

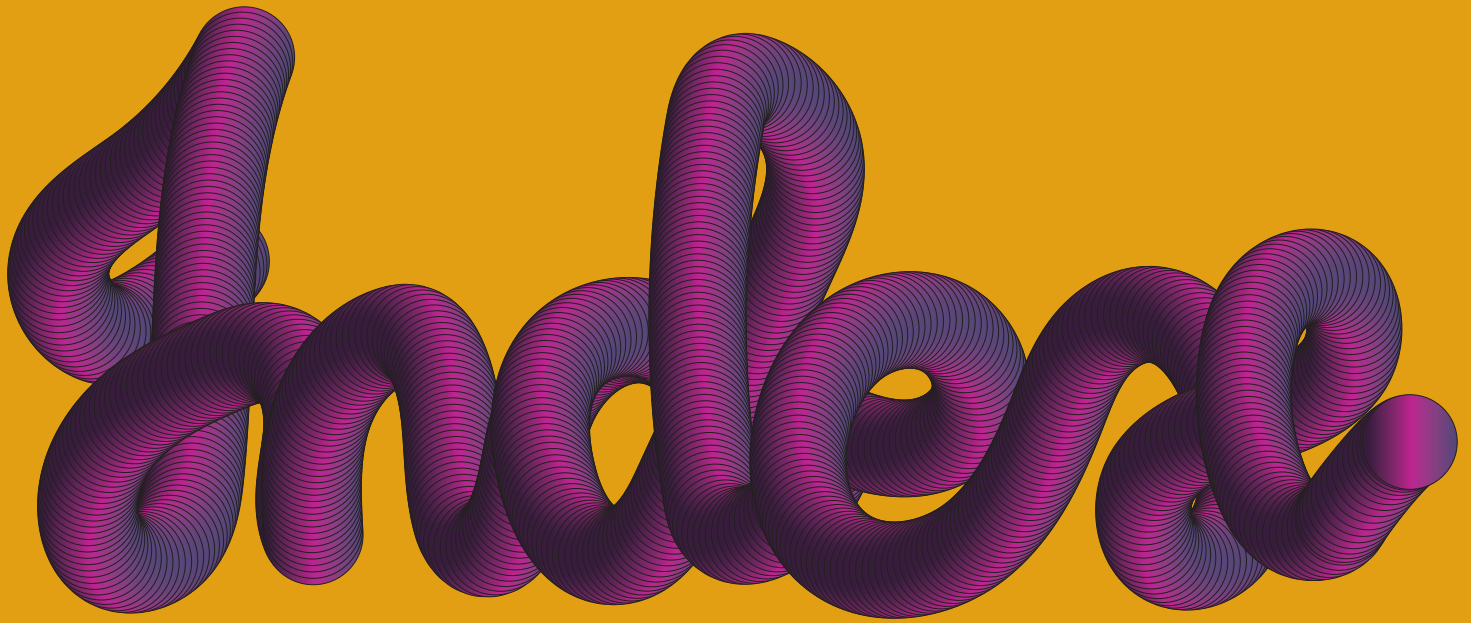
The background is a dark, abstract illustration with shades of purple, blue, and black. It depicts a person from behind, wearing a dark coat, sitting and reading a newspaper. The person's head is turned slightly to the left. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

# THE SHISHUKUNJ GAZETTE

NOVEMBER 2021

**A 2 A.M. EDITION**

午前2時の雰囲気



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# editorial

*“Perhaps the reason this night looks so beautiful  
Is not because of these stars or lights, but us.”*

*-Mikrokosmos*

Namaste!

As winter comes in all its glory of fuzzy sweaters, thick blankets, hot chocolate, fogged up doodles on the windows of school buses and the ever so glorious (not really) exams— we bring to you another warm issue of the Shishukunj Gazette!

