

Allegories



Every step of the way but my heart will know At least I never gave up

And people always look at the art and listen to the artist

No other choice than to listen and obey

No tear shall it let you weep

To quench its thirst of soulful and loving poetry

As mother nature extracts her vengeance,Gays are discriminated, They beg forgiveness for their errors Lesbianis the same, And they allow themselves to be The most hurt of all people But mother nature has a purpose She prepared for people of all colors and all shapes Her wrath and fury erupts Her wrath and fury erupts Her wrath and fury erupts And the people are fated for their sins

जो ईश्वर की गहराइयों को समझ जाए, वह मनुष्य नहीं। जो अपनेकोमल आर्चे ल की छाया में खड़ा नहीं। के बाहर साँस लेले, वह भी नहीं। जो किसी समर्पि तपि न करे, वह पत्नी नहीं। जो संदेव मीठा बोले, वह शुभचिंतक नहीं।

As long as I know who I am, I am free. And she has no escape from her painful reality

it's over shall choose my smile

And the only horror is reality, which I dread

As time went on and to the questions asked, they never wanted an answer.

I don't deny we have differences

When will we see what we were promised a place I like to call home

She is a symbol of beauty of respect strength duty

We take a down memo

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In words, we sow what lies in our hearts

Simply complicated, frightfully beautiful

Like a flash of lightning

That settles into a rosebud.

Editor's Note

'Every poem begins with a lump in the throat.'

Growing up, we often tend to keep our deepest feelings inside. We fear talking about them, we fear to admit them. But writing gives us the opportunity to let it all out on a piece of paper. And Spoken Word allows us to face that piece of paper.

The Spoken Word is a secure platform for the exhibition of our most impalpable, dynamic expressions. It gives poets a safe and friendly space to display their creativity and passion while being their most vulnerable selves. Be it grief or gratitude, love or heartbreak, gender inequality or war - an infinite number of topics have been discussed through this event. The event is not about trying to make your feelings rhyme, or receiving the loudest snapping of fingers, or giving a flawless performance. Instead, it is about expressing your poetry in a way that helps you find your voice.

With the purpose to connect in a time where hope is much needed, the Editorial Board of Shiv Nadar School, Noida organized its 9th edition of the Spoken Word. We were overwhelmed to see over 150 young poets across 15+ schools register for the event. Hence, for the first time ever, we extended the Spoken Word into a two-day event.

Each student poured their heart and soul into the performances. The event was an experience of a lifetime for both the performers, as well as the audience.

As the organizers, we were thrilled to see the event become such a success.

And so after two weeks since the awe-inspiring celebration of poetry, we very proudly present to you - the Allegories, a compilation of all the poems submitted and performed in the Spoken Word.

We hope you enjoy reading through them and join us again next time!

Misha Oberoi & Manya Durga
Editors-in-Chief

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Ahlecon Public School

Oditi

The New Me

This poem aims to shower light on how Lockdown can help us discover the hidden talents, and make the lockdown even appear positive. After all positivity can lead us to win the war against Covid-19 and weak immunity.

I throw a book to my face
Let the breeze touch my skin
The beautiful wet mud fragrance
And peace like in heavens.

It is just the ideal beautiful
morning
And my favorite author's work
To be adored and appreciated
Sits with passion in front of me.

Reading the character's mind
Something strikes just then to
my side
Curiosity is my boss I realize
And a question strikes me
just right

Do I know my self completely?

Am I the person I know since
years sixteen?

Do I have an undiscovered side of
me?

Can I get what my zeal shouts out
to seek?

My boss explains me
That new is to exist
Maybe not known yet
But it thrives to live.

My soul has huge creativity
Is what I realize soon
The adorable work of author
Turns down to be later resumed.

I treasure hunt my hidden talents
And find the emerging being
Which has many faces
Each carved beautifully.

My heart adores it
Hope of better still exists
Let the new me always thrive
And always find new friends in
life.

~Odit,
Ahlcon Public School, Mayur Vihar

Akshat

Untitled

That is what you all did,
Painted me for the world through
your brushes.
Brushes that seemed to tell less truth
and more hues,
Brushes that turned white black with
bleeds from past.
People call you an artist because you
paint agony,
You make art that weakens the piece
and shatters it.
You make it harder to breath and
easier to kill.
You make a whole purchase and
never sign the bill.
Everybody thinks that the subject of
your art is polluted,
And all you have done is painted or
illustrated it,
They don't know how you have
plucked every single leaf off that tree,

They don't know how you have drained
every drop of blood from that carcass,
They don't know how you have a pallet
that knows only black and grey,
They don't know how you kill a lively
subject for your benefit.
You seem to portray yourself as cheery,
But if only people heard what you say
while painting on a canvas.
They think you are very sacred
and pure,
Only if they saw how you abuse art to
fulfil your heartless crave.
Everybody hates me, the carcass
because of you,
Because you always painted me a
villain.
And people always look at the art and
listen to the artist.
Cause art continues to be mum, silent
and belittled.

~Akshat B. Sinha,
Ahlcon Public School, Mayur Vihar

***Amity* International
School**

Yashi

Morpheus

Dream, O silent dreamer
Sing your woes to sleep
Comes and goes; the wind
No tear shall it let you weep

Phantoms fall to pieces
The mind in tranquil bliss
Here come the gentle breezes
Midnight's silent kiss

Eyes gaze afar; beyond what
one can see
Atop the twinkling stars,
beyond the raging sea
Here, on the horizon, lies a
fallen star
Into the passing waves like
pearls devoid of scars

Look into the moonlight that
bathes the bay in tears
No more will the stars cry, no
more will drench the waves

Dream, O silent dreamer;
forego all your fears
Luminescence alights all that
you crave.

~Yashi Sharma,
Amity International School

**Bal Bharati
Public School**

Ankita

The Promise

I made a promise,
Scribbling through the last few pages of my
math notebook,
Watching how thickly inked it has gotten in the
past year,
Embracing the endless rows of childish
signatures at the back,
the wavy and bold letters “M-A-T-H” written on
the crease,
The smudged calculations were surely not done
with ease.

I made a promise,
While zipping and unzipping my backpack for
the 13th time,
After keeping my books and notebooks in every
possible order,
Slowly taking out my half-eaten tiffin box and
three chocolate wrappers.

I made a promise,
Arranging my messy bookshelf, which had
everything apart from “real” books,
The safely kept and not secretly hidden report
cards,
The massive posters of movie stars,
The Macbeth, Othello and, The fault in our stars.

I made a promise,
While hanging that shabby grey attire I was
forced to wear for 6 hours,
Noticing curry stains on the shoulders,
And unfolding a tiny chit from the pocket
having 7 games of noughts and crosses,
Laughing on the naïve stitch of the buttons with
unmatched threads.

I made a promise,
I knew this was going to happen,
It's a steep hill but it will soon flatten,
I am big girl now,
So I'll stop with the Whys and the Hows,
It's a great world out there,
Well, not always great but good, not always
good but fine, not always fine but okay,
It's going to be okay.

I made a promise,
That although I won't have to worry about red
checks across my notebooks,
Although I won't have to carry that heavy
backpack over my shoulders,
And my shelf won't wait for me to get to home,
And I may never get to wear that grey robe,
I will never let go of the memories,
Because I may be growing up,
But I am not growing apart.

~Ankita Verma,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Aleena

The Change

Locked up in my home,
It has already been a year;
What I felt like knew,
Now seems so unfamiliar.

Just a couple of days back,
We were all merry and together;
Laughing out loud at the jokes we used
to crack,
Always gave me immense pleasure.

And then everything turned upside-
down,
Confining us all to a single place;
For once, we couldn't visit our
hometown,
Even going for a walk felt like an
unusual case!

This pandemic did set you and me,
On a roller coaster of emotions;
For the first time, life wasn't a
hunky-dory,
And gradually, we overcame the art
of patience.

~Aleena Banerjee,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Divija

My Heart Desires

It hurts
To see that rosy face
On a small lit screen
Like the sunshine captured
In a photograph.

It hurts
To see that lovely smile
On a flat surface
Like the wavering reflection in a
Numbing mirror.

It hurts
To see those gentle fingers
Yearning to reach me
Like those of chestnut
Withering without water.

My heart desires
To break the barriers.
My feet die hard
To run for you.
My arms crave
To cradle you tight.

My eyes will greet yours
With an enamoured smile;
This deep-rooted desire
Will spring eternally.

~Divija Bansal,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Qurjan

A Way of Life

Pencil, move after thinking
Yes, I know you have little control on you
Yes, I know you have to move according to
writer's choice but
Yes, I believe that you are an obedient object

Don't be sad buddy,
You are there to write and,
I am here to erase the mistakes
We are and we will be used together, always

The writers , poets, novelists, journalists etc
They all use you and me
Because you are removable and
I can erase you and give another chance to
write

Not even a single thing is perfect in this world,
Everyone has made at least one mistake
No one is a perfect body and so get a chance to
erase it and correct it;

“That’s why Pencils have Erasers”

~Gunjan Rastogi,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Harsh

The Conflict Within

My eyes, darker than the sky today, pitch black
My resilience growing thin, a strength it
now lacks.

I still have goals, science's knack,
My heart is elastic and my shell won't crack.

Do I keep trying or do I give up now ?
Do I perform grandly or leave with a bow ?
Where there's a will, there's a way, but how ?
"Just slay 'em and make 'em go wow"

I think I will press my luck,
Get the determination boiling in my cup.
Maybe I'll fail miserably and regret it,
Maybe I'll win and bring home the cup.

Every step of the way but my heart will know,
At least I never gave up.
At least I never gave up.

~Harsh Malik,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Ishani

To All the Mothers

The Day We Met...

I was a small baby yet...

I knew you were waiting to carry me
ahead as the sun set....

When I saw you with my tiny eye...

You were looking at me with a big
smile....

But I didn't know who you were and
why?....

I seemed like your facsimile....

Now I know who you are.....

Mother Mother you are such a lover.....

You make me feel alive even when I don't
feel like...

Through all these years you have been by
my side.....

You have made me feel the love that no
one can describe...

You are like the brightest star in my
darkest night.....

Oh Mother!! I feel your love like the only
sunshine...

Thank you for always being mine!!

And today I stand here in front of you...

Just to say Thank you!..

You have made all the wounds heal....

Epic is what you have made me feel....

For all that you have ever done, for all that
you have ever been,

A great mother and a great teacher but
above all a friend forever...

I'll love you Always and Forever!!!

~Ishani Arora,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Ishika

Gratitude - An Acrostic

Give a word of thanks to all those
who are there,
Respect their presence as they are
the ones who care.

Acquiring the power of gratitude
won't depict you as a weakling,
Thanking them, however, would
fill you with contentment.

Inculcate these words forever in
your mind,
Titillate this emotion in others in
no time.

Using this sentiment might make
someone's day,
Dodging this feeling will make
you pay.

Enjoy your years and be
appreciating.

~Ishika Garg,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Janhavi

Ray of Hope, Beam of Life

A ray of hope, a beam of life;
Uplifts the soul
from the melancholy, in time.

Entwined in darkness are our souls
Pour some love,
Let the happiness unfold.

Bestow them with gifts
Which won't cost,
It is certainly,
the smile they had lost

Through the sorrow and the mysteries untold
There's a path for us to behold.
With a little bit of this and a little bit of that
We always carve, our way back.

For, the ray of hope
is always found.
Even when the darkness
is so profound.

~Janhavi Tandon,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Jasdish

That Weird Kid

He was that weird kid in the school,
who just couldn't bother to sit for a few seconds,
arms flapping, hands clapping, leg spinning,
he was always twirling.
His friends called him a fool,
and he never seemed to pay heed to his teachers'
beckoning.

He was that weird kid at home,
The one who would cry one moment and laugh the
other.
He couldn't seem to understand others' feelings nor
could he seem to express his own,
And his eyes never met with the ones of his known.
Unfathomable was his syndrome,
to him and to any others.

He was that weird kid in the playground,
who seemed under-sensitive to touch and pain.
His eyes followed all movement and his ears twitched
towards noise.
The other kids never talked to him,
he seemed to be caught up in his own world,
plucking leaves from bushes and running around trees.

Yes, he was that weird kid,
weird because others considered him not normal.

Yes, he was teased for being dumb and unresponsive,
but in reality he did not know how to control himself.

People call him "weird", "different" and "not normal",
but they don't realize that all of us are God's children,
and he has made all of us unique.

It may be a syndrome,
it may be a disorder haunting his mind,
he may not understand what you speak,
he may not understand what he reads,
but in the end, love and care is what that autistic child
needs.

~Jasdish Kaur Batth,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Khushi

Oh! What a Year it Was

With a joyous carnival, with which we started
our year
Expecting little fun and waiting for boards to
be done,
Who would've thought, the tables would have
been turned so,
A tiny virus will affect the whole globe.
News channels will flood with numbers,
All looking for hope, amongst all the grim
figures.
Schools and offices fitting in phones,
Everyone being stuck in their homes.
Banging plates and overcoming cooking fears,
All of us trying to get some sort of cheer.
Whole Medical Industries falling into a fix,
Brands like moderna and pfizer counting on
their tricks.
Human Rights and Black Lives Matter,
For the rare times in history, the whole world
gathered for the better.
Spending time with family more than ever,
'cause at last-we're all in this together.

~Khushi Gupta,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Krishna

Youth Power

Just close your eyes and force your
mind,
To think of a world with people so
kind,
There's happiness everywhere and
cheerful faces,
And the world is shining with beautiful
places,
But my eyes opened and something
happened to my world,
Will it only remain a Dream world?

It feels like someone gives water to a
dying flower,
And then i see someone, that is youth
power!
"India was called the golden bird"
will there words for India, be heard
again?
Yes, they will be! because someone is
here for India, to empower!

And that someone I see, that is youth
power!
however Corruption has eaten up
India like an insect,
Is there anyone who has the energy
and power to invert?
From crimes and obstacles, corruption
and violence to cover,
I see someone, and that is youth
power!

Now again close your eyes, and get
involved in the world.
As our problems will soon be solved!
People will be full of happiness rather
than aggression!
Because India is now secured with
happiness with protection,
And I see someone that is, the youth
power, youth power!

~Krishna Soni,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Samridhi

Fly

Fly — not because you want to,
But to prove to those people, who pulled
you down,
Who scratched your wings every time
you were ready for your flight,
And those who caged you in doubt,
That you are worthy of everything.

Fly — not just to measure the expanse
of the pink sky,
But to fly past the insecurities that
weighed you down,
And to fly above those people below.

Fly — even if you have no destination,
No place to call home,
Even if you have to cross millions of
nameless towns,
In the map of your success, alone.

Fly — not to show others how high you
can go,
But to inspire them,
To fly high like you.

Fly — against your fearful notions,
That the sky is home to clouds of
competition,
That the aircraft and helicopters
threaten to,
Rip your wings apart.

Fly — because the world has left you
to rise from the ground,
Because the people laughing at you,
Sought to bury you deep inside.

Fly, my dear, you have been given
wings of courage.

~Samriddhi Bisht,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Supanya

Life In Happy Hues

The season of pink,
After the winter has thrived,
Has finally arrived.

It takes my blues away,
Replaces the winter's grey,
I see life in pink.

Wind brushing my hair,
A touch of dazzling flowers,
No cries of despair.

For I feel hopeful,
As these little joyful things,
Make me feel alive.

Picturesque sunsets,
Palettes of colours in sky,
The best of God's work.

My old stagnant thought
shave begun to drain away,
liberating my mind;

Filling it with joy,
vacant inhabitation
just like birds in the sky.

A 'La Vie En Rose'
Lies hidden in your own
spring.
Quest for serene life.

*[This poem is a collection of
many haiku. Almost every
stanza of this poem is a
haiku i.e. it has the syllable
count of 5-7-5]*

~Sukanya Mukherjee,
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Bluebells

Arinda

True Calling

You may cheat on me once.
You may cheat on me twice.
But you know I am someone,
whom nobody likes.

I am in all truthfulness attempting to
be cheerful about this,
Though most people find themselves
hindered in believing me
No matter my protestations and how
much I resist.

I can be cheerful; I can be sad.
Just don't ask me to be nice,
That's one trait I never had.

Where are my manners?
I should introduce myself properly
but that's not important I guess
Afterall, this is not my story.

Let me tell you a tale about a man
whom I never knew,
But still fell in love because of all the
things he could do.

He would go on long adventures and
dance with the moon,
And study day and night until it was
everything he knew.

He would write letters to
opportunities and knock numerous
doors,
Taking each one of them carefully
And making them his own.

Then there was his friend, who had
no idea what he should do
And spent every day trying to figure
out what he could do.

He lived his life thinking I would
just do it tomorrow
And this is how his opportunities
from broad turned narrow.

When he saw me for the first time,
Well last time as well,
He grieved for more hours and had
a depressed expression
And that's all I can tell.

You know many people whom I
have met on my way,
They said they never got a chance
to express what they wanted to
say.

I have stopped counting the
number of people who say this to
me.
It's like every second soul weeping
at me.

This wound of remorse takes
several years to cure
And it's not easy to forget it
That's for sure.

It's like you think your life is a pen,
With which you write on and on
And it will not harm if you leave
some pages in between,

After all your life is long.
It's when you see me,
You always regret
That you should have filled
those pages
With bright sunsets.

~Arima Gupta,
Bluebells International School

Devi

She Stands Alone

Over the corpse of her fallen soul
Her words thread themselves into
words untold
She stands alone

Considered a curse from the minute
she was born
Crucified for not being as pretty, not
as fair, not as strong
Forever a load, a burden, a mistake
For a boy brings you honour,
And a girl disgrace.

Caught in the web of izzat and
sanskar
She learned to live life as a
marionette
Swapping ink and paper for kitchen
sets
Swaddling her identity under layers
of silk

Pruning and crafting till she's
Sweet as sugar
Pure as milk

Her life was set in stone, rigid and
planned
Grow up and finally give up in marriage
her hand

Scrutinised by the eyes of prospective in-
laws
As they dissected her apart to inspect her
flaws
Downcast eyes peer from the folds
Of a dupatta impeccably tied
A demure smile from thin lips unfolds
Stopped in its tracks for fear of being too
bold

No matter what insult, humiliation or
disgrace,
She gave every last part of her for the
perfect marriage
But her knight in shining armour was the
villain in disguise
Her husband became her jailer and so she
realised
The life she had yearned for, she rejected
and despised

Promises of future happiness crumbled
before her very eyes
She choked on poisonous illusions and
pretty lies
She had played the role perfectly but got
none of the rewards
Now her heart sung of ideals she could
not put into words
Half formed dreams of a world where
she was finally free
Free from the cutting chains of society
A world where she could finally smile as
she pleased
Where a hint of disobedience won't mark
her as diseased
She sought a haven to reclaim the life
that was hers
Where she was the only one with a right
to her years

Centuries have passed but unchanged
lies this tale
The misery of this injustice is yet to be
paled,
The end draws nearer as another life is
snuffed out
Leaving us to wonder
Could things have been better
If we had raised our voices, cared to
shout?

How many more women must you
make believe
That happiness lies in the hands of
whom they marry?
How many more women must
suffer and bleed
Until we slay this archaic
monstrosity?

How many times must I
Scream at hearts of stone,
Before I no longer
Stand alone?

~Devi Sankhla,
Bluebells International School

Hansika

Serendipity of the Ages

The sky and the stars come falling
down,
Dopamine comes rushing in.
The entire world into a puddle comes
melting down –
As music recites its triumphs and
sins.

Putting the world in a state of
oblivion,
Music is the dusk and dawn of each
era.
Each aeon golden and one in a
gazillion,
Making every person forget their
vendetta.

As the sanguine twilight falls upon us
And we lay in our beds, infinite
symphonies
Dash around the room, their aura
beauteous –
Making us fall into the arms of
Morpheus, subliminally.

As David played on for Saul, the
nefarious flitted,
Taken over by the magical, the body
as light as a feather.
Relived from pain, a picturesque
scenery was painted,
Stuck in a gossamer of rhapsody,
amidst beautiful heathers.

Cascading into a cold abyss full of
stones
No more being able to feel, fearful of
that path –
We see a saviour carrying a trident
of musical notes,
Ready to make us delve deep and
rouse from this trance.

The tale of Hazel and Augustus
doesn't ricochet
Embedded in a matrix, its ineffable
tragedy.
Nevertheless, harmonies swing by in
the nearby chalet
Narrating the saga, portraying the
lucid reality.
The destitute, the Wanderlusters, the
elite,
All pray to Apollo, god of music and
art.

Together they hum a powerful
symphony
And gaze at the dawn, listening to the
blissful lark.

Music is not ephemeral, rather
ethereal
Which holds our hand tight.
And walks us to epiphany, to reveal
An entire world inside.

~Hansika Bhargava,
Bluebells International School

Ritisha

Why?

Why do you love me so much?
When can't I seem to even like
myself?

Why do you like me so much?
When I can't look at myself without
holding a grudge.

Why do you look up to me?
When I fail to stand tall and am
unbuckled by my knees.

Why do you care for me?
When I can't give a second glimpse to
my reflection amidst the debris.

Why do you believe in me?
When I can't seem to rise above self-
doubt and its decree.

Why do you want to help me?
When all I want is to hide and flee.

Why do you think the old me can
come back?
When I've lost and fallen in between
the cracks.

All it took was one snide remark,
Just one, to leave a scar as if it
is a birthmark.
I felt incredulity, slowly morphed
into doubt and confusion,
And my insecurity reached a stage
where I knew it wasn't just
an illusion.
I let the small voices in my head
take charge,
And the thoughts of not being good
enough all barged.
They crammed into all the tiny
crooks and corners,
And all traces of my old confident self
were a goner.

And now,
The voice of self-doubt speaks louder
than my own.
It renders me speechless and makes
me rethink my every move.

It tells me to shut up, even when I
want nothing more than to speak,
The voice renders me silent, and I can
do nothing but squeak.

It tells me that one more opinion
won't change the world,
No matter how much I want to
be heard.

This voice, oh this voice gets in the
way of the greatest of things,
When I am trying to soar high, it
comes in and clips my wings.
I do not know why I listened to
this voice,
So frail and tiny, yet I see
no other choice,
No other choice than to
listen and obey,
Give in and submit, until you become
its prey.
And yet, you love me so much.
I am under a deep spell and you don't
let all this diffidence touch.

You don't let the spell of diffidence
enchant you-
You don't run but still, these voices
pass through.

They pass through, not even
acknowledging you.
And you stand there feeling all good
and new.

So I ask you,
Why oh why do you love me so much?
Have you seen nothing watching me
permanently mislay?
I have lost myself!
And yet you stand there smiling at me,
as bright as the dawn of a new day.
I can't fathom this. Is there something
I have misjudged?
All I ask is for the voices to subside
and for you to teach me how to love
myself so much.

