

DANDELION

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Presenting Dandelion - IITK's bi-monthly literary newsletter. Dandelion is an initiative by the ELS team to provide a publishing platform to budding writers of IITK, a creative delight for reading enthusiasts, and brain-tickling word games for puzzle fans. Hope you enjoy this edition and become not just active readers but regular contributors to this space!

We are open to accepting entries in all formats (poems/ stories/ articles/ reviews/ anything else) by anyone (any year/branch). If you wish to get published (anonymously or otherwise) in our next edition, drop us an email at litsof.iitk@gmail.com!

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MEANING OF LIFE

by Divyanshi Bansal

*As I turned the yellow pages of " Man's Search For Meaning,"
I got lost in the work of Viktor Frankl, so crisp and gleaming!*



I write this, and in my heart are restless beats,
Beats of ideas and awakesness,
That now stand erect and dauntless,
To question my life's meaning.
I'm not the squinter to avert the eyes,
Or to put a facade masked in disguise.
To myself, I need to answer,
Why so much pain, life's offering?
What's the meaning behind my suffering?

Suffering I'd say?
But am I even worthy of it,
Of all this mesh, life has knit.

Did I lose myself in the bitter fight,
For my self-preservation?
Or did I strive for extrication?
Keeping intact my ideals and dignity
When I was tested by time,
Clearly answers me, crisp and fine.
No one can escape from suffering,
as none can, to fate and death,
The purpose of each exhaled breath
is what one shall just look for,
It'll be enough to give the strength,
to endure and hope for its end.

Going on to find the meaning of love,
Such a quest for glory high,
Compelling a heart to live or die,
with the images of his beloved,
The only way to grasp the real core,
And to actualize what he truly bore!
Through it and in it,
truly lies the salvation of man,
redemption of the entire clan,
As if in a world of witchery,
A man so cast by the spell,
Feels like nothing, even in hell.

How deceitful is the hope from life!
So instead, let's turn it round,
to question life, we're not bound
But bound to live as life expects,
Sometimes as sliding down a rose,
Other like bleeding whips or blows!
Rise up the delusions so miniature,
Like the grandeur of glitter,
Or on the pain, that you witter,
And set to live with morality,

For soon, the ashes will dry,
After the soul passes by!

THE MISERY

by Aviral Upadhyay

In a secluded village lived Reyansh, a boy who loved chasing his dreams. This story would bring to light the affliction faced by students hailing from financially weaker sections due to the intentional pressure from society and the unintentional pressure from parents. Reyansh had already nurtured a lot of stress due to the scarcity he had witnessed. He wanted to aid his family financially to improve their standards of living. The only plausible option he could think of was to crack a competitive exam and get admitted to a prestigious college to pursue his studies which eventually would help him land a job. He thus started preparing for a national-level entrance test to satisfy his objective.

Reyansh was working very hard for the test. He would study around the clock. He had given up all the leisure activities, due to which he had eventually cut himself off from almost everyone. All this made him more eccentric. He would randomly get annoyed by petty things. Seeing his parents fight over issues due to poor finances fueled him to work even more.

Finally, Reyansh took the test. Feeling satisfied with this performance, he was sure of making it to his dream institution. He was still nervous, and why shouldn't he be? The level of uncertainty these competitive exams uphold is often depressing. Results were out. Reyansh could not make the cut. He was traumatized. All this hard work yielded him no output. His friends and relatives teased him for pursuing such an out-of-bound ambition.

The tale of Reyansh is something faced by millions of students every year. This notion that to be successful, an individual has to be from a brilliant institution needs to get shattered so that people are always motivated to work hard in life and achieve their goals.

WHOLE

by Ammu

When the wind blows		So I sleep
I listen	To the sound of running water	
For I hope		I dream
They tell me things.	Of flowing into quiet places.	

When each raindrop slides		I drown
down my hands	In the sounds around me	
I watch	Muffle that internal scream	
For I hope	Turn away from the light.	
They show me things.		

		Darkness,
An unknown place		I run towards it
A new infinite		Never looking back
To get lost in	Darkness, I embrace it	
To find again.	Feels uncertain, but whole.	



OUR CHANGING SOCIETY

by Reetika Gupta



*We didn't start the fire
It was always burning, since the world's been turning
We didn't start the fire
No, we didn't light it, but we tried to -*

Whether we look at the internecine Sri Lankan stomping of the presidents house to the shattering of democracy in Myanmar and Afghanistan. The policies of governments across the globe; in a nuance fashion is slowly turning around.