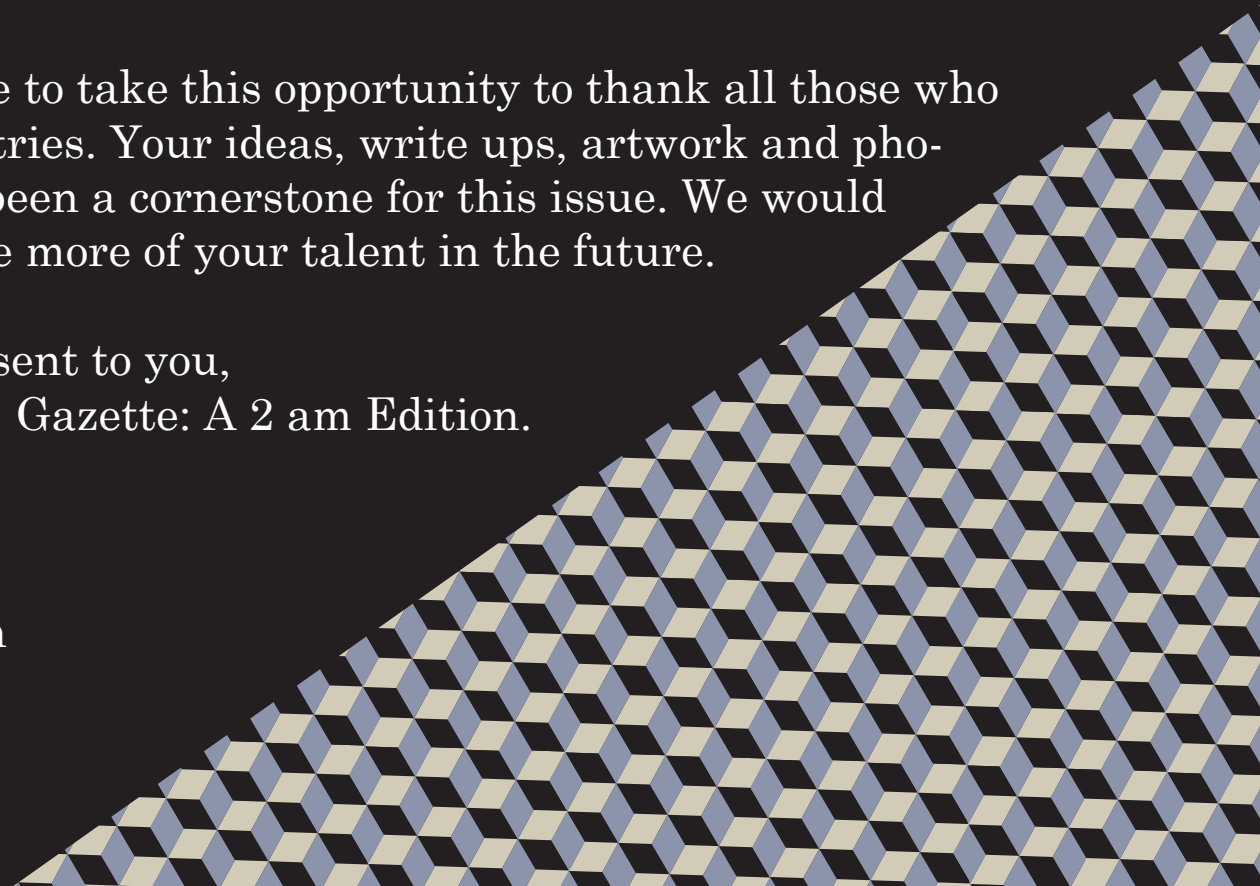
Our theme for this month was ‘Inside a Student’s Mind At 2 am’, or, as my team and I fondly call it ‘POV: Your Last Two Brain Cells At 2 am’. With this theme we aimed to achieve that state of mind one faces during the late hours of the night, the stress, the mind-numbing silence, the droopy eyes and the hyper-caFFEinated body. It’s raw and honest, it tackles our deepest thoughts, random opinions, questions we throw at the world and sometimes the mirror itself.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who sent in their entries. Your ideas, write ups, artwork and photography have been a cornerstone for this issue. We would love to showcase more of your talent in the future.

With this, I present to you,  
The Shishukunj Gazette: A 2 am Edition.

Happy reading!

Anwasha Ghosh  
Editor-in-chief



# A Mosaic Of Imperfections

Yet another gloomy night, this coffee mug accompanies me again. Starry skies and a window as if out of a postcard tempt me. Meanwhile I am stationed at my desk trying to find the price elasticity and examining whether a function is continuous.

Another day of being witness to people running blindly behind a trend. Yet another opportunity missed to redefine perfection instead of chasing the flawed concept. High-five if you are also troubled by the unrealistic standards set on social media.

This textbook tells me 25 is the perfect square of 5. Do perfect squares even like being perfect squares? What if they don't wish to be perfect? Does it burden them? Any explanation to perfection is implausible. And that's the thing too, is there any definition of perfection? The idea of perfection keeps changing through the eras, but the burden it hinges with itself remains the same.

Besides the recent mourning on #maukamauka after the first match of the World Cup, trends like, #make every minute, second, microsecond, millisecond count in your life have always been there. Such ideas of having a perfect day, personality, body, routine are subjective. When my friend was listening to Taylor Swift and trying to match every note of hers, the 'hustlers' might label it as an unproductive use of time instead of looking at it as an escape. What is conventionally accepted is often regarded as the right way out. I beg to differ and so should you !

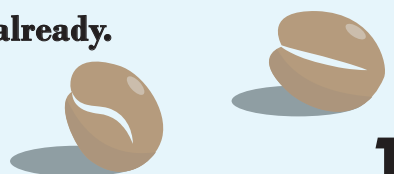
The world is a constant whirlwind of changing trends, wars, perspectives, morals and it'll drag you with it in its turbulence if you don't anchor yourself to your own-self.

'The slope of this demand curve is 0.' Like every point has a different slope on the curve, individuality is beautiful. Chasing accepted notions of painted truth cease growth of individuality. These differences which make you and me are golden, fundamental and unique. Eyeing an expected version of you is as heart-wrenching as looking at your ice cream fall before you could eat it all. In a world of margaritas don't hesitate to have your own pineapple pizza.

Back to homework— this question paper asks me to find  $k$  if this function is continuous. Why should I find  $k$ ? I would rather devote time to find myself. Finding my inner self bit by bit was as blissful as hitting the bed after a long day. Once you realise your calling and goal, the roadmap lies clear in front of you. Make your own perfect which is beautifully imperfect. This process will go on forever but what will stay constant is your effort to be you instead of flesh and bones with imposed ideas.

Know that greatness is what you deserve but have your own version of greatness. Know your calling and paint your sky as you please in a world of blue skies. Don't let someone dictate your way ahead. You are your own self soaring high in your sky.

P.S. If you're thinking about pizza and ice cream, you're a winner already.



# BEHIND THE CURTAIN OF A *Good Night*





*"Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light."*

Dr Brand's wise words still ring in every sci-fi lover's ears seven years after the release of *Interstellar*. Regardless of how epic it sounds in the voice of Michael Caine, actuality dictates that this gem of a line is instead an extract from a poem written by one of the most important Welsh poets of the twentieth century— Dylan Thomas.

