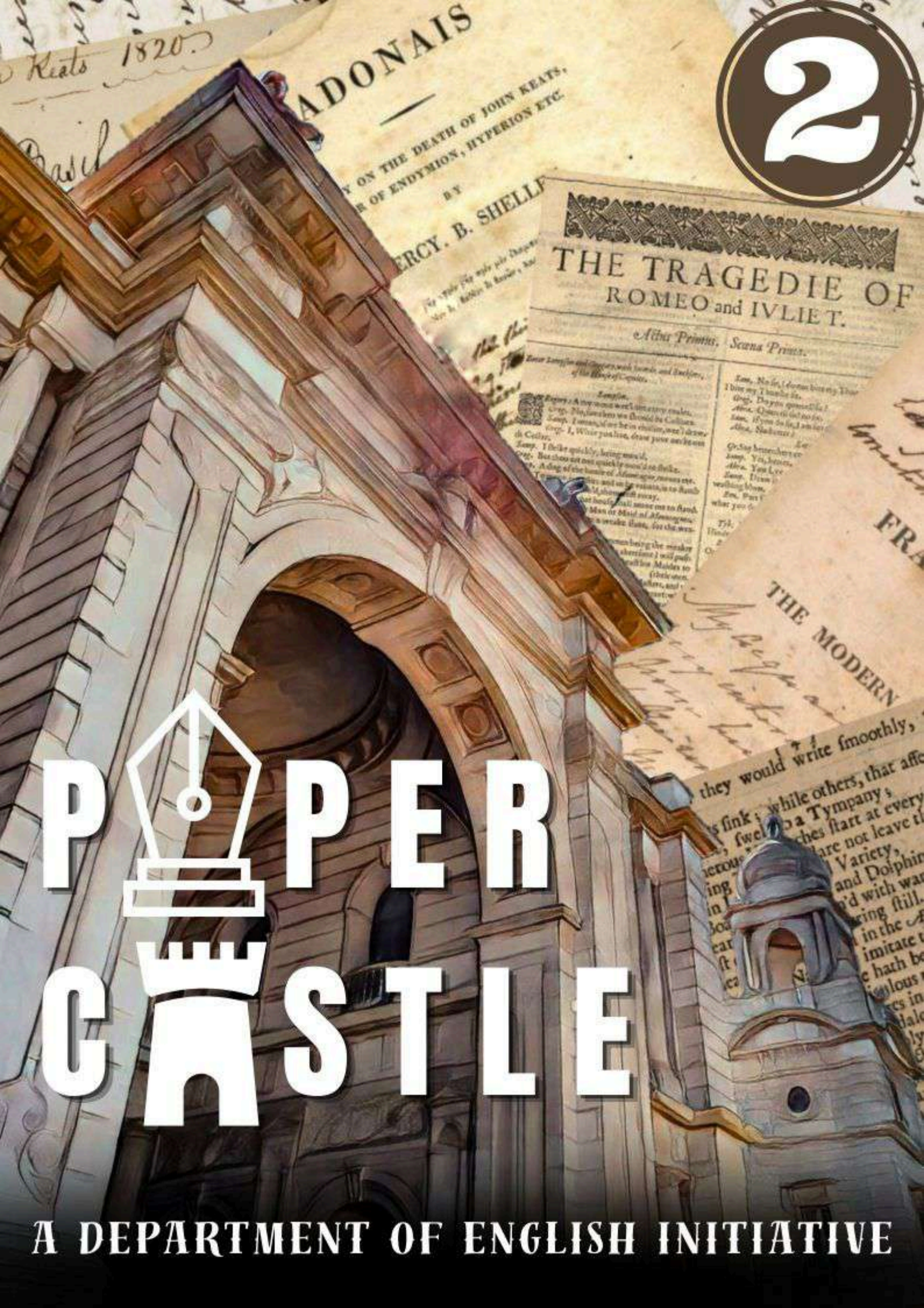


2

PAPER CASTLE

A DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH INITIATIVE



Paper Castle

The Departmental E-magazine,
Department of English,
Narasinha Dutt College, Howrah



Edition : 2 | July 2023



Our mind is like a bird that is free to fly expanding its wings. It presents evocative ideas from the world of imagination, and with a flick of the pen, those ideas are transformed into words on paper. And when so many imaginative minds come together, a castle of paper is formed. By putting our inner ideas into words, we, the students of the Department of English (UG and PG) of Narasinha Dutt College, hope to build our own "Paper Castle." As our college prepares to enter its centenary year, we too are extremely delighted to publish the second edition with a vow to strengthen the foundation of our castle.

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Foreword

**There is no end to the joy received when a venture, well begun, keeps pace with its promises. Our students had launched the first issue of "Paper Castle", their e-magazine, last year and have now successfully put together it's second issue. May their creativity and perseverance continue the publishing of each yearly issue of "Paper Castle".
Good luck!**

Maumita Dhar (Dey)

Head of the Department and Coordinator,
Department of English (UG and PG)
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Halls of the Castle

Poetry (Reverie)

Fiction (Palace of Words)

Non fiction (Insights)

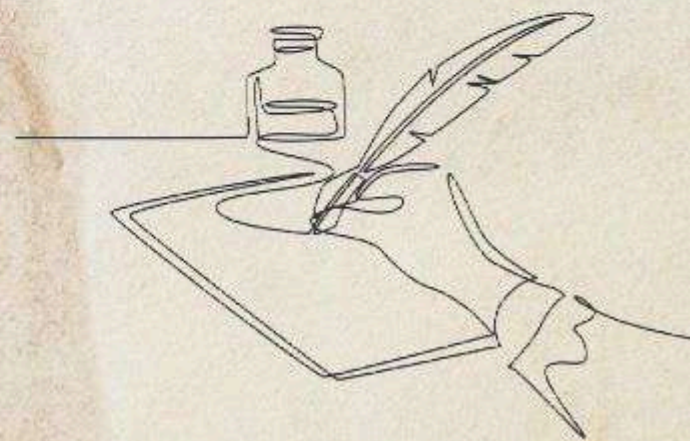
Photography (Glimpses)

The Reunion (Re-united)

Painting (Visual Poesy)

Reverie

Reverie



The First Rain

**Nandita Bera
Sem II, PG**

Blazing sun, Boiling ocean

Land is a sizzling skillet

No man, no bird, no dog is out

The tranquil is dissolved in the voice of loo

Trees are dead in the spartan of the heat

The sun has become an enormous being

Tormenting with it's extensive wrath

Every particle on earth is pierced and shattered.

Every creature on the planet long for a moment of relief

Amidst the vehemence of the sun little beings pray mercy

Finally !!

The day arrives

With cheer, joy and merriment

When the tiny pearls of heaven touches the earth

Healing the cracked wounds

The parched throat of the earth is blessed with the divine flow

Thirst of the planet is quenched

New life is born.

Trees are alive again

Plants are lush green concentrated with freshness of life

The pathos of the broken hearts are healed With the greenness of divine.

The enthusiasm of celebration is assorted with the refreshing breeze

And ever longed awaiting of peace ends with it. The earth is restored to it's natural scene.

Poetry is Born

Tuli Bhattacharjee
Sem IV, UG

Poetry is Born-----

When the unspeakable is spoken

When the unwritable is written

When the unthinkable is thought

When the unimaginable is imagined

When the unbelievable is believed

When unaddressed is addressed

When true feelings are expressed

When the Beyond is brought forth

When humanity reaches the epitome

When man falls beyond redemption

When a new morning bud sprouts

When the evening flower withers

When a baby bird flies in the sky

When an old vulture dies in desert

When a dew drop sparkles like a pearl

When a tear falls from agonized eye

When a baby is born in a slum

**When a prince dies in a palace
When the first ray of the sun sparkles
When the new moon smiles early evening
When poor peasant ploughs the land
When the rich waste priceless food
When a spoilt lad is unwilling to school
When a rag-picker passes by a school
When the lips fail to open up
When the pen trembles to write
When deadly silence shouts
When outer noises are mute
Then poignant poetry oozes out
Then immaculate poetry gushes out
Then great timeless poetry is born
Out of deepest agonies
Out of greatest ecstasies
Poetry is spontaneously born....**

River

**Nibedita Bhat
Sem VI, UG**

River

**River! O River you're gliding
Conveying the levin momentum of mass of water
Such metre, such measure
Civilization processing far to further
Your running path obscure, weird and unsure
While land of living concealed from each quarter.**

**O River! You're the emblem of holy and sanctity
A sublime creation of divinity
Heiress of glory and grandeur you possess
The whole nine yards, civilization continuance
River you're eminent, generous, benevolent
Therefore, you compassionate mother 'riverine' designate.**

**Biwildering! Where is the generosity, hospitality
River, you float away measureless dirt persistently
Can't you waft the mess of humane perpetually ??**

Nameless

**Trishanu Parui
Sem IV, UG**

**A open window - deep gray sky,
Weaving hair and couple restless eye.
Rainy it is - flooded cheek,
Gentle hands and sleeping lips.
Cracking clouds - perverted thoughts,
Two bodies in search of warm spots.
Shinking conscious - raging reflex,
A darker world is coming to replace.**

Shringar

**Trideb Das
Sem VI, UG**

**Thy voice
To me is unchaster
Than of Rati,
Yet it singeth softest evensongs
Of Krishna Radhe.**

**Thy voice
Musics more melodious
Than Nightingale to Keats.
Is an intonation of enchanting grace
Possesses supremacy to Siren's
prowess.**

**Thy voice is a song.
And song always has an end.**

**When thy lips start bidding adieu,
It is a pleasurely pain nigh
Though turning to poison with time.**

**At the very Opera of Delight,
Sorrow shrouds me all in its might.**

Utopian Land

**Triyasha Golui
Sem VI, UG**

**A land of all things arranged
Without any matter exchanged.
Fresh air, One for another care
No violence, no glare.**

**Clouds floating, flowers swaying
Trees evergreen and the rivers flowing.
Birds starts their day with chirping notes
Animals, Insects with them join their tones.**

**Man here all happy without any wanting,
There is nothing to make haunting.**

**I Wish if I could be there,
But this is a zingy affair.**

This is Life

**Debanjana Banerjee
Sem IV, PG**

**I know that I am good for nothing,
No need to tell me again and again.
My palms stretch upward; my hand
 Stoops with a queer brain.**

**The morning star pops up in the east.
Fatigued workers sleep in the west.
I know that I'm good for nothing,
 And I stay nested in my nest.**

**An inaudible, eternal music goes on
 In an incomprehensible tune.
My steps are controlled by it,
On the restless wave and on the calm sand dune.**

**A pink ball is prancing up to say,
"This is life", but in utter dismay.
The loud cry is only a whisper.
Palms stretch upward and the head stoops to pray.**

War

**Triyasha Golui
Sem VI, UG**

Suddenly comes the dreadful war,

All opponents on each other roar.

