KALPA 2015

Dedicated to the hardworking people who have made IISER Pune such a wonderful place to live in.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It's in your hands now, dear reader! Kalpa '15 has sailed through hours of hard work, days of planning and execution, a number of skipped meals, and a humungous number of sleepless nights before reaching you in its final form. Making it through all the tides of frustration, stress, tension, and of course laughter and fun wouldn't have been possible without the team we are proud to be a part of– The Kalpa '15 Team!

Every page of this edition of Kalpa has been read, re-read, and scanned for errors, corrections, and alignment issues. With the eyes of a hawk, the editing teams in different languages were led by Darshini Ravishankar, Dhriti Nagar, HR Harsha, Prachi Atmasiddha, Prathamesh Datar, Shipra Kumar, Sindhu, and Thasneem A, with a lot of support from Adarsh Vasista, Anwesh Bhattacharya, Bhargavi Parthasarathy, Chinmayee Mishra, Divya Singh, Govind S, Janani Narayanan, Karthik Prabhu, Mekhala Kumar, Mukta Joshi, Naven Narayanan, Nilima Walunjkar, Nivedhika Kannan, Papia Bera, Rubiya Mohammad, Sahana Srivathsa, Satvika Bandarupally, Shraddha Lall, Siddhartha Sohoni, Sidharth Sivaraj, VR Shree Sruti, Sukanya Pandey, and M Vidyadhari.

Adding colour and emotion to every poem and article and bringing out the best in them were the brilliant artists– Brijesh Meena, Debarun Ghosh, Divya Gadkari, Faseela EE, Ira Phadke, Kezia Ann, Nabha Shah, Shraddha Lall, Swastik Mishra, Tanmaya Sethi, Vrushali Rao, and Urmi Poddar.

When the lyrics are ready, you need to set them to a beat and make it sound as melodious as you can, adding all the required variations in pitch, tune, and maybe a little magic! Our designing team, the creators of this magic, consisted of Abhinash Palai, Amruta PN, Anwesh Bhattacharya, Darshini Ravishankar, Divya Singh, Mekhala Kumar, Kaarthik Abhinav, Keerthi Raj, Rahul Iyer, and Swastik Mishra.

A little bit of spice and everything nice makes anything tasty! Adding this spice were Mithila Unkule, Shubham Chhajed, Manish Tekam, Reema Nasser, Sravya P, Nida Farheen, Asmi Jezeera, Kavya Mohan, Harsha Kumar, and Anirban Sharma.

It's the third Kalpa that has been made under her charge and we couldn't have asked for better guidance and support. As always, she has made the making of Kalpa easier, better, and a more joyful experience for us. She has stood by our side, smiled through the hard times, and added some much needed discipline. We thank you from the depths of our hearts, Dr. Richa Rikhy! We really owe you one.

We express our gratitude to Mr. Ketan Joshi and his team at Vikram Printers for bringing this Kalpa to life.

This edition of Kalpa has been a dream come true for many of us. It wouldn't have been possible year after year without the constant and enduring support from our Director, Prof. KN Ganesh. We would also like to thank all the administrative staff who helped us procure contacts and finish various other tasks.

We value every bit of hard work and drop of sweat shed for Kalpa '15 and we thank every person who has been a part of this.

Harini and Lavanya

Photo: Anirban Sharma

EDITOR'S NOTE

When you pick Chinese food over dosas, a black dress over a red shirt, a fiction novel over a journal, or floaters over heels, you make a choice that suits you. You shape every day of your life around your tastes and your preferences. This Kalpa, we bring to you the different dimensions of taste, focusing on food.

As you turn the pages of Kalpa, The Scoop, our section dedicated to the happenings at IISER Pune will allow you to reminisce about the past year. You will venture into the depths of the scientific fervour that we have here, reading about the importance given to the celebration of various science-related days, and learn that students here don't just laze around during their summer vacations through Summer Shenanigans for the summer of 2014-2015.

You'll be served a platter full of creativity in Zest, our articles section. Zest is sub divided into five main kinds of taste in food– the Sweet, Sour, Salty, Spicy, and Bitter sections- giving you the flavour of each in a nutshell. Sweet will let you feel warm at heart and make you smile. Sour will offer a little seriousness and a taste of the sadness that often comes your way. Flip through Salty for variety- it can complement your palate and add a pinch of salt to your feelings as well. Bitter will take you through less-than-savoury experiences and tell you what others feel about various issues. Spicy will make your facial muscles stretch again, bringing back the joy of hearing gossip and making you feel zealous about life.

Having relished all five gustatory sensations, you can take a walk down memory lane with the 2010 batch at Nostalgia Street. Be a part of their five-year journey at IISER Pune and relive memories with them- some happy, some bitter sweet.

We bring to you snapshots of the beautiful campus that we reside in through Campus Updates and introduce you to all the new members of the IISER Pune family. With this we sign off, hoping that you savour this Kalpa as much as we did while making it.

Yours,
Harini and Lavanya

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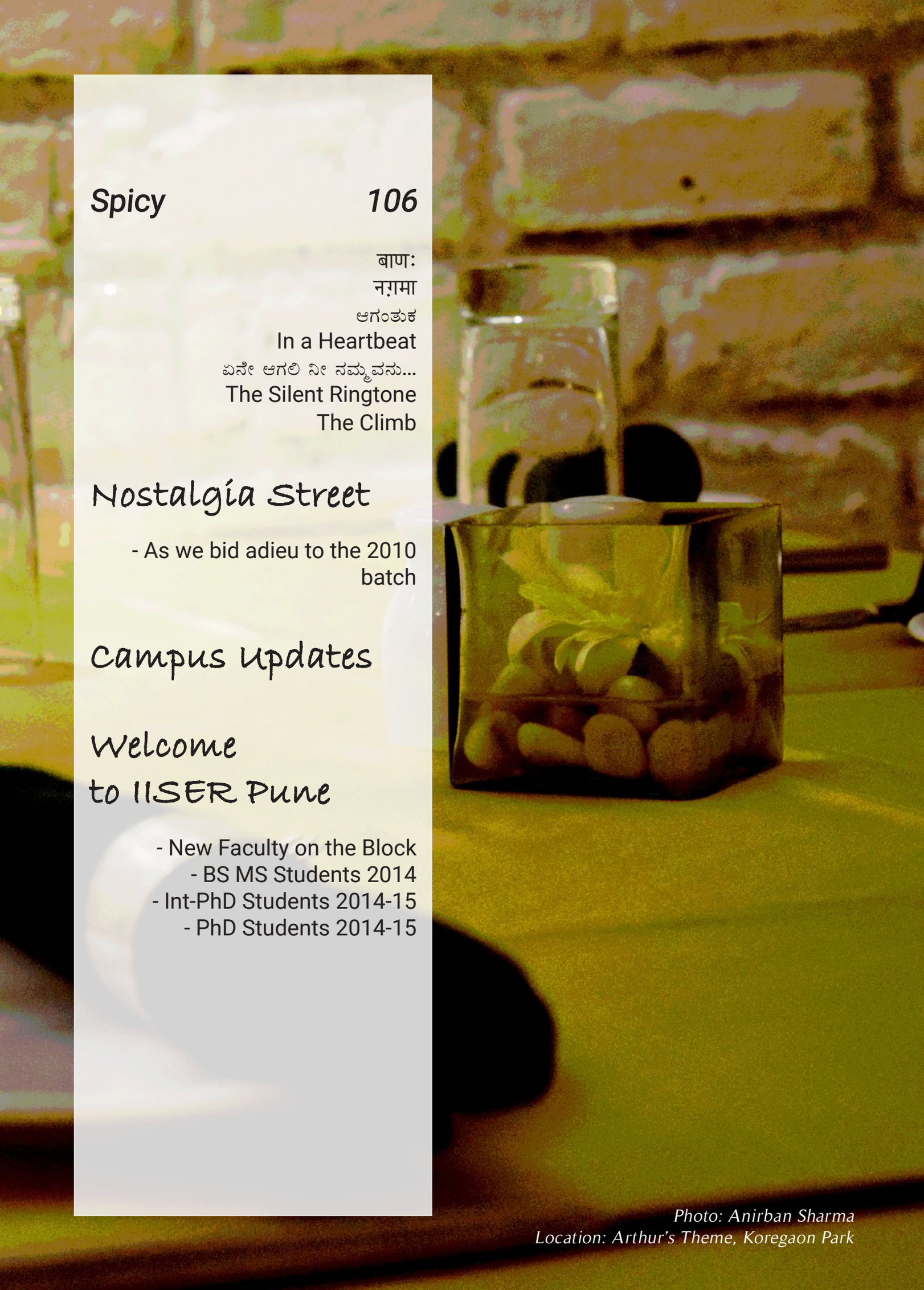

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Campus Updates

Welcome to IISER Pune

- New Faculty on the Block
- BS MS Students 2014
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Photo: Anirban Sharma
Location: Arthur's Theme, Koregaon Park

THE SCOOP

Photo: Harsha Kumar

SCIENCE DAY 2014

The 28th of February is a special day for the science fraternity in India. It is celebrated as National Science Day throughout the country as it marks the discovery of the Raman effect by Sir CV Raman. He reported the groundbreaking discovery on this day in 1928 at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), Kolkata, for which he received the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1930.

No surprise then that IISER Pune was blossoming with festivities on the 28th of February, 2014. The day started with an opening note by Prof. KN Ganesh, the Director of IISER Pune, in which he discussed the importance of the Raman effect in modern science. He illustrated how this effect developed into the very important and successful branch of spectroscopy, Raman spectroscopy. This was followed by talks and presentations on the applications of the Raman effect, which were delivered by students from the research groups of Dr. GV Pavan Kumar and Dr. Mrinalini Puranik. In his talk, Dr. Pavan Kumar reminded the audience about Prof. Raman's strong nationalist feelings and his love for his motherland. In keeping with the theme of National Science Day, Prof. Sunil Mukhi gave a talk titled 'Fostering Scientific Temper', in which he critically analysed the role of science in our society. The talk segued into a round of rigorous discussion on science and religion.

In the afternoon session, Dr. Shabana Khan enthralled a large crowd consisting of students from various schools in and around Pune and the IISER crowd alike with her fun demonstration session titled 'Magic in Chemistry'. Dr. Khan emphasised the necessary precautions while performing experiments in the laboratory. Experiments that involved the making of beer and wine won the audience's attention.

The afternoon also saw the students of IISER Pune's research groups participate in a research poster competition. They got a chance to display their work and also to interact with other research groups and exchange ideas. 'Best Poster' awards were given for one poster each in the subjects of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology. These awards were hotly contested and experienced IISER faculty members formed the judging committee.

A book exhibition was set up in one of the Lecture Hall Complex (LHC) rooms. The choice of books available was extensive. Students were allowed to buy and recommend both popular science books and textbooks for the IISER Pune Library.

As a part of Science Day 2014, students and teachers from schools around Pune had been invited to visit the laboratories at IISER Pune in order to expose them to the cutting edge research facilities that are available here. Students were taken in small groups to visit the laboratory blocks namely- ħ, Mendeleev, and G1 to see modern scientific equipment and their proper usage.

Celebrating Science Day gave everybody an opportunity to express their joy and deep satisfaction at being a part of Indian science and also a chance to celebrate one of India's biggest scientific successes.

- Siddhartha Sohoni

Photo: Dr. VS Rao

FOUNDATION DAY 2014

On the 2nd of April, 2014, the IISER Pune family gathered at our beloved HR-4 to celebrate its 4th Foundation Day. It was at the site of this building that on the 4th of April, 2006, the foundation stone of IISER was laid by none other than our former Prime Minister, the honourable Dr. Manmohan Singh himself. Students, faculty, and administrative staff were packed in the multi-purpose hall to attend this year's Foundation Day lecture. Sourajit Basu and Alisha Pathak, two of IISER Pune's graduates, then in their fifth year, conducted the programme.

The Foundation Day lecture and other celebrations of the day were preceded by the formal inauguration of New Hostel-II by Dr. BN Goswami, Director of IITM Pune and also that of the biology block– G1- by Prof. P Balaram, Director of IISc.

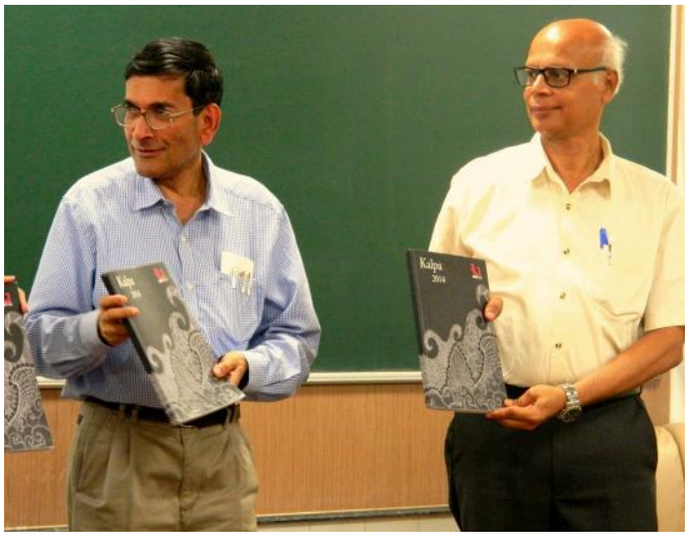
The programme commenced with the Director's welcome address to the audience. He outlined the progress that IISER Pune had made in the few short years since its founding. In the past year, infrastructure around the campus had improved drastically. HR-4, which still retains its multi-purpose tag, was not the only building in the campus anymore as the LHC was operating in full swing with its technologically advanced classrooms and halls with seating capacities of over one hundred and fifty. As of that day, we had added another hostel and a biology block to our list of buildings. The New Dining Hall Complex had almost reached completion and the new cricket ground was also ready for use.

The Director, Prof. KN Ganesh introduced our esteemed chief guest and Foundation Day speaker, Prof. P Balaram, Director of IISc. He is a professor of molecular biophysics who has authored over four hundred research papers and has received many awards in recognition of his work, including the Padma Shri (2002) and the Padma Bhushan (2014). He is currently a member of the Science Advisory Committee to the Union Cabinet and the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

His talk, 'Chemistry on the Fringes of Biology', enlightened the audience about the various applications of chemistry from the perspective of a biologist. He also emphasised the importance of such research in the bigger picture of interdisciplinary science.

Following tradition, IISER Pune's annual magazine, Kalpa, was unveiled. The chief editor, Sharvaree V, gave her thanks to the hardworking members of the Kalpa Team, who contributed to the making of the year's magazine.

Students from each batch who performed exceptionally well in academics were recognised and received various awards, including the CNR Rao scholarship.



The ceremony also saw awards given to the staff members of IISER Pune for their significant contributions in their respective roles as lab technicians, security officers, administrative staff, and many more, without whom IISER's day to day functioning would not be possible. Some faculty members were also awarded for their consistent efforts towards the progress of IISER Pune.

After a heartfelt vote of thanks from the Registrar, the Foundation Day celebrations concluded with the national anthem, instilling in the audience a sense of pride for the institute.

- Papia Bera

Photo: Dr. VS Rao

MATH DAY 2014

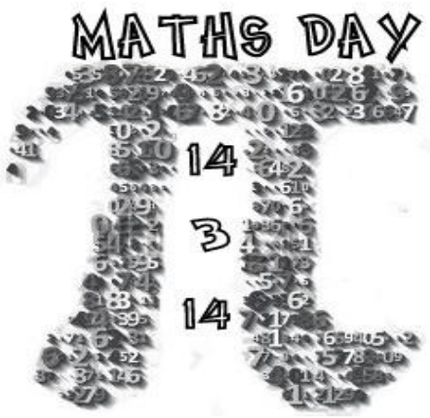
'God used beautiful mathematics in creating the world.'

These words by Paul Dirac succinctly describe how important mathematics is for understanding nature. Nothing compliments nature better than the science of mathematics as even the most complex phenomena can be broken down into numbers and equations. It is a language that makes other sciences eloquent, elegant. Therefore, it is only fitting that we at IISER Pune pay a tribute to mathematics.

While Mathematics Day or Pi Day as it is popularly referred to is celebrated on the 14th of March; we at IISER Pune decided to do things differently. On the occasion of International Women's Day, i.e. the 8th of March, amidst preparations and much excitement, Mathematics Day arrived with a bang. The morning started with the arrival of Prof. MS Narasimhan from TIFR, one of the most brilliant mathematicians the country has produced in recent times. He inaugurated the day by planting a tree in the premises in the presence of Prof. A Raghuram, the Coordinator of the maths department, and students.

Soon after, a flurry of activity took over the Lecture Hall Complex and each room had something unique to offer. Bringing together like-minded people with a zeal for numbers were a variety of workshops. These included multifarious activities like the Room of Games that explained the concept of games like Nim, Hackenbush, and many others. A room was dedicated to the study of bubbles and their real-life applications, rightly christened as the Chamber of Bubbles. Here people were shown how easily problems of minimum and maximum surfaces could be solved using the properties of surface tension of liquids. Similarly, the Room of Symmetries was dedicated to teaching its audience the art of making hexaflexagons and solving the fifteen-puzzle game. The highlight of the day, however, was the Carnival. With games like Pictionary, Telephone, Pin Newton's Nose, each of which had its own distinct mathematical flavour, this unique Carnival was enjoyed by one and all.

The afternoon of the celebration had more to offer to its audience at IISER Pune. As it was International Women's Day, a tribute was paid to the



contribution of women to mathematics through an event called 'Women in Math Showcase', which was essentially a poster presentation competition. Four teams of students from across Pune were invited for the same with the constraint of having at least one female member on the team. The theme of the presentation was 'Life/Work of a Woman in Mathematics'. The teams presented the life and work of distinguished women mathematicians including Sophie Germain, Hypatia (who is considered the mother of mathematics), Sofia Kovalevskaya, and Emmy Noether- a mathematician of many dimensions.

The day progressed further with the Prime Number Bee, which was a huge hit amongst the audience. It tested their abilities to recall prime numbers one after the other. With much fumbling and blunders galore, the event garnered a lot of cheering from the people present. Next on the agenda was a play by the students based on the eccentricities of one of the most famous fictional detectives ever- Sherlock Holmes. This time, Sherlock was given the task of discovering the culprit behind a series of murders, the only clues being math equations left on a board by the killer. This led to a series of false leads, but Sherlock being Sherlock was finally able to crack the code and nab the killer. The play received a great response and was appreciated for the ingenuity of bringing together the two greatest advocates of logic vis-à-vis Sherlock and of course, the hero of the day, mathematics.

The day concluded with Prof. Narasimhan, our chief guest, giving a talk on how India has been a contributor to maths in recent history and how the subject has grown in the post-Independence era. He talked about the emergence of TIFR as a leading proponent of higher mathematics in the country and how it is encouraging the youth to reach higher echelons in this field. He also talked about the growing importance of IISER Pune in academia and how research in mathematics done here is gaining recognition in academic circles. It was certainly an engaging talk and was a great motivator for teachers and students alike. It was a great end to a great day that left the student community entranced by the depth and scope of mathematics.

- Shipra Kumar

Photos: Makarand Sarnobat

CONVOCATION 2014

It was early June. Everybody at IISER Pune was in a festive mood- the campus had suddenly sprung alive with excitement. IISER Pune was gearing up for its biggest ever, and certainly the most important event in its journey of eight years. The President of India had kindly consented to visit IISER Pune to deliver the third convocation address and inaugurate the newly completed Main Academic Building on the 15th of June 2014. The campus had undergone a metamorphosis. A majestic fountain had suddenly sprung up in front of the Main Academic Block. There were IISER Pune flags all around, and signboards had appeared out of nowhere. This was a moment of immense pride for anybody who was ever associated with IISER Pune.

Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the honourable President of India, arrived at 2 PM. He was accompanied by the honourable Governor of State of Maharashtra- Shri Kateekal Sankaranarayanan, the honourable Minister for Human Resources and Development- Smt. Smriti Irani, the honourable Chief Minister of Maharashtra- Shri Prithviraj Chavan, Member of Lok Sabha, Pune constituency- Shri Anil Shirole, and Chairperson, Board of Governors, IISER Pune- Prof. TV Ramakrishnan.

The first event of the day was the inauguration of the Main Academic Complex. As Shri Pranab Mukherjee cut the ribbon and uncovered the inscription, every IISERite felt a surge of pride and jubilation. Above the inscription (which said that the President dedicated the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune to the nation on the 15th of June 2014) in an elegant font was the motto of IISER Pune, '…where tomorrow's science begins today'. The motto has ever since instilled in us, a sense of inspiration towards our goal and a deep sense of ownership for our institute.

Shri Pranab Mukherjee was later taken on a tour of the Main Academic Block. All interested patrons were seated in LHC 101 and LHC 103 where the President's tour was being telecasted live. Prof. Raghuram, the Coordinator of the mathematics department of IISER Pune, compered the event. The President was shown the various research facilities that housed cutting edge equipment and the research output of IISER Pune faculty and students. This was followed by

a presentation by the IISER faculty and students for all the dignitaries. This session included presentations by Dr. Sutirth Dey's research group, Dr. Umakant Rapol's research group, and from IISER Pune students involved in Disha activities. After this, Shri Pranab Mukherjee was shown the campus architecture plan, which he greatly admired. Smt. Smriti Irani was all praise for IISER achieving its current level of research and infrastructure in its short history of eight years. This drew the events at the Main Academic Complex

to a close. The President and all dignitaries were then escorted to the Sir CV Raman Auditorium in the Lecture Hall Complex, which was the venue for the 3rd convocation ceremony. This was, incidentally, the first function held at the CV Raman Auditorium. Ever since then, the auditorium has been the most awe-inspiring venue at IISER for holding workshops and conducting lectures. However, the enthusiastic crowd surpassed the seating capacity of the Sir CV Raman Auditorium. Extra seating arrangements were made at LHC 101 and LHC 103.

The convocation event started with Prof. TV Ramakrishnan declaring the 3rd Convocation of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune, open. This was followed by the Director's address in which Prof. Ganesh summed up the annual activities of IISER Pune and spoke about the new heights of excellence that IISER Pune was constantly conquering. The highlight

> 'The biggest moment of the convocation came when Prof. G. Ambika announced the winner of the Institute Gold Medallist for the year 2014...'

of his address, however, was his announcement of IISER Pune's new Earth and Climate Science Department. After the Director's address, Prof. Ramakrishnan presented Shri Pranab Mukherjee with a memento on behalf of IISER Pune. Shri K Sankaranarayanan, Smt. Smriti Irani, and Shri. Prithviraj Chavan were also presented with mementos. The biggest moment of the convocation came after this, when Prof. G. Ambika, Dean of Graduate Studies, IISER Pune, announced the winner of the Institute Gold Medallist for the year 2014, Akash G. He received his degree and medal from the honourable President of India. Following this, all the BS-MS students who were graduating with distinction were awarded their degrees by Prof. KN Ganesh. Dr. VG Anand, Dean of Doctoral Studies, IISER Pune, then took over from Prof. G. Ambika and proceeded to invite the Director to award PhD degrees to the thirteen graduating PhD students from IISER Pune for the academic year 2014.

Everybody was looking forward to the speech of the newly appointed Minister of Human Resources and Development, Smt. Smriti Irani. She rightly stressed on the need for world class science research and education in India, and also the dire need for female representation in the same. She was impressed with the outreach activities of IISER Pune, especially Disha and the fact that Disha had succeeded in motivating a class XII student from an underprivileged background to join IISER. Shri. Prithviraj Chavan, in his address, observed that Pune was the best possible location for an IISER as Pune already has scientific institutions aplenty. Next up in line was the address everybody was waiting for- the President's convocation address. Shri. Pranab Mukherjee took a critical stand in his convocation address. He reminded the audience about India's glorious past in the field of education. He talked at length about Nalanda and Takshashila and drilled into the audience that India is no longer the education superpower that it was in the earlier eras. He also rallied for a higher number of centres of excellence in research so that Indian research could find its rightful place in the world. He reminded the graduating students of their duties towards science, the people, and the nation. Finally, Col. Rajashekhar, Registrar, IISER Pune, gave the vote of thanks to the President and other dignitaries for taking time off their extremely busy schedules to attend the insitute's 3rd Convocation. Prof. TV Ramakrishnan then declared the Convocation closed.

As the audience dispersed from CV Raman Auditorium and the LHC classrooms, Smt. Smriti Irani made it a point to meet them outside the auditorium and discuss a few issues regarding science education in India. This was a step that was ap-

preciated by all the students.

The audience then proceeded to the multi-purpose hall for refreshments.

The final session of the 3rd Convocation of IISER Pune was held again at the Sir CV Raman Auditorium where all the 95 graduating BS-MS students were presented with their degrees. All students collecting their degrees were met with applause and cheers from all their batchmates. The atmosphere was one of deep emotion and joy. Following this, all graduating students posed for a final batch photograph with Prof. Ramakrishnan, Prof. Ganesh, Prof. Ambika, and Prof. Mukhi. Immediately after the photo, the sky was full of graduation hats, thrown up in jubilation by the graduating students. This picture perfect moment was a fitting close to the event.

Many graduates have now joined some of the best-ranked institutes of the world for their doctoral studies. Others have been placed in highly scientifically demanding jobs. Soaring to new heights, these students have done IISER Pune and everybody associated with the institute proud.

- Siddhartha Sohoni

Photos: Prathima Video Tech

FRESHERS' PARTY

Remembering the first two weeks at IISER Pune takes me to the petrichor, the drizzles, the enchantment of the pretty campus, the cheerful new faces, and homesickness. Gossiping about clubs, crushes, the high-tech campus, and tough courses. Oh! How can I forget, every professor asking the class, 'What is science?', and trying to answer people's 'Why did you join IISER?' question brings a smile to my face.

With the commencement of the first semester, the suspense of the freshers' event started building up. It began with our batch of 180 freshers being randomly divided into groups of six people (I guess it was done using some mathematical equation! Geeky seniors). Every group was supposed to present a skit on a theme chosen from a list given to us by the seniors and the themes were allotted on a first-come-first-serve basis. The punch line was clearly announced- 'It is compulsory to participate'.

Between hurrying to classes, exciting lab sessions, and studying for quizzes, we all tried to 'work' on our skits and struggled hard to come up with new ideas, so as to not bore our seniors to death.

The day of the event finally arrived. The 9th of August was an icebreaker for all of us. We entered the multipurpose hall with placards stuck on our backs with 'science-y' words (ad-

enine, cytosine, photon, algae, light, wave, etc) written on them, having no clue of what was to follow. The vibrant music of 'Hakuna Matata' made us pulsate with energy and got us started for the day. Our seniors worked hard to put before us some wonderful performances that put us at ease. Then came the time for the placards to be put into play. The idea behind the placards struck us like a bolt out of the blue, when 'adenine' was told to pick its partner 'thymine' from a crowd of a hundred and eighty to dance with, and the nature of 'light' was decided by a tug of war between 'wave' and 'photon'. Many such fun activities got different batches to interact with each other.

After this, it was our turn to present our skits. One team depicted what happens when superheroes come onto the dias together. At one point the lights were switched off and zombies appeared from various places, making our blood run cold. Then came the CID team who tried to hog the limelight through their futile attempts to solve a murder case along with Sherlock and Jacques Clouseau. While many had jitters at the prospect of performing in front of a big crowd, the rest accomplished the same with sparkling confidence. Every performance concluded with a short introduction of the performers. We all lost track of time.

This was followed by a dance party and snacks. Everyone was seen grooving to the music, enjoying the awesome, amazingly organised freshers' party, all thanks to the seniors!

I will always cherish the memory of that day. It brought all of us together, removed any fear we had of the seniors, and made us meet supercalifragilisticexpialidocious people.

I left my family miles behind. Little did I know that I would meet a new one.

- Nida, Sravya, Vrushali

Photos: Athul RS , Manish Tekam

KREEDA JUNG

Following the trend of most events and clubs having Sanskrit names, Kreeda Jung is IISER Pune's intra-institute sports meet. Through the perspective of a fresher, it was an opportunity amongst many others for us to get to know a little bit more about IISER and the people in it, and contrariwise. In September and October, people started checking their mails more often (freshers' note 1: IISER runs on emails) in order to get themselves registered in various competitions. Basketball, football, kabaddi, table tennis, cyber games, volleyball, throwball, chess, carrom, tug of war, and kho-kho are the games that are usually conducted as a part of Kreeda Jung (freshers' note 2: badminton and cricket junkies need to wait for IPL, IBL, and IISM).

For football, kabaddi, volleyball, and throwball, teams were registered directly, and the matches were then conducted. For basketball, groups were formed randomly, and it was played full court for the first time in Kreeda Jung history. The number of participants was fifty, which was a record high (with respect to basketball), with a higher percentage of girls' participation compared to the last time. Dr. Raghav Rajan, a faculty member in the biology department, also participated. The seniors had an eye out for good players to include in the team for IISM '14 (freshers' note 3: if you would like to secure your position to represent IISER Pune, you should probably do a good job in Kreeda Jung). There was good crowd support, which the players felt created a wonderful atmosphere.

Unfortunately, due to bad weather, some events like tug of war and throwball had to be cancelled. The results of table tennis and cyber games were inconclusive, though everyone had their share of fun while playing.

Among the indoor games, chess saw about sixty -four participants. Eight rounds of matches were played in total, with rules imported from the FIDE Laws of Chess. The points table by the end of these eight rounds saw Mohammed Fawaz at the top position with 7.5 points, followed by Rahul Nisal in the second position and Nithinraj in the third position, each with 6.5 points.

Carrom was introduced as a part of Kreeda Jung this year and it saw an overwhelming response of a hundred and eight players: fifty four teams, beating the basketball record in its maiden year. Unlike chess, the preliminary rounds and quarterfinals were knockout matches, with the best of three boards qualifying to the next round. From the semifinals onward, the game was for points. The final match lasted for twelve rounds, with Aishwary Shivgan and Birjeet Singh emerging as winners.

Though we had to bid adieu to Kreeda Jung (until next year, that is), the participants' spirit, sportsmanship, and love for the game stayed with them and carried over to IISM, IBL, and IPL!

- A Janani
Photo: Manish Tekam

ASIAN SCIENCE CAMP 2014

It was during the end-semester exams of our 1st year, that Nabha (Shah) and I were summoned to the Dean's office. We were informed about our nomination for the 8th Asian Science Camp from IISER Pune. and our feelings were like so-

'It was an April morning
When they told us we should go
As I turn to you, you smiled at me,
How could we say no?'

– Robert Plant, Led Zeppelin (from Achilles Last Stand)

Obviously, we were ecstatic, but I was a bit tense too. The unavailability of my passport could have cancelled my selection. Also, the ticket booking of the entire Indian delegation was deferred due to this. Eventually everything went well and we gathered together at IISc, all together twenty students who constituted the Indian delegation for the 8th Asian Science Camp, Singapore.

The Asian Science Camp provides a platform for young students to interact with top scholars in the world through dialogue and discussions. It aims at promoting international friendship and cooperation among the next generation.

The five-day camp comprised lectures and tutorials by Nobel Laureates and eminent scientists from Asia. Prof. Sydney Brenner spoke to us about the present status and the future of medical research in the world. This eclectic scientist's words left each one of us spell-bound. Prof. Chorng-Haur Sow presented demo experiments that exposed us to the exciting research going on in nanoscience. Prof. Akira Suzuki's lectures on Suzuki-coupling reactions made chemistry appealing. Prof. Kobayashi explained his model of quarks with a note on his never-ending quest for the perfect standard model. Apart from equations and theories, Prof. Aaron C, Prof. Vladmir V, Prof. Ada Y, Prof. D Rhodes, and Prof. J Ying walked us through their lives in the world of science, which was interesting and enlightening. The camp also had a panel discussion on 'Can discovery and innovation solve global challenges?'. The key speakers shared their opinions on the topic and answered our queries.

> ‘The Asian Science Camp provides a platform for young students to interact with top scholars in the world through dialogue and discussions.’

On the fourth day of the camp, lab visits and excursions were arranged for us. Some of my friends were lucky enough to get a chance to do fun-filled, hands-on laser experiments. On the other hand, we got to visit the National School of Biological Sciences, where we were shown the classrooms and computer lab facilities. Believe me, we at IISER Pune, have relatively better facilities. The visit to the Chinese School of Medicine was fascinating. Their efforts to conserve and promote traditional Chinese and Unani medicine are commendable. (Why, in India, do we not promote Ayurveda as much?)

Following the lab visits was a small exploration of the city. The Merlion, Sentosa Island, Marina Bay, roof-top gardens, and Satai-by-the-Bay made me fall in love with Singapore.

This wasn’t the end! There was more in store for us. An entire evening session was dedicated to Singaporean culture, which includes the Indian, Chinese, Indonesian, and Malay cultures. This resulted in the Indian delegation joining the organisers in applying *mehandi* to almost every participant of the camp! Apart from this, every country had to put up a performance portraying their culture. We, the Indian delegation, practised every night for our performance, a rendition of Vande Mataram followed by dances to folk and Bollywood songs, which was appreciated by all.

A group poster presentation was scheduled for the last day. Each group consisted of people from different countries. We got a chance to interact with a lot of foreign delegates. Sun, an astounding photographer from Thailand, Nadia, a cheerful Singaporean *sampi*, Aoi, a quiet girl from Japan, and Mayan, a brilliant Filipino girl were all a part of my group. Also worth mentioning are Kanit, a super-excited Thai fellow, and the always cheerful and lively Delia, our student coordinator for the camp. We got to know about other cultures, traditions, and also how science is practiced in various countries. Unlike in India, students are exposed to research at a young age. I also came to know about their outlook on India. To my amazement, I found out that India is considered one of the finest English-speaking countries in Asia!

Today, as I pen down this report, I relived one of the most marvelous phases of my life. For me, ASC will always be a place where I made amazing friends, a place where I learnt important life lessons, a place where I was exposed to the true essence of science, a place that triggers an endless cascade of memories!

- Shubham Chhajed

Photos: Shubham Chhajed

VIRASAT WEEK

SPIC MACAY, The Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music And Culture Amongst Youth, is an organisation that seeks to promote India's cultural heritage among the general populace, especially the youth. The IISER Pune chapter of SPIC MACAY is very active and regularly hosts art workshops, musical concerts, percussion performances.

The Fall 2014 semester started with a Cherial painting workshop under the guidance of Mr. Nageshwar Nakash, followed by a talk by Michael Danino on 'What can modern India learn from ancient India?' Both events received widespread appreciation from the IISER community, but the highlight of the semester was, undoubtedly, the Virasat Week that was organised between September 8th–15th, 2014.

Virasat Week, literally translating to heritage week, was a week-long cultural extravaganza filled with dance recitals, musical concerts, classic movie screenings, and interactive talks aimed at giving culturally inclined people a chance to revel in and celebrate the multiple facets of India's rich heritage and also to bring more people into the realm of Indian cultural arts.

The week-long event kick-started with a thought-provoking talk by thinker-sculptor Shri Ravindra Sharma on 'Traditional Technologies and Worldviews'. The founder of *Kala Ashrama* in Adilabad, he explored how technology is interwoven into daily socio-economic relationships. He talked about the knowledge he assimilated from elders and his experiences. He spoke about how every craftsman meticulously plans their designs and takes care of the subtle intricacies that lies within. His talk ended with emphasis on the point that instead of striving for extremely technical education, we should focus on preserving the innate curiosity within us.

The second day brought along with it the classic Bengali movie by master director Satyajit Ray- 'Sonar Kella' that is based on his novel of the same name. The movie shows how Mukul, a young boy haunted by past memories, is taken to

Rajasthan in the hope of finding a cure, only to be kidnapped by bandits. The quintessential Bengali detective, Feluda, is engaged to recover the child in a thrilling chase that leaves everyone amazed. Though the movie was in Bengali (with English subtitles, of course), the audience found it so masterfully directed that they craved for more Ray films to be screened.

After the talk and the movie, which succeeded in getting people talking about the upcoming events, came the live performances that thrilled everyone. The first live performance was a recital of the *Purulia Chhau* dance by Shri Gaur Kumar and his troupe. *Purulia Chhau* is a tribal martial dance form from Bengal and Odisha that draws its themes from the two great Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The dazzling costumes, the energetic acrobatics, and a vigorous rendition of *Mahishashurbadh* and *Taraka Rakshashi Badh* (the slaying of the demon *Mahishashura* and the demoness *Taraka*) left the whole auditorium dumbfounded.

As the week rolled on, more students began attending the concerts as news floated about in the mess and hostels about the amazing performances. The following day's performance was inarguably one of the most graceful and eloquent performances of the whole week. Smt. Sangeeta Dash, an Odissi danseuse, let her brilliantly rendered recital of one of the oldest classical dance forms of India speak for itself. Starting with the traditional *Mangalacharan*, a prayer dance, she then put up four more segments of her performance concluding with the versatile *Navarasa* dance in which the seamless transition from one *rasa* or emotion to the next made one feel giddy with amazement. In each segment of the dance, she explained the postures and the story behind it, and the emotions that were to be depicted. She explained the various *Bhangas* or stances, specifically the *Tribhangi*, the thrice bent posture in which the body is bent in three places, approximating the shape of a helix, and the *Chouka*, the basic square stance that symbolises Lord Jagannath. Her free-flowing dance combined with very natural gestures and eye movements made it seem effortless on her part. After the dance, there was a half-hour Q&A session in which the audience asked insightful questions, while she explained how Odissi's emphasis on intricacies makes it a subtle form of depicting stories full of emotions and the differences between Odissi and other South Indian dance forms. She described the need for Odiya music to strive, to match the levels of recognition that Odissi has gained now. Everyone in the audience gave her and the undeniably talented artists accompanying her- Sri Satyabrata Katar, the vocalist, Sri Pradeep Ray on the violin, and Sri Janardana Dash on the *mardal*, whose music provided rhythm to the whole performance, and brought out the various subtleties, such as the humming of a bee, a standing ovation.

The next day saw a shift from regional art forms to Hindustani classical music as Ustad Waseem Ahmed Khan charmed everyone in a Hindustani Sangeet vocal performance. A direct descendant of the great lineage of the traditional musicians of Agra *gharana*, he began

his performance by giving a brief discourse on Agra *gharana* and its specialties, especially on the *boltan*, which is unique to the Agra *gharana*. People were enchanted by his orotund voice and well-modulated rendition of *Raag Bihaag*, a pentatonic raga that is sung in the evening to express the emotion of *biraha*, the grief when two lovers separate. It is a unique member of the *Bilawal thaat* as it changes the whole ambience to one of *biraha*. After the performance, music aficionados flooded him with questions on Agra *gharana* and the *raag* he sang.

As Virasat Week neared culmination, we had in store for us one of the most renowned sarod maestros in India, Pandit Tejendra Narayan Majumdar, accompanied by Pandit Ramdas Palsule on the tabla. He began his impeccable performance with *Raag Yaman Kalyan*, which is a septatonic raga based on the *Kalyaan thaat*. He followed it up with a devotional composition on Durga which was based on the *bhakti rasa*. He ended the first part of his performance with the *Pahari dhun*. The audience was so mesmerised by the melodies emanating from the sarod that they kept asking him for more. To please the audience, he then played a composition created by his aunt– a rare treat from Pandit Majumdar. As it was the last day of Virasat Week, the performance stretched on for an hour longer, after which the audience gave a standing ovation to the amazing duo.

> '...giving culturally inclined people a chance to revel in and celebrate the multiple facets of India's rich heritage...'

As is tradition at IISER Pune, the maestros were honoured with creative yet beautiful presents that the SPIC MACAY volunteers had painstakingly created. The whole event was highly appreciated and well organised, thanks to the untiring efforts of the SPIC MACAY volunteers!

- Anwesh Bhattacharya

Photos: Nagarjuna Chary

Festivities at IISER Pune

KARAVAAN '14

Ghosts, mummies, witches, and pumpkins- it was the spirit of Halloween! The eerie backdrop of this celebration provided the theme of this year's Karavaan.

The student teams, led by general coordinators Sahana, Mithila, and Shrinidhi, and under the guidance of the faculty coordinator Dr. Sourabh Dube, had begun preparations months in advance. There was tons of work to be done– getting sponsors, promoting the event, organising activities and competitions, and imbuing the spirit of Karavaan in all the students. The highly efficient organising team let no hurdle bring them down. Club heads started preparing for the competitions, and the team heads held a string of meetings, trying to involve all the students of the first and second year and getting them to contribute in some way or the other. There were various promotional events by our clubs all over Pune, including flash mobs by the Dance Club and micro events by the Art, Quiz, and Math Clubs. As a prelude to the main fest, social events were also organised, including a blood donation camp and Trash Talk by Prutha, the green club. This was a competition in which teams of three scrounged around JM Road, picking up trash in an attempt to clean the city and spread awareness about the littering problem. Dozens of students worked hard day and night preparing for Karavaan and finally the day arrived.

The entire campus came to life during the three days from the 31st of October to the 2nd of November, with bloodcurdling, ghoulish decorations on every corner. The mood was set, and the festivities began! The campus teemed with students day and night, with numerous activities through the day, and competitions that began at midnight and lasted till the wee hours of morning.

The Showcase on the evening of the 31st kicked it off, and talented students performed on the stage of the Sir CV Raman auditorium, mesmerising one and all with their skills. A skit put up by the Drama Club on the life of Sir CV Raman was the highlight of the evening, enthralling the audience.

The moon rose in the sky and so did the energy level in the campus. Food stalls in place, the students teemed into the cricket ground where the big stage had been set up. It was time for Band Wars! The stage was set on fire by bands from all over the country, competing fiercely to win the coveted title. The audience swayed to the tunes of the bands, which truly 'rocked' the campus. The Nerds, a band that came all the way from Jammu and Kashmir to perform couldn't get selected for the finals, but won the heart of each and every student with their soulful singing. The Gravy Philosophy from Pune were declared to be the winners, a controversial win over Mumbai's Ryan Victor Project, the crowd favourites. After an entertaining evening, spirits were high! While some prepared for the next day, some competed in the midnight event– Crime Scene Investigation– a competition organised by the Literary Club. Truly, it was as if the campus did not sleep for those three days.

The next day, we made an attempt to create history– and we succeeded! The Art Club had put in months of preparation to organise the painting of the world's largest Warli composition within eleven hours. The football field was laid out with a giant canvas made of huge sheets of paper that the students had procured over weeks. Work began at sunrise, and after a few initial setbacks due to the morning dew and strong winds, the sketchers finally began their work at 9 AM. Soon, the ground was thronged by student volunteers, wanting to put in at least an hour or two of work toward the painting. Stations were set up for registration, collecting paints and brushes, and for providing refreshments to the tired volunteers. While a batch of about fifty students sketched the composition at breakneck speed, the rest of the students painted in the sketches, and soon a steady rhythm was established. The volunteers persevered through the day, and after nearly

eleven hours of hard work, a loud cheer broke out from the field, as the composition was finally completed. The end result was mind blowing. Through the day, over 400 volunteers had worked in batches and painted an area of over 2600 square feet, with a beautiful and coherent composition, depicting life in a village from sunrise to sunset. After careful measurement and inspection, the formal announcement was made by the Limca Book of Records that it was indeed a successful attempt to create India's largest Warli composition. The results are expected in June 2015.

While this was the biggest event of the day, the rest of the students were also occupied in the Lecture Hall Complex, organising and participating in various quizzes, debates, competitions, and games. The students were spoilt for choice with activities going on simultaneously, organised by all the different clubs of IISER .

