



vivaan'21



“

*We've arrived at the land of magic,  
Where guilds take on quests  
To defeat demons in the dungeons with spears of words;  
Where knights are armed with pens,  
And the wizards call their wands quills;  
Where spells are cast in the light of hope,  
And magic resides in the holy grimoire.*



# EDITOR SPEAKS



**I**t's finally happened! Vivaan'21 is finally here! After facing a lot of hurdles these past 2-3 years, it gives me immense pleasure in bringing out Vivaan, the long awaited magazine of Literary Society. As you flip through the pages of the magazine, you would notice that it is the cumulation of thoughts and words of students, faculty and staff from three academic years. The pandemic twisted many of our original plans and left us with uncertainties and despair. But taking inspiration from the name of the magazine, Vivaan, which means full of life and hope, we worked our way around all this chaos and despair, and held on to the hope that we can fight this deadly virus together.

Due to the online semesters, putting this magazine together was no cake walk for us. The team could not meet in a physical space to discuss ideas and plans, and this led to a huge communication gap. Like everyone else during this pandemic, we too resorted to WhatsApp groups, Google Meets and calls; currently there are 15+ WhatsApp groups just for Vivaan and this can convey the difficulty of interacting online.

We felt very dejected when, even after all the efforts we put into the previous edition of Vivaan, and designing more than half of it, we were not able to finish it due to some inconvenient circumstances. We then started from scratch again, sorted through a huge number of entries, edited the content, compiled and designed the magazine, and in the end, it was worth all the arduous effort we put in. As the saying goes, 'All's well that ends well'.

I would like to thank all the editors, designers, writers and our faculty advisor, who have played an integral role in making this magazine possible. I hope you take out some time from your busy schedule to read what the magazine has to offer.

Within these pages, we compiled many creative works into which our wonderful writers poured their hearts, and I hope their words resonate with you too and you enjoy reading the magazine as much as we enjoyed compiling it!

SHIKHA CHAUDHARY

# CONTENT

1	RISE OF IIT MANDI
2	LIFE AS I KNOW IT
3	HOLOCAUST AND OLYMPICS
4	SCALING THE HEIGHTS
5	DURGA KAALI HO JAYEGI
6	FRAGMENTS
7	FACING ME
8	GANGS OF KAMANDPUR
9	BIG BOYS DO CRY
10	MIND-BENDING BOOKS
11	THEY CANT SEE
12	SURVIVOR
13	SOCIAL MEDIA AND BALADKAR
14	VOID AND LIGHT
15	LETS TALK ABOUT IDENTITY
16	COLLEGE LIFE
17	PHASES OF PANDEMIC

DIMENTIA AND YOU	18
RAMAYANA: YES, WHY NOT?	19
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCT	20
COVID 19	21
GHAZALS	22
GHAZAL	23
SATYA GHATNAO PE AADHARIT	24
PHILOSOPHY OF PEOPLE	25
MERA BACHPAN	26
CAN MONEY BUY HAPPINESS? MAYBE, MAYBE NOT	27
WHAT DOESNT KILL YOU ONLY MAKES YOU STRONGER	28
WHEN YOU DONT KNOW WHAT TO DO	29
I KNOW A BOY	30
MAMMATUS CLOUD	31
IIT MANDI SORTING HAT	32
WHY I WRITE	33
YOU, BE YOU	34
BOOKS EVERYONE SHOULD READ	35
MEET THE TEAM	36



# The Rise of IIT Mandi

Timothy A. Gonsalves

A question that has engrossed many scholars is why the West has dominated the East for the last few centuries. Jared Diamond, Distinguished Professor of Geography, Physiology and Public Health at UCLA, has written several popular books dealing with large-scale societal issues. Several of his books are available in Book Nook. He confidently and persuasively tackles questions that sweep across the globe and over millennia of history. He addresses the East vs. West topic in *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, 1997. He first lists the major obvious historical reasons for the dominance of the West. These were military might (guns), European diseases that decimated American populations (germs) and efficient transportation (steel). He then tries to explain why the West developed these advantages.

The obvious question is why these differences? Was it that Westerners were inherently superior in intellect, in innovation, in organisation? Though such notions of racial superiority were prevalent for long, Jared Diamond argues that they are not supported by any evidence. He argues that the differences were accidents of geography and environment. Of course, it also required that the people of the West were predisposed to grab the



opportunities that presented themselves, that they worked diligently towards prosperity through growth. Societies that exploit their geography rise, those that ignore geography fall.

What has *Guns, Germs and Steel* got to do with the rise of IIT Mandi? IITs are special-purpose societies that work cooperatively and also competitively towards growth in quality and quantity. They are located in different geographical zones, some in metros, some near other cities, with IIT Mandi uniquely placed in a remote river valley in the Himalayas. The history of how societies have progressed and regressed has important lessons for IIT Mandi.

All IITs share a common brand image. Our stakeholders including the public, students, Government and the global academic community judge all IITs by common yardsticks. We cannot ask for lower standards for IIT Mandi due to its remote location. Especially in terms of pace of growth of the campus, the student strength, etc. we must be comparable to other IITs. Rapid growth is of the essence, despite some attendant inconveniences.

An important lesson from history is that our unique geographical location is key to our future. As in West vs. East, we use our geography to our advantage. By extending the even semester to June, every year in May-June we have a migration

of excellent faculty from other IITs to Kamand. They offer 1-credit electives for our students. With our serene, mountain location, we host 10s of academic conferences and workshops annually. These measures that bring visitors from around India and abroad are aimed to enrich the academic environment. The result is internships, PG admissions and postdocs for students, and research collaborations and lighter teaching load for our faculty. We foster mountain activities including hiking & trekking, scenic photography and mountain biking. These serve to enrich the experience of our students and to attract visitors. As a small new institute, we took advantage of our agility to be innovative in the curriculum and organisation. We introduced project-based learning through our unique 4-year Design & Innovation Sequence – Reverse Engineering in 1st year, Design Practicum in 2nd year, Interactive Socio-Technical Practicum (ISTP) in 3rd year and culminating in the final year Major Technical Project (MTP). Through this, our graduates have experienced most facets of work in a product-oriented company. This enables them to rapidly rise to technical leadership roles when they join industry. We eschewed the traditional discipline-based Departments that serve to divide faculty and students. Instead, we opted for broad-based Schools and Centres that encourage innovation across discipline boundaries. Our interdisciplinary culture, unparalleled among the IIT, is yielding rich academic benefits. It is starting to result in useful technologies driven by the needs of the people of our Himalayan region.

Are we sure that we are doing well? Let us see how India rates us.

- In the Atal Innovation Ranking 2020, IIT Mandi ranked 7th, after only the 5 old IITs + IISc, ahead of all other IITs and institutions in India. This is a reflection of our pervasive emphasis on innovation.
- IIT Mandi is recognised as the leader among IITs in promotion of gender equality, ranking 1st in percentage of female faculty and females in 1st BTech among all 23 IITs. This is reflected in our consistently high ranking in the measure Outreach and Inclusivity: 1st among all 23 IITs

in NIRF-2018, 2nd in NIRF-2019.

- Nishita, Mehak and Ruchika of 2nd BTech won first place in the 4th National ACM-W Hackathon. They credited their success to our curriculum that teaches data science and machine learning to all BTech students, and to the emphasis on project-based learning from Day 1.

- Between 2017-2019, BTech student Nitesh Kumar won 13 gold/silver/bronze medals for India in International Para-Badminton. A remarkable achievement for one so young.

- Dr. Manu Devadevan won the prestigious Infosys Prize 2019 in Humanities. A young Assistant Professor, he stood out among the 5 other recipients, all senior academicians/researchers from well established institutions.

These are just a sampling of the national laurels that our students, faculty and alumni are winning. In Himachal, this 10-year old institution is ranked 1st in engineering and overall by NIRF. Catalyst is the leading startup incubator in Himachal. EWOK has helped Kamand women to meet their aspirations and make history by starting the first woman-owned business in Salgi and the first women-owned PWD labour contractors in Mandi. Our alumni are making their mark throughout India and also abroad.

In its first decade, by capitalising on its geography, IIT Mandi has carved out a unique USP of R&D for the Himalayan region in an inter-disciplinary culture with project-based learning. This has already earned us respectable laurels amongst our peers. In the next decade IIT Mandi must continue to grow and innovate. By reinventing itself every decade, IIT Mandi will stay at the forefront, rise to the top of the IITs, and win global laurels!



Campus from Griffon Peak Jan'20



Alumni Chapter, Bangalore



# Life as I know it

Life is a complicated mystery. And it does not get better. You have to accept your losses and move on. Keep moving forward. Time can never go back. So be strong and embrace your failures. Do not get attached to things and do not expect anything from life. So, let us move forward and see how to live life, in the least hurtful manner.

Okay! Now that I have written what most 'intellectuals' say. I totally abide by it, but it's total BS. Life is a 'nirvana' (for those who don't know what it means, 'Kasaul'). And nothing can hit you higher than life and four shots of vodka (just kidding, they hit higher). And the purpose of life is an individual identity. We all give ourselves our own purposes. For me it is to be happy and enjoy it while it lasts. The most basic ingredient of life is love, an eternal power, which cannot be explained (no it is not just chemicals, cocaine is just chemicals). Every life begins with love (I know what is going on in your mind) and it ends with your memories. And memories are created with love. You see what you leave behind on this planet is memories. So earn them, you don't know when it ends. For clarity I am not talking about the bf-gf idiocy as love. You can love anything and everything (off course I don't have a gf, single life happy life).

Well this writing style is a bit stupid but its my style and I am not a great writer. But I love it, come on (pun intended) let us not take it too seriously. You see life was never meant to be serious. It was supposed to be fun. A journey because the destiny is death. And no matter what you do that will be the case.

Supressing your emotions and your killing your heart to achieve a greater good, will never work. You are never meant to supress emotions. Ask yourself if God wanted you to not use them why would he give them to us? He gave them to enjoy them. Listen to your heart make mistakes and learn.



To draw an analogy emotions are like horses and our mind is supposed to ride them (you and your dirty mind). So follow where your emotions point, go there with your mind. I did a huge mistake by showing them and not giving a path to them. And let me iterate life is nothing if you don't have the courage to follow your heart.

And about success about we are so obsessed about. I get it marks matter, job matters and most of all size matters (my bad feminist, are you single?). So what does actually matters? It is happiness. A beggar wants money and a rich person wants a person to share that richness with. Everyone wants happiness they are running after it. Not realising you are always doing your best. We get overly obsessed by jealousy. I feel it myself. Run after it, run wild. Go for it, work as hard as possible.

Expectations are always meant to be. Attachments always come in the way. The only thing I can say here is (actually I can say a lot, but I am busy) attach yourself to the work not to the outcome. Expect things from yourself not from others.

I know it hurts, I know you will fail and you will regret. I know that you will cry for someone who will not even care about you. You will hope until it suffocates you. But you know what only the greatest of men can bear the greatest of pains. You will probably questioning how does the author, a 20 year old can conclude that. After all I don't even have a gf, an intern and enough experience. The point is I don't the whole point is not to believe me but yourself.

When it hurts fight along your heart. I have friends who back stabbed me, people who insulted me and a girl who rejected me. I thought of quitting my way of life and follow what others do. Go after CSE, reject your own dream. I thought of revenge on a lot of people. I was completely devastated from the rejection and I don't have an intern. You see there was a point where I was completely

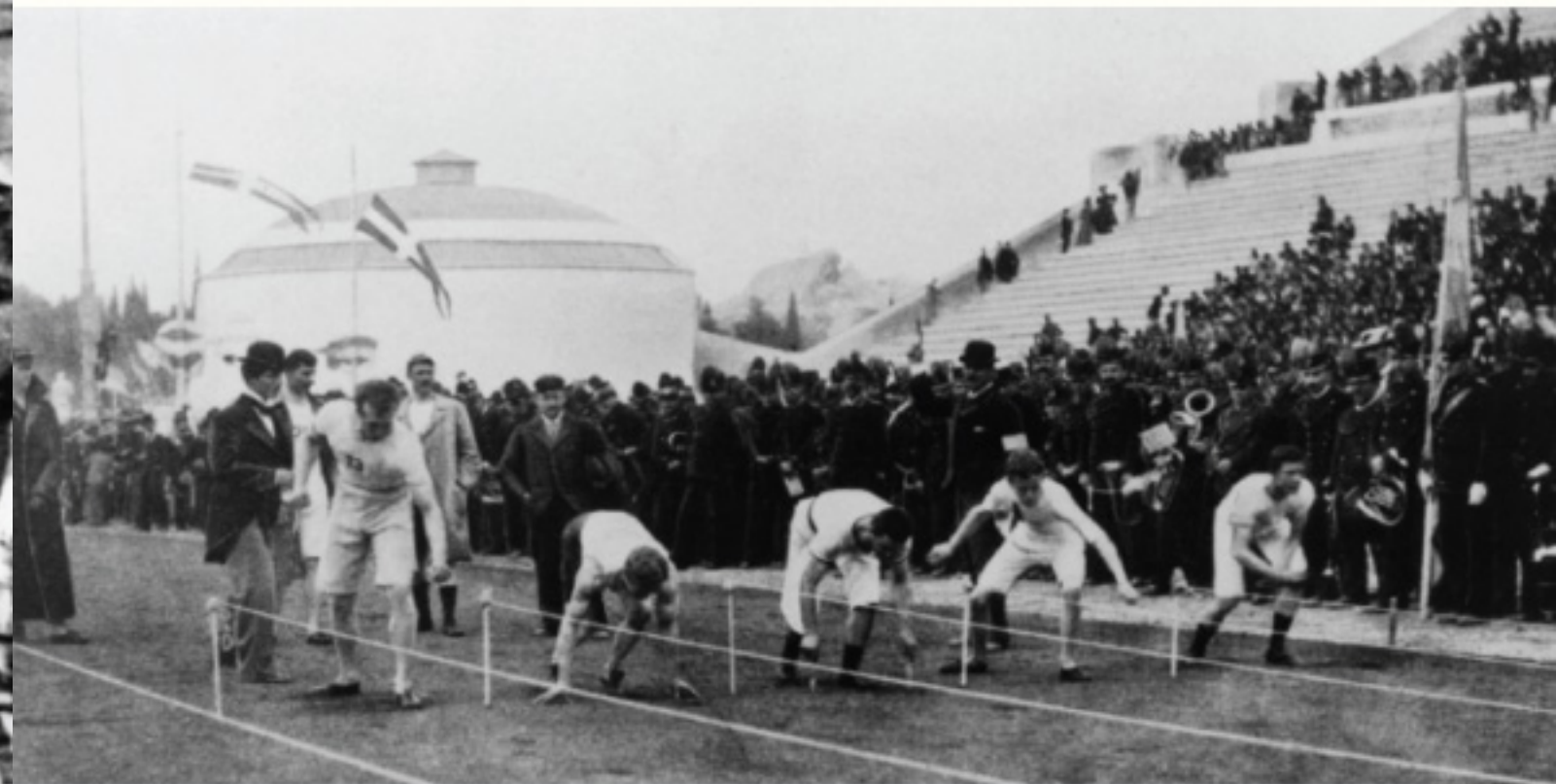
drained. But I stood up. I am picking myself and I am going to keep on working hard. Life is unfair and then it ends (pun intended). You don't get what you want but what you need. And all I learnt is that I am not going to take revenge, forget her and leave my dream. I am going to still go the mile. I am still going to love her. And I will follow my dream till the end of lifetime.

