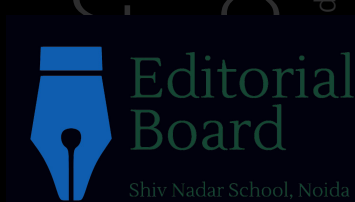


# Allegories



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

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

No other choice than to listen and obey

No tear shall it let you weep

To quench its thirst of soulful and loving poetry

As mother nature extracts her vengeance, Gays are discriminated, They beg forgiveness for their errors, Lesbians the same, And they allow themselves to be the most hurt of all people. But mother nature has a purpose. She prepares for pain and glory. She makes things beautiful. Her wrath and fury erupts. And the people are fated for pain. menstruation, mental illness,

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

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

it's over shall choose my smile

And the only horror is reality, which I dread

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

I don't deny we have differences

A word I know But I don't remember

These are Education for Life

human race

When will we see what we were promised a

wrong and you fall

In words, we sow what lies in our hearts

Simply complicated, frightfully beautiful

Like a flash of lightning

That settles into a rosebud.

# Editor's Note

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Misha Oberoi & Manya Durga  
Editors-in-Chief

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# **Ahlecon Public School**

# Oditi

*The New Me*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Odit,  
Ahlcon Public School, Mayur Vihar

# Akshat

*Untitled*

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



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

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

***Amity* International  
School**

# *Yashi*

*Morpheus*

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

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

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

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

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

~Yashi Sharma,  
Amity International School

**Bal Bharati  
Public School**

# Ankita

*The Promise*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Ankita Verma,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida



# *Aleena*

## *The Change*

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

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

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

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

~Aleena Banerjee,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

*Divija*

*My Heart Desires*

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

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

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

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

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

~Divija Bansal,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Qurjan

*A Way of Life*

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

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

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

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

“That’s why Pencils have Erasers”

~Gunjan Rastogi,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Harsh

*The Conflict Within*

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

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

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

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

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

~Harsh Malik,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Ishani

*To All the Mothers*

The Day We Met...

I was a small baby yet...

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

When I saw you with my tiny eye...

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

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

I seemed like your facsimile....

Now I know who you are.....

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

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

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

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



You are like the brightest star in my  
darkest night.....  
Oh Mother!! I feel your love like the only  
sunshine...  
Thank you for always being mine!!

And today I stand here in front of you...  
Just to say Thank you!..  
You have made all the wounds heal....  
Epic is what you have made me feel....  
For all that you have ever done, for all that  
you have ever been,  
A great mother and a great teacher but  
above all a friend forever...  
I'll love you Always and Forever!!!

~Ishani Arora,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Ishika

## *Gratitude - An Acrostic*

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

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

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

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

Enjoy your years and be  
appreciating.

~Ishika Garg,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Janhavi

*Ray of Hope, Beam of Life*

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

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

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

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

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

~Janhavi Tandon,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Jasdish

## *That Weird Kid*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Jasdish Kaur Batth,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Khushi

*Oh! What a Year it Was*

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

~Khushi Gupta,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Krishna

## *Youth Power*

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

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

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

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

~Krishna Soni,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida



# Samridhi

## *Fly*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Samriddhi Bisht,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

# Sukanya

*Life In Happy Hues*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Sukanya Mukherjee,  
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

**Bluebells**

# *Arinda*

## *True Calling*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Arima Gupta,  
Bluebells International School



# *Devi*

*She Stands Alone*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Devi Sankhla,  
Bluebells International School

# Hansika

*Serendipity of the Ages*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Hansika Bhargava,  
Bluebells International School

# Ritisha

*Why?*

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Ritisha Kapoor,  
Bluebells International School

# Shourya

*Dear Mr. Chrysanthemum*

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

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

I dwell into the past that cannot  
be undone

The terror and the screams  
underneath the bright sun

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

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

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

The agony so real, the fear so deep.

I scream! I shake! I fight!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Shourya Shrivastava,  
Bluebells International School

# Trisha

*Storm is in the Heart*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Trisha Juneja,  
Bluebells International School



**DPS GBN**

# Aanya

*Ethereal Peace*

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

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

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

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

~Aanya Aggarwal  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Aldina

*It is what we Welcome that Stays*

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

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

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

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

-

~Alaina Goel  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Anyaman

*The Way Things are Meant to Be*

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

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

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

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

~Aryaman Singh  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Devika

*Taste The Rainbow*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Devvika Shukla  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar



# Ishita

*Dear Emotions, I am Breaking Up with You*

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

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

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

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

Dear Sadness,  
I don't resent you because  
you give  
Me isolation when I need it  
the most, but I  
Don't want you to hog over  
me all the time,  
'Cause your perpetual  
existence is a source to my  
perpetual misery.

Dear Fear,  
No you aren't the worst,  
You're the good in disguise.  
But why exist only in  
darkness?  
Why show up unannounced?

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

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

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

~Ishita Sandle  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Kaashvi

*This Too Shall Pass*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Kaashvi Das  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Kritika

*Who Are You*

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

~Kritika Gupta  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

*Mansi*

*Behind Closed Doors*

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

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

~Mansi Rai  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# *Naamya*

*Why?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Namyia Lakhanpal  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar



*What Defines You*

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

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

~Niya Bansal  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Pragati

## *Carried Away*

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

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

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



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

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

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

~Pragati Tiwari  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

*Parth*

*One Day I Slipped*

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

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

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

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

~Parth Varshney  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Sadawi

*More Dreamy Prompt*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let's go out in the rain.

Let's get wet.

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

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

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

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

~Saanvi Gupta  
DPS, Gautam Budh Nagar

# Tanistha

*Dreams Lead On*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Tanistha TalapatraDPS,  
Gautam Budh Nagar

**Lotus Valley**  
**International School**

*Avika*

*Schizophrenia*

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Avika Kapoor,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Ankita

*Just Apathy*

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

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

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

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

In these occurings, you expect me to  
keep lucid?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Ankita Narang,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Areebah

*Cage*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Areeba Chaudhary,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Akshat

*Rakhtbeej Rampage*

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

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

Goddess Durga rises to Slay the Devil;  
Cradling humanity in her arms where none dare  
meddle.

Elixir of life lies in practising hand sanitisation  
Putting taboo to socialising and focusing on  
isolation

"Rakhtbeej" we carry within needs to be veiled so  
that it does not proliferate;  
Breaking the chain, Yes! that's how we stop it  
from catching the next bait

Divinity in a nurse's disguise took the devil by  
surprise.

Her inoculation needle bought down on knees an  
enemy so regal;

Legends till eternity, laurels of this act of bravery  
adorn,

Bit by bit with patience, the Devil's Gobstopper  
could finally be won

Brotherhood and harmony lessons learnt we  
treasure high

Once decided, faith can move mountains that  
touch the sky

As like the wheel of time, it circles from hell to  
heaven,

We're one world, one family; together will win  
them all, come One, or come a hundred and  
eleven.

~Akshat Gupta,  
Lotus Valley International School



# Anvii

## *Spirit*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Anvii Mishra,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Amrita

## *The Unfortunate Burden of 'S'*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Amrita Kaur Bedi,  
Lotus Valley International School

# *Dhruvi*

*Change*

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

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

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

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

~Dhruvi Saraiya, Grade 9,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Dhadni

*The 'Art' of Giving*

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

~Dhaani Sood  
Lotus Valley International School

# Kriti

*Presenting you, a world from our point of view*

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

so many girls have been complaining about  
verbal teasing and catcalls

but,

of course,

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

Hashtag MeToo.

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

we get buried with criticism while rapists  
silently escape.

But that's not an issue!

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

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

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

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

so after centuries and centuries of us  
struggling, still;

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

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

but till then,

support, encourage and love

the strong women around you

and start looking at the world

from our point of view.

~Kriti Nagpal,

Lotus Valley International School

# Kritika

*The 'State' Residence*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Kritika Gupta,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Maddavi

*Little Things*

She wakes up every day, tries to find  
motivation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



*Medhansh*

*Oh, deadly Devil!*

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

Oh, deadly Devil, you suddenly landed!

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

Oh, deadly Devil, you had already landed!

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

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

Oh, deadly Devil, you had already arrived!

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

Oh, deadly Devil, you came to create  
disorders!

