

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

Volume: 3  
Issue: 2





## *Auld Lang Syne*

*As the Department of English celebrates its decennial, we decided to take a trip down memory lane.*

*This issue of Quills Will comprises of delightful stories and poems which will transport you back to the days gone by...*

*It gives us utmost pleasure to release the decennial issue as it has not only creative pieces from the M.A. students but also from the English department alumni, making it all the more special.*

*It was a wonderful experience getting to read all of the entries for the magazine first hand and we hope that you do too.*

*Dive into the bitter-sweet nostalgia that the stories bring!*

*- Vandana.*

*It has certainly been a great experience being part of the editorial team of Quills Will. I think a theme like "Nostalgia" certainly takes one down the memory lane, bringing back various bitter - sweet memories that has lead people to put these memories down on a piece of paper in the form of poetry and other articles.*

*- Nadia Fernandes.*





## Note From The Research Team

What is life without sweet and spice? The bittersweet memories of the past shape us into who we are today. Recollection of the past help us to relive all the memories that have long been buried in the sands of time. Nostalgia is a feeling of longing to recreate the past experiences and cherish it. Nostalgia is smelling again the crust of the delicious choco-chip pie that your mother baked years ago; listening to the rain drops hitting the tin roof of your childhood home; getting lost again along the meandering path to the village fair that once you went with your friends; flipping through the perforated pages of a Thomas Hardy only to find a faded rose. Nostalgia is everywhere and what could be a better theme for this new edition of the Quills Will magazine? With the academic year coming to an end let us try to revive a few forgotten memories and be overwhelmed with the profound feeling of nostalgia.





## *The Dean Talks To The Team*




*The Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mr. John Joseph Kennedy began his journey at Christ(Deemed to be University) in the year 1990. He says he was shocked to see the university, because it barely looked like a university at all. It was just a one - block campus. However, he feels great pride to belong to Christ and that he made the right decision. He says Christ (Deemed to be University) is today well-known and well-renowned and his journey here has been very satisfactory. He also mentions how the university has helped him grow as an individual. He first joined the University as a faculty member, later became the Head of Department and now the Dean. He says back in the day the university was*

*smaller in size and so they had ample time to spend with the others, it is now that the University has grown and expanded which makes everyone busier than usual. He says it gives him great happiness because he has seen Christ grow up from a baby to a grown up entity.*

*As a person of responsibility, a man of letters, he wishes that students along with faculty members should together reinvent, be self-critical and stand together to the accolade of the University. He is certain that one day Christ will be at world class standards and it is his dream.*

*Interviewed by,  
Anandhu.*







## **The HOD Speaks...**

***We have interviewed Dr. Abhaya, the Head, department of English. She was excited to share with us her nostalgic feelings about CHRIST (Deemed to be) University. She says, she is that she is still wonders how to talk about it in a very capsule form because; it's been sixteen years since she came to Christ. Every single change that institution has gone through since 2005, right be it in its autonomous status or the becoming of the University. The change is not merely systemic or structural, it is also in terms of its attitude, approach, relationships and there have been several changes that she has personally been part of this journey. She is glad that these changes have also helped her in her personal growth and different opportunities that have come her way helped her to see a career in a completely different manner. She said that it is high time that we to look back and consolidate the experiences rather than be adventurous and look for huge changes. She also asks everyone to look back patiently and assume that we have really done a lot. There's a long way to go. While talking about the journey in itself. She says, it been a very meaningful and constructive journey all through these years. She affirmed it saying, that is for sure.***



***Interviewed by  
Kamda Singh Deo and Sathish Kumar H.***



## ***Despair***

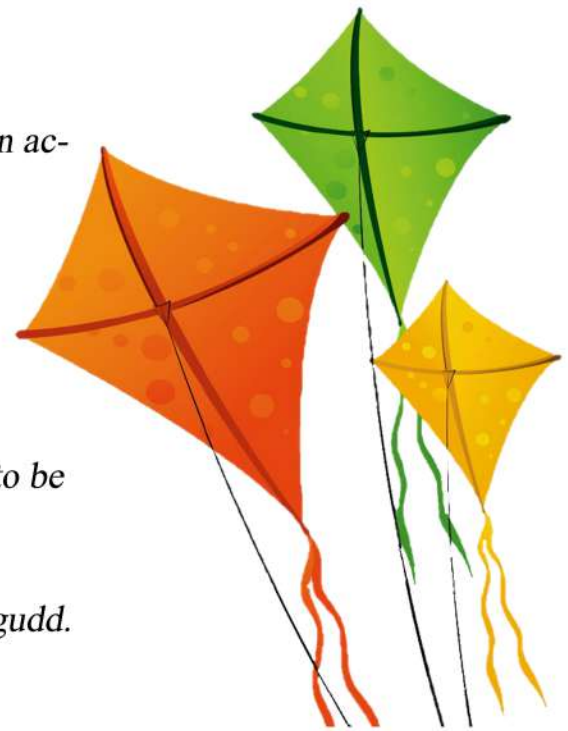
*When was the last time?  
When was the last time?  
You ran around the streets wondering which dog to catch,  
Pranced those wall compounds slinging that imaginary web.  
You broke twigs and waved them around like a thundercat.  
You shivered with fear after looking at the pool water.  
When was the last time?*



*When was the last time?  
You yawned while imagining yourself as a gunslinger and  
your mother cheated you with those final few bites.  
You curled yourself in your blanket when you heard a thunder.  
When was the last time?*

*When was the last time?  
You roamed the streets with your arms as the only known ac-  
celerator and your legs for wheels.  
No bumps, no potholes, no traffic,  
Only a pair of cramped legs after all those miles.*

*When was the last time?  
You flew a kite without worrying about a splinter.  
When was the last time you did not realise it was going to be  
the last time!*



*-Sohail Guledgudd.  
Alumni*



## *SHE DEFINES ME*

Never thought I would feel so  
Never thought I would miss the green wall  
Never thought I would leave my heart there  
Never thought my breath lies there.  
In this cacophony of never,  
I wake up everyday to the dream  
Of you and my happiness  
Which I left behind.  
When teenage taught me 'Friends Forever'  
Maturity taught me 'Family Forever'  
It's not the walls, I realized  
But the warmth that draws me back.  
Counting each day,  
To come back to you,  
To hug that lady, who is my reality  
Who defines my identity.  
Age made me realize,  
That it's 'her' who is forever  
It's 'her' who was there forever  
It's 'her' who is my home.  
The house may change  
The walls may wither  
But my home, is my mother  
Who would be young forever.  
Let me stop the eyes from welling up.  
Let me run to her  
And tell her  
What I never told her,  
You are my Home  
You are where I want to Live  
You are my EXISTENCE.



-Anamika Sreeny





# Bounded

Taking a slow  
walk  
through the  
Life  
I realised  
that I have  
missed  
so much  
when I rushed  
Now when  
I peek  
into the  
Windows  
and the  
Gardens  
filled with  
happiness  
and sorrows  
that holds worth  
a Million  
things that  
I kept  
running  
behind and  
I left my  
People and  
My heart  
on the way  
To,  
meet the Devil  
that never was  
my own  
but given  
to me  
by those  
who I  
Thought  
were the  
ones I

can Call  
my own  
Remember,  
The Kite  
that once  
flew  
without threads  
is into shreds  
Now  
Falling apart  
with every  
blow  
she got  
from the  
winds  
that hinder  
the Path  
but she is  
Trying  
not to  
forget  
the bet  
she made  
to go on  
and to Never  
look back  
To,  
the ones  
who still  
want to  
hold her down  
to the town  
filled with  
heads that  
are long  
Dead.

