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Live encounters

YOUNG POETS & WRITERS

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RANDHIR KHARE
THE POWER OF THE NEW

COVER ARTWORK BY IRISH ARTIST EMMA BARONE



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. Please help spread the free distribution of knowledge with any amount for this just cause.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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Randhir Khare is a distinguished writer, artist, teacher and theatre personality. He is the recipient of numerous national and international awards for his unique contribution to culture and education. His 36 volumes of poetry, fiction, essays, translation from tribal dialects and other writings as well as his seven solo exhibitions all explore themes of identity, belonging and the struggle to stay human in a violent and fragmented world. He has more recently spearheaded an initiative to enrich formal education through the experience of the arts. <https://randhirkhare.in/>

RANDHIR KHARE

THE POWER OF THE NEW

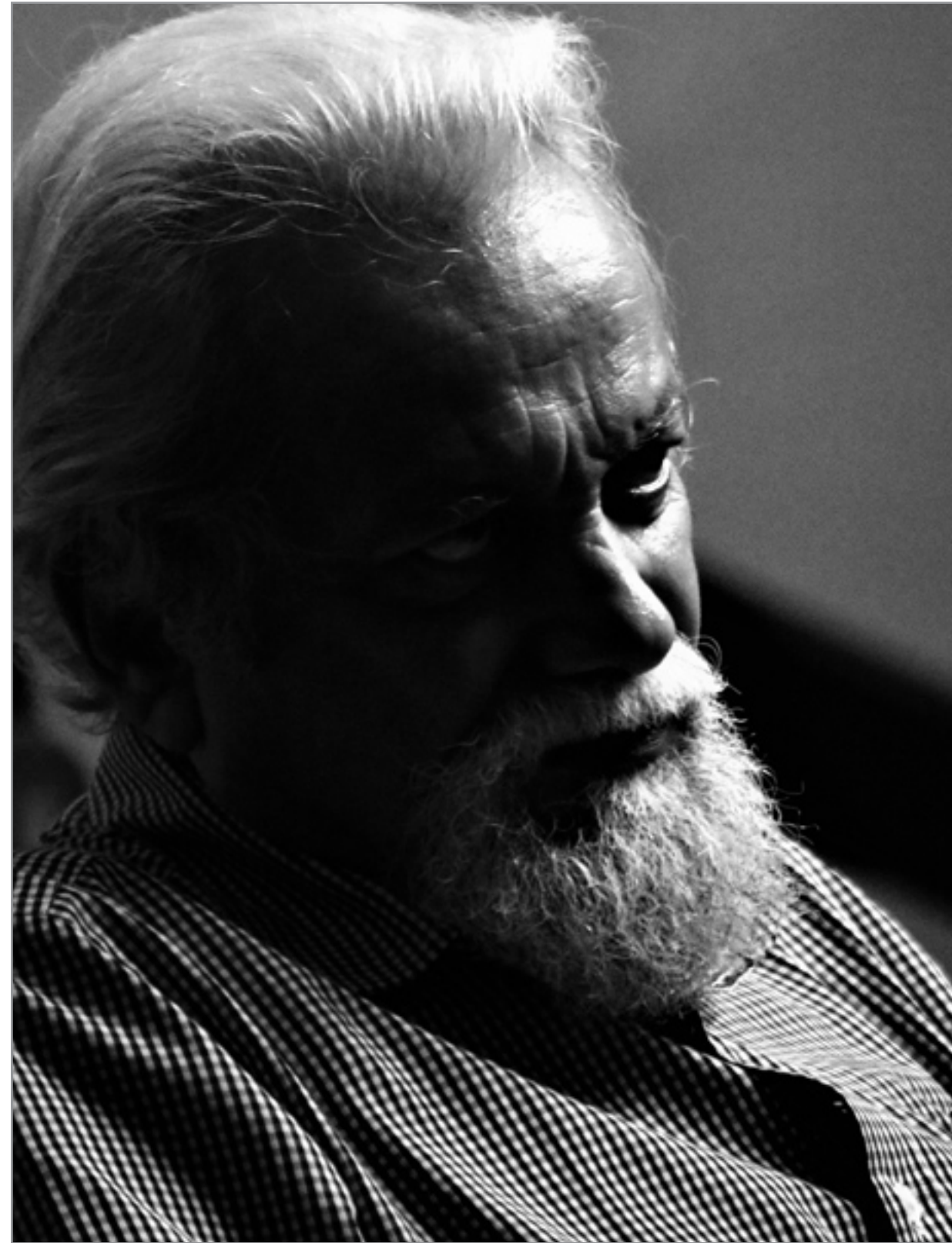
I think its time now that we stop preaching platitudes and step aside. Make way for the young, the new, the voices and visions of tomorrow, the raw angst, the pure joy. In this issue, there is a baffling variety of writing and art...all bearing witness to the truth that this emerging generation is going to carve a new path through the woods.

Devyani Kalmadi brings in her brand of pure magic, spinning tales that seem impossible but have a truth beneath the skin, the wildly active *Kaavin Arora* drags us into his world of *Little Nightmares* where he rides dragons and slaughters monsters – all for our good, *Ayaan* writes about the Dinosaur that sits within him – waiting to come out, *Nishita Bakshi* dips us into the fluorescent pink of illusion, *Zoya Dhorajiwala* communes with angels, *Falaq Dhorajiwala* wakes us to horror of the dark terrace of the future, eight co-writers haul us off on an adventure with a shiny fish whilst *Zahabiya Godhrawala* floats us down her river of dreams. The brilliant young poet *Siddharth Mathkar* introduces us to the delicate world of poetic of his inner life. These young writers and artists aren't strangers to me. I have know them for a while and have watched them evolve dramatically. In fact as their mentor, I have learnt more from them than they have from me.

I remember the time when I first met *Nishita Bakshi*. She was in her early 12th year then and engaged me in a conversation about the art of Picasso and Kandinsky. We graduated to conversations about dreams and how to alter nightmares and make them more pleasant. *Kaavin* took my breath away with his rapid fire stories which were accompanied by clay creatures which he had created. I had hardly got myself on my feet again when *Falaq* wrapped me in a story about a magic shawl whilst *Zoya* stunned me with a barrage of horror stories. Every encounter opened a new world for me. Step by step I sank deeper into the minds and hearts of vibrant creative lives.

So step in and view their worlds through the windows of their poetry, stories and art.

I believe that you will come out gasping for air.



Randhir Khare

Seven year old Devyani Kalmadi writes stories, draws pictures and has an amazing imagination.

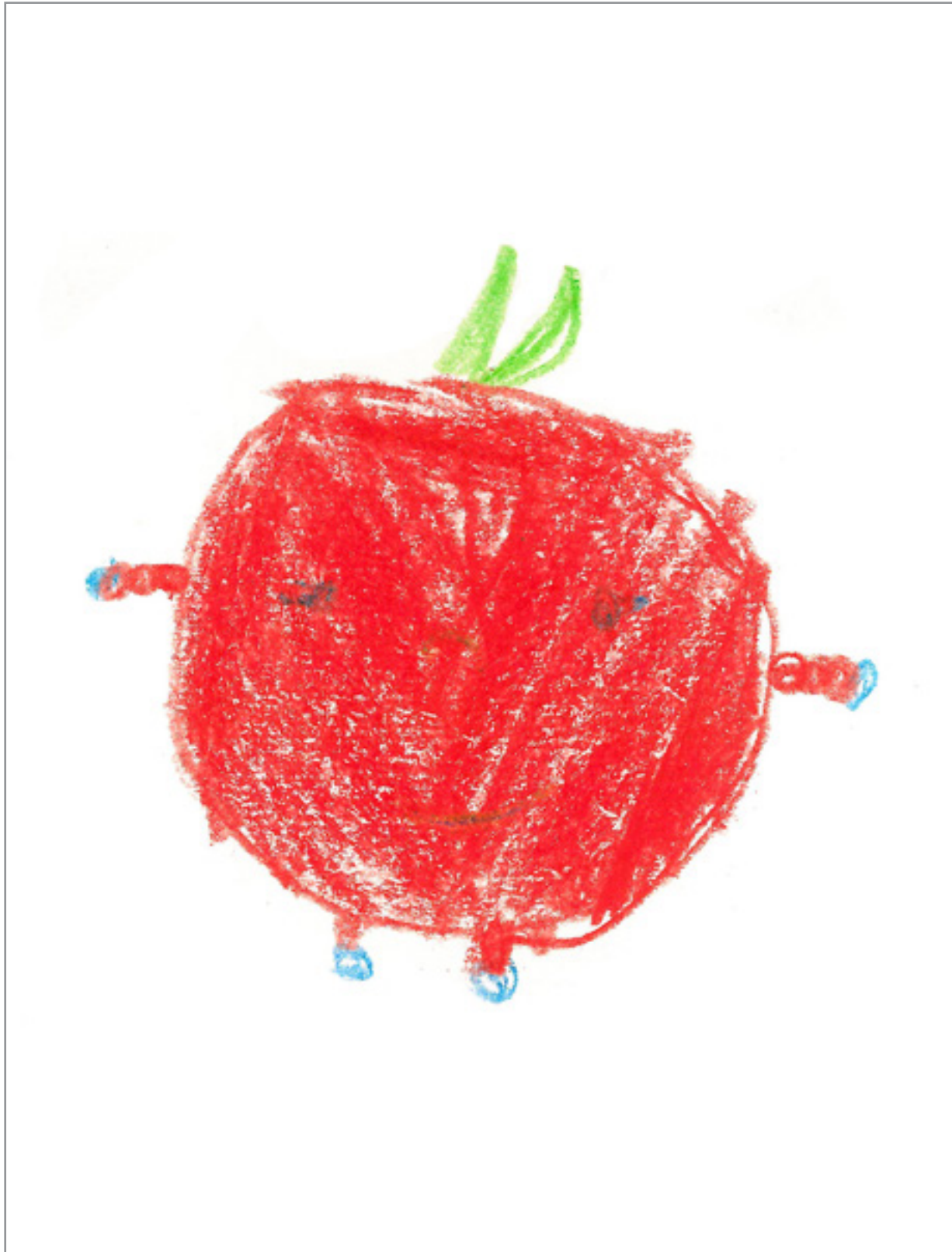


SUNSHINE MORNING

As the morning sunshine glows
The whistle in the courtyard blows,
The horses run and have some fun –
Cheer for them, oh run! Run! Run!