Yes, I am insane. Ask yourself you have got one life do you want to live like others or be unique and live like yourself? I am not going to tell you how lucky you are, you know it. Realize it. Don't take things seriously and love yourself to the full. What are you waiting for get wild?

PS: No one is going to be like that. Hell I still want her and I still want the intern. I still want many things. All this is my goal. I am fighting to work. So if you are not able to follow it. Do not worry I am right here with you. I also have a stab in my heart and I am living with it.

~Fallen





## What if the Holocaust happened in every four years like the Olympics?

I am lazy. I never found running under the blazing sun as interesting as eating a delicious ice-cream in the summer. I have participated in sports day parade only to stand beside my crush and do funny impressions of PE teachers. Otherwise, I only worked hard in my life to make my living easy. Yes, I am lazy. I loved Bournvita milk but I never liked picking up a glass from the rack, avoiding spilling milk, adding sugar to it and most importantly, using a spoon to stir it. It sounds like too much work, doesn't it? There was my mother to always help me with the arduous process but she never stirred milk for me. What did I do about it? I used my ingenious ten-year-old mind to break a car toy, take out a DC motor, attach its end to the top end of two spoons flipped, tie them with a copper wire and power it to stir like an electric handheld mixer. Trust me, it sounds tedious but I found it easier than using my hand and a spoon. I think that this really sparked my interest in engineering. Of course, my mother threw it away because she was tired of me breaking hundreds of expensive toys. I suspect I made it up to her by buying a saree from my first stipend but she never returns my call. I hope that made everything okay.

Did you know that Hitler saved a Jew doctor from the Holocaust who treated his mother for cancer? Eduard Bloch charged reduced prices, sometimes taking no fee at all. The 18-year-old Hitler granted him his "everlasting gratitude" for this. Genuinely, I did not know that until it was 3 AM on Tuesday morning, the chips bag was empty and Youtube video recommendations were getting out of hand. If you say it out loud, staying up late at night sounds appalling. But when you peek out of the window and you see lights on in other rooms, you feel less of a terrible person. Then you go back to staring at the laptop screen and continue scrolling through an infinite wall. You look at your mobile frequently but reading notifications from fitness apps that you installed long ago feels like a personal attack on your fragile will power. You wish to change yourself but the whole year goes by. This is dispiriting but seriously folks, I am surprised you did not object me saying 'saved' rather than 'spared' for a man who is widely credited for killing, Hitler. Who doesn't like to read a cheery Hitler fact in a college magazine?

It is hard for people to take you seriously when you are infamous for offensive humour and misogynistic jokes to be specific. I said "jokes" not "beliefs". I see humour as a powerful tool that can diffuse tensions and provide a coping mechanism for distress. But you have to be careful when people may miss your intent and which may backfire. I remember back in 2017, I prattled in a Facebook post before my flight took off- "I told my mother that soon, she'll not be bound to any kind of moral responsibilities after I graduate so 2020 would be a great year to file for a divorce. My father giggled nervously but she found the suggestion neither funny nor helpful." It didn't end well. My phone was bombarded with hate texts as soon as I landed. People told me how the post is 'plain stupid and (if I may add) disgusting', 'dark and mean', 'outrageous' and 'deplorable'. I agree that was stupid and pointless but I feel divorce does give more power to women and opens the gate to escape from domestic violence. That post mostly triggered men. Wasn't that obvious? Women rather found it amusing and yes, some considered divorce that gives a way to find the right partner. Even my ex whose parents are separated appreciated the thought behind my message and told me that 'your ridiculous thirst for meaningless likes needs to go away, you sadist prick'.

When I was writing this 'piece of art', I was in both a good and a bad state, I had a job offer but I lost a few friends. I was under the clear night sky of Andaman island. As I always say "even today the most jaded city dweller can be unexpectedly moved upon encountering a clear night sky studded with thousands of twinkling stars." Of course, Carl Sagan is now claiming that he wrote it in 1994 but that pantomath can talk to my lawyer.

Getting back to the important question. What if the Holocaust happened in every four years like Olympics? If you ask me, I would probably google it, looking for answers before I tell you "I don't know and I don't care." Instead ask a survivor, goddamn it! Honestly, it was supposed to be a working title but you've somehow reached the conclusion. If you're reading this, either you are the editor or one of the four readers of Vivaan who decided not to use it to start a campfire.

Cheers!

-Swapnil Sharma



## “स्केलिंग ध हाइट्स”

पर्वतों की इन उंचाइयों में, यन्त्र का अभिषेक, लाल रंग से अंकित किया,  
महीपाल मैं पहाड़ों का, संजीवनी से खुले, आकाश का निर्माण किया,  
संगणक कार्यक्रम के विचार में, विपुल धैर्य का, निर्वाह किया,  
विषय था खगोल-विज्ञान का, जिसमें यश एवं अभिजीति, प्राप्त किया,  
वैद्युतिक यन्त्र-मानव की चाह, जहाँ श्रेयस्कर होकर, श्रेया का वरदान लिया,  
उद्यमी थे जीव यहाँ के, प्रखर अग्नि पर चल, ईशान-दिशा का चयन किया,  
वैज्ञानिक गति-विधि में, आदित्य ने नीलोत्पल रूप, अमृत खोज लिया,  
कार्य था विचार- विमर्श का, जिसमें प्रद्युम्न को, नमन से सम्मान दिया,  
लिखे इसे विनायक, ज्ञान की सुगंध फैलाते, शिखा में समां लिया,  
प्रश्नोत्तरी में फँसा मैं, किन्तु परम-सत्य जानकर, प्रांजल-उत्तर मैंने दिया,  
अमन एवं मीशा से सज्ज, स्वयं का, विस्तृत वर्णन किया,  
क्षितिज पे बैठा मैं, सात्विक- की धून पर, ताल नृत्य को दिया,  
विनायक की उपस्थिति में, इस नाटकीय-रूपांतरण को, नैत्रो में कैद किया,  
चलने दो इस चल-चित्र को, परिमल हैं यह, इसने सत्य-अनुसरण किया,  
एकांश हैं मेरी कला, परन्तु सोने के ढेर से, इसे अलंकृत किया,  
बनावट हैं यह मेरी, जिसका अवन्तिकीय रूप, चारों-ओर वशीभूत किया,  
ऋषभ मैं मेरे कर्म से, संस्कृति का संस्कृति से, नव-निर्माण किया,  
मैं साहित्य-निकिता, विचारों की लेखनी से, उसका स्वाभिमान दिया,  
क्षमता थी पूर्णतः खेल में, पुरुषोत्तम बना, और नियम रच दिया,  
सचित आचरण अपनाया, विद्या-आवास के बीच, अंततः आनंद शोध लाया,  
तकनीकी हैं यह दृष्टिकोण, पर यहीं अभिज्ञान का, संकल्प हैं मैंने लिया,  
आर्यन में आर्य-वंश का, दक्षिण-से-उत्तर के मध्य, हित-एवं-ऐश्वर्य फैला दिया।

डॉ. हितेश श्रीमली

The poem has been written specifically for Students Gymkhana of IIT Mandi. All the used adjectives are the names of coordinators and secretaries(2019-2020) of the respective societies and clubs. As a core theme, the IIT Mandi is scaling its height through various technical, cultural, literary and sports activities. I would like to thank all the coordinators and secretaries for their continuous help and support to run extra-curricular activities amongst students. Keep it up with the same spirit :)

## दुर्गा-काली हो जाएगी

घुंघट ओढ़ कर ,  
चूड़िया पहन कर,  
क्या औरतें रो जाएगी  
या अब और प्रहार हुआ तो  
औरत दुर्गा-काली हो जाएगी ।

देवी-देवी कहते-कहते  
कन्यादान होने लगे ,  
बेटी के थे जो रक्षक नेता  
ऊंची नींद सोने लगे ,  
क्या अफसरों को बर्खास्त करके  
दिल को तसल्ली हो जाएगी ,  
या अब और प्रहार हुआ तो  
औरत दुर्गा-काली हो जाएगी ।

इज्जत-आबरू के नाम -नाम पर  
कितने अत्याचार हुए,  
जिस -जिस ने औरत को रोका  
उन सबके संहार हुए ,  
क्या खूबसूरती में सज संवर के  
औरत मोम की गुड़िया हो जाएगी ,  
या अब और प्रहार हुआ तो  
औरत दुर्गा-काली हो जाएगी ।

आंसू सारे बहते-बहते,  
गहरे निशान है छोड़ गए ,  
गंदी नजरों ने इतना देखा  
लाज के आईने सारे तोड़ गए ,  
गंगाजल की पवित्रता छोड़-छाड़ के  
अब औरत तेजाब हो जाएगी ,  
अब के जो और प्रहार हुआ तो  
औरत दुर्गा-काली हो जाएगी ।

-Apoorv Dashora



# FRAGMENTS

I'm a product of fragments  
I'm the fragment.

My verse is broken  
My lyric cut,  
My word is scattered  
And, my story unheard.

My reality is shaken  
And, life fractured.  
I'm a product of fragments  
I live in shreds.

I crumble at touch  
That augurs trust;  
Sometimes, mist  
Othertimes, dust.

I shatter at smiles  
With vow to walk miles.  
I surrender at sighs  
And unsaid goodbyes.



I'm a product of fragments  
Sometimes, I live in lies.

I perish at 'whys'  
The uncomfortable 'whys';  
Sometimes, half burnt  
Other times, alive.

I splinter in joy  
With unreal hopes.  
I split up in decoy  
And yield to cry.

I'm a product of fragments  
I'm the fragment.

My speech is fissured  
And, paper tattered.  
I'm a product of fragments  
But sometimes I deny.

~Arya Priya

# Facing Me

I smiled glaring him,  
but he smirked in variation  
I wryly smiled again to confirm his intentions  
But his weird expressions made me realise  
That now he is hard to be kept inside  
Even the reflecting glass separating us,  
declined to uphold me  
I got scared, I got terrified  
Because he is the one  
knowing me deep inside  
Because he is the one  
knowing all the stories inside-out  
Story of every scar on my heart and my mind  
And now he is bursting out of my smile  
I plead him to stay in a corner of my cognizance  
I begged him to bury his emotions inside  
But the storm in his eyes seemed  
unable to hold this time  
This dilemma to choose between me  
and my mirrored-me  
Made me unsympathetic to that might  
Thus I locked him in that mirror,  
leaving him alone to survive  
And I came out of the room  
with a broad smile

-Abhigyan Khaund





# GANGS of कमांदपुर (Kamandpur)

## Reloaded

An article by  
Chirag Vashist



This article is a follow-up to the previous year's issue "Gangs of Kamandpur". Like a greedy movie studio churning out unnecessary sequels to a mediocre movie, this article has been written with little prior planning. Nevertheless, expect bigger explosions, cheesier quotes and darker revelations because this time it's personal. Enough hype, let's jump in.

### The Devdas

**Species:** Cupidus Stupidus

**Description:** The ultimate goal of any biological entity is to find a partner and settle down. Most individuals come to college in hopes of finding their "One". But alas, the laws of romantic attraction are not governed by simple Newtonian Equations.

Pre-rejection phase may involve setting up a crush as their phone's wallpaper and LDAP's password. Post-rejection phase may involve intoxication, guitars, growing a beard (or trying) and binge-listening to "Channa Mereya". Three months after rejection, the individuals may start sharing trite memes of Zakir Khan's "Sakth Launda" and claim to have "moved on". But still secretly, just before sleeping at night, they

revisit their last conversations, still trying to figure out what went wrong. In order to cope up with pain, many members of this species evolve into the species Rejectus Fraternus.

**Quote:** "Why didn't she like my post?" and "Pyaar ek dokha hai!"

### Gym-Gang

**Species:** Wannabis Studaria

**Habitat:** The Gym, duh

**Description:** While some males regress into depression after rejection, a few dare to improve themselves. So after a serious dose of YouTube motivational videos, they embark on an arduous pilgrimage to the gym. After months of pumping iron, dozens of sweat-wrenched clothes, semi-naked Instagram selfies, a protein-emptied wallet and lengthy debates on the correct techniques for squatting, the only admiration they earn is that of their room-mates. Turns out love ain't that easy. May fight with the mess vendor due to sub-standard sprouts and milk during breakfast. During the festive seasons of Holi, their habitat is flooded with individuals of other species wishing to develop six packs in three workouts.

**Quote:** "Bro, what do you do for shoulders bro?"

### Spam-Post Juniors

**Species:** YoungusDumbus Brokus

**Habitat:** Facebook Feed

**Description:** Do not let the cute looks of this species deceive you, for they are one of the most vicious predators of this ecosystem. They lure their prey with an innocent Friend Request, but what follows is a systematic and brutal take-down of mental health. What starts as simple selfies in the mechanical lab (with those horrible grey coats) soon escalate to Candy Crush requests and invites to like the Facebook profiles of college dogs. Individuals of this species become particularly active during the publicity period of Exodia, sharing and reposting every poster that comes their way. To protect yourself from this species, the "Unfollow" maneuver is strictly advised. Issued in public interest.

**Quote:** "Sir, X ki party dedo !!" where X = {Intern, Placement, Passing a course, Conducting an event or pretty much anything}

### Chacha 420

**Species:** Homo Cannabis

**Habitat:** The Haveli / The Tapri / The 9th Cloud

**Description:** Himachal Pradesh is famous for two things- its mountains and a certain herb that grows on these mountains. Since this article is likely to be read by a lot of people, we need to talk in a euphemistic manner to ensure secrecy. This species, affectionately known as the Lovers of Ms. Mary Juana, becomes particularly active during the festive season of Holi and Exodia. Habits may include listening to LoFi beats, testing the fire extinguishers in the hostels, perfecting the art of baking brownies, and appreciating the beauty of the full moon on a new moon night.

**Quote:** \*Literally Anything\*

### Junior Girls

**Species:** Femmus Junioria

**Description:** Since, the seniors females were strictly off-limits and the ones in their batch just were just not right (every batch says this), most males were left disappointed. But, with the monsoon, comes a fresh flock of females. They are cute, sensible and really-talented. They find your laid-back attitude and last minute exam preparations bad-ass.