Although predominantly written for those on the verge of succumbing to their longest oblivion, a poem can have several windows through which the light of comprehension passes, for perceptions aren't universal; for the freedom to think in ways different from the others is inescapable; for 9's can be 6's in a world where 6's are perceived as 9's.

On the door leading to the room of our uncertain existence, knock a plethora of challenging scenarios. Sometimes, they don't even have the courtesy to knock, they just come smashing right at us. In those moments of indecision and palpitations, we often forget how courageously we kept that door from breaking, all those times earlier. We subsequently drown into the sea of our insecurities, asking the windy void enveloping us for help. On getting no bona fide answer, a voice reciting all our previous failures echoes inside our pitch-black head, constantly pushing us to take steps we'll regret in the long run. All that worthlessly burning the midnight oil and worthlessly trying to stretch our drowsy eyes open with worthless, detrimental doses of caffeine flashes in front of the windows of the soul. In this way, that 'good night' extinguishes the candles of hope and resistance.

Be that as it may, on the back of our mind, that question wanders seamlessly— why is that night good? An eccentric epiphany bounces back an eternity later— that night unknowingly prepared us for the worse ones. No night can be the most downhill till we see the moon sinking further down the horizon. We run to get hold of the moon, the sole light still shining in the blanket of darkness, but we realise it's too late. Yearn for the devil and the devil is gone! Time has rolled the dice and getting the desired outcome is improbable now. Nevertheless, the twinkling stars hoist an impulse in our soul, the impulse to keep on moving against all odds. And it is at this juncture that we truly rage against the dying of the light.

-Bheeni Jajodia (X-C)





# कलम-चिंतन

## सच की सच्चाई

क्या है दूसरों का अपनापन, क्या है अपनो में फूट,  
किसी के लिए सच है और वही सच ,  
किसी के लिए झूठ ।  
क्या होता है ये सच?  
क्या है इसका वजूद?  
सबके अपने मतलब है इसके, इसे समझने के  
अपने - अपने तरीके ।  
दूर भागना नहीं है अब इस सच से मुझे,  
क्या पता कब कौनसी खुशी मुझे दोबारा मिले,  
एक बात जो मुझे अब है समझ आई,  
सब छोड़ जाते हैं आखिर में,  
बस रह जाता है ये सच, और खुद की परछाई ।



-अश्वदा  
बंसल  
XI-E





## एहसास

आज है मेरे सामने मेरा अतीत आया,  
दूसरों को हराने में लगी थी मैं  
जब इरादा खुद को जिताने का था।  
यादें महज़ एक तस्वीर बनी,  
सूरत बदलने से सीरत नहीं बदलती,  
ये समझने में मुझे बहुत देर लगी।  
जिन लोगों को सब कुछ समझती थी मैं,  
आज है मेरे सामने उनका अस्तित्व आया।



आश्चर्य

पहले घर आने को तरसती थी मैं,  
अब उसी घर से दूर भागती हूँ।  
पहले उन्हीं लोगों के बारे में सोचती थी मैं,  
अब उन खयालों को दूर भगाती हूँ,  
क्या बदल गया है अब?  
जब सोचती हूँ मैं,  
रोज़ की तरह, थक के वापस सो जाती हूँ।



# Night Changes - An Overnight Journal

A peek into Hrishubh's journal written at various hours of the same night. He keeps changing as the night gets older. He writes in the diary showing us the seven stages of student deliriousness ft. a doomed assignment.

10 pm [Mr. Perfectly Fine]

I have made up my mind to get my life back on track for which, I believe, discipline is a must. As a logical consequence, I have formed an acutely calculated 24 hour schedule, which shall be followed starting tomorrow. For a teenager my age, 8 hours of sleep is essential. I'll be out like a light as soon as I complete this diary entry and wake up tomorrow at 6 am, right at the crack of dawn. An hour of walking around the neighbourhood in nature's embrace would be a perfect way to start my day off.



11 pm [Burning the Midnight Oil]



There has been a change in The Plan, I have now decided to commence the disciplined life from the day after tomorrow. It turns out that a school assignment, which is supposed to be submitted by tomorrow morning, hasn't been completed. After all, life is uncertain and that puts us in the most unforeseen situations. The assumed time required to complete the assignment is 3 hours, so I guess now I'll knuckle down and spend most of the night working on it. Let's get cracking!



## 12 am [Procrastinator]

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Here's a funny story— In our assignment, we had to state the name of the father of Mathematics. When I googled the term “Who is the”, I was recommended a number of interesting top google searches. One of them was, “Who is the most powerful Avenger?” Now here's where things get interesting. I have not watched a single Marvel film, and yet somehow I was interested in the question. So I clicked on it. After that, one thing led to another and I ended up watching a blooper reel of ‘The Office’ on Youtube. All I was trying to do was multitask, but unfortunately, destiny calls it ‘burning a candle at both ends’. Another unfortunate event has occurred in tandem with these— I don't feel like continuing the assignment anymore. I'm going to ease off for some time. I might listen to some music or even dance during this break. Why not have a whale of a time?



## 1 am [Existential Crisis]

If all of us are going to die one day, why are we living? What is the purpose of life? Is there a life after death? If there is life after death, then is that also not life, which makes us immortal? Is it all meaningless? These are some essential questions that I frequently ask myself. This series of thoughts raised a query in my mind which is the most important of all—“Will not submitting this one assignment make any difference?” A voice echoes from the back of my head, “No”. I now know how Buddha must have felt on getting enlightened. I have realized that the purpose of our life is to be happy and live it to the fullest. Thus, I come to a thoroughly thought conclusion.