It was a mix of the classic and the innovative; while on one hand there were the good old competitions like dumb charades, debate, and antakshari, on the other hand there was the Math Club's Math-e-Rubix (a challenging Rubik's cube solving game with an element of math), the Drama Club's Bollywood Craze (an improv based competition for the movie lovers), the Literary Club's Blabber-Out-Loud (a medley of Just-A-Minute and Block and Tackle, giving a chance to all the talkative people to talk to their heart's content), and Aaroha– the Music Club's Junkyard Jamming, wherein the participants created music from waste. These attracted the students with their novel premises. Cyber games were also crowd favourites, and in addition to the popular Counter Strike and Need For Speed, the gaming enthusiasts got to relive their favourite childhood games such as Road Rash and Pocket Tanks. The Photography Club also conducted a photography workshop, giving an opportunity to aspiring photographers to learn from the best. That wasn't all. There was the crowd puller, Laser Tag, in the basement of the new mess complex and the wall climbing set up in front of the LHC, which resulted in quite a few sprained legs!

In the evening, the second day's Showcase began. The beautiful Jugalbandi of Carnatic and Hindustani classical music on the *Raag Hamsadhwani* was harmonious beyond measure and gave a

Last year, I was fortunate to have a most enriching experience; I was the faculty co-ordinator for Karavaan '14. Branded as the science-and-cultural festival of IISER Pune's students, Karavaan was held on the Halloween weekend of 2014. The myriad events of Karavaan '14 are described elsewhere in this issue. Here I want to give my perspective.

I hadn't been part of any of the previous Karavaan events, even as a spectator, and so was apprehensive about suddenly being on the inside of the organising of IISER's centerpiece event (with apologies to Mimamsa!). On being asked to be the faculty coordinator, I first went through previous issues of Kalpa to get an idea of the event. Certainly what helped was the competent vibe I got from the general coordinators Sahana, Shrinidhi, and Mithila.

taste of the similarities as well as the differences that exist in these two schools of Indian Classical music. The traditional Marathi dance gave the students an insight into the heritage of the state in which they live, while Pulastya weaved magic with the tunes of his guitar in a solo instrumental performance.

This was followed by Pronite, which brought in acclaimed singer and composer Siddharth Basrur and the guitarist Adil Manuel to enthrall the crowd with their music, including Bollywood songs and other original compositions. There was something for everyone in the crowd, from soothing acoustic melodies to classic and alternative rock music.

The second night wasn't a silent night either as the finalists of the Midnight Treasure Hunt organised by the Math Club geared up to scour the campus for clues that required a combination of mathematical skills and scavenging abilities.

The final day of Karavaan began with a series of competitions. The Quiz Club in association with the Boat Club Quiz Club, Pune, conducted the ultimate trivia quiz– Know-It-All. The Math Club chimed in with Prime Number Bee, a challenging game of reciting higher and higher prime numbers, while the Art Club organised Disguise the Limit, in which participants unleashed the monster within them and dressed up a team member as a scary monster, true to the spirit of Halloween. The crowd puller was Gali-Gali Shor by the Drama club, a street play competition, in which the teams provided thought provoking messages of social relevance via their fifteen minute act.

The evening brought in the final Showcase of Karavaan 2014, and the audience were in for a treat. There were beautiful vocal renditions of Madaari by Nishant and Sukanya, the energetic I'm With You by Parijat, and a duet of Superhuman by Parijat and Vrushali, all of them accompanied by talented musicians playing the keyboard, drums, guitar, and even the cello! The spoof of Youtube by the drama enthusiasts of the Drama Club gave the audience quite a few laughs. Talented dancers took to the stage, and the semi-classical Ganesh Vandana was a feast for the eyes.

Karavaan concluded with the Masquerade party, accompanied by the tunes of DJ Ansh. The Halloween spirit kicked in, and the students suited

Organising any event lasting more than a day and involving more than fifty people is not easy. This year's K-team had to face several challenges. Some challenges were anticipated; how to manage the venues spread across campus. Some challenges couldn't be anticipated; the University of Pune had exams on the same days as Karavaan, reducing the outside-student participation. Some challenges were from inexperience; not realising the Warli painting (while awesome!) would take up all energy from half the students and leave them unable to participate in other events. And some challenges were frustrating; the pro-night band did a 4-hour sound check causing a frantic shuffling of the showcase performances of IISER students.

But all the challenges were met. And beaten. For the Band Wars event, I was very proud of the coordinators for showing heart and asking the band from Jammu to stay back and perform, despite not being officially selected to compete. The enthusiasm for the Orator, and the duet-singing events was fantastic. And the Masquerade-DJ party was a spectacular success- mostly because of the whole-hearted participation of all the students. For me, the performances of the IISER bands during the golden hour on Sunday were a photographer's dream. I'll end on this note - a shoutout to Dinesh Bulani for planning a complicated, prop-filled Ganesh-Vandana dance number, and for pulling it off without a hitch. The performance (and all of Karavaan) reinforced my belief that given the will, rabbits can be pulled out of hats.'

- Dr. Sourabh Dube, Faculty Coordinator, Karavaan '14

up! With quite a few innovative and creative costumes, it was a tough competition for the title of best-dressed for the event. The Dance Club put up another energetic performance on the stage, making all the students groove with them. DJ Ansh turned the celebrations up a notch, and his thumping beats did not let a single student stand still. As a fitting conclusion to an epic fest, students set sky-lanterns afloat, and the night sky glowed with dozens of lights. It was a spectacular evening with beautiful music, enthusiastic students, and a myriad of lanterns lighting up the sky.

Karavaan 2014 was a grand event, bigger and better than ever. Karavaan can only continue to grow, and magnify its success in the years to come.

- Shraddha Lall

Photos: Pranavi Reddy

WARLI VENTURE

It happened on the morning of the 1st of November 2014. After all the planning and the late night struggle, We had finally done it! We created the largest Warli painting ever- approximately 2601 sq metres in size. This event was organised by Lavanya Lokhande, Divya Singh, Siddhesh Zadey, and Prachi Shinde, coordinators of the Art Club of IISER Pune which functioned under the guidance of Dr. Suhita Nadkarni, the faculty coordinator of the Art Club. It was Dr. Nadkarni's suggestion to make a Warli painting which in turn motivated us to organise an event that would bring together entire IISER Pune community and bring this ancient tribal art form to the forefront.

Around September, we decided to attempt the Limca National Record of making the largest Warli composition and 1st of November was chosen for the same. As we started the preparations, our biggest concern was the budget, until Pidilite Industries came to our rescue as our sponsors for the event. The overwhelming response of 400 participants was another source of encouragement for us to complete the painting of 2500 sq metres within twelwe hours on the IISER Pune football field.

The idea was to portray a typical day in Warli life. To depict this, we used three colours of sheets that signified different times of the day- orange being morning, red showing day and maroon, night. As is distinctive of the Warli style of painting, the composition on this canvas portrayed the earthy harmony that exists between living beings and nature.

During the event, we had to overcome a number of obstacles but, the perservance of all the partipants and the encouragement from the faculty, made it possible for us to finish the painting in **eleven hours and one minute.**

1st November 2014 - Snapshots from the day
04:00 AM : 15-20 sleep deprived volunteers frantically mopping the wet (due to the dew) and already

laid out plastic so that the coloured sheets could be laid out on time.
5:00 AM : The situation worsens.
6:00 AM : NO PROGRESS!!
7:00 AM : Scheduled time for the event to begin. However, less than a third of the total area covered with coloured sheets, while the rest remains wet! All of us wait for the sun to come out in all its glory. Event is thus postponed to 9:00 AM.
9:31 AM: The event commenced.
10:00 AM : Sketching and painting in progress on the orange sheets, while more sheets are being laid out.
11:00 AM : Heavy winds blow away all sheets. Reinforcement of sheets using tape,pins and rocks. We soon run out of tape and pins and more have to be bought from the market.
4:00 PM : Two-thirds of the composition is almost complete while the maroon sheets are laid out.
5:00 PM : We fall short of maroon sheets. Sheets had to be bought again. Painting continues!
7:00 PM : New sheets arrive. Sheets are laid and sketching begins again.
8:32 PM : The composition is complete. Measurement by judges and verifiers.

Our aim was to create a painting of 2500 sq metres, but the final area measured was 2601 sq metres. We extremely appreciate the help provided by the housekeeping and security staff, and all the faculty members for their support which enabled us to create a record-making piece of art. We also thank Mr. Alom Hussain and Mr. Ramlal Chowdhury for their support. Dr. Nadkarni did a stupendous job of keeping everyone upbeat through out the event. The event was widely covered by local newspapers and TV channels and the Maharashtra Times featured it as a major cultural event.

An important outcome of this event is that apart from organising a-never-before kind of event at the institute, we now have something to show for to say ‘we have plans and they do work out’!

IISM 2014

Fall 2014 was an unusual semester. Weird accidents, astonishing stupidity (you know who you are!), and unfortunate incidents led to a lot of students- to put it crudely- breaking their legs. After all this, our diminished contingent set off for IISER Mohali to participate in the third Inter IISER Sports Meet, or as we like to call it, IISM 2014.

Neither the injuries nor the long train journey dampened our spirits, and on the very first day, we explored the campus and the city of Chandigarh, barely making it back on time for the opening ceremony. It started off with the torch relay followed by the march-past. After IISER Pune's march-past debacle at the last IISM, we managed to pull the proverbial rabbit out of the hat and won the trophy for the best march-past along with the coveted one hundred points. The opponents we flattened included the other IISERs, NISER, and the new entrant, IISc. This was followed by a short speech by the chief guest in which he emphasised the importance of sportsmanship and asserted that the true aim of IISM is to bring the students of the different IISERs together. The students of IISER Mohali put up an energetic Bhangra number that had the crowd up on their feet and before we knew it, an impromptu dance party had begun. This is probably something we should take inspiration from the next time we have a Punjabi food festival in the mess!

Then, the courts, the track, and the field were scrutinised intensely by the teams. Strategies were made and game plans were practised. A little bit of spying on the competitors was followed by the reformulation of strategies. At the end of all this hard work, a scrumptious dinner (good food is one of the reasons everyone wants to participate in IISM; the other being an opportunity to travel) and a warm quilt awaited us.

The first day of IISM dawned bright and sunny with IISER Pune's Upendra and Sereena bagging gold in the long distance track events. Unfortunately, a new rule, and an unfair one (in our opin-

ion) at that, prevented Sereena, the star athlete of the previous IISM, from participating in more than two track events. Pranavi conquered the throwing events by winning gold in shot put and javelin throw, while Yaikhomba struck gold in discus throw with Rajath settling for a silver. Trimbak and Rajath came second and third respectively in shot put. IISER Pune also sailed through the 100m and 200m heats. Next up was football.

The IISER Pune football team was up against Mohali, their nemesis. After a nail-biting match with controversial refereeing calls that resulted in the discounting of both their goals, they lost the hard-fought match. Despondent is not a gloomy enough a word to describe the mood of our contingent at that point.

There was a silver lining though. Pranavi's dominating presence on the court helped her secure gold in lawn tennis, the latest addition to IISM's growing list of events. However, the round robin format of the chess tournament led to our downfall despite having an excellent player like Fawaz. IISER Pune's cricket team drew their first match against Mohali. Nothing can be more agonising or painful than a draw in a T-20 match; one more run or one less extra would have assured them of a win. The only road to the final was a must-win game against NISER on the third day.

> 'This time we managed to pull the proverbial rabbit out of the hat and won the best march-past trophy and the coveted one hundred points.'

Competitive spirits were high and the anticipation of reaching the finals was evident on every face. The anticlimactic bit was that on the third day, the skies opened up and it rained. Initially, the organisers from Mohali tried to go about the events as scheduled. Track events like 400m and 800m took place in the drizzle. Sereena effortlessly won the 400m girls' race and Shreenidhi added a silver from 800m to her arsenal, having earlier won a bronze in 1500m. The girls' 4x400m relay was a close contest with IISER Pune coming in second place.

But sadly, the drizzle turned into a ceaseless downpour. The courts were flooded, the track and the field were drenched. Our misfortunes were great indeed. It led to the cancellation of a lot of events, in some of which winning would have been a cakewalk for IISER Pune. When the skies cleared, we heaved a sigh of relief. At least the hours of preparation and practice put in by the participants would not have been in vain. However, the worst part of all was that it brought the rulebooks out to determine who would go to the finals in events where critical games had been washed out. Our medal hopes in cricket and girls' volleyball succumbed to such technicalities.

On the last day of IISM, IISER Pune's invincible kabbadi team once again decimated IISER Mohali in the final, restoring some cheer to the contingent. In table tennis, the boys clinched gold while in badminton, the girls had to settle for silver. In throwball, the girls came first after a close battle with IISER Mohali. The team had lost two of its best players to injury and academics and its captaincy had changed hands thrice. Then again, the best way to win is in the face of adversity. The boys' and the girls' basketball team had made it to the finals and were both pitted against IISER Mohali. Sadly, the basketball court had soaked up a lot of water and was extremely slippery. It slowed the game down to a snail's pace; dribbling was difficult and fast breaks were out of the question. Despite the terrible playing conditions, the boys' final kept everyone on the edge of their seats, but IISER Pune had to settle for second place. The girls' final was a different story altogether as IISER Pune demolished Mohali's defence to win comfortably.

The closing ceremony brought another IISM to its culmination. The medals and the trophies were given away. In events like cricket and football, the first place was shared between the finalists. IISER Bhopal won the athletics championship and IISER Mohali won the overall championship. IISER Pune stood a close second in the overall points table. If not for the rain, it could have been a completely different story. One thing is certain– we at the IISERs (all five included) need to work on our cheerleading slogans. The ones used at this IISM were ridiculous and hilarious.

The Inter IISER Sports Meet has become an integral part of life at the IISERs. In just three years, it has grown in magnitude and multitude, becoming an event that everyone looks forward to. Life at IISER without IISM is a distant memory. What are December vacations for? To participate in IISM of course.

- Nilima Walunjkar

Photos: Nagarjuna Chary

IPL 2015

A cricket enthusiast coming to IISER Pune has only two opportunities to keep his passion alive and for girls, only one. One is IISM and the other, the IISER Premier League (IPL). IISM, though played in the proper format, is too short a tournament to quench the thirst of a player. Basically, two matches to play and a bonus match if you and your team do not mess up the first two matches. IPL, despite being played with 'tennis-cricket' balls, is a big event, offering you more than 8 matches. That, at least, helps you keep playing your favourite game for a while longer. IPL is the great oasis that feeds the deserted IISER cricket scenario! Taking into account the popularity of IPL (not to confuse it with the real one- it's a lot better!), organising the sixth installment of the tournament was an easy job. At a time when I had barely started preparing for the event, and even before the registration mail was sent, I could estimate the number of registrations just by counting the number of teams practising on the ground. Seeing this compelled me to buckle up and speed up the preparations. The level of enthusiasm for the game is evident from these statistics: 26 teams, 350+ players, more than 2 teams from one batch itself, and 6 non-student teams.

Twenty-six teams! That's a lot of teams for a single tournament. Grouping them, along with making sure that all of them get enough time to play, was a difficult task. Fewer groupings would have resulted in a large number of matches that would have been difficult to accommodate in one semester. The eight group system seemed to be a fair enough fixture to go with. All the teams would get at least 2 or 3 matches to play. The main attraction of the event was the participation of an all-girls team. As the number of female participants in cricket, in general, is very low, it was nice to see them play. Also, teams like Faculty, Admin and the fifth years' team elevated the spirit of the game as they managed to take time off from their busy schedules to be a part of IPL.

The structure of the tournament is unique; there are eight groups in all, with three teams each in six groups, and four each in two. After the group stage matches, all the group toppers go directly to the next round and the second teams still have a chance by playing the playoffs. Four teams selected from the playoffs join the top eight teams to play the Super 12 series of matches. In this series, these teams will again be divided into four groups with three teams each in one group (a desperate attempt to produce interesting matches!). Only the top teams will go to the next level i.e. the semi-finals and then the finals. A total of forty-five matches will be conducted. A few new ideas were also implemented in this tournament such as introduction of these caps: orange for scoring the most runs, purple for taking the most wickets, and green for the most catches.

A typical day of an IPL weekend for a volunteer or organiser starts by waking up late, looking outside the window to see if any other hard-working soul is there or not, and then either retreating to hibernation or running to the ground to finish the work when a deep sense of responsibility strikes. A half hour of rushing sets everything up and the ground is ready

for the matches. Three matches a day on weekends is the ideal schedule of IPL. This means spending full days on the cricket ground. However, it is more fun to spend the whole weekend on the ground, watching matches, enjoying them, playing during the intervals and thus spending more time on cricket.

Free Points celebrating their very first wicket!

Let's get back to reporting the events and giving you the statistics. The inaugural match was conducted on the 17th of January. The match was inaugurated by our beloved Registrar, Retd. Col. Rajashekhar. Dr. Shivprasad Patil and Swapnil Bule (the sports secretary) were also there to kick-start the event. The first match was played between Expendables and Sweet Poison- a one sided match, with Kaustav Dey's batting and Anur Yadav's bowling adding charm to the game. Rather than reporting the whole event, I would like to describe some interesting moments that have defined the journey of IPL '15 so far. Eagles v/s Blue Panthers was the first truly thrilling match of this season. It was a very close one with the tension lasting till the last moment, when Eagles got the other team all-out to win the match. The group consisting of Admin, Shaurya'10 and Finemen (one of the first years' teams), was interesting. The first match of this group was Admin v/s Shaurya'10, in which Admin won the match by a wide margin, proving all speculation wrong that this group would be a tough one. Shaurya'10 made a comeback by beating the new, naïve Finemen. Finemen, by then, was discounted as strong contender to the big teams. However, the unexpected twist came when Finemen went on to beat Admin, and with the advantage of a higher Net Run Rate (NRR), became the group toppers. I was there on the ground umpiring the match, and I could feel every bit of the tension. Only managing to put up a small target, Finemen bowled beautifully to pull the game away from their mighty opponents (everyone does love the underdogs!). There are many such moments to share and more to come. The IPL, so far, has witnessed many top class performances: an enthralling eighty-one run innings by Mahesh of the Sunrisers, two quality half centuries by Kaustav Dey (Expendables), top-notch bowling by Anur (Expendables), Vijaykant (Alchemist), Bhagwan (Blue Panther), Chetan (Radicals), and so on. We also witnessed an all-round performance by Karan (Stoners), Kiran (Lethal Warriors), and Dharmaraja (Alchemist). The quality of the game has improved a lot and the game is getting more and more thrilling. With the top 8 teams- Radicals, Expendables, Alchemist, Biohazard, Faculty, Lethal Warriors, Stoners, and Finemen having already made a place in the Super 12 and four more teams to come from the play-offs, the IPL is taking a new turn where all the coming matches will be tight, close and thrilling. The wait is on- the wait for the clash of the titans!

- Prasanth P Chandran
Photo: Hrithik Gudapati

SPIC MACAY OVERNIGHT CONCERT

The Spring 2015 semester activities of SPIC MACAY's IISER Pune chapter kick-started with the much awaited Overnight Concert on Saturday, the 31st of January 2015. This was a night long assemblage of performances by eminent artists, giving music aficionados a chance to immerse themselves in a night of beautiful, unadulterated Indian classical music.

Before the concert, detailed plans were made with every volunteer raring to go for the first big event of the semester. On Saturday, volunteers sacrificed their lazy weekend and worked hard to ensure that everything was in place before the concert. In the evening, people could see volunteers rushing, compères practising, and last minute touches being made at the Sir CV Raman Auditorium. At the entrance of the LHC, people were greeted with a vibrant rangoli and smiling volunteers at the SPIC MACAY registration desk.

As 9 PM brought the event to its scheduled beginning, Naven welcomed the audience to the concert followed by Prof. Sunil Mukhi felicitating Mrs. Rita Ganguly, a 2003 Padmi Shri awardee in Arts, for her gracious presence.

The night-long event began with an introduction of Vidushi Smt. Padma Talwalkar*ji*, a renowned Hindustani classical vocalist. Padma *Tai,* as she is popularly called, sang *Raag Yaman*, *Raag Basant*, and a *bhajan* (devotional hymn) based on the *Asawari thaat*. She enchanted the audience by singing *Bade* and *Chhote Khyaals* followed by a *Taraana* in *Raag Yaman* and also a *Drut Khyaal* based on *Raag Basant*. Accompanied by Shri Shriram Hasabnis*ji* on the harmonium, her mellifluous voice brought the concert to a riveting tempo with more people gathering for the concert as word spread about campus.

After a short snacks break, Pt. Dhruba Ghosh*ji*, one of the most lyrical instrumentalists in India, played the sarangi as a solo instrument in its full glory. He was accompanied by Yuji Nakagawa*ji* on the sarangi, Pt. Arvind Kumar Azad*ji* on the tabla and Omkar Yarguddi on the tanpura. Pt. Ghosh gave a brief introduction of the sarangi, also known as the sarang veena and its millennia-old folk history. He mentioned his Guru, Ustad Bundu Khan*ji* of the Delhi *gharana*, who furthered the idea of the sarangi as a solo instrument. Beginning with the slow *Aalap* of *Raag Bageshwari*, he progressed to the *Jor* and *Jhaala* with exceptional use of the *Panchama swara* followed by a *Bada Khyaal* in *Vilambit Ektaal* (ultra slow, twelve beats) and then a *gaat* in *Teen Taal*– their musical effect enhanced by the perfectly synchronised accompaniment on the tabla by Pt. Azad. Pt. Ghosh then played a slow *Aalap* in *Raag Neelambari*- created by Pt. Omkaarnath Thakur*ji*, a renowned vocalist from Benaras- and even

sang it, highlighting his musical versatility and the training that he had received from his father in his early years.

The next performance saw Vidushi Smt. Manjusha Kulkarni-Patil*ji*, an immensely talented and expressive Hindustani semi-classical vocalist; she amazed the audience with her versatile voice and excited gestures. Belonging to the Gwalior-Agra *gharana*, she was trained by Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar*ji*. Accompanied by Shri Bharat Kamath*ji* on the tabla and Shri Milind Kulkarni*ji* on the harmonium, she began her exposition with *Raag Kaushiki*, a supposedly romantic and serious midnight *raag* in *Asawari thaat*.

As the night progressed and music flowed freely, so did tea and coffee for the audience and the volunteers. Alternating between vocalists and instrumentalists, the next slot had Pandit Pushpraj Koshti*ji* enthralling the audience with his superb mastery over the *surbahar*. Pt. Koshti, accompanied by Shri Vivekanand Purangale*ji* on *pakhawaj* and Shri Bhushan Koshti*ji* on the tanpura, eloquently played the *Kharaj-Aalaps* of *Raag Tilak-Kamod* followed by the *Jor* and the *Jhaala* and then mesmerised everyone with a slowly rising *Dhrupad* in *Chautal* (12 beats).

The last show of the concert was arguably the most riveting of all, partly because of the immense possibilities that dawn offers to vocalists in terms of singing rare morning *raags*. And who better to do it than Pt. Jayateerth Mevundi*ji*, who has been labelled as the torchbearer of Hindustani classical music

by maestros. His well modulated sing-song voice coupled with his sheer energy woke even the sleepyheads up in the balcony seats, for which they were eternally thankful to him. Initiating the last segment of the concert with the *Bada Khyaal* in the serious *Raag Lalit*, he mesmerised the audience with serious early morning *raags* like *Raag Nat-Bhairava* and finally with a *Chhota Khyaal* in the devotional *Raag Bhaatiyar*, set to the rhythm of *Roopak Taal* (7 beats). His dazzling performance, along with Shri Bharat Kamath*ji* on the tabla and Shri Milind Kulkarni*ji* on the harmonium, culminated with the audience giving him a standing ovation.

As a token of our gratitude to the artists, all the maestros were honoured with exquisite presents by faculty members. The concert finally concluded with a photograph of the artists with all the SPIC MACAY volunteers followed by some frolic, something volunteers never fail to enjoy. As it had rolled on to almost 7 AM, we dined together in the mess, celebrating the successful organisation of an enormous event and revelling in the night-long treat of elegant Hindustani music. Let's hope for more such events to come in the next year!

- Anwesh Bhattacharya

Photos: Nagarjuna Chary

MIMAMSA 2015

It's four in the morning on the 14th of February and the last remnants of life can be seen in the haggard eyes of the twenty or so people hanging around in the multi-purpose hall in HR-4. Over the course of the night, members of Team Mimamsa slowly shuffled out to get some sleep as their work was completed. These last twenty people are putting the finishing touches on the question slides and testing buzzers out one last time. Five hours later, the finals of Mimamsa '15– the 'show-piece event of IISER', as our Director, Prof. Ganesh himself called it– is finally underway.

After a preliminary round that saw the most participants the event had ever seen, across nine centers– Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, and Thiruvananthapuram– four teams made their way to the final round. IIT Madras (IIT-M), IIT Bombay (IIT-B), IISc Bangalore, and UM DAE-CBS Mumbai, reached the final after breezing through the prelims and came into the multi-purpose hall on the 14th with their eyes set on taking the Mimamsa title back home with them. But of course, only one of them could, and over the course of the next two days they fought it out to see who was worthy of claiming the prize for themselves.

Saturday began with the biology round, which was judged by Prof. Nishikanth Subhedar, Prof. Milind Watve, and Dr. P Gayathri. After a few intense hours of quizzing and debate, with some interesting information coming from the contestants themselves about quantum biology, IIT-M surprised everyone by coming out on top after Round 1. This was then followed by IIT-M's exposition on tides, which was judged by Prof. Shyam Rai and Dr. Harinath Chakrapani.

Lunch was followed by IISc's exposition on biomaterials. Experts in the field, Dr. Chakrapani, Dr. Hotha, Dr. Anirban Hazra, and Dr. Sayam Sengupta from NCL were the judges and they continued as judges for the extremely interactive and fun chemistry round. This round saw a large amount of audience interaction and a lot of deductive work from the teams to solve the questions put up by the question making team. With this, Day 1 came to a close and the teams got some much deserved rest to prepare for the next day.

Day 2 started with the Occulomotor round. This crowd favourite, however, was sparsely attended because of its early morning slot but nevertheless, every minute was thrilling, as teams got their trigger fingers ready to hit the buzzer, the moment they figured out the answer. IIT-B and IISc took a large share of the spoils in this round and going into the mathematics session it was IISc who were heading the table.

The math session saw IISc dominate again with some clinical answering. This round was judged by Dr. Tejas Kalelkar, Dr. Anup Biswas, Dr. Anupam Kumar Singh, and Dr. Anisa Chorwadwala. The session was followed up by UM DAE CBS's much awaited exposition on mathematical models of love. Having taken a poll of the students at IISER the previous day, this exposition was very interactive and had as judges Prof. Gangal, Dr. Pranay Goel, Dr. Chakrapani, and Dr. Steven Spallone asking them some very interesting questions on the math behind love.

Lunch followed and then came the next exposition by IIT-B. Their exposition on symmetries in physics attracted a large audience, mostly physics lovers and had the judging panel of Prof. Gan-

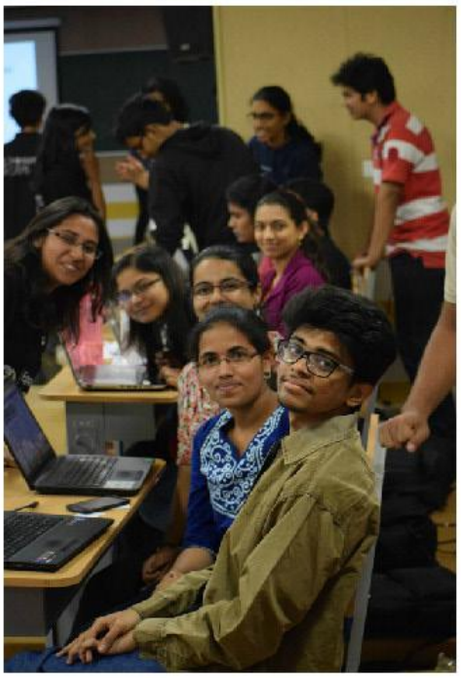
gal, Dr. Arijit Bhattacharya, Dr. Sourabh Dube, Dr. Surjeet Singh, and Dr. Chakrapani asking them some very fundamental questions in physics.

The physics round, judged by the same panel of scientists as the exposition, saw the participants putting in whatever little energy they had left into figuring out the brain-wrackers that the physics question making team had come up with. After this, all that remained was the Rapid Fire round that saw enthusiastic participation from all the teams and was a lot of fun as the rules for how the questions would be presented were explained to the teams by our anchors Divya Singh and Vikram Ravindranath.

With that, the rounds were finally done and the teams got a much required and somewhat nervy break as the scores were tallied. The prize distribution was presided by our Director Prof. KN Ganesh, Prof. Shashidhara, Prof. Sunil Mukhi, and the coordinator of this year's event, Dr. Diganta Borah. Once the scores were all tallied, it was IISc who came out on top for the fourth year in a row! They got to take home the new rolling trophy, hoping, I'm sure, to keep it for a few years. In second place came IIT-M, closely followed by IIT-B. Taking fourth place was UM DAE-CBS.

With the prize distribution, this year's event came to a close. It was a hard fought battle between the teams, which was only possible thanks to the tireless effort of the entire Mimamsa team, who have to be congratulated for pulling off yet another successful Mimamsa. Here's to many more such Mimamsas!

Photos: Photography Club, IISER Pune



SPREAD THE SMILE

Disha at IISER Pune organises Spread the Smile every year and the motivation of the same is to help increase the interest and knowledge of children living in rural areas in science. This year, it was held from the 17th of January to the 8th of February.

There are a few activities at IISER in which every student should take part. According to me, Spread the Smile is one such activity. I visited Ambhavane, a village around 60 km from Pune. Conducting sessions there was so much fun! Those guys are so creative that they can put any of us to shame. Being volunteers, we don't just get the chance to be their teachers, we also get to be their friends. You get to ride a cycle with them, climb trees with them, and do all sort of amusing things. Why sit in front of your laptop during the weekend when you can have an amazing experience being a volunteer of STS? — Shrinidhi M , 3rd Year BS-MS

'Early to bed, early to rise'. This is a very common quote that doesn't apply to IISERites at all. But for that one day I had to follow it. It was the weekend of Disha's Spread the Smile.

Just like the village, the people living there were also very cool. The most touching part was that the students recognised me even after one long year, when I went for my first Spread the Smile session. For the rest of the day, we had lots of fun teaching the kids and interacting with them. Although it was tough controlling them, we could manage with the help of the teachers there.

We thought that the biggest challenge was to bring the students out of their homes on Sunday. However, we were shocked by the response we got. There were many students who turned up, and we had dance and craft sessions with them.

This programme is one of the most fascinating experiences one can have in their lives. You get to meet new people. You can come out of the little space that you are in and see how big the universe is. From the people there I learned how to be content with what we have and not to complain for what we don't. These experiences have shaped my personality and perception of people. This will always remain a part of my memories.

— Sushma Tejashri, 3rd Year BS-MS

We, a group of four IISER Pune students and four from outside visited a village called Kondanpur, about 50 km from Pune during the first week of the Spread the Smile programme.

We started with an interaction session, making the students comfortable. After that we demonstrated some five-six experiments to them, each of which got an enthusiastic response. Even the teachers accompanying them were keen to know the concepts behind each activity. Sometimes it was really difficult task to control the children's enthusiasm, especially when we let them handle the apparatus. In a way, we enjoyed that, too.

They found it quite interesting, even though they didn't understand what it was all about. Having grown up in a village, they showed interest in anything and everything we showed them, whether that was a demonstration, an experiment, or a model. Seeing the students enjoying themselves, we had fun too. The response was better than we expected. It was the experience of a lifetime. — Shreeya Behera, 2nd Year BS-MS

One of our teachers informed us about Spread the Smile and the idea enthused us so much that a majority of us volunteered for this programme.

The village assigned to us was Kamthadi, Bhor. The topic for our weekend was chemistry, according to which we designed our activities. We started with a general introduction to science and its scope. We encouraged the students to pursue and build careers in science. We conducted different academic and fun sessions for them.

Interacting with them, answering their questions, and learning about their lifestyle proved to be a wonderful experience. We learnt a lot from them. The villagers' hospitality was heartwarming. Our co-volunteers from IISER became great friends.

The experience at Kamthadi will be cherished forever and we all look forward to being a part of this amazing initiative again next year. — Akanksha, Nidhi, and Natasha

Photo: Manish Tekam

I went to a village named Kamthadi. We, a group of eight people including students from outside IISER as well, started the session with a brief introduction about various aspects of science for the students of the 8th, 9th, and 10th grade. Then we showed them some chemistry, physics, and biology experiments while explaining their everyday use. In the afternoon, we showed them some documentaries. In the evening, we roamed around the village- the scenic beauty there was awesome. At night we stayed in a villager's home, which was, I think, the best memory for us. They were so supportive. The next morning, we took a session on origami that had a very good response. This continued for the remaining three weeks.

In the final week, we organised some competitions and distributed prizes and science kits. The results reflected the intellectual qualities of the students, which inspired us. We got very good responses from the school, the students, and the villagers. We learned a lot of things from this programme. Thanks to Disha and all the people who were a part of such an incredible experience.

— Tanmaya Sethi, 2nd Year BS-MS

THE INTERVIEW:
A glimpse into Professor Ashoke Sen's life

The Science Club (SC) of IISER Pune caught up with Padma Shri Awardee Prof. Ashoke Sen (AS) during his visit to IISER Pune. Here are a few excerpts from their chat with him.

SC: You attended Presidency College, which has produced many great physicists. Did physics come as a natural choice to you?

AS: When I passed my higher secondary, 5 out of the top 10 students went into physics and later they were all my classmates at Presidency College. Physics was the natural thing to do at that time. During my stay in college, my interests in physics grew because of my friends as well as the teachers.

SC: You went on to do your doctoral study at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. How was the research atmosphere there as compared to India and how has it changed over the years?

AS: I work in theoretical physics, and I would say in theoretical physics, the research atmosphere in India was not very different from what I found there. Except for the very few top universities, one can do research in India as well as anywhere else in the West.

SC: Could you tell us what attracted you towards string theory?

AS: I was always interested in looking for fundamental laws. I started following developments in string theory around '83 because that seemed to be the most natural candidate for unifying everything. Then there were some rapid developments around '84 and '85 that convinced me that this is probably the right way to look for the fundamental laws of nature.

SC: What is a normal day in the life of a string theorist like?

AS: A normal day? I don't know (laughs). Well, the day starts by looking at the archives. That is the first thing I do in the morning. After I have my tea, I have a look at the archives. It summarises the abstracts of the papers that were submitted the previous day.

Photo: Google Images

SC: When you talk about string theory you often talk about extra dimensions. Why are they so essential?

AS: Intrinsically, string theory has nine dimensions. It comes from certain consistency conditions. It basically means that for any question you ask, you must get definite answers. You shouldn't get infinity, for example. As it turns out, the number of dimensions of the theory is fixed to be nine space plus one time. The way we try to make string theory consistent with what we see in nature is by looking for solutions where six of those nine di-

mensions are very small and compact.

SC: A popular counter-argument against string theory is that it doesn't have any experimental evidence to back it up. Is there any work going on in that direction?

AS: Even though direct experimental evidence for string theory is not achievable today, people do look for indirect evidence. People are working hard to look for a cosmological test for string theory. The other approach is through string phenomenology. People are trying to look for different kinds of compactification and see if any of those give the standard model that we are familiar with.

SC: Your work on S-duality is said to be pathbreaking in that field. If there's one thing that you want people to understand about your work, what would that be?

AS: S- duality is the discovery of a new kind of symmetry, which is somewhat unusual. People had a hard time believing that such symmetry exists in string theory. It basically relates two different kinds of phases of the theory, which initially seemed completely unrelated. People realised that what earlier was thought of as five different theories were related to each other by some version of S-duality.

SC: Could you tell us about what you are currently working on?

AS: It is mainly on black holes in string theory. Black holes exist in Einstein's general theory of relativity, but there are several puzzling aspects that can be solved once we include a quantum theory of gravity. And since string theory is a quantum theory of gravity, we could, in principle, use string theory to address some of these issues. Black holes, as we know, carry entropy from various thermodynamical considerations. And in statistical mechanics, entropy is interpretated as some kind of degeneracy of states. Now the question in string theory was whether you could understand the entropy of a black hole in this sense. People have realised that this is indeed possible. Some of my current work on black holes is to try to understand to what extent this relationship really works.

SC: For an undergraduate student who has just opted for science, there are several choices available. When is the optimal time to decide to focus on a particular topic?

AS: At the level of undergraduation, you can probably decide on doing theory or experiment. Once you enter graduate studies, within a year or so, you must focus on a specific topic. But it varies from person to person. However, it shouldn't be based on what is fashionable at the time.

SC: What are your interests other than physics?

AS: It's hard to quantify. Cooking is one of the things I'm interested in. I also like travelling and walking.

SC: Did you have a role model as you grew up?

AS: I never thought consciously of a role model. But certainly there are several people who influenced me. Among my teachers for example, in Presidency College, we had Prof. Amal Kumar Roy Chowdhary. We knew him as an excellent teacher. Now we also know that he is an excellent scientist.

SC: Coming to the last question, what according to you is the key to being a successful scientist?

AS: I'd say that it is perseverance and the ability to not get depressed. You see, in research, most of the time you are stuck. Your research is not going anywhere. And that is the time you have to be the most stable. If you get depressed and you give up that's the end of your research. This is perhaps the most important thing you need, to be a good researcher. When times are difficult, you have to be able to hold yourself.

SUMMER SHENANIGANS

A glimpse of the work done by IISER Pune students during the summer of 2014.

'All in all, it was a never-to-be-forgotten summer— one of those summers which come seldom into any life, but leave a rich heritage of beautiful memories in their going- one of those summers which, in a fortunate combination of delightful weather, delightful friends and delightful doing, come as near to perfection as anything can come in this world.' - LM Montgomery, Anne's House of Dreams

Amruta P Nayak
1st Year
Synthesis of light absorbing perovskites and their characterization
Dr. Deepa Khushalani
TIFR, Mumbai

Anup Anand Singh
1st Year
Understanding songbird behaviour- A study of the behaviour and cognitive abilities of Zebra Finches
Dr. Raghav Rajan
IISER Pune

Arpith Shanbhag
1st Year
Differential geometry of curves and surfaces
Dr. Vivek Mohan Mallick
IISER Pune

Atul Chaudhary
1st Year
Dielectric relaxation spectroscopy of binary combination of n-pentanol (n= 1, 2, 3) and alkyl benzoates
Dr. Ranganathan Subramanian
IIT Patna

Bharath Krishnan
1st Year
Modeling animal navigational strategies
Dr. Collins Assisi
IISER Pune

Manil Kanade
1st Year
Denial behaviour of Bulbil bird
Prof. Milind Watve
IISER Pune

Pranavi Reddy
1st Year
Synthesis of n-heterocyclic carbenes
Dr. Akkattu T Biju
NCL, Pune

Prathamesh Madhav Datar
1st Year
Study of $CeCl_3$.7H2O as a catalyst in five-component synthesis of functionalized tetrahydropyridines
Dr. Gomathi Shridhar, Dr. Lakshmy Ravishankar
HBCSE-TIFR, Mumbai

Rahul Biradar
1st Year
Evolution of Philautus frog wrt to altitude in Eaglenest sanctuary, West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh
Dr. Ramana Athreya, Dr. Chintan Sheth
IISER Pune

Swetha Jos
1st Year
Maleimides, their derivatives and their reactivity with different nucleophiles
Dr. Jeet Kalia
IISER Pune

Shubham Chhajed
1st Year
Stem xylem plasticity in Sorghum in response to drought
Dr. Deepak Barua
IISER Pune

Urmi Poddar
1st Year
Co-existence of ant species in Arunachal Pradesh
Dr. Ramana Athreya
IISER, Pune

Abhilash Sawant
2nd Year
Developmental neurobiology
Dr. Naren Ramanan
IISc, Bangalore

Adithya Rajagopalan

2nd Year
Standardisation of the behaviour protocol for the performance of a delayed non match to sample task in mice
Prof. Upinder S Bhalla
NCBS, Bangalore

Aishwarya Dipak Bhosale
2nd Year
Molecular phylogeny of genus Rasbora from the Western Ghats of India
Dr. Neelesh Dahanukar
IISER Pune

Anand Kumar
2nd Year
Actinides study using Density Functional Method
Dr. Mahesh Sundararajan
Bhabha Atomic Research Center, Mumbai

Darshini R
2nd Year
Understanding the prebiotic role of riboswitches in an RNA world
Dr. Sudha Rajamani
IISER Pune

Deeksha Adil
2nd Year
Dynamics of particles in a compressible flow.
Prof. Samriddhi Sankar Ray
TIFR-ICTS, Bangalore

Divya Gadkari
2nd Year
Measurement of isolation efficiency using z-boson- particle physics
Dr. Sourabh Dube
IISER Pune

Gaurav Bhole
2nd Year
Quantum information and computing.
Benford's Law
Dr. TS Mahesh
IISER Pune

Harshvardhan Jog
2nd Year
Fabrication and characterisation of TiO_2 based dye sensitized solar cells
Dr. Satishchandra B Ogale
NCL, Pune

Irene Dutta
2nd Year
Coupled dynamical systems
Prof. G Ambika
IISER Pune

Kiran Gajhans
2nd Year
Synthesis of imino sugars
Dr. Dilip Dhavale
Pune University

Kumar Priyadarshi
2nd Year
Relativistic electrodynamics and quark model
Dr. Poulose Poulose
IIT Guwahati

Lavanya Lokhande
2nd Year
Dissecting the role of P300 histone acetyltransferace in Zebrafish development
Dr. Chetana Sachidanandan
CSIR-IGIB, Delhi

Mithila Unkule
2nd Year
Oviposition preference and starvation resistance across different populations of Tribolium casteneum
Dr. Deepa Agashe
NCBS, Bangalore

Nilima Walunjkar
2nd Year
Repeatability of evolution in Methylobacterium extorquens
Dr. Deepa Agashe
NCBS, Bangalore

S Harini
2nd Year
Developing a web-based multi domain cognitive assessment module for normal human subjects
Dr. Archana Purushotham
inStem, NCBS, Bangalore

Sahana Srivathsa
2nd Year
Modelling evolution of cooperative behaviour using Dictyostelium
Prof. Vidyanand Nanjundiah
Centre for Human Genetics, Bangalore

Saket R Bagde
2nd Year
Optimization of overexpression of the protein MreB1 from Spiroplasma citri in Escherichia coli.
Dr. Gayathri Pananghat
IISER Pune

V R Shree Sruti
2nd Year
Differences in feeding preferences of nectar and pollen foragers in *Apis mellifera*
Dr. Axel Brockmann
NCBS, Bangalore

Shrinidhi Mahishi
2nd Year
Phylogenetic analysis of North Eastern & Western Ghat butterflies
Dr. Krushnamegh Kunte
NCBS, Bangalore

Sukanya V Jogdand
2nd Year
Construction of gene knockout vector for SCARECROW ortholog of Physcomitrella patens (PpSCR2)
Dr. Anjan Banerjee
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Suvidyakumar Homkar

2nd Year
Preparation of GMR devices using hybrids
Dr. Sunil Nair
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Suyash Naik
2nd Year
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Dr. Sanjeev Galande
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Dr. MM Shaijumon
IISER Trivandrum

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Dr. Mrinalini Puranik
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Aishwary Shivgan
3rd Year
1,5-amino group migration route to form acrylamidines
Dr. Pinaki Talukdar
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Anur Yadav
3rd Year
Different hybrid peptide foldamers synthesized using natural amino acids and modified hybrid amino acids.
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Ashish Kakkar
3rd Year
Magnetic monopoles in Gauge theories
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ICTS, Bangalore

Ashwini Ramesh
3rd Year
Oviposition strategies in mosquitoes
Dr. Kavita Isvaran
IISc, Bangalore

Birbal Prasad
3rd Year
Nonparametric statistical methods
Dr. Isha Dewan
ISI, New Delhi

Charu Jain
3rd Year
Histone recognition of chemically dimerised bromodomain (BrD4)
Dr. William Pomerantz, Prof. Mark Distefano
Univerisity of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Cherukuri Kesava Phaneendra
3rd Year
Preparation of solid and biotin tagged HPR compounds to target the primary HPR binding proteins
Prof. Robert W Curley
Ohio University, USA

Ghorpade Smita Madhukar
3rd Year
Effect of therapeutic agents on the myeloid derived suppressor cell (MDSC) population in cancer
Dr. William E Carson III
Ohio State University

Govind Unnikrishnan
3rd Year
Interferometric entanglement detection under coarse grained measurements
Prof. Andreas Buchleitner
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany

HR Harsha
3rd Year
The Hawking Radiation
Prof. Justin David
IISc, Bangalore

Kalyanee Shirlekar
3rd Year
Study of T- Independent and T-dependent immune responses using ELISA
Prof. Satyajit Rath
NII, New Delhi

Khushboo Singh
3rd Year
Synthesis of bi-functional ligands derived from BINOL scaffold, their complexation in developing new chiral transition metal catalysts and their applications in asymmetric catalysis
Dr. Paolo Larini, Dr. Rodolphe Jazzar, Prof. O Baudoin
University Claude Bernard Lyon, France

Ningthoujam Birjeet Singh
3rd Year
Cloning and overexpression of proteins in bacterial cytoskeleton-based motility
Dr. Gayathri Pananghat
IISER Pune

Nishanth Tirukoti
3rd Year
Small molecule targeting miRNA
Dr. Souvik Maiti
CSIR-IGIB, New Delhi

Nivedita Rangarajan
3rd Year
The role of neurons in Drosophila egg-laying decision-making
Dr. Gaby Maimon
Rockefeller University

Saurabh AK
3rd Year
Synthesis of metal complexes from Silicon based ligands and

their catalytic properties
Dr. R Boomi Shankar
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Shruti Paranjape
3rd Year
Geodesics in a charged Myers-Perry space-time
Prof. Jutta Kunz-Dolshragen
Carl von Ossietzky
Universität Oldenburg, Germany

Tanmay S Patankar
3rd Year
A Graph-theoretic angular synchronization algorithm using Gabor frames
Prof. Götz Pfander
Jacobs University, Bremen, Germany

Arya Thampi
4th Year
Structural elucidation of the biopigment melanin using Raman spectroscopy
Dr. Mrinalini Puranik
IISER Pune

Ayush Nagar
4th Year
Bottom-up synthesis of large-scale graphene oxide nanosheets
Prof. Sulabha Kulkarni
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Devika TD
4th Year
Synthesis of new oxide thermoelectric materials based on indium and tin
Dr. Sunil Nair
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K Sriram
4th Year
Development of effective quantum cat states which are robust under noise
Dr. Aditi Sen
Harish Chandra Research Institute, Allahabad

Mihir Kulkarni
4th Year
Commissioning of newly built 15 meter radio telescope at NCRA-TIFR, Pune
Dr. Niruj Mohan Ramanujam,
Dr. Jayaram N Chengalur
NCRA-TIFR, Pune.