After years and years of rejection, this time you



vow to be different. This time around you will be sensitive, this time around you will buy a better gift than a 10 rupee Lotte Chocopie (true story), this time around you will check that the restaurant is opened before taking her out (again true story), this time you won't make any fart jokes, this will be different, this time you ....

While you were busy reading this article, someone wooed her away as well. Better luck next time.

### *Haters and Traitors*

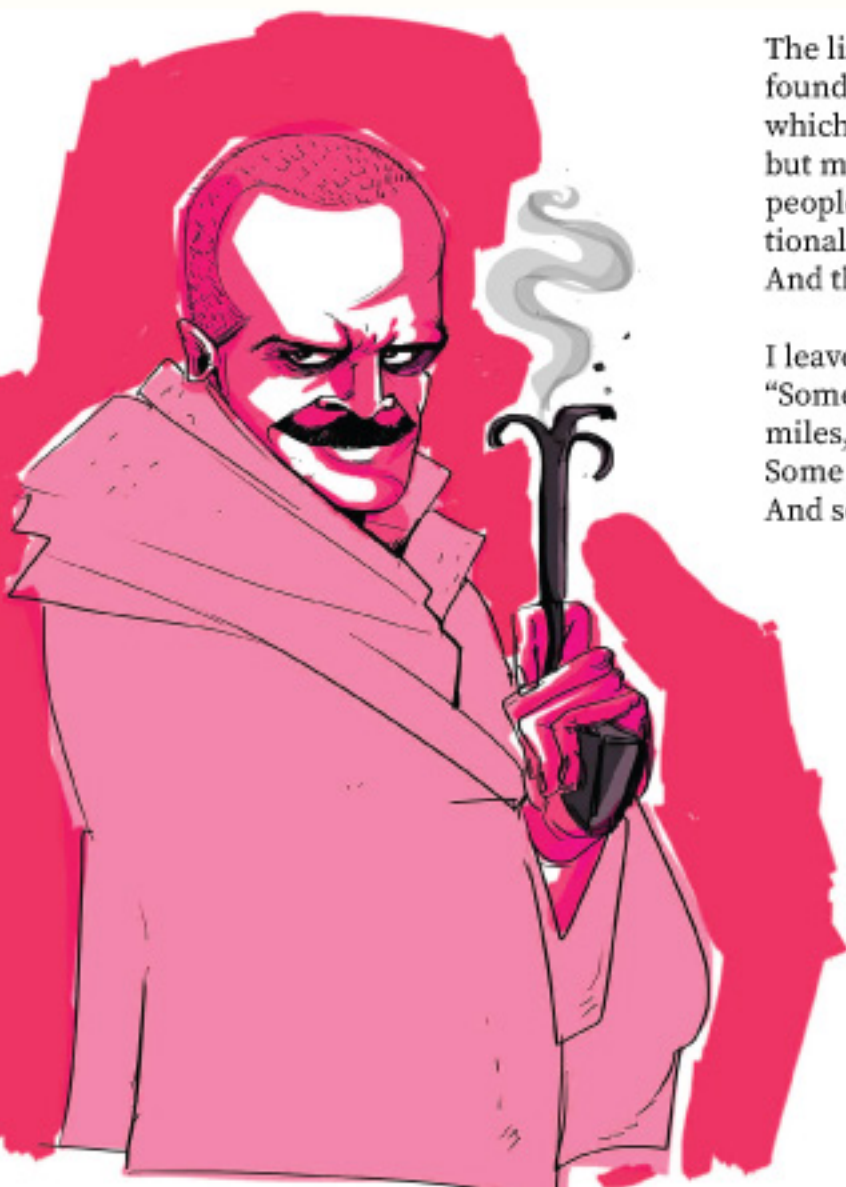
**Species:** Brutus BurnInHellus

**Description:** Ain't nobody got time for that. Besides, the article has been going on for far too long. Moving on.

### *The Reader*

**Species :** You

I don't know how you would be when you pass out of this college. Perhaps optimistic, perhaps nostalgic. A little sad, a little happy, a little relieved.



But one thing I know with absolute certainty: The person who walks out would no longer be the person who walked in. Just like the Ship of Theseus, the valley changes you: piece by piece, day by day, year by year, until your identity without it becomes questionable. It changes you in ways you could not have imagined.

In 10th grade, I read a poem about a king named Ozymandias and how his legacy is eroded with time. I have always wondered what my legacy would be. I have brewed up infinite hypothetical scenarios of how people would remember me when I am gone. I think it is our very need to be remembered that drives us to do what we do. Over the last few months, I have spent a lot of time scrolling through old photos and reminiscing about the good times : guitar jam sessions, late-night G2 raids (and subsequent human rights violations), early morning treks to mountains I wasn't fit to climb, scantily-lit dhabas, emotional lectures by Nigam, that diwali night on the balcony swing.

The list can go on forever. But sadly, I recently found out that Instagram has a 10 photo limit : which means this is it. In the end, I cannot help but marvel at how much I have learnt from people around me. I hope that they too, intentionally or not, picked up a few things from me. And that is how I make peace with my legacy.

I leave you with a few lines by John Lennon :  
 "Some kinds of happiness is measured out in miles,  
 Some kind of innocence in wounds,  
 And some kind of solitude in you."

Signing Off,  
 B16094  
 Chiggy

## BIG BOYS DO CRY

A Real Man will not fail, will not drop down the dumbbells, will not lose, will not vomit the pints of beers, will not miss that easy goal, will not surrender in any race, will not weep in public, will not vent out his emotions, will not cry and above all he will not feel.

How much do we stereotype men? How much we bind them under the magical model of masculinity. The model which clearly pictures men are meant to be strong, men are meant to be machos, men are meant to catcall and they are meant to keep their heads high with that jolty smile even if their heart is crying inside. The tears may kill them inside but shouldn't roll down on their cheeks as it may prove them weak. The toxic masculinity demands a man not to be vulnerable, not to be wrong and not to be emotional.

Just because a person is born into a particular gender suit, does this loot away his basic roots? Every child learns to cry before he walks then what makes this world to declare crying a feminine talk? Do the eyes knock every heart and declare "it's just for the girls we are supposed to toil?" Or is it the tear that thinks about the gender before coming out?

If it is not so then what makes us to pre-set a model of masculinity in us? Why do we forget there are boys and men who have suffered with mental health? Mental illness can strike at any age and to any gender. Therefore, every sect has a cent percent right to express. There is no proven research or theory which measures strength or bravery by ability to stand silent to mishaps in life. It's we who have programmed a folk of our society just to protect, to sacrifice, to put aside their own fears for the sake of others. Be a herol Be a man! Stand up and fight! And this is a shameful stain to our culture.

Apart from every other teaching we give to boys, Parents should indulge in teaching them "How to cry?", "How to share their emotions?" and "With whom these issues should be discussed?". We should preach that there exists no relation between silence and strength. You can cry and be tough at the same time. It takes guts to show pain and it gets more difficult to keep them hidden in the secret chamber. So, it gets better if we emote out. It takes a real human being to feel and takes balls to cry. There is no shame in crying and crying isn't feminine. It's just human. So let boys be emotional, let them cry, let them express because Big boys do burst with tears, big boys do cry.

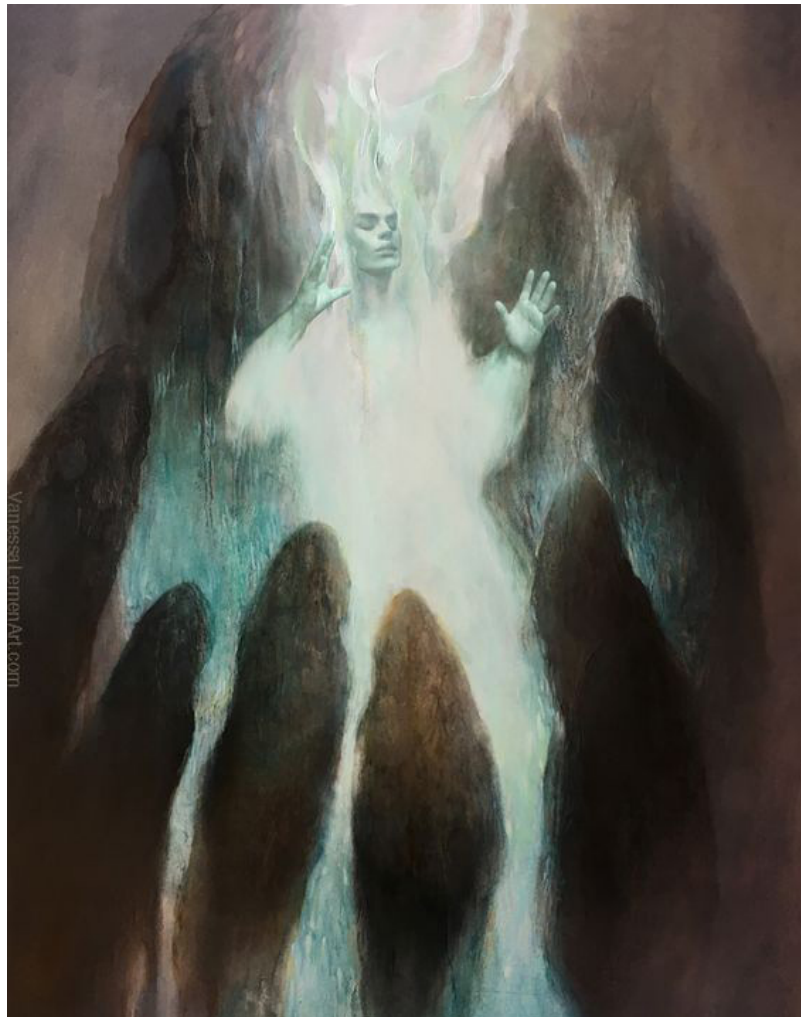
-Nikita Yadav





# Mind-bending Books

Priscilla Gonsalves



I love books and have always read. I am quite omnivorous and enjoy a wide variety of genres. I do not believe that time is ever wasted when reading. Even seemingly quite trivial books can give you glimpses of other societies, different ways of thinking, new ideas. Sometimes the knowledge and insights gained from books can lie dormant for years, but then one day they spring forward to guide you or aid your understanding in a new situation.

***The Left Hand of Darkness*** by Ursula Le Guin profoundly affected the way I view our society. In this book a man from earth is visiting a newly discovered planet. His task is to invite the inhabitants to join the interstellar community. The book is a good read. There is an amazing trek across the frozen wastes covering a large portion of the planet, and the visitor learns the ins and outs of the two main communities with quite different political and social setups.

But the thing that really made me take another look at our society is that there is only a single gender. All people are the same. If two decide to become a couple and have a child, one briefly becomes female and the other male. After birth, both can be mother and father.

The interstellar visitor has a really hard time with this. He feels uncomfortable with everyone as he is not able to see any as either male or female. His discomfort made me realise how very deeply issues of gender influence almost all our social interactions. From birth, baby boys are treated differently than baby girls.

In the early seventies after college, I taught for two years in a small town in Afghanistan. That was, of course, a very conservative Muslim society. Houses were designed so that no strange male eyes could catch glimpses of the womenfolk. The society was strongly patriarchal with females having little say in their lives. But there was also a freedom on the female side of the house that was greater to any I had found in Western society. You could sit as gracelessly as you wished. The dancing was wild and free, and the discussions delved freely and deeply into issues of sex and intercourse which were never spoken out loud in Western mixed society.

The above is a small example of the freedom of living in a single sex community. But think of the implications if we broke free from the gender based restraints and controls which shadow us from cradle to grave. Males could cry, show sympathy, mother. Females could show their strengths, pursue their passions for maths, physics, engineering. These ideas are quite novel now, though many societies are slowly freeing themselves from the ancient rules which bound us to narrowly defined roles based solely on our sex. When *The Left Hand of Darkness* appeared in 1969, it was truly mind-bending. At least in part thanks to this book shining a light on our bonds, societies are slowly moving to a more fluid interpretation of sex and gender.





## THEY CAN'T SEE

They can't see  
What I hold deep inside  
At the centre of my heart  
Resides the heart of the universe  
Which beats hard inside me  
With every beat growing wilder; but  
They can't hear  
As they can't see.

They can't see  
What processes take place in me  
Fierce eruption of volcanoes in my breath  
Rise of innumerable cyclones in seas of my blood  
And formation of insanely bright stars  
Behind the shine in my eyes; Which  
They can't feel  
As they can't see.

They can't see  
What I do all day long  
Watching only the surface of me,  
They declare my depth wicked  
The skin is never true  
And the soul is is never false  
They don't know  
As they can't see.

~ Shikha Suman

## SURVIVOR

She tells you 'No'  
You kiss her again  
She tells you 'No'  
You give her strain

She smells of whiskey  
Or even of bread  
It's not a permit to  
push her to bed

You give her bruises  
All black and blue  
Is this the way  
Of saying I Love You?

Well,  
this is not enough!

Blaming is left  
Shaming is left  
Pressurizing the victim  
And taming is left

You hit her hard  
In the dark & in light  
You torture her to death  
And she can't even fight

She's asked to be quite  
She's asked to be shut  
Or else, they'll call her a whore,  
they'll call her a slut

But,  
She'll fight today  
She'll fight tomorrow  
Just be her strength  
Don't give her sorrow

Oh poor babies,  
The monsters won't let you live  
You need to be on your own  
Because they are demons, eating all  
Destroying from Flesh to Bone

On this side is a,  
Grim Reality  
On the other side of the road  
is Revolution

Cross the road and take a step  
For this time,  
We need more than  
just an Evolution!!

~Anonymous





# बलात्कार और सोशल मीडिया....

चलिए आज हैशटैग हैशटैग खेलते हैं,  
कुछ कमाई सोशल मीडिया की भी करते हैं,  
सुनाई देगा,  
सोशल मीडिया के गलियारों में कुछ दिन जोश,  
यानी स्टेटस, स्टोरीज और पोस्ट में कुछ दिन शोर।

और कुछ दिन न्यूज चैनल के एंकर्स की आवाजों में  
रोब,  
और होंगे सवाल कुछ दिन सत्ता के नुमाइंदों से,  
और फिर हम में से कोई दूढ़ लेंगे समीकरण  
धर्म जाति पार्टियों के लिहाज से,  
और फिर कुछ दिनों बाद  
वही खामोशियां,  
वही बे-रुखापन,  
और फिर वही मासूमों का रोना हंसेगा हम पर।

और फिर किसी रोज अखबार में  
नया बलात्कार का किस्सा ,नया तरीका ,  
नयी जगह ,नया नाम और नया धर्म मासूम का।  
तो मिल जाएगा नया तरीका बवाल मचाने का  
और सोशल मीडिया पर नयी ट्रेंडिंग..  
## जस्टिस फोर...।

- अपूर्व दशोरा

## The Void and Light

Deep in the Self,  
Looking for Light,  
I found a feeling,  
Sinister than Night.

