

SPELLED INK

Journeys and Destinations

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's
SPJIMR



-Vol II-

“So, I guess we are who we are for a lot of reasons. And maybe we'll never know most of them. But even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there.”

—Stephen Chbosky, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

SPelled Ink *Vol. II*



A curation by the Literary Club of SPJIMR, Mumbai,
nurturing a love for literature

This edition is a collection of *journeys*,
some taken across roads and cities,
some traced inward through memory and silence,
and some imagined far beyond the horizon.

These pages hold stories shaped by movement:
of leaving, arriving, and becoming.

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Foreword

Some beginnings are grand, ceremonial, and loud, while others arrive quietly, through unstable internet connections across different cities (owing to Covid powered distance). SPelled Ink began humbly, on a Zoom screen with four tentative faces, admitting loudly (and proudly) our love for the written word.

What followed was the courage to create something that would far outlast our tenure on campus. We were fortunate in ways we hardly could fathom, with faculty members supporting us with generosity, offering us encouragement, time, and much-needed validation, giving us the legitimacy that would transform an impulse into something that could endure beyond us.

Time has its own way of carrying people through the web of life, across the globe, through different roles that we take on, and phases that we as B-School students would hardly imagine. Through all this, there's something deeply moving about the nostalgic knowledge that within the same pulse of campus life that we all have lived through, generations continue to gather as we once did with newer stories and faces, with the same passion carrying words into a circle that yearns to listen.

To every writer in these pages, may you always find your way back to the version of yourself who strung together the twenty-six alphabets into madness, into beauty, into magic. As you traverse through the undulating responsibilities of life, may words find you as faithfully as you have found them across years and distances.

The hope is that SPelled Ink keeps unfolding like well loved book passed from hand to hand, the pages gathering more ink, its story growing beyond the edges of our first imagination. May it travel to new forms and may more voices find their way here; to experiment and be unfinished; to be honest and create without apology. As the current custodians of SPelled Ink make it their own, may it always remain timeless in the way true literature always is, rooted in the moment and yet arriving anew in the hands of those who come after.

-Sriza Ghosh, PGDM'22
Founding Member, SPelled Ink

Patron's Note

In a world where words are increasingly outsourced to GPTs, putting together a dense volume of original thoughts, reflections, and creativity is an achievement beyond expectations. Words can unshackle us, free us and connect us. The magic of words, and how they spur the human brain into memories or even memes, is still under the control of human intelligence.

This magazine is proof that management students can use metaphors, not just jargon. It is also a testament to the fact that their writing conveys emotions and thoughts cathartically. SPelled Ink is not just a compendium of its writers' and poets' works; it is also tangible proof of the creative talent of our future leaders, who found a fertile space at SPJIMR.

In my own life, I have often lived with the belief that “a good traveller has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving”, and this year's theme of journeys is such a beautiful reminder of how we all live in an increasingly uncertain world with the human connection as the only certainty. I hope that readers will truly connect with the emotions in this volume of SPelled Ink and that it will spur many more writers and thinkers to express themselves freely.

We are on a long journey. This is the second edition of our magazine for the ambitious creative writing lovers, flourishing in the time of artificial intelligence. Bravo to the writers and the editorial team – may our tribe grow!

-Dr. Vineeta Dwivedi
Associate Professor, SPJIMR

From the Editors' Desk

When we started working on the magazine, the most pressing question became: What should the theme of the second volume of our literary magazine be?

We wanted something that captures the essence of literature being pursued in a B-school, while also ensuring there's enough room for words and stories presented from a plethora of diverse perspectives, all finding a home between these pages.

The quest led us to our theme, Journeys and Destinations, and it just fit.

Because literature, much like life at a B-school, is never static. It moves through classrooms and corridors, across cities and cultures, inward into memory and reflection, and outward toward ambition, uncertainty, and change. Every piece in this volume is shaped by motion, of people, of thoughts, and of time.

That is also the very reason we chose to use the SPJIMR tumbler on our cover alongside the campus wall. The tumbler, given to each participant who appears for the admission interviews, symbolises an important destination reached by an MBA aspirant. At the same time, it marks the onset of a beautiful two-year journey that follows, tying our theme together poetically.

Curating the magazine from a collection of thoughtful write-ups by students, alums, and faculty members thus became an integral part of our own time here, of one that is constantly evolving.

Within these pages, you will find roads taken, and roads questioned, journeys that unfold quietly within, and destinations imagined far beyond the horizon. Some stories arrive at certainty; others linger in the act of becoming. Together, they reflect the many ways in which we navigate the spaces we inhabit, both real and imagined.

This volume is thereby an invitation to pause, to travel through words, and to find fragments of your own journey mirrored through someone else's, from all facets of life.

Welcome to *SPelled Ink, Volume II*. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed curating it.

-Editorial Team
SPelled Ink 2024-26

About the Theme

How poetic it is that each destination we reach in life was once a journey, and that what once felt like arrival often becomes the beginning of something new. What we call destinations today soon turn into paths toward newer ones, shaped by time, experience, and change.

Journeys and Destinations is not just about travel. It is about evolution. It reflects the many ways we move: through places, people, languages, and even phases of our own becoming. It speaks to the in-between moments: the pause before a decision, the detour that redefines purpose, and the quiet realisation that changes direction.

This volume unfolds across five sections, each approaching the theme from a different perspective:

- 1) **Roads We Travel** explores actual journeys through the choices that we make and the paths we take, often without knowing where they will lead.
- 2) **Roads Within** turns inward, tracing journeys shaped by memory, identity, even doubt and self-reflection.
- 3) **Beyond the Horizon** tries to look ahead, toward ambition, aspiration, uncertainty, and imagined futures.
- 4) **Different Languages, Same Journey** then celebrates journeys across cultures, tongues, and forms of expression, reminding us that movement is not always geographical, but deeply linguistic and emotional.
- 5) **Rewarded Paths** finally reflects on arrival, growth, resilience, and the quiet victories earned along the way.

Together, these sections present journeys that are not always linear. Some stories move forward, some circle back, and others pause in between. Each piece engages with what it means to move, to arrive, or to remain in transit.

These pages do not promise conclusions. They offer moments to pause, reflect, and recognise parts of your own journey along the way.

We hope you find something here that stays with you, long after you turn the page.

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ROADS WE TRAVEL

Where moments become memory



SECTION
ONE

“A few minutes later he’d already changed his mind — an adventure is much more interesting than a city square. The ancients said that change is permanent and constant — because life passes quickly. If there was no change, there would be no magic.”

—Paulo Coelho, *Hippie*

A Town Full of Memories

I was welcomed into this ‘campus town’ with heavy rain crashing down onto my car’s windshield as my parents sought to see me off. For a person who loved the rains with an unparalleled passion, it seemed like the town was beckoning towards me with open arms. As I would later come to realise, these short outbursts of rain were a classic feature of the odd semester—a feature that left everybody clambering for their umbrellas in a failed attempt to keep their books dry.

One of my fondest memories would come two weeks into my life as a hosteller. I was sitting in my neighbour’s room, a person I barely knew at the time, and inexplicably the two of us wound up singing old Bollywood songs at the top of our lungs. In a matter of minutes, a few other friends came over and suddenly, we were a large group of tone-deaf acquaintances singing cringeworthy songs with the help of someone’s borrowed guitar. This would soon become a tradition for us; we got together every Saturday evening to relish in each other’s awful singing.

I’d love to say that our vocals got better or that we finally learned to play the guitar, but none of that happened. All we accomplished through this tradition was a sense of companionship and a misplaced confidence in our ability to sing. I guess that’s what hostel life is about—accepting each other for who we are and cherishing the moments we spend in each other’s company.

Then came the college fest. What had relatively been a quiet event suddenly changed its course on the third and final day. Something that started as three people dancing amidst themselves to peppy music quickly became a huge group of people going berserk with their dance moves.

Once the rain started pouring, the enthusiasm of the dancers just grew exponentially—a few even ventured into dancing on top of the tables! At that moment, with heavy rain pouring over me and Bollywood songs playing in the background, being surrounded by strangers didn’t seem as daunting as it would have a couple of months earlier. That’s the beauty of Manipal—it brings together people from all walks of life and unites them, almost as if they’ve known each other since their childhood.

-Vedant Seigell,
PGDM’26

Playground Prophecies: A Satirical Peak into Growing Up

Kids are lovely and cute. They are an illusory product of pleasant reality. Sitting in the park with children all around seems quite mesmerising and enchanting. So, sitting here, I can observe a few children who show traits of what they will become. One of the children is so fascinated by football that he runs after other children's footballs, leaving his own. He will be a faithful social worker.

Then there is a baby who is not giving his football to others; he seems like a tax evader, hence a businessman. Then there is a boy around 4 years old who is disturbing every other child around him; he will surely join the Bajrang Dal.

Female empowerment is also being witnessed here. One of the girls is practising wrestling with other kids. Then there is a grumpy kid who is not sharing her chips with her parents; she will be a miser for sure. Then there are modern indian parents still living in the 90s when they ask their girl child to play with their bhai: trying to strengthen the hypothesis that the school pledge of all Indians are my brother and sister will hold, despite knowing the reality.

Disappointed by modern parents and their smarter-than-smartphone kids, I don't feel like writing anymore since I need to study to find a mother for my smarter-than-smartphone kids in waiting.

-Ravi Shankar Kumar,
PGDM'26

Understanding 20s

Remember the lyrics from All Izz Well:

“Confusion hi confusion hai...

Solution kuch pata nahi...

Solution jo mila toh question kya tha pata nahi.”

Doesn't that sum up being in your twenties?

But why are the twenties so weird, directionless, and mysterious?

Well, well — we're all decoding it in our own ways, but here is my take.

In your twenties, your three H's — head, heart, and hormones — are all playing their best shots within you. You hear the success stories of Warren Buffett and think you have plenty of time. Meanwhile, the classmate who used to copy answers from you has just posted their McKinsey offer letter.

You're still unsure about your favourite nachos flavour, but your relatives want you to be absolutely certain about your career. You watch your parents grow older and wonder what will happen to your back — already a messed-up relationship — by the time you hit fifty.

Some of your friends are getting married, others are going through their worst break-ups, and you are still a “forever single”.

A lot to read, and even more to handle.

But do you really need to think this much?

No. Because believe me, we are all sinking together in the same twenties boat.

Our only life jacket, of course, is a good old TMKOC episode.

We have time to make things right. In fact, time never really ends.

Our parents might disagree with this, but that's because their generation was different. Back then, nearly 65 percent of people had crossed traditionally set milestones — completing education, leaving home, gaining financial independence, getting married, and having children — by the age of thirty.

The equation has changed now.

Milestones completed by a thirty-year-old in 2001 are equivalent to those completed by a twenty-five-year-old in the early 1970s.

So, my boomerang generation, sit for a minute. Let your anxiety settle. Let your doubts fade. The darkness of the twenties will pass, and the light of a more settled decade will eventually arrive.

-Janvi Khetan,
PGDM'26

The Mumbai Magic

We are all a bundle of contradictions, aren't we?

Torn between solitude and belonging, between the urge to move ahead and the comfort of what we already know.

Those unexpected moments of connection, growth and reflection often slip by quietly

Only to become beautiful memories we look back at with longing.

This is an ode to Mumbai, touted as the city that never sleeps. It is a place I have known my entire life yet have not truly experienced it. Though I have been living for the past 15 years in Mumbai, I left when I was 18 years old for college and later shifted to Bangalore for work, visiting only once in a while.

The humidity, the omnipresent traffic, the lack of space; everything about this city seemed too chaotic and crowded. When people spoke about the infectious spirit and the never-say-die energy of Mumbai, I never truly understood what they meant.

Life had a strange way of reconnecting me with my roots, as it gave me an opportunity in these 6 months in Mumbai.

I had also often heard from my friends about how your college experience in undergraduate and master's are poles apart. Earlier, I used to think of it as an exaggeration, but I see the truth in it now. The older we grow, the more our priorities shift, the less time we have and it takes longer to trust someone wholeheartedly.

Perhaps it was because the program itself was unlike anything I had ever known - intense, fast-paced, and crazy as we juggled between multiple subjects at once. It was a very hectic yet refreshing change of pace from the monotony that often creeps into corporate life.

GMP was initially very overwhelming, yet intellectually stimulating and exhausting in a good way. In just a week, even before our classes began in full swing, we were juggling between exams already, while drowning in back-to-back assignments and the dreaded 8am lectures everyday.

Every day brought a host of challenges, new faces replete with interesting conversations, from which new perspectives began to emerge.

I was pleasantly surprised by how practical and interactive classes were by renowned professors - effectively preparing us for a global career.

Somewhere amidst the exhaustion, I realized I was also changing as a person from within. Being thrown into a fast-paced environment like an MBA really tests your limits and helps you become a stronger and wiser version of yourself.

After I got used to this new routine and when the dust settled, the chaos faded into the background as I started noticing the quieter beauty of the city, especially after midnight. It feels as if the entire city is holding its breath, particularly between 2 am to 5 am. The cool breeze on my face during late-night auto rides, the spray of the seawater at Marine Drive, the lush green campus and the peaceful lake in SPJIMR, truly a rare sight in the heart of the city.

The stark difference between Mumbai during the day and at night is astonishing to say the least. I had heard from my peers that your college life experience in masters and undergraduate are like two different worlds altogether.

I think it is rather true that the more you grow older, you have less time and more baggage so people are less open to making honest, in-depth friendships, but this is a new journey and life to live and cherish regardless.

With barely a month to go to travel abroad for the second leg of the SPJIMR GMP program, I look back with nothing but gratitude for all the experiences I have had here. 6 months in and I have come to realise that both Mumbai and GMP share the same heartbeat; restless, relentless yet deeply fulfilling.

It has been quite an overwhelming yet incredible journey, one that I could never have dreamt of, yet one that helps me discover new parts of myself which I didn't know existed.

Perhaps the real destination is not a goal at which we arrive, but the human being we grow into along the way.

-Snigdha Deshmukh,
GMP'26

Love, in Transit.....

I find myself on the emergency seat in a plane to Dharamshala, a plane so small you could actually hear the turbofan running. A plane so small that once the airhostess explained how to open the emergency gate and asked if she should repeat herself, me and the 5 *firangs* blurted out “No” so loud we couldn’t hear the turbofans for a minute.

Post landing, my destination was still at least 3 hours from there. To take the road less travelled, I took the HSRTC public bus (non poetic version: *paise bachane the*)

Even after the breathtaking mountain views, there was one sight that caught my attention, that of an old couple sitting in the seat right in front of me.

The woman was probably sick and looked pale. The man, quite wrinkled and grey himself, kept her head on his lap and just brushed his hand through her hair. And in that moment, I saw a sly smile emerge. A smile that probably meant “Ohhh, how can I love this woman more?”

And then the bus took a halt so people could get some snacks. Apparently, the white coconut flesh is quite a thing here in Himachal. He asked her if she wanted something to eat, and she refused.

He alighted from the bus briefly, and when he came back, he flashed two pieces of some local delicacy and pieces of coconut. While she caught hold of her head and nodded, I saw a smile emerge, on her face and then on mine too.

