



**CHRIST**  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)  
BANGALORE • INDIA

# QUILL'S WILL

## VOLUME 7 ISSUE 6

# ADULTING: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY



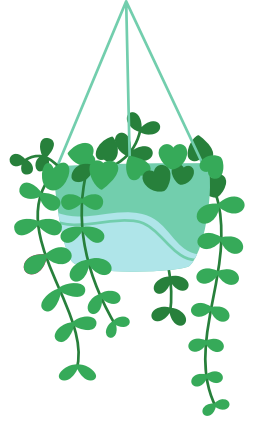
Department of English & Cultural Studies | Central Campus



Cover illustration by Rikyta AT



# Acknowledgement

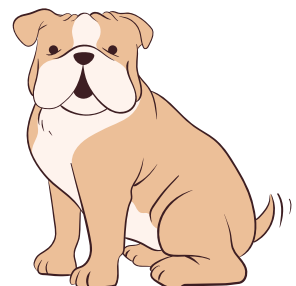


The new edition of Quill's Will brings with it an opportunity for students to share their stories of discovery and change as they transition into adulthood. The magazine team would like to take the time to acknowledge everyone who has aided in its creation, contributors, and those behind the scenes.

First and foremost, we thank Dr John Joseph Kennedy, Dean, School of Arts and Humanities; and Dr Anil Joseph Pinto, Registrar, both of whose leadership has played a pivotal role in fostering an environment of creativity and innovation. We thank Dr Shobana P Mathews, Head, Department of English and Cultural Studies, for her insights that have inspired students to explore their talents. Furthermore, we extend our thanks to the dedicated coordinators, Dr Joseph Edward Felix and Dr Sreejith D.

The magazine would not exist without everyone who has sent in their pieces for the edition. We extend our sincere gratitude towards every writer and artist who has allowed us to collect these pieces and fashion the new edition of Quill's Will. The efforts of everyone in the editorial and design teams of the magazine have not gone unnoticed and their attention to detail and creativity are deeply appreciated. Last but not least, we would like to thank our readers who continue to encourage us to put out each edition. We hope this edition brings comfort and reassurance in community and in shared experiences.

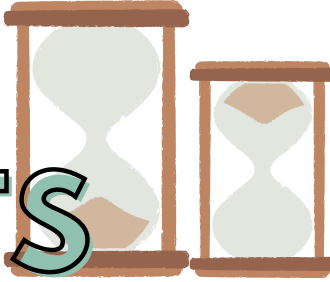
Thank you,  
Team Quill's Will







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An illustration of two hourglasses, one larger than the other, with sand flowing from top to bottom. They are positioned behind the word 'CONTENTS'.

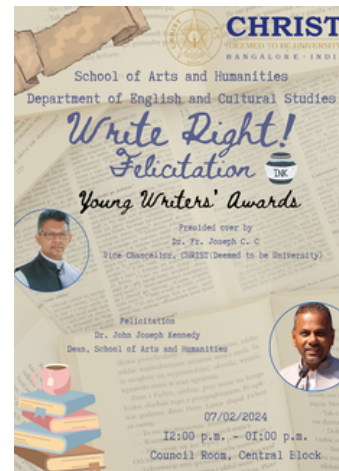
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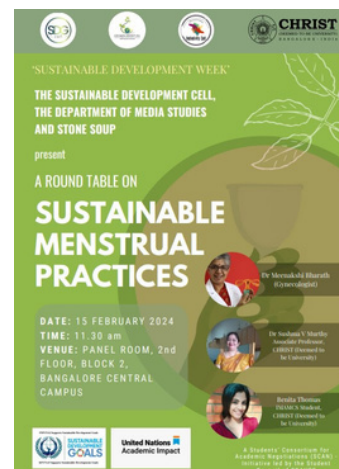
# Newsletter

The School of Art of Humanities, Department of English and Cultural Studies, on 2 February felicitated the best-performing students of each class as part of the Write Right initiative which aimed to provide training in writing skills for the first-year undergraduate students in Christ University, Central Campus. The event was presided over by the Vice Chancellor, Dr Fr Joseph C C and felicitated by the Dean of the department, Dr John Joseph Kennedy, who presented the students with certificates of completion.



The SDG cell of Christ (Deemed to be University), Central Campus held the inauguration ceremony of Sustainability Week on 12 February. The Sustainability Week will be observed from 12 to 16 February in collaboration with the United Nations Academic Impact to raise awareness and foster partnership between industry and the environment. The ceremony was held at the Main Auditorium of Central Campus with Mr. Guruprakash Sastry, head of Climate Action Infosys Ltd. as the keynote speaker.