It wasn't Dark,  
It wasn't Deep,  
But it was Empty,  
Like a Shallow creek.

It was the Void,  
I tried to listen,  
A Part of self,  
Yet it was hidden.

It wanted something,  
Yet was alone,  
Filling itself,  
Yet the Grief goes on.

The Colours fade,  
The melody drowns,  
And A pure blunt

But one day it happened,  
The pain Stopped,  
When I kept my head,  
On your beating Hearting.

When I'm with you,  
Time reaches still,  
Like there isn't anything,  
Ever to Fill.

The Void, it ceased,  
It wasn't there,  
Like a spell casted,  
For it to disappear.

And in that moment,  
Perfection lied,  
Like it was just made,  
For us to hide.

The Gentle Strike,  
Of blowing wind,  
The Slowing time,  
Every moment twinned.

The Sun's Light,  
On Horizon still,  
The rustling leaves,  
Of trees on the Hill.

It was so much,  
At a same time,  
Yet I felt it all,  
Like it was just mine.

What it was?  
I never get,  
That when you are near,  
It's all perfect.

What was this feeling?  
What lies above?  
Oh so I guess

~Sushant Manhas







## Let's talk about identity

*We are all wildly different and yet so eerily similar. All any of us strive for is the freedom to live our truth and be ourselves. But who are we, who am I, who are you, who is everyone? That is what identity is, a complex phenomenon oversimplified into a single word.*

To really understand identity you have to break it down into tinier sub-identities. This will perhaps allow you to reflect upon things you don't usually think about or maybe even to analyse others. We can look at identity as a pie chart of three sub-identities personal, social and political. Depending on what stage of life we are in and what we choose to do with our existence each of our sub-identities may bear more or less weight on our overall identity.

Personal identity plays a pivotal role in deciding what we live for, what line of work do we pursue, the nature of our love, it rules over the most private and intimate moments of our existence. Personal identity is defined by our age, our experiences, our gender and sexuality, our religious beliefs and our value system. Personal identity is the most important of them all and is largely not something we can change or control. We can just work to accept it, for our own happiness.

**Age** is probably the most obvious part of our personal identity and the one of the most impactful. As we age, we exist at different levels of self-awareness and I think the older we

grow, the more we settle into ourselves, like slipping on a well-worn pair of shoes. We have a different sense of purpose at different stages in our lives. Our aims and ambitions are largely subject to age. To put it simply a 20 year old wants different things in life as compared to a 50 year old. When we are younger we are willing to make sacrifices that we would not at an older age, when we have found steadier ground. With age comes more responsibility and accountability, both to ourselves and to the people around us.

**Experiences** are the crux of human existence, who we are today is because of what we have been through each previous day. Experiences can cause us to be introverted or extroverted. They affect how we love and how we trust. What is important to remember though is that our experiences do not define us. If we have been through traumatic experiences, we do not have to carry their burden with us for the rest of our lives. Identity can learn from experience but experience is not the crux of identity. Experiences are not really category but more of a blanket over all parts of personal identity.

**Gender** is one of the most sensitive parts of our identity. We are assigned a gender at birth and are expected to carry that label and all that comes with it for the rest of our lives. Gender comes with gender roles and expectations that absolutely cannot be unpacked in a simple paragraph. Without realising, on the basis of gender we internalise innumerable quirks into our identity. Our gender changes the experiences we have in the world to such an extent that it is impossible for a more privileged gender to ever truly understand or comprehend what other genders experience. Being proud of and owning one's gender can be empowering as long as we do not bring other genders down to do it.

**Sexuality** is still not an openly discussed topic in more conservative societies like ours. It is talked about in hushed voices full of contempt or used as a medium of mockery in eliciting raucous laughter. At this point of political existence people like to acknowledge the existence of LGBTQ+ people as a concept not as a reality. Despite all of this it is undeniable truth that among us are many unspoken voices and unheard stories of love because they are afraid of being shamed for being different. Accepting one's own sexuality can be extremely liberating whether you are identify as being gay,

lesbian, bisexual, transgender, gender non-binary, asexual or even straight and cisgendered. Know yourself, be proud of it and try not to drag others down for accepting their truth.

**Religion** is not something we view as a choice, we are born into it and we accept it. At most our rebellion with religion lies in rejecting the drama of it all, dismissing it as a string of silly rituals and sing-song prayers in languages we don't understand. Most of us tend make peace with our religion though, mostly because it ties us to others in a way nothing else can. The ramifications of religion are endless and too be complex to be unpacked and sometimes its meaning gets lost in money-mongering god-men or a political agenda. Religion is tied to all things from more philosophical parts of life to the impact of the caste system on our society. Despite all of that, whether or not we like it our religious identity is ingrained deep within us and something we carry with us, regardless of our acknowledgement. Another part of religion is our relationship God or lack thereof. This relationship is perhaps our most well-guarded secret, hidden in our saddest, most desperate moments and our greatest triumphs, existing only in our most private thoughts.



Our **value system** is not something we ponder upon as much. It is far more complicated than simply being an empathetic person. It affects how we treat the world and how we treat ourselves. It affects our careers and our relationships. Why do we choose the career paths we choose? Why do we interact with different people in unique ways? Doctors are not doctors just because of their deep appreciation for biology. Teachers are not immune to the drudgery of repetition. We must ask ourselves tough questions to shed light on our value system. Do we wake up each day and do good? Do we act for ourselves or do we work for the betterment of the lives of others? How many of the decisions we make are for someone else's happiness? Do we spread joy? I think it is always incredibly important to note that this, unlike other parts of our identity can always experience positive evolution and change.

**Social identity** is the part of our identity that is based on our interactions with other people. It is the part of our identity that is perceived by others and it is to an extent in our control. Our social identity is in some ways an extension of our personal identity and also depends on economic, religious and regional factors. It can be divided into four categories based on our interaction with our family, our friends, our peers and our romantic partner(if one exists). Our interaction with **family** forms the first and most integral part of our social identity and has a lasting impact on all other relationships we form. From how much trust we are able to place in others and how much respect we have for people different from us to whether we are introverted or extroverted, all of it stems from family in one way or another. A person who grows up in an oppressive household has a starkly contrasting personality in comparison to one who grew up in a liberal home. We learn social behaviours from our family and apply it into other facets of our social identity. Families impact us in ways we cannot even fully comprehend. Our **friends** shape our thoughts and ideas. They are a representation of individuals with a similar personal

identity in one or more respects. We make friends based on common opinion and common feeling. For example if I am a woman from city x and am nineteen I would likely find a close companion in a woman who is similar to my age and from a place like city x. This is obviously not binding and we should not limit ourselves to making friends only where we find familiarity. Our peers view the most public part of our identity. Everyone judges everyone and this often causes us feel insecure and overthink how we present ourselves. We just have to accept that not everyone can like us. We should present ourselves in a way that brings us satisfaction because in setting out to please everyone we risk losing ourselves. As for romantic partners I don't think I can pin down how exactly they affect identity because of lack of even presence whether by choice or by circumstance.

**Political identity** is not inherent and is not impossible to live without. It has to be developed to exist meaningfully. What I mean by political identity is our reaction and opinion to any incidence that affects a large number of people. It is easy to have this identity when it is in relation to issues that affect us directly. Where we falter is developing an identity in relation to things that do not impact us. It really is up to us if we want to educate ourselves and form opinions or just live oblivious to the world around us and go about our daily life. Not everyone has that privilege.

An important thing to remember is that I am 19 and not in any way educated in human sciences. Thus naturally this is not a conclusive compilation of all that makes us unique individuals. Our identity is impacted by things like the state of our mental and physical health, our appearance, whether we are under long term emotional duress and such. To fully unpack identity we will have to consider far more factors and determine the weightage of different sub-identities. This essay can be likened to the rough first sketch of a complicated painting.

~Aarushi Gajri

## COLLEGE LIFE

Leaving my familiar grounds, ready to traverse the unknown lands, my mind diving deep into the ocean of new beginnings and possibilities, I never imagined how different a life up in the mountains can be compared to the regular city life. As I entered the campus, my mind still reeling with anger with my result and my strenuous last two years, all my frustrations went away with every breath of fresh air that I took. While Mandi, one of the biggest districts of HP was a blow in my face, the campus took my breath away. The large expanses of lush green grass were a sight for sore eyes which were accustomed to nothing but concrete. Our induction was spent tending to sore limbs after hours of grueling exercise and trying to sneak in a few extra hours of sleep while the professor droned on some gibberish on human values and public speaking. That I believe brought us closer than any of the activities that were organized. The sleepless nights spent together outside the mess were the highlight of my days. Never knew one could enjoy the nightlife on campus grounds. Though a few pubs and clubs near the campus won't hurt. After all, not everyone prefers Desi right.

Parties, tons of freedom, all-nighters with friends and the chance of doing whatever it is that you like, that's what was my perception of college life was. Unfortunately, that's true only for the first few days. I had to attend classes literally equal to the number of trees on our campus. And believe me, that's not a small number. They said, "study for two years and then your life will be chill". That's the biggest lie society tells you, never believe it. Life is never a bed of roses, especially not in IITs.

Putting aside the few Maggus that can't be eliminated, most of the students I found were really cool who could manage a good grade even with a night's preparation. One finds people of such colorful variety and mannerisms here that our college can be a symbol of India's diversity. The lack of conflict is truly astonishing.

The college fests are magnanimous. I never knew it could such a feat to gather people. They were the only reprieve we got from our mundane lives. I was even provided the opportunity of watching a movie in a 90's theater. PVR's are so overrated. After all, all one needs is a white screen and few friends to enjoy a movie, so there is no need for one in Mandi right.

Don't get me wrong, I am not complaining. Truly, the feeling of fresh air on my face and the starry nights are worth every evening I have to spend at Vishal and Dominos to pass as a day-out with my friends.

Leaving all this, I will never trade my life for anything else cause of all these wonderful people I have the opportunity of calling friends. These people who give you strength and are your knights in shining armor but also tease you mercilessly, who accept you despite your faults and mannerisms. The time I have spent playing Mafia, Poker, or arguing about any random topic will always stay in my heart. Planning road trips, occasional vacations, and impulsive journeys whether treks or riverside trips—all these things have left an indelible imprint in my memories.

-Mehak Jain



## PHASES OF

## THE PANDEMIC

~Madhumita

1

**The Ignorance Is Bliss Phase:**

Remember when Corona was just some far-land scary tale? Remember all the conspiracy theories about how Corona came about? We packed our bags, asked our mothers to prepare homemade snacks (an extra box for your roommate) and set out to college for another semester. What's the worst that could happen?

**The Jai-Corona Phase:**

Exams ki tension, vacation ki abhilaasha.....

Aur lockdown!

Corona was nothing short of a blessing - a blessing in disguise. Exams to cancel ho gye the tab, aur kya hi chahie tha hme? We packed our bags and returned home for 15 days. But when did 15 days become 15 months?? And we still don't know when we'll go back :(

2

3

**The Insta-Madness Phase:**

Corona ke sath sath ek nayi bimari feil gyi thi. From women empowerment to world hunger, we had come to believe that we could solve all the problems of the world through Insta stories. And being tagged in someone's story was a nightmare.

No! I don't want to post a childhood pic of mine!

Special mentions: Ludo king and Dalgona Coffee

**The Modiji-ke-Tasks Phase:**

Roz corona tracker pe positive cases check karte hue, 'Go Corona Go' ke naare sunte hue, Modi ji ke speeches Ka wait karte hue, balcony me taaliyan aur thaaliyan bajate hue, candles aur diye jalate hue, hm ye sochte the do teen mahino ke baad to college bula hi lenge.

Graduate hone se pehle do teen mahine to rahenge na campus me?

4

5

**The Online Semester Phase:**

Hr baar ki tarah iss baar bhi yahi soche the 'iss sem phodenge'. But soon we were flooded with assignments and quizzes and after every deadline we just wished we were dead. Pr assignment to submit karna hi h, chahe wo hmara bhoot hi kyu na likhe!

**The Saanp-ko-Dhundo Phase:**

Online classes aur non-stop assignments ke beech ye game hmara favourite pastime ban gya tha. Ever wondered why? Among us was a metaphor for life! It taught us important life lessons! There always are imposters among us.

'Tu ne wo assignment submit kardi jiska hm extension maang rhe the??'

'No... I was fixing wires in electrical.'

Definitely sus.

6

7

**The Insta-Reels Phase:**

If you thought the Insta-madness had ended with Ludo King and the constant spamming of selfies on stories, you couldn't have been more wrong! Corona ke second wave ke pehle, we were hit by Insta-madness ki second wave. TikTok ko to ban kar diye pr Insta reels ka kya?? And jiska bhi idea tha Insta ke app me search button ko reels se replace karne ka, they deserve a special place in hell!

**The Maaro-Mujhe-Maaro Phase:**

Kisi subject me plagiarism check to kisi me viva to kisi me surprise quiz. Ek taraf ye assignments aur quizzes khatam nhi ho rhe the aur endsems aa gye. Didn't the semester just start? Lecture 4 se lecture 40 tak kab aagye? Kya matlab camera on karke exam dena h?? Agla sem phode?

8

9

**The False Hope Phase:**

Kuch log college wapas jaa rhe the, kuch log dosto ke sath ghumne ja rhe the and kuch log college wapas jane ke liye mails likhte hue apne dosto ke photos dekhke mann hi mann unhe gaali de rhe the...jab ek din social media aur news me dekha ki we had flattened the curve! Corona khatam ho gya! Ab to college chale jayenge, dosto se milenge, chill karenge!

But we celebrated too early coz that was just the calm before the storm, or should I say, the second wave. And when the second wave hit us, even those who were in college were sent back home, so at least now, everyone could be sad together.

**The F-ka-Khauf Phase:**

Humans have always been adept at adapting to any dire situation. Online evaluation was one such situation. From WhatsApp groups to Discord servers to Google Meets to browser extensions, we were ready for our exams, come what may! Iss sem to phodenge!

But professors giving F's on a spree was not something we expected. Whatsapp ke status, Facebook pe confessions, mails ke screenshots, har jagah yahi dikh rha tha, aur jab bhi dekhte the ek aur baar oas pe grades check kar lete the, just to be sure if we were still safe....