I wear my slippers on my feet,
I carry a carrot and radish and beet,
The horse thinks that's just so neat
Because for them it's a lovely treat.

Illustration by Devyani Kalmadi



SHEELA THE TOMATO

Randhir and his wife were fast asleep. In the middle of the night the dog barked. Randhir's wife carried on sleeping but he woke up and wondered who could it be. So he opened the front door and was surprised to see the watchman.

"Sir," said the watchman, "there's a tomato downstairs waiting to meet you."

"What rubbish!" Randhir shouted, "A tomato, did you say?"

"Yes," replied the watchman.

Then Randhir thought to himself, "That must be one of my friends dressed up for fun even though it is not Halloween." So he went down and saw a box and nothing else.

He asked "Where is the tomato?" and the watchman pointed to the box. Randhir opened the box and said "Oh!" Inside was a small tomato with two little legs and two little hands. "What are you doing here Sheela?" he asked.

The tomato said, "I want to go inside your house to have strawberry ice cream"

Randhir replied, "You woke me up in the middle of the night to have ice-cream!" Sheela the tomato said, "yes, won't you allow your guest to eat something at your house?"

Tara his dog was scared. She had never seen a talking tomato. She followed them to the lift and they went up to the 3rd floor. Randhir went to the fridge to look for the ice cream. "I don't have any," he finally said.

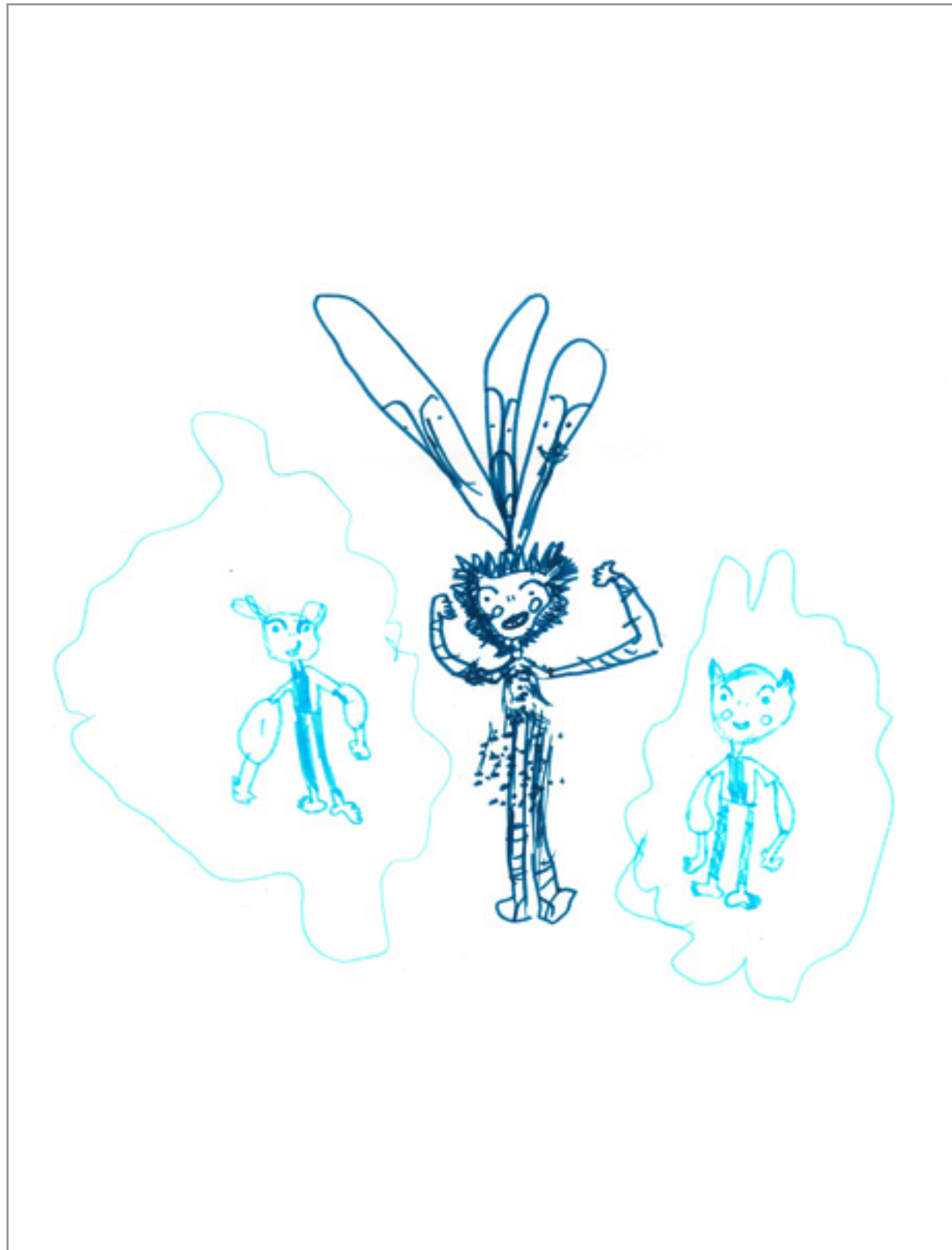
Sheela was furious. "I want ice cream."

So he picked up Sheela and Tara and put them in his car and went in search of strawberry ice cream. But there was none. All the shops were closed. The only ice cream place that was open had chocolate ice cream, so Tara had chocolate ice cream.

Sheela only cried.

They went home to Randhir's house and slept. The next morning, Sheela had disappeared. Had Tara eaten her up, Randhir wondered.

Illustration by Devyani Kalmadi



THE WICKED GOBLIN

One day there was a girl and a boy. They were having a sleepover. When their parents went away to a party, they woke up. They saw a light glowing in the corner of the room. Then the light came closer and they discovered that it was not a light. It was a fairy.

“Hi children,” the fairy said, “I want your help.”

The children replied excitedly, “Yes, what do you want us to do?”

The fairy said, “there’s a goblin bothering us. His name is John Ice. His head is made of ice and so is his shirt. He is the king of the goblins and he has three advisors. One is fat, one is thin and the other is in the middle. They have stolen our magic things to help themselves.”

The children asked, “how can we help you?”

The fairy replied, “Please don’t do anything to the goblin but help us get back our magic things.”

“What do your magic things look like?” they asked.

The fairy replied, “they are in a small pouch the colour of this dress.”

The children asked, “how do we get there?”

“It is easy,” the fairy replied, “now put on your slippers and I will magic you there.”

“How?” Asked the children.

The fairy waved her wand and in flash the children disappeared.

“Aaaaaaaaah,” they shouted as they vanished and went flying like silver dust through the night air. They travelled and travelled until they reached Fairyland with a big bump.

Illustration by Devyani Kalmadi

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© Devyani Kalmadi



THE WICKED GOBLIN ...contd.

When they opened their eyes they looked around and saw fairies running away from them. The Fairy who had brought them there explained why she had invited them there. She waved her wand and the children became fairies. Just then four goblins appeared thinking that the children were fairies. "Do you want your magic things back?" they asked.

The children replied, "yes."

"Okay, then you will have to play a game with our chief goblin."

"Yes," said the children.

The chief goblin smiled as he always cheated.

"So what is the game?" asked the children.

"Hockey," he replied.

So then they went to play hockey.

The girl took a blob of ice cream from her pocket and threw it on the ground in front of the Goblin. He slipped on it and fell on his bum. "Ooooooouch!" cried the Goblin, "oh my bum hurts."

Then the boy shot the ball into the goal.

The Goblin was very angry and went up to the children and he put his fingers in front of them and then blue shots came out of them. The children escaped the shots and started running. They were chased by three goblins. The blue shots hit the goblins and they disappeared forever. The pouches fell out of their hands.