On 15 February, a round table conference on Sustainable Menstrual Practices was organized as part of The Student's Consortium for Academic Negotiations, a joint effort by the Student Council of The Schools of Arts and Humanities, and Social Sciences, The Sustainable Development Cell, The Department of Media Studies, and Stone Soup. The discussion involved noted gynaecologist, Dr Meenakshi Bharath, Dr Sushma V Murthy from the Department of English and Cultural Studies, and Ms Benita Thomas from 1 MAMCS.





# Counting the Tracks - Melange

**SANA KAMAL 1MAENG**





On February 9, the warm embrace of dawn greeted us with the promise of an exhilarating day for the Melange Photowalk in Mysore. Boarding the Kachiguda–Mysore Super Fast Express at 7:00 am, the journey was filled with a plethora of picturesque scenes and fun chatter. The sunlight-dappled waters and the lush greenery of the countryside provided us with a much-needed break from the city's monotony. On reaching Mysore, we had breakfast and proceeded to the Mysore Rail Museum to understand the various intricacies involved in the functioning of trains in the Indian Railways. We got the opportunity to ride the toy train set, and this experience was one etched with happiness. The museum also had a souvenir shop offering products that resonated with the culture and spirit of Mysore. This was followed by a city walk wherein students dispersed in groups to visit the Mysore Palace or the Jaganmohan Palace Art Gallery and Museum. The Mysore Palace, staying true to its longstanding existence and resplendence, offered an amalgamation of mesmerising sights. Similarly, the Jaganmohan Art Gallery, with its serene ambience, opened its doors to a realm of antiquity, art, and tradition. The paintings displayed in the gallery offered a glimpse into the Wadiyar dynasty and the artistry of Raja Ravi Varma. The gallery proved to be a panacea to the mind of every student who stepped through its doors. The day concluded with our return to Bangalore, and it is fair to say that the Melange Photowalk was a resounding success in the hearts of everyone who took part in it.

The Photowalk emerged as a rich blend of cultural, scientific, and societal elements, which echoed the theme of Melange 2024 – "Narrativising Railways as a Cultural Text". As we bid adieu to the beautiful montage of experiences, we hope that 'Melange 2024 – Safarnama' will feature interesting dialogues on railways.



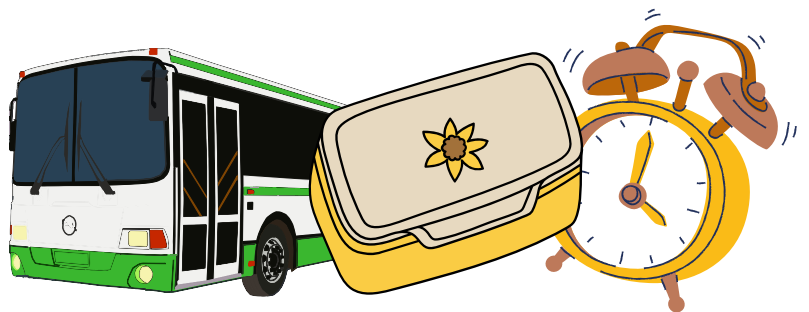
# On Leaving Home

**ARCHANA KUMAR 1MAENG**

The media that we consume daily has given us way too many sides of adulting. It's either too tedious or it's beautiful, it gives you freedom or crushes your confidence, and sometimes it shows you precisely how alone you are in the world. As all kids were once eager, I would always wait for the day I “grew up”. However, it is perhaps a universal experience that all children realise later on that adulting is not all about fun and freedom but rather a tricky path that awaits to be navigated. To me, the process of adulting started when I left home for the first time to pursue my bachelor's in a different city. I was suddenly whisked away from the comforts of my home where I was the only child, from my small village where I knew everybody's name, to a city that was so big and busy and so fast that people barely looked at each other and smiled. It was my first week in Kochi that made me realise how scary it is to be away from home.

All of a sudden, my father dropped me off at a convent hostel, and I, who lived in the luxury of my own room and my own space for the entirety of my life, was crammed into a small room where four of us were expected to share the space. My roommates were girls from different parts of Kerala, and none of us talked to each other on the first day. I remember crying the entire night, but later, I realised my sadness was not merely because I missed home but was also due to my first glance at the mess food that our hostel provided.