10

11

**The (K)isko-Vote-de-rhe-ho Phase:**

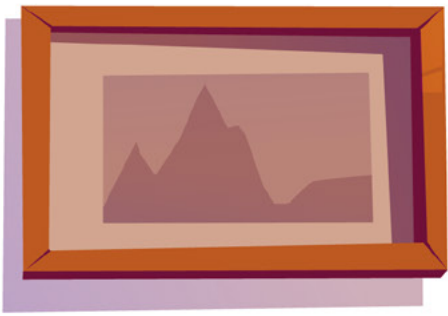
Jab dost dost nhi rehte, jab logo ke true colours unke stories aur statuses se reveal hote h, jab confessions aur memes me candidates ki (anti)campainging chalti h, jab candidates ke gangs ke beech cold war shuru ho jata h, tab jaan lijiye ki election full swing me chal rha h. The all-too-appealing manifestos that promised us a campus life with fests and facilities, some of which we didn't know we needed and some of which we didn't know we lacked, and the Open House which is always too short for anyone to make their choice, somehow fall short in front of bonds of friendship and kinship.

**The Thak-Gya-Hu-Vro Phase:**

Ghar ke chaar diwaro me band, din bhar laptop ke saamne bethe bethe thak gya hu vro. Online exams aur viva dete dete thak gya hu vro. Mummy Papa se results ki baat chupate chupate thak gya Hu vro. Courses ke approval ke liye rote rote thak gya hu vro. College khulne Ka wait karte karte thak gya hu vro. Ye post likhte likhte thak gya hu vro.

12





## DEMENTIA AND YOU

Ever since I was a child, I was told by my grandma that time flies. Some also said that it runs but flying has always been more mysterious to me than any other verb. So every time I saw someone leave, it made me believe that time actually does fly. Maybe Grandma always knew this better than me. I mean she obviously does.

She isn't around now but I have kept a jar of her memories that reminds me that time flies. She used to tell me to keep the doors and windows shut. At that age, I never thought that she was talking about the heart and not the house.

So, ever since you left I couldn't fathom the courage to enter this room that I took along with you, keeping granny's memory jar on the wooden table, so that I could recreate those stories with you. Though I always knew that time flies, the first time it hit me, it had already flown by 6 months while I was still stuck between the aroma of this room where the windows were always open and you sat beside me, smiling and gazing.

It's hard to be here again without you but the fact that this house is the only place where I don't miss your presence has made me love it even more. Every time it cajoles me somehow that you are here, though not immediately next to me, but you are here. Maybe when I am eating a cake in the kitchen, you are on our bed waiting for me, if the room is empty I'd know you are in the shower waiting for me, if the shower is dry then maybe you are outside, playing guitar for me on our favourite aesthetic songs.

I just might be searching in the wrong places but I know you are here.

A week back when I opened the gate of this room, yes after 6 months, in search of you, but it refused to open. And I again believed that it's just because you are inside trying to miff me like always. But the dust on the door knob didn't let me wander for long or maybe it was trying to fulfill your absence by refusing to open and push me into sadness.

The door opened somehow, and I was again shocked to find so much missing. I already knew you were in the garden collecting flowers for me so I ran to my wooden table, only to find Grandma's memory jar missing. I couldn't calm myself at such a loss. Now how would I recreate her stories with you. I shrieked with fear.



Tried to call you inside but you didn't reply, maybe you are still busy with your office colleagues that called you last night, or with the boss that keeps you awake more than I have been keeping you in the past few days or maybe because you are busy picking flowers for me from the garden.

I ran towards the kitchen. I knew something bad had happened. All my dishes splattered across the floor, a wine glass shattered into pieces with blood on its edges.

Has someone been killed? Did you bring someone last night while I was working late in my office? Did I do something wrong? Did someone barge in to harm you? Did someone try to kill someone here?

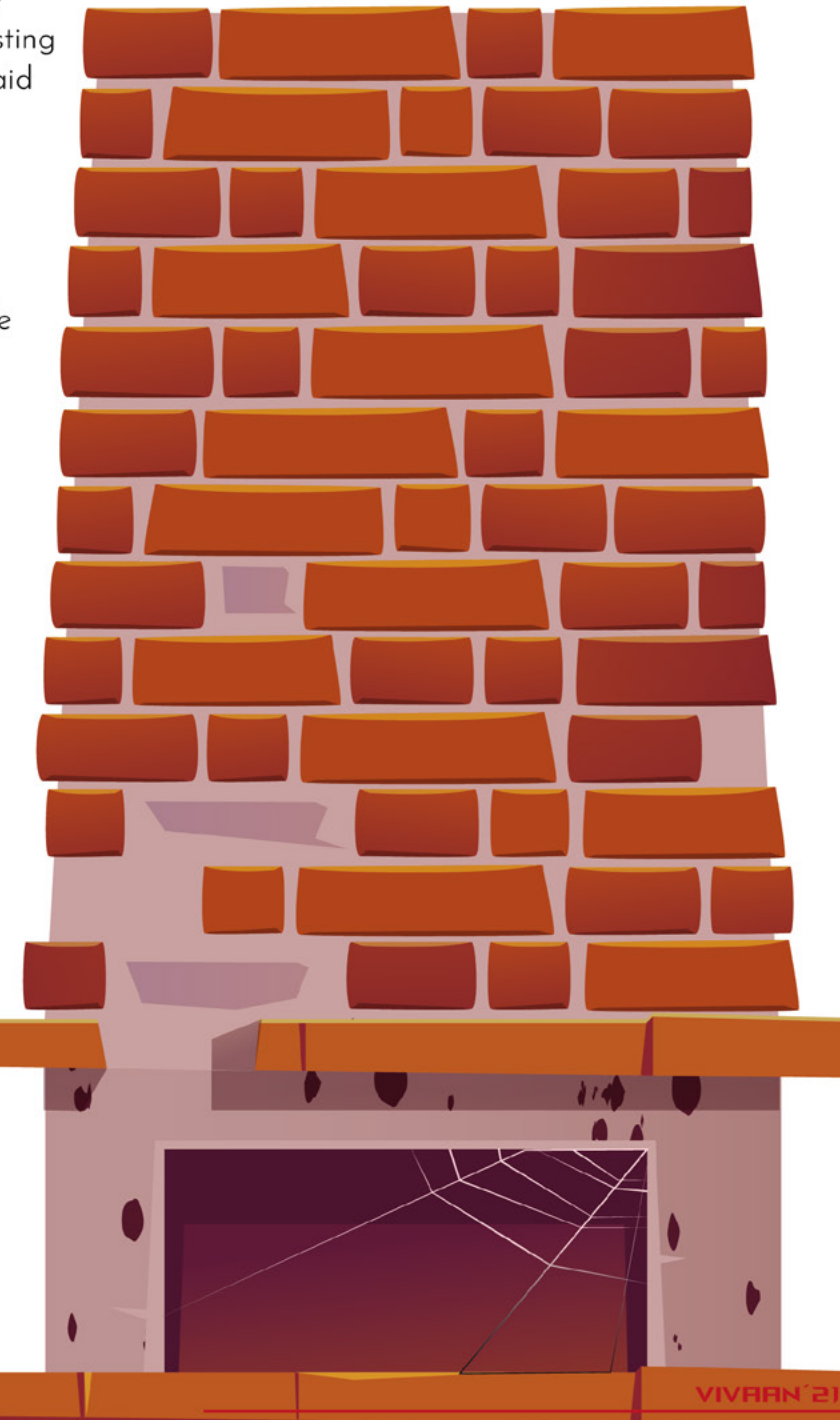
What's wrong with our house? I peeped out of the window but the trees were flowerless, maybe because it's winter or maybe because just now you brought all the flowers home for me, but where were you?

I gazed around and everywhere, everything else looked fine untouched, untarnished and pristine as it always has been with a thin film of dust resting over everything around. Maybe because the maid didn't come yesterday.

So I hurriedly made a list of what's missing so that I could tell you once we are both in our bedroom, before dementia sweeps me in. I ran towards my table, my diary. I looked at the table clock and the time read 10:00 a.m. It's spring, but isn't it cold and dark outside?

I knew this clock also died. Nevermind I would add this in the list too. I opened the diary in a jiff but it opened to manifest many versions of you.

There were versions of all kinds, all the versions that I have witnessed, the one that loves me, the one that knows me, the one that completes me, the one that handled my dementia, the one that picks flowers for me, the one that likes me but there were also the ones that don't love me at all, that lays on the other side of the bed even when we both are awake, the one that leaves me abruptly in the middle of the conversation due to an incoming call from some colleague and also the ones that drag and smash my head across the kitchen wall with a wine glass and no innocence left to survive.





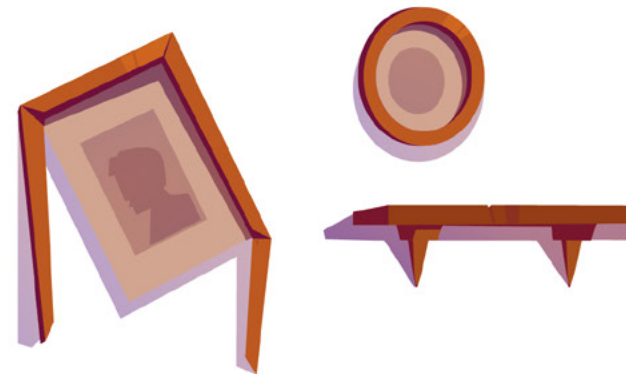
"What? Who created these versions of you? Did I?  
No no, I can't, these latter ones are so terrible. Who  
created them in my diary?"

I moved to close the windows as a cold breeze of air  
was blowing inside. I closed it and came back to my  
table. The strong breeze didn't let it stay close for  
long and the windows refused to shut. Weird! So  
there's a window in our room that refuses to close  
and a door that refuses to open. Maybe the doors  
are your heart and the windows are mine, always  
open to hold you inside.

I lied down on one side of the bed with fear, sweat  
dripping off my face, hands perspiring and a gaze  
set at the door because I knew you would come  
anytime soon.

But wait! These doors are hard to open. Would you  
be able to open it all alone? How would you? Trust  
me I am not trying to rattle your cage. It's the door  
that refuses to open.

But I am too tired to open that door again so I  
switch off my imagination and retire to sleep. I know  
you would come soon with a soft whisper of "I love  
you" in my ears in the middle of night while I'd be  
sleeping in peace. I know you will come. Will you?



Ridhi Ratan



VIVAAN'21

## Ramayana? Yes, why not

BOOK : Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana

*In Ramayana after winning the hand of Sita Ram was exiled to forest for 14 years, his wife and brother also willingly joined him, where in forest Sita was abducted by Ravan & to rescue her Ram gathered a whole army first to search her and then rescue from Ravan. At last Ram killed Ravan after reaching his island and rescued Sita. Under some circumstances Sita had to prove her chastity and she did by entering fire, but fire couldn't burn her since fire can burn only impure things, and then Ram ruled the Kingdom for some time and again Sita had to leave for the forest again. So, this is the plain old story of Ramayana you heard.*

*But, did you ever think what Sita went through all this? what was she thinking when she decided to go with ram, when she was in lanka. How she stayed strong through all this? What is the relation of kitchen and Upanishad to Sita? Did you know about Ravan's brother with hundreds of heads which was killed by Sita, did they really have so many heads? What does it mean by having so many heads? if Sita could kill Ravan why didn't she? Who's the only person other than Ram that can lift Shiva's bow...it's Sita. Why did Lakhshmana committed suicide? Why did Kaikayi send Ram to exile only for 14 years and why not for lifetime if she really wanted her son to be King for life? Why we still don't know that once Lakshman also had to go through Agni Prikhsha. What really is kanya-daan?*

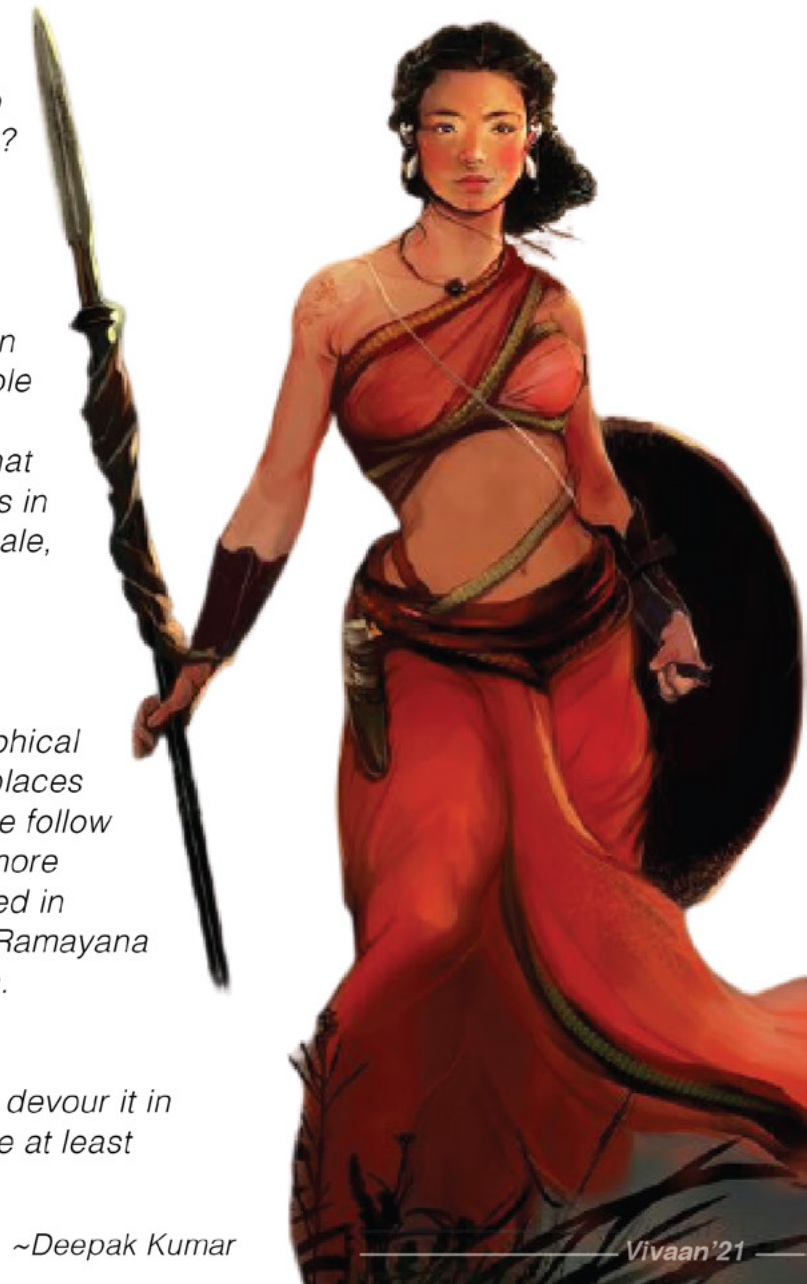
*This book creates a so vivid and rich telling you will stay spellbound throughout it. You question it...& you will get every answer. Knowing Ramayan from its female protagonist's perspective is a whole new experience. There's so much left to tell in Ramayana. This book is where you get to know that Sita has the strongest personality of all characters in Ramayana. It takes the mind of Sage, heart of whale, persistence and patience more than anyone can imagine to go through adversities Sita faced.*

*The book tells how all events unfolded in geographical space over Indian subcontinent and what those places are today. From where our traditions came that we follow unknowingly this is where you get to know. One more thing it reveals is how over time Ramayana evolved in various parts of the world, numerous versions of Ramayana were created over a period of thousands of years.*

*If I want to say in short... it is pure bliss... you will devour it in one sitting...err... not so easy, 330 pages will take at least five sittings.*

~Deepak Kumar

Vivaan'21





# The Social Construct

"Give a man a mask and he will show his true face"

- Oscar Wilde

Is it true? Do we lie ourselves to the society?

