lap.

The stories of the night croon like a lullaby, the stars felt like my
grandmother's hair brushing my palm, and all I saw was light.

Childhood nestled in the crook of my neck like a prayer for the endless
afternoons wrapped in my bed sheets, the faint smell of rajma carved hope
within my unabashed toothless grin,

I can hear the evening stirring the occasional game of badminton,
all of my youth sublime and mine.

And this is how you feel after growing up,
you still remember how your breakfasts felt every morning before school
with an episode of Mickey Mouse Clubhouse,
and how the roohafza your dadi made for you was your first form of love.
This is how you feel after growing up,
you're stuck with remembrance.

By: Sakhi Singh
Member, BlueQuill



How to make a cocktail



1. *Gather your ingredients. Think about what you're in the mood for.*

Lay out your entire life for people to see. Pick out anything you find shiny enough to sell. Make a glorious story out of small-town causality and give yourself an identity. *Swallow it like bitter medicine.* Circumstance is your enemy, and the self an unattainable desire.

2. *Build a foundation of flavour.*

Remember the walls you've grown up around. The road trips slowing to a stop, never ending. You've been playing hide and seek for so long; you make friends with the shadows. Remember falling, and embarrassing yourself and laughing until you cry. Your wrath and wrongs. In sepia lighting, all of it looks so grand. *You don't remember it being that sunny, but then, you were never convinced easily.*

3. *Add in your favourite spirits.*

All the things you vow to live and die for. Everything you thought defined you, everything you held close to yourself. Your choices haunt you, but they keep you moving. The dreams and expectations you keep hidden in that jewellery box under the bed. Let them fall in. (*Contention-* They never existed because you've lived only for yourself for as long as you remember. *You forget nothing*)

4. *Blend it together.*

You remember a letter you had received once, full of love. It had a childish hope to it, one that gives, expecting to receive. One that wants to do and be better. *You wish to choke it.* Everything in front of you is the same. Run from them- your favourites and hatreds. The experience aches in the way all liberation does; and feels how bitter berries taste - painful and lovely, all at once. *You don't need anything, and you want it all.*

5. *Cut yourself accidentally.*

Take a step away and look at the mess. Blame it on your youth. The scars start fading already, but the wound never closes (*You know from experience*). Do you throw it away, everything you've ached to get? Everything you've always felt like erasing? Indecision is a constant companion, and confused restlessness a lover. In the end, you give it up, convince yourself you never needed it. You are unsurprised, *and so very wrong.*

6. *Start again. Succeed this time.*

You've done it before, burned down forests to plant trees. Maybe the big budget movies were right- climaxes breed growth. Forgiveness is far but it exists somewhere under those veins. *Maybe a small plot popcorn flick is more than you deserve.* The cinematography, tinged with purple shadows, is where you betray yourself- with a still of hands, proof of both your sins and salvation. *It is all you have ever known.* You start to like the director this time around.

7. *Squeeze lemon and pinch salt.*

Into the eyes of the arrogance you could've been and the life you might've had. Pour the acid into thoughts and habits and languages and everything else you can't make sense of. This world wasn't meant for you- your unsteady hands and your cruel tongue. Throw the salt behind your shoulder to keep the lingering demons company. *And to add to your wounds,* when you get ahead of yourself. Never forget what you come from.

8. *Add sugar according to taste.*

But you have none. You were raised by the internet and you live in its opinions through a cracked screen. Still, you tilt the spoon a bit more because you remember picking mulberries and how you wanted the darker ones. It's hard to believe, but it tastes so much better now. The sweetness lets you think about history, science and how you want to change the world, how you'd die for love. It is uncomfortable, but it is the closest thing to magic you've ever seen.

9. *Sip and down.*

You have held glass before, proof from the bracelet of shards you wear around the wrist as an aesthetic for your mistakes. But this time, your hands are tight in their gentleness. Like crossing the road with friends. Like falling on ice, spinning with laughter and fairy dust. The pint burns like a cut to the lip; burns, of the love that you've been gifted and the anger you clutch. *But it tastes different than you imagined.* The novelty dies- s l o w l y until you're outside looking in. Still, you dream of making another.

You were born in an unyielding desert, and still, you dream of living with the ocean and dying in its multitudes.

By: Vasundhara T
Vice President, BlueQuill



Track 3

let the
tales unfold



Doggo's Trail
By: Nandini
General Secretary, BlueQuil

HOME (NOT)

I am home.

earphones plugged in my ear as your voice rises in the background,
I would rather listen to rahat fateh ali khan than you.

not everyday, not each day,

but when you are like this, a mass of your voice dumping over me
talking about death and separation, in such easy words.

I feel guilt, along the border of my skin and inside it,
but how long will I store all of this,
we are animals, we do not have vacuoles
so, I vomit it all out.

I have to take a step back, metaphorically.
each time, I walk closer to you
I accidentally stop this playlist from playing ahead
and I am forced to listen.

I run away, metaphorically.
I am home.
will I find you? home?

By: Simran Samant
Member, BlueQuill



花樣年華

the most beautiful moment of my life

dancing underneath the skies of lust,
the music box of tragedy plays,
i run in circles
with emotions laying breathless on stainless trays,

i cradle the waves of joy—
tight in my arms as i come undone,
exhaustion creeps up on me as they crash down and raise me up,
no qualms about the woman i've become

with edges that make you cry
and, the beauty with which we tell lies,
the fate is unfathomable
carrying courage that fails in compromise

intoxicated and dazed—
tailoring chaos as we rise in flames;
we trace the tattoos of rebellion,
fishing for jested praise

the night is young in our eyes
and so are our defeats,
life seeps in like slow poison,
concealing the pretty little treasures of failures

biting down the tools that make us cry
i begin to play charades with joy,
teasing it with experiences that are infinite—
preserved memories, vulnerabilities and succumbed friendships

i hear the music, it mixes with my red—
with the river, the moon, and everything that lays adept
icarus' fall is how i lay awake,
crying for the sun outside my grave

the ocean's fumes are visceral,
potent and sharp—
the blues are golden,
as they tear me apart

father ocean rises and breathes,
my heart lays bare before him
he sings for me and calms me down—
wiping the soundless tears of an unchartered crowd

i crawl home to the siren's song,
with melodies she plays and innocence she flees,
protective embrace and fragile hearts cherishing
the most beautiful moments of my life, for me.

By: Nandini
General Secretary, BlueQuill



Blooms of Youth

When unarmed bosom was least harmed
When fortune's dart had not pierced our hearts
When sobs were silenced with mild caressing
When frail memory unshackled suffering
When id was naive and ego unstained
When due dropped unveiled
When boundaries were mere space
The sun shone and did not stupify my sense!

Her infancy worshiped youth
Like piety venerated a visionary saint
That knight galloping in sword-shield tales
Glass sandals and hearts often impaled
Soon stitched bathing in empyreal tranquil
With these she slumbered in valleys faint
Of galaxies existing in one animate

Now when only bombs drop and tears
Soil is nurtured with blood not care
Rape is consensual forget my discomfort
For love is turned into a warfare
Chosen land? Chosen man?
Beneath this animal skin dwells
Visions of yestsrday and morrow

Through nostalgia I tolerate today's sorrow

By: Dilnasheen Zarreen



INSPECTION

“Hair?”

Slightly dishevelled;

One pink rose holding on to the edge of the loose
pigtails.

“Forehead?”

Missing- a black bindi.

If found, please return to the bathroom mirror.

“Eyebrows?”

Raised in contempt at this inspection.

“Eyes?”

Left- darkest brown with a blue-ish outline.

Right- darkest brown with no outline.

The most beautiful pair.

“Nose?”

Irritated by pollen and mornings.

“Cheeks?”

Left- Kissable

Right- Equally kissable, but covered by scratching
fingers.

“Mouth?”

Smells like tender mango leaves.

“Neck?”

Five mosquito bites.

“Arms?”

Left- Muddy, holding my finger.

Right- scratching the right cheek, leaving mud marks.



“Legs?”

Left- Dancing to the song playing from the TV, red nail paint,
gold anklet.

Right- Dancing to the song playing from the TV, red nail paint,
no gold anklet.

No gold anklet.

“Where is the anklet?”

Eyes to the right,
Lips tightly closed,
Fists clenched,
No more dancing feet.

She knows where it is.

“Where is it?” (*in panic*);
The same “Where is it?” garnished with a little anger;
Where is it? (*in anguish, said by my furrowed eyebrows, not spoken*)

How stubborn are you?
Why would you not tell me?

Will you tell me if I wrap the same question in glitter paper?
Green glitter paper?
Or if I make it as sweet as *Palada Payasam*?

Palada works like magic every time.

One finger points towards the trees. The back of the house. Her
playground.
Four fingers point at me, her mother.



“Where exactly here?”

The question is as sweet as *Panji Mittayi*; Cotton Candy now.
Sweet inside the mouth, sticky on hands.

“Under these flowers?”

Red, blue, yellow, pink and purple.
Nothing plucked, she promises.
She would never hurt the plants she says.
All relocated from the ground with permission.

I never thought I would be digging mud at this age.

“Are you sure it's here?”

The question is as sweet as *Sharkkara* now.
Jaggery-sweet questions as fingers dig deep in jaggery

A smile and sigh breaks out upon touching the metal anklet.

“Why did you bury it here?”

The question is as sweet as *Unniyappam* now.
It was for the anklet to grow into a tree, she said,
So that she will have many anklets.

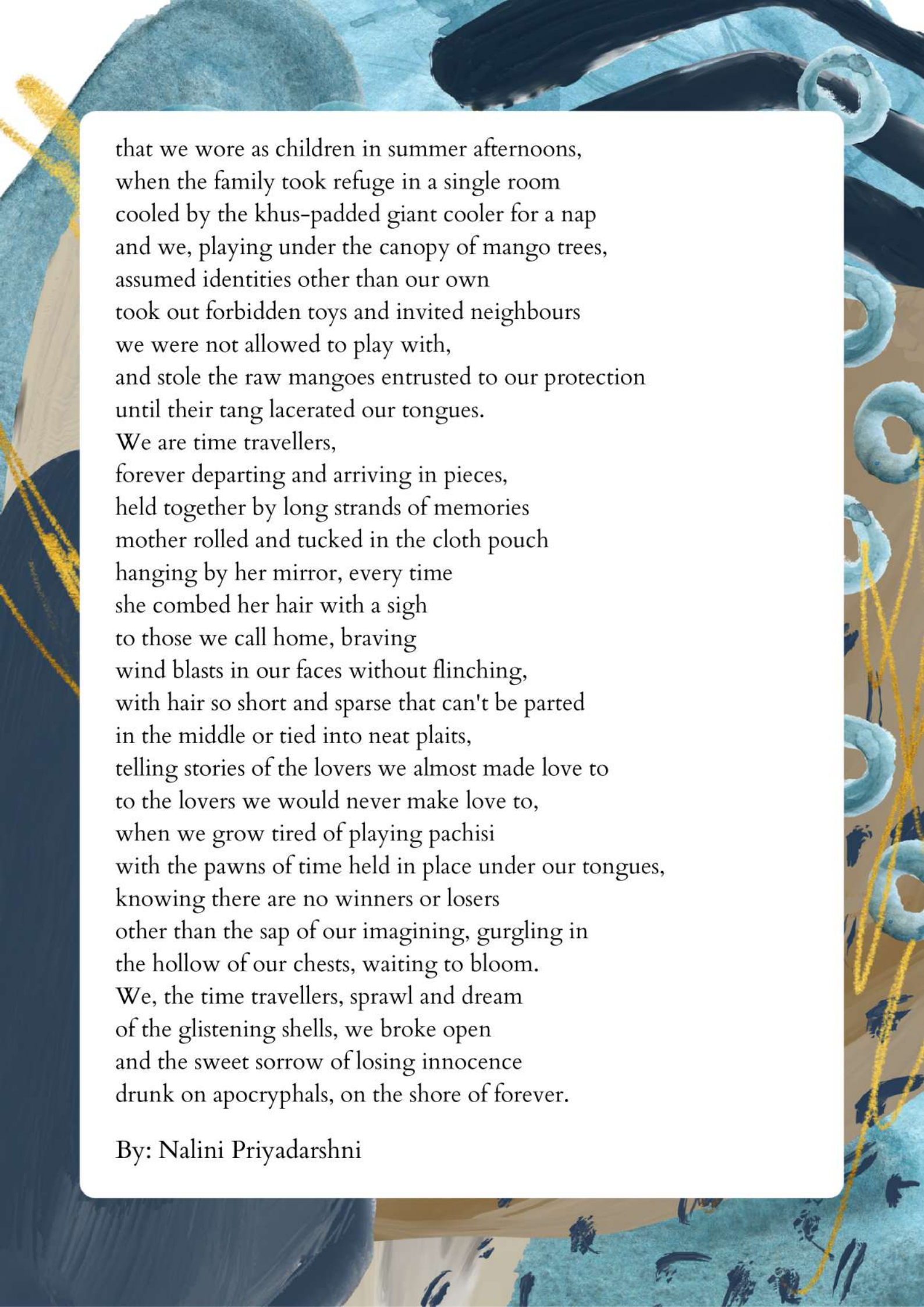
How do you respond to that?

By: Nandabala
Member, BlueQuill



Time Travellers

Sprawled on the shore of forever,
we are time travellers,
talking to each other across
the dusks and dawns of tomorrows,
toasting our marshmallows
on the bonfires of yesterdays,
sipping amnesia, that we pour into
each other's cups to heal
the wounds on our feet that keep
changing the shapes of our journeys
like maps we abandoned after a brawl
in the bar that offered us tepid beer
with reheated fish that was beginning to fall apart.
All we wanted to change was the music
but they won't let us anywhere near the jukebox.
Men with gold chains and Rolex watches
with devotional songs for ringtones
who laughed loudly at the jokes
women in slinky saris whispered in their ears
did not want to play our songs after they pocketed our coins.
We are time travellers,
forever making beds on crossroads
patting down pockets for stolen kisses at gloaming,
with eyes fixed on horizons livid with promises
of soft beds and masala tea in glasses
listening to chapattis being slapped on grilles
as jars of mango pickle waited on the wall
their mouths covered with mulmul, torn from
mother's discarded sari bought from Dhaka.



that we wore as children in summer afternoons,
when the family took refuge in a single room
cooled by the khus-padded giant cooler for a nap
and we, playing under the canopy of mango trees,
assumed identities other than our own
took out forbidden toys and invited neighbours
we were not allowed to play with,
and stole the raw mangoes entrusted to our protection
until their tang lacerated our tongues.

We are time travellers,
forever departing and arriving in pieces,
held together by long strands of memories
mother rolled and tucked in the cloth pouch
hanging by her mirror, every time
she combed her hair with a sigh
to those we call home, braving
wind blasts in our faces without flinching,
with hair so short and sparse that can't be parted
in the middle or tied into neat plaits,
telling stories of the lovers we almost made love to
to the lovers we would never make love to,
when we grow tired of playing pachisi
with the pawns of time held in place under our tongues,
knowing there are no winners or losers
other than the sap of our imagining, gurgling in
the hollow of our chests, waiting to bloom.
We, the time travellers, sprawl and dream
of the glistening shells, we broke open
and the sweet sorrow of losing innocence
drunk on apocryphals, on the shore of forever.

By: Nalini Priyadarshni

Budhiya ke Baal and Bachcho ki Hassi

By: Sukriti Singh

B.A. Hons English, Miranda House



the birth of my insecurities

"You know, I saw her bra-strap the other day!"

"Really? My mom has told me that I'll only wear sports bras until I'm 16."

"I know right! Same for me."

"And what about you...?"

They look at me, and I think of my bulging chest caused by "excessive fat" (according to my school nurse) and definitely not my looming puberty.

"Yeah, same," I lie, rounding my shoulders.

The ultra-energetic group leader, no longer wishing to be seen.

But, by now the boys had come over,

in their somehow, still well-fitting jeans (ugh)

And suddenly, our conversation didn't matter, with my friends slowly scattering away like sheep.

In that moment of solitude, I concluded

that the more I grew, the more I didn't like being a girl.

How could I, when I could neither be bold, nor carefree?

My favourite art teacher told my parents I talked too much,

after which, I could only draw when I was angry

(which was never, that's not how well-behaved children are supposed to be).

With my crippling stage fright, I knew I couldn't be a singer.

Too dumb to do anything mathematical, too smart to be a teacher,

and after having barely come to terms with learning five languages at the same time,

becoming a writer seemed too far-fetched to even be a dream.

So instead, after all of this prolonged deliberation,

I ventured the down the same old path, chosen by every self-respecting teenager

I chose to be my own worst enemy.

By Sunaina Mishra

Member, BlueQuill

UNTITLED

I struggle between a sweaty crowded youth
and the gentle touch of an aged river.

Hopeless walls and cold dead ends
Stand in the way of my beloved sleep walk
to the kingdom of heaven.

And the lust of banging my head and smashing my brains out against these walls
Is intense and overwhelming at times.

The thick smell of a butcher house
Buries the subtleties of a lone incense stick.
I try to walk through the apolitical Sal trees
And move towards the setting sun,
Silent but desperate.

Nothing seems familiar.

The inaudible chants of Russian sounding names
Seems to surround and confuse me.

The best place to plant a bomb is deep within
The heart.

The explosions shall splatter words.

I seem to be too nauseated with the undigested lot of philosophies
and pictures of bearded men in suits.

Empty expressions, all seem to look desperately for my abstract coffin.

The dervishes left, leaving behind helpless

Insanity.

Dialectic materialism

Drags me to the asylum.

By: Surjamit Bhattacharjee



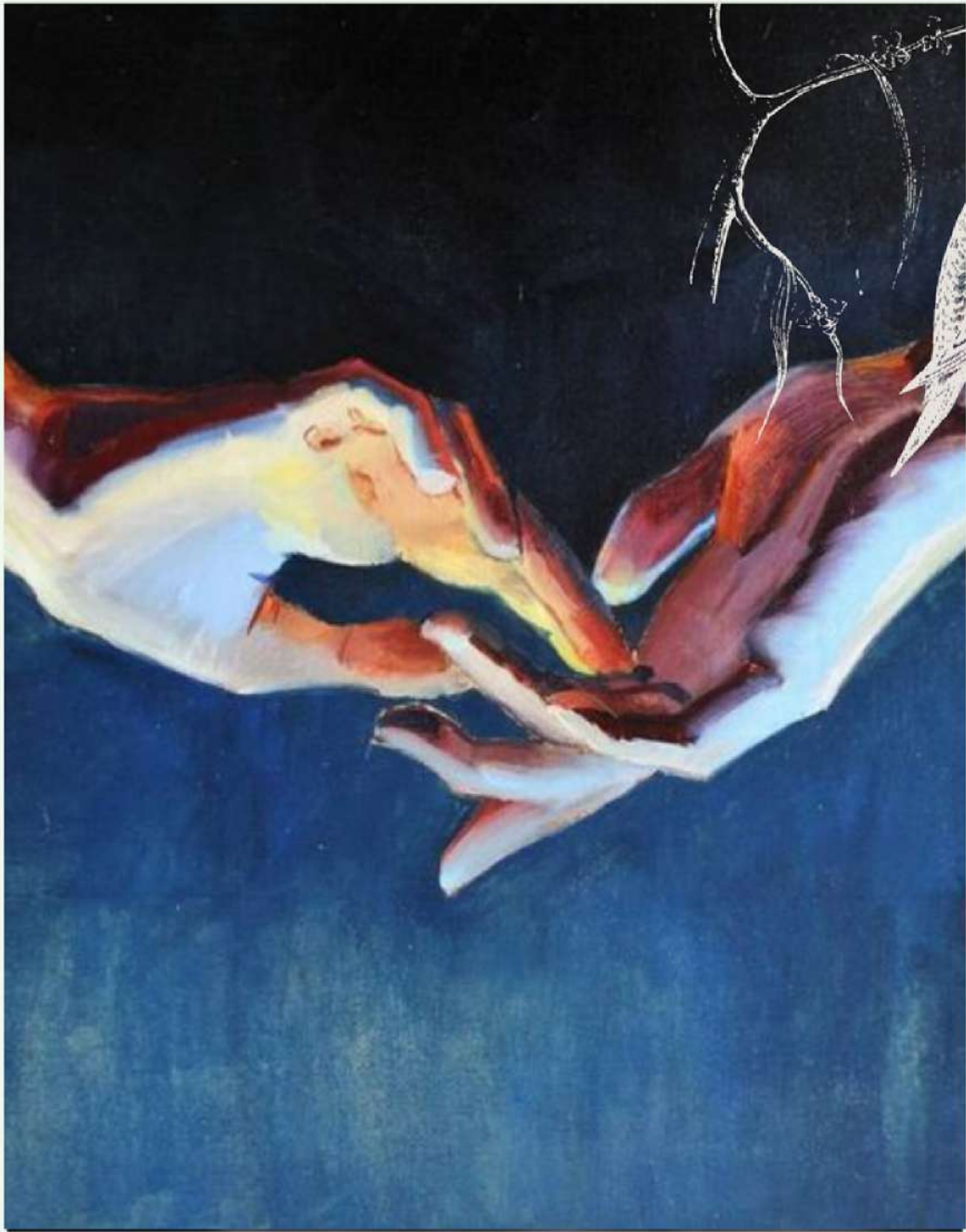


Bittersweet Binaries

By: Sukriti Singh

B.A. Hons English, Miranda House

TRACK 4



LOVE IN THE UNKNOWN



ALCOHOL

ALCOHOL

with
ed
h
YC
ee
joth
oint;



A love that heals, not hurts.