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

~Medhansh,  
Lotus Valley International School

*Rehal*

*Pause to feel*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Nehal Saini,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Rahid

*Locked Out*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Rania Anand,  
Lotus Valley International School

# *Padavani*

*A Façade*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

-Paavani Sethia, Grade 9,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Teesta

*Never Wanted to be Answered*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Teestha Agrawal,  
Lotus Valley International School

# Tarushi

*The Power of YOU*

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

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

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

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

~Tarushi Singh,  
Lotus Valley International School

# **Mayoor School**

# Tanvee

*Destiny of Doom*

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

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

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

~Tanvee Maheshwari,  
Mayoor School, Noida

# **Mount Carmel School**



# Palak

*The moment of nature and you*

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

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

~Palak Gambhir  
Mt Carmel School

*Pritha*

*Home*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Pritha Jain,  
Mount Carmel School

# Shreya

*The Day I Woke Up at 4 am*

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

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

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

~Shreya Lahiri,  
Mount Carmel School

# **Pathways World School**



Samantha

*Why can't we be the same?*

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

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

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

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

~Samarth Bansal,  
Pathways World School, Aravali

# **Sanskriti School**

# Advikada

*My School - Post Corona*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Advikaa Kapil,  
Sanskriti School

# Amritaansh

*Hut on the Hill*

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

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

~Amritaansh Srivastava,  
Sanskriti School

# Anoushka

*When the Moment of Silence has Ended*

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

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

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

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

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

~Anoushka Akella,  
Sanskriti School



# Avani

*Desire*

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

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

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

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

The war reflecting  
Our tendency  
To be caught in appetency

~Avani Rudra,  
Sanskriti School

# Dilisha

## *The Poisoned Days*

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

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

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

~Dilisha Fatima,  
Sanskriti School

# *Ishita*

*For Someone Special*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Ishita Gupta,  
Sanskriti School

*navya*  
You

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



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

~Navya Singh,  
Sanskriti School

# Vanya

*The Deeming Power of Realisation*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Goodbye.

~Vanya Kapoor,  
Sanskriti School

# Vidushi

*Ink*

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

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

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

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

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

~Vidushi Jain,  
Sanskriti School

**Shiv Nadar School,  
Faridabad**

# Anvi

*The Blank Canvas*

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

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

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

When the svelte bristles clinch  
against the profuse yellow  
acrylic,

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

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

An uncanny uneasy sensation  
strikes you to your bone.

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



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

~Anvi Behl,  
Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

Anshia

*She reminds me of a word*

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

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

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

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

My memory of her fades  
Slowly but,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Would this be our final goodbye?

This was the third time  
The brutal reality set in

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

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

~Arshia Jaitley, Grade 11  
Shiv Nadar School Faridabad

# Kashvi

## *The Evil Stranger At High St - A Narrative Poem*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Kashvi Singh,  
Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

# Lakshita

*Eunoia*

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

~Lakshita Sharma,  
Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

*Gashvi*

*My best friend*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Yashvi Midha,  
Shiv Nadar School Faridabad.

**Shiv Nadar School,  
Gurgaon**

# *Aaishi*

*Officially Broken*

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

Children are getting bullied,  
woman getting harassed,  
A little boy just killed himself  
and still no one seems to care  
The rich get richer,  
and the poor get poorer  
I thought that was just a saying,  
But the facts are becoming more and  
more clearer,  
Children getting sold,  
drugs being trafficked  
Teenagers are drinking beer,  
and yet no help for the  
disadvantaged.  
Death because of skin colour,  
riots because of caste  
I thought we were moving forward,  
But why does it still seem like  
the past?  
Feminism is frowned upon,  
men suppress their emotions  
A woman can't walk alone at night  
and men are looked upon as  
criminals.  
So many things to fight for,  
and we choose the smallest ones  
Basic rights all should have,  
Yet most have none.

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

~Aaishi Gupta,  
Shiv Nadar School Gurgaon

# Adhikshita

प्रदूषण हमारा दुश्मन

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

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

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

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

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

और प्रदिशन फेलाओ थोडा कम  
जिससे भारत रहे स्वच्छ हरदम.

~Adhikshita Vishnoi,  
Shiv Nadar School Gurgaon



# Akshansh

*Pandora*

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

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

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

~Akkshansh Bagga,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Aishwarya

*L'Appel du Vide*

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

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

~Aishwarya Pande,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Anwita

## *Little Things*

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

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

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

-Anwita Ganesh,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon



*Diya*

*Tear of Midnight*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Diya Sharma,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

*Divija*

*The Cracks On the Roof*

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

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

~Divija Manaktala,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Diya

स्त्री

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

~Diya Dadoo,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Gayatri

*Pain*

When I hear the sound of thunder  
And rain,

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

No Pain is greater  
Than the Pain of losing someone;

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

Just as we merciless creatures  
Showed Her children no Mercy;

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

And when I hear the sound of  
Thunder and Rain,

I know She's  
Now laughing at our Pain.

~Gayatri Brijesh,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Khushi

*Sisyphus*

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

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

The sweet sound of notifications  
woke him

he flexed his cheekbone

'hashtag woke up like this'.

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

"how are you so perfect?"

"let's meet"

"can we take pictures of our cool  
things

in our cool outfit

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

The widening of his smile was  
proportional to his likes

like every morning he chanted

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

I love my likes, I love my likes"

His life quickly became his likes.



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

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

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

~Khushi Soni,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Madhurya

*Atheism: a work in progress*

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

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

~Madhurya,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

*Maina*

*She Doesn't Need a Hero*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Naina Sardana,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Prisha

*A Spider's Sorrows*

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

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

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

just because it has an erudite  
mind?

My heart beats,  
And your's repeats.

Are we all that different?

I beg you, be a little munificent.

My life is mundane,  
unpretentious.

I don't mean to be a menace.

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

Because the contrary begs not,  
to be thought about.



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

~Prisha Adhikari,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Suhani

War

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Suhani Saraf,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Shivranjini

*My Mind Is No Less than a Battlefield*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Shivrinjini Rathore,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

# Tara

*The Power of Yes*

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

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

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

~Tara Chadda,  
Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

**Shiv Nadar School,  
Noida**



# Karissa

*You Always Have A Choice*

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

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

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

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

A dandelion

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

A rainy day

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

Hunger strikes

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

Pandemic world over

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

Life gives us choices

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

~Karissa Gupta,  
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

*Madriya*

*Wake Up India - A Letter To The Prime Minister*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Mariya Abbas,  
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

*Naomi*

*It's Like Clockwork*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

~Naomi Pandey, Grade 11,  
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

*Hirali*

*Orange Streets*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unnerved, unbridled,  
unafraid.

~Nirali,  
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

# Siddhant

*An Accidental Fallout*

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

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

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

~Siddhant Singhania,  
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

# Tanush

*The Fallen Warrior*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Tanush Bhatnagar,  
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

# Zehra

*Voice of a different soul*

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

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

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

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

~Zehra Bukhari,  
Shiv Nadar School, Noida

# **Step By Step School, Noida**



*Annsh*

*The performer*

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

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

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

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

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

His mind oozes confidence,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I follow him into the garden,  
Where he sits with a glass of  
whiskey.  
He sighs and sips,  
Then sighs again.

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

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

~Annsh Kapoor,  
Step By Step School

# Dangsh

*The saga of love*

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

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

~Darsh Anurag,  
Step By Step School

*Gia*

*The End of a Tunnel*

What's the worst thing a person can  
feel?

You'll say - pain, anger, fear.

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

The despair of drowning in tears.

But what we always forget

Is the agony wrought by shattered  
dreams.

The torment of loving and losing.

The hope turned to anguished  
screams.

They say, look to the bright side of life.

They say the glass is half full, too.

They say, believe that everything will  
be all right.

They say hope is what'll get us  
through.

But what if the bright side blinds us,

And the glass itself should break?

Everything is never all right,

So what if hoping is a mistake?

What you don't know you want,

You won't want to possess.

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

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

~Gia Arora,  
Step by Step School



# Ragini

*The game*

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

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

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

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

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

~Ragini Sen,  
Step By Step School

# Shivanshi

*The last leaf*

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

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

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

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

~Shivanshi Agarwal,  
Step By Step School

# Shivom

*Where the mind is with fear*

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Shivom Singh,  
Step By Step School

# Shreyas

## *The invisible man*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~Shreyas Das,  
Step By Step School



# Vikramaditya

*When disaster strikes*

When disaster strikes,  
It is ironic how I always feel as  
though the go days on and on.  
And yet, when I see my calendar, I  
am shocked as to how much time has  
gone.  
Nearly half a year has passed by, but  
I can't remember what I have done  
so far.  
We used to think we would be free of  
this curse by summer, now it feels  
like the end is afar  
I can't remember whether it is  
Sunday or Wednesday, all days feel  
the exact same.  
But even today, the solution to COVID  
is what everyone except a doctor  
proclaims.  
"It is bleach, the virus will die in  
mere seconds, you will see,  
Stop isolating because no virus can  
survive herbal tea.

“And you can never go wrong with  
drinking a cow’s pee!”  
No one saying such things has a  
doctor’s degree.  
Everyone is suffering and deep in  
prayer,  
I have heard so much bad news that  
now I don’t care;  
It is sad when you become numb to  
such things,  
But such is the terror that disaster  
brings.

~Vikramaditya Ghose,  
Step By Step School

# **Tagore International School**

# Aadya

*Logical Fallacy*

A Faustian  
Bargain was made,  
Underneath roundtables  
A game was played.