Oscar Wilde forgot one thing. He forgot that there are different types of masks. There is a mask of Facebook, there is a mask of Quora and there is a mask on Tinder.

"Different masks reveal different people"

We all wear masks today. We all project ourselves differently to the world than who we are. Perhaps it's jealousy, ego, pride? This is a topic for another day. Today, we are just studying these masks.

Warning: It's going to be blunt. And it even hurt me. Guilty as charged, I am a social media simp.

I am an Indian college "kid". Kid because before coming to college I never had a phone and social media presence. Also people mistook me for having low self respect. They thought I can't read situations and I can't understand what someone means by saying: "hmmm..." "ok" or other kinds of bullshit. Well guess what, it hurt. Seeing two completely different people, hurt me. On the face you were something else, on personal level something else. I didn't know being friendly was just on the face.

After feeling rejected from many people, I studied how to decipher people from their social media activity. I did the study on myself. And all of the conclusions below, also imply on me.

**1. They post all their achievements online.** Bull Shit. Whom did you get that job offer for? You, your family and closed ones? Or for showing how much better you are than others? This is a bad sign, let others post for you. Also, it is bad for one-self. If all your achievements are for others, what did you do for yourself?

**2. Have a lot of "self respect".** "We don't start conversations. We are important. We deserve attention. Nah, I like memes and I want to tag



people but that's childish and no one does that anymore." What in the world are you smoking people? Granted I am not socially popular or a high achiever but even I know that self respect is following your own morals. It's not what public gives you, it is what you give to yourselves. If the other party doesn't respond, black list them. I did the same stuff, it only made me feel more lonely. I still get pissed off by no replies, but I simply don't care for them anymore. I gave them a chance, they screwed it.

**3. We are kind and we care for environment.** "Save the earth, go green, donate money, look!! A small puppy, let's wipe his ass and make a video with him" Look bull-

shitters. You aint doing fuck for the environment or planet earth. You are only promoting yourself like you are one, because you are a fucking high achiever. You want to impress your other jackasses on what a high achiever you are and how you also give food to poor, never forgetting to record it. People who actually do something for the environment, don't just post save earth, they post how to save earth.

**4. We are freaking beautiful and hot.** "look use this filter, dim that light, take your stomach in, take your chest out, have you tried an apple mirror selfie?" Who the fuck do you think you are? A goddamn model? Do you seriously think all this "in frame" bullshit you do, is not noticeable? Listen jackass, if you do bullshit, only bull shitters are going to like you. I am not saying don't apply photography skills. I am saying do not fake yourself. Accept who you are.

People are so stuck up. They have forgotten to live. This narcissism in the name of common sense, will only make you inferior. Making the world a better place should be our goal. We should consistently and diligently work towards it. Have fun in life. Eat tasty food, sure keep your body in check. Fitness doesn't mean you need to have six abs, or nerves coming out of your hand. It means feeling healthy. It means getting up every morning with energy, smile and confidence.

I apologise for using offensive language. The thing is I am a nice person. That means I will beat you up, when you cross my moral code. I do respect you. But this fake knowledge, brought a lot of pain to my life.

-Arjun Sahdev



# कोविड - 19

हे अदृश्य जीव आत्मा  
की तुमने घोर तप साधना  
कह दिया ब्रह्मा ने तथास्तु  
देख तुम्हारी कठिन आराधना  
तुमने माँगा अमरता का वरदान  
विश्व की सत्ता करें प्रदान

ब्रह्मा ने कहा वत्स!  
जो करता देह धारण  
करती मृत्यु उसका हरण  
अमर होने की कोशिश में  
बहुतों ने गवां दिये प्राण  
मौत का नहीं कोई निदान

तुम हो परजीवी निकृष्ट निर्बल  
स्वच्छता के अभाव में होते प्रबल  
वैसे भी तुम्हारी प्रकृति है कमजोर  
साबुन पानी के समक्ष नहीं कोई जोर  
सत्ता हथियाने का त्यागो अरमान  
कर सकते हो सिर्फ हैरान हलकान

तुमने बड़ी चतुराई से किया निवेदन  
भगवन मेरी निष्ठा से हैं प्रसन्न  
तो मुझे बताएं ऐसा स्थान  
जहाँ रहूँ दीर्घकाल तक सुरक्षित  
होता रहे पोषण बिना व्यवधान  
मेरी उपस्थिति का न हो किसी को भान

वत्स!, मानव देह में कर जाओ प्रवेश  
तो शरीर दर शरीर होता रहेगा  
अनंत काल तक तुम्हारा निवेश  
पर हवा से संभव नहीं विस्तार  
भीतर जाने का कर लो इंतजाम  
सहज हो जायेगा तुम्हारा इंतक़ाम

तुमने अपनी जान जोखिम में डाल ली  
साबुन पानी की शर्त सहर्ष स्वीकार ली  
तुम जानते थे आदमी कब तक रखेगा मुंह बंद  
पेट की आग बुझाने खायेगा ही फलमूल कंद  
हो गया तुम्हारी समस्या का समाधान  
मानव हाथ एकमात्र उपादान

बेखौफ जहाँ तहाँ डेरा दिया डाल  
समझ न पाया कोई तुम्हारी चाल  
सबसे पहले केघर किया थिएटर मॉल बाज़ार  
जहाँ हो भीड़ मेला सत्संग वहाँ किया कारोबार

तुमने शीघ्रता से चलाया अभियान  
थे सब तुम्हारी कुटिलता से अनजान

चौबीसों घंटे रहती जहाँ चहल पहल  
कार बस ऑटो के शोर से दिल जाता दहल  
लगातार बढ़ रहे कंक्रीट के जंगल  
अहंकार में भूला आदमी प्रकृति का मंगल  
नित नये आविष्कार से बढ़ा अभिमान  
समझ रहा स्वयं को सर्वशक्तिमान

बंद होने लगीं सारी गतिविधियाँ  
सिमट गयी चारदीवारी में हस्तियाँ  
लगे थे सभी के मुँह पर ताले  
बहुतों के मुँह से छिन गये निवाले  
तुम दुष्ट दुरात्मा शैतान  
घरों को बना रहे श्मशान

एकाएक खामोश होने लगा शहर  
धीरे-धीरे बढ़ने लगा तुम्हारा कहर  
बंद हो गये स्कूल कॉलेज दफ्तर  
सूने हो गये माल बाजार थिएटर  
सड़कें हो गईं सुनसान वीरान  
स्तब्ध था मानव का ज्ञान विज्ञान

भला आदमी कैसे मान सकता है हार  
उसने भी ठान ली तुमसे भिड़ने की रार  
दिन में कई बार साबुन से धो रहा हाथ  
ज़िंदा रहने के खातिर छोड़ा सबका साथ  
हो गया आदमी सतर्क सावधान  
ढूँढ़ रहे वैज्ञानिक तुम्हारा निदान

चारों ओर छाई अपूर्व शांति  
मिट रही मानव मन की भ्रांति  
ध्वनि प्रदूषण से मिली निजात  
वायु देने लगी स्वच्छ सुवास  
उड़ रहे पंछी उन्मुक्त आसमान  
मानव एकांत में कर रहा ध्यान

मानव को अपनी गलती समझ आई  
लोभ मोह ईर्ष्या द्वेष में नहीं कोई भलाई  
कोविड-19 ने सबको है जोड़ा  
ऊँच नीच गरीब अमीर किसी को न छोड़ा  
नियति के आगे झुका इंसान  
सबकी रक्षा का कर रहा आह्वान

- माला ठाकुर

# GHAZALS

- Anand Ramrakhiani

आते हैं सब जहाँ में खुद को पाक करके  
जाते मगर हैं कुछ ही ऊँची नाक करके

जाने कौन जवाब इन सवालात के आखिर  
पूछूँगा मैं खुदा से इक डाक करके

चिंगारियों का खेल भी बड़ा अजीब है  
खुद राख हो जाती हैं सबको खाक करके

इक रिश्ते को था हमने बड़ी खैर से रखा  
कोई चल दिया उस रिश्ते का मजाक करके

खामोशी से टूटे अगर तो कोई गम नहीं  
क्यूँ टूटता है जाने दिल तड़ाक करके

इस रंज-ओ-गम की दुनिया में लगता नहीं  
हैं दिल  
लो मैं चला इस दुनिया से तलाक करके

शान-ए-महफ़िल कौन बने ?  
तारीफ़ के काबिल कौन बने ?

ढालों का कायल हर सैनिक,  
तीरों से बिस्मिल कौन बने ?

वजीर से लड़ने फौज खड़ी,  
सुल्तान का कातिल कौन बने ?

नाव डुबाने सब बैठे हैं,  
साथी-ए-साहिल कौन बने ?

रास्तों का दास है हर कोई  
मालिक-ए-मंज़िल कौन बने ?

जो 'नन्द' का दुश्मन हो यहाँ,  
इतना बुज़दिल कौन बने !





## गज़ल

अभी जो दफ़न ये जज़्बात लौटे क्या हमारे हैं  
सितारे टूटने के बाद चमके क्या इशारे हैं

हमारी ख्वाहिशें रूठी किसी के रूठ जाने से  
मनाने नज़्म ले आकार दौड़ी क्या नजारे हैं

कभी ख्वाबों सहारे काट लेंगे ज़िन्दगी सोचा  
हकीकत ख्वाब सी इस बार लायी बस बहारें हैं

अभी जो ख़त मिले हमको किसी मकबूल शायर के  
शरारत कर रहे अल्फ़ाज़ इसमें क्या तुम्हारे हैं ॥

मेरे थके हुए कंधे कुछ सुखन माँगते हैं  
पर घर के ये हालात और तपन माँगते हैं

इनकी ख्वाहिशों की आग, ख्वाबों की राख पे  
सुलगती मेरे  
आरजूओं के तराजू पसीने में वजन माँगते हैं

'मर्द' लफ़्ज़ निगल जाता मासूमियत सारी  
कहीं भी क़त्ल हो इंसा, मुझसे कफ़न माँगते हैं

दिल के जख्मों से रिसता लहु, आँखों से बह  
जाना चाहे  
मेरे भी घाव आँसुओं से मलहम माँगते हैं

वो हमदर्दी के गर्म लिबासों में लिपटी रही  
मेरी बेगुनाह पीठ के निशां रहम माँगते हैं ॥

~ शिव शंकर तिवारी



## सत्य घटनाओं पर आधारित

~भुमन्यू

चेतावनी : यह लेख पूर्णतः वास्तविक घटनाओं पर आधारित है। इसमें आये पात्रों, व्यक्तियों एवं स्थलों के नाम संयोग मात्रा नहीं है एवं इनका किसी घटना विशेष से सम्बन्ध संभव है, जिसके लिए हमें कोई खेद नहीं है।

Engineering college में इंटरनेट बंद पड़ जाना बड़ी परेशानी का सबब होता है लेकिन इस परेशानी से व्यथित छात्र आत्महत्या का प्रयास भी कर सकता है, ऐसा मैंने सपने में भी नहीं सोचा था।

12 अप्रैल 2019 की सुबह पुरे देश में सनसनी फैल गयी जब पता चला की IIT Mandi में Engineering कर रहे एक छात्र ने कैपस में एक दिन से इंटरनेट बंद रहने पर आत्महत्या का प्रयास करा। तरुन (बदला हुआ नाम), जो की सिविल इंजीनियरिंग प्रथम वर्ष का छात्र है, फ़िलहाल सदमे में है और मंडी के ही एक सरकारी अस्पताल में भर्ती है। " ऐसा तो होना ही था...! तरुन का CS विभाग की ज्योति नाम की लड़की पर क्रश था, लेकिन वो उसकी पहुंच से बाहर थी क्योंकि ज्योती की लेटेस्ट प्रोफाइल pic पर 350 likes थे !" mechanical engineering के छात्र ओमप्रकाश ने मामला स्पष्ट करते हुआ बताया। "लेकिन तरुन इतनी आसानी से हार मानने वालो में से कहा था... उसने सीधा ज्योति को ही जाकर चुनौती दे दी की वो एक दिन के अंदर 100 likes कमा कर बताएगा वरना आने वाले रक्षा-बंधन पर 'Bhai-Zoned' हो जायेगा। " तरुन के ही एक सहपाठी अंशुल ने अपना माथा ठोकते हुए कहा। रक्षा-बंधन पास आ रहा था और कॉलेज वालो ने अब तक छुट्टी भी घोषित नहीं की थी। इससे सभी लड़कों के होस्टलो में आफरा-तफरी का माहौल बना हुआ था और तो और कई लड़कों ने तो mass bunk की योजना भी बना ली थी।

तरुन ने उसी सुबह अपनी फेसबुक dp बदली थी, लेकिन जैसे likes बरसना शुरू हुए, कॉलेज कैपस में इंटरनेट ठप्प पड़ गया। अब तरुन अपनी dp पर likes की progress नहीं देख पा रहा था। एक तो पहले ही 'Bhai-Zoned' होने का डर और ऊपर से ये एक नयी समस्या... तरुन का माथा तो मनो फटा ही जा रहा था। Likes की चिंता में उसने दिनभर न तो कुछ खाया और न ही अपने आवारा दोस्तों के साथ गप्पे लड़ाये।

" भैया... मैं तो शॉक में था की आज तरुन को हो क्या गया है... कोई भूत-वूत तो नहीं देख लिया लड़के ने...! एक बार तो मन करा पूछ ही लेता हूँ क्या मामला है लेकिन फिर तरुन से लिए उधारी के 1000 रुपये ध्यान आ गए तो सोचा फिर कभी और पूछ लेंगे..." हॉस्टल वॉर्डन ने बताया।

जब शाम तक इंटरनेट नहीं चला तो अंततः तरुन ने पहली बार अपने फ़ोन में इंटरनेट पैक डलवाया, लेकिन उसकी pic पर तब तक मात्रा 14 ही likes आये थे। उसके तथाकथित जिगरी दोस्त भी इंटरनेट बंद होने के कारण उसकी pic like नहीं कर पा रहे थे। तरुन Bhai-Zoned होने और सिर्फ 14 likes मिलने की बेइज़्जती सहन नहीं कर पाया। उसी रात उसने शराब के नशे में पंखे से लटककर आत्महत्या करने की कोशिश की, लेकिन पंखा इतना पुराना था की उसके भरी शरीर का बोझ नहीं उठा पाया और टूट गया और अपनी आखिरी सांसे गिनते गिनते उस तरुन नामक मनुष्य की जान बचा गया।

"This is an unimportant and overrated issue." IIT Bombay के एक छात्र ने कहा जब उनसे इस विषय के बारे में मीडिया द्वारा पुछा गया।

नोट : अगर आप गलती से इन बदले हुए नामों का असली मतलब पता कर पाते है तो कृपया अपने पास ही रखे।





आसमां में बसने वाले ,ऊँचाइयों से डरा नहीं करते ...  
छलांगों में जान फूँक कर कोई उड़ा नहीं करते ...  
हौंसले दुरुस्त ,इच्छा-शक्ति प्रबल चाहिए ...  
उड़ान अगर तुम्हें अविरल चाहिए ...  
मत पूछो की कितना उड़ना चलता है...  
सूरज छूँ कर हमेशा सम्पाती जलता है...  
बिम्ब जहां तक ज़मी की आँखों में तेरी बाकी है...  
बस उतना उड़ना पाखी जीने को तेरे काफी है...

