

Vol. II - Issue - I

April - June 2013

Klound9

National Magazine for School Children
A Literary Venture by KiiT International School

₹. 40



La Mejor Palabra

The Enchanted Lion

Dory the Witch

Crickets in My Pocket

¡Viva España!



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From the Editor's Desk



We are very pleased to present the first anniversary issue of *Kloud 9* to our readers. It's the first milestone that we have covered, and we are confident that we will cover many more with your support. Looking back it is indeed heartening that *Kloud 9* has made inroads into several countries like USA, UAE, Singapore, the Netherlands and New Zealand. Many eminent people have been interviewed

in these pages, they include the likes of Rahul Dravid, and Mohan Sivanand, editor of the Reader's Digest.

This issue is a 'Spain Special'; we have a few writings from our readers in Spain and also a folktale from that country. Other than these, we have included an excerpt of an interaction between Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, Chairman ISRO and the students of KiiT International School, along with, of course, many stories and poems contributed by students from all over the country. With Easter just gone by, we have put in a filler explaining the significance of the Easter egg.

In an earlier editorial column, I mentioned that one of the purposes of *Kloud 9* is to nurture creative talent in children. We have a dream that some time in the future, some student who had begun his writing career in our pages would turn out to be a well known writer. Well, there is already a sign of our dream coming true. Harsha Pattnaik, an eighth grader, who wrote a story and a poem in two of our earlier issues, has published her first anthology of poems, *At the Twelfth Hour*. We have included a review of her book in this issue. By the way, it also pays to be a writer in our periodical. We have started giving monetary rewards to the students whose writings we accept for publishing. So, young authors, what are you waiting for? Email your stories to us; we are waiting to send you your cheques.

At a book signing event, one little girl asked me which was my second book. Well many of my readers know that my first book was *Room on the Roof*, and I am often asked about it. But this question simply stumped me, and I could not recollect my second book. So it is in life – no one cares for the second, it's only the topper who gets all the recognition. Come to think of it – who was the second person to climb Mt. Everest? Take a lesson from this, dear children. Strive to get there first, wherever you are aiming to go.

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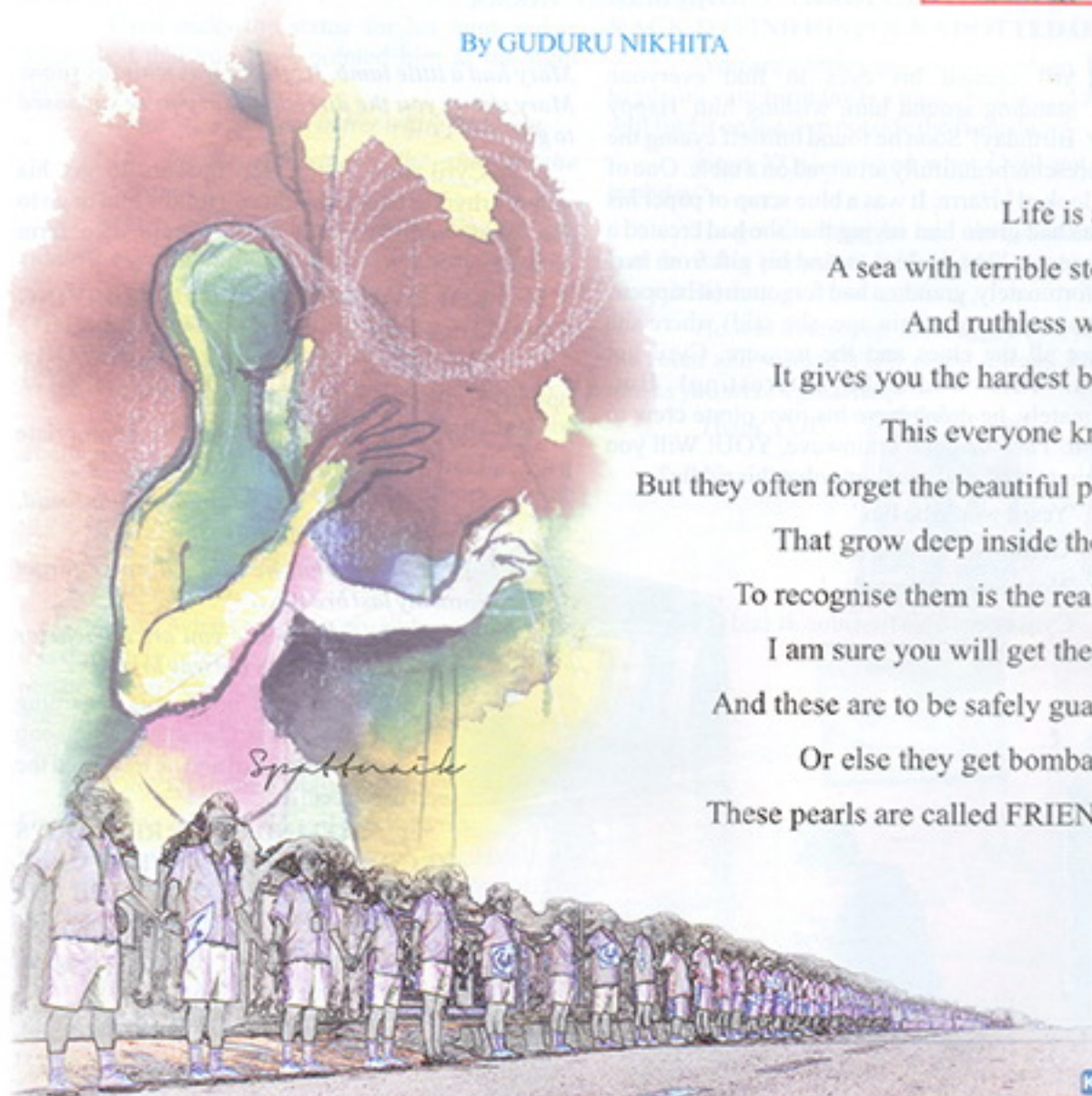
Story by Nigar Ataula

The Human Pearls



By GUDURU NIKHITA

Life is a sea,
A sea with terrible storms,
And ruthless waves,
It gives you the hardest blows,
This everyone knows,
But they often forget the beautiful pearls,
That grow deep inside the sea,
To recognise them is the real test,
I am sure you will get the best,
And these are to be safely guarded,
Or else they get bombarded,
These pearls are called FRIENDS!!



Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 9 student in DPS Vijayawada

Cyril's Treasure Hunt

By MANAV VARMA



Cyril opened his eyes to find everyone standing around him, wishing him 'Happy Birthday!' Soon he found himself eyeing the many presents beautifully arranged on a table. One of them looked bizarre. It was a blue scrap of paper his grandma had given him saying that she had created a small treasure hunt for him to find his gift from her! But unfortunately, grandma had forgotten (it happens to everyone after a certain age, she said) where she had kept all the clues and the treasure. Cyril got excited. This would be interesting! But, unfortunately, he didn't have his own pirate crew to help him. Then he got a brainwave. YOU! Will you be his pirate crew and help him solve this riddle?

'Yes, it would be fun.'

'Great.'

'Now, let's get started...'

Cyril opened his first clue. It said:

*Mary had a little lamb. Its fleece was white as snow.
Mary shows you the direction that you're supposed to go!*

Cyril immediately ran upstairs to get his nursery rhymes book. Should you follow him or go to the living room where a giant picture of a farm hangs?

FOLLOW HIM / GO TO THE LIVING ROOM. (tick the right option).

You ticked 'GO TO THE LIVING ROOM' option? You are wrong. Follow him.

Cyril quickly opened out the appropriate page and saw a paper stuck to it. He read out:

*When I was young my father said,
'Son, I have something to say.'*

*And what he said I'll never forget
until my last breath...*

*He said, 'Son, you are a bachelor
boy and that's the way to stay...'*

Cyril had no doubts regarding this one. It was his Dad's favourite song sung by Cliff Richard and he treasured the well used record.

GO FIND CLIFF RICHARD'S RECORD / LOOK FOR THE CLUE UNDER THE PHOTOGRAPH OF DAD AND YOU. (tick the right option).

Gosh! You've got wrong it again. There's no clue under the photo.

He rushed into the living room, opened the music cabinet to find his next clue:

*Then he called his twelve disciples
together and gave them power and
authority over all devils and to cure
diseases....9:1,2.*



Spallmark

Cyril was at a loss. Who gave power and to 12 people? He sat wondering what to do. May be you can help here.

You know that this is a verse from the Bible and it refers to Jesus Christ.

CYRIL CAN GO AND GET A COPY FROM HIS GRANDMOTHER'S ROOM / HE CAN LOOK BEHIND THE STATUE OF JESUS IN THE DINING ROOM. (tick the right option).

Cyril picks the statue for his hunt and is astonished that you have pointed him in the right direction.

*Little Miss Etticoat in her white petticoat,
The longer she stands the shorter she become.*

That's easy as he has heard grandma ask that riddle to everyone around. The answer is a candle.

TO THE DRAWER WHERE ALL THE ODD STUFF (BUT IMPORTANT) ARE SHOVED IN / TO MOM'S WARDROBE WHERE CLOTHES ARE. (tick the right option).

Well, sorry you are wrong again. It might be a better idea to just follow Cyril.

Wound around a candle Cyril finds a scrap of paper. This clue baffles him yet again.

The best way to my man's heart is through his...

'Now, what could that possibly mean? Man, this definitely refers to grandpa. How do you get to a person's heart? Certainly not through his throat. That goes into one's tummy. Maybe I need to go up and ask him that,' thought Cyril.

'Do YOU have a clue to help me?'

Grand pa was asleep and Cyril was in two minds as to whether he should wake him up or not. His huge whale like stomach was moving up and down in a rhythmic manner with his loud snores.

'Hey wait a minute. I can see a clue right here,' shouted Cyril as he spotted the familiar blue paper his grandma had taped on his grand pa's stomach. Hearing his shout, Grand pa woke up with a start and almost fell off the bed. On showing him the previous clue he chuckled loudly.

'Of course, I know exactly what she refers to here,' and he pointed to his huge tummy.

This clue is too easy for words.

What comes up when the rain comes down?

YOU COULD SAY CLOUDS/ THUNDER/ RAINBOW OR JUST FOLLOW CYRIL TO THE FOYER WHERE HE RUMMAGES THROUGH THE UMBRELLA RACK TO FIND HIS POLKADOTTED ONE.

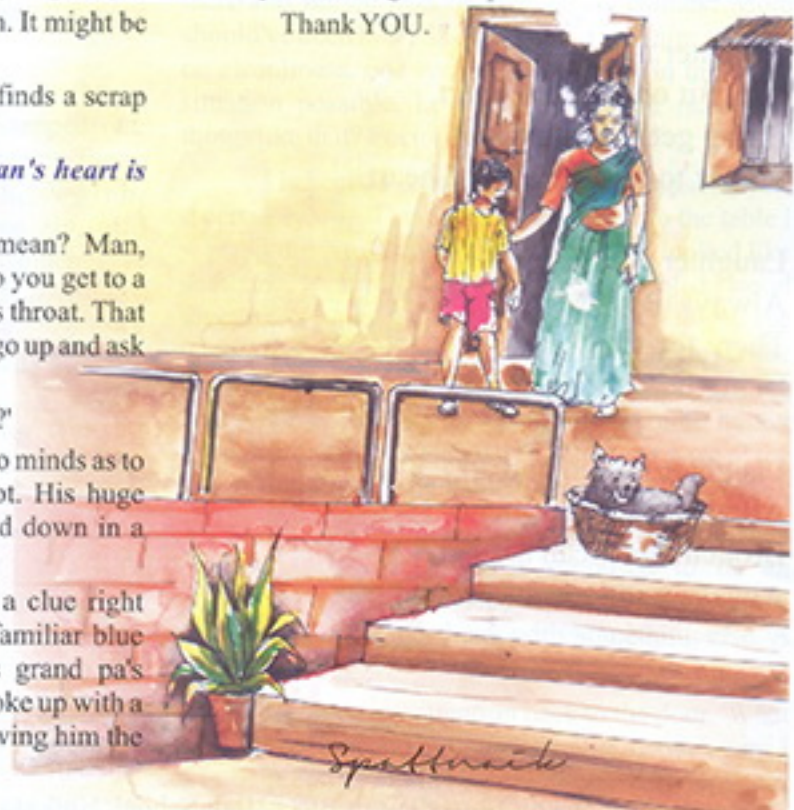
'You are a little genius my grandson. My gift to you on your birthday is a man's best friend and you will find it on the step outside the front door.'

Have YOU guessed what Cyril got on his birthday?

He got the thing he had always wanted – a cute loveable puppy all for himself! He decided to name it Sterling.

He was overjoyed. He hugged everybody in the room and wished YOU could always stay with him as you were a great help.

Thank YOU.



Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 10 student in Bhavans Rajaji Vidyashram, Chennai

Laughter



By UPAMANYU NATH

Laughter is a talent,
Some have it, others lament.
For those who haven't,
It is not a thing to be lent.

Laughter is also an exercise,
Works better than any device.
Very effective and so concise,
You ain't got time to revise.

Laughter is an art,
Using it one seems smart,
But to get it to start,
It's got to come from the heart.

Laughter is an attire
Always used in satire,
There for you to admire
Using it you'll never tire.

Laughter has no end.
All wounds it can mend
Broken ties it can amend
Always with you as a friend.



The writer is a grade 10 student in Birla High School, Kolkata

Kloud 9

Uninvited Guest

By SHAFIA JAMEEL

The forest was dark and quiet, and eerily undisturbed. A dense layer of fog formed a coat of grey, obstructing my view. I squinted a little to see clearly. Thick fog always obstructs even super human vision.

Suddenly, there was a thumping noise that came across from behind a copse of tall spruce trees. The earth shook and the noise steadily grew closer. It sounded vaguely familiar as my demon hunter instincts kicked in and my brain classified it to be footsteps. But what creature could be so gigantic? A couple of seconds later, the answer to my question was revealed.



A huge troll stepped out, frightening me to death, which, fortunately, did not happen. I could hear my heart beating furiously in my chest. I stood hoping that I could become invisible and that didn't happen either. The troll scrutinized me

out of the trees; my legs froze, refusing to move. All of a sudden, adrenaline pumped through my veins and I took to my heels, not knowing where I was heading for. I blindly ran as fast as my legs could carry me, hoping that the ugly troll wouldn't find me. The trees became a streak of dark blur as I ran past them. The cold wind whipped my face - its usual gentleness being turned into ruthless lashings.

The troll followed my path as I ran; his one gentle stride equivalent to several frantic ones of mine. Bloody unfair. His ugly, fat, ginger like fingers grabbed me by the waist and lifted me several meters above the ground. I tried to fight back but its grip was really tight. He took a good long look at me, turned around and walking back to where I had seen him before. He carried me like a tiny twig and took me to a small house (it looked small from the outside but was huge inside). He placed me on a table, tended a fire, chopped rotten vegetables threw the peels here and there and started to cook something. Blimey! Mom should've been here. She would've given him a lesson on cleanliness, one on one. Geez, even in the worst situation possible, how can I think of ridiculous things like that? Focus, I ordered myself.

I checked if my location was escapable; yes, it certainly was. There was a chair close to the table I was put on; huh! It was hardly a chair. It looked like someone had mashed pieces of jumbled wood together creating this haphazard thing. Uh-oh, the main problem (as always in a giant situation) is the door! I couldn't push it 'cause I was nothing compared to the giant. Even my demon hunter powers didn't help much. All I could do was smell the foul stink of rotten vegetables being stewed. Yuck!

I panicked. The troll had almost finished preparing his meal. Was I supposed to be an ingredient of his stew? Thankfully, he didn't want to check on me. He got busy with something else. A close call!

I turned my attention back to the door. 'What should I do?' I wondered, trying to figure out a way. I was helpless; I couldn't do anything except wait for my death. Ugh, why didn't they teach escaping tactics in situations like I was in, back at the academy?

The troll finished making the stew then he

picked me up (like before) and put me into a plate decorated with those ghastly vegetables. The smell was disgusting, of course. It didn't help having a highly developed sense of smell. The troll took the lid and masticated on onions. My heart was thumping loudly against my chest, so loud that it made me wonder if the troll could hear it. He brought the lid closer and closer and then....

I woke up!

'Whoa! Scary nightmare'. I muttered, gaining consciousness. I remember hearing continuous knocks on the door. But I'd mistaken it for my racing heartbeat. Daniel opened the door, and treaded softly in. "are you asleep?" he asked, subtly, his voice barely audible.

"Yes" I said, trying to calm myself. He chuckled.

I sat up slowly, curling into a ball, wrapping my arms securely around my knees. "Thanks for saving me" I said.

"From what?" he asked, his face blank with surprise.

"A troll was about to eat me for lunch" I answered, a smile gliding across my lips. He chuckled again.

"Did you sleep well?" Daniel asked.

I shrugged.

"Don't give me the silent treatment" he said, his lips pouting.

"I slept fine, barring the nightmare." I replied, a little annoyed. Why was he concerned about me?

"You're awake", I said after some time. It wasn't a question, just a statement of a simple fact.

"I couldn't sleep. I thought, maybe I could drop in, if that's okay with you" he added hastily.

"Sure, sure." I said, nonchalant. That line sounded all too familiar. I wonder why.

When I looked up, I found him studying me closely. His eyes were a familiar color of blue. Azure. I think. He realized I was staring at him. He tilted his head, seeing me look at him.

"Would you do me a favor?" he asked, his azure eyes pleading.

"Maybe" I said, cautious.

"How would you describe me?" he asked, curious. I exhaled deeply. Gee, how should I do this? Then a line intruded my thoughts. I remembered something my friend had once told me. She'd complained I talked like Shakespeare at times. I had this ridiculous urge to do it again. I just hoped I'd do it properly. Not that I knew how to, so I pulled out a bit from the great bard.