Nitheesh K
4th Year
Role of platelet activating factor in motility of breast cancer cells
Dr. Mayurika Lahiri
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Poortata Lalwani
4th Year
Cognitive abilities and brain connectivity
Dr. Archana Purushotham
inStem, NCBS, Bangalore

Rachana Bhave
4th Year
Sexual dimorphism in personality traits of the Indian Rock Agama
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IISc, Bangalore

Reshma C Chandrasekharan
4th Year
Construction of covering arrays
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IISER, Pune

Sharath Chandra
4th Year
Hydrogen sulfide donors
Dr. Harinath Chakrapani
IISER Pune

Shiva Chidambaram
4th Year
Adeles and ideles
Dr. Ritabrata Munshi
TIFR, Mumbai

Thameez Mohammed K Y
4th Year
Stimuli responsive polysaccharide vesicles for targeted anticancer drug delivery
Dr. M Jayakannan
IISER Pune

Urvashi Gupta
4th Year
Photon entanglement with a linear beam splitter
Dr. Mandip Singh
IISER Mohali

Vyankatesh Rajmane
4th Year
Molecular dissection of isoprenoid biosynthesis pathway in Ocimum
Dr. AP Giri
NCL, Pune

Zest

Art: Swastik Mishra and Lavanya Lokhande

FICTION
ULTIMATE
TRAVEL
GUIDE
COMICS
BIOGRAPHY
SCIENCE
TEXTBOOK FOR SCIENCE
FOR CLASS X
NCERTAS

The child walked down the road with his bag of laddoos when he tripped and fell, spilling everything onto the grimy street. His eyes welled with tears.

'Kid, don't cry', said the candyfloss seller, handing him a free bouquet of spun sugar.

Sweet

Art: Darshini Ravishankar

The Warmth of True Love

- *Swetha Jos*

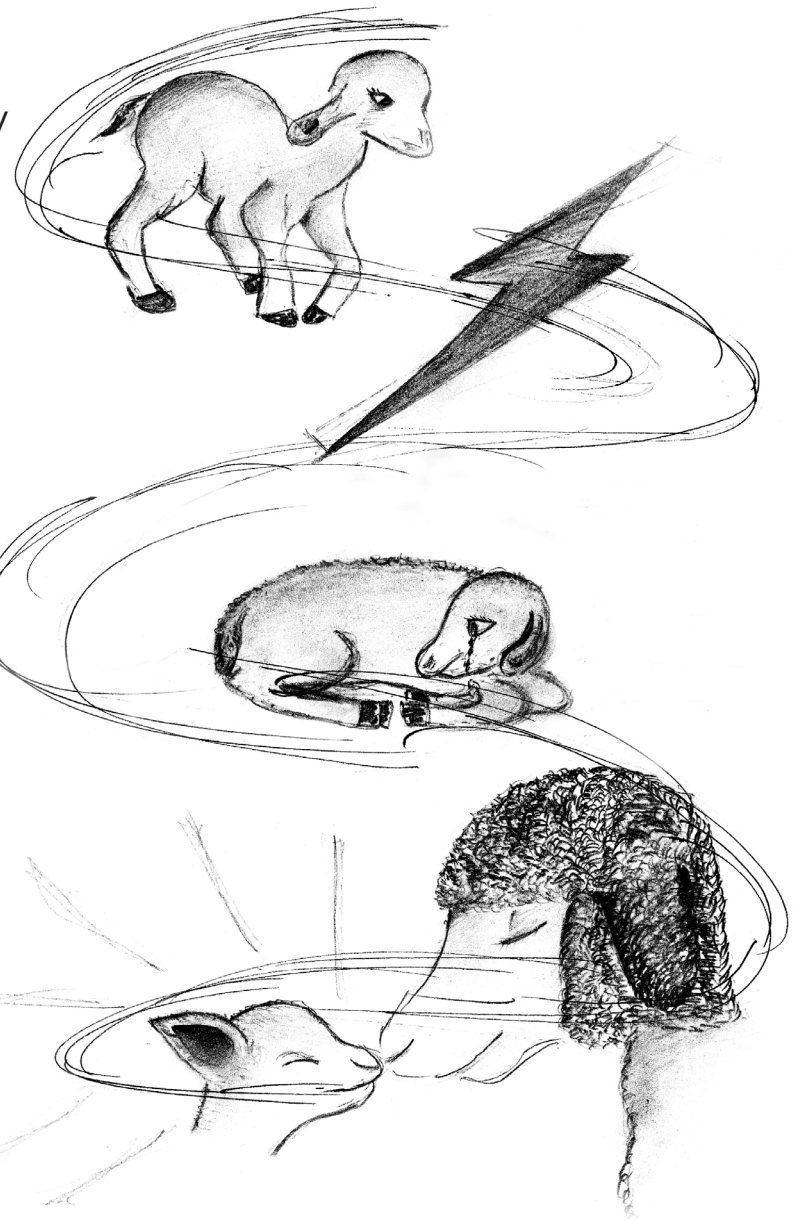
The night sky cries out in pain,
Oh! The earth is trembling in vain;
Lost a lamb in this swirling wind,
Nowhere to go, the land seems barren.

The frightened little lamb cries for aid,
No one to see the misery made.
Lightening slaps her and she screams aloud,
Thunder quivers her and she falls down.

The little one looks around,
Her grief is too much to be pond.
Oh! Who can save her from this agony
She looks up and groans.

Here comes the dawn
The dusk looks at her with a frown
'I've come for my daughter;
She is my soul and "the love",
The fruit of happiness that
I bear for mankind...'

That moment she wakes with a smile,
And sees her mother,
And feels the warmth of her love,
The love that never fails!



Art:

L

T

Art: Debarun Ghosh

Let It Be Together

- Ravi Umadi

Warmth took me by surprise
On that chilling winter morning,
Afloat around the campus sky
Was a single passion star
Striding past me without warning

When is it that a warming beauty
Took me so long to meet and talk
Was in the very vicinity
I was hoping not to be scared.
‘So be me’, I said and gathered my bulk
True to my sense, she said ‘Hi!’

All ablaze went my heart
Numbing traces of empty grace.
I was myself- simple and through
Well, I’ll never forget how we met.

Was it a tiny sting of pain
That I felt as you left?
It flew beyond conscious grip
Though not missing a trail behind.

Here and now I write to you
Holding hopes of longing together.
Let us belong to the present and future
Lest a beat skip me ever!

She sits alongside the sea on a rock,
Looking at the ships entering the dock,
Splashing water all over me
And experiencing the serenity of the sea.

Her long black hair is done gracefully;
The tiny curls on her tender face add to her beauty.
The deep red kumkum she spreads in her hair
For the loving husband for whom she cares.

Her eyes sparkle with intimate affection
For her people, her greatest possession.
Her blissful smile spreads calmness all around;
It has the ability to cure the deepest of wounds.

And above all the lady is adorned
With the eternal glory of her mind,
The glory which she nurtures deep in her heart,
The glory which no man can find.

I sit beside her, learning from her the values of life.
She made a good daughter, a good mother and a good wife.
I tell you now that the lady is none other
Than my own loving and caring mother.

Photo: Sanket Nagarkar

The Indian Mother

- Durga Parkhi

കനി

- അപർണ പി.കെ.

Kani
- Aparna PK

True love lies beneath your skin. It may take a few more winters, but at the end it will come to you. And then you change, you transform, you become nature..

നീ വളരുന്തോറും
കള്ളിമുൾച്ചെടിയും വളർന്നു
ആരെയും അടുപ്പിച്ചില്ല
ആരെയും വളർത്തിയില്ല
ഏതു മരുവിലും ശ്വസിച്ചു
സ്വന്തം തണലിൽ തളർന്നു
നിന്റെ പരിണാമം നൈമിഷികമായിരുന്നു
എനിക്ക് യുഗങ്ങളും
നിന്റെ വിത്ത്
എന്റെ ഉള്ളിൽ
ഒരു ദീർഘ മഴക്കായി കാത്തു കിടന്നു

പക്ഷേ നീ അറിഞ്ഞില്ലല്ലോ
നിന്റെ വേരുകൾക്കും
ഗന്ധമറിയുമെന്ന്
നിനക്കുമപ്പുറം മറ്റൊരു
സൃഷ്ടി ഉണ്ടെന്ന്
അന്നാദ്യമായി നിന്റെ വേരുകൾ
എന്നെ ചുംബിച്ചു
ഞാൻ ഒന്നു പിടഞ്ഞു
ശ്വാസം മുറുകി
അവ പതിയെ മന്ത്രിച്ചു
'നീയത്രെ അവന്റെ അശക്തിയെന്നു
നിനക്ക് നഖണക്കുഴിയുണ്ട്
കണ്ണുകൾക്ക് തിളക്കവും
നീ നിഷ്കളങ്കയാണ്
അവന്റെ ദൗർബല്യവും '

എന്റെ ചിറകു വിരിഞ്ഞു
പ്രാണൻ മദിച്ചു
ഞാൻ കോരിച്ചൊരിഞ്ഞു
കാറ്റ് വീശി

നീ തണുത്തുറഞ്ഞു
മുള്ളുകൾ പൂക്കളായി
എനിക്ക് വസന്തവും
ഞാൻ ഋതുക്കളെ ഭയന്നു
പക്ഷെ നീ ഉയർന്നു പാറി
ഓരോ നിമിഷവും എന്നെ പുൽകി
ഞാൻ വ്രണപ്പെട്ടു
നീ പുഞ്ചിരിച്ചു
എന്റെ കാതിൽ മൊഴിഞ്ഞു
'എന്നിട്ടും നീ അറിഞ്ഞില്ലല്ലോ
നിന്റെ കനിക്കുമപ്പുറം മറ്റൊരു ലോകമുണ്ടെന്ന് '

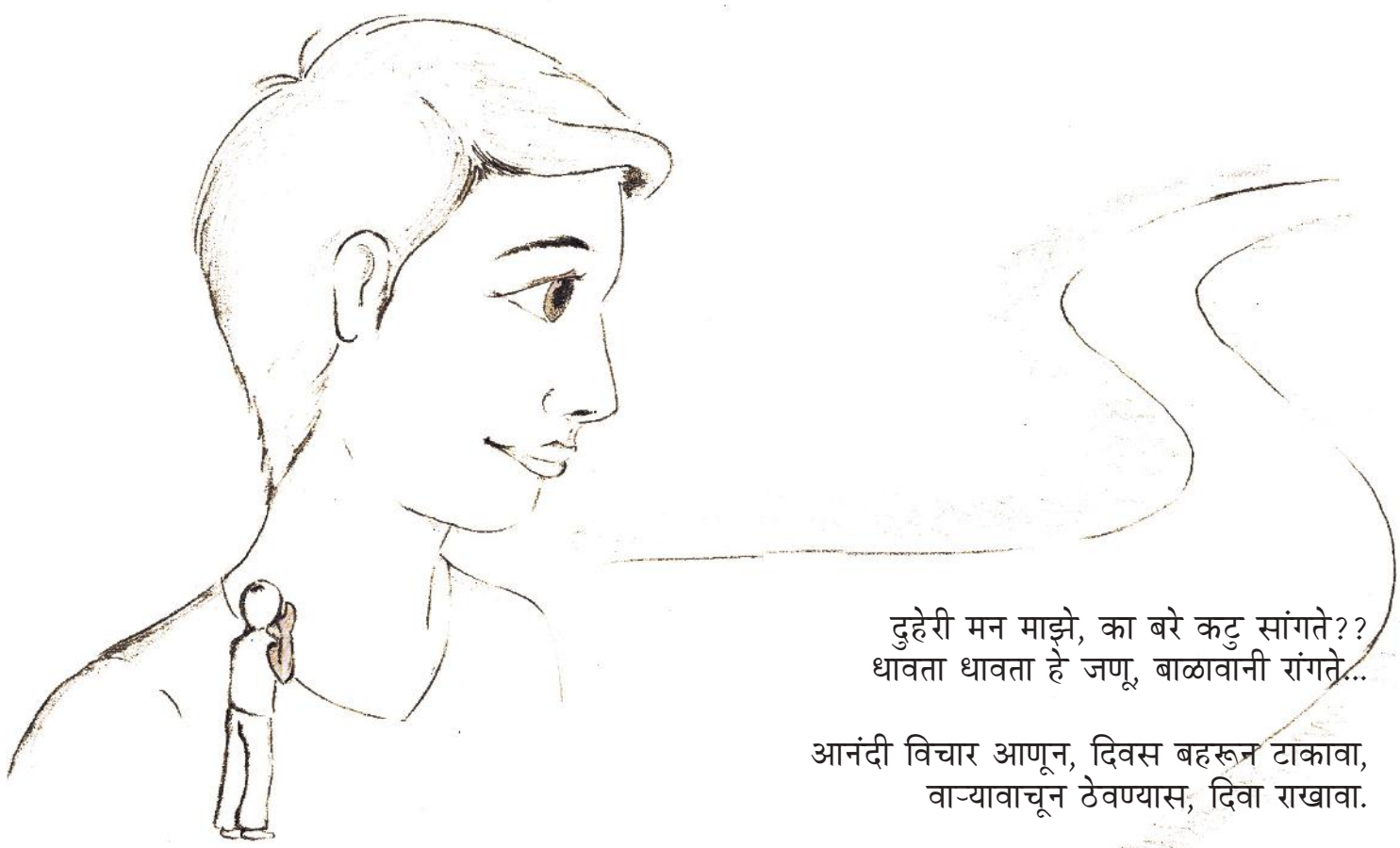
Art: Kezia Ann

एक प्रबळ विश्वास

– श्वेता तेंडुलकर

Ek Prabal Vishwas
- Shweta Tendulkar

A person in doubt about his own abilities can help himself by neglecting the negatives and looking at the brighter side of any situation. Any good deed carried out with sincere efforts will definitely end on a happy note. And if things don't turn out well at some point in life, we should convince ourselves that this is not the end, that the road is yet untravelled



Art: Nidhi Sudhir

दुहेरी मन माझे, का बरे कटु सांगते??
धावता धावता हे जणू, बाळावानी रांगते...

आनंदी विचार आणून, दिवस बहरून टाकावा,
वाऱ्यावाचून ठेवण्यास, दिवा राखावा.

सायंकाळ होईल कधी, कोण नेम लावेल?
दिवसाच्या प्रकाशातच मग, अखंड बळ सापडेल.

स्वप्नातले दृश्य जर खरे झाले नाही,
सांग तुझ्या मनास गं, हा शेवट नाही...

वाटेवरचा दगड, नेहमीच अडथळा नसतो,
छिद्रावरती पडला जर, पाय रुतण्यास टळतो..

चालता चालता ही वाट, कसला शोध लावेल...
नक्कीच एका वळणावर एक सुंदर दृश्य गावेल....

The Valleys

- VP Gokul

Specks of light out through the clouds
On to reveal the sky
Bright, vast, blue like the oceans
With its white dapples of clouds

The light falling, on the dew
Collected, the blessings of nature
By the palms of the young plants
Humbly, making them glisten

The morning fog, the sudden chill
Ignites the heart of the passionate
A cold wind blowing through...
Snow-capped mountains reaching for the sky

The mountain path, lit by the sun
Trodden less and laid with rocks
And stones, so perfect
You see the master sculptor’s hands

Lakes cold, silent and calm
Water gushing, gurgling brooks
Mountain goats out grazing
Bulbuls fluttering...

Willows along the road
Marigold fields and tulips plenty
Bright red, the apples hang beside
Peaches and cherries and mighty deodars

An old lady has begun her day collecting firewood
A young girl dressed up for school
I’m amazed and dismayed
Because they say, terror is born here

For how can it be, embraced by nature
That someone would think to put down this beauty
For I see heaven on Earth,
And that is the beauty of the valleys.

Photo: Lavanya Lokhande

Goodwill Cycle

- Shruti Paranjape

The little girl's name was Maya. Her small flip-flops periodically slapped against the pavement of one of Mumbai's streets as she ran. In her hand was a stick, with which she had set a rubber tyre rolling.

Maya chased her tyre past a bunch of blue-roofed slums. The stench that rose from their uncovered drains and the cries of the children didn't seem to bother her much. She ran past all the freely roving bovines and chickens with everything but the tyre in front of her a blur. She stopped at the signal, as Mahesh *bhaiya* always told her to and waited impatiently for the signal to turn green.

'Fifty one, fifty, forty nine...', she counted out loud along with flashing numbers, having only recently learnt numbers in English. As the signal turned green, she set her tyre rolling and was running again.

She had entered a slightly more posh area now. People were giving her disapproving looks, which might have had something to do with her making horn noises to make them get out of her tyre's way. She reached the bus stop and reluctantly stopped her tyre with a jerk before sitting down on the pavement near the seats.

She observed the people quietly. She liked clothes. A lady in a *salwaar kameez* reached down to tighten her anklet. A man in a suit with a briefcase loosened his tie. He then dug his hand into his breast pocket and took out a bunch of bills. He sorted them into two bunches and threw one onto the pavement, close to where the girl was sitting.

'*Ey uncle, kay kartes*?' (Eh uncle, what're you doing?). The man blinked at her; clearly he didn't understand Marathi. 'What doing?' she said, stammering. She had never spoken to *bade log* (big people) like this. Mahesh *bhaiya* said *bade log* could hurt you.

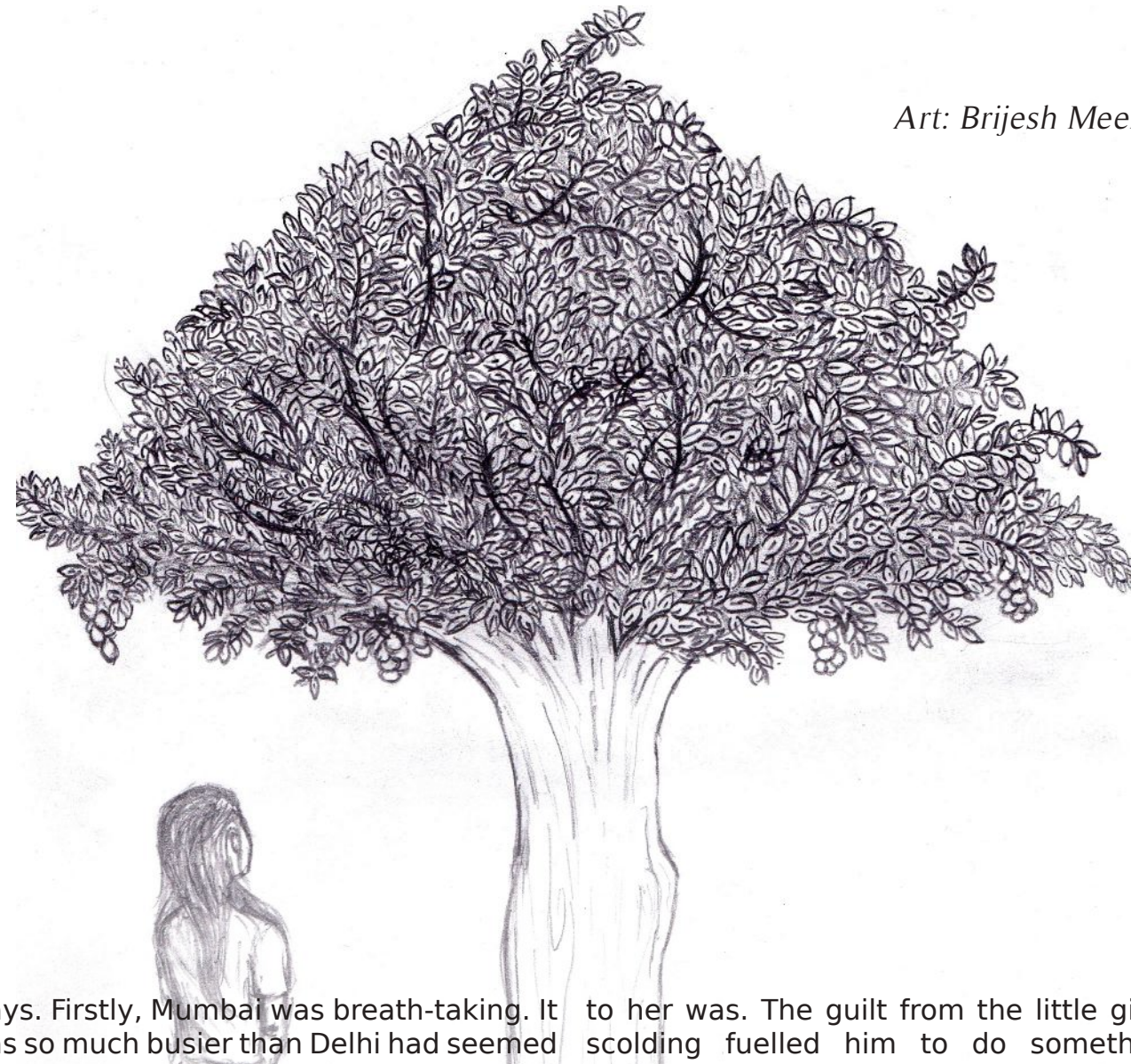
'You...'

She faltered. The little girl then picked up some of the bills, thrust her arms towards him and said simply, 'Dustbin!'.

*****

He hung his head a little lower than usual. The usual head-lowering was because it had been a month now and still no one at work accepted him. Yes, he was from Delhi. Yes, he couldn't speak Marathi...so what? People at work seemed to think he might as well be from Mars. Then there was that little beggar girl who told him off for littering that had caused the lower-than-usual head-lowering.

It was all very difficult. Mumbai took the breath out of him in two equal and opposite



Art: Brijesh Meena

ways. Firstly, Mumbai was breath-taking. It was so much busier than Delhi had seemed to be and the people seemed to move as one big beating wave. Secondly, it took the breath out of you. Just living in Mumbai tired him out by the end of the day.

Then there was the commute– Vadala-Bandra-Vadala. Day in, day out. In Delhi, he would've felt unsafe, especially on his walk from Vadala's bus stand to the paying guest house he was staying in. In Mumbai though, things were different. And he liked all of it, but for his xenophobic company.

Presently, he was getting off the bus and was beginning his walk home. He noticed a plastic bag and felt a surge of shame for what had happened earlier. He picked it up and tucked it into the side of his bag. He was hungry.

Just when he was thinking happy thoughts of warm *paranthas*, he was jolted by the sounds of screaming. It was muffled and unsure, as if the lady who had screamed wasn't sure how bad what was being done to her was. The guilt from the little girl's scolding fuelled him to do something uncharacteristic of himself– to go find out why the lady had screamed. His heart pounding in his throat, he ran towards the source.

It was coming from a nearby gully. He entered it, his guilt lifting and dropping his tired feet. He saw her distraught face, with her *sindur* smudged and eyes frantic. He saw their strong arms holding her struggling body still.

'*Ey*!', the guilt shouted. '*Ey! Band kar!* Police *bulaunga!*' [Eh! Stop it! I'll call the police!].

A lot of scuffling and whimpering followed, but the guilt had run out and fear had taken over him. He was rooted to the spot. He heard a loud thud and her scream again and then running feet. He couldn't move.

Finally, he saw her again. She was limping. Her *navari* had come undone. Across her cheek was a red mark. She limped past

him without a word.

*****

She entered the house, took off her *navari* swiftly, dabbed her wounds with a wet cloth and then wore a new sari with the air of someone doing something they have done a thousand times over. And indeed, maybe it had been a thousand times that her drunk husband had joined his friends and jumped her.

She sighed. Why hadn't she said thanks? She had always thought that what really distinguished the poor from the rich was etiquette. If only she could have good manners and charm and beauty, she'd be out of this hell-hole. She could join Bollywood. But no, she couldn't even thank a man who had gone out of his way to help her. She hadn't even smiled. Nothing.

She put the *tawa* on the stove for dinner and slapped some of the previous day's oil onto it. She was just about to turn the stove on when she noticed the close-to-empty pot by the stove.

She sighed again as she hoisted the pot onto her hip. Why did she dare dream? She was simply an uncultured poor woman whose existence was going to change no one's life for the better. She stepped out of her house, locking it behind her, and made her way to the closest Sintex tank.

She observed that which was her neighbourhood. Poverty, stench, classlessness, no culture. It was no miracle that she had turned out the same way. Why hadn't she said thanks?

She stopped at a signal. Two seconds of waiting and she started off. But her sari got caught in the lamp post behind her and she was jerked back. As she maneuvered her pleats, she noticed an old lady carrying a large bundle.

'Aunty, *de*' [Aunty, give], she said. When she heard herself, she sounded crass. The lady was blind and smiled vaguely in her direction.

Pot under one arm and the enormous bundle under the other, she poked a small hand out to hold the old lady's as she helped her cross the road. Old, blind, but well-to-do, she thought.

They stopped on the other side of the street and the old lady said in her Parsi-accented English, 'You have helped me greatly. For you, I will help someone else'.

She stared at the Parsi lady in confusion before sighing again. Why was she so uneducated and so uncultured?

*****

The old lady wobbled down the streets with the enormous bundle in hand. She cursed her rheumatism, which had only been worsened by the cold of Mumbai's winter.

She would have to walk back and then cook dinner. '*Dhansak* never tastes good cold', her husband always used to say. She felt a small pit in her stomach when she remembered.

She waddled down the streets, past Mumbai's cobblers and peddlers and shops and food-joints, until she reached her destination– Mahesh Children's Home.

Without bothering to ring the bell, she opened the gate and went in. She carefully placed her bundle on the ground before rapping sharply on the door. A young man opened the door.

'Come in, Pammi aunty.'
'Mahesh! I have some stuff for the kids.'
'They have a day off from school so you can give it to them yourself.'

At least fifty different kids rushed towards her as she entered the nursery with squeals of 'Pammi aunty! Pammi aunty!'. She opened up her bundle and felt like Santa Claus. She gave each of them something small- a toy, a jacket, a pair of socks, a book. In the end there was just one frock left. A little girl walked up to her shyly with her hands out in front of her and Pammi aunty placed the frock softly in her hands. The little girl's name was Maya.

The Standalone Curly Hair

- Anwesh Bhattacharya

On a sprightly, bright, sunny morn,
The arena was all abuzz–
Full of kids of different kinds,
Of different colours, affiliations, and heights!

I walked in haste for I could not
Afford to miss the gathering,
Of two-a-thousand waiting for a bell–
To start the day's proceedings!

The usual route was the one I took,
And quite the same it was;
Except for one– and only one;
A curly hair, dressed in yellow and blue!

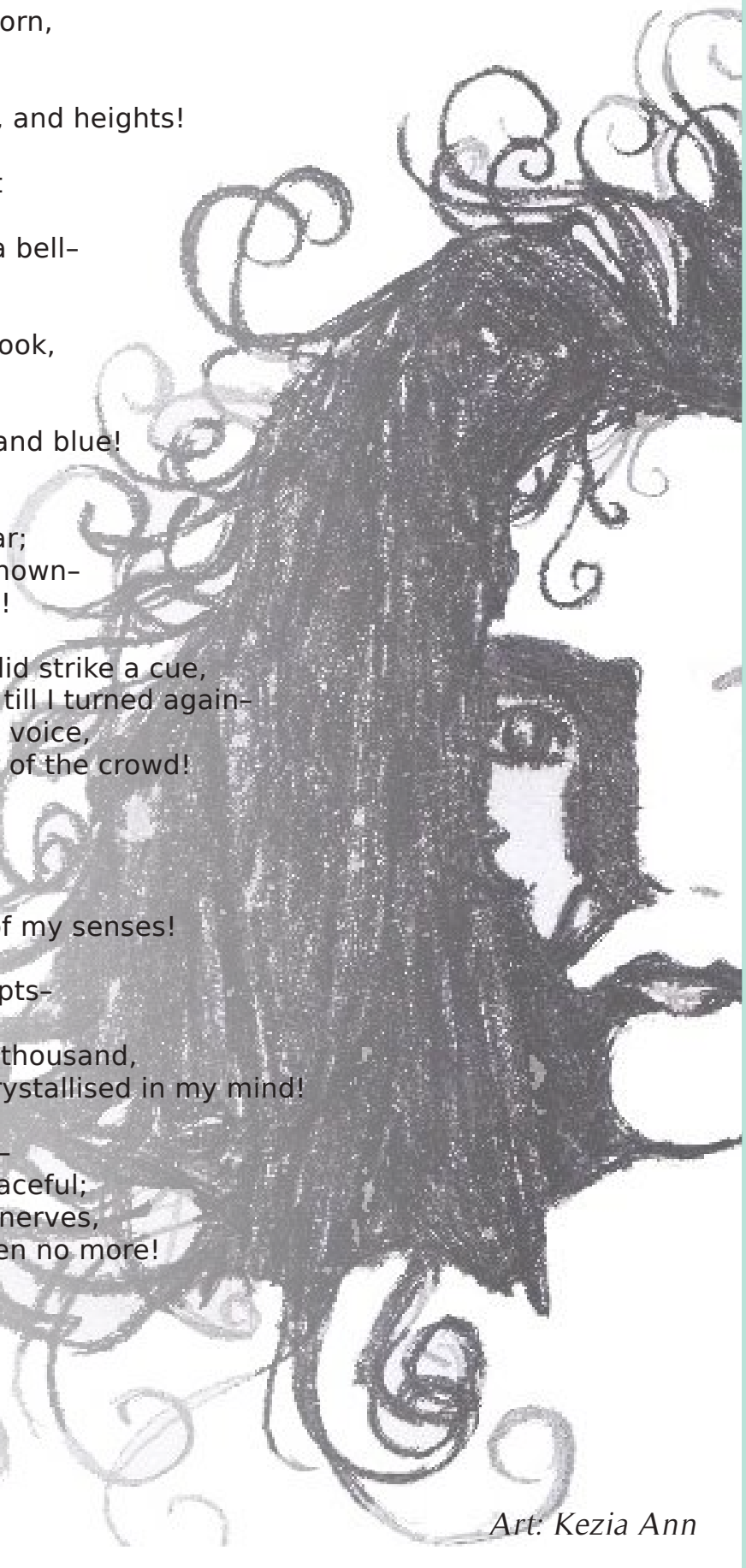
The others were just the same,
As on other days, all too familiar;
This single one seemed so unknown–
Yet intuitively, the closest of all!

Neither kinship nor friendship did strike a cue,
And I thrived on my wild guess till I turned again–
Hoping to hear that mysterious voice,
Only to be let down by the roar of the crowd!

I was getting late,
So I hastened my pace;
But that picture in my head,
Blurred out, for an instant, all of my senses!

I did not make any more attempts–
To look for that lovely entity;
Instead of madly scanning two thousand,
I settled for that one picture, crystallised in my mind!

I keep thinking of that moment–
Sometimes when I'm alone, peaceful;
And that curly hair stirs up my nerves,
Long after it was seen…and seen no more!



Art: Kezia Ann

Sour

He dropped his daughter off at school, her little blue water bottle swinging from her shoulder.

'You be good, Meena', he said. He watched her walk past the lemon trees through the big double doors, looking so tiny in the crowd of children.

With wistful eyes he saw them laugh and jostle each other- no worries, no cares. Sighing inwardly, he wished he could go back to a simpler time.

Art: Darshini Ravishankar

Coloured Toys

- Anup Anand Singh

‘When I bring to you coloured toys, my child, I understand why there is such a play of colours on clouds, on water, and why flowers are painted in tints- when I give coloured toys to you, my child.’

- Rabindranath Tagore, Gitanjali

The colours in nature, the blue of the sky, the green of the grass; the world around us is full of the bright hues that light up our lives. As children, all of us do wonder about these different shades around us. This curiosity, though, gets lost with us ‘growing up’ with time. Perhaps we grow up way too much to realise that there is an inherent beauty that encompasses this universe.

Children are perhaps the most curious and the most creative versions of us. You know it when you see the gleam in their eyes each time they break open a toy and find those cogs and springs inside, or when they are handed over a paint brush and a canvas and allowed to create a world of their own.

You see the happiness on their faces; happiness that is not supposed to last long; happiness that vanishes into unspoken corners of this world, a world that values performance over learning.
Probably, it is time we sit back and reflect on why education evolved in the first place. Wasn’t it supposed to make children explore and discover life and the world? We try to ‘teach’ science to children rather than inspiring them to learn. School textbooks and curricula must stimulate young minds to question and wonder, rather than making them follow protocols to get things done. If children stay curious, they’ll continue to explore and discover. Give them books to read, books that do not teach formulae but help them learn about life. Give them toys to play with, let them figure out how things function...the best thing a child can do with a toy is to break it open. Give them paints and brushes, let them paint the world around them in the colours they want to.

Science is not a rich man’s game. A great challenge our generation faces is to ensure that science reaches out to the most marginalised children, the brightest of minds we miss out otherwise. You don’t need costly experimental setups to illuminate these minds. Simple toys can explain more Science than expensive machinery can. There are numerous simple folk toys out there based on great science principles. But no, we like making things complex. We feel that things are not ‘science-y’ enough if they are not complicated. We like confusing people with science rather than simplifying it for them.

The colours, the hues, the beauty, everything nature has to offer is fairly simple. The simplicity is where its beauty lies. From the starry sky to the clear streams, each tiny bit of nature sends out a very clear message: to keep things simple; education, science, our lives, everything.

Art: Brijesh Meena

മണിക്കുട്ടി പറയാതെ പോയത്

– ദേവിക ടി. ഡി

Manikkutti Parayathe Poyath
- Devika TD

This story follows the emotional turmoil of a brother who loses his sister unexpectedly.

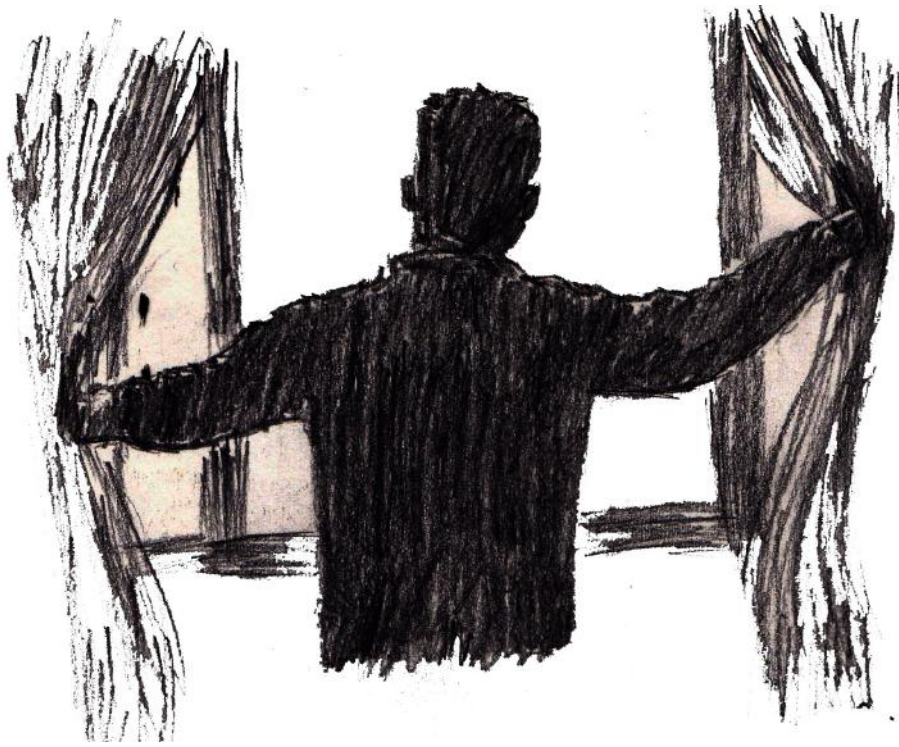
ശീതീകരിച്ച മുറിയിൽ നിന്നും മഴയിലേക്കിറങ്ങുമ്പോൾ എവിടേക്കാണ് പോകേണ്ടത് എന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവ് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല മനുവിന്. പരിചിത മുഖങ്ങൾ കൈകൾ വീശിക്കാണിച്ചു. സഹതാപവും സങ്കടവും മുറ്റി നിൽക്കുന്ന നോട്ടങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും ഓടിയൊളിക്കാൻ അവൻ ശ്രമിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു.
മഴ തുണച്ചത് കൊണ്ട് ആരോടും സംസാരിക്കേണ്ടി വന്നില്ല. ചാറ്റൽ മഴക്ക് ശക്തി കൂടുവാൻ ആഗ്രഹിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് മനു പതുക്കെ നടന്നു. പുഞ്ചിരിച്ചു തള്ളിയ മുഖങ്ങളാരും കുശലം ചോദിക്കാൻ വരാത്തതിൽ അവൻ മനസ്സാലെ സന്തോഷിച്ചു.
ആരോടും അനുവാദം ചോദിക്കാതെ മഴ കനത്തു. വഴി തെറ്റി വന്ന മഴയെ ശപിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ആളുകൾ കൂട്ടം കൂട്ടമായി തെന്നി നീങ്ങി.
മനസ്സ് വിങ്ങിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. തന്റെ ശരീരത്തിന്റെ ഒരു ഭാഗം അടർന്നുമാറിയ വേദനയാൽ ശരീരവും മനസ്സും ഒരു പോലെ കരയുകയായിരുന്നു.
കാലുകൾ വലിച്ചുവെച്ച് മനു ആവുന്നത്ര വേഗതയിൽ വീട്ടിലേക്ക് നടന്നു. പുറത്ത് നിന്ന് ആരും വരാനില്ലാത്തത് കൊണ്ട് അധികം ചോദ്യങ്ങളും ഉത്തരങ്ങളും അനുതാപം നിറഞ്ഞ നോട്ടങ്ങളും ഉണ്ടാവില്ലവിടെ.
ഉറവ വറ്റിയ അരുവി പോലെ അവന്റെ മനസ്സും ശരീരവും വരണ്ടുണങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. വീടിന്റെ വാതിൽ ചാരിയിരുന്നു.

Art: Vrushali Rao

അകത്തെവിടെയോ കിടക്കുകയാണമ്മ. പോയി നോക്കാൻ തോന്നാഞ്ഞിട്ടോ എന്തോ മനു ഉമ്മറത്ത് തന്നെയിരുന്നു.
ഒട്ടു നേരത്തിനു ശേഷം ഉൾപ്രേരണയാലെന്ന പോലെ അവൻ മണിക്കുട്ടിയുടെ മുറി തുറന്നു. ആ മുറിയിലത്രയും അവളുടെ തണുത്ത ശ്വാസം മുറ്റിനിന്നിരുന്നു. മണിക്കുട്ടി അവന്റെ കുഞ്ഞനുജത്തിയായിരുന്നു.
അവസാന ശ്വാസത്തിനായുള്ള അവളുടെ പിടയൽ ഈ ജനാലക്കമ്പികളിലായിരുന്നു. തെക്കു വശത്ത് ഉരുകിയൊലിച്ചു കിടക്കുന്ന ആറടി മണ്ണായി അവൾ മാറിയിരുന്നു.
ഓർമകളുടെ കുത്തൊഴുക്കിൽ മനുവിന് കാലിടറി.
കാലം കൈപ്പിടിയിലമരാതെ പറന്നു പോയപ്പോൾ എവിടെ വെച്ചാണ് തനിക്ക് മണിക്കുട്ടിയെ നഷ്ടമായതെന്നോർക്കാൻ അവൻ ശ്രമിച്ചു .അവൻ വളർന്നപ്പോൾ അവനോടൊപ്പം മണിക്കുട്ടിയും വളർന്നു എന്ന കാര്യം അവൻ മറന്നിരുന്നു. ഓർമകളുടെ ചരട് പൊട്ടിച്ചെറിഞ്ഞ് അവൻ മണിക്കുട്ടിയുടെ മുറിയാകെ കണ്ണോടിച്ചു. നോട്ടുപുസ്തകങ്ങൾ അടുക്കി വെച്ചിരുന്നു
മുറിയിലെ ഭിത്തിയിൽ അവൾ വരച്ച ചിത്രങ്ങൾ തൂക്കിയിട്ടിരുന്നു. മേശയിൽ പഠിക്കാനുള്ള പുസ്തകങ്ങളും പരീക്ഷാ തീയ്യതി അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തി വച്ചിരുന്ന കലണ്ടറും തൊട്ടടുത്ത് പഠിക്കാനുള്ള ടൈംടേബിളും ഒട്ടിച്ച് വെച്ചിരുന്നു.
മനു മെല്ലെ പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ തുറന്നു നോക്കി. അവന് അറിയേണ്ടതും അതായിരുന്നു, അവൾ ആരോടും പറയാതെ പോയതിന്റെ രഹസ്യം. അക്ഷരത്തിന് തീർത്തും വ്യത്തിപോരായിരുന്നു. നിരതെറ്റിയ അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ അങ്ങിങ്ങായി ചിന്നിച്ചിതറി നിൽക്കുന്ന ആൾക്കൂട്ടം പോലെ
തോന്നിച്ചു. അക്ഷരങ്ങളിൽ അവന്റെ ഓർമകൾ കണ്ണീരിൽ കുതിർന്നൊലിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. കഥകൾ കൊണ്ടും കവിതകൾ കൊണ്ടും വിസ്മയം തീർത്തു വെച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത് തന്റെ മണിക്കുട്ടി തന്നെയാണെന്ന് വിശ്വസിക്കാൻ അവന് പ്രയാസം തോന്നി.
ഒരിക്കൽ പോലും അവളെ ഒന്നു പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കാൻ കഴിയാതെ പോയതോർത്ത് അവന്റെ സങ്കടം അണ പൊട്ടിയൊഴുകി.

