



AKSHAR - ARBOL
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
Nurturing Young Minds

Dhaara

The Annual Magazine

2022 - 23

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Greetings!

In the words of H W Longfellow _

"Tell me not, in mournful numbers, Life is but an empty dream !

For the soul is dead that slumbers, And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust returnest, Was not spoken of the soul."

We, at Akshar Arbol, recognize a myriad of ways in which life teaches us the values and meaningfulness of all that we do, all that we achieve and all that we lose. This year we savoured a taste of varied experiences filled with planned progress, challenges and resilient efforts even as we face a great loss in the demise of our beloved Chairman, Mr. R. Subramanian. A visionary in his own right, he was at the helm of the organisation striving for quality education and globally responsible citizens.

Dhaara is a humble endeavour towards his vision as it brings together an expression of the creative and literary works of our school community through their journey of rebuilding older routines of life while creating practices to suit present needs, and a recognition of life as a series of spontaneous changes where we let things flow naturally forward responding to the cues from the universe.

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Ms Akila Srinivas

Ms Nandini N

Ms Kirthiga N

Mr. Mrithyunjay G N

THE BARD

"Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility"-
Wordsworth

This is a section dedicated to the poet in us.

TALES OF CRUEL IMMORTALITY

Tell me o' muse,
of tales of cruel immortality
far-folded mists and calamitous lives,
the ones who we look down at in pity.

Tell me o' muse,
of she who opened the box,
to an unknown world of fatalities,
through the simple click of a lock.

Tell me o' muse,
of the serpent-headed she,
with sight so treacherous,
she turns to stone, everything she can see.

Tell me o' muse,
of the silk woven thread,
that spills out of her eyes, lips, and soul,
and so, she bled.

But what don't you tell,
about these tales of cruel immortality?
these apocryphal lores,
and spurious veracities.

So tell me o' muse,
of how the blame was placed,
on a fair young neophyte,
whose inquisitiveness was encased.

Tell me o' muse,
of the innocence that was robbed
through the stolid-told lies,
and the prurient natures of a god.

Tell me o' muse,
of how everyone was made to believe,
that she was the mendacious one,
and now all she does is weave.

Conclude, o' muse,
these tales of cruel immortality.
Will learned men and women,
continue to call these inanities?

spurious veracities - False Accuracies
neophyte - a person who is new to a subject or activity
stolid - showing little emotion
prurient - amorous interest
mendacious - not telling the truth
inanities - nonsensical remark or action

Sahasra Sathyanarayanan
- Grade 8

WATER - THE SOURCE OF LIFE!

Water is a source of life which we can never let go.
Even if it flows, we can save it to grow;
Even though it grows slow, it is very very important
to know,
That Water, Water everywhere, it lets us live and
lets us thrive!

We may thrive, but water can revive.
Water flows down the hill and makes it chill.
Water is clean and water is cool,
Living in rivers and raining in pools.

Water has many purposes.
It can wash my hands and wash my hair.
Water is as important as air.
We must be aware, to use the water fair.
It is very very important to know,
That Water, Water everywhere, it lets us live and
lets us thrive!

Conserve, preserve, and maneuver!
Because water is our savior.
We need to manage, to prevent damage,
So we can salvage this precious resource.

We need to strive to keep water alive.
Remember, water lets us live and lets us thrive,
So why not do this little favor,
By reviving our saver!

Sheema Suroor S K - Grade 6

MY CAPTAIN

The wind howling and the waves crashing
My captain prowling the ship

"We will push through and make it to shore " she yells
And with a roar the crewmen agree

The sky turns blue and the waves die down
Our ship crowns the sea
the deck is in ecstasy

"We have made it "
As the storm became history they celebrated their victory

Srishti Murali - Grade 8

THE MATCH (SONNET)

Today we played a sports match,
It happened in another school

They picked the best of our batch,
Even then, we played really uncool

All the other players were very tall,
And they ran lightning fast

We couldn't get the ball,
Thus, we came last

The main thing is we had lots of fun,
Even if we got tired

And felt like we carried a tonne,
Though, in the morning we were fired

We had a good time,
Although, some of us did whine

DEAD NIGHT (HAIKU)

The crickets chirped loud
The silence of the dead night
The Tiger hunted

SPRING (HAIKU)

Bright green blades shoot up
The sound of spring is now loud
Time for harvesting

Arushi Shankar - Grade 8

A BALLAD

When the evening fog sets on my hair
and petrichor fills the air,
my bleeding soul is beyond repair
for the light is no more

and your eyes seem to have closed
though not forever
It is still the cause of my devour
Because all I want is for us to be together

but When I'm around your elysian soul, time flies
faster than gushing bluebirds in the winter skies
for some it is just an evanescent icy winter
but for me it is one that i will eternally remember

When I throw my arms around your long extending
neck
the roots of my mind, drenched in ecstasy
as your hair caresses my cheek in the purest way
I notice All the words that you can't say
Because your eyes speak more than words could
ever convey

with those eyes, through my bleeding soul you see
you are the only one who understands the way I
feel

Poonthendrel C.V - Grade 8

FRENCH FRIES

French fries are yummy
give me a fry mummy!
I love fries
when I eat it, it cries
It has a salty taste
after all it's not a waste
Fries are long
about fries there is a song
Fries are yellow
eat some fries fellows
The french fry song is too mellow!

Sashwath V - Grade 7

OXYMORON THE POEM

Certain thoughts,
They replay in my mind.
If it is all worth it,
Whether I should go and reconcile.
Love is a reckless gold rush.
The prize turns forgotten dreams into mere slush.
One day we're soaring through the sky,
Next, we're paralysed and can't fly.
Take my hand before we become old news.
This deafening silence, No, I cannot take it no more.
Oh this brawling love, this loving hate.
Dosing on this medicinal poison.
What we have, it is beggarly riches.
We have it all, but it does not interlock.
The ups and downs, it is a civil war.
This sweet suffering, should I end it before we take it way too far?
It is bitter and it is sweet.
It is hot but so cold.
It is ruthless but it is fun.
It is young yet it's time has come.
It is damaging but it is irresistible.
It is impulsive yet rejuvenating.
It is incredible but it is insensible.
It started and ended in burning flames.
That is because this love is like an oxymoron,
Two opposite words combined together.
This journey is an oxymoron,
Two contradictory meanings fitted into each other.
So bewitching, yet so cruel

VULNERABLE

I grew up too soft.
Mom told me to toughen up.
I thought being nice would keep me safe,
Well I guess I was wrong.
I grew up caring too much.
Dad told me to know my worth.
But it's hard to do that when you're broken inside,
Years and years of buildup.
I hate this town.
I dream of getting out.
Silicon skies,
Too bright for my tired eyes.
When you fell down,
I dropped everything to help you up.

You climbed the ladder,
But you pushed me down.
Another gifted kid that burned out in the 10th grade.
Another child who cared too much only to feel heartbreak.
Another vulnerable girl who worshipped the wrong wrath.
Another one who let them drag her down the crooked path.
I wish I could be my old self.
I wish I didn't think too much.
I need to give my heart a break,
And my mind, one even longer.
Even the cleanest of slates don't give me fresh starts anymore.
I washed all their plates yet I still got too much on mine.
They take me for granted, they say "oh it's just her"
Yeah, it's just me, a vulnerable little me.
A flightless Indian sparrow in a wire mesh cage,
They cut my claws off, they punctured my wings.
Bound to the tough puppetry strings tied to my hurting back,
I watch in horror as the threads start ripping away.
But in my wounded feathers lies the monuments of my struggle.
My broken back holds the weight of the heaviest burdens.
If I live to tell my story, does it mean vulnerability is also a part of history?

SHIVANI C - Grade 9

THE WISH TREE

It was an ordinary tree
Leaves, stem, the whole affair
It was in an ordinary place
So it blocked the afternoon glare.

The only difference between
This tree and others
Was that with its usual green
It had hundreds of colours.

For this was the town's wishtree
People had flocked in a horde
To tie a bright cloth
And request a favour from God.

Many hands, some withered, some fresh
Some fair as milk, some dark as night
With a wish, all were blessed
Hopeful, nevertheless.