The King of fools  
Dealt our hands,  
Built this house of cards  
Where he sang, he danced.  
Now the wind's blowing  
Blowing again.

Time was just  
One of his slaves to kill  
At councils and in palaces,  
While underneath  
We stood silent still  
Defending him with our defeat  
After all, we were beneath.

We live and relive  
The ravages, the mistakes  
As seconds and minutes dilate  
Now clocks struck eternity  
We're stuck in a loop of errors  
Oh, end of certainty,

Inventions  
And new discoveries  
No rhyme or reason  
Just illogicality.  
Science for wars,  
Wars for peace,  
Peace for calamity.  
Can't believe our reality  
Is this our reality?

We hide and they seek.  
Eyes on us,  
But we can't see  
In realpolitik  
Who's the real enemy?

Now lock me up,  
Set me free.  
Oh, with missiles  
You set me free,  
And changed my name  
To save the guilty.

I'll think I'll be alright  
But I wish that my son could see  
That out here,  
There aren't any borders,  
Only the wind blows  
And whispers to trees.

We could fly,  
Fly paper planes,  
Race the moon  
Through terrains  
And dream a hundred dreams.

Now that I am up here  
The order then seems uncanny  
Thus today I conclude,  
Reductio ad absurdum  
Your truth is a fallacy  
Reductio ad absurdum  
Their truth is a fallacy.

~Aadya Aggarwal,  
Tagore International School

# Adarsh

*Silence*

Often heard by accident, or maybe  
desire  
Is it acid, dissolved in air spreading as  
wildfire?  
Where the eye searches, and overlooks  
its dreams,  
Catching only dust particles and by  
chance some oxides of sulfur or it  
seems.

the occasional good performance glance  
at the artist,  
The awe of disbelief,  
The expression of horror, the thought of  
a clenched fist,  
Whose touch so versatile, so lethal, yet  
so brief.

I love it but sometimes,  
Just sometimes, it echoes my past,  
Reeks of my future but is as mute as my  
present,  
It can't say yet talks a million more  
words than a singer.

It sits right beside me, yet bullied by  
my humming,  
I desire it when hearing criticism but  
during tunes, find it bumming  
It shines with the crystals of an earring,  
Yet gets strangled by the holes of a  
trumpet.

Sometimes it talks to me,  
Pushing me over the edge between deaf  
and observant,  
It beckons to show me the people, the  
audience where silence is acute.  
Who can hear nothing but it, just deaf,  
and others trying to speak like it and  
mute.

I can hear yet I can't see, I can't heed.  
No, I am talking about doom, not about  
the demises  
The apocalypse that surrounds us,  
But silence saying indeed.

~ Aarush Chakrapani  
Tagore International School



# Dhrishiti

## *Growing Old*

Raising a child,  
Always forgiving them with a smile.  
Knowing that one day when they wake up,  
They will realise that  
Now the candles won't fit on the cake.

Sometimes I question why I have that  
terrible ache,  
My mum says it's a part of old age.  
Look how far you have come,  
And how far you have to go.  
Look at what a grand journey,  
Your life has been till now.

Days pass so quickly now,  
Nights are seldom long.  
Life seems to be difficult,  
Anxiety, depression, mood swings and so  
much more.

Sometimes music is the only medicine,  
To the heart and mind.  
It calms the soul and relaxes the mind.  
Nevertheless, music is the universal  
language of mankind.

Time is the best healer,  
It's the fire in which we burn.  
God is the last hope,  
Blessed people believe in Lords.

Don't spend time beating on a wall,  
Hoping to transform it into a door.  
Move on in life,  
And create a positive room.

Your happiness is your choice,  
So don't let anyone ruin it.  
Your life is in your hands,  
So try to improve it.

You can do it,  
You will do it !

Hey youngster,  
Overthinking and feeling insecure is alright.  
Just be aware about it and accept it.  
Take a deep breath and  
Focus on your goals.

Let your mind relax for a while,  
And become an observer of your mind.  
Thoughts are like visitors who come and go,  
Be concerned about the energy  
You receive from the universe.

Feel every emotion,  
There is nothing positive or negative  
It's only our perspective.

Whenever you feel anxious,  
Just perceive your breath.  
Live every present moment,  
And love yourself.

Child to teen,  
Teen to adult  
It's a long journey to go.  
Have faith in yourself

We all know,  
You can fight through anything,  
Whether acne or your skin, or  
Your evil friends win.

Don't let anyone distract you,  
Whether it's your peers  
Or my tears.

Keep going...  
Keep rocking.

Stop reacting and start responding  
Never be worried about anything,  
When you have everything.

Love is always bestowed as a gift,  
Persist those precious sets of emotions.  
Never do anything as such,  
That brings our head downwards.

Bright stars shine only when the sky is dark,  
You will spark in my heart.  
Stay blessed  
Do your best !

~Dhrishti Verma,  
Tagore International School

# *Kavya*

*Desire*

Our story is timeless, unbound and free,  
And yet it's a small rare occurrence.  
Like fallen snow, and flurries on a tree.  
In a hundred years may there be a recurrence.

Bless our friendship with light and bless it with  
darkness.

Bless it with all things gems and thorns.  
Warm comfort and unpleasantness,  
Carbon to diamond, beauty may it adorn.

Even if a mystic may come on the door and knock,  
And admonish me with arcane truths,  
Must I never leave you, not even in a deadlock,  
Because you are my precious Ruth.

Recognize your worth and let self-love ignite.  
Or you may miss out on your perfume.  
My twinkling and hopeful light,  
It's time for you to bloom!

~Kavya Dhodapkar,  
Tagore International School

# *Lalnunpimi*

## *Prisoner*

Oh dear voice in my head,  
What is it that you greed?  
A helpless prisoner to you I am  
And escape is all I plead.

From bitter regrets of the past  
To fear of what lies ahead,  
Merciless and without pause;  
Your presence drowns my head.

You devour me from within  
Brutally like a beast,  
Eating away my fortitude  
My sanity, your beloved feast.

Slowly robbing my senses  
Your words are like thieves;  
No matter what silence I seek  
Your echo simply never leaves.

But alas, every thorn comes with  
a bloom  
And so do you, old friend,  
For when loneliness surrounds me  
It is on your songs that I depend.

For your never ending resonance  
That so often brings me pain,  
Is nothing but my dearest ally  
Who shields me from the rain.

How funny it is that you,  
The cause behind my cries;  
Are no one but the same,  
Who sings me comforting lullabies.

Even if darkness engulfs me  
And till my last breath,  
I know that we won't part  
Unless it is by death.

So dear voice in my head  
Though your prisoner I may be;  
I must confess I do cherish  
Your unconditional company.

~ Lalnunkimi Hnamte  
Tagore International School

# Lavanya

*In The Making*

A flower in the making  
Hidden is the seed  
Waiting for its turn  
To see and be seen.

A flower in the making  
Now it's growing through the dirt  
Nurtured by the gardener  
In his old, tattered shirt

A flower in the making  
Bud bursting into bloom  
Then at the eleventh hour  
Comes the voice of impending  
doom

“A flower in the making  
It's as beautiful as me!  
I surely must have it,”  
The queen screamed with glee



A flower in the making  
Wild fragrance no more  
Owned by the opulent  
A piece of décor  
A flower in the making  
Hidden is the seed  
Blissfully ignorant  
Of hearts cold as steel

~Lavanya Saha,  
Tagore International School

*Malvika*

*Star*

You can't do it, stop this now  
I control you, you should bow  
Covering my ears, I fall down  
Try to drown these voices out

You think you can one up me  
I own you, now say sorry  
You know you can't win this war  
Give up now, you won't go far

But then I heard a voice  
Shining through the loud noise  
My mother telling me  
"Oh darling can't you see?"

No matter what, it's your choice  
To be tough or to be poised  
You have power in your voice  
Now go and show those boys"

I'm a girl and I'm blessed  
Can't you see this is my test?  
I will rise to be a star  
You'll see that I'll go far

~Malvika Nair,  
Tagore International School

Sadavi

*Silence Is All I Have Now*

I'm breaking into a million pieces,  
But there is no one to hold them  
together  
Winds are blowing them away,  
And I know that no one is going to fix  
that weather  
I was falling apart everyday ,  
No one held my back so I ran away  
My inner conscience tried to speak, but I  
didn't allow  
Because silence is all I have now.  
At the end of the day I told myself to be  
strong alone ,  
And now I guess I'm on my own  
Now that I am sitting alone, no one's  
there by my side,  
For a second everything feels fake and  
life is pushing me aside.  
Moreover I understand that I was  
wasting time on people who couldn't  
understand a word ,  
And for that they bullied me and called  
me a nerd  
My head is caught up and my soul is  
tied,  
Silence was eating me from inside.  
Silence is all I have now

Lately my emotions have been  
pouring on paper instead of tears,  
Still my bullies couldn't figure out I  
was the kindest person or closest to  
near  
But I wouldn't stop just because of a  
little sarcasm  
Even if they call me numb, dumb or  
scum for my enthusiasm  
I probably don't exist in that narrow  
view of life,  
Where I seem shallow and I could  
barely survive.  
Now, later in my life I am blessed  
and happy  
And everything actually feels fine.