താളുകളവസാനിക്കുന്നിടത്ത് അവൾ ഇങ്ങനെ കുറിച്ചിട്ടിരുന്നു.
'ഇടക്കിടക്ക് ചിന്തകൾ കാടുകയറുമ്പോൾ, ഞാൻ എന്നെത്തന്നെ മറന്നു

Art: Vrushali Rao



Art: Kezia Ann

പോകുന്നു. മറവി എന്നതിലുപരി ഞാൻ ഉണ്ടോ എന്ന ചോദ്യമാണ് എന്നെ അലട്ടാറുള്ളത്. ചിന്തിക്കുകയും എഴുതുകയും സംസാരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ഈ ഞാൻ സത്യത്തിൽ മറ്റൊരാളുടെ ചിന്തകളുടെ, സ്വപ്നങ്ങളുടെ, എന്തിനേറെ പറയുന്നു ഈ ലോകം തന്നെ മറ്റൊരു ചിന്തയുടെ ഭാഗമല്ലേ? നമ്മൾ ഇന്ന് കാണുന്ന സ്ഥലകാലചിന്തകൾക്കും അതീതമായ് മറ്റൊരു സ്പേസ് ടൈമിൽ ജീവിക്കുന്ന ഒരാളുടെ ചിന്തയിലാണ് ജീവിക്കുന്നതെന്ന്.

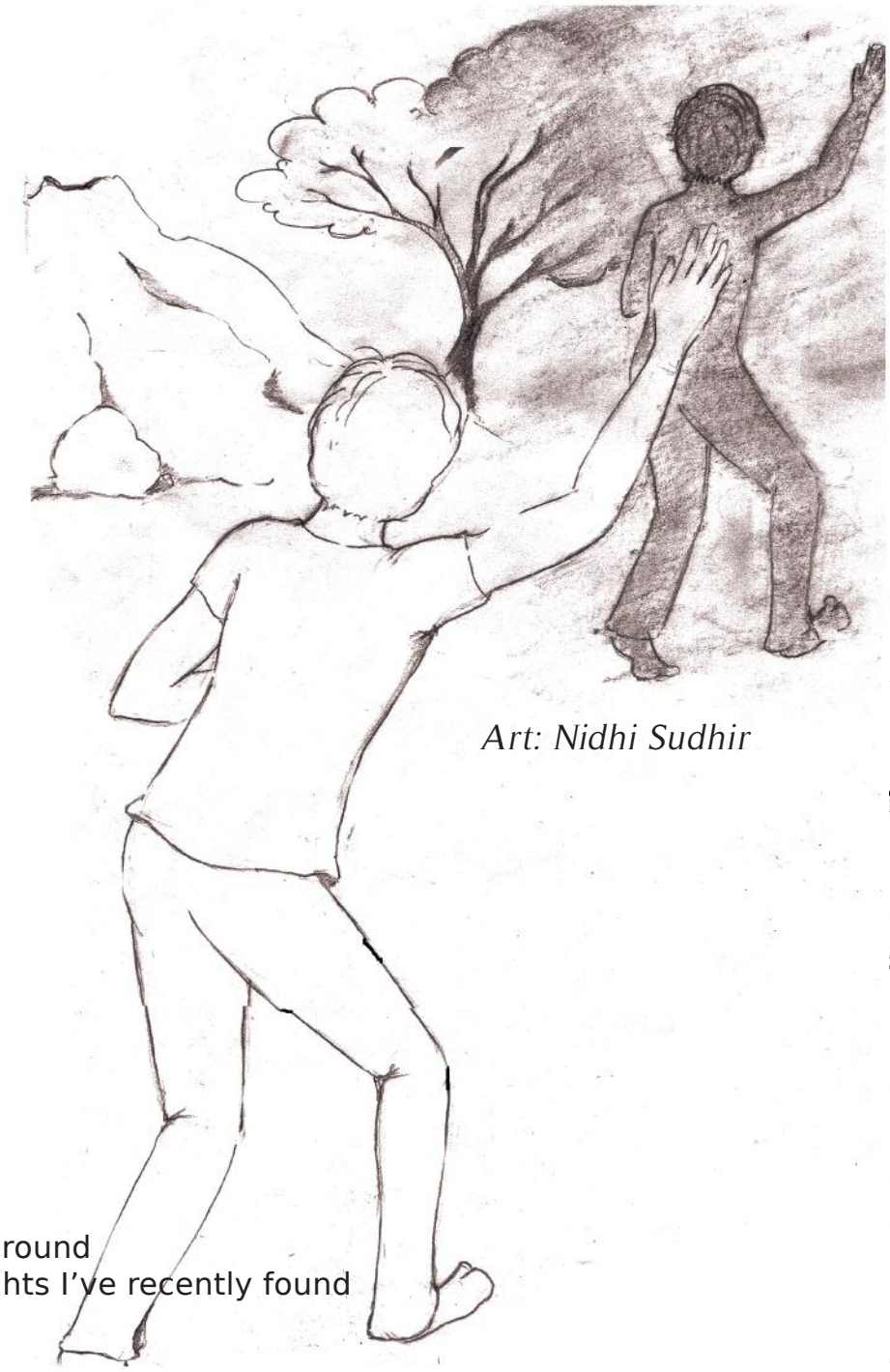
മനുഷ്യനും ഭൂമിയും മാത്രമല്ല , മഴയും പുഴയും മരങ്ങളും ശ്വസിക്കുന്ന വായുവും കൂടി സത്യമല്ലാതാകുന്നതാണ് എന്റെ ചിന്തകൾ. കാട് കയറുന്ന ചിന്തകൾക്ക് ചെന്നു കയറാൻ ഒരു കാടില്ലാത്തത് തന്നെയാണ് എന്നെ അലട്ടുന്ന പ്രശ്നം. ആദ്യത്തെ ചിന്ത ഒരന്തവും കുന്തവുമില്ലാതെ ഇങ്ങനെ തങ്ങിയിരിക്കുമ്പോഴായിരിക്കും അടുത്ത ചിന്ത വരിക. ആദ്യത്തേത് ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ നിലനില്പാണ് പ്രശ്നമെങ്കിൽ അടുത്തതിൽ പ്രതീക്ഷകളുടെ ഭാരമാണ് പ്രശ്നം. പ്രതീക്ഷകളുടെ ഭാരത്തിനൊത്ത് ഉയരാൻ കഴിയാതെ വരുമ്പോൾ ഞാൻ ഓർക്കും അമ്മയുടെ വയറിനുള്ളിൽ ചുരുണ്ടുകൂടിക്കിടക്കുന്നൊരു കുഞ്ഞു ഭ്രൂണമാണ് ഞാനെന്ന്. ഇത്രയും നേരവും ജീവിച്ചതത്രയും സ്വപനത്തിലായിരുന്നുവെന്നും സ്കൂളിൽ പോവുന്നതും എഴുതുന്നതും കഴിക്കുന്നതും അന്നന്ന് ചെയ്യുന്നതത്രയും സ്വപ്നത്തിൽ. ജീവിച്ചത് മുഴുവൻ സ്വപ്നത്തിലായത് കൊണ്ട് ഉറക്കം വിട്ടെണീക്കുമ്പോൾ ചെയ്ത തെറ്റുകൾ അത്രയും തിരുത്താൻ ഒരവസരം കൂടി ബാക്കിയുണ്ട് ഉറക്കം വിട്ടെണീക്കാൻ ഒരു വഴി കണ്ടെത്തണം എന്നു മാത്രം. പറഞ്ഞു വരുമ്പോൾ ഇപ്പോൾ ജീവിക്കുന്ന ജീവിതം തികച്ചും ഒരു സ്വപ്നമാണെന്ന്. ഈ സ്വപ്നം വിട്ടെണീറ്റ് ശരിയായ ജീവിതം തുടങ്ങണമെങ്കിൽ മരണം ഒരനിവാര്യതയാണെന്ന് മാത്രമാണ് എനിക്ക് മനസ്സിലായത്. ’

മണിക്കുട്ടി

മണിക്കുട്ടി അറിഞ്ഞ അനുഭവിച്ച ഒറ്റപ്പെടലിന്റെ വേദന മനുവിന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിൽ നിന്നും ഒരു തേങ്ങലായി ബഹിർഗമിച്ചു.

Existence

- Anwesh Bhattacharya



Art: Nidhi Sudhir

Whenever I see
A look-alike of me,
I ponder over myself
To see if that person is related
By any means to me
And whether I'm actually 'me'

The realisation of his existence
Makes me think over again
Whether the relation of that boy around
Has anything to do with the thoughts I've recently found

I feel like walking closer to him
And asking him, 'Do you belong to my kin?'
Even thinking about his befitting answer for the question of mine
It seems like he is a long-lost brother, found at the right time

Just at the moment when I'm going out of my mind,
Reality takes hold of my thoughts– those of an unrealistic kind
And prevents me from asking that stranger
The question that would have made him feel that I'm mad as a hatter

Then my thinking shifts to another form
Where I denounce the materialistic platform
I try to find a spiritual connection
Between the two entities of my consideration

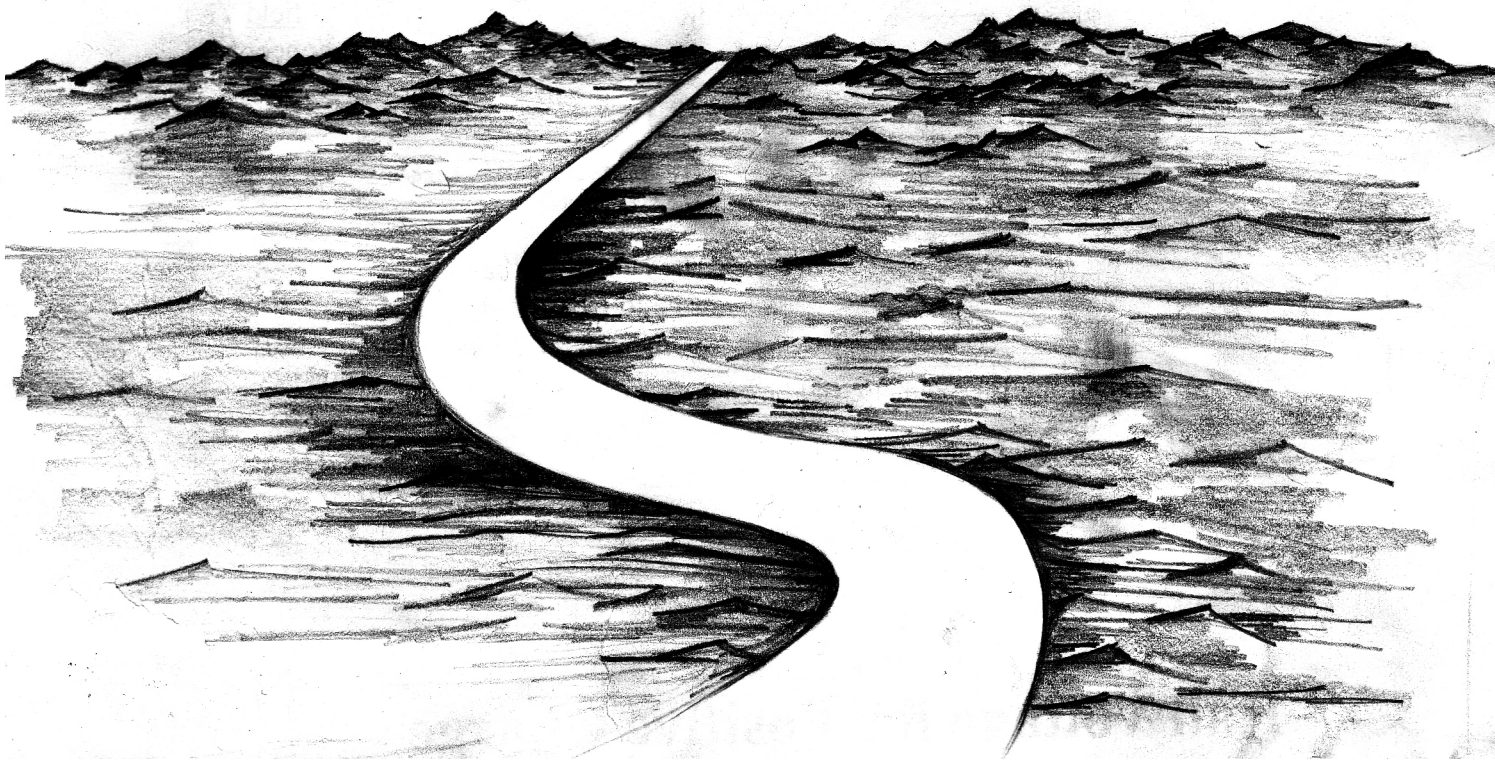
But Alas! When I'm going deeper into the cave
The wall of the cave crumbles down like a breaking wave
I hear someone calling that boy, 'Apu, why are you so late?'
And all my speculations cease to exist in that half-alert state.

रुक मत पथिक

– सचिन गुर्जर

Ruk Mat Pathik
- Sachin Gurjar

The mind and the body are never in synchrony. Where the mind wants to go forward, the body wants to take a moment of quiescence. However, the traveller has to move forward in his journey and accept his fate as it comes.



मन चाहता है, जीत लूँ इस मन को
तन चाहता है, ठहर जा विश्राम दे इस तन को
मन की बातें तन चाहे और तन की बातें मन चाहे
दोनों फँसे कठिन दुविधा में, रुक गई है जीवन की राहें
अब पथिक से मेरी ये गुज़ारिश, छोड़ दे इस दुविधा को
उठ, खड़ा हो, जहाँ हार हो वहाँ हार स्वीकार कर
जहाँ जीत हो वहाँ उसे स्वीकार कर...
इसमें ही तेरे तन–मन का भला है
क्योंकि जीत तो सिर्फ़ जीत है, लेकिन
कहाँ हारना है, ये भी एक कला है

Elegy for Childhood

- Prashastha Mishra

In the evenings,
The silence is at its loudest;
No wind, no chirps, and no trills,
No patter of footfalls across the street.

And solitude, quiet solitude crawls in—
No escaping.
No music drowns the stillness,
No book, no weather, no beauty
Drives any cheer to the being.

And then the images,
Of life, of rainy afternoons past,
Of the games, of the dog, of the hammock;
And the calls, the faint urgent calls.

The child that had been,
Calls out to the person it will be.
I stop where I am, and say,
‘See, here I am now,
At the place you’re so afraid to be’.

Photo: PM Shreenidhi

തിരിച്ചറിവ്

– ഗോവിന്ദ് എസ്.

Thirichariv
- Govind S

A young woman's experiences have led her to believe that love is nothing but an illusion. This story details her feelings about this realisation, and how she reacts to it.

ട്രെയിനിന്റെ കാഹളം അവളെ മയക്കത്തിൽ നിന്നുണർത്തി. പെയ്തു തോർന്ന മഴയ്ക്ക് ശേഷമുള്ള നനുത്ത കാറ്റ് അവളുടെ സാരിത്തലപ്പിലും മെഴുകുപോലുള്ള ശരീരത്തിലും വീശിയടിക്കുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഇളം കാറ്റിൽ പോലും മഞ്ഞു പെയ്യുന്ന താഴ്വരയിൽ വഴി തെറ്റിയെത്തിയ യാത്രികയെ പോലെ അവൾ അടിമുടി വിറക്കുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. തെല്ലൊരു പരിഭ്രമത്തോടെ അവൾ ചുറ്റും നോക്കി. താൻ ഇതെവിടെയാണ്? കൽക്കട്ട റെയിൽവേ സ്റ്റേഷൻ! ഇവിടെയാണ് വർഷങ്ങൾക്ക് മുൻപ് താൻ ഭർത്താവിന്റെ കൈ പിടിച്ച് വന്നിറങ്ങിയത്. കഥകളിൽ മാത്രം കേട്ട് പരിചയമുള്ള കൽക്കട്ട. കൽക്കട്ട എന്നും ഇങ്ങനെ തന്നെയായിരുന്നു. മഴയിൽ കുതിർന്ന പ്രണയാതുരയായ നഗരി. അവളെ പോലെ തന്റെ മനസ്സിലും അടങ്ങാത്ത പ്രണയദാഹമായിരുന്നു.

നാട്ടിൻപുറത്തെ പ്രതാപിയുടെ ഏക മകൾ. ചെറുപ്രായത്തിൽ തന്നെ കൽക്കട്ടയിലെ ഉയർന്ന ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്റെ ഭാര്യാപദം അലങ്കരിക്കാനുള്ള ഭാഗ്യം. അന്ന് ഏവരും പറഞ്ഞു. 'ഭാഗ്യമുള്ള കുട്ടി'. എന്നാൽ വർഷങ്ങൾ പഴക്കമുള്ള ദാമ്പത്യം തനിക്കെന്താണ് സമ്മാനിച്ചത്? താൻ വെറുമൊരു യന്ത്രമായി മാറുകയായിരുന്നോ? അദ്ദേഹവുമൊത്തുള്ള ഒരു നല്ല നിമിഷംപോലും എന്തുകൊണ്ട് തന്റെ സ്മരണയിലില്ല? ഇന്നിതുവരെ തന്നെ ഒരല്ലലും അറിയിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെങ്കിലും അദ്ദേഹം തന്നെയാണ് തന്നെ ഒറ്റപ്പെടലിന്റെ പാരമ്യത്തിലെത്തിച്ചത്. താൻ പ്രണയം പകരാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചപ്പോഴൊക്കെ എന്തിനാണ് അദ്ദേഹം അകന്നു പോയത്? അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കണ്ണിൽ ഒരുപക്ഷേ പ്രണയം കണ്ടത് കിടക്കയിൽ അന്ത്യയാമങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ അത് പ്രണയമായിരുന്നോ? തനിക്കറിയില്ല. എന്തുകൊണ്ടാണ് തന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിന് അർത്ഥം നൽകിക്കൊണ്ട് കടന്നു വന്ന തന്റെ തന്നെ രക്തത്തോട്, ആ കുരുന്നിനോട് പോലും തനിക്ക് വാത്സല്യം തോന്നാതിരുന്നത്? ഇല്ല! അങ്ങനെയൊന്നുമില്ല. എന്തൊക്കെയാണ് താൻ ചിന്തിച്ച് കൂട്ടിയത്? തന്റെ ജീവിത സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ എപ്പോൾ മുതലാണ് തനിക്ക് അസഹനീയമായി തോന്നിത്തുടങ്ങിയത്? ഏകാന്തതയുടെ നിമിഷങ്ങളെ ശപിച്ച് കഴിയുന്ന ഏതോ സമയത്ത് ബാൽക്കണിയിലൂടെ തൊട്ടടുത്ത ഫ്ളാറ്റിൽ വന്ന ചെമ്പൻ മുടിക്കാരനെ കണ്ടപ്പോഴോ? അതോ അയാളുമായി താൻ സൗഹൃദത്തിലായപ്പോഴോ? എന്തിനായിരുന്നു തന്റെ മനസ്സിലെ വ്യഥകൾ അയാളുമായി പങ്കുവെച്ചത്? താൻ വെറുമൊരു യന്ത്രമായി മാറുകയായിരുന്നോ? എന്തുകൊണ്ടാണ് അയാൾ

Art: Kezia Ann

പ്രണയം വച്ചുനീട്ടിയപ്പോൾ തിരസ്കരിക്കാതിരുന്നത്? തന്നെ കാർന്നുതിന്നിരുന്ന ഏകാന്തതയും ഉള്ളിൽ അലയടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്ന പ്രണയദാഹവും തന്നെ അതിന് സമ്മതിച്ചില്ല. താൻ ഒരു ഭാര്യയും അമ്മയുമാണെന്ന സത്യം മറന്നു. മഴ പെയ്തു തോർന്ന അനേകം പകലുകളിൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ മടിയിൽ തല ചായ്ച്ച് സ്വപ്നം കണ്ട കാല്പനികതയുടെ ആലോകം യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാക്കിത്തീർക്കാൻ ഇന്ന് ഇറങ്ങിത്തിരിച്ചപ്പോഴും തന്റെ മനസ്സ് താൻ ചെയ്യുന്നത് ശരിയാണ് എന്നൊരുറപ്പ് തന്നിരുന്നോ? ഒരിക്കലുമില്ല! അങ്ങനെ ഒരുറപ്പുണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ പിന്നെ എന്തിനാണ് വീട് വിട്ടിറങ്ങിയ സമയത്ത് നിദ്രയിലായിരുന്ന തന്റെ ഭർത്താവിന്റെയും കുഞ്ഞിന്റെയും മുഖത്തേക്ക് ഒന്ന് നോക്കാൻ പോലും ധൈര്യപ്പെടാഞ്ഞത്? റെയിൽവേ പ്ലാറ്റ്ഫോമിൽ തന്റെ സ്വപ്നകാമുകന്റെ വരവും പ്രതീക്ഷിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ വൈകിയ വേളയിൽ താൻ തന്നോട് തന്നെ ചോദിച്ച് പോവുന്നു. തന്റേത് എന്നു കരുതുന്ന ഇയാളിലും കണ്ടത് യഥാർത്ഥ പ്രണയമായിരുന്നോ?അതോ ശരീരത്തിന് വേണ്ടിയുള്ള കാപട്യമോ? അയാളുടെ ജീവിതത്തിലേക്ക് കടന്നു വന്ന അനേകം പേരിൽ ഒരാൾ മാത്രമായിരുന്നോ താൻ? ഒരിക്കലും തന്റെ മനസ്സ് കണ്ടിട്ടല്ല മറിച്ച് തന്റെ സൗന്ദര്യം കണ്ടിട്ടാണ് അയാളും തന്നിലേക്ക് അടുത്തത്. മനസ്സിലെ യഥാർത്ഥ സ്നേഹം പകരുന്നതിന് മുൻപേ ശരീരം അയാളിൽ സമർപ്പിക്കേണ്ടി വന്നു. ഭാര്യയാവാനും അമ്മയാവാനും തനിക്ക് യോഗ്യതയുണ്ടായിരുന്നോ?അറിയില്ല.പക്ഷേ താൻ പാപിയായിരുന്നില്ല.സ്നേഹിക്കാനും സ്നേഹിക്കപ്പെടാനും ആത്മാർത്ഥമായി ആഗ്രഹിക്കുക മാത്രമായിരുന്നു താൻ ചെയ്തത്. എന്നാൽ ഈ വൈകിയ വേളയിൽ തനിക്ക് ബോധ്യം വന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇന്നീ ലോകത്ത് സ്നേഹം എന്നൊന്നില്ല. തനിക്കു സ്നേഹത്തിൽ വിശ്വാസം നഷ്ടമായിരിക്കുന്നു. ലോകമേ, ഇത് നിന്റെ തീരുമാനമായിരുന്നോ? സ്നേഹത്തിനു വേണ്ടി ജീവിച്ചവൾക്ക് സ്നേഹം ഒരു മരീചികയെന്ന് ബോധ്യപ്പെടുത്തിയത്. പ്രണയം പ്രാണവായുവായുവായിരുന്ന തന്റെ ആത്മാവ് മരിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇനി ഈ ശരീരം തനിക്കെന്തിനു? അതോർത്തുകൊണ്ട്, മന്ദഹസിച്ച്, അകലെ നിന്നും പാഞ്ഞുവരുന്ന ട്രെയിനിലേക്ക് അവൾ ഓടിയടുത്തു.

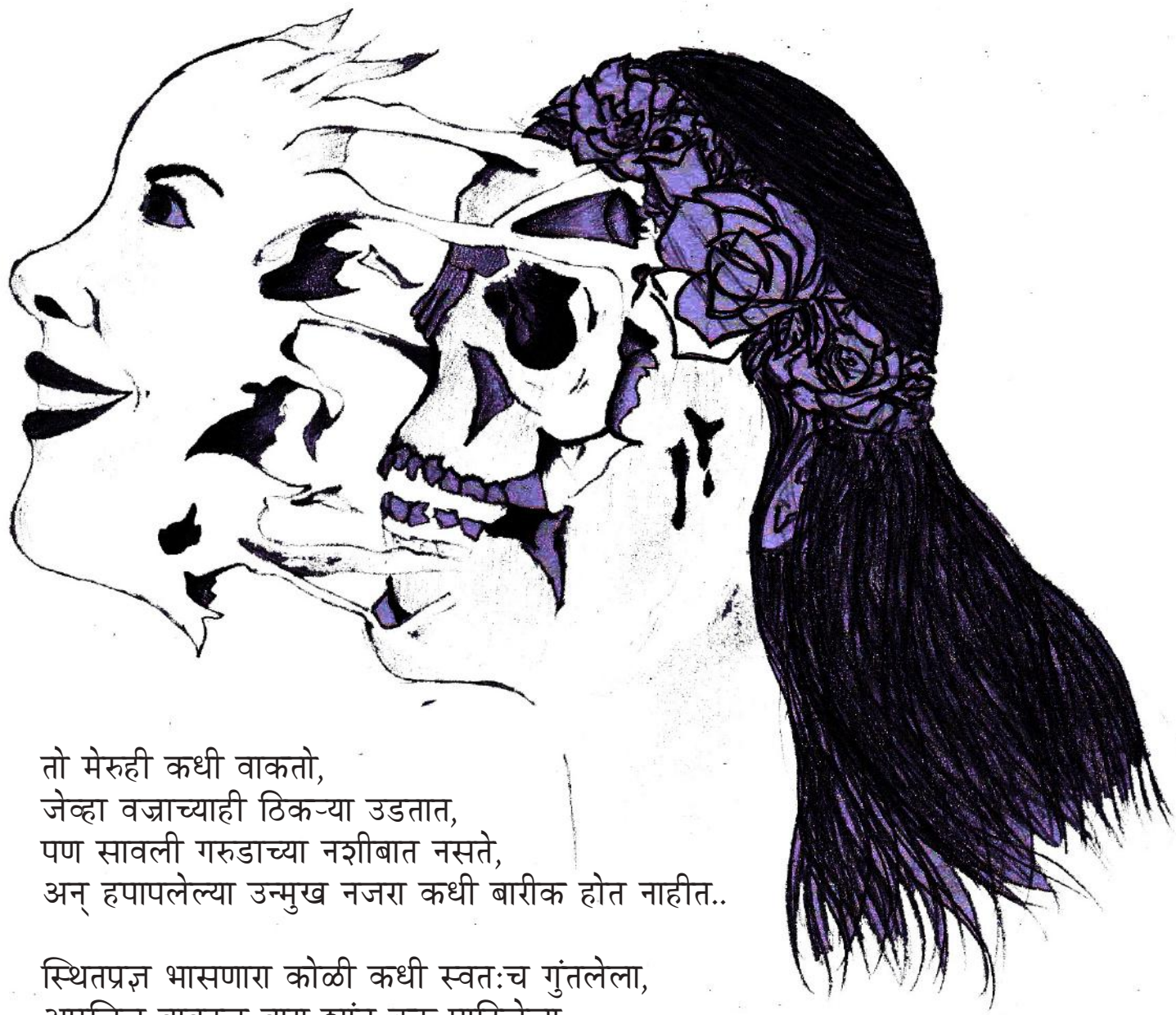
Art: Kezia Ann

काटेरी मुकुट

– अद्वैत साळवी

Kaateri Mukut
- Adwait Salvi

The greatest weakness of the elite is their drive to stay at the top. Those who appear strong might be going through their own share of pain in their obstinacy to stay strong. But the reality can be very different. This poem is for all those who have made hard decisions and stuck with them irrespective of the consequences.



तो मेरुही कधी वाकतो,
जेव्हा वज्राच्याही ठिकऱ्या उडतात,
पण सावली गरुडाच्या नशीबात नसते,
अन् हपापलेल्या उन्मुख नजरा कधी बारीक होत नाहीत..

स्थितप्रज्ञ भासणारा कोळी कधी स्वत:च गुंतलेला,
अपुलिच वावटळ वारा शांत करु पाहिलेला,
धरा उद्वेगते, पण तिला फुटण्याची परवानगी नसते..
अन् काटेरी मुकुट गुलाबाला स्वत:लाच सोडवत नाही.

Art: Faseela EE

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Irreversible Back Reaction of NaCl

- Struggle in Silence, Unheard and Untold

- Shubham Joge

The Little Rann of Kutch (LRK), once a sea, is one of the nature's miracles, spread over 5000 sq km. In summer it is a barren brown desert and in winter it is a breeding ground for some of the largest flocks of flamingos and many other migratory birds. LRK is a wildlife sanctuary, home to the world's last population of the Indian Wild Ass (*ghudkhar*), technically making them encroachers. They live with local people of the Agariya community. They share a close relation with the Agariyas, even sharing their drinking water. LRK is a centre of inland salt production. A visit to one of the saltpans made me wonder how anybody could work in these harsh, inhuman conditions. LRK's landscape was flat, with no bushes or trees in sight for miles and miles.

The Agariya community has been living here for centuries, knowing just one means of living- salt production. Throughout their lives they work tirelessly in the field of the LRK, where salt mining leaves them with a bitter taste. Salt production is their only source of livelihood, a life drenched in sweat, dust, and tears. There is hunger, there is thirst, there is no medicine, no electricity- but there is life in the middle of this deserted land where they are fighting, suffering, and struggling for better days.

Eight months of intense labour and hunger have eaten up their bodies. Poverty is their fate. For each one of us, it is painful to see the way they toil under the sun, performing hard physical labour. These people have been raking salt in LRK's white desert in Gujarat since they were children, digging wells to draw the briny groundwater to the surface and then relying on evaporation to leave behind the white crystals.

An estimated 200,000 people across India work barefoot in such extreme hardship, exposed to a relentless sun and serious occupational hazards. They toil in the white desert using a harvesting technique unchanged over centuries. The salt and the sun inflict immense damage to their health. Exposure to salt causes skin lesions among the workers. Exposure to bright, white, reflected light and dust leads to premature loss of vision. They suffer from malnutrition, anaemia, vitamin deficiencies, aches, pains, poor night vision, and accelerated aging. They are also at higher risk for hypertension, presumably because of the higher salt content in their blood from inhaling salt aerosols. Due to continuous work in saltpans, their feet become septic and absorb the salt. Even after death,

Photo: Shubham Joge

they suffer an ignoble fate. Their hands and feet are difficult to burn during cremation because of the high salt content. Their legs are then collected by their relatives and buried separately in a small grave with salt so that they can decompose naturally. There are a number of young women and girls with goitre (a swelling of the thyroid caused by iodine deficiency) as most people in this area consume non-iodised salt. The people who provide the rest of the country with something as basic as salt do not receive iodised salt themselves. Isn't it an injustice to them? It is like rubbing salt into their wounds.

India is the world's third largest producer of salt after China and the US. We all know the history of the Salt March in April 1930, as part of the Satyagraha movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. Salt became a symbol of our struggle for independence. Today, life remains harsh for salt farmers who continue to struggle for even their basic rights. They produce the most important food ingredient. Despite being the true producers, they are never given importance. Despite working hard in harsh climatic conditions with day temperatures rising to above 45 degrees in summer and the night witnessing temperatures of 5 degree celsius, they earn a meagre ` 80-100 per tonne- one of the poorest communities of India. In spite of all this, they are living happily. The smile on their faces and open hearted conversations with them made me feel fortunate. Meeting new people and understanding their cultures teaches us a lot. It changes the way you look at yourself and the world around you. Salt has played an important role across human life throughout history. No substance other than water has been used with as regularly as salt has been. In our time today, it lies devalued and neglected. We consume salt everyday, never realising the pain that people go through to put it on our table. It is impossible to imagine our daily meals to be complete without salt. Yet, the lives of the people making this salt remains both beyond our concerns and imagination.

I was amazed by their unbelievable ability to remain dignified in such adverse conditions, their ability to continue to dream- dream for a better future despite perpetual threats and the uncertainties of their livelihood. This short story will serve no purpose other than to highlight their lives. We all can only hope for better days for them, that the time will come for them to have a dignified future.

छूना है आसमाँ

– कुमार प्रियदर्शी (रमन)

Chhuna Hai Aasman
- Kumar Priyadarshi (Raman)

A child is torn between the desire to go after his own dreams and meeting his parents' expectations. He wants to set out on his own path but has to go against everyone to do just that as it does not conform to societal norms.

मुलाकातें तो होती थी बड़े अरसे से,
मगर मिलें उनसे हम चंद लम्हें पहले थे।
चेहरे की हँसी दिखती थी पहले,
आँखों के समंदर की गहराई से मिल अब रहे थे।

पहले जो सावन की हरियाली लगती थी,
पहाड़ों के पीछे छुपे सूरज की लाली लगती थी,
करीब से देखा तो पाया वो पतझड़ का सन्नाटा था,
नसीब ने उनको खुशियों से ज़्यादा ग़म बाँटा था।

इस डर से कि बच्चे गलती करेंगे अपने फैसलों में,
या ख़्वाहिश है सबको अपनी औलादों से,
हमारी जिंदगी के इंतज़ाम कोई और तय करे,
अल्फाज़ मेरे हों तो कहानी का अंजाम कोई क्यूँ तय करे।

दिल–ए–करीबों को चोट ना पहुँचे,
इस वजह से सारी शिकायत दिल में छुपाए जाते हैं वो,
और जज़्बात जब उफ़ान चढ़ने लगे,
तो नमकीन पानी में आह मिलाके बहाए जाते हैं वो।

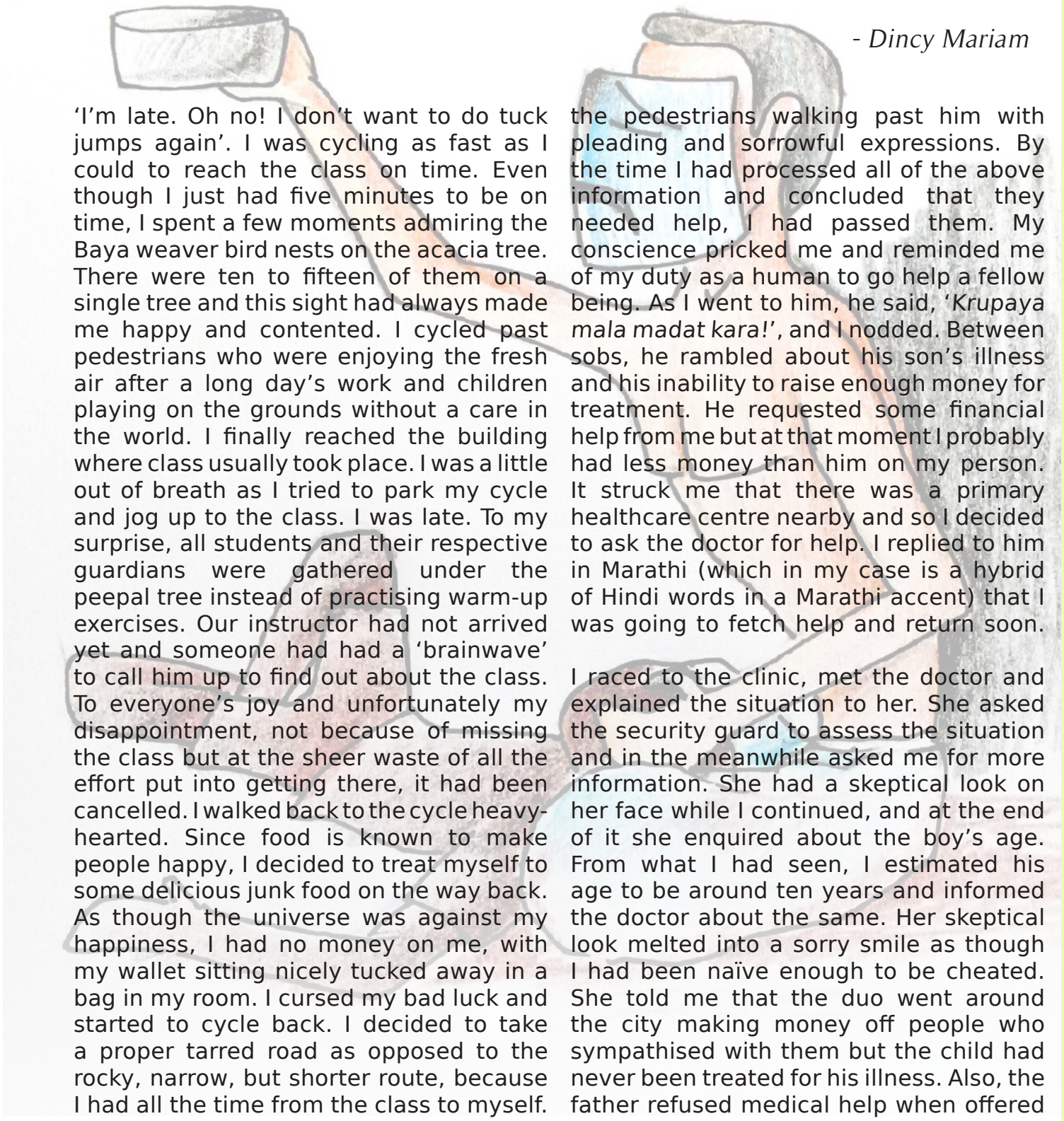
इन सबके बावजूद नहीं कह पाते वो समाज के ठेकेदारों से,
कि बँध के नहीं रह सकते वो इन छोटी सोच के तारों से,
बनानी है अपनी दुनिया मुझे आपकी सोच से आगे,
रूकेंगे नहीं गर लिखनी हो अपनी किस्मत तलवार की धारों पे।

बहुत हुआ, आज वो चुप रहे तो जिंदगी की काली रातें उनका इंतजार करेंगी,
गर अब वो ना बोले तो उनकी आँखें दरकते सपनों के मंजर का दीदार करेंगी,
भगत या गाँधी किसका रास्ता चुनना है, ये तय उनको करना है,
मेरी राय में तो गाँधी की तरह जीने से बेहतर भगत की तरह मरना है।

Art: Divya Gadkari

On the Face of It

- Dincy Mariam



‘I’m late. Oh no! I don’t want to do tuck jumps again’. I was cycling as fast as I could to reach the class on time. Even though I just had five minutes to be on time, I spent a few moments admiring the Baya weaver bird nests on the acacia tree. There were ten to fifteen of them on a single tree and this sight had always made me happy and contented. I cycled past pedestrians who were enjoying the fresh air after a long day’s work and children playing on the grounds without a care in the world. I finally reached the building where class usually took place. I was a little out of breath as I tried to park my cycle and jog up to the class. I was late. To my surprise, all students and their respective guardians were gathered under the peepal tree instead of practising warm-up exercises. Our instructor had not arrived yet and someone had had a ‘brainwave’ to call him up to find out about the class. To everyone’s joy and unfortunately my disappointment, not because of missing the class but at the sheer waste of all the effort put into getting there, it had been cancelled. I walked back to the cycle heavy-hearted. Since food is known to make people happy, I decided to treat myself to some delicious junk food on the way back. As though the universe was against my happiness, I had no money on me, with my wallet sitting nicely tucked away in a bag in my room. I cursed my bad luck and started to cycle back. I decided to take a proper tarred road as opposed to the rocky, narrow, but shorter route, because I had all the time from the class to myself.

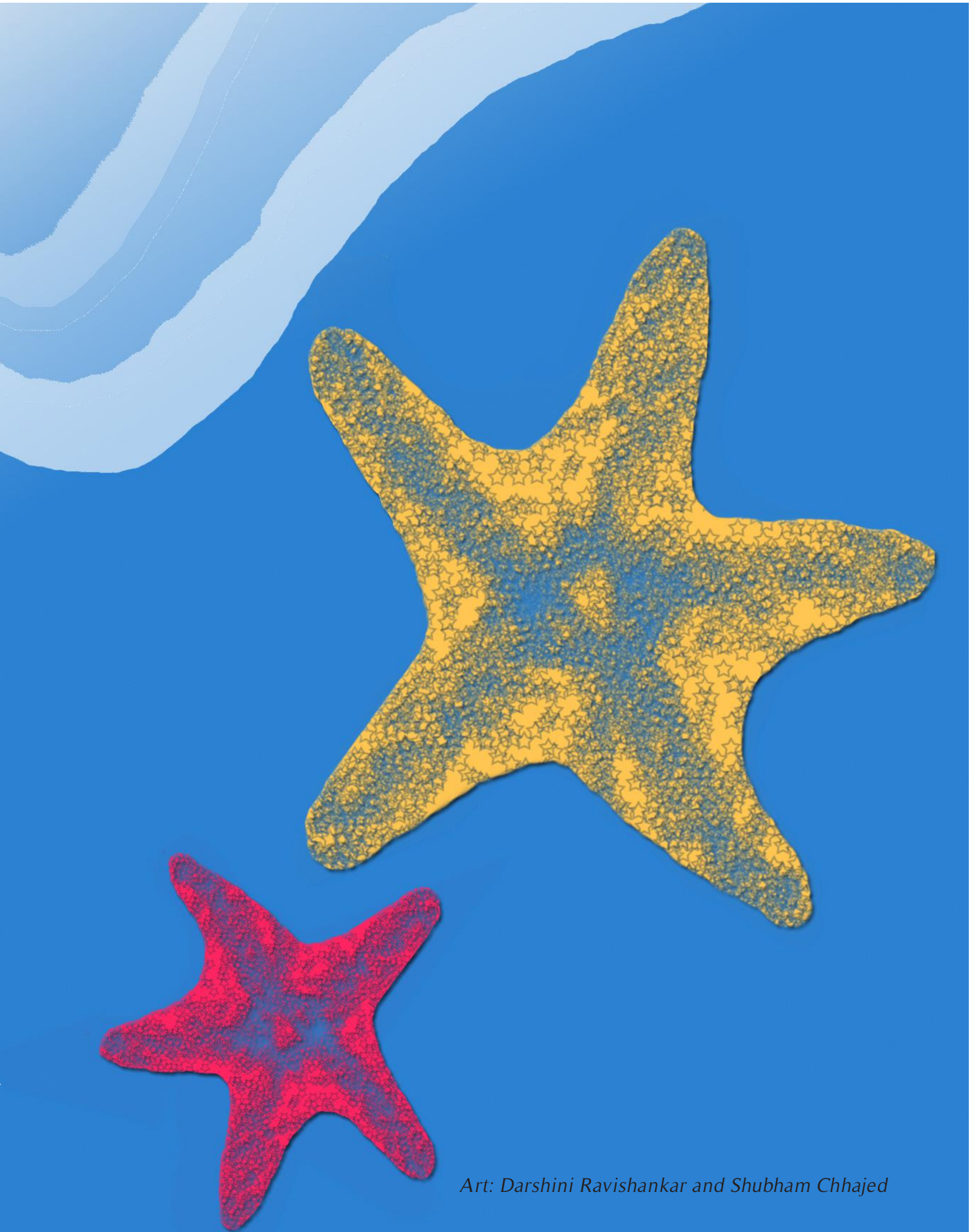
The traffic had not yet picked up, which meant that I was allowed to admire the surroundings and observe people on the road without the fear of being run over. A man and boy on the other side of the road caught my attention. The boy, who looked seriously ill, was resting on the man’s lap while the man was saying something to the pedestrians walking past him with pleading and sorrowful expressions. By the time I had processed all of the above information and concluded that they needed help, I had passed them. My conscience pricked me and reminded me of my duty as a human to go help a fellow being. As I went to him, he said, ‘*Krupaya mala madat kara!*’, and I nodded. Between sobs, he rambled about his son’s illness and his inability to raise enough money for treatment. He requested some financial help from me but at that moment I probably had less money than him on my person. It struck me that there was a primary healthcare centre nearby and so I decided to ask the doctor for help. I replied to him in Marathi (which in my case is a hybrid of Hindi words in a Marathi accent) that I was going to fetch help and return soon.