In that moment, I knew theirs was a story only few will experience in their lifetime. And maybe people don’t need fancy big gestures to find their ones. Maybe love can be wrapped in little pieces of coconut flesh. All we really need is a little magic, magic between two people that when witnessed, makes the world smile!

-Vansh Agarwal,
PGDM'26

To Be Sad in Delhi

To Be Sad in Delhi is Better than Being Sad Anywhere Else.

Because every moment is pandemonium here. Roads that cut corners, days that kill conversations, cynicism in barbed tongue and staircase wit. History breaks breads with politics every day — for every street, a crime; for every friendly autowallah, a cop; for every balcony, a missing member from 2021. We remember until we can, because forgetting is more survival than impulse. how it unites us — the sobriety of living. It quakes under our feet like the malnourished river that keeps flowing over the city, marking a silent sigil. Like the years buried and exhumed by poets and prime ministers alike.

Still, we yearn. For the fragrance of *Raat ki Rani* in October, for a warm embrace from the sun on days it's too cold to leave home. For every bad omen, there is an unsaid prayer. For every monument renamed, one is erected in evidence of resistance. No djinns travel alone here. Being in love in Delhi is better than being in love anywhere else. Because every moment is pandemonium here. Because where else will you sip on masala Coke in the spring as you feed each other morsels of memories? You know the place. You were always meant to be here.

-Paridhi Puri,
PGDM'27

My Home

There's a place I once called home,
It lived in a city far away,
You'll find it strange, but it's true,
I came back to it everyday.
I went home sometimes,
Sometimes home visited me,
And it felt like a holiday,
Until inevitably it was time to leave.
Yet I knew it was all good,
Because I'd go again soon.

And then came a fateful day,
I went home but it wasn't the same,
As if some evil eye had been cast,
I did not know this at the time,
But that visit was my last.

The ceiling fell, the walls crumbled,
The ground gave way, the earth trembled,
My home collapsed and buried under,
Its existence wiped away,
It's not to be found in the world anymore,
Yet, now close to me it stays.
It's in my heart, it's within me,
It's in my dreams, in my memories,
Oh so close yet so very far,
I clutch it tight, I hold on,
It's elusive, it slips away,
I miss it, it keeps me awake,
I know I've lost it, it's not coming back,
But damn it, home, I still long for.

-Disha Agarwal,
PGDM'27

The Lonely Crowd

A hundred eyes watch me.
Crowds scream, lights bleed.
Still, I feel LONELY.

They say life is a choice, but I never had one.
This road was forced on me,
and I kept walking — too tired to stop.

I don't know where it ends.
Maybe in death. Maybe in silence.
Maybe it never ends at all.

Scared to Fail. But what is failure?
To fall? To disappear?
No — failure is waking each day
to a life I don't belong to.

I walk alone. Each step heavier than the last.
No hand beside mine,
No voice calling me back.

I've forgotten why I started.
Forgotten what I wanted.
Now I just move — because stopping hurts more.

And if I meet someone on this endless road,
I won't ask them to stay.
They'll leave, like everyone else.

And if the path ever ends, I hope it's dark, quiet, and kind enough
to let me finally rest — without eyes, without voices,
without pretending I'm not alone.

-Chinniah Ramanathan,
FMB'27

Un-placed

It feels never-ending: this wait
In a hall filled with faces
Filled with hope, waiting
For a verdict, a list from lists
Bearing names including their own,
A ticket to the future
Good seats and a free meal

Each morning a head held high
Dressed to impress, neat, heavy smile
Practiced to perfection
And I know I can't, shouldn't complain
I've only been here a short while
Ready to leave, while
This room has held people for longer,
People scrambling for a golden ticket

Yet the wave of disappointment
While short-lived, washes over me
With each announcement of a list from lists
That bears names, bar mine
And I know it will come
My seat, somewhere waiting
In a room full,
Of seats half-filled

But like I said, this wait of ours

It feels never-ending.

-Shelly Simon,
PGDM'26

The Audacity of Now

Life, as they say, is what happens while you're busy making other plans. We get so caught up in the "what ifs" and "maybes" that we often forget the "what is". We postpone joy, delay dreams and put off living for some vague, distant future when everything will magically align. But what if that future never arrives? What if the perfect moment is always just out of reach? It is in these moments of reflection that the wisdom of seizing the day, of *carpe diem*, truly resonates.

Think about it: how many times have you said, "I'll do that someday"? Someday I'll travel to Europe. Someday I'll learn to play the guitar. Someday I'll tell that person how I feel. Someday becomes a comfortable excuse for inaction, a way to avoid the vulnerability and effort required actually to pursue our desires. We build up this idealized version of the future, a shimmering mirage of happiness, while the present, the only reality we truly have, slips through our fingers. We're all guilty of it. We get caught in the daily grind, the endless cycle of school, work, chores and obligations. We tell ourselves we're working hard for that better future, for that elusive "someday," but often, we're just postponing our lives. We're living in the waiting room, instead of embracing the main event.

I remember my grandfather. He was a hardworking man who always provided for his family. He talked about retiring early, about travelling the world with my grandmother, about finally having time to pursue his passion for painting. But retirement never came. He worked until he physically couldn't anymore, and then, sadly, he passed away. He had spent his life working towards a future that never materialized, and he never got to experience the joy of pursuing his own dreams. His story, though heartbreaking, taught me a powerful lesson: life is not a dress rehearsal. There are no do-overs. There's only now.

This isn't to say that we shouldn't plan for the future. Of course, we need to be responsible and make wise choices. But planning shouldn't come at the expense of living. We need to find a balance between preparing for tomorrow and appreciating today. We need to learn to savour the small moments, the everyday joys that make life worth living. A good conversation with a friend, a beautiful sunset, a delicious meal – these are the moments that we should cherish, not postpone.

Think about the things that genuinely make you happy. What are you passionate about? What do you dream of doing? Now, ask yourself: what's stopping you? Is it fear? Doubt? Procrastination?

Whatever it is, challenge it. Don't let those things hold you back from living your life to the fullest.

So, how do we seize the day? Start small. It could be that it is finally signing up for that class you've always wanted to take. It could be telling someone how you feel. Maybe it's just taking a moment to appreciate the beauty of the world around you. Whatever it is, take that first step.

Don't wait for someday. Someday is a disease that kills all your dreams. Life is happening now. It's happening right now. Don't let it pass you by. Embrace the audacity of now. Live your life. Love fiercely. Learn constantly. And never, ever, stop seizing the day. Because ultimately, the only regrets we have are the chances we didn't take.

-Sneha Arora,
PGDM'27

A Parent's Story

Every journey has its own destination, which we all look forward to reaching. But the responsibility of being parents teaches us that sometimes the most important destinations are the ones we discover as we walk our personal journey itself. This journey was started by us with anxiety, hopes, expectations, and a vision. But soon, we realised that the journey is like a roller coaster ride with many ups and downs, requiring us to revisit the same path with a new perspective.

When our children stepped into their academic journey, we had high expectations. As we climbed the stepping stones of the academic world, we relearned along with them. All children are not the same. Some are independent, some need a little guidance. At the same time, some open an entirely different world before us, where learning is not just reading or memorising; it is visualised to retain concepts for deeper understanding. This translated into an altogether different outlook; all our old traditional teaching methods and assumptions went down the drain.

It, in fact, showed me a different world. A world where learning is not always about reading, but about the need to be felt, to visualise the concepts for deeper understanding. A world where creative imagination becomes the foundation of learning and curiosity helps us to learn the concepts more thoroughly.

Some insights became a boon during my journey as well. They helped us understand our child better, remember the concepts effortlessly and change our thoughts about learning. In this new journey of learning, we began to notice the natural enhancement of our child's strengths, revealing creative talents that traditional teaching methods might never have uncovered.

My son's technical talents became evident when he cleared the elementary and intermediate drawing examinations at the ages of 13 and 14, respectively, on his very first attempts, earning good grades despite not attending any classes. These examinations also required engineering technical drawings, which he had to visualise, understand, and execute with accuracy.

The faith, trust, and encouragement he received from his art guru enhanced his confidence and helped him navigate this phase with assurance. As his confidence grew, so did his opportunities to explore more. He took part in organising his school's annual day. His skills truly took off when he was entrusted with implementing an AI-based annual day theme at the age of 15. We were amazed by his technical automation of the show's lighting, which strengthened our confidence in his abilities. Technology soon became his close companion, opening new doors to explore, understand, and express himself creatively. His drawings grew more imaginative, innovative, and expressive— reflecting how clearly he could visualise the world with purpose.

Understanding concepts visually is a great blessing for children. It is like looking at the world differently. We must make this their strength and help them build their learning concepts. This will help our child to stand out in the crowd, be humble due to the challenges, face obstacles confidently, think differently, develop creative ideas, be innovative, help out friends in their studies, guide other children positively, handle interviews confidently and in a relaxed manner and use technology as a tool for learning. Hence, these experiences transform us from teacher to student as parents, where our children become our guides and teachers, helping us relearn and redefine our objectives.

Our destination for our children's education is to ensure they complete their journey successfully. But that journey transforms us as well, even though it is stressful and challenging at times, helping us be more patient and begin again with a fresh perspective, so that we can support our child to stand out confidently and creatively and to dream big. Rolling ahead like a skater on wheels, the journey might be filled with doubts, uncertainty and moments when we lose our confidence, people questioning the parents about their children's skills, making us wonder whether we are on the right track of guiding our children correctly.

But today, when they are grown into strong and independent young adults, we can look back on our journey and thank God for all the relearning and for every support that guided us from school to college, knowingly and unknowingly. This journey teaches us that progress in life is not measured on the same scale for everyone, nor by how much one has learnt from books; it depends on whether our dreams are pursued and fulfilled. The joy of the journey is not in how quickly we will reach the destination, but how courageously we are ready to face the challenges.

As we look back on our journey as parents, with joyful tears, we should thank God for blessing us with such wonderful children who gave us the title of "Mother" and also taught us to think differently in life.

This is a message to all parents who feel that traditional learning is the only way to learn. If your children struggle with memorising or adapting to conventional methods, remember:

"Life has no remote control — get up and change it yourself."

And remember every day, we relearn and rediscover new destinations and new dreams.

"Manifest them — and you will achieve them."

This is the journey of a parent!

-Jiji Santosh,
Manager, Central Examinations

The Night before Tomorrow

It was way past midnight, and though the long day had worn him down to the bone, sleep seemed far away from his eyes. His body ached with age, but his mind—restless, unsettled—kept circling the quiet truth that tomorrow would mark the end of one journey and the beginning of another. With a sigh, he pushed himself upright. His wife lay beside him, fast asleep, her face laced with exhaustion; he did not have the heart to disturb her. Removing the blanket, he rose slowly and slipped out of the room.

His first steps lead him to his daughter's room. He quietly opened the door and peeked inside. She lay fast asleep, her breathing gentle and steady, the soft glow of the night lamp illuminating the intricate bridal mehendi on her hands. Tomorrow was her wedding day—a destination he had always known would come, yet one he still felt unprepared to arrive at. Ever since childhood, she had feared the dark. He remembered how he had placed night lamps in every corner of her room, then later installed motion-sensor lights throughout the house so she would never have to walk in the dark.

“Will he care for her the way I always tried to?” The question rose uninvited yet unavoidable. He knew that her fiancé was a reliable, trustworthy and loyal man. If not, he would never have agreed to their marriage. And yet, the worries continued to slip into his mind. He closed the door gently and walked toward the living room. His steps halted in front of his favourite corner in the house—the wall filled with the photos of his daughter. Each image felt like a milestone on the long, beautiful journey he had travelled with her. His gaze fell first on the earliest photograph: her six-month-old self, eyes bright as stars, toothless grin stretching across her tiny face. In the picture, he held both her hands, steadying her as she stood wobbling on unsteady legs, laughing at the newness of the world. He smiled tearily at that memory. The following photograph drew a small laugh from him. Oh, how bewildered he had felt when he saw his four-year-old standing in front of him in the costume of a strawberry! Yet she had looked adorable, and she had known it too, grinning triumphantly under that oversized costume.

From there, the memories unfurled in gentle sequence: him teaching her to ride a bicycle; her clutching her first award with shy pride; her learning to cook with her mother, flour smudged on her cheeks; the three of them smiling at a picnic; she holding her graduation trophy, radiant with accomplishment. Each picture felt like a stepping stone across the stream of years—one that led, inevitably, to tomorrow.

Lost in the quiet flow of the past, he didn't notice her until a pair of sleepy arms slipped around his neck from behind.

"What are you doing here, Papa?" she murmured, her voice thick with drowsiness.

"Nothing, beta," he said softly. "Just thinking about how quickly our journey together brought us here... from the baby who held my fingers to the bride who will walk into her new life tomorrow."

She blinked, surprised. He was not a man prone to sentiment. Yet here he stood, vulnerable and bare in a way she had rarely seen. She tightened her embrace, as if to steady him. He stroked her hair gently, the familiar motion soothing them both.

"No matter what happens," she whispered, "I'll always be your little princess."

"I know, my Gudiya Rani," he said. "And tomorrow, you begin a new chapter—a new destination. I hope he cares for you as well as I did. I know he will... but a father cannot stop worrying."

She smiled softly. "Don't worry, Papa. He's a good man. He'll treat me right. Just like you and Mumma have."

"Hmm... Well, if he doesn't, he'll have to deal with me for the rest of his life."

Both of them laughed softly at that. Before they could say more, a familiar stern voice floated from down the hallway: "What are you two doing awake at this hour?"

They exchanged amusing glances—an echo of old days sneaking snacks past that same voice—and quietly drifted back to their rooms.

As he returned to bed, he felt the restlessness inside him finally begin to settle. Tomorrow would bring a new beginning—for her, and in its own way, for him too.