By: Sumedha Gupta

B.A. Programme, 3rd Year, Miranda House



Young By Fluke

Your little finger touched my littler finger
After years of
Cowering from apocalyptic glances
Confessing would be dying
Being together would mean decay of anything
worthy
Cowards can be brave together,
Or simply redefine cowardice
An ostrich party of two under shifting sandstorms
We were comfortable in our discomfort
Like shakespearean tragic lovers,
Content in incomplete manifestation
Scorned by destiny, confused by will
Young by fluke
Contrary to popular opinion, I don't think it was
inevitable
Fingers live apart all the time

By: Heer Nimavat
Member, BlueQuill



LOVING A STRANGER



When my grandma told me how she fell in love with my grandpa, I could hardly believe it. Never once did they meet before their wedding day, they were complete strangers when they made the vows of eternal togetherness. They had not seen each other's faces or had the slightest idea of what the other person was like. Did she like to travel? Did he like listening to music? Would she accompany me to the movies? Would she mind if I click her photographs? Did he snore at night? They were painstakingly clueless.

They trusted their parents to be miraculous matchmakers. They could only hope that the person they were going to spend the rest of their lives with was going to be their soul mate. The rishta was finalized through the back and forth of letters. I heard the story when almost 40 years had passed since it all happened, and I was 2 years too young to comprehend it entirely. Maybe she left out some details, indebted to my credulous age. It still nags her, how my grandma never got to wear a proper red lhenga on her wedding day. She can recall it clearly to this day, how the loud festive music distracted her from the terror of leaving the only home she had ever known.

Their wedding was on a pleasant October day, the year was 1970. The year when Jhony Mera Naam was released. It was a good year in terms of movies, my grandpa would know. Summer had come to an end. Windy were the streets of Punjab, with the tantalizing aromas of savoury sweets, the wedding season was here. What awaited my grandma was a 6 hour long bus ride from Malout to Delhi with the stranger in the pink shirt.



That is all she knew about him, the colour of his shirt. Their seats were together, my grandma sat by the window. If she risked snatching a glance at his face, she would find two dark eyes, a pair of half rimmed spectacles resting on a sharp nose, a chiselled face and a nicely trimmed moustache. But alas, the veil over her face sabotaged any intention to do so.

The bus hit the road and the journey began. They were both tired and drowsy after one whole week of marital traditions. Grandma could not help herself, she dozed off, resting her head on the window. She could not come to put her head on his shoulders, just yet. The bus halted every now and then, the ride was bumpy. The window was surprisingly not so tough, it felt oddly gentle and somewhat comfortable. She woke up to find grandpa's hand under her head, covering the hard glass of the window.

That is when she thought, maybe I can love this stranger after all. She fell in love indeed. Slowly, over time. The more she got to know him, the easier it got. Riding around the city on my grandpa's scooter, sitting behind him and clutching his shoulders so tight, for the fear of being toppled down from the unfamiliar vehicle. Going to the movies together, a whole new world opened up for her. They fell in love by sharing it, for the classic old cinema, for Wenger's bakery in Connaught Place, for long walks and the simple things in life, which had a new charm to them, now that they were together. They had two lovely boys, the elder one being my dad. Our whole family sprouted from their decision to love the stranger in front of them.

By: Kriti Khurana
Graphics Head, BlueQuill



The Start Of Love

When I encountered it
I thought I was not prepared
To accept the burden
of a phenomenon so rare.
My thoughts and feelings raced against time
to present to me their varied side.

"You can accept it, you know.
Even if it left, you'd always have
the memories to hold"
"But what about the carnage left behind,
would you have it in you to make it alright?"

Back and forth it went
Rationalising my emotions
And romanticising the logical ends.
A fortnight more, and then I let it in
Not just my life
But in the essence of my being.



My bones ached less
When caressed with pastel words
And my tea tasted sweeter
Under the gaze of those honey-
toned orbs.
I can not say I have had my fill,
Retreating steps still give me the
chills.

But love is a word I am yet to define,
With every sunrise a new alteration
comes to mind.
I guess I was wrong to call it rare
It is a ubiquitous sensation, an
undying affair.

By: Aayushi Jaiswal
Member, BlueQuill

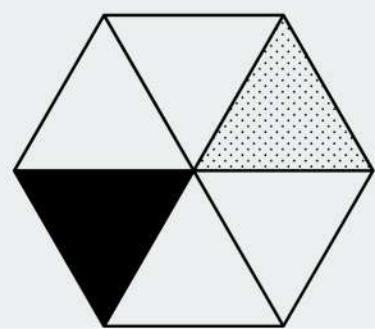
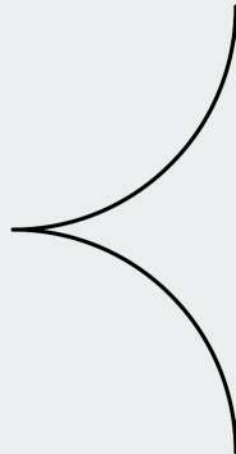
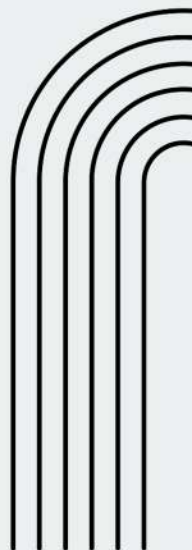
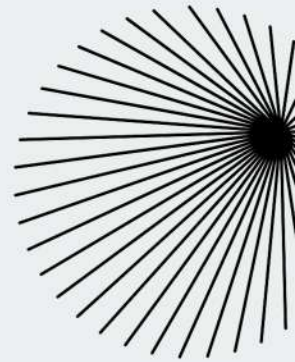
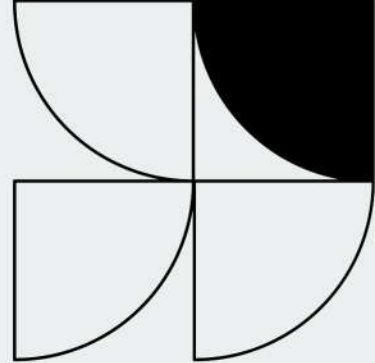
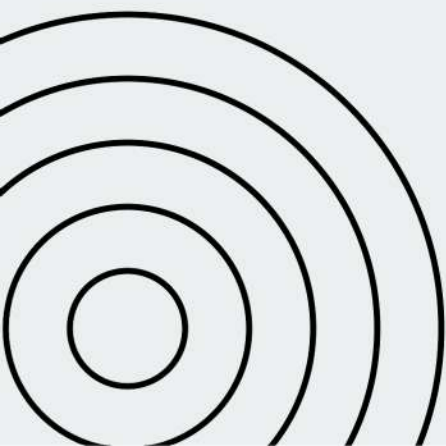
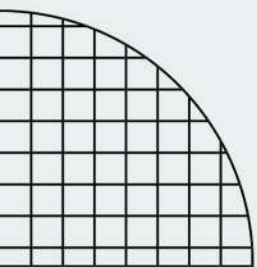
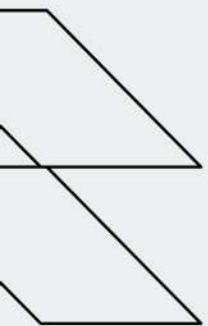
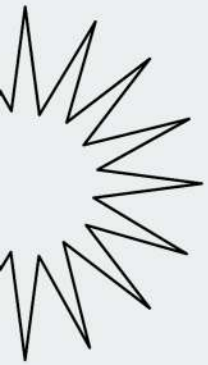
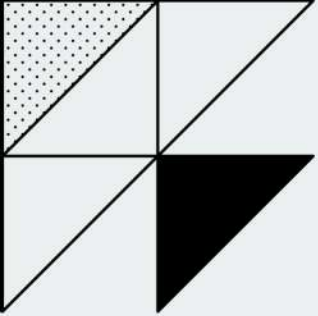
Pause

Unity of opposites
Negation of negation
Antithesis leads to synthesis
Certain order we should have
Bigger order, better order
Thesis and antithesis, preserved
We need a revolution
Gatherer and hunter
And a slave

I wish I were here
Turning my class notes
Into inadequate poetry
Not existing in bits and bytes
With his electric heart
Our energies crackling behind
The pitch black screens and
Giving us life in life
Day in day
Light in light

Where should I be
If not here?
With the cool wind
Bestowed upon me
By chance, what lovely chance
The selfish desire for violence
Gently blown away by
Quiet longing for peace
Only if it weren't curious
How easily I give up
The storms of my soul
To settle for calm seas

By: Moksha Sharma
Member, BlueQuill

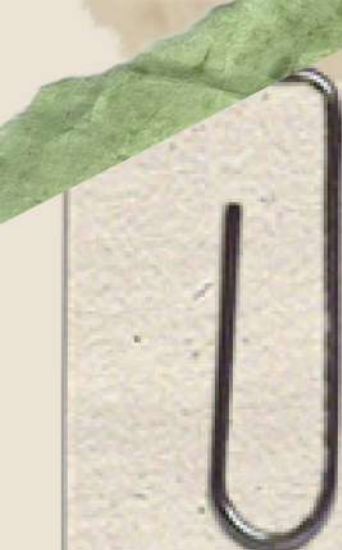


'Laughter in Square Boxes'

By: Shreya Krishnan

B.A. English, 3rd Year, Miranda House



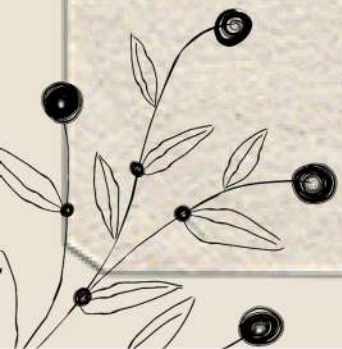


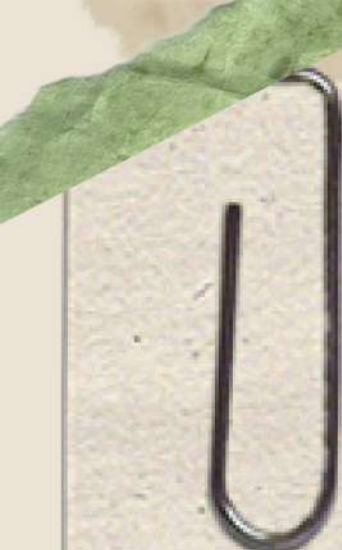
YOURS LOVINGLY

I used to feel like a closed book
that didn't want anyone
to imprint their thoughts on its flimsy pages.
But, ever since my eyes met yours
And I noticed your winsome smile
that starts from your right ear
and goes on to the earring you wear on your left,
I knew I wouldn't even think twice,
before filling up the pages of my book with your intricacies.

It's hard to digest,
how I used to make myself understand,
that the gates to my heart are best left shut,
and should remain unconquered.
But now I have carved a window
out of the helplessness I felt in your absence.
Today every inch of my soul craves to be with you,
to shower you with love,
that I've kept hidden in one corner of my fragile heart.

Sometimes my own insecurities,
do not allow me to let my guard down
and read this book to you.
I wish I could show you
how every page
is now screaming out your name. But I fear.
I fear if my book would ever finds its place in your library,
it will probably remain unread on a side table,
that many would not care to give a second glance.



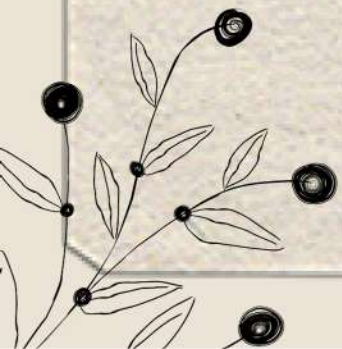


But my dear,
no matter how much dust that book may collect
in some dingy corner,
the sweet memories of you
will always remain fresh in it.

The fragrance of its pages,
will be as earthly as that of a newly printed book.
And even if you did not reciprocate,
the ink on its pages will continue to spell out
how my love for you will never fade away.

Thus, at this very moment,
I cross my fingers and hope
that one day you will pick it up
and come face to face,
with all that my heart desires.
And once you reach the climax of this book,
it would enlighten a spark in your soul,
to start our new story..

By: Parul Kumar,
B.A. (Hons.) English, Shaheed Bhagat Singh College





An Ode to New Love in Middle Age



There is no anti-aging more potent than a young lover
bursting with lust for your middle age vulnerability
who pulls you out of rut with his arduous banter
and make you whole again with his benevolent smirk

You manage to tuck chaos behind your ears and
pack pieces of your wrecked self
inside your crimson underwire push up brassiere and
steal glances at his freckled face like the sailor
puzzling perpetually over capricious constellations
to navigate through all fourteen degrees of love

Despite all promises you make to yourself
hoyam sneaks in after gharam
another word for attachment in Arabic.
A love that burrows deep and suffocates;
dies on its own but if it ruins you, it ruins you.

Like those flowers that change colour upon pollination
you know when to let them go
but if they stay put long enough
they can watch you unfurl.

All new beginnings are sheathed, in painful endings.

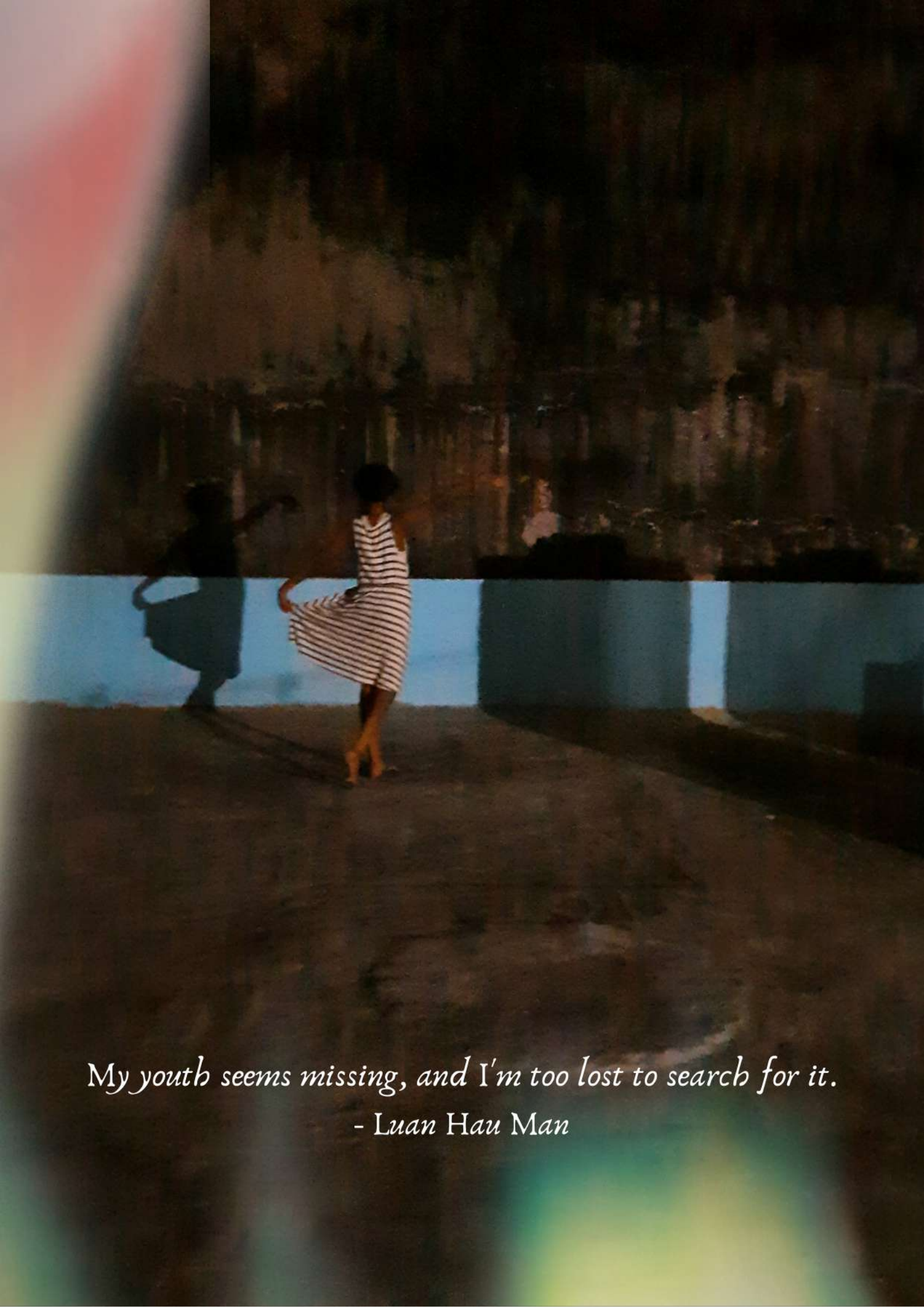
Nalini Priyadarshini
Mentor, Ludhiana



SKIT

SLOW
≡ AND ≡
STEADY





My youth seems missing, and I'm too lost to search for it.

- Luan Hau Man



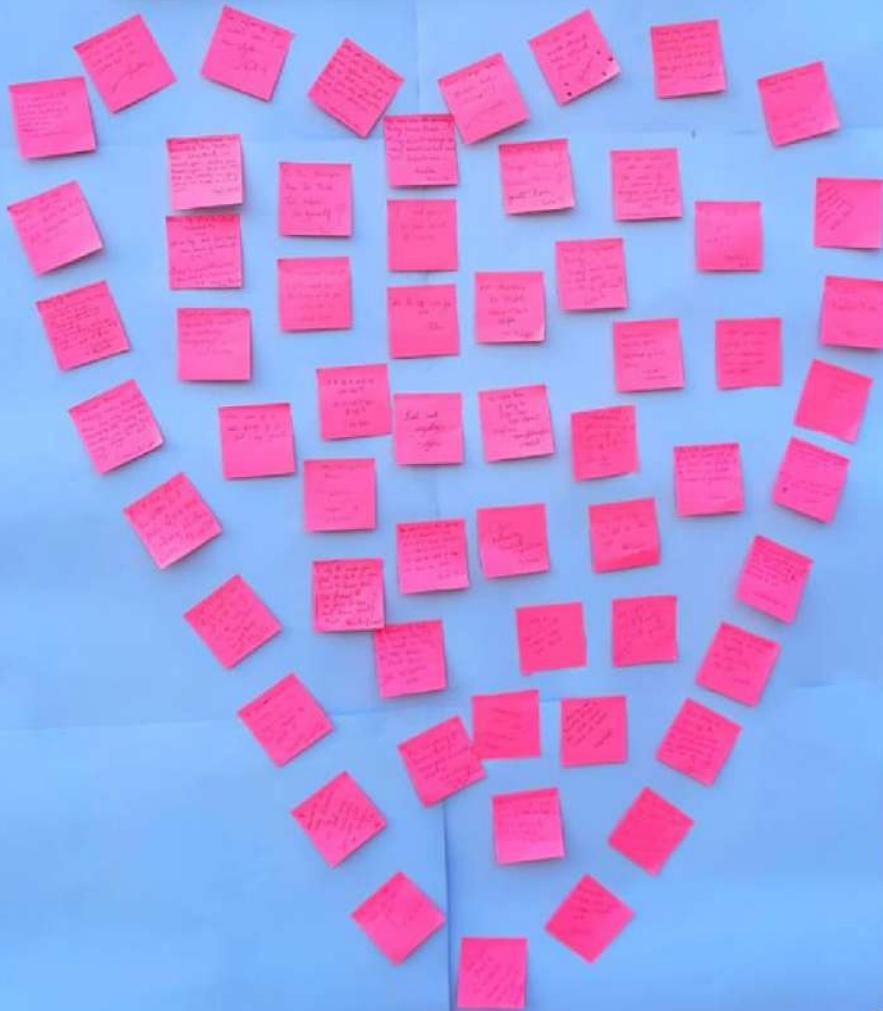
Meet our
Blue Team!

With love,
Team Blue

Creative Writing Club MH

B L U E Q U I L L

*tell us the quote that lives
in your head rent free*





SIDE B

Mixtape: In Bloom
Four Tracks

Track 5: Family Portrait

Track 6: The Inherent Discomfort of Growth

Track 7: The Dog Days are Over

Track 8: Navigating Nostalgia



Track 5



Family Portrait

ONCE UPON A TIME

(My naani's home was a sanctuary -
in the months of sun-parched land,
every year she awaited our arrival,
with golden mangoes in her dark hands.)

Naani would stand smiling on the verandah, eager to welcome us,
back bent but arms open to hold onto our vivid, childish delight -
the long, arduous years seemed to fall away from her wiry frame,
her deeply-etched wrinkles smoothening under the soft moonlight.

Responsibility had been a crushing weight on her young shoulders,
already burdened with widowhood and three children not yet grown.
Yet, she'd built her own home ages ago - each brick laid with faith,
and held together with steely resolve - and all this she did alone.

(My naani's home was her pride,
its weary chores skillfully hid -
it would bring a god to his knees,
to take on half the work she did.)

She was not an amicable woman - easily irritated, headstrong,
wanted things done her way, had a tongue that could cut men in half.
Yet, she always gave us everything we wanted and everything she had -
makkhan-mithai, doodh-malai, stories sprinkled with her chuckling
laugh.