~Ritisha Kapoor,
Bluebells International School

Shourya

Dear Mr. Chrysanthemum

Mr. Chrysanthemum on top of my
coffin, had a conversation with me
last night...

Miserable was my sight... but even
worse, was my plight!

I dwell into the past that cannot
be undone

The terror and the screams
underneath the bright sun

All this happened when this very
society decided to do something
beyond their sanity.

Who's gonna fight for this? All in the
name of humanity?

Torn clothes, bleeding nose, short
dress... or probably... she's a wreck!

The agony so real, the fear so deep.

I scream! I shake! I fight!

They laugh! They enjoy! Because for
them! It is right!

Hopeless in the puddle of their shame
As they walk away smiling,
Bathed in my tears, satisfied by
my pain.

I've sold my smile today,
To this rapacious beast so wild!
To the one who cut me deep
To the one who made me weep.

Sometimes late at night... i simply
couldn't fall asleep
Thinking about how my innocence is
no longer mine to keep

What someone can only imagine in
their nightmare
Is my gruesome reality that cannot be
repaired.

And every night I lie awake,
Wondering how much I can take.

The pain never decreases... no one
little bit.
It just keeps deepening... like a
bottomless pit.

They are everywhere I go
around every corner i turn.
The sight of their face... just
makes my skin burn.

I hate the way they've hurt me
With every bruise they've left
Horrors of that night have
buried with me...
Because now...my dear
chrysanthemum for forever...
I've slept.

~Shourya Shrivastava,
Bluebells International School

Trisha

Storm is in the Heart

As years go day by day,
We've travelled along life's highway.
We've been through ups and downs.
And sometimes just circling round
and round.
You know I love you dearly,
But I cause you so much pain.

Still each time you stand beside me
Guiding me to the perfect lane.
You came into my life unexpectedly
And everything turned out to be well
I thank you for being there
Even when the situations were hell.

Sometimes I felt I wasn't worthy
I've made mistakes when I was topsy
turvy.
But love and hope were something
circling around,
Even when I was hopeless, flat on the
ground.
Blessed I am, I know this to be true
It is a complete feeling, I never knew.

You give me strength and hold me close
It's you whom I thank the most.
All bridges have now been crossed,
This bond is forever lost.
It hurts me too as much as it does to you
I cry when no one's around
And scream without a sound.

You think I'm doing well,
Come and see as I enter my own hell.
Time hasn't healed the pain overall
Or quieted my fears
So every night, alone in bed
I shed those silent tears.

I guess now you know
Why I never held you tight;
Coz' why hold onto someone, you know
You're going to let go, right?

~Trisha Juneja,
Bluebells International School

DPS GBN

Aanya

Ethereal Peace

Pleasant weather it is,
The air is fresh,
And my heart is calm,
My mind, full of thoughts.

The little plant near a tree
Has grown too well.
People are looking for peace,
While I sit near the tree,
Staring at a honeycomb,
Looking for Queen Bee!

I hope this lasts for two more
days.
I am not asking much.
I know, this sky is very beautiful,
This heart- too calm.

Oh yes, I believe in peace.
Calmness makes me happy too!
But it has always been difficult,
To long for things which are
tough
To hold on to.

~Aanya Aggarwal
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Aldina

It is what we Welcome that Stays

When darkness is seizing as you sit
in your chamber,
Draw the curtains aside my friend,
and let the sunbeams enter.
Hail the light to shine with the
jolly rays,
And you'll realize that it is what we
welcome that stays.

When you are lying on the couch in
the ecstatic house of thoughts,
And then at your door a doomsayer
is brought,
Shut the gate on him my friend even
though it's not as easy as one says,
For it is what we welcome that
stays.

Today you may feel that to meet the
world yonder, you aren't free.
But my friend, there is no world 'out
there' it's all inside of thee.
So greet the thoughts of fullness in
the hollow days,
And you'll realize that it is what we
welcome that stays.

The cosmos is not created, we create
it with our minds,
And our mind's a collection of
thoughts depending on the kind.
So choose carefully what you let in
as you walk through the many ways,
For it is what we welcome that
stays.

-

~Alaina Goel
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Anyaman

The Way Things are Meant to Be

A thought lingers around my head,
Refusing to answer me,
Never to be found again,
But also refuses to leave easily,
To allow me to be.

I'll never tell myself,
For somethings are meant to be
The way we see them already.

They tell me, I have changed,
That I am not the same man
I used to be yesterday.
I certainly do want to change back
Into the childlike mind
I drove away,
But now wish to possess again.
The world isn't seen,
The same way it used to be.
For now,
I have looked beyond the shadows.
The shadows, which once
I was forbidden to even gaze.

I wish those thoughts
Strike me again.
Or is this the way things are meant
to be?
Knee-deep in my own thoughts,
Who now refuse to answer me.
Maybe...
Because that's the way things are
meant to be.

~Aryaman Singh
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Devika

Taste The Rainbow

Oh, I wish I could taste the
rainbow, I wonder what flavor it
would be?

If I could, nothing would stop
me, I would stuff my face with it
in glee.

I wonder how violet would taste,
maybe a little sour,
But I am sure any taste it would
be, my happiness will
overpower.

I wonder how indigo will taste,
maybe a little bitter,
I think it would be the healthy
one as all the foods that aren't
tasty make us fitter.

I wonder how blue would taste,
maybe like cotton candy,
Whenever my sweet tooth would
wake, it could come in handy.

I wonder how green would taste,
maybe a bit leafy,
This might be a healthy one too, so
I could eat it freely.

I wonder how yellow would taste,
maybe a bit sugary and light,
But I am sure that it would make
my day brighter with just one bite.

I wonder how orange would taste,
maybe a little tangy like tart,
This might be the one which I
would never stop eating if you let
me start.

I wonder how red would taste, it
may have a hint of a spice,
I would love to have one or two of
its slice.

This is what I think a rainbow
would taste like, it's just how I
feel,
But what I can say undoubtedly is
that the rainbow would make
quite a nice meal!

~Devvika Shukla
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Ishita

Dear Emotions, I am Breaking Up with You

Never have I ever been
In an actual relationship,
Let alone in a messy one.
But with you,

Like faces of humans,
You've got components of you.
But no I don't treat them
All the same as everyone.

So I stand here today,
Giving you all the reasons
To reason with, and letting
Me be unshackled.

Dear Happiness,
Oh hon, you're the most
comforting,
But why can't you be
constant?
Why can't you show up at the
right time,
And disappear at the wrong
time?

Dear Sadness,
I don't resent you because
you give
Me isolation when I need it
the most, but I
Don't want you to hog over
me all the time,
'Cause your perpetual
existence is a source to my
perpetual misery.
Dear Fear,
No you aren't the worst,
You're the good in disguise.
But why exist only in
darkness?
Why show up unannounced?

Dear Anger,
I love you the most.
Your invisible power is my
potency.
However, I'm jaded of you
being in my head,
My thoughts, my speech
all the time.

Dear Emotions, I am done
having
To deal with all of you at the
same,
Unexpected time, I am done
handling
All of you at once.

So, I break up with you all
that
Knocked me down all at
once.
But mostly, I am patching up
with
All of you one by one.

~Ishita Sandle
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Kaashvi

This Too Shall Pass

I look down outside the window pane,
At the bare, empty lane,
Which once used to be bustling,
With laughter of children playing
merrily,
But now it's only leaves that are
rustling.

The headlines of the national
newspaper,
Their letters encaptioned in bold,
Read, "Covid-19 a mass killer",
"Hospital beds rarer than diamonds,
oxygen more precious than gold."
Checking the WhatsApp groups
Loaded with pleas of people seeking
beds, oxygen and medicines,
For a loved one gasping for breath,
Struggling between life and death.

Then there's the black marketeer,
I wonder, "How can someone be so
inhumane as him on this blue sphere?"

The thought of playing with friends
in school,
Though the chances now are miniscule,
Seems like a sweet memory,
As today, even being safe at home is a
big luxury.

With all this news and thoughts
Comes a load of anxiety, fear
and despair,
Which ties me up in knots.
Not a sign of hope in the air,
And amidst all, one question arises-
"When will this end?"
Then, My mother caressed me and told,
"Who knew it was coming?
It was never foretold,
Though the darkness of this time
is blinding,
Always remember the saying, 'every
cloud has a silver lining'."

The things to be carried from this time
Are nothing but the lessons learnt,
It's shocking to see how the
tables turned.
What humans couldn't preach to each
other in a thousand years,

The silent nature did it with its
thunderous roar.
It taught us,
How our health is prime,
Greater than any dime.
It bound us all together,
Not physically but in our prayer.
People came together and put in all
their efforts,
To save someone, be it whoever.
People found time,
Out of their otherwise busy lives,
To check with their loved ones if they
are fine
Be it their parents, children or wives.
Through adapting to the new ways of
staying connected,
Using technology, stay together but
protected.
When the lockdown came,
The boredom of the social distancing
and quarantine,
All felt the same,
But we never did realise,
Animals feel the same in a cage,
Whatever be their size.
Stop being a mourning dove,
Rather feel fortunate to be
Amongst the people you love,
In the safest place of all-
Our HOME.

In these tough times,
Support and help each other,
Be the ray of hope for one
another,
For our strength lies in our unity,
To understand that, this is the best
opportunity.
Think of a half-full glass,
As 'This too shall pass'.

~Kaashvi Das
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Kritika

Who Are You

The sunlight creeps in,
In the dimly lit room,
And makes its way
To fall on her face.

Wrapped in a pashmina shawl,
She doesn't look like
The majestic tigress she used to be,
But a child tucked into bed.

Her unblinking eyes,
Search for something familiar,
But she can't see her creation,
Standing right in front of her.

She tries to fall asleep,
But the rocking chair
Underneath her
Creaks of old age.

The smell of home-made achar
Momentarily eludes me,
And I take a dive
Into the deep, hidden memories
Of life's innocence.

I am sitting in the verandah
And she's rubbing jasmine oil in
my roots,
And I smile
Looking at those long, articulated
fingers,
Well working as a weaver's.

She's singing in the garden,
And all the birds join her,
Probably to taunt me,
That you can never sing like us.

I make my first tea,
And she praises it like
It's nothing she's ever tasted.
But indeed, she hasn't,
Because salt and sugar can't taste
the same.

Something pulls me back to
reality and I realize,
It's her voice,
Barely a whisper.
She says something
Which screams in my soul
even today.

~Kritika Gupta,
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Mansi

Behind Closed Doors

Behind closed doors, what
do you see?
The budding rose she thought she
would be.
The rose needs water,
So she was given.
But was it really poison?
All was forgiven.
One petal blooms, at the sight of
light.
Soon it was plucked,
What can be done?
It was just a child.
Another one blooms,
admiring the sky.
But the sky carries storms,
And the storms carry lies.
The leaves grow,
But with them grow thorns.
Sharp and fierce, they'd
protect her,
Or so she thought.

The red of the rose flows down
the stem,
As the thorns turn inwards.
Oh how wrong she was,
Shouldn't have trusted them.
Behind closed doors now, what
do you see?
A withered red,
laying in its own red silently.

~Mansi Rai
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Wahya
Why?

Why have we divided ourselves
Into different castes and creed?
Why have we enveloped ourselves
In a thick blanket of greed?

Why have we built around us,
A wall of envy and scorn?
Why have human relations and love,
Been brutally wounded and torn?

To have a lavish life and worldly
pleasures,
We go to every extent.
No wonder our lives are full of
nothing
But sorrow and repent.

Why has ego and fury
Shaped who we are?
Why has this become the reason
Of incessant rivalry and war?

What has happened to humanity?
The mighty religion of all time,
Why are we now opposing this,
And committing this heinous crime?

Have we all forgotten the fact,
That we are God's ultimate
creation?
It's time to leave everything else
behind,
And work towards self-
realization.
Anger, greed, envy, spite,
What good lies in this?
Humanity after all is,
The key to eternal bliss...

-Namyia Lakhanpal
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Niya

What Defines You

You are not your age,
Or the size of your clothes.
You are not a weight,
Or the colour of your hair.
You are not your name,
Or the dimples on your cheeks.
You are the books that you read,
And the words that you speak.
You are your croaky voice of
the dawn,
And the smile that you hide.
You are the innocence of your
laughter,
And every tear that you
have cried.
You are the songs that you sing
out loud,
When you know that no one is
around.
You are the places you have
been to,
And the one you call home.

You are the things that you
believe in,
And the ones you do when you
are alone.
You are made of so much
beauty,
But, it seems that you forgot,
When you decided that,
You were defined by all the
things that you are not.

~Niya Bansal
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Pragati

Carried Away

Something tells me
The night is still young.
These streets are
Beyond my wildest dreams,
Yet to come to life.
And these lights won't go out,
Until I'm off my feet,
Or on my knees.

This template comes with
A new car smell,
Bringing second thoughts
a tad too early,
A tad too late.
And before I know it,
I'm out of time,
Past my prime.

Rain after rain I turn
A shade too blue,
A shade too you,
The shade that fireworks
Shooting off in prisms make.
That shade's for you.

There are flags waving,
And flags burning.
Last night's cereal with
12 shots of caffeine,
To make a storm bound world
Spin off its axis.

There are gaps to mind,
Quantum leaps to make,
If I don't figure out soon,
What to make of all this,
I might just get carried away,
For better or for worse.

Yet something tells me
these lights won't go out.
These streets are
Beyond my wildest dreams.
And we're here at the karaoke bar,
To sing last decade's indie hits,
Late into the night.

~Pragati Tiwari
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Parth

One Day I Slipped

Found myself staring,
Where did I get myself?
In the abyss of hating,
Desperately needed help.

Found no ropes, no hands
To pull; to pull me out
Of my misery dull.
So, I fell down, fell down.

Perhaps a few words,
Or a hug would have done.
Or maybe I needed
Something else; I don't know.

But nobody dared to look down,
Nobody came for me.
So, I fell down, fell down.
Into oblivion.

~Parth Varshney
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Sadawi

More Dreamy Prompt

Take me for a long drive with slow music and chocolate.

Let's lay in the grass, and watch the stars.

Let's go to the weirdest of places, and know things we shouldn't know.

And at last, take pictures together, so when we see them, we relive it.

Let's go on a study date, and forget about studies.

Let's find a shooting star, and wish together upon it.

Let's add some fairy lights, and make the place aesthetic.

Let's go out in the rain.

Let's get wet.

Let's dance in the water for hours without realising the time.

Let's choose a movie and call for popcorn and drinks.

Let's have a video call tonight,
where we laugh and find it
difficult to call it a night.
Let's re-read our favourite book
and cry over it again.

Let's be us,
Let's be humans,
Let's have fun!

~Saanvi Gupta
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Tanistha

Dreams Lead On

After a long day when my head
hits the pillow,
I enter a world of my own,
Leaving behind the world of
the grown,
Revisiting the dream that
gives me hope.

We all have that one strong desire,
For which we work vigorously,
So that it can become a reality,
And are not afraid to aim higher.

Many a times when I am blue,
And unable to find a way,
My will doesn't let me stray,
And finds a resolve on what to do.

I am sure many feel the same,
And have their personal list of
wants,
Which they will plan to get at all
costs,
Whether it's money, power,
love or fame.

Few want to set out to see the
grandeur of the world
And unravel its mysteries.
Others want a simple life without
worries,
Enjoying time with loved ones in a
rest well earned.
It's my sole reason to get out of my
bed
And greet the day with a smile.
Even though I know it's going to
take a while,
I am looking forward to the
journey that lies ahead.

Even with this pandemic at large,
And nothing seems to go right,
I believe that our ambition will
help us fight,
Like it never lets anything else take
charge.

~Tanistha Talapatra,
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

Lotus Valley
International School

Avika

Schizophrenia

Empty spaces make that noise,
People say that my mind is void,
But my mirror, it talks to me,
Glimpses of my past are all I see.

'fore the mirror, I often question
myself,
Are all these just hallucinations to
thysel?

Scrutinizing my sanguinary wounds,
Which are the rewards with which
my flesh resounds,
I feel at ease,
My inner demons have unleashed.

My shell has crumbled,
My lucidity has withered;
Agony flows through my veins,
And all that remains,
is an exanimate mortal.

The nights are what I dread the
most,
Feeling myself unknowingly lose-
into the dark nightmares which
haunt me foremost.

It feels like I am in a parallel
universe,
A pair of green eyes become
omnipresent,
Overpowering my soul with their
quintessence.

Then I descend
from a hill whose end is inexplicable
to comprehend.
I sense my life slipping away,
'Into the unknown', as they say.

Frightened cries are what
welcome me,
As the sun shines with all the
warmth there can ever be,
And then my contemporaries engulf
me as I fathom that-
In this world, I am alienated;
And the only horror is reality, which
I dread.

Avika Kapoor,
Lotus Valley International School

Ankita

Just Apathy

"Hi": just a single two-lettered word
practically being availed by the entire world.
Child's play for you to say, yet not the case
for me.

Maybe I am not that friendly.
And what do you do? -label it as apathy.

There are shadows you abandon wherever
you step,
Magically creating friends with a flick
of a finger.
Where so, my intellect becomes paradoxical
to intercept,
ditching me with no one to linger.

Though there isn't much complexity in
what I quote,
You can't feel me, for we aren't in the
same boat.
While I struggle to find a remedy
What do you do? -label it as apathy.

In these occurings, you expect me to
keep lucid?

Apologies, but it's impossible.
Since diplomacy isn't a part of me,
I won't mind you considering me an
utter nuisance.

I work hard and stress,
While you party around.
Still, you envy my success,
Tag it as if it was luck I had found
But do I go backbiting you?
Or weep to seek solace?
For its brutally true,
that it's been long I have lost this race.

It's not my fault if I can't cry or fake
laugh,
or give one false sympathy, or not
console enough.
You demonise me even though I am
not wrong.
When all I ask for is room to breathe,
What do you do? -label it as apathy.

When you get hurt, it hurts me the most.
When you have left astray, I wait at
the coast.
I loiter backstage while you go on with
your performance;
But when you say that I don't care, it
hurts, to be honest.

Yet I remain muted when cheated on,
Neither shout nor scream.
Portray as if I don't care,
Well, that's what to the world, it seems.

Does it really express that I
am not wounded
by the sudden thunder you send my
way?
Or does it suggest that I really dread
being deceived once again.
I conceal my emotions in the face
of betrayal;
While you fantasise about me being all
healthy and hale.
What you see is me, all bold and cold
When the truth remains untold,
And all I desire is just for an arm to hold.

Here you are, left with nothing to say,
So there we go all again
Throughout, the story remains the same
Alive with the least of courtesy
You label all this as just 'apathy'.

~Ankita Narang,
Lotus Valley International School

Areebah

Cage

“Please let me free”. There was a scream,
The rage behind the teary eyes could
clearly be seen.

First, they made a hype,
Hashtags trending all over sites.
There were a couple marches and
protests,
But by next week, everything was at rest.

Who was to be held accountable?
Instead, who is giving the test?

That’s when the reality was laid in front
of me, waiting to be unwrapped;
A true history ready to be written;
without any blanks or gaps.

Uncovering the dirty secrets was my
task,
To show everybody’s true face behind
masks.

“If they do, all they get in is trouble.
They all are naive”, they said;
As they turn off the light.
I knew in front of me was a dark
night,
Each truth unravelled, sending
shivers down my spine.

Slowly but surely did I realise;
Everyone is stuck in a cage.
Each- in one of a different kind;
Finding the truth was just an attempt
to break mine.

Then they said again, “Stay in the
cage! The monsters will get behind!”
Not realising that they were the
monsters we needed to fright.

Now here’s the irony.
I try to be a voice that is free,
But my lips are numb,
And it’s just the pen that speaks.

~Areebah Chaudhary,
Lotus Valley International School

Akshat

Rakhtbeej Rampage

The Nano giant, invisible to eyes;
Ruthless devil who loves the cries.
Curly hair and spiky crown,
Round fat body with a fearful frown.
Every drop of it is like a seed,
Drop him, and spread is all that he needs.
The boon he earned, now embezzled it,
He slaughters at large, and we're helpless albeit,
He cannot be stifled, by any weapon or magic,
Though his might can wipe humanity, this is true
yet tragic.
He can multiply to millions in seconds,
Man left puzzled on which force to be beckoned.

'Rakhtbeej-the devil's Gobstopper' is on a killer
fray
Humans are left helpless; now, we can only pray.
Oh! mighty Lord, the world is crying out with a
sigh,
"Your boon to the fiend" didn't help any, laws of
nature it surely did defy
Bodies are falling like rootless trees,
Houses shattered; this massacre, if only we could
seize.
Innocent souls seek your shelter, please descend
to earth
just one ray of hope; we still deserve a new Birth.

Goddess Durga rises to Slay the Devil;
Cradling humanity in her arms where none dare
meddle.
Elixir of life lies in practising hand sanitisation
Putting taboo to socialising and focusing on
isolation
"Rakhtbeej" we carry within needs to be veiled so
that it does not proliferate;
Breaking the chain, Yes! that's how we stop it
from catching the next bait

Divinity in a nurse's disguise took the devil by
surprise.
Her inoculation needle bought down on knees an
enemy so regal;
Legends till eternity, laurels of this act of bravery
adorn,
Bit by bit with patience, the Devil's Gobstopper
could finally be won

Brotherhood and harmony lessons learnt we
treasure high
Once decided, faith can move mountains that
touch the sky
As like the wheel of time, it circles from hell to
heaven,
We're one world, one family; together will win
them all, come One, or come a hundred and
eleven.

~Akshat Gupta,
Lotus Valley International School

Anvii

Spirit

Where did your spirit go?
I remember it in the way you smiled,
you laughed,
you sang so dearly.
How does it fade so instantly-
between a couple of breaths?
I refuse to believe your presence is no
more.

Only yesterday I heard you speak,
and laugh,
and sing
until you lay on the floor gasping for
air,
dead eyes staring into the ceiling.
Was it some higher calling?
Dead hands could do no more.
Were you tired of our realm, wished to
stay no more?

I know, you still fought, I know, I know,
but questions plague the child
within and
rips up my soul to demand answers.
So, tell us, where did your spirit go?
How do we find it?
Is it still somewhere in your shriveled
body

Whose daunting imagery plays in my mind?
Is it in the same darkness you taught me to
be unafraid of?
The light you taught my heart to embrace?

Questions plague us,
but we will be brave, for we are your
children.
We will find a way to meet you
even if He wouldn't point to where you
are...
across this map that spans metres on
metres on metres
as if my pink throat from its core
was torn
and flattened
and stretched to infinity.

Questions plague us,
but we will be resilient, for we are your
children.
We will search for you in the fabric of space
and time.
Voyages never bore us.
So, wait for us.
We cannot wait to see your smile.

~Anvii Mishra,
Lotus Valley International School

Amrita

The Unfortunate Burden of 'S'

She is a mother, a sister, a worker, a daughter.
Her soul is caged within the boundaries of slaughter.
Her beautiful soul, so horrifyingly maimed;
Countless selfless efforts, constantly unnamed.