## 2 am [Self-Care Guru]

I just took a hot-water bath. I have never really felt this sense of calmness before, added to a blend of peace and serenity. My body has never been more relaxed. I am thankful for having the gift of life. I should start taking more care of myself. One should come first in one's life, and prioritise happiness.





3 am [Coward]

I think someone is standing at the window. I can see a shadow of a person with long hair. This problem is accompanied by my thirst for water. I need to go downstairs in the kitchen but there are high possibilities of Bloody Mary haunting me down the way. Should I go downstairs? Is it better to die out of thirst or fear? I'd probably choose thirst. I do not know if it is the whistling sound of the wind outside or an immortal presence in my room that is giving me these chills. Neither do I have the courage to get out of my bed and switch the lights on.

4 am [Inner Poet Wakes Up]

How humorous is it that a tree, standing still in all its glory, can sometimes be perceived as a ghost with long hair?

Words swim inside my head

As I drift into a winding sea,

Emotions flow in rhythmic waves

As moonlit tides wash over the page.

This poet gives an eye to the words

As he explains to me what I couldn't explain in the past six hours,

That I could have saved myself from a day of excuses and sleep-deprivation given for not submitting the assignment,

By completing the very assignment rather than scribbling through my journal.

*Oh, does it ever drive you crazy? Just how fast the  
night changes.*



# The Forgotten Archive of Thoughtfulness

"Here you are star until they render you asteroid, before they watch you turn to dust." Yes, I'm talking about that quiet kid sitting aloof in that lonely spot of our class while they doodle in the margins of the last page of their notebook—the kind we've never tried to explore, the kind whose reflection is much more than that we've been made to see on the superficial layer of their so-called personality, the kind we've never cared to dive into. The location of their doodles accurately illustrates their life— cast from the interiors to the exteriors, due to the extremity of "content" and the lack of "space".

Our mindset walks in the orchard of trees fruiting the rancidity of hate, stereotype and bias. Our unaware selves pluck those cursed fruits and mindlessly consume them, leaving little space for the cache of conscience. The spread of this fetid air rots several other fruits lurking around the edges of others' subconsciouses. Amidst this figmental blight, the most vulnerable remain the ones reluctantly absorbing all this poison into themselves. They let this venom drive them, erode them and subsequently scar them for the rest of their lives, thus leading to that seclusion we all make memes about and have a hearty laugh on. The labels they have been trapped in disconnect them from the meshwork of daily activities. They have now become caterpillars cocooned from the outside world, unlike gregarious butterflies spreading their wings out in the atmosphere of this nasty thing we call 'society'.

It is said to let the past die, but this does not materialize in most cases. One's past usually becomes the prominent reason for one's slow internal death. Symptoms of this syndrome include a drop in self-esteem, a rise in established helplessness and the sentiment of mediocrity. Dwelling on the past parallels dwelling on the same chapter of our lives and hoping that the ending spells out "and they lived happily ever after." It's significant to realize that maybe this 'happily ever after' won't be as happy as it appears. Maybe there is a fine line between normality and happiness. Maybe happiness is just observing normality through a different pair of eyes.

It is crucial to be vocal about labelling, to make stigma a "once upon a time" thing and to transform the vicious cycle of mayhem into a virtuous cycle of mindfulness.



*Bheeni Jajodia ( X-C )*



# *Miles To Go Before I Sleep*

We all remember getting scolded by teachers for not submitting assignments on time. Have you ever wondered if your teachers procrastinate the same way? Here's an interview with two teachers at our school who spilled some beans while answering our questions on procrastination.



With  
Mr. Thomson Varghese  
and Mrs. Sonu Mehrotra

**Q1) Being a high school teacher, it's likely that you have procrastinators in your class—students who consistently wait until the last minute to turn in their assignments or put off studying until the night before an exam. Do you recall any amusing incident where a student gave you an excuse for their habit of procrastinating ?**

**Mr. Varghese** - It happens all the time. I normally give at least a week (often more!) for submission of any assignment. When assignments shifted online, I set the deadline as midnight of the assigned day. Last year, a student called me close to midnight to inform me that 'work on the assignment was in progress' and requested the submission deadline to be extended by half an hour. I wasn't amused though!

Excuses have been myriad: "I didn't know; I didn't remember; I had an MUN to attend..."

**Mrs. Mehrotra** - Some students have a habit of procrastinating on work, like their assignments. They defer the work till the last moment and come up with innovative excuses for not completing it like- my younger sibling tore my notebook, or I accidentally spilled some ink on the homework assignment or my friend took my notebook to complete his assignment. But I found one excuse quite amusing - my father came home late yesterday, and I was just trying to establish a relation between late home coming and assignments!

**Q2) As a teacher, do you have a habit of procrastinating or is there any instance where you have done the same? What are your excuses?**

**Mrs. Mehrotra** - As a teacher I also procrastinate on certain work and rush at the last moment. And my excuse is often that some guests turned up unexpectedly

**Mr. Varghese** - I do that a lot more than I would like to admit. I tend to wait for the 'most suitable' time to do something. I also tell myself that I work better under pressure. I like to believe that closer to a deadline, one gets more creative and gets the work done in much less time than otherwise.

**Q3) What are the modes of distraction for you? Do you think this generation has more means to get distracted than your generation?**

**Mr. Varghese** - Often the reason is that I have multiple things on my plate. Instead of multitasking or allocating time to each item, I put off the ones that I can (frequently those that I think would require more time or effort) in order to finish something that I have already started or feel I can finish sooner. If something new comes up in the meantime, the more demanding item is pushed further. And then there are cat videos.