Rudderless run with shout

The withins becomes without.

Before felling a gaze,

Home, towns, cities do raze.

I, looking around, found

Scattered bodies lying on the ground.

Few ones survived.

When all will be well?

When will they take a fresh breath ?

A Darkling Search

Swapnil Mukherjee
Sem II, PG

**Lonesome alleys
Blind gateways
Rambling beggars
Standing amidst a deconstructed world
Looking for the amended ways
To build a mirage anew.**

**Dark pamphlets
Bombarded minarets
Fiery bodies
Vomiting the latent anger out
Among the brethrens,
To shape a realm anew.**

**Bloody waters
Smoky paths
Shrieking women
Rustling around the streets
Trying to reach a shelter
To learn to live anew.**

The Lottery

Debanjana Banerjee
Sem IV, PG

The tea stall is beside it.
It's a lottery ticket counter.
I take my morning tea,
Staring at it I ponder -
Shutter down, it displays the sign.
It'll open at nine.

The keeper comes and garlands the Lord.
This bank is full of pathos.
The customers need to know
The quickest way to Ford.

Here comes the vegetable vendor.
Yesterday's result he will check.
The list will give him a naught
For fruitless battle is fought.
Yet he would choose a number,
He has his future to make.



The cab driver is shuffling some tickets.

Old ones brought nothing to him.

Tomorrow would surely be generous,

And he continues to dream.

With an eternal desire to be rich,

They pick up dry shells to gain a pearl

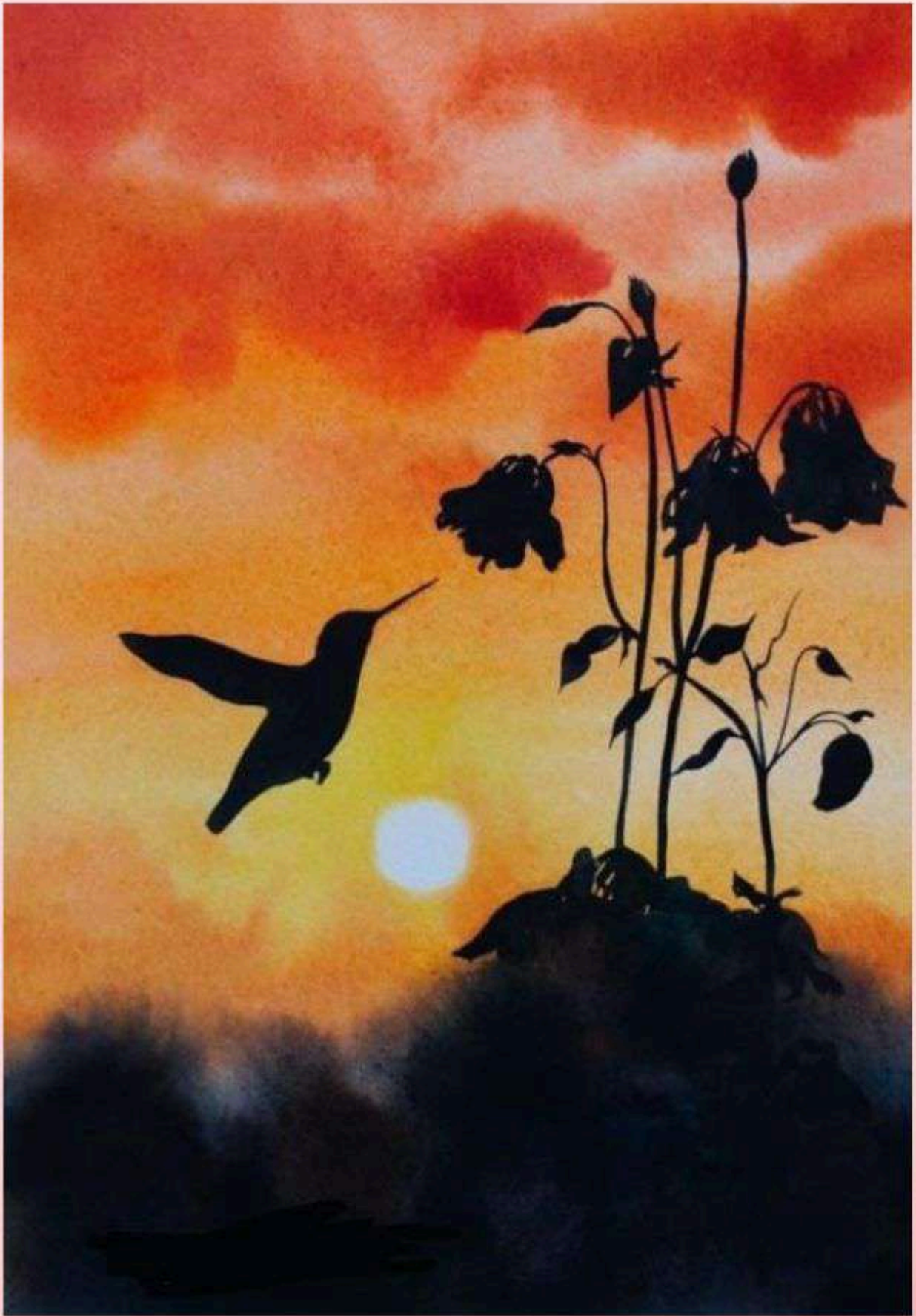
On the over-crowded beach.

They are all customers,

Dream seller's day dreamers.

Look at their faces...

Reasonless, happiness!!



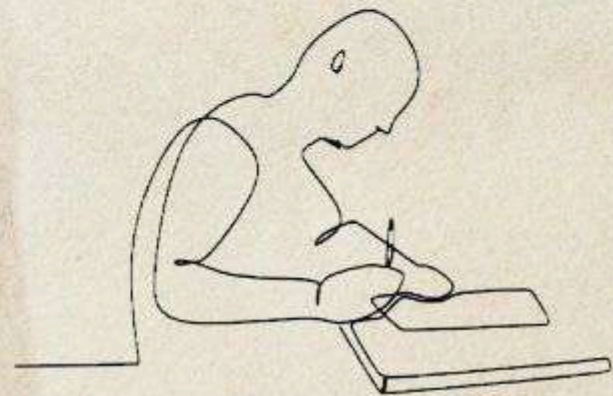
**Soma Bank
Sem VI, UG**



Swabarna Paul
Sem IV, UG

Palace of Words

W



Friends

Dibya Mukherjee
Sem II, PG

- You'll leave then, won't you?
- I have to.
- Is there no other way!
- I'm afraid. There's none. They'll take me away. I can't do anything about it!

The striking golden rays of the dusk fall upon their bodies; they're sitting face to face– at the two opposite sides of the table of Niranjana Cafe. This corner of the cafe always remains silent and less crowded. This table too remains vacant most of the time. And thus, they can freely exchange their thoughts in this, not-so-disturbing, corner of the Cafe. But today, they look sad, upset... Today they aren't exchanging sweet gestures but only facing the bitter truth... The first one starts to speak again.

- There must be some other way! You know...
- There's not... Don't act like you don't know!
- But... but... Only one of your legs is broken... It can be cured here...some good doctors are here in this area too... Right?
- I know, but they'll take me away... Perhaps to another country or city or... wherever, I don't know. Maybe it's better for my leg... I'll get a better treatment after all!
- Honestly, I'm not sure about that.
- Me neither.
- When will you return?
- No idea.

- Are you kidding me? How am I supposed to live without you!
- You need to learn how to survive, without me...
- What do you mean I need to learn! Are you not coming back?
- Probably, not.
- Oh... Oh!

An unusual silence makes place between them. Usually this corner of the Cafe remains peaceful and silent; but today, these two are heartbroken, and this seems to be the silence of their agony. The second one speaks...

- Please, don't be sad! We've been living together for almost nine years! Isn't it amazing? We are friends for a long long time, right? We should celebrate...
- How?
- By recalling our best memories! Memories are all that will remain forever!
- Hum... I can remember the first day I saw you... I was sitting in this gloomy corner of the cafe and suddenly you came... A friend for life...
- I was so much tensed at first when I saw you... You were quite handsome and I was shy... You always do look handsome...
- You know what, that time I needed a friend, because I was new in this city, and you came to my life like a blessing... We have shared innumerable secrets with each other...
- Yeah, remember the guy over that table in the front? He was quite a crazy one... He pushed the waiter and the glass of juice fell on his shirt...
- Oh, a day to be remembered indeed! Remember the couple who used to sit beside our table? They used to quarrel, fight, and at the end of the afternoon, the boy used to give her a sunflower and her heart would melt like butter.
- Yeah... But this table, the lonely table of Niranjana Cafe, isn't it special?
- Yes... Because of you.

Another period of pin drop silence. The people have started leaving the cafe, probably they're done with their afternoon

gossips here. But today is the last, yes, the very last day of the meetings of these two friends... The first one breathes heavily. The second one remarks...