Getting ruled by a tyrant in a shrinking economy surely won't be everyone's reality but it is slowly becoming so. With the rise of conservative governments and their policies all around the globe- be it India, Russia or Brazil. The recent debates related to abortion in the US sparked various controversies. How could the paradigm of westernisation implement something so conservative?

For years we see a liberal society as one where everyone has the right to choice, democratic and the protective of its minorities. But today it seems this definition of ours is changing. The anti Muslim protest and policies across the globe- Poland , France and their ill treatment solely cause of religion can't be denied. Similarly the genocide of Hindus, Christians , Ahmadiyahs and Shia Muslims in Pakistan or the detention of Uyghurs Muslims in china- it all sends a clear message , differences of ideologies, beliefs are not welcomed anymore.

Whether we believe it or not , the world is slowly turning into more xenophobic and conservative society than it was twenty thirty years Ago. We can only be hopeful that this mentality and beliefs change over time or else humanity will bite the dust cause of loath and anger.

IN DEATH AND BEYOND

by Tanya Soni

It's 3 am; I am wide awake
This room seems a little too dark
Or maybe my phone's a little too bright
Either way you left too big of a mark

It's 5: 38; I can see the sun rise
Behind my phone screen, too small
I think I see where your number is at
Maybe I'll give you a call

It's 7: 27; I am holding a knife
Why did you not respond?
I think I'll make breakfast
Turns out the bacon's fake, I was conned

It's 9: 09; I am staring at nothing
Never believed people actually did that
I think I hear my phone ringing
Is that your name am looking at?

It's 11: 07; I am smiling
Just when I thought I forgot how to
I think I am happy, am I not?
After all, I am going to see you

It's 1: 49, I am in my bath
Looking down at the surface but drowning
I should stop. I can't, I continue
After all, I am going to see you

It's 3 pm; they say
This is when Christ breathed his last
I can see my smirk in the mirror
Well, I did call you my god

It's 5:59, I am standing
Exactly on what we called our spot
I am here early, aren't I?
Can't afford getting caught

It's 7:13, I am against the wall
Right where you pushed me to
"Love is just a phase" you say
Who am I to say no to you?

It's 9:01, I am driving
To the shadiest ends, of my mind and this road
I think I was too handsy
I can see only red on my coat

It's 11:11, I am ploughing
Cause you dug me inside out
I hope it feels just as good to be ploughed this deep
But unlike me you cannot shout

It's 1: 41, I am stranded
Right in front of my door
I smell of something I can never wash away
You always made me sore

It's 3 am, I am thinking
Do we match? We totally don't
"Love is just a phase", you said
And here I am, going for "In Death and Beyond"



THE OUTSIDER

by Ashutosh Rana



There's something I haven't yet talked about
 The constant tingling feeling of being left out
 I claim justly that my sensation of exclusion
 Is part of my reality, not some fleeting delusion
 I keep my bitterness hidden, do not let it seethe
 For I know your concern bears much falsehood beneath
 Your actions are not needed, your words will suffice
 The smallest twitch in your voice betrays the extent of
 your lies
 Come on, think over it; shouldn't be that hard
 If you want to include me or keep me in the dark
 For I can accept and forgive any extent of flaw
 With an important exception- unforgivable is fraud
 When to you and your clique I was always an 'other'
 Did it not merit a little shame, you calling me your
 'brother'?

Just say so if you despise my company
 Rest assured, I'm open, won't take it too badly
 I shall then free my waking mind from your ransom
 And seek refuge of sleep in the great 'black album'
 And will reflect to myself from my bedtime until dawn
 Given nobody really cares, why must this farce go on?

A SWING THROUGH TIME

by Aniruddh Pramod

The swing sets were busy, in the setting sun.

A noisy summer evening, a park full of kids.

And on the swing, the second one from the right, a girl in her uniform.

The one with the spark in her eyes.

The one with the drive to be the best.

She went higher and higher, as the others just watched.

'Sandhya! You're going to fall', a voice rang out. A voice of concern, but a voice too tired. Almost a formality at this point, they both knew she wasn't going to listen.

Some boys were frustrated, they thrashed about.

Others looked at her in wonder and awe.

But no one could reach her world. Her eyes, they looked up and only up. A brilliant painted sky, the final warm rays of the sun. And the wind on her face that made her keep going.

Higher and higher she went, till she was convinced that the birds, the sky, and the sun, were all hers to keep



The swing sets were quiet, bathing in moonlight.

Too late for anyone, anyone but these two.