She is no different from the men of the world,
for she bears the same heart, the same soul with
struggle swirled.
But perhaps the 's' has corrupted their minds;
She is refused the money, the work, the respect and is
confined.

Great is the God, great is the Goddess,
Worshipped, both, for their remarkable prowess.
Blessed us with the beautiful gift of life,
Not just a man and woman, to be precise.

Doing household chores is looking after the family;
So why only her? It should come to him too,
naturally.
Her dreams should not be restricted to this;
she also has desires just like his.

She can be anything she wants.
You are no one to permit her the grants.
A job doesn't differentiate; it just needs the skill,
so why the pay difference when both fit the bill.

God helps those in need,
Keeping in mind only their deed,
Irrespective of whether 'he' or 'she',
that is how He wants the world to be.

You are blessed with a mind and two eyes,
so see clearly and be wise.
She is not weak or undeserving, as thought,
She has been in battles he hasn't fought.

Give her wings, let her fly,
Let the world rise to new highs,
Not just men or women, humans will be wise,
Shoulder-to-shoulder humanity will rise.

From the highest of mountain peaks to the lowest
of ocean beds,
From a rickshaw driver to chairing a meeting
she dreads,
she has flown to space, she has conquered all,
with a mighty will and a heart caring for all.

Go try on; it'll bring a smile,
A baby boy or girl, both equally worthwhile,
When bred the same way, they will surely brim,
learning 'it's greater to love humans than to stick
to a whim'.

She is a symbol of power; of beauty,
Of respect, strength, and duty,
Not of weakness or vulnerability,
She is brimmed with capability.

So stop feeding on the poison!
It's the 21st century; look beyond the horizon!
She should be given a fair chance, just as he,
to money, to power, to fame, to dignity, or simply, to
be.

~Amrita Kaur Bedi,
Lotus Valley International School

Dhruvi

Change

It is crazy how quickly time
can change,
One minute everything is normal, and
the other, it's all strange.
Roads went from heavy traffic to
completely empty,
Malls and theatres went from full-
house to no entry.

Earlier, I didn't even know what a
pandemic meant,
Until now, when it became our life's
present.
But this, somehow, changed the way
people looked at life before.
We started valuing what we had
(instead of what we didn't) more.

Friends were missed, families got
closer,
Only these relations could keep us
together till all this is over.

One thing that we didn't realize was
how this change was actually for good,
After all, this time wasn't that bad; we
just misunderstood!

~Dhruvi Saraiya,
Lotus Valley International School

Dhadni

The 'Art' of Giving

When the sun gives you a scorching look,
A figure walking behind you comes to light.
A speechless companion, floating in seas of
sunshine,
Who walks by your side till it is night.

Oh! When you're vulnerable to the wrath of the sun,
A haven you shall find in the tree's abode
The old crown on its head, defending you;
While across the sky's battlefield, the sun strode.

When the withered leaves of a flower, like you,
Yearn for the drizzle of the misty rain;
A silver-lined cloud, gloomy it may seem,
Brings refreshing showers, yet again.

When the dead embers of your burning desires,
Sink to the bottom of your heart,
A brave and graceful fire strengthens you
To rise and shine for a novel start.

In the dark monotony of your unheard voice,
A sweet and cheerful song it sings.
An uncaged bird, calling out to everyone,
To fly and find happiness in everything.

On a solemn and silent night of despair,
An untouched star shines bright!
Giving you direction, giving you hope
To realize your dream under its eternal light.

Oh, what joy it is to see a spectrum of colours!
A sky, tinted with a prismatic dye;
Only could it have been more delightful,
If the nimbus clouds did not cry.

For when you wish to channel your sorrows,
Or wash your pains away,
The sea is vast enough to find,
Your lost self led astray.

When nature in all its eternal beauty,
Is benevolent and so forgiving;
What do you wish to take and treasure,
When life is all about giving?

What's the point of idealizing wealth?
When all you need to 'earn' is a smile,
Colouring life with the hues of empathy,
Is the act that makes it worthwhile.

Opening doors to help someone,
Is the true way of living,
Paint a soul with a shade of love,
That is the 'art' of giving...

~Dhaani Sood
Lotus Valley International School

Kriti

Presenting you, a world from our point of view

Here's a question to all the toxic people
I knew,
have you ever tried to see the world
from our point of view?
sexism, harassment,
violence, embarrassment
and all the things patriarchy has put us
through?
oh! yes, yes, you're absolutely right
I'm here only to exaggerate my plight
and cry about my non-existing rights
I'll probably just blabber about
the infamous struggles
of women around,
while you watch me
with your face so frowned.
ugh! who cares about the victims of
domestic violence in the villages!?
you all have been putting us down
for so many ages!
okay, now I have to ask you,
what about the underage mothers and
the early wives?
oh, I forgot, you don't give a damn
about women's ruined lives.
also, you know what?

so many girls have been complaining about
verbal teasing and catcalls

but,

of course,

you'll find a way to prove these accusations,
also false.

Hashtag MeToo.

Hashtag MeToo mainly talks about
casting couches and women being raped
but instead,

we get buried with criticism while rapists
silently escape.

But that's not an issue!

The big problem is, who on earth will marry
an impure bride?

the rapist is out, guilt-free and proud
while we are robbed of our pride.

so now, we will have to be with the first man
who agrees to marry

after all, the thought of an unmarried woman
is shit scary.

so after centuries and centuries of us
struggling, still;

maybe, one day we will have an equal pay
and an equal say.

maybe, one day, we will live our lives our own
damn way

but till then,

support, encourage and love

the strong women around you

and start looking at the world

from our point of view.

~Kriti Nagpal,

Lotus Valley International School

Kritika

The 'State' Residence

In that house with the pretty door,
I heard that their family is torn.
They fight day and night;
One of them even wants to leave home.

They scorn at each other-
Run crying out the door;
But when they return,
There's always somebody holding open
the gate;
Putting up their best poker face,
Putting on empty glassy eyes;
The start of any public fight.

Their talks;
Their manners,
Their smiles;
The way they say hi
For people so similar,
For people so close,
Why they hate each other is a mystery
of its own.

Whispers of a scandal,
A dark age,
Mistakes by their old,
Mistakes they don't want to be told,

But the young are persistent, you see,
They refuse to let it go.

All have different habits too.
When the sky lightens,
The dew settles down.
One bows his head,
One takes a knee,
One rings a bell,
One meditates for peace.

They pray with closed eyes,
They pray for the same things;
Just in different languages, they
speak.

They fight for power,
Fight for their own,
Fight for a place-
A seat,
In the famed halls of the decree,
They fight for control.

The neighbours don't mind,
Unless the voices reach their home,
Unless the sound is a screech too loud
to ignore.
They then do press their ears against
the door,
Check-up on them,

Knock the door;
Could be that they care,
Could be that they just have to,
Could be that they want to be the hero.

I heard that in that house with the
pretty door,
They don't like each other.
It's not always spring.
They withstand the winters;
The boiling heat;
They stand apart,
They stand for different things,
There is not nearly enough that binds
them,
But why make a list when you have
inspired hearts,
And have
A pretty door.

~Kritika Singh,
Lotus Valley International School

Maddhavi

Little Things

She wakes up every day, tries to find
motivation.

In search of an adventure, a journey,
a passion,
Drinks those two cups of coffee
to give her enthusiasm.

Goes to her same old job
Sits on the same old desk
Stares at the same old laptop
As the same old day goes by.

Finally, the clock hits eight,
And it's time to go.
Packs up her stuff,
And hits the road.

Takes out her keys,
Opens up her front door,
Only to see - 'Pay rent' on the floor.
Oh well, no shopping this month
too...

Binges on a movie n Chinese,
Just to lighten her mood.
Scrolls through the Insta posts,
Falls asleep as she broods,

The sun rises; it's a 'brand new' day again.
She gets up just to follow that routine,
Hoping to find her light,
Searching for that beam.

Suddenly those cups of coffee,
Seem tastier than yesterday.
Was that cinnamon she tasted on her buds?
Or was it the creamer she added today?
Across her desk, from where she's working,
A butterfly rests on her window.
Stopping to admire its fluttering wings,
Brings a smile to her face.

The phone vibrates.
Finally, the salary slip!
Pays off her dues,
Even buys herself that new scarf!

She got into her car.
Suddenly the radio started -FM 93.0 - her
favourite song
Screaming the lyrics, vibing to the music,
Today, the daily ride didn't seem boring
anymore.

She starts enjoying the everyday;
Glee in the ennui.
Life's not always a roller coaster in sway,
It's the little things we recall one day.

~Maanavi Bansal,
Lotus Valley International School

Medhansh

Oh, deadly Devil!

Nature was stunning; we probably didn't
appreciate,
Who knew last year that soon we will have to
recreate?
Freedom was free, but probably taken for
granted,
Who knew last year, oxygen would be so
demanded?

Oh, deadly Devil, you suddenly landed!

Many people ranted,
Families became stranded as you expanded.
We really should have planted-
A few trees, before you added
Yourself to this world;
-but,

Oh, deadly Devil, you had already landed!

Freedom got caged,
People were full of rage.
Oxygen was deficient,
Sorrow and grief sufficient.

Despite white coats on the frontline,
Many died,
Their loved ones cried.
-but,

Oh, deadly Devil, you had already arrived!

You set the world ablaze.
But you still seem to gaze.
You don't seem to have mercy on anybody,
You left the world very muddy.
Poor, rich, weak or strong,
You crossed all borders.

Oh, deadly Devil, you came to create
disorders!

However, I see a silver lining,
Where man keeps surviving,
Where man keeps rising,
Where man keeps realizing,
And learns to respect nature;
Redesigns this mess,
And learns to discriminate less.

~Medhansh Mritunjay Singh,
Lotus Valley International School

Rehal

Pause to feel

We are all so different
Yet all the very same
Trying to grow past and
Survive with the pain

The time you lost a friend
Someone close; someone dear
Take a step back from the chaos
Feel; shed a tear

We are all so distraught
Yet living the very same
Day in, day out; every day
Staying complacently sane

At the cusp of a void
Of loneliness so enticing
Pawns on different chessboards
Yet to see the silver lining

We are all so unhappy
Yet coping the very same
Tossing, turning, lying awake
In good faith, cursing fate

Forging ahead in a rat-race
Trying to not get left behind
But the ground soon runs out
Leaving empty heart, hollow mind

We are all so very different
Yet all the very same
Striving, marching on with
Hopes for a better day

So take a step back,
Pause, reflect, reclaim
Reclaim the ache
That slowly drives you insane

To hurt and then to heal
Is growth not a bane?
We are all in this together
For we hurt the very same

~Nehal Saini,
Lotus Valley International School

Padavani

A Façade

Like walls splattered with heaps of
paint,
to hide its nooks with cracks;
Worldly glooms with smiles are feigned,
for everything seems better with a
façade.

All I see before my eyes,
Are the naïve getting exploited.
They see their kin die; My!
The world has become a
disappointment.

I don't see any use in denying,
the kindness of the world is merely a
mist.
For so many people are dying,
Despite the reason that we were born to
live.

There are wolves amidst the goats,
A cunning mind; voice so sickly sweet.
And beware, don't open the door,
else you'll be duped into their
counterfeit.

Playing the trump card so wicked,
Costing them wholly of what they
possess.

And forever remains a conundrum to
the afflicted,
Of whether they should forgive
and forget.

And you may never find the butcher,
Who made your life an anxious wreck.
For salt too, it looks like sugar,
yet, the difference between them; can
you tell?

The world is becoming so masochistic,
What it will become, I simply
can't judge.
The kindred too have become so
sadistic,
Perhaps some families are
merely blood.

Our sapphire beauty is plummeting
to danger,
Is it too late to bring it out of ruins?
The good are turning into
demonic angels,
Surely we can turn them back
to humans?

What if egotism transformed into love,
Would the innocent get what
they desired?
What if the world indeed became
innocuous,
Would lives be less wild and dire?

-Paavani Sethia,
Lotus Valley International School

Teesta

Never Wanted to be Answered

Walking down the dark street,
All the women and children fell asleep.
As she walked further, she was asked by
on each step,
She answered with an angry-looking
steep face.

The clock struck midnight,
She looked at the lights,
Since it was to remorse.
Nonetheless, the lucidity makes it
impossible.

As she saw the sun rising,
she starts to throttle convictions,
reminiscing
the prelude of the emptiness of the road
gives thoughts of vivid plots.

Sentiment exchanged from one end
to another,
secularism couldn't have changed
the mastery;
As time went on and to the
questions asked,
they never wanted an answer.

Obscure did she become
as she overcame her questioning.
Dune she did from reality
as if fading into worldly questioning.

All of this suffering for one single
reason,
For the question;
Never meant to be answered,
Never meant to be remembered.

~Teesta Agrawal,
Lotus Valley International School

Tarushi

The Power of YOU

The string that pulls you apart,
Whenever the times are dark.
The stone that ignites a spark,
When sadness invades your heart.
The rope that pulls your emotions inside,
When the world forces them to hide.

The hammer that breaks your courage
The stair that brings you above average
The glue that sticks your broken spirit
together
The only friend that will be with you forever
The key to the lock of all your problems
The wall that supported you whenever you
have fallen

The eyes that find light in the darkness of the
sea
The only one who can make your destiny
The holder of all your awards
The shield that stops criticism's sword
The change that you wish to see
It's both inside you and me

I would say this at last;
'YOU' will be the answer to all these tasks.

~Tarushi Singh,
Lotus Valley International School

Mayoor School

Tanvee

Destiny of Doom

Lush, green forests
Lakes and rivers blue,
The birds chirp in chorus
In the sky's azure hues
A shade of vivid cerise
In the florets among the foliage,
The sunlight hits the leaves,
As the wave of thunderous clouds
rolls in.
At the confluence of winds
Over the colossal ocean,
The hapless tree clings
As it frets over the upcoming
implosion.
The earth rages and quivers
And the bands of storm clouds
gyrate,
The cyclone soon begins
And the torrential rains and storm
tides generate.

As the waves break and hit the shore,
The phenomenal seas inflict a heavy toll.
Deadly rip currents plummet and soar.
And the littoral land is engulfed.
The people run about in panic and
terror
As mother nature extracts her
vengeance,
They beg forgiveness for their errors
And they wallow in repentance

But mother nature has had enough
She prepares for pain and gloom,
Her wrath and fury erupts
And the people are fated for doom.

~Tanvee Maheshwari,
Mayoor School, Noida

Mount Carmel School

Palak

The moment of nature and you

The sun is setting in taking away the
gloom of life,
The sky seems filled with colours of
life,
The clouds are moving slowly as life
is,
The birds are chirping the blessings
to be grateful for,
The sea waves are rising high as the
hopes are,
The trees are high trying to touch the
sky,
As you try to achieve your goals,
There so many roads you can go
down,
But you choose one wisely and
steadily
You look above to see the moon,
Even when the light is covering it,
It's the rest of life which you can
have,

The time precious, and your mind
at peace too.
And it's all the moments of you
growing,
The memories you take along.

~Palak Gambhir,
Mount Carmel School

Pritha

Home

The far end of the back of my
mind,
through the untamed oceans
of my raw emotions,
is a place I like to call home.

Home,
it's a kaleidoscopic beach
where the waves crawl back to the
ocean,
and kiss the sands of my thoughts
goodbye,
only to come back
again and again and again.

Home,
is a fancy tropical daydream,
with single-story victorian houses
built at unsafe distances from the
shoreline.

Home,
is the enormous french window
overlooking that of the elderly couple
next door.

Home,
doesn't feel like just a word,
anymore.

The clock on my bedside table reads
3 a.m. in angry red characters,
I have wasted about four hours of my
time,
Selfishly breathing in all the rain
from the air, gluing crappy poems
onto the roof of my mouth,
thinking of sunsets back home-

You see,
sunsets back home are as surreal as
can be,
with the sky tugging at the hem of
the sun's dress, begging for her to
come to bed and call it a night,
and her cheeks flushing a deep pink
when the sun expresses her love for
the first time-
but that is just another reason why I
prefer living within my mind

She's drinking her daily tea when
mumma nonchalantly tells me she
thinks creativity is underrated,
and in that moment, I want to tell her
how right she is,
I want to tell her how hard it was to
build myself the home I'm not sure I
deserve,
I want to tell her that my glassy eyes
aren't just glassy eyes, not anymore;
they're warfronts,
begging polar opposites (ideals) to
stay away from each other,
but instead-
I nod in silent agreement

And on days I feel hollow, I like to
look at the world within me through
rose-tinted glasses,
because that reminds me of how
nothingness, miraculously, can feel
like everything.

~Pritha Jain,
Mount Carmel School

Shreya

The Day I Woke Up at 4 am

The day I woke up at 4 am, my
heart was beating fast and I was
sweating as though I had run a
marathon,
Then I looked at you and tried to
figure out if you were alive or
dead,
And stared at your face for 30
minutes straight,
Until you woke up to take
your meds.

Then you looked at me with your
drowsy eyes that gave me a touch
of life and a small smile,
And then you whispered
underneath your breath, “What’s
the matter beta?”
And ma you don’t know my heart
shattered and eyes teared up,
And it felt like the biggest reward.

And everything inside me broke, as
my mind yelled at me,
“She is alive, My mom is alive,
Thank you god for this wonderful
life, for keeping this wondrous
woman alive,”
And all these emotions hit me at
once,
When you called me your child,
For I feared your death would leave
me alone,
to drown in my sorrow and fear.
And you closed your eyes and went
to sleep,
And that’s the day I woke up
At 4 am .

~Shreya Lahiri,
Mount Carmel School

Pathways World School

Samantha

Why can't we be the same?

Born from the same foetus,
in the same genus,
Together we make a species,
Fellow sapiens,
Why isn't the stature of a woman,
The same as the stature of a man?

We are different in terms of our
biological roles,
but why to discriminate us whole,
together we complete the cycle of
life,
Doesn't society need us both ?

You bleed in war so can I,
but I shed blood every month,
Wonder Why?
For in me lies the power,
to birth give to someone,
like you and I.

I don't deny we have differences,
but we both need individual spaces,
together we make up this world,
Can't we make up with each other?

~Samarth Bansal,
Pathways World School, Aravali

Sanskriti School

Advikada

My School - Post Corona

The deadly corona was not over,
our school reopened, despite the threat.

The closure was sadly a year long,
this was the place I used to belong.

I entered the portals of my school, with
a strange sentiment gripping,
the hustle-bustle was missing, as I
walked past the gate reminiscing.

The people were same but their
behavior was different,
the aloofness in the air was quite
significant.

No hugs, no handshakes, we just smiled
from 6 metres apart,
but we met after a year and wanted to
talk, heart to heart.

Overwhelmed we tried to hug sans any
pretensions,
as our emotions were gushing like
unstoppable waves of the oceans.

No sooner did we hear “Maintain
distance” the teachers shouting,
when the norms of social distancing,
they found some of us flouting.

As if my friends were an imminent
danger to my life,
we de-clung immediately as if there
was a strife.

My eyes became watery as I walked
past the canteen,
our favourite hanging out spot, had
lost its sheen.

There was no sharing of tiffins,
I missed eating my friend’s delicious
muffins .

These are the testing times for human
race,
these too shall pass with God's grace.
Amen

~Advikaa Kapil,
Sanskriti School

Amritaansh

Hut on the Hill

Hut on the hill,
As bright as the sunflowers
around it,
But darker inside than their
black heads.
Windows as clear as crystals
yet,
Not one can gaze inside.
Perfect door, chipped handle,
spotless boards, rusty nails.

Hut on the hill,
Destined to remain in its
place,
Forever alone.

~Amritaansh Srivastava,
Sanskriti School

Anoushka

When the Moment of Silence has Ended

When the moment of silence
has ended,
And the roses have all dried up,
We shall go out looking for Light,
In the search of the sun and the
morning dew.

When the ocean has washed up
the shore,
And when the weather has
finally calmed down,
Sitting on the stone, O dear,
We shall look at the birds.

When the Veil is lifted,
We'll be bound forever,
But then again,
Looking at the same face each
day will turn volatile.

Then our time will come to an
End soon,
As did theirs,
And yet again, they'll comfort us,
Saying we are going to a better
place.

Soon some other young hands,
Will play the melody on the
piano,
And then when the air will be
filled with melancholy,
They shall go out too, looking for
the Light.

~Anoushka Akella,
Sanskriti School

Avani

Desire

We rush after it
Knowing we'll catch it
Thinking it would be so nice
Just to add some spice

But knowing very little
That life's always been
So brittle

From generations to
generations to come
The sun has always sunk
The day has ended
And the night has begun

Then why don't we ever stop
And forget about the war
That was never taught?

The war reflecting
Our tendency
To be caught in appetency

~Avani Rudra,
Sanskriti School

Dilisha

The Poisoned Days

Every breath scares me,
For it might be my last.
Around me, the world's been torn,
Into pieces so small, so apart.
Monsters now sit on the thrones
Who care about nothing but
themselves.

To stand along the ocean again,
carefree
To have my face contorted into a
permanent smile,
As it used to be.
Oh! To hear the happiness in my
mother's voice again.
To jump and splash with my
friends, in the rain.
All I want is not wear armour
Everytime I step out of my shelter,
For it weighs me down.

Now I remember with a sigh,
What the world used to be.
As the days pass by,
My willpower starts to
crumble.
The world is burning down
to ashes,
And I can do nothing but
watch as it turns to rubble.
The poisoned days just never
seem to end.

~Dilisha Fatima,
Sanskriti School

Ishita

For Someone Special

Her smile makes me smile,
Her thoughts make me think,
Her company makes me sad
during her absence,
Words flowing out of my mouth
seem to be inadequate,
Probably because I don't know,
dear audience,
If these words will entice
The same sense of comfort and
peace around her,
As they do to me.
The credit is not to these words
though but to her,
For whom I write.

I have not spoken to her in a
while,
She stays in my thoughts.
I replay memories I have shared
with her,
I imagine stories I wish to share
with her.

Is it true that it is easier to love
an idea way more than a
person?

I ask because I find myself
surrounded by so many people,
People with ambition,
compassion and confidence,
All of whom I find inspiring.
Yet her thoughts haunt me,
Sometimes, pleasant and
sometimes sad,
And sometimes a figment of
imagination,
Yet, they are always dear to me.

I remember times when she
would come into class,
I remember her voice as she
would read,
I remember the way she would
tie her hair,
I remember the way her
earrings would dangle when,
She explained something
important to her,
I remember waiting for one
glimpse of her,
Which would later make my
entire day,

I remember watching her sit
and correct notebooks
I remember bits and pieces of
how she made feel,
I remember a little inaccurately
I think,
I wished I remembered better.
I wish I did not have to
remember her
Wish she was here with me.