-Rima Sawant,
PGDM'27

Game Time #1- Wordle

Solve this Wordle by scanning the QR code



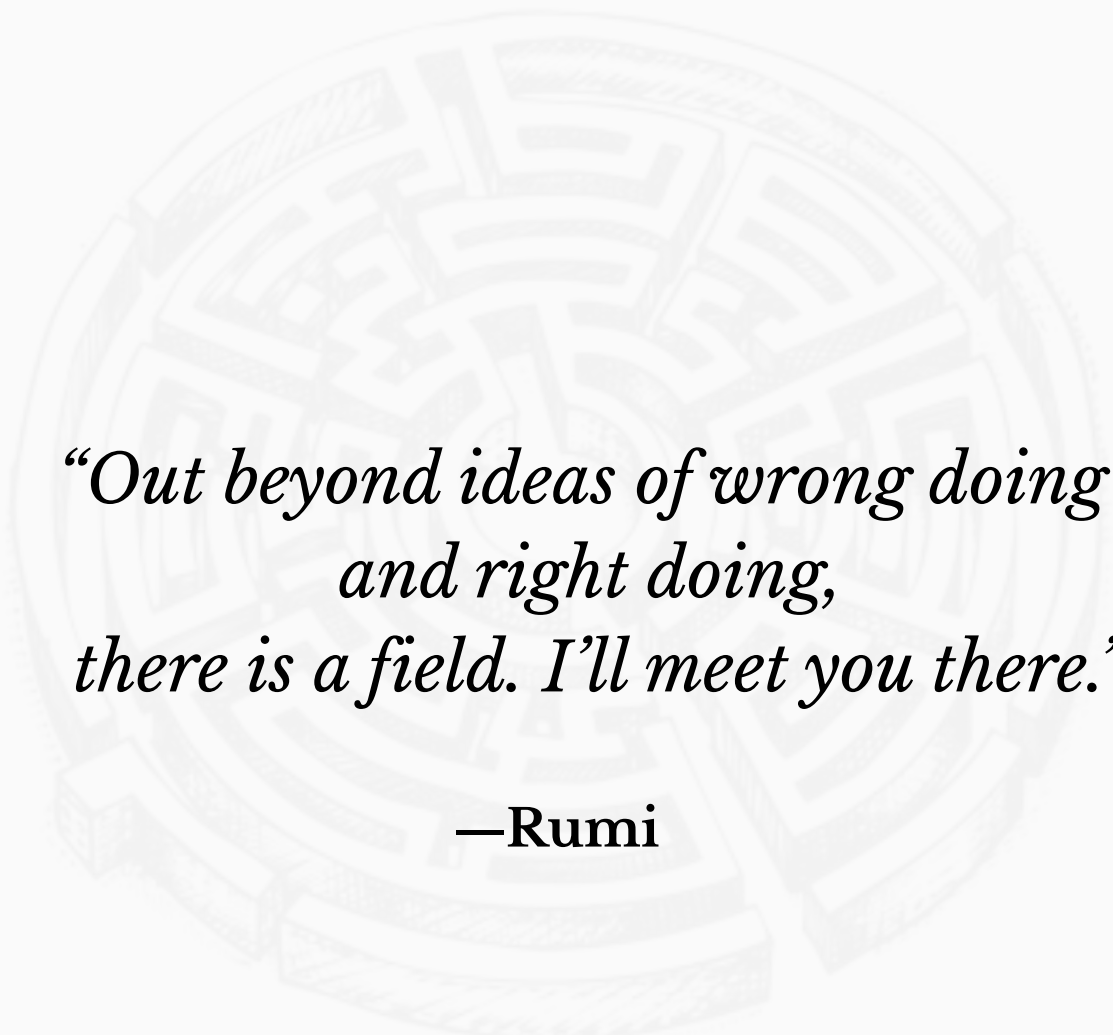
Pro Tip- Begin with purpose and let the path unfold :)

ROADS WITHIN

Where thoughts become paths



SECTION
TWO



*“Out beyond ideas of wrong doing
and right doing,
there is a field. I’ll meet you there.”*

—Rumi

Heart and it's Unspoken Emotions

Words are often thoughtfully uttered,
It's the heart that treasures unspoken emotions!
We often attach immense value to people too soon
That conversations with time grow emotionally hard.

To express our deep sorrows and feelings to those we love,
Sends anxieties that render us speechless and silent.
We often keep it to ourselves, failing to be kind enough to our own thoughts.
Yet, we think of a billion ways to keep our dear ones happy —
the human mind is indeed ironical!

We often put our hopes on time, waiting for the “right situations” to speak up.
What we fail to realise is that, in the blink of an eye, life passes by!
In the hustle of everyday life — power, pride and responsibilities
take over simple harmonies of happiness.

Life is uncertain — learn to live and love with everything you have!
Behind every smile, may lie a breaking heart.
Behind silence, may lie thousands of emotions that search for answers.

In this journey of life, it's important to pause
by appreciating small things.
Reciprocate love to those who prioritize your happiness beyond theirs.
Satisfaction isn't about monetary pleasures,
it's about a few seconds of care and warmth from a dear one!

Life isn't always about being perfect.
Sometimes, all we need is a hand to hold,
a shoulder to rest and a heart to understand!

-S. Sangeetha,
PGDM'26

Belonging

Every place, I am excluded.
Is anybody even my friend, or am I just deluded?
Will I have my people to fall back on?
Or just few around whom the show must go on?

I want connection, I want trust.
People with whom I can simply burst.
It could be laughter, it could be pain,
people who don't find me loud

Or think I'm dramatic, I'm insane.
I don't want to have to entertain,
I want to exist, just plain.
I want the peace of not having to think twice,
to approach,
or how to up this conversation with spice.

I want to be stable, I want to feel nice.
Will I ever find home away from these cries?
God, where do I belong? Will I be okay alone?
Does the adult world work like this? Happy, but torn?

Will it always be the same tomorrow and today?
I wish I find my people, dear God, I pray.
And if that is not possible,
If that is not how things work,
please give me the strength
to make peace with the feelings that lurk.

-Vanshika Saluja,
PGDM'27

A Quiet Almost

I met her on an ordinary day, the kind a man forgets unless something happens to mark it. She spoke in a calm voice, and she listened the way people do when they care about the truth. There was no drama to it. No sudden spark. Just two people talking, and something steady forming between the words.

She had lived a little, enough to know what mattered and what didn't. She wasn't sentimental, and she didn't pretend to be. But she had a way of holding her thoughts that made you want to follow them. She liked the cosmos, and big questions, and the kind of quiet that lets you think. I liked the way she looked at the world, straight, without fear.

We talked often. Sometimes for long hours, sometimes only for a few minutes, but always with the sense that the conversation would return. A man grows used to that kind of company. It settles into him. It makes the days feel less empty.

She shared small things about her life, and I shared some of mine. It wasn't love, not in the loud way people talk about it. But there was a pull to her, strong and clean, like the current in a river you don't see from the bank. You only feel it once you've stepped in.

I liked her honesty. She never tried to impress me. She never tried to hide. She was young, but she carried herself with a kind of courage. It made a man want to be better, though she never asked for it.

When I think of her now, I think of quiet rooms and long evenings and the way her voice softened when she was curious. I think of two people learning each other slowly, without promises, without fear. And I think of how rare it is to meet someone who makes the world feel straighter, clearer, and good.

Maybe it was the beginning of something. Maybe it was only a moment. But it was honest. And that is enough for now.

-Sujal Raj,
PGDM'26

Paper Heart

She has a paper heart,
Easy to crease, easy to crush,

But a drop of love,
Can taint her forever... She loves timelessly,
She loves endlessly

She can set her heart on fire,
She can lose her entire,
Self in those eyes...
Beware though,
She has learnt to see right through the lies.. She's scared to be broken,
She leaves some words unspoken,

Until then, she stares at the sky,
Waiting for someone,
she does not know why,
The pinks, the purples, the shades, the hues,
Trying to fill the void,
she proceeds to,
Walk down the lonely path,
Until it's cold no more.
she can see a shadow not far,
Staring at her, he knows,
She's the one, the one for him.
"Hi", he whispers slowly.

Her heart crumbles,
her walls break,
She knows she's ready,
She's ready to fall again.

Her heart beats,
Her hands clasped,
Two steps forward,
She starts to retrieve back.
The feeling returns,
She turns around,
"I'm sorry I can't", she whispers to the clouds. "Wait!", She looks back,

Lost in his eyes,
her thoughts fade away,
This is right,
her heart reassures,

They stood 5 feet apart,
Couldn't get enough of each other.
Step by step they move closer, "I'll always be there", he promised her,
"Let's fall together", she closes her eyes,
"Let's fly together", he looks at the sky.

-Aakansha Mishra,
PGDM'26

A Reflection on Flights

I finished reading *Flights* last week but took my time to post about it, just like I took my time to read this book as well. I started *Flights* in 2020, fascinated with Tokarczuk's vignettes of displacement and mobility.

Over the span of 3 years, I have carried this book with me and moved through space and time. As I traced and mapped out my own trajectories, I read *Flights*, breaking it apart again and again.

At first it was unintentional, but as days progressed, I tried to imagine myself as one of the fragments the book is splintered and glued into. I read about airports and travellers and lectures of travel psychology, about anatomists and amputated legs and a lost wife and child on a Croatian island, about Turkish dogs and Chopin's heart, a daughter's plea to let her father's body rest, about bleeding/running/flying/moving/travelling.

I thought about translations, spatial mapping, and how airports stand still in time. Now I forget that it's over, and I often find myself glancing the absence of a Yves Klein blue on my desk.

“We will simply write each other down, which is the safest form of communication and of transit; we will reciprocally transform each other into letters and initials, immortalize each other, plastinate each other, submerge each other in formaldehyde phrases and pages.”

-Trisha Awari,
PGDM'26

In the End, it did Matter

When I was younger, probably around 8–9 years old, my brother used to play loud music on our computer. The music video used to freak me out because of its extreme tenebrosity.

But slowly, I realised I had started to develop a liking for it, though it took a little while. Slowly, I embraced the songs, the lyrics, the singers and the band. And gradually, it ended up being my 'Favourite Band'.

And this morning, I just woke up with the question, "Is this the end of it?" Last night, I didn't feel like sleeping. Because yesterday, darkness had faded into my childhood. It would never be the same. Those same dark videos kept popping up whenever I closed my eyes.

I had so many questions unanswered. Why should he do it? Fans and his fellow band-mates so loved him, and what kind of dirty mess is this feeling named 'depression'? So evil to take a person's life?

He was the father of six pretty kids. He gave soul to more than a hundred stray words. Whatever he sang came less from his throat and more from his heart. He was a victim of sexual abuse during his early teenage years, which led to addiction to alcohol and drugs. He believed that being 'high' gave him a sense of control over his surroundings.

Chester Bennington, 41, killed himself in his house in Southern California on 20 July 2017. Call it a coincidence, Chester's friend Chris Cornell, who committed suicide in May, would have turned 53 on the 20th. People usually choose a day of grief and sadness or an anniversary of their bygone loved ones for suicide, and it just makes my conviction stronger and stronger that it wasn't just an instant decision and that it was in his mind, at least, for a while.

Chester had everything the world, today, lacks: greed. He had money, name, fame, talent, great friends, but he lacked an important element named 'Peace'. There was a mental block that he could never get rid of. It was always there, despite all the support he got from Mike Shinoda, Rob Bourdon and others. Maybe he needed therapy, just like people needed his songs.

It was so easy to relate, sometimes, to him and his songs and his passion and assertion while singing them. He had this incomparable honesty about his songs and the ability to tell his autobiography through his lyrics. It was easy to understand how tough life had been for him from his music alone.

What hurts the most at this moment is the fact that despite all the effort being put into making people aware of depression and despondence, a Grammy-winning album singer decided to end his life at a tender age of 41.

Linkin Park didn't ever drift apart. They came together in the last years of the 20th century and stayed together till this very day. And they'll never be the same ever again. I fail to foresee a Linkin Park without the Arizona prodigy vocalist whom Brad Delson, guitarist, called 'the final piece of the puzzle'.

I heard 'In the End', 'Somewhere I Belong', and 'Numb' in the morning and felt my sleep-deprived eyes get moist. I am no longer afraid of anything dark because Chester and Linkin Park taught me to embrace it with rectitude and not ignore it.

Chester was way too disturbed and had written a song on his phone, the chorus of which read, 'I Hate the World Right Now'. Maybe the world, except his band-mates, wasn't willing to accept him the way he was.

We may just ignore all this and continue with our stereotypical notions about celebrities that drug and divorce and excess money have ruined their life, but think if depression can kill Kurt Cobain, Chris Cornell and now, Chester Bennington, then how strong is this feeling and emotion?

Jimmy Kimmel addressed Chester as the kindest person to have come to his show. Chester had suffered a lot himself and knew how it felt. That's his life lesson for all of us. In a world where people take 'tit-for-tat' seriously, he believed in the virtue of being 'humble and meek'.

Chester Bennington, you are an inspiration to a generation, not just as a singer but also as a human. With you, you're taking a significant part of my childhood, and probably my favourite band will soon become an extinct entity.

You were wrong, Chester.

You said, "In the end, it doesn't even matter".

It does matter—a lot.

I hope you realise that when you reach heaven. And I really hope you unite with 'peace', after all, Earth failed to provide you with any.

Thank you for raising me when I needed you!

Thank you for making my childhood so amazing!

You're irreplaceable. Forever and Always.

Hey Chester,
As I'm writing this, my hand feels heavy.
I feel desolate and crying.
We had so many roads untravelled.
So early, why have you given up?
You were wrong, Chester Bennington.
A good goodbye is unreal and fictitious, and
In the end, it does and did matter.
With you gone now, I'm finding a place somewhere I belong.
I wish I could have written all this yesterday. But then, you of all people would
understand me. I was numb.

-Kevin Thomas,
PGDM'26

Broken Homes

In war-torn homes
After peace
Respect tramples out the gates

No one believes
That the other can command
Even a tiny ounce of space

And the adulterated silence
Between two hearts
Begs for reconciliation

But ego comes and stays
And in this battle
After respect

Childhood follows out the door
The tiny bodies
Hold huge heavy souls

Learning to weigh themselves down
Accepting that in every night
They will have to be the moon

And that is how
Broken children
Grow up way too soon

-Malvika Kushwah,
PGDM'26

A Lonely Swing

There is a lonely swing in the garden
shining bright green
under the summer skies
the pattering of small feet,
which dangle from the edge of the seat
whispering juvenile secrets
Half imagined, half true
and another magical half
that hangs altogether unknown

There is a swing in the garden
Often visited now by two,
As their limbs grow longer
and secrets grow heavier
So do the hinges creak more
and more, and more

There is a swing in the garden
That has become the haunt
for two lost souls
who have found themselves
in the eyes of the other,
The bench swings slower now,
more so a gentle cradle,
to ease burdened hearts

There is a worn swing in the garden
Commandeered by two
Travelling vast distances
into strange new lands,
they have seen it all together,
on this chipped green vessel
They weigh nothing,
floating towards the sky
unburdened, set free
each to their own destiny

There is a lonely swing in the garden
It waits there still,
Holding stories that cannot
be seen, heard or felt.
The worn wood creaks
and sings and beckons,
waiting each day
for someone who'd stay

-Shruthi Muruganandam,
PGDM'26

Lost Roads

Once walking along a cold dark road
Wearing my heart on sleeve and my mind going bold,
I thought about all the people I've met,
All the people I've loved and all that regret.
What are regrets really but silent wishes?
A peak in the past to correct all the misses?
I don't have a wish really but I do have a thought.
Would things have been different if I had not myself lost?
But then you only lose things you had before,
Can't cry over something you never had a taste of.

We live in a world where vulnerability is a taboo,
So sometimes it's hard to believe people can be real too.
Caught up in our own wannabe world,
Waiting to escape and fly like a free bird,
There comes another hurdle to jump,
This one's called baggage of past demons.
Everyone here is damaged in their own ways,
Maybe that's why some people can't stay.
What goes wrong to make them turn this way?
Does it have to be traumatic, can't it be just something stray?
Maybe we loved too much or maybe it was the trust, Honestly,
It's okay to feel a bit too much.

Acknowledging our feelings only makes us human,
If not everytime, maybe once in a blue moon?
While all these thoughts cross my mind,
I realize, Maybe to myself I can learn to be kind.
The world doesn't have to be a dark place,
All anyone ever longs for is a familiar face.
What I long for is to look into my reflection,
And see that familiar face in all its perfection.