I raced to the clinic, met the doctor and explained the situation to her. She asked the security guard to assess the situation and in the meanwhile asked me for more information. She had a skeptical look on her face while I continued, and at the end of it she enquired about the boy’s age. From what I had seen, I estimated his age to be around ten years and informed the doctor about the same. Her skeptical look melted into a sorry smile as though I had been naïve enough to be cheated. She told me that the duo went around the city making money off people who sympathised with them but the child had never been treated for his illness. Also, the father refused medical help when offered because it brought him easy money. I was devastated by the fact that a parent could treat his child in such a manner. Mentally cursing his behaviour, I cycled back on a different road, not wanting to see the father with his mask of helplessness. Two weeks later, while travelling in a bus, I spotted two familiar faces- one with the mask and the other a tad too thin.

Art: Swastik Mishra

Salty

Her dress whipped lightly around her ankles as she strolled along the boardwalk. The waves lapped soothingly against the rocks, throwing the fragrance of sea-foam into the air. The peanut-seller called out to would-be customers, starfish crawled up languidly from the water, and seagulls peppered the air with their cries. She paused and inhaled a dozen different scents; there was so much to see by the sea.



Art: Darshini Ravishankar and Shubham Chhajed

The Maze of Life

- Shraddha Lall

Life is a maze
And we are but wanderers.
Walking in a daze,
Thinkers and ponderers.

We often cross paths
And encounters leave a mark.
While some fill us with wrath,
Others bring light to the dark.

We are not lost in this life,
The end is clear.
Death is but a price
For a journey so dear.

Friendship is a treasure
And friends are a gift,
For they give us pleasure,
Our spirits they uplift.

But the greatest of all blessings
Is the feeling of love;
To feel your soul undressing,
An unexpected treasured trove.

Sadness is of essence
In this winding road,
And it is just adherance
That helps us bear the load.

Being hurt is inevitable,
Pain and tears keep us alive.
Life is only stable
If it stings to disturb the hive.

Consequences of actions
Begin shaping our journey;
Every decision triggers a reaction,
Giving peace or agony.

It is only the contrast
That makes this journey bright;
Good and bad will always last,
There's wrong only if there's right.

Love makes it worth living
And enduring it all,
Those little moments so fulfilling
Make hurdles feel small.

We are all together.
Yet, only the lucky find
The right bonds that tether
And make the hearts bind.

The scythe is ultimate,
The truth we all know;
And at the summit,
A fulfilling journey makes us glow.

Art: Shraddha Lall

The Sparrow Still Sings

- Anup Anand Singh

Those fine winter mornings...
Waking up with the neighbourhood sparrow family.
The whole flock on the old *Champa* tree;
Sparrow songs filling those cold, lazy mornings.
Soon another flock, and one more, and another-
The old *Champa* would beam with joy.

'What are the sparrows singing, Papa?'
'Songs for you, son; telling you 'tis time to rise and shine.
Time to rise and shine.'
Yeah, it was time.

But, time...time moved on.

And yesterday after so long,
The old familiar sound was heard again.
A faint little chirp in the dense forest of cemented bricks.
But, somehow it managed to stay on.
'The sparrow still sings.'
It was a moment of joy.
A random chirp for others, maybe;
For me, my old diary,
Those memories old and lost.
Of all those fine winter mornings.
Of all those flocks gathering in my neighbourhood.
Of all those buds blossoming into flowers on the old *Champa*.

And the old *Champa*...yes, it still stands there.
It doesn't flower anymore, though.
Time...yes, time did move on.

The sparrow still sings.
But for how long..?

Does Religion Really Unite?

- Shraddha Lall

Does religion really unite?
Or does all it do is divide?

Problems world over, have only one cause;
Fanatic people, who don’t even pause
To think of what they’re doing, in their blind faith
Creating divisions and a feeling of hate.
Is it even worth it, to live in a world,
Where in the name of god, accusations are hurled?
Where people who work together, won’t together eat,
For one thinks it poison, what for the other is meat!
Where companions become enemies, friends become foes,
All in the name of fanatical vows.
To all those hypocrites- is your soul not haunted,
By thinking if there is a god, is this what he would have wanted?

Art: Lavanya Lokhande

चल दिए है हम...

– अमन कुमार

Chal Diye Hum
- Aman Kumar

The poet is ambitious, hopeful, and has dreams of making it big. He has no destined path, no one to show him the way. He only has his own vigour that he has to achieve his dreams.

इन लम्हों को समेटे दिल में, चल दिए हैं हम ।
जीवन की डगर में इतने मग्न हो गए,
वक़्त–ए–आईने में खुद को निहारना छोड़ दिए हैं हम ।
न मंजिलों का संदेशा, न रास्तों का अंदेशा,
कुछ पाने की चाहत में निकल दिए हैं हम ।
ग़मों की संकरी गलियों से होते हुए,
उदासी के वीरानों को चीरते हुए,
हौसलों के पंखों को बाँध कर
प्रगति के पथ पर चल दिए हैं हम ।
अंगारों पर है चलना,
काँटों को है झेलना,
गुल की खुशबू बिखेरने चल दिए हैं हम ।
बरसात की प्यास,
खुशियों की आस में
सौगातों की झोली भरते चल दिए हैं हम ।
तन्हाइयों की रात गुज़ारते,
ऊर्जा का स्रोत निहारते,
एक नए सवेरे की ओर चल दिए हैं हम ।
दिल में लिए कई अरमाँ
एक नए सफ़र की ओर चल दिए हैं हम ।

Photo: Madhvi Bhosale

Be Thyself

- A Janani

The world tries so hard,
As it always will,
To make you someone you're not,
Against your will.

'Adapt, evolve, survive', they say,
Only the fittest prevail;
Exist they do, but cease to live,
Their true self, those who bail.

Identity to one comes with time,
Though time itself changes constantly.
So how to remain yourself all the
while?
Is it that easy? Of course it's not.

Oh, look at this poem itself!
The rhyme scheme changes, phrase
to phrase!
Then how do I keep me myself,
As life moves from phase to phase?

In life, there are many lessons to
learn,
Knowledge and experience we all
yearn,
But how can it all not have an impact?
No, never will it leave you unscathed.

No doubt, that as the wind blows,
A stern and proud tree snaps,
While the humble grass that bows,
Lives on and escapes all traps.

Be resolute and unyielding,
Is not what I say;
It can never be that way,
For life is all about change.

Hard and tough mud is of no use,
Neither is sand that runs loose.
A potter can only shape and mould,
Soft earth that he can hold.

Am I confusing you? Maybe I am.
Talking this way and that way?
It's like the subtle contrast between
The resembling words- tell and say.

Understand here, as I explain
About your clothes you everyday wear,
The dirt clears away every time you wash,
But the colour unwaveringly remains.

Similarly, we should treat our world,
Experience it all but be ourselves;
As your eyes lull into dreams in the dark,
You should always remember who you are.

Art: Kezia Ann

The Freedom Struggle

- Durga Parkhi

Up above the tree I see a bird sing happily,
The song of freedom it sings merrily
And then off it goes into the blue sky,
Flapping its wings, taking it further high

Flying along the horizon towards the west it heads,
Up the hill it goes and down the mountain range,
Past valleys and along river beds,
To see its fellow mates trapped in a cage

I remember the days when Mother India, mother of us all,
Was trapped in the cage of slavery, just like the birds
The British rule made many states suffer severe downfall,
Then arose the battle, the soldiers marched with their tinkling swords

They fought all day and all night
Using all their strength and might
There were wounds and deaths and cries and weeps
For all those loved ones who went forever to sleep

Blood gushed out from the martyrs' chests,
The birds set free, flew back to their nests
The wind kept still, and whispered in my ear,
'Wake up child, you are free forever!'

Art: Shraddha Lall

मंदिर की घंटी

– अंशुल कपूर

Mandir Ki Ghanti
- Anshul Kapoor

Most of us look up to the Lord Almighty in times of crisis for solutions to our problems or when our heart yearns for something. We are also quick to blame Him for our griefs and sorrows- but is it really God behind all the troubles that we face, or ourselves?

मंदिर की घंटी में कहीं गुम सा जाता हूँ
बच्चों के बहानों में कहीं छुप सा जाता हूँ

कहीं युद्ध का कारण मैं होता हूँ
कहीं सन्धि का विषय बन जाता हूँ

कोई मुझे पत्थर में ढूँढता है
कोई आसमाँ में खोजता है

फिर किसी की हँसी का कारण होता हूँ
कहीं परेशानी का सबब बन जाता हूँ

बताओ मेरी क्या ज़रुरत है इस दुनिया को
सब मेरे बिना भी तो चल रहा है

दु:ख में तुम्हारा अपना होता हूँ
खुशी में कितना पराया बन जाता हूँ

सब कुछ तुम्हारा है फिर भी मुझसे माँगते हो
अगर ना मिले तो मुझसे दूर भागते हो

कहते हो कि मैं हर जगह हूँ
फिर भी क्यूँ खोज का कारण बन जाता हूँ

इतना बुरा भी नहीं कि अपने बच्चों को लड़ने दूँगा
और एक सरहद की आड़ में लाशें बिछने दूँगा

प्यारे–प्यारे से हो तुम किस बात से नाराज़ हो
क्यूँ मैं तुम्हारा हो कर भी तुम्हारा नहीं कहलाता हूँ

Art: Swastik Mishra

ಕಡಲ ತೀರದಲ್ಲೊಂದು ಸಂಜೆ...

ರಜತ್ ಸಾವಂತ್

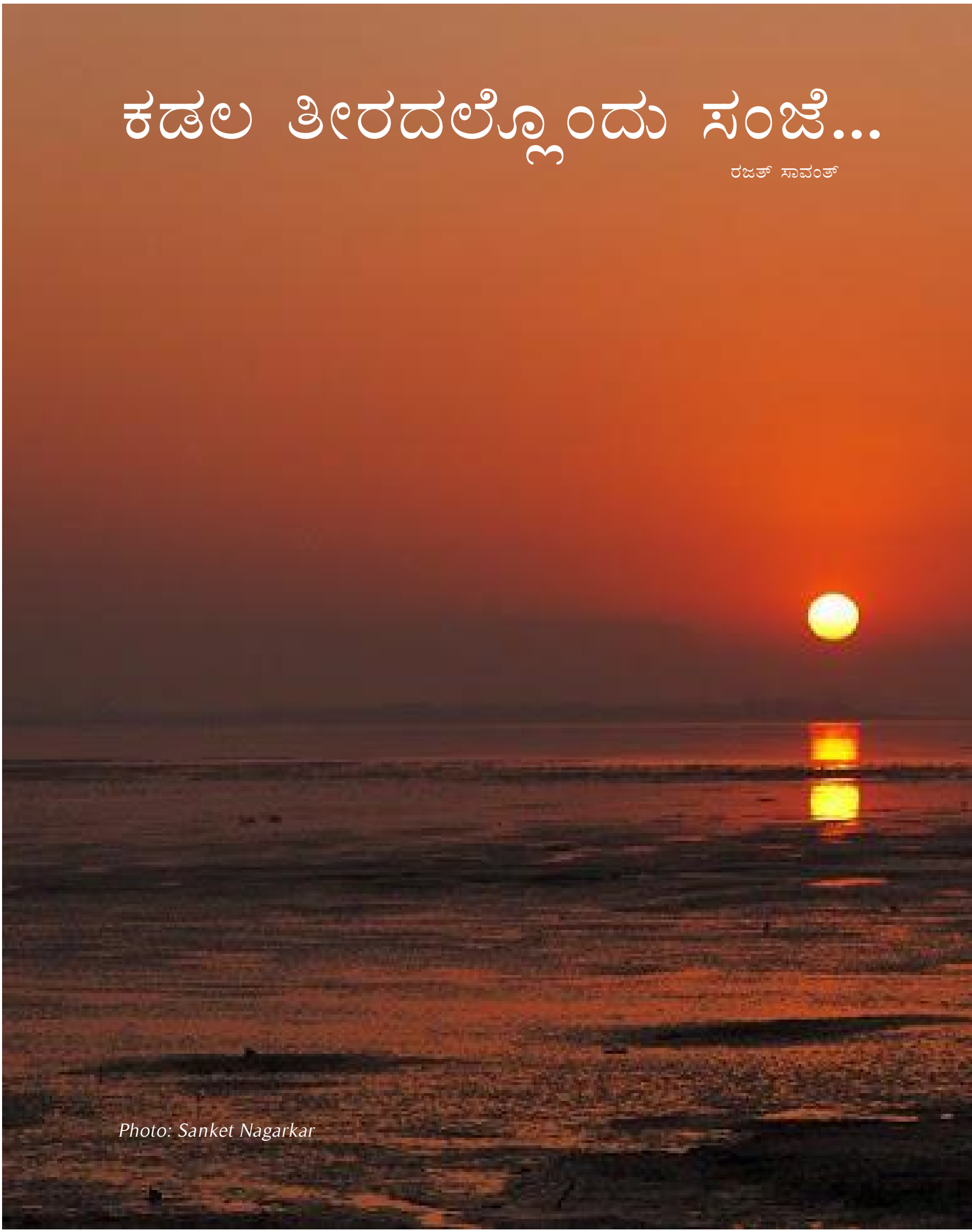


Photo: Sanket Nagarkar

ಯ...

ವಂತ್

Kadala Teeradallondu Sanje
- Rajat Sawant

The poet explains the obvious natural beauty of the sunset at a seashore.

ಕಡಲ ತೀರದಲಿ ಕಳೆದೆ ನಾನೊಂದು ಸುಂದರ ಮುಸ್ಸಂಜೆ
ಕ್ಷಣಮಾತ್ರದಲಿ ಮರೆಯಿತು ನನ್ನ ಮನದ ಚಿಂತೆ.
ಕುಪ್ಪಳಿಸುತಲಿ ಬಂದವು ಮೋಹಕ ಅಲೆಗಳು ನನ್ನ ತಣಿಸಲೆಂದೆ
ತೇಲಿ ಬಂದ ತಂಗಾಳಿ ನನ್ನನೂ ತೇಲಿಸಿತು ಜಗವನು ಮರೆಸುವಂತೆ
ಘಳಿಗೆಘಳಿಗೆಗೂ ಬಂಡೆಗೆ ಅಪ್ಪಳಿಸುವ ಅಲೆಗಳ ನಾದಮಯ ಸಂಗೀತ
ಈ ಸ್ವರಕೆ ತಾನೂ ಸ್ವರ ಸೇರಿಸುವೆನೆಂಬಂತೆ ಝೊಯ್ಯನೆ ಗಾಳಿಯ ಇಂಗಿತ.
ಈ ಮನೋಹರತೆಯಲಿ ತೇಲಿತು ನನ್ನ ಮನ ಪಕ್ಷಿಯ ತರಹ
ಇದು ಸ್ವಪ್ನವೋ ಸತ್ಯವೋ ನಾ ಹೇಳಲಿ ಯಾವ ತರಹ
ದಿಗಂತದಂಚಿನಲಿ ಆಯಿತು ರವಿಯ ಕಡೆಯ ದರ್ಶನ
ನಾಚುವ ಮದುಮಗಳ ಕೆನ್ನೆಯಂತೆ ಕೆಂಪೇರಿತು ಗಗನ
ಇದನ್ನೆ ಕಾದಿರುವಂತೆ ಪ್ರತ್ಯಕ್ಷನಾದನು ಪೂರ್ಣಚಂದಿರ, ಹಾಲು ಬೆಳಕನು ಸೂಸುತ
ಬೆಳದಿಂಗಳ ಕಡಲ ಮಿಲನ ಕಂಡು ನಾನಾದೆ ಮೂಕವಿಸ್ಮಿತ.

शब्द

– सिद्धेश झाडे

Shabda
- Siddhesh Zadey

In the poem, a 'Shabda' (word) asks the poet for 'Arth' (meaning/money). What follows is a debate which culminates with the 'Shabda' convincing the poet that he's not merely a 'merchant' of words, selling them in a 'Kavyasngraha (collection of poems)'. But rather like a dealer of precious stones, he knows the true value (Arth) of 'Shabda'..

आज माझ्या घराचा दरवाजा
ठोठावला 'एका शब्दानं',
आणि म्हणाला,
"मालक !
मला 'अर्थ' द्याल का?"

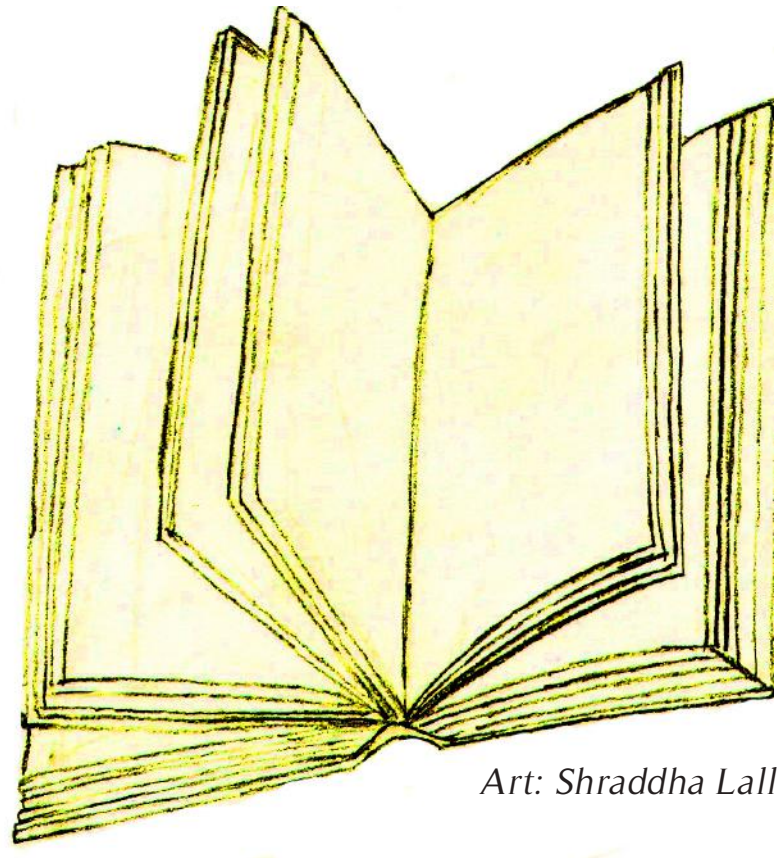
त्याला मी घरात घेतलं,
त्याच्याशी गप्पा रंगल्या.
त्याला विचारलं मी,
"का रे बाबा ! माझ्याकडे का आलास 'अर्थ' मागायला?"
तो उत्तरला,
"मालक, तुम्ही कवी आहात म्हणून."
मी हसलो आणि म्हणालो,
"अरे ! मी फक्त शब्दांचा व्यापारी,
विकतो मी त्यांना संग्रहातल्या पेटीत डांबून."
तो म्हणाला,
"मालक ! तुम्ही गल्लत केलीत.
तुम्ही नाही 'शब्दांचे व्यापारी',
तुम्ही तर 'शब्दांचे जोहरी'.
जोहरी जरी असला व्यापारी,
तरी त्याला विकलेल्या वस्तुची
माहीत असते किंमत,
असते खरी पारख,
आणि कळतो त्याचा वज."

अर्थाची भिक्षा मागणाऱ्या शब्दानं
माझ्यातल्या 'कवी' च्या अस्तित्वाचा 'अर्थ'
मला शिकवला.
जाताना तो शब्द आपलं नाव
'कविता' असं सांगून गेला.

Art: Lavanya Lokhande

ज़िंदगी की किताब

– उर्वशी गुप्ता



Art: Shraddha Lall

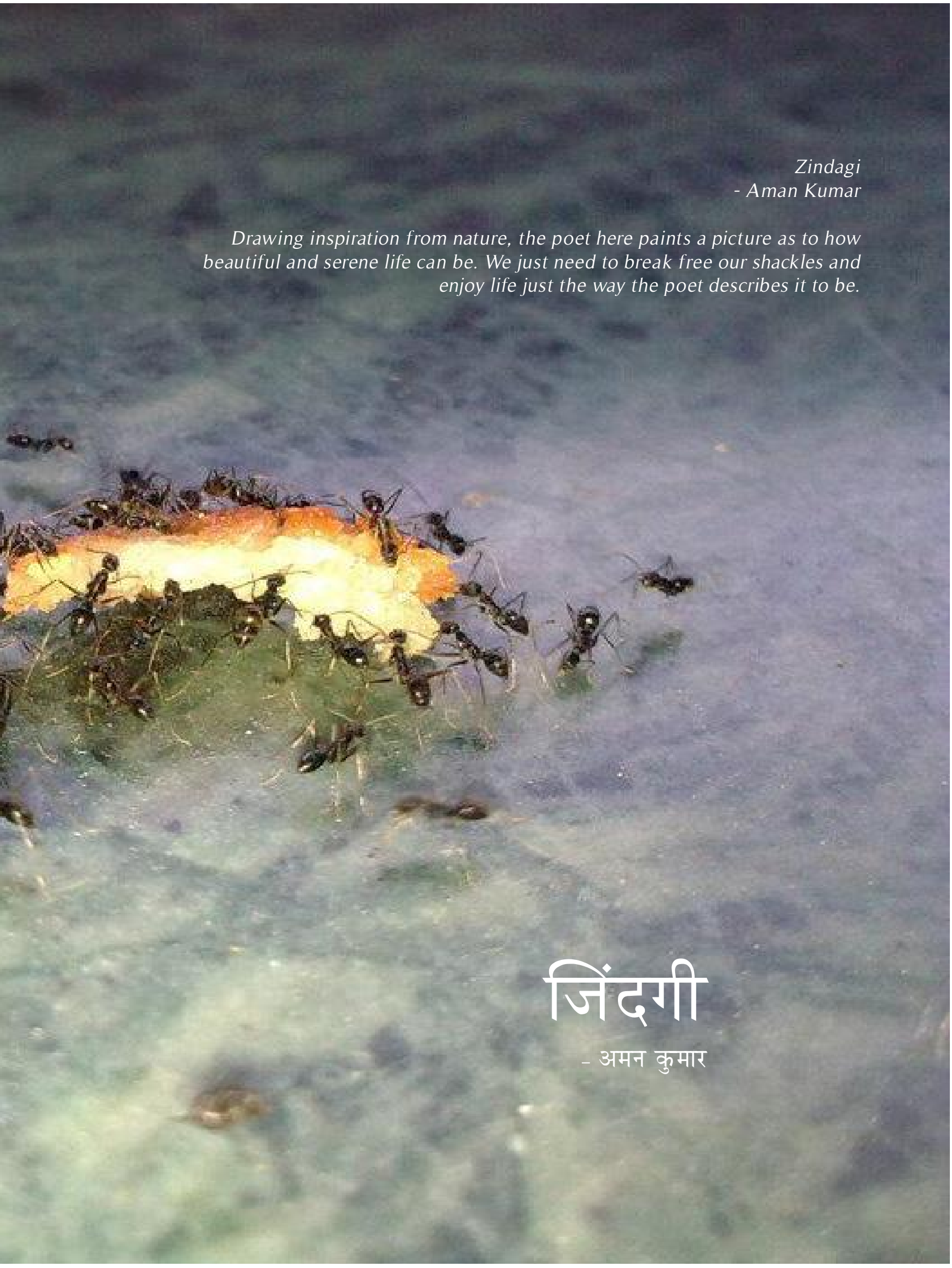
ज़िंदगी की किताब के
किसी हवा के झोंके से
कुछ पन्ने पलट जाते हैं
किरदार बदल जाते हैं
साथी वो बचपन के
अजनबी से लगने लगते हैं
नए–नए दोस्त अब
हमसफ़र बनने लगते हैं
हलचल सी मच जाती है
दुनिया उथल–पुथल हो जाती है
किससे पूछें, कौन बताए
मन में रट लग जाती है
धीरे–धीरे फिर
सब शांत हो जाता है
एक बार फिर
ऐतबार हो जाता है
पराए फिर से अपने बन जाते हैं
बस तभी मेरी किताब के
कुछ और पन्ने पलट जाते हैं

Zindagi Ki Kitab
- Urvashi Gupta

Moving forward in life is never easy, yet it is something we all must do. In this course we all, at some point, have to let go of old friends, meet new people, and accept them in our lives. However in between all of this, reminiscing about old times gives us unparalleled joy.

सितारों को जगमगाते देखो,
तो जैसे रोशन ज़िंदगी ।
कोयल की वाणी से सरगम सुनो,
तो जैसे मधुर ज़िंदगी ।
झूलती बेलों में चिड़ियों की चहचाहट हो,
या खेलते बच्चों की मुस्कुराहट,
तो जैसे हसीन ज़िंदगी ।
फूलों का खिलना,
तो जैसे मुस्कान ज़िंदगी ।
वो बरसात का आना, नदियों का यूँ बहना,
तो चलती का नाम ज़िंदगी ।
आसमान में पक्षियों का उड़ना,
वनों में मोरों का नाचना,
हिरणों को यूँ दौड़ते देखना,
तो जैसे आज़ाद ज़िंदगी ।
वो नानी की कहानी,
परी हो या रानी,
तो अटूट बंधन हो ज़िन्दगी ।
हवाओं का ज़ोर हो, या
नदी का छोर,
तो जैसे सुक़ून ज़िंदगी ।
सूरज की चमक,
तो जैसे ऊर्जा का स्रोत ज़िंदगी ।
माँ की ममता है,
जैसे प्यार ज़िंदगी ।

Photo: Madhvi Bhosale



Zindagi
- Aman Kumar

Drawing inspiration from nature, the poet here paints a picture as to how beautiful and serene life can be. We just need to break free our shackles and enjoy life just the way the poet describes it to be.

जिंदगी

- अमन कुमार

Commonplace Chaos

- *Anonymous*

After an immensely satisfying bath, which I took on the momentous occasion when piping hot water flowed through the taps upon opening the knob labeled 'hot water', I strolled back to my room, alert, happy and ready to take the world on; in other words, in just the right frame of mind to take stock of all the things I had to do. I realised that it was a lot, decided to take a nice nap, and opened the door.

The world within my room had undergone a sea change. A miracle had clearly been at play, smiling and laughing while imagining what my expression would read when I saw it. The floor was neither brown nor dirty, all the dust was gone, and the room positively gleamed. Such alien sights, as you can probably imagine, gave me a start, which was unfortunate given that I had just had a bath (the 'bare' minimum).

The sheen of it all swept me off my feet and instead of attempting to change the way I live my life and sleeping, I dressed quickly and went straight to bed after depositing my clothes on the chair opposite my laptop. My room, you see, is made up of two worlds– my half and my roommate's half. My half, you see, is made of two worlds; the laptop, chair, and table world, where I do all my ground-breaking research (on cute facebook cats); and the bed world, where I do all my sleeping. The clothes unfortunate enough to be in circulation- i.e. those deemed too clean to be washed and too dirty to be put back in the cupboard, make the reverse journey every time I switch from one world to the other. So once I flung these pitiable oscillating clothes onto my chair and proceeded to place my head on the pillow, I dozed off into one of those oh-so-enchanting half-an-hour naps that you take not because you have nothing better to do, but because you have way too many better things to do and do not wish to start any of them.

Upon waking up (someone woke me up of course, and ran away before I could see who, but I know who the prime suspects are without having to even begin collecting evidence), I felt something smooth and cold against my hand. I jerked open my eyes in horror to discover a water bottle next to me - a water bottle I'd never seen before. Then I saw a comb, a sock, an old question paper amongst other things in the queerest assortment of different things I had ever laid my eyes on. All the things from my floor, all those things I had been missing– a bottle of Vicks, my 6-inch ruler, the assignment that I had to borrow from someone, click a picture and read off the screen (resulting in a headache whose only cure was a nap), a notebook I thought I had lost, and a pen, which too, I thought I had lost.

I rejoiced, wondering how I missed all this, whilst actually sleeping with lost treasures on my bed. All this had been under my bed all this time; all it took was a squat and a peep. Then my eyes came back to the water-bottle. That alone, in the assortment, was not mine, and I kicked it away, so it bounced off the wall and rolled under the bed; to stay there till my roommate calls the house-keeping staff without my knowing, and the *bhaiyya* performs a miracle in minutes. I love how routine all the queer, random things in my life are.

Art: Brijesh Meena

ग़ज़ल लिखें

– समीर ठुकराल

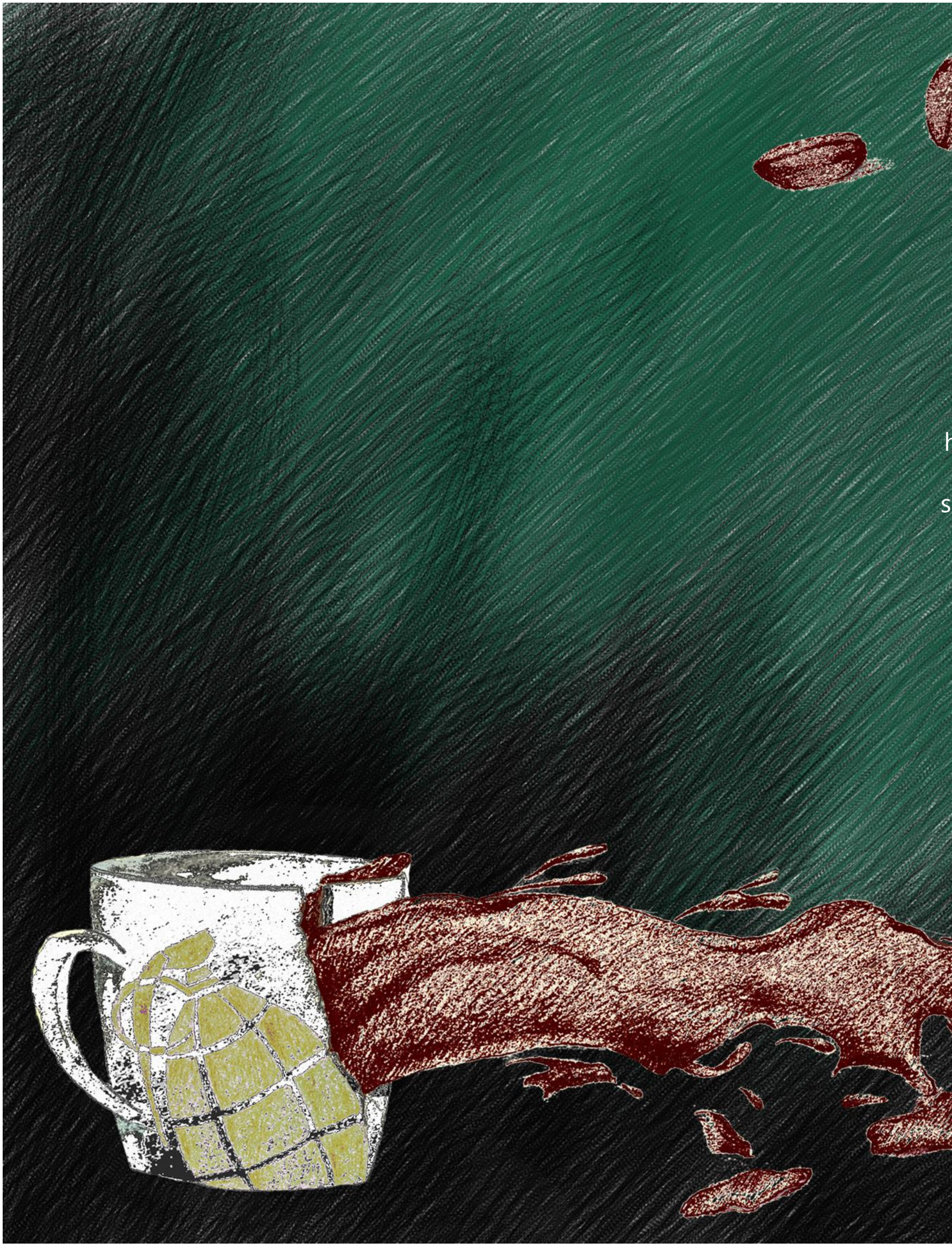
Ghazal Likhein
- Sameer Thukral

One often decides to do something great and starts off with plenty of determination. However, more often than not, procrastination overwhelmes us.

कल फिर सोचा, एक ग़ज़ल लिखें,
कुछ नया लिखें, या फिर नकल लिखें,
कुछ ऐसा जो ग़ज़लों की हसरत बदल दे,
मिसरों और पन्नों में कैद कुछ ऐसे पल लिखें।

लब्ज़ मेरे और नाम तेरा हो जिनमें,
महक तेरी, कलाम तेरा हो जिनमें,
होंठ मेरे और जाम तेरा हो जिनमें,
रूह तक पहुँचता आराम तेरा हो जिनमें.

अल्फ़ाज़ कुछ दुनिया बदल लिखें,
फिर सोचा, एक ग़ज़ल लिखें,
पर.. मसरूफ़ हूँ बहुत,
आज तेरी इबादत में,
खैर आज छोड़ो,
क्यूँ ना कल लिखें!



BITTER

The rain was torrential, she'd had to stay late at work, and she was missing her dinner reservation. Three idiot drivers had cut her off, two trucks were blocking the road, and the coffee in her thermos flask had gotten cold. She was about to turn when a sedan overtook her, forcing her to slow down. The signal turned crimson, glowing eerily through the mist.

Cursing, she brought her fist down. The thermos toppled, spreading its dark contents across the leather seat.

Art: Darshini Ravishankar and Swastik Mishra

एक मुंबईकर जेव्हा पुण्यात येतो तेव्हा...

– प्रथमेश माधव दातार

Ek Mumbaikar Jevha Punyat Yeto Tevha
- Prathamesh Madhav Datar

Since time immemorial, the residents of Mumbai (Mumbaikars) and those of Pune (Punekars) have been in a state of 'word' war with each other. In such a scenario, a hardcore Mumabikar crosses the 'Line of Control' and enters Pune. In this article, he has shared his experiences 'Behind Enemy Lines'.

विशेष सूचना: ह्या लेखाद्वारे मी स्वतःचे अनुभव मांडण्याचा व थोडीशी हास्यनिर्मिती करण्याचा प्रयत्न केला आहे. 'मुंबईकर', 'पुणेकर' किंवा इतर कोणत्याही 'कर'आने त्याचा विपर्यास 'कर'ऊन घेऊ नये. शाब्दिक चुकांचा व्याकरणाशी संबंध नसून त्या 'अन्योक्ती' चा भाग आहेत ह्याची नोंद घ्यावी. तसेच ह्या लेखाच्या 'प्रूफ रीडिंग' मध्ये ऋग्वेद पुंड (पुणेकर) ह्यांनी केलेल्या विशेष मदतीसाठी मी त्यांचे विशेष आभार मानू इच्छितो.

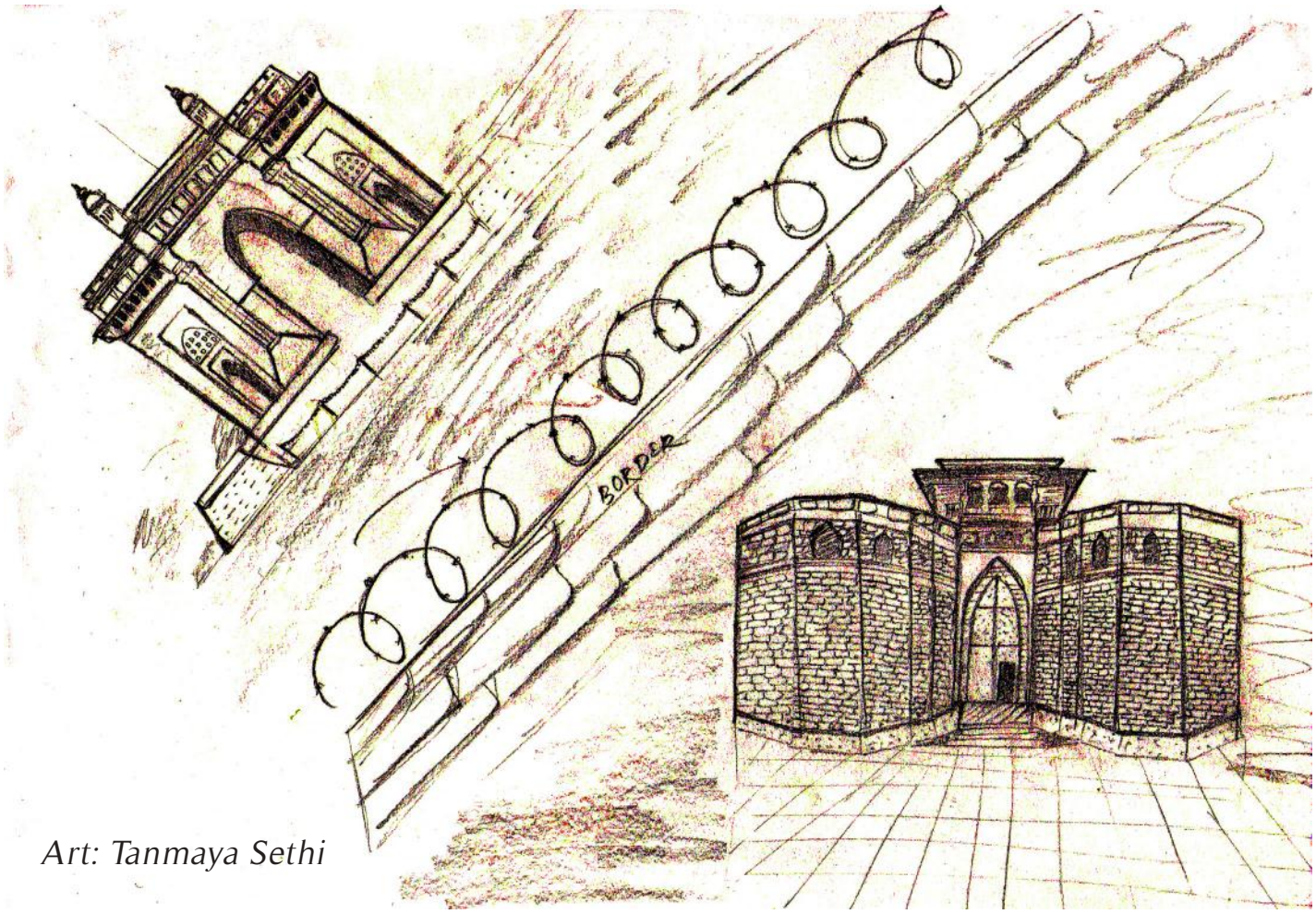
मी एक मुंबईकर. स्वतःला 'हाडाचा मुंबईकर' म्हणवून घेणाऱ्यांपैकी एक. बोलेतो,पैदा होनेके बादसे इधरिच बैठेला, इधरिच सिखेला, इधरिच लिखेला. मुंबई के बाहर पैर नही रखेला. लहानपणापासून पुण्याशी दृढ संबंध येण्याचे 'पुण्य' मला लाभले नाही. सर्वात जवळचं नातं म्हणजे माझ्या आईचा चुलत काका पुण्याचा. त्यामुळे केवळ 'दगडूशेठ हलवाई' व 'चितळे बंधूंच बाकरवडी' हीच काय ती पुण्याची ओळख. लग्न, मुंज इत्यादी समारंभांसाठी पुण्यात येणे व्हायचे, पण ते फार तर फार एक ते दोन दिवस. 'आयसर' मध्ये 'ॲडमीशन' घेतल्या नंतर पुण्यात दीर्घकाळ वास्तव्य करण्याची वेळ प्रथमच आली. १ ऑगस्ट, २०१३ रोजी पुण्यात दाखल झालो व विज्ञानाचा अभ्यास करण्याऐवजी दोन्ही शहरांमधील समता व विषमतेचा बारकाईने अभ्यास करू लागलो.

तसे पु.लं.च्या वर्णनातले पुणे व मी अनुभवत आहे ते पुणे ह्यात फारसा फरक जाणवत नाही. पुणेकराच्या प्रिय सायकलीचे स्थान आता मोटारसायकलीने घेतले आहे, एवढेच.रस्त्यावर आपल्या "वाहन–चालन शैली" साठी मुळातच (कु)प्रसिद्ध असलेल्या पुणेकराच्या हाती मोटारसायकल आली म्हणजे बघायला नको!(?) पण स्वतःचे प्रामाणिक मत मांडायचे झाले, तर जेवढे ऐकले होते, त्यापेक्षा परिस्थिती बरी वाटली. अर्थात ह्याचे दोन निष्कर्ष निघू शकतात. एकतर खरेच असे आहे किंवा 'बरी' ह्या शब्दाची व्याख्या मला बरीच सुधारावी लागेल!

मुंबईकर (जनसामान्य) तशी साधी माणसे. सकाळी सहा वाजता उठायचं, प्लॅटफॉर्म क्र २ वरून ७:३३ ची चर्चगेट फास्ट पकडायची, लोकल मित्रवर्गासोबत (जसे शालेय मित्रवर्ग, ऑफिस मित्रवर्ग असतात, तसेच लोकल ट्रेन मधल्या सवंगड्यांना लोकल मित्रवर्ग असे म्हणतात!) भजन, गाणे, रमी खेळणे, आठ तास कचेरीत राबणे व रात्री घरी परतणे हा मुंबईकराचा 'दीन'क्रम. बॉबस्फोट होतात, अतिरेकी हल्ले होतात, पूर येतात, पण मुंबईकराचे 'रुटीन' काही बदलत नाही."चालू" घड्याळाच्या काट्याप्रमाणे ते "चालूच" असते! रेल्वे प्लॅटफॉर्मच्या लोटांपासून रेल्वेट्रॅकबाजूच्या "लोटा" पर्यंत तो "ॲड्जस्ट" करत असतो. पुणेकराला मात्र आपली यथार्थ "स्पेस" हवी असते. आपल्या पेशवाई थाटात वावरणारा पुणेकर कोणत्याही मुंबईकराला "चाट" पाडेल. 'अन्योक्ती' (sarcasm) ही पुणेकराच्या गावीच नसते", असे म्हणणे हीच सर्वात मोठी अन्योक्ती होईल. वैतागलेला पुणेकर हा चवताळलेल्या शिकाऱ्यासारखा असतो. एक आपल्या बाणाने हल्ला करतो, तर दुसरा बाण्याने.