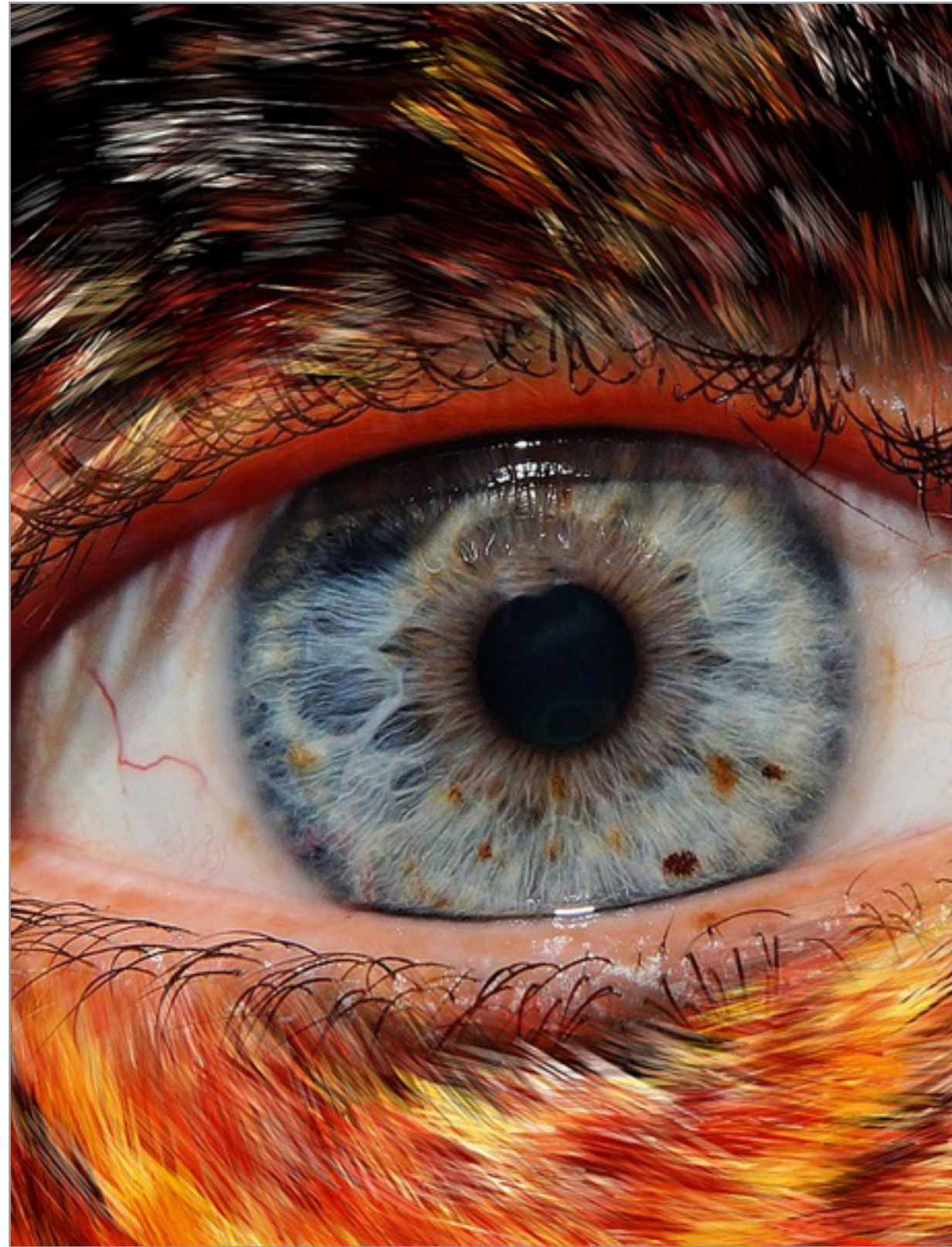
The Chief Goblin who tried to catch them crashed into the tree.

The children took the pouch and gave it to the fairies.

The fairies said, "thank you" and took them home with magic.

Illustration by Devyani Kalmadi

Nine year old Kaavin Arora loves to read and write stories. His characters come from real life situations and his own experiences. Whenever he is not reading or writing, he retreats into the world of dinosaurs. AND when he is not doing that, he makes videos for his YouTube channel. Dramatic performance is another of his passions. He is working on a novel, LITTLE NIGHTMARES. Here are a few extracts.



LITTLE NIGHTMARES

Chapter 1

The Worst Nightmare

Ben woke up. It was like he had the worst nightmare ever. "I'll just have some water from the kitchen," he said to himself, sweating.

In the kitchen, he drank lots and lots of water. When he finished, he heard a very strange noise, it was like a mixture of a screech and a howl. He had never heard this strange sound before, anywhere. So, he went outside and found a strange creature. It was a combination of a man and a spotted wolf. He realised the horrible truth about what that thing was - A SPOTTED WEREWOLF. The most dangerous species of werewolves. Plus, the biggest. So that was the creature who was making that sound.

"Shoo, shoo, get away demon nightmares!" He tried to shoo away the creature. Now he was in grave danger, the werewolf stopped, stared at him, then came at him... but the sunrays burnt its right shoulder. The werewolf whined. Of course! Werewolves get burnt in the sun! Then he took his father's flamethrower and shot the werewolf full of fire. It was literally burning, its skin was all shrivelled up; but it came running towards him. Later the werewolf got turned into ashes, really black ashes.

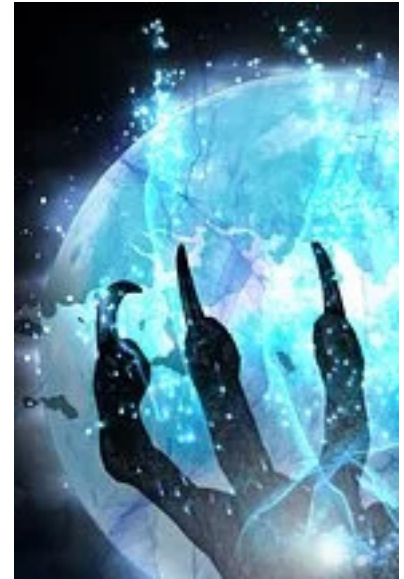
"Enough of this!" Shouted his father who was standing outside the door. "Why did you take my flamethrower without my permission?"

"But..."

"No buts! You are now grounded for a month!"

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/human-face-fur-animal-fur-werewolf-1219543/>

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LITTLE NIGHTMARES

Chapter 2

Being Grounded

Being grounded was not fun at all. Ben was getting the same nightmare all the time! He could hear the werewolf sounds; he could hear the sounds of the ghouls. Well, ghouls are zombie-like creatures but they are dumber than zombies. He could also hear the roaring of dragons.

"I'll just have to do it," he said, sweating, again. When he went out, he saw his friend Gulliver, riding a miraculous red dragon. "We have to go dude, time is running out," said Gulliver.

He was super confused, right now. So, he climbed up the amazing dragon and they flew for 368 kilometres.

Over there, they visited Rule Street.

"Come on mate, let's go ..." said the Dragon.

"Enough!" he shouted out. "What is going on here?"

Gulliver sighed heavily and said, "Mate, you killed that werewolf last time, right?"

"Yeah so?" he asked.

Gulliver was now nervous, after 3 years of playing with Ben, he had never told him anything like this this, "You're a monster hunter."

Then silence. The trees rustled, the wind blew, the insects chirped and the ticking of a clock could be heard.

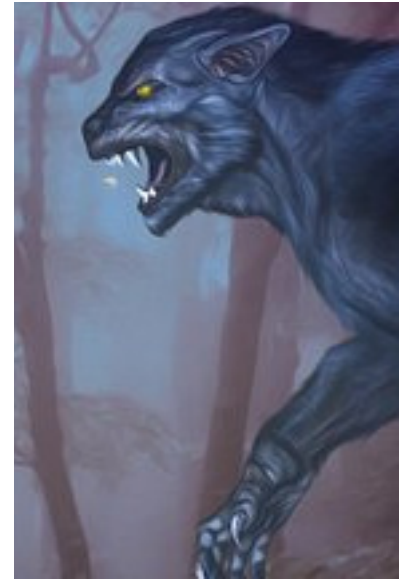
"I'm a what?" Ben asked, interrupting the silence.

"A monster hunter," said Gulliver, "an ordinary person would have been killed by that silly old werewolf! But then, look at you! An amazing person who just killed a werewolf last night!"

Ben was now confused, he didn't know what to do. "What else is new?" He asked.

"Ooooooooookay!!!! Your parents are actually monster hunters too!" Now poor fellow, he nearly fainted, he could actually hear the sounds of his parents and Gulliver. Now he just didn't care and rested.

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LITTLE NIGHTMARES

Chapter 3

Damshackles

“Nnnngh!” he groaned as he woke up and his parents and Gulliver said, “welcome to Damshackles! A world which is a school of monster hunting!” Then he found another person saying, “Miss Rooks will be meeting you in her room”. Then Ben and Gulliver went inside the room and saw a pretty girl with her huge Cereburus alongside.

“Aah, so you came!” Said June Rooks.

“Do you even know us?” Asked Gulliver.

Then Redfang, her Cereburus, shot fire on Gulliver’s hair and he laughed. Gulliver whispered, “Shut up.”

Miss Rooks said to Gulliver, “Oh, I know you, a long time ago when I was only 4 years, a little boy pushed me in the game parlour. Then our parents were shouting like crazy people. Then the boy said sorry to me and I noticed that the boy’s parents were shouting out the name ‘Gulliver’.”

“So, you can still remember my face since childhood? Awesome!”. Gulliver commented in surprise.

“...And me, what about me? How did you meet me? ’Asked Ben.