They sit there quietly, swinging slowly to pass the time, to reduce the silence, but not one that is awkward.

Her eyes look up at the stars, the stars in all their wondrous glory. The stars who would never tell her to stop. The stars who beckoned her to come join them, who had always beckoned her to join them. A world of possibilities, the glimmering night sky full of hope.

But his eyes, they stayed only on her. The orange swing, second from the right, the girl on them, the only world he cared about – this little playground, and the two of them.

But she didn't look back, and that told him everything.

The swing sets lay still, covered in snow.

He moved over to one, the third one from the right, and pushed the snow off, before finally sitting down. The sky was a brilliant azure, and the clouds still made up a vivid scenery. But his eyes, they weren't looking up.

He stared at the second swing from the right. The orange one. The one she used to swing on. Memories of easier times, when your biggest worry was the colour of the pen you wanted to do your homework with. When going higher on a swing was a revered skill,

Memories of the times when she was right there, and yet too far away from him.

The swing sets are busy in another summer.

The kids are different, and so are the parents.

A boy is on the orange swing, his eyes a brilliant amber in the sun, as his head turns back just a little.

“Higher! Higher!”, he begs his mother, her eyes looking up, not just at the sky, but at the love of her life.

She didn't want to fly anymore, the birds, the sky, the sun – a distant dream for her. But not for the little one. She saw in his eyes the intensity that used to be her own, and she knew. She knew that this time, nobody would quench the fire inside.

And so she pushed him, till the birds, the sky and the sun, were all his to keep.

GET UP

by Talin Gupta

I know you must be broken,
For it was a big fall
Your soul must be shaken,
And only pain is what you'd recall

I know you must be feeling
Like it's the bottom of the pit
And you must be kneeling,
All ready to quit



Just ask yourself this,
Was it ever worth the effort?
Think of the bliss,
That would have tasted like your favourite dessert

If it was worth the toil,
Why are you still sitting?
Why doesn't your blood boil,
From the mere thought of quitting?

Ask yourself why you held
Onto it for so long,
I am sure you have the answer,
Let it pierce your dejection like a prong.

Don't let your negative thoughts roll
Let me be more clear
Defeat that imaginary troll
Who laughs at your failure

You've got to make your destiny,
You've got to take charge
It's you who can bring harmony
For in your mind's palace no one else can barge

Push harder, hustle, train
You are destined to be a winner
If you don't try again
You might end up considering yourself a sinner

You are an injured lion,
Waiting for a big roar
Once you decide it
You are gonna shake them to the core

Get Up, for it's your hour
Get Up, for it's worth it,
Get Up, for that's who you are,
Get Up, for you've been too long in the pit.

THE MUTE

by Meenakshi Mandal

Worthless, that's what he says
To the mute lady who never sways
She fails to swim against the waves
Working to death for many days
Making sacrifices that never pays
All this for his single gaze

Does nobody care how she sleeps?
Shivering, letting the cold seep
Muffling agonizing sounds of her weeps
Accepting the life of misery deep

Smash, the glass shards fly
She's challenged by all to defy
Step up, raise voice and deny!
But No! She is painted the 'bad guy'
She befriends fate with a sorrowed sigh
Alas! There's no one to hear her cry

The unyielding pain makes her choke
Once a princess, now a broke
Speck of dirt to these heartless folk
All her aspirations up in smoke

She's terrified to take the leap
Pick phone and answer the beep
Get help, that's what you need!
Tell them you cried and bleed
Did everything to fulfil their greed
Cooked, cleaned, followed and feed
Left your dreams to write and read
Never forget, you were still the weed

Why! Just why is there violence?
Subduing her to a doll of silence
Chaining, imprisoning her inner lioness
No voice, No want or resilience



Heart and soul already wounded
And crack, the slap resounded
A life of suffering, she has mounted
Whips and beatings, all uncounted
Is this fortune her evils compounded?
She is lost to these shackles bounded

Speak! But she remains mute
Freedom lost by force so brute!
A mere object of hollers and hoot
This doomed world, 'my salute'

TWISTED LOVE

- THE GROOVE ON HER NECK

by Sai Vedant

The jury finds the defendant not guilty.” Everything around erupts. Everything melts. Maa is saying something. She is smiling, isn't she? I can't tell, my brow is sweaty, it's seeping into my fucking eyes. It burns and trickles down my nose. What is everyone saying? Wait what am I saying? Why can't I speak. My mouth is open and I am trying to scream but I



am speaking gibberish, aren't I? Why is the room so bright, why are the edges darkening. Okay, the edges are closing in everything is darkening. Am I on my right leg or left? Oh, I forgot to breathe. Fucking tip over the witness stand fence already.