"Shall I start with- Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" I asked smiling.

He laughed a care-free laugh and I laughed with him, my laughter sounding odd to my ears - odd because it was a real laugh, a laugh that had no trace of pain in it, a laugh that said that I was happy. It took me some restraint to calm down. Daniel sat still for a minute or two before mumbling, "I wonder what your parents were like".

At this, every trace of humor left me instantly. I looked through Daniel. Not quite wanting to look into his eyes. Not wanting to answer his question. I pretended not to have heard him. A huge lump in my throat.



Daniel pursed his lips, his eyes apologetic. "I'm sorry" he said, in a small voice like a kid who'd been caught doing something he shouldn't have. I

shrugged. "Amy" he said my name in an uncertain voice, somewhat hesitant. "I've been meaning to tell you this...Even if your world fell apart, even if everything's over, there's still a good memory to look back at and smile. The world will be a better place when you smile." He continued, his whole attitude sincere, his face looked forlorn, like he knew how it felt to lose a loved one.

I looked up at him. His eyes were sad. Their color, a dull grey. I shuddered. What was it with his eyes? Changing colour like that!

"You okay?" he asked dubious, the color of his eyes abruptly changing to warm brown. The color strongly reminded me of dad. I faltered.

I nodded, uncertain myself if I was okay. He stared intently at me, and then relaxed. I held on to my stiff posture. Feeling like I was very literally falling apart.

He looked at me, an agonized expression on his face. My eyes were watery. I hadn't realized I was crying. I hid my face. I didn't know what I was hiding from - probably from myself.

I felt a comforting arm on my shoulder. I gulped back the sobs and quickly wiped away the tears not wanting to look weak. I took a deep breath in order to calm myself.

"Not crying anymore right?" he asked, his voice gentle. I nodded, no, definitely no more crying.


Abruptly, the door flew open. A pale looking person with a murderous glint in his eyes stood in the doorway. He glared at me, as blood cascaded down his lower lip, he bared his fanged teeth. By the time my brain could register the gesture. I was shoved. I hit the wall, on the impact my back arched defensively, stinging slightly. Taken totally off guard, I chided myself. I tried to get my bearings back. The furious pumping of blood that was loud in my ears did not really help. My acute sense of smell kept picking up a really foul odour, blimey, it was just the same scent the troll had wreaked. Or maybe, that was the way my brain had portrayed it in my sleep.

Analyze the situation, regain control, I ordered myself. I reached out for the closest weapon. I couldn't feel any; it took me a minute to realize I was in my night dress. Closing my eyes.

When I did open my eyes. He was gone. Both Daniel and the intruder were...gone.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 10 student in Oasis International School, Bangalore



Weird but True

Nose prints can be used to identify dogs, just like fingerprints of humans.

Days are longer than years on the planet Mercury.

Bamboo can grow about an inch in one hour.

It's impossible to breathe and swallow at the same time.

All of the blood in your body travels through your heart once a minute.

What Planets do in The Milky Way



By HARSHA PATTNAIK

The auburn aurora
Of the golden setting sun
Radiates in the pink evening sky
Not the end, but a story that's just begun

As the orb of the day
Languidly drowns below the horizon
The canvas slowly turns many shades darker
As the white clouds start to run

Twinkling stars light up the dark sky
As the shy moon peeps from behind
The curtains of the night
Like a young shy bride, confined

The small milky Mercury
And the hot evening star, Venus,
Sit close to the Sun, basking in its heat
As cold Uranus and Neptune get jealous

The big, big Jupiter
Surrounded by his herd of moons
Tells tales of his greatness
As moonless Mercury and Venus, enviously fume

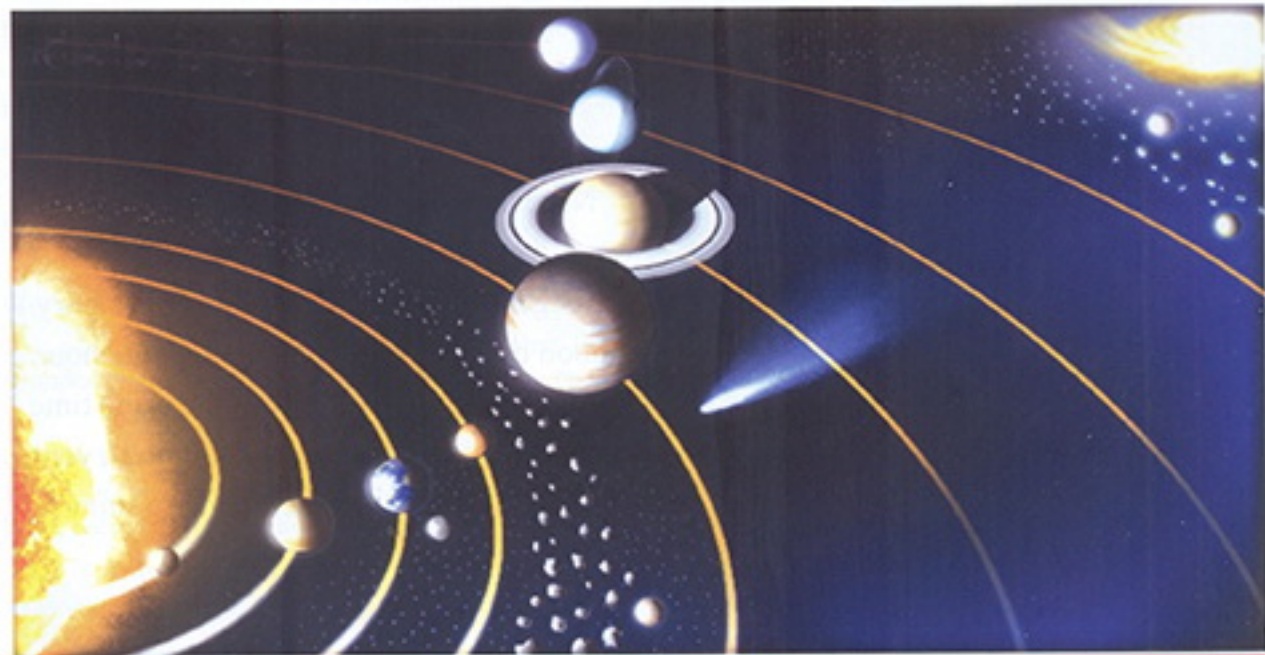
As Saturn hula-hoops
With his dusty, rocky rings
The stars in the constellations
Play connecting dots, simply merry-making

As the poor left-out-Pluto
Sadly stares at his friends
Harsha includes him in her poem
And tries to make amends.

Thus, here my silly poem ends.

Klound 9

The writer is a grade 8 student in
D.A.V Public School, Rajabagicha, Cuttack



The Mad Flower-Man



By **DHIRESH MOYONG**

Licha's parents were poor village folk. Licha was eight years old, and although life was unfair to her in many ways, she was happy because her parents loved her very much.

One summer day, Licha developed a high fever. Her parents were too poor to take her to a hospital, so she lay on her straw bed at home and suffered silently as her fever gradually rose. She felt she was about to die and so she called her father and said to him, 'I have a last wish, Father. I want a flower that devotees have placed at the feet of the gods in one of our temples. Please bring one for me.'

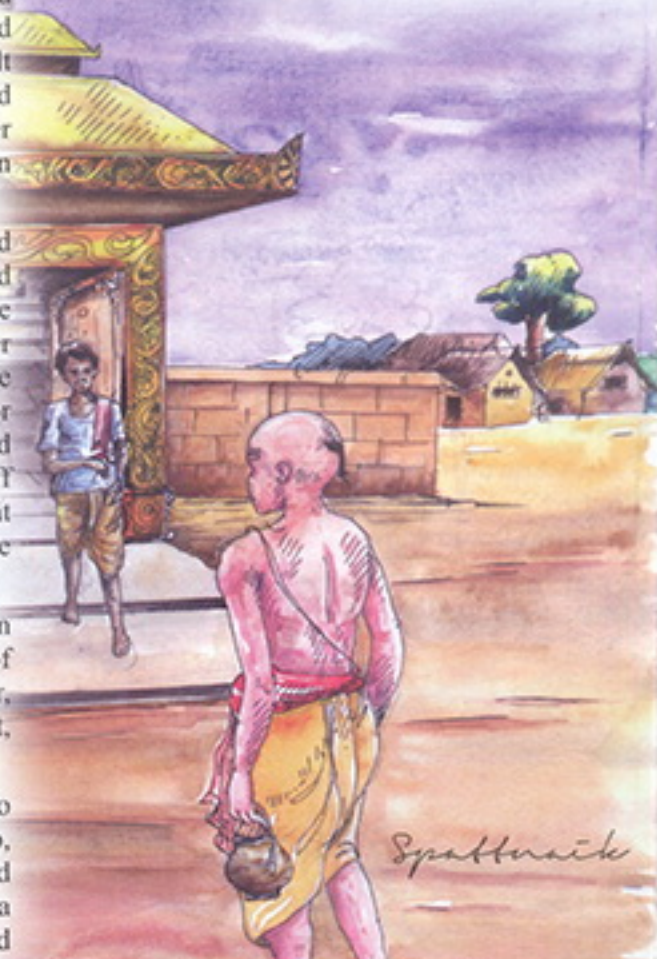
Now, Licha's family were dalits or so-called 'low' caste people, and in the area where they lived dalits were prohibited from entering temples because they were treated as 'untouchables'. Licha's father knew that if he dared to enter a temple to obtain the flower that Licha had asked for, he would be in for major trouble. At the same time, however, he could not deny his daughter her last wish. And so, he set off for a temple located in a nearby town, hoping that some miracle might occur through which he might be able to get the flower that Licha wanted.

Licha's father walked hesitatingly, deep in thought and worry, till he finally reached the gate of the temple. He didn't have the courage to go further, but just then he thought he heard a voice calling out, 'Don't worry! Come in!'

'It must be the voice of some god,' he said to himself excitedly, believing it to be a miracle. And so, he walked briskly into the temple premises and before anyone could see him quickly grabbed a flower that was lying at the foot of the idol that stood at the far end, in a dark corner. Then, he ran out, in a tearing hurry to get back to his daughter with the flower that she so desperately wanted.

Just then, the priest of the temple happened

to enter the temple compound. Seeing Licha's father rushing out, he suspected that something was wrong. He asked him where he was from and what his caste was. When Licha's father told him that he was a dalit, he flew into a rage. He shouted out to his neighbours, telling them that a dalit had dared to enter the temple.



On hearing the priest's loud clamour, a gang of men rushed into the temple compound, armed with sticks. They beat Licha's father so badly that he almost fell unconscious. Then, they locked him in a

shed as a punishment. Seven days later, they let him off, but warned him never to enter a temple again.

Licha's father made his way back to his village. He was badly bruised and greatly distressed by the way he had been treated. But, at least, he cheered himself thinking, he had with him the flower that Licha had asked him for. When he reached his home, he cried out, 'Licha! I've brought you your flower! When you see it, you'll be so happy that you won't ever fall sick again!'

Usually, whenever her father returned home from a visit to the town, Licha would run out of the house, expecting a cheap toy or some chocolates - but not this time. Nothing stirred in the house; a depressing gloom greeted him.

The father's heart skipped a beat. 'Licha! Licha!' he shouted at the top of his voice as he stood staring at his daughter's empty bed.

Just then, his neighbor called out to him. 'Brother! Your Licha is no more. She died waiting for you and the flower you had promised her.'

But that wasn't all, the neighbor added. Licha's death had proved to be such a shock to her

mother that she had a massive heart-attack and died just minutes after her daughter's death.

The jolt caused by the death of his daughter and his wife was simply too much for Licha's father to bear. It drove him mad and he lost all his senses.

If you visit his village you can still see him—'The Mad Flower-Man' as he is now known—sitting all day outside his house, waiting for



Licha with the remains of the flower she had asked him for in his hands, hoping that one day she might come back so that her last wish could be fulfilled.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 9 student in Mahabodhi School, Arunachal Pradesh.

Riddle

Q. The ages of a father and son add up to 66. The father's age is the son's age reversed. How old could they be?

A. There are three possible solutions for this: the father-son duo could be 51 and 15 years old, 42 and 24 years old or 60 and 06 years old.



Yesterday



By AMITA RACHEL THOMAS

I stand in the rain; I choose to forget all the pain,
But I can't. In all my distress I try to keep myself sane.
Because yesterday the angel of death took with her a soul
The soul of one a child loves most- a grandpa's soul.

Yesterday I saw him in the coffin all stiff and dead.
I was heartbroken, comfortless; bitter tears I shed.
It didn't matter when I had to kiss his ice cold pate.
I just wished he hadn't died then, but sometime late.

The hour passed and in the flick of the minute hand,
I found myself at the graveyard with sand in my hand.
The coffin was lowered and I knew that this was
The last moment, the final moment after this no grandpa

I still stand in the rain hoping to forget all the pain,
But I can't, it's so agonizing, I can't push it down the drain
I miss my grandfather, I miss him a lot.
So much that I doubt this memory will ever clot.



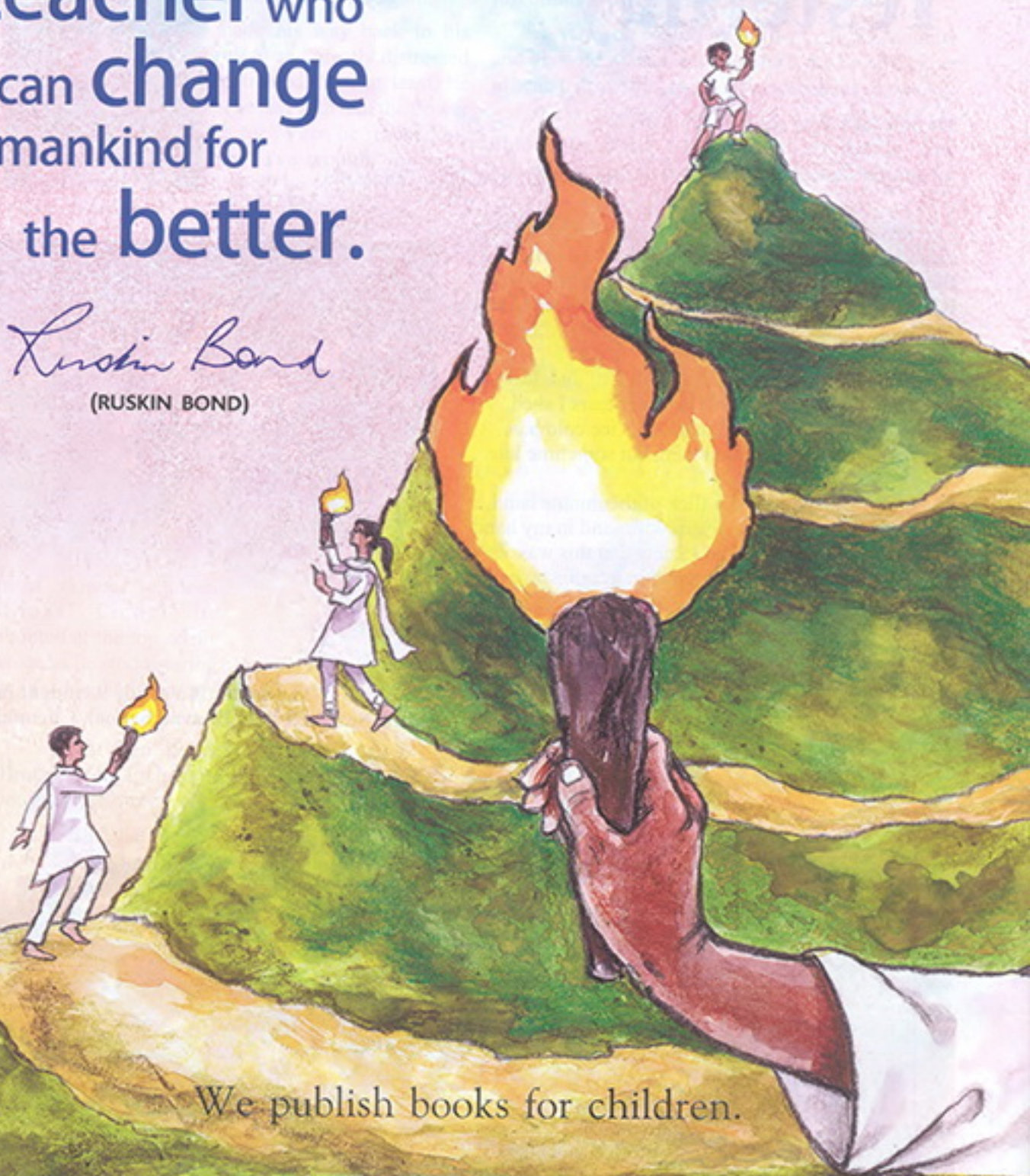
The writer is a grade 9 student in
Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan School, Chennai

Kloud 9



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The Regretting Father

By DEEPALI AGGARWAL



For ten years, Ram had not seen his daughter Ratna.

Inside his heart was a deep desire to meet her but also was the pain which she had given him ten years ago. Ram wiped stream of tears off his cheeks while he remembered Ratna. He was just pacing up and down in the verandah when a small cat caught his eye. She was alone and had an expression of innocence on her face.

Ram bent down and picked her up in his hands. This reminded him of the moments when he first carried the crying infant Ratna in his arms, when her mother was in her death-bed, demanding a promise from him in her last minutes. She wanted Ram to be the mother to Ratna. But now the time had changed as had the promises. Keeping all those memories behind, Ram kept the cat with him and named her Roohi. He fed Roohi carefully, affectionately every day. The innocence of the cat and the way she drank water reminded him of Ratna. He remembered how he used to scold Ratna when she drank water standing, and how she used to sit down obediently and drink it.

