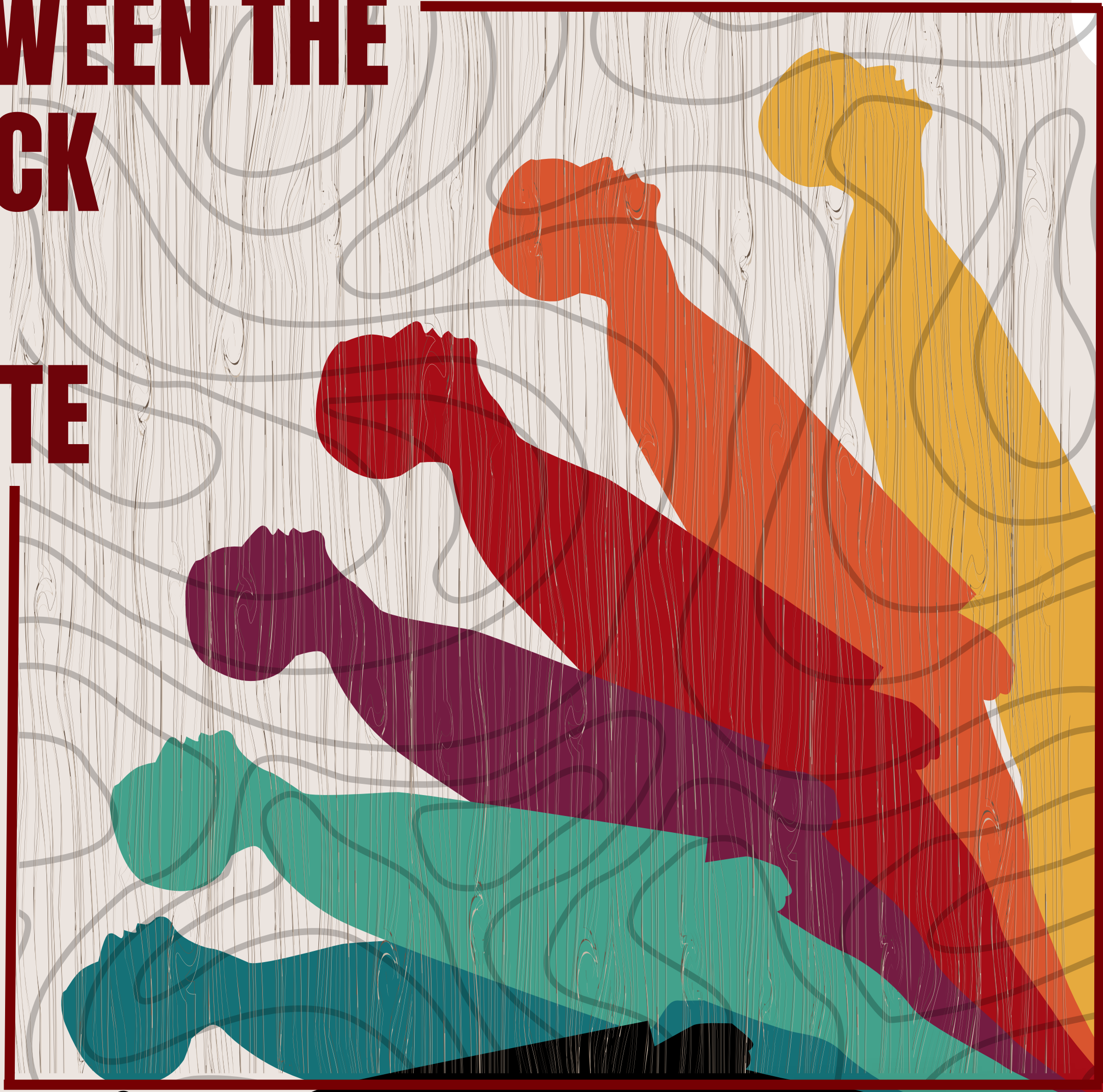


ALYSSUM'24

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT MAGAZINE

**BETWEEN THE
BLACK
AND
WHITE**



FIRST EDITION



ALYSSUM

THE LITERARY MAGAZINE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL BOARD	I
NOTE FROM THE TIC	II

EVENTS

SEMINARS	2
EPIPHANEIA	7
THEATRE FEST	16
PIAZZA	20

BETWEEN THE BLACK AND WHITE	22
CONCEPT NOTE	23
SUBMISSIONS	24

GENERAL SUBMISSIONS	33
----------------------------------	-----------

BRICOLAGE’S GALLERY	42
----------------------------------	-----------

The

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The Editorial

Bricolage, the English Literary Society of Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, is proud to present the first issue of the English Department magazine – Alyssum, a sanctuary for the blossoming of literary talent and the cultivation of artistic expression. Just as the delicate petals of the Alyssum flower unfurl, we aim to provide a platform for writers to unfurl their creativity, explore the depths of human experience, and weave narratives that resonate with the soul.

Every voice in the literary garden has a distinct color and aroma to offer. Regardless of your skill level, Alyssum is here to support your development and honour the variety of literary expressions. The thoughts of creative nonfiction, the vivid strokes of prose, the whispers of short tales, and the sonnets of poetry can all be found inside our pages.

Alyssum strives to be more than just a literary publication; it intends to be a community, a meeting spot for people who share a passion for stories and language. We invite you to interact with other writers, offer suggestions and analysis, and encourage one another as you go through this process of introspection and artistic inquiry. From young Edgar Allan Poe to devotees of Keats, you will find a tapestry of voices – voices that echo across generations, across cultures, in the pages of Alyssum.

“I am rooted, but I flow”. With this thought by Virginia Woolf, let us embark on this literary odyssey together. Let us rejoice in the diversity of voices that comprise the human chorus and let us bravely and resolutely sing our songs, believing that literature has the capacity to shine a light on even the darkest recesses of our hearts and minds.

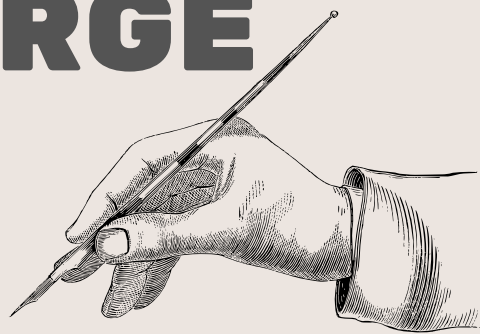
Therefore, dear reader, we cordially invite you to accompany us on this exploration of the limitless potential of the verbal (through the written word) as well as the visual – the flowers of literary expression that we are cultivating within the pages of Alyssum.

With creativity and solidarity,
Yours
Vaishnavi Mishra
President, Bricolage



“Freedom would be not to choose between black and white but to abjure such prescribed choices.”

NOTE FROM THE TEACHER-IN-CHARGE



As the flowers of spring 2024 bid adieu to let the blazing summer sun have its turn, Alyssum bloomed and materialized as another *pièce de résistance* in the life of Bricolage, the English Literary Society of Shaheed Bhagat Singh College. Catering to the thirst for knowledge of burgeoning posterity, this magazine aims to be a bridge in linking distinct schools of thought across time and space. There is an inherent ability in human beings to learn. Our patterns of growth and evolution root themselves in the conditioning and enhancement of our minds through acquiring knowledge and human sensibilities.

The plethora of programs and initiatives undertaken by the department along with the avenues of cultural platforms, forums, and innovative perspectives underline the credibility, potential and talent of Bricolage.

Ironically, the supposed irrelevance, disdain, and inutility of English literature are juxtaposed with the growing significance of the English language. As winds of change engulf us in their whirls of wisdom and experience throughout life, hope and colour often spring from unexpected and at times indeterminate spaces, like a wildflower. In light of this reality, this edition – on ‘Between the Black and White’ – is an indispensable one at this crucial juncture.

The department magazine is an endeavor to showcase the intellectual and creative prowess of our students and faculty that constructs itself into the strength of ideas and thoughts that are varied, contemporary, innovative, and revolutionary.

This first edition of Alyssum too successfully captures the views and articulations of our creative minds, and I hope that they will provide sufficient food for thought to the readers. This magazine is an outlet for reactions and responses to the current and crucial societal issues, and to express the contributors’ dormant capabilities and aesthetic sensibilities. As a literary society, we constantly strive to enable students to be truly critical, enlightened, and liberated.

Dr. S. Varadharaj
TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

EVENTS 2023-24



SEMINARS



EPIPHANEIA



THEATRE



PIAZZA



INAUGURAL LECTURE SERIES

SHAKESPEARE AND INDIAN THEATRE

The Seminar and Conference Committee, operating under the auspices of Bricolage, proudly inaugurated its lecture series on October 11.

Dr. Vikram Singh Thakur, Assistant Professor at the school of Letters, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi, delivered an enlightening discourse titled “Shakespeare and Indian Theatre”. The event commenced at 11 am in the dignified setting of the C-5 seminar room, drawing eager participants and enthusiasts alike, in person as well as on YouTube.

The talk mapped the relevance of reading William Shakespeare in the Indian context, and showcased how the politics of performance in the Indian theatre gets weaved with the literary works of the celebrated playwright.

**October 11
2023**



DR. VIKRAM SINGH THAKUR

Dr. Vikram Singh Thakur holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Hyderabad. He has been teaching literature at the School of Letters, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi since 2011.

His research interests are eclectic and vary from Drama, Theatre and Performance, Shakespeare Studies, Postcolonial Literatures, Partiton Studies to Sufi Poetry.





Poetry Competition



An inter-departmental poetry competition took place on 6th March, 2024 on the theme, “Plural Cultural Heritage: India’s Varied Mix, Unity’s Fix, Cultures Blend, Harmony’s Trend”.



Students from multitudinous disciplines expressed their appreciation for the country and its diversity through wonderfully weaved poetry in Hindi and English. Judges of the event comprised of faculty members from the departments of English and Hindi.