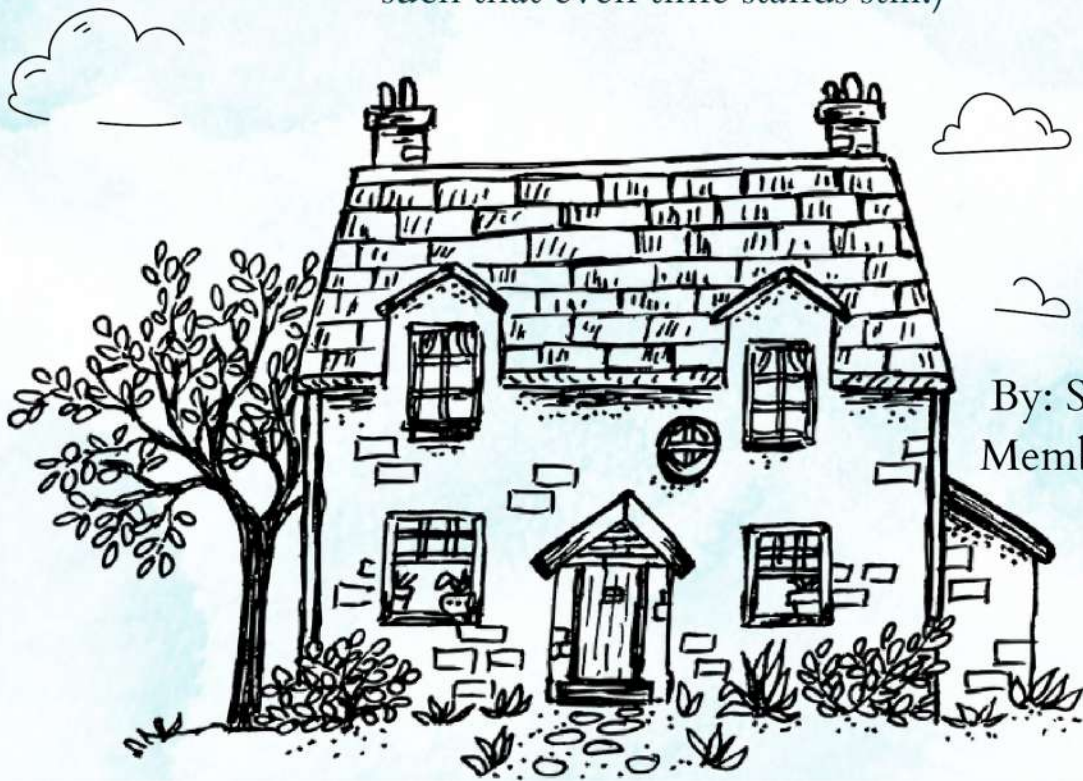
I wonder what she felt like when she was all alone –
did she miss us on moonless nights or lonely afternoons?
Or had she grown used to the constant comfort and company
of her ancient haveli's creaking doors and lamp-lit rooms?

(My naani's home was inseparable from her,
just as stars are from the skies,
till not even sheer force of will made up
for the dimming light of her eyes.)

The years gone by refuse to rewind themselves at my command,
and she lived too vast a life to be contained in my fickle mind.
So, what am I to say when asked of her too-few years with us,
when the desires to remember and forget are hopelessly entwined?

But, the story of her life still clings to that house like cobwebs –
each inch covered in gossamer-thin bewitching tapestries,
painted over with brushstrokes dipped in scattered ashes,
framed in a thousand dazzling, blinding, desperate memories.

(My naani's home is a maqbara,
where I search for ways to fill
the empty ache left behind by loss –
such that even time stands still.)



By: Suhani Duhan
Member, BlueQuill

The Curfew

I close my eyes and find myself surrounded by streetlights,
their reflections staring back at me
from the puddles on my way back home.

It's 7:30 and dread has captured me,
but the cacophony of laughter around me seems too fascinating
yet again, making me not want to go.

"When will this swing be empty?"



I can hear the toddler scream,
as his mother makes him put his jacket on.

"The slide is so slippery!"
They giggle (How do they always look so pretty,
those perfect 'older'; girls I can never know?)

It's chilly, but I love how the wind caresses my cheek -
making me feel invincible, just a pre-teen
all alone in this big, loud world.

Why do I have to leave?
Maybe that scary dog will finally get a hold of me
when my father refuses to open the door.

Teary-eyed I walk back,
ring-the-bell, look upto the balcony.
“Stay outside for a little while longer, no? Why come back at all?”



Do you know what's the time?”
“I didn't know.” “Couldn't you have asked someone on the street?”
“I'm sorry,” I concede, promising myself that I'll never go out alone.

Open my eyes, I'm 20.
At the peak of my youth, undeniably free,
and far away from home.

But the streetlights still scare me
more than the dogs.
And I still believe I can't be trusted on my own.

By: Sunaina Mishra
Member, BlueQuill

Trauma

I hear the declaration of war in the creaking of my front door. It opens into a battlefield — with ghosts of dead memories hung on cold walls, and lamps that wear weaponized headgears. In the trenches under my couch, I hide away.

With echoes of deceitful parleys, I crawl all the way down to the cutlery. Plates firm as shields, and knives that slice through tomatoes like daggers. Bandaged fingers, wounded by the swords they held in the kitchen. Some in the dressing room, by needles, stretched through threads the way arrows rest on bows before they attack.

I've only ever seen cavaliers dress up in front of the mirror — I notice them take purposeful glances at the flowerbeds in the backyard out the window. Peace lilies curl out like caltrops, and rosebuds cage up into grenades.

As they prepare for war, I march to my room and disappear under the bed.

Today I rest my head on it.

Pick myself up.

Wear white for death.

Raise my fingers.

Dim Mak.

By: Khyati Sanger

B.A. English, Miranda House, Batch of 2020

My Brother's Birthday

At night the ceiling reflects zooming red
lights.

At 6 am

I see two golden bangles of sunlight on the
ceiling.

By October end the sun starts to filter itself,
becomes

weak and wane of its ten-month age.

My mother's memory vividly defines this
time

with a warm belly

And frozen, chafed nipples.

She smells the air and says "Karan's birthday
is coming."

By: Gauri Yadav
Member, BlueQuill



Like Mother, Like Daughter

The bindi-stained mirror stares back as you stand in front of it draping the
saree

A girl of your quarter height standing tall trying to blend in as your image
playing with your
dupatta

Amma, this was us when I was too innocent to know of anything other
than your warm embrace

Too gullible to know I had to grow up and live up to your expectations
Too ignorant to know that I'd grow up and understand you better than
yourself

As I grow up, you see parts of yourself in me to foster, parts of Achhan that
you want to weed
out

You see me as a vessel of your clipped dreams and suppressed valour
As a shield of resistance against my dad's stubbornness as he can't fight his
own seeded in me

As a perfect example of everything you couldn't do and shouldn't have
done

As your honour and your shame

Frowning at dad's remarks that we look alike
For the teenage girl I was, I made the biggest enemy out of you
I couldn't fathom your anger, your concern as love
The love I wanted was gentle and our love, they spoke languages alien to
the other
To understand you was my biggest failure and to make you understand me
was my biggest trial

On most days, I'm your worst version,
Even when you go through pains and toils to make me out into your best
creation

Most days, I pray that I become anything like you



And then again, all over, nothing like you
My paradox to carry, I can't ever quit being you and can't ever stop wishing it
wasn't the case

Most nights, we weigh too much on each other's chest that it gets hard to
breathe

We call out to each other as if one breathes life into the other
On most nights, I crave the crook of your elbow to hold onto
And on some nights, your touch sinks into my skin like molten lava as I can't
carry the weight of
its expectation

I run away from being a crooked image of you but wherever I go,
I see you in my anguish, in my suppressed emotions and in the creased
wrinkles of pain on my
skin.

You leased out your womb to me for 9 months and I came out bearing all of
your dreams, flaws
and hope.

My constant nightmare; never being good enough for you, etched in me as a
blood-sucking
parasite.

I took pride in my straight hair which my dad gave me.
Now they've turned into your unruly curls,
Making it harder to hide your resemblance in me anymore
It hovers under the lashings and disapprovals of love
It lurks beside every bits of myself I sacrifice for the ones close to me

Now as we stand alongside the mirror,
I see it clearly.

Two women who try their hardest to survive in each other's gazes,
Two women who fret over the mildest and brave against the hardest battles,

Two women who just wanted to be understood and loved in the language
they knew.

I've come in terms with the pieces of you in me,
Like mother, like daughter.



By: Nandana AR
Member, BlueQuill

the name carried by my winds (is yours)

Do you know of the color hex code?

My body is made of 78% color. I live and breathe it; spend days reminiscing of memories made of flowers bathed in strange, indescribable hues. Watch #73C2FB of my favorite shirt spread over the black of #2C3E4C, and define them with vague hand gestures and blurry memories. I think I prefer it that way- to me, memories are wisps of fire, out of reach before I can even think of catching one. they stay of their own free will. The other 22% of my body lives beyond a place I have any control over.

Consider an ocean. It's infinite, as oceans are, but it doesn't smell like the sea. there's no sand in my toes or sun in my face. The ocean is a freshwater lake in the middle of a forest, whose canopy only allows select rays of the sun inside as if every leaf handpicks the gentlest of beams just for me. There are flowers that grow as each minute passes, and every day, they play a game. a few days ago, a pink dahlia won. Today, as I walk along the riverbed, a pansy shyly gives itself away to me.

Every day, I offer the flower I receive into the ocean. Some stay afloat, stubborn and relentless- kind as day and fierce as night, they persist- but most vanish as time passes. The forest has to replenish, so it lets its own leave. So is the law of nature.

Each memory is a flower, and each flower is a memory. They're unique, whether in color or type: after all, plants undergo meiosis, not mitosis, and whether or not each day is just the same as any other really makes no difference to me- I get a new flower anyway. The forest also houses people. my parents, just shy of the riverbed: two huge trees, humbly bent down. Fruits of various types, dates and coconuts, a stray watermelon. My best friend and I barely talk to the little squirrel, who comes and goes as she pleases, but is always a pleasure to see around. Others, too: family and friends and teachers manifesting in the form of dew and rain and foliage, a mushroom hither, a bird thither.

I am, of course, the lake.

Beyond the lake is where this story starts.

Beyond the lake, is a desert. once you cross over, its #39; hard to go back.

You only cross over the lake when you are mad with grief. When regret burns your mind and you that if you stay near the lake for one second more, you will drown.

And so you cross it, knowing what it entails. it feels inescapable.

The desert harbors a mirage. In it, sprawling luxuriously without rent, lies a mirage.

I am an only child. I've wished I had a sibling more times than I can ever hope to count. Whenever anything happens, I run to the desert: I sit in their arms, safe and protected momentarily. I crave for it-support and companionship. another human in my imagined forest. An escape from the loneliness.

When I think about it, the cause of my loneliness was very obviously myself. In a world of green splashes of paint onto a blue canvas, here I was a red volcano erupting, there I was a dark cloud, unable to let go of the darkness- because then I would have nothing left.

Rather than a forest, I am a volcano. I love my parents to death, but I also wish they got someone other than me.

Rather than a nurturing hand to their forest, they got a fire wishing for water to pull it apart.

Rather than love, they get grief and a well of selfishness- not a #329664, but a #DC143C- the color of blood.

By: Devanshi Sharma

Inertia

To my parents,
all you need is a push so hard
that it rattles your organs
like when you are doing dishes
in the sink
without that, you are like stagnant water,
collecting moss and breeding vectors.

Your hearts are so full of love,
refusing to dilate even an extra inch,
you'd rather mutilate
and move on
than expand your minds
and gulp down a contemporary concoction
your condition is serious
and the only medicine is change.

I can shove reason
down your throat
but I know you will only throw that up
over and
over again.

By: Diyasha
Member, BlueQuill



Bleak Roots

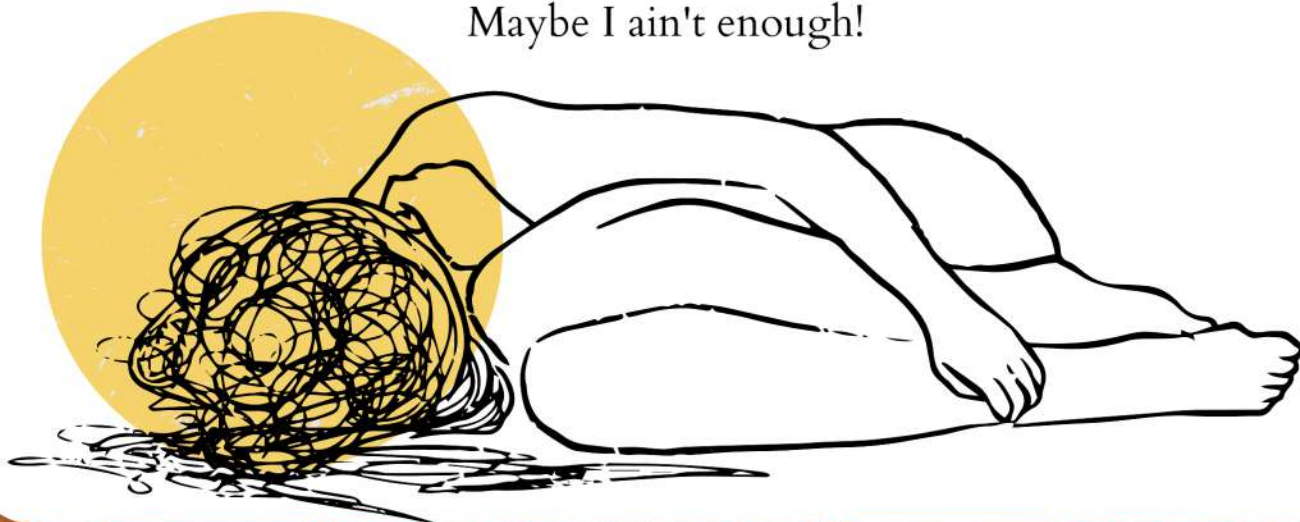
My body aches and shudders
to look at the frame
hanging on the dingy wall
of this house, that never became my home.

I was never the favourite child.
While other children bloomed
as pretty flowers in spring,
some, were devastated by the adversity.
I was one of them.

I remember putting my hands over my ears
in the bleak corner of my bathroom
trying to not make a sound
as I heard the wrath of a man and a woman
lighting each other on fire.
I was cursed to live in this burning house.

I craved affection so much
that I have strangely started to dislike even the thought of
it.

I was deprived from all the love,
and for the longest time,
I have felt deficient the way I am.
Maybe I ain't enough!



I wanted to scream into the void.

For once hear me speak,

Mom and dad

I am your child!

With the pain in my tears,

the hurt in my heart,

the fear in my bones,

the voices in my head,



But... I was taught to be silent.

For me, happiness is a distant memory.

Just like a flickering light switch,

I've never had stability.

My soul mourns all that's been lost,
enduring the aftermath of this lone self.

What do I know about pain?

Oh, I have lived with it my entire life.

It's a familiar face

I don't know how to leave.

And the worst part is,

I don't even know how to try.



By: Muskan Kaur Arora
B.Com Honors, Shaheed
Bhagat Singh

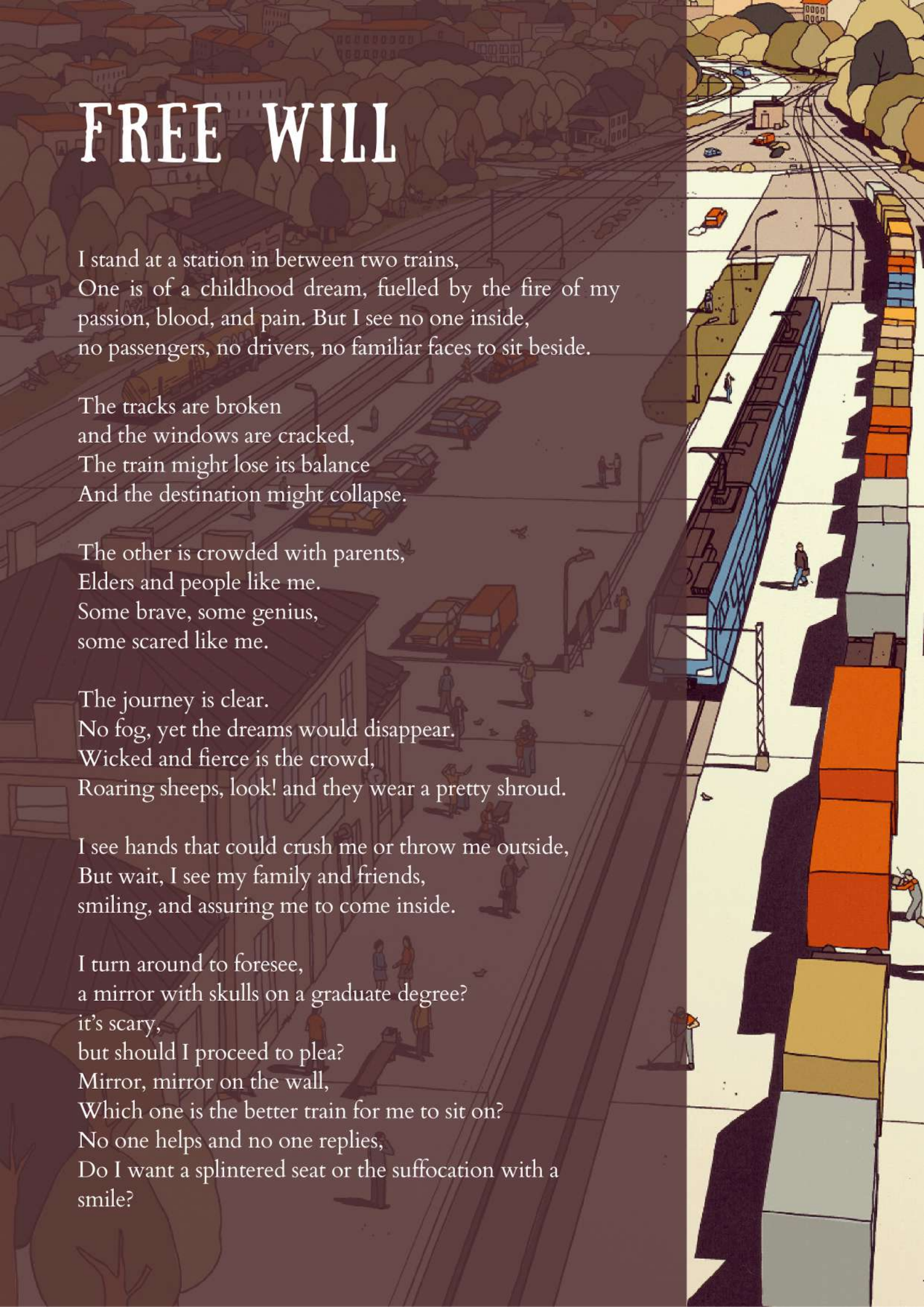


Family Portrait
By: Bhavika Sachan
Lucknow, India

TRACK 6

THE INHERENT
DISCOMFORT
OF GROWTH

FREE WILL



I stand at a station in between two trains,
One is of a childhood dream, fuelled by the fire of my
passion, blood, and pain. But I see no one inside,
no passengers, no drivers, no familiar faces to sit beside.

The tracks are broken
and the windows are cracked,
The train might lose its balance
And the destination might collapse.

The other is crowded with parents,
Elders and people like me.
Some brave, some genius,
some scared like me.

The journey is clear.
No fog, yet the dreams would disappear.
Wicked and fierce is the crowd,
Roaring sheeps, look! and they wear a pretty shroud.

I see hands that could crush me or throw me outside,
But wait, I see my family and friends,
smiling, and assuring me to come inside.

I turn around to foresee,
a mirror with skulls on a graduate degree?
it's scary,
but should I proceed to plea?
Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Which one is the better train for me to sit on?
No one helps and no one replies,
Do I want a splintered seat or the suffocation with a
smile?

Can you hear it? God has already blown the whistle of life,
Wait! please don't twist the pen inside,
I cannot stop so I have to run,
Childhood vanishes three, two, one.

I start running, holding on to both of them until I can,
Hands rip, and legs burn but I can do it, maybe I can.
But as the speed accelerates and the tracks diverge,
I must choose and choose now while still I can.

So, I let the first train, my train go,
Let my freedom leave,
Maybe I am too tired of running,
Tired of the rebukes, refusals, blames, and the fake griefs.

So, I run, run towards the bitter faces of suits and ties,
I run, run even if it fills my eyes.
I see the hungry sharks,
Staring and waiting to feast on my prize.