“We just met, there is no story about how we met,” said June and then smiled and said, “come on people, let’s just have a quick look at Damshackles. Shall we?”. So, they went outside and Ben, Gulliver, June, Charlie (Ben’s father) and Mary (Ben’s mother) went outside.

They went to a room named, NTSGR.

“N stands for Norman, T stands for The, S stands for shark’s, G stands Grave and R stands for Room.” Said his dad.”

“Who is Norman dad?” Asked Ben, “His full name is Norman Dilophu. He was actually the strongest monster hunter of all time. He could actually walk on land!”. Whenever he used to hunt, even if he was far away, he just had to say one word! And that word is, abracadabra.

Ben asked, “If he was so legendary, then why is he not buried respectfully in a grave?” His father explained, “Because he is a source of inspiration for all the students and teachers. One glimpse of his body is enough to fill their hearts with courage and strength. Before they go for any hunting, everyone comes here to seek his blessings.” Ben asked, “ How did he die?”

“That’s a long story, which you shall know at the right time.”

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LITTLE NIGHTMARES

Chapter 4

Norman's Death

"Ben, it is really time for your training, so come on!"

Ben stretched and yawned as his cat Whisker-licker purred softly and yawned. "Dad," asked Ben...

"Yes Ben?"

"Before you start my training, I want to know the story about Norman Dilopho.

"Okay, Norman Dilopho was just a normal shark in the sea before, then an amazing thing happened to him, by mistake, he drank a magical juice called, Birimackhole. Then he had superpowers!!! One day, a person called Racker Middlebraker was jealous of his powers, so he poisoned the Birimackhole and Norman drank it, Norman was dead. Millions of people cried at the death of Norman. Some people say that Racker is dead.

"What's your opinion dad?"

"In my opinion? O God! In my opinion he is not dead. Racker may be somewhere around!

Ben got scared, he had never heard such a murderous story before, could he be killed by Racker?

"Let's do your training now shall we?"

"Okay". Said Ben.

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/werewolf-halloween-forest-monster-4566395/>

Nishita Bakshi, 14, “speaks fluent art” specializes in music, painting, and drama. She’s an avid reader and a dedicated writer. She loves experimenting with soundtracks, paint, words, and images. She hopes to grow up to be known for doing all of these things, but most importantly for being herself.



REFLECTION OF A PINK SKY

We usually stand under a blue sky, but is it really blue? No. It's colourless, but the light of the sun fools us into thinking that way. What if the sky was a colour? It would end all the possibilities of colour.

Anyway, let's say it's pink.

Life is like that. Is it pink, or is it just a reflection of this pink sky?

Who knows?



Painting by Nishita Bakshi

Nine year old Zoya Dhorajiwala loves to sing, dance and act. She likes taking risks for other people. She loves animals and when she grows up she would like to create an animal rescue home. She would love to skydive and paraglide.



THE GIRL WHO TALKED TO ANGELS

A Play by

Zoya Dhorajiwala

Painting by Zoya Dhorajiwala



SCENE 1

A girl peeks in on to a darkened stage.

Girl: Hello! Anyone here? Anyone here?

She steps in and walks around, stumbling around as she moves. When she is in the middle of the stage, she stops and looks around.

Girl: Hello! Anyone here? This place is spooky. I better leave.

She is about to leave when she hears a loud scratching sound. Followed by squeaks.

Girl: What was that?

Once again there are loud scratching sounds and squeaks. A spotlight lights up a small black box lying on a small table. She walks up to the black box and looks at it carefully.

Girl: What's this?

Box : (scary) A black box , idiot. Can't you see?

Girl : What black box?

Box : This one on the table , you fool

Girl : I'm not a fool , at least I don't think so. And stop using bad language.

Box : Ugggh you are really off topic. Open me and I will do great things for you

Girl : Someone who has such a foul mouth like you can't do great things. And certainly not for someone else. But what are you?

Box : Just open me. Hurry.

Girl : A question. What great things will you do for me? Can you get me a pony?

Box : Yes I can, if you deserve it.

Girl : Can you make a person I don't like disappear?

Box : Still yes.

Girl : Can you...

Box : (angry) Yes I can do anything, okay? Just open me.

Girl: Why?

Box: There you go again. You are scared. Really scared.

Girl: How do you know?

Box: Just look at your face. And your heart – I can hear it beating from here.

Girl: Where's 'here'?

Box: I didn't imagine you'd be like this. You seemed the clever sort.

Girl: What do you mean by 'seemed'?

Box: Means I thought you were clever BUT you are not.

Girl : Don't dare me.

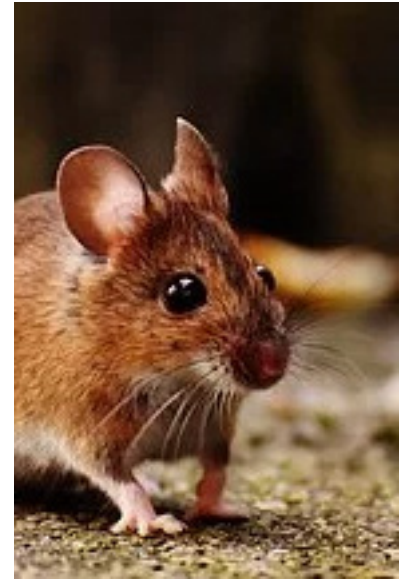
Box: I DARE you.

Suddenly the spotlight goes off and the sound of the lid of the box opening is heard.

Box : Hahahahahahahahahahah

Girl : Aaaaaaaah

continued overleaf..



SCENE 1 ...contd.

The lights come on and the girl sees a little mouse near the black box.

Girl : (scared) y.....you're a mouse.

Mouse: Guess so.

Girl : (greedily) now for my wishes. I want a.....

Mouse : You really think a mouse can grant you wishes?

Girl : But you are different. You're a special mouse, you can talk.

Mouse : True.

Girl: You MUST have other tricks hidden away

Mouse: I DON'T

Girl: Expect me to believe that? (She grabs the mouse by the tail and lifts it up)
I'll drown you in boiling water.

Mouse: You won't.

Girl: I'll show you.

The lights go off again.

Girl: Now I am putting you in boiling water.

Mouse: Help, help me someone.

There is a loud BRZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ noise. The lights come on again. The girl stands there without the mouse in her hand.

Girl : Where am I? , is this all just a dream?

Before her, the black box lies closed upon the table. She looks at the audience and asks.

Girl: Should I open the box?

Since she does not get an answer, she opens the box and looks inside but the box is empty.

Girl : Thank god! Nothing is in there. Might have been just a dream.

Suddenly the mouse's voice is heard.

Mouse: You are wrong

Girl : Oh no

Mouse : I have a challenge for you

Girl : What now?

Mouse : Find a way out of this maze , and I will grant your wishes.

Girl: There is no maze.

Mouse: Of course there is. Try and get out.

The girl tries to get out but can't. She runs around and keeps bumping into walls of the maze. She sits down and starts crying helplessly.

Girl : Let me out. Let me out. Stop this nonsense and tell me the truth.

Mouse : What truth?

continued overleaf..



SCENE 1 *...contd.*

Girl: About what's going on here. Are you really a mouse. And where are you.
I can't see you anymore.

There is a loud whoosh sound and an angel appears.

Girl : Huuuuh you're an angel too.

Angel: Yep.

Girl : Expect me to believe that.

Angel: Yeah. Because I am standing here right in front of you.

Girl : Well if you are an angel tell me what good things you have done, ha...

Angel: Fine, I have fed many things to the poor like rasogoolas

Girl : You expect to change the world with rasogoolas? Okay, if you say so.

Angel : Thanks

Girl : Why are you thanking me? I didn't say you are doing great things. If you do something that's magical...that's great...now tell me - what magical things have you done, huh?

Angel : Well...

A bell rings...

Angel : Oops, gotta go. Ctach you later (she says weirdly)

Girl: Nope.

Girl: Nope.

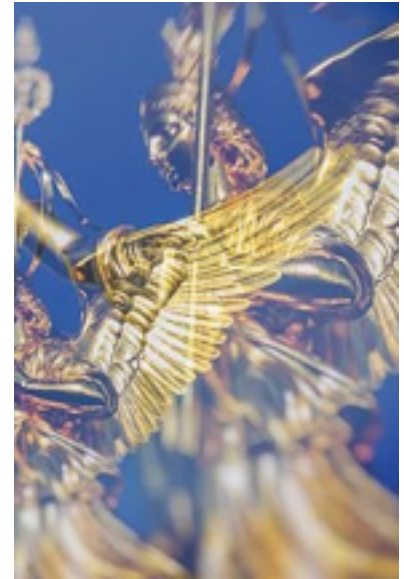
Angel: The bell rang (says in her head)
By the way, my name is Grace.

Girl: Okay Guacamole

Angel: It's Grace

Girl: But I'll call you Guacamole

continued overleaf..



SCENE 2

Lights on the stage. Queen Angel can be seen talking to the Angel.

Queen Angel: Where have you been? feeding rasogoollas again, please say no

Angel : Actually no. I have been talking to that weird girl over there.

Queen Angel : (Cunningly) She isn't weird! She's cute. Ah but she's our new visitor. Maybe, she will be the one. Watch and learn angel watch and learn.

Angel: Heh, you're going to learn a thing or two from that THAT brat.

Queen Angel stands in front of the girl.

Queen Angel : Oh, greetings. lovely to see you

Girl : (Rudely)What are you ?