From rich velvet to faded, rough cotton
Some were tied sadly, some with childish glee
Adorned with limes, lilacs and crimson
It was an out-of-the-ordinary tree.

Sahana Vijay, Grade 7

ECSTASY

The salty air hits your face
As the sun spreads its warm rays

While your feet get stuck on the wet sand
You forget all about the far away land

As the waves caress you with their cold waters
It washes away tensions and increases your laughter

As your eyes drink in the vastness of the sea
Your mind slowly starts drowning in its Ecstasy

Just like the high tides and low waves
Your emotions are heightened by your heart's crave

Just as you start wondering about your thoughts
If all the stress is worth for what you sought

The salty breeze turns colder
The rays of the sun no longer warmer

A shiver down your spine gives you goosebumps
As you witness the expansive darkness that makes you jump

Only the soothing sound of the waves with a pace
As the salty air hits your face

Sreepriya, Faculty

SUSTAINABILITY

We green the Earth,
after all,
she gave us birth,

Lush green,
and rivers blue,
spreading our love,
in every hue,

We need to maintain,
sustainability,
to live in happiness,
and prosperity.

Tharika K and Priyanthi Karunakaran,
Grade 6

ODA A JEFA- (ODE TO A BOSS)

oiga jefa,
a vos conto una oda
¿Cómo onda pa arriba y lo de futuro?
el tiempo transcurre como debe pasar
todavía nuestra relación no se terminó
le adoro por su animación.
También por la honestidad, la eficacia
Aún le sorprenderá de qué se trataría
lo zumbe rápido como la abeja

La hija que lució el hogar propia
la madre que dió a luz en 1982
la alegría que sentía la familia
la muchacha que siempre ha sido intrigada
la mujer que se hizo,
se graduó pomposamente
no sé si tenía flechazos
se casó con un tecno aficionado
se trasladó a Buenos Aires
se metió a aprovechar la estancia por aprender
castellano, el idioma romance
se parió a su propio Rey
se mudó de allá, se volvió a su patria
esa madre que enseñale la vida al primogénito
esa mujer que vuela sin alas

Esa mente con cuya función penses
cuánto fuego/ardez tenés esos ojos
qué belleza sos vos
con nosotros se ha portado como si fuera nuestro
amiga sin fronteras
¡qué maestra maja ha sido!

Cuánto nos ha apreciado, apoyado, agradecido
guiado, gestionado, odiado, extrañado.

Le saludo con mi brazo extendido
me doy prisa por poner un fin de la oda
¡Eres la joya corona!

Raghav Krishnaa G,
Faculty

LOVE WHEN PERSEVERING

An opaque veil over my heart
but you see through it like it's sheer

steel spikes protrude from its sides
but like they're willow petals, you caress them so dear.

The sound of rushing black blood
but that of dripping honey is all you hear.

Taste that's meant to scorch your throat,
you embrace the flames, not letting it sear

and then it doesn't take long for the veil to lift does it?
For it was never there in my eyes

those spikes you speak of.
All they needed was a gentle touch, a true love's kiss.

Soon the rushing black blood turns crimson.
One that flows from a healed heart that is finally his.

My love and darling I was born from the flames
I can handle more and this.

Neharika Nambiar - Grade 12

WAR AND PEACE

The world we live in is a medley of achievements and setbacks. As we swing like a pendulum through the spectrum of strife and relief, there are cherished moments that take us further in our pursuit towards our goals, and we also learn from moments that show the shortcomings. Here we have writers who have shared their reflections about many such happenings and experiences.

GRAPPLING WITH THE STATE OF THE WORLD - TALIBAN: A WALK THROUGH THE PAGES OF HISTORY

The Taliban community has become the latest dinner table topic. All we usually listen to are lousy whatsapp forwards or things your uncle's classmate's friend's sibling's friend heard when they were living in Afghanistan. But what happened? Did the United States have something to do with the rise of the Taliban? Why do the Taliban do what they do? I also had very similar questions and decided to go way back to the history of America's and Afghanistan's alliance. Here is what I found.

The military alliance between the USA and Afghanistan dates back to the early 70s while the infrastructural one dates a couple of decades back. It started when both the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union wanted Afghanistan as an ally. They both decided to gain footholds instead of capturing the whole nation. They also realized that it would be smarter to invest in Afghanistan's infrastructure instead of bringing in military power right away. The 2 regions had helped the development of society and made people happier. For instance, the Soviet Union built the 'Salang tunnel' which was an easier way to get to Kabul from Northern Afghanistan. Then the United States was involved in what was known as the Helmand Valley project, which was an irrigation project and agricultural project about building dams in southern Afghanistan. Soon, the Cold War had started. The Soviet Union and the United States had been bickering for way too long and always wanted to prove their own superiority eventually causing the Cold War. This 'war' wasn't soldiers fighting each other causing mayhem but more of a civilized way of arguing. One wanted what the other had and vice versa.

Initially, Afghanistan was ruled by King Zahir Shah. He treated these people very well but unfortunately, he got overthrown by his cousin, President Mohammad Daod Khan. This was in the midst of the cold war. Daod Khan was very pleased with the way he was treated by both nations and expected them to keep doing him favors as he was the decider; picking the ally he wanted to keep. He continuously used the same phrase 'I feel happiest when I light my American cigarette with Soviet matches.' Sadly he didn't see the fact that the Soviet Union was slowly trying to capture Afghanistan as a whole. The Soviet influence prevailed and a New Democratic government was formed and they were communists who were allies to the Soviet Union. The 'Democratic Republic of Afghanistan' was formed. The government was a mix of oppressive and progressive. The government worked for the good of the people. They made sure everyone had a job, women were treated much better than they ever treated in Afghanistan and everyone had very good health care at an affordable price. But at the same time, they tried to shut down the Islam religion and anyone who spoke ill of the government was put behind bars. Understandably, many people disagreed with the morals of this communist government and they were called the Resistance forces or the Mujahadeen.

The Resistance forces of Afghanistan consisted of many individuals. They were a bunch of people who disagreed with the Soviet Union government. They included many types of groups. One group is a bunch of organized people who were unruly when it came to their morals like attacking women with acid. This group was led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The next group was led by Ahmad Shah Massoud, he had a better way of dealing with the situation. He wanted to lead a nation where all religions and people are treated equally and everyone lives in peace and harmony, which in my opinion is the best way of looking at this situation. Next, there was the leftist who are people who believe in being liberal but not in religious activities. Many of the people who were part of the government decided to join this community. Finally, some ordinary people were disgruntled with the government. These people didn't have much power so they had no moves left to play. The government however had utmost power to be and treat the people however they like. This intimidated the Americans and they decided they had to put their foot forward. They came up with a pretty solid plan... well that's what they thought. They wanted to defeat the Soviet Union but they knew they were not powerful enough to! So they decided to fund these resistance forces and make them powerful enough to fight the Soviet Union! They thought this was a brilliant idea and decided to move ahead with it. Sadly, the government somehow found out (btw if you told them...I kinda hate you but that's not the point) and they were NOT happy. They cut the connection between the Americans and the mujahadeen. This wasn't very good news. The Americans did figure out a way to smuggle in resources to the mujahadeen through the Pakistani intelligence forces who were also paid to do so. They got guns and hard cash to spend on equipment to fight their enemies. This was a great move.

Between 1978 and 1992, the successive communist Governments allied with the Soviet Union and tried to control the Govt. The Soviet Union sends its troops to help Communist Govt retain power. The insurgents were attacked by the Soviets and they went into the villages and engaged in guerilla warfare. The insurgents were also funded by Americans who gave them shoulder-mounted rocket launchers and slowly the Soviet forces became tired of fighting the war in Afghanistan. At this time the Soviet Union collapsed and the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan. At this time Civil war broke out and the Taliban which was one of the Mujahideen took control of Kabul.

Soon, the Mujahadeen which included the Taliban started going into debt since America was not planning to fund them and cut the alliance abruptly. At this time Al Qaeda funded their missions and grew close to them. This was when they planned the 9/11 attack at the World Trade Center. This caused a lot of havoc and also killed over 3000 people. It caused a lot of confusion as no one fully knew who had done it in the beginning. Then it was traced back to Al Qaeda and the Taliban causing the US to take serious actions. They decided to find Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda but he was protected by the Taliban and since they refused to hand him over, America decided to invade Afghanistan.