I wake up to obnoxious glucose and dry biscuits. Acquitted of the charge of assisting suicide. Not Guilty. Lack of substantial conclusive evidence. I did insinuate her demise. Manipulated her very bones. Animated the very rope she herself hung from. Drew the grooves on her neck. Guilty, Guilty, Guilty. Eyes widen. The saline drip starts hurting my veins and now my head is going to break. Constant pulse of pain. Three-Two. Three-Two. Goddamn I need to fall back. Like she fell back. Agony.

Somya had the eyes of a doe. The sprightly doe that runs on her own and might come to lay her cheek on your palm. “When I come to you to rant, I love how you offer support and not solutions.” She failed to realise that I offered nothing. Felt nothing. I have always lived in this third perspective my entire life. It's easy. And things are so funny. I didn't like her weak. Pathetic and snivelling. But she must have realised. Many days. But particularly that day. That day when she asked me to pour her meds in her mouth and I fucking tipped the whole thing in. She kept slapping my arm and looking up and I did not stop. Why did I not stop? “Evil” people might say. “Weakness” is what I would think. And I hate when I am weak. I left, punched three of my fingers to break and broke a ring against the wall. Later I said it was a mistake, I was disoriented. We kissed, made love and made up.

Days later after the court's decision I come home and adjust the chair. I stand raised, close my eyes and feel. That day we sat under the stars. She and I. Holding hands that night. I think and I contemplate. This contemplation of today, may have spared her. Yanked my unfeeling hand free from hers. I kick the chair from underneath me and then the air tightens.

A PAGE FROM AN MTH102 NOTE

by Niliena

The Educated Lament of a Stupid Soul

Somewhere after the Bessel Equation, from the dark recesses of my painful existence during this monotonous, break-free nightmare of a lecture, I try to reach out, one final attempt at resuscitation. Here goes,

Take

$$a_0 = \frac{1}{2^\nu \Gamma(\nu+1)}$$

(instead of taking $a_0=1$) and observe that the Frobenius series solution, which is called the Bessel function of the first kind of order ν is the following

$$J_\nu(x) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n}{n! \Gamma(n+\nu+1)} \left(\frac{x}{2}\right)^{2n+\nu}$$

I can't do this. The man speaks a tongue that is beyond the reaches of my comprehension. His words, sweet music to those with sounder minds, but to me, they are not unlike meaningless chants that belong to a cult. Time kills me as I attempt to kill it. There is no escape from this well conditioned prison, isn't it the worst kind? As I pen this down, all else fades.

I look at the white screen that he molests with his unholy faith, a stoner's thoughts, a shifty agenda. I see the squiggles but understanding evades me.

I question my existence, mind you, existence not life. The questions and answers loop back to a daunting question, "Is another moment worth the pain?" The answer is well-formed, though ugly.

A knife materializes, gently caressing my dirty skin. A gentle touch, yet to be followed by the redemptive slit.

As I brace myself, for the final ride, the bell rings. The air smells sweeter, my soul feels lighter and I'm free as people crowd me.

CONFESSIONS BY KANAE MINATO

A review by Sai Praneeth

Whew, I don't think I have ever been left this empty after reading a thriller (or so it calls itself to be, but below the surface it's much more). As the title and the cover suggest, the book is all about the characters "confessing" their crimes. But whether they like it or not, they eventually get dragged into the vortex of grief and what it makes people do.

The plot is about a middle school teacher, Yuko Moriguchi, whose 4-year-old, Manami, daughter, is found dead, having drowned in the school swimming pool. And thus, our story starts when she decides to reveal on the last day of school that both murderers are sitting amongst the students, thus setting off a chain of events that ends in disaster. All this in the name of revenge.

At the heart of the book, Kanae Minato, being a homemaker, delves into the deepest parts of the developing teenager's brain. And in it she cooks up

one of the most gruesome, and psychologically disturbing plots I have ever read. Never once in the book does she shy away from violence but rather gives it all the due value the plot requires her to give it, even when the story deals with mere kids.

A twisty tale

The writing is beautiful yet so simplistic, crisp yet very complex. Each chapter never has a set pattern to it, the first chapter is Yuko's speech to her students, another one is a letter, another is a diary, one is a phone call and so on. Each chapter comes up with its own definition of chilling, adding twists and turns at every perceivable corner.

Is Justice Justifiable?

"I think we regular people may have forgotten a basic truth—we don't really have the right to judge anyone else."