-Ankita Gambhir



## ***Somewhere you become***

*We don't grow because we settle,  
And remain there for so long,  
That it becomes comfortable —*

*So long that we never see,  
We've been in the mud,  
For mud becomes our home,  
And home is never  
Where you run from.*

*We don't grow because we accept  
Who we are and what we make,  
We settle for what we have—  
Without knowing or seeing,  
That we could have more,  
Better,  
Best.*

*We don't grow because—  
We tell ourselves that we haven't,  
That we won't,  
We can't.*

*We don't grow because we make  
Ourselves believe  
That we don't want to.*

*But when you see the numberless  
Possibilities of what can be,  
Who you can become,  
Places you can go—*

*And when you see  
The mud for itself,  
The world for you—  
Home won't be home  
Not something you run from,  
But somewhere you go.  
Somewhere you become  
Your own home.*

*-Riya Chawla*



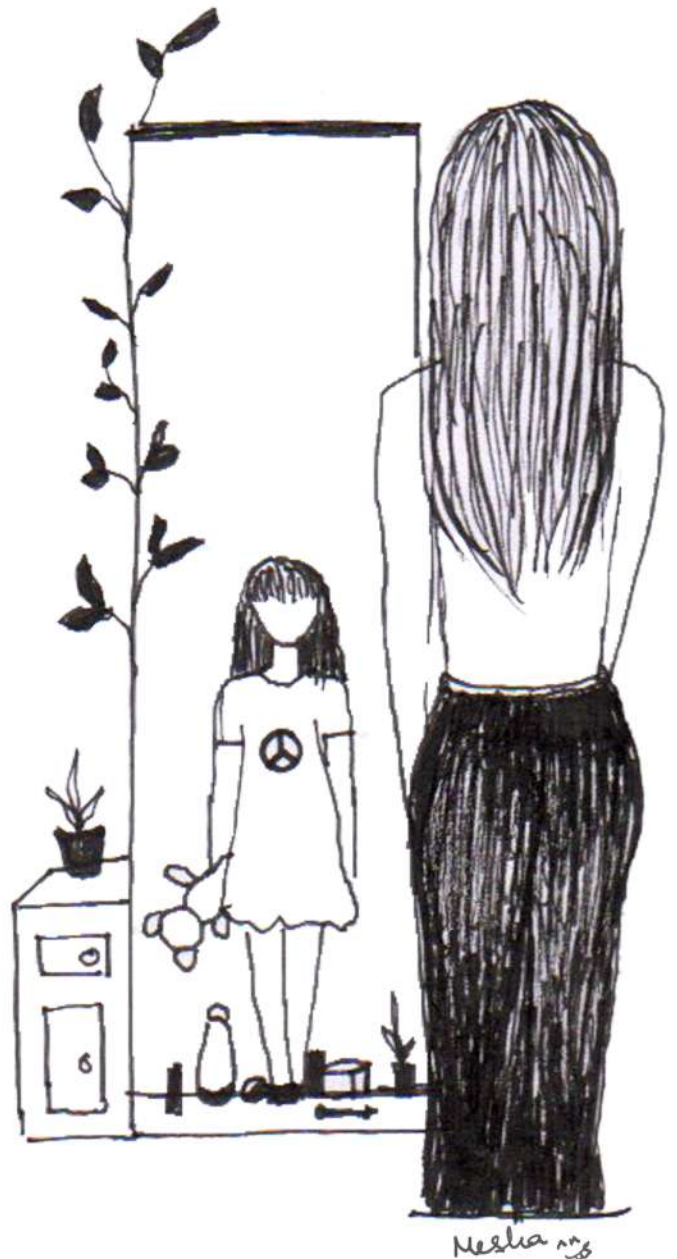


## ***Miles afar there is a land***

Miles afar there is a land  
Where freshness fills the air  
And the babies sleep to the lullabies  
In the warm lap of her care.  
Miles afar there is a street  
That is familiar to my gait  
All its turns know whistles of first love  
And hums of heartbreak  
Miles afar there is she  
Who stands at the door.  
Her head resting on the frame and  
In her eyes waves adrift the shore.  
I often hear a voice calling  
My name from that nostalgic core.  
It calls me towards that street,  
That land. But I say "no more".  
Miles away I lie in the  
Corners of my room.  
A 10 by 10, with plastered  
Ceilings. An image of doom.  
My eyes still see the fun  
And frolic of that street  
With people by the stalls  
Eating and fanning the heat  
The dingy lights still blink  
My eyes from stalls cheap  
That rise as hills of heaven  
From fords of my sleep.  
Miles away I stand alone  
Amidst the swelling crowd  
Reminded of my peaceful porch  
In the avenues of this town.  
In flashes I see her standing  
Under the sun- loaded in frost  
but now my vision is blurred

And now I am lost.

-Kamda Singh





# *Adieu to auld lang sync*

*Dark array of clouds untied in sky  
Where squid embers with  
the rhythm of rattle.*

*Caparisoned elephants aligned  
in countryside with the  
pace of dance.*

*Dames are everywhere with  
unstated words and  
despoiled lips  
With flamed sun in their Forehead.*