From the next day onwards, I had to pack my own lunchbox with the questionable food from the mess, wash my own clothes every two days on the washing stone kept in the backyard of the hostel, and wait in line to use the bathroom, only for other girls to bang on the door with their impatient fists if







you take a bit too much time. I could go home once or twice a month, but for that, I had to catch a bus, wait for an available seat and travel for 3.5–4 hours. Suddenly, our lives revolved around the nun's daily schedules where we had to pray, eat, and sleep according to the timetable set for us. On the face of it, all of these experiences seem trivial. However, for someone like me, who lived 18 years of her life reeking of privilege, this was indeed a humbling experience.

My stay at this convent hostel taught me major lessons. And as cliché as it might sound, I learnt that at the end of the day, if you don't take care of yourself, no one will. It also made me appreciate the easy and loving life I had at home. Having adjusted to that hostel life, I had no issues adjusting to my new life in Bangalore, in a much bigger and faster city. Thus, I firmly believe that staying away from home is the first step towards adulting. You learn and unlearn things, you learn to choose what is right for you and what is wrong, and though you have a long way to go, you learn where and how to start being independent.



*Illustration by Soumili Datta*



# Reminiscence

**ANONYMOUS**

The cookies sat in irregular shapes on the butter paper, and I very gently touched a corner with the tip of my littlest finger to see if they were done. My finger sunk into the slightly wet dough. Half-baked cookies. Two years ago, I'd have pulled them out of the tray and arranged them on a little plate to relish by myself. They'd be sticky, they'd crumble with ease, and the faint odour of the eggs used in the dough would get stronger with every bite. I didn't mind it back then. I'd gobble them up as I waited for someone to tell me that survival was a lot closer to success than I thought. I waited to feel the coldness of my fingers and toes disappear in the warmth of a summer morning, or at least a personified version of it. I wanted to know that I still crossed the minds of everyone around me in the best way possible. And so it didn't matter if the cookies were soggy or charred. The looming smell of raw eggs that I visualised as a faint yellow fume disappeared. I didn't care for it. Deep in my heart, I knew that things were okay. The only problem I found with everything around me was myself. It was set in stone – ingrained within the ridges of my brain that the only person who could bring down what I had so carefully formulated was me and that there was nobody worse. Every single thought entered my head like a precarious whirlpool, punishing me exactly the way I had intended. I looked into the mirror only occasionally to find my reflection smiling back wearily, tired of it all.



*Illustration by Soumili Datta*



Illustration by Rikytā AT

I wanted to stop. The fragrance of perfume and banquet hall finery around me had turned putrid. 'Stop,' I yelled in my head, waiting for things to settle and for me to be able to take in the wonderful smells around me again. The sullenness in my eyes hadn't left for over a year. I was seated at a friend's birthday party, staring down at an empty plate that was supposed to hold a slice of cake. At a short distance across the table sat a wicker basket with flowers and little gifts. "Split a cookie with me," someone said as they walked over to my table. I looked up to meet a pair of coal-black eyes and tried my very best to muster a little smile.

"You needn't look so worried about it. Here!" The cookie snapped into an irregular half and multiple crumbs fell into my hand along with it. "Thank you," I said, trying to sound as high-spirited as I could. The cookie was very nicely done; it wasn't wet and it didn't crumble. There was no unpleasant odour from the egg. What lingered was the melting chocolate chips from every little bite. I looked over to the wicker basket and immediately knew what it felt like. What it felt like to be filled with something good. 'You don't deserve it,' a voice inside my head piped up. I collected another cookie. 'You're not good enough for this.' I ripped open the package. 'Are you rewarding yourself for sleeping in today? Or not doing the dishes?' I broke it into several little pieces. 'You can only eat to fill the void; there's nobody else who'd rather do it.' I placed the first piece in my mouth, and the taste of sweet chocolate and cookie dough completely demolished the tide in my head.

I was going to treat myself better hereafter; to start with that, I'm going to have the cookies fully baked.



## APOORVA PATHAK 1MAENG

Illustration by Soumili Datta

I stood in front of her on my 20th birthday and waited for her to wish me. Her friends did. They had known me for less than two months but they remembered anyway. She heard them wish me, she heard me thank them, and kept her eyes focused on her psychology lab record. I knew she wouldn't say anything, but I hoped anyway. That was the day I decided – there was no point in waiting.

A few months later, after an hour-long phone call of me getting yelled at and then dismissed, I decided something else – no more. If I didn't let anyone get too close, I wouldn't be as devastated when they left. I wouldn't have to make eye contact with them as they approached only for them to turn around and walk back out of sight. When S told me how ridiculous she thought her friend was for saying he didn't think he was meant for friendships, I didn't tell her how much I agreed – friendships were for people stronger than me.