- You know what, probably they will take me away for treatment, today.
- Today? Why?
- I don't know. Do you have anything to say?
- Umm... How should I put it...
- I know, go on.
- See, when I came to the city, I was alone and I wasn't loved by anyone, except you... I know you loved me as a friend... But... but I think I...
- I know... Actually you know what? Me too. I also...

Two people come from inside the cafe towards the lonely corner, where two chairs are placed at two opposite sides of the table. One of the chairs has a damaged leg. They pick the damaged chair up and leave with it. The another chair, which has now become lonely, once again, shouts in distress...

- Why! Why are you taking her away from me!

While leaving against her own will, the second chair asked for a promise to the first one...

- I know I'll not be coming back here, ever again... Promise me, you'll make the new one your closest friend, you'll treat the new one just like you treated me... Promise me!

Three days have passed. He is now lonely and surviving with her memories. He's not sure whether he'll be able to cope up with his trauma. Suddenly he hears another voice, a new voice. He finds that, the shopkeeper has placed another chair in front of him at the opposite side of the table- and the new voice is hers:

- Umm, Hullo! I'm new here... Will you be my friend?

The Tale of Disloyalty

Sruti Ghosh
Sem II, PG

On a bright, sunny Sunday morning, I woke up to find myself lying in a small corner of a little cage surrounded by a lot of my friends. I was just forty days old at that time. I was separated from my parents a long time ago; I don't remember who my maternal parents were. As I grew up, I understood that my life's going to be a tough one. Everyday we were carried along to a certain spot, and a lot of us were put up for sale. Every Sunday, some of my friends were bought and sent to what is known as a "permanent home". On March 23, 2015, a young girl came to visit this pet shop. She was astounded to see so many of us playing and enjoying ourselves in one single cage. Suddenly, her eyes fell on me, and I looked back at her. I don't know how to express this feeling, I felt like she's the one. She asked the breeder how much I cost. At that moment, I realized my value was to be measured in monetary terms. The breeder replied, "9000 bucks only, madam". The girl agreed to pay the price and I was finally bought, apparently approaching my "forever home". But was it really my permanent home?

My happiness had no limits at that point of time. I kept looking at that young girl's face, who claimed supposedly to be my new mother. The car stopped by a huge mansion, and I perceived it to be my new home. I was beaming with joy at the core of my heart, as I had at no time seen such a huge mansion in these 40 days of my life. I was offered a grand welcome by my "forever family". I was offered delicious meals from time to time. Not only that, I was provided with a very comfortable and cozy bed to sleep in. I was even

furnished with a spacious garden to play in. I also have a loving family comprising of mom and dad. I was named 'Teddy'. My parents took me on vacations where we visited different places. I personally fell in love with oceans, not that I disliked mountains and forests but I was just driven more towards oceans and seas. The funny part comprised of my grooming sessions. "O how can I forget those beautiful days!". My nails were trimmed from time to time, and so was my fur. My parents never compromised to provide me with a comfortable and luxurious life. I used to bathe with expensive shampoos and soaps, and at that moment I felt as if I was rich. Haha, jokes apart, however, the only stuff I hated was visiting the clinic for vaccinations. "Can't we skip this part, mom and dad?", I tried often to communicate with my parents, but the language in which they spoke was alien to me. So just like a helpless child, I was vaccinated from time to time. Time passed by, and I was now a 6-year-old adult boy—hmm, not a forty-day-old kid anymore, mind it. However, on May 26, 2021, I witnessed a huge argument break out between my parents. I could not understand anything. I have never, in these six years of my life, witnessed such an argument taking place between my parents. I was sitting in the far corner of the room without understanding anything. Suddenly I saw my father approaching me hurriedly. He picked me up on his lap and tossed me into the car. I thought we were going out on a drive as we used to do quite often, but little did I realize that it was going to be the most traumatic experience of my life.

We drove by beautiful landscapes, huge trees, spacious houses, clean roads, and small shops. Suddenly our car stopped in the middle of a dreary, desolate, and unknown road. My heart skipped a beat at the sight of that terrifying road. The loneliness of the road started to haunt me. I barked desperately, urging my dad to immediately leave that spot. My dad, with a very disgusted look, yelled at me and said, "Shut up, you fool, you have made our lives a living hell." Surprisingly, that day I understood his language, and I understood something terrible was about to happen to me. I was trembling with fear, and I no longer loved my parents. All of a sudden, my dad picked me up forcibly, opened

door of the car and literally hurled me onto the road. By the time I recovered, I saw my parents leaving the spot at a very high speed. I ran helplessly behind the fast driving car, barked desperately, and tried seeking help, but no one came to my rescue. My tiny legs could not keep pace with that fast-driving car. Finally I gave up and lost sight of my "parents".

A six year old child was left to die on an unknown road. At that moment, I realized, " I WAS ABANDONED." Abandoned by my own family, my supposedly own parents. For days, I survived without food, without an adequate amount of water, and most importantly, without my family. I started sleeping under the open sky, no more in my comfy bed, no more in a safe and secure house. But was it even a "safe" house? I still don't know. Is this how I was supposed to be treated? We too have emotions, and feelings, just like the human community. We too have expectations, we too want to be loved. "Why did you treat me like this, mom and dad?" , probably just because I'm a dog and not your own son. You named me " Teddy" but forgot that I'm a living soul and not a "teddy". Today, my address is a dreary, desolate road. However, now I have become habituated to this life of mine. I no longer have expectations, I no longer trust any human being, and most importantly, I no longer love anyone on this planet. I now live by myself. I arrange for my living, I fight every single day for surviving as I want to live. Time passed, but I never saw my parents to come and take me back home with them. And you know what's funny? I don't even have any expectations from them.

My name is Teddy, now a nine-year-old Golden Retriever dog, and folks, this is my story—the story of DISLOYALTY, the story of betrayal.



From Here to Eternity

Aiswariya Debnath,
and
Riya Ganguly
Sem II, UG

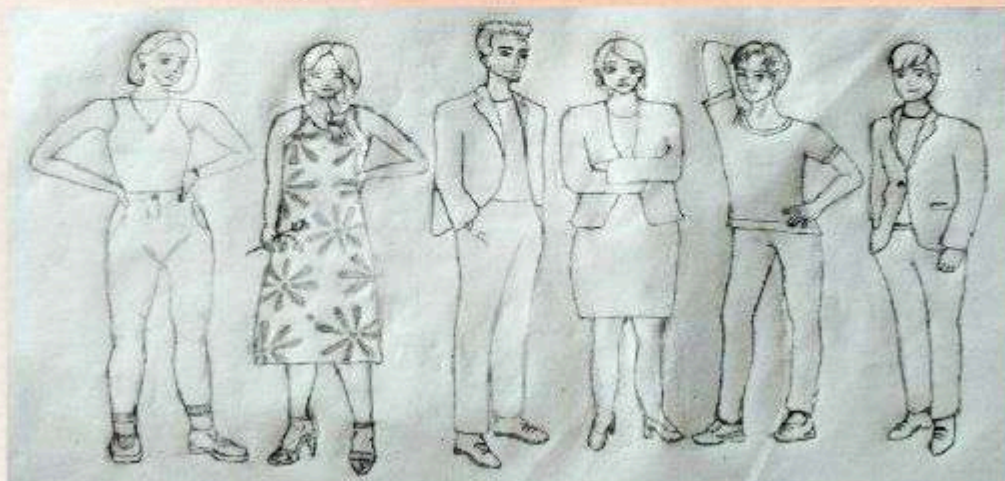
It's been a while since I have been into writing, or you can call it an addiction or hobby. Well, I only write poems, but now I feel like I should write about something different as I want to share some stories with people. My name is Neil Dasgupta and I'm a fifty-two years old poet writing about "Love" and how it's the same but different at the same time for people and my book is called "From Here to Eternity".

The story is about a boy named Tian who is twenty-five and works at a bank. Currently, he's in a relationship with his bank manager, Miss Devi who is twenty-seven years old. Even though they are adults and want to get married they are having a few problems. Tian's family is against the marriage because Devi is two years older than him; Yes, she is only two years older than him. According to them, society won't accept them even though it has nothing to do with them or their marriage. They love each other unconditionally, but the fact is that people are making fun of Tian saying it's shameful for a man to marry an older woman. Their lives are kind of controlled by society even though they haven't done anything wrong. Society is making them feel like they have done something shameful but the only thing they did was loving each other without any doubts. It's not important to follow the unnecessary rules and norms of society to lead a happy life. After all the only thing that matters is their happiness. We have people who support them and understand that this isn't a crime, and we have people who do not support them as well.

On the other hand, there is another problem with Tian's sister, Maya. The problem people have with her is she is in love with her classmate. Well, it seems quite normal, isn't it? But the thing is her classmate is also a girl. I know it's okay for a few people but most of them think it's wrong and a few people don't even know that a person can love someone regardless of his or her gender. The girl is Yami and both are twenty years old. They have kept their relationship hidden from people because they know that society would have a problem if it find out about them. They were considered "best friends" , "sisters" etc. With their friends where everyone knew about them, they felt happy and comfortable. But at public places, they can't even hold hands thinking people might judge them. They are also under the pressure of society that society won't accept them the way they are, so they insisted upon hiding their relationship, even from their family. They keep loving each other until their last breath without even their families knowing because that's good for them. Yes they haven't done anything wrong but society, or every person who values society won't accept them because society thinks homosexuality is an illness while heterosexuality is not. To some people, it's just fun which will fade away with time. They do not understand that it's a feeling which cannot just disappear because that's their true identity.