As the Americans invaded, the government of Afghanistan soon lost power and gave up the country. The Americans took control of Afghanistan's total power till the year 2014. When the U.S.-led coalition formally ended its combat mission in 2014, the ANDSF (Afghan National Defense and Security Forces) were put in charge of Afghanistan's security.

The ANDSF, unfortunately, faced multiple challenges and mainly focused on the highly populated areas of Afghanistan. But the Taliban ended up carrying out multiple suicide attacks in the rural areas where there was no defense to protect the commoners. The US tried everything to get the Taliban to fall on their feet, they even tried to target Taliban revenue sources and shot down drug and opium production sites. Sadly the Taliban was NOT budging! The ANDSF felt helpless. The Taliban soon lost patience and knew that doing nothing and just protesting was not working. They soon started to slowly seize small areas including Farah Province and Ghazni province in the year 2018. This lasted for around a week where the US-Afghan troops got back their control. Later the ANDSF faced a lot of issues and soon lost most of its power. The US ended up signing a peace treaty with the Taliban in February 2020 after a lot of convincing and negotiation.

Okay if you have skipped to this point, well ouch! But I get it. Still listen closely... This is all you need to know now. The government of the United States has safely evacuated all of the American troops and President Joe Biden calls this mission a big success! So this full 70-year-old chapter is closed... well almost? Taliban have captured Afghanistan, leaving the government helpless. The Taliban is treating people, especially women very poorly and enforcing harsh rules on them. Since they are extremists all girls above the age of 8 are instructed to stay home. Women have to wear the headscarf (hijab) and can only leave the house only with the assistance of a man. This is just the beginning...

This is my take on this. I have nothing against anyone who was part of this huge slice of world history: I think the Soviet Union and America could both consider how this fight for superiority may affect the well being of the world.

Secondly, I am happy that the Mujahid existed because after all, they were trying to look out for their country. Although I don't agree with their methods. Honestly, I don't think throwing violent protests is the way to get independence. Even though many resistance groups seemed stuck in the BC, many were contemporary and were pretty forward. I am also glad that the USA finally decided to withdraw their forces because after all the Americans needed some support and it was a bit unfair that Americans had to die for the good of another country. I hope the Taliban understand that they don't always need others to follow what they follow. I don't think anyone was in the wrong of this 20-year long war but I know that soon everything will come to an end where everyone lives peacefully and without fear. When? That's for us to soon find out...

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Thulikha Krishna - Grade 9

LA MANCHA

It was one of those muggy, dreary evenings where there was an omnipresent whiff of rain and leaves, when the humidity licked your skin and left an uncomfortable lingering feeling. The train glided on smoothly like, I had discovered, most trains in Paris. But then, this particular train was different. When you turned towards the window, there were no sights to see. Just an all-consuming dimness.

'La Manche,' they called it. The thin strip of sea separating the people of France and England. Historically, that strip made all the difference; it was often the chasm between the old and the new, the two faces of a coin. Paris, France's capital city, had none of the aristocratic reservation London did. Thus far into our vacation, I found Paris to be similar to many Indian metropolises: tropical, sweltering, cultured, cosmopolitan, and a bit rough around the edges. It was the kind of city hospitable to such grand displays of exuberance as the Palace of Versailles as well as roughnecks and rowdies. Such a country naturally didn't obey conventions. For example, one would think to cross 'La Manche,' the English Channel, by boat. This need not always be the case, evidenced by my journey on a train that in fact went under it.

They had the ingenious idea to bore a tunnel under the English Channel to facilitate 'land transport' to England (the madmen). Thus, as our train shuddered forth, the only views we were treated to were those of the damp tunnel walls. A relief, I thought, to be shielded from the Mediterranean Sun; but I also felt a twinge of regret, recalling the solace of mint ice cream from stands around the legs of the Eiffel tower. Discomfort is intolerable, sure, but it often has sweet consolations.

Having nothing to entertain me outside, I turned my attention to the passengers. This has always been one of my favourite pastimes: observing strangers in public spaces as would study specimens in a museum, with almost an anthropological fervour. It was an early fascination of mine to observe their behaviour and their quirks, attempting to grasp the depth and dimensionality of each individual. As if to imitate a technique of writers to better capture the human essence in their work.

One woman I remember distinctly had red, or maybe brown hair (my memory fails me) in a short bob. I could not tell you why I remember her alone, among all the other things I saw in Europe, but her pallor and steely eyes are still vivid in my mind. It was the universal experience of a secret, shared knowing with a stranger—your eyes meet for a brief few moments and you know that you'll probably never see each other again, but in those fleeting seconds you share some sort of silent understanding. She was wearing a trench coat and tracing designs on the back of her hand using stencils and a Mehendi cone. (I had found that there was a peculiarly French fondness for "Indian things" in Paris: the local Parisian Saravana Bhavan was always swamped with visitors of every skin tone.

I witnessed frenchmen walk into the pure veg restaurant, dust their shirts off as if attending to very important business, and then proceed to polish off their plates of idli sambar.) I recall her focus in tracing the stencil, the way her light eyes fixed on the design, then on me, then flitted back to her design. Her resolve and focus, fixed unwaveringly on the back of her hand, stands clear in my memory. I was observing this woman for quite some time (I was a child, so I still had time to learn manners), until I noticed how intricately beautiful the mehendi designs on her pale hand were coming out. She glanced at me once more, as if she had finally proven herself.

Other than that, I retain only fragments of the experience. Somebody reading a newspaper, the rustle of snack wrappers, an absent-minded yawn, laptop keys clicking, the humming of the train, the soft crying of a baby. . .

Sharada Gopalakrishnan -DP1

SCHOOL CRICKET TRIP TO HYDERABAD

We started our trip to Hyderabad by bus, on 24th December 2022. At around 7:00 pm we loaded all of our luggage and kit bags and started the journey. The bus ride was about 12 hours and we reached Ramoji film city Hyderabad. After we arrived, we got our luggage off the bus and boarded another bus to go to our resort. Our resort was right next to two of the cricket grounds. When we reached the resort we got our rooms, freshened up and went to eat our breakfast. After that we played gully cricket and enjoyed ourselves. Before our practice session at 3:00 pm after our practice session, we went back to our rooms, had a shower, ate our dinner and went to sleep. The next day we woke up and got ready for our first match. After our match we came back and took some rest. We had matches everyday for the next four days so we followed the same routine. After our last match we all ate our last meal as a full team in Hyderabad and the ones who weren't coming back by bus left. The ones who were going back by bus, we boarded our bus at 9:30 pm and reached Chennai at around 8:00 in the morning.

Even though we lost our matches in Hyderabad we still bonded very well as a team. Even on Tuesday, Jan 17 2023 we won a nail biting match against St Patrick's.

Siddharth.K Grade 7

CALL IT WHAT YOU WANT - REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST SCHOOL YEAR

This past year was good. That's all I can say about it, I guess. I mean, that is, if you don't consider all the times I got into trouble for doing the silliest things or got told off by a teacher for not standing in line or something like that. But if you think about it, that is what school is all about, right?

Now, I'm not going to go all philosophical and erudite - because I'm not Socrates (obviously). But I am going to break down this past year. So, why should you be reading this? Well, I have three main reasons:

- a) this is going to be very interesting
- b) I will describe in detail some of the instances where I got into trouble (it's not wrong to feel some epicaricacy)
- c) by the end of this, you'll probably have a smile on your face... or you might just be bored... but read on, you're soon to find out by the end.

This year was actually really good. Learning was fun and I seriously enjoyed all my classes.

There've also been many instances where I hadn't completed my homework. And I would feel so guilty about it. And I would be sad. And there've been many instances where I felt proud of myself for doing something really cool.

Sports Day was fun, Thiran was the best and the Aadi Street Festival was one of the most unforgettable days of this year.

Ohhhh... once during P.E., I accidentally threw the basketball somewhere, and now... it's lost. We never found it. And I've lost count of the number of times I got into trouble for talking with my friends (a little too much), giggling in the middle of a serious conversation, or just being undisciplined, in general.