*Again a Festive season  
but this time smother consumed me.*

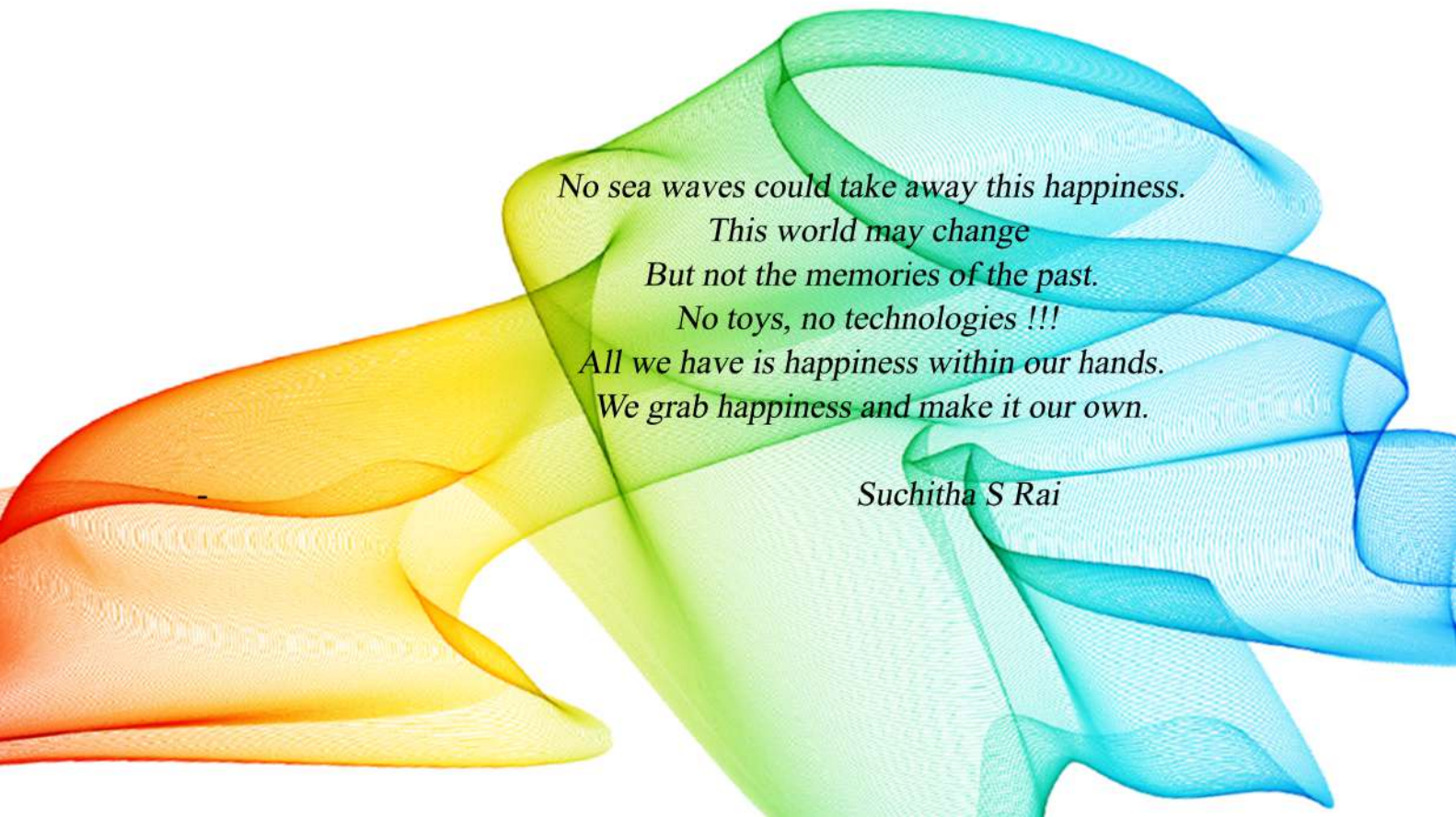
*White draped wizardry be an envoy  
And take my bosom  
from this mummery  
to the place that you travel .*

*-Anandhu S*



*No sea waves could take away this happiness.  
This world may change  
But not the memories of the past.  
No toys, no technologies !!!  
All we have is happiness within our hands.  
We grab happiness and make it our own.*

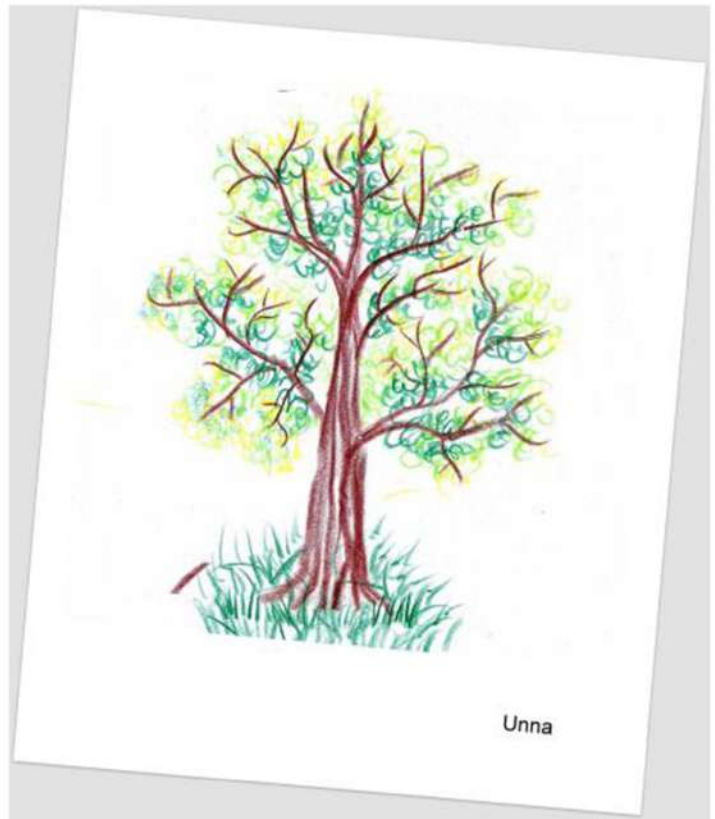
*Suchitha S Rai*





## THE CASE OF A WRONG MOMENT

Do you ever wonder  
How easily a friend  
Becomes a foe?  
One misspoken word,  
One unspoken word,  
One twitch of an unruly eyebrow  
And the poison tree blooms  
It bears pointed glances  
And clipped syllables  
And offers it to the (un)suspecting culprit  
Without the slightest tinge of remorse.  
There is an undetectable force that  
Goes around the universe deciding  
The ties between friends and friends,  
Deciding and dissolving  
According to cosmic whims.



-Anjana K

## THE WIND AT SEA

The warm sand embraces my feet,  
The waves touch me as if they missed me.  
I smile at the distance , wondering how it all began  
And how it ended.  
Times like that would never come back.  
I'm too careful now to get my feet wet,  
To jump in the chilling ocean that  
Would raise goosebumps on my skin.  
It was an easier time as the sea would wash away my worries,  
The sand tickled me and remained stuck on my body.  
They were my companions in happiness  
As well as sorrow.  
My goodbyes were said at sea,  
My hands running through the sand remains damp  
From the tears I let out.  
The wind reminds me of that time.  
The time that was endless.  
Times like that would never come back.

- Nikita Ann Mathews



Picture Courtesy: Geethanjali R



When I came to this new city,  
I left it behind.

The old, oil-stained,  
Musty smelling,  
Feathers filled  
In a piece of cloth.  
Threads on its seam,  
Worn out with use.  
I left it behind.

The hoarder of memories,  
The proof  
Of every person leaving.  
The diary of secret thoughts.  
My pillow  
Was the heaviest thing to pack.

So, I left it behind.

-SreshthaUniyal

## *Forever his town*

There is a town, beautiful everyway  
Where the early birds, finds the way  
To abscond the harshness of life.  
There is a town, frightening everyway  
For the inhabitants pretends savagery  
Bolting the reality that is life.  
There is a town, his beloved in everyway  
One he vowed never to depart  
Exact opposite he did moving on in life.  
There was a town, in his memory  
Evocation filled, good and bad  
For the bad took over the good in his life.  
There was a town, coming back finally  
To the good and bad it preserved  
As the nature deemed in the way of life.  
For all it's staleness, for all it's virtues  
It remains to this day, forever his town.

-Nidhin Shibu

## *Pink Petals*

The scent of those flowers calls me back  
They remind me of something I lack

The pink petals falling down free  
I could see them singing out in glee

Joyous as ever in the ground  
Interred forever, still bound.

-Written and captured by  
V.P. Harsha





# *The Longing Forever*

It was a cold winter night and I was sleeping peacefully in my bed when I heard a knock on my window. I thought I was dreaming and fell back to sleep for a few more minutes. I heard the same knock a second time only louder and knew I wasn't just dreaming. I had to get out of my bed and check what's the matter. I felt extremely uneasy like someone was watching my every move.

