

Thoughtspell

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Students' Magazine

Department of English The Bhawanipur Education Society College

Team Thoughtspell

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From the Editors' Desk

Since its inception, the principal objective of *Thoughtspell* has been to offer students of the Department of English, The Bhawanipur Education Society College an opportunity to express their creative and critical prowess in a space external to that of the academic curriculum. Functioning as a bi-annual, digital imprint, *Thoughtspell* has undergone two rounds of publication in April and November 2022, respectively; the third (current) volume has been curated out of a veritable deluge of contributions from young, enthusiastic minds from both the undergraduate and postgraduate sections of the Department of English. For the members of the Editorial Sub-Committee, it has been an extraordinary experience to have witnessed the manyfaceted manifestations of human inspiration in the works of these budding artists. Arthur Schopenhauer felt that art is a healing balm of comfort for the human subject who has tasted of the inevitable disappointments tied to mortality. Modern life has insidious and ineluctable ways of scarring young minds through its lionisation of ghettoized standards of excellence; it has felt heartening to note that our students have turned to the highly versatile discipline of art to lend tongues to their wounds and celebrate ephemeral moments of ecstasy alike. The capability to derive inspiration for art from lived experience leads to an eventual affirmation of the mortal condition, and perhaps, there is no greater achievement than this-to be able to affirm the entire spectrum of human experience, as a Job, or a Nietzsche would. However, the ability to perceive the ever-elusive moment of inspiration is no mean feat either. Shelley has rightly remarked that "the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness." Every student who has contributed to the students' magazine deserves plaudits for clinging on to these fleeing moments of heightened perceptivity, and devoting significant effort to impart tangible shapes to these precious epiphanies, these invaluable moments poised between delirium and enlightenment.

The first section of the current volume is entitled "Limen." It was initially intended to consist of literary efforts of faculty members of the Department of English who are also alumni of the department. Accordingly, "Time-Turned Disneyland"—a skit composed by Ms. Soumyosree Banerjee (Faculty Member, Department of English) when she was a postgraduate student at the same department was included in this section. "On the 458th Birth Anniversary of William Shakespeare" was composed by Mr. Soumyajit Chandra (Faculty Member, Department of English) and recited by him at an event commemorating the birth anniversary of the English poet and dramatist ("The Bard's Birthday" organized by the Department of English on 23rd April, 2022). Albeit he is not an alumnus of the department, this poem has been included in this section since Dr. Suchandra Chakravarty (former Associate Professor at the Department of English) had expressed the desire to see it in print in *Thoughtspell*.

The second section, "Afflatus" contains poems and short stories contributed by students from both the undergraduate and postgraduate sections of the Department of English. It has been a remarkable delight to peruse the diverse poetical works of students, and to have been able to identify commendable flights of imagination, spurts of originality, intelligent instances of imitation and emulation and moving poetical renditions of human emotions.

The third section of *Thoughtspell* is entitled "Kaleidoscope;" it contains artwork created through a broad multitude of artistic mediums including graphite, charcoal, watercolour, acrylic colour, oil colour and digital applications.

The fourth section, "Camera Lucida" contains photographs contributed by undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Department of English. Students have succeeded in capturing not only the multiform aesthetic charms of nature through their cameras, but also highly eloquent snapshots from quotidian moments of human life.

The five student-editors of *Thoughtspell*, namely Bhavna Jagnani (UG Semester VI), Ankhi Bandyopadhyay (UG Semester VI), Kaushiki Ganguly (PG Semester IV), Nafisa Islam (PG Semester IV) and Shatabdi Roy (PG Semester IV) bow out of the department in a matter of months. The three volumes of *Thoughtspell* would be impossible without the indomitable enthusiasm, steadfastness and editorial acumen exhibited by these young people in the past year. The Department of English wishes them the very best in all their future endeavours and will always remain deeply grateful to each one of them.

The pursuit of art consists in a quest for the *sui generis* despite there being nothing new under the sun. For an editor of a students' magazine of a humanities department, it is nothing short of a privilege to watch how psychic trajectories once traversed by the self, keep welcoming new pilgrims, knights-errant, travellers and harvesters, who revel in the joys and pains of life, and most importantly, sing melodiously of their experiences. *Thoughtspell* will always aspire to be an audience to these merry ballads of life.

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Section I: Jmpromptu Jnspirations

Time-Turned Disneyland

Ms. Soumyosree Banerjee

Characters: Rapunzel ("Rapunzel")

Ariel ("The Little Mermaid")

Tiana ("Princess and the Frog")

Cinderella ("Cinderella")

Prince

Belle ("Beauty and the Beast")

Snow White ("Snow White")

Aurora ("Sleeping Beauty")

Act 1 Scene i

There is an intimate party at Snow White apartment.

(Enters Snow White)

Snow White: Mmmm, the margarita tastes perfect! The fries are crisp and the place looks clean!!

(Knock! Knock!)

(Enters Belle)

Snow White: Hey Belle!

Belle: Sshh! Let me complete this sentence first.

(Freezes and starts reading)

Snow White (*to audience*): This is Belle from "Beauty and the Beast" and I am Snow White! Belle: Hey Snow White! Don't tell me I am the first one to arrive!

Snow White: Oh yes! And you what...

Belle (*cutting her short*): Good, now I can tell you all about *The Second Sex*. You know Beauvoir observes that the root of subjugation of women lies in the existentialist and aggressive pattern of thought in man who looks at woman as 'a sexual partner, a reproduces, an exotic object'!!! (*increased pitch*)

Snow White: I... I think I heard the doorbell. Let us listen all about it when everyone has arrived!

(Belle and Snow White freeze)

(Enters Cinderella and Snow White)

Cinderella: If you wouldn't have hurried so much, I could have worked a little more on my winged eyeliner!

Rapunzel: Why do you have to draw wings on your eyes, woman?

Cinderella: Orgh! By the way, you are looking pretty in my dress!

Rapunzel: Dress? This is a freaking go-as-you-like costume! Why isn't anybody opening the door? Open, open, open!!!

Snow White: Coming!

(Freezes again)

Cinderella (to the audience): I am Cinderella! The diva, the gla...

Rapunzel: Nobody has come here to listen to your balderdash.

(to the audience): This is Cinderella, and I am Rapunzel. Now this much will do!

(Cinderella gets in, stands beside Belle)

(Rapunzel stands beside Snow White)

Snow White (shyly): You look different!

Rapunzel: Oh don't remind me of the laces and frills!

Snow White: But you look pretty!

Rapunzel: Orgh!

Cinderella: Why are you reading?

Belle: A book!

Cinderella: Oh really? I thought it was a trumpet!

Belle: Do you know, trumpets were initially used as signalling devices in the battles...

Cinderella: No no no no no no

(Enters Aurora)

Aurora: No no, her. Anderson. Let me know about the blue-chip stocks right away! Our 37% investment is stuck into it! (*over the phone*)

Belle: Hey! So how's our Sleeping Beauty doing?

Aurora: Sleep? I haven't slept since ages. The last time I had a peaceful nap, my dear friends, the picture has been captured! And that happens to be my mother's USG report.

Cinderella: Is it that bad?

Aurora: Bad? I carry one bag on my shoulder and two below my eyes. You think I am kidding?

(Takes out a cigarette)

All: No no no no no

Aurora: Alright alright! I am going to die of a cardiac arrest anyway!

(*To the audience*) Smoking is injurious to health and not character. And that applies to both men and women.

(Enters Ariel)

Ariel: And to the environment!

Rapunzel: This is Ariel, from *The Little Mermaid*, the deep sea diver. Now Ariel, tell us, did you get to fight a blue-whale this time?

Ariel: You know, our life is not as great as you think it to be!

Cinderella: But is adventurous!

Ariel: Sure! And fun too! But what bothers us the most is the sexism that exists here.

(Sounds of crying)

(Enters Tiana)

Ariel: What's wrong Tiana?

Belle: And what's that thing you are holding?

Tiana: And this is the 950th frog I have kissed! And no! No Prince for me!

Cinderella: Ewwww! Are you out of your mind?

Aurora: I am sure she is?

Tiana: Oh please! I so desperately want to get married! I need a prince!

Snow White: Not again!

Belle: You know what Tiana, you should stop abusing these animals and look for humans!

Tiana: Oh yes, a human Prince, who will walk down this alley and save me from...

Enters Prince dressed as Professor Quirrel from Harry Potter.

Prince: Troll in the dungeon! Troll in the dungeon!

(Stops. Looks around.)

Oops, wrong place.

(Leaves)

Snow White: How about these men we have here. You can date any of them!

Belle: Supratim?

Rapunzel: He is kind of a male Cinderella, you know, doesn't stay past 12, but noon!

Ariel: Soupal?

Snow White: You will be killed by somebody!

Cinderella: How about Ekramul?

Tiana: Cinderella, the kind of brand freak you are, all his notions will be in severe danger!

Cinderella: You know what, we don't need a Prince to validate our fairy-tales. Do we live to get married to a Prince?

Snow White: I don't need a Prince!

Belle: There you go!

Aurora: Now, let us dig into these burgers and all get fat together!

Act 1 Scene ii

(*Enters* Prince)

Prince: I am a Prince! Oh don't bother about my name. Because all that matters is I am handsome, I have a castle, and I am the universal rescuer! That's how you want a Man to be right?! (*winking*)

(Enters Rapunzel)

Prince (to himself): She seems to be a 'damsel in distress'. I'll rescue her!

(to Rapunzel): Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair,

Let me climb up the long tower

And rescue you?!

Rapunzel: Hair? What hair? And who the hell are you?

Prince: I've come to rescue you! Let down your hair!

Rapunzel: I can throw some of my loose strands, if you're so desperate!

(plucks a hair and throws at him)

Prince: But I've come to save you!

Rapunzel: You know it's an introvert's paradise up here. I'm doing great! Now go away young man!

(Rapunzel leaves)

Prince: Now, I've heard women love gifts! How about I shower them with expensive stuff!

(Enters Cinderella)

Prince: I've got glass shoes for you Cinderella!

Cinderella: What?

Prince: If these fit you, you can be my Princess!

Cinderella: Are you out of your mind? Glass shoes and that too on heels? Get realistic man! Do you think it is still the 1940s? It is the age of sneakers and platforms!

Prince: But, but, we can get married and live happily ever after!

Cinderella: I have my own fashion blog, my own apartment, and a car! I am already living happily ever-after!

(Leaves)

(Enters Belle)

Prince (with a sword): Where is the beast, my beauty! I'll kill him right now!

Belle: Oh. My. God.

Are you a Prince from King Arthur's time who has time travelled?

Prince: No... I'm as much from the present as you are.

But I'll kill that beast!

Belle: With a sword? I would have still believed if you would have barged in with a wand, crying 'Stupefy!'!

Prince: But... But...

Belle: There's no beast by the way. And I am an expert in judo, I can take care of one! Go now!

(Leaves)

(Enters Aurora)

Prince: Let me kiss you, and relieve you from your miserable life.

Aurora: You creep! Do you want me to drag you to the police station??

(Leaves)

(Prince takes a chair and sits, shocked)

(*Enters* Snow-White *with an apple*)

Prince: How you doing?

Snow White: What?

Prince: I don't want to ask, but I assume your answer will be 'No' again!

Snow White: What is it?

Prince: I want to get married.

Snow White: Me too!

Prince: To a beautiful Princess

Snow White: Me too!

(both pause, shocked)

Snow White: Oops! I tend to forget section 377.

(Leaves)

(Enters Ariel and Tiana)

Ariel: I want you to mail me the details asap!

Tiana: Sure!

Prince: Excuse me, are you the Princesses who need to be rescued from a stepmother, an apple or a tower so that I get to feed my psychological masculine notions, imposed on me and my entire gender by society?

Ariel and Tiana: Nah!

Tiana: But you can help us rescue the frogs if you want to!

(Leaves)

Prince: I guess, I'll have to look to the other side!

(Leaves)

Cinderella: Life is so much more than finding or being a perfect prince or princess. So instead of being Cinderella, Snow White and Tiana that we all have grown up reading, let us be brave, strong and compassionate.

On the 458th Birth Anniversary of William Shakespeare

Mr. Soumyajit Chandra

This summer's day we gaze from the sunny East On Avon's shores in distant Albion Where on this day, when good Queen Bess held sway, A poet destined for august fame was born; His rustic home taught him how best to kneel At Nature's shrine, and love her sweet caprice-So keen a votary he proved to be That his fair verse from fair ne'er did decline. Well did he play his part in London town; He made the world a stage, the stage his world— Some "greene" with envy called him "upstart crow", But good Ben Jonson hailed him Avon's "swan". My Shakespeare though was neither crow nor swan. A robin of the scarlet breast was he-That sang in joy through every season round, From a winter's tale to a midsummer night's dream. Thou taught us well to reason not the need, To sing "Heigh-ho!" though most love be mere folly, To screw our courage to the sticking place And wallow not in palest cast of thought. There is a tide in all of our affairs Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fame, So may this briefest candle still burn bright Before the sound and fury put out the light.