But I think that's what school is all about. We don't have to be perfect, and always get the best grades and always do well. All you have to do is, try your best, and have fun. Motivational speech over... please clap.

Okay, well I just mean to say, I had a lot of fun. And I just have the most amazing friends, and I'm so lucky to be with them. This past year has been wonderful to me...and I learnt a lot of things. I've made mistakes, and made some choices that's hard to deny... but looking back, I wouldn't change a thing.

I'm just going to say it... this year was seriously the best, call it what you want.

Vishakha, Grade 8A

The year that has gone by

Is a year to remember....

With its fair share of twists and turns

And with memories to look back and smile!!

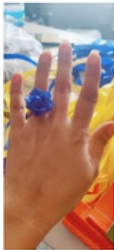


Bright days with sunny skies
and blooms around....

And stormy days scaring us with
lightning and thunder!! ☹️



It was all
about
finding joy
in little
things



.....And
to keep
moving
forward
!!!



There were days filled with laughter...
Moments that made eyes well up...
Love and Joy that we spread
together...
And Disagreements that kept us
alive!! 😊



With gratitude for all that happened and with hope that we
continue to keep doing good together.....

Gita Saikia- Science Faculty

THINKING OF BIASES

What would the world look like if gender stereotypes didn't exist?

Less gender discriminations

The world would be more fair

People will be less biased?

- Everyone can wear earrings
- Everyone can wear skirts
- Everyone can have long/short hair

PEACE!



How... would the world be w/o inequality? ☺

NO MORE Gender stereotypes...

E.g: If people constantly associate girls for dresses & boys for gaming, it would be out of order. If gender stereotypes didn't exist, it would be beautiful.

Examples of a world without stereotypes below:

SAY NO TO GENDER DISCRIMINATION

No room for racism

Be kind to all

NO STEREOTYPING

Be equal

No room for bias

And the world will be a better place

Everyone's happiness at the cost of one action

No Stereotyping!

Peace

Avoid Conflicts

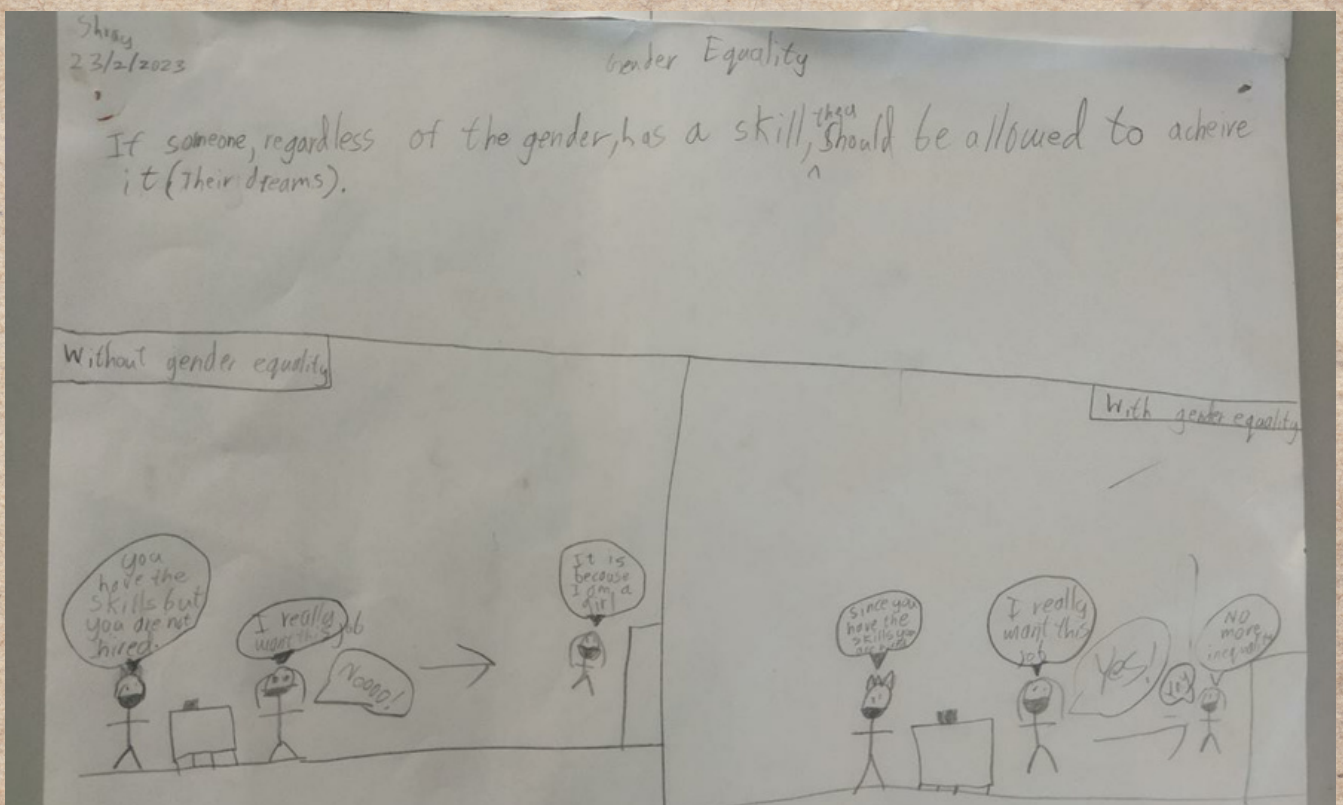
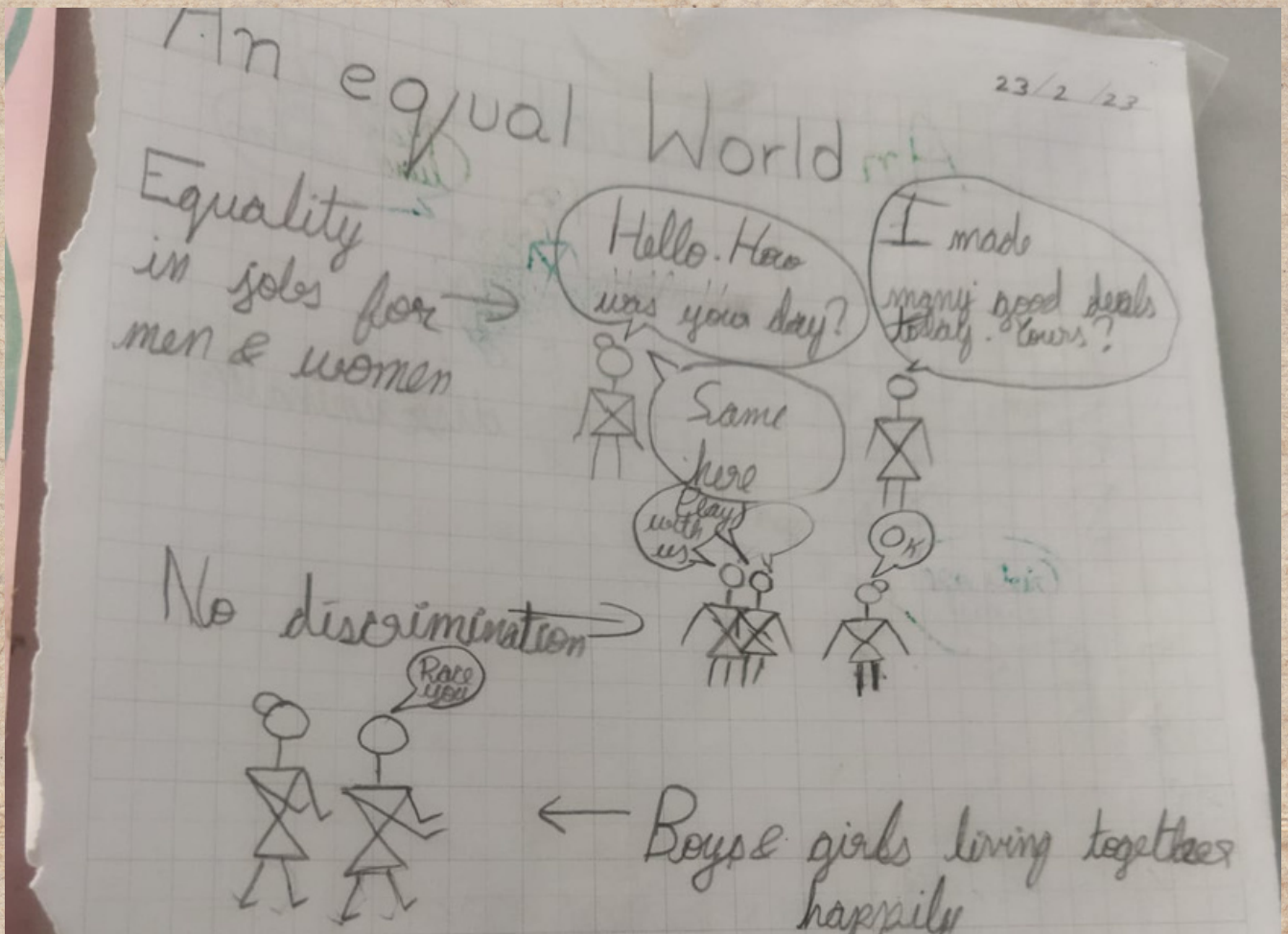
Gender equality

Self Love

No Shame for our gender

It avoids wars like in India & Pakistan.