I failed myself. My coping mechanism to deal with the loss of two VIPs is what pushed me further away from myself. Screw the mortifying ordeal of being known. Know me. Predict my behaviour. Tell me what kind of artists I would like. Give me your playlists. Let me give you mine.

Last week during the theatre class, when Professor C asked us to share something good about our lives on a Monday, I said, "I spent another weekend with the people I loved." And I had. I said, "We have Ram Mandir pooja on 26th January," and N laughed and put her hand up for a high five. I said "Poets in toilets" and S laughed and put her head back. I said, "You look amazing" and A laughed and said, "SHUT UP."

What else do I need? Nothing. Nothing as long as my friends are laughing.





# Orange Slices and Conversations

**PUNYA KHURANA 4MPE**

I peel an orange  
and give a slice to you.  
I bite into the sweet, fresh fruit  
the juice trickles down my neck  
and paints the collar anew.  
I tell you all about my new life,  
now that we don't sleep under the same roof.  
"Did you miss this?"  
"It's good to be back home, Ma"

You oil my hair,  
strands slipping through your fingers,  
I close my eyes and listen to birds chirp  
and then you ask, "ਆ ਕੀ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ?—what are they talking  
about?" I'm a young adult now, Ma,  
but sitting here, I am a little girl.  
"It's all just high-pitched sounds,"

Ma, I'm growing fast,  
don't you think so?  
Time is fleeting,  
life is slipping away,  
but you and I could stay,  
we could sit here all day.

I help you clean the house  
and we talk about God,  
"I don't believe in one— not anymore"  
"I found him again when you were born,"  
I'm still young, Ma  
you treat me like I'm fifty.

All this dust is getting to me—



Illustration by Rikyta AT



You light the flame  
because I'm sick again.  
Lemongrass, herbs and tulsi leaves  
to soothe my allergies;  
two hot cups,  
one for you and one for me

Here we are, back again  
aren't we?  
It's all just the same,  
isn't it?  
you and me, we won't change,  
would we?

I remember you nursing,  
a little me— panting and crying  
— a little too often  
patting my forehead  
wiping my tears  
(slow, steady)  
helping me breathe  
(breathe, breathe)  
urging me to sleep.

Ma, did you ever get sick  
of your ever-sick child?  
Of all the tantrums and the lullabies?  
I can't ever thank you enough, can I?

“Here bacha, tea.”

I'm packing up all my things  
“Won't you stay a day or two longer?”  
How do I tell you that  
this is not where I belong,  
this is not my city?





"Your visits are getting shorter,"  
How do I tell you that  
your mother tongue will never be mine—  
this is not my city?  
"I'm really gonna miss you"

Ma, I'm growing fast  
don't you think so?  
Time is fleeting by,  
life is slipping away,  
thirty years of our distance closes  
but it is never sealed.

Ma,  
this world in all its transience,  
its ignorance and forgetfulness  
is slipping away from me.  
I'm still the girl you left in the dorm room,  
the girl who cried and said, "Ma, I love you".  
As the light glints off the  
tarnished heirloom on my finger,  
I sit and ponder.

I sit and ponder  
alone on the roof  
and clutch the railing as I watch the city move.  
I sit and listen  
alone on the roof  
to the tick-tick-tocking of the clock tower blues.  
I sit and ponder  
alone on the roof  
how I fade under the oscillation of the sun and the  
moon. I sit and listen  
alone on the roof  
to the groan of my heart when you still say  
"I'm proud of you"



You and I wake before dawn.  
Down to the garden,  
to watch the sunrise,  
we wait in silence,  
for the sun to arrive.  
I watch your patient eyes  
linger at the horizon, as a sudden thought rises in mine—  
They say parents mess up their kids  
one way or another,  
So I always thought I was the luckiest daughter.

“You've overwatered these plants, Ma”  
The sodden soil slowly suffocates the roots, the leaves wilt and yellow—  
“Oh look!”  
There it is,  
The sun in all its glory  
(slow, steady)  
you smile and curl your toes in the grass.  
(breathe, breathe)

“Oh, at last.”  
I said I don't believe in God anymore but  
sometimes I think I got really lucky - too  
lucky for it to be luck alone.







# It's a Revelation, Won't You Liberate Me Now

**SOUMILI DATTA 1MAENG**

In your late teens, there exists a looming cloud of a certain something that will utterly devastate you for months on end. In my case, I walked right into this storm on my own. Having jumped with no landing in sight, it was only afterwards that I realised that the fall was bone-crushing.