In the morning whenever they both went to the temple the panditji used to give her prasadam (chamamrit). One day she said to the holy man, "Panditji, my father says you should sit while drinking water, otherwise it would affect your lungs. One of the reasons that endeared her to everyone was this innocence of hers. They both were happy and Ram did everything in his powers to play his roles of dad and mom.

Ram had not realized that his child had blossomed into a young lady until his neighbour, Mr. Sharma proposed her marriage with his son. Ram agreed to the proposal without bothering to ask

Ratna. This decision of her father stunned Ratna. She had never expected this from her father. She could not figure out a way to tell her father that she loved somebody else and wanted to marry him. Eventually, after a few sleepless nights, she ran away from home, leaving her father alone and devastated. This was the only act of filial disobedience she had ever done in her life - an act that snapped the father-daughter bond forever.

Ram's mind got diverted when the cat Roohi jumped on to his lap. Ram was happy. Time had healed him. He had learned to live on without his daughter. Now he had a great companion. He fondled the pet.

Suddenly one day Roohi fell ill. Ram immediately took her to the hospital. She was admitted there. The vet asked Ram to get some medicine. Ram could not see her for a couple of days and he grew very worried. He feared that he might lose Roohi. But hiding all his emotions he waited for good news from the vet. After days of waiting the vet declared that Roohi was fit and fine. Ram was very happy as if he was given a direct access to heaven. He took Roohi home. At night he lovingly fed Roohi supper. Roohi delightfully ate it and asked for more. She kept eating the whole night and the following day. Seeing this, Ram got angry and scolded her: "How much will you eat Roohi? You will fall sick again. You have already had enough. Now stop gorging."

Roohi went off quietly. After 2-3 hours Ram came out searching Roohi, but she was nowhere to be seen. He was grief stricken. He thought Roohi had left him as Ratna had 10 years ago. He started wondering what his fault was. He should not have scolded Roohi; but then was scolding Ratna right? Or should he have admonished both of them politely?

Once again darkness shrouded his life and he lost his hopes. He felt intensely lonely for he had no one to love and no one to love him.

He searched Roohi everywhere - in the streets, parks but she was not anywhere. He abandoned the hope of seeing Roohi again and was

He drifted into the past, one moment recapturing memories of Ratna's childhood and the other moment touched by Roohi's care for her kittens. A few years ago he had come to know that Ratna had a son. Roohi's motherly love reminded him of his own wife and her wish, the promise she had taken from him, to

be a mother and father to Ratna. Suddenly tears rolled down his cheeks, pangs of remorse and guilt, staining his cheeks and all he could think about was his unhonoured promise and Ratna's forlorn face begging for forgiveness. He remembered the letter Ratna had written to him after she had left home, asking him to forgive her. After all had he not himself

taught her to live for love alone? He decided he would make amends now. The letter lay somewhere on the bookshelf. He dug it out and found her phone number in it. Wiping his tears he perused the piece of paper and started dialing the number 9...

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 11 student in Mount Abu Public School, New Delhi



regretting his behaviour with Roohi. After a few days Roohi showed up mewling. Ram became very happy and Roohi caught his pyjama and took him to the garden in the backyard. Behind the bushes he saw four lovely kittens playing with each others. As Roohi looked at Ram, her glistening eyes told him those kittens were hers. Ram became very excited and started loving them. Soon Roohi settled down to suckle her kittens.

Ram started thinking of her daughter Ratna.

Witty Q & A

Q

1. If two's company and three's a crowd, what are four and five?
2. If there are four apples and you take away three, how many do you have?

1. Nine.
2. You took three apples so obviously you have three.

A

My Power

By SAKEENA TAYEBJI

Delicacies that make our mouth water,
Strawberries dipped in chocolate and biscuits swirled in butter,
Perfectly made tomato spaghetti and hot cheesy hamburgers,
My power is within these appetizers.

Mozzarella cheese stuffed pizzas topped with herbs,
Moisten my pink little taste buds,
Strawberry, peach and lemon ice tea,
Perfectly served with a slice of kiwi.

Lemon cheesecake, vanilla milkshake,
If I were a chef I would always bake,
Sizzling chocolate brownie with dripping ice cream,
To meet Willy Wonka would just be my perfect dream.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 10 student in Activity High School, Mumbai



True Colours of Life



By MARGDWITEE



Lone is this life,
And lone is this world,
Everyone to shine,
And no one to fall.

Love is a word mistaken by all,
Here and there it blows in the air;
Every single heart to beat
And get its call.

Sun is still and moon is still,
But people are here to change;
With the clock ticking by,
And changing everyone's will.

Luck and fortune are all by grace,
Money and power are the best.
The needy has his no trace,
But to make use of the rest.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 10 student in
DAV Public School, PPL Township, Paradeep

The Perfect Plate of Biryani



By VARTIKA CHADDA

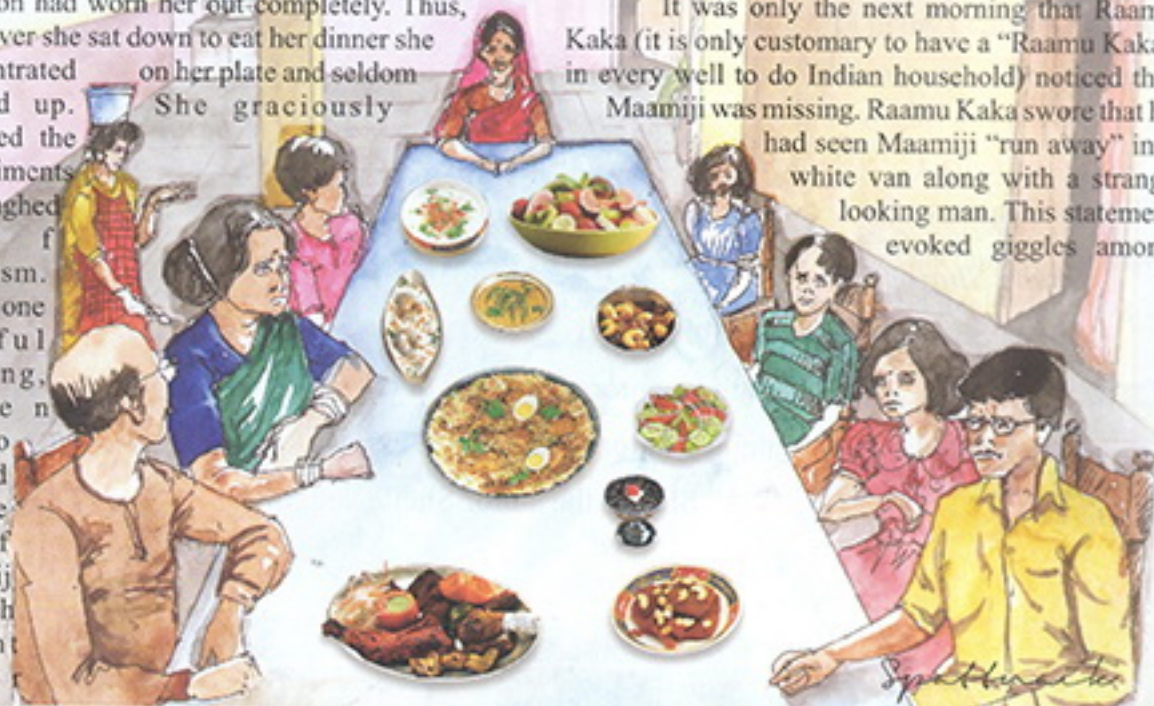
Every family has a secret: a funny one, an embarrassing one, a ridiculous one and often a scandalous one. Well, my family, too, has secrets and we certainly aren't experts at keeping them. Mine is a big family: it has a whole assortment of uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, bhaiyas, bhabhis, didis, pets and what not. So, one can very well imagine how difficult it gets to keep a family secret. Hence, when the cat is out of the bag, it instantly becomes the talk of the town.

Once, my entire family assembled at our ancestral home of Amritsar for Diwali. Sixty-two people in the house can drive any host up the wall and our host, my Maamiji, was no exception. She was a large handsome woman, all of 58 years, who had the task of cooking and washing for everyone. Her plump face always had a smile but this festive occasion had worn her out completely. Thus, whenever she sat down to eat her dinner she concentrated on her plate and seldom looked up. She graciously

accepted the compliments and laughed off criticism. Then, one fateful evening, when everyone had polished off Maamiji's much sought after

lamb biryaani, there ensued an argument. It started with a trivial issue like family inheritance and went on to grave issues like the plummeting standards of Maamiji's biryaani. Maamiji had spent the greater and better part of the day cooking the delicacy and she wasn't expected to put up with any sarcastic remarks. However, this did not prevent the Senior Maamiji from questioning whether the biryaani was actually a biryaani or not. Maamiji went red with anger and barked what the former meant. The Senior Maamiji demanded what the difference between pulao and biryaani was. Maamiji was rendered speechless. She stood there, gaping with her pupils dilated and her eyebrow almost invisible behind her curly, oily hair. Then, Maamiji turned and marched off to her room. Nobody bothered to inquire as this was a perfectly normal end to a family squabble.

It was only the next morning that Raamu Kaka (it is only customary to have a "Raamu Kaka" in every well to do Indian household) noticed that Maamiji was missing. Raamu Kaka swore that he had seen Maamiji "run away" in a white van along with a strange looking man. This statement evoked giggles among



the youngsters while the elders shook their heads in disappointment. Senior Maamiji had to endure everyone's accusing glances. "Well," she said, "She was certainly no culinary genius."

This secret, not unlike many others, was soon out. Maamaji, whose wife had "run away" with a strange looking man, was now the butt of all jokes but strangely enough he wore a genial look on his face and sported a brilliant smile. The jibes didn't seem to bother him rather he joined in them, gladly. "A strange looking man ruined a twenty year old matrimonial relationship", was the general verdict.

A year passed by with no sign of Maamiji yet Senior Maamiji was sure she would return as she had left a greater part of her dowry behind. As predicted, Maamiji returned, dressed up in a fake red Ed Hardy t-shirt and a pair of blue pants. She leaped out of the white van like a Bollywood hero and charged up the steps like a rampant bull. She kicked open the door

and loudly proclaimed, "While making pulao you cook all the ingredients together; on the other hand in a biryaani you cook the meat and rice separately and then put them together and cook once again in order to preserve the flavour of both."

Silence.

Maamaji found his tongue and uttered, "Is it you, is it really you?"

Senior Maamiji answered, "Why do you ask the obvious? Of course, it is she." Then, addressing Maamiji she inquired, "Where were you the past few... umm ... weeks?"

"Year," Maamiji corrected her. "I was in Hyderabad all this while learning the secret of cooking the perfect plate of biryaani. My brother, who is a chef, was with me."

This time Senior Maamiji was left with her jaw open while Maamiji went into the kitchen to start cooking the perfect plate of biryaani.

Cloud 9

The writer is a grade 11 student in Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram, New Delhi

Tongue Twister

Sheila Shorter

Sheila Shorter sought a suitor;

Sheila sought a suitor short.

Sheila's suitor's sure to suit her;

Short's the suitor Sheila sought!

- By Anonymous

Bound & Caged

By SANCHIT KUMAR THAKUR



"Sitting by to see the setting sun,
Again and again my heart thumped.
Glory had swept past me,
Now nothing was there for me to believe.
I had become a mere body without a soul,
Kept my emotions well within my stock...
Chirping of the birds I could hear,
Having fun flying here to there and all over!
Amidst all this a fire burnt,
It's in my own aching heart.
There somewhere my drooping mind,
Emits around a dying light.
Reaching, fading, until it couldn't survive ...
Jealousy arouse in my deep down inside,
Endless anger was burning me alive,
Endless anger... and the birds flying..."

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 12 student in
Oak Grove School, Jharipani, Dehradun

At the Twelfth Hour

Book Review



By POOJA JOSHI & RITIKA GOENKA

The young Harsha Pattnaik is a child prodigy. *At the Twelfth Hour* is an assorted collection of poems, ranging from Haikus to Odes, that reveals her versatility. The poet writes with a deep understanding of her experiences in her formative years, which is evident in many of her poems like *Halycon*, *Serendipity*, *Mother and Dandelions*. Her titles like *Serendipity*, *Luck* or *Dandelions* – the beautiful flowers – reveal her insight into the world of aesthetics. In the poem *Ode to Nature* with ABCB rhyme scheme – the budding poet has enunciated her calibre for high quality poesy.

In the poignant lines of *My Mother* she uses similes to provide an emotional depth to her central character. "She is like the fresh air" reveals the omnipresent guardian for children. *My Tattered Old Shoe* personifies the shoes "she walked miles with me climbed the highest peaks ... and danced on rotten teaks" - an ordinary thing made extraordinary by the poet.

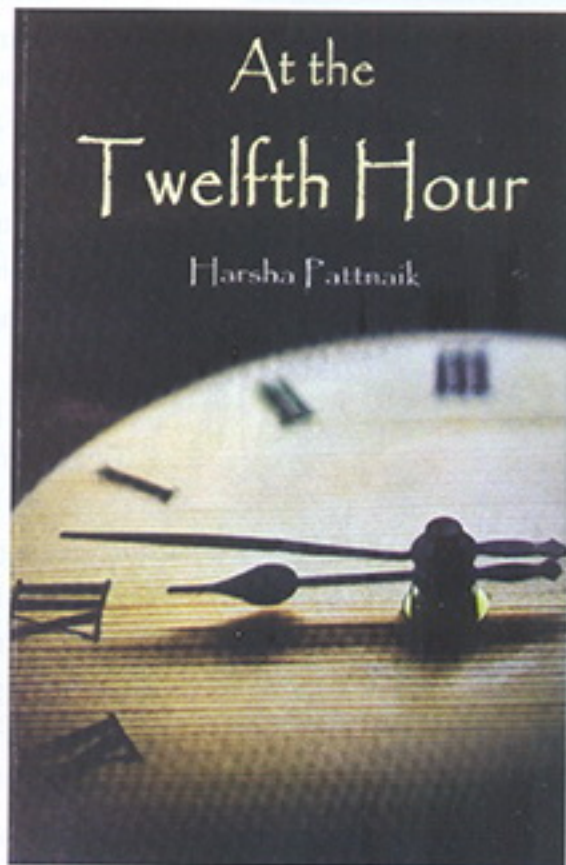
Birthday Cake reveals the importance of green broccoli and avocados and fresh sprouts for growing children, because without eating them Mister Beans fell sick. Poems like these candidly prescribe the requirements on growing children.

The title *At the Twelfth Hour* is all the more significant when one gets to know that the poet just turned twelve when she published the anthology. Besides, according to her, the muse strikes her at midnight, when she pens most of her verses. Come to think of it, Harsha is only in standard 8, and what a

nice collection of poems she has already written! When children of her age are browsing the net, unnecessarily, or wasting time in other ways, this diligent poet composes passionate strands of poetry. With such a start to her literary journey, she is sure to make a distinguished poet. No wonder, the eminent poet and Padmashree awardee Shri Jayant Mahapatra is all praise for this little poet on the blurb and in his foreword.

In the end, the poet has asked a question to the reader, "Didn't my poems leave an impression on you?" Yes it was a worthwhile read!

Kloud 9



The reviewers are grade 10 students in KiiT International School, Bhubaneswar

What is a morning without some existential crisis?

By REVATI DESHPANDE

Finally. I slid the balcony door open as the cool salty breeze thrust itself upon me, grabbed my coffee and sank into the plush loveseat.

This was right. Everything was just right.

I had a beach-house all to myself, away from every problem, every person, free to do whatever I liked for a change.

And I liked sitting right here watching the gradual sunset, listening to the waves racing each other to the shore, sipping my piping hot coffee.



I liked watching the sun, which was now a big gold coin barely touching the horizon, paint the colors of the sky, constantly changing its mind between shades of blue, orange and pink.

I liked snuggling into my big fluffy turquoise jacket, which I had saved up for a day just like this, a day when I would have the time and the liberty to luxuriate in its cozy warmth.

I could sit here forever, just doing nothing for a change, just looking at the sky, sand and sea. It

might sound quite boring, but I believe this is where my equilibrium lay.

Nothing could destroy this; I just knew it, and not even my paranoia could get in the way.

Trrriinnnggg!

Oh Good Lord, where is that awful sound coming from? Trrriinnngggg! It's getting louder by the second and- where did the sun go all of a sudden? The waves, why are they getting so furious? An earthquake? Trrriinnngggg! I'm not prepared for an earthquake! Oh no, now the coffee is all over the floor and the mug's broken Trrriinnngggg! and how will I answer to- did I have anyone to answer to? Was this even my house? Trrriinnngggg! I can't see anything with the sand in my eyes, must be a really bad storm. Trrriinnngggggg! I should just go inside. Wait, where's the house?

Where am I? Am I flying? Did the storm lift me off my feet?

TRRRRIINNGGG!

I can't breathe...

Click

7:02 a.m.

I drag myself out of bed. I'm feeling quite strange. What was that dream I had? Oh right, the Grand Beach House. Well, that was most definitely just a dream because I am still in my ancient (when I say ancient I mean dawn-of-time-ancient) studio flat, with the musty, worn out wallpaper peeling off the walls and the carpet discolored with its various stains, smelling incredibly...

Note-to-self: Clean up around the house. It's been a while. Or who knows. Maybe I'm dreaming right

now, having a really bad nightmare...oh just stop Abelia, back to reality.

7:04 a.m.

Note-to-self: Buy a tube of toothpaste.

Note-to-self: Refill Cavities.

Note-to-self: Fix the water heater.