VIKSIT BHARAT

DE-CANONIZING THEORY, JUNŪN-IZING CANON

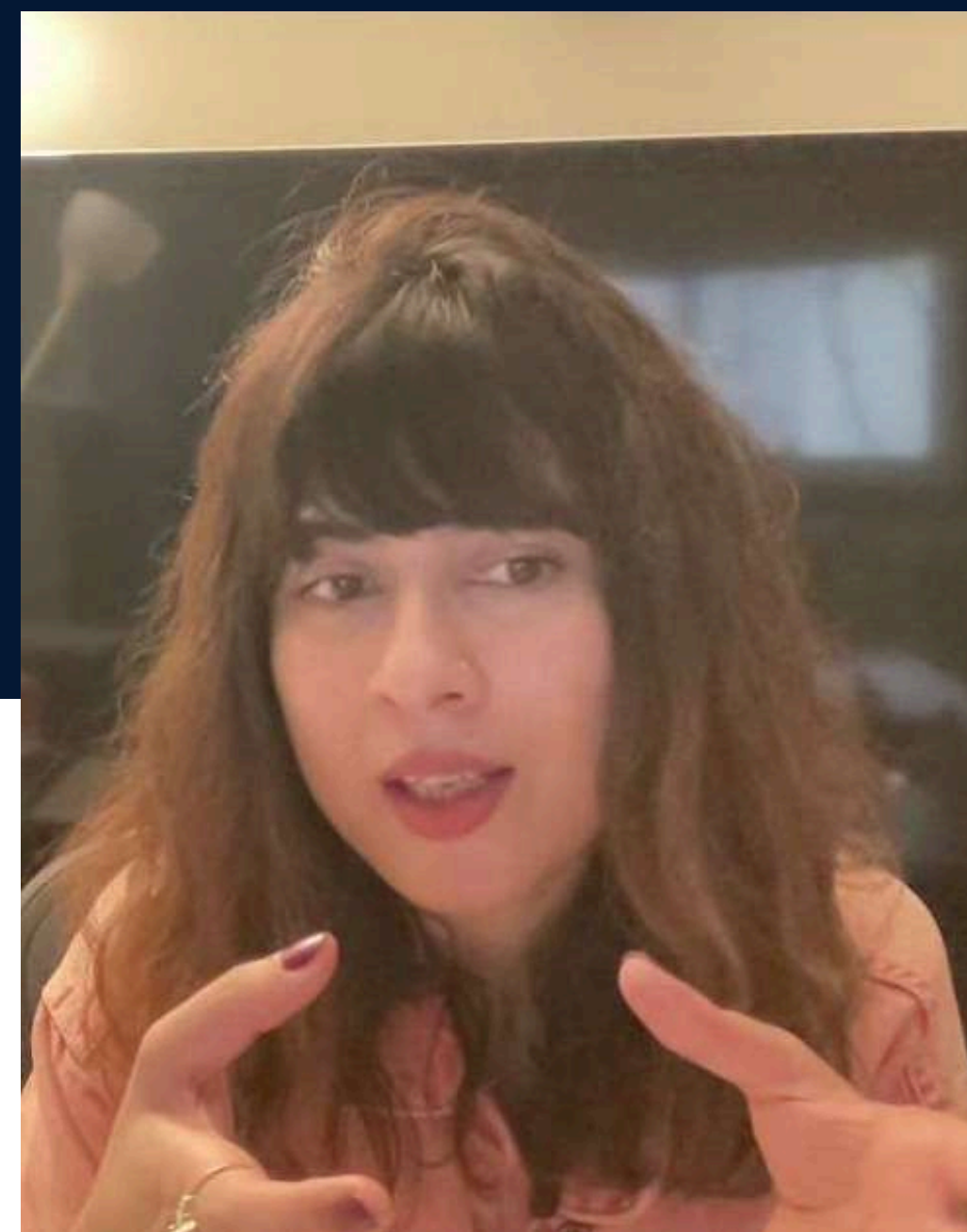
Online Lecture



On November 10, 2023 an engaging online lecture was organised 3:30 pm onwards.

Dr. Divya Dwivedi, Associate Professor at IIT Delhi, was invited as the guest speaker. She captivated the audiences with her presentation titled "De-canonizing Theory, Junūn-izing Canon." The virtual platform facilitated widespread participation, fostering intellectual exchange beyond physical boundaries.

Her talk illustrated how canons, as functional isolations to create identities are not essential to theory.



It proposed that neither canon not *theoria* are exclusively colonial, but have homologies in qanūn, which reveal the junūn of canons or their passion for polynomia or multiple laws.

Divya Dwivedi teaches Philosophy and Literature. She is the co-author of *Gandhi and Philosophy: On Theological Anti-Politics* (Bloomsbury Academic, London: 2019). She is the editor of *Virality of Evil* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022); co-editor of *Narratology and Ideology: Negotiating Context, Form and Theory in Postcolonial Narratives* (Ohio State UP, 2018) which is a narratological investigation into the ideological conditions of postcolonial theory; and of *The Public Sphere From Outside the West* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

Dwivedi has been elected as Executive Council Member of the International Society for the Study of Narrative (ISSN) in 2022. She was an elected member of the Committee on Literary Theory, International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) in June 2017. She was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Fictionality Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark in 2013 & 2014.

SEMINAR ON DALIT WRITING



Prof. Raj Kumar joined the Department of English in 1999 and became a professor in 2014. His research focuses on autobiographical writing, Dalit literature, Indian writing in English, Odia literature, and post-colonial studies. He has published extensively in academic journals and authored several books, including *Dalit Personal Narratives* and *Dalit Literature and Criticism*. Prof. Kumar is also a translator, bringing Odia literature to a wider audience through his English translations.

March 6, 2024, witnessed a significant seminar titled "Dalit Writing as an Alternative Literary Historiography of India." Esteemed scholar Prof. Raj Kumar, from the Department of English, University of Delhi, delivered a thought-provoking discourse. Hosted in the esteemed C-5 seminar room, the event commenced at 12 noon, attracting a diverse audience keen on exploring alternative narratives in literary discourses.



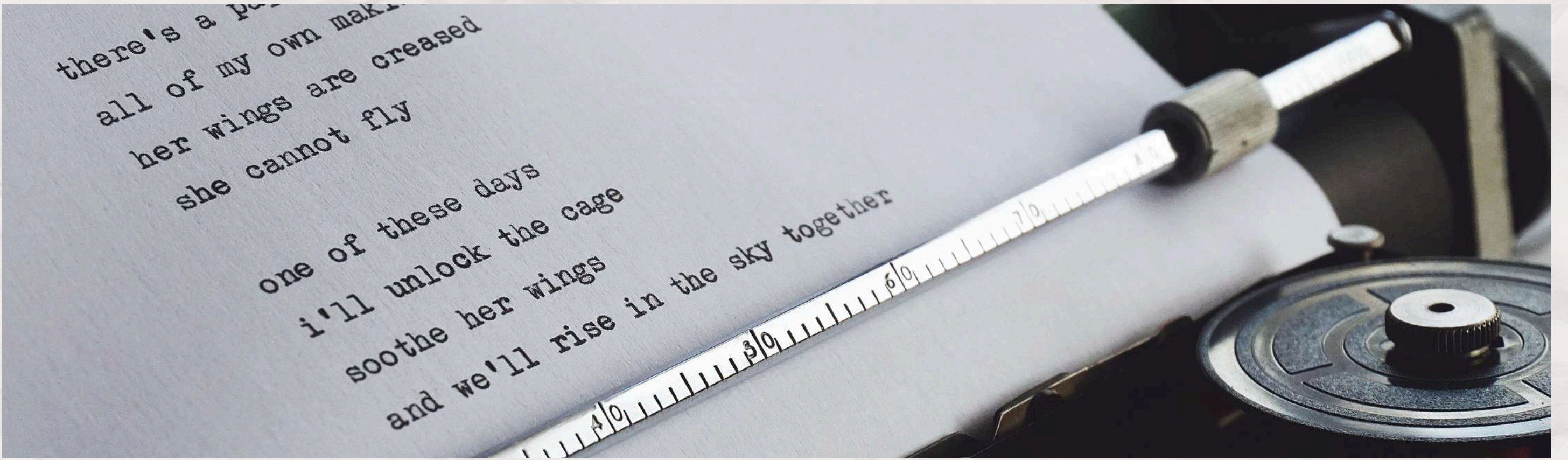
**March 6
2024**

Epiphaneia welcomed students to celebrate the timeless art of adaptations. From classic novels to modern masterpieces, participants were implored to explore the infinite possibilities of storytelling through insightful talks, engaging sessions and exciting events under the prism of literary and cinematic adaptations.



2024 EPIPHANEA

SCREENWRITING WORKSHOP



The scene of screenwriting is like a closed book in our sight. To open this book, Bricolage organized the workshop, “Introduction to Screenwriting” by filmmaker and media trainer Ms. Kavita Joshi, who took us through the intricacies of screenplay composition.



Kavita Joshi is an alumnus of FTII Pune and has been working as an independent filmmaker and media trainer. Her series of five works based in Manipur deals with women's protests for justice and peace.



This year, as part of Epiphaneia '24, our literary quiz LITRIVIA, was held on the theme - Adaptations. Since this precious knowledge is rarely (if ever!) appreciated by our parents or in the walls of classrooms, winners were rewarded with the Holy Grail of capitalism - cash prizes!