Oh Will—dear Will—how do we honour thee? Thou have been called "dear son of Memory", The grove of Mnemosyne was thy playground Where sundry poetic saplings thou did sow, Today, we walk beneath those Sibylline leaves And weave a wreath to place upon thy brow.



Afflatus

Section II: Creative Writing

A Beautiful Legos

Rajshree Pathak UG Semester II

OH, oh how right I was! OH, oh how right I was! I took a correct decision, It didn't require any precision. I dreamt big and I was smiling at that time, My decision seemed so firmed as if caught in a chime. But then, came that day, the day I never saw coming. How stupid I was to forget them. Them who never had my vision, Them who could never make a place in my realm. After that day, two days thenceforth, the full moon of my dreams seemed like a crescent. Following them seemed suffocating, But steadily, subconsciously, I was drifting. Still I was stubborn, Not caring they were looking at which of my versions. In came that call. Which shook the palace of my dreams right from the hall. My dreams shattered, My confidence scattered. Some say my will power had hanged itself, How could I even survive, when my supporter gave up herself? I still fought, This too shall pass, I thought. Oh how wrong I was. Oh how wrong I was! Came that day, where everything deceived me,

My dreams, my aims. Dear all! Why couldn't you people just receive it! I agree their opinion was appealing, But my aim was not that bad to be removed like a banana peeling. They deserved to see the defender in me, and burn in its lava. I still tried to adjust, Anxiety, depression trying to adjudge. I am a warrior! I am a warrior, because I made my anxiety my saviour. Up I sprayed my achievements like a colour spray, But my brain was already society's prey. I tried and tried and tried. I was fried. Fried deep into competition and complications, I still smiled. Honestly, I still lied. Truth struck me back harder, Bringing with itself an invisible ladder. This time I fought stronger. Begging chance in front of strangers.

My supporters were there for me, but they were looking out and never looking in.

The one who looked in, was hurt deep within.

I had deceived her even,

Maybe that's why she thinks I fuss like an irritated raven.

My supporter, my angel, you need not to be tensed,

Your little angel knows all the ways to mend.

My angel is always positive,

That's what you have always talked of me in your every affirmative.

Believe me,

Oh just believe me, my supporter.

I will come out stronger,

Fighting all those subconscious strangers.

With everyone and my alter ego,

I'll construct myself a beautiful Legos.

I'll construct myself a beautiful Legos.

Untitled

Alifiya Attari PG Semester II

Trapped in the concrete jungle of life, Fighting amongst the rubble of strife

Thwarting sharp-edged knives, That hurt more than burning hives

Unto the people we know Who say they care, but fail to show...

Struggling to let go of our woes While awakening our inner foes

Bursting out our angry hearts And emptying out our rageful carts

In spite of knowing it's all a waste Why do we keep going on in haste...

Why can't we just take a pause And jot peace-making as a clause

In the book of the laws of life Let's try to be strong and to strive!

Dearest P - 01.02.2023

Wreet Gupta

Semester IV

Past wants to cling onto me.

He wraps his fingers around me, holding me dearly

Delaying the inevitable departure where I no longer let him touch me.

Perhaps he is lonely:

Sitting alone in a boulevard of memories, on a broken bench made of Nostalgic wood,

Crying incessantly for he knows that he cannot live.

Ergo, he has already lived.

But what can I do?

I am a mortal unlike him,

Subservient to the Elements:

I will cease to be, eventually.

I love you wholeheartedly P,

You remind me of times much simpler,

Happier times, sadder times even, but times I choose to remember.

However, it is you who have taught me to look in front

And fly far, far away until I become one with Blue of Sky.

You knew very well that we would have to part but you did it anyway.

I love you too. Please tell me before you leave, What am I supposed to do: When you will reach out to me again; Dishonouring Present.

Promise me this, P. That you will deny me the pleasure of seeing you again. For life is going to go on and I must too.

Harsh but necessary, you have my word. Is it really that simple, P? No, not at all.

Prisms And Rainbows - 03.03.2023

Wreet Gupta Semester IV

Prisms and Rainbows, hail ye! For thou hast taught me To find what I already have, When Miss Fortune showers her wrath.

Wrath you say but she is immune to logic:A slave to her whims and fancies, F is eccentric.I have merely taught youThat when Rain bears down the avenue,Be not sad that flooded is the street.Instead, rejoice for he nourishes that child named Seed.

Prism and Rainbows, you have taught meThat I need to be happy.But how must I be so,When I feel as if I attract all the anguish that Life can bestow?Remind me, for is it not pointless at times, foolish evenTo find the beauty of orange when my feet touch magma?

Think not too much and be an idiot. For you cannot change the hand you have been dealt. Welcome Optimistica instead: Your lover whom you're too scared to bed. Bliss maybe blinding Yet peaceful in your minding. O, will at least help you settle down And balance the equation.

Prisms and Rainbows, I remember now!

Siblings that you are, you taught me how.For when I hold you P,I have the choice of choosing, you see.Red, yellow or any from the spectrum R,All that comes to be, must be embraced thus far.So when Miss hands me one of youI should not only dwell on the bad in blueBut consider the good in green.And hopes in me must convene.To find the silver lining whilst aware of the grey in the clouds,This you taught me and this shall I follow, I vow.

Strength And Beyond

Ambreen Hossain

UG Semester VI

I am stronger than my urge.

My urge to just close the book without completing all the chapters and putting it into the cupboard that I will never open,

The book of life, the chapters of living, I am the cupboard made of bones.

Rib bones.

My thoughts are capsulated in thy brain, like my heart is in your rib cage.

I urge to rip off the skin, break my bones and bleed my tears;

But I'm stronger than my urge.

The Carousel of Love and Death

Tanya Alam UG Semester II

Lights everywhere. The scent of cotton candy and popcorn, fill the cold evening air.

Among the crowd, he was the only one, who seemed to stand out.

His hair bright red, like that of a clown. No matter what happened to him, he never wore a frown.

His eyes like a fox,

that tore into my soul.

On me, he wished to have complete control.

His smile, as wide as the Cheshire Cat, made me wonder if there is more to him, than just his flirtatious act.

He kissed my hand and led me away, to a carousel that had no end, so that we could continue to play.

I could smell the blood off of him, but that didn't matter. I did not want the love between us, to shatter.

He knew, I was aware,

of his intentions,

that living, quite fair.

I know, if I make one wrong move, I'm dead.

However, I cannot deny the fact,

that he's the only thing occupying all the space, in my head.

Hence, I ride this carousel of love and death.

Never wanting to get off, as I know,

if I do, I will be taking my very last breath.

Birth

Srijita Banerjee PG Semester II

Shrouded in life,

Shrouded by life.

In this little womb of mine

What I thought was mine.

Mother, can you hear me?

Amidst all these chaos of muffled screams.

Here, hold my hand.

It's pressed against your belly.

Mother, do you understand me?

What is this language that I speak

That only you understand,

Only you and no one else?

Mother, hum my favourite song?

I don't know the words,

But it prepares me for what's coming -

A myriad, a labyrinth, a mirage that we call living.

Mother, hold on. Hold on. Breathe with me. Hold onto me Like I am the boat without oars – Moving silently on the painted sea.

Mother, will my entire life flash by me,

As I make you scream while I come out of this

Prison that I call home. Will I see streaks of lightning

And feel gusts of wind when I cry out for life?

Mother, just a little longer.

You and I will pass by the years, the months, the days -

Even those seconds which we call 'unbearable'.

It will all be done, like those movies you watch – ending in retrospect.

Shrouded in life, Shrouded by life –

Here I come.

Push, mother. Push.

Wings are meant for soaring, but a feather can dream

Anushka Chowdhury UG Semester II

The heavy feather, like a weighty stone That falls to the ground, and is left all alone On an arid bed of dirt and sand -A dying ember of what life once had; It sits quietly, wishing it could flee. Caught in the grasp of monotony, It drifts away, to a distant space Where the worries of this world erase. Relieved to be unburdened by worry and stress, The heavy feather finds a place to rest Where there is naught to be weighed down, It knows it will never be tamed by a frown For here, the heavy feather knows true liberty In a land free from burdens and misery; Here, it is free to fly and glide In a world that is now opened for it to explore wide. This heavy feather will have found its new home, It's bound by a destiny, that won't wander or roam, Where it will rest, perched up high, Dreams fulfilled and forever flying, with joy and light.

Divine Elegy

Soham Chatterjee UG Semester II

Now, mortal, grace my presence while your ears be free; When you lay robed in blood, you won't be honoured, When the cold pelt burns accompanied by a banshee, The pyre will be deserted and the shrieking, barely heard. The brilliance that ennobles you, Immortalised only by a mere union of words, Which are never read, nor ever argued, Chorused only by Satan's squealing birds. When the horns signal the end of crusade, When the battle was ordained to be lost, Disdain shall creep upon the human heath. He who rues, shall rue for his damned birth. So sing the hymn of your trifle breath Treading the path of a dismal fate.

Perks of Being a Wallflower

Shrijan Dasgupta UG Semester II

A pitiful silence.

A mournful retreat.

A solemn moment of lopsided peace.

Is all this parched land longs for

when the birds aren't around.

The delirium of the sky perched atop crimson nests,

picnic baskets and violet mittens arranged in quaint formation.

Scent of rosemary and leather

permeates the glass petals of the cloudscape that delineates

this town, and for once,

we hold on to it,

close.

So very close.

It's a deranged parody of a song we all sing-

a reflection of the malevolent chaos somehow everybody manages to bring

at quiet tables-

the perfect, flawless pieces of cloth-

get stained with salt and saccharine stories.

There's a girl at the corner, silently sweet

brows knitted in grave contemplation or a lovesick longing- nobody knows

but I'd like to go to the world where she goes.

With mayhem at most corners

yet quietude in all-

Sometimes it's nice just to be

a solemn little fly on the wall.

Impermanence

Shrijan Dasgupta UG Semester II

Today I love you.

Tomorrow I won't. Yesterday I longed for you, today I don't.

Today I look at your face in the looking glass and sigh, the windshield clouding over my despair.

My breaths are numbered and aches are numerous, electric and eclectic,

they spread their brazen wings.

Sometimes I love to live,

a life of someone who loved to dream.

A louder noise.

A more delectable silence

is what this broken nightfall longs for.

When the shade is the only thing keeping us alive,

the whispering pants of trees

tell us to vanish with a speck of moonlight.

But I won't listen- and I won't be told

all those rickety old stories I so beautifully refuse to hold close-

I won't be tamed.

My spirit is parched grass.

It grows over decadent countertops and imbibes the smell of juniper-

it slips, slides, glides and ricochets off into the madness and mist...

These days are barren-

barren with sounds of the empty-

a month goes by, and no one ticks an eye-

a year flicks past- and nobody blinks at clocks.

Soft is the shroud of nothingness,

and quite inviting indeed

I wonder what'd happen

if I jumped in for just a bit.

I Wander like a Cloud

Bhavna Jagnani UG Semester VI

I wandered like the white cloud in the sky, Entering a new world With an "untamed" mind Looking at the world through innocent eyes Enjoying my journey at my own pace With my friends, without any fears.

But as I travel through the world My heart gets heavier and darker It's difficult to lift my legs – I drag my feet now! My surroundings are no longer as I used to view. No one here is pure; Everyone tries hard to pull me down;

> Doubt grabs a place in my mind. I can't see my next move.

I don't know how to proceed I can't feel my steps anymore –my feet are numb! My descent approaches; it looms heavy on my mind. I can see I am soon going to fall – With a great bang on the ground. How do I stop it? How do I save myself from falling?

How do I carry on?

The words of the people struck like thunder I wasn't experienced enough to not give in. What I feared the most happened – From my world up above, I fell with a thud! Ah, that hurts! (I hope you never go through that pain) I try to get up –I try with all my might. I can see my dreams scattered like droplets in the puddle. I can see others jumping and laughing in them.

I was wandering like the cloud in the sky

Maybe –and I hope so –I too come back with a bounce

I too can have the guts to start. All. Over. Again.

Insider

Hemoshmita Roy UG Semester II

I'd like to say a few things.

I don't know if they would make sense-

If they should make sense or

If I should know them

But I do.

And they don't know them like I do.

They couldn't ever know it like I do, even if they tried to It wouldn't make sense to them because it doesn't Since it might not be pleasant to those present

I'd like to clear what isn't

Make sense out of what doesn't

But would anyone understand my situation, stand in my position

And tell me I'm wrong for my inhibition

That I must make sense

When my mind doesn't.