वडापाव व पावभाजी हे मुंबईकराचे "स्टेपल फूड". त्यासाठी बनणाऱ्या पावांच्या संख्येसमोर मुंबईची लोकसंख्या पाव असेल. पुण्यात मिळणाऱ्या 'स्ट्रीट फूड' चा आढावा घेतला, तर असे लक्षात येईल की, पुण्याच्या रस्त्यांवर जेवढ्या PMPML च्या बसगाड्या दिसत नाहीत, तेवढ्या रस्त्याच्या बाजूला अंडाभुर्जीच्या गाड्या दिसतात [ही थोडीशी अतिशयोक्ती (over-exaggeration) आहे].

मुंबई–पुणेमधले भौगोलिक अंतर केवळ २०० कि.मी. आहे, पण दोन्ही शहरांमधील भाषाशैलींमध्ये बरेच अंतर दिसून



Art: Tanmaya Sethi

येते. मुंबईकराची मराठी "अशुद्ध" मानली जाते. त्याचे कारण म्हणजे मुंबईची भाषा "बंबैय्या" ही मराठी, हिंदी, गुजराथी, इंग्रजी व कोंकणी ह्या पंच–भाषांच्या पचपचीत मिश्रणाने बनली आहे. मुंबईत स्थाईक झालेल्या ह्या पंचभाषिकांनी जेव्हा एकमेकांच्या भाषा बोलण्याचा प्रयत्न केला, तेव्हा निर्माण झालेली भाषा ही "बंबैय्या" होय. ही भाषा तशी सोप्पी आहे. त्यातल्या त्यात कठीण भाग म्हणजे क्रियापदे, पण ती सुद्धा लक्षात ठेवायला एक समीकरण आहे:
हिंदी क्रियापद + मराठी प्रत्यय (suffix) + accent = बंबैय्या क्रियापद

उदा. वही + च् + accent = वोईच्

याशिवाय 'वांदा', 'मगजमारी' सारखे गुजराथी शब्द बंबैय्या मध्ये "इनकॉर्पोरेट" होतात. भाषा बोलण्याची "ईश्टाईल" कोंकणी (अतिजलद) पद्धतीची असते. पुणेकराची मराठी ही संथ, स्पष्ट व शुद्धतेचा "आव"आसून सोडणारी असते, पण ती ऐकायला फार मजा येते. "अवघड असणे", "जमलेलं असणे", "गंडलेलं असणे" अशा विशेषणांनी व तत्सम क्रियाविशेषण अव्ययांनी अलंकृत अशा "अवघड" भाषाशैलीत बोलणे तो सहजरित्या "जमवतो" व "गंडलेल्या" गोष्टींना "आवरा" म्हणत सावरतो. मुंबईत बावळटासारख्या वागणाऱ्या व्यक्तीला "अबे चिरकूट, क्या अलिबाग से आरैला है क्या?" असे चिथवण्याची पद्धत आहे, तसेच पुण्यातही "पौडातून आला आहेस का?" असे म्हणण्याची पद्धत असल्याचे नुकतेच एका विश्वसनीय स्रोताकडून कळले.

"घंटा" हा शब्द दोनही शहरांमध्ये सर्रास वापरला जातो. फरक एवढाच की पुणेकराची घंटा ही मंदिरातल्या घंटेसारखी वाटते, तर मुंबईकराचा "घंटा" हा लोकल ट्रेनच्या भोंग्यासारखा वाटतो. त्या शेवटच्या 'टा' साठी अगदी टाळूच्या आतल्या टोकापर्यंत जीभ वळवून विशेष जोर दिला जातो.

"हवा" ह्या शब्दाचा वाक्यात उपयोग करा, असा प्रश्न विचारल्यास मुंबईकर व पुणेकर वेगवेगळी उत्तरे देतील. मुंबईकराचे वाक्य " चल, हवा आने दे, वंटास मार" असे काहीसे असेल. पुणेकर मात्र हेवा वाटावा असा "हवा" ह्या शब्दाचा "हवा–हवा"सा वापर करतो. "हवा असणे" व "हवा करणे" असे दोन प्रमुख "हवा असणारे" वाक्प्रचार पुण्यात प्रचलित आहेत.

आता मला असे जाणवत आहे, की मी "मुंबईकर" व "पुणेकर" ह्यांची भरपूर "हवा" केली आहे. त्यामुळे मी मूळ मुद्द्याकडे वळतो. तर, मूळ मुद्दा असा आहे, की दीड वर्षांच्या सहवासानंतर पुणे मला भावले व पुणेकर मला आवडला असे म्हणायला हरकत नाही. (माझ्या मुंबईकर मित्रांना हे कळू देऊ नका!) माझे पुणेरी मित्र मला "मुंबईकर आला" असे चिडवतात, तर मुंबईचे मित्र "तू आता पुणेकर झालास" असे टोमणे मारतात. ह्यामुळे माझी गोची होते. स्वतःला कुठचा म्हणवून घेऊ हे कळेनासे झाले आहे. म्हणूनच मी स्वतःसाठी व माझ्यासारख्या इतर लोकांसाठी एक नवे जातीवाचक नाम प्रस्थापित करत आहे. "मुंबापुणेकर"

Free

- Nivedita Rangarajan

Art: Faseela EE

She woke up, startled; but why? Her dream hadn't particularly been anything of note. One of those random, meaningless dreams, that slipped away from her grasp the harder she thought about it. Was there an intruder in the house? She doubted it. All seemed fairly quiet and peaceful in her tiny abode. The small cottage with the peeling white paint wouldn't have appealed to a burglar's fantasies anyway- just another ordinary cottage in an ordinary neighbourhood.

Her thoughts, though, were quite lucid for such an ungodly hour. Four AM, according to the small red clock on her nightstand. She lay peacefully in her warm bed for a while longer, wondering idly about nothing and everything, all at once. And then it hit her- the reason for her clear head, the feeling of contentment bordering on actual joy, and the strange, liberating feeling now washing over her- the pain was gone. The bane of her existence for the past eleven months had finally vanished.

She sat up straight. How had it taken her so long to realize that the excruciating pain in her right leg had finally disappeared? The constant presence, the dark spectre clouding her every thought and directing her every action toward seeking only one goal- alleviating the pain, if only by an infinitesimal amount- had miraculously relinquished its hold on her. Her thoughts were wonderfully clear and the mind-numbing weariness had finally left her bones. The world was suddenly filled with, as they say, endless possibilities.

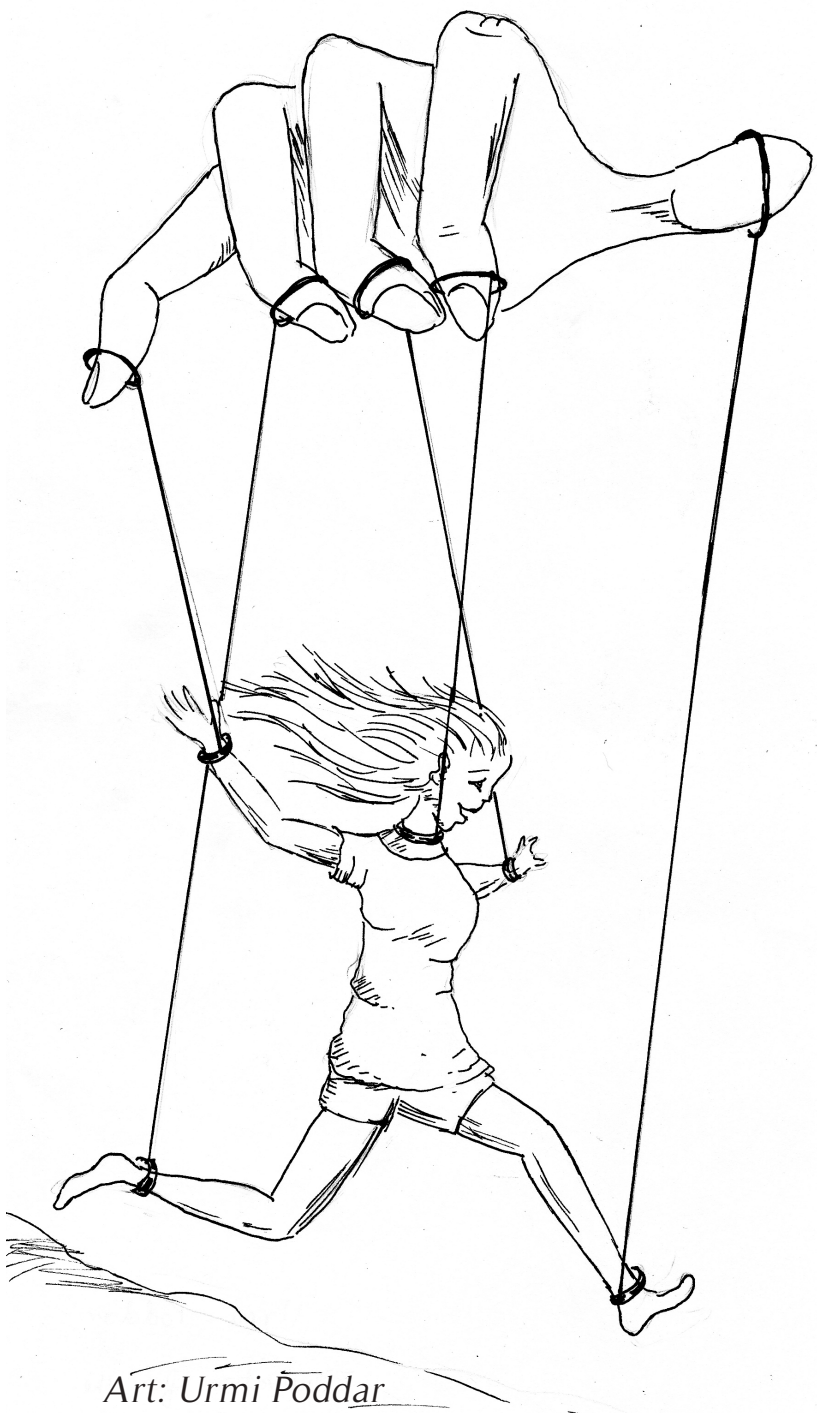
She quickly rolled out of bed and proceeded to carry out her morning ablutions, whilst simultaneously trying to figure out what to do with this newfound freedom. After toying with a couple of ideas, she finally settled on going for a run. She knew she shouldn't be pushing her luck like this- what if the pain came back in a few hours? What if she twisted her leg, or worse? She realized she didn't care- she would relish every moment of this sweet bliss as long as it lasted.

By the time she finished getting dressed and lacing up her dusty running shoes, she could see faint streaks of light painting the sky through her tiny window. She walked over to it and tugged at the handle with all her strength, finally managing to pry it open. A cool breeze blew in and sent a tingle down her spine. She really couldn't have asked for better weather for her first run. She stood there, letting the breeze blow strands of her long hair onto her face and tickle her neck. After a couple of quiet minutes, she roused herself, closed the window (after a fair bit of struggle) climbed

downstairs and stepped out the door.

She started off with a brisk walk down the winding road from her home. The other cottages along the way were quiet. It felt like she had the whole world to herself- even the birds were not making any sounds. All she could hear was the rustle of leaves and the sound of her own footsteps. It amazed her how she could think so easily about these trivial things now that she was unfettered. The spring in her step was unmistakable. She couldn't help but smile- it was the little things that she had missed the most.

As she approached the end of the road, her pace quickened, as did her mounting anticipation. Though the neighbourhood had been quiet, she couldn't wait to leave it and everyone behind, and start her way into the hills. She stepped off the road and onto the path gently winding up the hill, and switched to a slow jog. The breeze carried a woodsy smell, mixed with damp earth and a hint of some wonderful wildflower. The heady, intoxicating mixture made her break into a run. Her legs would probably seize up in a couple of minutes but it would definitely be worth it.



Art: Urmi Poddar

Now that her running had fallen into a rhythm, her thoughts wandered on to other things. Her career spiralling into the abyss was at the forefront- something she had tried her best to not think about over the past few months. Her radical views and notions had always rubbed some people the wrong way, but just as she had finally started getting through to a few of them, the crippling pain in her leg had started up. It had taken all her effort just to get to work and go through the motions of the day- convincing people became a distant dream. As the months went by, even the mundane things took a hit- her work had become subpar, and she didn't know how long they would keep her.

Things would change now, though. She had finally reached the top of the hill, albeit with shaking legs. The sky was much brighter, and the breeze, phenomenal. As she surveyed the landscape, she knew she would fight back. She just had to get across to the others- her ideas were really good, she could feel it. She knew she could effect change, maybe a revolution even. She just needed to make people see sense.

And all of a sudden, she knew how. She was rooted to the spot, electrified. She had finally hit upon the perfect way to

Art: Faseela EE

convince everyone. A tremor of excitement ran through her. It would require immense effort, but as long as her current physical state persisted, she was sure she could do it. The more she thought about it, the surer she became. Her heart quickened and adrenaline coursed through her veins. She could have just burst with happiness.

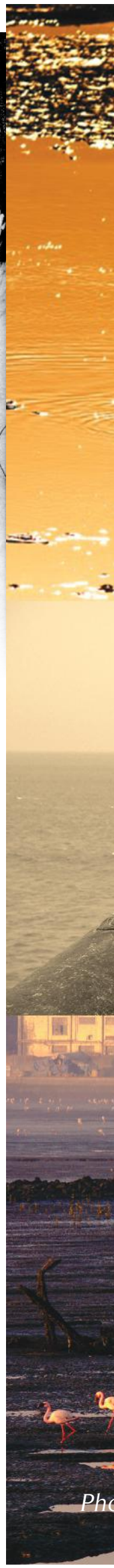
Elated and empowered, she started off down the hill as fast as she could run- faster than she had ever run in her entire life. She let loose a cry of pure joy. She was light. She was free.

*****

The man watching her on the screen inhaled sharply. His subject was suddenly going to escape his control. Once before when she had proven dangerous to the experiment, they had decided to take her out of the picture and give her the debilitating leg pain. They could not tamper with her mind directly, but this, they could change. They had watched her, as her thoughts became increasingly murkier with the pain. She had the capacity to induce a radical shift in the experiment, and they were having none of it. He had been in charge of making sure her pain did not drive her insane, or become inhumane, but he was instructed to ensure that she never forgot the pain either.

Over the past eleven months, however, the man had slowly grown fond of her. He felt that some of her daily struggles were his own and decided to show her some mercy and help clear her mind for a bit- a huge mistake. In just a few hours, her thoughts had become course-altering. If they ever found out, it would be the end of him. He could not grow weak like this again. The next time she woke up, the pain would be back in full force. It would bring her to her knees. And it would be worse this time- he would be crushing her hopes too.

She was not free. Neither was he.



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Photos: Sanket Nagarkar, Madhvi Bhosale and Sharvari Tamhankar

Spicy

The fighters sized each other up;
one clad in red, the other in yellow.
Red threw the first punch, sending
yellow veering back. Yellow swept
Red's legs out from under her
as she fell. The crowd yelled and
frothed and tumbled over each
other, cheering their favourite
brawler on.

Chokeholds, half-nelsons,
roundhouse kicks, and right hooks-
the bruises appeared one by one,
but Red and Yellow only grinned.
They hadn't shown the crowd
anything yet.

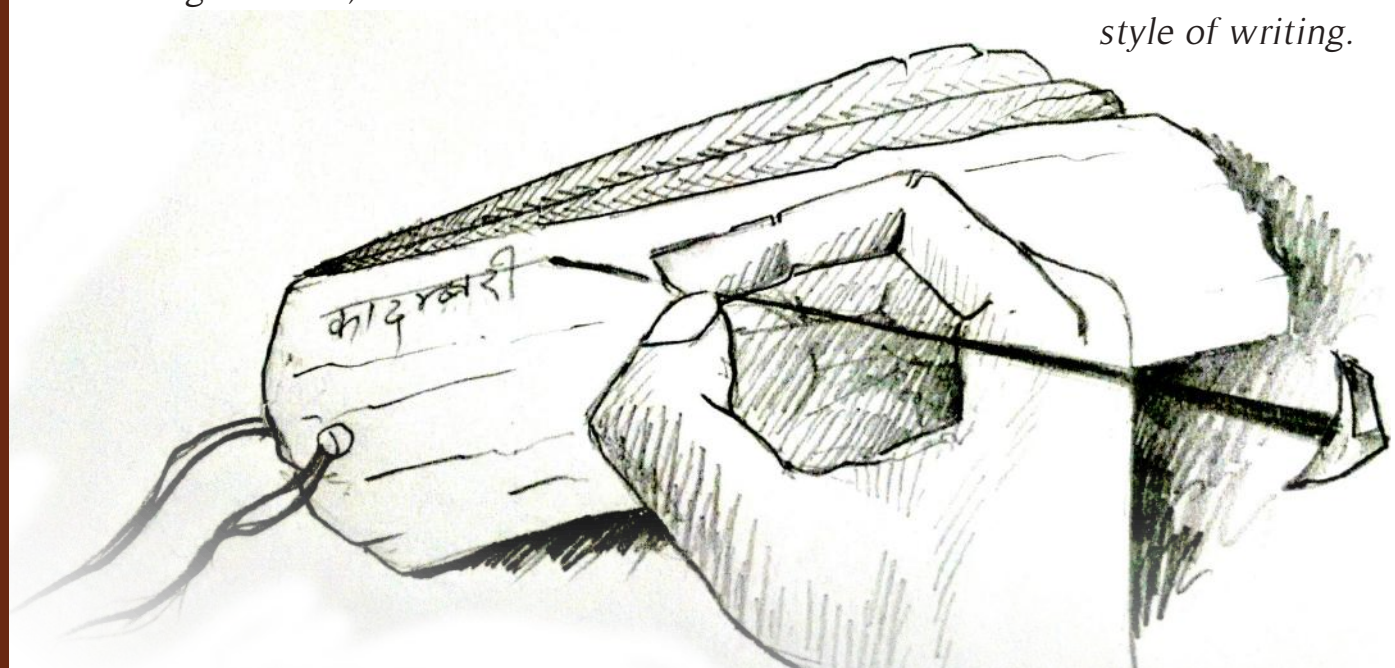
Art: Darshini Ravishankar and Lavanya Lokhande

बाणः

–मुमुक्षु

Baana
- Mumukshu

Baanabhatta, who lived in the 7th century, was probably the first novelist in Samskrit. Under the patronage of King Harshavardhana he wrote two great novels and several poems of great repute. This is a brief biographical sketch of the great man, the ordeals he had to face and a discussion of his 'Vaidarbha' style of writing.



Art: Swastik Mishra

यत् रमणीयं तत् काव्यमुच्यते। संस्कृतभाषायां तु विपुलकाव्यसंग्रहः। परन्तु आसीत् गद्यकाव्यरचयितयोः दुर्भिक्षा। प्रायः सन्निवेशमिदं सरस्वत्या असहनीयोऽभवत्। तथैव बाणावतारोऽभवत्।

बाणकविः वात्स्यायनमहर्षिवंशसञ्जातः,चित्रभानु–राजादेव्याः सुपुत्रः इति तस्यैव गद्यात् ज्ञायते। शोणनदीतीरे प्रीतिकूट' इति ग्रामेऽभवत् अस्य कविपुङ्गवस्य जननम्। बाल्ये दिवं गते जनन्यौ जनक एव जनन्यपि भूत्वा पर्यपोषत् तम्। क्रूरा विधिः किल? चतुर्दशीयवर्षे तस्य जनकोऽपि दिवं गतः। बाणः अनाथोऽपि स्वस्य भूरिपरिश्रमत्त्वात् विद्यानाथोऽभवत्। अनेकैः पण्डितैः सह नानादेशान् भ्रामं स्थाणीश्वराधिपहर्षवर्धनमहाराजस्य आस्थाने आगतवान्। तस्य पाण्डित्यं ज्ञात्वा श्रीहर्षः तं आस्थानकविपदवीं प्रयासत्। अत्रैव बाणः 'भट्ट' इति पदविमपिसमलंकरोत्।

श्रीहर्षसार्वभौमस्य कालः क्रि.श ६०६–६४८ इति प्रसिद्धः। अतः बाणस्यापि कालः सप्तमशतमानस्यादिभागमिति निर्णेतुं शक्यते। हर्षस्याश्रये महाकविबाणभट्टः हर्षचरितनामकं ऐतिहासिकं गद्यकाव्यं तथा 'कादंबरी' नाम गद्यकाव्यान् रचितवान्। कादम्बर्यां स्वस्यैव करुणकथां शुकोऽदन्तरूपेण विवर्णितवान्। अनेन गद्यकाव्येन बाणभट्टः अजरामरः जातः, गद्यसाम्राज्यसार्वभौम इति प्रशस्तिम् प्राप्तवान् च। 'कादम्बरी रसज्ञानां तु अहारोऽपि न रोऽचते' इति तस्य वैशिष्ट्यम् जेगीयते। बाणस्तु कादम्बरीग्रन्थस्य पूर्वभागं लिखित्वा पञ्चत्वम् गतवान्। तस्य पुत्रः भूषणभट्टः ग्रंथस्याऽस्य उत्तरभागं रचितवान्।

धन्याः किल भरतभूमिसञ्जाताः वयम् यत्र बाणसदृशमहाकवीनां जननमभवत्।

Art: Urmi Poddar

नग़मा

– दीपक खुराना

Nagma
- Deepak Khurana

This poem speaks of the journey of a woman and the different emotions she goes through during her lifetime

देखो रे ! काले आसमाँ में सुनहरी चिड़िया उड़ी जा रही है
साये से खुद को दूर पा कर, दिमाग़ पे ज़ोर डाल रही है
कौन हूँ मैं? क्या हूँ मैं?

सफ़ेद चूनर हूँ, हर रंग में ढल जाती हूँ
शायद धृति हूँ मैं, फ़ितरत है ये मेरी
कलमा हूँ, सादे पन्नों पे परिभाषा उकेरती हूँ
शायद दिव्या हूँ मैं, अनकही कहानी है मेरी
अनोखा स्पर्श हूँ, परदा गिरते ही दिल में उतर जाती हूँ
शायद महक हूँ मैं, वजूद ही ताक़त है मेरी
नादान हूँ, रंगीन बादलों में ख़्वाबों के पर लगाए घूमती हूँ
शायद अदिति हूँ, सरहदे नहीं हैं कोई मेरी
चारू हूँ, दिलों में हूर ढूँढती हूँ
शायद अखिला हूँ मैं, कोई हिजाब खूबसूरती नहीं मेरी
यलगार हूँ, वक्त की करवट पहचानती हूँ
शायद शिवानी हूँ मैं, तप के निखरना आदत है मेरी
सितारा हूँ, अंबर से रोशनी चुनती हूँ
शायद स्वाति हूँ मैं, चमकना नियति है मेरी
बाँसुरी हूँ, हर साँस में सुर टटोलती हूँ
शायद नग़मा हूँ मैं, उम्र अनंत है मेरी
तमन्ना बस दुआ है मेरी
बुनियाद बस हवा है मेरी
अरे! ये चार गुंबद क्या बाँधेंगे मुझे
औरत हूँ मैं, हर शुरुआत है मेरी ॥

ಆಗಂತುಕ

– ಆದರ್ಶ ಭಾಸ್ಕರ ವಸಿಷ್ಠ

Aagantuka
- Adarsh Bhaskara Vasista

'Uchchangi' is a remote village in Karnataka known for its scenic beauty and perennial rains. In a village where everyone knows everyone there appears a stranger who wants to meet the village priest. There is something eerie about him and the mysterious suitcase he is carrying.

"ಥೂ... ಈ ದರಿದ್ರ ಮಳಿ ಎಂತಕ್ ಬರ್ತದೋ... " ಎಂದು ಗೊಣಗುಡುತ್ತಾ ಸೋಮಯ್ಯ ರಾಜೇಶನ ಹೋಟೆಲಿನ ಒಳಗೆ ಬಂದವನೇ ಛತ್ರಿ ಮಡಿಸುತ್ತಾ ಮಳೆಗೆ ಹಿಡಿ ಶಾಪ ಹಾಕಿದ. 'ಹೊರಗೆ ಧೋ' ಎಂದು ಮಳೆ ಸುರಿಯುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಮಲೆನಾಡಿನ ಪ್ರಚಂಡ ಮಳೆಯ ಆರ್ಭಟಕ್ಕೆ ಸೋಮಯ್ಯನ ಛತ್ರಿ ಕ್ಷುದ್ರ ಕೀಟದಂತೆ ಕಂಡಿರಬೇಕು. ಆಚೆ ಈಚೆ ಎಲ್ಲ ಕಡೆಯಿಂದ ರಭಸವಾಗಿ ಬೀಸಿದ ಎರಚಲಿಂದ ಛತ್ರಿ ಹಿಡಿದೂ ಅವನಿಗೆ ಕೊಂಚವೂ ಉಪಯೋಗವಾದಂತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಬಂದವನೇ ಹೆಗಲಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ಒದ್ದೆ ಟವಲಿನಿಂದ ತಲೆ ಒರೆಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ನಿರರ್ಥಕ ಸಾಹಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ. ಸುತ್ತಲೂ ಗವ್ವನೆ ಕತ್ತಲು ಕವಿದಿತ್ತು. ಮಳೆಗಾಲ ಅಂದರೆ ಹೀಗೆಯೇ, ಕಾಡಿನ ಮಧ್ಯೆ ಇಣುಕಿ ಬರುವ ಪವರ್ ಲೈನಿನ ಮೇಲೆ ಮರದ ರೆಂಬೆಯೋ, ಅಥವಾ ಇನ್ನೇನೋ ಬಿದ್ದು ತುಂಡಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಅದನ್ನು ಕಂಡುಹಿಡಿಯಲು ಹೋಗುವ ಲೈನ್ಮನ್ ಸುಲ್ತಾನ, "ಕರೆಂಟು ಯಾವಾಗ ಬರುತ್ತೋ ??" ಎಂದು ಕೇಳಿದ ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ, ಶರ್ಲಾಕ್ ಹೋಮ್ಸ್ ರೇಂಜಿನಲ್ಲಿ, "ಎಲ್ಲೋ ಲೈನ್ ತುಂಡಾಗಿದೆ ಅನ್ಸತ್ತೆ, ನಾನು ಹೋಗಿ ಹುಡುಕಿ ಇವತ್ ರಾತ್ರಿ ಒಳಗೆ ಛಾರ್ಜ್ ಮಾಡ್ಸಿಬ್ಡ್ತೀನಿ ಅಣ್ಣ... " ಎಂದು ಕರೆಂಟು ಹೋದ ನಾಲ್ಕು ದಿವಸದಿಂದಲೂ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಲೇ ಇರುವುದು ನಾವು ಕಾಣುವ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಸಂಗತಿ. ಸೂರಂಚಿನಿಂದ ಬೀಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ನೀರನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಲು ರಾಜೇಶ ಎರಡೂ ಕೈಲಿ ಬಕೆಟ್ ಹಿಡಿದು, ತಲೆಗೊಂದು ರುಮಾಲು ಬಿಗಿದು, ಪಂಚೆ ಮೇಲೆ ಎತ್ತಿ ಕಟ್ಟಿ, ಮಳೆಯ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ಯುದ್ಧ ಮಾಡಲು ಸನ್ನದ್ಧನಾಗಿ ಬರುವ ಯೋಧನಂತೆ ಬಂದವನೇ , " ಏನ್ ಸೋಮಣ್ಣ... ಇಲ್ಲೇ ಇದ್ದೀಯ, ಕೂಡ್ರಸ್ತೆ ಜೀಪ್ ಹೋಯ್ತಲ್ಲ" ಎಂದು ಮಳೆಯನ್ನು ಬೈಯುತ್ತಾ ಛಳಿಯಿಂದ ನಡುಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಸೋಮಣ್ಣನನ್ನು ಕೇಳಿದ. "ಹೂ ಕಣ್ ರಾಜೇಶ, ಅಯ್ಯೋ ಅದು ಮೂಲೆ ಮನೆ ಶೇಖರನ್ ಹತ್ರ ಮಾತಾಡ್ತಾ ಕುಂತ್ ಬಿಟ್ಟೆ, ಟೇಮು ಓಗಿದ್ದೆ ಗೊತಾಗ್ಲಿಲ್ ನೋಡು.. ಗುಳ್ಳೆ ನರಿ ಬಸ್ಸಲ್ ಹೊದ್ರಾತ್ ಬುಡು.. ಅದಿರ್ಲಿ, ಒಂದು ಒಳ್ಳೆ ಕಾಪಿ ಕೊಡು" ಎಂದು ತಾನು ಇನ್ನೂ ಇಲ್ಲೇ ಇರುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಸಮಜಾಯಿಷಿ ಕೊಟ್ಟ. "ಸುಬ್ಬೂ! ಸೋಮಣ್ಣಗೆ ಒಂದು ಬಿಸಿ ಬಿಸಿ ಕಾಪಿ ಕೊಡು" ಎಂದು ಕೂಗಿದ ರಾಜೇಶನ ಧ್ವನಿಗೆ ""ಹಾ ...ಬಂದೆ" ಎನ್ನುವ ಸಣ್ಣ ಪ್ರತಿಧ್ವನಿ ಒಳಗಿನಿಂದ ಬಂತು.

ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ರಾಜೇಶನ ಹೋಟೆಲಿಗೆ ಬಂದಾಗ ಅವನಿಗೆ ಆರೇಳು ತಿಂಗಳಿರಬೇಕು. ಯಾರೋ ರಾಮೋತ್ಸವದ ಟೈಮ್ ನೋಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಬೇಡದ ಕೂಸನ್ನು ಹೋಟೆಲಿನಲ್ಲೇ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಹೋಗಿದ್ದರು. ರಾಜೇಶ ಎಷ್ಟೇ ಹುಡುಕಿದರೂ ಅವರ ಪತ್ತೆ ಆಗಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಆದ್ದರಿಂದ ಹೋಟೆಲಿನ ಮಾಣಿಯಾಗಿ ಮಾರ್ಪಾಡಾದ ಸುಬ್ಬು, ರಾಜೇಶನ ಬಲಗೈ ಅಂದರೂ ತಪ್ಪೇನಿಲ್ಲ. ಬಿಸಿ ಬಿಸಿ ಕಾಫಿ ಹಿಡಿದು ಹತ್ತು ಹನ್ನೊಂದರ ಹರೆಯದ ಹುಡುಗ ಬಂದು ಸೋಮಣ್ಣನ ಮುಂದೆ ಕಾಫಿ ತುಂಬಿದ ಲೋಟ ಇಟ್ಟ. ಹೋಟೆಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಇನ್ನಾ್ಯರೂ ಇರಲಿಲ್ಲ.ಇನ್ನೇನು ಮುಚ್ಚುವ ಹೊತ್ತಾಗಿತ್ತು. ರಾಜೇಶ ಒಳಗೆ ಬಂದವನೇ ಸೋಮಣ್ಣನ ಮುಂದೆ ಕುರ್ಚಿ ಎಳೆದುಕೊಂಡು ಕುಳಿತ. ಆ ವೇಳೆಗೆ ಮಳೆಯೂ ತನ್ನ ಆರ್ಭಟ ನಿಲ್ಲಿಸಿತ್ತು. ತುಂತುರಾಗಿ ಹೊರಗಿನ ವಾತಾವರಣದ ತೇವ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ಹೊರಗೆ ಬಂದು, ಸೂರಿಂದ ತೊಟ್ಟಿಕ್ಕಿ ಬಳುಕುತ್ತಾ ಬಾಗುತ್ತಾ ಧರೆಗೆ ಇಳಿಯುವ ನೀರಿನ ಹನಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕೇರಂ ಆಡಬಹುದೋ ಎಂದು ಕೈ ಬೆರಳಿನಿಂದ ಹೊಡೆಯುತ್ತಲೇ ಇದ್ದ. ಇವನು ಇತ್ತ ಗಮನ ಕೇಂದ್ರೀಕರಿಸಿ ಹನಿಯ ನೋಡಹೋದಂತೆಲ್ಲಾ, "ಏ... ಏಲಕ್ಕಿ ಎಷ್ಟಾದರೂ ನಮ್ ಕೈಗೆ ಹತ್ತಲ್ಲ ಬುಡು... ", " ನೀನ್ಯಾಕ್ ಅವನ್ ಹತ್ರ ಹೋದೋ..." ಎಂದು ಲೋಕಲ್ ರಾಜಕೀಯ ಮಾತಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಸೋಮಯ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ರಾಜೇಶನ ಧ್ವನಿ ಸುಬ್ಬೂಗೆ ಬರಬರುತ್ತಾ ಕ್ಷೀಣವಾಗುತ್ತಾ ಹೋಯಿತು. ಕಣ್ಣಿಗೆ ರಾಡಿ ಎರಚಿದಂತೆ ಬಂದ ಬೆಳಕಿನ ಕಿರಣದ ಜೊತೆ ಪೊಂ ಪೊಂ ಸದ್ದು ಮಾಡಿ ಗುಳ್ಳೆ ನರಿ ಬಸ್ಸು ರಾಜೇಶನ ಹೋಟೆಲಿನ ಮುಂದೆ ಬಂದು ನಿಂತಿತು.

ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಏಕೆ ಗುಳ್ಳೆನರಿ ಬಸ್ಸು ಎಂದು ಕರೆಯುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಸುಬ್ಬೂಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ರಾತ್ರೋ ರಾತ್ರಿ ಗುಳ್ಳೆ ನರಿ ಹಾಗೆ ಕೆಲವೊಮ್ಮೆ ಬರುವ, ಹಲವು ಬರಿ ಕೈ ಕೊಡುವುದಕ್ಕೋ ಏನೋ ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ಈ ಹೆಸರು ಇಟ್ಟಿದಾರೆ ಎಂದುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದ. ಒಂದು ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅವನ ಊಹೆಯೂ ನಿಜವೇ ಆಗಿತ್ತು. ಕಿಟಕಿ ಬಾಗಿಲಿಲ್ಲದ ಆ ಬಸ್ಸು ಯಾವಾಗ ಬೇಕಿದ್ದರೂ, ಎಲ್ಲಿ ಬೇಕಿದ್ದರೂ " ನಾನಿನ್ನು ಮುಂದೆ ಹೋಗಲಾರೆ... " ಎಂದು ಕುಳಿತುಕೊಂಡು ಬಿಡುತಿತ್ತು. ಅಷ್ಟೆಲ್ಲಾ ಅವಾಂತರ ಮಾಡಿದರೂ ರಾತ್ರಿ ಸಂಚಾರ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯೇ ಇಲ್ಲದೆ ದ್ವೀಪವಾಗುವ ಉಚ್ಚಂಗಿಯಿಂದ ಕೂಡುರಸ್ತೆಗೆ ಹೊರಡುವ ಎಲ್ಲ ಪ್ರಯಾಣಿಕರಿಗೂ ಜೀವನಾಡಿ ಆಗಿದ್ದಿತು.

ಬಸ್ಸಿನ ಕಂಡೆಕ್ಟರ್ ವೆಂಕು ರಾಜೇಶನ ಸ್ನೇಹಿತ, ಇಳಿದು ಬಂದವನೇ ರಾಜೇಶನ ಹೋಟೆಲಿನೊಳಗೆ, "ಬೇಗ ಕಾಫಿ ಕೊಡೊ ... " ಎಂದು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಲೇ ನುಗ್ಗಿದ. ಒಳಗೆ ಬಿಸಿ ಬಿಸಿ ಚರ್ಚೆ ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಸೋಮಯ್ಯ, ರಾಜೇಶರಿಬ್ಬರೂ ಅವನ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷಿಸದ ಆಗಮನದಿಂದ ಬೆಚ್ಚಿಬಿದ್ದರು. "ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ನಿಧಾನ ಮಾರಾಯ... ಯಾಕ್ ಅಷ್ಟು ಅರ್ಜೆಂಟು... ಸುಬ್ಬೂ !" ಎಂದು ಸೋಮಯ್ಯನಿಗೆ ವಿದಾಯ ಹೇಳಿ, ಕಾಣದ ಸುಬ್ಬೂನನ್ನು ಕರೆದ. ಸುಬ್ಬೂ " ಬಂದೆ ಅಣ್ಣಾ!"ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾ ತನ್ನ ಆಟಕ್ಕೆ ಕುತ್ತು ತಂದ ಬಸ್ಸಿಗೂ, ಕಂಡೆಕ್ಟರಿಗೂ ಮನದೊಳಗೆ ಹಿಡಿ ಶಾಪ ಹಾಕುತ್ತಾ ಒಳ ನಡೆದ. ಪೊಂ ಪೊಂ ಸದ್ದು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಡ್ರೈವರ್ ವಸೀಮ್ ಸಾಬನಿಗೆ, "ಬಂದೆ ಕಣೋ ... ಬಂದೆ " ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾ ಅವಸರ ಅವಸರದಲ್ಲಿ ಅರ್ಧ ಕಾಫಿ ಕುಡಿದು ವೆಂಕು ಬಸ್ಸು ಹತ್ತಿ "ರೈಟ್..."ಅಂದ.

ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಗುಳ್ಳಿ ನರಿ ಬಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಉಚ್ಚಂಗಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಪ್ರಯಾಣಿಕರೂ ರಾಜೇಶನಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಿದ್ದವರೇ ಆಗಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಶನಿವಾರಸಂತೆಗೋ, ಚಂಗ್ರಳ್ಳಿಗೋಹೋಗಿ ಬರುವ ಉಚ್ಚಂಗಿಯ ಗ್ರಾಮಸ್ಥರೇ ಹೆಚ್ಚು. ಆಗೊಮ್ಮೆ ಈಗೊಮ್ಮೆ ಊರ ನೆಂಟರು ಬಂದರೂ, ಅಲ್ಲೇ ಹುಟ್ಟಿ ಬೆಳೆದ ರಾಜೇಶನಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಿಲ್ಲದ ಮುಖವಂತೂ ಆಗಿರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.ಆದರೆ, ಅಪರಿಚಿತ ಮುಖವೊಂದು ಕೈಲಿ ಕಪ್ಪು ಸೂಟ್ಕೇಸ್ ಹಿಡಿದು ರಾಜೇಶನ ಹೋಟೆಲಿನ ಕಡೆಗೆ ನಡೆದು ಬರುತಿತ್ತು. ನೀಟಾಗಿ ಕ್ರಾಪು ಬಾಚಿದ್ದ ಯುವಕ ಸುಮಾರು ೨೫ ಹರೆಯದವನಂತೆ ಕಂಡ. ಮತ್ತೆ ಮಳೆ ಸುರಿಯಲು ಆರಂಭವಾಯಿತು. ಆ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಓಡಿ ಬಂದು ಹೋಟೆಲಿನೊಳಗೆ ಮಳೆಯಿಂದ ಪಾರಾಗಲು ಬಂದು ನಿಂತ. "ನಿಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಡಿಲ್ವಲ್ಲ ನಾನು .. ಹೊಸಬರ ಥರ ಕಾಣಿಸ್ತೀರ... ಕಾಫಿ ಗೇಫಿ ಕೊಡ್ಲಾ.. ಎಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಹೋಗ್ಬೇಕು ... " ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾ ಆಶ್ಚರ್ಯಚಕಿತ ಪ್ರಶ್ನಾರ್ಥಕ ಚಿಹ್ನೆಗಳು ರಾಜೇಶನ ಬಾಯ್ಬಿಲ್ಲಿನಿಂದ ವಾಗ್ಬಾಣಗಳಾಗಿ ಆ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯ ಕಡೆ ತೂರಿ ಬಂದವು. ಅದೆಲ್ಲಕ್ಕೂ ಅವನ ಮೌನವೇ ಉತ್ತರವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಹೊತ್ತಿನ ಬಳಿಕ, " ಛತ್ರಿ ಇದ್ರೆ ಕೊಡ್ತೀರಾ, ನಾಳೆ ಬೆಳಗ್ಗೆ ಹಾಗೆ ವಾಪಸ್ ಕೊಡ್ತೀನಿ... " ಎಂದು ಮೌನ ಮುರಿಯುತ್ತಾ ಆ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಮಾತನಾಡತೊಡಗಿದ. "ಎಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಹೋಗ್ಬೇಕು ನೀವು... ಈ ಮಳೆಲೀ... ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ತಡಿರಿ, ಕಮ್ಮಿ ಆದ್ಮೇಲೆ ಹೋಗೋರಂತೆ " ಎಂದ ರಾಜೇಶ. " ಇಲ್ಲಾ.. ಈಗ್ಲೇ ಹೊತ್ತಾಗಿದೆ. ಮೇಲ್ಮನೆ ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಭಟ್ಟರ ಮನೆಗೆ ಹೋಗ್ಬೇಕು.ಛತ್ರಿ ಕೊಟ್ರೆ ತುಂಬಾ ಉಪಯೋಗ ಆಗತ್ತೆ " ಎಂದುತಾನು ಹೋಗಬೇಕಾದ ಸ್ಥಳ ಯಾವುದೆಂದು ನುಡಿದ ಆ ಆಗಂತುಕ. " ಅಯ್ಯೋ.. ಮಳೇಲಿ ಒಬ್ಬರೇ ಯಾಕೆ ಅಷ್ಟು ದೂರ ಹೋಗ್ತೀರಾ... ಸೂಟ್ಕೇಸು ಬೇರೆ ಇದೆ.. ನಮ್ ಸುಬ್ಬೂನ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಕಳಿಸ್ತೀನಿ, ನಿಮಗೂ ಟಾರ್ಚು ಹಿಡ್ಕೋದಾದ್ರೂ ತಪ್ಪತ್ತೆ... " ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿ, "ಸುಬ್ಬೂ!ಭಟ್ರ ಮನೆಗೆ ಇವರನ್ನ ಬಿಟ್ಬಾ ." ಎಂದು ಸುಬ್ಬೂವಿಗೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಯುಕ್ತ ಧ್ವನಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಳಿದ ರಾಜೇಶ. " ಅಣ್ಣಾ! ಈಗ್ಲಾ? ಛಳಿ ಹೊರಗೆ" ಎಂದ ಸುಬ್ಬೂವಿಗೆ ಕಣ್ಣಿನಲ್ಲೇ ಪ್ರಳಯ ರುದ್ರನ ಪ್ರತಿರೂಪ ತೋರಿ ಹೋಗುವಂತೆ ಸನ್ನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ ರಾಜೇಶ. ಒಲ್ಲದ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಿಂದ ಟಾರ್ಚು ಮತ್ತು ಕೊಡೆ ಹಿಡಿದು ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ಆಗಂತುಕನ ಜೊತೆ ಸುರಿಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಜೋರು ಮಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊರನಡೆದ.ಸುಬ್ಬೂವೋ ಬಹಳ ಮಾತುಗಾರ. ಈ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ಮೌನಿ. ಇವನು ಹತ್ತು ಮಾತಾಡಿದರೆ,ಅವನಿಂದ ಒಂದು " ಹೂ .. " ಎನ್ನುವ ಹೂಂಕಾರ ಬರುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. " ನಿಮ್ಮೂರಲ್ಲೂ ಹೀಗೇ ಮಳೆ ಬರುತ್ತಾ... " , " ನಿಮ್ ಸೂಟ್ಕೇಸು ಪಸಂದಾಗಿದೆ.. ", " ನಿಮ್ ಊರು ಯಾವುದು ... "ಎಂದು ಹತ್ತು ಹಲವು ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳ ಬಾಣ ಹೊರಡುತ್ತಲೇ ಇತ್ತು. ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಅವನ ಗಾಢ ಮೌನದಲ್ಲಿ ಕರಗಿ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದವು. ಸುತ್ತಲೂ ಹಬ್ಬಿದ ಹಚ್ಚ ಹಸುರಿನ ಪರ್ವತ ಶ್ರೇಣಿ, ಭೋ ಎಂದು ಎಲ್ಲೋ ದೂರದಲ್ಲಿ ಧುಮುಕುವ ಸಣ್ಣ ಜಲಪಾತ, ಹಕ್ಕಿಗಳ ಚಿಲಿ ಪಿಲಿ... ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಮಲೆನಾಡಿನ ಈ ಸುಂದರ ಊರು ಉಚ್ಚಂಗಿಯ ಪರಿಸರದ ಭಾವಗಳು. ರಾತ್ರಿಯ ಕತ್ತಲು ಎಲ್ಲೆಲ್ಲೂ ಮೆತ್ತಿಕೊಂಡಿತ್ತು. ಇದರ ಜೊತೆ ಸುರಿಯುತ್ತಿರುವ ಮಳೆ. ಮಲೆನಾಡಿನ ಮಳೆಯೇ ಹಾಗೆ. ಎಷ್ಟೇ ಬೇಡವೆಂದರೂ ನಿಲ್ಲುವಂತದ್ದಲ್ಲ. ಇಡೀ ಊರಿಗೆ ಏಕೈಕ ಹೋಟೆಲು ಅಂದರೆ ರಾಜೇಶನದ್ದೇ. ಊರಿಗೊಬ್ಬಳೇ ಪದ್ಮಾವತಿಯಂತೆ, ಅವನೇ ಪ್ರಯಾಣಿಕರ, ಗ್ರಾಮಕ್ಕೆ ಹೊಸತಾಗಿ ಬರುವವರ ಅನ್ನದಾತ. " ಅಗೋ ನೋಡಿ.. ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಮಿಣಿ ಮಿಣಿ ದೀಪ ಉಂಟಲ್ಲ.. ಅದೇ ಭಟ್ಟರ ಮನೆ .. " ಎಂದ ಸುಬ್ಬೂ.ಭಟ್ಟರ ಮನೆಯ ಮುಂದೆ ಹಾಕಿದ್ದ ಹಸುಕಲ್ಲಿನ ಮೇಲೆ ಯತೇಚ್ಛವಾಗಿ ಹಸುರು ಪಾಚಿ ಬೆಳೆದಿತ್ತು. ಭಟ್ಟರ ಮಗ ರಂಗನಾಥ ಸತ್ತ ನಂತರ ಅವರ ಹೆಂಡತಿ ಸುಂದರಮ್ಮ ಖಾಯಿಲೆ ಬಿದ್ದರು. ಮನೆಯ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಕೆಲಸ ಭಟ್ಟರದ್ದೇ ಆಗಿತ್ತು. ಅವರು ತಾನೆ ಎಷ್ಟೆಂದು ಮಾಡಿಯಾರು,ವಯಸ್ಸು ಅರವತ್ತರ ಆಸು ಪಾಸು. ಮನೆಯ ಮುಂದಿನ ಅಂಗಳ ತೊಳೆಯುವಷ್ಟು ಶಕ್ತಿ ಅವರಲ್ಲಿಇರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ಮನೆಯ ಬಳಿ ಬಂದವನೇ " ಭಟ್ಟರೇ... ಎಂದು ಕೂಗು ಹಾಕಿದ.ಒಳಗಿನಿಂದ " ಯಾರೂ... ಬಂದೇ " ಎನ್ನುವ ಧ್ವನಿ ಹೊರಬಂತು. ಆಗ ತಾನೇ ಊಟ ಮುಗಿಸಿ ಕೈ ತೊಳೆದು, ತನ್ನ ಪಂಚೆಯಿಂದ ಕೈ ಒರೆಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತ ಮನೆಯ ಬಾಗಿಲು ತೆಗೆದರು ಭಟ್ಟರು. "ಏನೋ ಸುಬ್ಬೂ... ಈ ರಾತ್ರಿಲಿ ಒಬ್ಬನೇ ... " ಎಂದರು. ಸುಬ್ಬೂ, " ಏ ಇಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ... ಇವರನ್ನ ಕರ್ಕೊಂಡು ಹೋಗು ಅಂತ ಅಣ್ಣ ಕಳಿಸ್ದ... " ಎಂದು ಕೈ ತೋರಿಸಲು ಹಿಂದೆ ತಿರುಗಿದ. ಅವನ ಹಿಂದೆ ಗಾಢ ಕತ್ತಲು ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಇನ್ನೇನೂ ಇರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಸುಬ್ಬೂವಿನ ಹೃದಯ ಧಸಕ್ಕೆಂದಿತು. ಅವನ ಪಕ್ಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ಆಗಂತುಕನ ಸೂಟ್ಕೇಸು ಒಂಟಿಯಾಗಿ ನಿಂತಿತ್ತು. ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ಒಮ್ಮೆ " ಓ .. ಎಲ್ಲಿದ್ದೀರಿ... "ಎಂದು ಕೂಗು ಹಾಕಿದ. ಯಾವುದೇ ಉತ್ತರ ಬರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಮಳೆಯ ಕಾಯುವ ಕಪ್ಪೆಯ "ಟರ್ರ್ ಟರ್ರ್ ... " ಬಿಟ್ಟರೆ ಗವ್ವನೆ ಕವಿದ ಕತ್ತಲಲ್ಲಿ ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಧ್ವನಿ ಇರಲಿಲ್ಲ. " ಅದೇನಿದೆ..ನೋಡೋಣ ... ಸೂಟ್ಕೇಸು ತೆಗಿ ... " ಎಂದು ಭಟ್ಟರು ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ಗೆ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