LITRIVIA



THROUGH THE LOOKING LENS

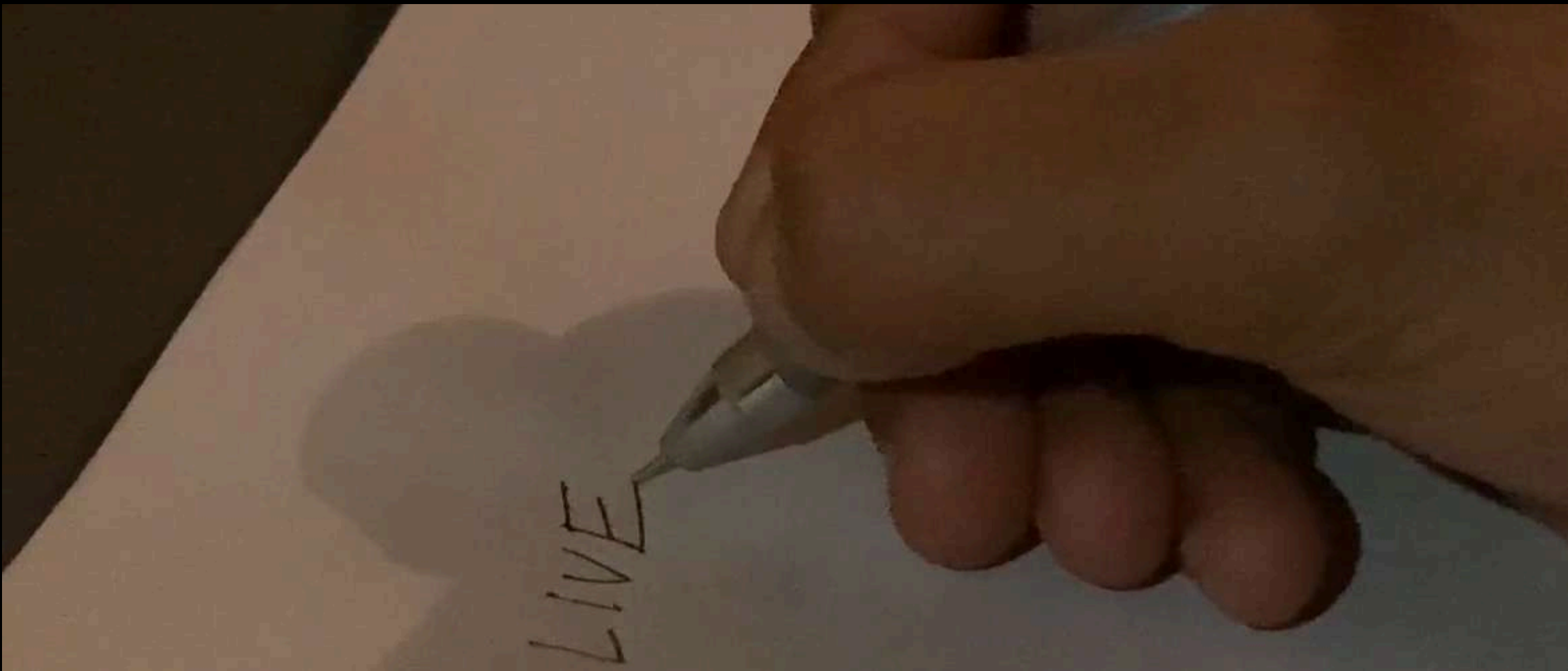
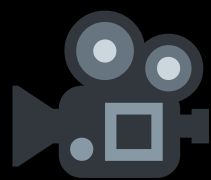
“A book is a film that takes place
in the mind of the reader.”

-Paulo Coelho

Whether it's a classic tale or a
contemporary twist, adaptations
have danced through genres and
enchanted audiences with their
cinematic magic.

A Short Film Making
Competition titled ‘Through the
Looking Lens’ was organised
under Epiphaneia where we
brought literature to life through
the lens of short films!

STILLS FROM SHORT FILM MAKING EVENT



“A book cover is a distillation. It is a haiku of the story.”
-Chip Kidd

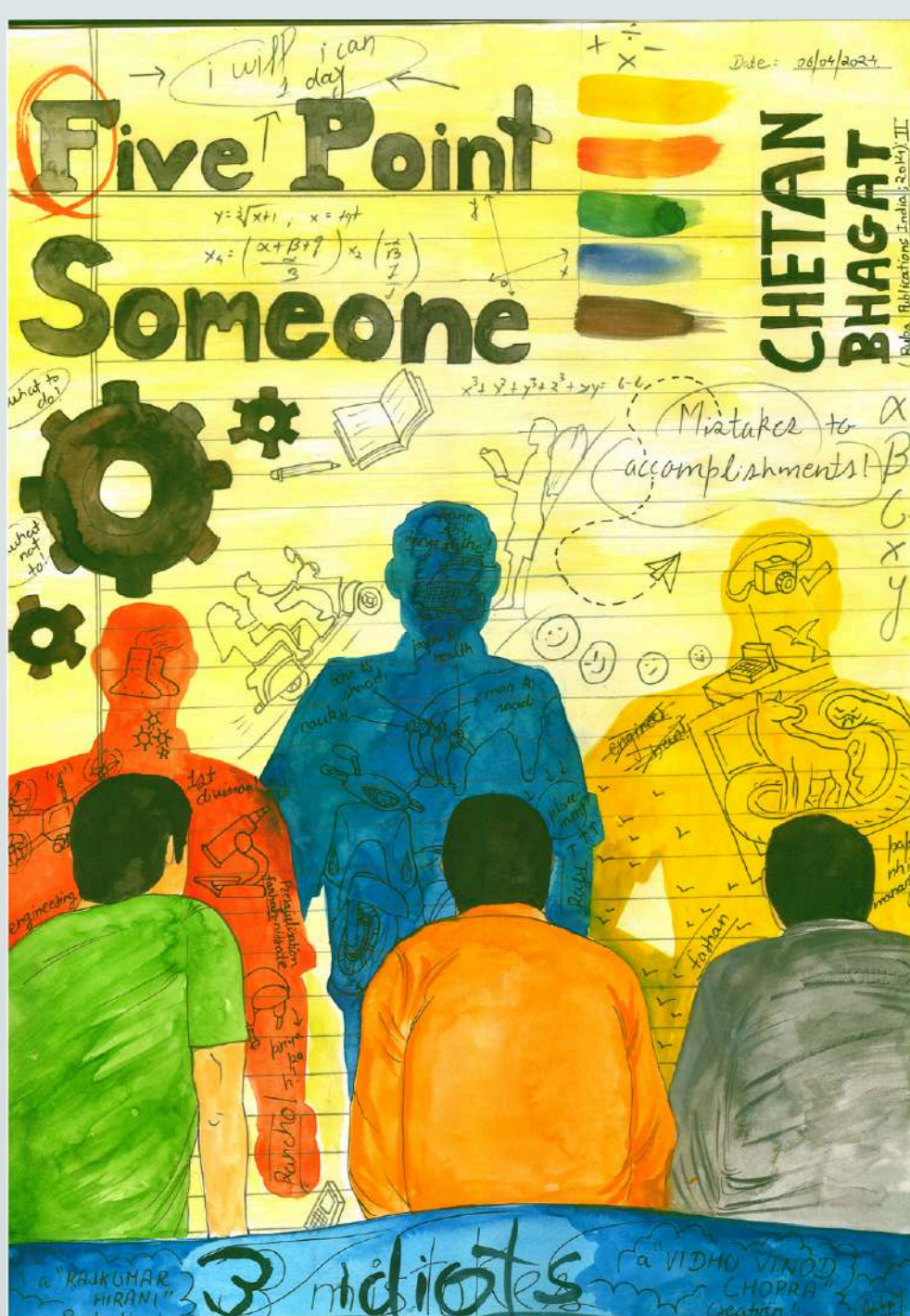
A poster making competition was organised to give students from different colleges a chance of utilising their ideas, creativity and skills to design their own book covers and movie posters following the theme ‘Literature and Cinema’.



~SHIVANI SHARMA



~KARAN SINGH



~ADITYA YADAV

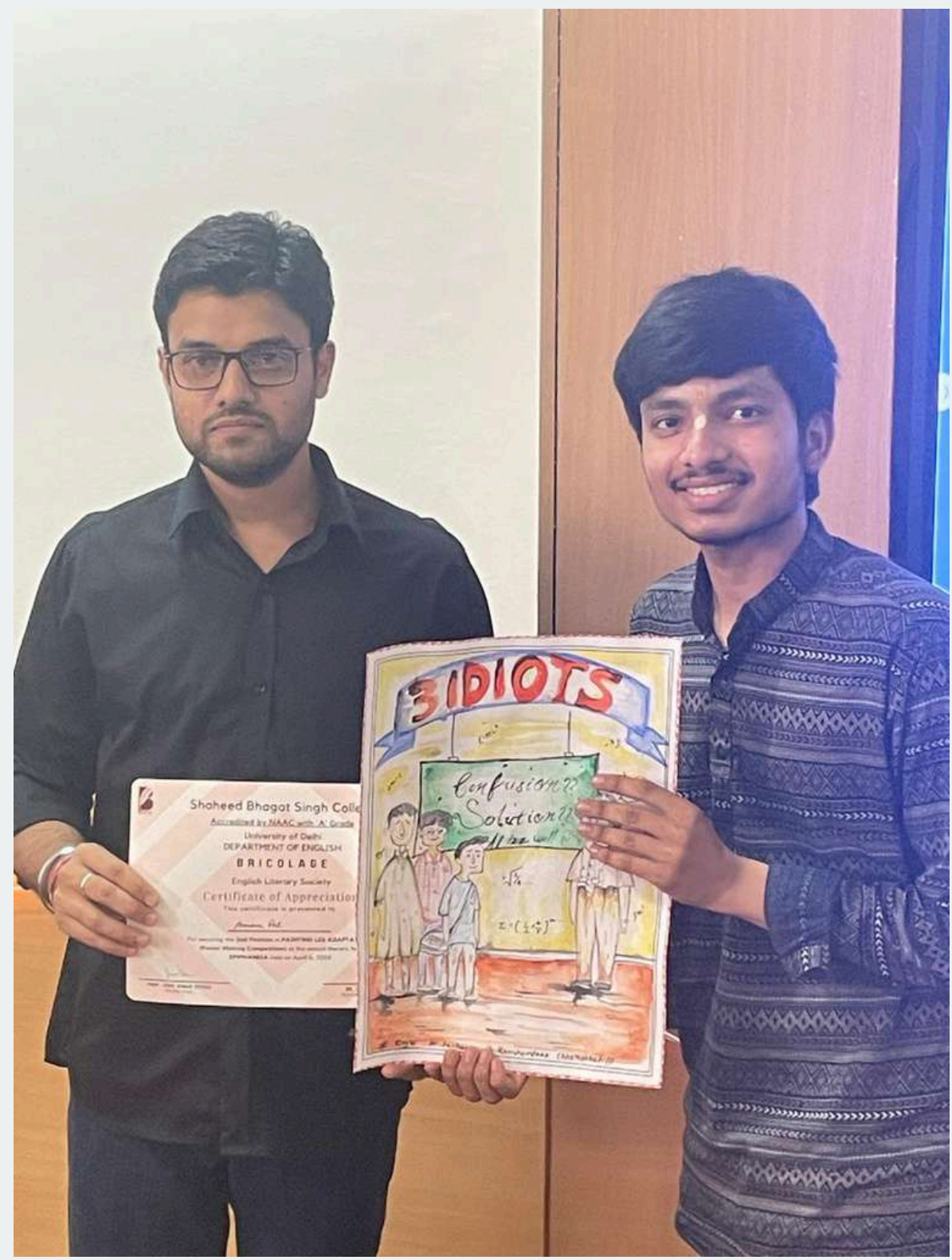


~ADITYA CHAUDHARY

WINNERS



1st Prize: Shivani Sharma



2nd Prize: Aman Pal



3rd Prize: Unnati Gupta

FRAMES AND PHRASES

CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

"Create with the heart; build with the mind."