I am left in the utter confusion
because I don't know what it is,
Maybe a defense mechanism to
deal with stress,
Or am I in love, I wonder.
What form of love it is, I
wonder.
Have I ever felt it before,
No,
Is it strong,
More than one can imagine,
Is it romantic,
I don't think so, because I
respect her and can't think of
her sexually.
Can't you respect someone you
love romantically?
I don't know.

It has been so long since I have
had her as my teacher,
I miss her but I have let her go,
Now, I can deal with these
frequents attacks of loneliness
better,
I still deeply care and hope that
she is happy,
These attacks always pass and I
always end up feeling better
and loved.
My comrades who have been in
love before,
And know of its bitter-sweet
suffering,
Refuse to count me as one of
them for they say,
You 'admire' a teacher and that
is different from what we feel,
Only a few will understand
what I mean,
And I would like to let my dear
audience in on a secret,
If what I suffer is different from
conventional romantic crushes,
It is only deeper because it is
true love,
In its rawest form, without any
explanations.

~Ishita Gupta,
Sanskriti School

navya
You

All along waiting for me,
“you”
The hidden ray of sun upon my
darkened sky
The perfect red rose in my withered
field of sunflowers
The hint of milk in the darkest of
chocolates
The smiling wave in the sea of gloom
The happy tune in the night long,
lame songs
To be or not to be?
To not be there are a million reasons
but
The universe cares for all its
creatures
And to be, there’s a reason alone
Standing out
In the annihilated sky so dark
In the dying field
In the chocolate it larks

In the melancholy sea, unconcealed
And yet till I get there
The tune starts to fade
Blues fill again
But not for long I hope
Hope the sun comes out again
For once and for all.

~Navya Singh,
Sanskriti School

Vanya

The Deeming Power of Realisation

I spent hours,
I spent hours on and on, doing
nothing,
I searched desperately,
tried to find peace and solace,
but that nonetheless, didn't
happen-

Days passed by,
I started getting involved even
more,
Started distancing myself from
the obscure world,
Thought I could control myself,
But that nonetheless, didn't
happen-

Slowly time evaded,
The monstrous temptation
disrupted my world,
I went from being the top pupil,
To the bottommost blithe,
Wanted a retrieving chance,
But that nonetheless, didn't
happen-

Then came a day,
When I found a way,
I broke the law,
I bided my time,
Waiting for a retribution,
But that nonetheless didn't
happen-

After weeks, I realised and,
My parents came like a silver
lining,
We failed day after day,
It took time; countless weeks,
With a silence that lasted an
eternity,
But soon I found peace,
With that came duty,
To never go back to that wicked
trap.

Now that I have come a long
way,
The power of realisation,
Has taken over my
subconscious mind,
And this has lifted a hefty
weight,
Which I had been carrying,
Like my fate.

So a message for you,
Is to not go down that lane
too,
Everyone has their
experience
And this was mine,
Which nearly consumed my
entire time,
Now it's time to bid adieu
And for you to follow this
virtue!

Goodbye.

~Vanya Kapoor,
Sanskriti School

Vidushi

Ink

The blank page is clear and perfect,
white as the snow once the storm has
passed,
It sits there with great patience, to be
able to tell a story of loving human
hearts,
The white, ivory paper stares at the
writer desperately,
To quench its thirst, of soulful and loving
poetry.

From the tip of her pen flows the
blackness that brings life to her creative
currents,
She realizes the worth of her words and
their power to transform emotions,
Her words dance on the paper and she is
in full possession of her wings,
The tale told upon the parchment in
words so eloquent that the ink must be
flowing from the heavens.

The ink is an open invitation to the artist
in her,
To capture her feelings in her cursive
letters,
Her ink tries to find the right way to
dance upon the literary stage,
Her emotions flow freely, her joy and
melancholy, her beauty and rage.

Her pen says the words as if they're
raining from her soul,
The ink paves the path from her heart to
the paper, making her whole,
Through the pen is how her soul learns
to speak,
To spread her love in a world which is
harsh and bleak.

The paper carries the poetic black ink
with nonchalant grace,
Bearing everlasting truth in ink till the
end of its days,
In elegant swirling letters, her beautiful
black ink says,
The words that her heart bleeds.

~Vidushi Jain,
Sanskriti School

**Shiv Nadar School,
Faridabad**

Anvi

The Blank Canvas

Raised to the tales of Disney,
Today, they breathe the air of
misery.

The canvas is sparking in the
glee of potential and a yearn for
color,

Yet it is unrelentlessly bestowed
in painful tears of hate and loss.

When the svelte bristles clinch
against the profuse yellow
acrylic,

Stroked by the society to the
canvas, soft and naive begging
for only wanted warmth.

When tears from cold dark
winter nights turn to tingling
vulnerability,

An uncanny uneasy sensation
strikes you to your bone.

When spry yellow puffs
poisonous black, magic in the
svelte beauty of the artist; that
is our society, collapses.

When their world turns black,
The lights go out and the
homeless blue shoot at them,
bullets of agony.
Then there must be something
terribly wrong in the flair in
humanity.
Must we all bow down to
requisite heaven in a pose of
hypocrisy?
Must we force our softest
corner to the coarse side of the
sandpaper, just to win a silly
“manly” power?
Must we go back to our blank
canvas that's currently tearing
apart in its lone corner as its
young lissome beauty fades
away, just to win the ability to
breathe?

~Anvi Behl,
Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

Anshia

She reminds me of a word

She reminds me of a word,
A word I know
But I don't remember

She seems like a memory,
Something I learned a while ago
But forgot
Gradually

Like the petals that fall
Slowly
But once they touch the ground,
They're lost forever

She felt within reach
But the next second,
My fingers caught the air
And hers slowly pulled away

My memory of her fades
Slowly but,

First when I saw her hair
shine under the sunlight
My mesmerised eyes followed
the snowflakes right onto her
light brown hair

I've started forgetting her face
I've started to forget the walks we
used to take
How she would briskly walk in
front of me
And squeal when the snow would
get into her shoes

I can't remember the colour of her
eyes
And how they would shine under
brightest colours of the sun
And the moon
And the stars

As I recall, reality set in
Three times as I walked on the
snow
Trying my best to place my feet
exactly where she stepped

I realized this would end soon, that
this moment
Would end as soon as the
snowflake lands on her hair
And melts away

But then I would see her smile,
And reality would dissolve like
The snowflakes on her warm hand

The second time
I watched the sun play hide and seek
with the clouds
And saw the light bouncing off the
frosty tips of the snow-covered plants
I realised
The sun would come up,
Melt the snow away,
And take us away with it

But then as we walked on the white
and green pathway
I realised she was still there
Still walking briskly
Now though to a different destination
Towards the train-station

Would this be our final goodbye?

This was the third time
The brutal reality set in

I would never see her again
Even if I do,
It would never be the same

The girl I saw that day,
The one I can't recall
She's the one who broke my
heart
But sewed it together
All at once

~Arshia Jaitley,
Shiv Nadar School Faridabad

Kashvi

The Evil Stranger At High St - A Narrative Poem

One day at a dress shop,
I met a man selling shirts,
For money he wanted to swap,
But I really wanted some nightshirts.

"Got any nightshirts?", asked I.
"For that's how I'll spend my money."
"No nightshirts here!" said the guy.
He seemed to find it quite funny.

"We've got some lovely buns,
I'll give you a very fine price."
"I'd rather have some quince."
The man blinked rapidly thrice.

The man seemed exceptionally hyperactive,
And his manner was strangely amused.
He wasn't what I would call reactive,
Great disdain he noticeably oozed.

Like others, he thought I was odd,
Some say I'm a bit evil.
Still he gave me a courteous nod,
As if he thought I was plenty medieval.

But how did you know?", I asked,
"Do you want them or not?", she did say.
Silently, the nightshirts she passed.
Then vanished before I could pay.

As I walked away I heard a crackle
Or was it, perhaps, a hushed cackle?

~Kashvi Singh,
Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

Lakshita

Eunoia

Blue skies, blurry eyes
Had a path but didn't know what to
find.
The wilderness engulfs your emotions
as your tears have dried,
Always losing yourself, as sunlight
strikes the canopy up high.

Darkness uncovers a side of loneliness
in the mind,
No one loves you, even when you
showed you were kind.

No signs of loved ones or a familiar
face,
When you look back, your footsteps
back home can't be traced.

Wondering if I could turn back to the
undeniable
Thought I could survive but don't know
who's liable;

All the shadows will remain while the
faces fade
You'll be standing there alone under the
darkest shade.

Expectations were no more while hopes
had died,
No shoulder beside, for support or to cry.

When you look in the mirror and don't
know your true self;
Gone through bumpy roads, don't know
how you dealt.

But then you find those three shining
stars at night,
Giving you all the optimism you needed
that time.

Turn back to the belief that life goes on,
Turn back to the belief that life is a gift to
be made worthwhile all along.

They shine brighter as you need them
They are your friends and you should
always keep them.

~Lakshita Sharma,
Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

Gashvi

My best friend

The first time I giggled
He knew we would be a perfect family.
My first memories
Involve us creating chaos
And him taking the blame
When I look back at our videos
I see my toothless grin directed towards him
My eyes gleam with pride
Every time I make him smile.

When my mother and I fight
He is always the silent messenger
He wipes my tears when nobody else was
there
One time I got bad marks and was too afraid,
He was the one who gave me the push
It is like I am the creeper and he is my
support stick
He ensures that I grow up just fine and fit.

We might be five years apart
But still very close;
That is why now it is difficult to see
His “I am sorry” face
Well, I guess his events in college are
important too.

People weren't lying when they said I
will miss him
My room doesn't feel the same
Nor does the empty house
The empty bed and extra space
Don't make up for the lingering silence.

When I meet him sometimes
we are laughing and joking
He tells me about funny incidents
and his epic interview fails
Two days later
We are back to fighting again.

He might be eighteen
And will never be a child again
That doesn't change the fact
He is still my best friend.

~Yashvi Midha,
Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

**Shiv Nadar School,
Gurgaon**

Aaishi

Officially Broken

I've been here
for not more than the last 14 years,
but from what I have heard and
seen,
This world needs some fixing.
Teens are depressed,
Parents are divorcing,
The world seems to be ending,
But still no one ever seems to stop
pretending.
A little girl got raped,
she came back with a little more
than thousand scrapes Yet somehow
the world thinks,
that she escaped.
Children are getting bullied,
woman getting harassed,
A little boy just killed himself
and still no one seems to care

The rich get richer,
and the poor get poorer
I thought that was just a saying,
But the facts are becoming more and
more clearer,

Children getting sold,
drugs being trafficked
Teenagers are drinking beer,
and yet no help for the
disadvantaged.
Death because of skin colour,
riots because of caste
I thought we were moving forward,
But why does it still seem like
the past?
Feminism is frowned upon,
men suppress their emotions
A woman can't walk alone at night
and men are looked upon as
criminals.
So many things to fight for,
and we choose the smallest ones
Basic rights all should have,
Yet most have none.

Gays are discriminated,
Lesbianism the same,
The most natural of all
processes, Why has it
supposedly changed?
So many things to normalize
Adoption, abortion, asexuality
Menstruation, mental illness,
maternity
Athesium, transgenders and
infertility.
Why do we focus on blaming
each other instead of righting
the wrong,
Why are we all hypocrites
who don't walk the talk?
Our world is officially broken
and things need to change,
We need to express our rage
and fix this mess we made.

~Aaishi Gupta,
Shiv Nadar School Gurgaon

Adhikshita

प्रदूषण हमारा दुश्मन

पेड़ क्यों काटते हो तुम,
क्यों करते हो तुम हरियाली को गुम?

क्यों फैलाते हो इतना प्रदूषण,
लोग बीमार होते हैं हर एक क्षण

आसमां में हैं धुंआ ही धुंआ,
हर शहर को क्या है हुआ

हर जगह परेशानी ही परेशानी,
लोगो को होती है कितनी हानि

इससे बचने के हैं दो सुझाव,
की पेड़ों का करो तुम बचाव

और प्रदिशन फेलाओ थोडा कम
जिससे भारत रहे स्वच्छ हरदम.

~Adhikshita Vishnoi,
Shiv Nadar School Gurgaon

Akshansh

Pandora

He was a shaking thing,
Soaked in steel air
and crippling pain.
With an overwhelming scent
of exile.
He was a brittle thing,
He was a brutal thing.
For they left
They all slipped with tongue
like tendencies
In such momentary rage.
But he stayed
In jeweled boxes
In museum epiphanies
In cracking bones
For he died
In the midst of a pathology
lesson revelation, bitter
revolutions
As the screen kept blinking in
ironic indignation
Again and again and again
Until it was so furious that it
seemed finally at peace

Heavy
Heavy eyelids
Unblinking.
He died
As the professor kept talking
In her delicate hiss
And broken tongue
With an accent that clung so
tight a hug never planning to
let go first
Until her jaw gave up
Until she screamed in such
silence that it ricocheted like
echoes uncanny. Breaths
untaken.
He died
As the little girl on the top
corner of the gallery view kept
hoping
As she just got to know her
mother might just as well be
dying, her skin burning at the
hands of airy altars, her eyes
weeping in the dignity of
ending.
Kept hoping and hoping and
hoping
Until she didn't know what it
meant to hope anymore
Until her consciousness has let
go of even its mere definition

A lingering gladness grips
you
When you mourn an escape
so immaculate
When you know that
madness is nothing is not the
sister to sadness Sickness
nothing if not the wind-
stolen petal of withering And
hope, an imaginary friend
Lost like the innocence of
standing at the crest of the
unknown And smiling in
curiosity.

~Akkshansh Bagga,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Aishwarya

L'Appel du Vide

Grass blades hiss against each
other,
Sawing across like bows on strings;
A symphony in the night,
The galaxy sprawls out as a net cast
by a fisherman's hand, Catching us
dreamers up
In the knots and twirls of light.
My neck aches from looking,
Or maybe that's simply the weight
placed there From the jovial flow of
time;
But I listen on;
Indeed, the cosmic song is not as
elegant as they like to say.
No, it's not the chiming of bells
It is the crash of cymbals,
The thunder of drums.
It is grandiose,
Demanding,
Daring,
Broad slashes of ink on paper.
Beautiful.
And what could possibly be better
than that?

The waltz of stars
Through that stygian sea with
blooms of color
It is not desolate,
Far from it;
It is alive.
There is a tearing desperation
To know it all,
But 'tis an impossible feat
One can never know
The sum of the unknowable;
And that is what makes it all the
more beautiful.
So as I set up this telescope
To take in the empyrean,
To see the lissome jewels weave in
and out,
To watch yawning galaxies drift,
As I unknowingly feel myself
depart from my body a little more.
And then I hear them
The ancient ghosts of what had
once been,
Whisper softly in my ears a song
no one can hear, And I gladly
submit myself to it;
L'Appel du Vide
The Call of the Void

~Aishwarya Pande,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Anwita

Little Things

When I see my reflection in the
mirror, what do i see?
Pimples, acne and the flaws in me
But have you ever noticed those
eccentric details we hide
The completely different world
deep inside
We always hide our air of
verisimilitude
And have ourselves covered in an
absolutely different filter of attitude
We've always thought that the list
of our flaws is interminable
That we're always doing something
wrong it's all explicable
But when will we realise that no
one cares about your dress size It's
all about what's inside
Always agreeing to what the crowd
says and acting like a know-it-all
That's what people like, right?
That's what **they** like
And actually, you're more
bewildered than ever

If we make one mistake and we've
already started to tremor
If you're bold then you're
overconfident
If you're shy then you're
underconfident
If you have an interest in
something the crowd doesn't like,
then you're "other-wordly" If you
like wearing dresses you're girly
If you're positive, you're too full of
yourself
If you wear braces you're a geek
How much more can we handle?
How much more can we stand?
This... This concept I do not
understand
I'm doing whatever I can but still
have the fear of missing out
FOMO!
One second you do something
wrong
The next, you are wearing the
vermillion of shame
It shan't be like this
It's time for us to stand up
To let everyone in filling your cup

We shall not be scared that we'll
be left in profusion
In fact, we should ask them for a
clarification
Let us be who we are
And enjoy our ecstasy
Let us be the ones shining like a
star
And set free from this slavery
So what if I am thin?
So what if I am fat?
So what if I'm dark skinned
So what if I may be flat
I am who I am and you cannot
change me
So,
When I see my reflection in the
mirror, what do I see?
The strong, beautiful and
courageous me

-Anwita Ganesh,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Diya

Tear of Midnight

That tear of midnight,
that idle talk of 4 am,
the stars of the sky know me
more, then my own ever did.
No one listens,
not a soul cares,
some just laugh
and some heedlessly stare.
I tried to make it stop,
the fury that hits each night,
but what's the point of anything,
not a single person is
listening, right?
I am subject to misjudgment,
nobody ever broke the chain,
the same had happened to
everyone, I too should go through
the same?
I tried to make it stop,
the tears of midnight,
but what's the point of
everything,
no one cares right?
Is there a way out?

This shunned voice aches a
shout, I would rather sell my
soul,
than be forced to pay the benefit
of the doubt.

But then the 4 am hits again,
and I am all alone,
nobody cares about the pain,
I am just supposed to watch
my tone.

They say it's not about me,
yet I see every fight start with
me,

I tell them it's insane
but I spoke in vain.

No one cares,
all this is just humbug
I tried telling them something,
but isn't that just messed up.

Still, I am not to speak,
not to act,
simply to watch,
but not to react.

You expect the impossible
out something so average,
tried my best to tell you the truth
but you used it as leverage.

Nobody sees the pain,
apparently, everything is fine,
and the moment you complain,
nobody gives a second of
their time

I tell them, do not make me
your excuse,
do not make me the bait,
this is your matter,
do not trap me in this cage.

Yet, I am not to speak,
not to react,
simply to watch,
not to act.
So I write everything down
for this sinking feeling
to vanish,
but end up in its drown
trying to find words that rhyme
with damage.
I try listening to songs
to ease the tears of midnight,
then the midnight turns to dawn
and the rage shifts to fright.

~Diya Sharma,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Divija

The Cracks On the Roof

The cracks,
When did they first appear?
Did I see them?
Or, did I pretend that I didn't?
Then the thunder,
The rumbling
The cracks weakened
with time,
Something is broken.
That something is me.
The rain falls in,
The cracks cool
Sometimes, the Sun shines
through,
And, the flowers bloom.
Everything's quiet.
So, we forget,
So, we turn our backs
To the cracks.
They remain in the dark,
The cracks.

They grow,
They wind
They rewind
They loop,
They encircle.
It won't be long before
The next storm;
The cracks shall remain
And,
We'll be here
Again.
And again.

~Divija Manaktala,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Diya

स्त्री

जो ईश्वर की गहराइयों को समझ जाए,
वह मनुष्य नहीं।
जो अपनेकोमल आचँ ल की छाया में ढके,
वह माता नहीं।।
जो पानी के बाहर साँस लेले,
वह मछली नहीं।
जो खदुको समर्पि तर्पि न करे,
वह पत्नी नहीं।।
जो सदैव मीठा बोले,
वह शुभचिंतक नहीं।
जिसको पढ़ाई सेवचिंचित रखें,
वह एक बेटी नहीं।।
जो पौधा नहींबनता, वह बीज,
बीज नहीं।
जो अपनेलि ए खड़ी न हो सके,
वह एक स्त्री नहीं।।

~Diya Dadoo,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Gayatri

Pain

When I hear the sound of thunder
And rain,

I understand it's Nature's way
Of showing us Pain.

No Pain is greater
Than the Pain of losing someone;

And that is what Nature
Is trying to teach our young.

Just as we merciless creatures
Showed Her children no Mercy;

I think, expecting Her help,
Is History's biggest controversy.

And when I hear the sound of
Thunder and Rain,

I know She's
Now laughing at our Pain.

~Gayatri Brijesh,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Khushi

Sisyphus

Jack and Jill were sent up the hill
to push a big, fat boulder.

The boulder fell down and spoilt
Jill's gown
and Jack was called Sisyphus
thereafter.

The sweet sound of notifications
woke him

he flexed his cheekbone
'hashtag woke up like this'.

"oh my god I honestly love your
feed, can you maybe dm me?"

"how are you so perfect?"

"let's meet"

"can we take pictures of our cool
things

in our cool outfit
of how our smile perfectly gets
into 3 by 3 glass squares".

The widening of his smile was
proportional to his likes

like every morning he chanted

"I love my life, I love my life, I love
my life,

I love my likes, I love my likes"

His life quickly became his likes.

McD suddenly didn't fit his feed
now he had salads of flaxseeds.
For he had finally pushed his
popularity to the top
Now he held coffee mugs with
pinkies up,
"sorry mom can't hang
gotta make a boomerang"
Gotta take pictures,
in front of brick walls
with yellow light bulbs.
Please tag me
tweets, facebook, snapchat,
Instagram funny captions.
But thoughts like cryptograms
or absolutely no thoughts at all
the reality is
he doesn't know himself
he doesn't like salads
or bright yellow bulbs,
he doesn't read.
He is not even friends with
that guy,
but he wants to be.
At least till that guy has 'that'
or until someone else has that,
he wants to have that
he wants to be that
but he doesn't know what that is.

Like everyone else he is an
imperfect person trying to act
perfect in front of other
imperfect people.
He has 15k followers but no
real friends,
no one to be with on the
weekends
no functions to attend.
Just late night visits to clubs
and pubs
for his Instagram stories,
Facebook top fan
comes home to an empty bed on
the weekends. Who cares if there
are no functions to attend, pubs
and clubs make for fine
Instagram stories 15k followers
are no small feat of glory!
Worrying about if his filter was
quite right
all day long, the whole night
He had no friends but
that's okay, right?
Because he loved his life, he
loved his life, he loved his life, he
loved his likes, he loved his likes,
he loved his likes,
He had no life, he had no life,
he had no life.
But the camera clicks,
he posts pictures of him eating
with chopsticks "Lemme know
which edit is better"

wink emoji, heart emoji
he loves his life, his likes, his
comments
he loved to be liked online.
He was living online
few fire emojis and double taps
made him happy
waking up, is it too lonely
the light of his screen is like a
safe house keeping him safe but
harmed
making him oblivious.
Searching for friends! add
friends! send a request! What
friends?
Hey Siri, add friends
siri: "playing episode 1 season 1
friends" "Siri, call MY friends"
"404 Error: Not found"
"Who cares about friends
anyway."
he mutters, tossing the phone
away.
The sweet sound of notifications
wake him once again on the next
day. he flexes his cheekbone
'hashtag woke up like this'

~Khushi Soni,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Madhurya

Atheism: a work in progress

I don't have an idol
and I haven't sinned
I don't have any faith
Yet I feel the wind,
The wind of hope
And uncertainty
If I can't see "It"
Give me the ability
To believe;
A non-existent person
that I shall follow
With my daughter and son.
I question its presence,
And I do have morality,
I have values
And I have validity.
Tell me why you have faith
In an immortal, god, deity
Think about it
Have you felt him really?
For all, I know
no one has
They are a rumor
My friends alas.