~Saanvi Mehta  
Tagore International School,

Saira

*Welcome*

WELCOME to the society  
Here your bodies will be shamed  
Here people won't leave you  
Until you scream in pain

Don't try to fit in.  
You will never be able to escape.  
Don't try to build an empire  
For all they will give you is hate.

WELCOME to the society  
Here people will judge  
more than the courtrooms will ever do  
Here the guilty will never be accused

Don't trust them  
For all they will do is break your heart  
It is easy to love the devil  
When the devil looks like a star

WELCOME to the society  
Let's play a game  
The one who survives till the end  
wins the game

~Saira Bhateja,  
Tagore International School

# Sambiyak

*My Vision of Mother Earth*

My vision of Mother Earth,  
What should it be?  
Should it be tropical trees,  
With busy buzzing bees?;

Or scintillating seas,  
With churning water and a cool  
breeze?  
Should it be unadulterated air  
Blowing freely here and there?;  
Or pleasant peace,  
Putting everyone at ease?

Should it be Mystical mountains  
Striking with clouds to make fabulous  
fountains?;  
Or radiant rainbows  
Spreading joy to and fro?

Achieving this can be a tedious task,  
Why not join hands and ask?  
“O Mother Earth, we have caused you  
harm

Please forgive us and bless us with your  
charm; Under your care  
mankind survived,  
But we took it for granted and left  
you deprived;  
O, celestial being we are ashamed of  
our deeds, Together we will fulfil all  
your needs;  
Spreading awareness to a world such  
diverse, We will ensure you keep on  
giving births.”

~Sammy Jain,  
Tagore International School

# *Simrat*

*The World Beneath*

,Devoured by the misty sea  
Drowning beneath her depths,  
Glimpses of lustre and radiance  
Green as emerald,  
Serene as a star in the night sky.  
The dolphins dance their way ahead,  
The lumpy jellyfish with it's  
fluctuating charm,  
While the lobsters trot behind  
All trying to bypass the big, bad, old  
shark.

Down under lie all the mysteries,  
Among the mumbling creatures  
And the twiddling currents,  
Allured by the world beneath,  
And the outside facade completely  
hushed,  
Floating there forever and ever  
Felt as if I could breathe underwater.



But as i run out of breath  
I crawl back to the shore  
And my equanimity splinters,  
All I see is a cloud with a golden lining  
As the ocean lifts its arm, touching the  
shore,  
The waves stand there whispering,  
Calling out to the silky sand.  
And the water strokes my feet,  
Thereby I lie, exhaling my past  
And breathing into my future.

~ Simrat Oberoi  
Tagore International School

# Shubhangi

*The Ring Of Acceptance*

You'll both wear the ring,  
Diamond, ruby or gold.  
Warmth and comfort it'll bring,  
And your heart will unfold.

You'll protect it from water,  
And longing glances of a stranger.  
Wouldn't sell in for a thousand  
pounds or a quarter,  
And you would never take it off,  
ever.

You'll both start being careless,  
But still wear it for a long time.  
You'll convince yourself it's flawless,  
Because taking it off would  
be a crime.

The texture will feel rough,  
And the shine now seems faded,  
As the layers of coating peel off,  
All along, it was painted.

You'll hastily throw it away,  
Go and shout in the goldsmith's  
face.  
You're on your own, you'll live  
your way,  
And leave the ring at its place.

But when the moon and stars  
will rise,  
You'll bend and pick it.  
Not a glare or tear will escape  
your eyes,  
Around it, a sweater of your fingers  
you'll knit.

You'll never wear it again,  
But you'll keep it like a treasure.  
The ring was first joy, then pain,  
And you'll hold close to you, all  
the pleasure.

~Shubhangi Aparajita  
Tagore International School

# Shadyan

*Money*

A desire possessed by every heart  
Something with which we never want to part  
A source of motivation for all  
Without it, we just seem to fall  
All our problems it seems to solve  
To earn more money is everyone's resolve  
Its value changes from country to country  
Money

Yet, there is something amiss  
Is money really good: ask yourself this  
A cause of social and economic disparity  
When money is sight, we forget about  
humanity  
Of many deaths and many crimes, it has been  
a cause  
It does not deserve much applause  
The walls that it has erected among us are  
many  
Money

We must realise  
Greed for money is not wise  
Money is a mere necessity  
We should not let it interfere with global  
brotherhood and equality  
Never to let it be a way of inflicting pain  
Such should be our aim  
It is in our hands, not to let it become a cause  
of worry  
Money

~Smayan Gupta,  
Tagore International School

# Vadanya

*Neverland*

If I could've been with you tonight,  
I would sing you to sleep  
I'd never let them take away the light  
behind your eyes  
One day, You'll lose this fight  
When you fade into the darkness,  
Just remember,  
You will always burn, as bright.

With every passing day,  
You'd be lying, if you said you  
were fine  
Just be strong and hold my hand.  
When the time comes for you, I'll  
understand  
But for now, will you let me  
Stay by your side?

As our fingers lock in together  
We take a trip down memory lane  
The day we went waltzing through  
the empty corridors  
Your gorgeous locks, intertwining  
within the tip of my hand  
The day we dreamed  
To fly till never land

The taste of your lips,  
Forever engraved on my tongue.  
Your dulcet voice  
Forever echoing in my ears.  
Your eyes, Your oh so gorgeous orbs,  
A pair I couldn't help but fall into.  
While in your mind, your existence  
was nothing but flaws,  
For me, your existence was nothing  
but perfection.

I promised, I'd protect you,  
From those monsters in your  
nightmares  
But how can I,  
Protect you from your own decaying  
mind?  
I promised, I'd keep hope alive,  
But how can I,  
When those eyes of yours are no  
longer shining, your tanned skin,  
slowly draining color?  
How can I, keep these promises,  
when the only one, I've ever loved,  
is slowly letting go of my hand?

I wasn't with you tonight,  
And they took away the light behind  
your eyes  
Today, you lost this fight  
And faded into the darkness,  
Just remember,  
You still burn as bright

But sadly, all good things must come to  
an end

Today is the day we bid goodbye,  
I hope you enjoy your stay,

On the island of Neverland

~Vaanya Karla,  
Tagore International School



# **Vasant Valley School**

# Adangsh

*A Betrayal of Sanctity*

A free man of North Africa,  
as rare as they come,  
he stirs in me, a desire,  
to hear the wedding drum.

His name - Othello,  
the protector of Venice,  
a Moor yet a General,  
the product of his penance.

Started from the netherworld,  
rose through the ranks,  
all Venetians are grateful,  
They bow and give their thanks.

A warrior so undeniable,  
he'd put Hercules to shame.  
There's yet to be one to match  
him,  
for there are none stronger than  
his flame.

I wish to marry this soldier of gold,  
I wish to soothe his flame.  
I wish this against all godly odds,  
though I shall damn my  
family's name.

I shall not shed a tear thus,  
for I am not as passive as Portia.  
I shall choose my smiles and sorrows.  
In God's name, I pray, Hallelujah.

~Aadarsh Chowdhury  
Vasant Valley School

# *Aadhya*

*What other people say*

She walked down the busy street,  
Laughing and talking with her friends  
She looked confident  
Because that was the only way she could blend

But on the inside, a million thoughts were racing  
Inside her mind  
Feeling like everyone could hear how annoying it was  
Every single thought unconfined

Everyone made fun of her...  
Those so-called friends to her face  
But she would laugh it off  
Pretending like it didn't sting  
But it was obnoxious  
So they weren't to blame

She hated her voice so much  
But of course, couldn't do anything about it  
"Maybe if I just quit talking.." she thought to herself  
Maybe that way I can fit

They would help her gain confidence  
Compliment her from time to time  
Yes, it made some difference  
Yes, she started to shine

Of course she's not rid of the insecurities  
Sure she has those bad days  
But now she soars like a free bird  
She doesn't care what people think about her What  
they have to deal with because of her She soars  
Because she doesn't care about what other people say....

~Aadhya Bharara,  
Vasant Valley School

# Adandini

*Bid Adieu*

The surreal feeling of losing someone,  
Knowing that you won't see them,  
knowing that their life is done.  
It takes a great deal of time and is  
tough to accept,  
To see your reduced family that is all  
you have left.

Knowing that you won't see their  
smile,  
Knowing that they won't see you walk  
down the aisle.  
Knowing that all you have left are  
memories,  
Trying to recall all the moments you  
spent together, each and every.