THINKING OF BIASES

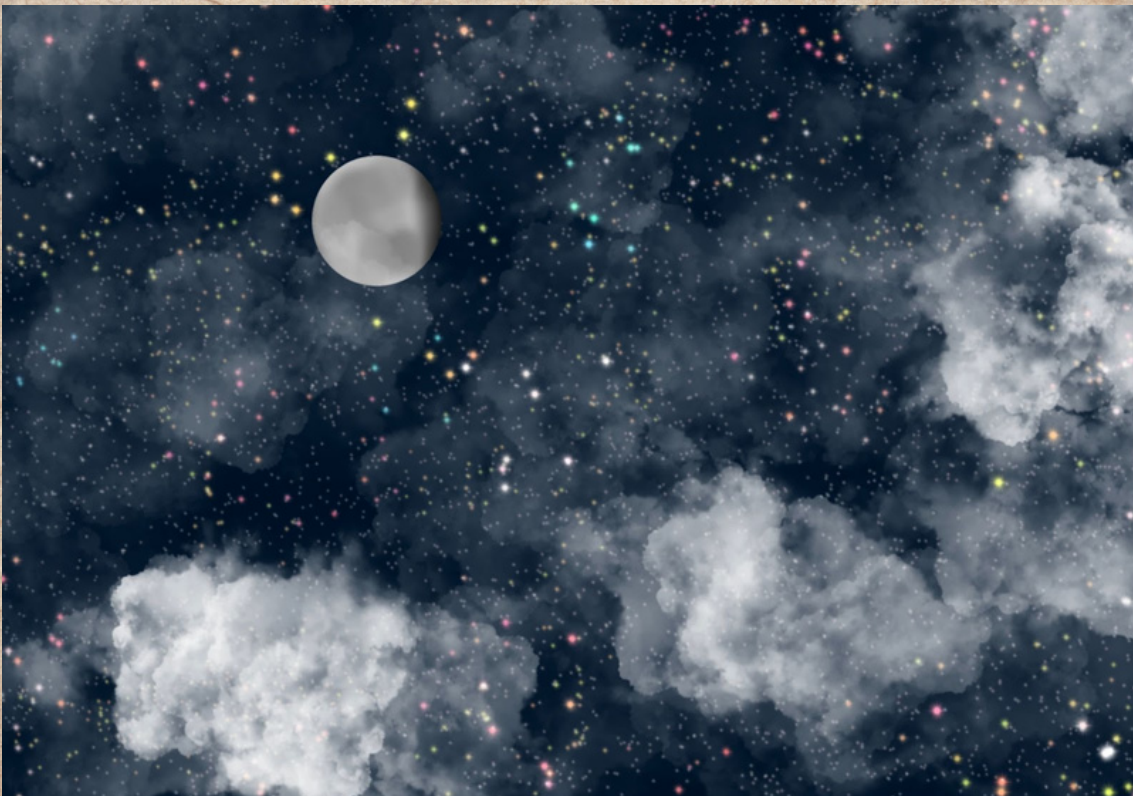


THE CREATIVE ME

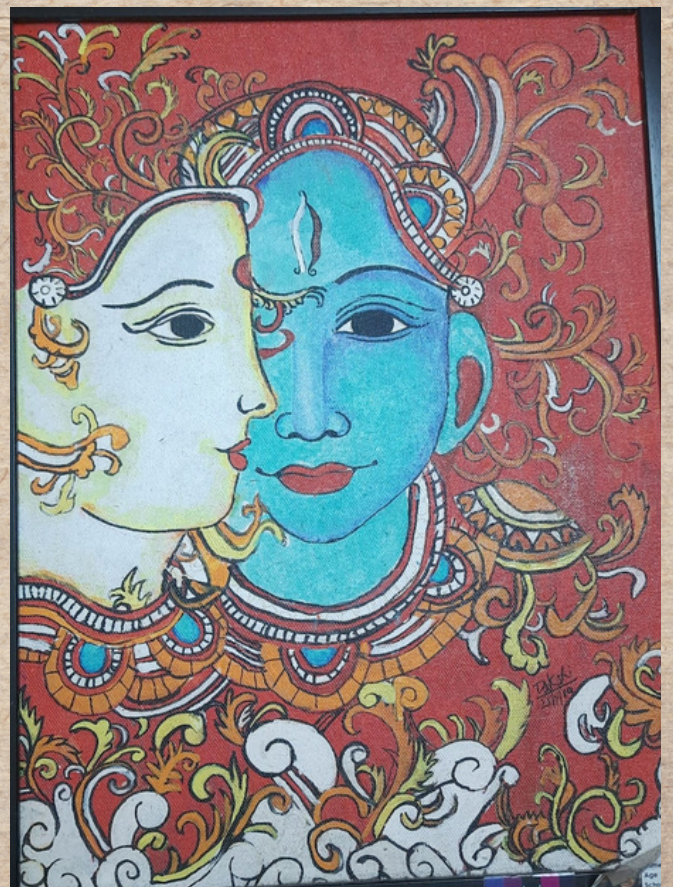
While the majority of our days, weeks, and sometimes months are filled with mainstream and structured expectations from self and others, 'The Creative me' is a space for us to move out of the regular norms and let the artistic creativity in us take the limelight.



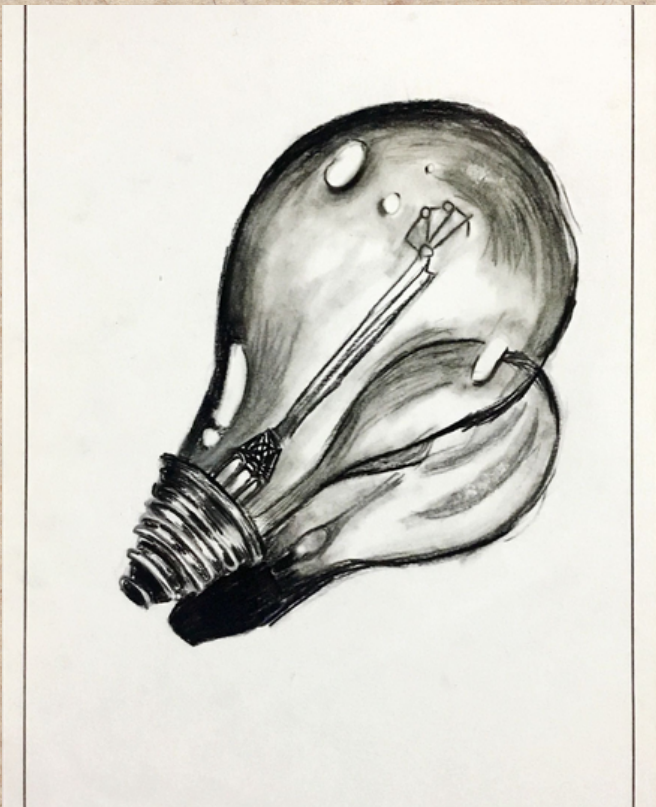
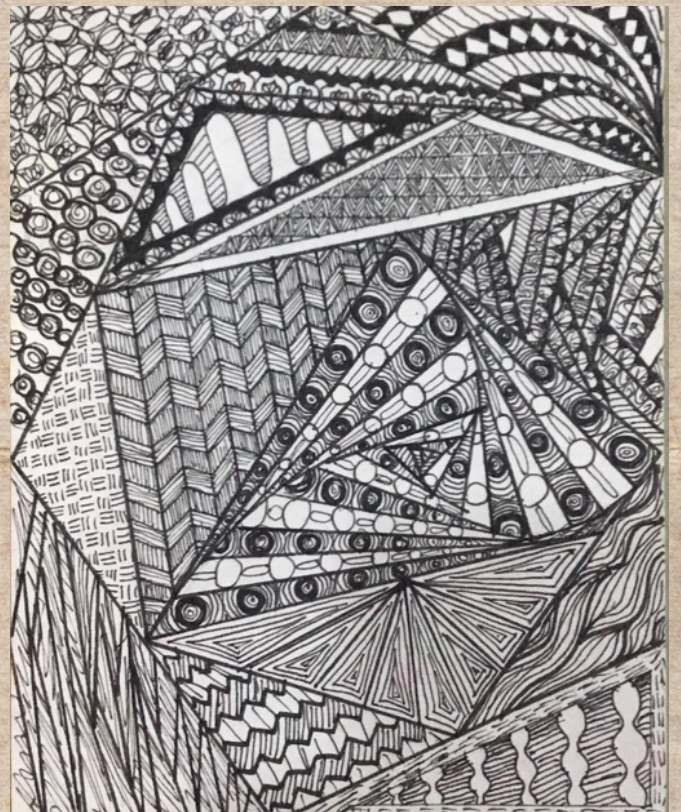
Vibhavari Pungu Venkata-
Grade 8