I couldn't pray to
something that doesn't
exist,
And is being misused
To give terrorism a gist.
Think about your faith
Is it a creed?
To make the world a
better place Or to fulfill
someone's greed?
Are you filling their
stomachs With the
dogmas?
Or are you helping people
And escaping the drama?

~Madhurya,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Maina

She Doesn't Need a Hero

For years and centuries,
no one cared
about the struggles of the princess
because her prince was there.
All her troubles just disappeared
because a man in a shining armour
appeared
Life is easy because “you are a girl”
“You don’t have to worry or earn.
Just look pretty and give them a smile
No one likes a girl who is vile.”

Empires rose and fell, ages passed
Yet the story remained;
The poor damsel, under a spell
Saved by a man, all was well.

Her “happy ever after” was
hers after all
No one could take that away
The world tried to make her seem
small

But to their dismay;
She was steady, she was strong,
All those determined against her
Didn't make her worry at all.

They tried to paint her a villain;
Like Circe or Helen
Or Medea and Clymenstra
Whose "faults" were nothing but
sticking up for themselves.

She was constantly undermined
She just had to make her
hero shine
But truth be told,
He did nothing at all
For where was he
When she was stuck in the abyss?
The one that trapped her
The one that suffocated
The one she must cross every
single day
Afterall, it is her life
Its tribulations are hers alone.

~Naina Sardana,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Prisha

A Spider's Sorrows

Honest work, deserves honest pay.
and that is what I do all day, every
day.

But yet, I live in trepidation,
That one day, humans may cause
my assassination.

Oh, what has the world come too,
where a living soul has the ability
to choose who, dies and stays
alive.

just because it has an erudite
mind?

My heart beats,
And your's repeats.

Are we all that different?

I beg you, be a little munificent.

My life is mundane,
unpretentious.

I don't mean to be a menace.

My heart is gold,
And I hope I grow old.

Because the contrary begs not,
to be thought about.

And just like you,
I have a passion too.
String is spun,
it's marvellous fun.
Delicate lace webs,
sweeping overhead.
In Paris,
my kind can produce silk,cotton
and chiffon.
They even dressed
Kim Kardashian West.
But yet we are humble creatures,
and what we ask for is meager.
We are sentient.
So why must you cause a massacre
Because of our structure?
I am a spider.
Live and let me live.

~Prisha Adhikari,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Suhani

War

No food, no smiles or laughter,
all only afraid to see what's after,
it's only begun and going to extend,
it's only begun and we need
it to end.

Days pass by and it's all a blur,
blood and bodies, to death no cure,
violence and hate, is that
what we seek?

All look distraught, all look weak.
We look for a place to see the light,
to see a place not afraid of the
night,

A better world, where the sun
shines of hope, not a world, where
life is hanging by the rope.

This war has just begun, and it's
going to extend.

This war has just begun, and we
need it to end.

~Suhani Saraf,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Shivranjini

My Mind Is No Less than a Battlefield

My mind is no less than a
battlefield.
The enemy has come and set
camp somewhere close by.
I'm aware of its presence,
I'm aware nothing good can come
off this
I'm aware it's going to take more
than I can give.
But I wait.
I wait for the enemy to attack
first.
Just so I know how strong to be.
My mind is no less than a
battlefield,
now slowly you'd realise the
camp gets bigger,
the enemy starts conquering
more space,

and you
you aren't able to stop it because
all you're aware of
is its growing presence that
doesn't care if it's needed or
wanted, and whether it'll harm
you or not is unknown.

My mind is no less than a
battlefield.
because now the enemy won't
attack just yet,
it'll slowly take all you had and
hold it against you at once.
Without letting on,
how much you've lost, how much
it has already conquered, and how
much more there is left of you to
take.

Now my mind is the battle field of
a lost war.
The enemy conquered all it could
and now I'm left with nothing to
give.

After taking every part of what I
had once owned, it doesn't leave
just yet.

They've stationed somewhere
close to prepare for attack again.
For as soon as I think I'm strong
enough for this battle,
they'll strike again
and I'll be back to square one.

Now, my body is the soldier at
war on the ground.
shot and wounded
deciding,
whether to keep fighting
or to wait for someone to save
her.
For what else can one do when
the mind is no less than a
battlefield.

~Shivranjini Rathore,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

Tara

The Power of Yes

The power of yes
is that you don't say no,
So nobody gets upset
other than you.
Obligations are
everywhere with no time
to spare for working on
things that really make
you care,
Tricked yourself and made
opportunity dilemma
other people jealous of
your misery that
seemingly lasts forever.
And value there for sure,
But too much to do leads
to issues with trust
as each project isn't
getting the time that it
must, And you are
searching for a cure
everywhere.

Some people find it fun,
Until you are left alone
with no gun
To defend yourself nobody
cares anymore,
For serious snobbish
people who only work for
THEMSELVES.

Until you realize you are
doing everything for
everyone else, but that busy
feeling lures you closer
For as humans we strive
for purpose,
Until you see the chance for
what it is,
A mousetrap which you are
now stuck in.
You want it and you don't,
Think you can balance it
out but you won't.
So tell me yes or no?

~Tara Chadda,
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

**Shiv Nadar School,
Noida**

Karissa

You Always Have A Choice

A plant in your backyard
You see the beauty of the rose,
Or does the thought of getting pricked
keep you from getting close?
What do you choose?

Litter in the garden
You crib, complain and move on,
Or do you pick up a rake to clear the
lawn?
What do you choose?

Flight delayed
You scream, whine or maybe plead,
Or do you use the time to pick a book and
read?
What do you choose?

Number 13
You never pick it for the fear of bad luck,
Or do you let its enigma leave you
awestruck?
What do you choose?

A dandelion

You pluck it out for it is just a weed,
Or do you see it as a wish granting seed?
What do you choose?

A rainy day

You find it dark, dreary and full of gloom,
Or do you look for a rainbow in full
bloom?
What do you choose?

Hunger strikes

You reach out for a regular potato chip,
Or do you mindfully eat a carrot with
yoghurt dip?
What do you choose?

Pandemic world over

You get embroiled in the negativity,
Or do you fill yourself with hope and
positivity?
What do you choose?

Life gives us choices

You procrastinate and shirk your
responsibilities,
Or do you explore the innumerable
possibilities?
What do you choose?

~Karissa Gupta,
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

Madriya

Wake Up India - A Letter To The Prime Minister

A letter to the prime minister (and those associated with him),

Greetings Mr. Prime minister,
I wouldn't waste time in introducing myself even though names and surnames matter so much to you,
I will focus on what's important and what needs to be said.

You think we are blinded by the sickening yet clever ways you run this country;
A country where concepts like democracy and secularism are myths,
The country that took 200 years to make now is back to where it started.

Humans are said to be sane creatures, but look at what they've done;
Two killed her but millions of the same kind had to suffer,
You're after the people of the north whose opinion was never asked,
They aren't your pawns in this witless fight.

Here you are looking at the world from all
directions,
Here you are sitting on lavish velvet
cushions,
Making decisions for those who sit on cotton
mats.

The question isn't to be or not to be;
The question is to live and be free.

The north and the south are like distant
cousins;
Don't know anything about each other, yet
are bonded by relations,
But, in this enormous family you tend to
favour the relatives of the north even
though
excellence is broader in the south.

Today, when millions of people are suffering
to get a penny and to stay alive to earn it,
You remain silent and fund programmes
that make this harder to achieve.

When will we see what we were promised?
When will we see actual humanity in this
country?
Where women aren't punished for dreaming
and aren't treated as objects,
Where humans don't turn against their own
kind,
Where everyone's born a touchable,
And money doesn't define power.

Can we be 'the real dream'?
Can we become the nation we were
supposed to become?

It's high time now, wake up;
Wake up for those who are closing their
eyes forever,
Wake up for those who want to stay,
Wake up for this nation that has woken
up today.

~Mariya Abbas,
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

Naomi

It's Like Clockwork

Tick
A second passes
Tock
A minute passes
Tick
An hour passes
Tock
A day passes
Tick tock tick tock tick tock
A week, a fortnight, a month, a year, a
decade, a millennium
An eon.

Tick
A paralyzing fear
Tock
A never-ending feel
Tick
What are you doing with your life?
Why do you waste your time, idly?
Writing pages and pages on end
About themes that
No one reads.

Tick
Why do you spend a lifetime overthinking?
Every little thing
Tock

Enough with this lack of confidence!
I've been waiting for fifteen years
And you're still the same person

Tick
Stop thinking of yourself
You self-obsessed excuse
Stop being insecure
And do something of use
Tock

I can't solve this sum
It must mean I'm dumb
Why has God given me a brain this stupid?
And does God even exist?
STOP, THERE'S NO TIME FOR THIS.

Tick
I will spend the entirety of my days
Being sad, dismal and stressed
Because for as long as I live I'll never be
free
My brain won't let me breathe
I want to be free
Tock
God, you and your
First world problems!

People are struggling with real things
And you're crying over your brain not being
"free"
The audacity!
Tick
Why do you do this?

You're not Whitman, Dickinson
Yeats, Poe, Blake
Frost or Wilde
What you write is mild
You're just a stupid child

The stupid child gets up
And she looks at her table
She sees monuments
Of books, binders
The last time she ate was yesterday night
She forgets about water, more than she'd like
And she's not special, is she, now?

Because if the camera zooms out and pans
over every child her age
All of them are in the same state
But no one shall take them seriously
Until they do something drastic, of course
Then maybe someone will look
Concernedly
For all the wrong reasons
Admittedly
Tick

You're a speck
A speck of dust
That the universe flicks over
Tock
The never-ending
Ever-expanding
Universe
And then there's you

And just like that a whole new day's
gone too.
And just like that a whole new
week's gone too.
And just like that a whole new
year's gone too.
And just like that a whole new
lifetime's gone too.

~Naomi Pandey, Shiv
Nadar School, Noida

Hirali

Orange Streets

The sun has set
And the night has begun,
Ready to unleash
Its miserable, numbing
embrace.

The city now throbs
With the mellow warmth of
streetlights,
Only slight specks of orange
Against the inky clouds.

Yet the empty lanes
Aren't the only ones these
lamps ignite,
For under their glow
Also reside countless tiny
lives.

Waiting, hoping, scared.
One such of them,
Is a boy in tattered clothes
Having spent his entire being,
At the margin of the lane.

Today,
With some scraps of food in
his belly
He wishes to bring a smile,
To the worn face
Of his little sister.

So, he tries to do a cartwheel
With his arms out straight
But with a slip of feet
Comes crashing to the
ground

There is a moment of silence
A moment of defeat,
The little girl in a pale frock
Calling out to her fallen
brother

But just like all his life
Of all the love they have lost
All the happiness they have
found
He gets up, smiles and starts
again,

Unnerved, unbridled,
unafraid.

~Nirali,
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

Siddhant

An Accidental Fallout

Bonds,
Those friendships and those
fellowships,
Deep, overfilled with those pleasing
memories of conversations,
Strong these bonds seem to be yet,
Yet all of it seems to be on a tightrope.

One misdeed, one transgression, one
misstep
And you fall, into a chasm of a
crushing stomach and insomnia,
Of fear, weakness, embarrassment,
guilt
It feels that your friendship's end is
just a mistake, just an accident away,
One wrong and you fall, it's over.

That fear, it always grips me,
It keeps me restricted, bound, chained
from another side of myself.
As I hold myself on this unpredictable
balance.

~Siddhant Singhania,
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

Tanush

The Fallen Warrior

Oh! The chevalier most valiant
Held a sword to eliminate despair
Oh! The knight most altruistic
With an armour of love and care
Oh! The guardian most majestic
Wore a helmet to give respect so rare

A battlefield enemy dominant
Called out his name in agony
“I am yours and await your presence
My enormous fields lie barren
Waiting for the gust of wind
To send you rushing in!”

As he stood with his chest out
They stood shivering and shout
The battle cry with which the battle
begins
He moves swiftly injuring general sins
Sprinting ahead, shattering pessimism
He finally destroys the troops with
abundant optimism

Even after being fatigued by wounds so deep
He hoisted the flag for the land was his to
keep

After a while a man visited the king
Long songs of praise he would sing
He and the king got along just fine
This is the calm before the storm in line
Soon after which his influence wins
One gets exiled of the two twins

The king loses his land and fame
While the twin ruled the lands with his name
The land is not ruled by his owner anymore
The land degrades, but everything has a cure
The key to the cure is absolute determination
For short or long period of duration

Now I must reveal his name
Whose story has earned much fame
The heroic warrior I am talking about
Is none other than your inner self I shout
You as a warrior shall rule your life
Don't let sins and pessimism attack your life
Surround yourself and others with love and
care
Try your best to eliminate despair
This gift of God shall be under control
Live to have a memorable role.

~Tanush Bhatnagar,
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

Zehra

Voice of a different soul

I am nothing but I mean a lot,
Against the gift of darkness I
bought.
In trade for my mortality;
That hides behind the loathing sea.

No answers to my curiosity,
Oh the Lord, the Almighty.
Some in grace, some in fear-
Of strength that strikes and tear.

The sun, the wind, the flowers I see-
All around the nature tree.
Cloudless sky just still and there;
Forms a view that was meant to
stare.

I don't live in the world of yours,
Where creation teaches and lores.
But differences that each one holds
One's in money, Two's in poverty
I realize that but humans can never
see...

~Zehra Bukhari,
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

Step By Step School, Noida

Aahan

Impact of Corona Virus

Coronavirus! Coronavirus! Oh,
Coronavirus!
What have you not done?
For all, you have left us completely
stunned.
Killed so many for you are not
satisfied yet,
you are the one that none of us will
ever forget.
Sparked at Wuhan, spread like a
wildfire,
from America to India to Japan, you
have left other viruses truly inspired.

Coronavirus! Coronavirus! Oh,
Coronavirus!
You have brought a revolutionary
change,
trapped everyone inside our homes
that feels like a cage.
Online schooling has become the

new normal,
giving exams from the comfort of our
homes is abnormal.
You came from nowhere and now
are everywhere.
You have struck the first blow; watch
out as we are all coming for you with
the full gusto;
there will be a time when you will
talk with a voice full of despair.

~Aahan Shukla,
Step By Step School

Aashmin

The toughest profession

Our teacher once asked us a question,
“Which according to you is the toughest profession?”
Hands swayed high up in the air,
Some said law, some army and some healthcare.

I pondered, I paused, I asked,
Which is one profession that is multitasked?
Doctors, engineers, law- all answers were good,
But for me the perfect one was Parenthood.

They neither have swords nor have guns;
But their biggest weapon is love, which they have in tons.
They vaccinate us with all nurture

and care,
They protect us from all jeopardy
and scare.

Life is a marathon and success the
finish line.
But for parents of yours and mine,
Our happiness is their finish line and
we, their dream.
That's why we give them so much
respect and hold them in high
esteem.

They teach us to be considerate and
be good,
They guard and shield us our entire
life, right from childhood.
They have sleepless nights when we
are ill,
Their love and care is the most
effective pill.

Our parents are our cushions and
our springs,
They repair the guitar of our lives
with ever new strings.
They are shells and we the pearls
hidden in them,
If we the plants, they are our stem.

They care, they protect, they
sugarcoat,
Just to keep our boats afloat.
Thunders, tsunamis, lightnings may
hail,
But that doesn't stop them from
ensuring our smooth sail.

They stitch our lives' loose threads,
We, their butter and they, our
breads.
They teach us to keep our heads high,
And give us wings to touch the sky.

My parents say, “Nobody’s flawless.”
But that doesn’t stop you from being
the best, any less.
And you should know one thing
yourself,
For me, you are greater than God
itself.

You are our doctors, athletes, artists
and sailors.
Our parachute, our springs and our
tailors.
Well, this is the answer to my
teacher’s question,
Parenthood is definitely the hardest
but the best profession.

~Aashmiin Kaur,
Step By Step School

Aniyona

Desire

Every step, every twist,
oh, such mountainous bliss!
You try being kind,
You try being blind,
Yet you still feel powerless.
The kindest,
treated the worst.
Your constant urge for validation,
is what slowly devours you.
Always thinking about others'
perception,
never thinking about your reception.
The overthinking before you utter,
making your mind stutter.
Your opinions left untapped.
Who to trust
and what to trust
when everything around you might
just blow to dust?
Wish I had a life book,
life would be easier.

Trying to swing with the flow,
with so many emotions in tow.
The uncertainty in every nook,
is what haunts me
and taunts me.
Never good enough you are,
when will you fill that insatiable
thirst,
for more?
Residing Inside that void,
that consumes you like fire,
and burns within you,
in the form of desire.

~Aniyora Shukla Tiwari,
Step By Step School

Annsh

The performer

It's the middle of the night,
Or so we think.
Our minds wide-awake,
Eyes staring ahead without a blink.

He's drunk,
At least half a bottle down.
He can't stand straight,
But is still clowning around.

Nevertheless, we don't know,
We don't get to know until ten years
later.
All we do is see him perform,
Perform his heart out.

He is a showman,
A star in his full glory.
The lights are on and the curtains
parted away,
The world is his stage.

He is a beast,
Almost on the verge of catching
his prey.
The eyes see red and the lips
salivate,
He lets a smile escape, but not his
prey.
Never his prey,
Not for once.

His mind oozes confidence,

His eyes sparkle brilliance.
He knows he has his prey
cornered,
His audience captivated.

Shivers run down our blankets,
Our lips part in awe.
The buckets of popcorn are kept
at our feet,
But they don't seem as interesting
as what's ahead.
And what's about to come.

He reaches the climax,
The prestige lay right ahead.
He knows he has the trophy,
Even before he touches it.

He smiles and smells the intrigue in
the air,
He knows he has complete control.

Then, he delivers.
The final act, the fatal blow.
A wave of satisfaction brushes over
all.
Our eyes droop,
Mystified by the aura of a magician.
We drift away.

It's summer again,
he's back on stage.
His usual audience tucked in.
He's older but just as majestic,
Maybe even more.
The sparkle very much still there.

This time, as he delivers the finale,
I know I can control the hypnosis.
I close my eyes,
But don't drift away.

He sits for a while,
Soaking in the silent praise.
Then, he stands and walks away.
The walk is different,
Not as elegant as it should be.
I don't understand it.

I follow him into the garden,
Where he sits with a glass of
whiskey.

He sighs and sips,
Then sighs again.

I see his eyes,
They don't sparkle anymore.
His hand shivers as he takes another
sip,

And then I see it.
A beast trying to hold onto his fading
strength.
A showman trying to grasp onto the
tiny shards of brilliance still left in
him.
The soul of a tired old man.

~Annsh Kapoor,
Step By Step School

Anoushka

The Elusive Upside

Once upon a past,
Told a story of-

This rampant plague that has led to
the demise
Of hundreds, near and far.
Some dear, some unknown to us,
But live on in someone else's heart.

That wracking pain:
Loss of one's own,
Towering walls,
That keep us home.

Bar us; break us,

A mind is a place of calamity,
If you let it escape.
Swallowed into the depths of
darkness,
Grief, anxiety and heartbreak.

But-

If you let your mind,
Turn to the beauty that has reborn;
Outside of the internet and our
homes,
Our foliage has regrown.

Their creeping arms,
Once cut, killed whole.
Reaching their way up,
Into the sapphire encrusted sky.

That blue, devoid of grey,
Sweet as the cotton candy;
That floats, sugar-white across the
sky,
While the free birds take poised
flight.

Animals have returned to land, water

and ether.

That was once their domain.

Regained are the beautiful rivers of
the pink dolphin,

Wallowing in the now crystalline
water.

Observing nature get back to its
work,

Puts our minds and wild spirit to
rest.

The elegance of nature

Is unparalleled, without a doubt.

Man is a naïve, shallow-minded
being.

In ignorance, he lives.

Unbeknownst of true cognizance:

The profundity of nature.

Looking in, we also realise,

The invisible backbone of your life
Has stood at your elbow,
Through doomed days of deterrent
disease.

The love brought by your family
Is an ever-glowing light bulb of hope.
Someday, with persistence and
optimism,
We will climb back up this slippery
slope!

Though this journey across hell,
For us, humans have been torturous,
Can we not see that our great Mother
Is nursing her wounds in our
absence?

What goes around, comes around;
We pained the earth, bruised her on
our own whims.

She sought revenge, played the game;
She kicked the ball right back at us.

So, I ask you,

Boon or bane,
Has Covid 19
Really come to slay,
Or bless life in disguise?

~Anoushka Puljal,
Step By Step School

Avishi

You're blind to their side,
their pain is insignificant,
resting in your cloud of oblivion,
as dust and smoke consume the
innocent.

Don't you see
our world of glee?
This is a faux reality.

Casual insensitivity
invades the blood in these veins
more and more everyday,
and it is our humanity we betray.

Everyday I try not to submit
to the powers telling us to quit.
Yet, the gloomy night fades.
Sympathetic terror in my heart,
escapes.

I wake up the next day,
and participate, once again,

in the usual ways.

If anything we accomplish,
in life on this planet,
I hope it is to never forget,
the love in our blood that makes us
connect,
that keeps us alive,
and makes our human silhouette.

~Avishi Mishra,
Step By Step School

Dangsh

The saga of love

It keeps me going,
when the nights are murky and the
days cast gloom.
The warm and snug embrace,
the breeze on your face,
Those bright and gleeful days,
still make me swoon.
Never can I forget,
The beatific smile and the gleaming
eyes,
that brightened up my days,
when the twilight loomed.
The night sky,
full of stars,
shone in its glory,
when you walked past.
My heart abound with agape love,
my yen for a soul mate,
that'd forever last.
Our eyes met,
Souls bestirred,
our beguiled hearts beat ever so fast.

the revere life,
a bequest not just any.
Revelling in the pleasures,
the reminisces etched,
deeply felt- unshattered.
The ambrosial life, never seen before,
the soul, no longer battered.

~Darsh Anurag,
Step By Step School

Durga

Sparrow

The sparrow flies from far away,
Carrying the burden of all that I want
to say.

The sparrow sits beside by every
night and day,
Don't take my sparrow away from
me.

The sparrow flies through the dead
of night,

His eyes gleaming like the firelight,
The sparrow knows what's wrong,
what's right,

I just need my sparrow tonight.

The sparrow sings a song I know,
The trilling is soft and sweet and
slow,

I wish he told me the way to go,
But in the end, I'm all alone.

The sparrow goes away tonight,
They took him, said he's better this
way,

I wish I had the strength to fight,
To see my sparrow for another day.
He said he wouldn't leave me crying,
Yet here I am all alone,
The tears, they've begun drying,
I wish my pain could be blown
Away with every memory that
haunts me.