Queen Angel: Me? I I I....

Girl: You look like you have seen a ghost.

Queen Angel: O, I remember. I'm your Fairy Godmother.

Girl : Fairy God Mother! Seriously... I can't believe such an elderly woman like you believes in fairy god mothers!

Girl starts laughing.

Angel : She's dangerous...I told you she is weird....

Queen Angel : Sssshhhhhhh

Queen Angel : Oh no really, I am your Godmother.

Girl : Can we stop with this Godmother nonsense...

Angel : I told you she is dangerous.

Queen Angel : If you don't believe I am your fairy godmother at least believe me when I saying I am the Queen of Angels.

Girl : Really? First – Fairy Godmother.....NOW Queen of Angels! Next who knows you might imagine you are a photo frame.

Queen Angel : Yes really, you are weird.... And stop cracking these jokes

Queen Angel laughs in her head.

Girl : Where's that thingy gone?

Queen: Thingy? Oh you mean the Angel...

Girl: Yes...first a black box then mouse and then an angel...what next? Anyway, you're no different. First a Fairy God Mother... now a Queen Angel....

Queen Angel: I am both...

Girl: Come on, make up your mind. Why aren't you all satisfied with being yourselves?

Queen Angel: Those are two faces of myself. Let's get back on track.

Girl: And do what?

Queen Angel: You talk too much for a little girl.

continued overleaf..



SCENE 2 ...contd.

Angel: Your Angelness, can I go for my lunchbreak? I am having Chole Bhature.

Queen Angel: Okay

Girl: You mean angels eat food too?

Queen Angel: Then how do you think we survive?

Girl: On fresh air.

Queen Angel: You are a brat. Watch how I change you into a goody goody little girl...

Girl: Oh no.

Queen Angel starts singing a poem about how she will change the girl into someone better.

Oh dear you're such a brat,
I never know what you are at,
Watch and see how I make you better,
I'll change your attitude and behaviour
And turn you into a saviour
For other people's needs
We'll plant more seeds
And see how the world becomes.....

Girl: How?

Queen Angel: Well....
The rich will become richer
And the poor much poorer,
And....

A fire starts.

Queen Angel: Oh dear what have I done...

And she flies off.

Girl: That's got me confused...where has she gone? What did she mean when she said the rich will become richer and the poor poorer. Is this a joke? Is this a dream? Hello! Hello? Anyone here?

Angel: Hey.

Her voice echoes. She runs up and down frightened. Finally the Angel appears.

Angel: Why are you making so much noise? I am on my lunch break. BTW is there anything on my face?

Girl: Yeah, right there.

Angel: You wanna lick it?

The girl comes forward with her tongue out.
I didn't actually mean that.

Girl: I know like I would actually do that. Where's the Queen Angel?

Angel: How would I know?

Girl: I'll go find her myself because you won't tell me.

continued overleaf..



SCENE 2 ...contd.

Angel: Catch you later (weirdly)

Girl: No that is not how you do it.

Angel walks backward and bumps into a table and when she's in the wings she says to herself...

Angel: Come on.

Girl: Where are you Queenie! Hey Queenie where are you? Show yourself and stop wasting my time. (Girl Leaves stage)

SCENE 3

Queen Angel enters stage from the other side. Queen Angel wears a weird mask and has a long furry tail. She is doing a strange dance and making weird sounds. Girl enters stage with her hands on her hips and then starts walking around the Queen Angel watching her curiously.

Girl: What are you doing?

The Queen Angel ignores her.

Girl: I asked you – what are you doing Queenie?

The Queen Angel turns towards and picking up the furry tail swings it in the air and starts chasing her. The girl runs.

Queen Angel: I am going to get you.

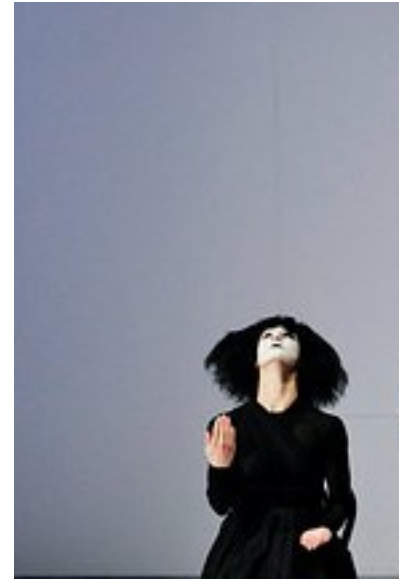
She continues chasing the girl and finally the girl falls and the Queen Angel goes dancing around her, waving her tail and singing a scary song. The Angel echoes the word of the chant.

Ba uana ta la beka
As na tulae la enta
Ruka na na doad lana
Foiy la toe ma ra sto a na na
Too ra cont ta tu na eonta
Rosk sae ta la va nos sa ca
Ron ta pela sa no rara
Raa raa ronta raa
Ruka na na
Doad lana...

Girl: Ruka ruka shoo shoo

The Angel by mistake echoes the Girl's words.

continued overleaf..



SCENE 3 ...contd.

Angel: Oops, I was not supposed to say that.

Queen Angel: Shshsh Grace

Then she turns to the girl...

Queen Angel: Stop making fun of me, I will make you into an ugly toad!

Girl: You are an ugly toad yourself...just look at you....you are a joke!

Queen Angel: Don't say that to me.... I....I....

Girl: Are you speaking gibberish again?

Queen Angel: No I am not.

Girl: Then take off that mask and that silly tail. It makes you look like a monkey.

Queen Angel: Where did you learn your manners from?

Girl: From a monkey like you.

Queen Angel takes off her mask and tail.

Queen Angel: I am tired of being a Queen Angel. I want to be BAAAAAD. Really BAAAAAD.

Girl: (Backing away) Wha....whaaa....what do you mean?

Queen Angel: Okay, let me show you.

She sings and dances.

I want to be bad, real bad,
Break all the rules,
Take all the lives,
Turn the world upside down,
Wear a thorny crown,
Be the Queen of evil,
Not the Queen of Angels,
I will take babies from cradles
Hang them upside down,
Crucify them
Till they become brown.....

Angel: Brown, Brown, Brown, Brown, Brown...
What do you mean by crucifox them?
Oh

Angel dances

She wants to be bad, real bad,
Cry out to demons
Make all the bad achievers
Make the whole building topple over
And what do you think she is
You think she is the Queen Angel
Well she is
The Queen Evilness
Now

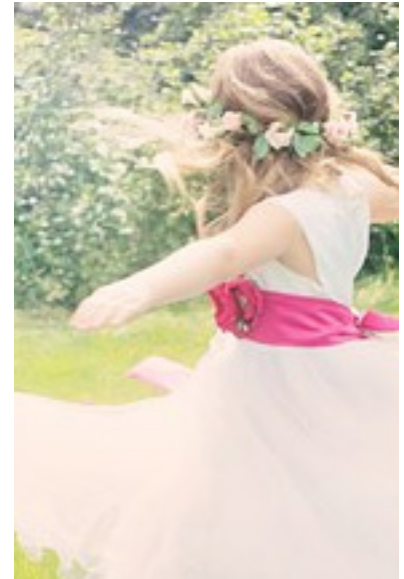
Girl: Ugh, stop, stop.... Enough of your evil ways....

She tries to run out but bumps into the Angel.

Angel: Where do you think you are going to beauty?

Girl: Get out of my way. Move.

continued overleaf..



SCENE 3 ...contd.

Angel: You stay right here, Queen Angelness or may I say Queen Evilness has not not finished with you as yet.

She has hardly stopped speaking when the lights dim and the fire dance begins. A crowd of fire dancers come in and dance in a big circle with Queen Angel in the middle. They sing. UV lights flash.

This is the end, the fire end
There's nothing there around the bend
Just
Fire Fire Fire Fire
Whoosh.
This is the end, the fire end
There's nothing there around the bend
Just
Fire Fire Fire Fire
Whoosh.
Whoosh.
Whoosh.
This is the end
The fire end
The fire end.
Whoosh.

Angel: There is no ice
Just fire, Whoosh.

Queen Angel grabs the girl and takes her into the middle of the circle. She crouches. Then suddenly she jumps up and spreads her arms, shouting,

Girl: Stop. No more of this nonsense.

Angel: Mmmmmm hhhh

All dancers freeze and lights go off. When the lights come on, there is no one there except the girl standing there with arms spread wide. She drops her arms and looks around. Queen Angel and Angel enter from both sides of the stage.

Angel: You've passed the test. You're

Queen Angel: I'll say that....You're the only human who has passed the test.
You are chosen.

Lights keep changing colour.

Girl: What test?

Angel: We've

Queen Angel: We've been looking for a human girl like you.

Girl: What for? To make me into a monkey who dances around with that crazy mask and sings rubbish?

Angel laughs.

Queen Angel: No, a girl who can talk to angels. You are the right person.

Girl: How do you know I want to talk to angels?

Queen Angel: You do and you can.