Note-to-self: -Wait, what was I just thinking?

7:15 a.m.

Ugh. Why do I even try making my own coffee?

Note-to-self: Grab a Starbucks on the way. Wait. I don't think I have enough money to spare...this coffee will have to do today. In fact, I'd rather put a little money in my savings jar.

Note-to-self: Put a solid lock on the savings jar and give the keys to Martha. I need to stop "borrowing" from it.

7:20 a.m.

Note-to-self: Abelia. Abelia. Stop staring at the Seychelles postcard. You won't get there by dreaming about it. Abelia. ABELIA!

7:22 a.m.

Note-to-self: Get mom some more books about knitting. That's the only thing that she seems to enjoy doing all day in the hospital.

7:31 a.m.

If today was your last day.

When did I stick that post-it up?

Note-to-self: Stop sticking post-its with useless inspirational quotes on the dashboard. Soon the entire car will be filled if I keep up this way. With useless, useless, *useless* quotes.

But what if today was my last day?

I could crash my car and get a fatal head injury like they do in movies. Get caught in a sudden terrorist attack and get shot. Trip over that hobo in front of the shop and die of embarrassment. Not to mention, the stench. The possibilities were endless.

Beep-Beep

You have 1 unread message*

Hey Bell, I have to leave urgently, so the keys to the shop are under the mat. I hope you're not bailing today, there's no one to take over your shift.

Xoxo

But what if I did die on the way? Oh that would be just horrible; I would've spent my entire life in the same town, with the same people, doing things just so that I barely got by.

If I did die today, my entire life would be pointless. Well, then, I wouldn't die today would I? There has to be a point to my existence. Doesn't there?



If today was your last day.

Well if it was, I definitely wouldn't spend it like this- going to work at a shop which barely saw any customers.

I would be in Seychelles. I had enough money to fund a trip there and besides it would only be a one-way trip and a one night stay at whatever resort I chose.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 12 student in Ahmedabad International School

The Clock Strikes...

By KHUSHNUMA DUBASH



The clock strikes eleven and exactly an hour left,
For our probable journey to heaven.
The Minoan calendar which has never been wrong,
Has predicted mankind's doom.

As an hour is left I begin to think about
The tempests and rainbows I have lived out.
I thank the stars for the realization
My destiny is my creation.

I have been fortunate to hear the raindrops on my window sill.
The laughter of little children which gave me a new thrill.
Family and friends who have stood by me like stone.
Encouraged me to face the tempest when I was chilled to the bone.

They have made me an eternal fighter,
Someone they look up to see brighter.
Someone who knows what it is to love and care
To make them feel better when bad-luck does stare.

I smile, let tears of joy trickle down my face
I'm not interested to be a part of the rat race.
I let the pure divine laughter ring through my ears
Knowing I caused this mesmerizing feeling.

As the clock strikes for the last hour
I'm happy in never being sour.
I have never seen the world
But I have always felt the beauty of the Lord.

I have seen it through my heart
And lived life without being a dart.
The world may end in an hour
But I have no complains against the eternal power.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 10 student in
Activity High School, Mumbai

Grandma's Tale



By ANUBHUTI GOHAIN BORUAH

Jonti, the baby rhino was again sitting all by himself with his back to the other animals by the banks of Donga Wetland amidst the tall grasses of the Kaziranga National Park.

"What is the matter Jonti?" his grandmother asked. She had sent him out to play with other baby animals but now she found him sitting away from them and gazing soulfully at the fishes as they jumped playfully in the water.

"Don't you want to play with your friends?" Granny asked. "Nobody wants to be my friend. They say I am too clumsy and big. When I run, others are afraid that I will crush them. When I kick the ball they make of wild grasses, it comes apart and they say I am ugly too!" Jonti sniffed.

"How dare they talk to you like that and why do you have to feel so low?" Granny rhino said angrily.

Jonti began to cry. What could he do? On the one hand, his friends made fun of him and on the other hand even his strict grandmother was scolding him for being timid.

His grandmother felt sorry for him and gave him a gentle shove. "I know, I have been harsh on

you. Now dry up your tears. I am going to tell you our story!"

"Our story!" Jonti looked at her in surprise.

"Yes, Jonti our story!" Grandmother said. "Millions of years ago we were found throughout the entire stretch of the Indo-Gangetic plains. Even as recently as, 3200 years ago, we were found in Pakistan, Gujarat and Sri-Lanka. But now, we are confined only to the tall grasslands and forests in the foothills of the Himalayas."

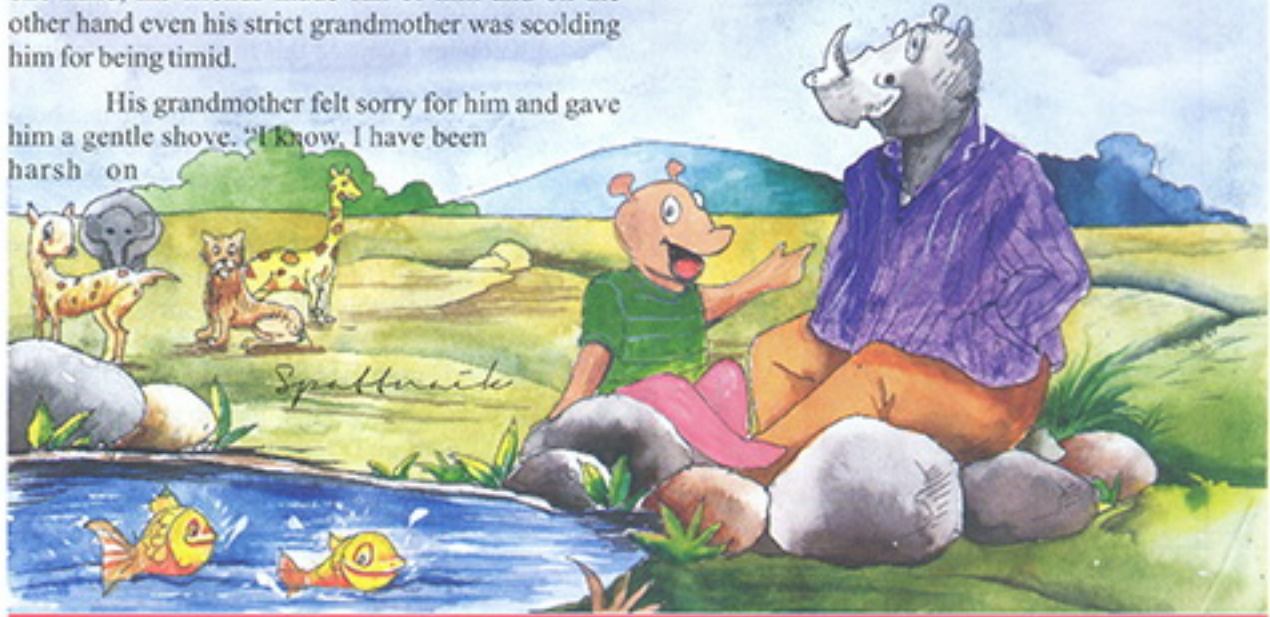
"But, why is it so?" the little rhino asked.

"Now, now, don't interrupt me, Jonti," grunted granny. "Where was I now? Yes, we belong to the Rhinocerotidae family and our ancestors were the relatives of the ancestors of Equidae."

"But, why don't we visit them?" Jonti asked.

"They are our very distant relatives. Anyway, we do not even have the time to visit our near relatives – the Sumatran rhinoceros and the white rhinos."

"Where do my cousins- the white rhinos live?" Jonti asked



"They live very far away in Africa," said granny.

"Oh!" Jonti's eyes began to grow wide. "It must be a very exciting place to live in."

"Now let me get back to our story. Jonti, you see I have one horn in my head. Every grown-up rhino has it."

"But granny, I don't have one. Is this because I am shy?" asked Jonti.

"No no; be patient, Jonti. I have told you many times that you will have it only when you are six years old. Now you are only four."

"Now, humans believe that our horns have medicinal properties and so they kill us. We rhinoceros can run very fast. We also

have an excellent sense of hearing and smell. Therefore, usually it is difficult to kill us. But we have very poor eyesight, which humans take advantage of to kill us. They dig holes and cover them with leaves. When we move unsuspectingly, we fall into these pits. They take our horns and leave us to die there."

"That was how mummy and daddy were killed," said Jonti's with tears swelling up in his eyes. He clearly remembered that fateful day, even though he was only a year old. Both his parents were found dead and their horns taken away. His granny tried to take him away from the scene but he began to cry. He fell on his mother pleading with her to get up but she did not respond. Many animals had gathered to pay their last respects and everyone had tears in their eyes. But nobody could comprehend his grief and loss.

"Uh...uh do you want to hear the story or not?" demanded granny.

"No, granny. I don't want to hear about human cruelty. What have we done to them that they treat us like this?" Jonti said angrily.

"No, Jonti all human beings are not so insensitive. In 1908, there were only twelve rhinos in Kaziranga. But due to the efforts of some good human beings, who genuinely care for us, we have increased and finally now, there are more than two thousands of us in Kaziranga alone. Remember Jonti, we are the pride of Kaziranga. We have made this National Park world famous. Most animals in the forest love, respect and are friendly with us as we do not eat them or their babies nor do we encroach upon their homes."

"But, why are they so unfriendly to me?" asked Jonti.

"Jonti, they are just children. You should try to be friendly with them. I am sure they will play and be your friends," Granny rhino said.

"Actually, you are right grand mom. I too have been aloof and at times even rude to them. I will go now and say sorry to them." Jonti smiled already feeling better.

"Good, I am proud of you, now get going," said Granny rhino. She turned and started moving away.

"Grand mom, where are you going?"

"I can see some tourists coming on an elephant. Let me pose for them so that they can photograph the pride of Kaziranga," Granny rhino said smilingly as she strode away majestically.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 11 student in Delhi Public School, Guwahati

Seven Days in Bed



By ABHILASH NEOG

That was a disastrous night for me, when I was returning from my friend's birthday party through the woods, to cut-corners, and suddenly met with an accident. It happened due to my carelessness and fear of moving through the woods in the midst of rustling sounds of dry leaves and cries of animals, and left me seriously injured and unconscious. When I came to my senses the next morning, I found myself on the bed, with bandages all around my body. My family members stood around me, gazing at me full of tension and worry. I felt a bit awkward and ashamed of myself.

With some bashfulness and timidity, I narrated my story as well as I could remember, though I wasn't clear myself how it had happened. While some scolded me for my carelessness, others laughed at my cowardice. It was later in the day that I got the sad news and was left heartbroken – I would have to remain in bed for a whole week, which meant I would miss my exams. Luckily, there was only one exam scheduled that week. I was really sad, not because I wouldn't be able to appear for my exam, but I would have to miss the interschool cricket match, which I had been looking forward to since many weeks.

The first day was spent leisurely meeting relatives, friends and neighbours, who came to enquire about my health. It wasn't the same for me in the coming days, which I had to spend in complete loneliness, when my parents left for work early mornings and returned late in the evenings. I found it boring and chose to read some books to while away the time.

This created in me a strong liking for books. As the days passed, my desire to read books grew. It made me feel happy, taking me into the world of science, into the space and stars. It created a new world in me of kings and warriors, made me experience the lives of great men and women, connected me from one pole of the earth to the other and filled me with knowledge, wisdom and moral values.

The day that I had been eagerly awaiting arrived and made me sad, because I wasn't able to play the cricket match. I wished my friends good luck, though I was very disappointed. I felt like crying out in sorrow and anger. I felt empty and lonely, as if the whole world had turned its back on me, as if there was nothing left for me. I felt as though I was going to stay in that condition for ever. Time too started ticking slowly, which made me all the more desperate and impatient.

Later on in the day, the news of my team's victory made me feel better. The visits by my friends instilled in me a ray of hope and confidence. The days passed this way with diverse thoughts, and finally the day arrived when I was allowed to get up and move around. I was permitted to attend classes and felt really happy.

Now, when I think back of those days of bed-rest, I feel as if it was only yesterday, when I was bored to death as the time did not move. But now time seems to fly, and I have realized that a moment gone by can never come back. Though I regret cursing those days of confinement, I am happy that it helped me develop the habit of reading.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 10 student in Carmel School, Jorhat

The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of *Dharma*

Book Review

By CADET AMIT KUMAR RAI

At a time, when the western world is getting more and more inclined to learn about Indian culture and when India is growing as an icon of 'Soft Power', I too couldn't resist my temptation to dabble in Indian epics and literature. In modern India very few people read the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* for the first time. The stories are always there in extracts of literature lessons, TV soaps and nanny's tales. They are 'inherent' in most Indian children, and my case was no exception.

One of my teachers introduced me to the book, "The Difficulty of Being Good: on the Subtle Art of Dharma", marvelously penned down by the widely acclaimed author and columnist, Gurcharan Das, and I was irresistibly impelled to read it.

He is a well known commentator and intellectual. His other famous works include 'India Unbound', 'The Elephant Paradigm' and the latest is 'India Develops At Night'. His writings have strong social relevance and their sinews run deep into the ancient Indian literature and culture.

The book is based on the epic '*Mahabharata*' and some episodes from the classic have been logically linked with the moral conflicts of modern man. The writer has succeeded in ingeniously equating the characters and time of the epic with those of his plot and the analogy is simply impeccable. Instead of retelling the story of *Mahabharata*, the writer focuses on some random incidents from the lives of its major characters and draws on their traits, and link them with our envy towards successful fellow humans, our courage to stand up against the evil when the evil seems all powerful, to keep our head when all around us are losing theirs and, our ability to trust in our rightful acts and so on – traits that readers would easily identify in themselves. If seen broadly, the book

emphasizes the three worldly goals- *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* which are needed to lead a more balanced life.

To quote the *Mahabharata*:

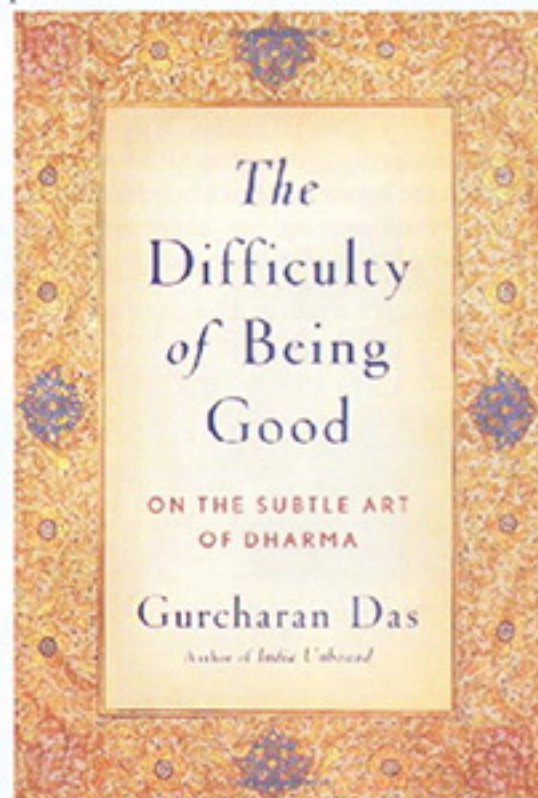
When this great incomparable tale, esteemed

By dispassionate man of wide erudition

Is studied in detail, their spreading insight

Into the three pursuits will conquer the earth.

The contents of the book are based on the characters of the *Mahabharata*. Ten characters of the epic and their attributes are explicated in great detail and with a deep understanding of life values. A chapter is devoted to each character.



- Duryodhana is the key character who drives all the contemporary *kshatriyas* to the D-Day. And what drives Duryodhana is his envy, his envy of his own cousins. The writer goes on to write: 'Envy is a natural and universal emotion, common to all human beings. It is all pervasive and if envy were a fever, the whole world would be ill.'
- Draupadi's insult in the game of dice acts as a catalyst to the war. Her questions about 'dharma of the king' embolden all democratic citizens of the present to question the *dharma* of public officials, especially when they are chastised constitutionally in broad daylight.
- When in exile, Yudhistira is questioned by his wife about the point of being good when it only brings grief. Yudhistira replies that forbearance is superior to anger and he justifies his passivity by his instinctive duty. He shows that the righteous is always more content than a knave even though the world may seem to be structured for the selfish, the powerful and the dishonest.
- As Arjuna sees the enemy troops in formation, he is left despondent; not by the might of the enemy but the affection for the men who stand across getting ready only to be killed. America's unjust wars in the name of global peace and 'War on Terror' are severely censured in the light of sympathy for the innocent lives.
- Bhishma's selfless devotion to his vow and his death at the hands of Shrikhandi highlights the necessity of our actions honoring our words despite our temptations for personal gains.
- Ashwatthama's wrath and revenge are motivated

by an owl. Here forgiveness and revenge come into conflict. The author compares this with the alternative situations of communal riots in India – 1992 Ayodhya communal conflict and 2002 Gujarat massacre. In the end *Mahabharata* itself seems to be a message of dharma and human effort, denying the supremacy of 'daiva' or fate over human will. Even the Pandvas have to go to hell for their unfair means, who are seen as virtuous throughout the epic. This motivates our today's society which is filled with dissent against governments, dumping all blames on them, staying complacent with folded arms and waiting for some angelic reformer.

In my entire analysis of the various characters of the book, I deliberately missed the evaluation of my favourite character. Though the character acted as the master strategist for the Pandavas and the ultimate redeemer, his guile is often questioned in the book. Known by various names, Krishna uses treachery, deceit and magic on behalf of Pandavas to make *dharma* win, but this is what makes him a human incarnation and *dharma* which is a very a subtle issue.