When I was there but my mind wasn't

Is my mind mine, if I can't fathom

To introspect theirs, rather than my chasm.

I'd like to say a few things

but my mind doesn't.

Since it doesn't want me to make sense and it knows I wouldn't.

Nameless Man's Social Dilemma

Aman Jigar Desai UG Semester IV

As the human impulse craves for self The prelude of life is not dependent on patrons From oblivious sense to being a prodigy We all grew up from the worst to being the best. Revolutionaries take place from reign of terror The butchering of bloody goblins within that returns to the self known as the "Invader." The suppression arising out of civilising atrocities The beat on breast contradicts the rich cry Where a genuine weep is regarded as morally just Leaving behind the unrefined genuine emotions Wandering like a minstrel with hopes of none A major change in nameless and faceless common man is what I see forthcoming And as I term this as a Personal Account, aloof from a serious pioneering issue With a subjectively casual and constructive conversation, I speak for nothing but them That makes me like them, a face and feel amongst "equals." Just a bit drowsy of this world A living entity entitled for nothing The preliminary happiness brought valorous vain That beheld oneself from its fringes For what desires were lie shattered in pieces Are the words my heart says and mind interprets on the same path? What is the worth of sheer utterance of such unruly speaking Or else I just proclaim this thrust upon thyself As none but it's solitude that helps in recovery

And as I dream of aspirations and prosperity

With only shattering hopes and fragmented desire And as I proceed to conquer it, I begin a thrust of war A rage against myself and swiftly bereft of hope and all The benevolence of trajectorial opportunities And prevalence of irrelevant possibilities Brings us to nowhere but "The Social Dilemma."

Our Saviour is Dead

Angelina Basudas PG Semester II

How do we live in a world without the Starman?
When I want to leave, you won't let me,
You say you love me, then why do I feel so hurt?
It's all the scars, love is care, and effort,
You say you love me, why should I believe it?
Planet Earth is orange and all I can do is rage,
My lungs are sandpaper, my nose inhales powder,
When I want to leave, the world is a smoking cage,
You say you love, then why are your actions acid shower?
The technology's so good, each second a new tentacle.
Wild Romantic hair, overwhelmed by a technicolour nightmare,
It's the allure of a tragic death of a golden heart so rare
Killed by the kind monster. With an overdose of a rosy spectacle.

Untitled

Angelina Basudas PG Semester II

The leaves that don't move

because no wind moves the tree,

shade a crow, the foe of naps!

Out of My League

Shreya Ghosh UG Semester II

Oh, my beloved shooting star I'm longing for you to pay a visit just for once, When the whole city looks dull You are the one to brighten it up You are the light of my dark and longing nights; You are the spring to my autumn. The feelings of being connected is so strong that we became one soul, devouring the bittersweet love from the forbidden world. But, Oh Lord! What kind of faith I have written for myself where being connected still feels like I'm beyond the horizon. Though I try to reach you out, I fail to get a hold of you My love, I never imagined my day would start and end with the thought of you being in my arms; But how foolish of a girl like me to want a man like you who is already out of her league. Afterall they say forbidden fruits are always luscious,

Yet after acknowledging it I dared to step inside the lion's den.

The den, from where I could never return back;

Mi Amor, you are the star and I'm your Astrophile

I want a star like you in my life,

But sadly, that star is out of my league.

Song of Lost Love

Adiptya Mukherjee UG Semester IV

Sweet, if Night stirs thee from Noon's sultry nap, Nought not her hope to have thee by the lovers' lake, Least, for me. Stroll by the grass on Earth's silver lap, Where Eager Elves shall guide and Flaming Fairies take

Stars' sheen to thy lips parted. I'll quaff off thee, thyDear moulding Moon. Let our lips never part, not frameBetwixt, stars. Oh, being Moon, ebb as stars fly! Let thy,Orbs' lightless lustre stall larks' croons and Sol's light fame.

Yet, my moist breath, that bloomed thy blush, within Breeze's cape Of pores, shall slowly shape. On thy arms, I shall sleep For thy joy, to all breathing bliss, grants an escape!

Love, seize me in the sparkling stream, that thy face keeps,

"Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes"
Off thee. Sways when his white coat, Wooing Willow, to
Adorn thee with his floral anklets, I'm Waves' highs
Of deluge delicate, to drizzle esse to
Thy blossoming beads' beauty. Melts when, with Moon's prime
The breast of the perched Nightingale, the twig night-like
That rests her, whispers of my love's lone clime,
Undying. Her chants soulful, of milk's sweet, unlike

My ebbing ear, through honeycomb cells, by

Blonde poppies, and rings my hazed heartstrings to Sprog Sol's babe bows' nocks. Amber arrows, now those by The gleaming Ether, his ambrosia into my

Lips shall ache. Sweet, cast a kiss, and lull these eyes all awake,

As this soul flees far, where I shall await thee, by

Abstract hours, in plains blissful, barren, sans thy sake.

How Do I Love Thee?

Adiptya Mukherjee UG Semester IV

How do I love thee? To say, is to simplify
That breathless bliss, when thou embraced me for the first.
I love thee, more rapt than our eyes,
When they first blinked to look for each one's trust.
More earnest is my love than my purblind sight's will
To purely prize thy anklet bells' pulse that awe bards.
I love thee, like milk's sweet and cure's sour that wounds heal,
Alike stew's salt and solace, signing days toil hard.
I love thee more inclined, than stimulus to sense,
As my joys, past dreams cease, to see thee not by me.
By love's all bounds that I pledged to souls, since
I have breathed; I love thee more. I love thee
By morns sweet, when our heartstrings chord, "I do, I do."
By dusks blue, when they sleep, still my love shall ensue.

Beloved's Love

Adiptya Mukherjee UG Semester IV

Beloved's love's the last night's trance that lilts
By the warm curls and quilts, like dark darts in dawn's frame,
Like eyes bound to a "slumber stilly", lids to wilt
At "the sun rising", till his first kiss states morn's fame.
Beloved's hugs hush a hot flush beneath the skin
That simmers, his scent having savoured, like a rose
Sweet in a sultry salt bath, of a man's toil in
True love. A love's ring, his hug bonds two souls up close,
Where lips fuse, fostering a fervour, darting round
The shank, till they gleam at the peak, off the crowned pearl.
Yet, round lakes and lawns that in eyes abound,
Love's kiss on chance cheeks craves more fancies to unfurl.
Beloved's love's the bed to the still seas, flushed fires'
Sparks, calm's ease, yet the zest for deepest of desires.

Saraswati

Navyaa Baid PG Semester IV

When the clutch of my life is let loose,

And I wander astray, Find me in the lines I have composed Prior and post my birthday! My farewell may not be a grand affair, But the fire of the pyre will ignite into you a sense of inspiration of that which will be gone, but remain forever I lie within all of you...

I am knowledge.

Smell

Somdutta Chakraborty UG Semester VI

(I)

There may be some similar to, but never any quite like it.

The smell of me and mine.

The overbounding Olfactorial familiarity of knowing what and who.

Fleeting as smells are, they hold their own in the absolute constant dispersion of their being. Pockets of memories, pockets of sights, pockets of what-is-so-known-but-i-might-never-encounter-again.

Smells.

Typical smells. Foreign olfactory stimuli. Exotic fragrances. Animal odours. Rank, divine, earthen and refined. Smells defining, smells differentiating. Smells percolating, smells intensifying. Smells binding and mixing and spawning new. Smells, so invisible yet definite.

(II)

The fortress used to smell of ashes and damp stones.

The throne of nothing in particular but would give off a faint whiff of metallic surety.

The watchtower corners always had stacks of old damp paper, one would wonder how , in

that hellscape, but they somehow made sense.

The damp papers smelled of dampness.

The damp papers smelled of wooden desks.

The damp papers smelled of rubbing alcohol and very faintly of attar.

They burned, they sure did, the papers.

They burned with heavy smoke.

Smoke heavy with the stench of emotions.

Smoke reeking and leaving streaks of soot smelling of everything but soot on the stone walls. Walls smelling of moist ash.

Walls smelling of dry eyes.

(III)

Smelled like a Firebird,

Smelled of glory and liberty.

Smelled of Pipe smoke and attar.

Smelled like the sodden sheets..

The sodden sheets which smelled of spilled need, of spilled feelings, and most importantly, of spilled laughter and screams.

The bed itself smelled of old, used and hardy teak.

The bed itself smelled of old, used and hardy trysts.

The bed itself smelled of nothing striking but the smells of the bed and the sheets themselves were always in nature, striking.

(IV)

The immensely absolute certainty of the being of smells.

The immensely absolute certainty of existence.

The immensely absolute certainty of the smells, always being followed or the smells themselves following, a being.

WAR/SALT

Somdutta Chakraborty UG Semester VI

I// War, oh sweet warbler, knows no bounds.

War, in all its glory, embraces debauchery and honour alike.

War, oh sweet warbler, knows only the last beast standing.

Havoc and disarray it wrecks upon souls and lands,

But inspires ballads and builds kingdoms too.

War, in all its primal beauty, is a heinous hour of the deep.

From whose bloody depths men satiate their inner thirst, quench the fiery bloodlust threatening to leave them vanquished and torn.

But war's nature is like the finest afeem,

Addictive yet supreme, a snowy visage cloaking the harrowing annihilator of lives.

War, like love, demands everything of a person.

A person kneels with his weapon in hand, to break or to get broken.

War, oh sweet warbler, is the magnum opus of the seven sins.

War, oh sweet warbler, is the inferno of the earthly plains.

II// The wings of the creature red raises tempests over the badlands,

Beating to the din and cacophony of the Muspell highs,

The storms a becon to the giants of the fiery depths- a call for war.

The earth washed scarlet with blood, the mountain spouting sulphur and smoke.

A scene to behold, the vision of mania of the one below, of the fortress high.

The maces ring against the breastplates of the soldiers live; the deranged warriors of the cold, of the blue skies, of the immense depths of nought.

The warhorses lathered with sweat and dust, trampling friend and foe alike, eyes bloodshot and mouths foaming,

Running through bonfires and raising their heads high.

The fortress stands proud,

Impregnable and impressive.

Almost mountains now, amongst fire and rock.

The once lush forests of solitude replaced by the glass chipped flatlands of raucous screams. The creature rings the battlements, fragile and scarred hands drawing leaves in the soot covered walls solid.

Laughing and hollering,

Empty breaths fanning the hellfire within, cloaked in smoke and grease, a film so thin, so gossamer to the touch.

Sighs never won wars, longing never smote someone with no wants.

There are tears for things, there is salt for wounds.

With a Smile

Kaushiki Ganguly PG Semester IV

The city slithers along oozing roads,

Weathery in disposition. The clouds look on, teary-eyed and mutinous, The rod was not spared to spoil them. But I waste not a moment And forge ahead on my perilous mission.

The gutters are swollen pregnant;

Their water broke a long while ago.

While mud lovingly clings to random strangers

As they hurriedly step in whirlpools of cigarette butts.

But I waste not a moment

And forge ahead on my perilous mission.

Armoured and vehicled, I travel far,

Carrying with me precious parcels

While rain cruelly pricks me everywhere

And tries to do away with my purpose.

But I waste not a moment

And forge ahead on my perilous mission.

Finally I arrive at my destination.

Sir, here is your order. Do give the rating.'

But I am answered by a door slam.

Timely delivery of unspoilt food, I pat my back.

But I waste not a moment

And forge ahead on my perilous mission,

Again,

With a smile.

Daily Sweat

Kaushiki Ganguly PG Semester IV

I visit regularly, be it summer or fall, I support all who heed hunger's call, From working in pungent heat To travelling in ac metros, dead beat, I accompany all who are weary, With hopes moist and dreary. I give them the will to fight, To those who would rather work right Than snatch another's morsel of rice And spend it on a million dollar price. Sour and smelly for those Who anoint themselves with waters of British Rose, Earthy and natural for them Who wear sarees with knotted, high hems, I am that you discard and detest, That which stains both shirts and vests, I am that which fashionable society does suppress, While poor ones unwittingly express, I am your daily sweat, As common as it gets, Scented for some, unscented for the rest, I am your daily test, Those who pass, shall not need me more, Those who fail, shall curse me evermore, But I am as common as it gets, Smelly, scented, daily sweat.

The Radiance of Youth

Ditsa Banerjee UG Semester IV

Oh youth, thou art the precious gem most bright! Thy radiance shines as the beams of the sun, And in thy glow, our world sleeps sweetest night, As we await the dawn of each day begun.

Thou art the spring that breaks from winter cold; The rose that blossoms from a wintry gale; The hope that shines when all around is old, And shines like diamond in a setting pale.

In thee, we find the source of all our joy,

The wellspring of our strength and our delight,

And in thy heart, we find that shining boy,

Whose beauty fills the world with love and light.