Just like Maya and Yami, their friends Yohan and Ron are also together, and yes, both of them are males. Yohan is a twenty-one-year-old college student, and Ron is a twenty-five-year-old veterinarian doctor. Yohan and Ron were neighbours, but now Ron's family has shifted. They knew each other from their childhood and developed a soft spot for each other. It took Yohan more than 5 years to confess that he likes Ron but when he did, Ron accepted him because Ron also liked him. They never cared what people thinks about them or if society will accept them or not, but people never failed to insult or badmouth them. People say a man is not a man if he doesn't like women. People pointed their fingers at them accusing them of being cowards and fake men. They always ignored society because Yohan and Ron have an understanding family, and they don't have any problem that their children being gay. They supported them and that's certainly the

best thing. But when a family doesn't support their children it can cause them trauma or also can ruin their lives. Yohan and Ron they are very understanding of each other, which leads them to their unconditional love for each other. A few years later they got married just like every other couple. Yes, people made fun of them when they were getting married but there were also people who supported their marriage.



Even 2023 people still consider homosexuality an illness. And for those people who believe it's a sin or that God won't accept them; I would like to let you know that it's not like that because God always wants their children to be happy. Loving someone doesn't harm anybody, and the thing people think that others would be influenced by homosexuality if it were shown publicly but it's not like that. Whether a person is homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual, it's in their blood; none can do anything about it. People should understand that if it's ok for a man to marry a woman then it'll also be ok for a man to marry a man or a woman to marry a woman. Oftentimes, while judging other people, society forgets what happiness is. Society should let people be who they are, not something society wants them to be. This way everyone will be truly happy.

Well, Yohan and Ron's story reminds me of my own story. It was probably thirty years ago when I was in college. I liked one of my college seniors named Suriya, I used to call him Surjo da and yes I liked him all along, and I guess he also liked me. We used to meet every day and sit under a royal poinciana tree and chat about what was going on in our lives and all. At that time, talking with

him for an hour wasn't anything big because I felt happy talking with him. One day I realized that he's gonna get graduate and I won't be able to meet him again. I wanted to tell him that I liked him but I didn't have the courage to tell him about my feelings. I also thought my feelings would go away by then, but it's been thirty years and I still regret why I didn't confess at that time, maybe if I had confessed then the things would have been different.



Well, I didn't have the courage to tell him how I felt, and I also thought that he would reject me. Years later, when I saw him again I wanted to tell him that I still had feelings for him but then I found out that he has a wife and a son too. Honestly that broke my heart into pieces that I was about to ruin his relationship with his wife and son so I didn't say anything. Till date I don't know if I'm over him or I'm not- maybe I'm not and that's why I'm still single and living my life writing poetry.

"After I'm born again, I'm going to look for you.
And when I do, I will fall in love with you again."



The Man in the Hotel

Sanatan Saren
Sem II, UG

We're in a luxury hotel, dressed in expensive clothes and having a fancy meal. Does this mean we are living a good and happy life? Absolutely not. We are just treating our-self good because it's the last day for us. We are going to end our lives tonight.

“Up until yesterday I was in a tiny, crappy, 4000 *** per month house. But now I am relaxing at a 40,000 *** per night hotel room. Yesterday I was having only rice. But tonight, I am having a fancy steak dinner. Not to mention this nice suit I have on right now. Money really makes all the differences. Am I wrong Gus?”

“You are absolutely right. Guys born with silver spoon, probably spent more than we have spent today. By the way, how did you even manage to get private loan from gangsters?”, Gus replied.

“Since I have nothing to lose, I told them I'm a business owner in need of some shady money. Then I gave them my personal information.”

Gus laughed and said, “Obviously I know that since I did the same. I am asking how you managed to talk to them about money.”

Gus laughed again.

“I just talked to them keeping my face down. And, don't you think it's rude to talk to someone like that!”

Gus said, “You should at least get rid of this fear of yours before dying.”

Yes, I can't look at other's face from that day. Gutter is my only friend to whom I feel like talking about it. He is different from others.

Cutting the steak Gutter asks me to look at a certain article on his mobile phone. It's an article about how youngsters these days don't put much efforts, and said, “It's garbage. It's not like we don't put efforts. Does putting effort guarantee you success? The answer is a big 'no'. There is too much difference between the efforts of rich guys and efforts of guys like us. No matter how hard we try our efforts will always look lame compared to them.”

“That's why instead of making efforts in vain guys like us invest in Cryptocurrency. Even though it's pretty much like gambling.”

“I don't think it's a fair way to make money. Have you ever tried it?” Gus asked.

“No. But why don't we try this? We are going to die anyway”, I suggested.

“Wait, I am signing up an account”, Gus said.

After signing up an account he invested all of the money we had left and then we ordered another two plates of steak. After eating we drank together. It was an expensive brand. Both of us sipped our last glass of beer talking and laughing about our crappy life.

After finishing the dinner, we went to the roof of the hotel.

“Don't you think it's a perfect place for dying!”

“Why is that?”, Gus asked.

“If we die in this famous luxurious hotel, even guys like us will get some ink. We will be famous.”

Gus laughed hilariously.

We were just taking a little walk around the roof. And when the time to jump came Gutter said something unexpected.

“I don’t think I am ready to die yet. I am just so scared” Gus said.

“Why is that? We came to this discussion together. Why are you changing your mind right now?”, I asked.

“I am sorry. I am getting out of here.” Gus said and went out of the roof.

I didn’t try to stop him. It was the first time I saw him as a stranger. Just because the money we invested went up by a hundred times in the last two hours, he hid it from me and left me to die all alone. I waited for him to return but he didn’t come. I waited for an hour and decided to jump alone.

But then I heard a voice, “Why don’t you wait for 7 more days?”

I turned around and saw it was a boy dressed like a delinquent. Keeping my head down I asked him, “What do you mean?”

He said he heard me and Gutter talking about dying together and followed us to this hotel. He said his name is Daniel Pinkman and he is a medical student. Seeing his manners of talking and dressing, I was obvious that he’s silver spoon guy.

“You don’t have to lower your head. I already know about this problem of yours. And that’s why I chose you for my experiment. Would you like to cooperate?”, he said.

Raising my head half I asked, “What kind of experiment? I am not interested.”

“10,000,000 ***. You will get 10,000,000 *** per day for these 7 days experiment. You should at least hear me out before refusing.” he said.

He suggested to go inside our room because it's too cold outside. Then he ordered a bottle of beer and a bottle of orange juice. He poured me a drink and started sipping his orange juice directly from the bottle. He pulled out a fat file and an old dairy and said, "If you want, feel free to take a look at this. Even though I am going to explain it to you."

I couldn't understand a single thing. All I did was looking at some pictures. There were pictures of some little kids (New Born & 5-10 years), some people with weird expressions on their face, some medical bottles etc.

" 'I don't understand a single thing' is written all over your face", he said.

I replied, "Then would you mind explaining it?"

"Were you always like this? I mean, there must be some reason for not being able to look at people's faces. I am sure something happened in your past. You do don't have to tell me anything about that. Just answer with 'yes' and 'no'." he said.

Just as he said I answered with a 'yes'.

"Do you remember what were you like before that incident?" he asked.

I answered 'no'.

"Do you know? Humans only use 10% of their brain." he said.

"Obviously I know at least that much."

"Congratulations. Now hear me out silently.", he replied.

Daniel pulled out a notebook and drew something. Then he showed it to me. It was a rough drawing of human figure. The figure was divided uneven by a line over the neck horizontally.

"We use only 10% of our brain. That means only 10% of our brain is

conscious and the rest 90% is unconscious. The head part of this picture is conscious part and the body part is unconscious part. 95% of human mind is controlled by unconsciousness. Let's say, in the unconscious part a person hates his/her parents. But consciously he/she thinks he/she loves his/her parents. This is a contradiction and we have a problem. This problem becomes suppressed in the unconscious part. It's like plunging the 'hate for his/her parents' deep into the bottom of the unconscious part. The deeper down you hide it, it becomes harder to remember it with your conscious part. And finally, you forget it ever existed. The same thing happened with you."

"You mean it's exactly why I can't remember my past-self?"

Daniel replied, "Yes. But just by hiding it you haven't made it disappear. The 'hate for his/her parents' or 'your past-self' is always waiting for the opportunity to be raised to the conscious part once more. In order to bring it forth you have to make that person feel it again. But if they are suppressed too deep that the conscious part doesn't even remember a little about it, then it's hardly possible."

"So, is there any other way to raise it?" I asked.

"So, do you want to?" he asked.

"You want me to answer with a 'yes'?"

"If you make your brain stimulate on a high scale, it might be possible. You already know about caffeine. There also are other stimulants that make the brain stimulate on a high scale."

Daniel pulled out a large box out of his suitcase filled with vials. There is written 'CerebriumCaffoxyrin' written on all of those vials.

"You won't find anything if you search it on internet, because it's illegal. I imported it from Taiwan. 15 years ago, a doctor from there made it using formulas of a few stimulants. 'Cerebrium' goes for 'Cerebrum', which means 'brain'. 'Caff-' goes for 'Caffeine' and 'Oxyrin' is used for the treatment for 'Heart Attack'."

It sounded almost believable. When I was looking at his file, I saw records of the previous experiments. I saw some green, blue and red marks. There were about 19 marks like this in this whole file. I asked him about it.

“There have been total 19 experiments done in this whole world. You are the 20th one. The red marked ones are failures (11). The green marked ones are successful (5). And blue ones are the victim of side effects (3). Among the failures (11), 5 of them died, 4 of them became vegetable, and other 2 survived without any side effects.”, he replied.

We didn't talk for 10 minutes. I was just looking at those records and thinking- “Is it all real?”

“Why don't you cooperate You were going to die anyway. Why not make some profits before dying. If it's a success, you can start over a new life with the money I will give you. If you are a failure, you can just die. If you are a victim of side effects, then it's another profit you are getting.” he said.

- “Profit? What are the side effects?”, I asked.

“Getting side effects is very rare. It's some kind of sixth sense. The three records say they got the supernatural power of foreseeing, telepathy and seeing ghost or spirits.”, he replied.

“No matter how you look at it, it's a complete win or win situation. It will definitely save you.”

Gutter's betrayal left me stuck between the borderline of life and death. My mind went blank. And I realized what Daniel is saying is true. It's a win or win situation.