My heart started to pound out of my chest when I turned around and saw a lady in my window looking right at me! She was wearing a black Gown and a blue Breton. As soon as we made eye contact, she started breaking my window. I tried to scream for help but nothing would come out of my mouth. I was scared speechless! I ran into the bathroom and locked the door behind me hoping she would just leave. I had my cell phone and tried calling 100 but got a busy signal every time. Within a few minutes, the lady had entered my house and started banging on the bathroom door!

After several minutes I heard a door slam shut. As soon as I felt safe, I opened the door and looked around. I knew this person was after something but I didn't know what. All my drawers were opened and clothes were everywhere on the floor. My mattress had been moved and the special box with my mother's ring was missing. Was the lady who entered my house was after my mother's ring? How did she know where to find it? Was she watching me through my bedroom window all along?

Why did she come after the only thing left to me? It wasn't worth any money but very dear to my heart. My mother wore her studded silver ring for as long as I could remember. After I heard a loud knock on my door I woke up. Was I just dreaming, or did I pass out from fear? After a few minutes, I was alert and looked around my house. There was no broken window and my clothes were neatly stacked in my drawers. The event felt so real while it was happening and scared me to death.



When we lose a loved one, we try to hold onto their belongings, feeling comforted that there is still a part of them with us. Her ring makes me feel safe like she is protecting me from up above. I wear it every day in my fingers so it will never get misplaced or stolen. I stopped having that nightmare and now the vision of her in her bed haunts me in my dreams. I don't want to remember that sight and pray that someday the old memories will come back into my mind so that I would like to spend my whole life along with her. The things around me keep reminding that I have a long way to meet her. The distance has made me feel the complete loss that I miss you terribly in my life, amma.

- K. Unnamalai



# NOSTALGIA DOESN'T COME THAT EASILY.



*"It was not easy. To get used to a disciplined way of life was not easy. It was not easy. To lead a military life in college was not easy. It was like asking an omelette to get back to being a yolk in the shell. Three years of my Undergraduate studies at Christ taught me that life was not easy and it was never going to be". These were words exactly spoken by my dad before I got admitted to college. My dad was an alumni of Christ years back.*

*Little did I know that I'd be repeating those words after three years of my Undergraduate studies. On the first day of my college, my dad and I toured the library where the trophies were kept. He showed me the ones he had won with his Hockey team and I vowed to get another trophy placed next to his. He told me of all the nostalgic moments he had in the campus. I never knew that I'd be threading his path.*

*Today, as I sit reminiscing days gone by, remembering those celebratory moments in Fresheteria, sipping juices and watching the Basketball matches, I knew how heavenly those moments felt. In the last few months when it actually hit me that my college life is soon going to be over, I wished to spend more time in college.*

*The most nostalgic spot in campus for me was the University play-ground. I played all games possible and to represent the university was a proud moment for my team.*

*It was of course not easy. Early morning practices can never be forgotten. I had to rush to attend 9 am classes and beat all the sleepiness but I had a competitive class and so never got bored. College taught me to cope with struggle and learn how to survive. It was draining and challenging to balance academics and sports but at the end of the day, especially during convocation, it does make us realize the value of those three years. It makes us a completely different person and it makes us celebrate our toil and efforts invested.*

*That's exactly why I chose to do my post-graduation as well in Christ. While undergrad was more about being participative in extra-curricular activities, post-grad made me more academic-oriented. Nostalgia hits time and again when I play my last tournaments for college and spend my last few months in campus. It makes me go back to those first few days of college. Today, the Hockey Trophy I won with the Christ team sits next to the one won by my dad and his Christ team. It does feel nostalgic!*

*-Srividya*

*Picture Courtesy:Geethanjali R*



## *Little Things*

Just like any other little girl, she's curious about the world. One day she saw an old man and she was shocked because the man had grey hair, saggy dry skin, a hunch posture and a tired face. What she saw was new to her; she hadn't seen anyone who's as old as the man, "Why do you look like that?" the little girl asked.

"Because I am old." the old man replied. The little girl is confused, is this possible? Does everyone get old like this? Her mother is old but she does not look like this.

It is scary, that's what she thinks.

"Are you scared?" the little girl asked once again.

"No." the old man replied.

"Why? You look so fragile, like you could fall or break any moment." the little girl added.

"You don't understand because you're still a little girl. This is a part of our life. Growing old, but you'll experience the whole world on your journey and it is going to be a great one, I promise." he was fascinated with the curiosity of the little girl; he's never asked this question in his whole existence.

"I want to experience it now, I don't want to be like you when I experience what you're calling a journey," she replied with a scared voice.

"You have to be patient, what you will experience now is not going to be the same after so many years. And you will wish that you had cherished those moments and had not rushed on jumping into the other right away," the old man replied with a smile on his face.

"I do not understand what you're saying," the little girl replied as she cocks her head on the side trying to think deeply about what the old man had just said.

"You do not have to; you're still a little girl. You do not have to rush sweetie." the old man replied with a laugh again, amused with the little girl's curiosity about him and his old age. How he wishes to be young again and enjoy these little things.

The little girl was about to ask another question to the old man when her mother called her. She said goodbye to the old man and left with great wonder and questions. The old man felt that way too. ☹️



-Gautam Gayan



## **A Remembrance**

Living in a different place, away from your home, away from your mother tongue, that you heard everyday around you, away from the familiar aromatic smell of the typical delicacies of your place, away from your parents, produces in you a sense of longingness. In this hectic schedule, sometimes you badly want the warmth of that hug that was able to drive all your worries away.

The other day I was sitting by the window of my room, reading a book, when I heard an Odia song *Mayuri Go Tuma Akase mun* playing somewhere in the building next to mine. The music, the lyrics, the tone of that song was able to break open the dam of many treasured childhood memories and without me even realizing it, tears started rolling down my cheeks. An image flashed across my eyes; The image of my mother humming this song, moving around the house doing her chores and I was looking at the beautiful woman with a sense of awe and wonderment. I have never heard anyone sing the song more mellifluously than my mother, so much so that I felt she sang more beautifully than the original track sung by the legendary singer Mohammed Rafi. I have heard many people sing this song, but none can come even close to the way she sings it.

*Mayuri Go tuma akase mun* is a romantic song, where a lover is praising his beloved, in the sweetest way possible. But for me, the song had and still continues to have, a different meaning altogether. The younger me never understood the essence of that song, because for me, the essence was something different than the meaning present in the song. Listening to my mother sing the song brought a sense of peace in me. In a way that the song is the reminder of the love, the smile, the warmth of my mother- the caring, practical, headstrong and beautiful woman that she is. There is so much tenderness in the lyrics and so much beauty in the way she hummed it, that the essence of my childhood is somehow wrapped in those tunes. Maybe I am exaggerating it, but, the feeling is one of bliss when I hear it.

Moments like these make me want to go back home, make me yearn for her physical presence - to sink into those comforting arms around me. This song is one of the remembrances of the place I call home and my mother - Bou.