There is a difference between reading the *Mahabharata* and understanding it and yet again adopting its morals and principles in our lives. Even understanding can take place at various levels of intellect. The book "The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of Dharma" makes the epic incredibly pragmatic and reveals the *Mahabharata* as a contrivance to solve moral quandaries of the labyrinthine life of the world which, superficially, seems to bear no analogy with the time of the epic. This is what makes the book stand out in the crowd.

Kloud 9

**The writer is a grade 12 student in
RIMC, Dehradun**

A Gift That is Taken for Granted

By SWATI BARUAH.

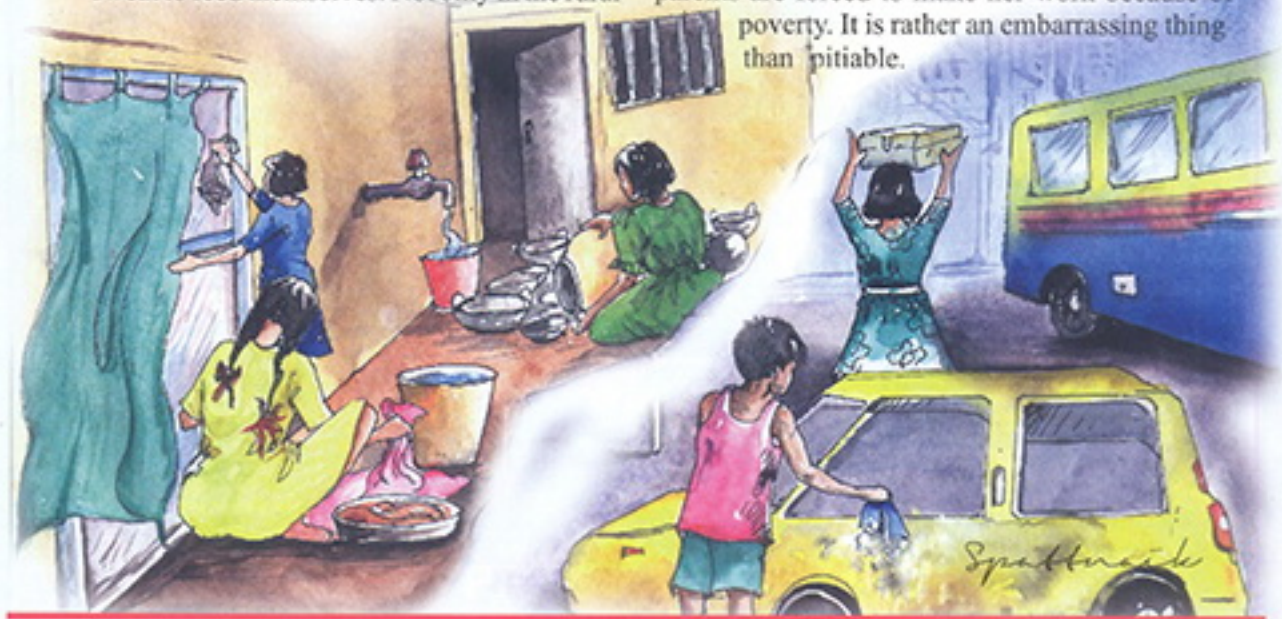


“CHILD LABOUR” is now-a-days a burning problem and has attracted a great deal of media attention. But, are we taking any steps to stop the evil practice? It has been declared in the constitution that every child till the age of sixteen years is to get an education. The Government of India has set up thousands of schools around the country. The students are provided with free education, free books and free uniforms. One of the most striking schemes provided by the Government is the “Mid day meal”, where the students are also provided with cooked food in the schools. Despite all these privileges, many children are prone to child labour.

One of the main factors responsible for this tragedy is poverty. Poverty has a disastrous effect on our country. Poverty and illiteracy go hand in hand. Thinking about a poor illiterate couple having five to eight children, it is obvious that they have no other option other than making their children a source of income. At a very tender age, they work and sweat to feed themselves. Not only in the rural

areas but we also come across children even in cities and towns who work to feed not only themselves but also their families.

As a child, the idea that education can be life to somebody was a joke to me. I hated going to school and cried each morning and insisted on not being sent to school. But, as I grew up I learned the value of a book and a pencil. Whenever we visited our paternal home I used to see girls of my age picking up logs of wood, some wiping the floor and the others helping their mothers with house hold chores. And in my little brain I used think that they were the luckiest girls, who neither had to go to school nor had any home work to do. Now as a grownup I can realise the value of education and now I find it quite amazing how I used to regard education as a near burden. Now I see these unfortunates every day - boys wiping and cleaning tables at tea stalls, fixing cycle tyres in mechanical shops, and not far away, the girl, named Aarti, doing the dishes in my own house. The girl's parents are forced to make her work because of poverty. It is rather an embarrassing thing than pitiable.



She was eight years old when she started to work in her locality. Now she is twenty, works in my house, and still supports her family. Once when I had an argument with my mother regarding my studies, Aarti came in after my mother had left and said, "Do not quarrel with your mother just because she asked you to study for two extra hours. God has given you the most wonderful gift and make use of it to the fullest. Many of us do not get the opportunity to education."

This problem of child labour can be overcome, to a great extent, by motivating the parents and the children to study. There are schools for parents too. And it is also advisable that people

who keep children as maids and as helping hands must educate those children in schools. In addition, private organisations and NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) should come forward to decrease the numbers of illiterates. It is also worth mentioning that educational institutes should also take measures to provide free education to all the downtrodden children of their locality by setting up Siksha Kendras (Education Centres). Until and unless this problem is rooted out and solved, we cannot dream of a better future and a better nation.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 10 student in
The Assam Valley School, Sonitpur

Symbolism of the Egg at Easter

Easter is a special time in the Christian calendar; a time when it is believed that Jesus rose from the dead after he was crucified on the cross. Easter is a celebration of rebirth and new life, and the egg is a symbol of this. However, Easter has pagan origins too. The pagan goddess who represents the rising sun and new birth is known as 'Eostre', which is similar to 'Easter'. Both the words originated from Scandinavia.

Eggs as a symbol of rebirth have been around for a long time. The belief that the world began with an enormous egg is something that has been attributed to the ancient Egyptians, Persians, Phoenicians, and Hindus

The tradition of the Easter egg is associated with early Christianity, where eggs were stained red in the memory of the blood of Christ. After this, the Christian church adapted the custom officially to represent the rebirth of Christ. Traditionally, hard boiled chicken eggs were painted in different colours, but now chocolate eggs are more common.

By Geraldine Lane, Teacher,
KiiT International School, Bhubaneswar



Kloud 9

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¡Viva España!



Spain is a European country located in the Iberian peninsula having Portugal, Andorra, France and Gibraltar (UK) as its neighbouring countries. The Mediterranean Sea in the south and south east and the Atlantic (Bay of Biscay) in the north west and north form the maritime borders of the country. It is separated from Africa by only 15 kilometres. The main language spoken there is Spanish, which is also spoken in several other countries. It is an official language in 23 countries and is spoken widely in many other countries. Spain became a major global empire in the 15th and 16th centuries, due to which the influence of the Spanish language as well the Spanish culture travelled to such distant countries in South America and southern countries of North America.

Spain is a democracy, under a constitutional monarchy; but the monarch is the symbolic head of the Kingdom, while it functions as a parliamentary government. The present King is Juan Carlos I. Spain is a member of the European Union (EU). Their currency is Euro. Prior to the introduction of Euro as the common currency of most EU States, Peseta was the currency of Spain.

What is the national sports of Spain? Bullfighting? No. It is Football. Spain is the current world champion in football.

But bullfighting has been a traditional and popular sport in Spain, and often referred to as the national sport. However, there is much controversy over it as it is considered a blood sport and one that is played with unequal opportunity to both sides. It remains a



traditional form of entertainment, though many no longer consider it a sport. A bloodless form of the game is played at many places within and outside Spain, where bravery and skilful manoeuvres are displayed by the matador without injuring the animal.

There are various other sports related to the bull. There is the festival of San Fermin in Pamplona, Spain, which is better known as



Running of the Bulls – a festival where bulls run through crowded lanes of Pamplona, often injuring people. It's a very popular festival held in July every year and attracts thousands of spectators from all over the world. This spectacular event gained international exposure through Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*. There is a similar festival in Tamil Nadu, called Jallikatu or bull taming spectacle celebrated during Pongal. Here the bulls are not killed and the 'matadors' don't carry any weapon.

Christopher Columbus, set out to discover a sea-route to India in his ship *Santa Maria*. It is another matter that he landed in America and thought he had indeed arrived in India. He died thinking he was in India. Such was the lure of India to the Spaniard.

Miguel de Cervantes is one of the most well-

known Spanish novelists. His novel *Don Quixote* is a magnum opus in Western Classical literature.

Did you know this about Spain?

- Spain has a free universal health care system.
- Spain is the number one country in the world in organ donors and transplantation.
- Spain is world leader in eco-agriculture.
- Spain is the country of the European Union with the highest number of university graduates.
- Spanish people usually have lunch between 14h-15h; and dinner between 21h-23h.
- Most of the Spaniards have siesta and no calls are usually made during these hours as a signal of sleep respect.
- When a woman gets married in Spain, she does not adopt the surname of her husband. She continues with her maiden surname.
- Average life expectancy in Spain is 82 years.
- In summer, the Sun sets around 22.00h.
- Spanish people cook with olive oil.

23 countries have Spanish as their official language. 500 millions people all over the world speak Spanish. Spanish is the second most influential language in the USA and Brazil.



Kloud 9

Surendra Mohanty & Maria Lopez de Bayas

La Mejor Palabra

(Spanish)

Hay muchas palabras
en el mundo.
Yo no puedo elegir
de entre ellas
El sonido más bello.

No puedo elegir
solamente un lenguaje.
No puedo elegir
la mejor palabra.

Tenemos Amistad.
Tenemos Esperanza
Tenemos Amor.

Tenemos Paz,
Sol, Libertad,
Luna, Danza,
Estrellas, Canciones...
Y muchas más.

No puedo elegir
Mi palabra preferida.
Así que, por favor, Dime,
¿Cual es la tuya?

This poem is written both in Spanish and English by the students of an English workshop organised by DINAMUR, an intercultural organisation in Spain. Violeta Sáez Garcés De Los Fayos is their educator under whose guidance the students have written and performed the poem.

The Best Word

(English)

There are many words
in the World.
I can't choose
among them
the most beautiful
sound.
I can't choose
just one language.
I can't choose
the best word.

We've got Friendship.
We've got Hope.
We've got Love.
We've got Peace,
Sun, Freedom,
Moon, Dance, Stars, Songs
... And so on.

I can't choose
my favourite Word.
So, please, tell me,
Which is yours?



Dory the Witch



The Enchanted Lion

(Spanish Folktale)

Retold by SURENDRA MOHANTY

ONCE UPON A TIME, there lived a poor girl who earned her living by herding cattle for a rich farmer. Every morning she would take his cows to the meadow and bring them back at dusk. One morning in the meadow, she heard a strange loud groan, which sounded like that of a man in pain. She rushed in the direction of the sound to find a lion sitting down and groaning in agony.

Scared as she was, she ventured close to the lion because he was groaning pitifully and making gestures with his paws as if he was human. She noticed that a large thorn had pierced his foot. She carefully pulled out the thorn and dressed his foot with her head scarf. The lion licked her hand softly and gratefully.

She then remembered her cows and rushed back to the meadow. But alas! They were

to her master empty-handed and narrated her story to him. But the farmer wouldn't buy her story. He was furious and scolded her and beat her up. "Tomorrow you will have to tend to my pigs. Look after them and be sure not to lose any of them!" he ordered her.

A year after this incident when the girl was tending pigs in the same meadow, she once again heard the same strange groan that sounded quite human. And upon rushing to the spot she found the same lion lying on the ground, hurt severely on his face. This time she wasn't afraid of the beast. She treated his wound with some herbs and bound it with her head scarf. The lion licked her hand softly and gratefully, like he had before.

Once again after treating the wounded animal she returned to find all her pigs missing. She looked everywhere but to no avail. She wept until



all gone. She looked for them everywhere but could find not a single one. She wept bitterly and returned

evening and then decided not to return to her master lest he should beat her up again. Instead, she climbed up a tall tree, sat on its branch and decided to spend

the night there. In a while a handsome young man came out of the woods, walked over to the tree on which she was sitting. He moved a large boulder that lay under the tree to uncover an opening with a flight of steps leading down. The young man descended the steps and shut the hole from underneath.

The maiden was very curious but afraid, yet she chose to wait until the man came out. In the morning the boulder moved and instead of the man a lion emerged from the hole. The lion looked around and trotted off into the forest. The girl climbed down the tree, pushed the rock aside and stepped cautiously down into the small opening. There she found a narrow path that led to a beautiful house. Inside the house she discovered several beautiful rooms including a library and a kitchen. She picked up a book and read for hours. Then she prepared dinner, ate some and laid the rest on the dining table along with her favourite book. 'I must get out before someone comes in and catches me, she thought and hurriedly climbed out of the hole and up into the tree.

At sunset, the young man came out of the woods to the rock under the tree and disappeared into the hole. Again in the morning it was the lion that emerged from the opening instead of the young man. Yet again the maiden came down from the tree, went into the house underground, spent hours reading her favourite books, and left the house, but not before laying out on the table a delicious dinner and another of her favourite book.

This happened for three days, and in the evening of the fourth day when the young man approached the tree, the maiden came down and said, 'Tell me who you are what may you be doing here.'

The young man was surprised to see a beautiful girl climbing down the tree, but he recognised her. 'So you must be the one who has been preparing my dinner and setting out good books for me.' He explained that he was a prince, who had been captured by a giant, years ago. The monster had cast a spell on him that turned him into a lion by day, and only by night he could remain in his human form. 'I am the same lion whom you helped twice earlier,' said the handsome prince. 'What's more, it's the giant who has stolen your cows and pigs.'

'How can you be freed from this evil spell?' asked the maiden very concerned about the prince.

The prince sighed. 'It's very difficult. If only someone could get a lock of golden hair from the head of the king's daughter, spin cloth out of it and then weave a cloak for the giant, would it be possible.'

'I will surely do that to help you,' said the girl and immediately set off for the king's palace. At the palace she presented herself as a very well-dressed and well-behaved girl, because she had washed and done her hair in an exquisite style, and good-natured she truly was. She was hired as a kitchen maid. Shortly everyone at the palace was talking about her good disposition and appearance, especially about her lovely hairstyle.

Before long, the princess too heard of her and sent for her. The princess was struck by the girl's delicate and attractive hair design. The princess asked her to comb and design her (the princess') hair every day. The hair of the princess was thick and golden, which the girl combed and arranged in lovely patterns each day. After several weeks, when the king's daughter was very pleased with her, the girl timidly asked her if she might cut off and keep one of her thick long tresses.

The princess would not let anyone take away a lock of her beautiful hair, which she was so proud of. So she didn't let the girl cut off a single strand. But the girl combed her hair each day with all sincerity and arranged it in more intricate designs. That pleased the princess enormously. After a few days the



girl repeated her request to be allowed to cut off just one long thick lock of her hair. This time the king's daughter gave in on one condition that the girl find for the princess the handsomest and finest prince to marry.

The girl agreed instantly for she already knew the handsomest and the finest prince. She cut off a thick lock of her hair and arranged the princess' hair in her best design as if all her hair was intact. Then she spun the hair into threads out of which she wove a cloak that shone like the sun and felt like silk. She took the cloak and showed it to the prince in the meadow, who requested her to take it to the giant who lived on the top of a mountain. He cautioned her to shout out to the giant that she was bringing him a cloak, or else the monster would attack her.

The girl climbed the high mountain and saw the giant was readying to charge at her, when she called out that she was carrying a cloak for him – just as the prince had told her to do. The giant calmed down and tried the cloak on. He was very pleased at the fit and the dazzle of the garment and asked the maiden what he could offer her as a reward.

'I wish, for my reward, that you free the prince of your spell so that he could return to his palace and stay human, day and night,' said the girl without a second's thought.

'I wouldn't do that,' snapped the giant. But the girl pleaded with him and told him that she had gone to great lengths to weave the cloak specially for him. The giant was so charmed by the cloak that he agreed reluctantly to free the prince, and said, 'You must cast the lion into the pond near the mountain, where he must remain submerged until he turns back to his human form. Only then will he emerge out of the water as the prince, free from the enchantment.'

The girl left the giant's mountain quite unsure if the giant had told the real secret to break the

spell or he had tricked her so that prince would drown. When the prince heard her and found that she was full of gloom, he said, 'There is no good despairing. You must do what the giant has told you to. Either I shall be free or I die.'

Next morning when the prince turned into a lion, the girl grudgingly cast him into the pond and waited with bated breath. The lion remained submerged for such a long time that she thought the giant had tricked her and that the prince was dead. At last, with a splash emerged the joyful prince out of the pond! It was daytime and the prince was in his human form. The enchantment had gone, they knew.

'Thank you for everything you have done for me,' said the prince full of happiness and gratitude. 'Would you be my bride?' he proposed.

'Oh no, that's not possible,' cried the girl. 'I have already promised the king's daughter that you would wed her; only on that promise did she allow me to take a lock of her golden hair.'

'Well then, let's go and meet your king's daughter,' said he, for he knew more than she did. They went to the palace where the princess lived. When the king, the queen and the princess saw the young man, they were overjoyed for he was their long-lost prince, who had been enchanted by a giant and taken away from the castle.

The prince reunited with his parents and his sister and told them how he had been rescued from the giant's spell by this beautiful maiden. He sought his parents' permission to marry her, which they willingly gave. And thus the peasant girl married the prince and later both ruled the kingdom and led it to prosperity. As for the princess, she released the girl from her promise, since she had saved the life of her brother. Nonetheless, the maiden managed to find another prince from the neighbouring kingdom and got the princess married off to him.