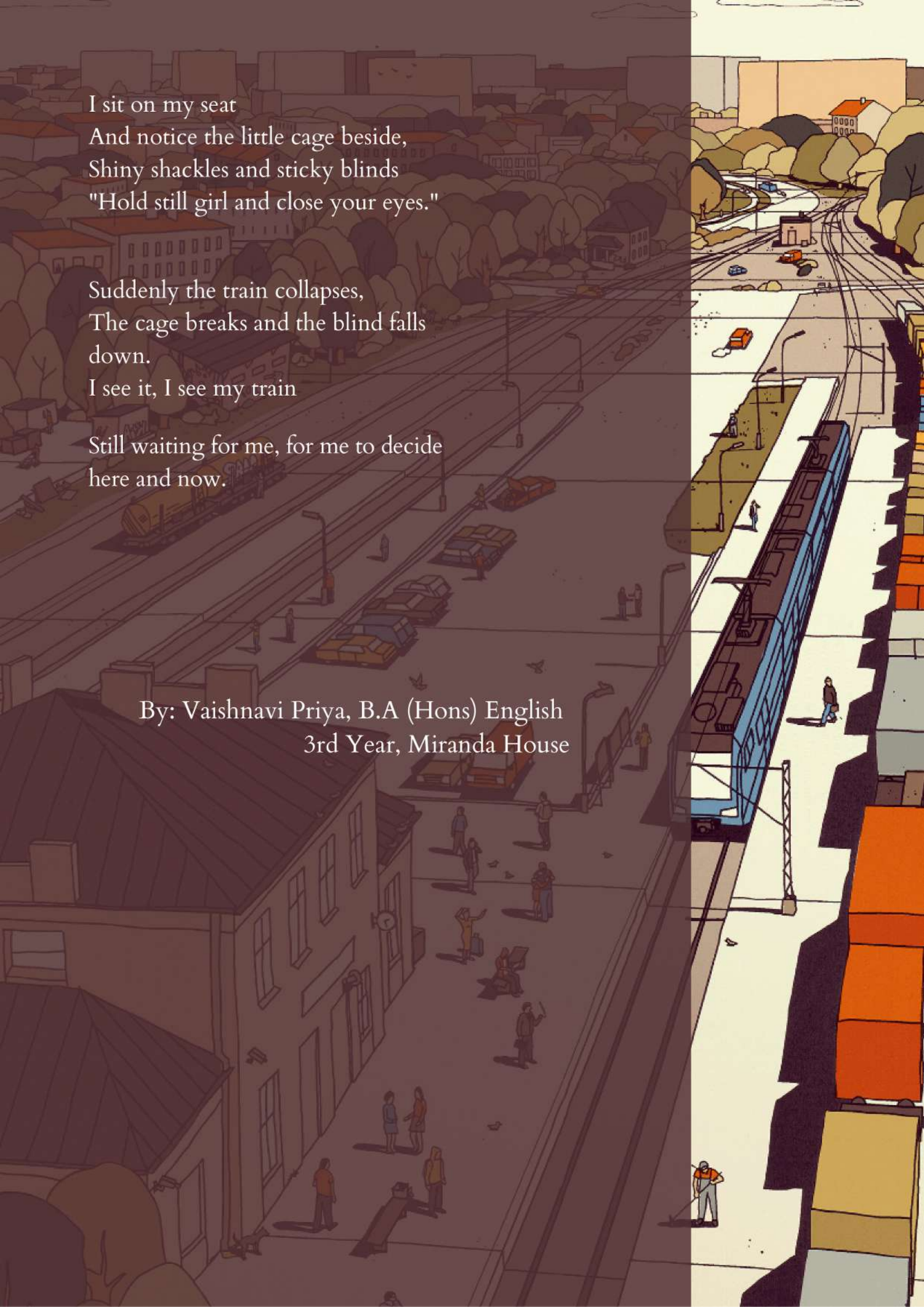
And, so I watch it leave,
Stare as my dreams compost to dust,
and step on the stairs of my reality train,
that I know would rust.

I will rust and they will blow.
Remember kids: "that is life that's how it goes"
Freedom cannot be taken,
It always has been gifted and bestowed.

I look into my eyes in the mirror, tear those journeys
unexplored, shatter the tickets of my freedom, to buy their
happiness,
That I, by myself could never afford.

So, I must say, I let you go,
Must believe that I had a childish childhood dream,
That was disappointingly too low,
I must run, not for myself, but for the sake of a social flow.





I sit on my seat
And notice the little cage beside,
Shiny shackles and sticky blinds
"Hold still girl and close your eyes."

Suddenly the train collapses,
The cage breaks and the blind falls
down.

I see it, I see my train

Still waiting for me, for me to decide
here and now.

By: Vaishnavi Priya, B.A (Hons) English
3rd Year, Miranda House



Running till my lungs burn and legs give out yet I never reach.

By: Sumedha Gupta

B.A. Programme, 3rd Year, Miranda House

Among summer and sugar and sadness

The rain falls and keeps falling as summer suffocates in my bones, writhing under my skin to crawl out. sickly sweet summer—too much chocolate all at once, chugging white wine and bodies that ate us alive and whole. Summer two years ago when I wrote 'worthless' on my underbelly with the lipstick I stole from my mother then ate another slice. April coloured red the day a boy touched me in the swamps of my body, then laughed. April coloured grey when I saw my mother stop the car and cry on the steering wheel and I forgot to tell her that I wished I could crawl back into her womb so she could stop me from growing up. April was blackened the day I pulled down my sleeves to hide my scars from dad-breakfast was a quiet, dusty affair.

May arrived like the stray hair that you wipe away and yet, my hands were frozen from last night's bubble-gum ice cream. May showed me magic that tied rainbows tight around my neck. May showed me that at least I would die happy. this year and I had given up on each other at the same time—so many months left.

I don't care if I'm real unless I'm being touched and smiled at—in the taller trees of my body. My flesh rots like a forest floor in all its green and brown. My nails skitter across my palms and draw rivers where they linger the most.

My body is a reckless ecosystem.

My body is a forest fire grown too large.

My body is oceanic—scary and blue and black at the bottom.

June washed over me like cold alcohol on an open wound and I'm back in the playground where I fell when I was eight. June is supposed to heal me but it stings like a bitch and I have to show papa and the nurse that I'm strong. I was strong at eight. I was strong at fifteen. I don't know how much I have left in me.



Papa, I'm never strong and papa, neither are you. My wounds can be healed with icing sugar and chocolate cake that I now hate. My wounds are healed sometimes when I share a cake with maa-paa. My wounds are healed in Kolkata. Then I tear them back open with my own hands because I can't tell if I'm real unless I'm in pain.

Render me sinless, the rivers of god. Render me thoughtless, for my ankles are void of fingers and they ring muted. my poem will never be quite what I felt then, and even lesser now. I wish I would stop writing about things that have already been felt-like a desert that sings of its rainforests. Like reminiscing childhood that nobody really liked, but would saw off their pinky finger to return to. But what even is childhood without a pinky swear?

Among summer and sugar and sadness, is my rest. Summer is now awfully silent under my skin and I wonder if she's drowned in rainwater. What pain is worse than that of drowning? Than that of flailing to live and waiting to die? Rest easy, soured summer. The rain will fall and keep falling.

By: Ayushi Upadhyay
IB 11, CHIREC International



A Strange Little Thing

She zoomed out through the door as soon as the car stopped;
Her hair tied up looking like a fountain, bobbed.
I yelled out to her, "Be careful, you may fall!"
She paused, looked back, and giggled like a doll.

It was an amusing contrast,
Her tiny self, the huge waterfall, and the sky vast.
I looked at her jump over rocks with careful excitement,
She was calling me, all the while smiling, her left cheek with a dent.

I walked forward as she squealed with joy,
Looking at the curtain of water as though it was a new toy.
I could feel her happiness as my own, as the water droplets hit her face.
I knew she loved the mountains, as they felt a home like place.

Even though the difference wasn't much between us, she felt freer,
Her face was smoother and she had a stronger cheer.
As the water gushed close by with its sound somehow soothing,
I thought how much I loved her, even though she was a strange little thing.

There was not much I would change about her,
She was already quite strong and would become bolder.
I knew who she was and who she wanted to be,
Since the little girl was a part of me.



By: Sukriti Singh, 3rd Year
B.A. Hons English, Miranda House

THE COMMOTION

Stumbled into a new world

Vales surround
An echo is all that's heard
A butterfly

It is
Free with hues to paint the world

Angst is frozen under the clamour
Shrouded are
The seas of sledges hurled
Set foot in the maelstrom
To chase the olive branch

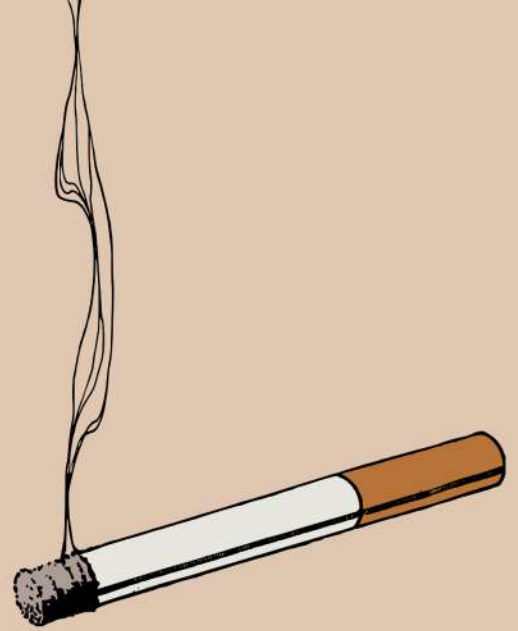
Leaping over beanstalks
Defy typhoons stirred
Bygone vibrant skies
Haunt concealed crimsons
Reopen unfed scars

Alpines tease the holy grails
Abandoned in unison
Crawling off hooded backs
From the nadir I rise
And lo!
The brilliance blinds the eye

By: Kriti Garg
B. Tech, 1st Year, IIT Delhi

Broken

broken cigarettes
in bent pockets
bent cigarettes
burnt beside denim wounds
broken kids
in bent schools,
bent houses.
kids bent
by these broken houses.
a broken axle
struggling, bent
under immense pressure
suspension cables
buckling, bent
under immense pressure
bent back to the start
no pretense of linearity
sick twisted ouroboros
human centipede and
the human condition
bent vertebra
wanting to break free
a lizard's defence
contortionist's goal
the nightmare of the system
flesh and pliable brains
bent around facetious prophets.
plans, that are twisted and bent.
broken at parts that
expect extreme spontaneity
a bag of bones and a
brutal blacksmith bending
people
like broken cigarettes
finding their way around
a bent pocket.



By: Ishitv Vats
St Xavier's College Mumbai

Footprint of my Youth

Summon the clutching ache you swallowed with each
hesitant gulp. Engrave the hurt in its ugliest semblance.

Remember it.

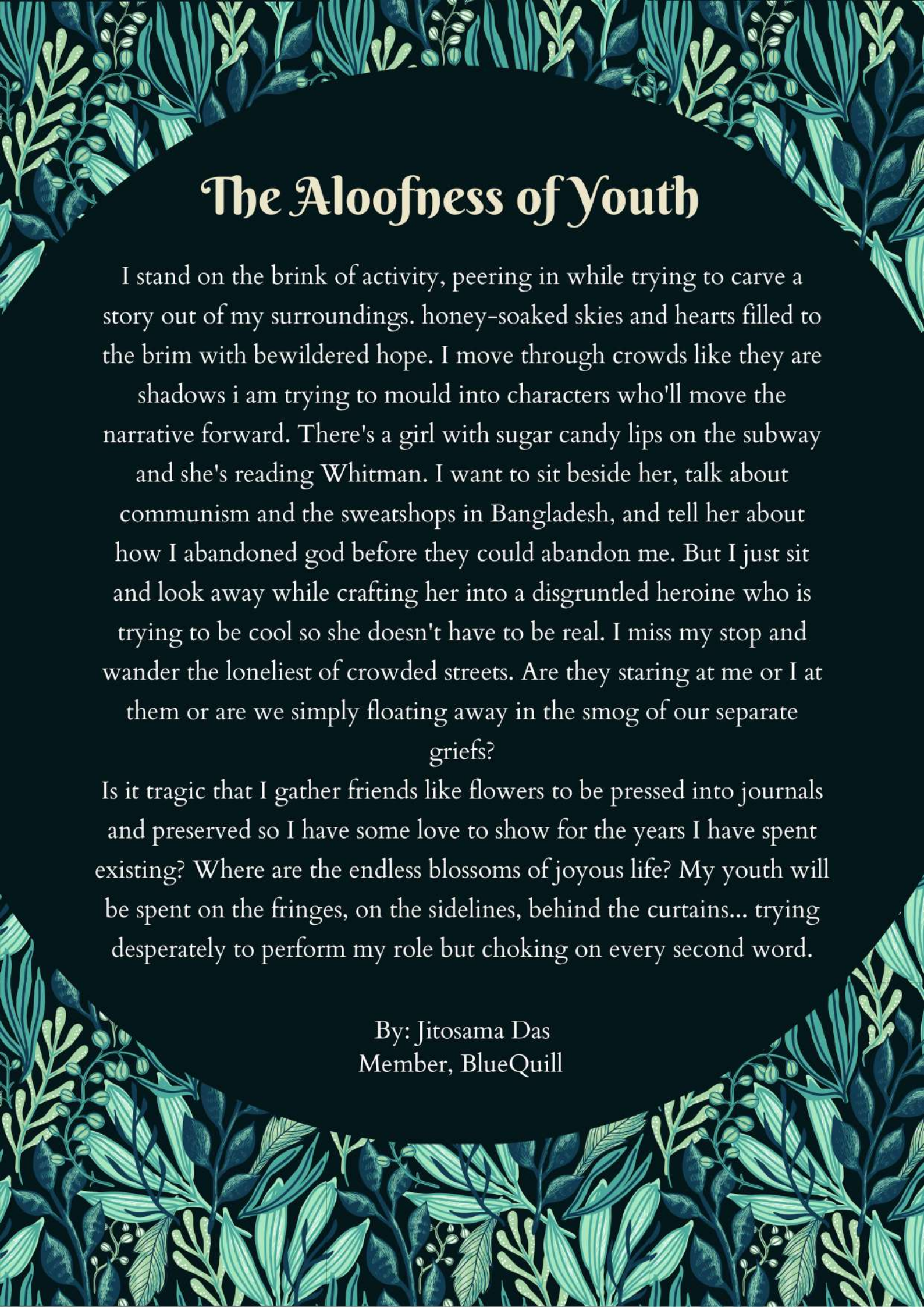
To trace back the footprint of my youth
Is to chew on sawdust,
As peering eyes gaze upon the fallen debris of
my being. To walk a path of coarse grains
prodding my sole,
Where solitude wavers a fraudulent stoic.
To find salvation in the arms of my mother
And yet fall prey to a purgatory no longer
'home.' Home – invaded like a solicited
burglary
Of my own body, robbed of space.
Space – an unkind captivity.

To shelter my wallflower-
evanescence now withered Into long
interludes of 'what-ifs' and 'maybes,'
Of agonizing trepidation and silence.

To trace back the footprint
of my youth Is to stomach
the ultimate chokehold
Of labouring a hundred
cement bags And mold a
refuge
From the manacles of a
ceaseless limbo.



By: Bhaswati
Member, BlueQuill

A decorative border with a repeating pattern of teal-colored leaves and small berries, framing the central text area.

The Aloofness of Youth

I stand on the brink of activity, peering in while trying to carve a story out of my surroundings. honey-soaked skies and hearts filled to the brim with bewildered hope. I move through crowds like they are shadows i am trying to mould into characters who'll move the narrative forward. There's a girl with sugar candy lips on the subway and she's reading Whitman. I want to sit beside her, talk about communism and the sweatshops in Bangladesh, and tell her about how I abandoned god before they could abandon me. But I just sit and look away while crafting her into a disgruntled heroine who is trying to be cool so she doesn't have to be real. I miss my stop and wander the loneliest of crowded streets. Are they staring at me or I at them or are we simply floating away in the smog of our separate griefs?

Is it tragic that I gather friends like flowers to be pressed into journals and preserved so I have some love to show for the years I have spent existing? Where are the endless blossoms of joyous life? My youth will be spent on the fringes, on the sidelines, behind the curtains... trying desperately to perform my role but choking on every second word.

By: Jitosama Das
Member, BlueQuill

youth: a funeral

(tw: mentions of death)

where does youth begin, but more importantly,
where does it end?
where did mine?

i sit at the burial of my youth,
and this is what is left behind: mere memory.
of home,
of a childhood home, set on fire.

light blue walls and cold red floors,
dark rooms where i lay fearful, of the night,
of the emptiness that it was, the lack of light.
of small worries, weak hearts,
warm eyes filled to the brim with love.
of people that i have now left behind,
but whose faces still visit in dreams,
shadows of who they once were.
people i watched burn with my own eyes,
people i buried with my own hands.

you are all here, dying within my memory
and i can only watch, for i am too far, from
home, from you
i can only weep at my memories,
watch as the tears fall and fade into the passage of time.

my youth now is this house that burned down,
the love i have buried beneath.

By: Adithi SR
Member, BlueQuill



Grown Up



Sometimes it's silly how I care more than the thing is
worth,
Does this thought mean that I have grown up?
Do adults stop making teenager mistakes,
Or get good at spotting whatever is fake?
Do they never trip on stairs with laces undone
Are their joyous moments, some higher level fun?
Do they know fancy, big words and use them left and
right?
Are they sensible and mature when they're in a fight?
With leather shoes, trousers, chinos and shirts
Do they just move on whenever it hurts?
Do they have their goals all settled and their thoughts
complete? When life flips them backwards, do they
always land on their feet? Know-hows, checklists and
crisp phone calls
In this giant world, do they never feel small?
Do their shoulders always ache but limbs never stop,
Smiles never fade and tears never drop?
Tell me if being grown up is this he y and more
Do grown ups never feel a bit insecure?
Tell me, as I age,
I can be a grown up too
So when on my worst days,
people ask, "How do you do?"
I can muster my best smile and say, "I'm fine,
thank you."

By: Surabhi Chhikara
Graphics Associate, BlueQuill

My Becoming

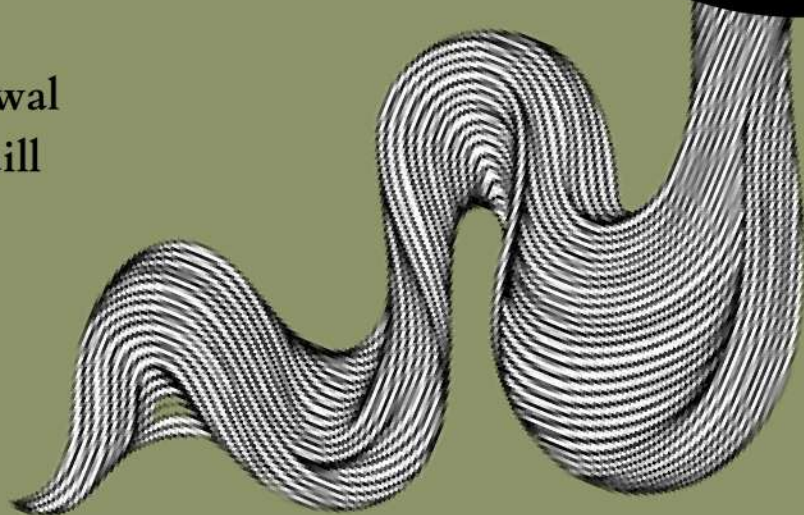
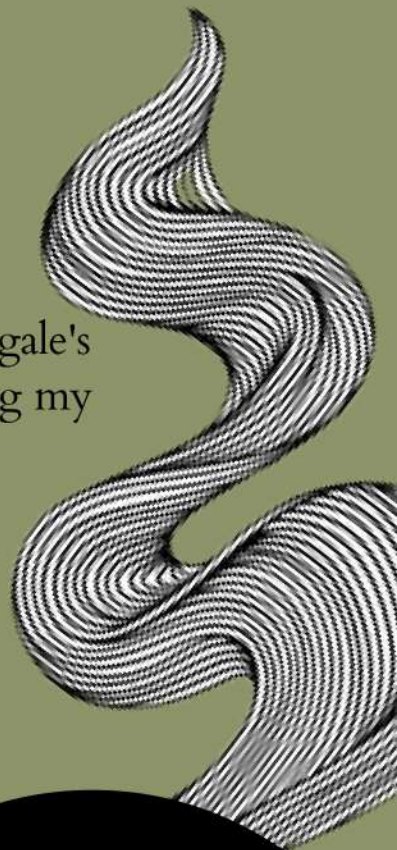
My Becoming is a song with unwritten verses and nightingale's melody. It's a dictionary filled with unmarked holes tripping my tipsy tongue.

A glossary of phrases which I can't fit into words,
Words, unwitnessed by another soul
and souls whose bodies are now mere moulds.

Through a maze of emotions, it's the path I had taken
to reach the summit of adulthood untainted
But veins of pain are still wrapped around my body
not loosening with any apology
At every turn they peek through
like a warning written in deep blue.

Years past have taught me though
a new language of growth littered with woe.
That adolescent anger has a room in me,
right next to my hunger for a home-cooked meal
My becoming is not an act alone,
It is the today, tomorrow and the days of yore.