पथरों पर चलने वाले ,ठोकरो से डरा नहीं करते ...  
अंगारो पर चल के भी आँह भरा नहीं करते...  
जो खुशी गिर के उठने में जन्मती है...  
आगे कठिन सफर तय करने की वो नींव बनती है...  
मत पूछो कितनी बार गिरना चलता है...  
अथक प्रयासों के बाद ही एक चिराग जलता है...  
जब तक उठने की हिम्मत गिरने के बाद बाकी है...  
तब तक नसीब राही तुझे गिरने की माफी है...

इश्क में जान,शान,जिस्म,हाल की परवाह नहीं करते...  
जो तुम पर नहीं मरता उसके लिए जिया नहीं करते...  
सुना ज़िन्दगी बिन मोहब्बत के अधूरी है...  
मैंने समझा खुद मोहब्बत तेरे आवारगी से ही पूरी है...  
मत पूछो किस हृद तक इश्क करना चलता है...  
मोहब्बत तो मिटती नहीं एक काया ही जलता है...  
जब तक ख्याल माँ का जहन में तेरे बाकी है...  
उस हृद तक इश्क करना आशिक मेरे काफी है...  
आज में जीने वाले वक्त फ़िक्र में जाया नहीं करते ...  
सिकंदर नगमे दुहाई के गाया नहीं करते ...  
आज इतने खूबसूरत फिर तुम कभी नहीं लगोगे ...  
वक्त कभी सोता नहीं तुम कब जगोगे ...  
खुदा भी सवाल क्रयामत में पूछेगा ऐसे...  
जो जिया ही नहीं वो मरा कैसे ?  
मत पूछो कितना खोना चलता है...  
कुछ चीज़े रह जाती है, जिनको ना पाना खलता है...  
हर गुजरता पल दीवाने देखो साकी है...  
हर पल खुल के जियो ज़िन्दगी जब तक बाकि है...

- शुभम

## मेरा बचपन

वो मिट्टी का गुल्लक और गुल्लक के सिक्के  
वो गर्मी का मौसम और बारिश के छींटे  
खुद से भारी मेरा वो किताबों का बस्ता  
मेरे घर से जाता वो मेले को रस्ता  
जवानी की इस कहानी में ये सब खो गया  
मेरा बचपन अब बस कविताओं में रह गया

सावन के महीने में वो नीम पर लगा झूला  
नानी की रसोई में वो मिट्टी का चूल्हा  
बारिश के मौसम में घंटो भीग कर आना  
घर की घंटी बजा कर दबे पाँव भाग जाना  
ज़िंदगी की लहरों में बचपन का घर ढह गया  
मेरा बचपन अब बस कविताओं में रह गया

स्कूल से बचने के लिए बीमारी का नाटक  
खिलोने की ज़िद में घर में फैलाया आतंक  
गुब्बारे की चाहत और पतंग की ख्वाहिश  
पापा से मिली हर नयी चीज़ की नुमाइश

समझदारों की भीड़ में, मैं अकेला हो गया  
मेरा बचपन अब बस कविताओं में रह गया

दिवाली के पटाखे और वो होली के रंग  
छुपन छुपाई खेली थी जिन यारो के संग  
चाँद को मेरा वो चंदा मामा कहके बुलाना  
छोटी सी ज़िद पर घंटो रुठ कर बैठ जाना  
रुठे हुए अब मुझको एक अरसा सा हो गया  
मेरा बचपन अब बस कविताओं में रह गया

रातों की कहानियाँ और कागज़ की कश्ती  
परीक्षा से पहले जो खायी वो दही और चीनी  
लंगड़ी टांग से मेरा वो सारा घर नाप आना  
कुछ लोगो में जो सिमटा था सारा ज़माना  
अब ज़माने की भीड़ में खुद ही कहीं मैं खो गया  
मेरा बचपन अब बस कविताओं में रह गया

-अंजली



# Can money buy happiness? Maybe, maybe not

"Such a cheapstake. A money hungry tyrant, I tell you."

" When the old geezer dies, does he intend to take all his damned money with him to the afterlife?"

" I will never understand these rich bastards. "

Moris was used to these insulting whispers, spoken in hushed tones when they thought he wasn't listening. After all, none of these low life imbeciles will dare to say the same to his face.

He couldn't say they were entirely wrong. Was he cheap, wanting to save every bit of money he could? Yes. Did he want more money, more than he already had? Absolutely yes. Who doesn't? Unless you are a monk, of course.

The difference between them and him was that he was willing to twist his ankles working for what he wanted, while these gossiping rascals only knew how to run their infested mouths.

He wasn't the best person in the world , but then again, when has this world treated good people fairly?

His feed is often full of motivational posts ' money doesn't buy you happiness', written in bold text dominating over an aesthetic picture. Motivation aside, he does get a good laugh out of these posts.

Of course , he won't be surprised if the main people responsible for creating and forwarding these 'inspirational' posts were lazy teenagers lounging in their beds while eating a packet of chips and scrolling through instagram on their latest i-phones.

Snatch the expensive phones out of their hands, let's see how long their 'happiness' lasts.

When his mother was in the hospital, her life hanging on a thin rope, should he have paid the hospital bills through these instagram posts and whatsapp forwards? The doctor's reaction would have been funny, to say the least.

As it was, his mother was alive and well and it was all due to those dirty piles of notes he chased after day and night.

He chased after money, because he had learnt it's worth the hard way.

He still remembered the numerous times when his mother gave her the last bites of food so he and his siblings did not have to go hungry. And it still wasn't enough.

He remembered staring through the window , looking over at rich kids eating sweet treats he could only dream about.

He remembered going to school wearing shoes with holes in it. Remembered how even books could be considered a luxury for him.



Atleast , he made sure his children will never suffer through the same kind of childhood . They will never sleep on hungry stomachs, will never worry about clothes that needed to be stitched, will never live in a dilapidated house, and will receive the best education he could possibly provide.

Money may not buy happiness, but it did let her mother live a few more years , ensured the smiles on his children's faces.

He may not take his money to the afterlife with him, but atleast his soul will rest easy knowing his family will not suffer, even after he is gone.

Rowen considered money to be his greatest enemy. An irony considering his family never lacked for wealth. Infact, they reveled in it.

His father was a strict man, and believed he must continue the family business. His passion was titled as a 'worthless waste of time'.

He spent the majority of his life conceding to his father's many wishes , hoping he could make his parents proud, hoping he could be a worthy son.

Yet, when he finally makes one decision of his own accord, he is labelled as a spoiled brat and an unfilial son.

He doesn't think it's fair, but when has life been fair?

His father considers his choice of career embarrassing. He asked him whether he will be happy living an uncertain life, struggling for meagre amounts of money. And he answered 'if it meant he could continue chasing after his passion, absolutely yes.'

His father just scoffed and taunted him about his lack of experience in worldly matters,"go one night on an empty stomach and then talk."

He was aware how empty his words sounded to his materialistic parents. But he didn't want to chase after money if it meant giving up on the one thing that had kept him going all these years.

Money never brought him happiness, and now he was certain he loathed it.

There are many people like Moris and Rowen in the world, each with their own perspective moulded out of their own experiences and different situations in which life often placed them.

Can we say for sure who is wrong and who is right?  
For one , wealth is his salvation and for the other, wealth is his prison.  
Can we judge them? Do we have the right to?

And the most important question, can money buy happiness?

-Jhanvi





## **“WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU WILL ONLY MAKE YOU STRONGER”**

“How long, how long...O God...please...how long will I have to wait to see things getting back to normal?”, I yelled. “This quarantine is so depressing, this is so distressing. People are locked down in their homes, borders are getting sealed, the economy is falling, millions are getting unemployed, people all round the globe are dying, there are not enough people left to cremate the dead, health systems are collapsing and the worst part is that it seems that worse is yet to come. No one knows how long will this trial of God last. I am sure this is the beginning of the end or in fact this is the end.”

“Hey kid! Calm down...calm down. You are overreacting. I know this is tough but this is nothing. I have been through this and more.”

“Overreacting!!! Come on boomer” I retorted. “And you say, you have been through more!”

“I mean, I remember the stories you have told me about the African jungle 6 million years ago and how you survived the harsh weather and the wild animals. I remember you telling me on how you first lit a fire by mistake and how a wheel turned your life upside-down. I clearly remember that you told me why you drew the first animal painting in a cave some 42000 years ago in Indonesia. I also remember you telling me that your desire to form a family and live a settled life compelled you to tame the wild farms into settled agriculture in Iran around 12000 years ago and I remember you boasting about the Indus Valley civilisation. I remember all of that but it was a natural process of evolution of you, the Human Race. This, what is happening, is not an evolution. It is a pandemic. Millions are losing their lives and millions more will lose their lives. Never was your existence in question, but this time it's different. Everyone is affected and everyone is suffering.”

The harshness of my voice had mellowed down and I was almost in tears when I said, “This is the end, God has finally punished us for our sins.”

“O hey Kid, listen I have survived 6 million years on my Mother Earth and you can't let me down by crying. Your generation can't let me down and I won't let it let me down. This is just another pandemic to hit Mother Earth, I have survived much worse and will survive many worse. Now that you remember the stories I have been telling you about myself, let me tell you my darkest and most dreadful story. Once, I thought I was going to go extinct.”

It was AD 1348, an unknown disease(it also came from the HOLY land of China) had hit me(the human race) hard. Humans were dying, whosoever who came in contact with the infected died. The mortality rate was around 60%(much worse than now) and it spread by air, it spread by touch and it spread by everything. With no science and no health facilities, I was staring at my death. People who prayed died, atheists died, christians died, jews died. The Black Death(as it was so called) was devastating. Almost half of the world population died during this time. The ordeal lasted for 4 long years and I survived. Not only did I survive, I flourished. I flourished so much so as to include you in me. These pandemics are painful and disheartening but remember these are just temporary. The maximum they do is that they change the course of history.”

“The renaissance which you so fondly read about in the history books was an indirect result of the black death. Even the word quarantine which you have been using, originated during the Black Death.”

The story consoled me. After taking a deep breath, I asked “So how long will it last?”

“So, kid I can't tell you how long this pandemic will last. What I can tell you is that many more people will lose jobs and many more people will lose their lives. Let me also tell you that you will outlast this and with you so will I. Remember one thing about human race :

## **“WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU WILL ONLY MAKE YOU STRONGER”**

- Param Kashyap



## WHEN YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO

Everybody encounters this situation many times in their lifetime. The feeling that you have no goal, that all you have till now is pointless. It is as if you are falling in a bottomless pit. I have experienced it myself. Let it be due to rejection, failure and sometimes getting all your desires fulfilled, this predicament is one of the worst feelings one can ever experience. So yeah if you ever faced the same despair in your life, you are reading the right article.

We are all humans, we dream, we set goals and then expect desirable results. All of humanities problems are because of the reason that we desire, we expect things. We think about the results of outcomes way too much that we do the task for achieving the result than for joy of doing the task. And when we do not get what we expected we feel that our actions were worthless. This is the point at which our subconsciousness triggers to defend ourselves. We try to explain ourselves why we lost and that there is no point living in the past and all that stuff that we read over the internet. The problem here is that sometimes we are too attached to someone or something that we make it the sole reason for our happiness. It can be anything like a bad rank in some exam, a crush who rejected you or loss of your loved ones.

The result of all this fighting within yourself never actually draws out. Because even if we do get an outcome which is logically correct we ignore it. It is because we are so terribly attached to it that we do not want to lose it, we want to keep pursuing it. We make it our only goal. Well, sometimes are not just meant to be so when you dropped the ball, it feels as if you have dropped your sole reason to be alive. You do not know what to do, you do not know where to go or what would be your next goal. All this time forgetting that we ourselves are our only goal. And it is an everlasting fall. And it hurts really bad. All you want to do then is stay in your bed sleep the whole day. Then depression happens, you feel hopeless and sad almost all the time. And to remove this some do drugs, drink alcohol and worsen their own life. While others start to discover themselves and learn new skills and hobbies such as writing, music or dancing.

The other problems with humans is also that we tend to forget our mistakes. So even after coping from the worst emotional state anyone can experience, we fall for it again. And then again cope up and fall again. It is tough to accept but we do it again and again. As we never learnt the lesson that until we desire things we will get hurt.

Now that we know the reason of our despair, we can find ways to cope up with it. We have to follow the principle listed in Geeta as "Keep working, Do not desire for its fruit". But our original problem was to know what to do when we do not know what to do. So what then?

There is no solution to it. You have to bear the pain for some while. Find yourself the ways for it to let go and then let it go. It is the hardest thing to do in life to let it go. So let it go and learn from it. Do not attach yourself to anything again.

-Arjun Sahdev

## I Know a Boy

I know a boy who was told to never cry,  
Not when he broke his favourite toy,  
The toy his grandpa gifted him before he passed;  
Not when his teacher slapped him  
For not understanding the mumbo jumbo called science;  
Not when the doctor stitched the wound on his head  
Without anaesthesia; the doctor called him a strong man;  
I know a boy who was told to be a man.

I know a boy who has never cried,  
Not when he was bullied by his classmates  
For cherishing his pink pencil box;  
Not when he was mocked by his teachers  
For liking home economics more than math;  
Not when his friends made fun of him  
Because he disliked fist fights and action movies;  
I know a boy who wondered if he could ever be a man.

I know a boy, who has never been scared,  
Not when a horror movie spooked him out,  
He still put up a strong front for his sister;  
Not when he almost met a road accident,  
He played it off cool, said it didn't faze him;  
Not when he was about to ask out the girl he likes,  
He once told her a secret, that he was scared  
Of the dark;  
I know a boy who hid his fears so that he  
Could be a man.