For youth is not a fleeting thing e'er gone, But rather the seed that plants the world with dawn.

Thou bringest hope to those who dwell in night, And fills their hearts with love and purest light.

Thou art the lifeblood that flows through each vein, And makes our hearts sing with a joyful strain.

Thou art the eagle soaring in the sky,

And from thy wings, our dreams doth gladly fly.

Thou art the rose that blossoms in the spring, And in thy bloom, our hearts are filled with sing. Thou art the light that breaks upon the day,

And in thy wake, our fears doth flee away.

Thou art the star that shines in darkest night,

And with thy glow, our hearts are filled with might.

For youth doth bring the world its brightest hue, And in thy light, all things are made anew.

For in thy heart, the world is filled with love, And from thy soul, all beauty doth spring up.

So let us cherish youth with all our heart, And from its glow, let us never depart.

For in thy radiance, we find our true home, And in thy light, our dreams do come to roam.

Hues of the Mind

Mantasha Anwar

UG Semester II

Perched feelings crawl into my brain every hour of the day. I remind myself not to think of those moments while I'm laying in bed.

The rising lava inside a dormant volcano The agony and torment inside this heart can no longer be hidden.

This heart's not a Phoenix; I wish it was a Halcyon.

They're reluctant not to reunite with me.

This pushes my mind deeper into misery.

My eyes had already turned red, and I could feel the blue running down my veins, but as soon as I heard my father's footsteps, I turned to the other side of the bed.

This is not a Story

Debanshu Ghosh UG Semester II

"Do they know that they're hypocrites or are they completely unaware of that?"

"Deep down they know. Instead of kali, we should name it the age of hypocrisy."

"Nah! It's okay bro. I don't need the job anymore. I take most of the loads the whole year and when it's time for my appraisal, every time you find a silly reason to stop it. You know what's funny? The ones who claim that they're the most responsible and don't care about any promotions, are the ones who grovel at you the most." Everyday I get these peculiar types of conversations on the bus. Also, isn't this culture too obvious in every sector of India? Today I saw a meme, 'Things to do in India- 1. Leave.' Sometimes I wonder what's the difference between being selfish and being a hypocrite. Like what I show to the world on social media is not what I am actually. That's hypocrisy. Also, I want to build a better image by posting the stuff I post, which I guess is being nothing, but selfish for myself. I imagine if I'm Konstantin from Chekhov's *The Seagull*. Initially we are all like him until we reach a certain stage of life, we're unable to figure out if we have really made it or not. From a perspective, we all are failures because we adjust or justify our successes according to our merits or maybe that's not what failure is, maybe it is maturity. And it is failure which makes us more mature.

Oh! My stop is almost here. I have got just a few minutes. I don't like it. I have always liked the journey. And, I hate it when someone accompanies me on the bus. With Mohiner Ghoraguli in my head, I can keep travelling all day long. Why do we have to reach our destinations anyway? Isn't it scary? Like what's after it? But also, what's this romanticization of loneliness? I mean, I live in a Third World country where nothing is going alright. Am I allowed to have these absurdist thoughts? But again, this is very true that something is very wrong with us, the Bengalis. We are still making romantic commercial films. You cannot just show a love story at this point of time. In a nation where riots are still a common thing, you cannot make a film on the problems of a live-in relationship and this is not even ironic, this is just funny. I guess this is how the capitalists want us to be, dull and stupid. It's their only strategy. Sometimes I wonder if a man who works in a nine to five corporate company, when he comes back home,

is it possible for him to have the patience or enthusiasm to watch a Godard or Polanski film? I don't think so. He'll prefer a film with proper action, entertainment and item songs. Everything is well planned. Make the people stupid as much as you like and conduct the world the way you want. The ministers are mere pawns, the capitalists are the rulers.

Well, what can I do? Now I'll take an auto, go to my place and have a sound sleep to escape from reality. What you will do it's up to you. You can be a hypocrite just like me. Trust me, it is very simple and easy.

Untitled

Gowri Vaidyanath UG Semester II

I wanted to abandon the sheer emptiness in me. Three hours more. And that's it. That's when I end my life. I started contemplating my life by each second of it. It's the same. I couldn't think of anything better. It just brought the worst out of me. I was done trying, trying to find the purpose of why I was put on this earth. This feeling inside me keeps coming back no matter how much I try to push it. I've been feeling like this for the past four or five years. In the beginning, I figured out something, that when we cry our brain keeps replaying so that we keep feeling hurt or maybe there is just the sudden gush of loneliness from a desperation, existential crisis and our insecurities. There's this guilt always that keeps making us feel torn, holding us back from where we should be.

It felt weird. Somewhere empty, somewhere half-filled memories. I'm talking about my beloved Grams who passed away a few years ago. It was a relief we didn't have to watch her suffer any longer, but it also broke our heart. One thing I know is, no one is ever really prepared for death. No one wants to watch their beloved taken away from them, no matter how much time they spent together, how many frames capture their figures or how many secrets are revealed to one another. The family of the soldiers protecting us and our country, they know what their acquaintances are endangered to, so every time they meet they cherish, they know that it might be the last time they are breathing together. But tell me, are they really prepared for their dearest to leave this earth so soon? Do they not hope secretly for them to be alive and awake?

I had not wept even once ever since her death day. Not even during the funeral. I may not be a crybaby but I am sensitive. I used to cry too often and I was so tired of it, I stopped weeping on every single inconvenience until it ended in even worse situations- random breakdowns and occasional panic attacks. I had probably never gone this long without shedding tears at least once in such a long time. It had ached when I touched her and her body had felt cold. It had ached when I came back home and clung onto her clothing for dear life. I won't say I was shocked because I was not, maybe a little, but that's it. Everytime I saw her picture in the frame

neatly hung on the wall in her room, it didn't feel real. It just did not sit with the situation. Was I in denial? Did I want to avoid the reality once again? Was I already moving on with my life. It all seemed like I was walking in a fever dream. Am I still in a fever dream? Stuck in a situation of not being able to express my pain and vulnerability to someone? I did not even trust my own self to be vulnerable with. I think all I'm doing is narrowly pushing away the situation in front of me to escape it. But why? Because I did not want to believe my Abuela's tragic demise or was I simply selfish enough to shove the situation away so I could indulge in the small happy section my present activities had opened up?

I woke up. I could not sleep. I dreamt of my grandmother again. She was smiling. She was here. She was alive. I saw her, I heard her. Everything hurt at once, but not a single drop rolled down my cheek. It was like I had lost my emotions. I wanted to cry. But I didn't even feel close to crying. A sudden music coming from my phone made me jump before realising it was my alarm. School after summer break. Sounds both exhilarating and enervating.

Things have changed this summer. I know that, I can feel it in my veins, I can feel it at the back of my head when I try to look unbothered by the irrelevant stares of the people everywhere I go.

Before I could dive more into my emotions, a loud bang disrupted my thoughts. The knock was so loud, "What just happened?"

"I'm sorry, I'm really sorry for breaking in but you have to understand-"

"What? Are you alright?" I interrupted her.

"Yes, and no. Someone broke into my room and he's after me. I want you to call the police right away," she looked at me, slightly panicked. I tried to understand her but the drugs were kicking in and it took all of my energy to stay awake and confront the situation in front of me. Then it hit me-my phone!

"You're unfortunate because I broke my phone a couple hours ago."

"How frustrated were you?" she asked with a surprisingly straight face.

"Just a little," I murmured.

"Should I be scared of you more than the stalker in my room?"

"No, I don't want to make you uncomfortable. What does he want with you?"

"I wouldn't know. All I know is he was there when it happened."

"When what happened?" I don't know if it was my curiosity or annoyance that was desperate to find out more about a random stranger, just when the night started.

"When my parents died. When they made me feel that I was responsible for their death," she spoke in such an emotionless manner that it was starting to worry me, she was even more mentally unstable than I was.

"How-What- How did you survive that?"

"I didn't. I had tortured myself several times just at the mere thought of it. Every day felt like a nightmare, but it is all over now. I can be in a better position," she sighed and smiled a little. How did she look so divine in the sad, gloomy, moonlight? "Wait, did you... did you try to harm yourself? Have I interrupted something!"

"No! It was just a moment of misery, I promise. Nothing else!" By now, my ears were red with shame. It felt like a crime to attempt suicide having the least deserving excuses when there were people surviving the most brutal phases in their life and still living to tell the tale. Or am I too weak to deal with even the smallest inconveniences in life?

"Look at me. I know what you're thinking. Look at these," she bared her wrists in the dim lit room. "I was once you too."

"What- what made you live?" I had almost lost my ability to speak by then. Guilt had wrapped around my vocal cords.

"Listen to me carefully. Life is more than what we think it is. Death doesn't exist without life. It is not just simply a body. You're not simply hurting your body, you're betraying your soul. I want you to grow. There's more to life than just dark rooms and empty thoughts," her eyes were glistening now.

"I'm so happy that you...made it," I said, swallowing my tears.

"I didn't."

"What?"

My confused head snapped towards the window where I sensed police sirens. I ran over to the balcony, hoping it was the stranger's intruder that was caught, only to find her body on the floor. A bloody mess, that made me forget how to breathe, especially because I found no one else in my room other than me.

Put to Death

Ojoshwita Mukherjee UG Semester VI

Sujata was already facing a lot. Being regularly tortured and tormented by her husband, she had started feeling totally hopeless about her future and she could not see anything ahead of her. She was traumatised and every new morning had become just a nightmare for her. She had no idea that one small mistake could lead her to such a drastic life. Just one small mistake, which had nothing to do with her, had led her to such a life filled with trauma, heartbreak, torment and torture. Wondering what her mistake was? Wondering what she could have possibly done that she was being punished so badly? She had given birth to a girl child.

Even though the little girl was always considered a curse by her father, she was never cross in nature. Years passed and the little baby girl became a young lady of 12. Even after going through such difficulties, struggles and ignorance, even after being misjudged, cursed and neglected by her father, Titas was always cheerful and supported her mother in every way possible. Titas considered Sujata as her role model. Her world revolved around her mother as Sujata was the only person close to her in the whole family. Titas too was Sujata's pride. Sujata always considered herself lucky for having a daughter like Titas. Titas was well mannered, honest, careful, courageous and courteous. She was Sujata's most valuable asset.

But today, fate had something else on its plate. Fate had something unexpected written on the forehead of this family. Sujata was determined. She was absolutely determined that she would kill her daughter today. She didn't want Titas to grow up in such complex situations. Enough was enough. Sujata had to go through humiliation and beating day after day. Death was now much more peaceful, she believed. According to Sujata, Titas deserved a normal happy life, good education, good parenting and most importantly, a healthy environment. But Titas was getting none. She was suffering day and night for years. Thus, killing her daughter first and then herself, was the best escape path from this hell.

Just like any other ordinary day, Titas came back from school and eagerly asked her mother what food she had prepared for evening snacks. "Porridge," she replied. "Porridge! My favourite. I can even die eating the porridge you make, it's always so tasty!". Sujata was silent.

She couldn't move when she realised what she was about to do. She had poisoned her daughter's porridge. Soon, the man of the house returned and it was time for snacks. When the family started eating, Sujata, a bit bewildered, started thinking, "What have I done? What will happen now? Will Titas tremble on the ground with pain? I shouldn't have done this. How could I do this to my own daughter?" Just then, Titas called out, "Ma! Come and look! Dad is behaving strangely. As if he is in a lot of pain. I don't understand. What is that white thing coming out of his mouth? Is he okay?" Sujata looked pale. Her eyes were stern. She said in a firm voice, "Sit and eat, Titas, the animal has been finally put to death."

Fate

Sk Alham Zain UG Semester VI

"Asim! Wake up Asim!" Layla shook her brother awake, "There are people outside!"

Asim woke up with an unpleasant countenance, annoyed with his sister, "What is it, Layla? It's probably Aput, you know he is mad and screams sometimes at night."

"No brother!" exclaimed Layla, "It's not Aput... I think... it's monsters."

Asim's mind transitioned from sleep to being able to notice the actual mayhem that swelled from outside, "Wait...something IS happening..."

He got up and peeked outside through an opening in his window. Guards were circling up the village folk in the centre of town. They were knocking down doors and putting the houses on fire.

"Layla... we need to get out of here," whispered Asim, "Pack your essentials."

"What is happening Asim?" said the ten-year-old Layla clutching her doll made from a piece of cloth with sand tied in.

"It's okay Layla, nothing is happening, be quick and—" Asim was interrupted.

Their weak door was knocked down by a soldier. They both screamed; dust swirled inside their hut and when it settled, Asim and Layla saw the face of the soldier, he wore a golden mask, like a cartonnage, and it gleamed clearly amidst the darkness of the night. Asim embraced his sister tightly and was dragged out by the soldier. He threw the two of them among the other village folk.