I believe the number of distractions is immaterial. If one is prone to distraction, even one is enough. I know students (& people from my generation) who manage their time impressively & are least likely to be found guilty of procrastination.

**Mrs. Mehrotra** - For me the modes of distraction are books. I get so engrossed in reading that I forget everything else.

I do agree the present generation has many distractors like social media, games, etc. But I firmly believe if these are used judiciously then it can be a game changer like big brands which effectively use social media to reach out to their customers.

**Q4) There's a thin boundary between taking a break and a prolonged delay in work. Sometimes, we fail to realize the difference and cross the boundary. Are there any methods that you use or suggest so as to prevent that?**

**Mrs. Mehrotra** - I firmly believe that one needs to take breaks frequently to break the monotony of work. It could be reading a book, watching a movie, or talking to a friend or traveling but the break shouldn't overpower the real motive. We need to understand the thin line between a distractor and a break.

**Mr. Varghese** - I think self-discipline is the solution. We need to bite the bullet & get cracking. It might help if we try to figure out the reason why we are delaying any work - whether it is due to dislike, disinterest or perhaps fear.

Saying 'NO' to work we don't find meaningful is more honorable, I think, provided that we actually do something justifiably meaningful in its stead.

In any case, what we do repeatedly becomes a habit. We need to be wary of letting procrastination become second nature.

## **Q5) Any advice you would like to give to all Shishyans?**

**Mrs. Mehrotra** -

I recall some famous lines by Robert Frost here—

*These woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

**Mr. Varghese** - If for no other reason, do all your assignments properly and before time to build your self-discipline. Yes, that includes English assignments.

# Thank you!

Interviewers: Hrishubh Zatakia (XI-D)  
& Disha Gupta (XII-E), Student Editor

# Almond: A novel

14

BY SON WOHN-PYUNG

I have almonds inside me.

So do you.

So do those you love and those you hate.

No one can feel them.

You just know they are there.

This story is, in short, about a monster meeting another monster.

One of the monsters is me.

In Sohn Won-pyung's *Almond*, a Korean coming-of-age novel, Yunjae, at six years old, witnesses a gang beating up a boy, yet he expresses none of the emotions that one might expect after encountering the gruesome scene. In fact, Yunjae has never laughed or shown any sign of emotion. Later, a visit to the doctor reveals Yunjae's amygdalae, two almond-shaped neurons located in the temporal lobes of the brain, are smaller than average, and as such, Yunjae doesn't feel fear or anger, or read others' emotions.

Mom thought that if I ate a lot of almonds, the almonds inside my head would get bigger. It was one of the very few hopes she clung to.

Upon learning this diagnosis, his mother sets about teaching him a multitude of possible social scripts—to express envy when a classmate is showing off a new toy, or to mimic the facial expressions of the person he is talking to—so he will appear “normal” to others.

“Granny, why do people call me weird?”

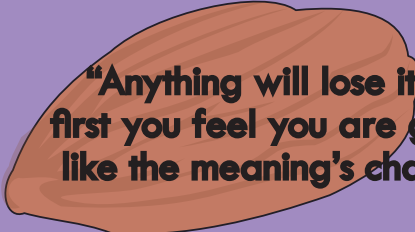
Her lips loosened.

“Maybe it's because you're special. People just can't stand it when something is different, eigoo, my adorable little monster.”

Granny hugged me so tight my ribs hurt. She always called me a monster. To her, that wasn't a bad thing.

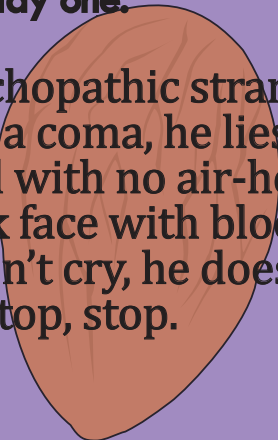
Our emotions are what ground us, put us in this vessel. Yunjae experiences the world through an almost third-person perspective—but, to the rest of the world, he still appears to be a normal boy, with a normal human body, and assumed normal social cues—except he doesn't.



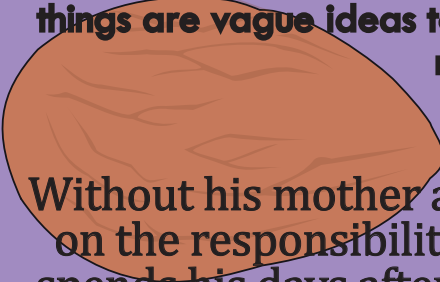


**"Anything will lose its meaning if you repeat it often enough," she said. "At first you feel you are getting the hang of it, but then as time goes by, you feel like the meaning's changing and becoming tarnished. Then, finally, it gets lost. Completely fades to white."**

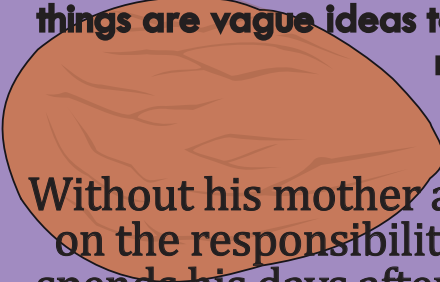
**Love, Love, Love, Love, Love, Lo, ve, Looo, veee, Love, Lovelo, -veLo, -veLo.  
Eternity, Eternity, Eternity, Eter, -nity, Eter, -nility.  
Now the meanings were gone. Just like the inside of my head, which had been a blank slate from day one.**