Without my sparrow, it taunts me,
To go a little closer to the edge,
To step off, take the flight,
In the deadly darkness tonight.
The memories won't leave me to be,
They haunt me constantly,
Telling me that I'm weak.
Sometimes I wish I could speak.
Without my sparrow, I'm just
another broken thing.
My sparrow is all that brings
Some light into my world.
An unheard tingle of laughter.

The songs the sparrow sings,
They'll be with me forever after.

He leaves and goes away,
Making me break apart again.
But I'll have to gather the pieces,
I'll have to shield them from the rain.
I wish I knew if my sparrow
Would ever return to me again.
Every time I close my eyes,
I see him smile at me.
I wish I didn't have to live in these
lies,
I just want them to let my sparrow
be.
Why does my sparrow fly away?
Will he return to say goodbye?
Who will sit beside me at the end of
each day?
But I hope he sees the happiest sky.
For if there is anyone who deserves
joy,
It's my sparrow who's been there all
along.
He's been there when I thought my
world would destroy itself,
He's been there to sing that happier
song.

I wish it didn't have to end like this,
But I'm glad I found my sparrow,
I'll cherish these moments of bliss,
When I met him in that lane so narrow.
I hope that everyone for once,
Gets a chance to meet their sparrow,
It could be in a field of sunshine or like me
in a lane so narrow.

~Durga Narayani Vasumati,
Step By Step School

Gia

The End of a Tunnel

What's the worst thing a person can
feel?

You'll say - pain, anger, fear.

The bitterness of the 'what-ifs' of
regret.

The despair of drowning in tears.

But what we always forget

Is the agony wrought by shattered
dreams.

The torment of loving and losing.

The hope turned to anguished
screams.

They say, look to the bright side of life.

They say the glass is half full, too.

They say, believe that everything will
be all right.

They say hope is what'll get us
through.

But what if the bright side blinds us,

And the glass itself should break?

Everything is never all right,

So what if hoping is a mistake?

What you don't know you want,

You won't want to possess.

If you've never seen the light,
You won't fear the darkness.
But once you've breathed air,
You'll use it as a crutch.
Once you've felt happiness,
You'll wait forever for its touch.
Wanting nothing brings nothing:
No joy, no warmth, and no pain.
Expectations lead to disappointment,
And hope to wish in vain.
The world isn't perfect, and expecting
it to be
Gives rise to suffering unlike any
otherwise begotten.
Because hope, once embraced,
Can never be forgotten.

Unfounded aspirations are the most
wounding sorrow:
Try as we might, the hurt will remain.
There may always be a light at the end
of the tunnel,
But usually, that's the incoming train.

~Gia Arora,
Step by Step School

Hritik

Darkness

As the sun sets over the horizon so
bright,
The full moon slowly illuminates the
dim, grim night.
The mountains quivered with
anticipation
As the oceans sparkled in the
moonlight.

Silence everywhere, nothing to hear,
The eerie darkness truly is queer.
The cold darkness radiates fear,
Spreading intensely as nightfall does
near.

The animals, the plants, even the grass,
All sit silently, waiting for the
blackness to pass.
As we quietly creep into the shadows,
The stars pierce the dark sky like
arrows.

Swaying trees and rustling branches,
Through which the breeze does blow.
Remind us of the silence,
That this pitch-black night does
show.

Footprints of darkness engulf us all
in dreams,
Bringing peace and calm to all that
gleams.
For fears constantly grow on and on,
But cease to exist with the dawn.

~Hritik Aswani,
Step By Step School

Kangna

Behind a Mask

So many looks, so many ways.
Blue, green and yellow,
different sizes for every fellow.
So many masks on display,
Using them throughout the day.

What secrets lie behind the mask?
Some wear it to show,
Some wear it to hide,
Some wear it in fashion's tide.

A boy pretends to be his own
superhero,
Superman today, Batman tomorrow

Or perhaps a blacksmith looking
through his mask,
Protecting his eyes from his blinding
task.

There's a doctor wearing a mask,

saving a life,
After years of study, practice and
sacrifice.

Frightened people are trying to keep
the virus at bay,
Using masks to protect friends and
family every day

So that they don't end up like the
man on the hospital bed
With an oxygen mask, Holding on for
dear life, with death upon his head.

It may be a woman, covering her
face,
Silently following what she's told and
do no disgrace;

There's a person, who's chosen to do
something wrong,

Wearing a black mask, a criminal
can't hide for long.

It's a person, trying to fit in,
Hiding, disguising, all there is within.

So, What's behind a mask?
Behind a mask, there is still a face
My face, your face, our face.
Right or wrong, strong or weak,
All trying to participate in life's
wavering race.

~Kangna Tandon,
Step By Step School



Naked

Naked
The hands that rocked a cradle,
The mother of tomorrow,
The women who shape destiny.
Such is the tragic irony of fate,
The one who sold me.
Told me, that my life was worth just a
couple hundred bucks.
Placed me in hands of strange men,
Who cuffed me in invisible chains.
And I felt NAKED.

Out of the dark my wrist was
grabbed,
I screamed,
But it seemed that the world was
deaf.
Needles inserted,
Eyes got heavier,
Knees went weak,
Body went numb,

My legs trembled with his touch.
And I felt NAKED.

As he came closer,
Shivers went down my spine.
A tear of blood dripped from my eye.
I screamed,
But what was my “NO” to a heartless
stranger?
I could see how my pain got pleasure
in his eyes,
The shrieks of my voice aggravated
him.
As he removed pieces of my clothes,
It felt as if he was removing the life
of my soul
Piece by piece.
And I felt NAKED.

This is not how it should be,
My body is not something to see.

If you turn away your head,
That does not mean that you’re not
guilty.
And this is the epistemology of being
NAKED.

They tell u when to dress up,
They tell u when to dress down.
When I should be queen, but not for
them to clown about.
But I am no one's barbie doll,
I got no sugar got no spice.
I got the guts to fly up high
And be my own fairy light.

A breath,
A sigh,
A cry,
A screech.
I tried so hard but my heart would
leap

With my body hurt but an unbruised
soul.
I can not be sold.

~Myra Chawla,
Step By Step School



Spoken for the Unspoken

Living life afraid, afraid of what
society might do,
Every action observed and noted
down, you're subdued.
When anything you say can and will
be used against you,
One thing you learn from this is that
you can never change society's point
of view.

Restrained, by the shackles your
ancestors have been enslaved in,
Beaten up for speaking out on the
injustice of your race
When all you wanted to do was
protect your kin
Everyone looks down upon you and
your family like you're a disgrace.

When all hope is lost
And you are enclosed by walls of
darkness

A light shines and says I have a
dream and a thought.
You travel closer to listen to the light
that's harmless.

He says:
Hold onto your dreams as they will
take you far
Hold onto hope for repairing any
scars,
Hold onto me for you are someone I
can't lose,
Hold onto life for it's something too
precious to misuse.

~Navya Dewan,
Step By Step School

Nihaara

A wall of bricks

A wall of bricks between me and you,
How tall it is, neither of us have a
clue.

With every new day, with each word
we say,

There are so many things which we
are never able to convey.

It seems like you and me, are waves
in the sea,

There are ups, there are downs, it's
always windy.

As life goes on and day turns to night,
The moments we live together are
only finite.

If only we had some time to spare,
There is nothing we couldn't possibly
repair.

But there's a wall of bricks between
me and you,

And how tall it is, neither of us have
a clue.

~Nihaara Sawhney,
Step By Step School

Ragini

The game

His eyes were concentrating hard, his
mind
At hard work, formulating battle
plans
The dice rolled, and look there! It
was so fine!
With lots of twists and turns, the
game began.

His opponent worked hard as well,
her schemes
Were working well, unlike his, sadly
now
He picked up pace, he swam against
the stream
He got himself up there, on top,
somehow

The two players played, so very
readily
They fought a fair and good fight,

oh yes, they did
The game got over, he won narrowly
His rival beaming fondly at her kid.

The boy said, “I had fun today,
Mum!” while
She sighed, “Wish I could play every
day, child.”

~Ragini Sen,
Step By Step School

Rahid

Locked Out

The streets are suddenly deafeningly silent,
The birds chirping have never seemed so
loud.

They seem to taunt me as they give me
quizzical looks,
Flying free while I can't step out.

The days seem to blur into one,
Monotonous actions and words over and
over again.

But I insist I'm grateful and thankful,
At least I'm not lying in a
hospital bed.

The closest thing I have as connections,
Are faces and texts on a screen,
And those disappear too,
As soon as my phone runs out
of battery.

They keep saying we're in this together
and we'll
fight it,
They keep saying soon we'll
be reunited.

They keep saying we're all in the same boat,
They keep saying we'll all
stay afloat.

And so I wait for the day,
I can look back and say,
All I remember are the
better moments.

~Rania Anand,
Step By Step School

Roshni

Day

Golden clouds were a part of
sundown, Then the everlasting roads
led to dusk.

A crowned pathway crossed all odds
And the once green, desperate tree
tusk

Fell into a crisp, orange avalanche.
Lastly, the wind peeled away
summer's husk.

The sky broke into crippling pieces,
Jeopardising, for once, the early
roots of winter.

And the smell of ice painted the
earth white,

While rhetorical calls forced the
earth to whimper. At the hands of the
earth, all it remembered

And at the end, the sun sunk to
differ.

Now the painted town whispered,
Underneath the scraped sky.

Dwindling chatter muddled the
sound of death When crusty, burnt
leaves break and fly
Into the wind, further away .
And the sound of death mumbled a
cry.

~Roshni Iadhani,
Step By Step School

Shaurya

My Land, Your Land, No Mans Land

A conflict drawn from myriad
hearths,
Arabs, Jews trying to claim some
earth
Whose claim to land is it?
Towns like Sinai, Gaza mire the
minds
West Bank, delineated for refugees
back in 1949.

Many centuries ago, the feud began
Yet again, over a piece of land
Infamous now, Palestine.
How it has left the common man,
Arab, Palestinian, Jews; displaced,
claiming a strip of land.

Occupation, I call it, of the mind
Broken dreams,
Hopes crushed.
The sound of the sirens,

Made those dreams rushed.

A gloomy atmosphere,
Filled with violence.
Enter the Hamas, and ballistics
follow,
The Palestinians are stranded, feeling
hollow,
There is an eerie silence,
Left behind from Ottoman times.

It was once peaceful, Yasser Arafat
he led,
Our land, which the Israeli's claim.
As refugees and displaced were
bombarded with missiles,
Pitifully enduring calisthenics, the
Israeli kind.

21 st century here we are
Abandoned homes, no let-up in
mortar
Empty streets, stricken faces, women,
children,
Looking for hope vacant eyes plead,
Anyone paying heed?

Once they woke up,
Hopeful to see.
The rising sun,
One Last time.

Upon seeing their houses destroyed,
It makes them speechless, no
endgame in sight?
Nowhere to go,
Hope is all humans know
Can we co-create a peaceful life?

The humanitarian mandate is ours to
know,
Not just policies that should flow

Let us stand as one with this singular
goal,
Even as the displaced, strive to stay
alive.

~Shaurya Bhatnagar,
Step By Step School

Shivanshi

The last leaf

As the last leaf fell withered,
I looked above,
to the tree which I had once
unconsidered.
Not admired its beauty enough,
Its evergreen leaves, which gave me
shade,
and its rough but gentle bark
where red fluffy tails played.
That day, yesterday, and every day.

Just wish I could have told you-
How perfect you are, in every way.

Why did I delay?
You were everything that mattered,
just didn't realize it.
Now I admit,
It's too late.
Could have spent more time in your
shade,

that gave me warmth.
'Thank you for everything,'
If only, that could be conveyed.
Wish I could see your smile again,
But the only place I see it now,
Is on a glossy plane.
Can't help but reminisce those days,
the time we spent together,
You put me before yourself, in all
ways.
Circumstances be whatsoever,
Now I had to set your body ablaze.
Should have said farewell,
before your last leaf fell.

~Shivanshi Agarwal,
Step By Step School

Shivom

Where the mind is with fear

Where men drop like flies,
and no one can save their lives,
Where whole cities are plagued with
funeral pyres and desperate cries.

Where there is international
disgrace,
And every decision filled with
distaste,
Where people are dying second by
second,
And everyone is unprepared for this
epic Armageddon

Where farmers endlessly protest on
the streets,
And daily wagers have nothing to
eat,
Where there is an acute shortage of
doctors and nurses,
And there seems to be no end to this
array of curses

“Where the cradle of vaccines cries
for more doses,
And the gasping patients suffer from
deep psychosis
Where the sea of hope is clouded by
dreary, lingering storm,
And incessant waves crash and
corrode our sanity in swarms,

Where it is easier to win the lottery
than procure a single hospital bed,
Where our vibrant and diverse India
has suddenly become the land of the
dead,

Is this the heaven of freedom that we
fought for?
Or is it anarchic hell instead...

~Shivom Singh,
Step By Step School

Shreya

Dear Humans

You burnt our lungs, now there's no way to breathe,
You melted our glaciers, now there's only sea.

You polluted the air that gave us life,
Polar bears are now dying because there's no ice.

You whine and cry about your first world problems but you're just never grateful,
A child just died on the street, and there's no money for a funeral.

You rape our women like they aren't a mother, a sister and a daughter,
And I can't help but think, this is how it's going to be forever.

You choked a man beneath your car,

his name was George Floyd,
But this is just who you are.

Abortion's illegal, guns are a
birthright,
The world is in ruins as Covid
reaches its extremity, but its okay,
you can still party every night.

The world would be such a beautiful
place,
If only you would stop this
superficial rat race,
Just who do you think you are, petty
human?
At least let me cry, before you roast
me and I die.

~Shreya Choudhary,
Step By Step School

Shreyas

The invisible man

A man the same as you or me,
He pleaded with people, for them to
see.

Not one on whom the varnish of
happiness feigned,
But the one filled with sorrow, he
was full of hurt and felt despised.

He no longer believed that life was a
beautiful dream, a gift.
Death felt a respite from the hells of
jealousy and rifts.

He saw each day pass over and over,
Nothing he could do to stop the flow
of his life's river.

He could not change the course of his
train, only stop it;
A crevasse in a heart, darkness lit.

He wanted not to, but was obliged,
To play a lone hand, for he felt not
loved.

An absence of companionship,
Dashed to the rocks was a
magnificent ship.

Despair crept in and interrogated.
Ones that he had no answers to, left
unanswered.

He was his worst enemy and best
friend,
Yet when he tried to stand out, he
always had to blend.

He was a drop, not a river.
He was of his life a passenger, but
not the driver.

And finally when he tried to make
himself visible,
All he did was to make sure that he
forever will be invisible.

And he knew that from now, till the
end of his days,
He would always feel alone and his
life would be a murky haze.

~Shreyas Das,
Step By Step School

Sudiksha

The malignancy in humans will eventually come back to haunt them

Bringing enemies to their knees,
Yet, I do not accept defeat.
A world full of abundant evidence,
Pinpointing strong allegations.
They are all guilty,
Sentenced to damnation;
Standing before their actions,
Accepting consequences.
Solemn to stop
This forbidding evil.

There is a dark malignant power in
life,
Nature has been not malignant,
The ocean is not malignant,
Nor are animals ever malignant.
There is nothing evil in them,
But only in us,
Humans.

Evil comes from us,

Humans are malignant.
Evil is not a thing,
Only a luring noise;
It is not a condition,
But a choice.
Evil is a choice,
You are only what you choose.
That alone is what makes you, you.
Evil is merely a hard truth.

This isn't you,
Standing in the darkness;
These unforgivable sins,
Creating unfortunate events.
Leaving you in oblivion,
With hopeless faith for freedom.

It has taken control of you,
This immorality, malignancy.
Evil has corrupted you.
Does it not ultimately
Feel like eternal suffering to you?

~Sudiksha Khemka,
Step By Step School

Tanussree

Untitled

Some things are easier said in verses,
Some things can only be read from
between the lines.
Some things can't be spelt out,
So listen close and pay attention,
I would hate for you to miss out.

I feel empty sometimes.
I can't decide if being drunk on
emotions is worse or
Being indifferent is what bothers me
more.
Sometimes I sit with my arms tightly
encased around me,
Some days I wail without noise.
If tears cascade, it's an easy night.

But when I look at you,
I can close my eyes,
Without worrying about the crimson
red cries.

When your arms are sheathed
around me,
I can breathe.
That rib crushing weight is lifted
off me,
When I feel your warmth against
me,
I can sleep.
The demons can no more chase me
through the night.

Then again there are times
When hell is unleashed in my mind.
Chaos is all it is inside,
Yet my body is limp
And unfeeling.
The foreign thoughts control it all.
Foreign because they aren't mine,
And yet they're inside.
They drive the walls up,
And torment me to be beyond
exhausted.

How can I then cry for help,
Form words that both ostracise and
minimise?

I'm besieged in darkness,
But I see you trying to scale that wall.
I see you trying to reach out,
I see your frustration,
I see your need to protect me,
To shield me.
I see your despondency.
Even among the chaos, I'm there.
Seeing you fight against ur
helplessness,
I wonder,
Why can't I?
It's easier somehow now, to fend,
To breathe and clear my head.
It's easier now, to put the personified
thoughts back in their place.
I might stand there sometimes and
wait,
I might dangle my feet over the edge.
But I want you to know, that
If not for me, then for you-
If the train comes,
I will move.

~Tanusshree Kandoi,
Step By Step School

Tara

Faraway

Your dark brown eyes used to glisten
With the subtle brightness of the
stars
It never scared me that I was so
consumed by them,
Never wanting to shift my glare
From the deepest abyss that they
were.

Looking at the stars together
Was a distant past reminiscence
Now every time I look up at the
midnight sky
Hoping to experience something,
anything
Be it pain, sadness, or anger
The only thing I can feel is a futile
emptiness.

The sky could be filled with the
brightest stars and perfect promises

But all I could think about is how
The only stars that mattered, were
taken from me
I wonder sometimes, however far
away
Maybe you look at the sky, wishing I
was beside you

I had so much more love to give
So many more memories to make
And so many more sleepless nights to
watch the sun come up
With you.
I wish I could've tried harder to take
your pain away,
But don't worry, I'll come see you
faraway someday.

~Tara Karni Devi Bajaj,
Step By Step School

Vikramaditya

When disaster strikes

When disaster strikes,
It is ironic how I always feel as
though the go days on and on.
And yet, when I see my calendar, I
am shocked as to how much time has
gone.
Nearly half a year has passed by, but
I can't remember what I have done
so far.
We used to think we would be free of
this curse by summer, now it feels
like the end is afar
I can't remember whether it is
Sunday or Wednesday, all days feel
the exact same.
But even today, the solution to COVID
is what everyone except a doctor
proclaims.
"It is bleach, the virus will die in
mere seconds, you will see,
Stop isolating because no virus can
survive herbal tea.

“And you can never go wrong with
drinking a cow’s pee!”
No one saying such things has a
doctor’s degree.
Everyone is suffering and deep in
prayer,
I have heard so much bad news that
now I don’t care;
It is sad when you become numb to
such things,
But such is the terror that disaster
brings.

~Vikramaditya Ghose,
Step By Step School

Vindya

An ever widening drift

Only the deceased have truly known
the war

The world which was dreamful of a
beautiful tomorrow

Now a broad field of battle
encompassing masonry of sorrow

The world with the fond hope of
unity and harmony

Now filled with envy and acrimony

Wandering over the hills unseen

Following the river of death
downstream

As water falls fast, to the putrid pool
below

Now a place with the cloying smell of
blood

When soldiers wade through waist-
deep in water

Fingers shivering while pulling the
trigger

The coppery taste of fear
The smell of acrid charcoal of
gunsmoke
In conjunction with the tears
While adults flail at enemies
Young hearts fill with anguish and
torment

Life confined to a tombstone
Yellow ribbons still on the brink of
the firestone
Spun crystal light still scintillates at
the end of the trenches
While the sun sets peacefully in the
west

With heavy rain doused upon them
Men meld with the setting sun then
Whilst death brags its irreversible
count
Time's unstoppable river courses its
way bound

Breathing their last breath heavily
Violence becoming their last memory
Death now a new journey
Death was indeed not an enemy
Their brothers were...

~Vinaya Dua,
Step By Step School

Tagore International School

Adya

Logical Fallacy

A Faustian
Bargain was made,
Underneath roundtables
A game was played.

The King of fools
Dealt our hands,
Built this house of cards
Where he sang, he danced.
Now the wind's blowing
Blowing again.

Time was just
One of his slaves to kill
At councils and in palaces,
While underneath
We stood silent still
Defending him with our defeat
After all, we were beneath.

We live and relive
The ravages, the mistakes
As seconds and minutes dilate
Now clocks struck eternity
We're stuck in a loop of errors
Oh, end of certainty,

Inventions
And new discoveries
No rhyme or reason
Just illogicality.
Science for wars,
Wars for peace,
Peace for calamity.
Can't believe our reality
Is this our reality?

We hide and they seek.
Eyes on us,
But we can't see
In realpolitik
Who's the real enemy?

Now lock me up,
Set me free.
Oh, with missiles
You set me free,
And changed my name
To save the guilty.

I'll think I'll be alright
But I wish that my son could see
That out here,
There aren't any borders,
Only the wind blows
And whispers to trees.

We could fly,
Fly paper planes,
Race the moon
Through terrains
And dream a hundred dreams.

Now that I am up here
The order then seems uncanny
Thus today I conclude,
Reductio ad absurdum
Your truth is a fallacy
Reductio ad absurdum
Their truth is a fallacy.

~Adya Aggarwal,
Tagore International School

Adarsh

Silence

Often heard by accident, or maybe
desire
Is it acid, dissolved in air spreading as
wildfire?
Where the eye searches, and overlooks
its dreams,
Catching only dust particles and by
chance some oxides of sulfur or it
seems.

the occasional good performance glance
at the artist,
The awe of disbelief,
The expression of horror, the thought of
a clenched fist,
Whose touch so versatile, so lethal, yet
so brief.

I love it but sometimes,
Just sometimes, it echoes my past,
Reeks of my future but is as mute as my
present,
It can't say yet talks a million more
words than a singer.

It sits right beside me, yet bullied by
my humming,
I desire it when hearing criticism but
during tunes, find it bumming
It shines with the crystals of an earring,
Yet gets strangled by the holes of a
trumpet.

Sometimes it talks to me,
Pushing me over the edge between deaf
and observant,
It beckons to show me the people, the
audience where silence is acute.
Who can hear nothing but it, just deaf,
and others trying to speak like it and
mute.

I can hear yet I can't see, I can't heed.
No, I am talking about doom, not about
the demises
The apocalypse that surrounds us,
But silence saying indeed.

~ Aarush Chakrapani
Tagore International School

Dhrishiti

Growing Old

Raising a child,
Always forgiving them with a smile.
Knowing that one day when they wake up,
They will realise that
Now the candles won't fit on the cake.

Sometimes I question why I have that
terrible ache,
My mum says it's a part of old age.
Look how far you have come,
And how far you have to go.
Look at what a grand journey,
Your life has been till now.