Ananya Dash



## *Home*



*There are a few places where the passing of time is so seamless, so fluid, that you don't realize when one moment has bled into another. These are the places where time appears to stand still.*

*“Upasana”– while this is just another name of just another house in the corner of a winding road; to me, this name brings back an entire barrage of memories. Memories that hold within them, emotions. Upasana isn't just a house for me, it is a feeling.*

*The earth there is different. On every granule of mud, my grandmother has once placed her feet. She hasn't just walked every inch of the vast lands at Upasana; I believe that with each step of her calloused feet, new life has sprung from underneath it.*

*On lazy afternoons, when even the wind sucked in its breath to heave a giant yawn and the leaves waited for the release of wind's breath, she busied herself tending to plants that didn't really need any nurturing. Why did she spend a significant amount of her time caring for those that could survive without her? Maybe because sometimes, mere survival isn't enough. Sometimes, to really flourish, even the strongest and the most resilient require just a little nudge.*

*In my mind, there's a small stone well in the corner of the vast lands. As a child, I used to scream into the well, and be amused at the echo that answered my scream, with a fainter scream. The still waters stared back at me, with a depth that was unfathomable. That was unacceptable to me. I required chaos. A stone was thrown, and the disturbed waters filled me with calm. Another scream into the void, and suddenly I wasn't sure if the scream that returned was mine, or the water's.*

*My little feet explored every nook, every cranny of those lands. These fingers have grazed the trunks of every tree, in the vain hopes that at least one of the trees would whisper to me what their leaves whisper to the winds every day. The stories these trees held within the rings*



that hid their age was a space that was unreachable, and beyond my imagination. These trees had seen her as a young bride, as an expectant mother, and now, as a doting grandmother. But they have also seen my grandmother in a role that differed from every character she had ever played. Maybe because her tryst with the trees and plants wasn't a role. Maybe that was the only time she was herself. No masks, no pretence – just an unadulterated, raw soul.

I loved walking barefoot around Upasana. The pointed rocks that would pierce at my soles filled me with a joy that surpassed the pain. There was an intense need to be as close to nature as possible, and if that meant hurting myself, then so be it.

I've always wondered if it was possible to be prepared for the loss of a person. Even if you knew the exact time that someone was to die, can you ever prepare your mind for when that actually happens? Years of meticulous planning to deal with the loss of someone can crumble into fragments at the time of the actual loss.

I've said before that there are places where time stands still.

From the moment I set foot in Upasana, my mind is at once a conflict between the child who roamed the lands without a single worry and the adult who carries the emotional baggage of associating places with people.

It's been 13 years since she departed without warning.

And I haven't been able to walk barefoot in Upasana since.

-Surabi Unni

## Captured.

I take pictures every second,  
Pictures that cannot be pasted in a scrapbook  
I take pictures every second,  
Pictures that cannot be hung on a hook  
I take pictures every second,  
Pictures that cannot be deleted, even if I wish to.  
I take pictures every second,  
Pictures that I go back to.  
I take pictures every second,  
Pictures that keep me tethered.  
I take pictures every second,  
Pictures that cannot be seen by another.  
I take pictures every second,  
Through my eyes, I take pictures every second.



Written and Captured by,  
-Sahaya Afra Johanna



## *A Trip to an Unfamiliar Place with Familiar Strangers*

The happiness that we couldn't contain within us after finishing our first semester's CIA took us on a night trip to Nandi hills. We didn't know each other properly, nor did we share the same mother tongue. Yet, the excitement to know each other and to watch the sunrise together was immense.

We all looked at each other with curious eyes; asking each other about the festivals we celebrated, our beliefs about certain things, our different languages, and food. That day I realized how different we are because of our different cultures and yet how united are we because of our similar beliefs. . "Paavam kutty", "Kannada Gotilla", and "Chill Maadi" were the new words that were added to my dictionary that night.

As adventurous as our friend Naithik is, he wanted everyone to climb mountains rather than walk straight on a road that directly took us to our destination. We crazily followed him, the magic of new friendships was all around us. When on top, we all sat and sang songs for a while. The beautiful view of the district Chikkaballapur, the amazing people around me and the songs made me feel alive at that moment. It felt like I finally stopped existing and started living again after a series of bad days. One of the best decisions of that night was to walk for 12 km after trekking for 2 hours. Although, everyone was stunned when Naithik and Aashi proposed this idea but nobody said no. Living in the new city made all of us fearless enough to try new things at all times. We walked, walked and walked till we were dead tired. We stopped after walking for seven or eight kilometers and decided to lie down on the road for a while. We laughed at our decision at first, but then felt great when we did. Lying down on the road amidst mountains where there is nothing but silence and looking at stars felt magical. It is one of the moments which is very close to my heart till date.

We walked fast, we walked slowly and sometimes we didn't walk at all. We kept on struggling to finish those kilometers and to keep ourselves calm. The morning signifies home; but for us, darkness was our hope, for we wanted to see the sunrise from the hills.





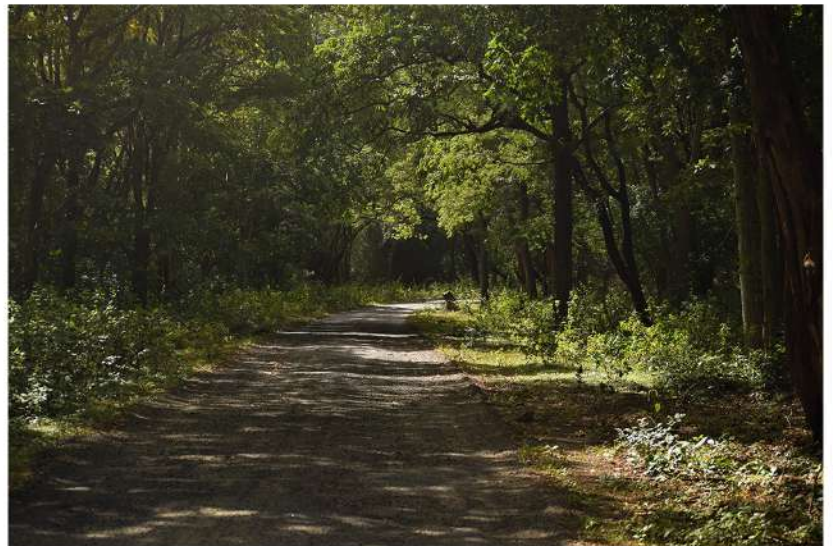
The struggle was over and we finally reached; just to see fog and no sun rays. They said, “you won’t be able to see the sun for the next one and a half hours”. Disappointed and sad we looked at each other. But then someone at the corner said, “We had fun on the way. So what if we couldn’t see the sun rays, we will come again one day.” We looked at each other and then we looked at the foggy view, with hope in our hearts we said cheese and smiled for the photograph.

We, human beings tend to do something or the other at all times to make and keep us happy. But sometimes things don’t turn out the way we want them to. Each photograph that we click reminds us of a time, a day, a story or multiple stories whether good or bad, happy or sad. They freeze a moment in time and let us keep our memories close. If there were no pictures and as forgetful as I am, I would have forgotten most of the things we did on our journey to this unfamiliar place.

-Jasnoor Kaur

## **I WALK THROUGH THE SAME LANE**

I walk through the same lane,  
The lane that I lived in,  
I played lagori,  
I played in mud.  
And I made the best memories,  
That I will cherish forever.  
I walk through the same lane,  
With a nostalgic feeling,  
Wanting to bring my friends back,  
Wanting to break neighbour aunty's bulb,  
And run away.