After thinking a lot, I agreed to the proposal of being a test subject for a weird experiment.

Daniel injected me the dose and ask, “Do you feel any difference?”

-I answered, “No”.

“Sleep for today. It’s not that it will start working right away. I paid for this room for next 7 days. And I already got rid of your all debts. Have a nice nap.” Saying that he got out of the room.

[Next day]

I woke up at 7’0 clock. I stayed flat on bed and looked outside the window, thinking if I did the right thing or not. I realized, yesterday when Daniel said, “Have a nice nap”, he waved at me. And I saw that clearly because I was looking straight at his face. I ordered my breakfast. Just a few minutes later breakfast arrived.

I opened the door and took the plate.

The hotel staff asked, “Sir, did you have a good nap? Do you need any help for room cleaning?”

I put up my courage and looked at his face. And I was shocked. He was faceless. He had no eyes, no eyebrows, no nose, no mouth, no moustache. I rubbed my eyes and looked at him again. Nothing changed.

The staff asked again, “Do you need any help, sir?”

“No, it’s fine.”, I answered.

The staff left. I closed the door and sighed. I put the plate on the bed and ran towards the reception room. All the people were same like the staff before. They were all faceless. I ran out of the hotel and went to the market. The view hasn’t changed. All the people I see were all faceless. I called Daniel and told him to come back to the hotel.

A few minutes later Daniel rang my doorbell. He came with a bottle of beer and a bottle of milk.

“This is not the time for this.”, I said.

Daniel got excited and asked, “Did something happen?”

I explained it all to Daniel. He nodded like he understood everything and asked me, "How do I look like?"

"Normal, you look normal", I replied.

It was strange for only a few people and Daniel looks normal.

"Is it some kind of supernatural power, like you mentioned yesterday?" I asked.

"Was there any other person besides me who looked normal?" he asked.

I said, "Yes, only a few."

"It might sound strange but I guess you are just seeing if people are being honest not." he said.

"And what does that mean?" I asked.

"You didn't gain any sixth sense. The five senses you hold, have simply been sharpened to its peak. Have you ever heard about Dr. Brian Kordhell?" he asked.

"No. Who is he?" I asked.

"Dr. Brian Kordhell is a psychologist from Ukraine. But he was not famous. He wrote a quote in his book called 'The Flesh Robots',

"To get the thing you don't have, you have to ace the thing you have."

That means if humans mastered all of his five senses, they gain a sixth sense."

"Using the five senses, humans exchange information between them. It can be through body language, voice, touch, expression, muscle flexibility, pitch of voice, the slight movement of every muscle of the face - once you start the list it never ends. This exchange of information is done at subconscious level. But they cover it with

fake expressions they don't even mean.”

“Using the sixth sense you got, you can see if others are faking their expressions or not. If they are faking it, you can't see their face. If they aren't, you will see them normal. But there isn't any scientific explanation of it.”

After hearing all this I went to bath. It was the first time I was this much confused in my life. What Daniel was saying, was this all true? Is it even possible. Should I really believe him? It's sounds too fake to be true. And he also said there is no scientific explanation behind it. I really want to get rid of this ability or what. But it was the first time I ever looked at stranger's face. Daniel said what I see is whether others are showing their true feelings or not. Daniel looks normal to me. Does this mean he his showing his true feelings? The only answer I can think of is 'yes'. Because, he is just using me for his weird experiment and giving me money in exchange. I don't think he cares about whether I die or not. He is okay with anything as long as he gets his result.

When I returned from the bath, Daniel said, "Let's go outside and visit some haunted spots. What if you have got the ability to see ghosts too."

I dressed up and went outside of the hotel with Daniel, raising my head up. Almost all the people are faceless. It was scary but, I don't know why, I feel relieved. It's the first time I feel unchained. Looking straight front, not my foot, I walked through the road with a happy face. We arrived at an abandoned hospital to test my ability. And we didn't see a thing, as expected. I don't even believe in ghosts. At the day's end, Daniel wired me money.

The 2nd day of the experiment went same. Same goes for the 3rd and 4th day too. On 5th day I started working at a restaurant as a cook. I got praised for my cooking. Others tasted my cooking and praised me, but they were all faceless. But why should I care about them as long as I am okay with it. I decided to start over my life with this ability. But on the 6th day something unexpected happened.

Daniel came to hotel with a bottle of beer and a bottle of tomato

juice. He started sipping tomato juice directly from the bottle and said, "It's a huge success. The experiment is a huge success." And gave me the rest of the money.

I asked, "What do you mean? You said I got this supernatural ability because of the side effects."

"Do you know what 'placebo effect' is?" he asked.

I said, "No, what is it?"

"In 1796, an US physician Elisha Perkins began selling a therapeutic device called the Perkins Patent Tractors. These tractors were two metal rods about three inches long with a pointed end. One was made of iron and other was made of brass, but Perkins claimed that those were made of unusual metal alloys. He claimed, people can cure any medical problems just by touching those rods to skin. And it actually worked because people believed it will save them- even though it was a lie."

I couldn't understand a single thing but Daniel kept talking.

"Let me give you a simple example. In a room some people are kept and given sugar pills. But they were told it was a stimulant. After they took the pill, their blood pressure and pulse rate increased, and their reaction speeds were improved. However, when the same people were given the same pill again and told that it will help them relax and sleep, they experienced relaxation."

"If a person expects a treatment to do something, it's possible that body's own chemistry can cause effects similar to what medical science might have caused. It's placebo effects."

I asked, "It's quiet an interesting story you told me. But what does it have to do with me?"

Daniel said, "My experiment was not to make you remember about

your past self. My experiment was to find out what will happen if I try giving placebo treatment to you. That's why I said, "I chose you". Actually, I just wanted to try this experiment on a pathetic man like you.'

"Are you trying to say those faceless people are just my imagination?" I asked.

"Yes, exactly. You were just hallucinating them. You believed this medicine will actually save you. And deep down you actually never wanted to look at others faces. So, you started to hallucinate about them being faceless."

Filling my mind with confusion I asked him, "So what about the explanation? What about the injection you gave me? What about 'Cerebrium Caffoxyrin'?"

"Do you really thing I gave you 'Cerebrium Caffoxyrin'?" he replied.

Hearing that I felt a cold shiver down to my spine.

"'CerebriumCaffoxyrin' doesn't exist. What I gave you was 'Midazolam'- a dose which is used before surgery."

"And about the explanation I gave you- it was all a lie. Getting sixth sense, Dr. Brian Kordhell and all the things I said are just lies. And about the explanation I gave you- it was all a lie. Getting sixth sense, Dr. Brian Kordhell and all the things I said are just lies."

After hearing this I was speechless. It felt like my throat was jammed. I ran towards the reception room. Then I looked at their faces. But I never wanted to see what I saw there. All the people there was staring at me. The unchained feeling, I was getting, suddenly faded away. It felt like, I was a bird with clipped wings. I ran to washroom and started vomiting.

I thought, "If I can get more 'Midazolam', I can have my supernatural ability back. Then I can start over again". Then I ran

to my room to ask Daniel for more 'Midazolam'.

I asked, "You always keep those medical stuffs of yours. Give me another shot of 'Midazolam'."

But Daniel refused and said, "If you are thinking taking more 'Midazolam' will make you see those faceless people again, then give up. It's hardly possible now since you have heard the truth. And taking more 'Midazolam' is dangerous. It might kill you."

I got angry and said, "You don't even care if I live or die. You rich guys are always like this. You use us, make us work like dogs. But when we need help you guys are nowhere to be found. Only because of our efforts you guys turn richer from rich. But guys like us always keep living their crappy life."

I started crying and said, "Just give me that box of yours."

"I agree that I used you for my own benefits, but I can't let you die like this. You can start over your life again. You were just hallucinating them. But they were actually norm-" I didn't let him finish his words and started beating him up. I didn't know what I was feeling. This feeling was a mixture of anger, sadness, helplessness and hopelessness.

I kept beating him up. I kept screaming and my mind went blank. After that I don't remember a thing. When I woke up what I saw was extremely horrifying. I was holding a bloody scalpel and Daniel was lying on the ground with his throat split open. But it didn't feel like I had done something wrong.

Then I opened his box of vile and started taking as 'Midazolam' till I started seeing those faceless people again.



Word's Worth

Subhankar Chowdhury
Sem VI, UG

Nightingales soared overhead. Their liberating squeaks precipitated into streaks of warmth through the branches while a numbing wind howled from the west, leaving a trail of petrified slaughtered bloody leaves in its wake. A huge banyan tree sprawled over me, its tendrils creeping up on my hair. A concrete bench had been constructed around its bark, quite possibly on the stage of the panchayat. The clearing was packed with curious eyes of every age. I tried sitting on the bench to deliver my much-needed assistance, but it turned out to be the luxurious abode of red ants. I had discovered this precarious predicament too late, my arms burning in various places from malicious bites. "Darn these these pests," I murmured. I would have loved to complete my work inside a well-insulated room supplied with an air conditioner, but this bullamakanka clearly hadn't yet been claimed by the alluring touch of grey. The villagers had then accommodated me in a little room, lined with caked mud and dung. A cranky fan groaned overhead. A little bed was stationed to the side, and the room was exceptionally bare and brown—a filthy abode for the benighted, among many others.

I cleared my voice. "Friends, Gents, and Ladies, in this day, when the festering wounds of society threaten our existence, when grey has encumbered the rainbows in our eyes, stagnated our very soul, and transmuted it into the filth of cities, when poison has seeped into the very water we drink, contaminating our very souls; we have to return to humanity. This is but a frail warning of what

is to come. This materialistic world sucks out human lives like expendable, ephemeral pieces of trash, and when my colleagues deem it 'a waste of time' or 'a life without much prospect' to come out here and help everyone, "NO!" I yelled back at them. This countryside fills my heart to the brim with joy, to be of service and to return to nature. O ye savages! Help me return, return us to our noble selves, when man was more than just a machine of exploitation!" There were wild cheers all across, the youth visibly inspired, clapping with all their being." This countryside is a testament to your rebellious spirit! It stands at the zenith of freedom; here no one has to slog for the select few at the helm; this world is for everyone and by everyone; if you may so believe. I find in this village inspiration to strive forward, with unbridled joy, at this vision of modernity where society is enveloped in green. I reject modernity! I reject air conditioners and fossil fuels if all they bring us is a moment of respite and a lifetime of repercussions. I revel in your bravery to put up a fight against this raging plague of society! I commend you, and pledge to detach myself from the delusion of progress."