Trying to recall their voice and their  
laughter,  
Remembering all the times they  
responded to your questions with  
clever answers.  
Reminiscing the moments they sang  
for you,  
Oh how I miss it, I didn't even get a  
chance to bid adieu.

Questioning God on why He took  
them away,  
Hoping that they found peace, I  
desperately pray.  
At least they're reunited with all  
those who they lost,  
But how I want them back, no matter  
the cost.

Longing to see their infectious smile,  
Their disabled number I long to dial.  
Seeing no one sit on their designated  
chair,  
It all just feels like a never ending  
nightmare.

Spending 15 years of my life with  
them,  
It's not something I would ever want  
to forget,  
Saddens me to know they won't see  
the woman that I eventually become,  
At least there's no moment with  
them that I will ever regret.  
Reminiscing the moments they told  
their childhood days to you,  
Oh how I miss it, I didn't even get a  
chance to bid adieu.

~Aanandini Tayal,  
Vasant Valley School

# Advaita

*I Will Never Know*

I lie wide awake at midnight,  
Unable to fall asleep.  
I hear whispers and beeping  
machines,  
I hear a muffled weep.

I feel the ache in her chest,  
I listen to the painful groans.  
Uneasiness when she turns on  
her bed,  
Interrupted by the doctors' ever-  
ringing phones.

An eerie fear creeps up my  
spine,  
I have a lump in my throat.  
Trying to lull myself into a light  
slumber,  
Frequently, I wake up with a jolt.



As the sunlight enters through the  
window,  
Near my bed, I vaguely see a  
crowd.  
Documents are being signed,  
And she is not around.

The relatives wonder in dismay,  
What more could they have  
done?  
Even during the shortage of  
resources  
An ICU bed she had won.

I tried to stop my tears,  
As I donned the oxygen mask.  
While the echoing wails of her  
family,  
Bored a hole in my heart.

The tears flowed uncontrollably  
now,  
They're very disloyal to me, you  
see.  
I mourned, said a silent prayer,  
Even though she had never even  
met me.

All I knew was -

She was woman that deserved better,  
Not to die of a flu - not so mild.  
She was a mother to a son,  
A little baby she left behind.

She was a sister,  
The best anyone could ask for,  
She was a wife,  
Whose husband only wanted her life  
saved and nothing more.

She was a friend,  
One, on whose shoulder you could  
cry,  
She was an aunt,  
Who always made the best pies.

But most importantly, she was a  
doctor,  
Who sacrificed her life to save so  
many more.  
Why would god save me, a ninety  
year old, over her?  
I will never know.

~Advaita Sehgal,  
Vasant Valley School

# Aryaman

## *Beloved Family*

My family is there with me on  
lows,  
they are there when I'm on a high.  
They know when I'm in the mood  
for dominos,  
and I love them all till the sky.

My mother is a carefree person,  
she cooks the best food ever.  
When she isn't around things  
worsen,  
she takes care of us whatsoever.

My father is the one who provides,  
he works day and night.  
He is like a friend,  
and has taught us to do what is  
right.

My sister is the one I can always  
talk to,  
the one that's always there by me.  
And when I'm in a crisis,  
she will definitely pull me through.

My grandfather is so cool,  
he lets me do whatever.  
With him, there are no rules,  
and he is very clever.

My grandmother always  
agrees with me,  
and I can always count on  
her.

Once I got hurt on my knee,  
and she fixed it in a blur.

So this is my beloved family,  
a house of loving people.  
I live here very happily,  
without any upheaval.

~Aryaman Mehra,  
Grade 9, Vasant Valley School

# Anshya

## *My Neighbourhood Streets*

On the rare occasions of walking my  
neighborhood streets,  
I feel the thrill of a child who gets to try  
their first sip of cola.  
It triggers an invigorating tingle to my  
feet,  
like the taste buds that uncontrollably  
bounce with each gulp of soda.  
But each time I try to quit, it provokes me  
to take yet another sip.  
And my feet rhythmically spring to walk  
another step.  
Oftentimes I ask myself, “Must I risk  
another step?  
Or will my addictive nature lead me to a  
path, astray, where I may be  
compromised?”  
And that is when I reach my conclusion:  
I am not welcomed by my own land;  
I’m a pariah trudging beyond my borders.  
I find it queer to see babies afraid to sleep  
in their cradle.  
Isn’t it meant to be their haven -  
the most familiar place after a mother’s  
bosom?

And so, aren't my neighborhood lanes  
supposed to be as familiar as the creases  
that run through my palm?

But, I guess, spending time indoors has  
given me my answers.

Answers, that have become an implicit  
reality to everyone who looks like me.

And everyone who has the same longing, the  
same questions, and the same fear as me.

And why I and a million others don't walk  
on our neighborhood streets.

It is partly because these streets aren't  
meant to be trodden by the likes of me,  
but be ground upon by a platoon of  
machines driven by my superiors.

Or perhaps, streets are places for them to  
exhibit their divine hegemony;

for they drive their repugnant ambition  
while assuming their position on the top.

And naturally, like the streets, our hands  
cannot ask for help,

for we're crushed like cement under their  
force.

Or maybe only when we walk, do the streets  
switch their purpose.

From providing a straight route to a  
destination,

they meander and twist like paths in the  
woods,

creating a labyrinth so most of us get lost.

And thus,  
They provide space for wild animals to  
hunt their prey.  
After all, we are, but, deer,  
relying on the headlights to not become  
the beast's feast.  
But we don't hide, nor wish to be hidden.  
We still step out on the streets,  
whether or not we may be bitten.  
The streets are dark, our fears even  
darker.  
In a confrontation with them, some of us  
fall but most of the times  
It teaches us how to stand up and walk  
even farther.  
Maybe that's why we're willing to take  
another step.  
Maybe our fears are what show us  
our strengths.  
Maybe the darkness in our  
neighbourhoods forces us to see the light.  
The light in us.

~Arshya Gaur,  
Vasant Valley School

# Bhavini

*It's a Journey*

Days overlap to form years, paving  
the path for this odyssey,  
Life is a compilation of phases:  
Infants, adolescents, adults and  
elderly.  
Like a burning candle soon  
extinguishes, and a full moon  
undergoes reversal,  
Celebrate your peaks and push  
through valleys because life comes  
full circle.

The miniature fingers and bald head,  
those magical eyes that are a window  
to your soul,  
You go from short to tall, and the hair  
on your head is as shiny as gold.  
As a young caterpillar you get ready,  
to mature and weave your cocoon,  
You leave your childhood behind,  
and hope to become a bold and  
beautiful butterfly.



Crushed under the weight of  
innumerable responsibilities,  
You were once the pampered child  
but now, it appears as if you've got  
invisibility.

This time is when daughters must  
move out of their homes, and sons  
become independent,  
Why are we forced to forget the  
things that made our childhoods  
resplendent?

This is the way that society has been,  
we can't change it or oppose it,  
We abandon those who gave birth to  
us,  
A brunette turns grey and our faces  
get wrinkled,  
Soon we shall be light years away  
and a part of those stars that twinkle.

Our loved ones shed tears, lamenting  
while they look at our tombstones,  
They put on their sad playlists and  
still hear our voice through the  
headphones.

“What is the afterlife?” is a question  
that no one’s answered yet,  
Everyone’s life will end someday so  
make sure you’ve got no regrets.

~Bhavini Nagpal,  
Vasant Valley School

# Darsh

## *Life*

The greatest gift, the greatest illusion,  
The longest race and toughest struggle.  
Our every moment has an image of confusion,  
Each action stems from an unending quest,  
For Dream and desire drive this senseless fire,  
We burn through the uncharted valleys of time,  
And through these scorched pathways our life is made,  
But is it actually worth this treacherous climb.

We begin in the most delicate and graceful way,  
But choose to grow up with feverish haste.  
From nursery rhymes to Shakespeare's plays,  
Time flies and years are enshrined in moments

We are told to 'Grow Up' by the very same men,  
Who gain their stature from the years they have  
passed.

They struggled in small cabins in the prime of life  
And believe this struggle has made them oracles at last.  
But even these 'wise' men have a hidden conscience,  
A moment of guilt and realisation comes through,  
God speaks to them; "Hold on my child,  
The immature one is actually you."

For they tell you tales of maturity,  
But do they regret the routines they didn't follow,  
No! They regret the puddles they didn't jump in,  
And this memory of vibrance keeps their heart hollow.

They miss the fun they could have and should have  
had,  
And regret that excuse, that dodge they used to escape,  
For life is short, but deep enough to understand,  
That the only day you get to live is today.  
The greatest gift, the greatest illusion,  
The shortest experience but invaluable indeed,  
For its beauty lies in every act so futile,  
But the story they stitch is what makes life unique.

~Darsh Puri,  
Vasant Valley School

# Kabir

*Looking through the prism*

We only see things as black and white,  
Ignore the beautiful hues of a rainbow -  
colors so bright. We snub people and  
hurt their feelings,  
Shatter their dreams of breaking the  
glass ceiling.