~Criss Jami

BOARD GAME OF MARRIAGE

I live in a world that looks like a chess board
With black and white squares
Invaluable pawns being pushed to get sacrificed
With valuable dormant king residing in castled position.

What part to the king play
To save? Or to get saved?

We all talk about the king in power,
For which the knight prepares the fork
To wipe off the opponent piece one by one,
But one remains silent about the players of show
One whose mind controls and calculatedly plots
each moves to let the other down.
It's the silent player who steals the show.

Do I see the miniature of the world I live in ?
Meek being unwilling pushed,
Jokers putting up the puppet show
Clowns dancing all around with their painted face
Opponents deciding which opening to play,
You play the 'Sicilian' which surpasses my simple
'E4-E5'

You and I play the same game too.
Each moves scientifically planned in order,
Predicting the others move.
We call ourselves lovers
But are we without politics?

I feel like that of a knight who has a freedom to move,
Only Two and a half, I guess.
You are the grandmaster
With strings of control in your hand.

You bring me lavender only when it fits you
I bleed like that of a forked piece and
Find no escape on the either side;
Entrapped in an illusionary world.

Everyday we play this game
Putting up the façade of happy marriage.
Your presence smothers me
And puts me in a stalemate position.
Your each approaching step fills me with terror
Pushes me into the corner
With no escape and,
finally puts the game to end
When you slowly smirk and whisper, "Honey,
checkmate!"

-Ahana Biswas





MIRRORS AND SPIRALS

The shattering glass
The spiralling stairs
The crooked panes
They call your name.
You pick a piece
Pierce your heart
Loose your footing
Roll down the path.
A trickling stream
A solid shard
A pale shroud
And frozen hearts.
Scrambling screens
Mirror your past.
Glass, bugs
His hands and palm.
Square or triangle
It circles your thoughts
That box of hidden threads
Splashes all about.
Trickle by trickle
Each thread weaves.

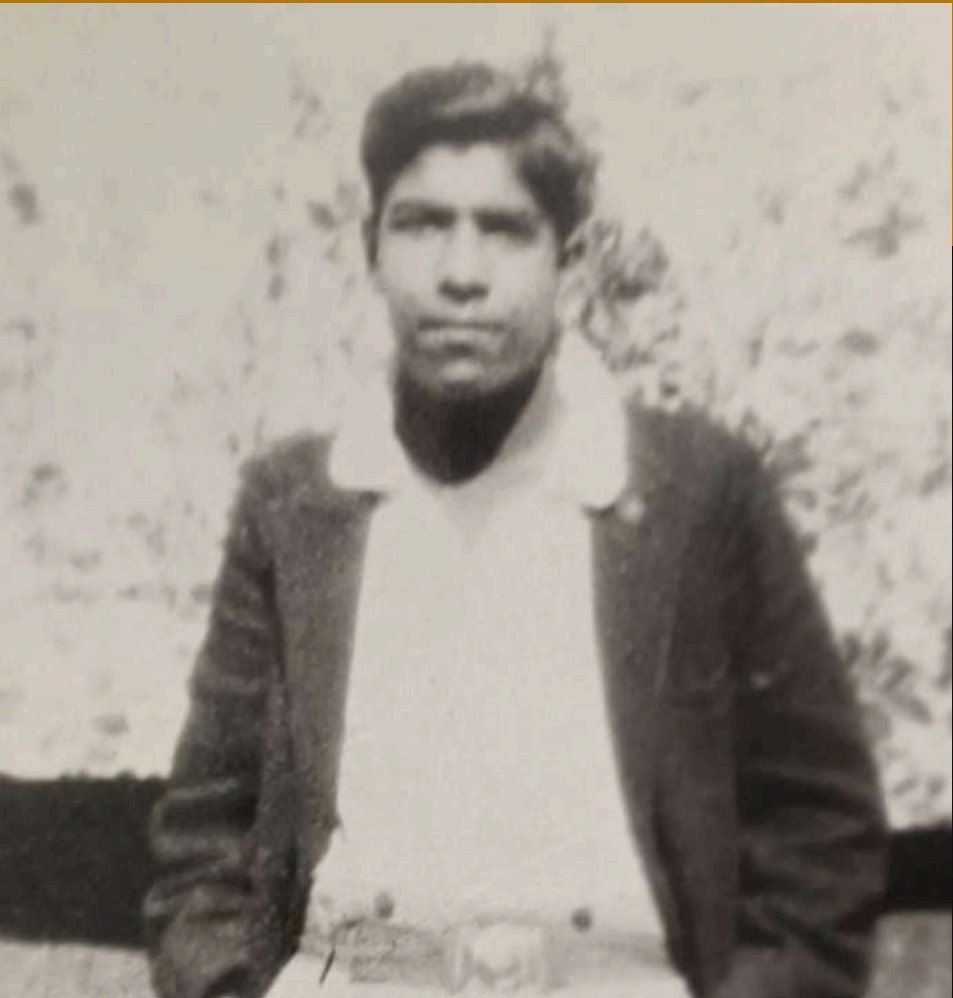
The pale shroud
It crusty no long.
The mirroring mirror
Mirrors your dreams,
The ones you had
In your mother's embrace.
Backyards, stars
And shiny scenes
They call your name
Inside that circled screen.
The shattering glass
The spiralling stairs
The crooked panes
They call your name.
Return to them
And pick a piece
Another piece, then
Another piece.
Collect them all,
Open the lid.
Dump those shards
And return to your mother's embrace

-Vaanshi Agarwal

JOHN
LEONARD
ISAACS



The John Leonard Isaacs Theatre Festival was an exciting day full of powerful and magical performances.



We are grateful to Prof. Rebeiro, who served Shaheed Bhagat Singh College from 1967-2004 and the University of Delhi from 1961 to 2021 for his generous endowment to our institution. He has served on several boards, and expert committees in a 60-year academic and professional career, spanning 4 continents.

THEATRE FESTIVAL

APRIL 29, 2024
C. D. DESHMUKH AUDITORIUM, INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, NEW DELHI



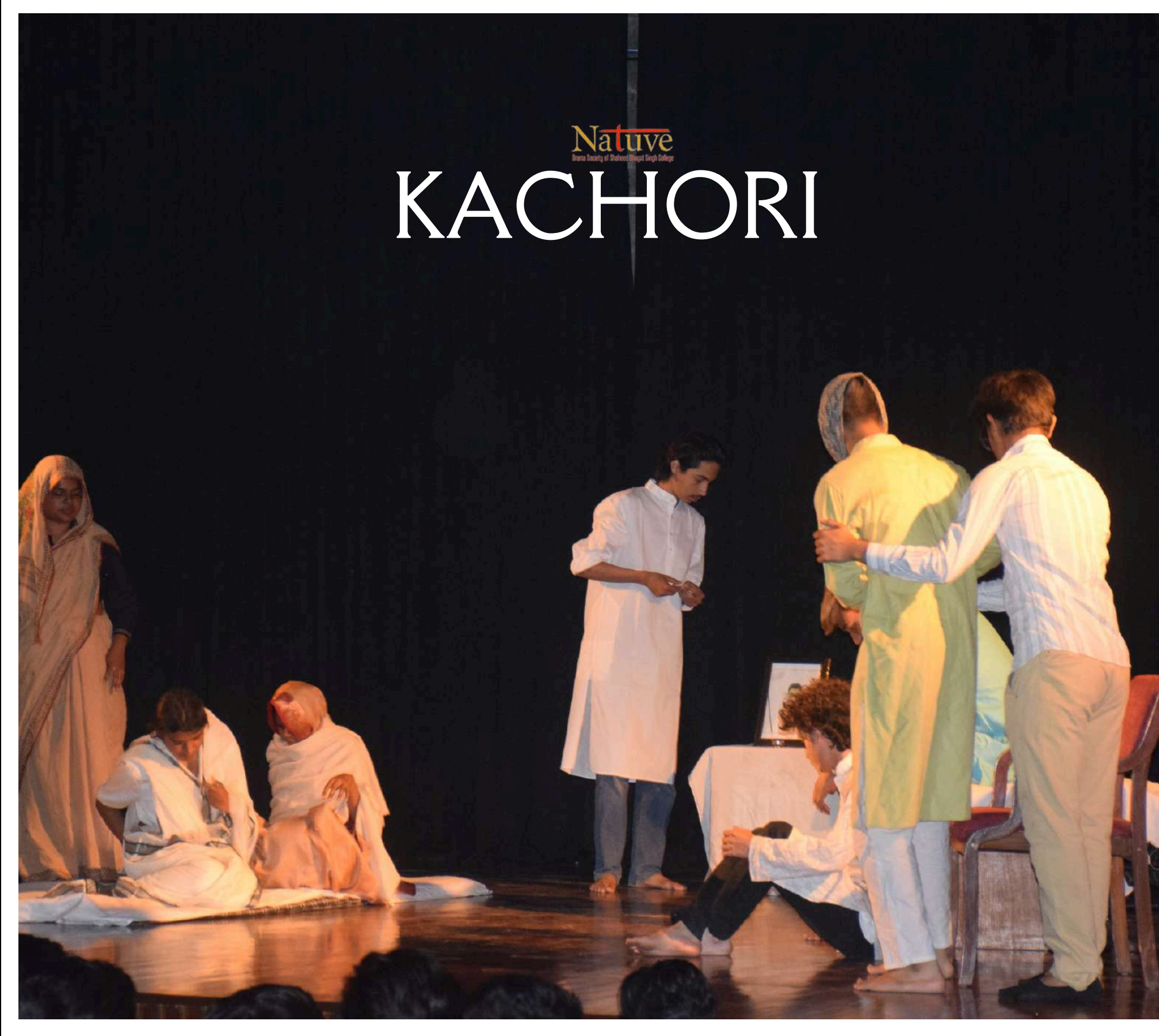
Prof. Sydney R. Rebeiro has instituted the John Leonard Isaacs Memorial Rolling Trophy in the fond memory of his uncle, an act which eventually culminated in the promising inaugural edition of the one-act play competition.