Picture Courtesy: Geethanjali R

I walk through the same lane,  
I can hear my younger self screaming dabba dabba,  
Hide and seek was my favourite game.  
I walk through the same lane,  
With a baby in my stomach,  
Hoping and praying,  
That she walks through her favourite lane,  
With the same feeling that I have,  
A feeling that surpasses all,  
A feeling that soothes her heart ache,  
A feeling that makes her smile,  
A feeling that will remain close to her heart,  
Forever.

-Tabitha



## OF BOUGAINVILLEAS, WET SOIL, AND AVIL

Evenings were her favourite time. After school, having snacks and listing out every story that happened throughout the day to her mother, Saahithya would run to her grandmother's home in the same compound, barefoot. Ammuma, as she called her, which meant "maternal grandmother" in Malayalam, would be outside, tucking in her dull oil-saree high to her hip and getting ready to do the evening chores. The duties were the same for every day – watering the plants, plucking out the weeds, filling the water tank.

Ammuma would be there, waiting for her, with her special savoury. Saahithya would pick up the mouth-watering aroma of her favourite avilnanachathu, which meant "dampened rice flakes" in literal translation, from a good distance. Avilnanachathu was a delicacy which was made by soaking the rice flakes in jaggery syrup, garnished with cardamom and roasted gram. Ammuma had a small steel plate in the shape of a flower in which she served this delicacy to her. She would munch on it and repeat her day, which Ammuma would listen to eagerly, sitting near the well, her one eye looking out to check if the water tank was spilling out.

When the evening rays weakened, Ammuma would switch on the motor and it was Saahithya's duty to connect it with the hose to water the plants in the garden. Ammuma used to say that their garden once used to be spectacular with immaculate lawn and different varieties of flowers and bushes. Theirs was one of the first gardens to have had pruned lawns in the neighbourhood. But as the years passed, the lawn was covered with soil again for the sake of easy maintenance. Saplings of mango trees and chikkoo were planted. Saahithya would splash and play with the water from the hose before Ammuma would take it away from her and start watering her plants in pots, in the soil, and the trees. She would skip around her, playing little games, singing songs and jumping into the small puddles, making her feet sticky with soil and water. The intoxicating aroma of the wet ground would blend in with the cooling evening air. Saahithya would draw patterns on the damp soil and would pluck the weeds and break the dried branches under Ammuma's supervision. The soil would accumulate between her nails, but her palms would have the smell that no perfume in the world could ever give – the fragrance of the earth.

The prettiest flowers were bougainvillea that were planted, pruned, and manured in big pots all through the way up to the front gate. They were different colours– light and dark shades of pink, peach, red and white. They required plenty of sunlight and little water to grow and bloom. Some of them were planted in soil, and they twisted and turned, making their ways towards their wild desires unapologetically. They swayed and danced in the slightest evening breeze, making the contrast of their vibrant colours and green leaves more prominent. For Saahithya, it was the zesty bougainvillea which looked like coloured paper-flowers that made their house a home, always making it a happy picture. After the plants and trees were watered, they would open the gate and go outside.





When there are no passers-by, Ammuma would sprinkle water outside the gate so that the damp soil would prevent the dust from flying. Most often, they would be greeted by our neighbours or the people we knew. They would stop for a small chat with Ammuma, giving Saahithya the time to play with water. She would twirl and dance with the hose, splashing water everywhere. It would be their dog Jimmy's barking, crying to let him out to run around and play that would make Ammuma cut short her conversation with the passers-by and return.

When the evening pulls the veil of darkness, they would finish off their routine to take bath, and get ready to light the lamps and pray. By then, Saahithya's frock would have stuck to her body with sweat, water, and soil. But her cheeks would have a glow of exhilaration. She would grudgingly return inside the house, but only to wait for the next evening to come, and to do their daily little ritual all over again.

-Swathi Ajayakumar



## NOSTALGIC MEMORIES.

The day I grow wise and perception of prime age  
An old age home, I do not crave for definite  
I allow you kids, to take away my belongings and  
to honor the love and memories shared along  
I request you all, not to fight on a war field  
to share my riches in a frame of useless talks  
Do not pity me to share my life  
Like a fragmented soul with any of you....  
Share my belongings equally except my soul  
when I grow old enough in your ideas and minds  
for me to go will be an old age home  
A hand note is enough for me to fulfill your requisites  
as you all share a part of me from my inner  
For further reasoning on requisite terms  
I construe your freckled lines clear enough

Leave me to a view of the lake where I sit  
and gaze  
At the most beautiful mountains and a  
sun rise  
I can amalgamate my old age in a way I  
desire  
And there I don't need any fences or  
boundaries...  
On the finale of my life, I do not require a  
Requiem of nostalgic expired tales on the  
serene shore of my incomplete life.

-Midhun Mathew





## Letter to Sabina Didi

Dear Sabina Didi,

I know, you keep waiting for my phone call. But now that Manji has learnt to read English, I decided to write a letter to you this time. When I called Mom this morning, she said you haven't visited her in last three weeks. I hope you are fine and taking care of your health. Today is Bihu, the first day of the Assamese new year and I couldn't go home this time. People do not celebrate Bihu here and I cannot find the cuckoo singing to sweeten my ears. But spring is knocking at the door and new leaves are sprouting on the trees here too. People here also have harvest festivals like us and they are celebrating the new year too. Are you crushing the jetuka leaves for Manji and Aasma like you would always do for me and my sister? There are no jetuka leaves here. So, I bought a cone of mehandi. But I don't like the colour, you know. It is not that strong. The freshly plucked Jetuka leaves are always better.

Are you preparing seviyan kheer? You make the best seviyan in the world, didi. You always put more cashews in my bowl and more raisins in my sister's. You make it better than mom. How did you always know when we were hungry and what we wanted? Mom says, when I was small, I would always start crying whenever grandma tried feeding me but the moment you held me in your arms I would smile. Grandma believed you perhaps knew some magic!

Last year, around this time, you invited us for lunch at your place. Do you remember? We spent the whole day there and you showed us your village around. Those fresh berries in your backyard were so sweet and juicy. I still remember the aroma of the chicken biryani that hit me the moment we entered the house. And the pithas and laddoos, you put so many on my plate. But I was saving myself for the biryani. You were so excited about our visit and wanted to prepare the best for us that for the first time you forgot that none of us like milk. Manji said, you had warned the milkman not to add even a single drop of water to the milk and he was horrified. You are so funny at times but you are also one of the strongest women I have seen in my life. I have seen you losing your belongings every year in the flood but have never seen you lose hope. You say, the floods bring more and more fishes to the pool in your backyard.

That day, you made the seviyan kheer even better. I wanted to eat more but I was full already. I was the happiest when you packed me the remaining biryani and seviyan so that I can have it at home. You always know what I want!