They share their innermost thoughts  
and feelings, Bruised egos and hearts  
that are bleeding.  
It took mighty courage for them to come  
forward, It's time to bridge the gap, we  
can't be cowards. Often mocked at, they  
bear the brunt  
They feel trapped, let's halt the witch-  
hunt.

Have no prejudices, we can't afford to  
marginalize Are we not humane enough  
to hear their stifled cries? LGBTQ+  
treated as though they are not the same,  
Taking blame for what they have no  
control over It's such a shame!  
They are only looking for acceptance in  
our hearts, Let's join them in their  
moment of joy and do our part.

We call ourselves modern and progressive,  
Reality bites, in many ways we are so  
oppressive. I wonder why it's so difficult to  
be accepting of others, The judging, the  
exclusion, it only smothers.  
God created each one with uniqueness  
Special in our own way, yet it's considered  
a weakness.

Dressed in beautiful costumes, they march  
in the parade Participate with all the zeal  
and take pride in their crusade. Celebrated  
the world over amidst gaiety and joy What a  
stellar show.... boy o boy!

Denial and deceit only lead to heartbreak  
Live and let live should be the motto for  
everyone's sake Life is a precious gift, let it  
be a journey of bliss Lived with a smile and  
eyes without mist.  
Let's embrace them, lets applaud  
Rise to the occasion and prevail over  
all discord.

~Kabir Bahl,  
Vasant Valley School

# Kareena

*The secret of my being*

Till the stars meet the land,  
till the moon unites with the dark water,  
till the sun fades away,  
it still is, never too late,  
to be  
what I might have been,  
by altering the vicious cycle of surviving  
to make my life a way of thriving,  
letting silence be my weapon.  
Silence, everyone thinks is gentle.  
Instead, it's shocking,  
threatening.  
Powerful enough to take my soul out of  
my mouth.  
I am finding freedom in chaos.  
The silent chaos which I can't see, but can  
feel under my skin.  
Just constant silent chaos and me.  
I want to be the calm before the storm,  
the silent movement of ground before an  
earthquake.  
Not like war because all it creates is  
havoc,  
but like famine- silent but deadly when it  
attacks.  
Behind my light,  
there is also a shadow  
hidden behind a modicum of security.

Afraid  
of becoming ghost  
remains of what I could have been, but  
never was.  
Living a compulsive lie,  
disguising it with truth,  
struggling with my dreams and demons  
while they jostle for a win.  
I think of my life as purgatory,  
where my nightmares turn into reality.  
Consciously embracing my secrets,  
and becoming one with thousand regrets.  
Flinching at my shadow, eclipsing in  
the corner  
because it knows what hides in front of it.  
Sometimes I want to take out all my  
inhibitions  
and dump them at my feet,  
for the bitter tears shall never taste so  
sweet.

But when dark water surrounds me,  
with just my shadow to cling onto,  
I would want to be a wave  
no matter how wild I get.  
Always bowing down to the strong rocks on  
the shore.  
Because liberation mixed with steadiness  
is where I can conquer without a battle.

~Kareena Grewal,  
Vasant Valley School



Kynda

*Dream World*

Every morning  
she promises herself that she will  
change,  
that she will get away from the toxicity  
all around,  
but she feels like she is in a cage.

A social butterfly-  
she went to school each day with a smile  
plastered on her face,  
interacting with anyone and everyone,  
she would always greet her friends with  
an embrace.

She has a close group of friends,  
whom she trusts with her life,  
but they are not there for her,  
they always stab her in the back with a  
sharp knife.

They don't mean a single 'sorry' that they  
have said,  
she keeps going back to them after  
listening to their fake cries,

they pressurize her into doing what  
they want,  
they only include her once she complies.

None of them realize how toxic their  
friendship has become,  
she gets hurt every day,  
but she stays loyal to them and hopes for  
change.  
Little does she know, she is not their first  
prey.

School used to be her only escape,  
from everything that was going on in her  
life,  
now she wants to run away,  
from all the pain cutting into her like a knife.

From the outside,  
her life looked picture-perfect,  
but as you peek into her world,  
you see that she only pretended.

Because that is what people and society  
expect.

She wants to run away to her dream world-  
a world where all her wishes came true.  
A world where she could finally be happy,  
but for now, she is sad and blue.

Seeing others hurt hurts her the most.  
In her dream world, everyone would be  
cheery,  
but sadly for her, a dream world is just that  
- a dream.  
And she has no escape from her painful  
reality.

-Kyra Dhar,  
Vasant Valley School

# Mannat

*Fake it till you make it*

Get up, take a shower, brush your  
teeth, you don't wanna smell  
Then look in the mirror and tell  
yourself, "damn I look like hell."

Straighten your hair, braid them up,  
Because if you don't people will talk  
about how  
your hair is more tangled than the  
earphones in your pocket.

Put on some make up, apply blush on  
those pale cheeks  
Mascara and lip gloss until you're  
satisfied with your face's new tweaks  
Cos every time you look in the  
mirror, you feel you aren't good  
enough, but the makeup helps  
You're scared they'll hate you, so you  
end up changing yourself.

Make sure you push back the tears  
threatening to leak out of your eyes  
Or you'll ruin the perfect painting  
you've painted on your imperfect  
face.

Then push your feet into those tight  
heels your friends have been  
wearing,  
You're ready to leave the house  
But make sure you skip breakfast;  
They're all so skinny and you can't be  
the odd one out

No pain no gain,  
Fake it till you make it

Now as you step out the car, you feel  
you're fake confidence wilting  
So you make sure to guard yourself  
with walls higher than the empire  
state building,  
Then take a deep breathe and look  
around until you see a familiar face  
One that's smiling, waving at the  
imposter that has somehow taken  
your place  
You wave back and join a group that  
can walk you to class  
Cos God knows you can't walk alone,  
so you hide in the mass.

You don't even like these people, they  
bully others and cuss  
But they're the popular kids, so you  
make yourself look comfortable and  
adjust,  
Because walking alone to class would  
be like being trapped in the stocks  
Where people are throwing tomatoes  
in the form of judgements and mocks  
And you can't stand up for yourself;  
you're trapped and defenseless  
And the popular kids are the royally  
dictating your sentence .

No pain no gain,  
Fake it till you make it

But as your day goes by, every  
comment, every complaint, every  
look, every grade

Fuels your doubts, till your self  
esteem goes spiraling down the drain  
You look at every girl, you're heart  
racing a mile a minute  
Wondering why you couldn't be her,  
until you finally reach your limit.

But you don't let it show, don't let  
your confidence quiver  
Because if you crack they won't  
respect you.

At the end of the day as you get ready  
for bed  
You look into the mirror and hear  
your inner voice say  
“Wow, did I really get fatter today?”

As you undo your hairdo, the same  
voice says your hair looks like a mop  
And you get into bed, wishing the  
voice would stop  
You comfort yourself by burying into  
the folds of your blanket,  
But it's false security because you  
know what tomorrow holds

But no pain no gain,  
Fake it till you make it.  
Right? Wrong.

I'm scared they won't hear me, so I'll  
scream louder  
I'm scared they won't like me, so I'll  
become another  
I'm scared they will leave me so I  
won't let them in  
I'm scared they'll forget me, so I'll  
keep reminding them I'm right here  
I'm scared of their opinions, so I'll  
silence mine  
I'm scared they will hurt me, so I  
won't let them know me,

I'm scared that will lock me up, so I'll  
keep running away  
I'm scared they'll make me one of  
them so I'll stay outside  
I'm scared they'll devour me, so I'll  
devour myself.

You're nothing. You're not good  
enough. No one can fix you.  
These are all the things you start to  
tell yourself  
You look at other girls wishing you  
could look like them,  
while those other girls look back,  
wishing they were you  
Both wanting to be another, don't see  
their own importance.

Everyone in this generation is  
corrupted by its infection  
Forgetting that they're human, and  
strive for inhuman perfection.  
I swear it's not just you, everyone has  
it tough,  
Everyone looks in the mirror and  
thinks they're not good enough.

According to society a thin waist,  
blonde hair, white teeth  
and a pretty smile is ideal



They'll make you feel like you  
aren't gonna fit in unless you start  
skipping ur meals  
So you push and push yourself,  
Until you finally break and it  
affects your mental health  
And then some day when you'll  
turn 18,  
You'll think about the little girl you  
used to be,  
The girl who just wanted a happy  
life  
With her loving friends by her  
side,  
But as she became older her  
friends turned cold,  
So she changed herself to fit into  
their mould  
And tried drinking and parties just  
for show,  
And the world thinks she's happy,  
But she's searching for someone  
who'll accept her.

But hey,  
Fake it till you make it,  
No pain no gain,  
Right?  
Wrong.  
And then some day when you'll  
turn 18,  
You'll think about the little girl you  
used to be,

The girl who just wanted a happy life  
With her loving friends by her side,  
But as she became older her friends  
turned cold,  
So she changed herself to fit into  
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And tried drinking and parties just  
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And the world thinks she's happy,  
But she's searching for someone  
who'll accept her.