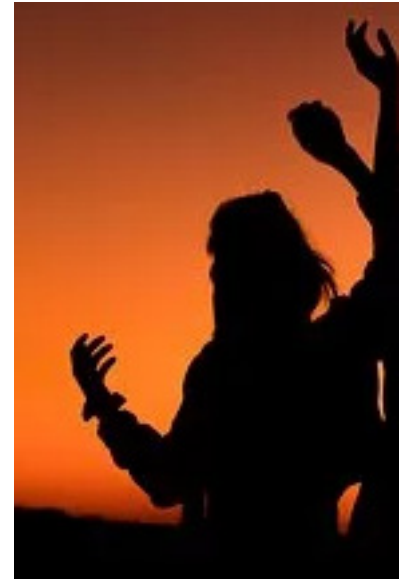
Girl: This is scary. What do I have to do?

Queen Angel: Just be yourself. Your brave self.

Queen Angel walks around the girl in a big circle. Angel follows her.

Queen Angel: I want one human who understands me. Someone I can talk to.
Someone who can explain what's happening down there.
You humans are so difficult to understand.

continued overleaf..



SCENE 3 ...contd.

Girl: Why me? I am just a girl?

Queen Angel: You don't understand....children are wiser than grownups.

Girl: Ok. But where will you find me? Where will I find you?
Are you going to come as an angel and scare everyone off?

Angel: I think s.....

Queen Angel: We will come as animals. we know you love animals.

Girl: Will angel come ?

Queen Angel: Yep ummm but I ythink she will use most of her time
feeding rasgolaas.

Angel: Oh your angelness

Girl : I bet guacimoli will

Angel : My name is grace

Queen Angel: Lets be off.

Girl: You can't just fly off like that. What about me?

Queen Angel: You have a lot of work to do.

The light starts dimming on stage and they vanish. Only the girl's voice can be heard.

Girl: Hello. Hello.

Lights come on. The girl is seen standing in front of a basket. She takes off the lid. Peers into it.

Girl: (looking at the audience) Don't worry, that's only a snake. It is help
less I am going to set it free. (She picks it up and puts it in her
school bag. Then walks to the edge of the stage and loudly whispers)
Who knows.... This just may be Queenie with an important
message for me.... Or it can be a venomous snake that can kill me.

*She waves to the audience and starts walking off the stage then stops in the wings. The
Angel walks in from the opposite side. Lights on. RK enters.*

RK: It is not over yet. The girl still calls the angel Guacimoli.

Girl: (speaks to the Angel) Hey Guacimoli.

RK: The Angel still says crucifox instead of crucifix.

Queen Angel enters.

Angel: (to Queen Angel) But in the poem what did you mean by
crucifoxing babies?

Queen Angel exits.

RK: The Angel can't get saying catch you later properly.

Angel: Catch you later (weirdly)

RK: The Queen Angel still wears that mask and furry tail.

Queen Angel enters.

Queen Angel: Woo hoo.

Queen Angel dances then freezes and leaves.

RK: Thank you. This is the end. The fire end.

Eleven year old Falaq Dhorajiwala is an avid reader, a whistler, music lover, essay and short story writer, actor, artist, singer and dancer. She would like to publish a book, go skydiving, paragliding and tree climbing.



Painting by Falaq Dhorajiwala

TERROR ON THE TERRACE

It was a clear evening , my friends and I decided to try and sleep on my terrace. It was a spooky place, really. In my opinion it was haunted. I know ghosts are not real but my terrace gives my whole family including me, bad vibes.

My friends, Riya and Syesha were psyched by the idea of sleeping on the terrace when I was not. They had no idea of what lay there, neither did I. I avoided it as much as possible. Honestly, I do not know how this idea arose in my mind. I regret it deeply.

My terrace had a marble floor and half was covered with a low roof. It had railings and it was always dark and cold . We asked my mother whether we could sleep out there but she did not approve , however, on the other hand, she had promised me that we could do whatever we wished to.

Riya and I carried the mattresses from my room onto the terrace, one by one. In the meantime Syesha took the pillows, then blankets. We first put sheets on the floor, then set the three mattresses onto them, then put the sheets on them, then put the pillows and blankets on them. I brought a torch, you know, just in case.

It was now 6 pm, we watched television for an hour (the movie "Alvin and the Chipmunks"). We ate dinner and went to bed on the terrace.

I looked up at the twinkling stars of the everlasting sky and shut my eyes.

Then suddenly, I woke up, startled, by the thunder and the roaring of the wind. I tried to shut my eyes and sleep but I could not. I looked at my side to see whether Riya and Syesha were awake too. They were awake. I looked again and they were asleep. I looked yet again and they had disappeared.

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TERROR ON THE TERRACE *...contd.*

I was astonished. They were right there a second ago. I shut my eyes thinking this was all a figment of my imagination. Suddenly, I felt a tap on my hand, I opened my eyes, no one was there. I was terrified. I stood up, looked around and took a few steps forward.

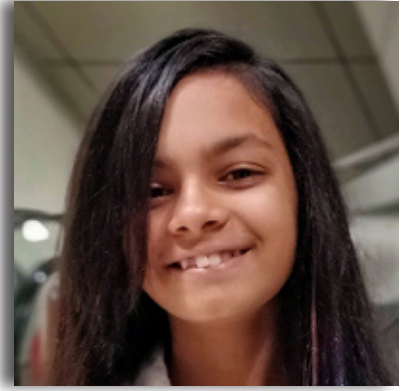
I started panicking and looked all around the house for Riya and Syesha. I could not find them, nor could I find my mother. I had to call her on her cell phone...so I searched for mine. It was a small pile of rotten metallic dust. There were no lights so I stumbled around in the dark. Then a dim gray light streamed into the house from somewhere. I caught the sight of red stains everywhere. The place was smelling of blood. There was a strange looking clock on the wall and it showed the year 8018 next to the time.

Time seemed to flow by me. I tried to locate my parents, friends and relatives but didn't succeed. So one day I walked out of the house and discovered that everything had been destroyed. There was a barren waste everywhere.

I miss my parents and friends terribly. I do not know where they are but I spent days and days trying to research on the series of events. I should not have slept on the terrace that night. My terrace is haunted I am sure.

<https://pixabay.com/photos/house-night-lost-places-mystical-3126362/>

Zahabiya Godhrawala is a twelve year old, 7th standard student of St. Mary's School, Pune. She loves acting and being on stage. She is also an avid participant in the Model United Nation events. In her free time, she likes to paint, create and decorate envelopes and read. She is fond of cycling and spending time with her friends. She wants to study further in the field of theatre, drama and public speaking.



IF I WERE A RIVER OF DREAMS

If I were a river of dreams, I would try, try to change the world. I would try to make it a better place, try to make a difference and try to make a change. I would like to touch a heart and heal the person who depends on my water.

I would like to change their mind set and make people more thankful and appreciative about the life they have. I want to help people and make them feel more safe and secure.

If I were a river of dreams, I would teach people how to love and respect our Mother Earth. All the areas I would flow in, I would make them greener, and do my little bit in contributing to save the Earth. I would like to teach people the importance of planting trees, because if we do not take care of the Earth then who will? It is us who need to save the Earth not just for right now but also for our future generations. I would teach people not to be selfish so that our future has the right to live.

If I were a river of dreams, I would like to change the mind of people. I would like to make them respect everyone, be it a man or a woman. I would like to teach people not to treat a woman like an object – someone who is just there with no aim in life. Women should have aims and ideals in life. Women are not necessarily just there to work in kitchens or to produce babies. I would like humans to look at each other with respect. We may have different genders but after all, we all have a heart inside.

Painting by Zahabiya Godhrawala

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© Zahabiya Godhrawala



IF I WERE A RIVER OF DREAMS ...contd.