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Ek Kadam Aagey



Cricket in My Pockets



By ESTHER VALLADO

As a child, I always looked forward to weekends in my grandmother's country house. It was just 5 kilometres away from my home-town, and it consisted of a huge manor, a big patio, an orchard, a massive field and some more adjacent constructions housing different animals. There were always many dogs and cats there, aside from the pigs, cows, horses, chicken, rabbits, pigeons and others. I always chose one of the dogs to be my favourite, the dog which used to play the role of the brother or sister that I never had. I loved spending time in the fields, scrutinizing insects, molluscs, reptiles, plants and fungi alike. I very much enjoyed observing the behaviour of all creatures. I was happy amongst them, and I often ended up being spanked by my mum upon the discovery of some animals in my pockets when I came back home to my home-town.

My parents contributed very much to my appreciation of nature. Their hobbies always involved nature. They used to take me with them river-fishing and mushroom picking, which I enjoyed thoroughly. Well, the river fishing was of no interest to me, as I didn't want to join them in that concrete 'killing activity', but I used to love just accompanying them and spending long hours by the river observing all the flora and fauna around – diverse, beautiful and surprising. And I always liked mushroom picking. It is challenging and entertaining, and it makes you walk a lot and discover new places, animals and plants while you search.

To my despair, I soon started to witness very serious damages to the nature that I so much appreciated. A water reservoir was built on the field that used to host the biggest mushroom yield we knew about. As a result, all the mushrooms were gone, of course, but also the river's natural cycle was interrupted, and the trout and salmon population was consequently affected, leaving my parents river

fishing excursions out of the question. A big hotel was built in the middle of another huge field at the feet of the mount chain we used to visit, ruining the views as well as the rural and wild feel of the area. 'Progress' slowly started destroying all the most beautiful things we knew about. This made me very angry, and I decided to devote my life to protect nature from being destroyed so brutally by humans.

Still in my teenage years, I was wondering what study to pursue at University as all I wanted was to protect the environment from the bad influence of humans, but there was no specific degree oriented to that particular wish of mine. My parents and grandparents were appointing me to become a veterinarian, but I was not that much concerned about the well-being of animals and pets in particular, but rather of the whole environment, and I wanted to know how humans could develop their usual activities without harming the natural world around them.

One joyful day I went to a career advisory centre in my town and someone there handed out to me the program of a brand-new degree called 'Environmental Science'. And I couldn't believe it. That was exactly what I was looking for, and someone had created it just for me to enjoy! From geology to plant physiology, passing by microbiology, ecology, zoology and environmental engineering, it was all there for me to learn. I couldn't have designed the study-programme any better. So I became an environmental scientist. And I was curious to know whether in other countries there was more environmental awareness than in Spain, so I ended up working for a water treatment company in The Netherlands as an environmental/sales engineer. After a bit more than a year, I decided to leave the country, as the environmental awareness of Dutch people was not as evident as their coldness.

The lack of sun, mountains and natural forests were also driving factors for me to want to move away from there.

I then moved to Brussels, Belgium, with a 6 months training contract to work for the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). A dream came true. My job in The Netherlands was way too technical, and here I could have a more hands-on approach to nature conservation. They liked my commitment and professionalism and offered me to stay after my internship. I was earning good money, working for the world's leading nature conservation organization, and growing more professional day by day. I was also volunteering for 'Birdsbay', a wild animals rescue centre in the outskirts of Brussels, and participating in different activities with the IBGE-BIM (Brussels' Institute for Environmental Management) and 'Natagora', an environmental NGO. But Brussels is a nasty place to live in, dirty, unsafe, messy and quite inhuman, and after two years there I thought it was enough, and decided to head back to beautiful Asturias.

Asturias is some sort of paradise on earth. I was lucky to have been born here. If you have some image of Spain in your head: forget it, Asturias is just not like that. At all. Asturias is green and mountainous. It's got the most visited and breathtaking mountain National Park of the Iberian peninsula, and the first one to have been designated as such, back in 1918. It has over 200 kilometres of unspoilt stunning coast, with sheer cliffs, beautiful wooded beaches and unusual natural phenomena such as the 'bufones', some sort of sea-water geysers which spray the coastal fields with rainbow coloured salty droplets when the sea is at its wildest. Turn around, and the mountains are there behind you, promising lush valleys packed with multi-coloured flowers, dense forests, spring waters and the wildest fauna: brown bears, wolves, badgers, wild cats, roe-deer, fallow deer... The gastronomy is rich and varied, the people friendly and helpful, the climate mild...

I love Asturias and for that reason I came back here to contribute with my knowledge and experience to keep my region as gorgeous as it is. Back in my beloved Asturias I did a two years professional training on Natural Resources Management to complement my education. Then I assisted the Green Party at the regional parliament as an environmental advisor for two years, whilst coordinating the local group of WWF (World Wildlife Fund) volunteers and working for them sporadically in weekend work camps. Fed up with politics, I left that job and moved deeper into what I had been wanting for already a few years: creating my own environmental NGO.

Founded in February 2012, "Biodiversa" has already given me many happy moments. Soon after its creation, I got a grant of more than 20,000 EUR from the European Commission to organize a training course on ecological footprint minimization. Thanks to that, 30 youth leaders from 10 different countries got together in Asturias for seven days in which I could train them on how to reduce their impact in the environment. As a result, a radio channel accepted my proposal to have a weekly programme on that topic every Saturday for a couple of months.

In November 2012, a journalist got in touch with me to tell me that I had been given the 'Outstanding Entrepreneur' award by the Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente Foundation. Felix, an outstanding naturalist and communicator himself, used to be my hero as a kid, so for me this award was more than I ever expected to get in my life. Biodiversa is still growing and I keep carrying out valuable nature conservation and educational projects in its name. I am still daydreaming and wanting to minimize the damages of humans on the natural environment. I am on the way, although I know I'll never get there. That's what keeps me alive. And, every so often, I still come back home with crickets in my pockets.

Kloud 9

The writer is the European projects-organizer and international trainer specialized in environmental issues. She lives in Asturias, Spain. A committed naturalist, she runs her own environmental NGO – Biodiversa.

The Mayfly



By CRESIDA RODRIGUES

There was something about her family's garden that always held a strange fascination for Karthika. Its beautiful display was not only to do with the vibrant flower colours but the various forms of life that thrived in that small natural space. She believed that a garden was not only a source of comfort and inspiration, but also something full of ideas to take home. Perhaps that was the reason why she found herself strolling outside her ancestral home, once again, into the welcoming arms of the garden.

"Karthika! Where are you going my child?" her mother called out, from behind the door.

"Nowhere far Amma! Just visiting the garden again" she replied, sensing the worry in her mother's voice.

"Okay. But be sure to return home before it gets too dark, alright?"

"Yes, of course Amma."

She started down a narrow gravel path leading to the newly laid lawn. Slowly, as she progressed, she hummed to herself, enjoying the warm evening weather. She entered the beautiful

space with a sense of excitement. There was always something new to discover here- flowers of soft as well as bright hues, a few trees, insects of different kinds, and, small animals wandering here and there. She was fascinated with the beauty of the floral world, which she carefully observed around her. While she was bending down on her knees to smell the flowers, she noticed a mayfly fluttering nearby and she began to follow it.

'Wow, how lucky I am to find one' she thought to herself as she hopped over a fallen branch. The mayfly danced through the flowers and soared in the sky as if it was born to fly. 'Born to fly... and die too,' she added sadly. 'I'm going to die too, very soon' she said and then sighed heavily. 'But, Amma told me not to worry about it. So I won't.' she told herself. And then brought her head up towards the sky and recalled the other day.

"She won't live for more than a year, Mrs. Shekhar. I'm sorry." Mr. Singh, my doctor had told my mother on my last day of treatment. When the news broke out, tears welled in her eyes and she closed them to let them run down her cheek. She already knew my fate and yet she had this little hope that I would be able to live a long life like any other fortunate child could. But all hope was lost now. She wept uncontrollably and I could do nothing to take away her sadness. "Amma, please don't cry." I said to my mother, hoping she would stop crying so much. "Oh, Karthika, oh my dear Karthika" she whispered and hugged me close. "I'm so sorry my darling" she said to me; her voice muffled by her tears and then thanked the doctor.

I can still recollect what the doctor had said when I was first diagnosed with Progeria. He said to my mother that the disease I suffer from makes my appearance look a lot much older than my age. For an eleven year old, I already look about eighty. I was



born healthy but signs of the sickness arose when I was about one and a half years old.

Karthika's reaction to the news was not of sadness or shock, but that of acceptance. She had accepted the truth of her life a long time ago. Progeria, the rare genetic condition she suffers from, had no cure. Her parents took her to so many doctors in hopes of a miracle cure or anything that could sustain her wearing life. But, to their utmost chagrin, there were slim chances of her survival. Her Appa once said to her that she was very brave, and he was proud that she was his little girl. Her heart was filled with immense joy and a wide smile graced her weary looking face.

The mayfly zoomed by her and she chuckled heartily. She played a little while with her new friend until she was once again consumed by her thoughts.

I never had many friends. But, my Amma and Appa are the best friends I could ever ask for. Before, when I was still at school, children of my age were very

scared to approach me. Some of them screamed and ran away. I could never understand why. Yes, I know I appear to look very old, but that doesn't mean I am unlikable. My grandparents are old but they have friends too. Hah, old friends like them I suppose. But I don't have a friend who is like me. I'm happy I don't, for I would never wish for a friend to suffer as I do.

Her gaze drifted on to the mayfly, which appeared to look very tired. It lost the enthusiasm which it had before. And suddenly its abdomen sank down onto a leaf. Its limp body rested on as it lay down to take its final few last breaths. Karthika bent down on her knees hovering over the leaf on which it lay. She thought about how similar she was to the mayfly. She was looked down upon like an insect, they both had very short lives and their childhood was stolen from them. She lowered her head closer and whispered "My grandmother had always told me to enjoy life as long as it lasts. To me, life is like an ice cream and I won't let it melt away before I can fully savor it! So long my friend, Goodbye." And with that she carefully picked the leaf and rose to her feet. She set the leaf on a nearby pond and watched it float away.

When the leaf was out of sight, she looked up at the sky. The setting sun's red rays lit up the dull sky and it soon turned dark. She made a wish, not a wish for herself but for her parents:

'Please, God. You have blessed me with the most loving parents I can ever imagine. Bless them with a healthy child. So that, after I am dead and gone, they have someone they can depend on. Please make this wish of mine come true.'

"Karthika! Hurry up dear unless you don't want your ice cream!" her mother called out to her. "Amma, I'm coming, I'm coming! You know how much I love ice cream, no?" She heard her mother laugh, and turned to return to go home.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 9 student in Our Own English High School, Abu Dhabi



All Children are Troublemakers



By SUBIN OH

All children are troublemakers!

They touch beautiful tea pots with curiosity and break them.

All children are troublemakers!

They open the window when it rains and let the rain water
Be blown in with a peel of thunder and a flash of lightning.

All children are troublemakers!

They draw giraffe on the wall with crayons.

Everyone has a childhood life.

And everyone was a child.

Therefore, everyone was a troublemaker!

Kloud 9

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Indus International School, Hyderabad



Who killed Mr. Andrews?

By VIDYUT KRISHNAKUMAR

It was the evening of December 21, 1986 when the world famous businessman and the topper of the 'Forbes: 1986, Mr. Andrews, was murdered in his ancestral home in the city of Birmingham, England. He was 66 years old. He had great personality. In business, sometimes you make enemies, and so did he. There were news flashes and coverage everywhere. Newspaper headlines screamed: 'Mr. Andrews dead. Murder suspected, killer on the loose.' The police were searching vigorously for clues and the media pressurizing the police for answers to their questions. Thus Detective O'Donovan (nicknamed D.D) had a new case.

heated up more. This is all I have to say", said Gerard. After this, D.D left the house and went back to his office to think over this case. His mind reverted back to the day when his chief appointed him to solve this case. He had gone to the Andrews Mansion along with the forensic expert Jonathon to examine the corpse. Jonathon examined the corpse and observed that Mr. Andrews was around 66 years old, 5 feet 7 inches tall and died out of multiple gunshot wounds. Mr. Andrews was a polite, jovial man and well accepted in the social and business circles. So D.D stated that this was a premeditated murder and exclaimed "What a case this one is turning out to be!"



Next day, along with D.D's apprentice Jr. Detective Paul, he went to the Andrews Mansion to meet Mrs. Andrews. She was inundated with grief. She said "I am just devastated. I have nothing to say. I mean, in business you do get a lot of enemies, but my husband was a nice man. He maintained healthy relations with all his counterparts and associates. I am just shocked." D.D consoled her and sent Paul upstairs to collect any clues. There he found a CD with a piece of masking tape neatly stuck on it with the word 'CONFIDENTIAL' scribbled

Now before investigating the case, D.D had to find out what exactly had happened. Mr. Andrews's butler, Gerard reported to D.D that "Mr. Andrews sounded really angry during that phone call with the Spanish businessman Sergio Roberto. I could hear the conversation clearly from closed doors. He swore a lot to him and the conversation

on. He quickly grabbed that and came back down. After going out, Paul showed D.D the CD and they took it to their office to play it. But the video only featured some strategic discussions on how to beat Sergio Roberto.

Later in the evening, around 8 pm, D.D paid a short visit to the grief-stricken Steven, brother of Mr. Andrews. "My brother was a bit annoyed before his death because of some competition from that Spanish businessman. My brother once casually mentioned that the Spanish guy threatened to kill our family over some business deals, and my brother was obviously angry at his threatening rival", reported Stevens. Steven suspected that the killer was a lady who worked for the Spanish businessman. "When they tried to shoot my brother and the bodyguard down a week ago, I was next to my brother in the car", he emptied a glass of water and continued, "but I never saw that businessman anywhere. But the bodyguard was very agile and foiled the attempt. That day when the assailant escaped in a car, I got a glimpse of the person at the wheel. It was a woman with long blond hair. Yes, it was a woman at the wheels". DD realized here is another twist to the tale. He wondered why a woman should be involved in this case. "Did you find any clues at the crime scene?" DD was desperate for a lead. "No I noticed that the license plate had an Irish registration."

So he now had four suspects- Sergio Roberto, Mrs. Andrews, Gerard, Steven and the woman behind the wheels. So along with Jr. Detective Paul, he went to investigate Gerard, Mr. Andrews's butler. Upon meeting them, Gerard knew why they had come, but he showed confidence in his talks. "Was Mr. Andrews a troubled man before his death?" DD fixed his gaze on Gerard as he quizzed him. "Yes. He was a troubled man, indeed. I think he did not tell anyone what exactly was bothering him. Usually he confided things in his brother. I do not know if he had shared his problem with Mr. Steven. If he had told this to his wife, she would have panicked a lot." Then D.D asked more about the phone call. "Mr. Andrews was very angry with that man. He was trying to ruin his business. I just remember Mr. Andrews screaming at his rival on phone that if he dared to cross his path in business, then he would have to face the consequences. Then he swore and slammed the telephone hard and I think he was pushing some things off his desk as I heard a flower vase break. That is all I recollect." Paul noted down the clues and they set off for the mansion again, to meet Mrs. Andrews. Upon reaching there, they saw the gardener. They also interrogated him asking if he knew what was happening. The gardener, Charles,

replied "I was not aware of Mr. Andrews's activities. Every morning he used to stroll around the garden and whenever he met me he just said 'hi'. I did not notice anything unusual on the fateful day".

After that, they walked into the mansion to meet Mrs. Andrews. "Mrs. Andrews, we have come to interrogate you about this case. So please cooperate with us and help us solve this case to do justice to your diseased husband." DD was sternly polite to the woman. "I understand D.D. It's okay. Please carry on." DD maintained his matter-of-fact tone; "How was Mr. Andrews' relationship with Sergio?" He gave her one of those cop-like stares, but less intense than the one he gave Gerard. "I am not aware of all his business deals. Usually all these talks are held between him and his brother. Just once he complained to me about a Spanish businessman being a big interference in his business deals."

"What happened on the day of his death? Was he acting unusual or anything else?", D.D asked. "He was completely normal. He stuck to his daily routines and had his breakfast and left for work at the usual time. I had to go and meet my friend Josephine that day. But when I came back, I heard this shocking news. He was cheerful and went to his office with a smile on his face as usual. Nothing unfamiliar happened that day". Then D.D and Paul went over to Mr. Andrews's room to examine some of his belongings. As they walked in, they found a lady in Mr. Andrews's room.

D.D addressed her gently in a rising intonation, "Who are you? What are you doing here?" "I am the house-keeper Juliana. I am just straightening up my master's room. These maids do not do a good job always. Who are you?" D.D slightly sharpened his tone with a tinge of severity "I am Detective Donavan. How come you weren't here when we came three days ago?" She looked momentarily disoriented and responded with a bit of a stammer, "Umm...I ... I had gone to meet my son who had flown down from Ireland. Had taken the day off." "Oh! I see", replied D.D who was not convinced with the answer of the house-keeper. He realized that she was a bit nervous while replying. The duo left the house after collecting Mr. Andrews's favorite book.

The next day D.D and Paul went to meet Sergio Roberto, who had incidentally arrived that

day to sign a business deal with Media Moghul, Clark Mason. He was not pleased to receive the duo. Finally after sipping a cup of coffee, D.D started questioning Sergio. "Why did you threaten to kill the family of Mr. Andrews? What did he do to you"? To this, Sergio replied "I had bagged a great deal but in the end, Mr. Andrews quoted a bigger price and he bagged the deal. Since then, I developed hatred for that man. In a fit of rage I told him I will destroy his family. But I did not mean it. Now Mr. Andrews is murdered and I know everyone is suspecting me of having sent goons after him, right? Well, let me make one thing clear. I did not kill him. If I had I would not be here. I am not so foolish you see." D.D observed that this man was shrewd but could not tick him off the list. D.D did not want to question him any further at that moment. He said good-bye to him and went to Paul's house.