The author also plays around with the moral aspect of things, toying with the idea of punishment and its severity.

Is it justified to take revenge against a kid, who is protected under various juvenile laws, even when their crimes are severe? And how much punishment do they really deserve? Who knows? The book is an effort to try to understand.

Dysfunctional Families

If all this wasn't enough, the book also investigates the relationships of the two murderers Shuya and Naoki with their mothers. On one hand we have Shuya who idolizes his mother to an unhealthy extent; an unrequited love. On the other hand, we have Naoki, whose overprotective and delusional mother believes he can do no wrong. On the surface, just normal families but pick it apart and something devilish stares back.



This part of the story, like most dysfunctional families in other domestic thrillers, is quite in your face, making sure that you question if the kids were wrong for their crimes or was it their upbringing, giving the book another dimension to it.

"In the end, it was the very fact of my existence that she couldn't stand."

It's really just a kid's story

Yeaaaaah, think again.

Kids are evil. Who even knows what sorts of horrors are running through the brain of that kid sitting in front of you? Who knows what he has/is been/going through? The author makes me scared of kids (is it only me?) as she nicely sums up how even the smallest of things can really mess up a kid's brain, which is ever maturing and growing.

This is also seen in the way Shuya is treated by the others, often bullied (oblivious to the teachers of course, sounds familiar?) very severely, all in the name of revenge for their beloved teacher. Again, how far is too far?

Another quote from the book for you to think about: -

"On the other hand, it's easy to join in condemning someone once someone else has gotten the ball rolling. You don't even have to put yourself out there; all you have to do is say, "Me, too!"



Final Thoughts

I remember reading, when a classmate asked her teacher, "What do you think of your revenge now?" and that one sentence chilled me to my very core.

The writing is precise, leaving out any unnecessary comments or additions to the story, making sure you stay glued to the words. Every single word in the book is written with purpose. All in all the writing style is unique and it's something I'd love to read more.

Coming to the characters our author has created, they are very thought out and never once are we given an opportunity to call anyone a hero or villain. It does, however, let us call them victims. The story is highly thoughtful albeit too dark for some to handle, but nonetheless, I'd encourage you to read it, it does provide some heavy food for thought.

I'll leave you with this quote from the book: -

"No form of revenge could have made me hate you any less. If I had cut the two of you to shreds with a knife, I think I would have hated the little pieces of you just the same. I realized that revenge was never going to wash away what had happened, never going to make me stop hating you with every ounce of my being."

P.S: Don't forget your milk!

WORD GAMES

Word Quiz

Without using your internet searching abilities, try to answer to following questions about words. Most of them would involve guessing the words from the origin.

1.) X is a notable error in lexicography, an accidental creation, or ghost word, of the G. and C. Merriam Company's staff in the second (1934) edition of its New International Dictionary, in which the term is defined as "density." On July 31, 1931, Austin M. Patterson, Webster's chemistry editor, sent in a slip abbreviating density as "D" or "d" (specifically in that order). This was intended to add "density" to the existing list of words that the letter "D" can abbreviate. The slip somehow went astray and was misinterpreted as a single, runtogether word.

Id X.

Ans.

2.) Editors of the Oxford English Dictionary have uncovered the use of "___" that predates the Internet by many decades. Even better, it was deployed, in writing, by an eccentric British admiral, John Fisher, who was prone to taking offense and running away in anger. ("I am unable to remain any longer your colleague ... I am off to Scotland at once to avoid all questioning," he wrote to Winston Churchill in May 1915. Prime Minister H. H. Asquith ordered him back.) The use of the abbreviation that's become synonymous with teenagers' textspeak comes from Fisher's memoirs: "I hear that a new order of Knighthood is on the tapis —" ___"— Shower it on the Admiralty!"

Fill in the blank.

Ans.

3.) X is a genre of hip hop music. Unlike the East Coast and West Coast style of hip hop, X has a highenergy and cluboriented feel. While other hip hop styles might involve a more conversational vocal delivery, crunk usually involves hoarse chants and repetitive, simple refrains. Lyrics are based on a rhythmic bounce, which is very effective in a club environment. The word is sometimes considered to be a blend of drunk and crazy. First use: The first popular figures to use the word were Atlanta rappers Outkast, who in their 1993 song and accompanying video "Player's Ball" said, "I got in crunk if it ain't real ain't right." But possible origin could be dated to 1993 when Conan O'Brien used the term X (an invented nonsense word) as a multipurpose expletive on his television program Late Night with Conan O'Brien.

Ans.