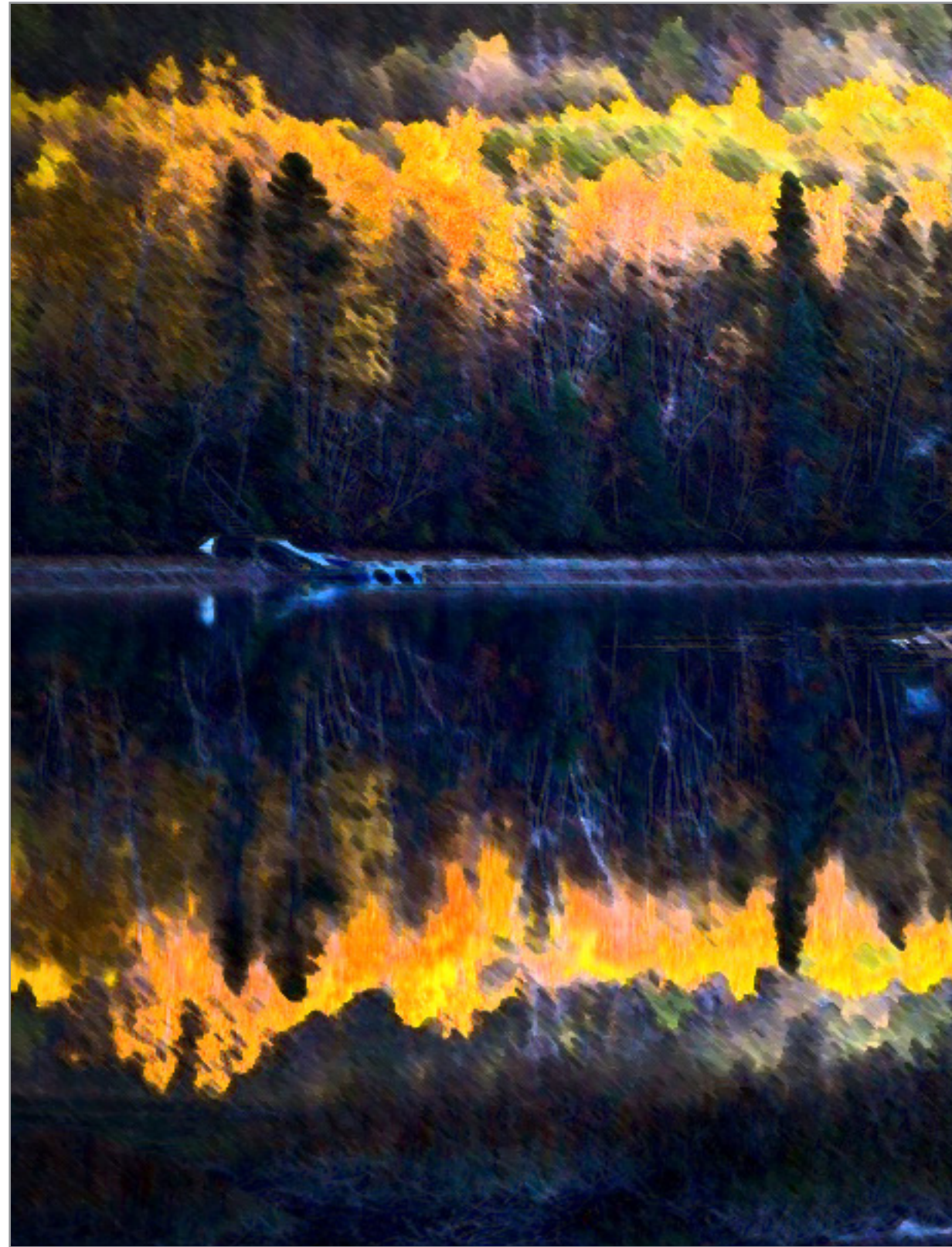
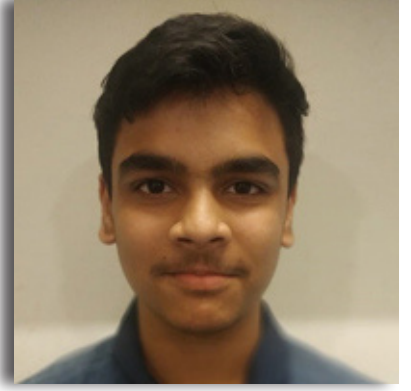
If I were a river of dreams, I would like to control violence. Everywhere I flow there would be peace and happiness. Everyone would learn how to live in harmony with one another. I would like to stop people from discriminating each other on the basis of caste, creed, religion, skin colour etc. I would like to teach people that their words could hurt or possibly scar people for life. No one is perfect, everyone has some flaws but they are perfect just the way they are.

If I were a river of dreams, I would like to end malnourishment, especially in children. This is quite a big goal, but I would take my own steps to end this gruesome situation. My waters would be clean and pure and taste sweet like honey. One sip of my water could suffice and make the person drinking it feel healthy and strong. I would like to also bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. Why is it that a child who comes from a rich home has all the privileges while the child who comes from a poor home has none?

If I were a river of dreams, I would lastly like people to hear my plea, my call for help. I would like people to understand that because of their selfishness my friends and I are steadily drying up. If everything goes at this rate, we will be left dry. This will neither benefit humans nor my fellow rivers. So all I would like to say is save me, help me and join me in 'Making the world a better place for you and for me'.

<https://pixabay.com/photos/water-rapids-stream-cascade-872016/>

Fifteen year old Siddharth Mathkar aspires to *change the world*. *Lost in Light* is his first book. He started writing at seven and has been published in numerous magazines, newsletters and newspapers. Here is a selection from his first volume of poems to be published by Lavanya Khare of *River Books*.



A REFLECTION ON MY FIRST BOOK OF POETRY

Written Poetry is the purest form of emotive literature. It enthralls the senses and keeps the mind alive, weighing people between the edge of reality and bliss. In my opinion, it is the most beautiful experience that one can have, amidst today's chaotic and busy world.

Today, all of us are running, in a mad rush for recognition, power, and an assertive inability to think beyond. The purpose of this book is to allow people to remember their roots, the true beauty that lies in every turn of life, and to remind them to delve into every beautiful experience they come across. Breaking shackles is the most important part of evolving and seeing the virtue of all that they encounter.

As suggested by the title, this book shows one the true nature of bliss, the actual way of peace. To be lost in light is a feeling that can only be experienced when one is with nature and therefore connects with themselves. It is only possible to be with yourself, happy and undisturbed, when you are one with the trees, the ocean and the mountains. It's a feeling of harmony, of security, of love, of dependency, of joy, of stability and of gratitude.

The first section - "My Garden" is a spell of pages that take you to different places, allow you to smell the roses, feel the sand and listen to the deafening crash of waves. It is a train of petit pockets of bliss and beauty, that one can read to take control of their thoughts and experience wonder.

The second half - "SoulStruck", tells the story of a man, lost in the complexities of his work, that he forgets to live. He pampers himself with worldly pleasures, easily distracting his mind from his true purpose and defining. At the peak stages of his life, he encounters a vision - one of nature, of beauty and true life. He forgets everything he already knows, discards everything he has and sets out on a quest for real happiness.

<https://pixabay.com/photos/landscape-fall-nature-trees-colors-4776073/>

A REFLECTION ON MY FIRST BOOK ...*contd.*

“Lost in Light” is a collection of thoughts and emotions that I believe only words can evoke. Poetry is a refuge to those who dream beyond the canvas in front of their eyes, a growing wildfire to ignite the life within a soul, to kindle the flame of aspiring hope. It is the most invaluable treasure of the modern world, to calm, to inspire, and to open one’s eyes to different perspectives. It is a growling tiger of heart and nostalgia, hungry for change and freedom. It is the gentle rose petals upon water, floating above the devils of today, under the shade of the rosewood leaves that bring back the marvels of the past.

It is so much in so little, that it often feels surreal to have such vast beauty in and around us. Yet again, we so conveniently forget the fundamental truth that lies within all of our hearts. We know it, want to embrace it and are yet somehow steered away by society and its eccentric rules of an ideal life. What we have forgotten as emotionally bonded social creatures is the limitlessness of ourselves, and everything around us. Everything is undefined. We only define the things around us to temporarily quench our natural way of uncertainty.

It explodes in our limited minds, showing us that seeing the world, conjuring magic and controlling one’s emotions are only a matter of finding the right orchestra of stanzas. It is truly a blessing, with the ability to stimulate love, express situations and to inspire. What makes it so versatile is that people can interpret it in a personalized manner, still gaining the intended effect. It can change minds and people, in a rhythmic flow of words that show one that truth still lives, keeping lit the wick at the end of the tunnel, pulling people out of the dark. This is what drew me to poetry, the thought of such endless possibilities keeping me full of hope and alive.

WHITE FLAG

I look down at my shrivelled feet,
As they sink in through the sand,
The violent waves engulf the sun,
As orange sea meets land

I let go of my holds and surrender,
To the tides that draw me in,
The currents of emotion take over,
But I have committed no sin

The tinted endless lay above me,
As I lay in pleasure level,
This ecstasy of hidden heaven,
Was this God or Devil?



BECOMING

Roostercry awakens us,
Shrill screams of dawnbreak,
Cloud curtains cover their ears,
Parting to the sun.

Armies of the dawn,
Rattling on window shutters,
Seeking refuge,
Gaining new homes.

Merging with the locals,
Learning their way of life,
Becoming one with Mother Darkness,
Who carries The Womb of Light.

THE SPLASH OF LIFE

Rainbows spin in crystal skin,
The aqua comet flows landwards,
Cracked arms of broken Earth,
Await the splash of life

UNTETHERED

The raintree in the moonlight sang,
Words that the wind could not contain,
The river of its syllables crashed thru
The lightness of the sane

The sane was murdered tonight,
Its life drained through the soil,
Men of knowledge absolute
Stood broken, looped in endless toil

Outcasted creatures danced and screamed,
Mother watching them play,
Her waves of truth stripped science,
Outside our senses her creations lay

Why tame the tiger meant to hunt,
Why shape the uncertain, swirling paint,
Why stain the beautiful, deep, white pages,
With lies to disappoint our hearts and saints?

Magic bounces off giant rabbits,
Hidden in the light of shadowed forest,
For miracles and dreams come true only if
Our soul is free and lives to the purest...



© Siddharth Mathkar

TASTE OF LONGING

Sweet taste of longing,
When will this waiting end?
Days, months in anticipation,
Endless time to spend

Drumming my fingers on the wooden armrest,
As I watch time and space freeze,
I keep looking round the bend for the magic,
As seconds continue to tease

After a dragged century passed,
Did the fairy break her spell,
The ending of this lovely trance,
Struck my heart's death knell...

RETURNING

Crackling embers, jumpy sparks,
Spraying air with glowing marks,
Soaring high, penumbra's phoenix,
Returning to her birthplace, sky.

I CAN FEEL

I can feel the rough bark against
Myself upon this tree,
Rubbing away my fingerprints,
And scraping across my knee

It pains me to undiscovered extents,
But my cursed fate is sealed,
That I do not possess control,
Over the man that wears my shield

But I stop for a subtle moment,
And sense the beautiful air,
That pulls at me for every second,
Draws goosebumps and alert leg hair

I feel the lush around my feet,
Of the dense strands of soft,
I feel the light breeze of plumage,
Beating to keep aloft

I can feel the moisture in the air,
Lining across my hands,
I can feel the sensation slowly escaping,
Like through an hourglass do sands

For the first time in this humble life,
Did this armour truly live,
For the man inside cried tears of heaven
That were never supposed to be his...