**He stands there, eyes blank as a psychopathic stranger kills his grandmother and puts his mother in a coma, he lies there as his bullies beat him up. Yunjae is a vessel with no air-holes to let his emotions out, he stares with a blank face with blood streaked across his lips, bruised jaw—he doesn't cry, he doesn't smile. He can only say stop, stop, stop.**




**So I don't know why people laugh or cry. Joy, sorrow, love, fear—all these things are vague ideas to me. The words "emotion" and "empathy" are just meaningless letters in print.**



**Without his mother and grandmother to help him, Yunjae takes on the responsibility of taking care of their old bookstore. He spends his days after school, dusting off the shelves behind the musty panels. But as much as Yunjae wipes the window glass clean—he is rarely met with a face of a reader, so Yunjae spends his time reading books behind the cashier. His eyes scan through the words, his index finger swipes through his tongue, he flips each page. The clock ticks, the leaves rustle by, the leaking tap on the cornerstone flows on— *tick, tick, wooosh, tick, drip, tick, tick, woos-* Yunjae closes the book. He feels nothing—he wishes his mother was here to give him almonds.**



**It's not always great when you understand emotions that you were once unaware of. Emotions are tricky business. You'll suddenly see the world in a completely new light. Every little thing around you might feel like sharp weapons.**



They say miracles happen when you least expect them to— but what about monsters? Do they come barreling into your bookstore and demand you feel? Do they scream at you, beat you up, and yet come every single day to see you, to in a twisted way, and be your friend?

Enter Gon, a transfer student to Yunjae's high school class, who has bounced in and out of juvenile detention after tragically being separated from his mother during a trip to the amusement park. Unlike Yunjae, Gon is violent, loud, and angry at the world for depriving him of a family and a happy childhood. Yunjae is oddly drawn to Gon, mainly because he is so transparent and pure of heart that Yunjae can easily read his feelings. Through an unlikely friendship, the two boys find a way to understand something they thought was unlikeliest of all: love.

**True bravery can happen only in the face of fear, if you aren't really afraid how can your actions be brave.**

When do we feel brave? Is it when we are on top of our dreams? Or is it when we are crumbling beneath, with nothing to lose? Yunjae shows us that to be brave is to choose to be brave. Our life is a series of choices. A choice to see, to see beauty, to love, to love even when there is nothing to fill our vessels with. A choice to move, a choice to change, to confront.

**I have decided to confront it. Confront whatever life throws at me, as I always have. And however much I can feel, *nothing more, nothing less.***

A blank slate is how Yunjae describes himself in the beginning of the story— at the end, he stands, maybe still blank according to his doctors but there he is, with two hands— clasped beneath the knuckles of the person he's run around the needle of the clock with, felt alive with. A monster meeting another monster. It isn't a bad thing after all.

**-ANWESHA GHOSH  
XI-F**

# Student Council's Visit to the North Campus



Have you ever been in a bus full of almost-adult kids and even though they're 12th graders, or maybe especially because they're 12th graders, they are shouting and trying to sing in coordination creating the most melodious screeching ever! The students seated at the back are laughing all the air out of their lungs while the ones in the front are talking and giggling with crescent-smiling eyes. This was our group of twenty three students, the

Student Council, which in a very short span of time had become a tight-knit group— a Breakfast Club (1985) of their own.

We take a left turn and we see from afar a glimpse of one of the most beautiful school campuses ever, all of us are in awe— the trees, the front gate, the Buddha statue. It all seemed so familiar yet strangely new.

We had spent almost 13 years in noisy classrooms full of students, in the art education rooms, dance areas, PG halls and the auditorium preparing and performing in various competitions, in the lunch halls enjoying scrumptious Thursday feasts and Rajma Chawal.

We had come to call the Jhalaria campus our home and in a few years, the North Campus would also become a place filled with memories and life lessons ten times the capacity of the vastly spacious classrooms.



For a moment there, I went down the memory lane. Coming back to the actual concrete lane which led to an international standard 50x25 meter swimming pool with 10 lanes, just adjacent to two smaller pools and an intricate system of pipes and controls— simply wow! We took a tour of the whole school. With its brick and black colored exterior, long corridors, large airy classrooms, sandpit for kids, a



staging area no less than a Greek Amphitheatre, a beautiful basketball court out front, a cricket field larger than the Holkar stadium, multiple sports facilities and a library overlooking a wonderful sunset, the Shishukunj North campus delighted us!

We had a little picnic after the tour; the weather was perfect to have one. And as I was sipping on cool orange juice, I was reminded of a few clumsy moments I had during the day— saying a very echoing “hello” in a completely silent classroom or accidentally spraying water into my friend's contact lens. But then the thoughts of these gauche instances faded away and I thought what a beautiful day it was! I looked up at the clouds, and felt so very grateful to have a great family, a great school life, and the greatest group of teachers

and friends anyone could have ever asked for. And then I looked up at the magnificent blue sky yet again and then towards the sculpture of the ever-smiling Lord Buddha and I boarded the bus back to home.



-Nirali Mahajan  
(XII-B),  
Vice Head Girl

# BEDTIME STORIES

SPOOKY EDITION





# HALLOWEEN'S NIGHT

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As it came nearer and nearer, I was completely covered in the darkest of shadows I could have ever imagined. My heartbeat started crossing all the limits. I knew how it all started. 'Boom!' was the very first sound I heard this morning.