But hey,  
Fake it till you make it,  
No pain no gain,  
Right?  
Wrong.

~Mannat Kukreja,  
Vasant Valley School

# Mehak

*Upbringing*

We all arrive in this world the  
same,  
a clean slate.  
Innocent eyes and a body,  
which possesses not a drop of hate.  
How we turn out truly,  
depends completely on fate.

From there the road bifurcates,  
and us children, our parents  
domesticate.  
Mold us into whoever, whatever  
they want,  
as certain values, they implant,  
so young, naive, we cannot even  
recant.

Parents,  
our first coaches,  
in this twisted game called life.  
Some invested, while others sit  
silently,  
engulfed in their own strife.

Yet, the homo sapien infant,  
can see and perceive.  
Pick up every little detail,  
its actions based on,  
observation and imitation.

Just think,  
an impressionable mind,  
awakes in the middle of the night,  
to the muffled screams of his  
Mother-  
who an inebriated villain,  
is trying to smother,  
only to realize- wait!  
The face behind the wicked mask  
is one all too familiar.  
In fact- it's familial!

The Father,  
come day-time,  
Becomes sober and free of crime.  
And so it seems like this cruelty is  
only part-time?  
The child sees the Mother act,  
like it's any other day.  
Just a little concealer dabbed,  
onto the sore black eye.

But this strange occurrence,  
who will demystify?  
Will it pass unnoticed? unspoken?  
Well then,  
'It must be acceptable,'  
concludes the toddler.  
Who naturally,  
expectedly,  
grows up unstable.  
And his children too,  
encounter the same violence,  
around the dinner table.

In this case,  
the eyes did the learning,  
the parents unaware,  
of his witnessing,  
of the hidden nightmare.

But what of certain knowledge,  
that is drilled into children's heads.  
Judgment, jealousy, homophobia,  
hate, racism, rage.  
They hear religious verses,  
a long list of virtues and sins.  
And so, the parents begin.

“Boys like blue, and girls  
like pink,  
Stay away from the chinks!  
Beta, darker skin is not desired,  
Smear on some of this,  
Fair and Lovely I’ve acquired.  
A successful person is one,  
with a respectable degree,  
and their money should grow on  
trees.  
Does it really matter if they’re  
happy?  
Look at that shameless girl.  
The one that’s giving her mini skirt  
a twirl,  
Short top and legs out bare.”

The gal was just 12, they were  
unaware.  
They tell their kids,  
‘Don’t eat too much, you’ll get fat,’  
but in another dress it’ll be,  
‘Oh dear, your chest looks flat.’  
So these little children  
are taught to hate,  
to carry these mindsets  
that are hard to forget.

It all comes down to  
Childhood,  
Nurturing,  
Upbringing.

But something is being done  
wrong,  
children's upbringing,  
is instead bringing them down.

This vicious cycle will end,  
when there comes a generation  
that can transcend-the spite and  
malevolence,  
teach their children,  
to respect,  
love,  
and open their mind,  
to a better future,  
for all of mankind.

~Mehak Anand,  
Vasant Valley School

# Nikasha

*An unbeatable barrier*

The mirror gave her a cold gaze,  
a gaze that left her frozen.  
That one minuscule mark on her  
face  
defined who she was and how much  
she could achieve.

“Stop eating sugar” he ordered, but  
what could she do?  
She was just a normal child,  
yearning for a normal life.  
Looking longingly at her brother’s  
red lollipop,  
full of sugary goodness, the treat she  
deserved.

She wanted to run faster than  
the wind,  
but what could she do, confined to  
the four walls of the kitchen?  
Having to meet boys double her age,  
boys she would later marry, just to  
be their slave.



That was all she was good for, doing  
domestic work.

The dark light at 3 am, the quiet in the  
city,  
running against the cold wind, was the  
feeling she loved.

The feeling, that had been snatched  
from her.

Running as fast as she could,  
Hoping not to get caught by her  
parents.

She knew she was fat and the boy's  
joke,  
Her thyroid was untreated, her illness  
was something to laugh about.

She wanted to go to school,  
But she couldn't, the talks of the  
villagers paralyzed her,  
But what did she do? She rented books,  
And opened a gateway to the world of  
learning.

She gazed out of the window,  
asking herself "What is wrong with  
me?"

Asking herself "Why can't I just be a  
normal girl?"

Asking herself "Why can't I dream  
big?"

She looked down upon the street,  
hoping for once she could step out,  
forget that she's a woman, forget about  
the dangers,  
the dangers of being a woman in India.

She glanced at her brother, her brother  
who was notorious,  
who had been gifted with a childhood,  
a childhood full of fun, friends, cricket  
and family,  
wanting to be him, just for a day.

“There's always hope at the end of the  
rainbow.”

“I will never give up, and keep fighting.”

“I will fight against the odds.”

“I will forget about his comments.”

These phrases echo in the head of every  
Indian girl.

Why must parents pressurize only girls to  
get married?

Why must parents pressurize girls to be  
lean, thin, and attractive in the eyes of  
men? Why must every Indian girl be a  
victim of abuse?

Gender- a constant barrier,  
a barrier that has cost the lives of  
many females.

A barrier that has abused females for  
decades, centuries.

A barrier that will never allow women to  
lead a lives like men.

If a teenage girl can climb Mount Everest.

If a teenage girl can fight for  
climate change.

If a teenage girl can start a school for  
the poor,

If a teenage girl can discover science, in a  
whole new light.

Then I don't think there's anything to  
worry about.

The power of femininity is something that  
will never truly be accepted unless we  
make a difference together  
and overcome the greatest barrier of the  
21st century.

~Nikasha Manaktala,  
Vasant Valley School

*Nipita*

*I am Free*

The world is moving by too fast,  
I can't catch up.  
I try to run with the change,  
but it's more than I can cope with.

So maybe I'll go at my pace,  
and just look around me-  
fireflies glowing, casting a feel of home,  
the smell of wood in rain, old and  
nostalgic.

I walk up the stairs,  
with my dress fluttering down  
in a billowing heap of satin.  
My hair swirling in the breezy wind,  
in a mess of tangled curls,  
I look up.

Far and high, some thousand steps  
more,  
and I will find myself  
among the thorns and snakes  
from down below.

The step's too high to climb.  
Its okay,  
I've got time.  
I'll find myself.

Going deep underwater,  
my hair floats in front of me.  
Gently, fish brush past me.  
Somehow, I can breathe.  
Somehow, my vision is clear.

I see far ahead,  
the legacy of the dead.  
For in the middle of the shipwreck,  
is a shining diamond.  
And in the rubble all around,  
in the red of the stone,  
I see myself.

Suddenly the thousand steps have  
lead me to the last one.  
Suddenly, I'm challenging the world.

Challenging myself-  
how can I be the best?

Soaring in the air,  
with wings of freedom  
that stretch out to the edge  
of the sky,  
watching my reflection in the sea.

As long as I know who I am,  
I am free.

# Ruveer

*Migrant Workers*

In hope of finding a job, we left our villages.

Making a living for ourselves, feeding our families, enjoying certain privileges.

With covid striking and this lockdown, I feel we are permanently damaged.

No money left for paying rent, living in a government shelter, just like an orphanage.

I worked as a driver in a household on one of Delhi's streets,

I helped this family to go from one place to another.

With no job and no salary, the money needed is incomplete,  
it will be extremely hard to recover.

It is a hard situation, nobody is coming to our rescue,

all we need are a few rotis which also are not in our possession.

I feel we are of no value,  
politicians are busy fighting, saying that we are in an economic recession, not caring that the people like us are in depression.

With one opening, people like me,  
along with their families will leave for our  
hometown,  
for this situation of ours, with no help  
received from the government,  
someone has to be held to account.

Add a With no running public transport, we  
will have to go on foot.

With absolute discomfort and being  
impoverished,  
our dreams of settling in an urban area,  
working there, and giving our children the  
best education,  
will be left shattered and demolished.

With our children and bags on our back,  
walking on the road track,  
in pain and distress,  
we go back to where we started from  
without many expectations for the future.

We wish we just remain safe and healthy.