-Pragya Gupta,
PGDM'26

Night-time Routine

I kill a self of mine, on every other night.
My corpse let's out a whine, as he's filled with spite.

So he waters himself, between 12 to 6.
And I wake up in bed, revived and fixed?

But something seems lost, maybe an organ?
Unsure, but this body does feels foreign.

I kill a self of mine, on every other night.
Some of these selves, were coloured and bright.

I watered them myself, inspite the despise.
and held them with pride, as it was still me, they comprised.

Inflicting my own misery, was sadly my vice.
That may also be, what inspires my demise.

Now I watch them bleed out, with my very own eyes.
Even the best of measures, have not deafened their cries.

I look beyond them, and try to sleep.
"To grow a plant, the pests need to bleed."

I kill a self of mine, on every other night.
But I ask myself, did they all need to die?

I tell myself, that growth has a price.
But what is growth to peace, if not a grain of rice.

A kind of rice, that I've deprived myself of.
So I sleep every night, with a bloodied bitter cough.

-Anoop Anil Kumar,
PGDM'27

Of Dreams and Lies

Passions undead yet weary
Like the final sparks of a dying flame,
Unlived dreams to realize –
Smothered by the echoes
Of a passive existence.
Fear lurking around
Like a child waiting to
Steal treats from the countertop.

Attempts of trespass
By fiery pursuits of passion and love
Invigorate feelings long- forgotten,
Provoked and betrayed –
Like a bride left behind at the altar,
Burning sensations dwindle away
But, never die.

'Oh! You are creative', they'd rave
'Find your passion,
make it your hobby,
Reserve it for when you reach the age of
Back aches and plummeting memory,
It'll keep you sane then', they'd say.
But, what good is sanity
When my soul is disgraced
By the swindled chances,
And swindled by whom?
Them or my passive acquiescence?

-Nivetha A,
PGDM'27

Parish of Passion

I wake up today,
with a sore throat.

Beyond my door,
I peep, a shadow or more.

One big, one small,
Two others; just fog.

I rise to look yonder,
They look back, in loss.

Then one comes forth,
with a similar sore throat,

He recites an apology.
I respond, "what for?"

He looks at my eye,
as meets it with his fist.

He signals his colleague,
who then blesses it with spit.

When they retreat,
I notice their robes.

"The Parish of Passion"
have levelled their scores.

They look to their sinner,
and seek some sorrow.

So I recite my apology;
"There is passion no more"

Is it a sin,
to lose fervour?

If not then why,
are these priests at my door.

-Anoop Anil Kumar,
PGDM'27

This Girl in a Black Dress

I am this girl in a black dress trying hard to fit in
But somewhere in the smooth pace, do I trip into a puddle of doom
And when the puddle turns out to be a lake

I dive deep.
I dive deep in, only to find out what the illusion casts
It says that the lake is not the lake

But a river for I find myself swaying with the flow
Believer am I to hope that the flow is only for the good
Dear, don't you know where the river destines?

A murderous push into the deep ocean of darkness
And that is all that takes me to drown alive
Afraid am I for suffocation has always choked me nearly to death

I swim hard to see my sunshine but it seems harder
Never have I ever felt this hard
And then I see myself being dragged by a heaviness

A heaviness that takes every little last thing left with me
The darkness only grow when I reach out and now I give up
'cause I'm this girl in a black dress whom you will fail..

-Jayasri,
PGDM'26

Mirrored Reflections

I look at myself in the mirror
Trying to find me
But all I find is a reflection I don't recognize, a reflection that's not mine.

This reflection doesn't reflect me
This mirror doesn't express me
It tells the tale of a girl gone numb
Her world has made her mind really glum.

Betrayed by her own thoughts ,
Led into war by her own heart,
She turns to her conscience for relief
Only to find herself surrounded by thieves
The thieves tie her up in chains
Chains of doubt, regret and past pains
Grasping for air she finds herself crumbling to tears
In loneliness, she's about to give in to her fears
Just as she's dying, her soul intervenes
Whispering in her ears, "darling, Reflections change".

Given hope by these words, she stands again
Tasting freedom she breaks apart her chains
She will not be bound by herself anymore
She's a sea which cannot be contained for sure
Roaring and soaring high, she finds her spark
She will never again go down a pit so dark
Belief and love are the only things she requires
To turn her spark back into fires.

As she watches her darkness burn
Towards the girl outside the mirror she turns
You can change your reality she says,
"Darling, just let your reflection change".

-Pragya Gupta,
PGDM'26

Self Portrait

There are things
I find about myself
On these pages
In lines written,
Struck down,
Carefully restructured
Things like thoughts
I shouldn't spend too long thinking
Lest I go mad
Things like feelings
I shan't feel for I fear
I'd drown in them.

So at the first glimpse,
the warning sign
I pick it up, my book and pen
And write, building
Something from Nothing
Laying out my pieces
In a messy puzzle
Skilfully taped together

And I call this art,
This cowardly confession
Hidden within verse
Hoping someone, a nameless face
Unearths these words, I pray
With patient eyes
understanding, kind

In a world so loud
Where I find myself backed
Into a silent corner
I write these poems
And these verses,
My art as I call them
Are perhaps all that
I can truly call my own.

-Shelly Simon,
PGDM'26

Essay

I find myself at a spoken word poetry contest, all sweaty palms and nervous breaths, wondering if I can do this today, if I should just go home, and if it's a conducive attempt.

I was 15 years old when I first heard the words 'spoken word poetry' at a TEDTalk I saw on the internet, right after the keynote speaker performed a poem I couldn't take my eyes off. She talked about Spoken Word in how oceans recede, and waves crash, and the way the sun comes up and sets in, in words that exceeded my finite vocabulary, making it almost accessible and unavoidable. Since then, I've just looked at it through an upside-down glass ball; it is terrifying yet enticing, jittery yet inviting.

But on occasions like this, I often question the very idea of being a poet, and it is on occasions like this that I'm the most vulnerable. So when the microphone stand is fixated way above my height, and I'm struggling to turn the knob to lower it, I know I'm going to deliver the shittiest performance this room filled with 36 people had ever seen. In between the stubbornness of the stand and the self-doubt of yours truly, a stranger asks me if they could help me adjust it, and I let them. Being a nervous talker, I feel the extreme need to fill in the silences with words, and in no time, I'm telling them, "I face this issue all the time since I'm short, so it's cool, I'll just pull out the mic."

To tell you just their verbal response would be a disgrace to their entire body, which dropped all the effort it was putting into adjusting the stand and turned its complete attention to me, looking me straight in the eyes with absolute shock, and uttered the words I would remember for a lifetime, "No, you're amazing, it's the stand which needs fixing, and here, it's fixed now. Now show us your perfect.". I went on doing the piece and they went on doing their work.

Neither did I win that night, nor did I talk to the person again, but I took home something that I later learned to call Faith.

-Jagrati Pahlajwani,
PGDM'26

Free Woman

I was born in a room
With marble walls and a door that never opened.
My mother said, the day someone fell in love with me
Was the day I would be set free.

Slavery is generational.
My mother was a slave to the empty promises of a man
And I am a slave to hope,
The same poisonous hope that has bred eternal misery.

I have seen every inch of this gilded cage
And nothing of the world outside.
The world, in turn, has never known me,
Has never felt the weight of my footsteps on its body.

I've planted a pomegranate tree in my heart,
Everyday I water it, and nurture it
In the hope that some day
I can buy my way to freedom in exchange for fruit.

What if I die in this room?
What if no one ever falls in love with me,
Never opens the door,
Never wants to eat the pomegranate seeds?

If I die in this room, let the world know
That I have only ever known the touch of the sun's rays through the bars of my
cage,
That my mother was a slave, prone to delusion,
And so was I.

-Srijita Sengupta,
PGDM'26

WALK ON! MOVE ON!

Strong gusts of winds blow
But me, they can't possibly slow
Although the path is littered with burning coal
But me and my indomitable soul

So I walk on!
So I move on!
For the destination is far
And the goal has yet to be reached
I know I will be victorious eventually
Maybe not immediately
But absolutely and definitely

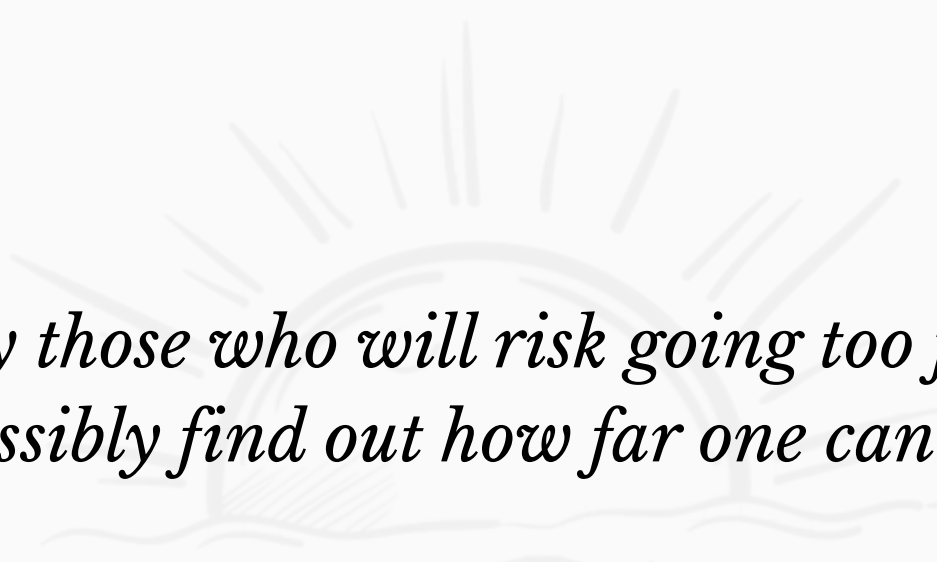
So I walk on!
So I move on!
Through thick and thin
Through fire and ice
Through defeat and win
Through hell and paradise

-Raunaq Singh Sahil,
PGDM'27

BEYOND THE HORIZON

Chasing the future, one dream at a time

SECTION
THREE



“Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.”

—T. S. Elliot

Echo of the Illusionary World

Randomness of the air and my bewildered thought...
Its browning motion continued, but not mine.
It kept swirling around, blowing through faces, throwing and catching dust, speed,
and stillness occasionally.
Imagination eclipsed me, taking me high.

What if this Earth was just a thought,
Revolving in the minds of those asleep?
In the actual Earth, I know not
Whose heads, for years, have never peeped out of the blanket.

What if Birth and Death were just the changing of blankets?
Us sleeping every night is sleeping in a dream.
The deep pockets are mere virtual depths,
While the shallow ones scream the message of a light and peaceful sleep.

What if the boundaries of Nations don't even exist actually,
And every person is an immortal being?
Because Mortal is just that blanket, factually,
Which sometimes more than one wraps around and over a single person.

Or what if the ones dying here
Are reserving a bed for that sleep in the actual world,
And the ones waking up there
Are transported to this Earth — an imaginary thought curled in virtual air?

What if it gave me the courage to face Death,
As I wouldn't have to die but just sleep?
Or what if it taught me to live yet lively without any threat,
Meeting a common destiny here or waking up there when the alarm of transition
will beep?

My mind questions whether I live a life of sleep
Or that of a roller-coaster dream.
Imaginations creep into my head right through facts.
Are we just mistaken about a world so supreme?

Such imagination clutches my mind wondrously,
Forcing an expression between a smile and bewilderment,
When suddenly facts lay their hands on it, fighting my imagination ferociously,
Finally bringing me out of this soon-to-reoccur, occasional amazement.

-Dhun Rathod,
PGDM'27

(Over)Thought, Realised

As I lie in my bed,
Way too late in the night,
I think and I overthink,
There's something I've realised.
With time and with change,
Maybe taught or just aged,
I still think far and wide,
About things gone, auld lang syne,
About tomorrow, and aeons ahead,
About things lost and things gained.
Yet, it's so very different,
In how it makes me feel,
From all these nights I've learnt,
People and time help you heal.

I longed for the past,
Now it makes me cry,
I feared the future,
Now it calls my name.
What scared me before,
Is now exciting,
What terrified me then,
Now has the feathers of hope.
Memories that I treasured,
Now break my heart,
The future that I ran from,
Now, I manifest.

-Disha Agarwal,
PGDM'27

Sonder

Is there a name for what I am feeling?

I look out the window and there's the blur of a passing traffic
Strangers rushing to dive into destiny
Destiny rushing towards them
Both quite naïve to what the future holds
Who am I to them?

I look around the bus and there's the sweet buzz of a budding childhood
Some laughter here, some cries there
Kids running about, falling, tripping
An impatience brewing inside them
A longing for home
Who am I to them?

I hear the faint sound of an ice cream vendor ringing his bell
He carries a dejected look on his face
The Sun shines ablaze as he serves his last scoop
hoping to pack up and call it a day
He sighs, as I think
Who am I to him?

There's an old lady walking down the pathway
With a bag of vegetables and two children by her side
She wears a smile that reaches her eyes
And looks around the busy street
Did she look at me?
Or was it just my imagination?
Who am I to her?

Who am I to her and the thousands of people
I cross my paths with but never quite meet?
Who am I to the little boy who asks me to do his math sum
but disappears as soon as he comes?
Who am I to the man who drives me to school every day
but I know not his name?

Who am I after all?
Who am I to the boy who lost faith in love
the day he rested his best-friend
six feet underneath the ground?
Who am I to the poet
who gambled away his words?
Who am I to those
whose grief I cannot fathom?

Who am I when not the teller of my own story?
Who am I when I am the fading haze?
A drop within the ocean,
and yet an ocean within a drop
A fleeting memory
that tastes like an epiphany
Who am I to you?
Who am I to this world?
Sonder. Do you feel it too?

-Manasi Varwandkar,
PGDM'26

Outsider

frosted glass
a room baked warm
armchairs and tipsy wine
loose tongues forgoing time

conversation flows
like Himalayan streams
small bits odd
forgotten dreams
and laughter,
easy and fond
minds at ease
in the comfort
of familiarity

frosted glass
mutes exchanges elated
blurs expressive faces
blocks the warmth of company
offers indifference
to misery

where stood once
an armchair blue
with a blanket of patches
and a book or two
offering its master
the most wonderful view
of people and laughter
and seasons anew,
in that square space now lay
an empty place, a missing face

looking inside from the
biting cold
at a new story slowly unfold
the premise the same
no change in name
the only difference
an absent presence

one that wandered
to distant lands
in search of a muse
for poetic hands
stumbling back home
eager to join
friends of the past
only to find
frosted glass

-Shelly Simon,
PGDM'26

Falling, Rising, Walking Again

21, young, bold, adventurous, jawaan- these are the words people always associated with him. And why not, for someone who went on eight treks in the last six months, wants to climb the Mount Everest someday and plans on never settling, he deserves all these adjectives and more. But as they always say, 'life has weird ways of taming everyone', he could never even imagine what was coming his way. At first, he thought that the clutch plate of his rusty 12 year old SUV had finally given up when he was unable to push the clutch on a chilly December morning in Delhi. It was only while stepping out of his vehicle, almost cursing it, when he fell on the gravel outside and realized that there was suddenly no power in his left foot. It was not the clutch that had given up, but the muscles in his leg. Amidst the sea of emotions that started flowing as he entered the house, it was the limping and look of helplessness that made his mother run up to him and start crying.