I have been living in this quarter, all by myself, for a long time, I feel. Though I was warned that it is a mysterious place, I never tried to find the deep secrets hidden inside it. I was warned by the crowds not to take shelter here, but I found it quite an extraordinary view to look at. It is believed to be 'haunted' during Halloween, though I was sure that it wasn't. But now, this colourless, ruthless shadow has taught me the difference between right and wrong. Today, my Halloween started with a 'Boom' and will possibly end with me.

After hearing that sudden noise, I got out of my bed with an empty stomach directing my hands to prepare breakfast. Suddenly, knocks on the door were heard. 'Knock! Knock! Knock! Knock! Knock!' These were surely a part of a prank my friends were playing on me I thought. I rushed to the door, thinking that I would catch my friends red-handed, even leaving my bread in the toaster.

When I opened the door of my little house, I found nothing but a black shiny card with the word 'RUN' written on it, with a dreadful red glitter. I ignored it completely and returned to my delicious bread. It was missing. I searched for it in the three worlds, but nothing was found. The one who took it away did not even leave an atom of bread for me. I was already famished,

but now, I was horrified too. I helped myself to one of the last chips packets left.

I sat, leaning against the sofa, turning on the television. I had two hours before I left for work, I had time. The television came up with some horrible ghost shows which forced me to turn it off immediately. I even tried to hit the hay, but I couldn't. I put my official clothes on and proceeded for a good day in the office. Though I was excited, it was an arduous task to face usual faces giving unusual looks, mainly due to my little flat. It was nine when I left my cabin. The moment I was near my bed, my eyelids went down and I fell asleep. With a 'Boom!' again, I woke up and an ocean-like shadow started to approach me. As the figure came nearer and nearer, I was completely drowned in the shadow. I wondered how to start a conversation with a ghost. "He... Hello! Ghost sir or madam, I am sorry to ruin your place. I'll leave this flat immediately. Let me just take some candies, that's it!" I said, trembling.

This remark of mine left my ghost in stitches. I was surprised. I soon realized that I was being fooled by my dear friends the whole day. They told me about the whole plan they had been following to trick their new friend. I laughed wholeheartedly, but I soon realized that my missing bread was missing from their plan also. I am sure that I fainted. When I got all my senses back, everything was normal and my breakfast was being prepared by my friends in the haunted house, and I was ready to face the real ghost the next year.

## *My Haunted House: A Story Recalled at the Dead Of The Night*

They say it is foolish to watch a horror movie at night before going to bed. They say, we get a lot of weird dreams at night and also start hallucinating. To be very honest, I was never afraid of ghosts. I always felt that having ghosts around you is really cool. I have seen many horror movies and read far too many novels that are about paranormal stuff that I am more excited to meet a spirit rather than being afraid. But then, an incident happened one day that petrified my family for a few days. I sip my tea and recall that night.

It was around 3 a.m. the typical time for evil spirits to come. All of us were sleeping. I was upstairs in my room, my brother and father were in the room below mine and my mother was sleeping in the room next to our kitchen on the ground floor. I liked to sleep alone in my huge bed with all the lights out. Somehow, this time, my door was open and a streak of white light from the kitchen was fluttering through the entrance. Then suddenly, the doorbell started to ring. It might have rung a few times before I woke up. Fun fact, we have two doorbells, the one on the main entrance, and the one that leads to the second door. The main doorbell was ringing continuously, and to make things worse, the sound was pretty similar to a church bell. I was stuck to my bed, my eyes trying to adjust to the surroundings but the ringing did not stop. Did I forget to mention that it was also raining heavily? Believe me, it was the perfect scenario for a haunted house. We just needed a ghost now.

I still wasn't scared. I am, as one can say, a brave-hearted soul because of my absolute stunning resistance to fear. I raced down the stairs and woke my mother up, which I should not have done because after my brother, she is the one who gets scared quite easily. My mother jolted up, I could already sense the fear in her eyes. She practically jumped out of the bed to call my father. Now, my father may look like a brave, fearless man, but when it comes to ghosts, he is no less than the other two.

We first checked the cameras to see if it was a person who needed help, but because of all the rain and fog, it was almost impossible to make out what was what. My mother urged my father to check outside and see the reason for the constant ringing. She took an umbrella and a flashlight and handed it to my father and quickly scurried across the hall with my brother.

I was behind my father, ready to go out. I pushed him a bit to check out the surroundings but I did not realise how badly he was shaking with fear and how cold and sweaty he was. My mother called out for me to come inside, but I wanted adventure. I wanted to know what was out and I stayed glued to my position, my eyes fixed on my father who was opening the main door, resisting the urge to scream and run away. He checked the porch and even called the security guard to ask him if anyone had come to the house. The guard denied, saying no one had come in the area for the last four hours. My father raced back to the house and closed the door. We anxiously waited to hear his story, but the moment he stepped in, the noise stopped. We heard a loud bang and I imagined my mother practically fainting, but thankfully, my father recalled what the guard had told him.

The bell stopped ringing and the rain also subsided a bit. We decided to talk about this incident in the morning after which my father advised us all to go back to bed. I could already tell that the other three were not in a position to fall back asleep because this incident might have terrified them. I was a bit annoyed, my sleep was broken off at 3 a.m. for no apparent reason. No ghosts and evil spirits, no creepy person up our front door. This was definitely not something to have woken up for. I went back up and drifted off to sleep. But now, when I look back at it, one question still haunts me, who rang the doorbell?