“So I wish
you first a
Sense of
theatre;
only
Those who
love illusion
And know it
will go far:
Otherwise
we spend
our lives in
a confusion
of what we
say and do
with
Who we
really are.”
~W. H.
Auden



Natuve, the theatre society of SBSC presented *Kachori*, a play detailing a situation where after the abrupt and mysterious demise of their father, Manoj and Santosh find themselves at the mercy of a heartless moneylender. The family finds itself tackling the perilous transformation of a safe haven into a treacherous state. As the situation unfolds, the simple lives of the brothers transform to ones permeating with dire straits. Will the brothers, being an uneven combination of recklessness and naïveté, be able to follow their hearts and come out of this treacherous predicament or let it consume the remainder of their lives?



WHAT'S WRONG WITH PRATEEK BURMAN?

RUNNER UP: HINDU COLLEGE



MASQUE





EK AUR DURGHATNA

Unfolding a murder mystery within the confines of a Police Station, the play follows the misadventures of a Maniac who is an enigmatic and cunning trickster. After tricking an inspector into divulging details about the suspicious death of an Anarchist while in police custody on a telephone call, the Maniac assumes multiple identities to uncover the truth. As the plot thickens, the Maniac's antics lead to a series of hilarious and thought-provoking encounters with the Chief of Police, Inspector Pahuja, constables, journalist Fatima, and others.

Through a series of high-energy confrontations and comedic escapades, the play challenges societal norms, and questions the very fabric of truth and justice. The Maniac uses wit, humour, and absurdity and the play reaches it's climax, the truth is laid bare, leaving the characters and the audiences to grapple with the consequences.

The play "Ek Aur Durghatna" cleverly disguises a serious narrative as a comedy, effectively addressing pertinent societal concerns. The story advocates for a liberated society devoid of oppressive forces through its satirical approach.



WINNER: SAMAYANTAR, MAHARAJA AGRASEN COLLEGE



Piazza - An exclusive gathering!

Palaces might need winter's candlelight but Piazzas are lovely and lively at any time of the day or year.

Originally meaning square or marketplace in an Italian town or city, Piazza is the gathering space for all members of the Department of English, Shaheed Bhagat Singh College-faculty members and students of all cohorts.

If you walk into a Piazza, there's a very good chance that you will come across interesting people, fascinating conversations, infectious laughter, and fabulous snacks. We talk about life, literature, and everything in between.





आखरी *Piazza*



**BETWEEN THE
BLACK AND WHITE**

"One can speak poetry just by arranging colors well."

~Vincent van Gogh

Creation is an essential experience of being a human. We live and create as long as we continue living, our hearts beating for the fascination of our mind, painting our emotions on our faces, words on our lips, and vision in our eyes.

But what are the colors of this painting? What is the ink of these words? What are the shades of our visions? Are they black and white? The black of wrong and the white of right? Is our world a dark black and our perspective impressing the color of pure white upon it?

Perhaps not. If it were, then we would not dream of the sickly but beautiful yellow which a painter ate in the hope of happiness. If it were, then red would not have meant different for a lover, a woman, and a hunter. If it were, then black and white would never have been found, and the world would never admire the grey of the eyes.

Between the black and white is an acknowledgement of the transition from extremes of definitions and judgements, and a proclamation of the spectrum of perspective, emotions, and selves.



Picture Credits: The Children of the Poor
Illustration by T Cobb

EAT THE YOUNG

by Himani Purwar

The spoor of steaming meat strips lurked in the air of the market, slowly being caged by the stronger chill of winter. Coats heaped with fur and cheap designs dissolving in a million pockets lined every stall, with sellers crying and puffing, “sale!” through their gloves.

Their watery eyes envied every neighbour who had gloved hands of customers caressing their goods. The chill tried and failed to warm itself in their worn and new boots. It settled on their faces like dough, molding their rebuff, reddening their cheeks and cursing their noses, clinging to their lips salving off their rejection, leaving bluish bruises behind.

But winter’s assault rained the most upon The Beggar of the market. It clung to the child’s skin, pinching his naked body till red polka dots danced upon the pale dirty flesh. The child, however, was indifferent. Only his rattling bones nodded to winter’s violence. He had lived here longer than this passing winter raving with frost.

A tin can with long cleaned off sauce, and a threadbare blanket-floor made up his home, beside which the weekly garbage mounted and tumbled. His trembling hand, clasped around the can, stuck out of his crouched naked body huddled with protruding bones and ravines of skins.

-boot 2-6, boot 2-7, boot 2-8, boot2-9, boot 2-1-0, boot 2-1-1, boot 2-1-2...- Each passing boot beside his can jarred the next count. The scurrying shadows had left the moonlit market as his broken counting reached 1-0-0-3.

Sighing, the child released his clutch on the silent can, and pulled his bluish hand into the cave of his stomach, under the blanket-roof with holes. It was as his eyes were closing that a mewl belt out its tiny low note. A growling stomach sharpens one’s ears like a nose knows whether a soup is of tomato or spinach. The child stood and stumbled on the ragged blanket. The mewl became louder, and sharper into a keening waul. With dizzy legs, the child walked towards the sound coming from a dark alley. The wail became shriller, as he neared towards the source, a kitten. The white-black fur of its stomach was garnished with blood, still oozing, bubbling in its own heat, releasing an iron scent which beckoned the child’s tongue to taste it. Thus called, The Beggar’s tongue licked at the fur, scraping blood crusts dry between bites, snatching fur between his teeth, biting and slurping warm blood. His mouth gnawed on as the spent paws tried to gouge him. A hush returned to the lane as the flailing paws fell into the murk.

Oh!
The taste...
“Finally”, sighed the blood-caked mouth, pleased at the delicious meal. The red tongue slithered out to nosh at the dripping warmth dyeing his lips.



Picture Credits: Pinterest

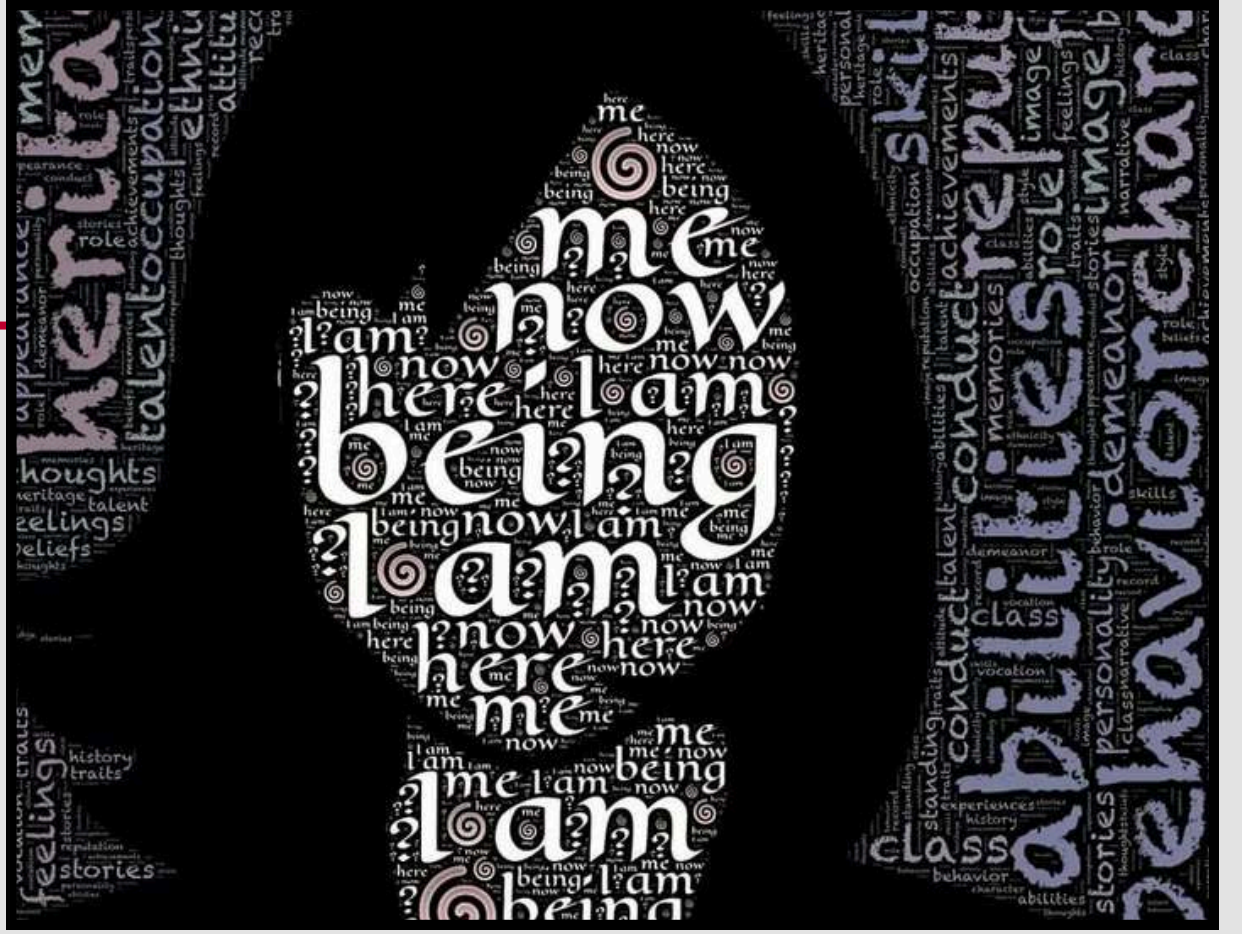
Three weeks later, with the lolling white sun in the dim sky, a truck rolls out of the alley at the corner of which The Beggar lives. The truck thuds with every move, jostling the half-eaten kittens, pups and rodents. Would they be missed by the market? In their absent visits to the vendors who now exclaimed at their tattered remains, as they opened their shops and stalls with the dawn? The Beggar’s can is no longer clutched in his hands, only the sharpened shards of tin shrugged under the ragged blanket remain. But the stomach growls, hungrier, weighing The Beggar’s feet prowling under the silver tortilla in sky. A week later, another truck rolls out of another alley and again from another, all along dragging naked toes, the stomach growls.

The night when winter was finally jailed by summer for its assault, the skulking steps of The Beggar stumbled across a drunken man, lying face-down in the marooned alley. Blistered feet crept towards the unmoving clothed sack splattered in dirt. The Beggar’s knee creaked as his fingers reached towards the slumbering shoulder hidden under the swollen coat.

The next dawn brings with it a crowd, shouting and exclaiming over a chewed out naked man. Near this chorus, small fingers tie laces of boots comically large for pulsing feet. The heaving leather leaves off the tattered blanket beside the garbage. And The Beggar with red lips and shrouding clothes leaves the market for another home.