I know a boy, who has never complained,  
Not when his parents put him in a school he didn't like  
And the nonsensical equations in his book got  
him depressed;  
Not when he was sent away from home to study  
When all he wanted was to stay with his family;  
Not when his career was chosen for him,  
forced upon him  
And now he's stuck at a job he hates;  
his worth lies in his salary;  
I know a boy who grew up into a man,  
trying to keep everyone happy.

I know a man who has never expressed his emotions,  
Not when he recalled his late father's smile  
As he patted his head and held his hand;  
Not when he saw his little daughter in the hospital,  
Her veins swollen from all the IVs and injections;  
Not when his son called him but was unable to speak,  
Asthma crushing his son's lungs, and the man's heart;  
I know a man who killed his emotions to be a man.

I know a man who has never been understood,  
Not when he wanted to change his profession,  
Quit engineering and become an artist;

Not when he said he loves a woman,  
And she mistook it for desire and lust;  
Not when he wanted to stay home,  
Take care of his kids and manage the house;  
I know a man who is tired of being a man.

I know a man who has never felt pain,  
Not when his wife left him with a divorce,  
Filed a fake case of dowry against him;  
Not when he was put behind bars,  
Found guilty for a crime he didn't commit;  
Not when he put a cold blade to his wrist and slit it,  
His heart had turned as cold as the blade in his hand;  
I know a man who died because he was a man.

We all know these men,  
Moulded to fit into the society's image of masculinity,  
Crushed beneath layers of social conditioning,  
They adorn masks without ever realising so,  
Their true selves left in the dark, forgotten.

We hold the key to these age-old shackles  
Of gender roles and gender stereotypes.  
We hold the key to change,  
We hold the key to liberation.  
So let's reach out to the men behind those masks,  
Men who cry, men who feel pain,  
Men who are scared, men who express,  
Men who are themselves.

- V Madhumita





# Mammatus Cloud

Blooming flowers, and floating Swans,  
Are they revealing the lord's plan??

A lot is happened in the jungle's bloom,  
A fairy of a jungle is not more in gloom,

The sky has clouds, shape in Mammatus,  
It shows they have destroyed a twister just,

The celestial body is nearby earth,  
Afraid us and shows the nature's worth,

Creatures are free and enjoying their lives,  
Earlier they were, just a dinner of people five,

A child is glad to have parents' lap,  
Mother's hand and father's clap,

Now who is unhappy and who is in wroth?

Of course not the Lord, and his angels though,  
Because Earth is for all, not only for the human's law,

Neither animals are for diner, nor butterflies for the wall,  
Do you think Birds are for cage,  
Who pleases humans like a doll?

Is my earth set only for the humans ?  
The god sighs with a great sorrow,  
"I ain't like you, who destroy other creatures,  
Now,I will made such minds who kill each- others"

The God at last, smile and sighed,  
Why have I made all humans with the same die??

-Dr. Aarti Pandya

Glossary  
Mammatus : A type of cloud, which has a round shape.  
Twister: Type of cyclone  
Die: Mould

# IIT MANDI, SORTING HAT

Oh, you may not think I'm pretty, But don't judge on what you see,  
I'll eat myself if you can find, A smarter hat than me.

You can keep your grades back, Your certificates and marks high  
For I'm the IIT Mandi Sorting Hat, And I can catch your every lie.

There's nothing hidden in your head, The Sorting Hat can't see,  
So try me on and I will tell you, Where you ought to be.

You might belong in Gryffindor, Where dwell the brave at heart,  
Assignments, Viva and projects, they always wait until the date last.

Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw, where they've sharp mind,  
If you spend your days in library, you'll find there your kind.

You might belong in Hufflepuff, If you are hardworking and patient,  
those Hufflepuffs are the real strength, behind every college fest.

Or perhaps in Slytherin, where they are all teacher's pets,  
Those students will go to extreme length, To achieve their ends.

So put me on! Don't be afraid! And don't get in a flap!  
You're in safe hands (though I have none), For I'm a Thinking Cap!

-Anjali





# Why I Write?

-Varnika Yadav



I don't really have something that hasn't been said before  
I don't have any talks that haven't been talked before  
I don't have any claims to make that haven't been claimed before  
But I like to write and I want people to listen because I've never  
been heard before.  
I am neither a story teller nor a poet  
I am not the person whose writings give people goose-bumps  
The kind of people who can make you laugh at oddest hour  
Or make you cry in broad day light  
I am sorry my stories are not heroic  
And  
I am sorry my poems don't rhyme  
And I don't know how to use metaphors and similes so perfectly  
But still I write.  
Because yes you may talk the right talk  
And you may walk the right walk  
But can you write?  
And I don't write because I am a perfect human being  
who has touched something spiritual  
or has found the secret to life.  
I write because  
I am a deeply flawed human being  
and I have made mistakes. A lot of them.  
I have chosen wrong people to love and care for;  
and I loved them too much, too hard and too jealously.  
I begged unworthy people to stay  
when they didn't deserve my presence.  
I have chosen to stand for people  
on a Monday afternoon in the month of May  
while  
they couldn't stand for me on a spring morning.  
I let the trauma do the talking for a long long time.  
I took a long road to survival.  
I took ages to recognize the path to healing.  
And along the way, I hurt people who loved me  
which I still regret deeply.  
I chose to put people before myself  
and  
along the way I forgot to love myself.  
I kept hanging to relationships which gave me nothing  
But  
bruises to my fingers.  
I kept chasing false dreams  
and ended up hurting myself.  
I chased wrong friendships  
and along the way forgot to be my own friend.  
So I write,  
I write because if there are lessons for others in my journey,  
if there are emotions which have never been expressed before,  
if there is healing for others in my wounds,  
if there is meaning in the ink which I bleed on paper  
then  
I am doing what I set out to do  
when I dreamed of words  
on a lonely starry night.  
I am doing what I thought of doing  
when I stared at the empty pages of my diary  
and couldn't think of words.  
I write to ensure that whoever reads these words never feels alone.

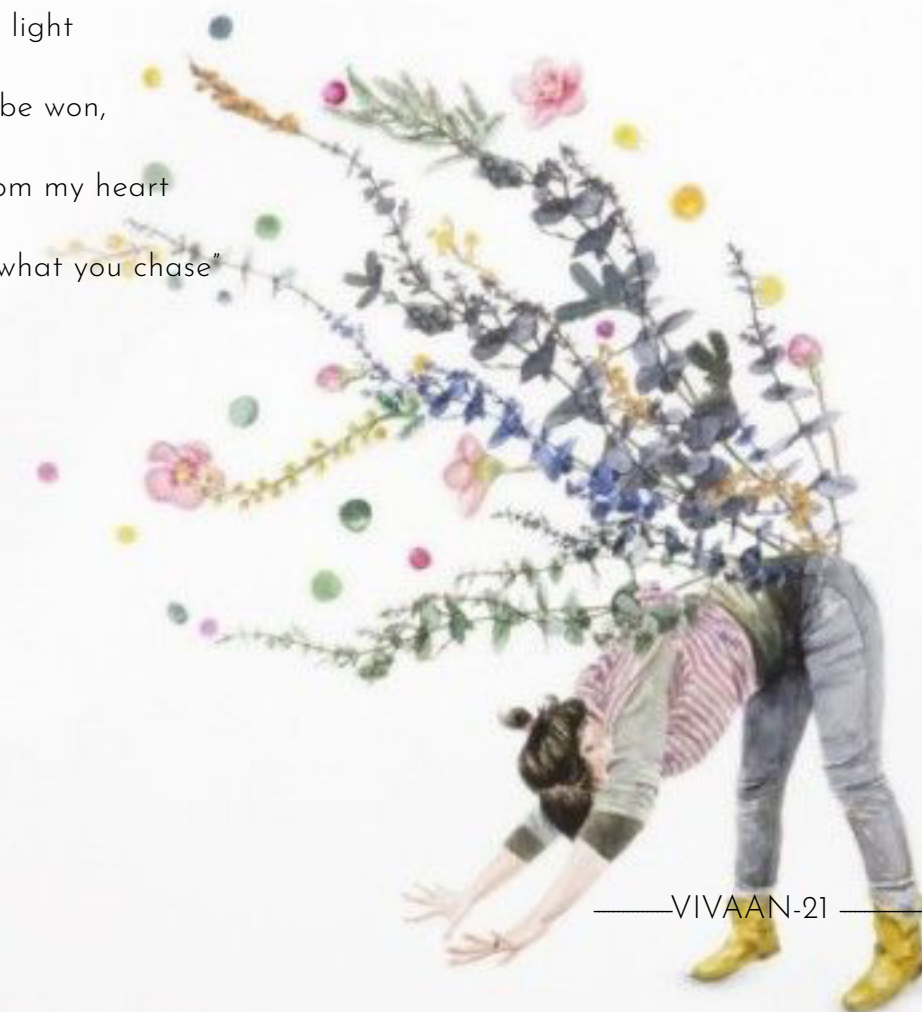
## You, be you!

Sitting here in the dark, I dream of light  
Hoping for the best and doings which are right  
I have a storm of thoughts hitting my mind  
Just trying to figure out "What is my kind?"

What is good in me is the question of the hour  
What can I do and what are my powers  
Am I of any special soil or just a barren land  
What I see is only toil left for me to stand

At a stage of life when I can't change the base  
Craving to be someone else just to win the race  
Trying hard to choose a quality and forming it's seed  
Sowing it in this body of soil without realising that  
the difference is of breed  
And then there comes a ray of light  
Piercing the storm of thoughts  
That this race is not meant to be won,  
But to be embraced  
Finally I got all the answers from my heart  
"You be you and no one else  
For that's the only way to get what you chase"

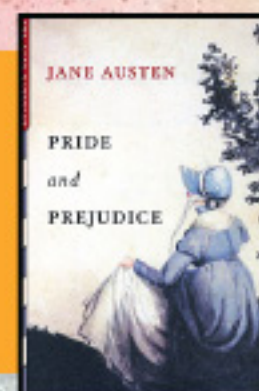
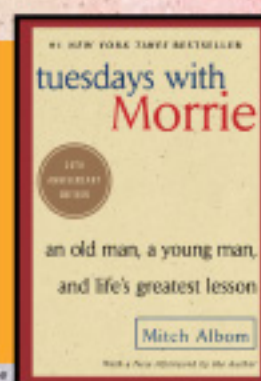
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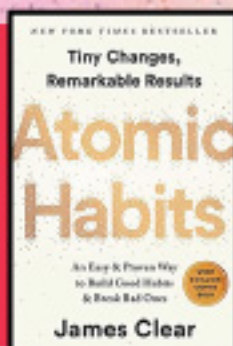


# BOOKS EVERYONE SHOULD READ

There was always a person in our life who helped us, guided us when we were young and still trying to make our way in this busy world. This non-fiction is the collection of great life lessons from Author's college professor Morrie. In the last few months of Morrie's life because of his ALS disease, Author visits Morrie every Tuesday just as they used to in college, and the life lessons Morrie discussed with author gave birth to this beautiful book.

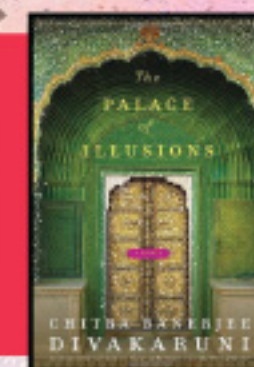


This is the story of Elizabeth Bennet set in Hertfordshire and Derbyshire, c. 1812. As the title suggests this story starts with hasty judgments and vain pride but ends up with some remarkable character development. This book is a masterpiece and exceptional in every way. Jane Austen's writing style will definitely leave you enchanted.

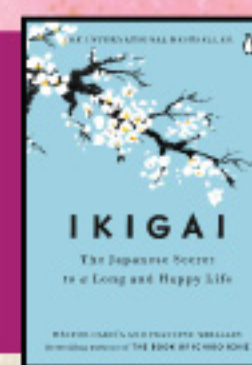


This book guides you on how to use full potential of your being with the help of atomic habits. This book will reshape the way you think about progress and success, and give you the tools and strategies you need to transform your habits.

The palace of Illusion is a mythological fiction, the story of Mahabharat narrated by Draupadi. The novel gives us a new viewpoint to read this ancient tale. Starting from her birth in the fire, this book portrays Draupadi as a strong-willed woman, following her time in Kampilya and her marriage to five Pandavas. There is a depth to Panchali's character in this book that I never witnessed before.



This is the story of a woman named Nora Seed who got stuck between life and death in a library. A library where time doesn't move, it is fixed at 00:00, hence the Midnight Library, bookshelves go on forever and each book provides a new chance to live another parallel life. She can choose from infinite numbers of lives that she can live by changing her past regrets. If you are looking for a good Sci-fi book with a deep philosophical meaning, go for it.



The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life. Ikigai (ee-key-guy) is a Japanese concept that combines the terms iki, meaning "alive" or "life," and gai, meaning "benefit" or "worth." Your Ikigai is the reason to jump out of bed each morning. This book will give you the life-changing tools to uncover your personal ikigai. It will show you how to leave urgency behind, find your purpose, nurture friendships and throw yourself into your passions.



This is the story of a black girl living in southside Chicago in a rented apartment with her family. Who becomes the first African-American woman to become the First lady of the United States. This book will inspire you, make you laugh, make you cry but most importantly it will teach you that whatever your dreams are "You deserve them". Don't let anyone tell you that you're not made for this. Don't let anyone else tell your story, tell it yourself. Because "If you don't get out there and define yourself, you'll be quickly and inaccurately defined by others." So define yourself, tell your story and own your story.

This book is about a young privileged boy named Amir and his closest friend Hassan set in Kabul, Afghanistan. This is the story of betrayal and redemption. This book shows a different Afghanistan. A peaceful Afghanistan before the war, where you could run after the kites and read the books under the shadow of a tree. This book is the perfect example of how can something be so beautiful but still can hold the power to emotionally destroy you.



Set in 1939 in Nazi Germany during the second world war and narrated by Death itself. This book is set in very difficult times, the entire country is holding its breath and Death has never been busier. This story revolves around Liesel Meminger and her Nazi German foster family. There are lots of stories about Jew people who suffered in that hard time. But we never got to know the story of poor Nazi Germans and how their life was changed. Were they innocent or were they also responsible? Did they really have a choice? This story will answer lots of these types of questions.



This book is the greatest literary achievement of our time. Do you know that Harry Potter is the world's 3rd most read book after "The Holy Bible" and "Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung"? It's a long series and it will take lot of your time. I'm not saying its going to be easy, I'm saying it's going to be worth it.



# MEET THE TEAM!

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