"What is the meaning of this?" Asim thought holding a shivering Layla close, he was ten years older than her and was her only relation left in the world. They waited for the soldiers to rally all the people of the small village to that spot and set their homes ablaze. Perplexity consumed the folk as they howled gazing at their houses on fire. "They are no ordinary soldiers," thought Asim.

After a while, a significantly taller figure appeared from the smoke and stood overlooking the rabble, his hands behind his back he slowly uttered, "Silence."

Asim felt his throat clench and for a brief moment, he couldn't move. The chaos of the crowd was switched off in the blink of an eye. The only noise that continued was fire crackling. The tall figure wore a similar mask to the soldiers but much grander and more elaborate. His golden armour sparkled dimly under the rippling brown desert outfit.

The tall individual spoke in a deep chilling voice, "His Majesty has ordered your presence... you will obey... or-"

"Or what? You already destroyed our village," interrupted an old man, "What did we do? This place is in the middle of nowhere, even if we wanted to do something that would affect the Pharaoh, we won't be able to...Can't you leave a few dozen desert people alone?"

The tall man began to walk towards the old man.

The old man, lying helpless on the ground continued, "Who are you supposed to be? HUH? Taking away our homes! You are no Medjay, that's for sure!"

The tall man raised his foot and with impossible speed stomped on the old man's neck and launched his decapitated head in the air which landed right in front of Asim and a sobbing Layla.

Asim guarded his sister's eyes, preventing her from witnessing the awful sight, but he saw the old man's head, with blood leaking out and something peculiar about his eyes.

In those lifeless eyes, he saw a dark blue night sky with a cluster of stars. It was almost like it was a gateway, a window to the ever-expanding outer space.

The rest of the people said nothing, they were terrified to even open their mouths even to gasp. Each of them obeyed every command and began to walk toward an unknown destination. No one spoke, except Aput, the madman of the village, famous for fabricating tales and prophecies no one believed. His hand was tied and he repeated the same thing over and over again, "His majesty has called us, Finally! His majesty has called me," followed by a hysterical laugh.

'Why would the Pharaoh call for a few desert people who have nothing to do with anything?' was the question that plagued Asim's mind. He looked at the soldiers, all with their golden masks, walking at the same pace, showing no signs of exhaustion. Hours passed by and the sun climbed to the top. The heat consumed the energy of the people, their hearts begging to halt, take rest under a shade, to drink water. But they were afraid to speak up and kept walking.

Eventually, one by one the people fell, the ones who stopped even for a moment to check on the fallen were immediately thrust with a spear. Asim occasionally carried his sister to avoid her demise but his body too had a limit. Luckily that limit was pretty high. The blazing sun was unforgiving, and walking under it without the protection of clothing was tormenting, yet they had to, there was no other choice. The sun settled into the horizon and the heat died down, but the bodies of men, women, and even a few children were breaking down. From about a hundred people it was down to sixty. No words were spoken, their lips growing drier and perhaps a fever creeping up.

The night sky displayed a sight to behold, the twinkling stars on the dark blue sky, with a glistening silver cloud of astral dust. Asim's eyes reflected the spectacle of the celestial marvel and he stared into the abyss of the darkness, almost halting his steps, but then recollecting his thoughts he caught himself and continued to walk.

The day passed, and the sun climbed back up again. And with it fell another group of men and women, and a few killed by the soldiers at the most minor inconvenience. Dehydration was setting in, their stomach growled, their temperature changed, and their skin turned scarlet and hypersensitive. Night fell again and the crowd of people dwindled.

From sixty people it was down to a couple of dozen people. On the horizon there stood a structure, a pool full of water with palm trees around it. Asim's heart pounding, holding his sister on his shoulder, started to walk a bit quicker. A few minutes later, they approached the palm springs, and to Asim's surprise, it wasn't a pool of fresh blue water, instead it was an opening of a cave. From the outside, it was no bigger than ten feet high and a few metres in width. As they entered the cave, Asim was able to see the end of it.

A thought crossed Asim's mind, "Are they going to execute us here? What's the point?"

A whooshing noise entered their ears and their tummies felt a bizarre drop. They were not inside the cave anymore. They stood on a plateau floating in space. This was no ordinary space,

millions of sparkling stars surrounded them, the pink astronomical glow moved slowly among them, the silver astral dust was more glaring than ever, the light green gleam of the interstellar sky was everywhere, and the heavenly divine shine of the soldiers' mask beamed incredibly.

Aput screamed with joy, "We are here! His majesty! He is here!"

"This is not Alexandria..." whispered Asim still carrying his sister.

In the distance, they saw a floating throne and it grew in size as they approached closer. As they reached the throne, they noticed it was facing the other side. Once reached, they were ordered to kneel, and without hesitation they obeyed. They had been walking for two days, it was not the opportunity they would leave. Asim sighed with relief, yet there was no catharsis, the lurking sense of impending doom persisted.

"We are here Layla," he kept her body on the ground beside her, sleeping, "Wake up...the Pharaoh is here."

She did not move.

The throne moved and it began to turn. Asim is still trying to wake Layla up. Asim's attention shifted when everyone gasped at the sight. He lifted his head to see a man on the throne, his skin was pure black, and his entire body flaunted different types of gold ornaments that looked nothing like from Earth. And when Asim relocated his gaze to his countenance, he found no human there; it was the face of a jackal on the body of a well-built human. He stood up with his Khopesh in his hand and approached the people.

"Anubis..." said Asim softly.

There was silence, no one moved a muscle, and the only movement that occurred for one whole minute was blinking. That silence was broken when Anubis raised his Khopesh and began to slaughter the people. Men howling, women screeching. Blood splattered all over the arena yet no one could move. Aput chanted, "I have been blessed!" before Anubis dismembered him. Meanwhile, Asim shook his sister thoroughly but she didn't move.

"Please NO!" begged the person that sat beside Asim and Layla's motionless bodies.

Anubis chucked the Khopesh. It pierced his chest, nailing him to the ground, killing him instantly. It was then that Asim realised that Layla had passed away. She died on the way there-

the exact time remained a mystery. Anubis marched towards a sobbing Asim and said, "Oh this one..." he chuckled, "Her I claimed long ago."

Tears dripped from Asim's eyes, and the memories began to wrap his mind, of how after their parent's death he was the sole guardian she had. He loved her immensely, and now she was gone, just like that, claimed by Anubis. The overwhelming woe shattered whatever spell he was under and his body broke free.

Thanks to a major shot of adrenaline fused into his blood and he unearthed the Khopesh of Anubis. Anubis was stunned; the god of death was astonished. The tall general rushed in to neutralise Asim but with one swing of the Khopesh, his body exploded. The menacing tall figure was gone in a glimpse. Anubis stood there dazed. Shaking his head, he clapped for Asim and walked around him.

"You have left Anubis impressed, Asim of the desert." Anubis said calmly, "Not always it happens, I tell you"

Asim stood there with fury in his eyes.

"I grant you one wish...but be cautious... I will claim something in return."

"I want my sister back, you monster!" Asim thundered.

"Oh Asim of the desert, you want to call back the departed, and so it shall be." Anubis raised his arms.

'So simple?' thought Asim.

"Of course, it is not so simple...Asim of the desert... I am the God of Death...to give back one life, I shall claim a thousand." Anubis stated, "Are you willing to make that sacrifice?"

Asim thought for a few seconds then spoke, "I just want my sister back, take whatever lives you want."

"Tsk tsk tsk, Asim of the desert...one life for a thousand...truly devious."

White light shone brightly before Asim's eyes and moments later he found himself inside his small hut back in his village. Layla lays on his lap, breathing. Asim tried to wake her up and

she did, relieving his heart. They shared an embrace and Asim said, "I love you so much, my little sister."

Layla, confused, and oblivious to the events that occurred, kept her eyes open. The Gods know if they are to be called eyes, well, that's where it's supposed to be, but instead, it housed a cluster of stars, no pupil, no white; just the darkness of the night, with stars and the same silver gleaming astral dust.

In the years that followed, there was no rain. Water began to disappear from the river Nile. Drought and despair are everywhere. Thousands fell. "Anubis massacres for amusement," that's what Asim had heard from the madman of the village, Aput. Never in a million years could he have imagined being a part of it. To play a part in entertaining a God seems far fetched, but Asim was a living example, oh well, not anymore. Within the hut of the small village, lies the remains of a brother and sister, starved to death.

Deluge of a Breath

Srijita Banerjee PG Semester II

It was time for Rekha. It was time for her to realise it was perhaps not worth it. She did not know why she had that clarity of thought all of a sudden, sitting in her chair – the chair which was not changed for the last three years even though "promised", the chair where there was no more comfort left for Rekha to probe into. Every square inch of it was drunk by her bottom, every inch, even the corners which were hard to get to – in the reception room where she was, the homing device responsible for those seventy two employees that worked in the company. She looked at the calendar. Today's day was circled with a red pen.

"No more", she whispered to herself. The whisper was quite loud. Maybe it was not a whisper but a statement. Mr. Bagchi, manager of the firm, who was passing by enquired, "Ms. Rao, is something wrong?"

"Nothing, sir. I... I seem to have lost my vigour today. Just now I accidentally ordered the wrong lunch for Mrs. Sinha. She would be furious with me if she ever got to know!" said Rekha in her perfect English accent.

"Oh, nothing to worry about. You have been with us longer than anyone. You know us more than we know ourselves. It is almost a tragedy how you know which is my favourite tie and my wife doesn't. Pity. Pity." The last of the sentence was perhaps muttered to himself.

"Oh, it's nothing I'm sure. You feel that way because we spend more time here in these four walls than we do with our family, our home or just ourselves." said Rekha with a plastic smile ironed to her face. Before Mr. Bagchi left her desk where a rainbow of telephones arranged in a systematic order, Rekha hesitantly called out, forgetting her accent, "Sir... Do you think you can do without me today? No more. I can't do this today. Please? I will make it up over the coming week." Mr. Bagchi, stood there for a while calculating the risk of losing their only receptionist but keeping in mind how she never took a day off for the past seven years.

"Sure. It's only three o'clock now. You may leave. We won't get profitable calls at this hour of the day." With a smile on his face, Mr. Bagchi went back to his cubicle leaving Rekha alone by herself.

Taking only her belongings, her pen and her writing, she got up from her comfortless, lifeless chair and headed for the door. Riding the elevator down from the thirteenth floor, she looked up to see her reflection. Her hair was still in a perfect bun, her silk purple saree still perfectly pleated, her face that never reflected the hollowness, but her eyes – they still had the warmth. With the ding of the elevator, Rekha stepped out into Calcutta when it is seldom appreciated – in the afternoon. Rummaging in her bag, she took out her black umbrella, opened it squinting her eyes, and walked. She did not know where to walk, in which direction to walk, but she kept muttering to herself like a mantra that could release her from this prison of hers – "no more, no more, no more".

After walking in the direction of Shakespeare Sarani for ten minutes, Rekha decided she wanted to see Esplanade. She looked around her – people busy in their own cacophonic worlds, some running, some tiredly walking, some fanning themselves, some using their folder as a shield from the sun walked on to a directionless destination which she would never know about.

Her muttering had stopped but instead she was humming a tune, sometimes whistling. She could whistle well, her father would always say. He was the one who taught her how to whistle – with two fingers, four fingers, and with just rolling her tongue. A smile appeared on her sweaty face, it was not a plastic smile. It was a different smile. It came from somewhere she was long familiar with – her long unused, unsung, corroded heart – closed to the plastic world that she breathes in.

Upon finding herself where she imagined she would be, looking at the big clock of the white and golden building from a distance, Rekha was experiencing an epiphany, an epiphany so strong, her perfect plastic face broke down to a human face where emotions came to show. Grief, it was grief and sadness that dominated her eyes, and her eyes – tears of a reverie lost to her. It was a moment when Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata came alive, with each keys and pedals waving on her aged face, moving not just time from one corner to another but ripples of emotions lost to her, sprouted like saplings, ready to be planted for its fruition.

Rekha walked into the playground where no school boys were kicking a ball around, yelling out whom to pass or dodge but away in their homes, sleeping comfortably in their mother's room under the electric fan. She looked around for a specific place, a tree close to her home – there she found it. She almost fell on her face running towards it. She knelt and breathed in – she breathed in and breathed out – like a person running out of breath or a drowning person fighting for every gulp of air. She breathed in and with it, the memory she was locked away. With every breath, the chains and many, many locks around the memory started to evaporate – with a sudden jolt it was out – like a bioscope in a kaleidoscope, just for her.