~Aashna Joshi,  
VIII-G

## CORNER

Kaashvi  
Dhawan  
VIII-B



### Beauty

*"Sometimes people are beautiful. Not in looks, not in what they say, but just in who they are." There has never been a specific definition of what 'beauty' actually is, but people's perceptions regarding this have changed manifold over the years. History gives us many insights into how a person's external appearance has gradually become a major criterion of judging them. Be it the apartheid system in Africa, or the atrocities done to the Jews under the Nazi regime—countless people were judged just based on their colour or their facial features and were subjected to such cruelty.*

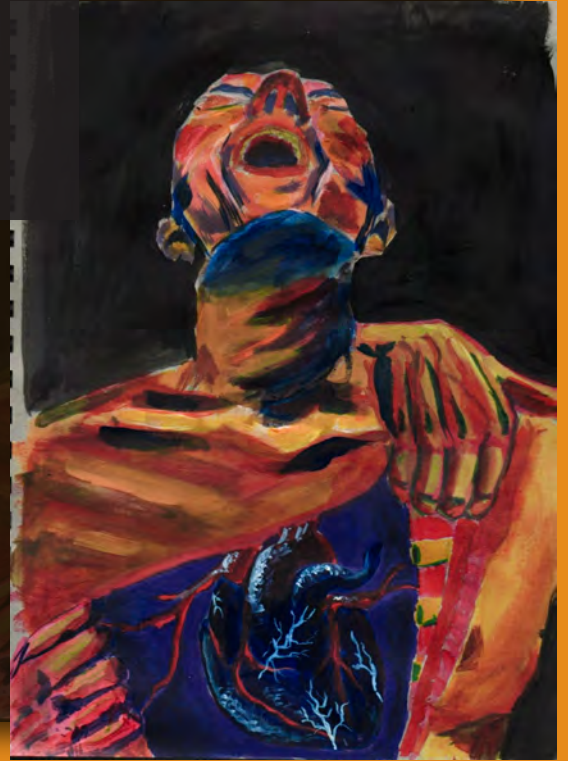
*A constant pressure of living up to some social and cultural standards of beauty has been seen in the youth of today. According to recent studies, 66% of people under the age of 18 feel very negative about their body image while children just at the age of 5 to 6 years start making up their minds on how an 'ideal' body should look! National surveys have found that 63% of girls and 58% of boys are bullied due to their weight and size. For teenagers, it is normal to feel insecure about their body type, weight, or features but to let these superficial things take over them leads to a loss of self-esteem and self-confidence. Putting up a façade just to please others is not what teenage is about. Yet, they make mistakes, go through many changes, but the ones who learn to embrace their imperfections truly display beauty.*

*Though today we have progressed in this field, people are trying to change the way they look at the world. The concept of internal beauty is also being popularised but we still have a long way to go. The understanding of what external appearance is should go beyond the colour, features, and body of an individual and must comprise how a person carries oneself, their self-confidence, and body language. Try to be yourself, have pride in who you are, and the day you do so, you will feel the beauty in you.*

*~Shubhi Sancheti (X-E)*



Tanushka  
Agrawal  
XII-F



Aahana  
Likhar  
IX-F



Rishi  
Shukla  
X-F

# STUDENTS' KITCHEN: TWO A.M. TOASTED

24

Do you also feel famished at 2 a.m.? Does all that homework in front of you also make your stomach rumble?

Let me share with you, an easy, quick, and scrumptious recipe with only 5 steps!

1. Take a plate and cut some tomatoes, onions, capsicums, carrots, cucumbers, or any vegetables you have and like. You may skip any of these vegetables if you don't have them or don't like them.
2. Now take a bowl and add any sauce or dip like mayonnaise, tomato ketchup, green chutney, pizza sauce or anything that you adore. Add the vegetables that you had cut and mix everything together.
3. For the base, take some chapattis if you have. Bread will also do a great job. With the help of a spoon, put some mixture on the surface. Grate some cheese and sprinkle it over!
4. If you have a sandwich toaster, heat it up and add some butter or oil. Put the chapatti on the toaster and do not close the lid. Wait till the cheese melts.
5. Carefully pick it up and put it on a plate. Garnish it with some oregano and chilli flakes and enjoy!

Hope that this Two a.m. Toasted gives you strength to continue studying. Stay strong and toasted, soldier!

~Vedant Garg VI-D



# 2 A.M. PLAYLIST

1.Champion - Fall out  
Boy, RM

2.homebody - VALLEY

3.Must have been the  
Wind - Alec Benjamin

4.Hi, my name is  
lonely - Stef

5.STEREOTYPE - STAYC

6.Paradise - BTS

7.Frida Kahlo - Sophie  
Rose

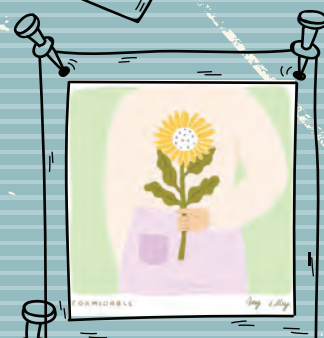
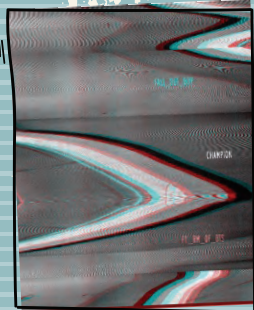
8.FORMIDABLE - Amy  
Lilley

9.OCEAN - Anuv Jain

10.Der Lagi Lekin -  
Shankar Mahadevan

11.come alive -  
MADAME X

12.WAKE UP - Elaine







# SEE YOU SOON

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