The chaotic routine of family panic and hospital visits began. The look of the doctor as he turned back after testing him gave all of it away. The eerie silence in the cabin broke when the doctor informed the family that he is suffering from multiple herniated discs in his lumbar spine, and if the condition doesn't improve in the next 2 weeks, he will have to undergo urgent spinal surgery. What followed were the most excruciating six months of his life. Incidents like trying to get out of bed and collapsing frequently brought tears of frustration in his eyes. "What if this is it? What if I never feel the crunch of gravel beneath my hiking boots again?" These thoughts gnawed at him, turning sleepless nights into endless pits of despair." Suddenly the casual car drives were replaced by visits to physiotherapists and spine surgeons, and the only time he entered a car was to see a doctor.

However, amidst all the confusions, the one thing that he never let go of his grit and determination. Whenever he would witness a group of joggers running on the pavement outside his house, or a video of Bear Grylls climbing mountains in *Man v/s Wild*, he would get pumped to heal himself faster. Slowly but steadily, his condition started to improve. After countless physio sessions, as the mercury started rising, and summers approached, he was finally able to walk again. As his stride became longer, and walking steps turned into running miles, the smile on his mother's face widened as well.

A year has now passed, and the wind is cold again. The SUV is another year older, and its rust has increased ever so slightly. As he climbs into the driving seat for the first time in twelve months, a feeling of nervousness and excitement sends shivers down his spine. As he pushes the clutch, yet again, he fails. Funnily enough, this time around, it's just the clutch-plates that have finally given up. He steps out of the car, curses it in his raw Delhi accent, and the thud of his steps echoes in the cold air as he walks away into the dense morning fog. After all, Aryan is jawaan again and those mountains won't climb themselves.

-Samaksh Nagpal,
PGDM'26

Worth the Wait

Despite all the hardwork , you fell again,
Once more your determination went in vain.
But this isn't your destiny , this isn't your fate,
You'll certainly reach the peak which is worth the wait.

Remember that everything evolves through transformation in life,
For continuous efforts even sharpen a blunt knife.
Failures come in way to make the success count,
It all depends on you whether to keep moving or to turn around.

You just need to persevere to reach the height of your ambition,
For downfalls always undergo a fruitful transition .

-Akshita Sachdeva,
PGDM'27

It's Ok to rest

It's ok to take a break.

It's ok to let your mind wander around those places where solace awaits your arrival.

It's ok to dance in the middle of nowhere with music in your ears, adrenaline coursing through your veins, despite several eyes shooting the beams of judgment at you.

It's ok to take a rest of a while, sit back, relax and let the heat go out.

It's ok to stop running, look back, or maybe have an apple, a glass of fine wine, or whatever.

You can be the rabbit or maybe the turtle in the popular tale of their race.

You can be an elephant walking along the same route just to have water from the lake at the end of the track.

You can be a bird flying high in the sky to reach its nest by the end of that evening.

You can be a flower spreading its aroma to attract the bees nearby.

You can be a fruit waiting to sacrifice yourselves for the greater good.

Remember! It's not always about being fast.

Maybe sometimes it's just about waiting for the right moment. Maybe it's just about finishing the journey you embarked on in the most convenient manner possible. It's just about ultimately fulfilling your purpose.

There is no pointing running in the rare that's not meant for you. No matter how much you cry, weep or fly, some days just aren't yours.

So it's ok to lay down on a couch, have a pineapple sundae on a lazy afternoon watching your favorite episode of the show you love.

Forgetting all the miseries, works, and pressure you have been carrying on your worn-out, crippled shoulders and bent back.

So my dear here is your sundae. Hope you have a nice day.

-Prasanna Abhinay Arcot,
PGDM'27

Journey

The air feels whole, my wings take flight
With the hums of the aircraft, I feel alive
The echoes of the past, the future I sight
In people who await me, my present thrives

Memories, stories in the hallways unfold
The hugs, the laughter, & warmth galore
So much shared, so much left untold
The city, your city, leaves you wanting more

A suitcase, a comfortable dress, a trickle from the eye
An uncarved path, of the future reminds
A paradox, that I let out a sigh
And yet, with the hums of the aircraft, again, purpose I find.

-Jahnvi Sekhsaria,
PGDM'26

Between

Between the before and after,
Between the calm and chaos
Between the cause and effect,
We found our solace.

Between the lines left unread,
Between the worlds that never met,
Between someday and forever,
We found each other.

Between the cityscapes and sunsets,
We made our peace, or maybe we were meant to miss,
Far along the horizon,
That's where I'll be.

Hoping to meet you soon,
The chasing and eventually the missing,
continues.

-Aakansha Mishra,
PGDM'26

Musings of a Restless Mind

They say that change is the only constant. Yet, embracing it often feels like standing on the edge of a cliff, where the thrill of the unknown is matched only by the fear of losing balance. Change demands courage—a leap of faith into an uncertain future—and leaves behind questions about whether solid ground will ever appear again.

Leaving home for the first time embodies this paradox. Home, with all its ordinariness, offers a sanctuary of familiarity. The way sunlight streams through the living room in the afternoon or the comforting aroma of a favourite meal wafting through the air becomes a rhythm that defines safety. Letting go of that familiarity feels like pulling up the roots that have grounded a person, setting them adrift in search of something more.

Youth is often defined by chasing dreams and aspirations, stepping out with starry eyes into a world full of promise. It is a time to build, to explore, and to create a unique place in the world. However, the pursuit of something greater often demands a steep price: the loss of what was once considered essential. The comforts, the constants, and the people who shaped a world of meaning are left behind, raising the question of whether the pursuit of the unfamiliar is worth the sacrifice.

In Japanese folklore, the tale of Urashima Tarō serves as a poignant reflection of this dilemma. A kind fisherman, he saves a turtle and is rewarded with an invitation to the underwater palace of the gods. There, he experiences divine beauty and peace. However, when he returns to his village, he discovers that centuries have passed, and everything he once held dear has vanished.

That story strikes a chord with me, because isn't that the price of stepping into the unknown? The realization that while you're out chasing dreams, the world that once felt eternal but also the one you left behind doesn't wait for you.

And yet, change is not without its gifts. It shapes us, moulds us into versions of ourselves we couldn't have imagined. There's a certain beauty in that, even if it comes with its share of pain. Maybe what we crave isn't the comfort of familiarity, but the promise of something better. Maybe we let go not because we stop loving what we had, but because we dare to hope that the leap will land us somewhere worthwhile.

In the end, it's a gamble. One that requires equal parts courage and faith. And perhaps that's what makes it all so profoundly human—the ability to embrace change, with all its uncertainties, and to keep moving forward. For now, I'm learning to sit with the discomfort, to mourn what I've left behind, but also to trust that the journey ahead holds its own kind of magic.

-Nidhi Harish,
PGDM'26

The Button

Here I was, recounting my life like a fable.
Trembling and sitting at a cafeteria table.
I had ordered a cheesecake with a topping of maple.
When the delay started to annoy me, along came Abel.

"Hello, Mr Baxter. Long time no see" he cried

"Long enough to gain fifty pounds" I replied
As he chuckled and placed the plate by my side,
My heart skipped a beat, I clinged to what I had to hide

When he brisked away, I breathed a sigh of relief
Finishing my last meal, I went into a trance of grief
I would had had everyone's attention, if not for my kerchief
I recalled the sight that made me go beyond belief

My dear Jenny was lying inanimate on the floor
Beside her corpse, laid our humble abode's door
The pool of blood received my teary downpour
With no luck from the law, I solved the mystery before

My final destination was a political rally
A crowded campaign across the adjacent alley
There stood the gory culprit, influencing his tally
I muttered to myself in rage "This is the finale!"

An old acquaintance who exploited our kindness
Stood where he was, thanks to his sins' success
The audience applauded his proud egress
The sight of his wave caused me great distress

I followed his way onto his opulent limousine
I got to his chariot and knocked on his window screen
He recognized me In a jiffy when I disclosed my machine
My finger on the button of the hump of trinitrotoluene

My eyes met his eyes of shock and fear
He screamed to his chauffeur to shift to fifth gear
I pushed the button knowing our end was near
I hoped in the afterlife that the Earth would be our frontier

-Rithwik Rao,
PGDM'26

The Hug

I always wonder what illusion this universe is,
indeed, there's a reason why it lives.
Could there be a creator? Or is it all free?
Is there a destination we can reach?
But who cares about the worlds above or beneath,
for we are the masters of our green.
There's no reason to find our being;
the lingering mortality will never let us reach.
Let the others believe in what they preach,
for we know we are independent like bees.
The highs we achieve and the lows we reach
are all outcomes of our actions from within.
No almighty soul guided us through;
the decisions we made were our own,
When meandering through blood-red mountains,
our determined rocks kept us afloat.
Certainly, my efforts were the only sailor I'd ever need,
but why was I still chasing those wishful dreams? And
always did I flow with a persistent hope the next stream
will be where I find my throne. But could it be that there
lay secrets manifold, beyond mortality, a world teeming
with gold? Only when I completed my journey, and my
heart lay still, my soul felt the warm hug it yearned.
For I discovered it was not the land under
me, my heels were carried on His lotus feet.
Finally, did I understand why the world paved the way,
it was never my efforts alone, but I had the gift of faith.
The faith which I could never comprehend,
regarding it childish with hefty disdain,
How could I be so foolish? How could my eyes see black?
When it was always my loved ones who had my back.

-Harsh Tiwari,
PGDM'27

Game Time #2- Crossword

Solve the Crossword by scanning the QR code



Pro Tip- Some answers cross only if you keep going.

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, SAME JOURNEYS

Stories that speak beyond dialects



SECTION
FOUR

“मैं अकेला ही चला था जानिब-ए-मंज़िल मगर
लोग साथ आते गए और कारवाँ बनता गया”

-मजरूह सुल्तानपुरी

मिठास तेरे प्यार दी

तू लक्ष्मी वांगू सोहणी,
मैं धूल तेरे पैरों दी।
तू बन जा सोहणे दा ताज,
मैं ठीक झांझर तेरे कदमां दी।

तू धनतेरस वाली लक्ष्मी,
मैं फटी हुई नोट तेरा यार।
तू समुद्र मंथन दा अमृत,
मैं शिव दे विष दा घूँट तेरा यार।

नज़र ना लगे मेरे महिये नू,
जो दुनिया उसदे रूप तो जले।

तारे उसदी चमक दा सहारा लैंदे,
जिसदे नैनां विच मैंनू रब दिखेया।

जिस रब दी कुड़ी ने मैंनू सजाया, सँवारया, संभालया,
मैं क्यों ना वारां उस ते अपना सब कुछ।

मेरे महिये वांगू रूप किसे होर नू रब नहीं बख्शेया,
ना उस तो सोहणी कुड़ी मैं कोई वेखी।

जे मेरे महिये दे नैना विच मैं वसा,
ता किसे गैर नू मैं क्यों वेखां?
तेरे नाल हां ता ज़िंदगी विच मिठास है,
तेरे बिना हां ता मिठास नहीं।

जे तेरे प्यार दी मिठास बिना होवे मेरी दुनिया,
ता उस दुनिया नाल मेरा की कम्म?

-Aashish Mirani,

FMB'25

Originally written in Punjabi

कितना है?

हमें जो इस मोहब्बत ने दिया वो मर्ज़ कितना है
कहो तुम भी तुम्हें इस आशिकी से हर्ज़ कितना है

शहर जो है तुम्हारा वो यक़ीनन खूबसूरत था
मगर चेहरा यहाँ हर फ़र्द का अब ज़र्द कितना है

मैंने इन महफ़िलों में शौक़ से गायी जो हैं ग़ज़लों
वो ग़ज़लों पर तुम्हारे आँसुओं का कर्ज़ कितना है

कई नदियाँ ग़मों की बस बहा दी हैं यहाँ जग ने
समंदर से नहीं पूछा कभी के ज़र्फ़ कितना है

नई इक रौशनी के लिए हमेशा जागते रहना
सुबह अक्सर बताती है तुम्हारा फ़र्ज़ कितना है

-Jinal Jain,
PGDM'26

मैंने मौसम को बदलते देखा है

मैंने मौसम को बदलते देखा है।
तपते हुए सूरज को क्षण में जलते देखा है।
मन में कुछ हासिल करने की ज़िद हो तो,
पत्थर को भी पिघलते देखा है।
मैंने मौसम को बदलते देखा है।

मैंने सूरज को बिना शिकायत किए रोज़ अँधेरों को निगलते देखा है।
समंदर से मिलने की ख्वाहिश में,
नदियों को पहाड़ों का सीना चीर कर निकलते देखा है।
अगर डटे रहने का हौसला हो तो,
लहरों को भी साहिल से टकराकर आसमान में उठते देखा है।

मैंने मौसम को बदलते देखा है।
मैंने बंजर भूमि में वृक्ष को साहस से पलते देखा है।
नाकामयाबियों से सीख लेकर लोगों को संभलते देखा है।
सच्ची नीयत से परिश्रम करने पर तो,
दुर्भाग्य को भी अपने हाथों को मलते देखा है।

मैंने मौसम को बदलते देखा है।
मैंने शेर को शिखर पर अकेले ही पहुँचते देखा है।
जीतने और सीखने की सोच रखने पर,
दिल की चट्टानों को आग उगलते देखा है।
अगर किस्मत बदलने का संकल्प कर लो तो,
भाग्य को भी पुरुषार्थ के गुटने टेकते देखा है।
मैंने मौसम को बदलते देखा है।
तपते हुए सूरज को क्षण में जलते देखा है।
मैंने मौसम को बदलते देखा है।

-Sourav Nanda,
PGDM'26

कॉरपोरेट करिश्मा

हे!

हाय!