From sadness, her face gave a peep of a smile. She remembered the time she was airborne when her Appa threw her up so that she could catch stars, the sound of her mother's anklet ringing in every corner of their home, the smell of comfort found in Dadi's lap, the various sound of her voice when she told Rekha stories, the never ending waving when her Appa left for work, the stargazing with raga Hamsadhwani playing in the cassette player in the living room while her Amma pointed to several stars in the infinite sky. She remembered all those times when her family remembered everything, everything about her, even her little idiosyncrasies – how she would take salt on the right side of her plate and just one spoon of mango pickle on the other side, how she would take only one serving of everything cooked and nothing else. Those days of childhood mirth were lost to her, lost like her family who long left her and soon she rooted herself in this plastic world where no plants could grow, where there was no soil, no air, no water, no nourishment – for themselves to be born and found.

Breathing under the tree, Rekha found herself to be free of the pristine clandestine mask – the impeccable mask which protected her and at the same time made her alien to everyone and herself. A breath, another, the mask cracked like lightning on the empty dark sky. She closed her eyes – a breath and two more. She was breathing.

Blackcurrant, Vinyl Records and Midnight Waves

Drishti Shroff PG Semester IV

When I first looked at the vinyl records in that old bar, I considered them obsolete but ended up stacking few in my bag since the owner was selling them at dirt cheap for something that might be an antique. I usually hoard candles which prove themselves useful if I wish to inhale vanilla and coffee beans diffused in the air. The setting is a rustic hillside at this hour of the day and I'm entering my peaceful neighbourhood, the smell of firewood against the clashing waves near the shore. Warmth.

I'd agree that the shores at midnight are more enchanting, really. It's inviting. The seashells are getting drowned and struggling against the slippery sand, the soft breeze with a hint of moisture and oh, I have to hurry and enter my cottage already. The red lights in my room touch my skin gently. It's soft, the beautiful shade of red on my skin reminds me of old wine bottles. It's harmless, sometimes. To douse yourself in these passive moments before sleep. Hot showers help too, the burning hot ones that are almost dizzying. But mostly, it's the breeze. Or an old letter. But it's just really the middle of the night and I can't sleep. Can you?

And there's something about these passive moments when streetlights are tinkering to a close, the shopkeepers are using tea kettles to keep themselves awake for customers a few minutes before drawing the shutters and when people on the streets remind you of a pain you thought had subsided. It's cold at this hour of the night.

The luminescent patterns on my fingers have a strange tension when placed against the pages of a book. The pages turn and my fingers follow, like they're the resultant reaction to the crashing waves of the ocean. They simply flow.

In hazy frames, like looking through droplets of water, the memories jostle to a stop. There's something solitary about women boarding a station at midnight, it's haunting, their image against the crimson city light. They disappear in a fraction of a second and you're making muses of a ghost and frankly, what's even the point? Here, I'm using antiquities and ornate

candles to amuse myself at an hour that seems oddly sinister for making me jump around and sprint my way to the waves.

Let me be your 'leccy metre And I'll never run out Let me be the portable heater That you'll get cold without I wanna be your setting lotion Hold your hair in deep devotion (I'll be) At least as deep as the Pacific Ocean Now I wanna be yours Secrets I have held in my heart Are harder to hide than I thought

Maybe I just wanna be yours

I hum along, it's not a hard song to catch. And it's even harder to get out of your head, especially if you're remotely familiar with the emotions Alex Turner romanticises in the beats and drugs you with its heady lyrics.

Like I'm tearing through the water droplets in front of my eyes, a memory grazes me. It was a mellow Saturday evening, from what I recall. Saving a drowning kitten, bagging a few toys from the gaming parlour and devouring a few cans of soda pop. Pop pop pop. Do I remember anything else? It would've been warmer to just freeze for a minute and bury myself in the cotton candy sweatshirt he was wearing, it smelt citrusy. It was weeks after he returned from navy duties and ah, the memory is interrupted as the next song plays *"She took my silver spurs, a dollar and a dime*

And left me cravin' for more summer wine

Oh, oh summer wine."

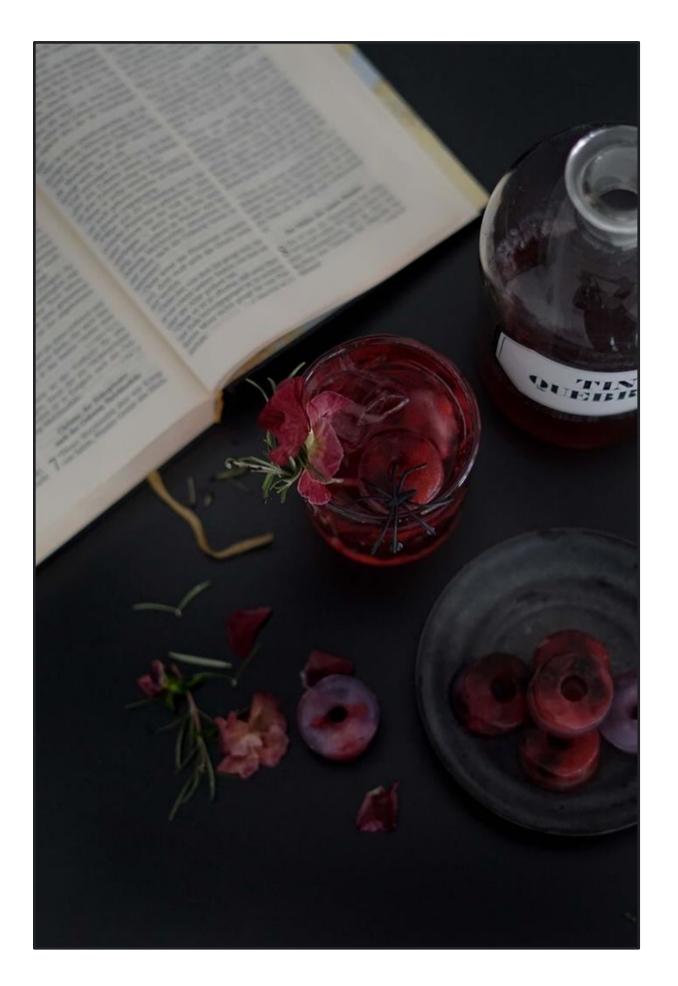
It occurs to me that perhaps it's just me itching to smell the citrusy scent and the warm choking embra- ah, I look around to see his cute smile as he adores a toy we won at the arcade. I laugh and open another can as we walk towards the shore.

I blink away my receding gaze and peel the layers of excess on my skin, the scarves and trousers and hum along the rest of the lyrics. As a painter, I've often used my brush as a sort of weapon to use fragments of my memories and conceal them in colours. Brushing past my memories, is it? Haha, you could at least say it was a decent one, a literal creative one. We keep amusing ourselves, don't we? I still got a whole night ahead of me and it seems I should leave this tiny cottage and go hear the crashing waves of the ocean. Usually, I switch off my lights before I leave the cottage but to avoid accidents when I come back, I leave it on.

I remember having this intoxicating experience with an ice cream, it was this tiny truck with usually the most exotic flavours. It had blackcurrant, it's almost as obsolete now as vinyl records and I hardly remember finding it anywhere else. You think you're going to find more blackcurrants in this bustling streets, dynamic and strange world that we live in. But you know what? That was the only literal blackcurrant I could sell my vinyl records and old Egyptian lamps for. It spelt magic in strange psychedelic ways and there's a silver lining to it. You would probably find a blackcurrant as intoxicating and pleasant in strange lanes of your bustling city, you probably believe you'd find more of it. But, you won't. It's obsolete now. And you only get it once, remember to let it burn through your memories and paint it on your canvas. You'd probably get to keep it, at least.

It's harmless, these passive moments before I walk towards the ocean. As I'm sitting on the sand, I could hear two voices behind me. It faded in the background eventually. There's a strange tension between the ocean waves and me. It's like we're reaching somewhere but crashing constantly. There's a need for warmth. It's cold tonight and Alex Turner has kept me drugged in his lyrics. The perennial itch for a strange warmth, the citrusy smell of the sweatshirt and dripping image blackcurrant at the tip of my brush, these collide and crash and I realise it's just me perhaps that yearns something of a choking embrace. Or does he too?

The shores at midnight are enchanting really. More haunting, like a flicker. I head back to my cottage, it's been a long night. Almost dizzying. The crimson shade falls gently on my blanket. Warmth.





Kaleidoscope

Section III: Artwork

"She is half my soul as the poets say."