Ayaan Syed will be ten later this year. Well travelled, this storyteller has a fertile imagination. He is passionate about the world of dinosaurs.



WHEN I WAS A DINOSAUR

You may not believe the story that I am going to tell you but it is true.

I was an Indominus Rex, one of the world's most dangerous dinosaurs. Indominus Rexes are carnivore dinosaurs and loved to eat Ankylosaurus, Edmontonia and Triceratops.

We once live in North and South America and Africa. Yes, we were powerful... so powerful that we could even bring a T- Rex down.

A long time ago in the Jurassic Period and the Cretaceous Period we ruled the earth. When other dinosaurs saw me they would run as fast as they could away from me. After a long long long period of time, the earth began to change. Volcanos started bursting out of the earth and erupting... earthquakes shook up the planet and... dinosaurs became so crazy that they started killing each other. And so one at a time, we all died and then there were no more dinosaurs on planet earth.

But I remained.

Of course, I don't LOOK like a dinosaur. I look like a human being, I talk like a human being, I live like a human being. But inside me is a dinosaur. He sits there. An Indominus Rex. Waiting to get out.

I am waiting for the weather to get better and for all these cities to disappear and forests to appear. That will be my time... the time I will start hunting.

REMEMBER ME. DON'T FORGET. I AM INDOMINUS REX. The hunter, the killing.

My time will come soon.

You won't be here to see me.

https://jurassicworld-evolution.fandom.com/wiki/Indominus_rex

This story has been co-written by 8 writers and artists who are nine year olds from Grade 4 of the Shamrao Kalmadi School (Aundh & Baner) in Pune. They love co-creating and always come up with a magical story. *Standing R to L* : Abhiraj Patil, Kaushal Shinde, Varad Arote, Tanish Gaikwad, Chinmay Satpute. *Sitting R to L* : Nickunj Patil, Shamika Rawale, Avnish Deshmukh



THE SHINY FISHY ADVENTURE

In a small town by the sea, lived four friends – Varad, Nickunj, Abhiraj and Chinmay. They were not the usual sort of boys who were happy with playing in the neighbourhood field but were the adventurous sort. Once they tried to climb up a nearby hill and got stuck halfway up. A rescue team from the town had to get them down because they were dangling from a cliff. There were many other times they ended up in trouble.

One summer day, they planned to go for a picnic to the beach.

“Come on,” said Varad, “Let us go to a beach.”

“Yes, it will be fun; we can even go boating,” Nickunj was excited.

Abhiraj was the careful one. “No we won’t. I know you love the Sea, but it is very dangerous.”

Chinmay thought it was a good idea, “Great, but we must ask our parents first.”

“Parents,” Varad laughed. “They will never agree to let us go to the beach alone. They’ll want an elder to go with us. That won’t be any fun.”

But to their surprise, everyone’s parents said yes. All, except Chinmay’s Mum.

When he asked her, “Mum can we go to the beach for a picnic?”

“No,” she replied, cutting vegetables in the kitchen, “you are not allowed to go there alone.”

“Why Mum?” he asked.

“Because, you four boys will be up to some mischief and you’ll get into trouble.”

“Please Mum,” he implored.

“When I say no, I mean NO. Now don’t argue with me. Go and have a bath, food will be ready soon.”

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Illustration by the contributors.



Illustration by the contributors.

Tears welled up in his eyes, he was really upset. What would he tell his friends? He thought.

Just then a miracle happened. Chinmay's Dad came into the kitchen. "Why are there tears in my brave son's eyes?"

"Mum," he said, in a choked voice, "Mum won't...."

"Now don't you blame me," interrupted Mum. "let tears flow like waterfalls Chinnu.... but when I say NO, I mean NO."

"No what?" asked Dad.

Chinmay realised that that was a chance to convince Dad. And when he finished explaining, Dad said, "A little adventure now and then is good for growing boys. Let him go," he said to Mum.

She didn't easily agree but when they finished eating, she cleared her throat and said, "Yes Chinnu, you may go to the beach...but do not go into the water." She had hardly finished speaking when Chinmay jumped out of his chair and ran over to her and hugged her.

Even though the three other boys had been allowed to go to the beach, their parents had also warned them not to go near the water. They packed their picnic hampers, hooked them on to their bicycles and off they went to the beach.

All the way, they shouted, "we are off to the beach to have fun."

Their school friends waved back, "have a great time but don't get into trouble," they warned.

After a while they reached the beach. It was a warm day and the beach was deserted. Flocks of seagulls floated on the water, feeding on little fish. When they saw the boys approach, they rose like a white cloud into the air and flew away along the beach.

continued overleaf..



Illustration by the contributors.

“I think we should rest for a while” said Chinmay. “Cycling in the sun is no fun. I am feeling tired.

“No , I am going to build a sand castle,” said Nikunj.

“Ok, you build the sand castle and I will sit in the shade with Chinmay,” said Varad. Actually , I am thinking of playing Volley ball because I hid the ball in my bag and brought it with me,” he added.

Abhiraj, who was the eldest, was a lot more responsible. “We came here to enjoy ourselves, so let’s enjoy ourselves. But we must not go into the sea.”

“What are you scared about?” Varad asked him. “There are no sharks here.”

“And the water is so refreshing. We could splash around a bit without getting into trouble,” Chinmay said happily.

So instead of being careful, the boys decided to be adventurous.

Nickunj stopped building his sand castle and started walking along the edge of the water, looking out to sea. He stared hard. “I think I can see something big and shiny in the water out there. Look,” he pointed to the others, “look.”

“It’s your imagination,” Varad joked.

“No, no, I am serious,” he replied.

“I defy you to swim out and catch it,” dared Chinmay.

“Remember,” warned Abhiraj, “no going into the water.”

But no one was listening to him. The three boys ran along the beach looking out at sea, hoping to see the big shiny fish that Nickunj had claimed to have seen. “Where is the fish?” they asked, “where is the fish?”

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Illustration by the contributors.

It was then that the shiny fish decided to leap out of the water into the air. It flipped around thrice and then returned with a big splash into the sea. Even Abhiraj saw it. He was fascinated and joined the others. “Let’s follow the fish,” Varad suggested.

“But how?” asked Chinmay.

By now everyone had forgotten about safety because they were fascinated by the fish with shiny fins, radiant in the sunshine.

“Hey look at that, there is a boat. We will follow the fish” shouted Nickunj. So they waded out to the fishing boat, lifted the anchor and started paddling out after the fish.

Varad, picked up the fishing line and threw it into the water, “let’s bait the fish and catch it,” he said.

So they all tried to bait the fish but it kept swimming away from them. What they didn’t know was that it was a thinking fish. It realised that the boys needed to be taught a lesson. What do you think it did? IT SWISHED ITS TAIL AND SWAM OUT TO SEA. The boys followed it in their boat.

“We’re going too far out to sea,” whispered Abhiraj, nervously, “we will never be able to get back to the beach.” But no one was listening to him.

When the fish was really far out to sea, it started going around the boat in big circles. The boys tried to steer the boat after it...but couldn’t catch up because the fish was swimming faster and faster.

The thinking fish was teaching them a bitter lesson. “I will topple them out of the boat,” it said to itself.

“Oh no, what is the fish doing ?” shouted Chinmay, frantically.

“The oars have fallen into the water, now we can do nothing,” said Varad.

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The waves began to rise higher and higher and the boat was thrown into the air, spun around and then dropped with a big splash. The thinking fish laughed to itself.

Now the children were scared. They started screaming . Some fishermen heard their helpless screams. The fishermen said “ Poor Children, lets go and save them.”

So two fishing boats went out to sea. One to catch the shiny fish and the other to save the boys. Both were successful.

Once on the beach, the boys went over to the net which had caught the fish.

They looked at the huge beautiful creature. Its body sparkled in the sun. Its big gorgeous eyes looked at them with love and its mouth seemed to be saying something. “Please don’t kill this fish,” the boys pleaded. It’s a thinking shiny fish. It is special.”

“Yes,” replied one of the fishermen, “it will fetch us a good price.”

By now, the boys were determined to save the fish who had taught them a lesson. So while the fishermen were busy loading the other fish into baskets, the boys pulled the fish out of the net and set it free in the sea. The fish leapt into the air and flipped over thrice as if to say, “thank you” and vanished in the depths of the water.

The fishermen were furious, “we saved your lives and instead of thanking us, you set our fish free. We are going to teach you a lesson.”

The four boys didn’t wait even a moment longer on the beach. They ran to they cycles and took off like rockets, pedalling as fast as they could, with the fisherman running after them. They didn’t turn back until they had reached home.

They never forgot the adventure. But they never told anyone about what happened. It was a special secret. They had met a thinking, shiny fish that taught them a lesson.

<https://pixabay.com/photos/fish-fishermen-fishing-net-fishing-3062034/>

FOUNDED 2010



Live encounters

YOUNG POETS & WRITERS

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
MARCH 2020

COVER ARTWORK BY IRISH ARTIST EMMA BARONE