चार अजनबी आपस में कहते हैं, और बन जाती है टीम
ना जाने कुछ बड़ा पाने की, या सब कुछ खो देने की है ये स्कीम
अंजाने रास्ते, मचलती मुस्कुराहटों पे कटते आते हैं
ये 9-5 वाले, एसी क्यूबिकल्स में छोटे शहरों की धूप बनाते आते हैं

एमएनसी ऑफिसों की गगनचुंबी इमारतें, कितनी ही ज़िंदगियाँ लिए बस्ती हैं
बचपन में कभी सोचा ही नहीं था, कि जवानी की कीमत इतनी सस्ती है
अब हर पल को जीने के लिए, एक बाद की तलाश में रहते हैं
और हर दफ़नाई याद को लिए, हम काश में रहते हैं

रातों को प्लास्टिक की मुस्कुराहट चेहरे से हटाकर रखते हैं
तब जाकर पुराने सपने, कहीं तकिए के नीचे सरकते हैं
कभी-कभी तो आँसू दिन भर इतनी मौत मारते हैं
कि अँधेरे में भी सिसकियाँ भरने से डरते हैं

ख़ैर, धीरे-धीरे ये टूटे-फूटे रूटीन हो जाता है
अजनबी चेहरे ही साथी हैं अब, यक़ीन हो जाता है
चाय और चाटपटे चुगलीयों के बीच, टेंशन कुछ खो जाती है
टास्क्स, ट्रेनिंग्स, डेडलाइन्स — और बस की खिंचाव की भी आदत हो जाती है

पर आदतों का भी एक जाल है, हर कोई जिसमें उलझा है
कोई खोज रहा है रास्ता बाहर, कोई जीवन से ही बोझा है
हायर स्टडीज़ या जॉब स्विच — हर दर पर देर दस्तक
कोई ढूँढ रहा है शीशा, देख रहा कोई ख़्वाब अनूठे,
स्टार्ट-अप करके छोटे मज़दूरी से पीछा

वो जो तंग गलियों से बड़ी सड़कों पे आने को मान बैठे थे आज़ादी
जान गए हैं इससे नहीं कोई राह सरल — तो बरबादी
घर के बरामदे, कॉरपोरेट लैडर चढ़ने के लिए छोड़ आए
जिगरी यारों से टच में रहने के वादे भी तोड़ आए

पर कुछ तो बात है ज़िम्मेदारियों के बोझ और इंडिपेंडेंस के फ़रेब में
कि अब उम्मीदों की भी रही नहीं जगह, हमारी आधी-भरी जेब में
टाइम इज़ मनी, टाइम इज़ मनी — हर कंपनी, हर ऑफिस में गूँजता है
फिर भी हर एम्प्लॉयी, ईदर टाइम या मनी — या दोनों — ढूँढता रहता है

एक वक़्त था जब घर से निकलने की जल्दी थी, अब घर जाने की रहती है
इंसान की फ़ितरत ही बंजारा है, ख़्वाहिशें भला कब ठहरती हैं

कॉलेज की यारी से कॉरपोरेट की व्यवहारिकता तय कर लिया है सफ़र
अब दोस्त नहीं बनाते हम — क्लीग्स या वर्क फ़्रेंड्स के साथ कर लेते हैं वीकेंड्स बसर
लाइफ़ इज़ मिस स्टेज पी — फ़ॉर्मल इज़ द न्यू नॉर्मल — को मान लेते मोट्टो
और हमारी पहचान बस अब वो आईडी कार्ड्स पे लगी 2×2 की फ़ोटो

अपने ही ख़यालों को अनसुना करने की प्रैक्टिस कर रहे हैं
समझ ही नहीं आता कि हर दिन जी रहे हैं या मर रहे हैं
नौकरी की आदत और अपनों की ज़रूरत में बस इरादों का फ़ासला है
हमारे जैसे हज़ारों तो हैं साथ, शायद यही का हौसला है

उफ़, इसी मोनोलॉग की उधेड़बुन में बीत जाती है सारी रात
बताता रहा अलार्म कि बज गए हैं सुबह के सात
दिमाग़ में अब दिन भर की टू-डू लिस्ट्स की कतार लग जाती है
बस ग़नीमत ये है, कि अजनबी चेहरों की मुस्कानें अब अपनी सी लगने लगी हैं

-Malvika Kushwah,
PGDM'26

हर Age का अपना Charm

जब थे हम toddler, दुनिया थी मस्त,
खाते, सोते, रो देते — सब काम हो जाता fast।

कोई stress नहीं, बस खिलौने और दूध,
Life थी बिंदास, full-on मस्ती, dude!

School गए तो लगा, बड़ा काम किया,
माँ-पापा पे नादाँ ने एहसान किया।

Homework से दुश्मनी, और recess से प्यार,
Report card पे लिखा था — “You’ll go far!”

Teenage आई, बड़े confusion से किया deal,
Future dark, crushes सब soulmate से हुए feel।

Heartbreaks हुए, और फ़साने बन गए,
ज़िंदगी के lessons deep हमारे बन गए।

College में entry, scene हुआ light,
थोड़ी clarity, पर fun full-on type।

Friends, fests, और थोड़ी study भी,
लगता था life set होने लगी थी।

Job मिली, खुशी से हुए fly,
पहली salary — was a different high।

खर्चे थे अपनी मर्जी के, भाई,
Pizza से लेकर EMI।

फिर शादी की, partner का मिला साथ,
Kids आए — बदला ज़िंदगी का path।

Night-outs बने home-bound,
और “me-time” was not to be found!

दादा-दादी, नाना-नानी —
कहीं यादों में सिमट गए,
ज़िंदगी के रंग थोड़े
हल्के पड़ते गए।

Loss सिखाता है — वक़्त रुकता नहीं,
और प्यार रहता है, कहीं जाता नहीं।

आगे क्या है, ये कहानी है pending,
Life teaching lessons — never ending।

हर age का अपना charm है, बस समझने वाली बात,
जियो दिल से, enjoy अपनों का साथ।

ज़िंदगी के हर मोड़ पे नए रंग नज़र आते हैं,
Journey और destination — दोनों के मतलब बदल जाते हैं।

पर एक बात समझी हूँ साफ़,
ज़िंदगी का ये सफ़र है एकदम खास।

-Deepali Vasant,
Lead Manager, GMP

कोरोना

यूं हर तरफ बेबसी है छाई,
ये हाल देख,
एक मासूम ने पूछा — ये हमने किस गुनाह की सज़ा है पाई?

जो कल तक इस्तक्रबाल करते थे गले लगाकर,
वो आज रहते हैं दो गज़ की दूरी बनाकर।

लोगों ने जो घर इतनी मेहनत से सजाया था,
उसमें रहते-रहते उनका मन अब ऊब सा आया था।

जिन मज़दूरों ने शहरों से काम की उम्मीद थी लगाई,
उन्होंने बदले में सिर्फ लाठियाँ ही पाई।

सड़कों की तरक्की तो सिर्फ बहाना था,
असल में उस पर ग़रीबों को मीलों-मील चलाना था।

ये काल नहीं, इतिहास है जो लौट के वापस आया है,
इस देश ने अपने आप को आज भी पिछले साल में पाया है।

इस बीमारी ने ना जाने कितनी जानें लूटी हैं,
लेकिन लोग तो आज भी रैलियों में ही जुटे हैं।

टूटी हिम्मत देख के लोग आज भी बाज़ नहीं आते हैं,
सौ रुपये की चीज़ को आज हज़ार का बताते हैं।

हमने तो मौतों की सिर्फ गिनती ही लगाई,
लोगों ने तो अपनी सारी दुनिया ही गँवाई।

कुदरत ने शायद ये मंजर इसलिए दिखाए,
ताकि इंसान को खुली हवा की कीमत तो समझ में आए।

इन हालात में सिर्फ एक बात ही सच्ची है पाई —
सलाम उन शहीदों को, जिन्होंने दूसरों की जान बचाते-बचाते
खुद की जान गँवाई।

-Mobashshir Javed,
PGDM'27

इंतज़ार और इनकार

कोई सहरो शाम मुंतज़िर रहे तुम्हारे जवाबों के,
पर तुम्हें कहाँ खबर उस मासूम आशिक़ की।
कोई बेचैन हो तुम्हारे लफ़्ज़ों की आहट को महसूस करने को,
पर तुम्हें कहाँ खबर उस बेचैन आशिक़ की।

कोई मीलों दूर सफ़र करे तुमसे एक खुशनुमा मुलाक़ात के लिए,
पर तुम्हें कहाँ खबर उस राही का।
तुम भी बेरुखी सीख गई हो,
इकतरफ़ा को इंकारना सीख गई हो।

हम नादान थे, तुम इस कदर बदल जाओगे,
कि जज़्बात को बदस्तूर करना सीख गई हो।
मुंतज़िर तो आज भी है तुम्हारे अलफ़ाज़ों के,
पर तुम नज़रअंदाज़ करना सीख गई हो।

बेचैनी तो आज भी है तुम्हारे लफ़्ज़ों की,
पर तुम बहाने बहुत अच्छे से सीख गई हो।

-Amrit Kumar Debnath,
PGDM'27

कहानी या किरदार

छतरी बंद करके कैब में बैठे ही रहे थे हम — आधे सूखे, आधे गीले — कि तभी अचानक उसने मुझसे पूछा, “Ms Writer, कहानी पहले आती है या किरदार?”

10 घंटे स्क्रीन से लड़ने के बाद, वो भी Monday को, इस dilemma में उलझने के लिए मैं बिल्कुल तैयार नहीं थी। But he was one of those curious colleagues जिनके ना work hours खत्म होते हैं, और ना ही सवाल।

उस वक़्त उसे टालने के लिए मैंने यूँ ही कह दिया कि, “सोचना पड़ेगा।”

“ठीक है, पर सोचकर बताना ज़रूर,” उसने कहा। फिर earplugs लगाकर हम दोनों ही अपनी-अपनी दुनिया में मशगूल हो गए।

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday... हर दिन उसे ऑफिस में देखते ही मुझे वो सवाल याद आता, पर घर पहुँचने तक टिक नहीं पाता। Saturday party में निकल गया और Sunday सोने में, और उस सवाल को किसी सपने की तरह ही भूल गई मैं।

Monday सुबह वो मुझे वापस मिला, दो coffee mugs के साथ, वही सवाल लिए। एक mug मुझे pass करते हुए उसने पूछा, “क्या हुआ, अभी तक सोच नहीं पायी क्या?”

बात अब thinking ability पे आ गई थी, तो मैंने भी जलेबी की तरह घुमाकर एक जवाब पेश कर दिया — “कहानी की खूबी होती है कि वो बिना किरदार लिए नहीं आती।” मुस्कुराते हुए उसने मुझे sugar पास की और चला गया। Which was very unusual... क्योंकि वो तो उन लोगों में से था जिसके पास जवाब आने से पहले ही 10 सवाल हाज़िर रहते थे। Anyways, I felt proud of myself for dodging it so perfectly।

पर किसे पता था कि वो एक किरदार है जो एक कहानी लेकर मेरी ज़िंदगी में आया है।

शाम को कैब में जाते हुए उसने मुझसे पूछा, “Would you like to hear a plotline I have over a cup of coffee?”

And I, being a sucker for stories, said, “Why not?”

तो रास्ते में ही एक cafe में बैठकर हमने ढेर सारी बातें कीं। उसने मुझे उसकी ज़िंदगी की सारी कहानियों की library का access दे दिया, और मैंने उस library में 2-4 किस्से add कर दिए। जाते-जाते उसने मुझसे कहा, “तो क्या ये पहला chapter है?”

And again, I had no answer. तो मैंने जवाब बना दिया कि इस बार मुझे किरदार बनना है, कहानीकार नहीं।

वक़्त निकाल कर वक़्त बिताने का सिलसिला चलता रहा, और धीरे-धीरे मुझे realize हुआ — I am really not the one writing this story. He knew how much I hated taking decisions, so कहाँ मिलना है, क्या करना है जैसी सभी चीज़ें मुझे बताई

जाती थीं, मुझसे पूछी नहीं। 1 साल में उसने मुझे writer से main character बना दिया था।

But life कोई कहानी नहीं, जिसमें एक ही plotline पे focus करके happy ending तक जाया जा सके।

ऐसा ही कुछ हमारी कहानी में हो रहा था। Career नाम की एक और plotline थी, जिसके साथ accident होना तय था। वो higher studies के लिए जाने वाला था — not just from the city, but out of the country।

उसके जाने से कुछ हफ्ते पहले हम हमारे usual cafe में बैठे थे, तभी उसने मुझसे पूछा — “हमारी कहानी का अंजाम क्या होगा?” उसके unpredictable सवालों के लिए अब भी मेरे पास वही हथियार था, so I said, “हमारी कहानी का आगाज़ क्या था?”

इस बार उसने पूछ ही लिया — “तुम किसी बात का सीधा जवाब नहीं दे सकती क्या?”

मैंने अपनी insecurities को कस कर पकड़ते हुए कहा — “सीधा जवाब क्या होता है?”

“ये देखो फिर से...” उसने कहा। I think I was really testing his patience.

तो इस बार मैंने उससे नज़रें नहीं मिलाई, और coffee mug दोनों हाथों से पकड़ते हुए कहा — “तुम्हें क्यों लगता है कि हर कहानी का अंजाम होना ज़रूरी है? कुछ कहानियाँ एक मोड़ के आगे लिखने का मन ही नहीं करता, क्योंकि ये पता होता है कि ये इस कहानी का सबसे खूबसूरत मोड़ है। इसके आगे अगर कुछ है, तो इस से बुरा।”

2 मिनट तक हम चुप रहे। फिर मेरे हाथों से coffee mug नीचे रखकर उसने मेरा हाथ थामा, और मेरी गीली आँखों में देखकर कहा — “सबसे खूबसूरत मोड़ वापस नहीं आया तो क्या, इससे वो कहानी बुरी तो नहीं हो जाती। क्या पता हम फिर कभी इतनी अच्छी कहानी लिख ही ना पाएँ? एक अच्छी कहानी को एक अनजानी कहानी की चाहत में अधूरा क्यों छोड़ना?”

मैंने अपना हाथ पीछे खींचा, आँख से टपकते उस आँसू को बहने से रोका, और हँसकर कहा — “बस भी करो अब, writer मैं हूँ या तुम?” पिछले हफ्ते उसे airport पे see-off करके मैं घर गई, और वही सवाल मेरे मन में गूँजता रहा — कहानी या किरदार, what first?

उस वक़्त मुझे एहसास हुआ कि दोनों का जन्म एक साथ होता है... जैसे माँ का जन्म बच्चे के अस्तित्व के साथ ही होता है, जैसे हमारी कहानी के साथ ही हमारे ये किरदार बने।

And I texted this to him immediately.

12 घंटे बाद land करके he replied —

“Good job. The first question took you 13 months. You now have a lifetime to find the correct answers to others.”