By: Aayushi Jaiswal
Member BlueQuill

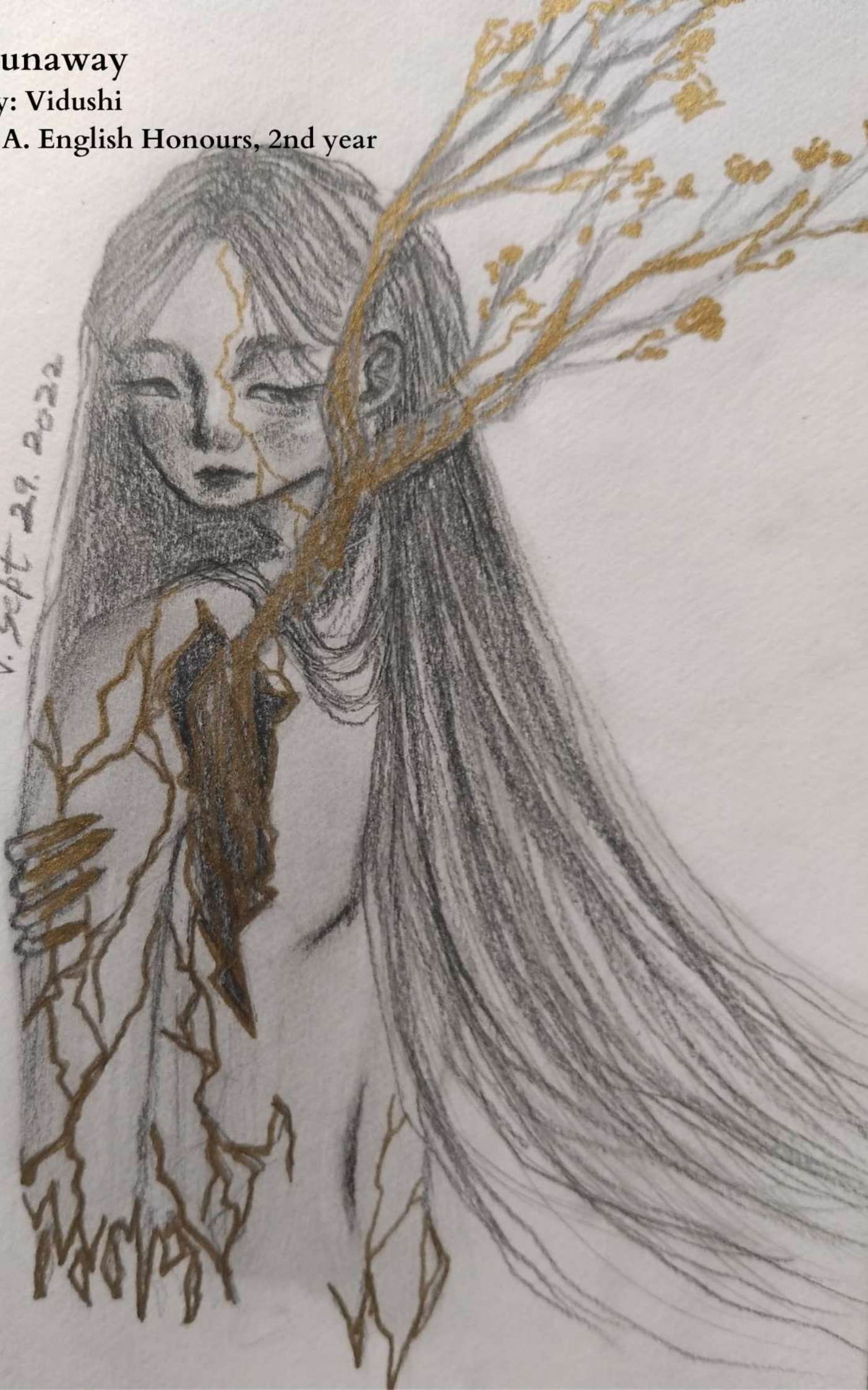


Runaway

By: Vidushi

B.A. English Honours, 2nd year

V. Sept 29. 2022



A Search for My Name

I've been wretchedly scared
To be twenty three and thirty
And forty five and sixty.

Honestly,
Slipping under the thick coat of time
Any day after swings of sixteen seemed a good deal,

c a r r y i n g

Fifteen sack full of scars,
The failing grades of maths

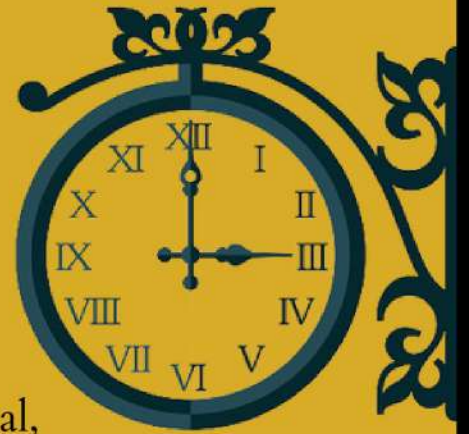
t h e a d v e n t u r e s o f

Letting my tongue run wild to tempt the gods of trouble,
And
Flipping a lad from a golf cart in a countryside

r e m i n i s c i n g

About the people who showed me light,
The stereo summer of dreams, vacations to purifying lands of
holy dips and saffron saints.
Winters to hibernate in layers of mismatched blankets and,
Spring blooming in delight, welcoming chirping birds carrying
twigs meditating on marigold buds reflecting the first ray of
sunrise.

What more could keep me stuck on earth, Longing for life?

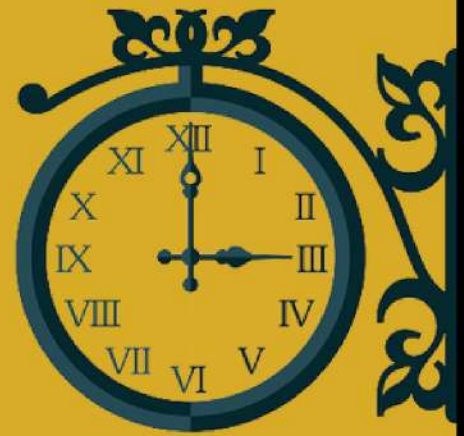




Afterall,
Our lands are charcoal dipped
in rage and misery, hand
holding dystopia
Their blaring echo -
bridesmaid of eclipse
Our miracles and hopes can be
robbed
They indulge in blasphemy
They are born only in lack

But most of us have plenty -
Plenty of weight,
Pouring down
Overwhelm pouring out
We know of life only as a debt.

Today however,
I'm tormented in ache and
forgiveness I want to roam and
shred
Have a sharp tongue
Gnaw at the next morning
Against a blasting madness-
Carry sunflowers and,
Bloom in the pages of now.
Tell the lands of tomorrow, my
name.



By: Siddhi Joshi
Member BlueQuill



Remnants

All my years have yearned more than what I have crafted -
out of remnants of stained shrouds and mixtapes of times' convulsion,
Rust in raindrops, errors in smiles.
I've held bloodbaths in my journals
And turned skeletons into symbols,
I have gazed upon the flight of crows from masjid to masjid
Attending janazah of the new-borns and then returning to the chinar at dusk.
I have seen the direction in which Jhelum flows,
It's steady gushes and fierce silence
Transporting pamposhes to pamphlets
For mitigating what is already dead.
I have seen the threads of astan clinging on to the iron bars,
Holding hopes of tryst with cordoned knots
I have seen the wrinkles of pheran,
Narrating tales of crackdowns and carcasses
I have seen identity cards drenched in blood
It's fog of protection as a graveyard in guise
I have seen prayers being chanted
for not life but for a peaceful death,
the choices crumble under the guillotines of inevitability
I have seen my poems go from love to loss
And in this becoming I have held
The crimson conundrum of morgues.

By: Madiha Mattoo
Member, BlueQuill





The mortifying ordeal of being content

It's a new feeling, finding comfort in the mundane,
the knot in the throat loosening just a little,
as I pull fresh linen over this misshapen lump
Of a borrowed mattress.

Whisks of spring grass and lavender softly ghosts by
and suddenly,
I can breathe again.

The ordinary sneaks up on me, all barefoot and hushed whispers.
I am happy today because the sun is bright and the laundry will dry quicker.

I am happy today because I found just the right perfume for me,
I am happy today because I have enough change for the
tuk tuk to take me home.

This happiness is quiet, it hardly makes a noise at all.

It sticks with you, this joy and burden of 'becoming'.
becoming older,
becoming content with simplicity.
four syllables, hung twice and shot once.

It stays with you
Like my ma's lipstick on my cheek, like gum in my hair
and the scar near my eye
It stays.

You learn to let go of dreams so big
they stumble out of your pockets,
slipping through your fingers
tripping over one another in a hurry
to reach somewhere.

You let go and suddenly all your ambitions
fit snugly in the palm of your hands
with room enough to grow.



The urge to learn eight new languages is still there, instead I settle for one.
My urdu professor chuckling lightly as he corrects my pronunciation of
Khoobsurat,
asking me to really emphasize the *kh*.

The itch to travel never truly ceases and yet
I find my way back home every month or so.
Sitting next to my nanu, drinking rooh afza
Desperately trying to quench a craving of eight years ago.
Summer still comes, but it doesn't feel the same.
I clean my scratched knees and mend my own torn clothes
I am 'becoming' an adult now.

I meet up with friends, visit bookstores and pet stray cats
And only sometimes think of a red bricked house
Covered in *chipkali bail*, with a *jhulat* hat is no longer there
In a street next to a basketball court
That no one now visits.

Yet youth never leaves me, stitches itself deep inside my bones
like paint that never truly washes away.
I'm like a child badly imitating a game I do not know the rules to,
with cheeks still too full and a mother who calls to ask
what time am I reaching home despite
the several cities between us.
This beckoning of age never arrives.

Maybe the stretch marks that crawl against my waist
and this contentedness
with the mundane and the ordinary
this death of ambition,
is the only grown up thing about me.

By: Mehak Bakhshi
Creative Director BlueQuill

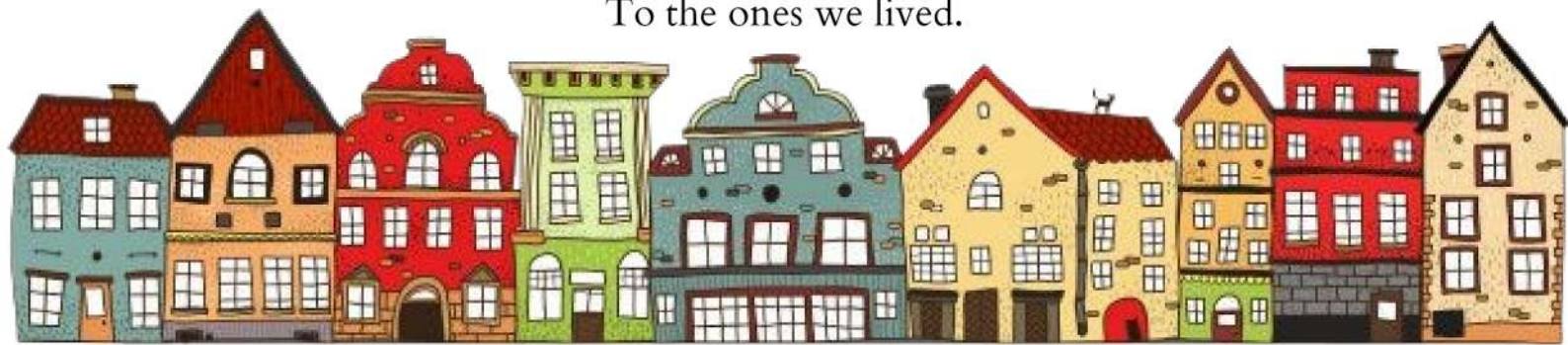


To the town of my childhood folklore

Your gay streets reside in my mind, buried with a cherry-picked wreath of distant memories. Some days, it comes to me whole: the same old canal beaming, smiling reassuringly at its lovers, the cotton clouds floating in midday skies. There it is, the bustle I left behind, faint in my ears, overlapping with the reverberating hum of the never-ending construction next door. It seizes me by the hand: the chatter of schoolgoers dwindling into the spring air and the noon bell striking, once, twice, thrice. The echo of the noon bell grows meeker as the minute hand shifts and the southern sky bids adieu to the sun in this city I barely know. They say the earth has only one sun. They don't believe me when I say: the sun of my hometown is different. Only you would know that I recognise skies more than faces. I've witnessed a hundred sunsets on the roof of my home; I've snuggled on my grandmother's cot underneath its crimson hues.

As a kid, I longed for school to be farther from home. If my ten-year-old self knew how I yearn every single day for home to not be three hundred and seventy-two miles away, she wouldn't believe it at first. And then, she'd probably laugh. The singular joy of gazing out of the school bus window wide-eyed would pull me out of the drudgery of the clockwork that is school. It was almost like an everyday moment of catharsis, you know. A fleeting vision: the blues of the sky plunging headfirst into the blue of the canal, like one drifting minute meeting the other, somewhere, in the middle of nowhere. I remember your waters. We have shared our circadian skies, knitted truths and lies. You were a witness to my stories, from when Tinkerbell sprinkled pixie dust, and blew life into my twinkling eyes to when Hassan with his cleft lip mouthed 'For you, a thousand times over' and my heart fluttered.

To the ones I saw,
To the ones I heard,
To the ones I lived,
To the ones we lived.



The little town of my childhood folklore, our fingers are intertwined. The day the eucalyptus trees that fenced the canal, the friends of my childhood were lost to the eclipsing shadows of modern times, a piece of my carefree existence waddled by. I heard you let out a silent cry. My shoulders grew and your borders unfurled. We sought blossomed skies and celebrated lives, no longer taking pleasure in the cherry hues of our young lives. How I outgrew you and you were made to outgrow. If I could, I'd take you back to our amber skies. To our azure, we'd return, away from the blues of the daunting highs. To when you were younger, and I was a child. I'd run barefoot on your mildewed grass. I'd let my feet sink in your homely waters. I'd let my hair unwind in the wind of your zenith and we'd be young again, one more time. My beloved, I'd forget all that is, I'd just be. Just be there, there with you. We lived these stories together, you and I. Ask your waters, they'd know.

We did,
We did.
We grew up,
You and I.
Voyagers in a hollowed sea of new life,
We're strangers now,
To one another,
And this mellowed life.

By: Amodhini Karwani
Member BlueQuill



By: Nandini
General Secretary, BlueQuill



Track 7



The Dog Days are Over



Mirror
By: Reet Deo
Treasurer, BlueQuill

I LOVE MYSELF NOW, BECAUSE OF YOU

I love myself now, because of you
I had you, then I lost you.

But somewhere along the way,
I found me and you found you
I buried it whole, the hole
you left in my heart.

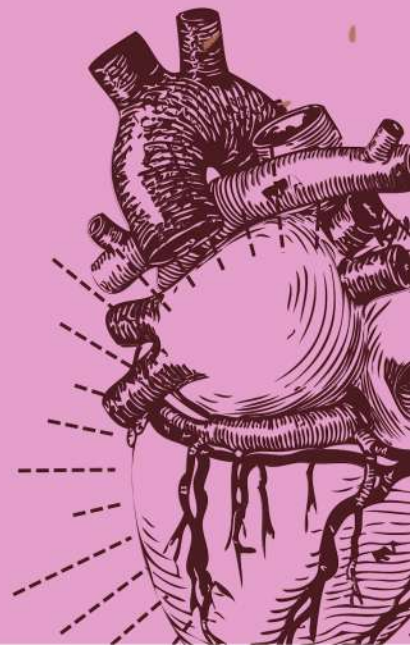
With a piece of my own, I
have a lot to spare now
As I'm growing more,

More than my body, more than my soul
More than your love, more than my own
Still not enough to clear the dents,

I'll always pass down as my own
March sings, to march on
And I have kept my headphones on
That day, I gave myself away
But your bag was full

Your song had no verses left
for me to sing on the tour
There were no reverses left in
me, to go back to the shore

I had coloured you golden, but
you painted me blue
That December brought a
wind, that I will forever rue



But I had sensed it all before
When you stared at me, a fool
I'd turn around, just to drool

I'd fake the narrow grins, but it was always skew
Not only I had gotten the start, but I fell too
As October brought a fall, I fell too

I don't remember how long ago I unlaced my shoes
Maybe August it was, when I got drunk on you

Maybe 'may' be the moment, you fled to be my muse
No candles or shirts, not even you
But I saw your glimpse because I was dying to

Maybe march brought me back to the alluring truth
I loved myself then, because of you.

By: Ishaan Grover
B. Tech, CSE, MSIT





NOW IS NOT THE HOUR

Now is not the hour to mourn.
The young mustn't refuse to giggle with breathless pauses
Instead, toe the line to make room for more.
Before your eyes meet mine,
I wonder what a decade is if not forgotten at the dinner
table.

Between rows of debates and a fiscal comeback,
You tell me the shapeless chapatti resembles a moon
yawning its fatigue away

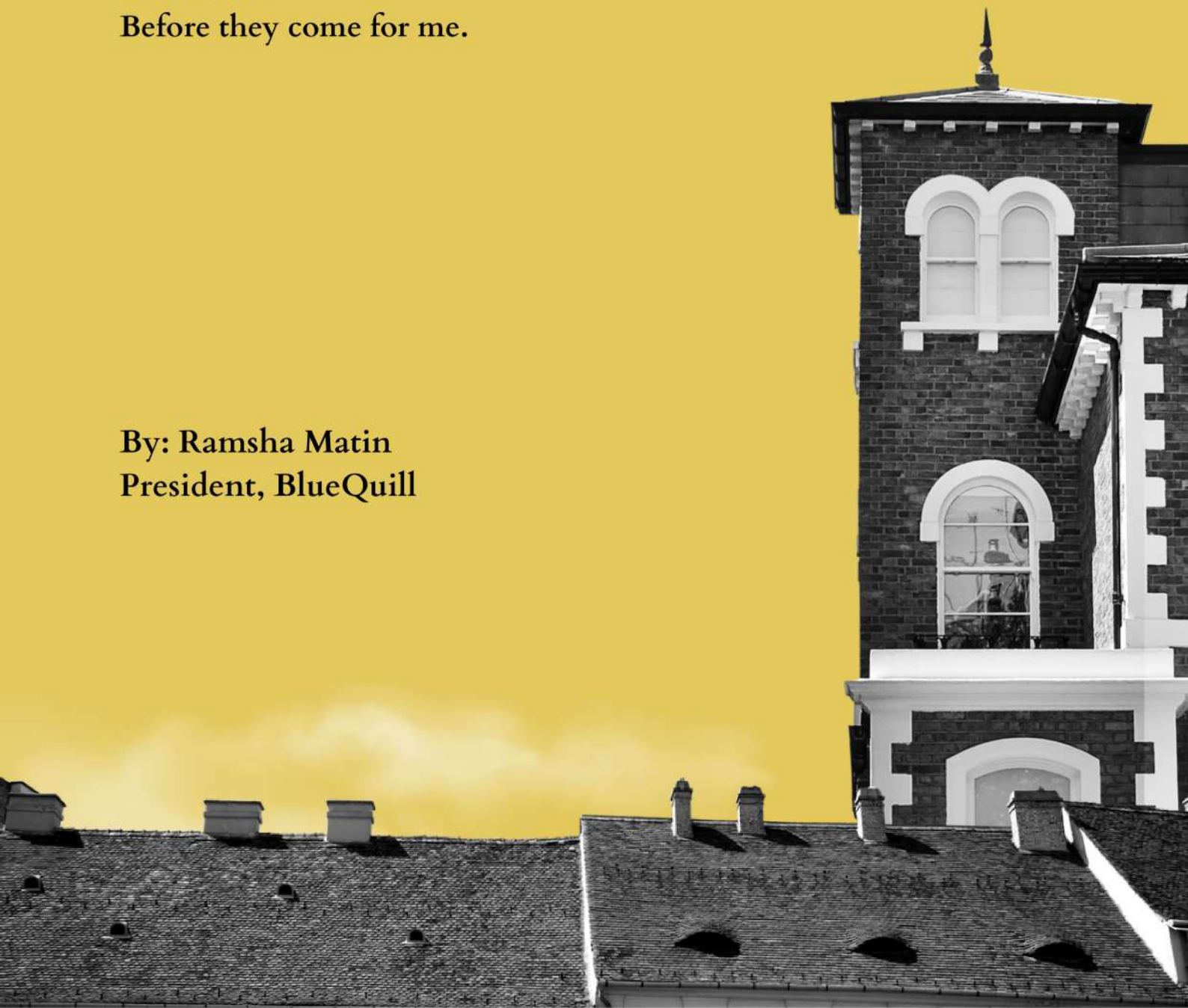
"Trace the burnt spots with precision."
It's a long night, young one
The tall figures know no better than stretching till it
breaks.

Now is not the hour to celebrate.
If you evade memories for too long,
they learn to flood in
The chairs give way first,
then the meal bows out,
And finally, the hours of secrets run
down to claim their prey.



It's okay to look down, for
As long as the roars stay put and the frowns
mellow out,
There's a place called home.
Before you learn how to pick apart shards
of reality from nostalgia
Gazing with a sore rumble in your throat,
I wish your eyes stop meeting mine, *kiddo*.
Don't ask me why the dinner is cold, and
the table a battlefield
I'll tell you I know no better;
I'll remind you I'm still learning to spit out
the answer
Before they come for me.

By: Ramsha Matin
President, BlueQuill



IS MY YOUTH MINE?

My youth does not feel like my own.
It feels like a basin of all the laughter, anger,
and tears of a forgotten childhood,

molded into a mix of my father's dreams that
I betrayed and my mother's expectations that
I don't have the confidence to fulfill.

My youth is a hollow success, it seems.
Not much regret, but not much fulfilment
either.