I felt a tug on my white coat. "Please, please excuse me doctor, please tell me, my son, will he live?", an elderly woman on her knees, a pleading look in her hollow eyes, pointed to the ground. Oh no, I had completely forgotten about the patient. He must have been lying on the stretcher there for quite some time. I took a glimpse at him. "Umm yes, ahhh how should I say this? there really isn't a way to get an antidote in a primordial place such as this, you might find it in a city, but here it is quite impossible. Ma'am, I'm sorry, but your son looks,a bit dead."





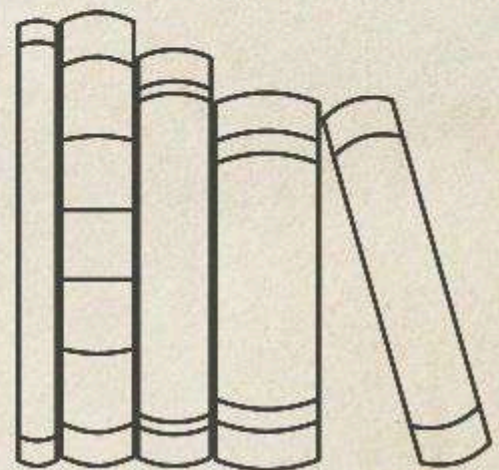
Debsmita Bhattacharya
Sem VI, UG



Chayanita Ghosh
Sem IV, UG

Insights

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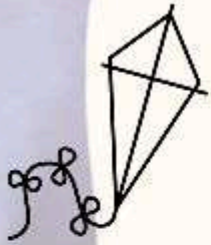
TWO : A Conflict of Two Worlds

Debosmita Mondal
Sem IV, UG

One of the most fascinating things about Satyajit Ray is the different layers of insights and a perfect work of documentation under the veil of cinematography. It is to accept, when comes to cinematography, there are a few directors in the film industry who have it in their fingertips, Ray being one of them. Not to mention, films such as 'Apu Trilogy', 'Devi', etc. are absolute treat to the senses. A work of Ray is as splendid as any that of a Kurosawa's or of a Wes Anderson's, if not more.

One genuine interpretation of Ray's films could be the framework of plots and character development. 'Two', maybe one of the most underappreciated or lesser celebrated of Satyajit, has a significance of its own. Let it be the plot construction or the portrayal of the subject matter, 'Two' stands out from his other works. This work of art was not available to the public eye until the Academy Film Archive decided to restore it 16 mm print while restoring Ray's oeuvre.

'Two', a 12 min film-fable, is a silent movie. The movie opens with a scene where a car leaves a mansion while a boy on the rooftop bidding them adieu--- a clear reference to the aristocratic class or to be more specific American influence. The boy was Probably wearing a Mickey Mouse cap, and was sipping on Coca Cola. When the boy goes inside his room we see some toys scattered here and there, and a



slight displaced decorations --- probably there was a gathering last night. But that which is not just a mere act of childishness is when the boy lights matches and lets them go off by themselves. The boy has all of it that keep entertaining him --- expensive remote cars, robots, air conditioner, a proper shelter, enough food supplies and comfort. But somewhere the boy has a void inside him. An excellent work of the child actor Ravi Kiran is evident in the display of his facial expressions. Such expressions suggest the discontentment of the character. The boy is not devoid of any material satisfaction but surely was of abstract ones.

'Two' moves forward with the music of a flute. The boy rushes to his window and is greeted with a view where a poor boy playing a flute. The boy involuntarily gets attracted to the music but the next moment he snaps out and his pride takes the best of him. He brings his drummer toy initiating a conflict between the two individuals. Although none of them speaks a word, the clash between the boys is significant in their actions; the clash between two different worlds --- one, victim of American consumerism; the other one, a simple, grounded third world country. The movie was made in 1964, during the Vietnam conflict. Some find the rich boy and the poor boy as the representation of America's hegemonic brutality and Vietnam's resistance, respectively. While on the other hand we've psychoanalytical readings of the movie as well. Ray beautifully projected both the matters with great efforts. The rich boy suggests the egoistic, ruthless, over-ambitious class of people while the peasant boy is the personification of the deep-rooted, contented and simple people rather the lower class of the society. The rich boy's material possessions might fulfill all of their needs but they appear useless compared to those of the poor boy. At the end of their conflict, the rich boy shoots his gun at the poor boy's kite and turns it down surely but that only added fuel to the fire he lighted before. He forcibly wins the battle but is still not happy. 'Two' closes with the shattering of the toy-tower or to be specific shattering of his ego, vanity and pride. And in the end, the flute music is heard again while an innocent face of a child is revealed.



Humanics

Tapalabdha Chatterjee
Sem II, UG

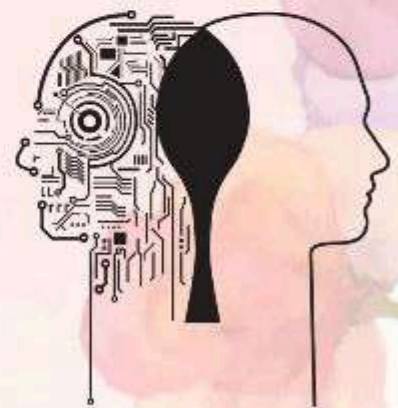
In the midst of our modern era, it's easy to get caught up in our fast-paced lives and forget about the importance of human connection and compassion. However, we must remember that our civilization should not solely be defined by busyness and constant productivity. We should strive to create a society that values family and personal relationships, as these things make us human.

Rather than viewing progress as only technological advancements, we should focus on building humane qualities that will benefit our future generations. We should make time to connect with our loved ones, especially our children, who are the future of our world. We cannot afford to neglect them or sacrifice their childhoods for the sake of work.

Let us not forget that we are superior beings, capable of empathy and kindness. We should strive to maintain our humanity in a world that is becoming increasingly mechanised. We must remember that we create machines, not the other way around.

As we continue to navigate the 21st century, let us choose to be human first and foremost. It is only by embracing our humane qualities that we can truly progress and create a better future for ourselves and generations to come. The positive impacts of society

can be seen in the advancements and achievements that we have made as a collective group. From technological innovations to medical breakthroughs, society has made significant progress in improving our quality of life. Our social structures have also evolved to promote equality and inclusivity, creating a more tolerant and accepting world. Additionally, the generosity and compassion of individuals and organisations have led to countless acts of charity and philanthropy, making a positive impact on those in need. Overall, the positive influences of society have shaped our world into a better place, promoting progress and development for all.