A bit of disconnect here, a bit of dissonance there, my sense of self blew up exponentially and there was no box to contain me anymore. They tell you how falling for your friend disrupts the whole equation and then leaves you to look for answers everywhere.

This storm so happens to be the destruction of the self I had spent my childhood building. Like a baby deer, I would have to learn how to walk again, each step more awkward than the last, more painful because I knew how to exist and then suddenly, I did not. When you make the decision to leave the first friendship you ever had, you realise people never talked enough about how losing a friend is like cutting a piece of your heart and leaving it behind, dripping blood as you walk on forward, resolutely not looking back.

A lot of paths, a lot of decisions, a desperate need to alleviate the torture of the soul, any at all. It all came down to the moment when I realised, I had ended up giving more importance to concepts than my friends. There came an answer, albeit not the one I expected, in the form of old chats.

After months, after an endless debate with myself, I sent a quiet text.



"I'm sorry. I think I have [ ]. I'm not angry anymore."

When an apology comes, it hurts in ways you couldn't have imagined. You're both apologising. You're both trying to knot the thread only to find it was torn in the middle. She says, "You know the last time I was intoxicated, I hallucinated".

"Oh".

"It was you. I couldn't reach you. It broke me that I couldn't reach you".

"...."

It will never be the same. This kind of thing has no precedence in a world where there is an obsession with a clean cut and an immediate out because there are guidelines for life. When your lives are entangled for a decade and over, these lines cross time and again. Then, at one point, you stop caring – caring about anything apart from the fact that you can do something about the dull ache in your heart when someone is missing from your life.

It came to me along these lines, "We leave threads hanging, thinking time will stitch them together. The needle glints in the sun, but our hands don't pick it up."

If there's an answer, it's in this. "To live without regrets". I chant this over and over. It will never be the same, and yet. And yet.



Illustration by Soumili Datta



# Growing Young and Old

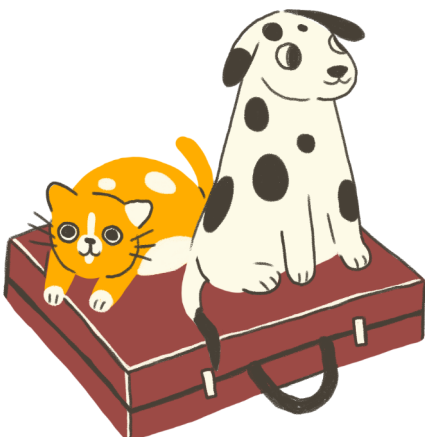
**BHAVYA 2BAES**

In the memories of my childhood, there were two animals- a cat and a dog . The cat I treated like one of my students. I remember in the winter holidays, I would sunbathe and make her study every concept by heart; in response, she would meow between my explanations. The dog was a pet of the dairy farm owner where my mother used to go early in the morning every day to bring fresh milk.

I was an early bird even on holidays. Sometimes, my mother allowed me to go to the dairy with her. I would see a black mountain dog sitting there with yellow dots, one above each eye, and the stack of *chappatis* beside him, which I doubt he ever ate. Gradually, the dog started to come with us on our way back home and he would sit on our veranda until we brought him milk. He would drink only milk or on occasion, *chappatis* dipped in milk. At times, he would run behind motorbikes, and people would look at my mom as though she was the owner. As time passed, I learned it is not only our home he goes to feed himself but all the people who bring milk from the dairy.

Years passed by and we stopped bringing milk from that dairy. He would still come to our house. Sometimes I see him on the main road, looking at the lane of my house, deciding whether he should come to our house or head home.

He is sitting on my veranda right now after having fed himself. He is old, odorous, bony, and uncared for. His not-so-shiny fur tells me so. He is changing positions and breathing deeply. I know in the back of my mind that his end is near. I wonder if it is my last goodbye to him, if it comes out, let me pet him enough as I did not have this moment when the cat disappeared – or died. Who knows.



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# Meet the Team



**Sinchana Shetty**  
Coordinator



**Neha Sen**  
Editor



**Meghna Manoj**  
Editorial Head



**Sana Kamal**  
Editor



**Sharanya Garapati**  
Design Head



**Trisha Poddar**  
Editor



**Archana Kumar**  
Editor



**Rikyta AT**  
Illustrator



**Esha George**  
Editor



**Soumili Datta**  
Illustrator