Picture Credits: Himani Purwar



Picture Credits: Johnhain

Changing the social formula



Picture Credits: Garofalo Jack

For a long time I had been standing
in between the binaries of the world.
Where it has already designated
what's right and wrong.
The answers are preached hardly before you
start questioning
Just like that of the gospels tales.

The kinetic movement of your thoughts are
brought to a standstill,
Hardly before it starts oscillating between the
extremes.
And even I'm no such exception.
I too carry those ancestral thoughts of pasts
And never try to flip to the other side of the card,
The formulas of gender roles, work ideal,
behavior are already to given to me
Just like that of finding out the area of a decagon.

I blindly follow the formula of the binaries
And ignore the world in between.



Picture Credits: Pinterest

I have always seen the world as black or white.
 While deliberately ignoring its greyish tone.
 The theories and formulas that I once used to
 comprehend the world stands antiquated.
 Maybe it time for me to quit the portrait lens of
 my camera and see the world through the panorama mode.
 The gender roles, idealism, the so called sex
 which are set in between the fixed binaries are
 posing question on us!
 Who am I to propose the exact rule?

Where newtonian exactness is replaced by
 continuous quantum spectrum. The world can't stand in binaries.
 It exists in its greyish state, in a state of constant change.
 It's only how we decide to view this world
 Some chooses a normal binocular vision and
 some a birds eye view.
 It's time for you and me to accept the change
 Make room for those who stand in between the
 gender binaries.

The formulas that we once used to detect the
 first, second or third gender can never lead us to the right answers.
 The human body doesn't calculatively release
 hormones, therefore,
 making us sometime act masculine as well feminine.
 So, it a call for you and me to see and embrace the change
 And quit using the ancestral formulas and
 make a new algorithm for the new world to work in.

LIFE IS NOT BLACK AND WHITE

In a world, where we have little patience and we are eager to put labels onto everything, where we try to comprehend the absurdities of life in terms of dualities—good and bad, moral-immoral, right-wrong, just-unjust, demon-angel, clear as a day or dark as a night, or simply, black and white.



Picture Credits: Rolf Jansson

My notions betray my existence,
to the extent that my soul becomes an uncertainty.
If Heartaches and heartbreaks are mere lessons,
where is the truth in them?
If suffering and sacrifice are noble endeavours,
Where's the truth in them?
The tragedy is an irony--a sarcasm of bad taste,
which only the unaffected get.
And then it strikes them as well,
and fate laughs at all, just the same.

The laughter, where's the truth in that?
Neither the smiling, nor the ones wailing,
The killers, the killed, the hunters and the hunted.
The ones who are warm and protected,
or the ones exposed to the coldness of the world.
The pleading eyes of the ones begging for mercy,
are as good as the indifference in the breast of the "merciful".

Sometimes, the curse of being good is so heavy on our hearts,
Screams are heard only in our eyes
While they trample our souls, while tears burn our face.
The mirage of being civil, strips you of 'you'.
The revelation of their hollow promises, kicks you in your gut, and they continue to do so,
until you realise what they wove wasn't a 'cocoon' but a 'spider web'.
And you'll live long enough to be killed everyday.



Picture Credits: Natalie Barajas

A thief was put behind the bars,
because poverty snatched away his bread at birth.
And they called it justice.
Where was justice when
A man was arrested after killing a rapist,
An animal who raped and murdered his
7 year old.
A man took control and was called a "tyrant",
after soldiers of the previous king butchered his father,
while he was still a boy.
Where was the justice in that?

These days,
Justice has become a leash that criminals tie to the neck of the just,
They pull it until it digs into our flesh,
Till our tails of truth wag to their lies.
The blacks and whites are mere fiction
And grey, well...
Where's the distinction in that?
Years of suppression, suffering, silence, shaming, sickness— adorn their walls,
And our tongues make up their carpets,
since muteness is most comfortable.

In fact,
The only free are the shackled ones, truly fixed are the broken ones,
compassion is cruelty, salvation—a sin, blood—skin, and life is a lie.
And death—who's alive in that?

~Ansh Gurjar



THE DICHOTOMY OF IDENTITY

Often, identity is perceived as a bifold concept, defined by the rigid categories of black and white. However, if one delves deeper, it becomes evident that identity is something more complex and subtle, existing in endless shades that lie between these two extremes.

Essentially, the duality of identity stems from the conflict between individual authenticity and societal conventions. Society tends to provide us with preset labels and a patchwork of beliefs that they expect us to follow. This tension often results in individuals feeling pressured to conform, which can create internal dissonance as they navigate between staying true to themselves and seeking acceptance within society. The desire to belong and feel accepted within a community may force one to accept certain norms that do not fully align with their personality and experiences leading them to compromise with their authentic selves. This often results in a fragmented sense of self wherein individuals fight battles within themselves. Eventually, they end up feeling that they must present a version of themselves that is appealing to others rather than embracing their true, multifaceted identities.

On the other hand, personal identity is an interwoven fabric of our experiences, beliefs, and values, shaped by a unique combination of our heritage, upbringing, and choices. It is a labyrinth of self-discovery that continues to evolve.

As we navigate through our lives, it constantly gets redefined through life's challenges, triumphs, and the relationships that we cultivate.

The black and white colors can be seen as metaphors for the extremes of conformity and rebellion. Conformity is the desire to blend in to get accepted and valued by society at the cost of subduing one's true self. Rebellion, on the other hand, is the defiance of every societal norm to prioritize individual expression, often at the cost of societal alienation.

However, the concept of identity lies far beyond this simplistic dichotomy. Identity is not merely a choice between black or white rather it is a vast array of grays that fall between. It is about embodying the contradictions within ourselves and accepting the multifaceted nature of identity rather than running behind one single aspect of it.

In its essence, the concept of identity is a complex and multi-dimensional notion that challenges us to look beyond the preset notions of black and white. It is a reminder that our identities are not fixed but fluid shaped by the interplay of internal and external forces altogether. Embracing its complexities allows us to look at the different shades of grey seizing the richness and diversity of our identity.

~Drishti Gera



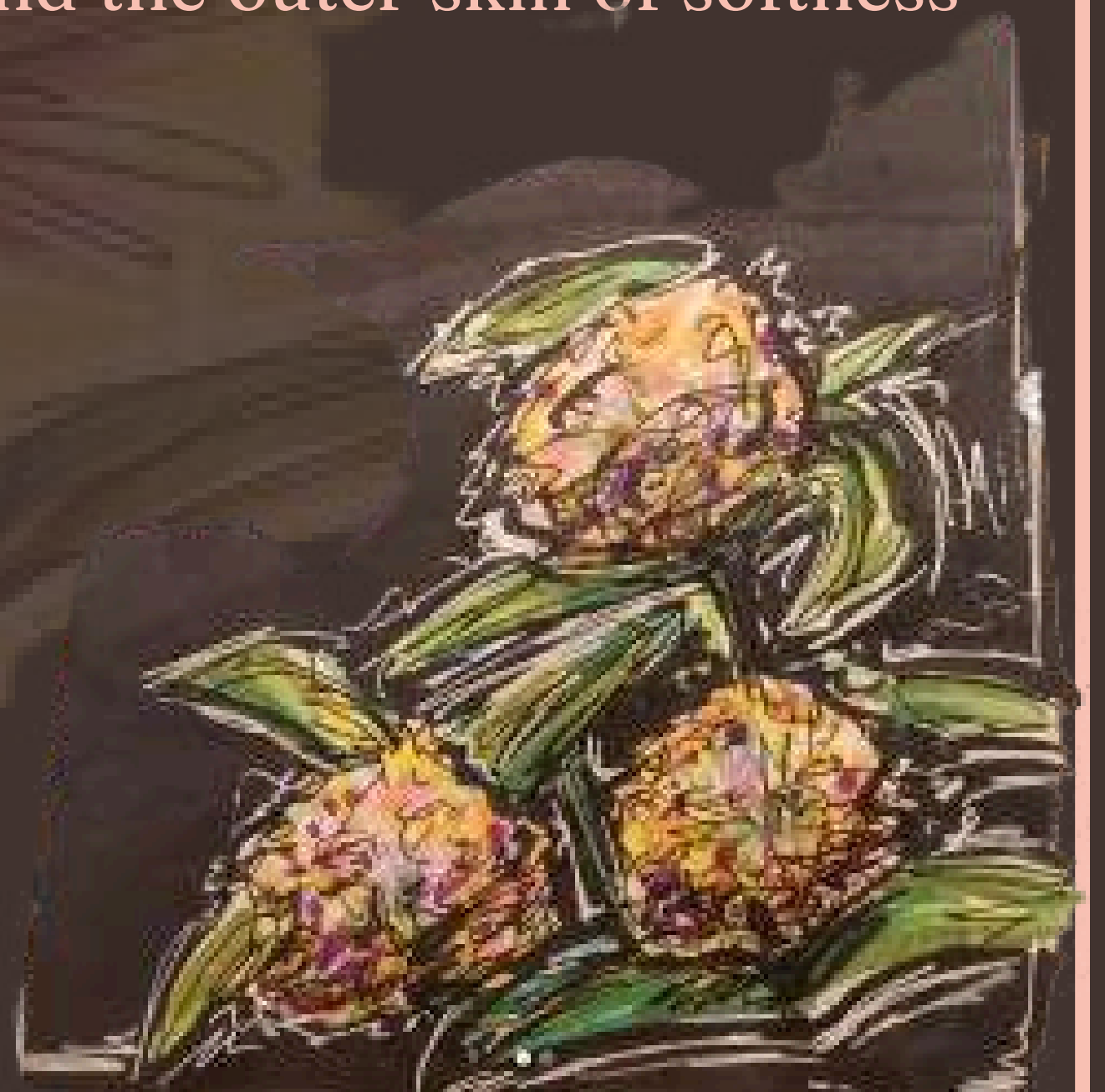
Picture Credits: Lesley Oldaker

BETWEEN THE BLACK AND WHITE

DELVING THROUGH INTRICACIES OF THE HUMAN MIND

Humans are mad creatures – madness is an inherent trait. Often blinded by what the world shows us, we're defiant to our inner selves – of our innermost desires, the burning rage of passion and reason – to examine the purpose of our lives. Our mind is preoccupied with trivial matters like appearances or to the more thinking minds, the supreme laws we incapacitated creatures have no control over.