ಹೆದರಿಕೆಯಿಂದಲೇ ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ತೆಗೆದ ಸೂಟ್ಕೇಸಲ್ಲಿ ಮಿಲಿಟರಿಯವರ ಬಟ್ಟೆ ಮತ್ತು ಅದರ ಜೊತೆ ಒಂದು ಕಾಗದ ಇತ್ತು. ಕಾಗದ ತೆಗೆದು ಗಟ್ಟಿಯಾಗಿ ಓದಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದರು ಭಟ್ಟರು, 'Clothes of Late Mr. Ranganath S/o S. Bhatt ...need to be sent' .೧೦-೧೨-೧೯೯೯ ರ ಡೇಟಿನ ಕೆಳಗಿದ್ದ ಅಕ್ಷರಗಳು ಸುಬ್ಬೂವಿಗೆ ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟ ಗೋಚರವಾದುವು."ಅಬ್ಬಾ... ಹದಿನೈದು ವರ್ಷ ಹಿಂದಿನ ಲೆಟರು... ಯಾರೀತ.. ಯಾಕೆ ಬಂದ... ಇವನೇನಾದ್ರೂ ರಂಗನಾಥನೇ ನಾ ... " ಎಂದು ಹೆದರಿಕೆಯ ಸಮುದ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಹುಯ್ದಾಡುತ್ತ ಇದ್ದ ಸುಬ್ಬೂವಿನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನ ದೋಣಿಯನ್ನು " ಸುಬ್ಬೂ... " ಎಂದು ಭಟ್ಟರು ಕರೆದು ಲಂಗರು ಹಾಕಿ ನಿಲ್ಲಿಸಿದರು. "ಯಾರೋ ಕೊಟ್ಟಿದ್ದು ಈ ಸೂಟ್ಕೇಸು ನಿಂಗೆ ... "ಎಂದು ಕಣ್ಣೀರು ತುಂಬಿದ ಮೊಗದಿಂದ, ಗದ್ಗದಿತವಾದ ಭಟ್ಟರ ಧ್ವನಿ ಸುಬ್ಬೂವಿನ ಹೆದರಿಕೆ ಇಮ್ಮಡಿಗೊಳಿಸಿತು. "ಅವರು .. ಅವರು ...." ಎಂದು ಸುಬ್ಬೂ ತೊದಲುತ್ತಲೇ ಇದ್ದ.

Photo: Lavanya Lokhande

In a Heartbeat

- Vishrut Patel

She chose to sit as close to me as possible without sitting next to me. My heart fluttered at the idea of the sheer proximity. No one between us. Nothing but an empty chair. That and a column of air.

That is when I felt the tug. An urge to go sit next to her in a heartbeat. A fleeting heartbeat.

I watched her from the corner of my eye as she pulled out a book from her bag. Another quick jerk from my heart, pushing me to close the gap.

I stared at the glistening leather of the empty seat beside me. Only my toes touched the ground as if my heart had my legs ready to jump off at a thump. Thump. Nothing. I didn't move.

I finally found the courage to glance at her. I wanted just a glance but my eyes seemed to linger for a long time. A long time.

One heartbeat.
Two heartbeats.
Three heartbeats.

I turned back, trying to hold on to the evanescent image of the side of her face. Two locks of her hair falling perfectly next to her eye. Their cusps just touching her cheek above the dimple of her now absent crooked smile. A blink and a beat and it was gone.

Why isn't she coming close to me? My fingertips tingled as a powerful impulse rushed over me. I longed to grab her hand, just lying there making imaginary doodles over the cover of her book, and pull her close. Just pull her close. Another heartbeat and the impulse ebbed away.
My heartbeats lost their vigour. They dampened. They lost hope that these sudden rushes would convince me to move.

I imagined her smiling at me. In that moment, it felt like it was so easy to tear the air column up so quickly that I would make that pair of locks swish against her cheeks- and just sit next to her, still a little far away, resisting the urge to move any closer. And that dream too faded in a heartbeat.

But something kept me unmoved. The fact that my moving close to her conveyed to her my desire to move close to her, even just a hint of desire that was no way near as powerful as these tugs that I felt was so…feared. Appalling, even. I remained fixed. And my heart went on to its usual business, serving a perfectly still person.

And then she tore off the column of air between us as she vacated her seat for someone else. For me, the outside world didn't matter; it was just me and her. And then she sat where I had chosen not to. My head turned as if it was her own hand gently pulling my chin, while I held still desperately, not letting any emotion leak from my face. Now my heart actually fluttered at the sheer proximity.

'Hi', she said. She was as close to me as I thought was possible. The locks of perfection were now touching the dimples of her crooked smile. A smile that was for me.

It was so much more than what I could take up in a heartbeat, that my heart just skipped a beat.

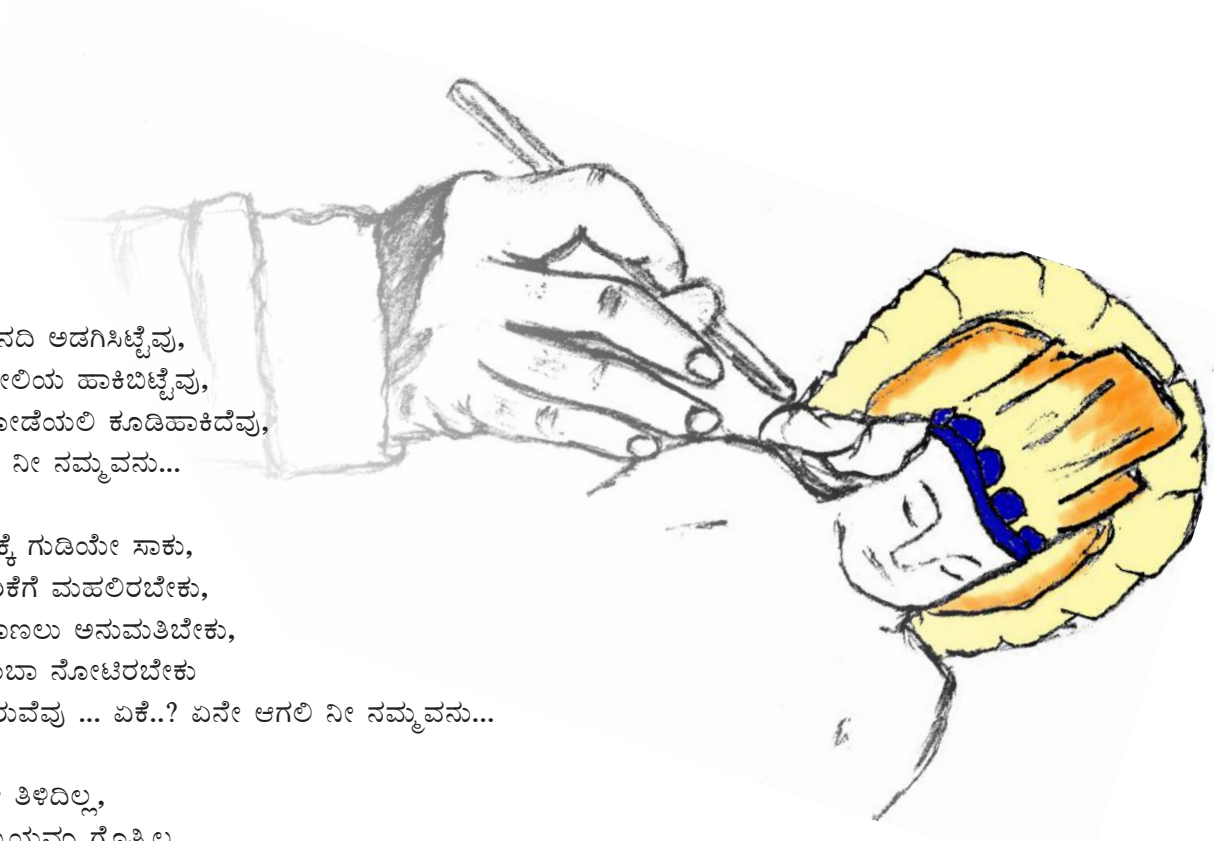
Art: Vrushali Rao

ಏನೇ ಆಗಲಿ ನೀ ನಮ್ಮವನು...

– ಆದರ್ಶ ಭಾಸ್ಕರ ವಸಿಷ್ಠ

Eene Aagali Nee Nammavanu
- Adarsh Bhaskara Vasista

Many a massacre has happened in the name of God. He/She is treated as a corrupt official who grants wishes in return for a bribe-prayer, offering, sacrifice...the list is endless. Religious leaders want 'God-fearing' people instead of 'God-loving' ones. This poem is a satire on the state of religion in the present world.



ಕಾವಿಯ ಕಾನದಿ ಅಡಗಿಸಿಟ್ಟೆವು,
ಮಂತ್ರದ ಬೇಲಿಯ ಹಾಕಿಬಿಟ್ಟೆವು,
ಗುಡಿಯ ಗೋಡೆಯಲಿ ಕೂಡಿಹಾಕಿದೆವು,
ಏನೇ ಆಗಲಿ ನೀ ನಮ್ಮವನು...

ಪುಟ್ಟ ಕೆಲಸಕ್ಕೆ ಗುಡಿಯೇ ಸಾಕು,
ಭಾರಿ ಕೋರಿಕೆಗೆ ಮಹಲಿರಬೇಕು,
ಬಳಿಯಲಿ ಕಾಣಲು ಅನುಮತಿಬೇಕು,
ಜೇಬಿನ ತುಂಬಾ ನೋಟಿರಬೇಕು
ಆದರೂ ಬರುವೆವು ... ಏಕೆ..? ಏನೇ ಆಗಲಿ ನೀ ನಮ್ಮವನು...

ನೀನಾರೆಂದೇ ತಿಳಿದಿಲ್ಲ,
ನಿನ್ನ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯವೂ ಗೊತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ,
ಅವನ ಹೊಡೆದು, ಇವನ ಕಡಿದು
ನಿನ್ನ ಹೆಸರನೇ ನುಡಿಯುವೆವು,
ಏಕೆ ...? ಏನೇ ಆಗಲಿ ನೀ ನಮ್ಮವನು...

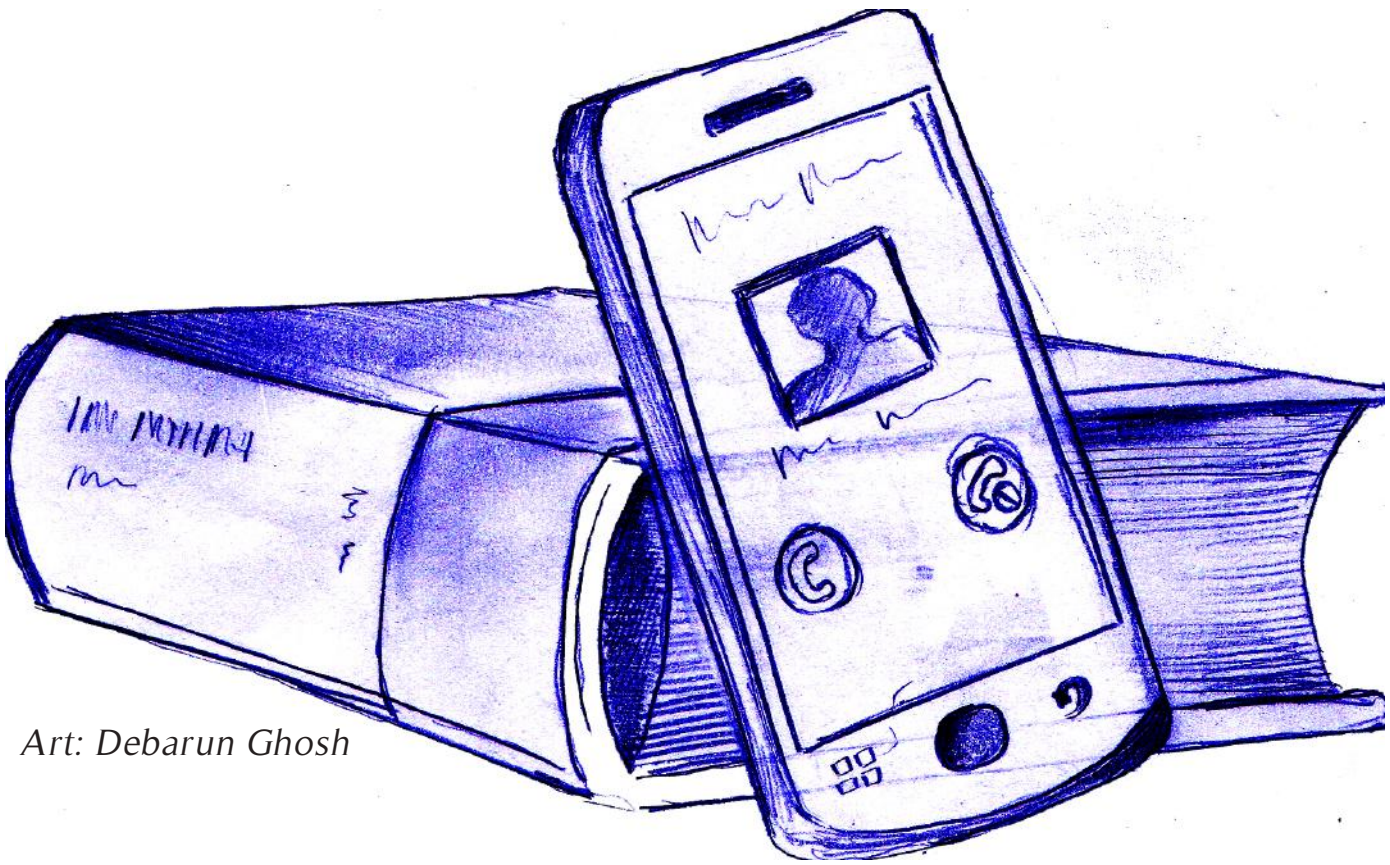
ತಿಲಕ ಇಟ್ಟರೆ ಹಿಂದೂ ನಾನು
ಟೋಪಿ ಹಾಕಿದೊಡೆ ಮುಸ್ಲಿಮನು,
ಕೊರಳಿಗೆ ಶಿಲುಬೆ ಬೀಳುತ್ತಲೇ
ನಾ ಈಸಾಯಿಯಾಗಿಬಿಡುವೆನು,
ನನಗೆ ನಾನಾರೆಂದೇ ತಿಳಿದಿಲ್ಲ
ಆದರೂ ನಿನ್ನನಂತೂ ನಾ ಬಿಡಲೊಲ್ಲೆ,
ಏಕೆ...? ಏನೇ ಆಗಲಿ ನೀ ನಮ್ಮವನು...

Art: Kezia Ann

The Silent Ringtone

- Dincy Mariam

In our first year, being the juveniles that we were, we decided to play a prank on one of my friends. It materialised on a lazy day when we were gathered in Saudamini's room post lunch for a quick nap before the next lecture began. As usual the break did not proceed as intended- my friends were cribbing about the morning lectures and I entertained myself by playing the game 'Bubble Buster' on Saudamini's mobile phone. While I was playing, an evil idea flashed through my mind. When Saudamini left the room I poked Surabhi to get her attention to tell her about my plan. After a relatively long time for the sensitive person that she thinks herself to be, she looked up from her phone, irritated, and asked me to explain myself. I told her, 'Surabhi, I want to change the settings on Saudamini's phone'. With a suspicious look she asked, 'Why?'. I replied, 'Turn on ringing for the "silent'' mode' with an evil smile and saw the expression mirrored on her face. 'Hmm...that would be fun. I'll call her phone while we are in the class', she said and I added, 'Yay...it will embarrass her... muhahahhaha'. We first had to get over our moral dilemmas about whether it would affect our friend, but with a little bit of rational thinking, reasoning, and analysing the earlier behaviour of Prof.



Art: Debarun Ghosh

Nice, we decided that it might not be too much of a problem. I immediately changed the settings of Saudamini's phone. Though it showed 'silent', the ringing was enabled with the weirdest ringtone one could ever think of. We decided to call her phone during the first lecture post lunch and also decided to sit somewhere behind so that Saudamini, as well as the professor, wouldn't notice two girls giggling away to madness. We got ready to leave for class after Saudamini joined us. She took her phone and switched to 'silent' mode before dropping it in her bag. While we were going to class, Surabhi and I were thinking about the fun we were going to have. It was funny how Saudamini did not notice our rather suspicious behaviour. The class was already full, but luckily we got seats in the back. Surabhi and I went to sit in the fourth row from the front, while Saudamini chose her usual place on the front bench with our other friends. We decided to call her during the lecture. The noisy class suddenly became silent, indicating the arrival of the professor. The professor went past me. I gave an 'Oh no! What do we do now?' look to Surabhi. Prof. Not-so-Nice had come, and he genuinely hated any sort of distractions and interruptions in the class. Most of the students in the class were terrified of him. He went and stood on the platform and announced, 'Prof. Nice won't be able to take the class today. We are switching our class timings', and began the class without any other remark. We had no choice other than cancelling our plans as matters could get out of hand. Our moods dampened. Another thought began to nag me- 'What if someone else calls on her phone?'

I expressed my concern to Surabhi and we both started dreading the consequences of a call. Neither of us could concentrate for the rest of the class, and I started praying to all possible gods, hoping no one would call Saudamini. Ten minutes into the class, Ram with his shabby hair and sleepy eyes entered the class and everyone's attention shifted to him. Mr. Not-so-Nice expressed his disapproval by checking the time and looking at him furiously. Ram did not seem bothered and proceeded to occupy the only place left in one of the front benches. The lecture continued. Nothing bad happened for the next twenty minutes until the expected happened. A mobile phone started to ring with the weirdest ringtone one could ever think of. Surabhi said slightly loudly, 'Oh my GOD! It has happened. Disaster strikes'. I held her hand tightly so that she would keep quiet. Everyone's attention shifted to the front bench while I muttered ,'Saudamini will be thrown out of the class and when she comes to know it was us, we are doomed'. We didn't want that to happen. We just wanted to embarrass her. I regretted what I had done. The professor stopped lecturing and stared at the front bench while Ram took his phone out of his pocket and turned it off. The professor, now fuming, shouted at Ram by pointing to the door, 'Ram, out of my class, now'. Ram stood up, stared at the professor and then decided to leave. While Ram was leaving, the professor continued, 'If you are planning to come late, please don't come'. The professor got back to the board and continued lecturing. Surabhi and I were relieved but waited with bated breath for the lecture to get over. The lecture ended soon. I thanked my stars for what had not happened. No one had called Saudamini's phone. I wanted to change the settings of the 'silent' mode back to what it was. I said,' Surabhi, I'll go and change the settings'. She replied, 'Yes, yes please do'. I went and asked Saudamini for her phone to play 'Bubble Buster'. She took her phone out, looked at it disappointingly, then showed it to me and said, 'No charge. It's dead'. A wide smile was about to appear on my face but I hid it and put up a sad face. Surabhi who was listening to our conversation from behind, shouted in delight, 'Saudamini, your phone is awesome'. Saudamini replied, 'Get lost'.

The Climb

- V Saudamini

I had to reach the top.

Ahead of me loomed two doorways, and beyond them, a pair of white and pristine staircases rose towards an unknown zenith. The right door flew open and out emerged a ghastly figure with a dark face, sharp canines, unkempt hair, and two tiny horns on his head. All of a sudden I noticed people; scores, no thousands of people around me. Several were heading towards this door, despite the demon, and none of them had horns. I had to reach the top, but I didn't like the look of the demon. I had to climb those stairs that, strangely enough, were still devoid of people. I took the door on the left and entered it.

I entered into chaos.

Gone were those beautiful white steps, an illusion replaced by a giant rock that loomed like the demon himself. This giant of a mountain stretched upwards, on and on towards eternity. There were people everywhere, shuffling and jostling past one another, all in a hurry to reach the top. In their hurry, I noticed that people took no heed to the fallen ones, even trampling them and pushing onward. I looked up at the mountain and from where I was, at the bottom, hidden among a sea of people and atop an equal number of dead, dying, trodden folks, I saw streams. Streams and streams– narrow and constricted- of people scurrying and clamouring their way to the top. They looked like streams of water in a vessel, joining and separating, merging and dividing, but unlike water, the streams were flowing upwards. I looked more closely at the foot of this hill, at the spots where people would concentrate before being carried up and away by the current, and saw steps. There they were, crude stone steps dug into the mountain that these people were following. 'Not bad. This way, I'll reach the top soon', I thought. I stepped in with the people, feeling a sense of camaraderie amidst all the hustle and found myself being swept upwards by the crowd.

I was finally on my way.

Soon enough I realised that this upward journey was not going to be as dandy as I had thought. Perhaps because a few had pushed me so hard that I fell several steps before I could get back on my feet again; perhaps it was all those elbows digging into my ribs; perhaps it was the bones under my feet or those dirty, smelly feet that were crushing my skull.

I couldn't take it anymore.

I decided to step out onto the wild rocks for a bit. 'It is suffocating in there!', I thought,

looking at the relentless crowd, still pushing upwards, climbing the crude steps. I looked around me and saw boulders, menacing, threatening to dislodge from under and above me. But fewer people. That was enough.

I had to reach the top.

I dug my nails into the hard earth and began to climb, and although I scratched and scalded my knees and elbows on the hot rocks, I seemed to be getting on as well as the folks climbing the steps. Sometimes, when I would get tired, I would be tempted to join them. All they seemed to do was look upwards and climb. I, on the other hand, needed to look all about me, even down behind me to discern ways to go forward. These people, they just had to climb one step at a time. It was tempting to join them. Then something would remind me of the crunching sound of feet crushing my skull on a step, maybe I would actually hear it from afar, and I'd decide that scarred skin was better than a damaged skull.

As I climbed further, I began noticing more people around me; perhaps they had always been there. Often I would meet a group, help out a few and get helped in return. By and by they would disappear and I would be left climbing by myself. The people on the steps were history by now. I could still hear their feet shuffling their way to the top. By now, the sound had faded into a hum, softer, nevertheless a persistent reminder of the common urge to reach the still out of sight peak.

I had climbed for a while.

It was getting tougher now and the people were getting nastier. Fewer and fewer people were stopping to help. I thought this was because we were reaching the top, and the top was a place for a few elite and deserving warriors. I looked up and strained my eyes but the top was still out-of-sight, as unseen and away as it had ever been. I soon began to tire. At some point, I rolled a few paces backwards and no one rescued me as someone always had. I began to despair. I wanted to stop but I didn't think I could. There was this ever present pull towards the top. I had to reach the top or just perish on my way. I knew halting for a breath would help but fear didn't allow me. 'Someone would push me or I would simply never move again', I thought. I had to reach the top. I had to.

Then just like that, I stopped.

I had thought of all this, but I stopped. Fear turned to growing panic, but my feet would simply not move. They would only shuffle at the same spot from time to time. Despair and helplessness gnawed at my heart as I looked longingly towards that elusive zenith, my body straining in vain to displace itself.

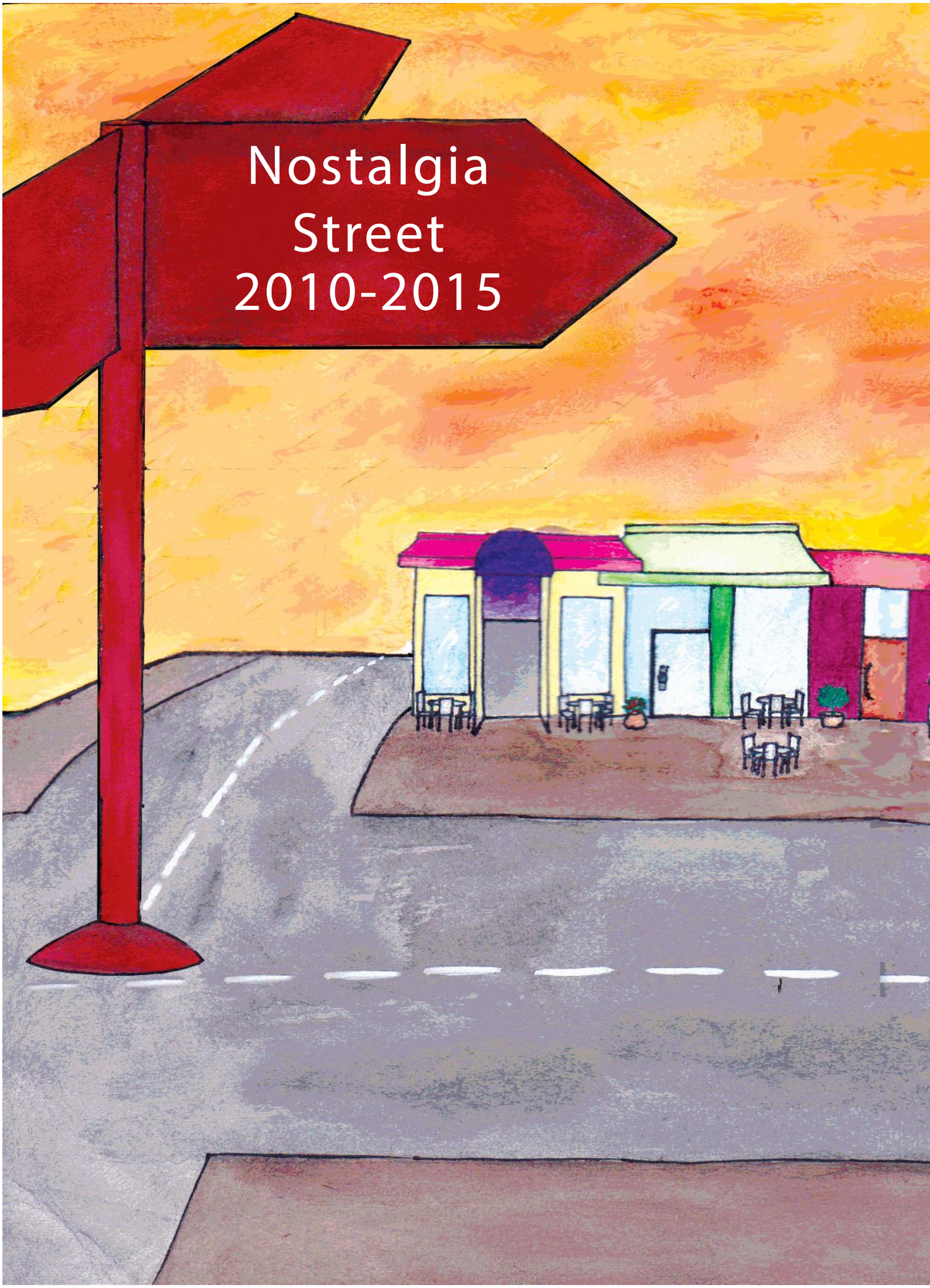
I had to reach the top.

I do not know how long I stood there, alone and static amidst the constant motion of the people on the steps; silent, with torrents of emotions raging inside me. Suddenly, I heard the sound of feet scratching the rocks below me. I felt a cool rush of wind as a figure swept past me. I didn't register the feel of this person's palm on mine before I had already climbed a few paces. I looked up to see a vaguely familiar figure climbing with me in tow. Perhaps this soul was one of many with whom I had shared a part of this uphill journey. I gathered myself, matched his pace, and found myself climbing up towards the peak with him.

I still am.

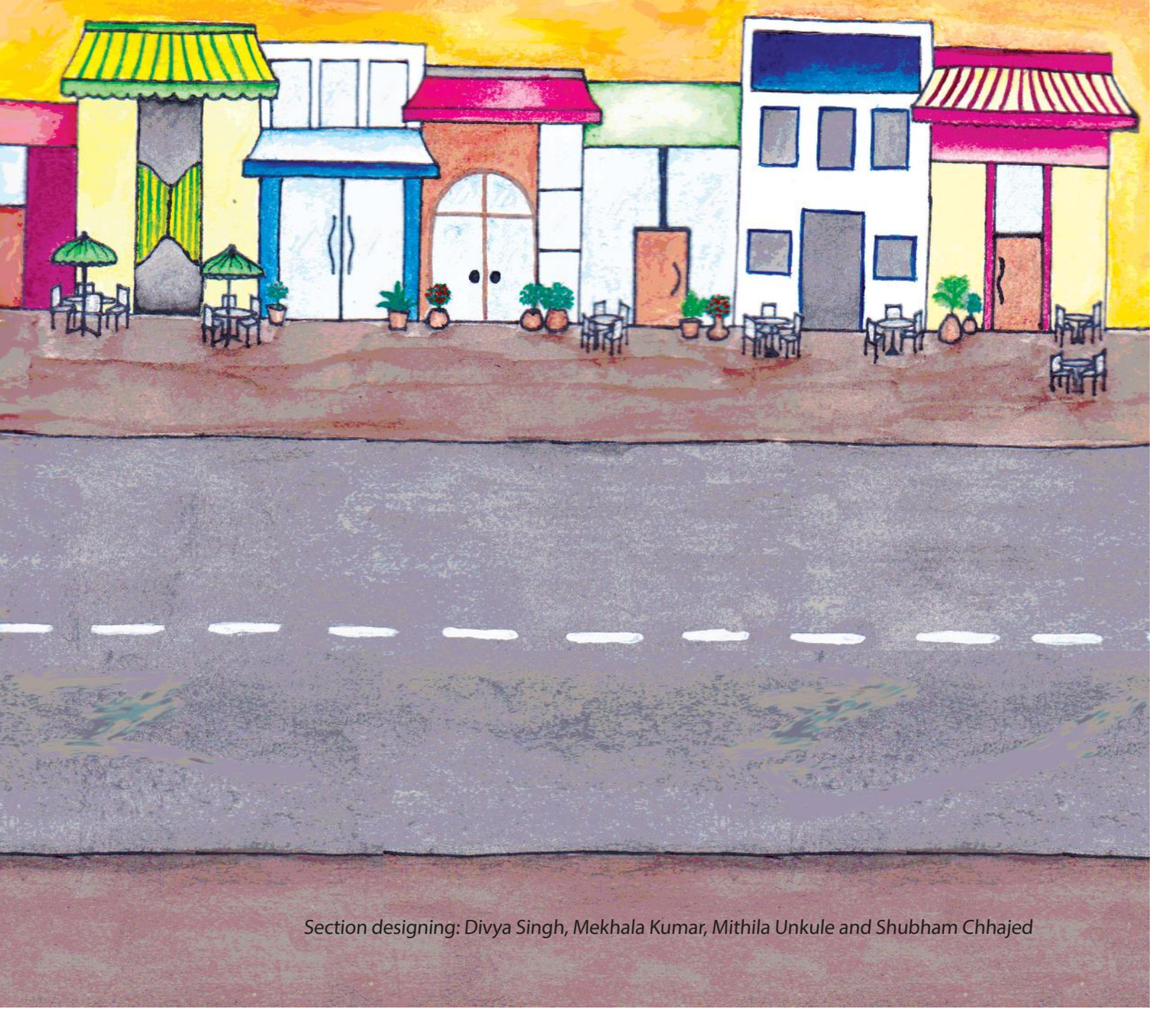
I have yet to recognise him and although I have never been able to climb as fast I had before, I have never felt safer climbing this mountain. Although each of us has stumbled several times, his hold has kept us from falling. And although this ever persistent tug to move on persists and keeps us climbing, I find that I no longer care about that sometimes promising, eternally elusive, and perhaps non-existent zenith. I don't have to reach the top. I don't want to reach the top. There is no top.
I only have to keep climbing.

Art: Kezia Ann


Nostalgia
Street
2010-2015

Five years of IISER,
Five years of joy and fun,
Five years of new friends and foes,
But was five years too short?

As we bid a tearful adieu to the beloved folks of the 2010 batch, we invite you to take a walk down the Nostalgia Street, relishing their five years of life at IISER Pune.



Section designing: Divya Singh, Mekhala Kumar, Mithila Unkule and Shubham Chhajed

NIRANJANA SREE-LAL

She is an ever carefree soul. With eyes frequently focused on his mobile, this guy is a gadget freak.

MARINA

The only designer for the 2012 Kalpa cover page, she can charm you with her humility and cute smile. This eternal art lover is always there whenever any help is required.

SUMANTH

A very calm and cool-minded person, he has great organising skills and the most simple and elegant solutions to all problems. Sumanth was the perfect person to create balance at the chaotic Karavaan meetings with his no-nonsense-let's-get-to-business attitude.

-Mate

SHIVA

Be it chess or maths, Shiva is a savant. I'll always remember him as one of the calmest, coolest, and brilliant guys around.

'I personally think that we bonded over the *samosas*, *kachoris* and *vadapavs* in Pashan market.'

-Nishad Mandlik

'I miss the Sai Trinity building, especially the computer lab, and being a latecomer to all classes.'

-M Sainath

'Those 5 minute trips to Sai Trinity for lab, viva, printing, and journal completion!'

-Urvashi Gupta

'I remember my first day in Raman hall, looking at the Bose speakers on the false ceiling; my first walk through HR-4 after settling down in the rooms. It has been a blur after.'

-Vishnu V Krishnan

'...the labs at Sai Trinity and liberation after- the Sai Canteen, and obsessively playing Klueless, the brief Bingo (the potato chips) obsession...'

-Kshiti Mishra

'The new look of the campus is lovely. However, the old campus, especially the buses to Sai, will be missed!'

-Sujoy Saha

'You no longer have to look at the bus schedule while planning an outing.'

-Sharath Chandra

DIPESHWARI

I've always respected Dipeshwari. When I took over as Someshwarwadi coordinator, the kids talked about her so much that it gave me a complex.

ABINAND

Despite his towering presence and foghorn voice, it is still a rare sight to spot him on campus on the weekends, not even on the basketball court. The epitome of a 'party guy', his sarcasm and frankness will have you in splits. Abinand, you'll leave huge footprints behind (literally)!

VYANKATESH

Vyankatesh is an amazing fellow with a simple lifestyle and the drive to achieve something in life. He is an excellent poet and writer. All his virtues cannot be mentioned here, but he deserves a salute.

-Petkar

K SRIRAM

He will never fail to amaze you with his nerdy businesses. He is just excellent at whatever he does, be it Mimamsa question making or Age of Empires 2!

-Aseem

SHANU

A free and happy soul, he is always ready to help people. This mischievous and crazy guy is a capable of dozing off in his room and classroom alike.

-Charu

VINAYAK aka BABA
Known across batches as 'The Casanova of Delhi', he actually has a fan club on Facebook! He's not the quickest at responding to messages, and this has garnered him quite the reputation across batches.

VVK
Always cheerful and accommodating to everyone's ideas, he is a true foodie who meticulously plans his weekend outings. His wit is delightfully tongue-in-cheek and you'd hardly come across a dull moment while conversing with VVK.
-Rohit

DIVYA
She is always on the look-out to try something new, be it glass painting or songs in languages alien to her. She is always cheerful, and has a joke for almost every occasion.

MADHUSUDHAN
He is a simple, hard working, and passionate researcher. Good times were those that we spent with you, man!
-Saurabh

'...getting up from your beds and running down to the first floor to attend classes...'
-Sree Vani

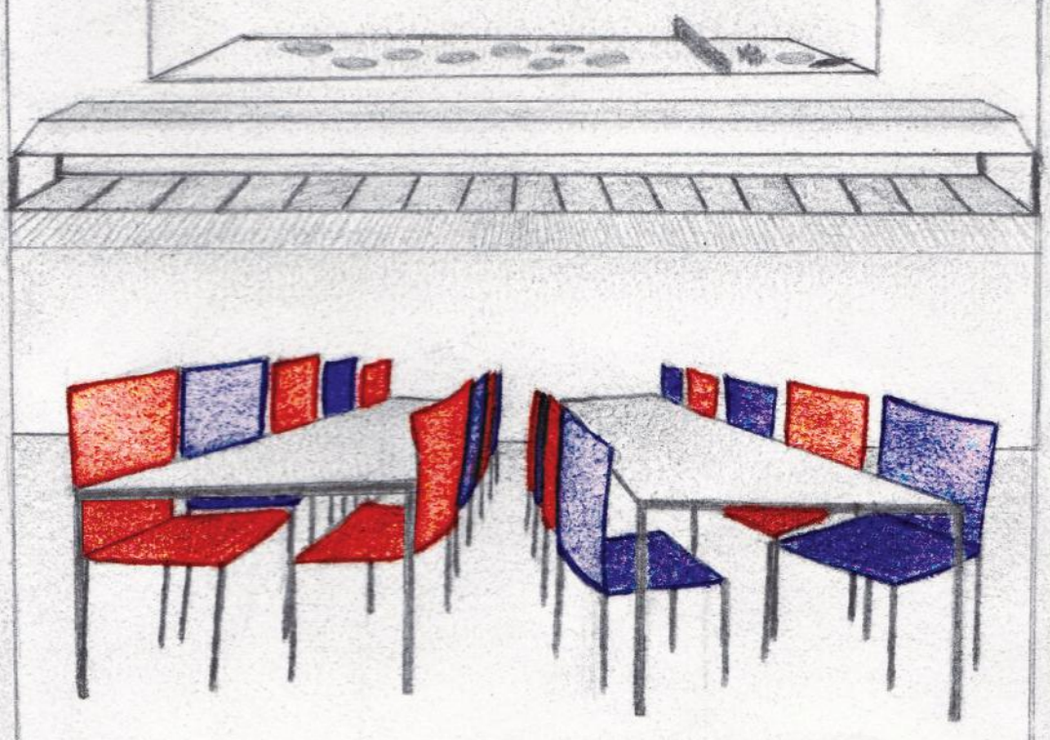
'Think about it: One could go back to his/her room, take a shower and come back for the next class. (We had a fifteen minutes break between two classes).'
-Nishad Mandlik

'...singing at the top of our voices in the corridors in our old hostel and getting shouted at by the warden and security guards...'
-Dincy Mariam

'Late night staircase chats with *padhai*, maggi, and chai are unforgettable.'
-Urvashi Gupta

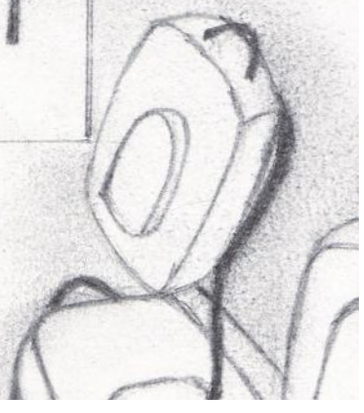
'That place served as
the hostel, the lecture hall complex,
the examination hall, the mess, and the only
construction in the campus.
So yeah, HR-4 is pretty special to us.'
-Abhishek Mishra

'The greatest thing about IISER was this feeling of home where everything was bundled up in one building (HR4) and you knew everyone and every nook and corner of the place.'
-Poortata Lalwani



'HR-4 power cut: There was chaos all around; dustbins being thrown out from the second floor; the garbage was everywhere and we were collecting the trash back into the dustbins just to throw it down again. It was pure madness!'
-Himanshu Rajmane

'...watching Exorcist in HR-4 and passing funny comments during the whole movie...'
-Dipeshwari Shewale



'Of all the things I will miss the wall clock that was there below the window of the erstwhile reading room.
Never understood why they removed it.'