The next day, Jason, the fingerprint expert called D.D and wanted the fingerprints he would like to match with the ones found at the crime scene. So D.D set off for Steven's house first. There he managed to slip into his pocket the notepad used by Stevens. Then he set off for Andrews Mansion and asked the gardener to lend him 10 pounds assuring him that he would pay him back later. Then he went to Mrs. Andrews and asked her for her kerchief, explaining the real reasons. Next he approached Gerard, and asked him for a pen as his pen was not working. Gerard said that D.D could keep the pen with him always. Having collected the items, he rushed back to the lab, anticipating an immediate solution to the riddle.

To their great dismay, they found that none of the fingerprint matched with the ones collected from the crime scene. So he sat down to think about his next move. Then he suddenly thought about Juliana. He had forgotten about her. He went to the mansion again. This time Juliana seemed well under control, and calm. He deliberately dropped his diary and ignored it. When she noticed it, she picked it up

for him. He later sent it to the Lab. To everyone's wonder, Juliana's figure print matched with one of those they had in the lab. There was no time to waste. D.D and Paul along with police rushed to the Andrews Mansion to arrest Juliana. As Juliana was in the house, D.D called Mrs. Andrews to the living room. Paul approached Juliana and handcuffed her. When she asked why, the police replied "You have been proved guilty of murdering Mr. Andrews. We have strong evidences and you cannot plead innocent. Tell the truth. Then Juliana sang like a canary. "Yes. I confess to the crime. I killed Mr. Andrews because Sergio promised me a fortune if I killed Mr. Andrews.

A devastated Mrs. Andrews burst out into tears and shouted at the officers, "Take her away!"



Later, they arrested the accomplice, Sergio too. Afterwards, Mrs. Andrews approached D.D and said, "How can I ever thank you? You have done such a great job. All I can give you is a cash reward of 20,000 pounds for a job well done. Please accept it" To this D.D replied "I am overwhelmed by your kindness. Well you know it's all in a day's work" he jokingly said. Even Paul congratulated him. The next day, newspaper headlines screamed: 'Andrews Murder Case Solved- Tycoon Sergio Roberto Apprehended! After reading the news, D.D said to himself "At last! Justice is served!"

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 9 student in
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For One More Day

Book Review

By GAYATHRI PILLAI

For *One More Day* is a book written by American best-selling author Mitch Albom who apart from being an author is also a journalist, screenwriter, playwright, radio and television broadcaster and musician. He was born on May 23, 1958 in Passaic, New Jersey and stepped into the role of an author for the first time through his autobiographical memoir "Tuesdays with Morrie" (written to help pay the medical bills of his beloved professor, Morrie) that mesmerized millions all around the world, and "For one more day", though not autobiographical, that reflects some of the author's own experiences with his mother. It is a story that will open your eyes and persuade you to enjoy the moment, to appreciate where you are and what you have.

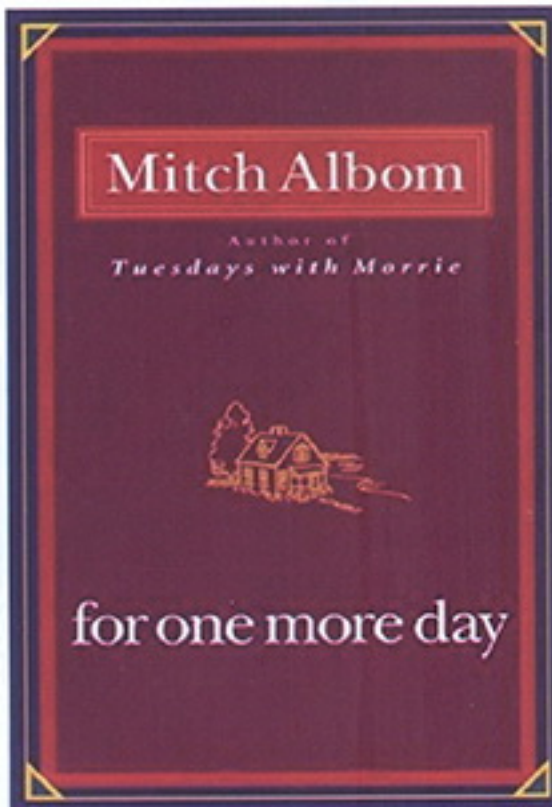
The book was first published in 2006. The main characters in the book are **Charles (Chick) Benetto, Posey Benetto (Mother), Len Benetto (Father), Maria Benetto (Daughter) and Catherine Benetto (Wife)**. *For one more day* though not autobiographical, reflects some of the author's own experiences with his mother.

For one more day, we would all wish – one

more day with our loved ones who have gone, one more day to relive all those splendid moments, one more day of childhood so that your mom can hug you when you are hurt, so that your dad can scold you for not doing well in school, so that you can fight with your sisters and brothers and sit in class with your friends listening to your teachers, one more day to become once again all you have been. But by then, it is always too late. We often don't realize the beauty of moments until they have passed by. And then we find ourselves taking out those little pieces of our life and peering into it, trying to absorb back all that we have lost on the way.

Charles Benetto has been taught since childhood that he can either be mama's boy or daddy's boy. And he chooses to be daddy's boy, working hard to impress his father. But one morning he finds that his father is no more living with them and he consoles himself that his dad is to come back soon. Charles and his dad shared a common passion for baseball and so Charles continues to work harder to become the best,

hoping that his Dad will come back for him. Upon his mother's persuasion he goes to college and there, in a match, he sees his father years later, who is watching him play. In his attempt to bond with his father once again, he drops out of college and goes to play the World Series, which gains him great fame as an



athlete. He marries and is soon the father of a child. But age catches up to him and soon he is no more an athlete and he sees no more of his father. He takes up various jobs in an attempt to feed his family and years later, Charles finds himself a middle aged salesman.

On his mother's seventy ninth birthday party, he once again talks to his dad who persuades him to play another series and in an attempt to escape from the party, he lies to everyone and runs off to play one last game of baseball. The next day after the game he finds himself clutching the phone, crying over his mother's death. His life, drenched in tears of remorse and regret, changes and he turns into a drunkard. His wife and daughter leave him and after a few years he finds out that his daughter has married. Torn by this incident, Charles decides to commit suicide and drives off to meet death. But instead he finds himself at the doorstep of his old house, staring at his mother who died years earlier. He spends a day with his mother when he learns that his dad had another family, and how his mother used to work in other houses, cleaning their floors and washing their dishes, how he was born after endless prayers, how she always stood up for him and he never stood up for her. At the end of the day with his mother, Charles wakes up in the hands of a policeman, near his bashed up car at the side of a road, injured but alive and he realizes that though in a dream, he has at last had a

chance to spend a day with his mother to make up for all what he never did and to say all what he never said.

Through this touching novel, the author points out that there is a story behind everything. But behind all your stories is always your mother's story because, hers is where yours begins. No matter where you are and what you do; your mother will always be there by your side because her love goes beyond the barriers of death, life and the possible.

"It is not until much later, as the skin sags and the heart weakens, that children understand; their stories, and all their accomplishments, sit atop the stories of their mothers and fathers, stones upon stones, beneath the waters of their lives."

I highly recommend this book as it is one among those rare books that snap you into realization and motivate you to appreciate what you have. It gives us a different perspective on the various things we see in life and makes us think about those little things we often fail to give ourselves a chance to ponder upon. And above all, it is a story that brings us to the realization that there is no love like a mother's love.

Kloud 9

**The Writer is a grade 12 in
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Tongue Twister

Betty Botter bought some butter, but she said, "This butter's bitter! But a bit of better butter will but make my butter better." So she bought some better butter, better than the bitter butter, and it made her butter better. So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter!

I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish, but if you wish the wish the witch wishes, I won't wish the wish you wish to wish

Birds



By ANJAN SRIVATSA MELKOTE

Many many birds are there all around the country.
Some here, some there; many many birds are there.

Crows, Hens and Peacocks too, they are very beautiful true.
Some tall, some short; many many birds are there.

Some are red, some are blue, some are rainbow colour too.
Birds come in different ways; many many birds are there.

Kloud 9

The writer is a grade 3 student in
Yuvabharati International School, Singapore.



Face to Face:

Students of KiiT International School, Bhubaneswar with

Dr. K. Radhakrishnan

Chairman, ISRO

The Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Dr. K. Radhakrishnan visited KiiT International school on 23 January 2013 and interacted with the students and faculty. He was all praise for the school and entire KiiT group in general. In Dr. Radhakrishnan's words, 'This is a memorable day in my life to be visiting KiiT and especially KiiT International School. I see here the great social vision of enabling through education.'

He was so impressed with the KiiT group of institutes which houses students from all states of the country and also from several other countries, that he called it a 'Mini India'. He reminded the teaching faculty that they can make a difference in the life of a child. He recalled his own school teachers who had kindled the spirit of learning in him. 'Nucleate the spirit of questioning in the children,' he advised the educators.

His counsel to the students was that they should continuously be inquisitive about everything around them and not take any phenomenon for granted, but must ask questions like Dr. C V Raman did - Why is the sea blue? Why is the sky blue? Only then can students develop a scientific bent of mind. He quoted Jawaharlal Nehru's words: 'The future belongs to science.'

Students were very enthusiastic to talk to him and flooded him with questions. The scientist replied to them in very simple and understandable terms. Here are some excerpts of their questions and Dr. Radhakrishnan's responses to them.

Q. The purpose of orbital motion of a planet is to balance the gravitational force with the centrifugal force so that it can revolve on a stable orbit. But what is the purpose of the spinning motion of a planet?

Dr.KR. All forces in the universe must maintain a balance. To maintain this equilibrium and stability there is a spinning motion in the planets.

Q. What happens to the satellites in the long run?

Dr.KR. Artificial satellites are placed in orbit. There are instruments designed to provide thrusts in different directions to the satellites to keep them in position in their orbits. When the satellites become inactive, or when there is some failure like a failure in some electronic

components, power failure or when the fuel gets exhausted, the satellite is moved out to a place where it does not obstruct anything active in space. Such places are called 'Graveyards'. Sometimes they are made to reenter the atmosphere and they burn out.

Q. Sir, will you disclose what are the major projects on which ISRO is working now?

Dr.KR. Certainly! We are working on many projects. The major ones include communication satellites. Then there are Navigation satellites and Remote sensing satellites. In addition, we are working on launch vehicles like PSLV and GSLV Mk III. Besides, we are looking at exploration of other planets - Mars, specifically.



Q. We are making huge investments of money in space research. Do such expenditures actually pay off?

Dr.KR. To answer you in simple terms it has already paid off. Present estimates indicate that whatever we have spent in space research over the last 50 years, we have already got back one and half times that amount. To give a few examples of the financial benefits of space research: fishermen go out to fish in the seas and sail aimlessly trying to make a good catch. Using satellites we can locate where exactly large shoals can be found. With this information the fishermen can get a much better catch using much less resources like fuel and time. Similarly, we are able to get a clear picture of the land (terrain) and can utilize the data profitably; such information can also be used for better food crop production.

Satellites help in finding water below the surface, due to which wells can be dug at correct locations with 95% success rate. This avoids expenditure of digging and failing to find water.

70% of the cyclones generate in the Bay of Bengal. It is now possible with the use of satellite imagery to study when cyclogenesis takes place, track its movement, study its intensity and evacuate people if needed. Now, the benefits in terms of lives saved cannot be quantified in terms of money.

Similarly we are able to use phones sitting at home. Even in the remotest parts of the country people are now enjoying the use of satellite DTH and televisions.

Q. What were the objectives of Chandrayaan I?

Dr.KR. The main objective was to place a satellite around moon at 100 kilometre altitude, for the study of moon's surface and its atmosphere. The aim was to prepare the topography of the moon, and to collect data regarding the distribution of chemicals and minerals on the lunar surface. Sources of Helium were discovered. Using Indian and foreign instruments pictures of the moon's terrain and atmosphere was taken in greater details. Traces of water molecules and ice

molecules were found in the subsurface. Basically we learned a lot in the technological dimensions. All this is very important because moon is the intermediary point for any future exploration towards Mars.

The following question was asked by one of the teachers.

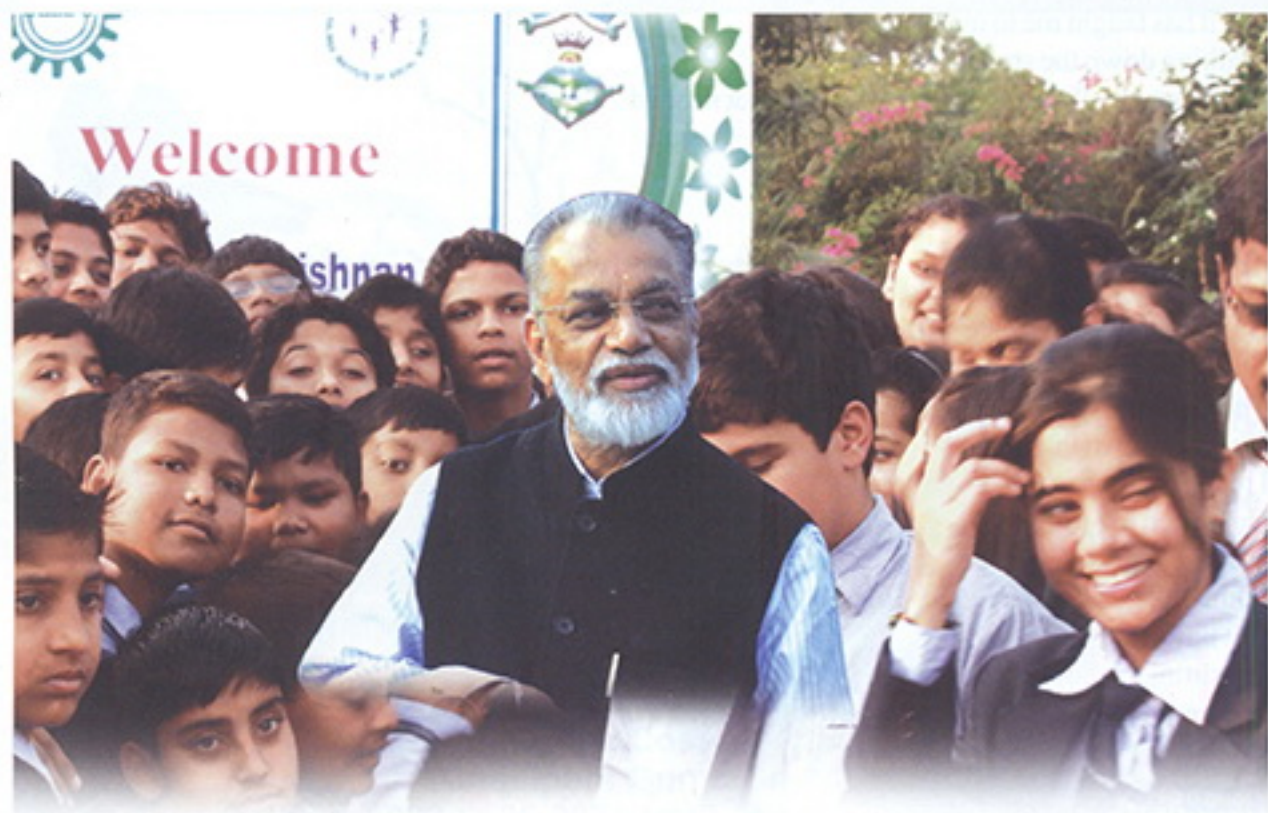
Q. On behalf of the teaching faculty, I would request you sir to share with us some personal experiences that have motivated you to become one of the foremost scientists of our nation today.

Dr.KR. I was initially keen to learn Mathematics. You know, Maths, Physics and Chemistry are important for any branch of Science and Engineering. I completed my graduation in Electrical Engineering. After that I had two options: one - to join Space Research and Technology Centre and two - go for an interview to join a private company. Then I

asked my teacher to advise me on the right course to choose. He told me to go to Thumba, and I joined the STC, though financially a private company was more rewarding. I began my career at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Trivandrum.

There I found a small India. Brilliant scientists from all over the country worked there as a team. This atmosphere encouraged me to improve my qualifications. I joined ISRO and found that it is one of the most professionally satisfying organizations to work with. If you are an ISRO man, you are an ISRO man for life. It is a very challenging and satisfying job, which can be seen nowhere else. The 18 minutes of rocket launch is test of everyone's professional mettle and dedication, over the previous several months sometimes years. No other task can ever provide such a challenge and the rewards are so satisfying that they last a whole lifetime.