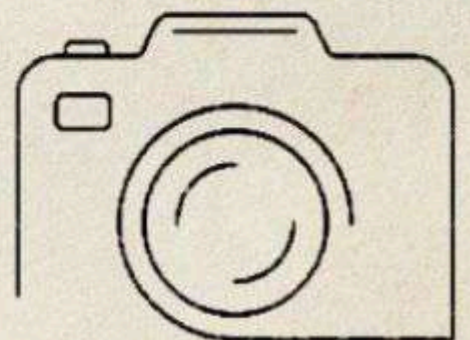
Chayanita Ghosh
Sem IV, UG



Sucheta Das
Sem IV, UG

Glimpses

W



Ice Spice

Soham Mandal
Sem VI, UG



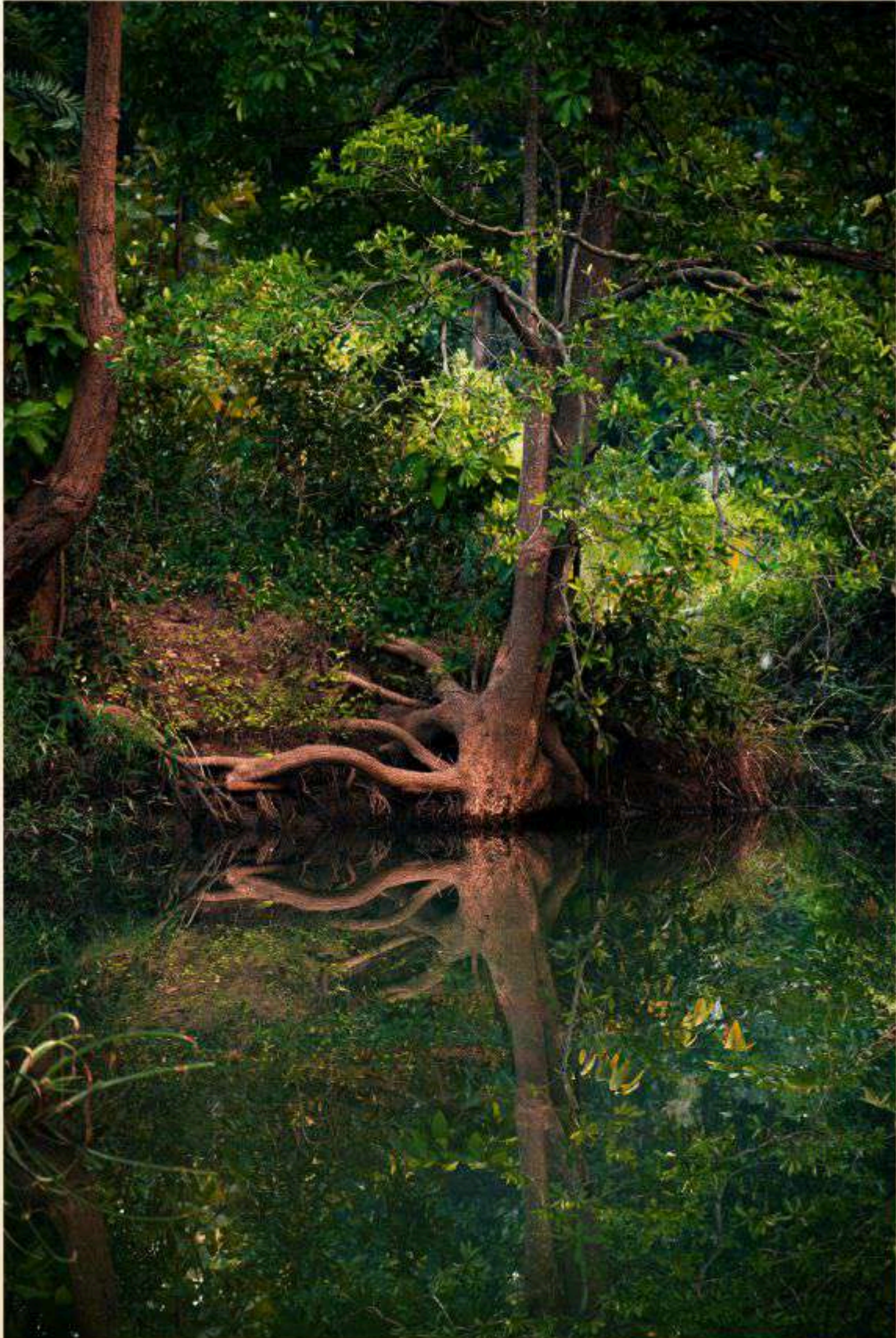
Infinity

Shaikh Neha Hasem
Sem VI, UG



The Mirror

Swaraj Roy
Sem VI, UG

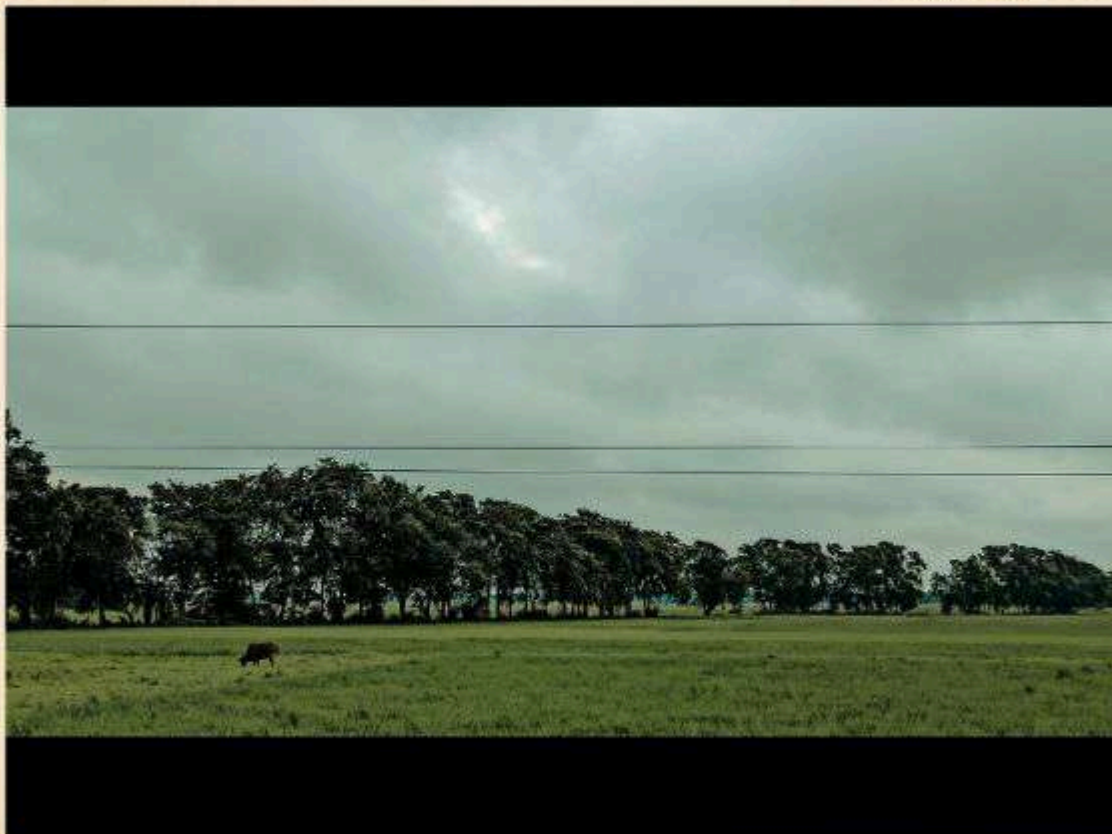


Serene

Trishanu Parui
Sem IV, UG



Trideb Das
Sem VI, UG



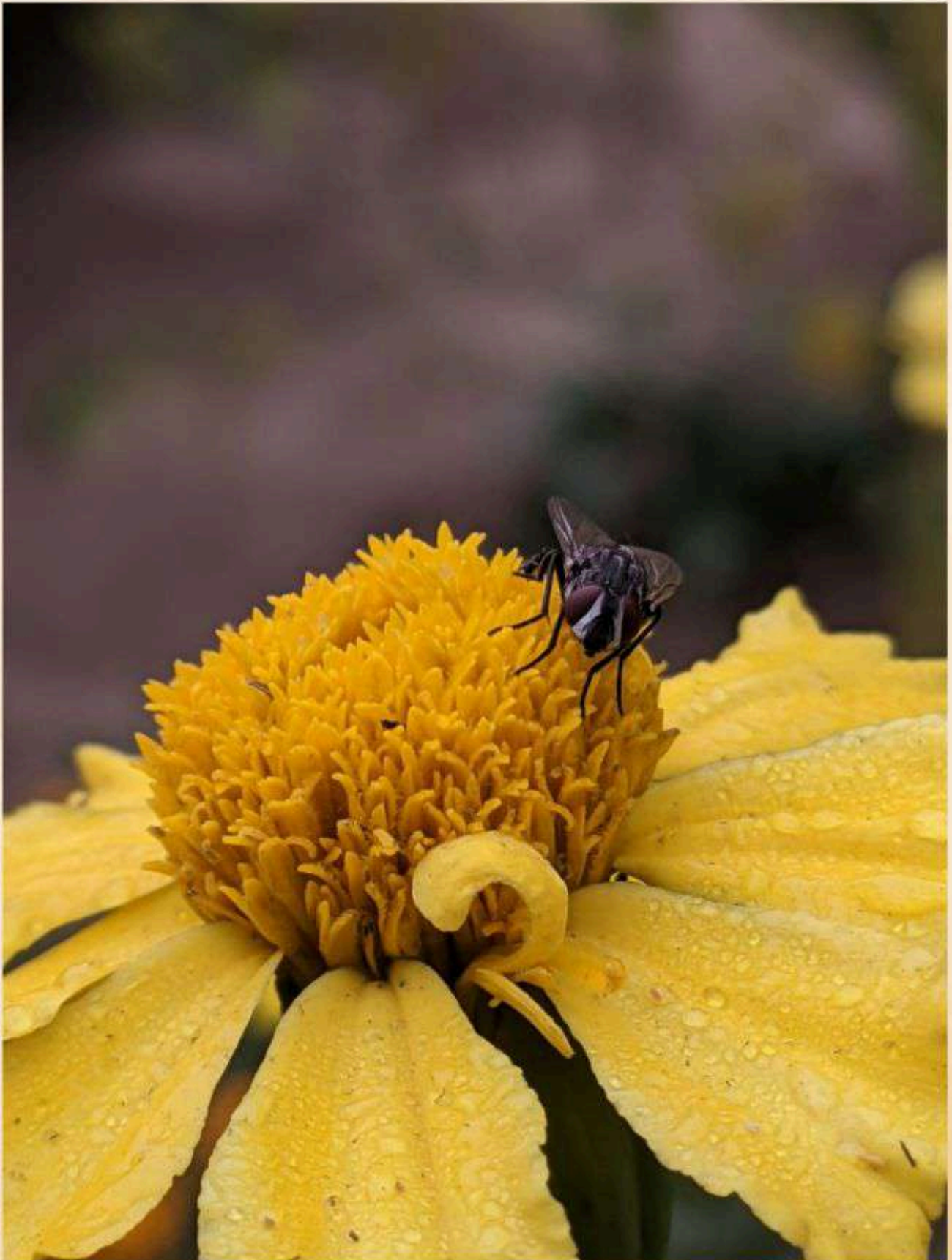
Composure

Swaraj Roy
Sem VI, UG



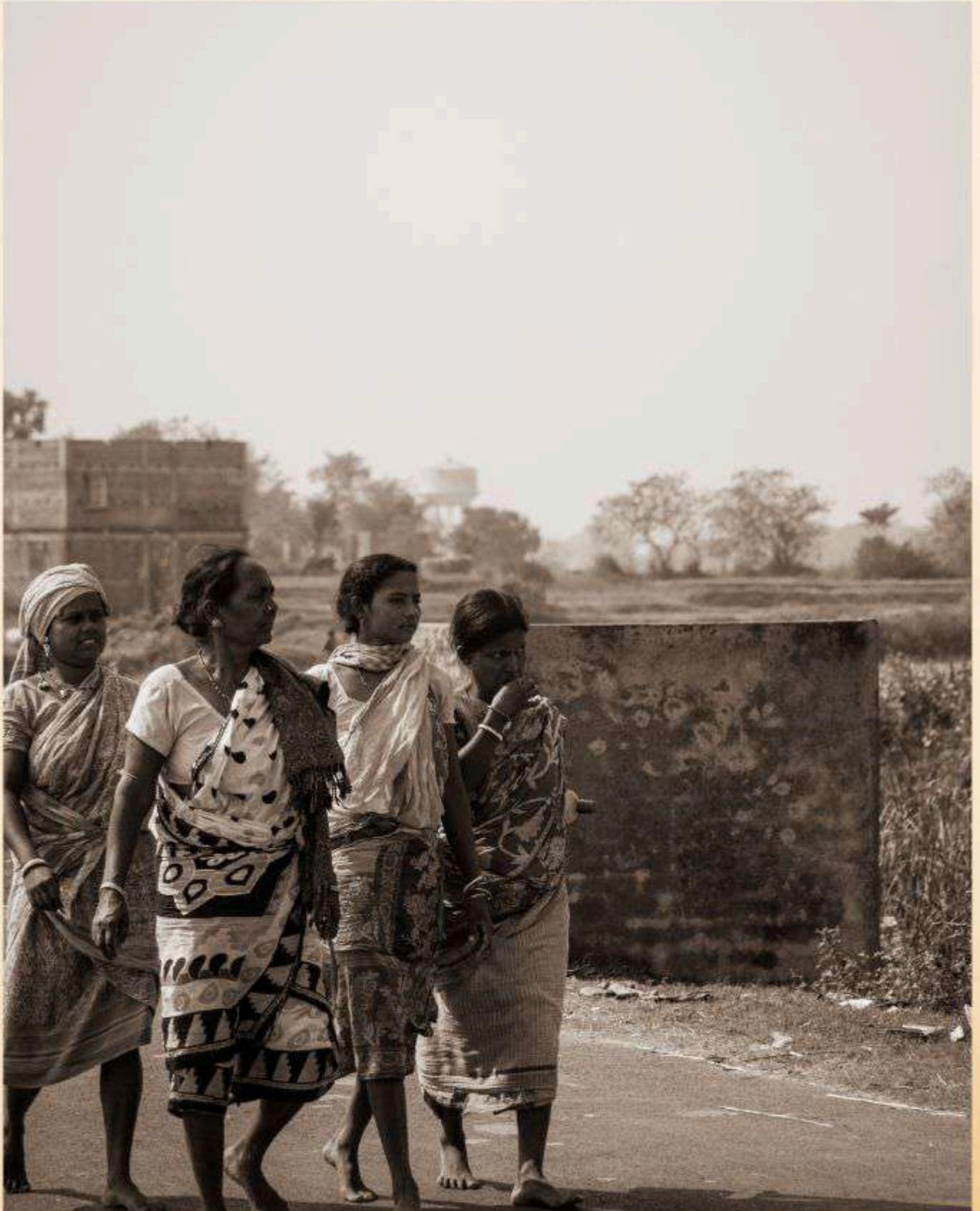
Seduction

Mondip Sarkar
Sem II, UG



Devi

Swaraj Roy
Sem VI, UG



Topsy-Turvy

Dibya Mukherjee
Sem II, PG



Asamyukta Hasta

Pragya Ghosh
Sem IV, UG



Solitude

Dibya Mukherjee
Sem II, PG



Re-united



We experienced a delicate touch of spring on the 26th of March, a bright day bathed in the appeal of spring, as our department, the Department of English at Narasinha Dutt College, hosted the first departmental reunion. The day will always be engraved in our memories thanks to the impromptu cooperation and participation of students, professors, and ex-students. The college is completing its 100th year in 2024, and at the beginning of the college's centenary year, our department planned to re-unite with its steady and hued history, ravishing tales, and reminiscences that stir nostalgia.

Before the reunion, a meeting was scheduled to organise and

carry out the plans. The students were divided up into various committees with varying levels of responsibility, and each subcommittee was assigned a professor to lead. Students came forward with enthusiasm, and attempts to establish contact with former students began.



It was decided to have the reunion on the second floor of the college's west block. A week before the event, students from both PG and UG started to decorate the room creatively. Together, professors, and students came forward with enthusiasm to make the initiative a success.

Finally, the day came, and the enthusiasm reached its peak. Respected Principal Dr. Soma Bondyopadhyay, Dr. Lipi Das, Secretary of the Alumni Association of Narasinha Dutt College, Dr. Purnendu Bhattacharya, President of the Alumni Association, current Head of the Department Prof. Moumita Dhar (Dey), professor Dr. Kuntal Chattopadhyay, Dr. Shruti Lahiri, Dr. Subhasis Chattopadhyay, and Prof. Swayamdipta Das glamorised the event with their presence.

The ex-students, who had been marched to the space by the volunteers and welcomed with badges and roses, continued to indulge in nostalgia as the programme went on. After so many days, they finally ran into many old acquaintances in the very familiar classroom where they had cherished numerous memories. Many of them had their voices dipped in nostalgia when talking about college and recalling their college days. They became more emotional after watching a video that was made by the PG batch passed out in 2022. The voice of everyone's favourite Kuntal sir, at the end of the video, tied the formers of various ages with a single thread.