Days pass so quickly now,
Nights are seldom long.
Life seems to be difficult,
Anxiety, depression, mood swings and so
much more.

Sometimes music is the only medicine,
To the heart and mind.
It calms the soul and relaxes the mind.
Nevertheless, music is the universal
language of mankind.

Time is the best healer,
It's the fire in which we burn.
God is the last hope,
Blessed people believe in Lords.

Don't spend time beating on a wall,
Hoping to transform it into a door.
Move on in life,
And create a positive room.

Your happiness is your choice,
So don't let anyone ruin it.
Your life is in your hands,
So try to improve it.

You can do it,
You will do it !

Hey youngster,
Overthinking and feeling insecure is alright.
Just be aware about it and accept it.
Take a deep breath and
Focus on your goals.

Let your mind relax for a while,
And become an observer of your mind.
Thoughts are like visitors who come and go,
Be concerned about the energy
You receive from the universe.

Feel every emotion,
There is nothing positive or negative
It's only our perspective.

Whenever you feel anxious,
Just perceive your breath.
Live every present moment,
And love yourself.

Child to teen,
Teen to adult
It's a long journey to go.
Have faith in yourself

We all know,
You can fight through anything,
Whether acne or your skin, or
Your evil friends win.

Don't let anyone distract you,
Whether it's your peers
Or my tears.

Keep going...
Keep rocking.

Stop reacting and start responding
Never be worried about anything,
When you have everything.

Love is always bestowed as a gift,
Persist those precious sets of emotions.
Never do anything as such,
That brings our head downwards.

Bright stars shine only when the sky is dark,
You will spark in my heart.
Stay blessed
Do your best !

~Dhrishti Verma,
Tagore International School

Kavya

My Eternal Light

Our story is timeless, unbound and free,
And yet it's a small rare occurrence.
Like fallen snow, and flurries on a tree.
In a hundred years may there be a recurrence.

Bless our friendship with light and bless it with
darkness.

Bless it with all things gems and thorns.
Warm comfort and unpleasantness,
Carbon to diamond, beauty may it adorn.

Even if a mystic may come on the door and knock,
And admonish me with arcane truths,
Must I never leave you, not even in a deadlock,
Because you are my precious Ruth.

Recognize your worth and let self-love ignite.
Or you may miss out on your perfume.
My twinkling and hopeful light,
It's time for you to bloom!

~Kavya Dhodapkar,
Tagore International School

Lalunpinkimi

Prisoner

Oh dear voice in my head,
What is it that you greed?
A helpless prisoner to you I am
And escape is all I plead.

From bitter regrets of the past
To fear of what lies ahead,
Merciless and without pause;
Your presence drowns my head.

You devour me from within
Brutally like a beast,
Eating away my fortitude
My sanity, your beloved feast.

Slowly robbing my senses
Your words are like thieves;
No matter what silence I seek
Your echo simply never leaves.

But alas, every thorn comes with
a bloom
And so do you, old friend,
For when loneliness surrounds me
It is on your songs that I depend.

For your never ending resonance
That so often brings me pain,
Is nothing but my dearest ally
Who shields me from the rain.

How funny it is that you,
The cause behind my cries;
Are no one but the same,
Who sings me comforting lullabies.

Even if darkness engulfs me
And till my last breath,
I know that we won't part
Unless it is by death.

So dear voice in my head
Though your prisoner I may be;
I must confess I do cherish
Your unconditional company.

~ Lalnunkimi Hnamte
Tagore International School

Lavanya

In The Making

A flower in the making
Hidden is the seed
Waiting for its turn
To see and be seen.

A flower in the making
Now it's growing through the dirt
Nurtured by the gardener
In his old, tattered shirt

A flower in the making
Bud bursting into bloom
Then at the eleventh hour
Comes the voice of impending
doom

“A flower in the making
It's as beautiful as me!
I surely must have it,”
The queen screamed with glee

A flower in the making
Wild fragrance no more
Owned by the opulent
A piece of décor
A flower in the making
Hidden is the seed
Blissfully ignorant
Of hearts cold as steel

~Lavanya Saha,
Tagore International School

Malvika

Star

You can't do it, stop this now
I control you, you should bow
Covering my ears, I fall down
Try to drown these voices out

You think you can one up me
I own you, now say sorry
You know you can't win this war
Give up now, you won't go far

But then I heard a voice
Shining through the loud noise
My mother telling me
"Oh darling can't you see?"

No matter what, it's your choice
To be tough or to be poised
You have power in your voice
Now go and show those boys"

I'm a girl and I'm blessed
Can't you see this is my test?
I will rise to be a star
You'll see that I'll go far

~Malvika Nair,
Tagore International School

Sadavi

Silence Is All I Have Now

I'm breaking into a million pieces,
But there is no one to hold them
together
Winds are blowing them away,
And I know that no one is going to fix
that weather
I was falling apart everyday ,
No one held my back so I ran away
My inner conscience tried to speak, but I
didn't allow
Because silence is all I have now.
At the end of the day I told myself to be
strong alone ,
And now I guess I'm on my own
Now that I am sitting alone, no one's
there by my side,
For a second everything feels fake and
life is pushing me aside.
Moreover I understand that I was
wasting time on people who couldn't
understand a word ,
And for that they bullied me and called
me a nerd
My head is caught up and my soul is
tied,
Silence was eating me from inside.
Silence is all I have now

Lately my emotions have been
pouring on paper instead of tears,
Still my bullies couldn't figure out I
was the kindest person or closest to
near
But I wouldn't stop just because of a
little sarcasm
Even if they call me numb, dumb or
scum for my enthusiasm
I probably don't exist in that narrow
view of life,
Where I seem shallow and I could
barely survive.
Now, later in my life I am blessed
and happy
And everything actually feels fine.

~Saanvi Mehta
Tagore International School,

Saira

Welcome

WELCOME to the society
Here your bodies will be shamed
Here people won't leave you
Until you scream in pain

Don't try to fit in.
You will never be able to escape.
Don't try to build an empire
For all they will give you is hate.

WELCOME to the society
Here people will judge
more than the courtrooms will ever do
Here the guilty will never be accused

Don't trust them
For all they will do is break your heart
It is easy to love the devil
When the devil looks like a star

WELCOME to the society
Let's play a game
The one who survives till the end
wins the game

~Saira Bhateja,
Tagore International School

Sambiyak

My Vision of Mother Earth

My vision of Mother Earth,
What should it be?
Should it be tropical trees,
With busy buzzing bees?;

Or scintillating seas,
With churning water and a cool
breeze?
Should it be unadulterated air
Blowing freely here and there?;
Or pleasant peace,
Putting everyone at ease?

Should it be Mystical mountains
Striking with clouds to make fabulous
fountains?;
Or radiant rainbows
Spreading joy to and fro?

Achieving this can be a tedious task,
Why not join hands and ask?
“O Mother Earth, we have caused you
harm

Please forgive us and bless us with your
charm; Under your care
mankind survived,
But we took it for granted and left
you deprived;
O, celestial being we are ashamed of
our deeds, Together we will fulfil all
your needs;
Spreading awareness to a world such
diverse, We will ensure you keep on
giving births.”

~Sammyak Jain,
Tagore International School

Simrat

The World Beneath

,Devoured by the misty sea
Drowning beneath her depths,
Glimpses of lustre and radiance
Green as emerald,
Serene as a star in the night sky.
The dolphins dance their way ahead,
The lumpy jellyfish with it's
fluctuating charm,
While the lobsters trot behind
All trying to bypass the big, bad, old
shark.

Down under lie all the mysteries,
Among the mumbling creatures
And the twiddling currents,
Allured by the world beneath,
And the outside facade completely
hushed,
Floating there forever and ever
Felt as if I could breathe underwater.

But as i run out of breath
I crawl back to the shore
And my equanimity splinters,
All I see is a cloud with a golden lining
As the ocean lifts its arm, touching the
shore,
The waves stand there whispering,
Calling out to the silky sand.
And the water strokes my feet,
Thereby I lie, exhaling my past
And breathing into my future.

~ Simrat Oberoi
Tagore International School

Shubhangi

The Ring Of Acceptance

You'll both wear the ring,
Diamond, ruby or gold.
Warmth and comfort it'll bring,
And your heart will unfold.

You'll protect it from water,
And longing glances of a stranger.
Wouldn't sell in for a thousand
pounds or a quarter,
And you would never take it off,
ever.

You'll both start being careless,
But still wear it for a long time.
You'll convince yourself it's flawless,
Because taking it off would
be a crime.

The texture will feel rough,
And the shine now seems faded,
As the layers of coating peel off,
All along, it was painted.

You'll hastily throw it away,
Go and shout in the goldsmith's
face.
You're on your own, you'll live
your way,
And leave the ring at its place.

But when the moon and stars
will rise,
You'll bend and pick it.
Not a glare or tear will escape
your eyes,
Around it, a sweater of your fingers
you'll knit.

You'll never wear it again,
But you'll keep it like a treasure.
The ring was first joy, then pain,
And you'll hold close to you, all
the pleasure.

~Shubhangi Aparajita
Tagore International School

Shadyan

Money

A desire possessed by every heart
Something with which we never want to part
A source of motivation for all
Without it, we just seem to fall
All our problems it seems to solve
To earn more money is everyone's resolve
Its value changes from country to country
Money

Yet, there is something amiss
Is money really good: ask yourself this
A cause of social and economic disparity
When money is sight, we forget about
humanity
Of many deaths and many crimes, it has been
a cause
It does not deserve much applause
The walls that it has erected among us are
many
Money

We must realise
Greed for money is not wise
Money is a mere necessity
We should not let it interfere with global
brotherhood and equality
Never to let it be a way of inflicting pain
Such should be our aim
It is in our hands, not to let it become a cause
of worry
Money

~Smayan Gupta,
Tagore International School

Vadanya

Neverland

If I could've been with you tonight,
I would sing you to sleep
I'd never let them take away the light
behind your eyes
One day, You'll lose this fight
When you fade into the darkness,
Just remember,
You will always burn, as bright.

With every passing day,
You'd be lying, if you said you
were fine
Just be strong and hold my hand.
When the time comes for you, I'll
understand
But for now, will you let me
Stay by your side?

As our fingers lock in together
We take a trip down memory lane
The day we went waltzing through
the empty corridors
Your gorgeous locks, intertwining
within the tip of my hand
The day we dreamed
To fly till never land

The taste of your lips,
Forever engraved on my tongue.
Your dulcet voice
Forever echoing in my ears.
Your eyes, Your oh so gorgeous orbs,
A pair I couldn't help but fall into.
While in your mind, your existence
was nothing but flaws,
For me, your existence was nothing
but perfection.

I promised, I'd protect you,
From those monsters in your
nightmares
But how can I,
Protect you from your own decaying
mind?
I promised, I'd keep hope alive,
But how can I,
When those eyes of yours are no
longer shining, your tanned skin,
slowly draining color?
How can I, keep these promises,
when the only one, I've ever loved,
is slowly letting go of my hand?

I wasn't with you tonight,
And they took away the light behind
your eyes
Today, you lost this fight
And faded into the darkness,
Just remember,
You still burn as bright

But sadly, all good things must come to
an end

Today is the day we bid goodbye,
I hope you enjoy your stay,

On the island of Neverland

~Vaanya Kalra,
Tagore International School

Vasant Valley School

Adangsh

A Betrayal of Sanctity

A free man of North Africa,
as rare as they come,
he stirs in me, a desire,
to hear the wedding drum.

His name - Othello,
the protector of Venice,
a Moor yet a General,
the product of his penance.

Started from the netherworld,
rose through the ranks,
all Venetians are grateful,
They bow and give their thanks.

A warrior so undeniable,
he'd put Hercules to shame.
There's yet to be one to match
him,
for there are none stronger than
his flame.

I wish to marry this soldier of gold,
I wish to soothe his flame.
I wish this against all godly odds,
though I shall damn my
family's name.

I shall not shed a tear thus,
for I am not as passive as Portia.
I shall choose my smiles and sorrows.
In God's name, I pray, Hallelujah.

~Aadarsh Chowdhury
Vasant Valley School

Aadhya

What other people say

She walked down the busy street,
Laughing and talking with her friends
She looked confident
Because that was the only way she could blend

But on the inside, a million thoughts were racing
Inside her mind
Feeling like everyone could hear how annoying it was
Every single thought unconfined

Everyone made fun of her...
Those so-called friends to her face
But she would laugh it off
Pretending like it didn't sting
But it was obnoxious
So they weren't to blame

She hated her voice so much
But of course, couldn't do anything about it
"Maybe if I just quit talking.." she thought to herself
Maybe that way I can fit

They would help her gain confidence
Compliment her from time to time
Yes, it made some difference
Yes, she started to shine

Of course she's not rid of the insecurities
Sure she has those bad days
But now she soars like a free bird
She doesn't care what people think about her What
they have to deal with because of her She soars
Because she doesn't care about what other people say....

~Aadhya Bharara,
Vasant Valley School

Adandini

Bid Adieu

The surreal feeling of losing someone,
Knowing that you won't see them,
knowing that their life is done.
It takes a great deal of time and is
tough to accept,
To see your reduced family that is all
you have left.

Knowing that you won't see their
smile,
Knowing that they won't see you walk
down the aisle.
Knowing that all you have left are
memories,
Trying to recall all the moments you
spent together, each and every.

Trying to recall their voice and their
laughter,
Remembering all the times they
responded to your questions with
clever answers.
Reminiscing the moments they sang
for you,
Oh how I miss it, I didn't even get a
chance to bid adieu.

Questioning God on why He took
them away,
Hoping that they found peace, I
desperately pray.
At least they're reunited with all
those who they lost,
But how I want them back, no matter
the cost.

Longing to see their infectious smile,
Their disabled number I long to dial.
Seeing no one sit on their designated
chair,
It all just feels like a never ending
nightmare.

Spending 15 years of my life with
them,
It's not something I would ever want
to forget,
Saddens me to know they won't see
the woman that I eventually become,
At least there's no moment with
them that I will ever regret.
Reminiscing the moments they told
their childhood days to you,
Oh how I miss it, I didn't even get a
chance to bid adieu.

~Aanandini Tayal,
Vasant Valley School

Advaita

I Will Never Know

I lie wide awake at midnight,
Unable to fall asleep.
I hear whispers and beeping
machines,
I hear a muffled weep.

I feel the ache in her chest,
I listen to the painful groans.
Uneasiness when she turns on
her bed,
Interrupted by the doctors' ever-
ringing phones.

An eerie fear creeps up my
spine,
I have a lump in my throat.
Trying to lull myself into a light
slumber,
Frequently, I wake up with a jolt.

As the sunlight enters through the
window,
Near my bed, I vaguely see a
crowd.
Documents are being signed,
And she is not around.

The relatives wonder in dismay,
What more could they have
done?
Even during the shortage of
resources
An ICU bed she had won.

I tried to stop my tears,
As I donned the oxygen mask.
While the echoing wails of her
family,
Bored a hole in my heart.

The tears flowed uncontrollably
now,
They're very disloyal to me, you
see.
I mourned, said a silent prayer,
Even though she had never even
met me.

All I knew was -

She was woman that deserved better,
Not to die of a flu - not so mild.
She was a mother to a son,
A little baby she left behind.

She was a sister,
The best anyone could ask for,
She was a wife,
Whose husband only wanted her life
saved and nothing more.

She was a friend,
One, on whose shoulder you could
cry,
She was an aunt,
Who always made the best pies.

But most importantly, she was a
doctor,
Who sacrificed her life to save so
many more.
Why would god save me, a ninety
year old, over her?
I will never know.

~Advaita Sehgal,
Vasant Valley School

Aryaman

Beloved Family

My family is there with me on
lows,
they are there when I'm on a high.
They know when I'm in the mood
for dominos,
and I love them all till the sky.

My mother is a carefree person,
she cooks the best food ever.
When she isn't around things
worsen,
she takes care of us whatsoever.

My father is the one who provides,
he works day and night.
He is like a friend,
and has taught us to do what is
right.

My sister is the one I can always
talk to,
the one that's always there by me.
And when I'm in a crisis,
she will definitely pull me through.

My grandfather is so cool,
he lets me do whatever.
With him, there are no rules,
and he is very clever.

My grandmother always
agrees with me,
and I can always count on
her.

Once I got hurt on my knee,
and she fixed it in a blur.

So this is my beloved family,
a house of loving people.
I live here very happily,
without any upheaval.

~Aryaman Mehra,
Vasant Valley School

Anshuya

My Neighbourhood Streets

On the rare occasions of walking my
neighborhood streets,
I feel the thrill of a child who gets to try
their first sip of cola.
It triggers an invigorating tingle to my
feet,
like the taste buds that uncontrollably
bounce with each gulp of soda.
But each time I try to quit, it provokes me
to take yet another sip.
And my feet rhythmically spring to walk
another step.
Oftentimes I ask myself, “Must I risk
another step?
Or will my addictive nature lead me to a
path, astray, where I may be
compromised?”
And that is when I reach my conclusion:
I am not welcomed by my own land;
I’m a pariah trudging beyond my borders.
I find it queer to see babies afraid to sleep
in their cradle.
Isn’t it meant to be their haven -
the most familiar place after a mother’s
bosom?

And so, aren't my neighborhood lanes
supposed to be as familiar as the creases
that run through my palm?

But, I guess, spending time indoors has
given me my answers.

Answers, that have become an implicit
reality to everyone who looks like me.

And everyone who has the same longing, the
same questions, and the same fear as me.

And why I and a million others don't walk
on our neighborhood streets.

It is partly because these streets aren't
meant to be trodden by the likes of me,
but be ground upon by a platoon of
machines driven by my superiors.

Or perhaps, streets are places for them to
exhibit their divine hegemony;

for they drive their repugnant ambition
while assuming their position on the top.

And naturally, like the streets, our hands
cannot ask for help,

for we're crushed like cement under their
force.

Or maybe only when we walk, do the streets
switch their purpose.

From providing a straight route to a
destination,

they meander and twist like paths in the
woods,

creating a labyrinth so most of us get lost.

And thus,
They provide space for wild animals to
hunt their prey.
After all, we are, but, deer,
relying on the headlights to not become
the beast's feast.
But we don't hide, nor wish to be hidden.
We still step out on the streets,
whether or not we may be bitten.
The streets are dark, our fears even
darker.
In a confrontation with them, some of us
fall but most of the times
It teaches us how to stand up and walk
even farther.
Maybe that's why we're willing to take
another step.
Maybe our fears are what show us
our strengths.
Maybe the darkness in our
neighbourhoods forces us to see the light.
The light in us.

~Arshya Gaur,
Vasant Valley School

Bhavini

It's a Journey

Days overlap to form years, paving
the path for this odyssey,
Life is a compilation of phases:
Infants, adolescents, adults and
elderly.
Like a burning candle soon
extinguishes, and a full moon
undergoes reversal,
Celebrate your peaks and push
through valleys because life comes
full circle.

The miniature fingers and bald head,
those magical eyes that are a window
to your soul,
You go from short to tall, and the hair
on your head is as shiny as gold.
As a young caterpillar you get ready,
to mature and weave your cocoon,
You leave your childhood behind,
and hope to become a bold and
beautiful butterfly.

Crushed under the weight of
innumerable responsibilities,
You were once the pampered child
but now, it appears as if you've got
invisibility.

This time is when daughters must
move out of their homes, and sons
become independent,
Why are we forced to forget the
things that made our childhoods
resplendent?

This is the way that society has been,
we can't change it or oppose it,
We abandon those who gave birth to
us,
A brunette turns grey and our faces
get wrinkled,
Soon we shall be light years away
and a part of those stars that twinkle.

Our loved ones shed tears, lamenting
while they look at our tombstones,
They put on their sad playlists and
still hear our voice through the
headphones.

“What is the afterlife?” is a question
that no one’s answered yet,
Everyone’s life will end someday so
make sure you’ve got no regrets.

~Bhavini Nagpal,
Vasant Valley School

Darsh

Life

The greatest gift, the greatest illusion,
The longest race and toughest struggle.
Our every moment has an image of confusion,
Each action stems from an unending quest,
For Dream and desire drive this senseless fire,
We burn through the uncharted valleys of time,
And through these scorched pathways our life is made,
But is it actually worth this treacherous climb.

We begin in the most delicate and graceful way,
But choose to grow up with feverish haste.
From nursery rhymes to Shakespeare's plays,
Time flies and years are enshrined in moments

We are told to 'Grow Up' by the very same men,
Who gain their stature from the years they have
passed.

They struggled in small cabins in the prime of life
And believe this struggle has made them oracles at last.
But even these 'wise' men have a hidden conscience,
A moment of guilt and realisation comes through,
God speaks to them; "Hold on my child,
The immature one is actually you."

For they tell you tales of maturity,
But do they regret the routines they didn't follow,
No! They regret the puddles they didn't jump in,
And this memory of vibrance keeps their heart hollow.

They miss the fun they could have and should have
had,
And regret that excuse, that dodge they used to escape,
For life is short, but deep enough to understand,
That the only day you get to live is today.
The greatest gift, the greatest illusion,
The shortest experience but invaluable indeed,
For its beauty lies in every act so futile,
But the story they stitch is what makes life unique.

~Darsh Puri,
Vasant Valley School

Kabir

Looking through the prism

We only see things as black and white,
Ignore the beautiful hues of a rainbow -
colors so bright. We snub people and
hurt their feelings,
Shatter their dreams of breaking the
glass ceiling.

They share their innermost thoughts
and feelings, Bruised egos and hearts
that are bleeding.
It took mighty courage for them to come
forward, It's time to bridge the gap, we
can't be cowards. Often mocked at, they
bear the brunt
They feel trapped, let's halt the witch-
hunt.

Have no prejudices, we can't afford to
marginalize Are we not humane enough
to hear their stifled cries? LGBTQ+
treated as though they are not the same,
Taking blame for what they have no
control over It's such a shame!
They are only looking for acceptance in
our hearts, Let's join them in their
moment of joy and do our part.

We call ourselves modern and progressive,
Reality bites, in many ways we are so
oppressive. I wonder why it's so difficult to
be accepting of others, The judging, the
exclusion, it only smothers.
God created each one with uniqueness
Special in our own way, yet it's considered
a weakness.

Dressed in beautiful costumes, they march
in the parade Participate with all the zeal
and take pride in their crusade. Celebrated
the world over amidst gaiety and joy What a
stellar show.... boy o boy!

Denial and deceit only lead to heartbreak
Live and let live should be the motto for
everyone's sake Life is a precious gift, let it
be a journey of bliss Lived with a smile and
eyes without mist.
Let's embrace them, lets applaud
Rise to the occasion and prevail over
all discord.