-Abhishek Mishra

'The Room A-309, HR-4: it belonged to Neha M, Meghana, and Neha Bora. But its actual residents were Neha M, Meghana, Neha Bora, Krishna, Kshiti, and Niharika.
We spent the first two and half years in that room.
Food, play, study all in one room. It was crazy.
Neha M hated us during exams.
She used to sleep at 10 PM. We would start studying together as a group at 10 PM and go on till 4 AM.
It would be a good night for us and good morning for Neha M.'

-Neha Bora

SANGAMESH
A true master of volleyball, kho-kho, CS, and dance! This talented all-rounder ensures that his arrival from home is always eagerly awaited- thanks to the abundance of food he always brings back.

PRANAV
The eternal goalkeeper of the IISER Pune football team, this quizzer has a fetish for Russian movies and literature. Weird conversations with him make him one of the best persons to chill with.

-Abhinash Palai

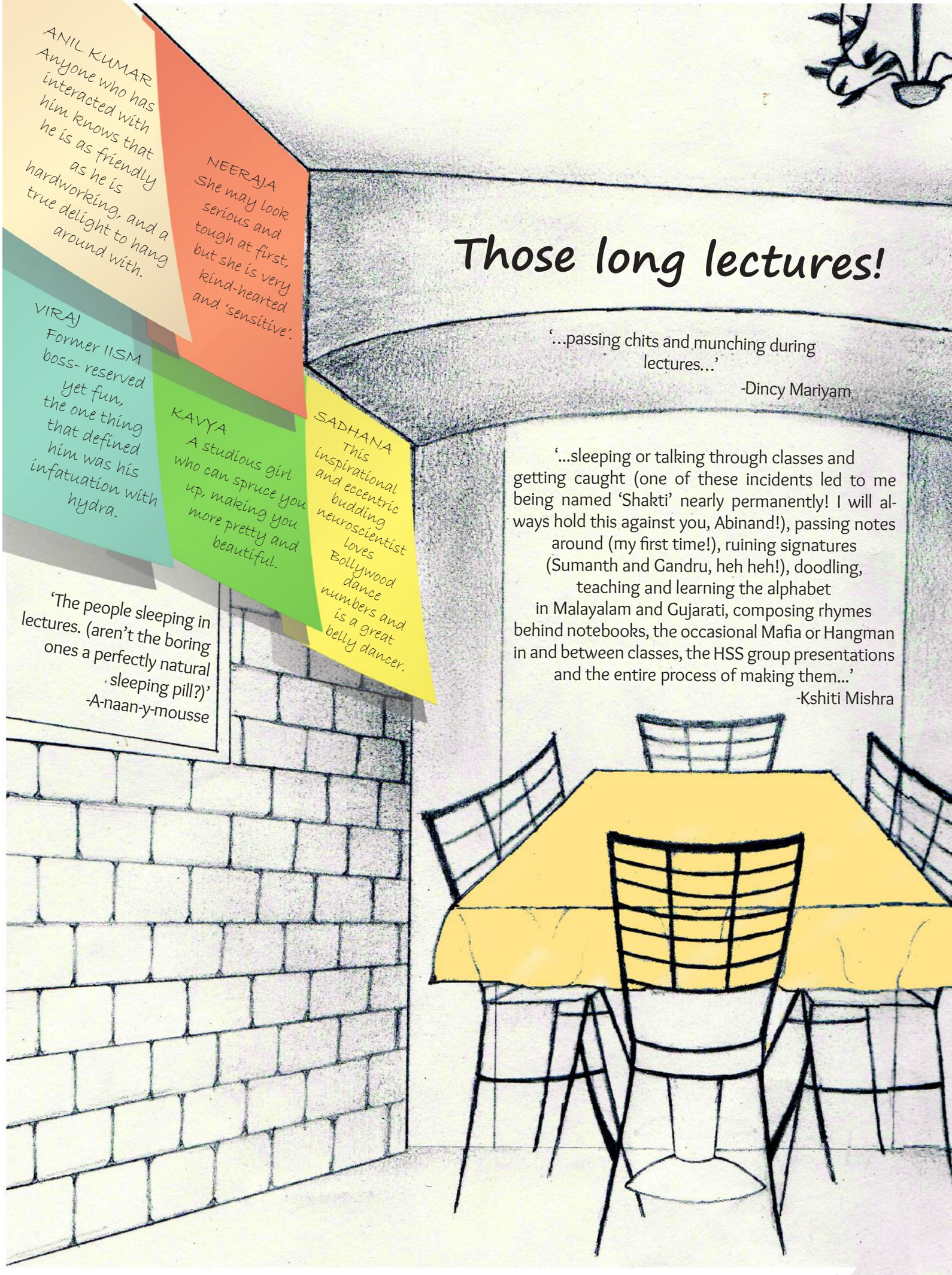
BAHAI
A brother from another mother, you have been a true mirror. I will never forget that incident about the 'castles in the air', which set me on the right direction in life.

-Anshul Kapoor

RESHMA
'Smile full of love and heart full of mathematics.'
You can always depend on Reshma. She's got a plan for everything and an immense reserve of dedication.
I'll miss her guidance, perspective, and clarity of thought when it comes to matters concerning Prutha, and her advice in general.

-Darshini, Visakh

RINTU
One of the sweetest and most lovable people you will ever meet. Her motherly tendencies instantly put you at ease.



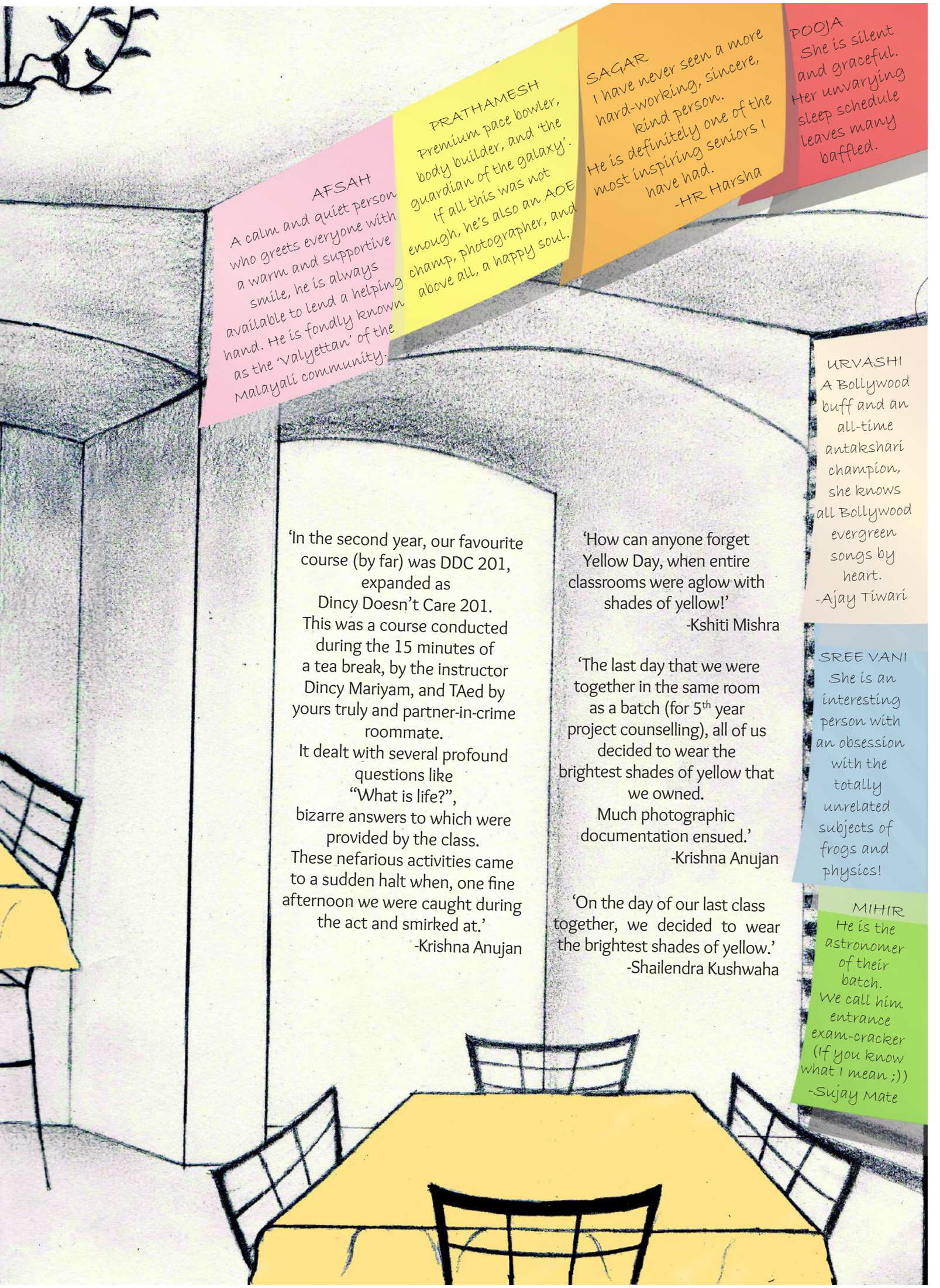
Those long lectures!

'...passing chits and munching during lectures...'

-Dincy Mariyam

'...sleeping or talking through classes and getting caught (one of these incidents led to me being named 'Shakti' nearly permanently! I will always hold this against you, Abinand!), passing notes around (my first time!), ruining signatures (Sumanth and Gandru, heh heh!), doodling, teaching and learning the alphabet in Malayalam and Gujarati, composing rhymes behind notebooks, the occasional Mafia or Hangman in and between classes, the HSS group presentations and the entire process of making them...'

-Kshiti Mishra



AFSAH
A calm and quiet person who greets everyone with a warm and supportive smile, he is always available to lend a helping hand. He is fondly known as the 'Valyettan' of the Malayali community.

PRATHAMESH
Premium pace bowler, body builder, and 'the guardian of the galaxy'. If all this was not enough, he's also an AOE champ, photographer, and above all, a happy soul.

SAGAR
I have never seen a more hard-working, sincere, kind person. He is definitely one of the most inspiring seniors I have had.
-HR Harsha

POOJA
She is silent and graceful. Her unvarying sleep schedule leaves many baffled.

'In the second year, our favourite course (by far) was DDC 201, expanded as Dincy Doesn't Care 201. This was a course conducted during the 15 minutes of a tea break, by the instructor Dincy Mariyam, and TAed by yours truly and partner-in-crime roommate. It dealt with several profound questions like "What is life?", bizarre answers to which were provided by the class. These nefarious activities came to a sudden halt when, one fine afternoon we were caught during the act and smirked at.'
-Krishna Anujan

'How can anyone forget Yellow Day, when entire classrooms were aglow with shades of yellow!'
-Kshiti Mishra

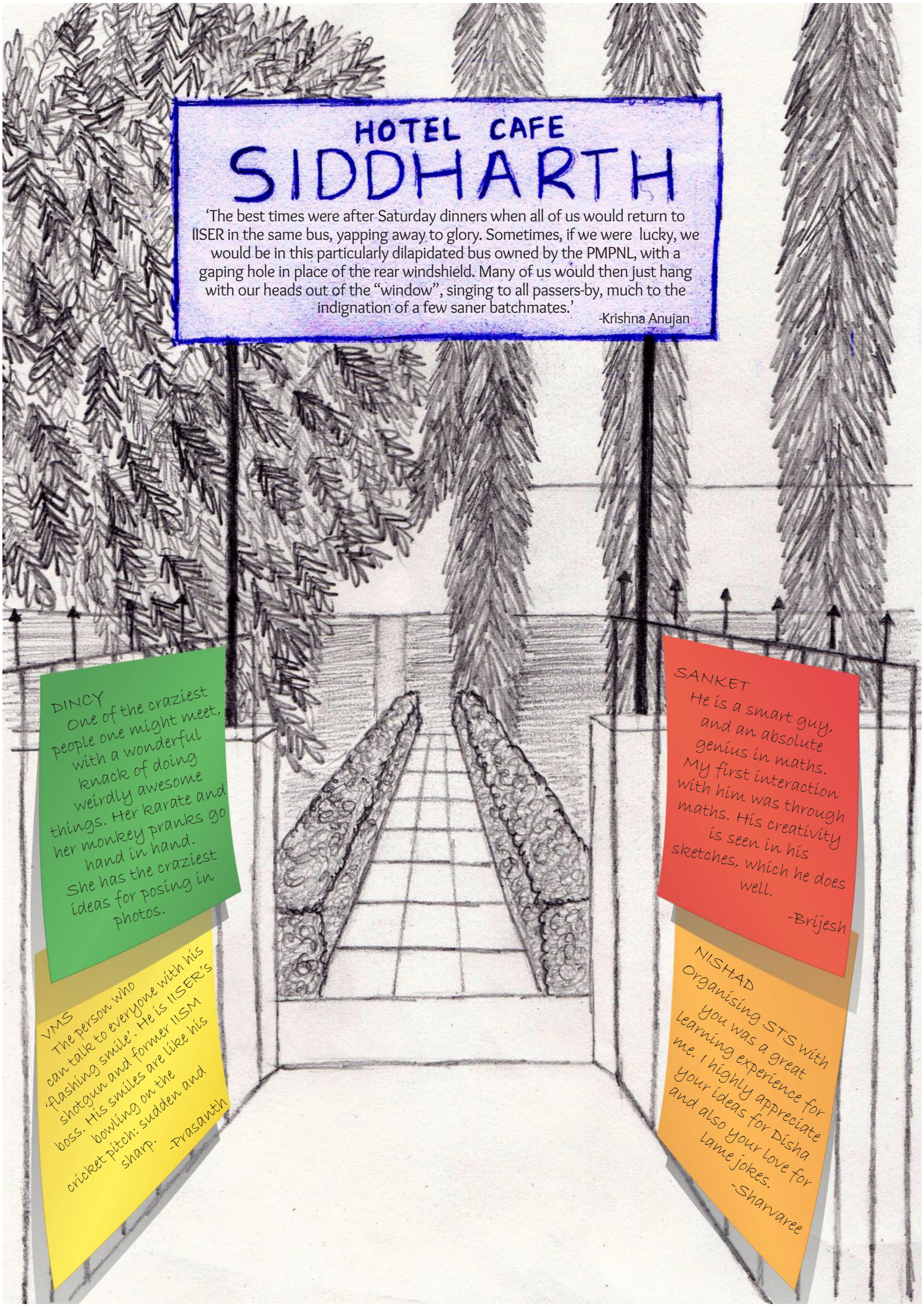
'The last day that we were together in the same room as a batch (for 5th year project counselling), all of us decided to wear the brightest shades of yellow that we owned. Much photographic documentation ensued.'
-Krishna Anujan

'On the day of our last class together, we decided to wear the brightest shades of yellow.'
-Shailendra Kushwaha

URVASHI
A Bollywood buff and an all-time antakshari champion, she knows all Bollywood evergreen songs by heart.
-Ajay Tiwari

SREE VANI
She is an interesting person with an obsession with the totally unrelated subjects of frogs and physics!

MIHIR
He is the astronomer of their batch. We call him entrance exam-cracker (If you know what I mean ;))
-Sujay Mate


HOTEL CAFE
SIDDHARTH
'The best times were after Saturday dinners when all of us would return to IISER in the same bus, yapping away to glory. Sometimes, if we were lucky, we would be in this particularly dilapidated bus owned by the PMPNL, with a gaping hole in place of the rear windshield. Many of us would then just hang with our heads out of the "window", singing to all passers-by, much to the indignation of a few saner batchmates.'
-Krishna Anujan
DINCY
One of the craziest people one might meet, with a wonderful knack of doing weirdly awesome things. Her karate and her monkey pranks go hand in hand. She has the craziest ideas for posing in photos.
SANKET
He is a smart guy, and an absolute genius in maths. My first interaction with him was through maths. His creativity is seen in his sketches, which he does well.
-Brijesh
VMS
The person who can talk to everyone with his 'flashing smile'. He is IISER's shotgun and former IISM boss. His smiles are like his bowling on the cricket pitch: sudden and sharp.
-Prasanth
NISHAD
Organising STS with you was a great learning experience for me. I highly appreciate your ideas for Disha and also your love for lame jokes.
-Sharvaree

'There are a lot of unforgettable moments right from the beginning of my life at IISER- the freshers' party where we performed some movie spoof or danced.'

-Madhusudan Naik

'It has always been fun to be a part of festivities of various regions of the country. Be it Onam or Saraswati Puja, all the festivals are celebrated here, with equal fervour.'

-Abhilesh Dhawanjewar

'Disha gave me a new meaning in life. Getting out of our cocoon to look at the outside world gives us a different perspective and sometimes can be a life changing experience.'

-Nishad Mandlik

'Dressing up for the Masquerade party during Karavaan '14 was memorable. I love last minute ideas. We were not prepared, and we had no costumes.
It was Vishnu's idea!
Why not use some leaves and twigs? They are available in abundance in the campus.
And thus we dressed up and grabbed the prize.'

-Reshma Chandrasekharan

BALA

From asking for dares to propose to random girls to being his official broker for finding him a girlfriend, I'm fortunate enough to have a bro like him! All the philosophy invented while he laid 'flat' in front of the lift will never be forgotten! Nee Thaan Machan!

UTKARSH

Shaurya's backbone (quite literally!), avid moneylender, and one of the most fierce debaters around. His love for trains and missing them is well known, as is his penchant for the 'college guys' phenotype (ZNMD much?).

ARYA

Arya is the sensible and soft spoken one- always working hard. She has a good and different perspective on things, which is very refreshing. The long night chats, making Chemistry Mimamsa questions, and the emotional moments shared with her will be missed equally by everyone.

-Katti, Sohoni

YOVHAN

A cheerful, happy-go-lucky, adorable character, he is a pleasant person to hang out with. He is the coolest senior we know, no wonder we called him YO! He was so cool that he had to join the 'COOL' lab of IISER Pune.

-Neeraja

SURABHI

An amazing person with great love for the music of 'God is an Astronaut', and with an impeccable fashion sense. Her matching earrings, nail-polish, stilettos, and great collection of accessories will be terribly missed.

॥ बालाजी ॥ भेळ

'Another wonderful memory is the night trek
from Katraj to Sinhagad, with several enthusiastic cutlets from
2009, 2010, and 2012 batches.
Climbing and descending several hills, looking like Hobbits
climbing up the Misty Mountains with torchlights,
sunrise found us on a lonely hill, with Sinhagad a couple of hills
away. Exhausted and disappointed, we had to climb down
to a nearby village, eat warm *pohe*
and board a bus back home to IISER.
It had been a lovely night with city lights below
and meteor showers overhead!'

-Krishna Anujan

AYUSH

His birthday became a landmark in batch history, but he didn't stop there. Time and again, Nagar has proved his worth as an entertainer of the masses.

ASWATHY

A highly ambitious and fun person, her forever spic-and-span room reflects the level of her discipline . (We just found our Monica!)

PREETI

Math and math lovers seek her attention, a simple and sweet-hearted senior who is happy to lend books!

'One of my most memorable moments as a batch was the first trek we undertook to Torna fort. About half of our batch along with a few of our seniors went to the mighty fort of Torna on a rainy morning, passing through treacherous routes, lost in the mist, relishing sandwiches outside a temple after having reached the top, soaking wet for most of the trek, but sharing a truly exhilarating experience!'

-Rachana Bhave

MANISH

He is an independent, self confident person and has a positive attitude towards life. He does not unnecessarily worry about work and enjoys life fully. He has the courage to speak the truth and takes responsibility for his mistakes.

-VGA Lab

SHARATH

Sharath is smart, inquisitive, and is a fountain of information on anything and everything. He is always hyperactive and his enthusiasm is truly inspirational. An amazing chemist, he proves to be a great role model and has been a wonderful support system whenever necessary!

-Katti

PRASANJEET

He is one of those few people who is a friend to all and enemy to none. His flair for designing is envious and equally adorable is his penchant for gadgets and gaming. He is always full of life and energy, spreading joy with his infectious smile.

- Sanjana

KRITHIKA

Coming to IISER did nothing to change my opinion of you. You're still the crazy, ever-smiling, helpful 'bulb' with the perfect incapability to tease people. My go-to person if I need cheering up, you are the sister that I never had (much to the chagrin of the one I do have).

-Sruti

NISARG

The long train journeys would have been too boring without his stories: be it those of him wandering in the Himalayas, working with monkeys, or travelling to Ladakh. I respect and envy him for being such a great photographer!

-Sharvaree V

SANTOSH

Unlikely to be spotted easily, high level of concentration in classes are commendable.

AKSHAY

I never thought I'd see the day when Akshay would be called more 'fun' than me. Unfortunately, I did. Also, I'm still convinced that it's his undies that were visible from the old canteen.

'...playing for Shaurya'10, the Kreeda Jung tug-of-war matches, and the throwball and handball games; the 2011 World Cup finals...'

-Krithika VR

'The most exciting occasion was when IISER's first Foundation Day clashed with the India vs Pakistan semi-final of the WC 2011. The admin knew the student turnout wouldn't be great , and so made sure that they wouldn't give the students a reason to walk out of the gates- so labs were closed, the library closed, internet access disrupted, and TVs disconnected. Most people left early in the morning, making sure they wouldn't miss the match. Unfortunately, I was at a conflict of interest with the Kalpa edition being released. It was funny that the chief guest, Dr. CNR Rao, himself seemed to be more interested in the match, asking us for regular updates while he was at the podium. By the end of the ceremony, we were dying to get on with watching the match, having instructed Sanjay Sir to put back everything as soon as possible so that we could watch the match post lunch. And how much more sweet the victory felt at the end of it all.'

-Rachana Bhave

HARIRAM

Thank you for your kind and patient lessons. You taught me that during the darkest of times, not losing hope and staying calm is the key to victory.

-Ajith Nair

'Winning the gold in kho-kho for IISER Pune in IISM.'

-Shailendra Kushwaha

MEGHANA

One brilliant woman it is who I can say is the pioneer of such 'awesomeness' in the English language. Correct only no, it is!

-Kalyanee

MAITREYEE

An easy-going girl with a laid back attitude, she believes in enjoying life to the fullest. She can be extremely hardworking when she takes up responsibility.

AJITH

Don't let the silent exterior scare you off, approach him with any difficulty and he will always try to help you out.

SUJOY
'Glamour' and 'Shammi Kapoor' are just underrated nicknames.
His true genius lies in chemistry and badminton (and invitations thereof!).

NEHA B
The Bora the Neha.
The ultimate account person and super energetic too.
Her gleeful smile has won quite a few hearts!

FARZEENA
She seems to be an introvert at the first glance, but can talk for hours together with a group of people she is comfortable with.

THAMEEZ
You're one of a kind, staying true to the meaning of your name (in Arabic!).
Enjoyed every moment spent with you.

'One of the best memories is going to CCD to watch the India vs Pakistan World Cup 2011 semi-final, on the day of the inauguration of the Mendeleev Block, and the crazy celebration after India won the World Cup.'

-Shiva Chidambaram

'Hitting the winning runs in the final of the IPL for our batch cricket team- Shaurya'10.'

-Siddharth Mohite

'...reaching semi-finals in a 5-a-side football match at COEP and Symbiosis (Jan, 2013)...'

-Anurag Mishra

'Most of the time we wouldn't need to watch matches because the shouts of victory or sudden bouts of silence were enough to tell us what was going on in the match. However, in the last 15 overs or so, the little room would be packed with all the girls in IISER.'

-Rachana Bhave

ABHILESH

Leshu- the show-off dimple boy who owns a fluorescent wardrobe and will always have an aura of Relispray around him due to his continuous love affair with injuries suffered in football. This is the best that this beer-belly boy can be described.

-Kalyanee

RAVINDRA

A silent cartoonist with an obsession with ants. I owe whatever little knowledge I have about ants to you! Your photographs have filled the photography gallery and coloured Kalpa with a myriad of colours of nature.

-Sharvaree

AKASH KRISHNA

The prolific captain and allrounder of the Broken Trebuchets, he is one of the most dependable guys around. His adventures inn love are a subject of common knowledge, as are his and Ajesh's experiments with Photoshop.

ASWATHI

A fun person, she will be remembered for her melodic singing.

ROLLA COSTA

'Birthdays were never exciting for me until I came to IISER. They used to be sobered-down affairs bang in the middle of summer vacation until my first year at IISER.
In my short life there, I was given a personalised Treasure Hunt, a personalised crossword printed on a t-shirt, the world's coolest boxers and the best handpainted laptop cover ever!
I feel loved here!'

-Krishna Anujan

'...celebrating birthdays by cracking eggs on the B'day boy and wearing pink on Arya's birthday because she hates pink...'

-Dipeshwari Shewale

'The Nano-party my friends threw for me with tiny bakkerwadis, cherry tomatoes, and shots of Frooti in 1.5ml eppendorfs! It was quite a surprise and happened when I was freaking out about what to do for the quiz the next day.'

-Arya Thampi

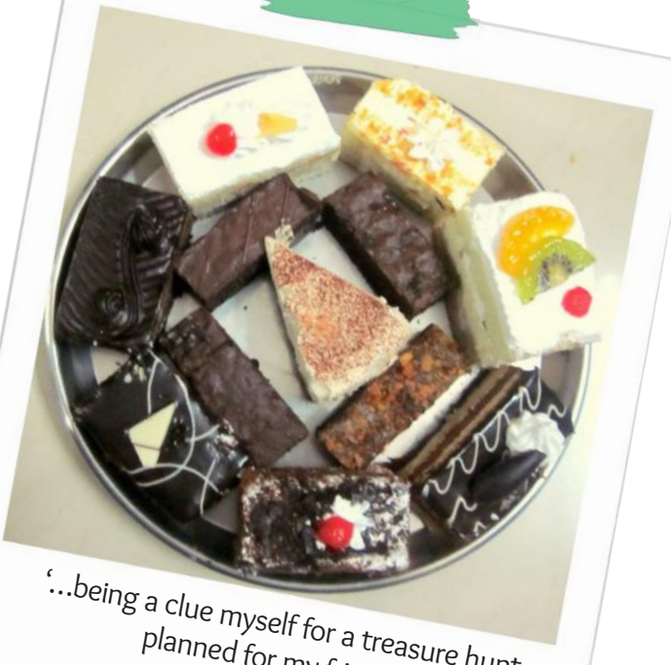
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

'A good birthday is where you get kicked by your friends, but is too much kicking good? Poor Pandu got kicked 3 times by all of us, lost his hope of cutting cake and finally when the kicking ritual got over, made a face that no one can forget. Out of sympathy yes, we did give him the cake.'

-Himanshu Rajmane

'Birthday celebrations and going out together was a lot of fun; the birthdays for which we had to convince the guards to let us party even though the lady guard upstairs was upset.'

-Ayush Nagar



'...being a clue myself for a treasure hunt planned for my friend's birthday...'

-Arya Thampi

'Our first batch anniversary which was on 8th of August 2011 was the best of all. We went to some restaurant in Kothrud for dinner and people who I never imagined could do a dance move, did the Helicopter!'

-Dincy Mariyam

SOURAV

You always inspire me with your indomitable spirit for life and physics. You are a perfectionist, be it in the kitchen or while composing music. Learnt a lot cooking together and preparing for Jhankaar Beats with Krithika and Harsha, which we won the first time! It has been an amazing journey till now.

-Anandita Dey

GOLU

A true sportsperson. Name a sport and he is good at it already. Golu is an inspiring example of modesty and sincerity that every sportsman needs to possess in order to succeed in any race.

-Kalyanee, Prasanth

RACHANA

Kalpa would never hold any meaning to me if it wasn't for her and somewhere I owe this Kalpa to her. She has a knack for being nice to every person and still getting her work done. I am convinced she used some magic on us during those Kalpa '13 days. Her ideas and passion for Kalpa, art, and people are commendable. This tiny space isn't enough to describe her wonderfulness!

-Harini

SAUDAMINI

I vividly remember the time when we came to you asking for books and you told us, 'Chill out people, it's just your first week here' and we ended up chatting for hours. I am grateful that you have always been there to guide me in my tough times, be it Kalpa or SPIC MACAY.

-Sharvaree V

ABHISHEK

Ever-smiling with a carefree attitude, he has never ceased to amaze us. He is capable of rationalising every situation and balances out the group. Mishra, you have made those post-drama club sessions a lot more fun with your witty statements.

-The Drama Club.

AJESH
Popularly known as the 'Silent Gyani' of the AG lab, Ajesh is extremely caring and helpful. This innocent Kochi freak's neuronal circuits are wired towards cooking!

SHAILENDRA
'Sahi hai bey!' : The first words that come to mind when I think about him. His ever-present smile and happy-go-lucky attitude can lift the mood of even the most demoralised person (except for when exams are around!).

JOCINTH
'Style Guru' of the 2010 batch, his never-ending tryst with his hair leaves many a people ashamed of their unkempt hair. Add to that the 'chill dude' walking style and here you have an incarnation of the Casanova himself.

SAINATH
'The man with all the elegant algorithms.' We are grateful to you for your 'lessons', your constant support and help in all our endeavors, and of course your stories. -Ajith, Visakh

We live at night!

'...night-time badminton matches outside HR-4 till the warden pushed the girls in; handball- our invention (though not the authentic one)- we played this game almost every other night for more than a year; chats at the (never working) fountain in front of the guest house...'
-Urvashi Gupta

'...overnight series of AOE and CS matches!'
-Anurag Mishra

'Sleepless nights spent in the name of Sentience, and Mimamsa; haggling with the security to let us stay beyond 2 AM (there was a time when we were not allowed to have meetings going on after 2 AM).'
-Neha M

'...playing ludicrous games like "Consequences" often with hilarious consequences; watching Anurag and Abhishek convince Rachana and Sauda that they were depressed!'
-Poortata Lalwani

'Those late night sappy girly talks with my roomie Saudamini, those times we spent trying to figure things out the night before exams, and the Friday night 'ritual' Niharika and I started in our fourth year (Sadly, Arya abandoned us in this venture over time).'
-Surabhi Jirapure

'The most memorable moment for me was the night before the TIFR exam. We were extremely bored and fed up of studying. Then we suddenly made a plan to go out for a movie. We enjoyed it so much. It felt as if we were done with all our exams.'
-Aswathi Ashok

'Kalpa 2012, of all Kalpas, will be the closest to my heart. The number of sleepless nights we had having forgone food; so much so that Prof. Mohanan decided to take us for lunch at 4:00 PM! The rambling I subjected my juniors and batch-mates to in that sleep deprived state, complaining endlessly about the 'dog english' people wrote in. The reading room at HR-4 was our haven for a month, urging- rather, begging- people to write. And how for weeks we would show Ambika Ma'am just that one section again and again, and she would still be assured that we would manage to do this work after all. I know that if not anything, I can definitely try and work in a publishing house.'

-Rachana Bhave

'Life talks with Krishna before exams. Making people understand concepts (one at a time) for two hours a day before exams only and finding out that that part wasn't even taught in class (ODE).'

-Neha Bora

'The moment when after months of hard-work and sleepless nights, Kalpa 2012 was finally ready to be printed.'

-Prasenjeet Kawale

GANDRU

Gandru is the sacred Tirupati boy, with an ultra big fan following at IISER and a not-so-gentlemanly attitude. This boy is particularly known for his fake 'Sponsorship/Band cancellation and equipment damage' calls a night before Karavaan started, completely freaking out the core committee members. How inhumane is that!

PRARABDHA

Caring, responsible, hard working, and polite. It is impossible to anger her inspite of all the silly antics that we pulled. With the perfect amount of dedication, she might just be the perfect senior (read, mentor). Thank you for making the SPIC MACAY experience one to treasure.

-Sruti, Saket

POORTATA

Making weird statements and adding her own logic to them is her speciality. Your expressions and your 'mandir zyada, aspatal kam...' dialogue, those practice sessions for our 'still on paper' play will always be in our memories. Somewhere you brought us all together and we are grateful.

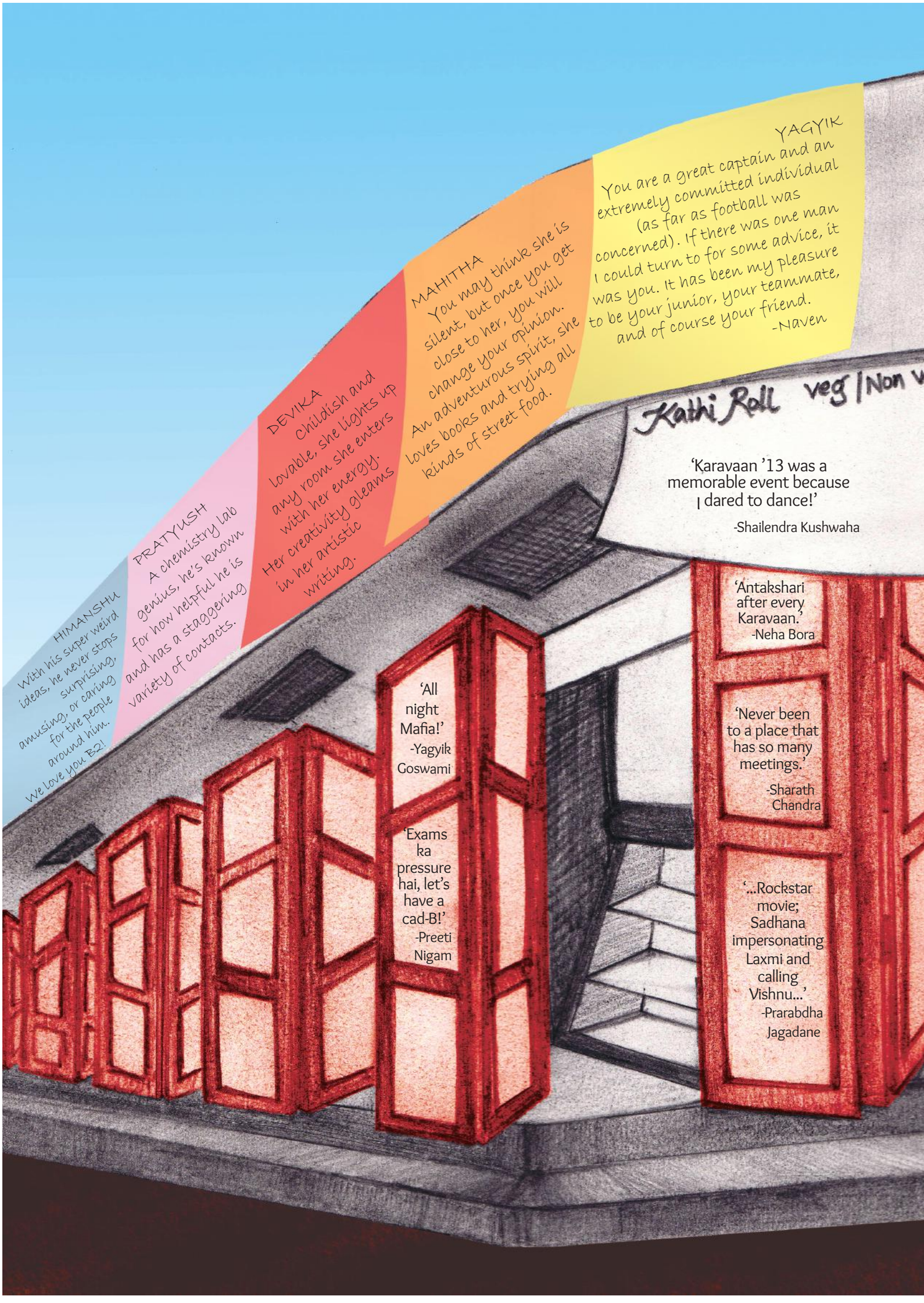
-The Drama Club

REVATI

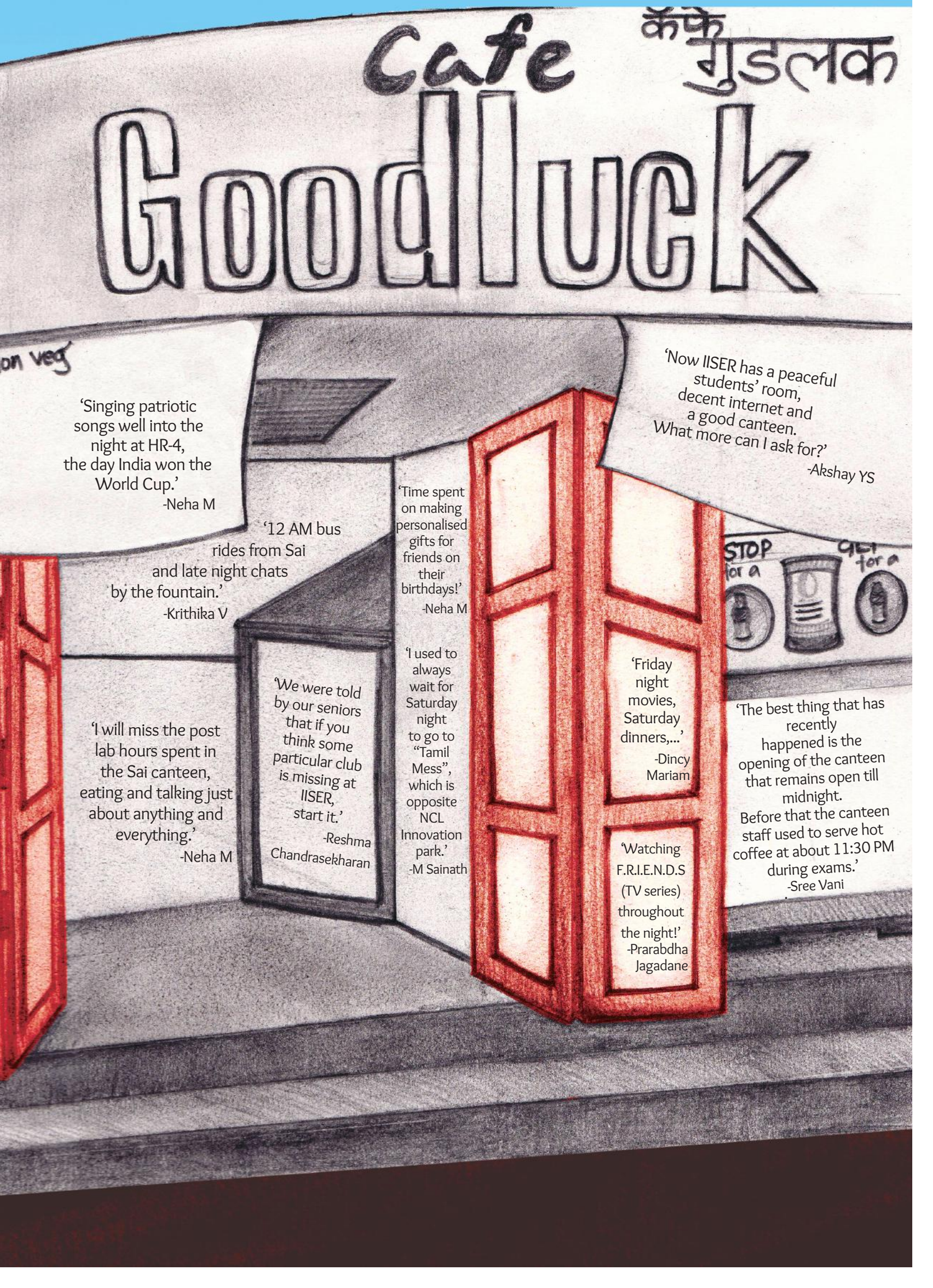
The girl with a Sony HXR MC1500 P (video camera), who never says no when it comes to recording; be it Talk for Twenty, Karavaan, or any guest lecture! You have helped us relive many memorable events of IISER.

NITHEESH K

I have seen people singing in dual voice, but never expected someone to sing in both a male and female voice. You never cease to amaze me. Also, I have heard you say, 'I don't care' more than anything else. I wonder if you are ever serious at all.


YAGYIK
You are a great captain and an extremely committed individual (as far as football was concerned). If there was one man I could turn to for some advice, it was you. It has been my pleasure to be your junior, your teammate, and of course your friend.
-Naven
MAHITHA
You may think she is silent, but once you get close to her, you will change your opinion. An adventurous spirit, she loves books and trying all kinds of street food.
DEVIKA
Childish and lovable, she lights up any room she enters with her energy. Her creativity gleams in her artistic writing.
PRATYUSH
A chemistry lab genius, he's known for how helpful he is and has a staggering variety of contacts.
HIMANSHU
With his super weird ideas, he never stops amusing, or caring for the people around him.
We Love you B2!
Kathi Roll veg / Non
'Karavaan '13 was a memorable event because I dared to dance!'
-Shailendra Kushwaha
'Antakshari after every Karavaan.'
-Neha Bora
'Never been to a place that has so many meetings.'
-Sharath Chandra
'...Rockstar movie; Sadhana impersonating Laxmi and calling Vishnu...'
-Prarabdha Jagadane
'All night Mafia!'
-Yagyik Goswami
'Exams ka pressure hai, let's have a cad-B!'
-Preeti Nigam

Cafe कॅफे गुडलक Goodluck



NIHARIKA

Whenever I meet her I'm always struck by how unassuming and genuinely nice she is.
Eternally cheerful, she instantly puts you at ease and is always ready to help out in any way she can.

ANURAG

A hardcore Real Madrid fan, this footballer is one of the 'seniors' who never seemed like one. Though his judgemental attitude can sometimes get on your nerves, his advice and help is always useful and not 'mainstream'. He will be missed for all the Monday night quizzes and the football practices!
-Omkar

SUKRUTI

A highly meticulous and dedicated person with principles. I have sat down and wondered how you have managed to be so diligent about everything you do.
-Sharvaree V

SIDDHARTH

The nicest guy we have met. You are one of the sweetest and most caring guys that we know of. Your funny statements and smiles will always remain in our hearts.
-The Drama Club

PADMAJA

A cute cartoon character, she is the go-to person for a plate of maggi as her 'maggi skills' are well known.

Of Krishna, Kshiti, and (K)neha

Here we pen a tearful adieu,
to those sentient beings who guided us through,
hoards of commas, idioms, and phrases,
once each time the moon phases.

With these OCD, enthu-cutlet geeks,
we wouldn't mind a few extra weeks,
so go, but don't go; miss you as we may,
we wish you luck as you go your way.

Quillingly yours,
Radhika, Shruti, and Ashwini

'...a fit of giggles, some great advice, and a few heart-warming moments. These moments have now rolled into years shaping them into one long, crazy, bumpy but beautiful journey. It has been a privilege to have known all of you! So long seniors, until we meet again.'

Sab Moh
Maya Hai!