Cloud 9

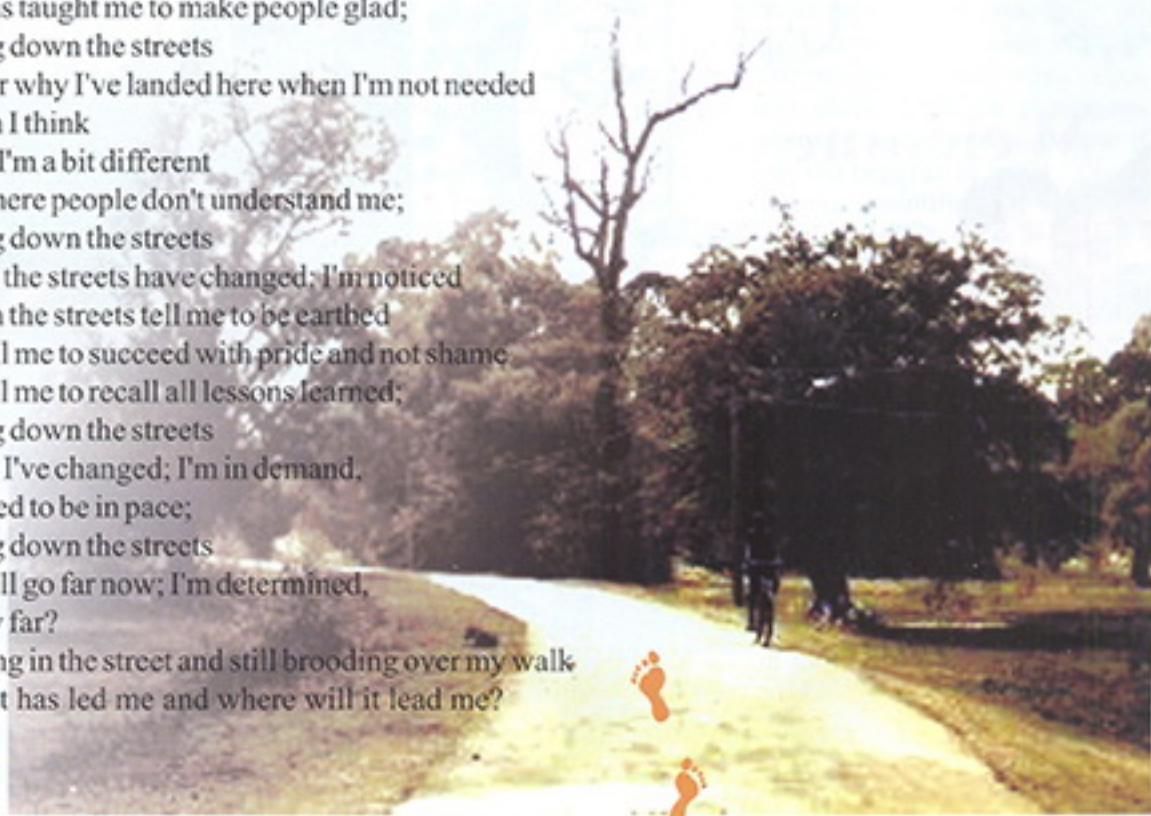


Walking Down the Street


By SHREYA GULATI

Walking down the streets
I realize the streets have wounded my feet: I'm bleeding;
But they've taught me
To make mere gravel the stepping stones to success;
Walking down the dark wintry streets
I realize the darkness has frightened me: I'm scared;
But it has taught me to pave my way in the dark;
Walking down the lonely streets
I realize loneliness has become my custodian: I'm abandoned;
But it has taught me to be me;
Walking down the laughing streets
I realize that I've become a laughing stock: I'm joked;
But it has taught me to make people glad;
Walking down the streets
I wonder why I've landed here when I'm not needed
But then I think
Maybe I'm a bit different
Maybe here people don't understand me;
Walking down the streets
I realize the streets have changed: I'm noticed
But then the streets tell me to be earthed
They tell me to succeed with pride and not shame
They tell me to recall all lessons learned;
Walking down the streets
I realize I've changed; I'm in demand,
But I need to be in pace;
Walking down the streets
I think I'll go far now; I'm determined,
But how far?
I'm sitting in the street and still brooding over my walk
Where it has led me and where will it lead me?

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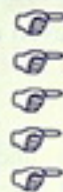
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A Dreadful Gurgle

By RUSKIN BOND

Have you ever woken up in the night to find someone in your bed who wasn't supposed to be there?

Well, it happened to me when I was at a boarding-school in Shimla, many years ago.

I was sleeping in the senior dormitory, along with some twenty other boys, and my bed was positioned in a corner of the long room, at some distance from the others. There was no shortage of pranksters in our dormitory, and one had to look out for the introduction of stinging-nettle or pebbles or possibly even a small lizard under the bed sheets. But I wasn't prepared for a body in my bed.

At first I thought a sleep-walker had mistakenly got into my bed, and I tried to push him out, muttering "Devinder, get back into your own bed. There isn't room for two of us." Devinder was a notorious sleep-walker, who had even ended up on the roof on one occasion.

But it wasn't Devinder.

Devinder was a short boy, and this fellow was a tall, lanky person. His feet stuck out of the blankets at the foot of the bed.

It must be Ranjit, I thought. Ranjit had huge feet.

"Ranjit," I hissed. "Stop playing the fool, and get back to your own bed."

No response.

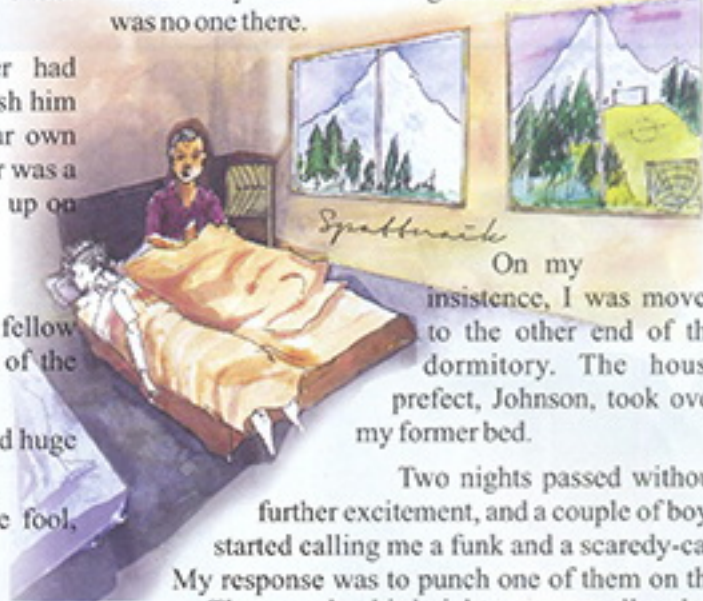
I tried pushing, but without success. The body was heavy and inert. It was also very cold.

I lay there wondering who it could be, and then it began to dawn on me that the person beside me wasn't breathing, and the horrible realization came to me that there was a corpse in my bed. How did it get there, and what was I to do about it?

"Vishal," I called out to a boy who was sleeping a short distance away. "Vishal, wake up, there's a corpse in my bed!"

Vishal did wake up, "You're dreaming, Bond. Go to sleep and stop disturbing everyone."

Just then there was a groan, followed by a dreadful gurgle, from the body beside me. I shot out of bed, shouting at the top of my voice, waking up the entire dormitory. Lights came on. There was total confusion. The Housemaster came running. I told him and everyone else what had happened. They came to my bed and had a good look at it. But there was no one there.



On my insistence, I was moved to the other end of the dormitory. The house prefect, Johnson, took over my former bed.

Two nights passed without further excitement, and a couple of boys started calling me a funk and a scaredy-cat.

My response was to punch one of them on the nose. Then, on the third night, we were all woken by several ear-splitting shrieks, and Johnson came charging across the dormitory, screaming that two icy hands had taken him by the throat and tried to squeeze the life out of him. Lights came on, and the poor old Housemaster came dashing in again. We calmed Johnson down, and put him in a spare bed. The Housemaster shone his torch on the boy's face

and neck, and sure enough, we saw several bruises on his flesh, and the outline of a large hand.

Next day, the offending bed was removed from the dormitory, but it was a few days before Johnson recovered from the shock. He was kept in the infirmary until the bruises disappeared. But for the rest of the term he was a nervous wreck.

Our nursing sister, who had looked after the infirmary for many years, recalled that some twenty years earlier, a boy called Tomkins had died suddenly in the dormitory. He was very tall for his age, but apparently suffered from a heart problem. That day he had taken part in a football match, and had gone to bed looking pale and exhausted. Early next morning, when the bell rang for morning gym-work, he was found stiff and cold, having apparently died during the night.

"He died peacefully, poor boy," recalled our nursing sister.

But I'm not so sure. I can still hear that dreadful gurgle from the body in my bed. And there

was the struggle with Johnson. No, there was nothing peaceful about that death. Tomkins had gone most unwillingly.....



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Gappu Finds a Pet

By MALAVIKA ROY SINGH

One fine day, Gappu was returning home from school. He crossed a small footbridge, when he heard a kitten meowing.

"Meow, meow, meow!" The voice resounded again and again.

Gappu looked around to find a kitten with yellow and black patches, meowing sadly. It had big eyes, with equally big eyelashes, but it looked in pain. The kitten had hurt its paw.

Gappu pitied it and picked it up. The kitten immediately liked Gappu, but was in too much pain and so continued to meow painfully.

Gappu rushed home.

"Grandpa, grandpa, look what has happened!" shouted Gappu as he rushed into the house.

Grandpa was reading a newspaper when he found Gappu barging in with a little kitty in his arms.

"Grandpa, my kitty is hurt! Can you do



something? Can you please help her?" pleaded Gappu. Grandpa loved animals and so Gappu was sure that he would have something for the little kitty.

Grandpa examined and found a tiny thorn prick in the kitty's paw. He carefully removed it.

"Meow!" the cat sounded its agony as grandpa removed it. Gappu got scared and hid behind Grandpa.

The cat soon relaxed and smiled gratefully at grandpa and Gappu. She brushed her head lovingly against Gappu's legs.

"Oh grandpa, I think she likes me!" he said looking excited. "Can I keep her?"

"Yes my dear, but you will have to take care of her."

"I will grandpa. I will keep her with me all the time. I will name her 'Mishti', as she's so sweet".

Days passed and Gappu was happy being with his new friend. He gave her food on time, played with her, told her stories about his school and put her to sleep as well. Mishti loved all this and was grateful. Whenever she felt happy, she simply meowed or closed her eyes and brushed her head against him.

Things were going great, till one fine day Gappu met a friend, who had a dog for a pet. Gappu loved the dog and spent the following days, playing around with him.

As he returned home one day, he told grandpa about it. "Grandpa, my friend has a dog for pet and he's brilliant. You should see the way he jumps, somersaults. He even plays with ball and picks up the newspaper." He suddenly turned sad. "Why can't I have a dog, grandpa?"

"You already have Mishti dear, you should play with her."

"But she's not that brilliant. She doesn't



somersault or play with ball or pick up the newspaper.”

“Yes dear, but she must be doing some other things that the dog isn’t able to”, explained grandpa, but Gappu was not reassured. He continued to whine.

The poor cat, who overheard the conversation, cried and meowed sadly. Suddenly, she felt hurt and unwanted.

The next day, Gappu woke up to find his cat missing. He called her many times, but couldn’t find her.

“Grandpa, Mishti is not in the house! Where did she go?”

“I guess she went away. She heard you talk affectionately about the dog and so figured that she was not wanted.”

“But that is not true.”

“It is dear. For a few days, you were busy playing with your friend’s dog and did not pay attention to your own pet. She felt bad and neglected and so she left.”

Gappu burst into tears, feeling bad.

“But I loved her grandpa.”

“Then you should’ve made her feel wanted dear. All animals are unique. They have qualities of their own and you have to accept them as they are. It is unfair to compare one with another.”

Gappu realized his mistake and ran outside, calling her out.

He came across the footbridge, where he had seen her first. There she stood, sadly meowing to herself.

Gappu rushed and picked her in his arms. “I am sorry my little kitty. You are the best kitty in this whole world. Please come home, don’t leave me. You are my favorite pet.”

The kitty was once again happy. She snuggled her head comfortably against Gappu’s chest as he walked back home, feeling happy in having found his kitty.

Ginny's Kitty Party

By NIGAR ATAULLA

Ginny was a little girl who lived in a big town. She loved animals, and wherever she went, she would look around for cats, dogs, squirrels and birds and would stop to say hello to them.

Ginny lived in a house with a big backyard and a little garden in front. Every day, all the neighbourhood cats would land up outside her home when they spotted her coming from school. Ginny would serve them saucers of creamy milk.

Ginny loved them all very much, and her dream was to have a little house of her own when she grew up, with a special room for cats, where any cat could come and stay, eat and sleep.

After Ginny's mother went to the abode of Gods, she stayed with her father and sister. Both grown-olds (who, if you know what I mean, are very different from grown-ups) could not make heads or tails of paws and claws. Ginny's mother would allow kitties to sit on the kitchen table and watch her making pancakes. But Ginny's father and sis did not allow the kitties to even step inside the house. Like all other grown-olds, they thought they were always right and claimed that the kitties would mess up the house.

Ginny dearly loved the cats and was sad that the kitties couldn't any longer come inside her house.

She secretly hoped that one day all the cats of the area would come into her house and have a big party!

That day soon came as Ginny's dad went out of town for a few days. "Wuppy!" squealed Ginny as she and her toy Teds set off to the baker's to fetch muffins, sandwiches, milk and cakes. And, guess why? Ginny and Teds had planned a surprise kitty party for all the neighbourhood cats!

Ginny's other toys, Dundi, the water-filler, Ronald, the baby rubber, Shelly, the sea shell, Tango, the baby crocodile, Felicia and Fanny, a couple of silly mice, jumped out of the toy cupboard to help

Ginny. They were really excited—they had never seen a Kitty party before. Felicia and Fanny put up balloons inside the dining room, and Dundi filled all the kitty cups with creamy milk.

Ginger, who looked almost like a tiger, was the first to come to Ginny's house. He was so excited to enter the house for the first time that he leapt into the larder and curled up around the honey pot. "Hmmm, so warm!" he meowed. Ginny was thrilled to have Ginger with her and gave him a hearty hug.

In a few minutes, Triggy Tom, the fat brown cat, rushed in. Then, through the window jumped Glassy and Greeny, the two very naughty street kitties. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Guess who it was! Prim 'n Proper, the Persian cat from the big house down the road. She was dressed in a white skirt with a pearl necklace around her furry neck. She lived with Dame Rich Witch, who wanted everything in her house, including her kitty, to be prim and proper, and that is how the latter had got her quaint name. The lady had taught even her cat to knock on doors before entering, which is what she did that day! Sharp at 12 noon, dressed neatly in a suit and bow-tie, Purr-Purr-Purrrfect, the big cat from the other side of the road, walked in. Finally, through the chimney, a black kitty covered completely in coal, tumbled down. That was Sooty!

When all the guests had arrived, the kitty party began. Everyone took their seats at the dining table and then joined their paws together and Ginny said a little prayer thanking the Lord for the food they were about to eat. Then, they began munching on the delicious cakes, biscuits, cream, milk and scones that Ginny had so lovingly put together. Ginny put on a delightful song to amuse them. 'Pussycat, Pussy cat Where Have You Been?' it rang out, and after the kitties had eaten their fill they all held paws and danced to the same song, over and over again. Never before had they had such fun as at their first kitty party!

The sun was setting and it was time for the kitties to go home. But Ginny told them that they could sleep over if they wanted to. "Wuppymeow!" squealed all the kitties in delight. They rushed together, as if in a race, to take their places on the warm sofas, beds and carpets that Ginny had spread out for them.

Ginny made creamy coffee for all of them, and after kneeling down together, they thanked the Lord for the wonderful party, after which each one of

the kitties gave Ginny a little peck on her little cheek to say how thankful they were to her, too.

Ginny was the happiest little girl in the world that day! And now she's waiting for another weekend kitty party, when the grown-olds in her house are out of town again! I do hope that happens really soon, don't you? Wuppymeow!

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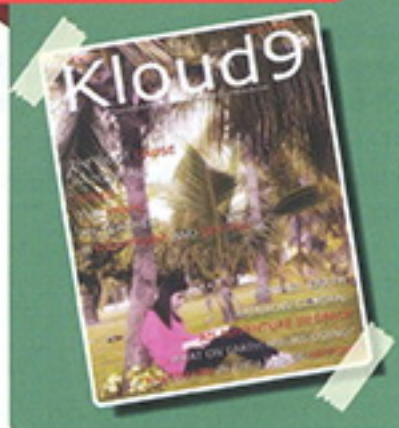
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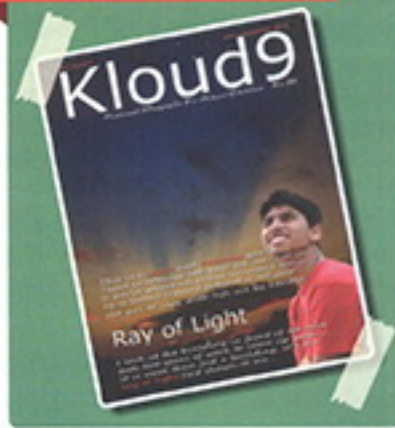
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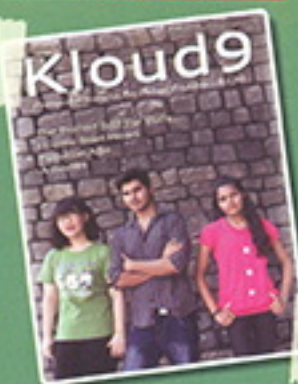
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2. We accept short stories, poems, personal experiences, opinions, travelogues, anecdotes, jokes, puzzles and interesting facts. But originality is the prime factor for selection.
3. All submissions must be in English, and MUST be the original work of the student.
4. Short stories and non-fictions should be below 2000 words (about 1500 words is ideal). Poems should not exceed 20 lines (may or may not broken down to stanzas).
5. Suitable pictures and photographs may be scanned and emailed in JPG format for travelogues, other articles and stories. But do not download from the Net and send it. Scan resolution should be 300dpi
6. Email your work to kloud9@kiitis.ac.in or post a neatly handwritten or typed manuscript to The Editor, Kloud 9, KiIT International School, KiIT Campus 9, Bhubaneswar-751024, Odisha.
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8. Email attachment should be in word (doc. or docx.) format. Do not use fancy colours and fonts. Times New Roman 12 size font with auto font colour (black) is ideal. All matter should be typed/ written in double space.
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