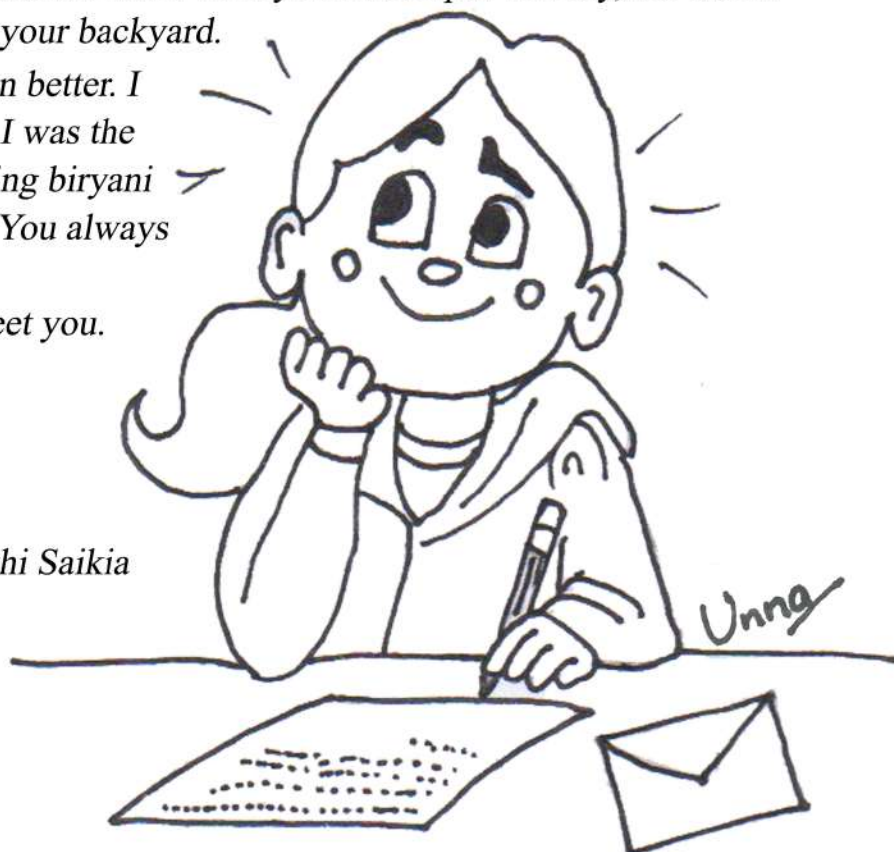
I wish, I could be home. I wish I could meet you.

I miss you, didi. Hope to see you soon.

Yours lovingly,

Preet.

-Priyam Ponkhi Saikia





# Old Friend

*She twisted her fork around, rolling up the pasta. It felt like little time had passed since they sat at the same quaint café a year back. And yet, our conversation reflected a distance from that truth. As I sat there on one of those very cushioned-single-seater pieces of furniture that's confusingly between a couch and a chair, sipping onto my cold coffee, I couldn't help my mind from wandering away from what she was saying.*

*Is it possible to miss people while they're with you? Is it possible to miss what she was, a year ago? Is it unfair of me to compare her with her older self because, well, who isn't touched by change? The same friend who would proclaim with God like confidence, "Some friendships are forever; you wait and see, all your skepticism will go away. College friends are for life." I always smirked at the naivety of her statement. You can't blame me; I'd moved a lot in life and seen a lot of friendships end like a cigarette having burnt its course out. And yet, a part of me undeniably hoped it was true. "It ends when your lips burn", I'd heard someone say once.*

*Nothing hinders happiness like the memories of it. As I sit here today, listening to her go on and on about a friend at her workplace, wanting to make him a Christmas card right then, how she doesn't miss college anymore or even that part of town...I wish I could go back to the time when we were so careful of crafting the relation that we held it like a new-born baby, praying for its best, panicking at the first sound of a cry, shielding it from the world. Because that's what time does in relationships, burdening us with so many expectations while simultaneously treating each other more and more and more flippantly.*

*I decide to shake her out of it, tell her to be real. Remind her of all the things she said and all that we shared because the denial of it all was killing me. I decide against it, what if she doesn't feel the same way and thinks I'm crazy? Suddenly she asks me, "I've been so occupied talking about my life, what's up with you?" The abrupt shift of attention towards me is awkward for both of us. I look into her eyes and hope she understands why. 'It's weird to be back. Feels like the places, this café, the food, the napkins, the smell of sea in the air, they haven't changed a bit, only you have.'*

-Sakshi Singh





## BEST OF ALL SMILES

A terrible, traumatic battle which continued for ages, ended when she breathed her last. To see my deceased Granny on the same bed in which she had cuddled me a long time ago demanded a great deal of courage. The love she shared, the care she had remains very fresh in my thoughts. The memories surrounding her never wanted to leave my company. The images of her smiles and her whispers swirl around in my head. Weeping doesn't help me feel good nor does withholding my tears. My unusual stern face helps me pose my fake-self really well before the public. The reality tends to knock my head very often merely to announce her parting. The one who owned me and my heart has left, forever. The beauty and gracefulness she had owned all her life were still with her. Her lips still smiled. Everything was the same as before except that she didn't breathe. Her eyes were closed and couldn't see me or feel my presence. They were closed forever. All I witnessed was her adorned body, draped in a beautiful green silk saari and neatly combed hair lying motionless before me as a relieved being. The pain that had squeezed life out of her during her last days showed her to the world as a strong woman who battled her odds really well while putting a brave smile permanently on the face which hadn't vanished yet.

Two years and ten months ago, my dear Granny was diagnosed with a deadly disease. The doctors found the presence of cancerous cells in her bones. This bitter news startled the entire family. She developed several complications and became bed-ridden. Her journey as a cancer patient taught many life lessons to each one of us. She was bruised, pricked and hurt in many other ways in the name of treatment. Gradually her bones began losing its functionality. The pain she endured was tremendous. The various doses of painkillers given to her increased day after day and after a while stopped having any effect on her. The troubles she experienced made her desperate to die. Amidst all the arrogance of life on her, she never forgot to smile at anyone who passed by her. The smile that lit her face and our hopes is the one factor that is still alive in my heart. The owner of the best of all smiles breathed her last breath on her seventy-third birthday leaving a vacuum in all our hearts.

The clock had struck only five in the morning. The house was already crowded. People moved in and out. So-called relatives and friends were crying and wailing as though to register their presence. Some people shifting her to the freezer box, some running for white clothes, ranting random things, and so on could be seen. All I could do was sit beside her the entire day with a hope that she may open her eyes. The numbness in her gradually spread over me. I had to feed my brain the fact that my Granny is no more which my heart refused to accept. For the first time in life, I was forced to see and understand death. Hours went by and then we had to travel to the cemetery with my deceased Granny in the ambulance. It was the first time that she travelled in an ambulance. By the end of this longest day in my life, I realized it was time to bid farewell. That farewell killed me inside-out. She was buried with enough honour and condolence.

Getzia Gladsen G.