After all ... what is there to regret about a
childhood you've mostly forgotten and a youth
you are yet to process into being present?

My youth seems to be slipping away.
Rather, when did it even start and when does it
end? Was it my youth when my womb started
bleeding,

or was it my youth when a test score started
deciding my future? Will it continue to be my
youth when I fall in love?

In love with a world that's breaking me in,
graying my hairs before the years,

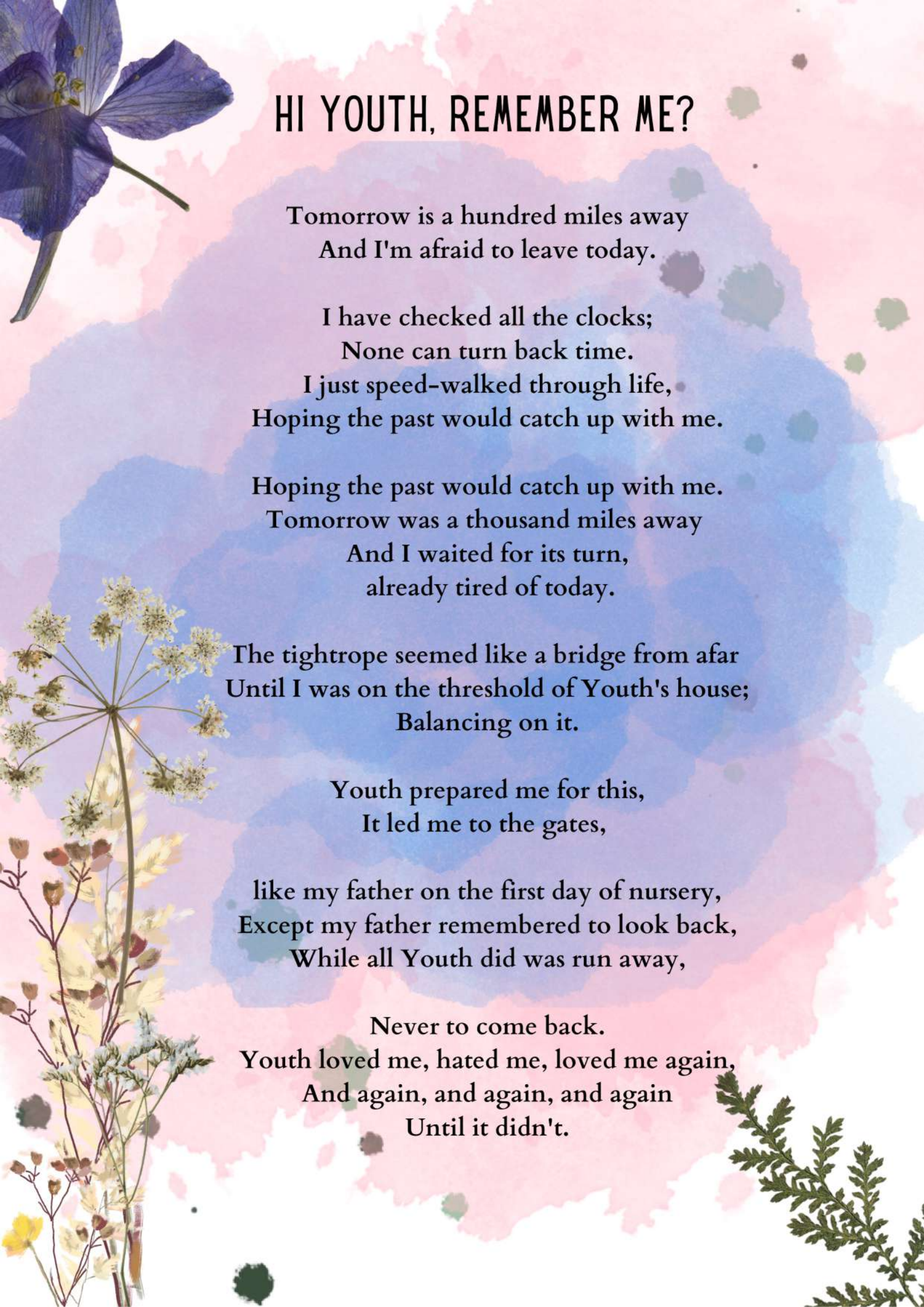
dimming my eyes before my time, and tweaking
my joints much too often.

Can I really call it my youth when it has been
fleeting away for so long? Running past me and
dulling away my years in banal tandem.

My youth seems missing, and I'm too lost to
search for it.

By: Luan Hau Man
Member, BlueQuill





HI YOUTH, REMEMBER ME?

Tomorrow is a hundred miles away
And I'm afraid to leave today.

I have checked all the clocks;
None can turn back time.

I just speed-walked through life,
Hoping the past would catch up with me.

Hoping the past would catch up with me.
Tomorrow was a thousand miles away
And I waited for its turn,
already tired of today.

The tightrope seemed like a bridge from afar
Until I was on the threshold of Youth's house;
Balancing on it.

Youth prepared me for this,
It led me to the gates,

like my father on the first day of nursery,
Except my father remembered to look back,
While all Youth did was run away,

Never to come back.
Youth loved me, hated me, loved me again,
And again, and again, and again
Until it didn't.

onsequat semper viverra nam libero justo
Duis conval... convallis tellus id interdum
et id. Consectetur a erat nam at lectus urna
vallis... suscipit adipiscing biben-
ultr... eras tincidunt lobortis feui-
mu... tas diam in arcu cursus.



donec enim diam vulputate ut pharetra sit. Dui vi
vamus arcu felis bibendum ut tristique et egestas. Fac
ilisi morbi tempus iaculis urna id. Malesuada fames ac
turpis egestas sed tempus urna et. Lacus laoreet non
curabitur gravida arcu a tortor dignissim. Accumsan
tortor posuere ac... semper
Velit aliquet...

Youth made me sick,
But
didn't give me any medicines,

It lounged in the waiting room
of my imaginary hospital,
While I writhed in pain.

Youth cut up apples for me,
But my mouth tasted the rot
before the sweetness.

But, youth also kissed me on my
worst nights.

Youth did come back once,
Matched my tears with its own.

Youth was innocent, like me
Until we both grew up.

I wanted it back,
but Youth grew wanton.

I have checked all the clocks;
None can turn back time.

By: Samriddhi Narayan
English Hons, JMC



Out of tune



Unity of opposites
Negation of negation
Antithesis leads to synthesis
Certain order we should have
Bigger order, better order
Thesis and antithesis, preserved
We need a revolution
Gatherer and hunter
And a slave

I wish I were here
Turning my class notes
Into inadequate poetry
Not existing in bits and bytes
With his electric heart
Our energies crackling behind
The pitch black screens and
Giving us life in life
Day in day
Light in light

Where should I be
If not here?
With the cool wind
Bestowed upon me
By chance, what lovely chance
The selfish desire for violence
Gently blown away by
Quiet longing for peace
Only if it weren't curious
How easily I give up
The storms of my soul
To settle for calm seas

By: Moksha Sharma
Member, BlueQuill



A Woeful delight

There is a rawness, something
disconcertingly thrilling about
exploring odd
and forbidden places after
school.

With an innocence that could
well trick the chaperone's
prying eyes, we took to narrow
pathways dotted

with uninspiring buildings
during humid afternoons,

disbelieving our incapacity and
too-supple sense of rightness.

The thought of childhood feeds
a mirage of memories,
so wonderfully clothed as to
mask its secret wiliness.

We revel in its rose-tinted
images, longing for the unreal,
imagining the unremarkable.

From behind the windowpane,
pictures of my young days filter
through reminding me of my
first dip in the pond,
hours spent whiling in an ill-
made garden den,





sweet tittle-tattles with grandmother (much
of which I would deem socially inappropriate
now) and an unending appetite for jams.

But this is what hindsight affords me.

A view afforded by the potpourri of literary
creations that delights itself in recounting
warming stories of those springtimes of life.



Yet I write now with dread.
An incomprehensible amalgamation of fear
and relief
(not to forget the irresistible wanton
pleasures),

makes me want to resketch the contours of my
youth again. Etched as in a two-hundred cubic
ton stone,

it has so fully razed and
enlivened the second decade of my life that
I'm unsure if to sing its praises,

or shut the volume and bury it in the morgue
of my memory.

The single syllabled word 'child' evokes a
breezy expression,

a half-hearted relishing of its bittersweet
flavour,

the only place where cavorting through
chalked tiles

and being chided to stay within the
geometrical confines of child-moral dictums
didn't seem paradoxical and pitiful enough.



Perhaps, to an equal measure,
the suffocation was not so much
because of our forbears but for
right-sized urchins of our age,
who seemed to act too wise,

too tall for their years on earth,
though their lowly spites
sometimes gave away

My childhood breathed through
a blighted mist of peer-time
agonies,
of failing to reach expectations –
hopelessly vulnerable – and of
being gratifyingly made a
laughing stock of the cliquish
brigade.

Flecked on the shores strewn by
the receding waves of youth are
my incongruent footsteps.

The irregular polygons my trails
betray speak of an unloved
history.

Here, my only ode to childhood
blooms with a painful
acknowledgement that the

chapter of my life which begins
and ends with carnations,
dried and rested for another life,
has come to a close.

By: Ayesha Mohammed Hanish
Member, BlueQuill



HOW TO SAY my NAME

My name is my mother's
call for warm aloo-
parathas from the
kitchen, her reminder to
always be careful but
never be scared.

It is her hope for me for
all things she once
wanted to achieve.

My name is my father's
pride and his
disappointment. It is the
keyboard I wanted for
my birthday that he
saved up his salary for
and the labels on dusty
covers of engineering
guides he sold away with
newspapers as I packed
my bags to leave for
Delhi.

My name is a print on the
back of a basketball jersey I
no longer wear. It is on the
first pages of novels that
someone, somewhere
would've picked up from a
thrift store at the airport.

My name is a missed call on
a certain someone's phone
who would've once barely
gone a day without talking.

My name is my sister's
"dhappa" during hide and
seek and my Dadi's search
party for the tv remote. My
name is something my
grandfather remembered
after Alzheimer's made him
forget his own.



A close-up of a human hand reaching out from the top right corner towards a butterfly. The butterfly has orange and blue wings with black spots. Another butterfly is visible in the top right corner, and a third is on the right side of the page.

Listen, I don't know who I am.
Some nights, my name is a war-
cry, a fight against shivering
hands and sleep music. that
doesn't help.

My name is an accumulation of
things I fail to voice,

it is my angriest poem and my
most timid apology. My name is
the credit I feel I am seldom
given.

A sprig of white flowers with many small blossoms on thin stems, located on the left side of the page.

I don't know who I am. But on
days that someone enunciates
my name, those six letters and
two syllables with softness, I feel
like I do more than just exist.

When you choose to say my
name with love, I choose to live.

By: Shreya Krishnan
Member, BlueQuill

A sprig of pink flowers with several small blossoms on thin stems, located in the bottom right corner.A butterfly with orange and blue wings, located near the bottom left.A butterfly with orange and blue wings, located near the bottom left.A butterfly with orange and blue wings, located near the bottom left.



Our Endless Numbered Days
By: Ramsha Matin
President, BlueQuill

A Tote Bag Of lament and love

The dull pink coats of
nativity drip, As the pollen
of marigold begins to unfold
its layers through
the crevices of a cemented
roof.

The clouds of sinful desires
put a hole through an
otherwise star-packed sky.
A collapsing sense of self
spreads into uneven
unwanted dreams, playing a
familiar tape.

This hour is stretched by
musky scents of a
sentimental moon.



Bruises on the elbow and joints
bearing the brunt of abandonment
reveal their presence
in a room cramped with sharp
daffodils. It's not a room.
It's a black hole of infinite loops of
rage.

Across the footpath, the yellow
cabs loiter picking up the dejected,
broken lovers, seating them in a
silent ride
to a bricked shelter and two rooms.
The waves of laughter of the city I
spilled my childhood in, doesn't
know mercy.

Despite my forgetfulness
the fingers of wildfire slither to
find mine, tucked inside the cuff of
the polka shirt.

We insist on moving on
when all we want is
to scream and scream and
scream
and puke these
memories from inside our
throats.

In an attempt
to plant a heart inside
rage
and save me,
I think I engulfed the
golden courtyards whose
retelling bubbled
the resilience of my
grandfather.

I bloom in fatherless
melancholy
to reign over what is
still monstrous
enough to engulf all
of me.

I stitch a tote bag
with the fruit of eve
on its freshly done
front.

I think we can refuse
to consume both love
and lament.

They tend to run in
circles and wind up
entwined in a
marriage of swirling
hurricanes.



Forgive me.
I'm in a rush
to run away to a harp
that'll build a burial for this
repeated destruction. The
enormity of loss clutches
the morning sun in a cold
embrace.

I'm a little girl again.
I'm a little girl again.
I'm a little girl again.

I need to apply ointment
to the receding courage
and thrust this ancient away,
so that I can briefly breathe
again
and squint my eyes that tend
to run a mouth of their own.

By: Siddhi Joshi
Member, BlueQuill



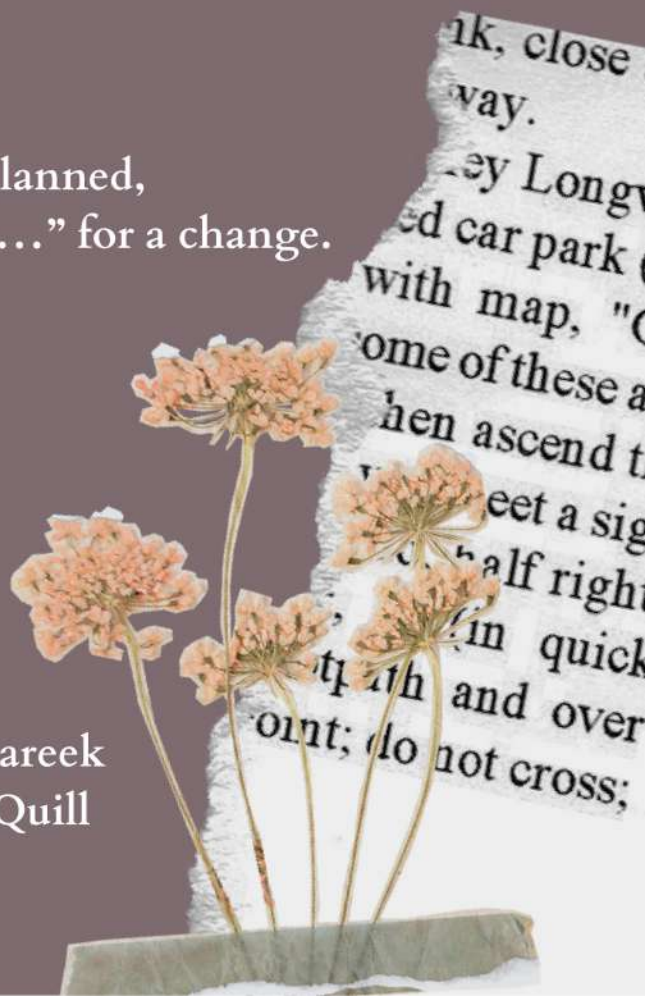
Nevertheless.

A thoughtless girl,
A huge void,
Winters,
And a notebook.
Scribbling away her angst
Too much ink for someone so thoughtless
Her pen refuses to continue midway
And she quits at the same moment.
She has a lot of pens, but at this moment
It's too tiresome to open any cap
And she still doesn't like mixing the shades of blue
So she just sits there, deciphering her own mess.
She wants to see the moon
But the popularity of the moon is ebbd
She accepts it with pain,
With feebleness, she rejects herself.
Watery as she makes her floor
And slips right into the next day
Today she falls in love with the sun, unplanned,
and opens the cap to write "nevertheless..." for a change.

Dusk is still a few hours away.



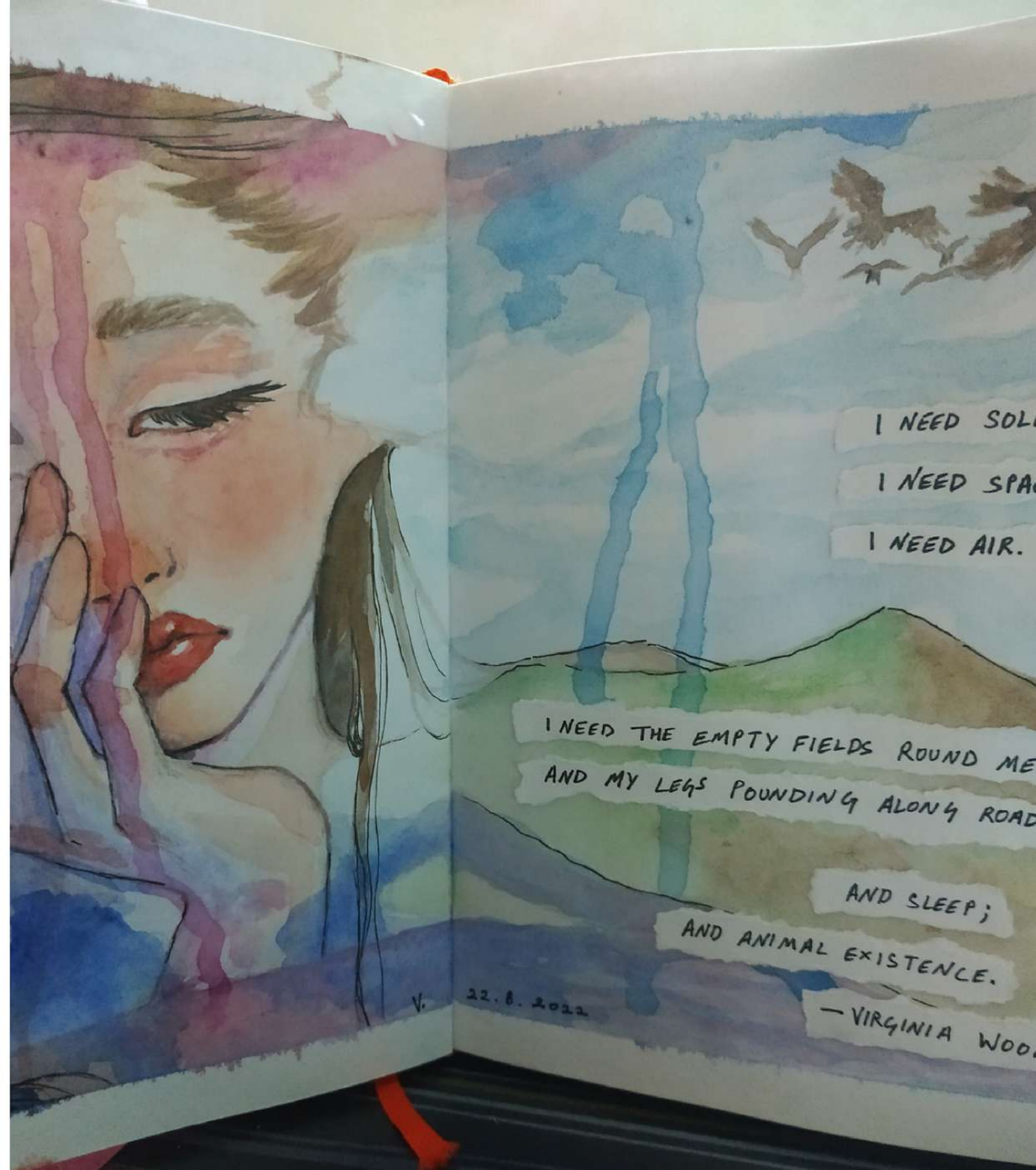
By : Anushka Pareek
Member, BlueQuill



TRACK 8

Navigating Nostalgia





I NEED SOL

I NEED SPA

I NEED AIR.

I NEED THE EMPTY FIELDS ROUND ME
AND MY LEGS POUNDING ALONG ROAD

AND SLEEP;
AND ANIMAL EXISTENCE.

— VIRGINIA WOOL

V.

22.8.2022

Beautifully Broken
By: Vidushi
B.A. (Hons) English, Miranda House

life time

Is it a milling melee
of chaotic obscurity? Or a
pristine thread of lucidity? Neither
can sweltering sun be shadowed
by the casting cloud, nor
the murky nights dwell
sans scintillating stars.

Last, yet, not ever last,
In this everlasting scrimmage of
eternal ephemeral quandary,
the states of gloom and glee, despair and
disrepair;
for, the tyres of time are too untiring to
cease,
remains only relishing the reminiscence of
remnants;

for, begotten, time has,
the unchanging change.
Only one we've of its kind, crammed
with anything and everything,
together with nothing,
a reclusive and inclusive life.