Death is Life

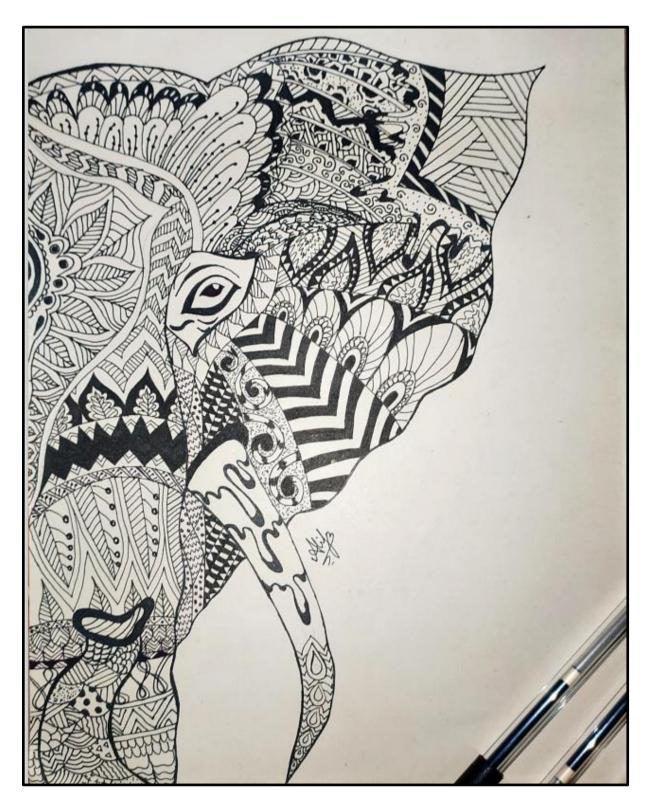
Tanya Alam



Sayanti Sinha Chowdhury



Suchetana Mondal



Alifiya Attari



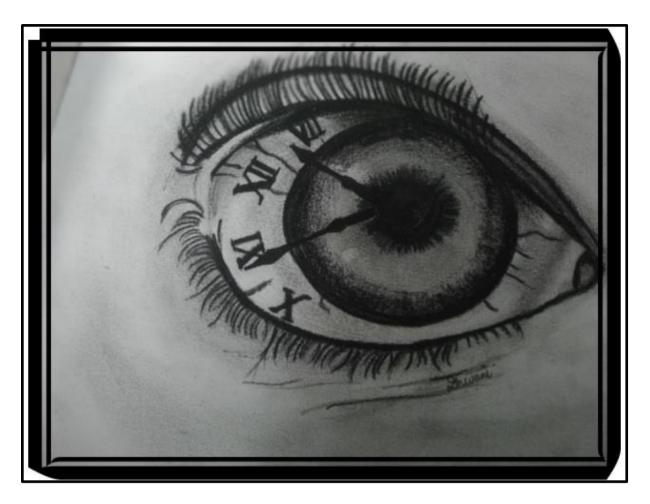
Glances of the Beloved

Chaitali Banerjee



Silence is a piece of art

Koyena Das

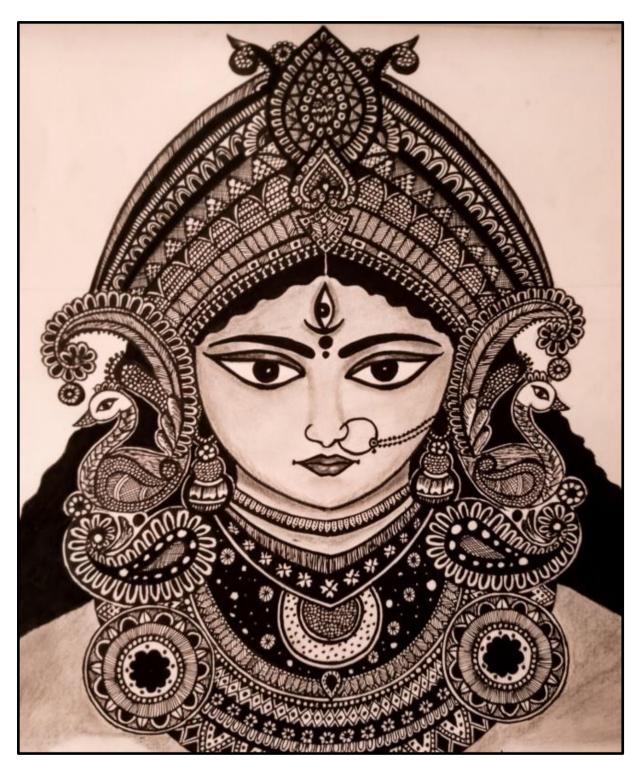


Time, waits for none

Dhwani Doshi



Akash Mahato



Ankita Bagchi



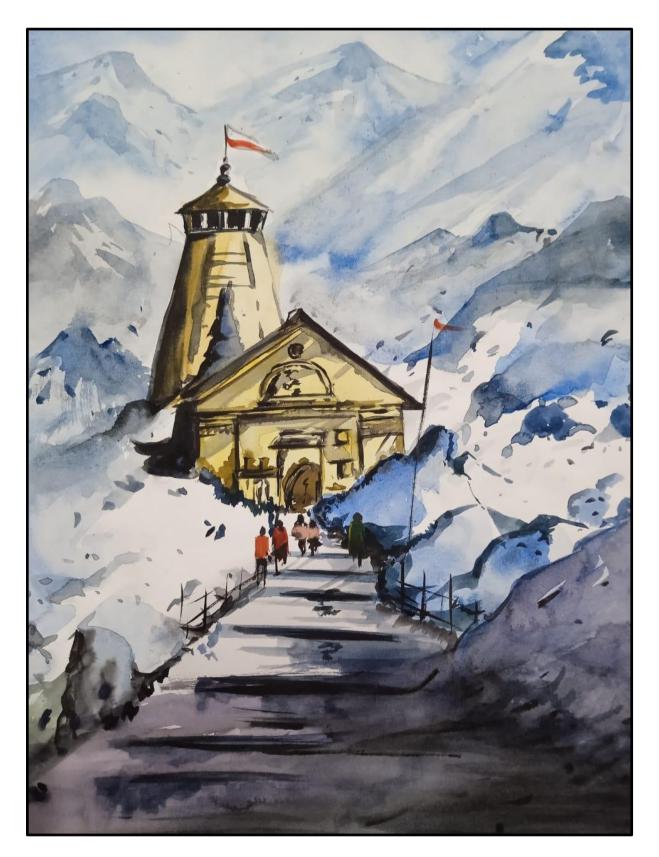
Shakti

Dhwani Doshi



Women

Dhwani Doshi



Kedarnath

Prerana Sharma (UG Semester IV)



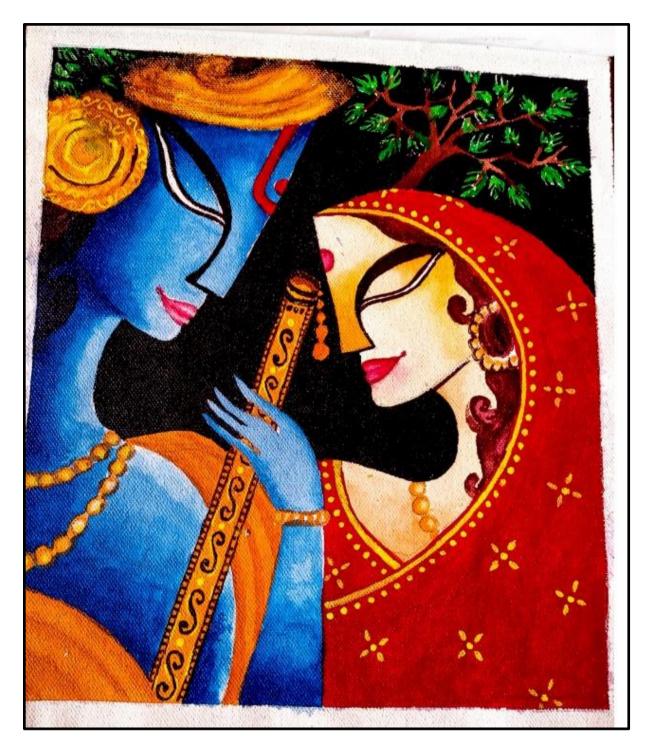
Pixelated Bliss: An AI Rendering of Sri Krishna

Ayan Banerjee



Garden of Heaven

Suchetana Mondal

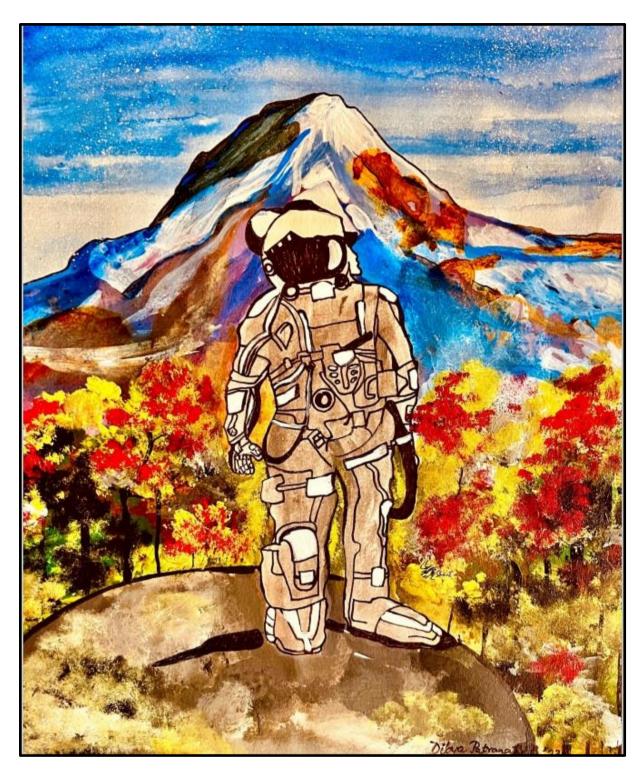


Ankita Bagchi



Kathakali

Yasmin Khan



Moonwalk 2

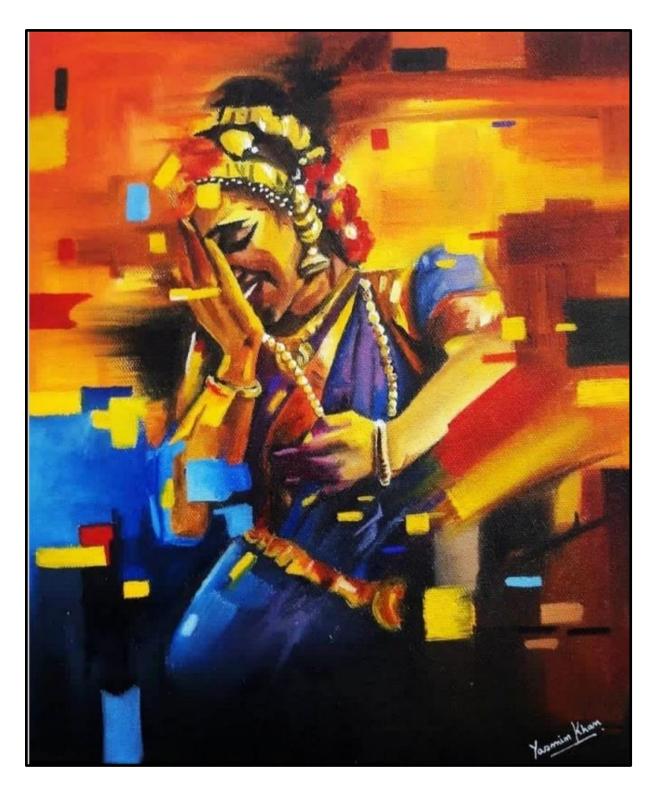
Dibya Patranabish

PG Semester IV



Unattended Despair

Yasmin Khan



Nrityangana

Yasmin Khan





Section IV: Photographs



Love's eyes are shades sublime of "caverns measureless"