-Malvika Kushwah,
PGDM'26

நம்பிக்கை ஏ வாழ்கைப் பயணம் (Hope--A Journey of Life)

பலர் மகிழ ஒரு அழகை துடித்ததோ
தியாகம் உணரா வெறும் மனமும் தவித்ததே

உயிரின் நம்பிக்கை சிறு துளியில் விழுந்ததே
உடலின் நம்பிக்கை பெரும் வலியில் கடந்ததே

உறவின் நம்பிக்கை உடன் பிறந்தே வளர்ந்ததே
புலமையின் நம்பிக்கை முன் கற்றவர் வளர்த்ததே

பொதுநல நம்பிக்கை முதற் நட்பில் உதித்ததே
கடமையின் நம்பிக்கை முழு துணையிலும் உணர்ந்ததே

பிறர் நம்பிக்கை பின்னே வாழ்க்கையில் மலர்ந்ததே
தனிமனிதன் தனிமை சில தோல்வியில் முடிந்ததே

பலர் துடிக்க ஒரு புன்னகை மலர்ந்ததே
தியாகம் மறந்தே வெறும் அழகையாய் விடிந்ததே

-Raghav CR,
PGDM'26

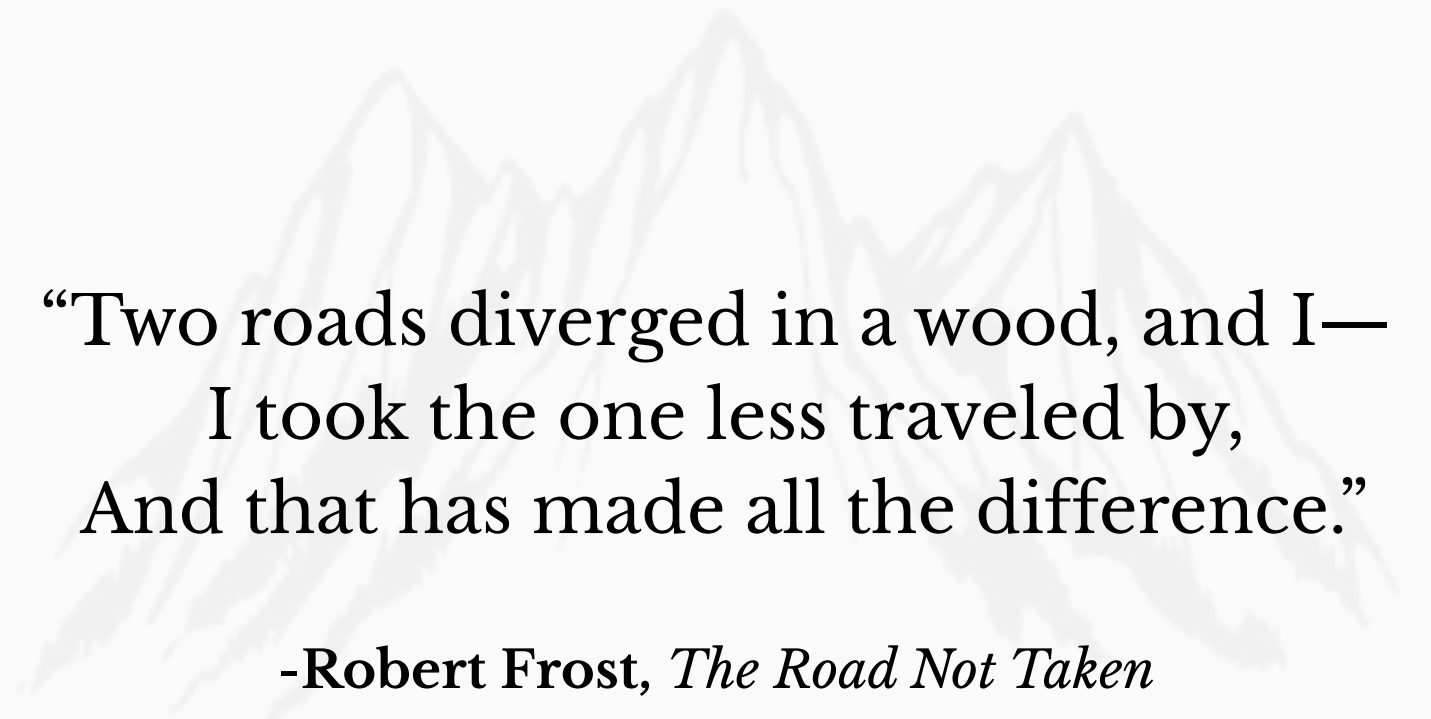
Written in Tamil

THE REWARDED PATHS

What endured, finally blooms



SECTION
FIVE



“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

-Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*

Tehraan

“Oh rain, you smell so angry tonight,
Maybe your loved ones aren't in sight?”

Ali asks himself, glancing outside.
An outside so bright, so free with life.
He sits alone, breathing in the night,
Holding some pride to coat his plight.

“Maybe you too have flown too far,
Maybe you too miss Tehran.”

Each thought, more loud,
Rowing closer to his mouth.
The rain, once outside,
Now flees his eyes.

“So different from home, these long-hallowed halls,
My shoes no longer adorn hollowed holes.”

His ambitious feats hide old scars,
Disallowing peers from peering too far.
Each whine of theirs seems sweet poetry
To a man who was forged through poverty.

-Anoop Anil Kumar,
PGDM'27

Winner of the writing contest

It Depends

The hallowed grounds of Transylvania spot empty halls.
Count Drac sets sail — another castle with suited dolls.

Long, sharp fingernails; RAC phrases to type away,
Deranged corporate bros — the predator's now become prey.

Blood-sucking to soul-sucking, assignments dish it all,
Not the fun kind — Drac's pending tasks stack up tall.

From royal decrees to unmanageable defaults,
The days and nights blend, no time to sleep in vaults.

At least he's still tall, dark, and handsome in Romanian wool suits,
His razor fangs no match for competitive blood-sniffing brutes.

But he's made fine friends, even found his life-long zing,
Made memories for eternity — hearts and smiles that sing.

Johnny and Mavis patiently wait for him to come home,
After all, in one day, no one built Rome.

To all smug smiles, EODs, KPIs, parlay and relay,
Drac's got six words — "I don't say Bleh Bleh Bleh."

-Anusha Malik,
PGDM'27

Winner of the writing contest

Blackout Poetry #1 (Page 1/3)

!?! (scribble) (scribble) 1 (scribble) !?!
The Stopped Clock

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc
Mark's heart pumped with the clock's ticks. Just a few more hours till the countdown hit zero. Every second was an untold agony.

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc
While laying down breakfast, Mark's mother gave him a knowing look. Mark's thoughts and were plain to see on his face. At least the constant ticking of the Clock kept him from going down the spiral of possibilities. If he were left to his own devices, he would never be able to leave the table. But, if he were to be objective, if that was what the Plan asked of him, then there was nothing he could do about it.

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc
Each second was an eternity, each minute, an era, and each lesson was akin to a fever dream. Time stood on a standstill, or were it his thoughts that felt as if moving through molasses? And the Clock stroked on his wrist was his only anchor to reality. In these last few hours Mark had imagined all kinds of possibility of what destiny had in store for him. Who would be one who would share the 0 on his wrist, right at the time when the countdown completed and he looked up? He didn't know, but he was dying to find out.

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc
An hour, 00:01:00:00 the Clock showed, already ticking down the seconds. In just an hour he would meet his Destined. In some ways he was lucky, he gets to find them early, and have a long, long life with them. He just hoped the horror stories he had heard weren't true, or at the very least such things don't happen to him. Anxiety ate at him. The only person he could ever love. And what if they were a monster?

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc
He was walking his usual path home, 10 minutes and his life would be different. There is no use fighting destiny. Not the Clock. Many thought that they could engineer places where they'd meet their soulmate, but nobody could change the Plan. And hence he would continue walking his usual path. With his heart palpitating, of course.

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc
A crowded intersection was not the place he thought he'd meet them - it is not the most picturesque of places. But it was familiar, an island of normalcy in the ocean of uncertainties. And that was better. He looked around. He would reach the curb as the countdown stopped. The only question was whether his destined was on this side, or the other.

0 seconds his wife read. On the curb, on opposite side, a girl also glanced at her wrist. And he saw her. She saw him. They saw each other. Their eyes found each other and an understanding passed between them. His steps quickened, each held more purpose. The anxiety all but melted. In a flash was now excitement and yes, fear. The world only gave them one chance of loving someone. And their hands, as far and few as they were, were still horror stories for the

!?! (scribble) !?!

THE WAIT! THE AGONY!

THE UNCERTAINTY!

Blackout Poetry #1 (Page 2/3)

2

Fireflies in the night sky

I opened the window railing a bit to let the cool air in. The soothing air gave a temporary relief from the pre-summer heat. As I gaze at the night sky, my eyes lay transfixed on the white, serene and perfectly round object. It is a full moon night and the sky is devoid of any stars. With my earphones plugged in and an array of feel-good songs playing I lay completely unaware of time, staring deep into the bountiful infinity. This sudden switch from the chaos to the huge expanse of tranquillity gave me a gush of relief and quietude to ponder on some intriguing thoughts. All of a sudden, I remembered my visit to Karkatta, a small village in Jharkhand.

It was a similar full moon night and I, along with my friends stood gazing at the night sky in the middle of a field, when suddenly a fiery bright insect flew past us. We turned around to look at it and were awestruck to find a group of fireflies scattered across the sky. It was pure darkness in the village after 7 as electricity was a rarity there. But this spectacular visual was enough to light up the sky. Right then across the fields, a small boy stood with fireflies cupped in his hand and wondering with innate curiosity whether to take home this magic light that he just caught or let it go and fill the skies with its beauty. And rightly so, he let it go and watched the skies illuminate with their radiance.

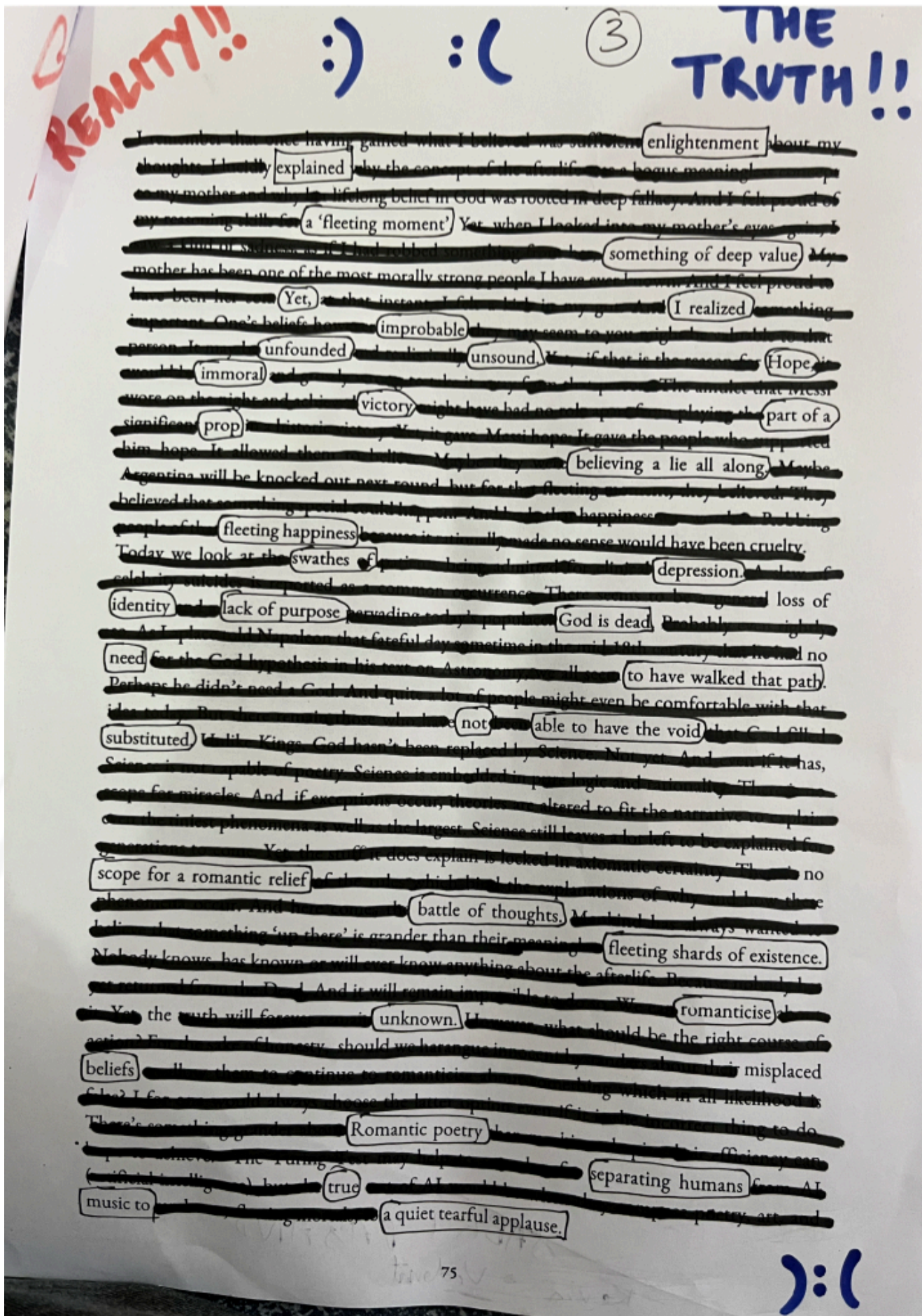
Fireflies are a phenomenon. When I was a kid, I always used to think about this tiny creature and its amazing super power to light up the entire space just by its presence. In fact, in most cultures fireflies are associated with many myths and stories. Their ability to light up themselves was a curiosity for years. In some cultures, the fireflies mean the souls of the dead or return of the warriors that died during the war. Whereas some believed they were sent by the gods signalling positivity, hope and guidance. A plethora of stories were made about the fireflies and their mystery which even today is part of many folklores.

But one thing is pretty common in most of the stories, the happiness one gets on seeing these tiny creatures of light is unimaginable. And that is why fireflies are mostly linked to positivity and goodwill. It is also a striking reminder for us to understand that it is important to find the inner light that glows in all of us because that is enough to light up our life with a pinch of hope and optimism. So, when life throws you to the darkness, just be a firefly and fly high.

Vishakh Raja Padinhare Covilakath
PGDM '25

LOVE
IS IN
THE AIR!

Blackout Poetry #1 (Page 3/3)



-Kevin Thomas & Vedant Seigell, PGDM'26

One of the best entries from Blackout Poetry

Blackout Poetry #2 (Page 1/3)

SABKI
FASAND

MANASI VARWANDKAR
UPASONA NANDI

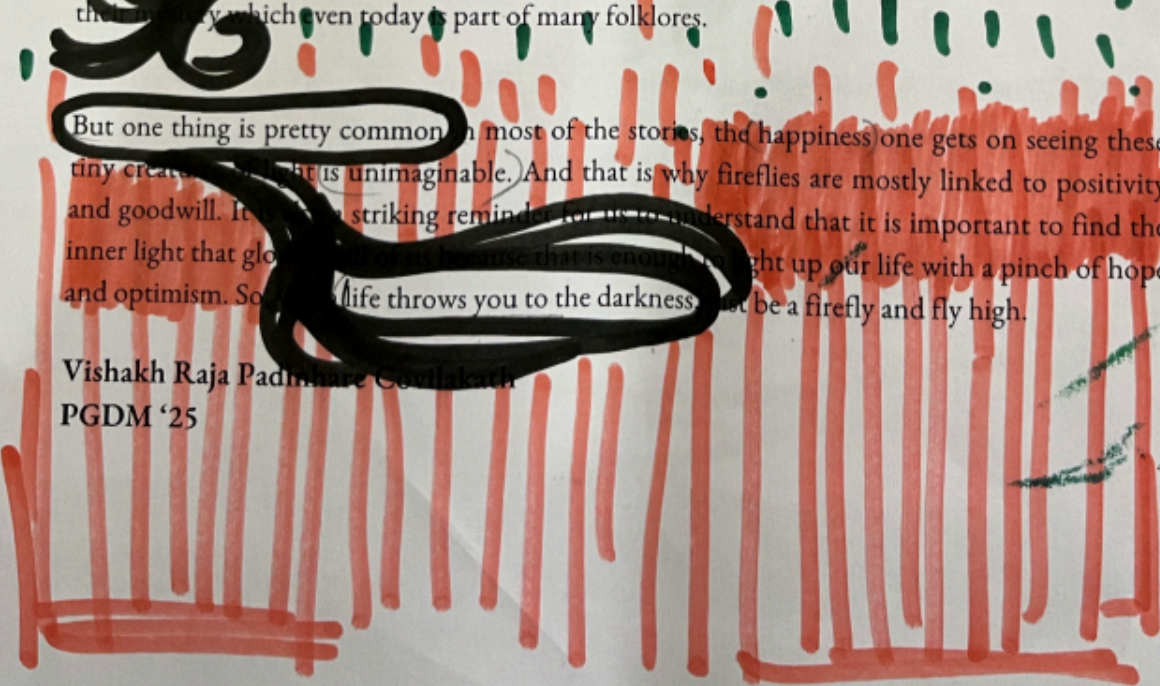
Fireflies in the night sky

my eyes lay transfixed
It is a full moon night the sky devoid of any stars.
completely unaware of time
This sudden switch from the chaos to
tranquillity gave me a gush of quietude. All
of a sudden (I remembered)
us We
electric a rarity that this spectacular visual enough to light
up the sky in their own right. (boy) took with his hands cupped in his hand and
wondered how to capture this magic light. (take home this magic light) let it go or let
it go and fill the skies with its beauty. And rightly so, let it go and watched the skies
illuminate with their radiance.