The Head of the Department, Prof. Moumita Dhar, said, "We have been thinking about a reunion for a long time on behalf of the department. As we are running a PG course from 2013, we have enough students, and they will come. But for a number of reasons, that didn't happen." "However, the college has now reached its centenary year. We are a century old now. The department has also entered its 100th year. And on this auspicious occasion, we have organized our "first" reunion today.", she added.



Inauguration



Dr. Kuntal Chattopadhyay sir

After the lunch break, the students continued the programme with their excellent dancing, singing, and other presentations. The day was loved by all; everyone enjoyed every bit of it and agreed that they would cherish it forever and keep it close to their hearts. Today, these reunions must be organised. It is important to plan reunions to learn about the experiences of people of different

generations who graduated from the same institution one day in order to develop connections across generations and improve social interaction. We found instances where the mother and the son were both students at this college. Additionally, we might name Miss Shrabasti Ghoshal, who is currently one of the guest faculty members at our college and who received her graduation degree from the same college.



**Current and former students
enjoying performances together**

We students only spend a relatively brief time in college—two or three years, or five years for those who complete both their undergraduate and post graduate degrees from the same institution. But in this very short period of time, so many things happen and become part of our memories. Everyone starts getting busy with their own lives after a certain point, and those days are lost. And re-live those forgotten days is the aim of this reunion.

May the college and department continue to thrive beyond their first hundred years, and every year, everyone should be reunited in this way. May the college premises be filled again and again with nostalgia and enthusiasm. Prof. Swayamdipta Das, in the end, on behalf of the department, addressed the vote of thanks for making the programme a grand success and expressed his wish for everyone's participation in many more events to come.



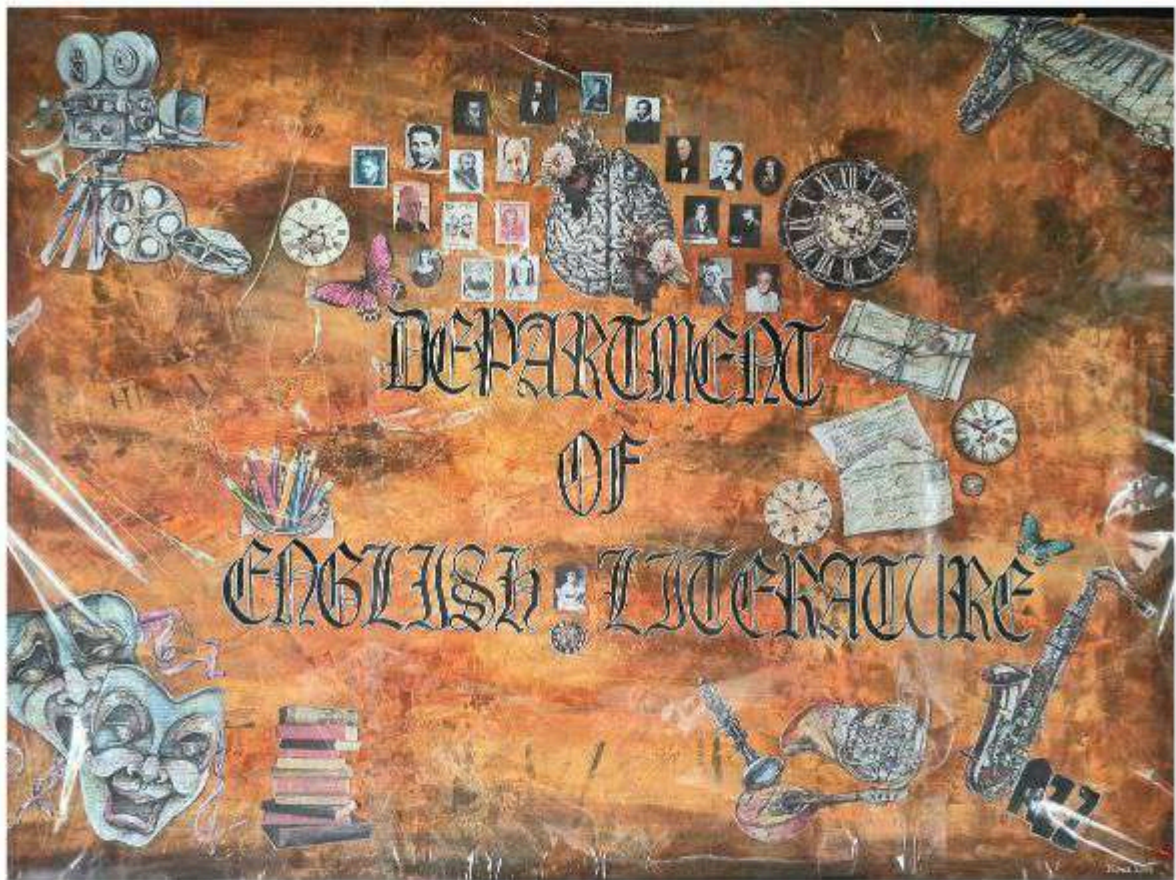
REUNITED: Respected professors with a bunch of former students



REUNITED: Respected professors with a group of current students



Chayanita Ghosh
Sem IV, UG



Paper Castle II