Adiptya Mukherjee

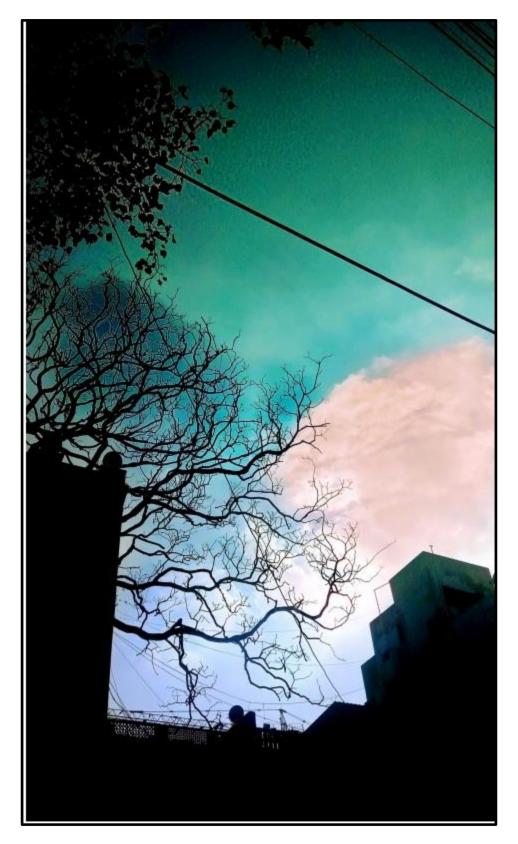


Casement

Shrijan Dasgupta

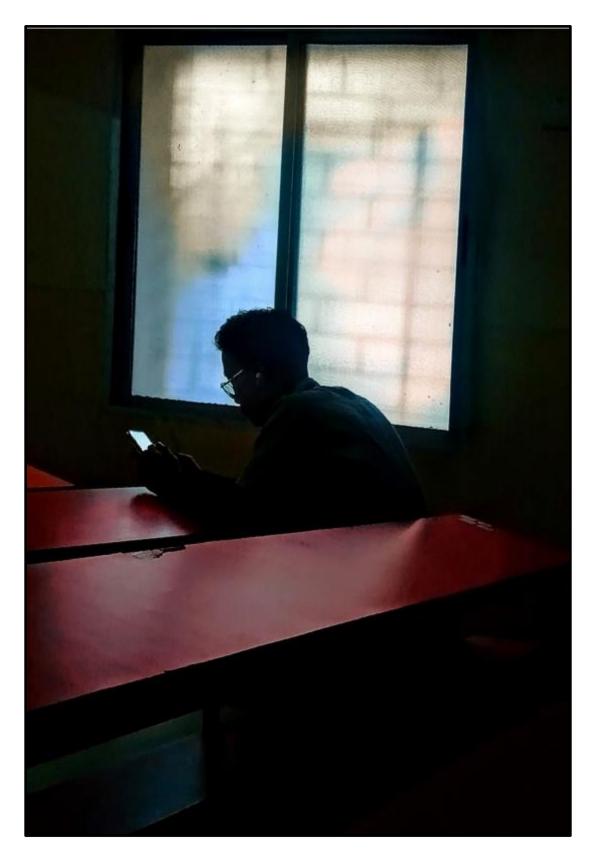


Daybreak by Sea Shrijan Dasgupta UG Semester II



Electricity

Shrijan Dasgupta



Friendship

Shrijan Dasgupta



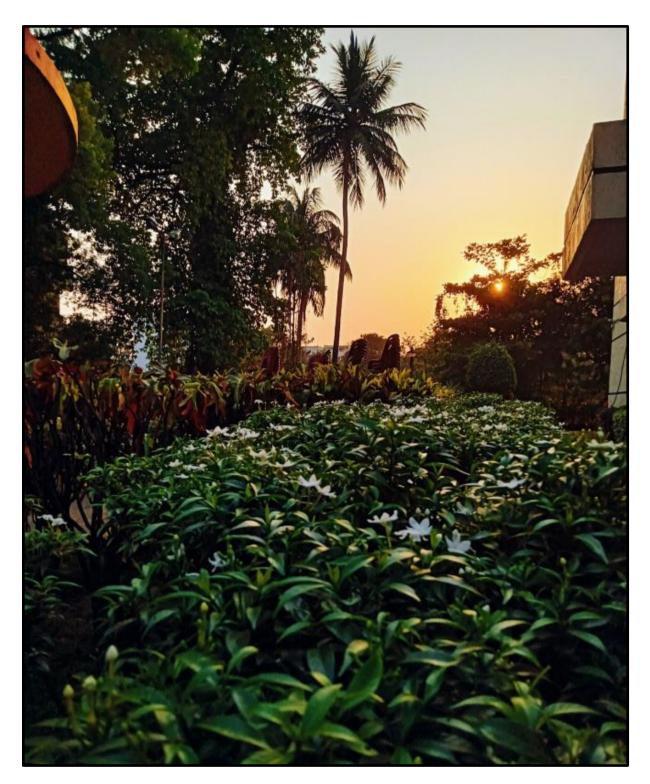
Lens Flare

Shrijan Dasgupta



Liminal Ambience

Shrijan Dasgupta



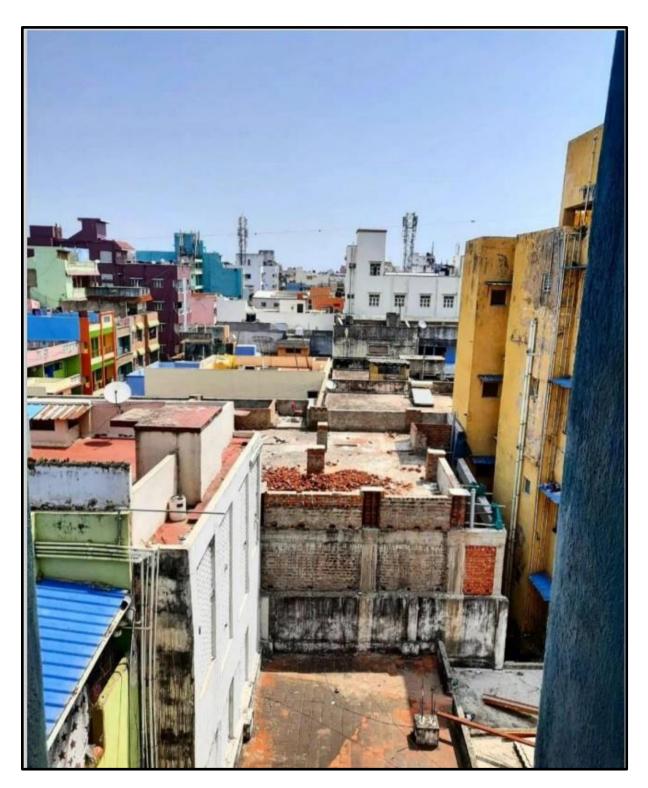
Stilted Twilight

Shrijan Dasgupta



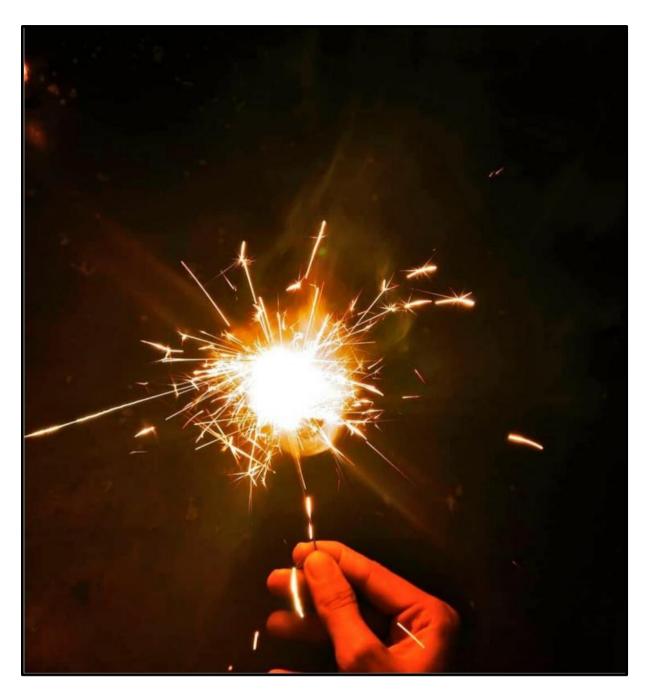
Sullen Dusk

Shrijan Dasgupta



Concrete Jungle

Alifiya Attari



Fire Flowers

Alifiya Attari



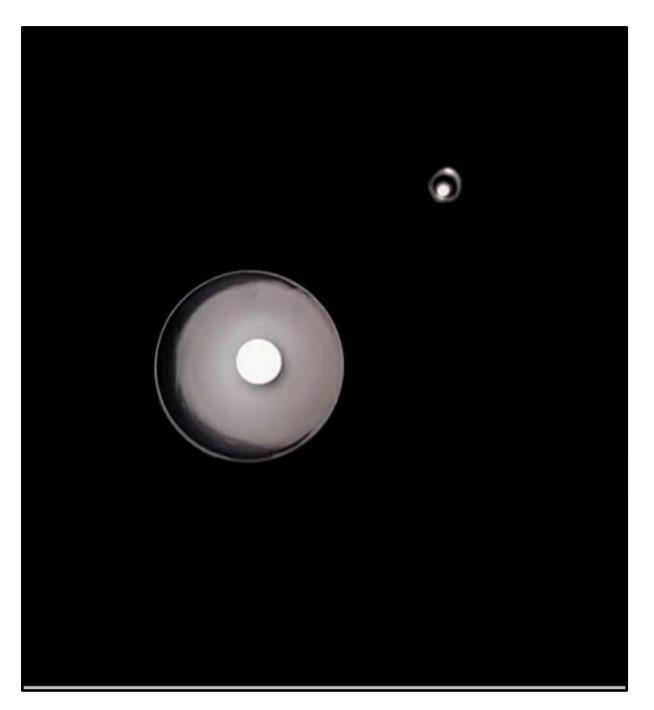
Ignited

Alifiya Attari



Sunlit

Alifiya Attari



To the Moon and Back

Alifiya Attari



Dewy Morning

Moubani Sarkar



Maa

Moubani Sarkar

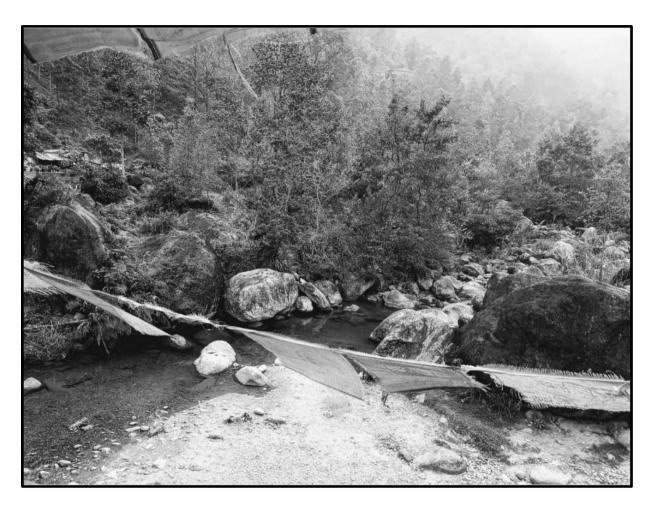


Moubani Sarkar



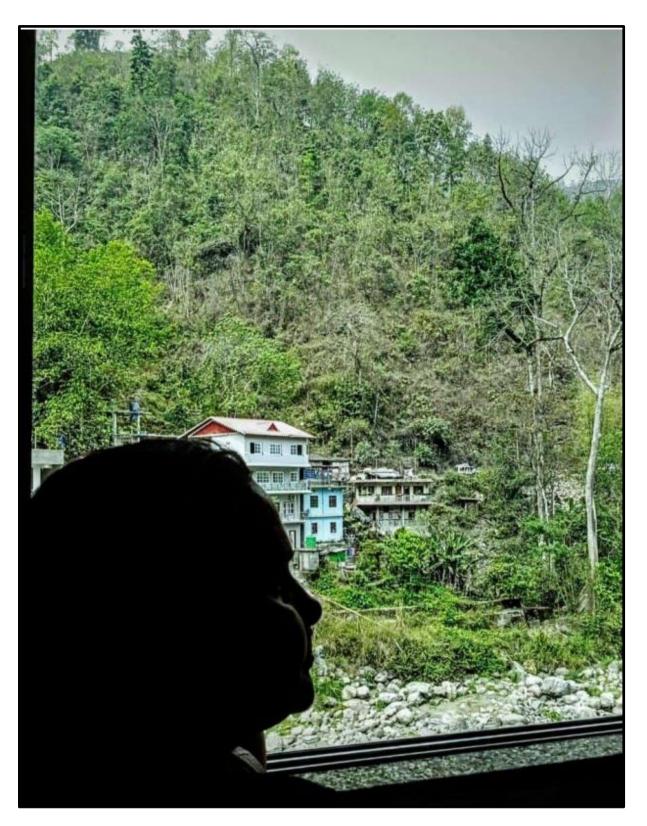
Silhouettes for Celebrations

Moubani Sarkar



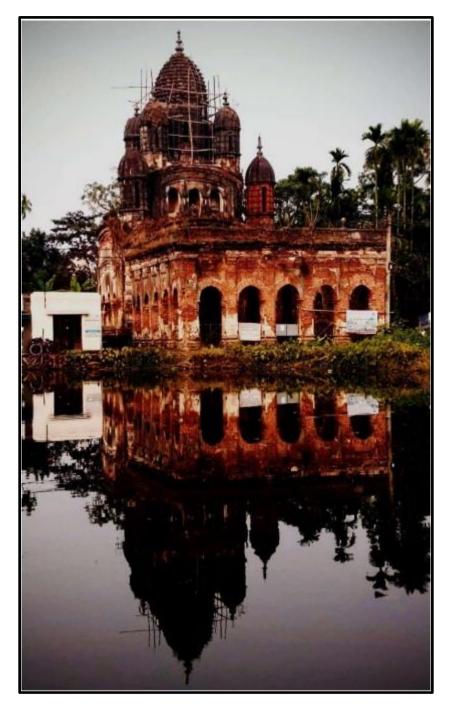
Downward

Rittika Lahiri



Lookout

Rittika Lahiri



Old History

Rittika Lahiri



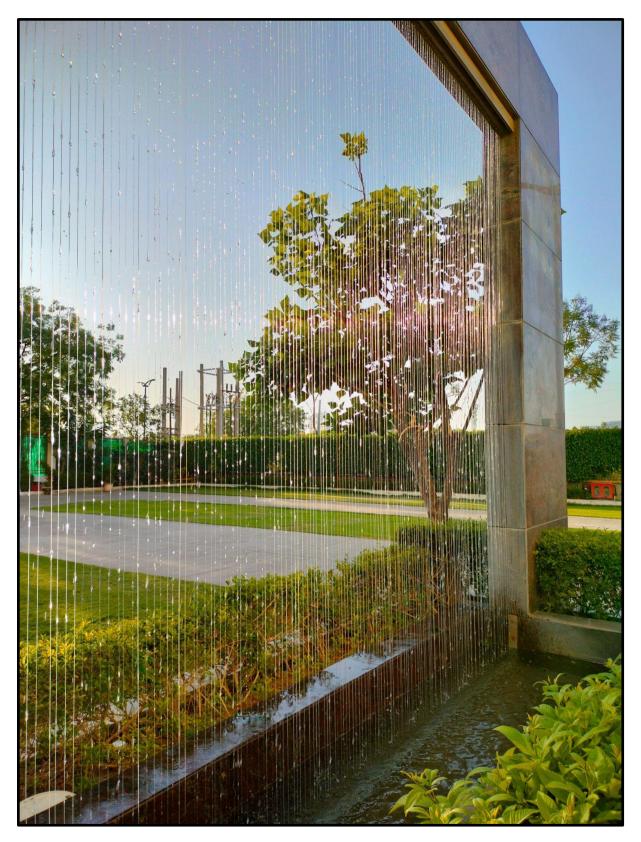
Kashmiri Delight

Malabika Saha



Watcher

Malabika Saha



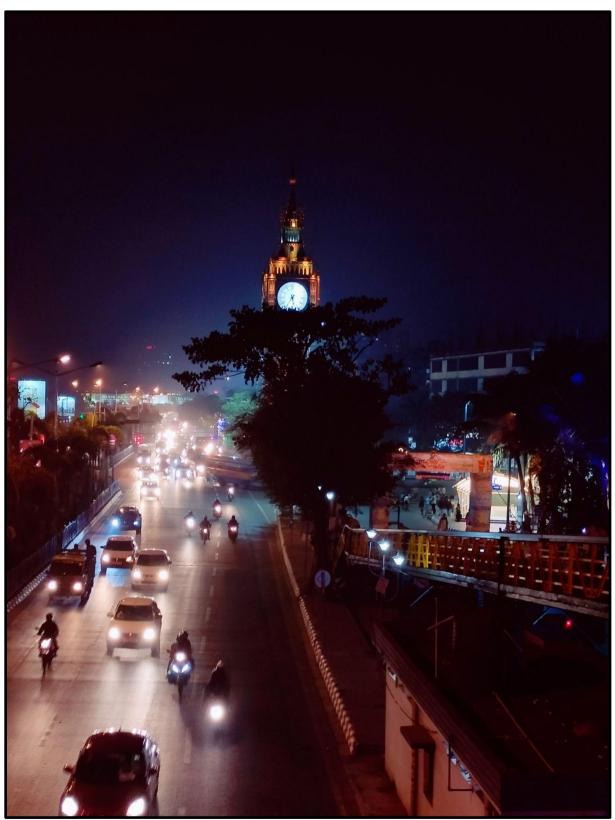
Prerana Sharma (UG Semester IV)



Prerana Sharma (UG Semester IV)



Prerana Sharma



Untitled: Prerana Sharma (UG Semester IV)



Prerana Sharma (UG Semester IV)



Shreejukta Basu



Shreejukta Basu (UG Semester II)



Sayanti Sinha Chowdhury





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