Sooraj S Cousik - Grade 11



Dakshyani Babu Rao - Grade 9



Lekha Hetal-Grade 8



Ashwath Mahesh, Grade 11



Adishri Senthil- Grade 8



Shreya Shrinivas - DPI



Adishri Senthil-Grade 8



Madiha Fathima Grade 8

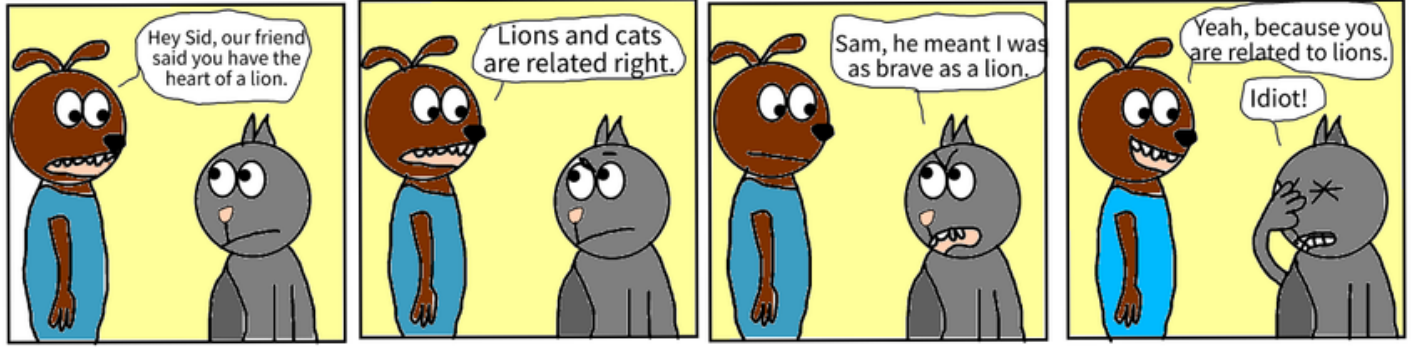


Sai Shruthi K- Grade 8



Ksheeraja R, Grade 7

Sam and Sid



Vaibhava Mukund- DP1

LIFE IS ALL ABOUT CLIFFHANGERS

Isn't it? There is so much happening around, and it is almost impossible for many of us not to start weaving these engaging, eventful, chaotic scenarios into narratives or descriptive reflections.

Read on to walk through.

GAME OVER

Throwing his controller at the wall, he leaned back against the couch and groaned. The “Game over” message displayed in big fluorescent yellow letters on his TV screen did nothing to ease his frustration and rather only made his anger increase.

It was his tenth attempt at clearing the level he was on and he was failing badly. Letting out a sigh, he walked to where his controller lay on the ground, picked it up and dropped it on the couch. He knew that if his mother were here, she would have lectured him for not placing the controller on its designated spot and somehow it was all the more reason for him to continue to not do so.

Walking over to the kitchen, he headed straight for the refrigerator, needing to drink water as he had spent the last three hours sitting on the sofa playing his video game without even a break in between. Right on cue, his stomach started to growl, indicating that he had not eaten anything the whole day except for a small bowl of rice for lunch.

He ignored his stomach’s cry for food, ready to head back to the living room to resume his game, when he heard the loud noise of glass breaking. Almost instantaneously, this made his hair stand on end, and he tightened his grip on the water bottle in his hands.

There was nobody in the house except for him...or at least that’s what he thought. His parents were at work and his sister was at her friend’s house; there wasn’t anyone he could think of who would drop by unannounced either. Feeling his heart beat faster, he made his way to the location where he heard the noise from—his sister’s room.

The dark purple door was closed, the ‘Do not disturb’ sign board hanging undisturbed on the doorknob, and there was no sign of anyone else. He let out a relieved breath, and opened the door anyway. Nothing seemed out of place and there was no proof of the noise he’d heard.

“You’re such an idiot sometimes”, he scolded himself as he closed the door and made his way back to the kitchen. He grabbed an orange, feeling more hungrier than before, and closed the kitchen door before going to the living room.

Falling on the couch, he started to peel the orange—wanting to eat as quickly as he could and get back to his game—and threw the peels on the coffee table. However, he abruptly stopped when he saw a mass of black in his peripheral vision.

Shifting his eyes from his hands to the table, he saw it. His controller placed perfectly on the centre of the coffee table to face the TV.

Goosebumps spread through his body as he suddenly felt a small chill up his back. Whether it was due to the night air flowing from the open window to his right or the fact that he knew he'd placed his controller on the couch, he wasn't sure.

Discarding the half-peeled orange on the table, he slowly picked up the controller. His mind was racing and the uneasiness he'd felt when he heard the noise was back. He was sure the controller was on the couch—it was a habit of his to leave it there whenever he played—so he had no idea how it was on the table.

Turning the controller front and back, he inspected it wanting to find something that could explain the bizarre happening, when the dull sound of a door slamming shut was heard. He immediately froze, his hands gripping the controller tightly so as to not shake—not that it helped much as he could feel a shiver spread through his body.

He couldn't help his mind from racing through different thoughts and scenarios. Someone was in his house, who was it? What were they here for? What was he supposed to do? What about his family?

The last thought pushed him to get to his feet and find his phone. He searched the couch and moved frantically around the room when his phone was nowhere in sight. Until he heard noises of clanging pots and pans from the kitchen, it didn't hit him that he had left his phone there.

He took a deep breath, needing to calm himself as his hands had become clammy and his body was slightly shaking. He knew he had to go to the kitchen in order to get his phone, but he couldn't face whoever was there, for he didn't know how to defend himself. When the clanging stopped, he grabbed the object closest to him—a blue coloured thick metal lamp his parents had just bought—and ran to the kitchen.

He stopped in his tracks when he saw that the kitchen door was ajar, with few of his mom's favourite crockery and utensils scattered on the ground. His heart was beating so loud he could hear it and he felt his fear increase tenfold. Holding the lamp in a vice-like grip, he walked into the kitchen, scanning the room for his phone. Spotting it on the kitchen island, he immediately lunged for it, not wasting a second. But, before he could even unlock the screen, the door to the kitchen slammed shut. He rushed toward the now closed door, lamp and phone in hand, and frantically twisted the knob to no avail. He was locked inside.

When he paused his efforts of twisting the knob and pounding on the door, he was able to hear light breathing noises from the other side. There was definitely someone on the other side; and it was only a matter of seconds before the door opened and he was attacked by them.