Fireflies are a phenomenon. When I was a kid, I always used to think about this tiny creature and its amazing super power to light up the entire space just by its presence. In fact, in most cultures fireflies are associated with many myths and stories. Their ability to light up themselves was a curiosity for many. In some cultures, the fireflies meant the souls of the dead or return of the warriors that died during the war. Whereas some believed they were sent by the gods signalling positivity, hope and guidance. A plethora of stories were made about the fireflies and their ability which even today is part of many folklores.

But one thing is pretty common in most of the stories, the happiness one gets on seeing these tiny creatures. Their light is unimaginable. And that is why fireflies are mostly linked to positivity and goodwill. It is a striking reminder for us to understand that it is important to find the inner light that glows within because that is enough to light up our life with a pinch of hope and optimism. So when life throws you to the darkness, be a firefly and fly high.

Vishakh Raja Padmavare Covalakath
PGDM '25



The Stopped Clock

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc

Mark's heart pumped with the clock's ticks. Just a few more hours till the countdown hit zero. Every second was an untold agony.

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc

While laying down his plans, Mark's mother gave him a knowing look. They both knew what was and were plan to see on his face. At least the constant ticking of the Clock kept him from going down the spiral of possibilities. If he were left to his own devices, he would never leave the table. But, if he were to be objective, that was what the Plan asked of him: there was nothing he could do.

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc

Each second was an eternity, each minute a year, and each lesson was a day. Time stood on a standstill, or were it his thoughts that felt as if moving through mud. The Clock tattooed on his wrist was his only anchor to reality. In these last few hours, Mark had imagined all kinds of possibility of what destiny had in store for him. Who would he be? Who would share the 0 on his wrist, right at the time when the countdown completed? He looked up. He didn't know, but he was dying.

Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc

00:01:00. The Clock stopped, already ticking down the seconds. In just an hour (he thought) he would be home. In some ways he was lucky, he gets to find them early, and have a long, peaceful life. He just hoped the horror stories he had heard weren't true, or at the very least, they wouldn't happen to him. Anxiety ate at him. The only person he could ever love. What if she was a monster?

He walked down the path home. 10 minutes and his life would be different. There is no use fighting the Clock. Many thought that they could engineer places where they'd meet, but nobody could change the Plan. And hence he would continue walking his usual path, heart palpitating, of course.

A crowd gathered at the place he thought he'd meet them. It is not the most picturesque, but it was familiar, an island of normalcy in the ocean of uncertainties. He looked around. He would reach the curb as the countdown stopped. The question was whether his destined was on this side, or the other.

30 seconds. He saw her. His Destined.

The world only gave them one chance of loving.

Blackout Poetry #2 (Page 3/3)



-Manasi Varwandkar & Upasana Nandi, PGDM'26

One of the best entries from Blackout Poetry

Creative Fusion Collective Abhimanyu & Navya



The Stopped Clock

~~Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc~~

~~Mark's heart pumped with the clock's ticks. Just a few more hours till the countdown hit zero. Every second was an untold agony.~~

~~Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc~~

~~While laying down breakfast, Mark's mother gave him a knowing look. Mark's thoughts and were plain to see on his face. At least the constant ticking of the Clock kept him from going down the spiral of possibilities. If he were left to his own devices, he would never be able to leave the table. But, if he were to be objective, if that was what the Plan asked of him, then there was nothing he could do about it.~~

~~Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc~~

~~Each second was an eternity, each minute, an era, and each lesson was akin to a fever dream. Time stood on a standstill, or were it his thoughts that felt as if moving through molasses? And the Clock tattooed on his wrist was his only anchor to reality. In these last few hours Mark had imagined all kinds of possibility of what destiny had in store for him. Who would be one who would share the 0 on his wrist, right at the time when the countdown completed and he looked up? He didn't know, but he was dying to find out.~~

~~Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc~~

~~An hour: 00:01:00:00 - the Clock showed, already ticking down the seconds. In just an hour he would meet his Destined. In some ways he was lucky, he gets to find them early, and have a long, long life with them. He just hoped the horror stories he had heard weren't true, or at the very least such things don't happen to him. Anxiety ate at him. The only person he could ever love. And what if they were a monster?~~

~~Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc~~

~~He was walking his usual path home, 10 minutes and his life would be different. There is no one fighting destiny. Nor the Clock. Many thought that they could engineer places where they'd meet their soulmate, but nobody could change the Plan. And hence he would continue walking his usual path. With his heart palpitating, of course.~~

~~Tick-Toc, Tick-Toc~~

~~A crowded intersection was not the place he thought he'd meet them - it is not the most picturesque of the places. But it was familiar, an island of normalcy in the ocean of uncertainties. And that was better. He looked around. He would reach the curb as the countdown stopped. The only question was whether his destined was on this side, or the other.~~

~~20 seconds his wrist read. On the curb, on opposite side, a girl also glanced at her wrist. And he saw her. His Destined. She saw him as well. Their eyes found each other and an understanding passed between them. His steps quickened, each held more purpose. The anxiety all but melted. In its place was now excitement, and yes, fear. The world only gave them one chance of loving someone, and miserable bonds, as far and few as they were, were still horror stories for the unbranded.~~

Nautanki & Co.
Rohan & Aditya



~~The Stopped Clock~~

~~Tick Tock, Tick Tock~~
~~of time, just a few more hours till the countdown hit zero.~~
~~an untold agony.~~

~~Tick Tock, Tick Tock~~
~~With dying breath, Mother gave him a knowing look. Mother's thoughts and~~
~~the constant ticking of the Clock~~
~~the table. But, if there was to be a miracle, if that was what the Plan asked of him,~~
~~nothing could do about it.~~

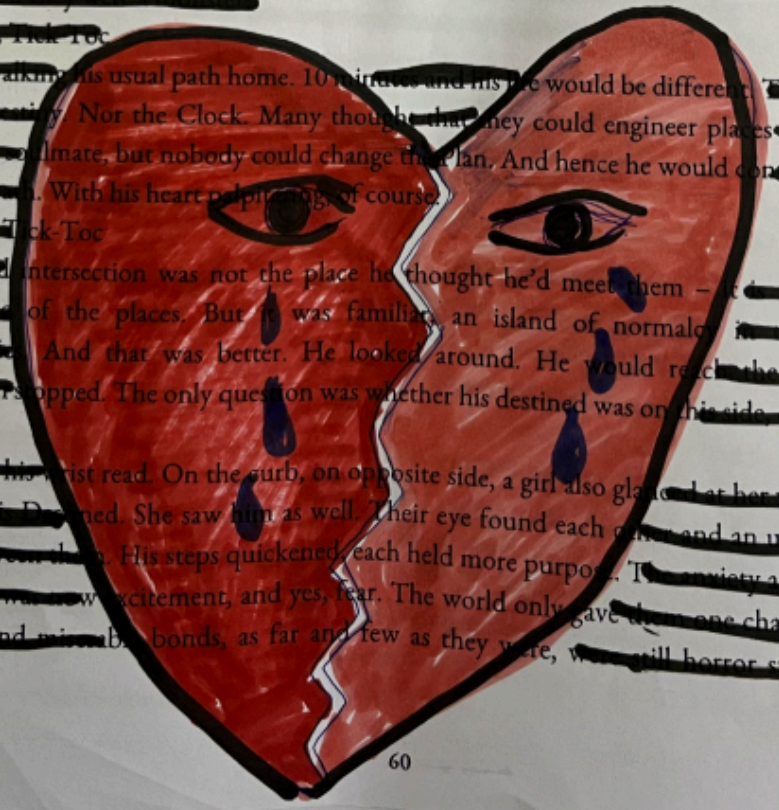
~~Tick Tock, Tick Tock~~
~~an eternity, and a dream.~~
~~In these last few hours~~
~~destiny~~
~~completed~~
~~but he was dying.~~

~~Tick Tock, Tick Tock~~
~~00:01:00:00~~
~~he was lucky,~~
~~he could ever love.~~

~~Tick Tock, Tick Tock~~
~~He was walking his usual path home. 10 minutes and his life would be different. There is no~~
~~fighting destiny. Nor the Clock. Many thought that they could engineer places where they'd~~
~~meet their ultimate, but nobody could change that plan. And hence he would continue walking~~
~~his usual path. With his heart palpating, of course.~~

~~Tick Tock, Tick Tock~~
~~A crowded intersection was not the place he thought he'd meet them - it was the most~~
~~of the places. But it was familiar, an island of normalcy in a sea of~~
~~uncertainty. And that was better. He looked around. He would reach the curb, the~~
~~countdown stopped. The only question was whether his destined was on this side, or the other.~~

~~30 seconds his wrist read. On the curb, on opposite side, a girl also glanced at her wrist. And he~~
~~saw her. His Destined. She saw him as well. Their eye found each other and an understanding~~
~~passed between them. His steps quickened, each held more purpose. The anxiety all but melted.~~
~~In its place was excitement, and yes, fear. The world only gave them one chance of loving~~
~~someone, and miserable bonds, as far and few as they were, were still horror stories for the~~
~~world.~~

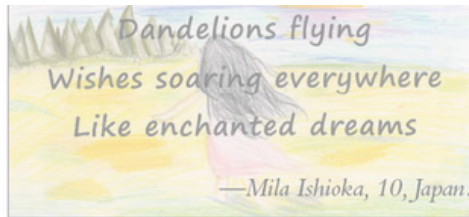
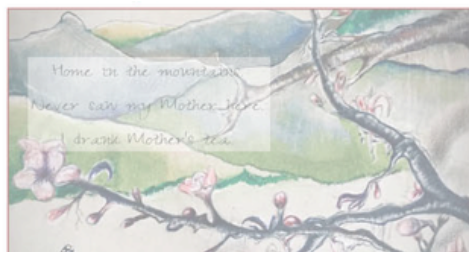
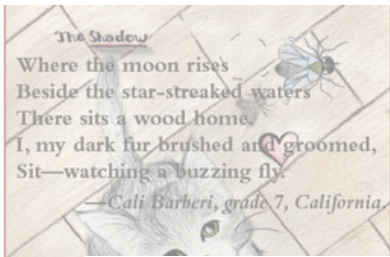


Blackout Poetry #4 (Page 2/3)

2

I remember that once having gained what I believed was sufficient enlightenment about my thoughts, I boldly explained why **the concept of the afterlife** was a bogus meaningless concept to my mother and why her lifelong belief in God was **rooted in deep fallacy**. I felt proud of my reasoning skills for a 'fleeting moment'. Yet when I looked into my mother's eyes again, I saw a **sadness**, as if I had robbed her of something **something of deep value**. She had been one of the most morally upright people I have ever known and I felt I had let her down. Yet she told me, I should stick to my guns. And I did. I thought I was right. God's belief however implausible by any means, might be the only thing that would be immortal and greatly outweighs any fear that person. The anxiety that wrestled with me on the night and added to my night have had no role apart from playing the part of a significant prop in a historic victory. Maybe. It gave the people a moment of hope. It will be a lie. **Maybe** they were believing **a lie all along**. Maybe Argentina will be a land of opportunity but for that **fleeting moment**, they believed. They believed that something special would happen. **And heck, that happiness was worth it**. Believing in a fleeting happiness **because** it is a lie would have been empty. Today we have thousands of patients being admitted for clinical depression. A general loss of identity and a lack of purpose pervading today's population. God indeed. Probably. An Imam told me that for a fully committed Muslim, God is not a deity but a state of mind. God is a state of mind on a human, all seem to have a small part of God. Perhaps he didn't **need a God**. And perhaps that of people might even be comfortable with that idea today. But there remain those who are unable to have the void that God fills. Unlike Kings, God hasn't been replaced by Science. Not yet. And even if it is **Science is not capable of poetry**. Science is embedded in pure logic and rationality. There is no scope for miracles. And if miracles occur, they are due to finite narrative completion. Science is not a philosophy as well as the logic. Science will be **a lot left to be explained** for generations to come. Yet the stuff is less explaining, **locked in axiomatic certainty**. There is a sense of romantic relief of the rules which bind the explanations of why and how things happen. **And here comes the battle of thoughts**. Mankind has always wanted to believe that something 'up there' is grander than their meaningless fleeting shards of existence. Nobody knows, but humans will ever know anything about the afterlife. Because **nobody has yet returned from the Dead**. This will remain impossible. We can romanticize about it. Yet the truth will forever remain unknown. However, what should be the right course of action? For the sake of humanity, should we encourage people to understand about their misplaced beliefs or allow them to continue to romanticize about something which in all likelihood is false? I would choose the latter option. **if it is the sincerest thing to do**. There's something grander about Romantic poetry than machines despite their efficiency can hope to achieve. The Turing Test may help to separate human from AI (artificial intelligence), but the truth is AI would be able to compose poetry, art and music to render us, **fleeting mortals**, to a quiet and full appraisal.

Game Time #3- Write a Haiku



Pro Tip- Best entries will receive physical copies of this volume, so give it your best shot!

Acknowledgements

As SPelled Ink, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to *Prof. Varun Nagaraj*, Dean of SPJIMR, for his continued support and encouragement of student-led creative expression.

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to our faculty guide, *Prof. Vineeta Dwivedi*, who has been instrumental in this entire process with her guidance and faith in the power of words.

This publication would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our Editorial and Creative team, who worked diligently to bring this volume together.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to all the authors who submitted their work. Your words may or may not feature here, but they are the essence of this magazine nonetheless, and we are grateful for your willingness to share them with us.

This volume also acknowledges all the previous custodians of SPelled Ink as a cultural club, without whom we would never have had a platform to share our love for the written word.

We are equally grateful to the SPJIMR community for fostering spaces where creative expression is encouraged and nurtured.

The cover artwork is an adaptation of a picture that was originally posted by *apaarappy* on Reddit, and we acknowledge their work with gratitude.

Finally, we thank you, the reader, for choosing to walk through these pages. We hope you find moments that resonate, linger, and travel with you beyond this volume.

Thank you for walking with us in our journey
of nurturing the love for literature.

Continue the journey→



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