~Kabir Bahl,
Vasant Valley School

Kareena

The secret of my being

Till the stars meet the land,
till the moon unites with the dark water,
till the sun fades away,
it still is, never too late,
to be
what I might have been,
by altering the vicious cycle of surviving
to make my life a way of thriving,
letting silence be my weapon.
Silence, everyone thinks is gentle.
Instead, it's shocking,
threatening.
Powerful enough to take my soul out of
my mouth.
I am finding freedom in chaos.
The silent chaos which I can't see, but can
feel under my skin.
Just constant silent chaos and me.
I want to be the calm before the storm,
the silent movement of ground before an
earthquake.
Not like war because all it creates is
havoc,
but like famine- silent but deadly when it
attacks.
Behind my light,
there is also a shadow
hidden behind a modicum of security.

Afraid
of becoming ghost
remains of what I could have been, but
never was.
Living a compulsive lie,
disguising it with truth,
struggling with my dreams and demons
while they jostle for a win.
I think of my life as purgatory,
where my nightmares turn into reality.
Consciously embracing my secrets,
and becoming one with thousand regrets.
Flinching at my shadow, eclipsing in
the corner
because it knows what hides in front of it.
Sometimes I want to take out all my
inhibitions
and dump them at my feet,
for the bitter tears shall never taste so
sweet.

But when dark water surrounds me,
with just my shadow to cling onto,
I would want to be a wave
no matter how wild I get.
Always bowing down to the strong rocks on
the shore.
Because liberation mixed with steadiness
is where I can conquer without a battle.

~Kareena Grewal,
Vasant Valley School

Kynda

Dream World

Every morning
she promises herself that she will
change,
that she will get away from the toxicity
all around,
but she feels like she is in a cage.

A social butterfly-
she went to school each day with a smile
plastered on her face,
interacting with anyone and everyone,
she would always greet her friends with
an embrace.

She has a close group of friends,
whom she trusts with her life,
but they are not there for her,
they always stab her in the back with a
sharp knife.

They don't mean a single 'sorry' that they
have said,
she keeps going back to them after
listening to their fake cries,

they pressurize her into doing what
they want,
they only include her once she complies.

None of them realize how toxic their
friendship has become,
she gets hurt every day,
but she stays loyal to them and hopes for
change.
Little does she know, she is not their first
prey.

School used to be her only escape,
from everything that was going on in her
life,
now she wants to run away,
from all the pain cutting into her like a knife.

From the outside,
her life looked picture-perfect,
but as you peek into her world,
you see that she only pretended.

Because that is what people and society
expect.

She wants to run away to her dream world-
a world where all her wishes came true.
A world where she could finally be happy,
but for now, she is sad and blue.

Seeing others hurt hurts her the most.
In her dream world, everyone would be
cheery,
but sadly for her, a dream world is just that
- a dream.
And she has no escape from her painful
reality.

-Kyra Dhar,
Vasant Valley School

Mannat

Fake it till you make it

Get up, take a shower, brush your
teeth, you don't wanna smell
Then look in the mirror and tell
yourself, "damn I look like hell."

Straighten your hair, braid them up,
Because if you don't people will talk
about how
your hair is more tangled than the
earphones in your pocket.

Put on some make up, apply blush on
those pale cheeks
Mascara and lip gloss until you're
satisfied with your face's new tweaks
Cos every time you look in the
mirror, you feel you aren't good
enough, but the makeup helps
You're scared they'll hate you, so you
end up changing yourself.

Make sure you push back the tears
threatening to leak out of your eyes
Or you'll ruin the perfect painting
you've painted on your imperfect
face.

Then push your feet into those tight
heels your friends have been
wearing,
You're ready to leave the house
But make sure you skip breakfast;
They're all so skinny and you can't be
the odd one out

No pain no gain,
Fake it till you make it

Now as you step out the car, you feel
you're fake confidence wilting
So you make sure to guard yourself
with walls higher than the empire
state building,
Then take a deep breathe and look
around until you see a familiar face
One that's smiling, waving at the
imposter that has somehow taken
your place
You wave back and join a group that
can walk you to class
Cos God knows you can't walk alone,
so you hide in the mass.

You don't even like these people, they
bully others and cuss
But they're the popular kids, so you
make yourself look comfortable and
adjust,
Because walking alone to class would
be like being trapped in the stocks
Where people are throwing tomatoes
in the form of judgements and mocks
And you can't stand up for yourself;
you're trapped and defenseless
And the popular kids are the royally
dictating your sentence .

No pain no gain,
Fake it till you make it

But as your day goes by, every
comment, every complaint, every
look, every grade

Fuels your doubts, till your self
esteem goes spiraling down the drain
You look at every girl, you're heart
racing a mile a minute
Wondering why you couldn't be her,
until you finally reach your limit.

But you don't let it show, don't let
your confidence quiver
Because if you crack they won't
respect you.

At the end of the day as you get ready
for bed
You look into the mirror and hear
your inner voice say
“Wow, did I really get fatter today?”

As you undo your hairdo, the same
voice says your hair looks like a mop
And you get into bed, wishing the
voice would stop
You comfort yourself by burying into
the folds of your blanket,
But it's false security because you
know what tomorrow holds

But no pain no gain,
Fake it till you make it.
Right? Wrong.

I'm scared they won't hear me, so I'll
scream louder
I'm scared they won't like me, so I'll
become another
I'm scared they will leave me so I
won't let them in
I'm scared they'll forget me, so I'll
keep reminding them I'm right here
I'm scared of their opinions, so I'll
silence mine
I'm scared they will hurt me, so I
won't let them know me,

I'm scared that will lock me up, so I'll
keep running away
I'm scared they'll make me one of
them so I'll stay outside
I'm scared they'll devour me, so I'll
devour myself.

You're nothing. You're not good
enough. No one can fix you.
These are all the things you start to
tell yourself
You look at other girls wishing you
could look like them,
while those other girls look back,
wishing they were you
Both wanting to be another, don't see
their own importance.

Everyone in this generation is
corrupted by its infection
Forgetting that they're human, and
strive for inhuman perfection.
I swear it's not just you, everyone has
it tough,
Everyone looks in the mirror and
thinks they're not good enough.

According to society a thin waist,
blonde hair, white teeth
and a pretty smile is ideal

They'll make you feel like you
aren't gonna fit in unless you start
skipping ur meals
So you push and push yourself,
Until you finally break and it
affects your mental health
And then some day when you'll
turn 18,
You'll think about the little girl you
used to be,
The girl who just wanted a happy
life
With her loving friends by her
side,
But as she became older her
friends turned cold,
So she changed herself to fit into
their mould
And tried drinking and parties just
for show,
And the world thinks she's happy,
But she's searching for someone
who'll accept her.

But hey,
Fake it till you make it,
No pain no gain,
Right?
Wrong.
And then some day when you'll
turn 18,
You'll think about the little girl you
used to be,

The girl who just wanted a happy life
With her loving friends by her side,
But as she became older her friends
turned cold,
So she changed herself to fit into
their mould
And tried drinking and parties just
for show,
And the world thinks she's happy,
But she's searching for someone
who'll accept her.

But hey,
Fake it till you make it,
No pain no gain,
Right?
Wrong.

~Mannat Kukreja,
Vasant Valley School

Mehrek

Upbringing

We all arrive in this world the
same,
a clean slate.
Innocent eyes and a body,
which possesses not a drop of hate.
How we turn out truly,
depends completely on fate.

From there the road bifurcates,
and us children, our parents
domesticate.
Mold us into whoever, whatever
they want,
as certain values, they implant,
so young, naive, we cannot even
recant.

Parents,
our first coaches,
in this twisted game called life.
Some invested, while others sit
silently,
engulfed in their own strife.

Yet, the homo sapien infant,
can see and perceive.
Pick up every little detail,
its actions based on,
observation and imitation.

Just think,
an impressionable mind,
awakes in the middle of the night,
to the muffled screams of his
Mother-
who an inebriated villain,
is trying to smother,
only to realize- wait!
The face behind the wicked mask
is one all too familiar.
In fact- it's familial!

The Father,
come day-time,
Becomes sober and free of crime.
And so it seems like this cruelty is
only part-time?
The child sees the Mother act,
like it's any other day.
Just a little concealer dabbed,
onto the sore black eye.

But this strange occurrence,
who will demystify?
Will it pass unnoticed? unspoken?
Well then,
'It must be acceptable,'
concludes the toddler.
Who naturally,
expectedly,
grows up unstable.
And his children too,
encounter the same violence,
around the dinner table.

In this case,
the eyes did the learning,
the parents unaware,
of his witnessing,
of the hidden nightmare.

But what of certain knowledge,
that is drilled into children's heads.
Judgment, jealousy, homophobia,
hate, racism, rage.
They hear religious verses,
a long list of virtues and sins.
And so, the parents begin.

“Boys like blue, and girls
like pink,
Stay away from the chinks!
Beta, darker skin is not desired,
Smear on some of this,
Fair and Lovely I’ve acquired.
A successful person is one,
with a respectable degree,
and their money should grow on
trees.
Does it really matter if they’re
happy?
Look at that shameless girl.
The one that’s giving her mini skirt
a twirl,
Short top and legs out bare.”

The gal was just 12, they were
unaware.
They tell their kids,
‘Don’t eat too much, you’ll get fat,’
but in another dress it’ll be,
‘Oh dear, your chest looks flat.’
So these little children
are taught to hate,
to carry these mindsets
that are hard to forget.

It all comes down to
Childhood,
Nurturing,
Upbringing.

But something is being done
wrong,
children's upbringing,
is instead bringing them down.

This vicious cycle will end,
when there comes a generation
that can transcend-the spite and
malevolence,
teach their children,
to respect,
love,
and open their mind,
to a better future,
for all of mankind.

~Mehek Anand,
Vasant Valley School

Nikasha

An unbeatable barrier

The mirror gave her a cold gaze,
a gaze that left her frozen.
That one minuscule mark on her
face
defined who she was and how much
she could achieve.

“Stop eating sugar” he ordered, but
what could she do?
She was just a normal child,
yearning for a normal life.
Looking longingly at her brother’s
red lollipop,
full of sugary goodness, the treat she
deserved.

She wanted to run faster than
the wind,
but what could she do, confined to
the four walls of the kitchen?
Having to meet boys double her age,
boys she would later marry, just to
be their slave.

That was all she was good for, doing
domestic work.

The dark light at 3 am, the quiet in the
city,
running against the cold wind, was the
feeling she loved.

The feeling, that had been snatched
from her.

Running as fast as she could,
Hoping not to get caught by her
parents.

She knew she was fat and the boy's
joke,
Her thyroid was untreated, her illness
was something to laugh about.

She wanted to go to school,
But she couldn't, the talks of the
villagers paralyzed her,
But what did she do? She rented books,
And opened a gateway to the world of
learning.

She gazed out of the window,
asking herself "What is wrong with
me?"

Asking herself "Why can't I just be a
normal girl?"

Asking herself "Why can't I dream
big?"

She looked down upon the street,
hoping for once she could step out,
forget that she's a woman, forget about
the dangers,
the dangers of being a woman in India.

She glanced at her brother, her brother
who was notorious,
who had been gifted with a childhood,
a childhood full of fun, friends, cricket
and family,
wanting to be him, just for a day.

“There's always hope at the end of the
rainbow.”

“I will never give up, and keep fighting.”

“I will fight against the odds.”

“I will forget about his comments.”

These phrases echo in the head of every
Indian girl.

Why must parents pressurize only girls to
get married?

Why must parents pressurize girls to be
lean, thin, and attractive in the eyes of
men? Why must every Indian girl be a
victim of abuse?

Gender- a constant barrier,
a barrier that has cost the lives of
many females.

A barrier that has abused females for
decades, centuries.

A barrier that will never allow women to
lead a lives like men.

If a teenage girl can climb Mount Everest.
If a teenage girl can fight for
climate change.

If a teenage girl can start a school for
the poor,

If a teenage girl can discover science, in a
whole new light.

Then I don't think there's anything to
worry about.

The power of femininity is something that
will never truly be accepted unless we
make a difference together
and overcome the greatest barrier of the
21st century.

~Nikasha Manaktala,
Vasant Valley School

Nipita

I am Free

The world is moving by too fast,
I can't catch up.
I try to run with the change,
but it's more than I can cope with.

So maybe I'll go at my pace,
and just look around me-
fireflies glowing, casting a feel of home,
the smell of wood in rain, old and
nostalgic.

I walk up the stairs,
with my dress fluttering down
in a billowing heap of satin.
My hair swirling in the breezy wind,
in a mess of tangled curls,
I look up.

Far and high, some thousand steps
more,
and I will find myself
among the thorns and snakes
from down below.

The step's too high to climb.
Its okay,
I've got time.
I'll find myself.

Going deep underwater,
my hair floats in front of me.
Gently, fish brush past me.
Somehow, I can breathe.
Somehow, my vision is clear.

I see far ahead,
the legacy of the dead.
For in the middle of the shipwreck,
is a shining diamond.
And in the rubble all around,
in the red of the stone,
I see myself.

Suddenly the thousand steps have
lead me to the last one.
Suddenly, I'm challenging the world.

Challenging myself-
how can I be the best?

Soaring in the air,
with wings of freedom
that stretch out to the edge
of the sky,
watching my reflection in the sea.

As long as I know who I am,
I am free.

Ruveer

Migrant Workers

In hope of finding a job, we left our villages.

Making a living for ourselves, feeding our families, enjoying certain privileges.

With covid striking and this lockdown, I feel we are permanently damaged.

No money left for paying rent, living in a government shelter, just like an orphanage.

I worked as a driver in a household on one of Delhi's streets,

I helped this family to go from one place to another.

With no job and no salary, the money needed is incomplete,
it will be extremely hard to recover.

It is a hard situation, nobody is coming to our rescue,

all we need are a few rotis which also are not in our possession.

I feel we are of no value,
politicians are busy fighting, saying that we are in an economic recession, not caring that the people like us are in depression.

With one opening, people like me,
along with their families will leave for our
hometown,
for this situation of ours, with no help
received from the government,
someone has to be held to account.

Add a With no running public transport, we
will have to go on foot.

With absolute discomfort and being
impoverished,
our dreams of settling in an urban area,
working there, and giving our children the
best education,
will be left shattered and demolished.

With our children and bags on our back,
walking on the road track,
in pain and distress,
we go back to where we started from
without many expectations for the future.

We wish we just remain safe and healthy.

~Ruveer Vohra,
Vasant Valley School

Saiesha

Bombs have no religion

“Bombs have no religion,”
Was the first thing
I heard from him.
Not more than 15 years old,
He sat in front of me,
Unable to move a single limb.
Blood was flowing out of
Every part of his body,
And both eyes were bruised.
I asked him several times,
Pleaded him and begged him
To tell me his name.
But even after beating, even after
torture,
Not a single word
From his mouth came.
I was shocked to see,
The lessons given to the young boy,
Beautifully brainwash his mind like a
toy.
A feeling of pity arose within me,
Seeing his childhood filled with
violence,

And thought how,
Instead of books and bats,
He was handed bombs and bayonets.
Just like his hands and legs,
His brain and heart
Had been cracked.
Tears rolled down my cheeks,
As I saw how that poor child's
Mind had been vigorously hacked
I threw the baton aside,
Eyes filled with water
I took a seat down.
I let myself and my mind drown.
I realized that young children were
being used,
To commit the filthiest crimes.
Are power and rule,
More precious than our kids?
I ask myself;
Can our children's future,
Be compared to
Such power or wealth?
If your opinion is "no",

Then we shall all unite
And let's try to resist
And if you think "yes"
Then helpless is even the lord
almighty, To do anything to help
humanity.

~Saiesha Mishra,
Vasant Valley School

Savya

Gobbledygook

I took a step forward,
And I went back,
What was this anomalous force?
I made a comeback.

I pushed myself forward,
But instead went rearwards,
Only to hit a wall,
This gobbledygook made me feel so
small!

This day grew stranger,
I saw my dog wearing my suit.
He started eating human food,
And even devoured my fruit!

I was left to eat his dog food,
For which some rather questionable
reason I enjoyed.
I then developed a somewhat loud bark,
But barking I did avoid!

Instead of playing on my iPad,
I chose to read my least favourite book,
Very soon—and I think you guessed it,
To it I was hooked.

On my way back,
I saw pigs in the trees...
And burying themselves in the mud,
Were none other than the bees!

I also saw horses flying,
And birds eating hay,
And then it struck me; how could I
forget?
It was Opposite Day!

~Savya Meattle,
Vasant Valley School

Siddharth

No More Regrets

Cut up some pork, fry with Hennessy
This will make Gordon remember me
I will show the human beings
I did not make it crookedly

It was supposed to be like that
Both of the ribs back-to-back
Not really a tacky snack
Add some sauce, then I become a
crackerjack

I don't get what was wrong
Baked, ten minutes long
Sauce, spicy and strong
Nothing was prolonged
I made my way through the throng
And presented it to the judges,
Hands out like a two-meter prong

Then the judges ate
Maybe I was too late
Time can teach hate
Maybe it's my fate
No achievements
Like a clean slate.

No!

I won't ever get it wrong

My history is too strong

This is where I belong

This is for the place where I'm from

I have got to get this tension off my chest

Every day I feel the constant pain and regret

I lost once, the reason for my distress

But never again, I will be blessed

Suddenly the bells started ringing

The chorus was singing

My eyes were stinging

The trophy was mine now,

I was finally winning

I go to my younger sister,

I kiss her

Tell her I missed her

Then she smiles and looks and says,

“Older Sister,

You had one more chance to do right,

It was tonight

You went out there and showed
yourself that it wasn't too late
So don't sit behind your bedroom
door
Walk on the stage because you are
who they are all calling for"

The happiness felt foreign
The spotlight was orange
I finally used that four-inch door
hinge
I was on the fringe
That is, the fringe of society.

I was successful
My life had been dreadful
Competition is suspenseful
Yes, it was stressful
But now, I am not regretful.

~Siddharth Mukherjee,
Vasant Valley School

Shubhkarma

Vermillion

I have seen many men.
The jovial, the gloomy, and the
crossed,
I feel their presence time and again.

Although, now as I begin to age,
long gone are my memories.
I forget, who I had lived with,
who rose me, took care of me.

I have taken care of some myself,
they look up to me as a star,
but today, a savior, they see in me.

They plead and they beg,
they seek an answer
for my idleness.
But I am helpless.

I stand there, just waiting,
for the excruciating pain
to plague my body.

I stand there knowing,
I will hear the cries
of the ones I raised,
their death before mine.

I stand there knowing
they have done no harm,
yet they will be punished.

I stand there knowing
they haven't even seen
the fruits of their hard work.
They will never see it.

The burned cigar fell
from the man's hand,
intentionally, I suppose.

It lands on a pad of dead grass.
The embers ignite the patch,
and the warm air blows it
towards us.
And I stand there defenseless.

The aggressive flames rise and soar.
They move and annihilate all in
their way-
like a ruthless knight on a mad
horse.

They call me once again.
I feel the fear, the distress, and
the agony.
They question,
'Why don't you do anything?'

Silence is the answer they get.
Silence is the answer I have.
Silence is all I can do.

I have no paws like a lion.
I have no wings like a bird.
I have no horns like a bison.
I have no guns like the man.
I have no legs for a run.
I have no arms to attack.
All I have are branches.

I can't protect myself.
I can't protect my children.
We have never caused any harm,
Yet, we will be draped in
Vermillion.

~Shubhkarman Singh Sandhu,
Vasant Valley School

Smit

Being the light of a darkness

The general notion of giving help,
I think, has been fixed to only some
examples,
To be kind to animals, to help the
needy,
To be self-sufficient, to not be greedy.

The general notion of giving help,
I think, should be broadened for
everyone,
It should make people realize, they
are not alone,
And that their grief is not only their
own.

When you see yourself crumbling
with grief,
When everything is falling apart,
Just remember the tree, which has
lost all its leaves, But still stands
upright, waiting for life to restart.

Life has its own twists and turns,
Sometimes you lose, sometimes you
win,
Sometimes you see the realms of
darkness,
And others, you see the glory of the
sun.

A word or two is the most one needs,
For that will give them the power to
face failure,
And the ability to rejoice if they
succeed,

These times have been demanding,
But when have we not been
understanding?

The mere satisfaction received, by
being the light in the darkness,
Is humanity truly known, only for its
harshness?

~Smit Bachan,
Vasant Valley School

Zehn

Perspective

The little girl and little boy, they settled
for a fight.

For each of them thought that they were
always right.

They called out to their mother to know
her perspective,

They thought that she was very smart,
much like a good detective.

“Well then”, said mother, sitting down
and making herself comfy,

“What is today’s discussion on?”, not
wanting to sound grumpy.

Every day her children fought and
reminded her of kittens,

for what one had, my that alone,
the other would be smitten!

“Well mummy, it is all her fault!”, the
little brother cried,

“She is just mean and bossy”, he said with
tears in his eyes.

“I did absolutely nothing!”, was the elder
one’s refrain,

“He’s just a cranky, silly boy!”, she said
with adequate disdain.

The mother quickly understood, what they were trying to say, for she had dealt with this before, almost every single day. She made them stand face to face, and hold each other's hands, Then she asked each one of them to raise their left hand. The children were confused as they saw ones left was the others right, and yet, strangely they realized that both of them were right.

“Perspective”, mother wisely said, “depends on where you stand. So, being rigid in your views, can put you in a troubled land.” She filled a glass with water and laid it on the table, “Half empty or half full, " is just a silly label. For it can mean the same thing, and it can mean it not, but not realizing such a simple fact, can land you in a spot!”

-Zehn Kashyap
Vasant Valley School

Vinda

LGBTQ+

Labels, they're everywhere,
They make some feel secure, and
others aware.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual,
transgender, queer,
Some proud and out, others
living in fear.

Fear of not being 'normal' or
disappointment from their loved
ones,

Of being treated differently, or
not being respected enough.

This dread in the mind, body,
and soul,

Is the simple fault of society, as a
whole.

“Why must we be different?
Why must this be a cause for
your dismay? This is not our
fault! We were born this way!”

A fault? To love one of their own,
is committing a crime?

To instead hide behind a mask,
away from who you are, all the
time?

All people are beautiful, and
must be free,
Free from the rules and norms of
our ever 'honorable' society.
For we are all just humans,
trying to smile and make it
through,
Always remember, I am valid,
and you are too.

For those in the closet, don't
stress over a label, it does not
define you, Jump out when
you're ready, I love and support
you.

So boring it would be if all
flowers were red, and all t-shirts
white,
Like the seven different colors of
a rainbow, we must all unite.

Ernest J Gaines once said "Why
is that, as a culture, we are more
comfortable seeing two men
holding guns than holding
hands,"

We must learn to accept and
evolve, and together, expand.
To be comfortable in your skin,
and happy with who you are,
Is more important than any box
or label, by far.

You are not answerable to
anyone, but your heart, which
must always be placed above,
Because in the end, love is love.

~Vira Chhatwal,
Vasant Valley School

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