His tight hold on the lamp stayed unwavering as he mentally prepared and instructed himself on what to do: "When the door opens, strike the lamp at whoever is in front of you. No hesitations, nothing". He thought of it like a video game he played—there was no time for hesitating or thinking twice as he had to rely completely on his instincts.

As if on cue, the door knob started to unlock, and he mentally counted the seconds before the door would open, his hand ready to swing the lamp at the intruder. The second the last click was heard, he pushed the door open and swung the lamp with as much force as he could muster in that moment.

When the lamp struck at nothing, on instinct, he moved forward and swung the lamp back with even more force than before that the lamp tumbled out of his hand. The metal dinging of the lamp was the only sound heard in the completely dark hallway. He staggered backwards, his hands holding the wall behind for support, as he felt off-kilter due to the absolute darkness and lack of weapons.

One by one, the sound of glass smashing onto a wall was heard all around him, causing his body to shake more violently and his mind to blank out. What should he do now? What can he do now? His mental questions were forced to a stop when the shattering of glass stopped, leading to a haunting silence.

The silence was broken when an unknown voice spoke, causing his body to still completely, ice filling his veins.

"You should learn to aim better. I'd give you a final try, but our little game is over now."

Meghana Sudeesh-
Grade 10

YOU'VE GOT MAIL - IT'S FROM YOUR SALAD

Scientists have taught spinach plants to send emails and it's not for a sale event.

A really cool study published by the scientific journal "nature materials" says that engineers from MIT have found a way for detecting big changes in climate patterns with the help of spinach root systems.

"Plants are environmentally responsive," said Professor Michael Strano, who led the study. "They know that there is going to be a drought long before we do. They can detect small changes in the properties of soil and water potential. If we tap into those chemical signaling pathways, there is a wealth of information to access." he added.

This new technology is called plant nanobionics and it uses spinach roots to identify nitro aromatics in groundwater. Nitro aromatics are man-made chemicals found mostly in explosives.

According to the study, when the 'carbon nanotubes' inside the spinach roots detected these compounds, they could send a signal to an infrared camera, which then triggered an email alert to the scientists who conducted the study.

"Plants are very good analytical chemists," said Strano. "They have an extensive root network in the soil, are constantly sampling groundwater, and have a way to self-power the transport of that water up into the leaves," he said.

Another study from American University found that spinach could be used to fuel air-metal batteries. These are a better alternative to lithium-ion batteries and are commonly used in computers.

Apart from being a nutritious addition to your diet, it appears that the modest spinach is doing its part. It looks like I might have to submit to the spinach overlords now...

Paridi Mukundan - Grade 8

THE SIREN'S CALL

I fell back, breathing sharply. I had just battled with a Kraken. Terrifying creatures, beautiful but terrifying.

The large tentacles pushing across the water and covering my ship like a Tsunami.

The loud roar of the creature, shaking my ship, nearly tipping us over into the rough sea.

I gasped for air as we steered past the Kraken, not believing what had just happened.

Although we had passed it, my body was still stiff and dressed as if something could be attacking us again.

After nearly thirty minutes of staying like that, my body suddenly relaxed. My legs felt like jelly and my body wanted to collapse on the floorboard of the ship.

But it did not feel painful and was not because of my rigidness, No. It was because of a sweet melody ringing in my ears.

It felt as if I had a tiny instrument in my ears and they were playing a beautiful melody with a harp.

Calming, beautiful, gentle yet alarming. The music was sinking into my bones

when a beautiful voice sang into my ears. An ancient language I didn't know,

yet I understood that she sang of Feelings - love, and she told a story

THE SONG OF THE WOMAN:

At the start it is beauteous

So majestic, so statuesque

The song so melodious.

Luring the man, Junoesque

A song bewitching the man

Sang by a woman enticing

She embraces and canoodles him

Putting him in a spell, enchanting.

He perishes,

A single tear falling from his eye

He did not know that she was abysmal

Not knowing she was the reason he must die

I did not know that she was singing about me

as I was so enchanted by her words.

I wanted to go to her, I wanted to jump off the ship

and swim to that beautiful voice.

I got up from the floor and walked slowly to the edge of the ship.
My body wanted to move faster
But my legs walked at one pace. I stood over the edge
and jumped off the ship. I fell off the ship
as the sound stopped abruptly,
My face plummeting to the sea when I realized that the singer -
that the singer was a SIREN and I was about to die.

Sahana V K, Grade 7

A TRAVELOGUE POEM - MUDHUMALAI 2023

The hills hold fond memories
The clouds above have witnessed heartfelt laughter
The wild creatures and trees that shot up into the sky,
had seen nurtured young minds as curious as a cat
The animated deers and turkey made our stay one of a kind
Waking up to not 4 bedroom walls and your mom screaming
But to the views of the magnificent mountains with the magically engulfing
mist
The flowing streams and before I forget, the blood-sucking leeches
Have experienced deafening screams of adrenaline and fear respectively
Our first school trip beyond the bustling streets of Chennai
It's those little memories: laughing hysterically and dancing with the
teachers
In the van, making the driver angry, singing songs and clicking a gazillion
pictures
These are the ones that stick with us forever
The walls of the hotel hold stories of the silly 'us' being scared of lizards,
the late-night musings of kids who are just not able to sleep a wink
because of the incontainable excitement
The rain, the bonfire, the homely food, people and atmosphere
The aromatic Annapoorna coffee, the views of the starry night sky
All these little things just filled our joy with pure gratitude
From hoping to see tigers to making friends with Sumangalam (the name of
one of the many elephants we saw...I just had to mention it because it's way
too iconic)
From leaving Chennai in trains with just clothes and essentials to coming
back with loads of Ooty goodies and memories to cherish forever
We had a BLAST!

Hansini Krishna - Grade 9

“ZOO” LANDER: REVENGE OF THE MONKE (BING CHILLING 2.0)

It was a big day at the Local Central Zoo for we had incoming: The two famous giant pandas Wei and Xin. Yes, the zoo is right here in Chinatown. The contingent was accompanied by the one and only Ni Han, head of the Chinese Environment Secret Service, the one with the honor of cutting the ribbon along with the head of the zoo: Karl. They were to welcome the giant pandas to their new home.

Thus, zookeepers were to run around, to check every last habitat to make sure nothing would get out of hand as the last thing anyone wanted was an outbreak (a break-out too). And yet, thanks to the “totally legal” below minimum wages, a few habitats would be left unchecked. One of those was the new, temporary chimpanzee habitat, created to make space for the giant pandas.

The ceremony began and damn it was GIANT. There was a large, shamiana-style shaded stage in the middle of the zoo, ready to accommodate over a hundred specimens, a dozen guards, and crew from nearly every news channel (except Subramanian news, which was a shame). There was a large outdoor banquet as well serving everything from coffee to coke to bananas to pastries to hot paruppu vadai (well not really but would have been MASS). Meanwhile, at the chimpanzee habitat, the pack leader, Hantoosha, discovered that the key still remained on the door of their cage. The chimps, being chimps, started messing with it and soon got it opened. FREEDOM. Hantoosha got the chimps' FREEDOM. FREEDOM.

The chimps began exploring and upon reaching the site, the monkeys were shocked that their original habitat had been transformed into an event ground. Their home, gone, turned into a banquet. GONE. Hantoosha couldn't believe it. Their home, all of it, is GONE.

So, in his outrage, he resolved to take revenge and reclaim their lost paradise and thus led the chimps to ravage the banquet worse than an income tax raid. FEAST, he yelled, EAT HAVOC & LET SLIP THE DUNGS OF WAR!

Before I proceed, take a minute and imagine a mass stampede (or that one scene from The Lion King). Now imagine that same scene but with chimpanzees high on bananas, coffee, and (diet) coke wrecking everything in sight, flinging their feces at everyone's faces. Yes indeed, PURE CHAOS it was, voices intensified to the extent that I could hear isolated screams of terror echoing around me:

“Everyone RUN!!”

“What is Happening?? Why are the monkeys high and going complete bananas??”

“That’s ‘cause they’re fully loaded on bananas! And far worse. RUN!!”

“That’s it I want to SEE YOUR MANAGER!”