# The First Touch of Love

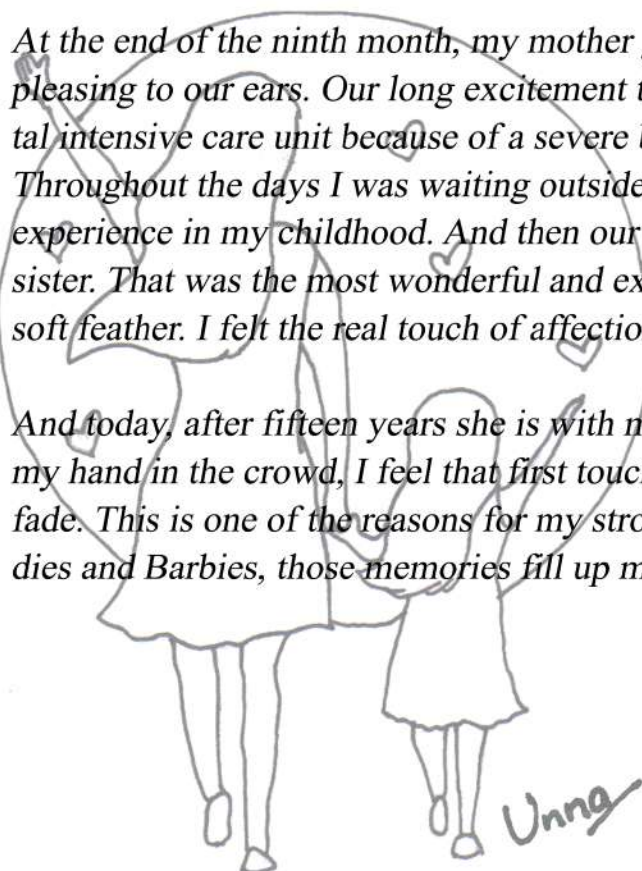
It was a period of immense longing- a hope that crept into the mind of an eight- year old child. She wished to replace her world of teddies and Barbies with a baby sister. I was the only kid of my parents for their first eight years of togetherness. Dolls were my companions. I spoke to them, played with them and even fed them whenever I had my food. This was a much amusing sight for people around me. I remember the tiny hair bands that I made for my dollies. Then the most exciting news came into my ears “You are going to have a baby sister”. Even today, after 15 years, I remember the very day when my mom told me this... My little heart was brimming with happiness. This was the most mesmerizing day of my life for sure because those memories are still fresh in my minds. I spoke to my Barbies about my expecting one.

I was my mother’s only companion when father went out to work. We had a world of our own. I helped her with my tiny soft hands. I would even wake up in the middle of the night, to massage her legs. Those were the days when I was becoming a grown-up girl. I was so eager to check how much my mother’s tummy grew each day, moreover to see my baby’s growth. I spoke to the little life growing in my mom’s belly and frequently kissed on it. I have many a times felt her stamping tiny legs. It was a long nine months. It hampered the mind of this little kid who was waiting outside for her most precious teddy. I was busy along with mom in making those little handmade pretty clothes for our expecting one. By the end of the eighth month, we made three such little frocks. We searched throughout the Holy Bible to find a perfect name for our angel. And we found it, Alpha: “the beginning”. And of course, she was a new beginning for all three of us.

At the end of the ninth month, my mother gave birth to our little angel. But the news was not so pleasing to our ears. Our long excitement took a bitter phase. My baby was shifted into the neonatal intensive care unit because of a severe blood infection. I didn’t even get to see her once. Throughout the days I was waiting outside the ICU with my grandmother. That was a terrifying experience in my childhood. And then our prayers bore fruit. After two weeks, I saw my healthy sister. That was the most wonderful and exciting day of my life. Her little hands fell on me like a soft feather. I felt the real touch of affection. Her first touch was full of love.

And today, after fifteen years she is with me just like that new-born. Each time when she pulls my hand in the crowd, I feel that first touch of love and happiness. Those memories will never fade. This is one of the reasons for my strong affection for her. And each time I see my old teddies and Barbies, those memories fill up my mind.

-Reefa John





## *The Byzantine Omelette*

What happens to the well-oiled machine of society when the workforce decides to 'down tools' one fine day? It will be compelled to come to an abrupt halt. The flow of daily life becomes hindered. The incorrigible inclination to impose such inequitable impediments on social infrastructure is an immediate resort of political parties and unions whenever faced with an adverse situation. The unions and the workers retract their services to society, much like modern-day parents taking away the video game privileges from their wayward children. The profound impact such short suspensions of service has on the economy is one of the major causes for the retardation of the economic advancement of the country. In a country that is developing, constant and ceaseless effort from their workforce is required to gallop to economic security and an enhanced standard of life.

Like love, these strikes or 'bandhs' as we have correctly christened in our local language, invariably comes just at the wrong time. It is quite ironic that the people who are the victims of this vexation, choose to celebrate and rejoice at the onset of such an event. The children take to the street, not to shatter the glasses of shops and vehicles or to holler slogans of injustice and unfair actions, but play cricket in the streets on the auspicious occasion of an unexpected holiday. The vibrant youth of the country settle on a TV show to binge watch and the ones who are advanced in terms of years savor the sweet surprise of a day of leisure. One could argue that this is a proof of the perpetual positivity of the Indian society, but the ugly truth is quite self-evident. We are indifferent. We are not concerned with the multifarious causes of the strike. We have evolved to live with the dissatisfaction, insecurity, and unpredictability. Yet, certain individuals are deeply perturbed by this poppycock of a practice, just like Miss Sophie Chattel in Saki's short story, 'The Byzantine Omelette', who suffers irreparable damage to her dignity and reputation due to the 'downing tools' of her servants during a dinner party hosted by her.

Lives are affected by such strikes. The greater forces of the Universe, unfortunately, do not believe in the customs and practices related to strikes. Therefore, illnesses, accidents and even deaths are bound to happen on a strike day and the bearers of such misfortunes find themselves in the pitiful plight of not being able to avail of the basic amenities. The workers on strike may benefit by forcing the employer to accept their demand but the common man must suffer if a general strike is called for. The common man cannot go on a strike against such injustice done to him by the strike mongers. Does the right to protest and voice one's opinion come at the price of the disruption of daily life? Don't the strike mongers owe reparations to the damages done by them? One could ask a plethora of questions without getting a definitive answer from anyone. It all boils down to the rudimentary question, "when will the next one be?" Sometime when you least expect it, I expect.

-Arjun Anil Bhaskar





# PHOTO GALLERY



Unna




Sketched by  
Unnamalai.



*Stopping minutes  
The best way to relive  
a moment, put it  
within a frame.*

*-Written and captured-  
by,  
Leona Joseph*



A photograph of a person in silhouette jumping over the ocean at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow and a reflection on the water. The person is in mid-air, with their arms outstretched and legs bent.

That crack of the dawn  
That broken sun  
That happy jump  
That smile on your face  
That outstretched arm  
That long gone happy day.

*written and captured by,  
Sahaya Afra Johanna*



*Captured by,  
Geethanjali R*





## ***THE TEAM***

*Jasnoor Kaur - II MA  
Ashish Santhosham - I MA  
Vandana Lohia - I MA  
Nadia Fernandes - I MA  
Sakshi Singh - I MA  
Sreshtha Uniyal - I MA  
Shivani Damle - I MA  
Anandhu S - I MA  
Sathish Kumar H - I MA  
Aarushi Kumaria - I MA  
Kamda Singh Deo - I MA  
Lekshmi Gayathri A - I MA  
Unnamalai K - I MA  
Sahaya Afra Johanna - I MA  
Meshabaker Umdor Syiem - I MA*