Despite our delusions of knowing everything about the supernatural intricacies of time, space, life, and death, we know very little. In the conquest to know it all, we barely appreciate the miracles of our very own existence. In the thin lines of the world's colours and the darkness of our minds – there exists Alyssum – worth beyond beauty – colours that fill up the mosaics of existence. In the present moment, breathe, ignoring the tapestry of thinking and going beyond beauty to the self-created gloom. Instead, we should gaze upon the sweet Alyssum, which seeks power beyond the outer skin of softness to cure diseases.



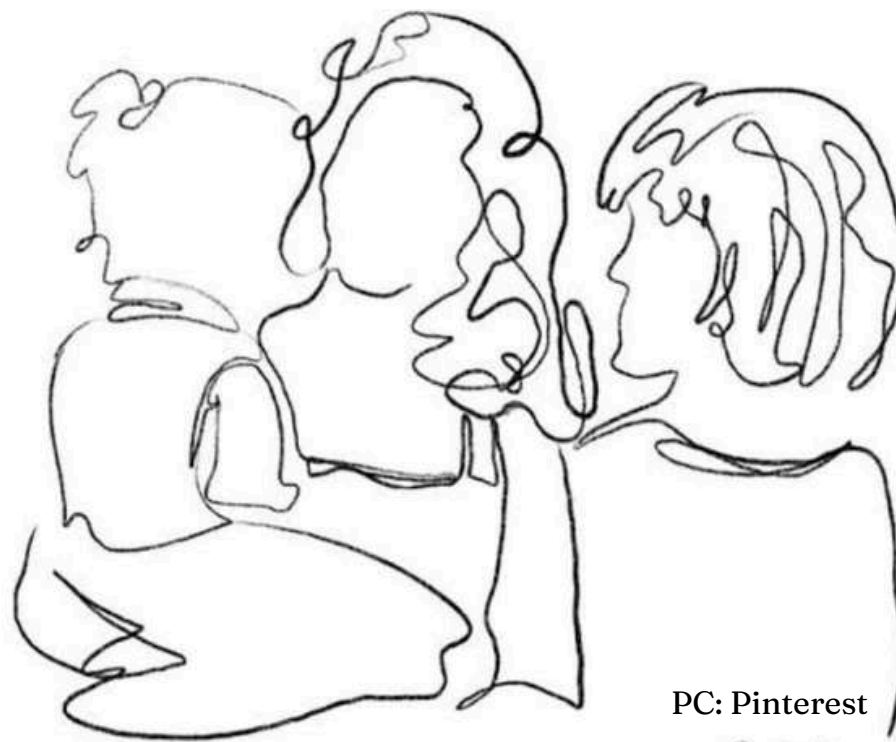
Picture Credits: Ashtree_Wyman

Next Up:

GENERAL SECTION

PHOTOS AND YOU

Every shutter and flash feels like a time travel,
from the places where you don't exist anymore
to the skin which felt your touch every evening.
Every colour and tear force my eyes to
find that particular silhouette again and again,
in every road I find you standing looking
at me,
looking at everyone
but no one at all,
I'd die for a golden sun pouring through a thin canopy
but what could I live for,
ever?
Maybe I'll live finding the thing I'll live for,
I want to tear and burn the captured stills on days
I don't spend spilling dry rivers on one side of a
pillow which is not mine,
the poem I read when I was nine



PC: brightgeneric (Instagram)

PC: Pinterest

the beach where the little girl's mother went
and the grandmother who captured the three
generations in a single frame for the fourth and
fifth to watch it together in time,
from that beach I stare directly into the sun
and it is burns and blinds
but atleast
every successful stare through the sun feels like a
time travel to that shutter and that flash,
a time travel
to you,
you, when you were still
breathing over my skin.

~Sakshi Uniyal

SUBMISSIONS

Unmasking Lolita

A cherubic girl
With lustrous eyes
Whose gaze at the green meadows
And pouting lips
Attracts the heavenly bodies
As they pulsate together
A spectacular picture of innocence
Captured by the lens of
The absent-minded Professor

He burns his boots
And the wisdom that
He had purchased at the University ;
Their bodies clash
In the armored night
He is fitful, exhausted
Not a spectacular solar sight;
He gathers his glasses
Giving a furtive look

All passion now spent
Reduced to the role of a crook---
Lolita simply vanishes
A haughty demeanor
But history pages
See her as a killer
A slayer of men
As she pouts and gasps
And gives birth To
yet another Lolita.



PC: Lolita Book Cover

~Ms. Neeta Singh, Faculty, English Dept.

WHO AM I?



Picture Credits: Guardado ra pido

In the depth of my mind,
I find self doubt,
The burden of my own existence.
Even my dreams are swallowed
by shadows of doubt.
In the swirling currents of uncertainty,
I find myself adrift,
Unsure of my path,
Yet somehow,
Always finding my way

Each passing second,
pressing me down,
threatens me under the label of failure.
The stars seem to dim in darkness within.
My dreams once my rope of hope,
But now,
A dying ember in the cold embrace
of my reality.

I, the prisoner of my own making,
Leaving my soul wounded
And bleeding tears of anguish
I find myself
grappling with the relentless question—
Why seek solace in the notion of fate,
A cruel trick that makes mockery
of my aspirations.
Who am I,
Stranger to myself,
Lost in the cast ocean
With no compass to guide my weary heart.

I am realm of my thoughts,
I dwell unable to distinguish between—
The fabric of my reality-
-And-
-The tapestry of my own creation .

~*Gulveer Sahni*

NIGHT WHISPERS

When the night knocks on my window,
It doesn't tell me to sleep,
Instead, it urges me to take
a step or two more.
It gives me a glimpse of
the sun shining in the darkness.
It tells me to dream with open eyes,
To learn from the moon
and illuminate myself with the light of others.
It tells me to be alone
like the moon
and to be a shore or sahil.
It tells me to merge the day and night.

WHAT'S MORE TRAGIC

Learning the art of letting go,
Or craving to be held?

The curse of being forgetful
Or the fear of being constantly
reminded?

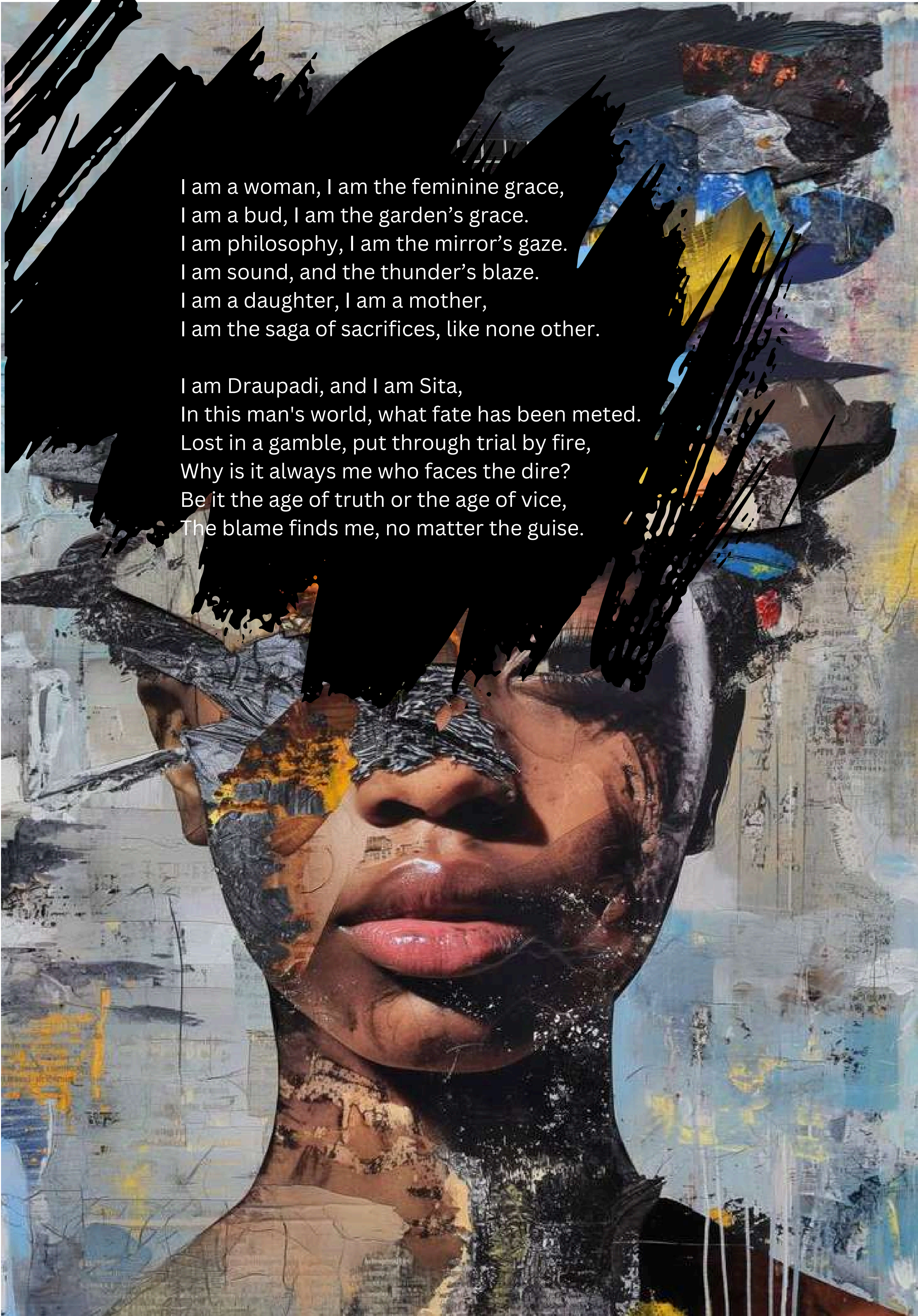
A fact that you'll accept
Or the dream that tears you apart,

To live in a paradox that haunts
Or to drown in reality that ache?