“DEVUDA DEVUDA, ENGA PAKKAM CHOODOODAAAA.....!!—“

Karl, completely stunned and furious, could do nothing but yell, “GUARDS! What are you doing?? Call Animal Control and get those tranquilizer guns from storage, NOW! And escort Mr. Han out of here!”

It took a few odd minutes, but a dozen guards returned with twice as many tranquilizer guns, ready to go full Rambo-style THUPAKKI mode. And they did, they did, proceeding to stun everyone in sight, be it primates or their mates. And, as fate would have it, Ni Han was not an exception. Neither was Karl spared, for Hantoosha managed to gain control of one such gun and put his behind to sleep.

“Everyone, get on the stage now! This party shall be over when we have the high ground”, one of the remaining guards ordered.

“That’s it. You’re putting another 5 bucks in the Star Wars Jar-(Jar) Bill!”, another guard responded. “But it’s a good plan.” And so, a circle on the stage was formed. Think of it as the famous “Avengers in a Circle” shot (cue music), but this time the six were your everyday Joes, Jeffs, and Bills. Nonetheless, the monkeys started falling one by one to the darts.

However, among all this back-and-forth Tamizh Padam style aviyaal masala, the real winner here was the media (it always is, isn’t it?) who managed to capture the whole thing live for the entire country to watch. ‘Oh them boys are having a field day’ my friend and I surmised as we barely escaped the wrath of Hantoosha to return to our Tata Nano and EXIT like BREXIT.

I saw the rest of this escapade on the news. Animal Control arrived at the scene and cleaned up the rest of the monkeys.

Firstly, I regret to report that we lost Hantoosha on that day. May he rest in peace with his brother Harambe.

Secondly, we lost the opportunity of a lifetime to live in close proximity to two giant pandas and thus have to settle for National Geographic and the Kung Fu Panda series.

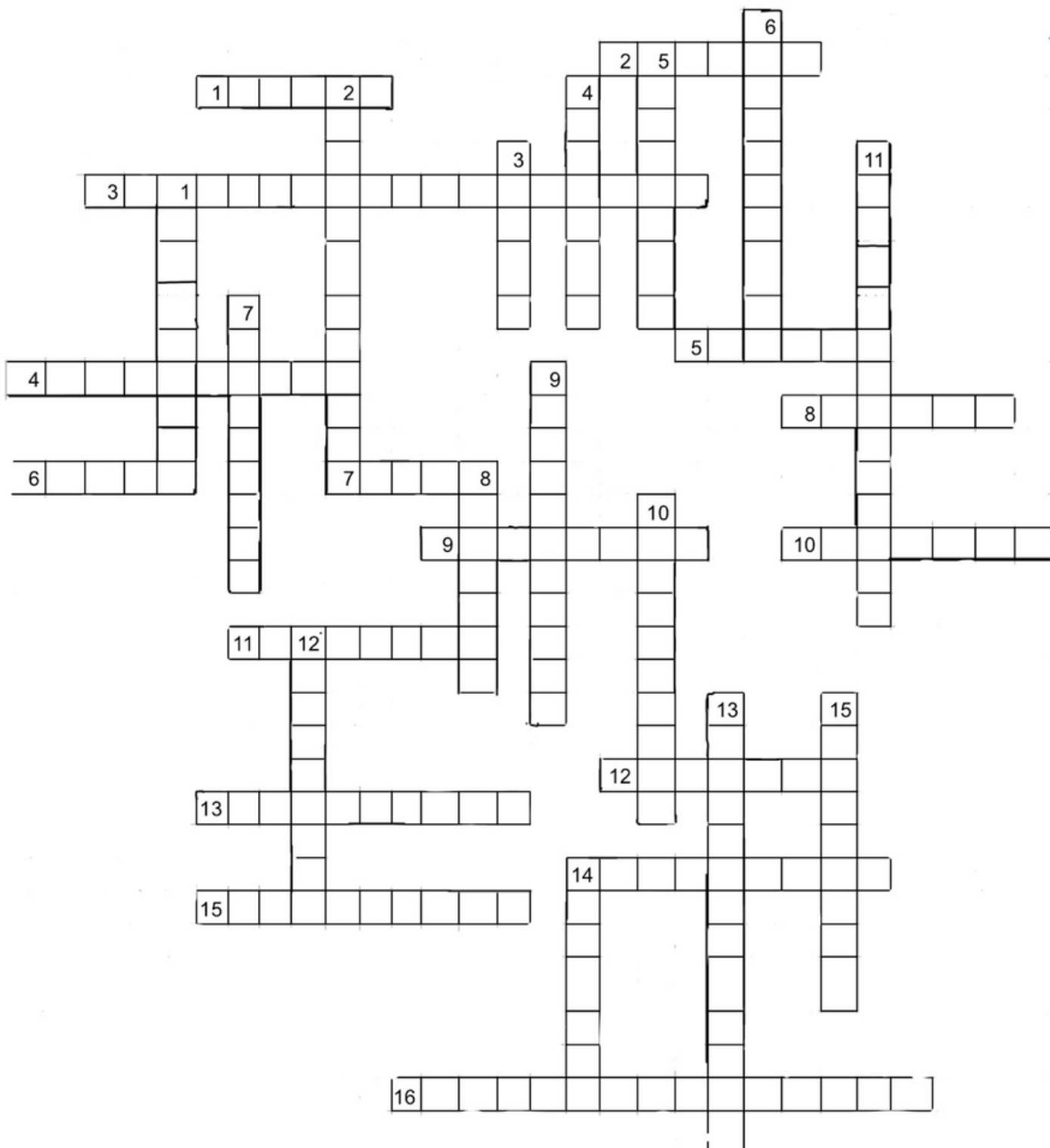
However, the net result of all this is the chimpanzee habitat will be restored, truly a step in the direction of World Peace for all eternity. Monke is together strong!!

Oh and one last thing: Karl will be sufficiently dealt with by the Chinese Environment Secret Service. We’ll totally definitely miss your presence bro, take care.

再见！

Sarvadh - Grade 12

PUZZLE ME!! CROSSWORD - HORROR AND HALLOWEEN



Across

1. "Aye, Matey!" (6)
2. Courtney Cox played a news reporter in which horror film franchise? (6)
3. Fictional character that has scissors for hands (6,12)
4. Who wrote the classic novel "Dracula"? (4,6)
5. Alfred Hitchcock's famous 1960 horror film (6)
6. A dead body covered in narrow pieces of cloth (5)
7. Casper is a friendly _____. (5)
8. "Once upon a time, there lived a ghost. He was known to be a killer, and feared the most!" (6)
9. Changes at the sight of the full moon (8)
10. You don't want to go trick or treat-ing to _____ Colony, do you? (7)
Trick or treat-ing attire (8)
Tell me if you spot the de Vil! (7)
13. R. L. Stine's famous series of children's horror novels (10)
14. Preys upon children once in every 27 years (9)
15. Antagonist of the Disney movie "Sleeping Beauty" (10)
16. Protagonist of the comic series "Sabrina the Teenage Witch" (7,8)

Down

1. What is the name of the daughter in "The Addams Family"? (9)
2. In which film did the Annabelle doll make her debut? (3,9)
3. During Halloween, what are witches said to ride on? (5)
4. In which country is Transylvania a region? (7)
5. A large, round, metal pot used for cooking over a fire (8)
6. Author of the classic novel "Frankenstein" (4,6)
7. A fictional dog that takes on Halloween mysteries with his friends (6-3)
8. A movie that features a maniacal green-skinned superhero that can bend reality (3,4)
9. Famous Halloween animated movie starring Helena Bonham Carter and Johnny Depp (6,5)
10. Look in the mirror and say her name three times (6,4)
11. Knock on 221B and scream "Trick or treat!"... a "high-functioning sociopath" will open the door (8,6)
12. What is the town in the Fear Street trilogy called? (9)
13. The antagonist of "A Nightmare on Elm Street" (6,7)
14. Carve two eyes, carve a mouth and turn the lantern on (7)
15. Mila Kunis plays Princess Odile aka _____ in this movie which is based on Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" (5,4)

Sahasra Sathyanarayanan
and Vishaka Jayakanthan

"The air was full of Thoughts and Things to Say.
But at times like these, only the Small Things
are ever said.

Big Things lurk unsaid inside."

-Arundhati Roy