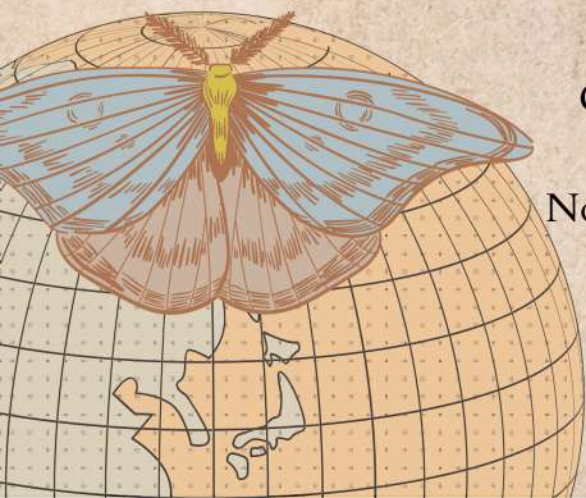
By: Shree Vardhini
Member, BlueQuill

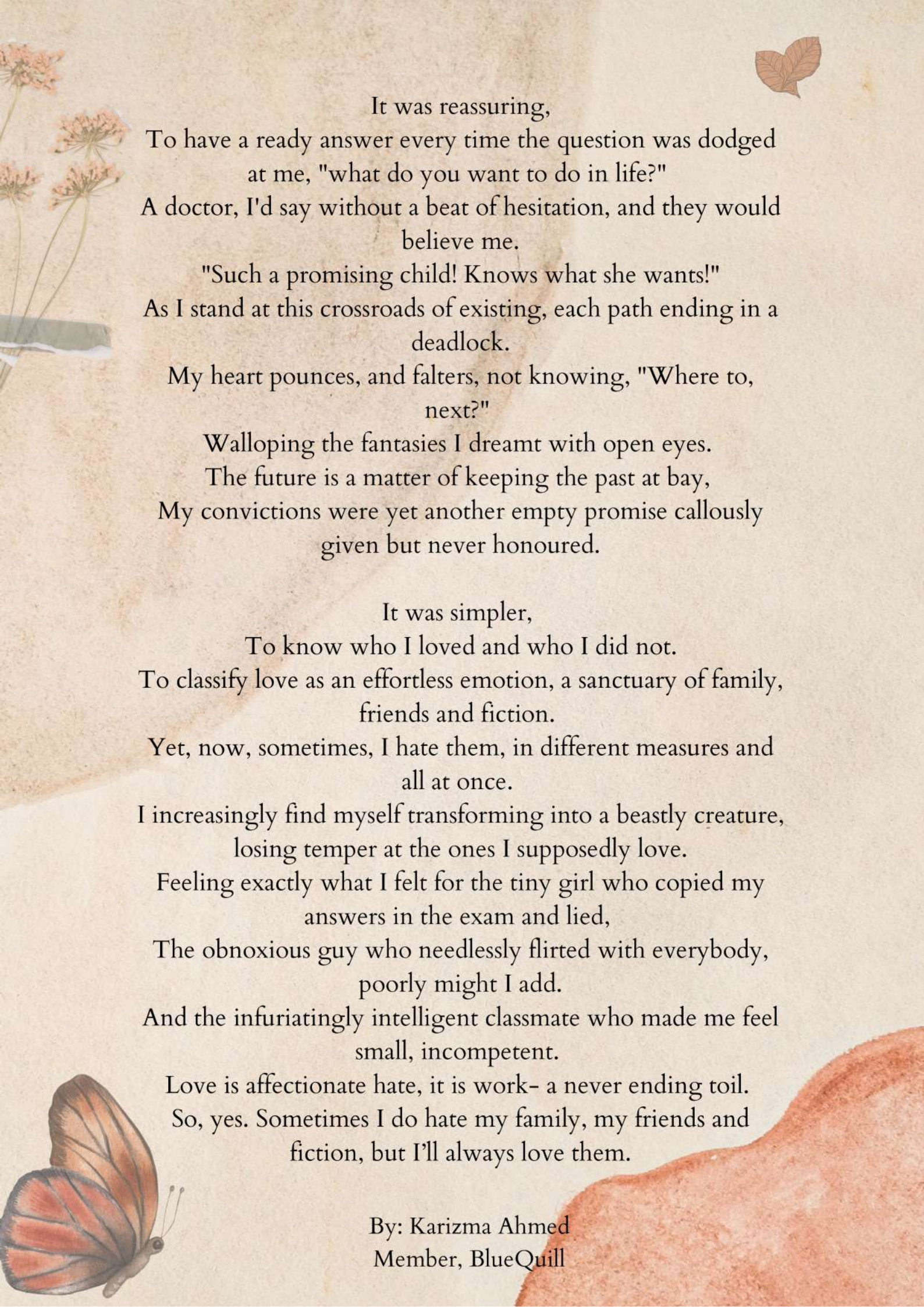


Jamais Vu

It was easy,
When I could tell my voice apart in a room full of people,
Confined and circulating confidently between the invisible
walls
of my little friend-circle.
Now it bounces between thundering boisterously, echoing
across
the room.
And timidly taking shelter in a lonely, far-off corner,
twitching uncomfortably in its own silence.
My voice is the distance it has travelled,
From the first to the last bench of the class.

It was amusing,
To gag at the mention of make-up with a dismissive
flick of my hand
Feeling oddly boastful as Ammi complained of
having a "boring daughter" .
Yet now, I find myself smoothening the panes of a
kurta that I choose to wear after many minutes of
intense internal debating,
Applying the liner on my eyes that I had finally
perfected, after years of practice and patience.
Carefully placing a black bindi at the centre of my
forehead and smiling at what I see in the mirror.
No, I do not – cannot – intensely work for my skin,
and yet.
I stand in front of the mirror and I smile.





It was reassuring,
To have a ready answer every time the question was dodged
at me, "what do you want to do in life?"
A doctor, I'd say without a beat of hesitation, and they would
believe me.

"Such a promising child! Knows what she wants!"
As I stand at this crossroads of existing, each path ending in a
deadlock.

My heart pounces, and falters, not knowing, "Where to,
next?"

Walloping the fantasies I dreamt with open eyes.
The future is a matter of keeping the past at bay,
My convictions were yet another empty promise callously
given but never honoured.

It was simpler,
To know who I loved and who I did not.
To classify love as an effortless emotion, a sanctuary of family,
friends and fiction.
Yet, now, sometimes, I hate them, in different measures and
all at once.
I increasingly find myself transforming into a beastly creature,
losing temper at the ones I supposedly love.
Feeling exactly what I felt for the tiny girl who copied my
answers in the exam and lied,
The obnoxious guy who needlessly flirted with everybody,
poorly might I add.
And the infuriatingly intelligent classmate who made me feel
small, incompetent.
Love is affectionate hate, it is work- a never ending toil.
So, yes. Sometimes I do hate my family, my friends and
fiction, but I'll always love them.



By: Karizma Ahmed
Member, BlueQuill

is that all there is?

By: Sanskriti Roy
Member, BlueQuill

The newspaper that adorns my top drawer has the obituary of a man, and i never noticed it before yesterday; just how i did not notice the ticking clock when i threw away my youth, one currency at a time.

it has been long since i last immersed myself in a loop of blues, it has been long since i last mourned for myself. i prize my agony in ways i cannot possibly fathom, it is a foil to all my days that have been, and those yet to be.

nostalgia is a peep at the past with rose-tainted glasses, they say. where are mine? all i get every time i look under the bed is another handful of memories that do not slip off my fingers; they are heavy and i am exhausted.

where are my bygone treasures and the dog days that i can look at, hoping for once, that this misery will fall two steps behind? no, i do not wish to part, i only want a few more hues to this canvas.

memories of the first friend i made in kindergarten come entwined with broken shards of my earliest remembrance of the division of my home. recollections of a first love come paired with the recognition of a dysfunctional middle class family.

i have worn serpents for flower wreaths before i realised what either were, now it is only a matter of how good they look on me. i have known blues for all my warm yellows, and slowly, they have seeped into my veins, one crashing into the other. i can no longer tell which is which.

a City & a Rover

It's been 20 days,
Since Rohit Vemula died,
Since Umar Khalid is behind bars,
Since Gauri Lankesh killed,
Since lovers separated,
And stripped of their clothes.
Since women were raped,
With their genitals mutilated,
Since Gandhi shot,
Since kids playing on streets kidnapped,
Since empathy abandoned,
Since media houses sold,
Since I left my home,
For Delhi.

I read about it in magnificent hard cover
But in reality it's a permeable membrane.

It's as fluid as the foam of Yamuna
As juicy as the verse of Khusrow.
Romanticizing it is a piece of cake
No, it's a sip of sharbat-e-mehboob.

The remnants of monarchy of Khilji, Tuglaq and Shah
Jahan

Appear nothing but carcasses of power
Politicised for power.

Reminding me of the verse of Galib:

हस्ती के मत फ़रेब में आ जाइयो 'असद'
आलम तमाम हल्का-ए-दाम-ए-खयाल है

If India is a melting pot of cultures
Then Delhi is the tea served from it
At a chai tapri
Under the gulmohar tree.
This city is ironic on some days.
I travel in crowded buses to reach lush green spaces.
On other days it's a toxic lover
Which gives you neither space nor time.
Walking through its lane is fearful yet liberating.
The scattered harsingar draws my path.
Where to?
I don't know.
There is no door but seven ways back to my home.
A purple tongue
After chuski or jamun.
A Sandhya Azaan after aarti.
A glass of milk with sweetness and love.
A pink sky with migrating cranes.
A box of medicines, a reminder of my father's disease.
A backless blouse filled with sweat that fed me.
I find these in every corner of every other Street
Except for the last two ways.
Dear Delhi,
I'm finding my home- a safe space
Like Vemula and Khalid and the innumerable women.
It's the 21st day.
You are a habit now.
Will you be my home?

By: Anchal Soni
Student, BA (Hons.) English



Fly Away; Snatch Your Freedom
By: Siddhi Joshi
Member, BlueQuill

UNTITLED

I am the sad girl at metro stations, not the kind poets write about, the kind that huddles in a corner and puts her head into a bag, and becomes darkness itself.

The murals on the walls of Barakhamba Road loom like giant nightmares before the windows, and I think about the last nightmare my roommate had, and the way her feet twitched when she was having it, and how she told me, later on, that she doesn't remember a thing about it; only that it made her sad all the way to the corners of her eyes.

I try to think about why I am sad, and if I could ever heal.

Marjorie blasts in my ears as I read up on self-love, on loving the innate you, whatever you are, darkness and draughts of cough syrup, the aftertaste of blood after you have chewed on your tongue, and I want to do it.

I want to love my paper mache brain, soaking in all the fears of the vast interconnected metro lines;

I want to love my grief bent body, pry away my clawing fingernails from my wrist, wash and wash every toe and every nail, and scrub the underside of my breasts, and soap the back of my neck; look as fresh as a spring field, be the sun on the apple skin that I was meant to be.

But that skin has been long peeled off, the sunlight has burnt its redness and the people in number 6 will see only the moist burn, the black core.

But, my mom tells me she delights in self punishment.

My dad burns his breath in midnight cigarettes, comes to my room, and tells me stories about a ghost that held his hand when he was filling his lungs with deadly breath. My roommates stay up and hungry, down mugs of coffee as their fingers tremble on their hand of cards, as dawn breaks on their wide open eyes. How do you self-love, I think, when your self only unloves themselves, day by unspent day, hour by ungone hour. My dad calls me at 1 in the morning and asks me if I am happy, asks me to be happy, and giggles about how my mom had scolded him that day for forgetting his favorite biscuits at the shop counter, and I wonder if I would ever be able to smile at my mom's anger.

I cross the road running, grabbing my best friend's hand, cold to the pores, pinkies knotted, and a man calls from a pub next door - free vodka for girls, madam, free vodka for girls. I laugh into my best friend's hands, what bullshit! But the man is insistent, free vodka, madam, only for ladies like you. My friend is insistent, we should get it - free vodka for girls! I shake my head no no no, I drag her away from the man, still screaming free vodka free vodka, I break into a run again, headfirst down the road, slippers pattering on the tarmac, away from the vodka, every drop free, and goddamn me, I need it, I need every free drop they offer, and yet I run, away, free vodka for girls flashing past my metro stations, drumming on the glass windows of number 6, and I hunch again, burying my face in my bag.

By: Mudra
PR Associate, BlueQuill

hours, days and light years

Have you ever been 15?
Because I haven't.

By: Soumya
Poet

I have only been 5475 days of stardust,
131400 hours of moonlight,
I have only ever been trips down old galaxies
only dark early dawn, first light.
Tell me, have you been 15?
Has your mind become blurry,
fogged up like windows in the winter?
I drew a map for home a light year ago
9 trillion miles have passed, and in the summer,
this familiar place seems now hollow.
My voice echoes off the walls,
like a haunting of poetry I loved
and so I stand here for a light year more
writing all that poetry all over again.

Tell me, do you know what it's like to be 15?
I drink the palest coffee some evenings
I find myself in a tea spoon of sugar, warm milk
and so as I lay for a way infinity,
looking for myself in the blue dusk
I walk down 14 years of sunsets,
Nostalgia and tears and moondust.
And I think that is what is being 15—
You get to be one and a half decade,
4.617 light years and a lifetime of pink skies.
Home and saturn, everything in between,
You get to be coffee as strong as the night;
And stories worth telling in monsoon.
"I love you"s as sure as petrichor, and
A path to home that stays the same,
No matter how much you've grown.



A reworked introduction for: **If I ever as an adult am asked to stand & introduce** **myself.**

By: Arjun
B.A. Political Science, 3rd Year

In the last nineteen years, I have learned that structures do not
stay,
that order is a concept of constructive futility which gives us
false hope,
there is nothing that remains as it is and ironically there is
nothing that grows,
I have found myself in a constant loop of letting go and
letting my surroundings take over,

engulfing me in emptiness, which sounds like wrapping
paper when it folds around me,
I used to think that my touch can help flowers bloom but
unfortunately, the only thing tactility has taught me
is respect for my boundaries, which I unknowingly open up
to everyone
and people like butterflies refuse to find comfort in the arms
of just one flower.

On most days I am afraid of losing everything I have ever
earned. I also uninterruptedly try to imagine all possible
courses that my life can take in the next few seconds,
minutes, hours, days, months, years, decades, centuries,
it's strange how death is something I have never really
thought about though,
except for when I saw the most beautiful soul in the world
being burnt in front of me, and I stood there helpless.

A self-proclaimed atheist begging god to perform one more
miracle, 873 days since my last request,
You cannot imagine how strange it is to blame him for
everything,
How strange it is that his is the only name I remember, at times
of pain, pleasure, euphoria, loneliness, and disbelief,
Even though he will never be there to experience it all with me,
I wish every time I was hurt,
I would only call out to those who can heal me and not for the
skies to bring me better days.

I have exhausted all my chances to ask for any more miracles,
Life is a routine left to be followed and normalcy is a staple diet,
I am slowly and steadily losing my faith in how special the course
of living is, blandly waiting for the universe to expand into itself

Maybe that is the do-over I feel like I have always needed,
Maybe I will feel differently tomorrow,
But until I don't, I will continue to contemplate and fail to
capture the answer to "Tell me about yourself", which was never
asked as a question but as a command to be followed,

As if privacy is a wax statue on display as if, if tomorrow you
wanted to buy it from the other side of the window, all it will
cost is meaningless trust which will break when kept in the cash
register, as if you are the mirror in my washroom, in front of
which I am comfortable showing all my imperfections,
as if I do not deserve the right to withhold my name from the
world, at times when I do not want it to know me,
but I am afraid that how will it tell my story if I forget to share
with it how to pronounce my name right,
maybe I have spent so long thinking about the "question",
no form of an answer makes sense to me anymore.



bloom into you.

By: Malika R
Writer, Engineer

When you look back at times, and wonder where it all went, how you miss the days that used to be – soft at the seams, bathed in golden light with cool blue undertones, memories – that slowly seem sweeter than what they used to be.

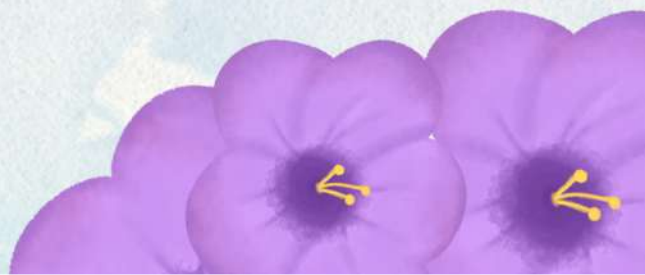
You should remember then, that your flowers, as intricate as you, are beautiful, just like your jagged roots under the ground. Your roots that have been through it all, come from the sands of time, and a period of growth.

While you were once just sharp edges and unpolished surfaces, you still had a soul that was raring to go, waiting to soar. You were chasing liberty through crowded streets and empty runways- an unending want for more- to be everything that you couldn't contain within yourself.

You should remember this then, that while the waters and wind have eroded your edges, your soul remains the same, bold and fierce, and at the same time serene- an unending need to be- among other things. Old heirlooms you decided to bury are in your bones and sense of self. You, are bathed in starlight, with undertones of purple and brown.

And thus, you have been a sanctum, born of flowers in the throes of spring, you have been someone's muse, in the blanket of autumn. While you have been all of this, you have never been static, a plethora of seasons and a whirlwind of a human.

With every counting second, you bloom into yourself.





Dreaming at the Desk
By: Shreya Krishnan
Member, BlueQuill

DIS(COMFORT)

My chromosomes count irrational prayers into veins of
choked Jhelum
-a youth with broken mixtape
Playing over and on repeat
Gunshots,
Pava shells,
Tear gas.

I was four when I learned to read sentences,
To associate words and letters into meanings
Building abstractions into images that were promised to sing
of princesses, kingdoms and happy places
But instead, I read headlines,
I read about love maimed into oblivion.
Blood flowing into Dal
And shikaras buoyant from convulsions of tears.

I was four when I asked-
Can we hold the loose strings of dewdrops?
Those that wipe off the wrong words from yellow pages
Can we hold the melting wax and make snowflakes out of
it?
To feel warmth in death and comfort in funerals.
Can we, for each other, hold the broken pieces of unfinished
poems,
Plant them into asymmetrical smiles of inconveniences,
Make an art out of atriums
And feel love instead of blood?

By: Madiha
Member, BlueQuill



I worry.

I am always worried that I think too much and that my thoughts will fly away as soon as I am able to find a pen or a paper or find the notes app or switch on my laptop and then I get worried that if I trust Microsoft once again, then, it will gobble up the rest of what I put in writing like the last three poems.

I am worried that my friends will stop lending me their books because, unlike what I am used to believing, that you can trust me with your books, you cannot. I write, I highlight, I might even scribble but I will abstain because how else will I read Crime and Punishment?

I worry I will not celebrate Halloween (yes the western festival which should hold no significance to us indian kids joined to their roots) before I leave my teenage years behind. I worry that I will not celebrate Christmas wearing ugly and cheap red and green sweaters bought from the local markets and that New Year's will be silent.

I worry that, since I talk too much, sometimes I will lose my silences and hence their worth. I worry the multiple long run to-do lists in my notes apps will sit unchecked and that I will never be able to learn Urdu. I am worried that someday, despite holding back, I'll say too much. I worry that someday because I do not say anything, I will see the end.

I worry that I will never watch and listen to Prateek Kuhad sing live and that Rahat Fateh Ali Khan will only ever croon as my personal singer through my earphones. I worry that I will never set a GoodReads book target and achieve it, because I can only keep tabs on myself for so long before it starts to feel like I am scoring myself according to the world. I worry that I will not be able to read the greatest love letter of all time and that Lemony Snicket was lying when he wrote the Beatrice letters.

I worry that I will never learn a little and what I learn will never be enough or even close.

I worry that the world will end when I am playing a silly game with a child or when I am laughing with my brother as he poses for another stupid picture or when I am in the middle of a love confession or when I am hanging my clothes to dry. I worry the world will end when none of us expect it and that I will have not done all that I could and all that I want to. I worry that no one will survive and we will lose everything we have ever built and have been.

I worry that I will wear that unnecessarily expensive dress that my mother bought on a not-so-special occasion. I worry my father will never know what to gift me for my birthdays, if he ever does. I worry that I will never understand my brother's anger. I worry that I will never be angry enough.

I worry as I write this that maybe I will never stop writing and then want to show it to the world. I worry that I will always be mildly embarrassed and hide it knowing and telling myself and others that embarrassment is a social construct.

I worry cats and I will always have a mutual dislike for each other. I worry I will never read enough and that people will unironically continue reading YA romance novels and recommend them ahead.

I worry that I will never dance to that Frank Sinatra song in front of the Eiffel Tower. I worry that the world will never be enough for us. I worry that I will never figure out a vampire's anatomy. I am worried that I will never complete a triathlon or that I will never be able to walk the longest walk (22,387 km). I worry extremism will dig its roots so deep inside us that the neurons will give up. I worry that I will never understand all the fields of study.

I worry that I don't worry about things that should matter. I worry that I am still holding back. But, mostly, I worry that I do not worry, not a bit, not at all.

By: Simran Samant
Member, BlueQuill

CAN I GET A REWRITE?

Youth - unfinished.

Rosy cheeks, college streets and promises.

Unfulfilled.

Anxious eyes, pale skin and book creases.

Trepidation.

I hear the sounds of morning banging against my door.

I cannot wake up.

My limbs are lifeless and my eyelids heavy.

A new day - uninviting.

The loud jangling of "success", Of a life extraordinarily lived,

Of a vision fulfilled.

These dreams that are shaped by the same faces, the same
classes, the same races and the slight variabilities of personal
taste.

It's still such a drag

The same crowd, similar minds, the same attitudes.

This boring sameness of the multitude I happen to mingle
with that shapes my mind.

Nothing of mine is really all just mine.