~Ruveer Vohra,  
Vasant Valley School

# Saiesha

*Bombs have no religion*

“Bombs have no religion,”  
Was the first thing  
I heard from him.  
Not more than 15 years old,  
He sat in front of me,  
Unable to move a single limb.  
Blood was flowing out of  
Every part of his body,  
And both eyes were bruised.  
I asked him several times,  
Pleaded him and begged him  
To tell me his name.  
But even after beating, even after  
torture,  
Not a single word  
From his mouth came.  
I was shocked to see,  
The lessons given to the young boy,  
Beautifully brainwash his mind like a  
toy.  
A feeling of pity arose within me,  
Seeing his childhood filled with  
violence,



And thought how,  
Instead of books and bats,  
He was handed bombs and bayonets.  
Just like his hands and legs,  
His brain and heart  
Had been cracked.  
Tears rolled down my cheeks,  
As I saw how that poor child's  
Mind had been vigorously hacked  
I threw the baton aside,  
Eyes filled with water  
I took a seat down.  
I let myself and my mind drown.  
I realized that young children were  
being used,  
To commit the filthiest crimes.  
Are power and rule,  
More precious than our kids?  
I ask myself;  
Can our children's future,  
Be compared to  
Such power or wealth?  
If your opinion is "no",

Then we shall all unite  
And let's try to resist  
And if you think "yes"  
Then helpless is even the lord  
almighty, To do anything to help  
humanity.

~Saiesha Mishra,  
Vasant Valley School

# Savya

*Gobbledygook*

I took a step forward,  
And I went back,  
What was this anomalous force?  
I made a comeback.

I pushed myself forward,  
But instead went rearwards,  
Only to hit a wall,  
This gobbledygook made me feel so  
small!

This day grew stranger,  
I saw my dog wearing my suit.  
He started eating human food,  
And even devoured my fruit!

I was left to eat his dog food,  
For which some rather questionable  
reason I enjoyed.  
I then developed a somewhat loud bark,  
But barking I did avoid!

Instead of playing on my iPad,  
I chose to read my least favourite book,  
Very soon—and I think you guessed it,  
To it I was hooked.

On my way back,  
I saw pigs in the trees...  
And burying themselves in the mud,  
Were none other than the bees!

I also saw horses flying,  
And birds eating hay,  
And then it struck me; how could I  
forget?  
It was Opposite Day!

~Savya Meattle,  
Vasant Valley School

# Siddharth

*No More Regrets*

Cut up some pork, fry with Hennessy  
This will make Gordon remember me  
I will show the human beings  
I did not make it crookedly

It was supposed to be like that  
Both of the ribs back-to-back  
Not really a tacky snack  
Add some sauce, then I become a  
crackerjack

I don't get what was wrong  
Baked, ten minutes long  
Sauce, spicy and strong  
Nothing was prolonged  
I made my way through the throng  
And presented it to the judges,  
Hands out like a two-meter prong

Then the judges ate  
Maybe I was too late  
Time can teach hate  
Maybe it's my fate  
No achievements  
Like a clean slate.

No!

I won't ever get it wrong

My history is too strong

This is where I belong

This is for the place where I'm from

I have got to get this tension off my chest

Every day I feel the constant pain and regret

I lost once, the reason for my distress

But never again, I will be blessed

Suddenly the bells started ringing

The chorus was singing

My eyes were stinging

The trophy was mine now,

I was finally winning

I go to my younger sister,

I kiss her

Tell her I missed her

Then she smiles and looks and says,

“Older Sister,

You had one more chance to do right,

It was tonight

You went out there and showed  
yourself that it wasn't too late  
So don't sit behind your bedroom  
door  
Walk on the stage because you are  
who they are all calling for"

The happiness felt foreign  
The spotlight was orange  
I finally used that four-inch door  
hinge  
I was on the fringe  
That is, the fringe of society.

I was successful  
My life had been dreadful  
Competition is suspenseful  
Yes, it was stressful  
But now, I am not regretful.

~Siddharth Mukherjee,  
Vasant Valley School

# Shubhankarman

*Vermillion*

I have seen many men.  
The jovial, the gloomy, and the  
crossed,  
I feel their presence time and again.

Although, now as I begin to age,  
long gone are my memories.  
I forget, who I had lived with,  
who rose me, took care of me.

I have taken care of some myself,  
they look up to me as a star,  
but today, a savior, they see in me.

They plead and they beg,  
they seek an answer  
for my idleness.  
But I am helpless.

I stand there, just waiting,  
for the excruciating pain  
to plague my body.

I stand there knowing,  
I will hear the cries  
of the ones I raised,  
their death before mine.



I stand there knowing  
they have done no harm,  
yet they will be punished.

I stand there knowing  
they haven't even seen  
the fruits of their hard work.  
They will never see it.

The burned cigar fell  
from the man's hand,  
intentionally, I suppose.

It lands on a pad of dead grass.  
The embers ignite the patch,  
and the warm air blows it  
towards us.  
And I stand there defenseless.

The aggressive flames rise and soar.  
They move and annihilate all in  
their way-  
like a ruthless knight on a mad  
horse.

They call me once again.  
I feel the fear, the distress, and  
the agony.  
They question,  
'Why don't you do anything?'

Silence is the answer they get.  
Silence is the answer I have.  
Silence is all I can do.

I have no paws like a lion.  
I have no wings like a bird.  
I have no horns like a bison.  
I have no guns like the man.  
I have no legs for a run.  
I have no arms to attack.  
All I have are branches.

I can't protect myself.  
I can't protect my children.  
We have never caused any harm,  
Yet, we will be draped in  
Vermillion.

-Shubhankarman Singh Sandhu,  
Vasant Valley School

# Smit

*Being the light of a darkness*

The general notion of giving help,  
I think, has been fixed to only some  
examples,  
To be kind to animals, to help the  
needy,  
To be self-sufficient, to not be greedy.

The general notion of giving help,  
I think, should be broadened for  
everyone,  
It should make people realize, they  
are not alone,  
And that their grief is not only their  
own.

When you see yourself crumbling  
with grief,  
When everything is falling apart,  
Just remember the tree, which has  
lost all its leaves, But still stands  
upright, waiting for life to restart.

Life has its own twists and turns,  
Sometimes you lose, sometimes you  
win,  
Sometimes you see the realms of  
darkness,  
And others, you see the glory of the  
sun.

A word or two is the most one needs,  
For that will give them the power to  
face failure,  
And the ability to rejoice if they  
succeed,

These times have been demanding,  
But when have we not been  
understanding?

The mere satisfaction received, by  
being the light in the darkness,  
Is humanity truly known, only for its  
harshness?

~Smit Bachan,  
Vasant Valley School

# Zehn

Perspective

The little girl and little boy, they settled  
for a fight.

For each of them thought that they were  
always right.

They called out to their mother to know  
her perspective,

They thought that she was very smart,  
much like a good detective.

“Well then”, said mother, sitting down  
and making herself comfy,

“What is today’s discussion on?”, not  
wanting to sound grumpy.

Every day her children fought and  
reminded her of kittens,

for what one had, my that alone,  
the other would be smitten!

“Well mummy, it is all her fault!”, the  
little brother cried,

“She is just mean and bossy”, he said with  
tears in his eyes.

“I did absolutely nothing!”, was the elder  
one’s refrain,

“He’s just a cranky, silly boy!”, she said  
with adequate disdain.

The mother quickly understood, what they were trying to say, for she had dealt with this before, almost every single day. She made them stand face to face, and hold each other's hands, Then she asked each one of them to raise their left hand. The children were confused as they saw ones left was the others right, and yet, strangely they realized that both of them were right.

“Perspective”, mother wisely said, “depends on where you stand. So, being rigid in your views, can put you in a troubled land.” She filled a glass with water and laid it on the table, “Half empty or half full, " is just a silly label. For it can mean the same thing, and it can mean it not, but not realizing such a simple fact, can land you in a spot!”

-Zehn Kashyap  
Vasant Valley School

Vinda

LGBTQ+

Labels, they're everywhere,  
They make some feel secure, and  
others aware.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
transgender, queer,  
Some proud and out, others  
living in fear.

Fear of not being 'normal' or  
disappointment from their loved  
ones,

Of being treated differently, or  
not being respected enough.

This dread in the mind, body,  
and soul,

Is the simple fault of society, as a  
whole.

“Why must we be different?  
Why must this be a cause for  
your dismay? This is not our  
fault! We were born this way!”

A fault? To love one of their own,  
is committing a crime?

To instead hide behind a mask,  
away from who you are, all the  
time?

All people are beautiful, and  
must be free,  
Free from the rules and norms of  
our ever 'honorable' society.  
For we are all just humans,  
trying to smile and make it  
through,  
Always remember, I am valid,  
and you are too.

For those in the closet, don't  
stress over a label, it does not  
define you, Jump out when  
you're ready, I love and support  
you.  
So boring it would be if all  
flowers were red, and all t-shirts  
white,  
Like the seven different colors of  
a rainbow, we must all unite.  
Ernest J Gaines once said "Why  
is that, as a culture, we are more  
comfortable seeing two men  
holding guns than holding  
hands,"  
We must learn to accept and  
evolve, and together, expand.  
To be comfortable in your skin,  
and happy with who you are,  
Is more important than any box  
or label, by far.



You are not answerable to  
anyone, but your heart, which  
must always be placed above,  
Because in the end, love is love.

~Vira Chhatwal,  
Vasant Valley School

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