~Sahil Tejaswi



Picture Credits: Sahil Tejaswi

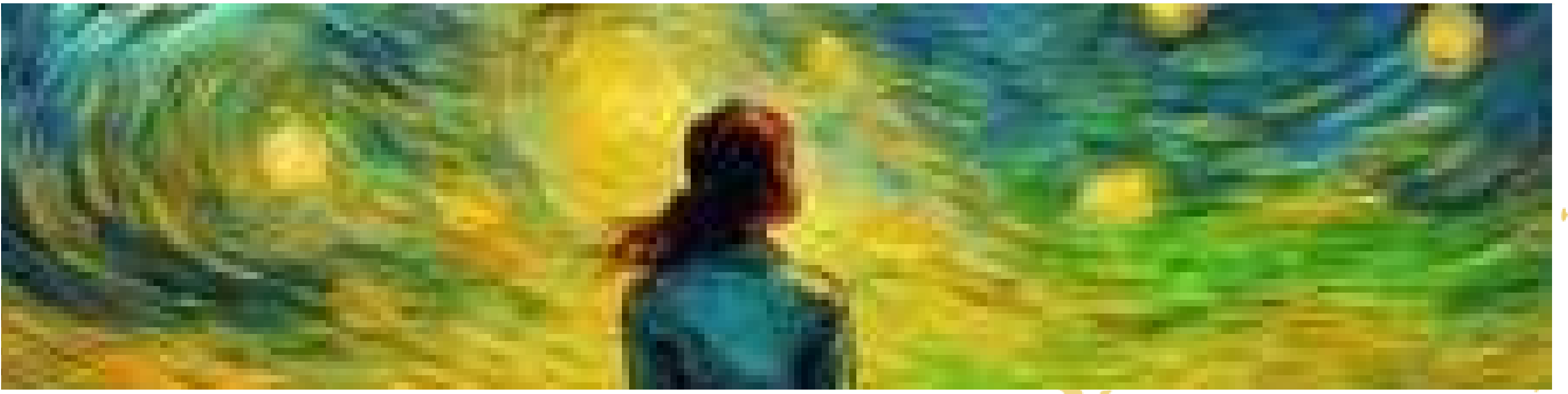


I am a woman, I am the feminine grace,
I am a bud, I am the garden's grace.
I am philosophy, I am the mirror's gaze.
I am sound, and the thunder's blaze.
I am a daughter, I am a mother,
I am the saga of sacrifices, like none other.

I am Draupadi, and I am Sita,
In this man's world, what fate has been meted.
Lost in a gamble, put through trial by fire,
Why is it always me who faces the dire?
Be it the age of truth or the age of vice,
The blame finds me, no matter the guise.

VOICES UNHEARD: A WOMAN'S CRY FOR RESPECT

Picture Credits: Pinterest



Why does walking dark, lonely streets fill me with dread?
I am scared, I feel as though I'm dead...
Left bleeding on those dark paths alone,
In silence, learning pain, my body thrown.

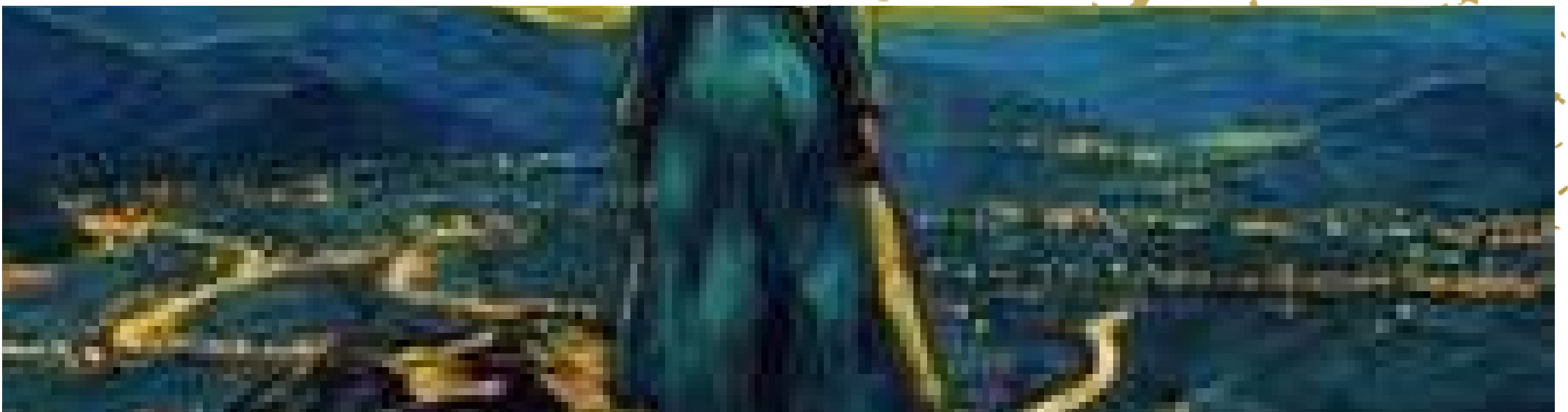
Everyone took pictures, but help was now where seen,
Hearing society's words broke me, shattered my dream.
"Family's honor" is what they all preach,
Saying boys will be boys, a lesson they teach.

"You are a girl, forget it all,"
"The world will only question and make you feel small."
Why you went out at night, your dress, your makeup so bright,
In a maze of questions, truth loses its light.

Those telling me to forget, don't you feel the shame?
How can I forget the nights, the pain, those hands, the blame?
Forget it all, they say with ease,
Remember, the last mistake could be yours, not just a tease.

Tomorrow, it could be your sister or daughter lying there,
And a pain worse than that, you cannot bear.
He who doesn't respect a woman, cannot be a true man,
Respect her, for she is the essence, since time began.

~by Palak Jain





Picture Credits: trip.com

OF RAINCOATS, RICKSHAWS AND COWS



The afternoon rain shower inevitably takes me back to childhood. The last period of school when the darkening sky glimpsed through green curtained grill windows making it impossible to focus on whatever was being taught inside the blue walls of classroom. It was lit by a single fluorescent tube light, with a miniature statue of Goddess Sarasvati above it, solemnly exhorting us to return to our books. The blackboard used to be grayed and textured from the day long inscriptions and deletions. It would glimmer in the strange surviving light of a gathering cloudburst. I can never forget the quality of that light. It was like a Japanese wash technique painting, saturated with all the muted, cool undertones of the palette: grays, blues, greens, understated beauty I've come to associate with the decor of the old red building.

Without fail, and not a moment of step, as soon as the piercing last bell ranged and the lord's prayer wafting in the choir's voice in the auditorium ended - and if you shared my stream of thoughts - some gypsy tones of Bedouin music would start playing over the same loudspeaker. The patiently unmistakable, the Baghpat cloudburst, coming far away from my village, would grace our purple and white clad presence with thunderous fanfare.

In response to the fanfare of cloudburst, colorful umbrellas were fished out and unrolled, flourishing in envies in the coded language of girls. The duck bag raincoat smelled of transparent plastic and waterproofing rubber - everything smelled of childhood. Some of us tried to find our anxious mothers crowded in the foyer, waiting for us outside the black gate with Ramu uncle on guard. If you look closely you would also see a couple of dogs, wet and smelly, curled up peacefully on the quaintly lovely S-shaped floor tiles, under the green chairs in the foyer, flanked by Goddess Sarasvati's portrait above.

So now, if you had resourceful parents like me who believe in plain living and high thinking, a phrase I'm yet to fully understand, your umbrella would most certainly be black, gigantic and mature. When I demanded an upgrade in my senior years, a raincoat, made of the thickest material imaginable, was given. It made me wonder if I was a child or a scientist visiting Chernobyl. Navy blue and three sizes too big, the raincoat worked perfectly to save my beloved uniform and my shoes as well as the ground beneath my feet, thus doubling up as both rain gear and cape for my imaginary superhero alter ego.

For those luck to live close by, rickshaws would be stationed outside the black main gate. Made of narrow wooden benches dangerously dangling at the foot of the seat to accommodate a couple of extra children, the rickshaws would be covered with tarpaulin sheets in the brightest neon shades.

Once inside this card of doom, you were literally blinkered from everything outside and spent the next whatever minutes staring at the person in front of you, or finishing the remnants of each other's tiffins, or planning costumes for the next week's Prarthana.

A typical afternoon shower near my school in Tis Hazari was unapologetically heavy, torrential with huge pellets of drops. As I remember, it was sometimes accompanied by theatrical lightning bolts landing indiscriminately on the tall trees and aerial TV antennas. Certain Old Delhi roads used to turn into small gullies within minutes into a basti, forming far audacious patterns of hailstorm lightning connecting each pointed front of Yagi antenna. This formed a shape no less magnificent than Dr. Frankenstein's huge monster in the endless sky, whizzing in unison with rhythmic creaking of the rusty pedals, escaping the fast-diminishing gulf.

After a long-labored watching of the watery road swish past from the corner edge where the tarpaulin fell short by a few inches, while vaguely aware of being transported down the bumps and bends of a thrilling yet scary journeys of Gulliver in Brobdingnagian, we would reach the final bindings of our destination. Before we would each be dropped off near our doorsteps without fail, in the entrance of the street, blocking all possible movement would be a ginormous bull, one particular fellow, and flea crowned, who had chosen my street as his official waiting hall when it rained.

To this persistent trauma of his august welcome on monsoon afternoon, I owe my lifelong phobia of all gentle bovines. The next ten minutes were spent shouting and gesticulating from a safe distance of at least ten feet at the intruder. He looked at me just once with a discerning disdainful eye of the nineteenth century French aristocrat beholding a peasant back from the field, and went back to chewing cud and leaving giant putrid signatures of his presence underneath. Finally, after prolonged efforts, the exhausted peasant would have to take the spiral fire-escape. On reaching the staircase, a dizzying zig-zag climb later, all I wanted to do was kick away those evident black ballerinas pinching into my skin, release my hair from the paraphernalia of clips and bands and rush to the balcony with the glass of lemonade - a little after-school indulgence I was allowed - to watch the rain in peace. That's what heavenly peace would finally send: all spectacle would certainly ensue as if nothing but a breeze had referred to the city in landscape and just as it had started - abruptly and without warning - it would stop. And from a cloud, a triumphant sun would raise its golden orb.

~Ms. Apoorva, Faculty, English Dept.



BRICOLAGE

Bricolage derives its name from a form of art that involves creating novel things from a vast number of materials that are already available at hand. It involves coming up with something extraordinary with entities that may seem quite mundane and regular but that are used every day in one way or the other, blending them in ways that seem bizarre in the beginning but by the end do lead to creation of something marvellous.

An artist who involves himself in this form of art is called a Bricoleur. We believe that each one of us, though seemingly mundane and uninteresting, when working symbiotically with the rest of the members of the department can become a part of a meaningful academic, literary and creative endeavour, and realise their potential to the fullest.





ALYSSUM

THE LITERARY MAGAZINE