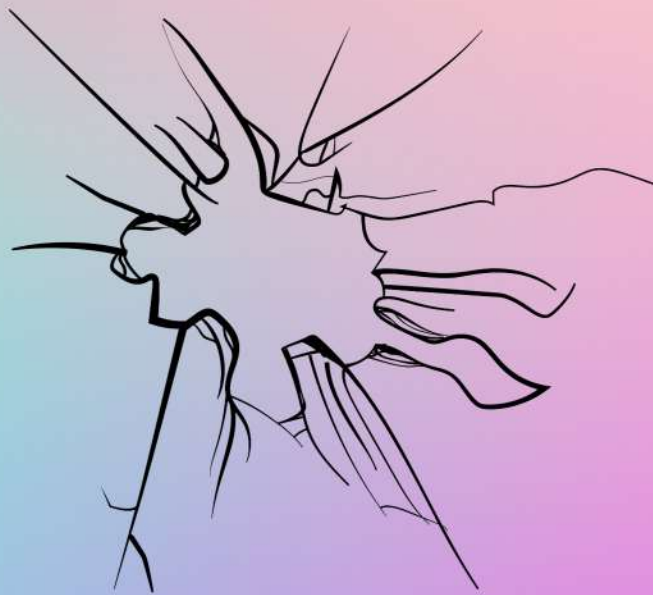
It's tinged by their touch, scent, thought, and so am I.

By: Debolina Bhattacharya

Member, BlueQuill

Through the looking glass

Kanzi is 1, she swears that she could feel the exact moment she was ripped out from her mother into the blinding lights of this world, immediately agonising over the calm nothingness of drifting through her own pool of blood , the umbilical cord the only remaining tether to the world she desired as she felt it being snapped in her mother's arm, and then, Kanzi let out a gut wrenching cry.



Kanzi is 5, she feels that if she stared at her inverted reflection in the spoon long enough she'd be sucked into a world of opposites . A world which turned Appa's grim tight lipped face into the one smiling that she only recognized from the pictures above the dining table mantle . That the window crowned by the setting sun would show her on the other side of the pale curtain , picking apples from the yard , veiling herself in Amma's saree as her hair cast a black shield through which sunlight filtered in kind rays.

Kanzi is 9, she sits scrambling through Amma's assorted boxes kept high up the wardrobe , stealing time before she'd hear Theri's wails echoing from his cradle , confirming the need for Amma's yawn to break the silence of the dusky afternoon . Kanzi feels that if she stared at the Polaroid of her mother long enough, she'd enter the world that belonged to the feisty woman in the cotton dress staring back at the camera , her hair in a slick ponytail and kohl lined eyes resisting the urge for their passion to be captured in a strange machine.

Kanzi is 15, assorting through Theri's textbooks for his first day at school. As she binds his book sitting on the wooden floor by his side, she wonders if she could knock it down and stumble into a world where she is 6 again, running her hands through her silk ribbons , excited for it to be braided by Amma for the first time. She looks over Theri's head, his face turned upward, the same wide eyed disposition framing his face, that Kanzi lined with kohl on her first day at school.

Kanzi is 19, as she feels the sunlight hitting on her bare back spreading the golden ambrosiac to her core. She pretends that if she saw the world through the bubbles of her lemon soda long enough, she'd see herself on the other side of the fence, 11 again; chasing dragonflies with the musky net she fought her brother over. As they parade a silly war cry on dragonflies.

Kanzi is 21, she thinks it's funny how a call that started with Amma asking if she'd be home for the solstice ended with them fighting and screaming over a place in each other's life. Kanzi wonders if she could concentrate hard enough she'd end up on the other side of the tether in her Mother's shoe, maybe life would be less lonely in the comfort of shoes that lived through one, because she couldn't decide about her own.

Kanzi is 26, she sits alone tracing the half silver spill of Theri's coffee mug on the table, the ghost of his smell still lurking around. She wonders that if she stares at its reflection long enough, Theri would be a baby again. Wrapping his plump fingers around hers as they walk through the long grass of spring in their backyard. If someone asked her at this moment what the loneliest sound in the whole world was, she would say the distant whirring of the hammer on a sultry afternoon, the sound that follows you when a loved one leaves realising how utterly alone you're going to be, that there is nothing left but to stare into the dusty bright sky and feel what they must be doing right now.

Kanzi is 29, screaming through the agony that was tearing her apart from her core, holding on to the hospital bed, fearing being prisoned in her own pitied love. She could feel the heaviness of a 6 pound baby that caved in her arms, for she felt that if she looked long enough at its face she would go through the torment of 3 decades of solitary remembrance again.

By: Priya Shandilya
Member, BlueQuill



Contributors



Shreya Krishnan 's attempt at writing mostly stems from the need to organize the overflowing clutter of memories in the drawers of her heart— a place where people still manage to make room for themselves, an iced coffee and a playlist at a time.

Ashlesha is a chirpy and outgoing person, who wears her heart on her sleeve and speaks openly about things that matter to her. An amateur writer, she enjoys dancing and binging sappy romances, and prefers being called weird to being like everyone else.

Adithi S R is an English honors student at Miranda House, Adithi spends her time being awkward at social encounters and chaotic at everything else. A lover of all things art, she spends her time trying to create it for herself, taking inspiration from everything around her, whether it be Pinterest boards, clicking pictures and so on. You can probably find her sleep-deprived at college, drinking cold coffee to cope with life, and everything else.

Simran Singh is a third year student at Miranda House. She can be found sticking her nose in a novel or trying to convince stray cats to accept her. Her love for acquiring creative inspiration from the most obscure things are unmatched, yet she craves mundanity.

Shriyanshi Yadav is a student of Indraprastha College for Women, currently pursuing B.A. History and Philosophy. She loves reading books as much as Lorelai Gilmore loves coffee and is fond of flowers, music and of course, poetry.

Arjun is a 3rd-year Political Science student and a self-proclaimed writer. He lists his main passions as coming up with lousy jokes and watching anything created by Greg Daniels. In his downtime, however, he puts together penned down and forgotten thoughts marinating in his phone notes to make seemingly sensible poetry while listening to EDEN on repeat.

Priya Shandilya is currently an undergraduate of Philosophy from Miranda House



Heer is a student of BA Hons English at Miranda House College, DU. Her first collection of poems 'If Life Wore Polka Dots' received awards and critical acclaim for its young voice. Heer's affinity towards the stage is translated in her dance and public speaking. Her passion towards the artist community and their plight for democracy is what has led her to found 'Projekt Kalaakaar' as a Millenium Fellow.

Shree Vardhani is a 20-year old, final year student pursuing BA Program at Miranda House College. She has a deep penchant for poetry and is an eternal lover of skies and mellow sunshine. She strongly believes in imbibing a pragmatically optimistic attitude. Her writings are a result of numerous thoughts and imaginations, tinged with multitude of emotions and alliterations.

Thakur Parth is a third year Btech student at Manipal University, Jaipur.

Aparna S Rajiv is a final year student pursuing B. A (Hons) Sociology at Miranda House.

Arya Mallik is a 2nd year Applied Psychology undergrad from Gargi College, University of Delhi. When she isn't running around looking for a research participant for her course, you'll find her writing poetry, dragging her friends to obscure art museums, or playing away at her piano. PS. She will laugh at your jokes no matter how bad or overused they are.

Sakhi Singh (she/her) is a 20 year old writer from Delhi, currently pursuing English hons from Miranda House, Delhi University. Her first book titled, "Affected Admiration" came out in February 2019. She has been a part of a number of poetry anthologies ever since. She hopes to bring a change or at least make one person feel at home through her words.

Soumya is a queer identifying, unlabelled 10th grader; who writes poetry and other such and happens to have a poetry account as well (@pearldrive.pdf).

Simran Samant divides her time between trying to study, cope with college, spending time with her friends and writing on substack. She hopes one day to make an impact and not lose herself in the oblivion.



Reeya Joshi is a 2nd year student at Jesus and Mary College, Born in the beautiful mountains of Uttarakhand and brought on the heritage city of Jaipur. The pieces 'Her fingertips' and 'Yaatra' are two pieces centered around everyday phenomenon. Summary of journey, Yaatra portrays the struggle of the writer when she travelled alone for the first time and has an underlying want to reach her home soon. Her fingertips is an interaction between a grandmother and a child as they reminisce about a long forgotten past.

Shefali Kohli is an Undergraduate student of English Literature at Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur College, University of Delhi. Her research interests include Greek mythology and literature, children's fiction and magical realism as a genre in literature, Modernism, Renaissance literature, and philosophical discourses. She likes to gather knowledge on varied subjects such as philosophy, psychology, languages and different genres within the paradigm of literature and tries her hand in academic and creative writing for gaining immense experience and improving her writing under proper guidance.

Shubha Bhatt is a final year student of History and Philosophy in Miranda House, University of Delhi. As someone who's figuring things out in a new city, she finds so much of the world within and around her through writing and reading. She's drawn by places in general, and loves how there's so much of us that a café, a city, a corner, a desk can hold within itself. Her works have been published in The Remnant Archive, Dhoop Biscuit, The BlueQuill Anthology Issue 1 amongst others.

Aratrika Mukherjee

Abhisha Gulati is an Author, a Poet, an Orator, a Freelance Tutor, a Creative and Content Writer who is currently pursuing her Under graduation in Psychology from the University of Delhi. Her debut book, 'She is an Enigma' is a Bestseller on Amazon. Been a writer since the past 5 years, Gulati has crafted more than five hundred poems and many short stories which have been recognized and awarded by several platforms. She is deeply passionate about psychology and literature.

Ayesha Mohammed Hanish is a writer (of sorts) from Cochin who's work has appeared in magazines and newspapers. A stickler for rules, Ayesha takes delight in all things bucolic, from hornbills to charpoys, and everything in between.



Vasundhara is an Economics student fueled by her own contradictions and the conviction that love is the only reality in the world. She refuses to be restrained by stereotypes, adopting new traits every month and living in a conflicting 'classical+pop' aesthetic. A huge dessert lover and entirely subjugated by her cat, she is usually making fairy tales out of the mundane when she isn't hiding her real thoughts behind the silences of her words. You can often find her fangirling over anything under the moon, or waiting for her magical powers to suddenly appear and her fantasy adventure to begin. (Spoiler alert: it wont. Probably)

Nandini is a second-year Literature student at Miranda House, University of Delhi. She is writer and poet, driven by her want to learn and direct interdisciplinary chasms between politics, culture, art, and literature. Mostly, she is grappling against social constructs and living her life as a fruit.

Dilnasheen Zarreen is a second year student pursuing B.A. English at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata.

Nandabala is a second year student of History at Miranda House. She started writing, or rather, reciting her works when she was about five years old. She has published a collection of Malayalam poems named ""Mazhavillu kondu varacha thathakkili"" (A Parrot drawn using the Rainbow) at the age of nine, and is currently working on her second collection of poems. Her stories, articles and poems has also been published in several other platforms like the Indian Express Malayalam. She is also a member of BlueQuill, the English Creative Writing club of Miranda House. She hails from Kerala.

Sanskriti Roy is a confused, cynical persona who spends all her day trying to navigate the water (and fails, mostly). her go-to food are fries, anytime, anywhere.

Anchal Soni is a student pursuing B.A. (Hons) English.

Debolina Bhattacharya

Nalini Priyadarshni writes and translates poetry. She has authored a collection "Doppelganger in My House" and co authored "Lines Across Oceans" with late D. Russel Micnhimer. Her poems have appeared in numerous Literary magazines and anthologies including but not limited to Counter Current, The Madras Courier, Ugly Writers, The Witness, Still We Sing and Contemporary Major Indian Women Poets. She lives in Ludhiana, Punjab.



Sunaina Mishra is a self-proclaimed singer-songwriter. With lyrical compositions based mainly in her head, she aims to do justice to her duty as a philosophy major by trying to highlight social, political and spiritual themes that transcend her rather mundane daily-life through the medium of her poetry.

Surjamit Bhattacharjee is pursuing Bachelors in Philosophy at Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

Aayushi Jaiswal is a Philosophy major currently in the final year of her graduation. The intent of her writing is to make sense of the chaos in her own mind.

Parul Kumar is a published writer, artist and spiritual seeker who finds solace in writing and is a literature student. She believes in making life a celebration and regards her poetry as an act of self-care and healing. Her work touches on love, candidness, spirituality and hope. The driving force behind her musings is to render a smile on her readers' faces and give them a reason to revisit the same.

Kriti Khurana is a third year student pursuing B.A. Philosophy at Miranda House.

Moksha Sharma is a college student who thinks the peak of artistic expression is disintegrating oneself into a pool cleaning machine. However, for now, verbal disintegration into unintelligibilities would do.

When **Suhani Duhan's** friends aren't bullying her into having a social life, they're despairing over her lack of popular cultural knowledge (case in point - she's never seen Om Shanti Om). Whatever time remains is spent trying to graduate with majors in History and Political Science (preferably without having a breakdown).

Khyati Sanger (1999) is a new writer who studied English literature at Miranda House, University of Delhi and went on to specialize in Journalism at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication. Her work mostly consists of short stories and evocative poetry. Inspired by her experiences as an Indian woman and mental health activist, it often features themes of social identity, childhood, emotions and redemption. She is also a journalist whose work has appeared in Hindustan Times, Economic Times, and Business Insider. On weekends, she likes to watch stand-up comedy, catch up on football, and draw comics. Her weekly newsletter Talk More is released every Sunday on Instagram @TalkMore and Twitter @SangerKhyati.

Nandana AR is a 3rd year student of Economics and Political Science who used to scribble away in her notebook but has now found a place where she can read them out to at least a few. She's an avid reader and learner who gets fascinated about the world she lives in as quick as taking a breath. Writing, for her, is the outlet she chose to untangle thoughts that buzz inside her mind.

Devanshi Sharma, the author assumes this is about her, and she says hi. there is not much time, but she loves cats and mathematics, books and colors. mountains over beaches.

Muskan kaur is a second year student currently pursuing Bcom honors at Shaheed Bhagat singh college, University of Delhi. She is also serving as social media head for 'Meraki'- the bilingual creative writing society of her college. Being an introvert that she is, she usually sorts to poetry to express her emotions. Though, she can be labelled as a 'chatterbox' around her favourite people.

Ishitv Vats is a poetry enthusiast who is studying Biochemistry at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. He strives to hone his craft and keep writing as it provides him with a great deal of catharsis and healing, and he loves poetry in general.

Siddhi Joshi is a poet and artist based in Uttarakhand, India. She is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in Political Science and Sociology from Miranda House, Delhi University. Warm like the colour yellow, in her company you will find yourself amid warm laughter and witty remarks. To her, mysterious old libraries and hastily scribbled poetry in a coffee-stained journal is the only utopia worth seeking. Siddhi is a blend of strong opinions and lyrical thoughts – a dichromatic soul that searches for answers in the prevailing paradigm and finds meaning in the minuscule. Instagram: siddhii.joshii.

Ayushi Upadhyay is a student in CHIREC International School, Hyderabad. She is in her year 1 of completing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. She plans on pursuing business management and economics in college. She has deep passion for the performing arts and creative writing, as well as cinema.

Madiha is a final year Philosophy student at Miranda House.

Diyasha is a final year student of the English department at Miranda House

Gauri Yadav is a final year student of the English department at Miranda House.

Amodhini Karwani is a final year, English major at Miranda House, University of Delhi.

Obsessed with metaphors drenched in the colour blue, wildlife documentaries and tumblr poetry, **Mehak** is a third year philosophy and political science student whose bursts of inspiration come at the most inconvenient of times. Stringing prose and poetry from leftover words in the notes app, Mehak aims to write poems that are easy to carry and to pet every doggo in the world.

Kriti Garg is an accidental poet who tried being creative for the first time and wrote her first ever poem when she didn't understand the rhythm of the world. She likes to call herself Senara. She failed to feel emotions until she knew they had a language which wouldn't make sense unless she felt it. Poetry has been her language of expression of any and every emotion that she ever experienced herself or in the eyes of the ones whom she felt.

Bhaswati is a 19 year old student pursuing BA Honors in English from Miranda House, Delhi University.

Jitosoma Das is a second year student of the English department at Miranda House

Sukriti Singh is an English Honours student who is in love with photography and sometimes decides to write. My art, be it photography or writing, has always been about raw feelings and depicting things in the most genuine way possible.

Vaishnavi Priya is a Miranda house student who loves reading, writing poetry and acting.

Ishaan Grover is an amateur poet/writer. He tends to look for the best in things and he finds it hard to balance his imaginative and creative perception of the world combined with a realistic nihilistic approach to life.

Samriddhi narayan is a second year student pursuing English honours at Jesus & Mary College. For her poetry has been the saving grace of life, which she has clung to since long.



Surabhi Chhikara is an easy going gremlin who loves to rhyme. Gobbling mangas and streaming Asian dramas, she's an economist-in-the-making. A George Ezra stan and chocolate lover, she's an active lazybones who describes sloth as her soul animal. From mindful and calm to eccentric and unhinged, her greatest fantasy is walking across Derbyshire like an Elizabeth Bennet-wannabe.

Borderline enthu-cutlet and whale enthusiast, **Ramsha Matin** is a twenty year old literature student who lives to articulate her rants into poetry. In the pursuit of not running out of verse, she finds solace in pet videos and shades of blue, and digs out muses in between random deadlines and unfortunate epiphanies. A strong advocate of embracing silences and introvert supremacy, Ramsha will casually hook you on blueberry jam sandwiches and Indie folk artists if she hasn't already.

Luan Hau Man is a second year, English major at Miranda House, University of Delhi.

Anushka Pareek is a 3rd year student of B.A. History Hons., Anushka describes herself as an 'old school',, housing all the love for everything vintage in her heart.

Karizma Ahmed is a literature enthusiast from Miranda House, who is better known as Kriz. She finds comfort in good music and trashy rom-coms (despite not being a romantic) to survive the general burdens of life. Kriz is also a low-key sociopath who observes her surroundings and then writes poems about them!

Bhavika Sachan is an aspiring Indian writer and poet with a degree in English from Miranda House, University of Delhi. She has won the 2019 Ellipsis Best Writer's Award. Her works have been published in Pinnacle Magazine, Unicorn Magazine, and the previous issue of BlueQuill anthology. She has won awards in many college-level Creative Writing Competitions. Find her on Instagram at @bhavika_19s.

Sumedha is a dog-mom, boba lover and photographer. With all her money spent on getting new tattoos and buying more film rolls, they're always a little broke. Some of her recent work favourite themes revolve around exploring queerness, disability and the politics of the two. Sumedha is the loud gay kid who just wants to sleep in class, constantly says "neend aa rahi hai", wanting to run to Gwyer Hall Canteen to get a good cup of Amma's filter coffee or biryani at DSE.

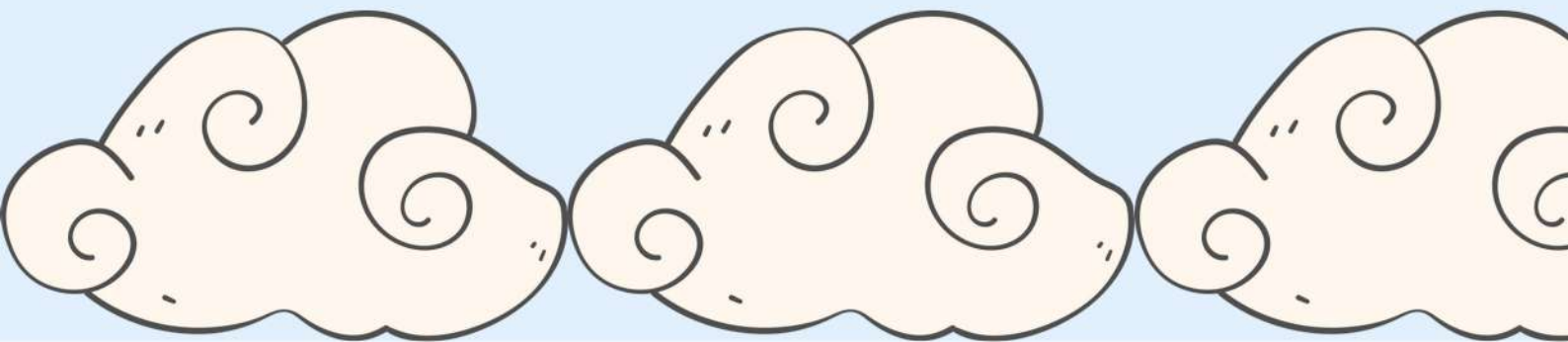


Vidushi is an artist who takes inspiration from the Japanese concept of 'kintsukuroi'. It refers to fixing broken ornaments/utensils with liquid gold and the emphasis is on how beautiful and amazing it looks even after all the damage, Vidushi believe youth is something that is very similar to a 'kintsugi' it's a beautifully broken existence held together with gold.

Sukriti Singh is a English Honours student who is in love with photography and sometimes decides to write. Their art, be it photography or writing, has always been about raw feelings and depicting things in the most genuine way possible.

Metamorphosizing into the friendly neighborhood crazy cat lady, **Reet** is a learner of literature but mostly things that do not retain much value. Between listening to Tow'rs and reading Faiz, she draws everyday life strictly from memory (poor memory) and writes only to reminisce what needs to be forgotten. Intrusively attached to many things at once, Reet humours herself to love and be loved.

Niranjana Rau is a photographer who have styled and photographed one of their coolest friends on the theme dark academia in the middle of the night.





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